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that riches come in many forms**

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AT WORK IN ROSCOE

Town draws workers in

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Dakotafire is sparking a revival in rural communities of the Dakotas and beyond by encouraging conversations that help rural residents rethink what's happening and what's possible.

Dakotafire magazine is published six times per year and owned by Dakotafire Media, LLC. Subscriptions are \$25; see information at www.dakotafire.net/getfiredup.

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COVER PHOTO: Austin Holscher of Holscher Construction; Dale Hettich, owner of Dale's Building Supplies; Sandy Hettich, owner of Roscoe Trustworthy Hardware; and Sandra Beyers, owner of Sandra Beyers Photography, are among the members of the Roscoe Commercial Club who spearheaded an effort to purchase new playground equipment in Roscoe. *Photo by Wendy Royston*





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➔ FROM THE EDITOR

Knowing what

For years, if you had asked me how I measured wealth, I'd have had a ready answer: time, books and berries in the freezer.



by HEIDI MARTTILA-LOSURE

Editor Heidi Marttila-Losure can be reached at heidi@dakotafire.net.

Money was nice, sure, but for me the first three offered a more direct route to happiness.

Nowadays, I'd probably fit the laughter of my children and a good conversation with my husband on the list, though that doesn't roll off the tongue as musically. Money, still nice, still isn't worthy of a mention.

There's a point at which money does matter: When you are in dire enough poverty that your basic needs are not met. At that point, money can make us happier. But research has shown there's an upper limit to that. Once you're out of poverty, additional money adds less and less to happiness until it reaches a point where getting richer doesn't add to happiness at all.

So I suspect if you asked yourself or many of your neighbors what you or they really valued in life, you'd get an answer similar to mine—perhaps something based on a passion, or a true connection with another person. Even if many of us feel as if we could use a little more money, few of us, if any, would answer, "You know, money is the most important thing in the world to me."

And yet, we can end up living our lives that way. We sometimes focus on work so much that we sacrifice time with our loved ones, thinking we'll be freer



Wondering what's happening with the Prairie Idea Exchange?

We'll be back with a new topic for the May/June issue: MAIN STREET AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP. For now, check out the follow-up to our LEADERSHIP issue on p. 27.

to measure

next week or next month, without realizing that children grow up faster than we notice, and these people may not be around when you're finally ready to make time for them. I'm sure we've all heard the stories from nurses who comfort people at the end of life, who say no one ever regretted not spending more time at the office.

For our communities, the challenge is a little different: I think sometimes we haven't thought hard enough about exactly what we'd need to make our communities better.

Think about how we talk about the national economy, for example. So much of the focus is on jobs: How many there are, who's searching for them, who gets credit when they are made and who's to blame when they are lost.

And on a national level, this makes sense as a way to think about how the country is doing. But it's not the whole picture.

What's the point of a job—it's actual value? Should a job ensure that a worker can purchase the basic needs of life—or perhaps more?

From a community perspective, there are jobs that support communities, and jobs that do not. Consider, for example, the increasingly common practice of hiring a worker for a 30-hour-a-week job to avoid paying full-time benefits. Many of those jobs also have no set schedule, which makes it difficult to take a second job to supplement the income. If that job is minimum wage, that worker is living in poverty or close to it and will require services from the community, such as food stamps or subsidized child care, instead of being able to give back to it.

And then there are even deeper questions about the nature of work: Should a job actually accomplish something that needs to be done in the world? Should a job help the worker use his

or her skills and talents to make the world a better place?

The true value of a job is probably most keenly known by someone who is unemployed, who struggles because of the loss of income, certainly, but also from the sense of no longer feeling useful.

That deeper importance of useful work is why economic development is important in our communities. But we don't always set up our economic development strategies to support that kind of work.

This is in part because those other characteristics of work are harder to measure. Just plain counting jobs is much more straightforward.

Many of the things we value in rural communities are difficult to measure: the strength of our connections to our neighbors, for example, or how rooted we feel to a place. This makes it hard to put programming in place to support those values.

But that doesn't mean we shouldn't try.

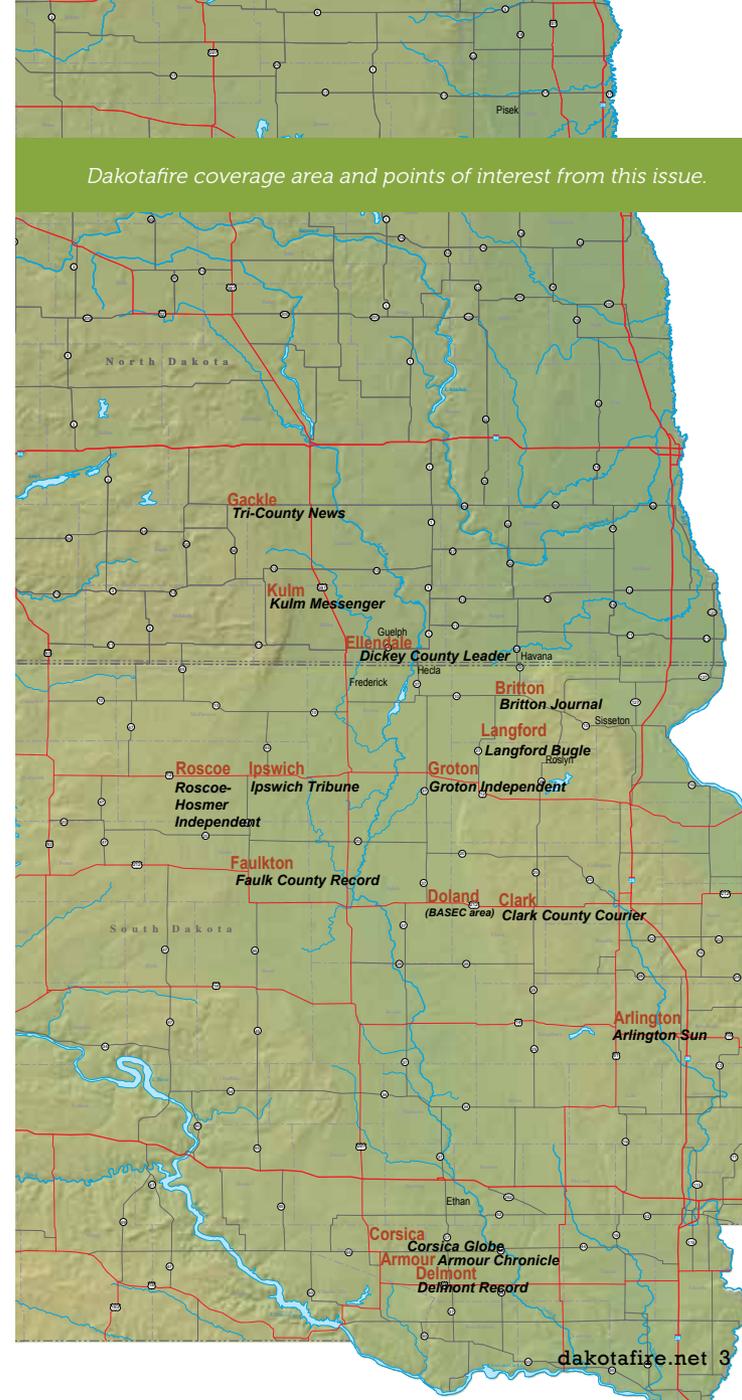
First, researchers are working on developing indicators that can help communities measure forms of wealth that aren't easily counted. This could make policy changes that support a broad-based view of wealth easier to enact.

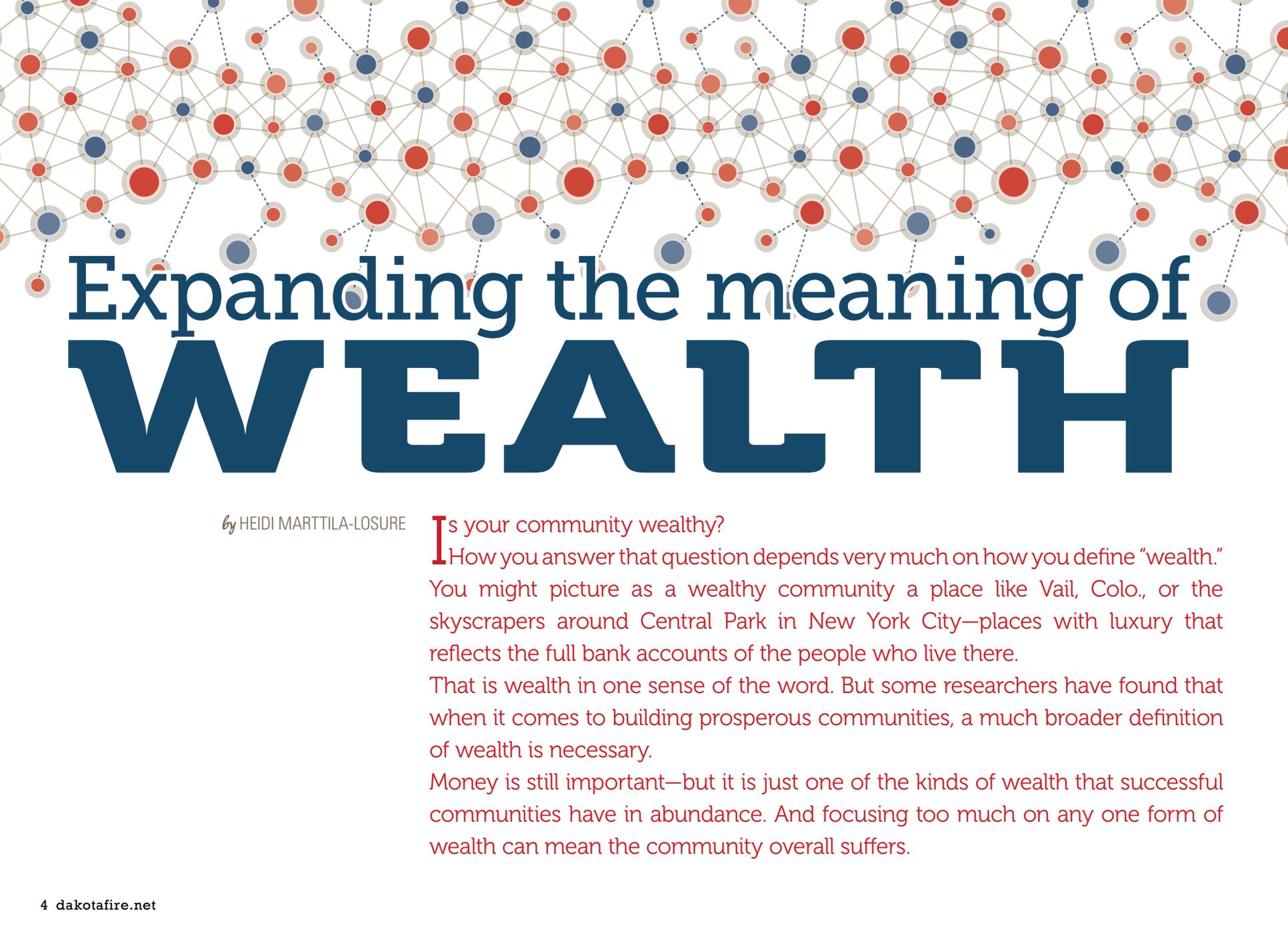
More importantly, if we don't pay attention to the things we value when we're making decisions, we may—with the very best of intentions—do damage to what matters most in our communities.

The stories in this issue look at different kinds of wealth in our communities. I invite you to consider what you value in your community, and in what you'd really like to see it be rich.

Wishing you all time, books and berries in the freezer—or your very own wealth equivalent. *

Dakotafire coverage area and points of interest from this issue.





Expanding the meaning of **WEALTH**

by HEIDI MARTTILA-LOSURE

Is your community wealthy?

How you answer that question depends very much on how you define “wealth.” You might picture as a wealthy community a place like Vail, Colo., or the skyscrapers around Central Park in New York City—places with luxury that reflects the full bank accounts of the people who live there.

That is wealth in one sense of the word. But some researchers have found that when it comes to building prosperous communities, a much broader definition of wealth is necessary.

Money is still important—but it is just one of the kinds of wealth that successful communities have in abundance. And focusing too much on any one form of wealth can mean the community overall suffers.

Thinking in capitals

Cornelia and Jan Flora, researchers at Iowa State University (both now professors emeriti), pioneered this way of thinking about wealth over several decades. They called it the Community Capitals Framework.

“Based on their research to uncover characteristics of entrepreneurial and sustainable communities, they found that the communities most successful in supporting healthy sustainable community and economic development paid attention to all seven types of capital: natural, cultural, human, social, political, financial and built,” according to the ISU Department of Sociology website.

Capital, in this way of thinking, is a source of wealth—an asset that can enrich the community. And it’s all those capitals together that make a community prosperous.

It takes a different kind of thinking than traditional economic development, explained Deb Markley, managing director for the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship. Markley has been involved with a Ford Foundation-sponsored project called WealthWorks, designed to test an approach to economic development that defines wealth more broadly.

“From a more traditional standpoint, if you asked anybody, ‘What does economic development achieve?’, they would talk about things like jobs. They would talk about rising incomes. They would talk about a stronger property tax base and sales taxes and those sorts of measures—which are all really important,” Markley said. “But none of those things in and of itself is wealth.”

Continued on page 6

THE COMMUNITY CAPITALS FRAMEWORK

Studies of successful rural communities showed that they tend to value, connect and work to build up multiple forms of wealth, which led to the development of the Community Capitals Framework. Two other factors are important: local ownership of the wealth that’s created; and making sure that the wealth that’s created is broadly shared, including by helping low-income people fare better.



Adapted from the ISU Department of Sociology website: <http://www.soc.iastate.edu/staff/cflora/ncrcrd/capitals.html>



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A person could have a job, but not be able to afford child care, health insurance, or to buy a home, for example, which means that job is just a job—"it's not leading to wealth creation in any way," Markley said.

"But if what you're really focused on is not just jobs, but a healthy environment, highly skilled people, new ideas and innovation as part of the culture—really all the forms of capital—you begin to ask some questions about how you do the work of economic development. It brings a whole other set of strategies to the table."

Whether assets increase or are used up is another difference between traditional economic development and the Floras' broader view of community development, explained Mary Emery, head of the Sociology & Rural Studies Department at South Dakota State University. Part of Emery's work has been to help communities use the Community Capitals Framework.

"If you look at some of the traditional or narrowly focused economic development programs, oftentimes they use up existing assets in communities, particularly financial capital and political capital," Emery said. For example, "we go to state government and ask for help bringing a company into the community. You can only do that a

couple of times," and then that political capital (or power, in this case) is used up.

If a community instead brings together resources from all of the capitals to get a project done, the process of bringing people together can *increase* the capital available: The connections between people are stronger, and individuals increase their human capital as they gain skills and experience, for example.

It doesn't always work that way. Sometimes there are trade-offs in which one kind of wealth is spent down to increase another. But this framework brings those trade-offs into the open.

"You can focus only on financial capital—it doesn't mean you're not impacting other forms of capital," Markley said. "This is just a way of being much more transparent about it."

Designing with the capitals in mind

Markley and Emery explained that the capitals are a planning tool for communities as they consider ventures for their communities, as well as an assessment tool to help them gauge how well they've done.

"If I want to understand everything that's going on in my community, if I want to make sure I don't miss anything, then the capitals (framework) is a way to make sure I'm looking at everything going on in the community," Emery said. "So many of our stories focus in on one or two (assets) and miss other things going on."

The first step is often figuring out where a community stands now: What forms of capital does it have in abundance? What is it lacking?

This is vital, because many rural wealth

creation efforts are tied to the resources in a specific place—they often can't be copied by a community in a different place, explained John Pender, a researcher for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service and author of the book *Rural Wealth Creation*.

On the other hand, "Communities can learn from other communities that have faced similar issues," Pender said—a process that starts with communities knowing themselves first.

Planning with those capitals in mind starts to shape how communities go about creating solutions.

"If you constantly have in your head all the capitals as you make an economic development decision," Markley said, "you can then begin to ask design questions. 'What if we did it this way? Would it have a greater impact on one of the forms of capital than if we did it that way?' You see the trade-offs between forms of capital. It's being really intentional about designing the way that you do your work so you are building multiple forms of capital at the same time."

Markley described one WealthWorks project site in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, where there was a strong demand for affordable, energy-efficient housing. Unfortunately, no one in the region knew how to build that way.

There was a builder in Houston who had exactly those skills. If community leaders had not been thinking in terms of building multiple forms of wealth, they might have gone with the easy answer: Hire that builder to put up the kind of housing they wanted. But that would not have built up any assets in the community; they would in fact be sending wealth out of the region for every house

they built, now and in the future.

Instead, they told the builder what they really wanted was his help in setting up a program at the local community college to train people in the region to build energy-efficient houses. He said he'd be happy to, and spent six months in the region setting up the training program.

"Now the community college knows how to do it, people from the region are getting trained, and they are going into these jobs," Markley said. "Just having those other forms of capital in mind helped them say, 'Wait a minute. I bet there's another way to do this that could actually build these skills in the region.'"

Ideal: An upward spiral

What communities want to avoid is the destruction of one capital in order to create another one—"which we do all too often, particularly the trade-off between natural and financial capital," Markley said. "If all you are focused on is creating jobs and trying to raise income levels in your community, you can do that by clear-cutting trees or taking the top off a mountain—all sorts of things that have a way of destroying natural capital and bringing into question the long-term sustainability for a place."

Instead, the overall goal is to create a system where all the sources of wealth are increasing through positive feedback loops, so that when one source of wealth goes up, another source of wealth that's connected to it also goes up.

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Breathing easier

Pulmonary rehab at Sanford Aberdeen

Breathing is something most people don't have to think about. Air comes in and goes out with little conscious effort. But for those suffering from pulmonary issues like COPD or emphysema, every breath is a fight and a painful reminder of their limitations.

"I had a hard time even getting up a few stairs," says Bob Hladky, a recent graduate from pulmonary rehab at Sanford Aberdeen. "I've got bad lungs and a bad heart, so it was a chore for me to do much of anything for very long."

Getting help

Bob's inability to do much physically started weighing on the mind of his family, especially his daughter.

"She was concerned," remembers Bob. "She works at Sanford Aberdeen as a pediatric nurse practitioner and knew about the pulmonary rehab program there. She wanted me to give it a try and see if it would help."

Bob signed up and was soon working out with Sanford Aberdeen's pulmonary rehab team, which consists of a respiratory therapist,

registered nurse and an exercise specialist doing simple exercises to build up his strength and lung capacity.

"We started small," says Bob. "I used the hand pedal machine or did a little walking on the treadmill and just built up from there."

A new confidence

Over the course of 15 visits, Bob gained strength while his lung condition improved thanks to his determination and the staff at Sanford Aberdeen.

"Everyone there is so pleasant to work with," says Bob. "Britt was my respiratory therapist and she was so easy to get along with. She really pushed and encouraged me to keep going and that the results would be worth it. And they are."

Before pulmonary rehab, Bob struggled to make it from the house to the car, but now Bob is able to keep up with not only his wife, but is able to enjoy a lot more quality time with his family.

"Before, I would have to find a place to sit down every so often if we went to the mall or something," says Bob. "But now I can walk

around for hours with my wife. I also have a grandson who plays sports. And now I can go to the games with no problem. I can walk up to the top of the bleachers without getting out of breath."

Bob is keeping up with the exercises he learned at Sanford Aberdeen by riding a stationary bike or walking on a treadmill two to three times per week. He is also very thankful for the team that helped him achieve his goal.

"You really can't say a bad thing about them," says Bob. "They are a good, fun group to be around and I would definitely recommend the program to anyone else who is struggling like I was."

To learn more about pulmonary rehab, call Sanford Aberdeen at (605) 626-4200.

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Continued from page 7

It sounds kind of far-fetched—like a perpetual motion machine. But it's possible because many of the assets in a community are currently dormant; bringing those assets into the system gives the system a whole lot more energy.

"Assets," in this case, most often means people.

"Those communities that focus on getting people involved and thinking about what the community should be and working toward helping people reach that vision of what the community could be ... asking them what they are interested in and helping them find ways to act on those interests ... those are the ones where you're building assets across the capitals," Emery said.

In the work she's done in communities that are clearly becoming more prosperous, Emery has found that changing the cultural capital in a community—their everyday ways of thinking and doing—had the most profound impact on their efforts.

"The communities that are successful in mobilizing to create change—you ask them what's the most important thing that changed in this community, and they often say, **'We don't sit around saying the glass is half empty anymore,'** Emery said. **"We know we can make a change, and we know we're the people who have to make a change."**

Local and uplifting

Besides considering multiple forms of wealth, the WealthWorks framework has two additional principles: focusing on local ownership and bringing people in from the economic margins.

One key question for development projects, Emery says, is "Where does the wealth created by this venture go?"

If the focus is on attracting industry from elsewhere, Emery said, what typically happens is the industry that comes in is a subdivision of an existing plant.

"So the wealth that's created by that economic venture is not retained in South Dakota. It goes to corporate headquarters. And it's there that people who have access to the wealth that goes there make donations to local charities. ... When you create a local business, usually the wealth that is created by the business stays in the community, and those dollars circulate in the community."

Markley said this kind of focus on entrepreneurship—helping the people who are already rooted in a community to grow and prosper—has become much more common in the 15 years she's been at the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship.

"I think there's much more of an appetite at the local and regional level to recognize what you have, and I think there is stronger social capital to begin to build relationships that you need to do this kind of economic development," she said.

Those relationships are important in part because they help to make those types of investments less risky—they bring in expertise that makes better decisions more likely, and it spreads

the risk around so it doesn't weigh too heavily on any one party.

The final principle in the WealthWorks framework is making sure that wealth reaches people on the low end of the income spectrum.

This criterion is often neglected in community planning, Markley said. And yet, it's a vital part of wealth creation in a community: "It's not wealth unless it's broadly shared," she said.

Wealth-creation policy?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture adopted a focus on rural wealth creation when Secretary Tom Vilsack took the helm in 2009, Pender explained. The USDA has used that framework for explaining the work it has already been doing—increasing built capital in communities, for example, or increasing human capital through training—as well as discussing potential policy changes. Pender thinks there will be continued interest under Vilsack to be more holistic in how USDA officials think about rural development, bringing multiple types of wealth into the conversation.

"People in local communities are already thinking this way," Pender said. "There's a lot known at local levels. How do we learn from each other? How do we learn from experiences at the local level in a way that brings that knowledge up to the policy level?"

One of his plans as a researcher is to think about how to measure wealth in other capitals—which could affect whether other forms of wealth are considered in policy decisions.

"If we can show that there are

indicators that can be used in a policy setting, then it's easier for policymakers to take them into account, and not always be dependent on employment projections. Not that we stop looking at employment, but we want to look at some other things, probably."

We measure what we value and value what we measure, as the saying goes, so some measurement might help other forms of wealth be valued more highly in government and community decision-making.

Imagine, for example, a project before a review board. "If you have people on one side that are standing there with all the numbers—how many jobs this project is going to create in the near term and so on, and people on the other side don't have anything—they just say, 'we don't really like it'"—the side with the numbers tends to get more consideration, Pender said.

Developing some ways to measure other forms of wealth could help decision-makers better understand what's at stake in the proposed project.

Seeing local wealth

So, back to the question we asked at the beginning: Is your community wealthy?

The stories that follow highlight some of the forms of wealth found in our region. Many stories show that communities are rich in more than one form of wealth.

There probably aren't too many of our neighbors sitting in the lap of luxury—but many of our communities may in fact be far wealthier than we might have considered before. *



More communities set up endowed funds

by WENDY ROYSTON

Sometimes, the key to keeping wealth in a local community is providing the means.

FINANCIAL CAPITAL:

The financial resources available to invest in the community—to build capacity, develop businesses, etc.

“If you provide people with the opportunity to give back, to leave a legacy—they will,” said Stephanie Judson, president of the South Dakota Community Foundation. “Keeping wealth in a community is key to its survival.”

In many ways, the story remains the same since the Summer 2013 issue of *Dakotafire*, indicating the anticipated transfer of more than \$400 billion in wealth over the next 50 years in the Dakotas, with much of it expected to be transferred to out-of-state descendants of the states’ oldest wealth-holders.

“Almost 40 percent of South Dakota’s counties will experience the peak of their 50-year wealth transfer within the next five years,” said Judson recently. “While many of these counties may see slow, steady decline in the percentage of wealth being transferred each year after, a few will experience a sharp decline in the dollars being transferred to the next generation.”

Over the past two years, the SDCF has focused its energies on the counties currently at the peak of their transfers. In all but six of those counties, some sort of endowment fund has been established to provide sustaining resources for generations, according to Judson.

“The conversations around the current transfer of wealth have been the catalyst for many community engagement opportunities,” she said. “Community savings accounts established with the SDCF continue to be a popular vehicle for people to give back to support the community they call home, allowing for a local board of directors to make annual distributions to support nonprofit and charitable

causes in their hometown.”

Community savings accounts are often called foundations or funds in their local communities. There are now more than 70 of them in South Dakota; in North Dakota, there are 58 community endowment funds established through the North Dakota Community Foundation.

Scholarship contributions have also increased since 2013.

“Donors are also choosing to provide ongoing support to local charitable causes through the establishment of designated funds,” Judson said.

And, partly in recognition of the significant increase in the value of agricultural land in recent years, the SDCF has adapted its policies to allow for gifts of land in which the property is managed according to the donor’s wishes.

“Through our Growing for Good program, donors now have more options to consider when contemplating a gift of real property,” said Judson. “Farmers and ranchers have a special connection to their property, and many would like to benefit their community. The SDCF is poised to work with those individuals and families to determine their goals and manage their property in a way accomplishes those goals.”

Judson said giving a portion of an individual’s or family’s wealth back to the community leaves a lasting impact.

“They are playing an active role in preserving a way of life for our next generation,” she said. “Dollars left to local community savings



See the 2013 *Dakotafire* story about the transfer of wealth at dakotafire.net/article/rural-wealth-makes-a-quiet-exit/.

For a list of the communities with local endowment funds, see:

- sdcommunityfoundation.org/for-donors/community-savings-accounts/
- ndcf.net/Information/CommunityEndowments.asp

accounts allow for the community to address changing needs.”

Those CSA dollars have helped housing initiatives, community centers, park and recreation facilities and other projects become realities throughout Dakota communities.

Judson said making connections with families before wealth transfer takes place is vital.

“Once these dollars leave our communities, it becomes increasingly difficult to convince their heirs to give back to a community they may not feel a connection to any longer.” *

Editor’s note: The South Dakota Community Foundation was a crucial initial supporter of *Dakotafire*.

Clark benefits from early investment in one of its youths

By the late 1990s, Dr. Glenn E. Ullyot had gone far from his roots in Clark. He had retired in 1975 with both great renown and wealth after a successful career in the pharmaceutical industry. But Ullyot had not forgotten his hometown.

He still subscribed to the *Clark County Courier*, which was delivered to him in Annapolis, Md. When he read about the city's need for funding to build a new city hall, he donated more than \$600,000 to the cause.

"Glenn Ullyot has been very generous in his support of education, the advancement and understanding of science and his support of Clark," said his nephew, Dan Ullyot, at the dedication ceremony of the new Clark City Hall on June 19, 1999.

From Clark to famous chemist

Glenn Ullyot was born in March 1910 on a farm west of Garden City. The family moved to Clark when Glenn was 2 years old.

Glenn grew up in Clark, working during high school at the Bockhoven drugstore and as a truck driver for a Mr. Cease, who traveled around the country peddling wares to farm wives. A teacher at Clark High School, Florence Winnings, sparked his interest in chemistry.

He graduated from Clark High School in 1927 and received a teaching certificate from the University of South Dakota two years later. After a year of teaching, he decided that was not the career for him. With the help of his brother Lloyd in St. Paul, Minn., Glenn entered the University of Minnesota in St. Paul. His major was chemistry, and he graduated with a

Bachelor of Science degree in 1933.

Ullyot was offered a graduate fellowship at the University of Illinois, which he gladly accepted, as the Great Depression made jobs hard to find. He earned his Doctor of Philosophy degree in February 1938.

In 1937, he was the third chemist hired at SmithKline & French Laboratories in Philadelphia, joining some 225 fellow employees. By 1960, Ullyot's employer had grown, and he had become a renowned member of the American Chemical Society. When he retired in 1975, as director of scientific liaison, there were about 10,000 employees. (Today it is SmithKline Beecham, an English company.)

Dr. Ullyot played a significant role in the development of the well-known blood pressure drug Dyazide. He also helped in the development of Benzedrine, Thorazine and Tagamet.

Giving back

In 1980, Glenn and his wife, Eleanor, established a Glenn and Eleanor Ullyot scholarship fund for students going into the field of science. It started with the Clark High School class of 1981 and continues to this day.

Glenn and Barbara Ullyot (his second wife after Eleanor's death) established significant scholarships at all universities attended by Dr. Ullyot, including \$4 million at the University of

by BILL KRIKAC,
CLARK COUNTY COURIER

South Dakota.

The building in Clark honors the community that gave Ullyot his start.

Ullyot dedicated the building, which is and always will be known as "The Ullyot Building" in Clark, to his parents and brothers in appreciation.

The 89-year-old Ullyot had this to say on the day of the dedication in 1999: **"I am grateful for the opportunity and the capability to make a meaningful contribution to the community of Clark. Many people had faith in me and helped me along the way."**

He gave much credit to Miss Winnings for his professional accomplishments. He also was grateful to the Bockhoven brothers, for whom he worked for as a teenager, who loaned him money to go to college.

"Most important however, was my family, my mother and father, Bessie and Benjamin, and my brothers, Forrest and Lloyd, in whose loving memory this building is dedicated," Ullyot said.

Ullyot died in 2002. He ensured that his legacy would not be forgotten. *



FINANCIAL CAPITAL:

The financial resources

available to invest in the community—to build capacity, develop businesses, etc.



Glenn Ullyot in his lab. Photo courtesy Clark County Courier



Living off the land, and sharing the view

by BECKY FROELICH

NATURAL CAPITAL:

Those assets that abide in a location, including resources, amenities and natural beauty.

When Carla Sanderson looks out the front door of her lodge, she sees rustling cattail sloughs and rolling prairie grasslands. All she can hear is “the sound of geese and ducks—pure nature. No sounds of traffic noise.”

A visitor can be totally enveloped by the sights and sounds of nature in the heart of the Glacial Lakes of South Dakota at Hidden Hill Lodge.

Up north, at the Coteau des Prairies Lodge in Havana, N.D., visitors are treated to breathtaking views. To the north of the lodge is the sweeping prairie, where the buffalo once roamed. The prairie rises and falls to the east and west, into the start of the Coteau des Prairies hill range. Southward are wooded ravines and native prairie grass pastures.

Olivia Stenwold, the lodge manager, describes it as a peaceful place. All year long, the location offers vignettes of quiet beauty—the smell of prairie flowers in spring, spectacular sunrises and sunsets in summer, and the colorful grain harvest in autumn.

For visitors to these lodges from outside the Dakotas, the natural beauty that residents might take for granted is fresh and new. Visitors from much busier places can regain serenity through solitude on Dakota prairies.

“Not all people in this country have the

everyday luxury of the beauty that we enjoy in this area,” Sanderson says.

Stenwold agrees.

“It is easy to forget just how many great things we are surrounded by in the Midwest,” Stenwold says. “We do not have mountains or oceans, but that doesn’t mean we don’t have things that are just as magnificent.”

Visitors from all over the United States and several other countries have visited these lodges and gained an appreciation for the Midwest’s serene beauty. Hunters and fishers from all over the world see the Dakotas



Hidden Hill Lodge near Roslyn, S.D., serves as a getaway from busier places.



Fishermen can enjoy the beauty of Dakota sunsets near Hidden Hill Lodge.



Photos courtesy Hidden Hill Lodge and Coteau de Prairie Lodge

as paradise, and the lodges offer ways for these sportsmen to interact closely with wildlife. Hidden Hill Lodge offers guided pheasant hunts, and Tewaukon National Wildlife Refuge gives the Coteau des Prairies Lodge abundant waterfowl and other wildlife for fishermen. Hayrides, sleigh rides, and skeet shooting are some other fun activities to unwind with at the Hidden Hill Lodge.

The Coteau des Prairies Lodge serves as a venue for creative retreats, weddings, and business receptions. The surroundings give events a special factor that an indoor city venue might not. Business retreats become more relaxed on the prairies; the scenery can stimulate creativity in an outdoor quilting group. Not everyone gets the chance to marry surrounded by blooming wildflowers under an expansive blue sky.

These lodges can become models for other places looking to benefit from their natural beauty, literally and figuratively "living off the land."

"Communities need to think outside the box," says Sanderson. "We need to appreciate the natural beauty that we have."

She adds that flexibility is also important. Many

in the Sisseton area have found ways to invest in nature's course as water levels have risen. Fishing has become a promising tourist industry there. These residents, like the rest of the people of the Dakotas, live close to nature.

"We are the 'real America,' and our way of life still has bits and pieces of what life was like when the first generations of settlers came," Stenwold adds.

She tries to educate visitors about the history of the area, with decorations inside the lodge reminding visitors of the early pioneer farming years. Genuine old farm machinery was incorporated in several places while building. Visitors can not only learn about the magnificent natural world, but also about how people have long interacted with it.

As one of the co-owners of Hidden Hill Lodge, Carla Sanderson finds great fulfillment showing others her love of living close to nature.

"We are living our dream, and through a lot of faith and prayers we have taken the leap to pursue this adventure and enjoy sharing it with others," she says. *



Grazing cattle add to the vistas around Coteau de Prairie Lodge near Havana, N.D.



A sleigh ride is a rare experience in our modern day lives, but one that can be had on the hill at Coteau de Prairie Lodge near Havana, N.D.

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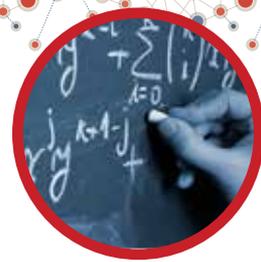
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Small-town inventor thinks big to solve problems

by JASON UPHOFF

HUMAN CAPITAL:

The skills, abilities, physical health, knowledge, creativity and innovation in a region's people, as well as a person's belief in his or her ability to have an effect on the world.

David Julian is a small-town guy with big ideas and a steady hand.

He hails from Arlington, S.D., and spends most of his free time dreaming up new inventions and new excuses to fire up his plasma cutter. While Julian hasn't yet made his entrepreneurial endeavors into his sole breadwinner, he is working toward that goal. *DakotaFire* recently sat down with Dave to see how he is sparking rural revival.

What is your process? How did you become an inventor?

Almost everything I invent is because I needed it. I think that is how most inventions are. The first guy to invent the pencil didn't do it overnight; he had a need, and a lot of work and effort went into the first pencil. Every invention spawns another invention. I start with an idea in my head

and create a prototype with my hands. Some work, some don't.

What do you make?

Payliner is a poly liner for pay-loaders, excavators, skid-steers, tele-handlers, etc. They are nonstick, and each one is custom. Hitchcaddy is for carrying your extra hitches in the bed of the truck and also Plasmapro plasma cutting templates.

It seems conceptualization is your strong suit. What is your weakness?

Marketing and salesmanship are not my strong points. The biggest thing out here (in rural South Dakota) is getting noticed. It's hard to be the guy that makes it and the guy that markets and sells it, and I'd rather be the guy that makes it.

How do you protect the ideas that you come up with?

Be careful about patent and copyrights. Right now, I have one patent pending and one procedural copyright. But patents aren't really for the little guys like me—they're for big companies. You can easily sink 10 grand into the patent process, and then spend \$100,000 defending it.

How would you like to see the "big guys" helping the "little guys?"

South Dakota has a lot of websites for the government, not a lot for the people. What about a website showcasing local talent? South Dakota should be promoting their own from within—maybe, a weekly showcase ... one week Bob's widgets and another week John's gadgets, etc.

What would you do differently?

Education, education, education. In marketing, sales, business, you name it. Hiring a marketing professional is out of my comfort zone. I wish I knew more about it. I think a lot of folks are like that.

What's most important for business?

Customer service and quality. I don't want a customer coming back for a replacement. My stuff is made to last and high quality. More stuff should be like that.

Any parting wisdom?

Oh, yeah—take advice. *

View Julian's products at www.payliner.biz or his YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/channel/UCiGtSzN8D7RSkOJmSVC4Y8g. You can also call Dave at 605-695-2196.

Are you interested in having your own business? Here are some starting points:

www.sba.gov

The Small Business Administration has resources for business planning, patent searches and federal procurement applications, as well as a small-business mentorship network.

www.entrepreneur.com

This companion website to the magazine of the same name offers many easy-to-digest articles and resources for everything from sales to marketing.

www.usd.edu/business/small-business-development-center/regional-offices.cfm

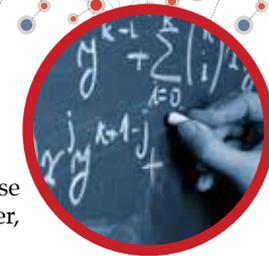
These offices provide a variety of services to new business owners, from planning to training on new technology and much more.

Local resources

Contact your local development corporation, planning district, chamber of commerce or municipal government. Chances are they have information about grants, low-interest loans and market research.

Homemaker's value adds up to big sums

by WENDY ROYSTON



Homemakers might not think of their worth in terms of dollars and cents.

After all, no one is writing them a paycheck for cooking, cleaning and child care. But there's a surprising amount of economic value in the work that homemakers do.

"For the homemaker, in general ... because he or she is not working, many people don't value that they're there," Bob Weisbeck, a 29-year financial adviser with Modern Woodmen of America in Brookings, S.D., said about determining the level of life insurance needed for a homemaker.

The value of the uncompensated work a homemaker provides to a family has been studied at length in recent years. According to a 2012 estimate by The Mint, a financial resources website, the work of a homemaker in the Midwest totals more than \$96,000. Weisbeck said that figure is significantly lower in the Dakotas, but still is not to be overlooked.

"For a homemaker, you don't have an income there, but what is your value to the family? You figure that at least \$20,000 to \$25,000 per year if

you had to hire day care and have someone come in and clean the house or have a nanny," he said. "If something happens to that homemaker, we've got to replace that income—or that value—somehow."

Plus, the value of the working spouse can decrease once the stay-at-home parent of young children is gone.

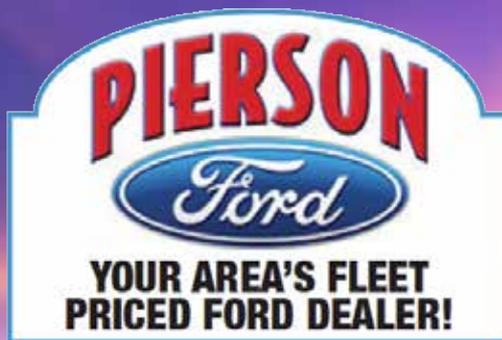
"A lot of times, the homemaker will stay at home just because of the fact that the other spouse will do a lot of traveling," Weisbeck said. "If that ... homemaker is no longer there, (the spouse) might have to change jobs, and maybe ... have a reduction in value there, as far as income-earning ability. ... Most people don't even think of that."

A needs assessment can end up with big numbers, Weisbeck said.

"Most people don't sit down and ponder, if they died tomorrow, what would happen with everything ... until they are faced with that reality or asked the question in a serious way," he said. "If you show them their human life value—that's the amount of money they make times the number of years they expect to keep working—it's not real hard to end up with two, three or four million dollars." *

HUMAN CAPITAL:

The skills, abilities, physical health, knowledge, creativity and innovation in a region's people.



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Neglected building becomes source of pride by WENDY ROYSTON

Over the past few years, the town of Ethan, S.D., has come together to build its future on preserving its past.

BUILT CAPITAL:

The infrastructure that supports a community, including buildings, streets, water and sewer systems, telecommunications and industrial parks.

The state's oldest cheese factory stirred its final vat of curds in the community of 330 in the mid-1990s and sat quietly for about 20 years before the building was remodeled into Ethan's first designated town hall.

"We took an area that ... was hindering the town, and now it benefits the town," public works director Brett Scott said. "If that whole process wouldn't have started when it started ... this building, today, would be on our tear-down list."

The original cheese factory was constructed in the late 1920s and underwent a series of additions prior to its closing. As it deteriorated at the end of Main Street, pieces of siding blowing off with heavy winds, the town's government operated out of a rolltop desk and a 12-square-foot closet inside the fire hall, two blocks away, and

Scott did his work out of a single-stall shed in between. Both the town and the fire department were experiencing growing pains, so the town rented space from a local plumber, and the fire department expanded. The town finance office remained in that space for two years while the town's leaders explored options for the future.

"It was inevitable that we had to do something. We just didn't know what that would be," Scott said.

The town purchased a vacant lot near the cheese factory building, and discussions began about building a town hall and/or community center. Project estimates ranged from \$200,000 to \$400,000, and the unknowns of the early plans had the small town reeling with rumors.

"They were afraid their taxes would go up," said Nancy Schoenfelder, who

was a member of both the Ethan Rural Fire Board and the Ethan Town Council at the time.

Lifetime Ethan resident George Puetz was determined to prevent that from happening.

A retired mail carrier with carpentry experience, Puetz said he mused about how the town could save money on the project when his son suggested renovating the dilapidated cheese factory building. Puetz drew up an initial proposal and gathered estimates for the work that would need to be done, presented it to the town board in March 2011 and joined the board, which had two vacancies at the time, that night.

Puetz told the board he believed the project could be completed for \$150,000, but the board—and the community—were skeptical.

"I saw two factions in town," said Puetz. "One was the part that knew we needed something, and the other ... failed to see solutions."

The retiree was committed to providing a better shop for town maintenance purposes, and spent countless hours negotiating \$85,000 worth of liens on the building from 15 creditors down to less than \$50,000.

"If I couldn't get those liens cleaned up ... I couldn't sell (the idea) to the people of Ethan," said Puetz.

Once that was done, discussions really began about purchasing and renovating of the former cheese factory. But the board and the community at large still were split.

Originally, Puetz wanted to save the entire



The town of Ethan has made its home inside what once was the state's oldest cheese factory, saving the historic icon. Pictured are, from left, front row, former Ethan town board member Nancy Schoenfelder and Finance Officer Sonya Hespe; and back row, Public Works Director Brett Scott, board member Dale Mienke and former board member George Puetz. Photos by Wendy Royston

building, but other members of the board saw the original building as a liability. It had deteriorated significantly in the two years spent discussing the project.

"We had two wet years in a row, and it deteriorated quicker than anyone could have predicted," Scott said.

The original cheese factory was demolished. In the more structurally sound additions, the former cheese cooler was converted to a council chambers, maintenance and finance offices, a file room and a restroom on the north end of the building's additions, while the southern addition houses the town's maintenance equipment and opened in 2013. Remodeling totaled \$100,000, putting the entire project in line with Puetz's initial estimates, and the 1,200-square-foot middle section eventually became home to the community's historical society, which plans to open a small museum later this year. *(See related story.)*

"Everything that was done was done with that year's budget," said Scott. "We didn't borrow any money for any aspect of this project (or raise taxes)."

Schoenfelder, who preferred to construct a new facility, said she could see Puetz's vision, but was in the dissenting portion of the final 3-2 vote for the purchase and renovation of the structure. "It (was) our responsibility as board members and representatives of the taxpayers to make the very best of it," she said. "If it (was) purchased, we had to make the right choices to ... make it happen right."

And, according to the town's employees and many residents, the project did "happen right."

"There's a bright side to the whole thing," said Scott. "After the (decision) was in place, the indifference went away, because everybody worked together. ... It serves the city well."

Moving forward, the community is exploring the idea of utilizing yet another building important to Ethan's ancestry by renovating the former Catholic church building into a community center. Early discussions began in February.

"I don't think anybody would disagree that a community center would add value to the town," said Scott.

The problem, according to finance officer Sonya Hespe, comes in funding the needed facility.

"A community center, for a city, is not a moneymaker, so (it would cost) some money," she said. "Where does that funding come from?" *

MUSEUM HELPS BRING HISTORY TO NEW GENERATION

After the Ethan town hall was completed, the Ethan Historical Society expressed an interest in occupying a portion of the building that incidentally was a huge part of the history of the community and the state.

A ramp that once bore the traffic of cheese being loaded out of South Dakota's oldest cheese factory now is the walkway through generations of memories sectioned into themed "cubbies" made to look like storefronts of old buildings along a typical small-town Main Street. Tin siding from the city's former shop building was removed when the building was sold, and now lines the upper walls above the cubbies' shake-style awnings. Each cubby, once finished, will be lined on either side with old-style wooden house siding, and the back walls and contents of each section of the museum will work together to give the "feel" of whatever theme that cubby is meant to portray—education and religion, among others.

So far, roughly \$15,000 has been invested into the museum by the Historical Society, on which Schoenfelder said construction is 80 percent complete. A town-sanctioned advisory board handles expenses for the space, with the organization's money.

While the labors of some local businesses have been utilized in finishing the museum, Randy Schoenfelder and grandson, Tristan Scott, 15, along with 17-year-old Lance Bruske, have done much of the work.

"(The museum) gives (local youths) an opportunity to learn," said Nancy Schoenfelder, Randy's wife and a member of the Ethan Historical Society, which began

with three members after the community's 125th anniversary celebration in 2008 and recently has grown to eight members.

Once the project is complete, Nancy Schoenfelder said, the local school will work with the Historical Society to enhance its educational programming and strengthen the community as a whole.

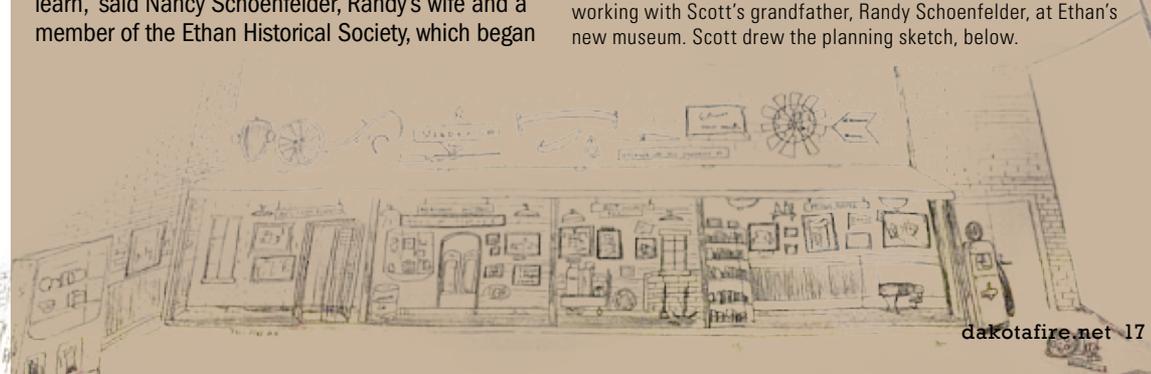
"It gives the opportunity to our young people to learn the history of the town," said Schoenfelder. "When you know the history of your town, you take pride in it. If you don't know anything, you're not going to take any pride in it or invest in it. The whole point of the museum is to generate that interest."

Scott, who drew the initial storefront sketches based on his grandmother's vision, agreed.

"Ethan's past shouldn't be forgotten," he said. "We better preserve it before we lose it."



Teens Tristan Scott and Lance Bruske have spent many hours working with Scott's grandfather, Randy Schoenfelder, at Ethan's new museum. Scott drew the planning sketch, below.



Contagious positive attitude drives Faulkton

reporting by
GARRICK MORITZ,
FAULK COUNTY RECORD



CULTURAL CAPITAL:

The way we “know the world” and how to act within it—including the dynamics of whom we feel comfortable with, what heritages are valued, etc.

The list of accomplishments that Faulkton can take pride in over the last few years would be impressive for a community of any size: A new hospital. A reinvigorated downtown business area. Revitalized infrastructure. Taxable sales in the county up more than 50 percent in four years. Businesses and families moving in.

That all this has happened in just a few years for a community of 735 and a county of 2,300 is enough to make any economic developer’s jaw drop.

How did they do that?!

Well, Faulkton residents could point to a few influential people who got the ball rolling. They’ve also partnered with some quality programs that have helped them along the way.

But the real driver is in plain sight on their website, on their clothing, on their banners, and, most importantly, in their attitude toward their community: In Faulkton, the tagline “We believe in possible!” is isn’t just a few peppy motivational words. It’s the engine behind their success.

For Dr. Joel Price, superintendent of Faulkton Area School District and chairman of the Faulkton Area Economic Development Corp., believing that a better future is possible is the obvious choice for rural communities that want to have a future.

“There is no status quo in our state,” Price said. “You are either, as a community, looking to the future with optimism and hope, or you are getting ready to close the doors and move on to a bigger town or city.

“We believe in possible simply due to the fact that while our community has struggled for the last 70 years to maintain the status quo,

the work around us changed. We took this on as a challenge to make it better for our children and grandchildren—a community with a future, rather than just a past, and a great place to raise kids, start or continue a business, or simply live in a community that has an eye to the future.”

That the community is fairly united in this vision shows when people gather to work on developing it.

“We’ve had a series of meetings over the past few years and always have over 100 people in attendance,” Price said. “Plus, the people in attendance come away with a new sense of energy and a desire to get involved.”

While other communities might have declared themselves “in survival mode,” without the energy or means to reach beyond the bare necessities, Faulkton was willing to experiment with new ways of doing things. Community members have worked with a variety of organizations to increase their skills and bring resources back to the community. One example is Dakota Rising, an entrepreneurship development program of the statewide non-profit Dakota Resources, which has proven a success in Faulk County, with eight entrepreneurs participating and taking their businesses to the next level through the program.

“(Dakota Rising) has provided them with

the tools necessary and encouraged them to step outside their comfort zone in regard to being an entrepreneur,” said Faulk County Commissioner Roger Dieter. “Those people have enjoyed business successes and have forged a path for others to follow—and they are following.”

That’s perhaps the hidden strategy for building a can-do attitude in a community: Prove you can by getting it done.

“Positive or negative attitudes are very contagious and once established can be difficult to reverse,” Dieter said. “Strong leadership helps to create positive attitudes, and then once the community begins to see visual signs of progress and success stories, it takes a lot of traction away from the nay-sayers. ... Success breeds success and encourages others to take steps they may not have otherwise taken.” *



City maintenance officer Jared Raethz hangs a “We believe in possible!” banner in Faulkton.

Image courtesy Dakota Resources

Editor’s note:
Dakota Resources
is also a supporter
of *Dakotafire*.

Visitors find value in 'heritage resources'

by HEIDI
MARTTILA-LOSURE



When Tom Isern and Suzzane Kelley travel, they don't consider themselves tourists. "We go as expeditionaries, in search of something," Kelley said at a January event in Ellendale, N.D. "We find lots of wonderful and beautiful things in unlikely and prosaic places."

One journey took them to Pisek, a town of about 100 in northeastern North Dakota. They found their way to St. John Nepomucene Catholic Church, which was open to all comers. The church had been founded by Bohemian immigrants to the area and was named after a 14th-century Bohemian saint.

Much in the sanctuary was pleasing to the eye, with stained glass and woodwork done in traditional designs. But the most stunning work of art was a large oil painting hanging near the organist's perch.

The painting depicts Saints Cyril and Methodius, two other saints also important to the immigrants who settled in Pisek. Alfons Mucha, the artist who created the work, was reasonably successful in the late 1800s and early 1900s, according to an online history of the painting written by a high school student, Faith Chyle Knutson, in the 1960s. Mucha made fairly good money from his work, but he also spent liberally, so he never amassed great wealth.

He was known for his art nouveau work, not realistic-style work such as the painting that found its way to Pisek. By the time he died, his style was considered outdated.

In the 1960s, the art world rekindled an interest in Mucha. Today you can go to fine museums in cities around the world to see his works—or you can wander into a church in a small town in North Dakota.

Isern pointed out that many of the people

who would seek out an attraction such as the Mucha of Pisek would think nothing of dropping a \$20 bill into a box to support the maintenance of such a work. There was no such box near that painting.

Isern and Kelley are both professors, Isern at North Dakota State University and Kelley at the University of Minnesota–Moorhead, so their travels are a combination of work and play.

They describe what they find in out-of-the-way locations as "heritage resources."

"The word 'heritage' has a stuffy feel to it, like it might be the name of an old folks' home, but the word 'resources' indicates hard value, maybe even market value," Isern said.

These resources affirm the shared history and culture of their communities, and teach that history more effectively than words in a book could do, Isern said. They also have a recreational value, or even heritage tourism, attracting visitors to see what rural places have to offer.

The potential for heritage resources is almost everywhere, Isern and Kelley said, if there is an interest and a capacity in the community to preserve the history and a willingness to share its stories. *



Suzzane Kelley and Tom Isern shared tales of their travels at the annual meeting of the Ellendale Area Arts Council in January. Below is the Alfons Mucha painting of Saints Cyril and Methodius in the St. John Nepomucene Catholic Church in Pisek, N.D.

Photo above by Ken Schmierer; photos below courtesy Tom Isern and Suzzanne Kelley



CULTURAL CAPITAL:

The way we "know the world" and how to act within it—including the dynamics of whom we feel comfortable with, what heritages are valued, etc.

Read more about the Mucha of Pisek at www.mfr-eng.com/rumreich/mucha/mucha.htm; connect with NDSU's Center for Heritage Renewal at heritagerenewal.org.

Decorating flair put to use to save Guelph School

Follow the numbers to go on a virtual visit of the school building in Guelph, N.D.—a place no longer filled with students, but still alive with history, creativity and community spirit. *by HEIDI MARTTILA-LOSURE*



SOCIAL CAPITAL:

The connections among people and organizations, or the social glue that makes things happen.



1

The Guelph School has not had students attending for several decades, but the unincorporated community knew it could not let the facility sit empty. The gym, with a beautiful, wood-paneled, curved roof, is used by local residents as a place to exercise, as well as for a variety of events throughout the year (such as the home décor sale above). Hundreds come to Guelph School every July for a turkey barbecue. *Photo by Jeanne Thorpe*



4

Local residents knew the roof had to be fixed. And then some local women had a brainstorm: They could use their talents in revitalizing furniture—something that several of them did as a hobby—to raise funds for the new roof. Here, Connie Finley and her grandson, Kasen, give an old chair new life with a bright new color.



2

Other parts of the school building are used as museum space, telling Guelph's history. Here, boxes and the service window from the old post office are on display. Museum items have been donated from many families, so the stories they tell cover many aspects of past community life.



3

A few years ago, the community had an unwelcome development: The flat roof of the classroom part of the school began to leak—and not in a small way. Even today, when there's a heavy rain, volunteers head to the school to manage the buckets.



5

When word got out about the new fundraising venture, people started donating items. Some of them were sold as they came in, such as this antique organ.



The venture grew quickly. Many people in the community donated their talents; the design on the lampshade above, for example, was drawn by a local woman. Others shared their skills in making attractive displays.



The hallway of the Guelph School, as well as most of the rooms, are now filled with merchandise for the new venture, called Off the Shuelph in Guelph. People drop off things they no longer use, such as old chairs or vintage doors, and the Off the Shuelph women use their creativity to imagine what the new life for those objects could be. A local retired farmer does whatever carpentry work is needed. They also do custom work—recovering old chair seats, for example.



Pictured above are, from left, Kasen Finley, Connie Finley, Madella Scheffert and Bonnie Daniels. Other women involved in Off the Shuelph in Guelph are Sue Gerdes, Jeanne Thorpe, Rose Sell, Geri Courtney and Susan German.

Every Tuesday and Wednesday, the Off the Shuelph women gather to work together, sharing their creative skills and elbow grease, to make their unique home goods store successful. They are pleased to report that they have made a down payment toward the work of a contractor who will come to repair the roof this year. Visitors are welcome; call 701-710-0888 for more information.



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A problem + a neighbor = a tasty solution by HEIDI MARTTILA-LOSURE

This might look like a bowl of stew, but it's actually a generous helping of social capital.

SOCIAL CAPITAL:
The connections among people and organizations, or the social glue that makes things happen.

A few weeks ago, the old farm freezer broke. After well over 40 years of service (there's no one left who knows when it was actually purchased), the 380-pound behemoth finally died—unfortunately with about half a year's worth of beef for our family still in it.

Luckily, we discovered this before any of the food had a chance to go bad. But it was all thawed enough that we knew refreezing it would be a bad idea.

We started running through strategies for dealing with it. We set a roast aside for meals in the next few days and gave a few packages of stew meat to my mom. I set aside a roast for my sister, and a pack of steaks for my best friend, whose birthday happened to be coming up.

And we were still faced with a big box of half-thawed meat.

My husband and I decided to call some of our egg customers: We figured we could give



This bowl of stew was all the more delicious for the story behind it. Photo by Heidi Marttila-Losure

away a few that way and call it customer appreciation. The first call gave us a better plan.

This customer is also a neighbor and friend, and she's always been very generous with the overflow from her well-tended garden. So when she asked how much the meat would cost, I said there was no need to worry about paying for it—I just wanted to make sure it didn't go

bad. She sounded a little relieved, saying that she'd love to have some beef, but she had set a strict budget for herself for the next few weeks as she waited for a check to arrive—if nothing unexpected came up, she would just squeak by.

And then she said she might have a better idea: Had I considered canning it?

Well, no. I had never canned meat before, and besides, I had a magazine deadline coming up and had absolutely no time to spare—if nothing unexpected came up, I would just squeak by.

Well, she suggested, what if she did the canning? And we split the end result?

Now there was a great idea. And that's what we did: That afternoon we dropped off a box of beef at our neighbor's. And the next day she called and said that in addition to the 14 quarts of beautiful beef in broth just coming out of the pressure canner, she had made a big pot of beef stew, adding all sorts of vegetables from her garden harvest. We were to come over and get our share of it for our supper that evening.

It was a more delicious supper than any of us would have had on our own. *

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State program supports local development work

by JASON
UPHOFF



Like many rural communities, Arlington, S.D., is struggling to maintain an economic foothold in the Walmart and dot-com world. Recently, the town of about 900 showed it was willing to stake a claim to the future with a dynamic and proactive program of economic development.

Economic development has been important for many years in Arlington, but efforts were hampered by the fact that volunteers were carrying the torch. A few motivated champions took on development as essentially an unpaid second job but could not always devote the time required. In August of last year, Arlington took an important step toward establishing a permanent foundation for economic development: hiring someone to do it full time.

To help defray some of the costs associated with hiring full-time professional economic development, the Arlington Community Development Corp. and the city of Arlington enlisted the help of the Governor's Office of Economic Development through the Economic Development Partnership Program.

The program provides matching grants to assist in funding equipment, training, new staff, or the elevation of existing part-time staff to full time, for the purpose of developing community economic development programs.

Arlington is not the only rural community to partner with the GOED. Almost every county in the state has applied for some economic development money.

GOED Partnership grant administrator Cherissa Wright says the job and wealth creation associated with grant money has been very promising.

"Through the 24 funded programs a total of 1,042 jobs were created or retained in 2014, and we are anticipating another 218 jobs in 2015," Wright said.

Every GOED partnership dollar is intended to have a multiplier effect by helping bring new businesses to communities, helping retain existing businesses or providing ways to further develop local wealth.

"The programs that have been funded through the partnership grant are varied. Many assist with salary for full- or part-time economic developers, some assist with work-force developments efforts, and some are targeted towards entrepreneurship," GOED finance director Kim Easland said. "Equally diverse are the communities receiving money—from Kimball (population 703) to Sioux Falls (population 164,676) and everywhere else in between."

Arlington's \$88,310 grant is spread over four years and requires matching funds from the City Economic Development Fund and the Arlington Community Development Corp.

"By assisting communities like Arlington to have a full-time developer, and providing that person with the training tools they need, we are putting more and more communities on a proactive path to development," said Commissioner Pat Costello.

Dick Werner, District 22 state representative, sponsored one of the House bills that eventually became Senate Bill 235, referred to as "Building South Dakota," which is responsible for funding economic development efforts in the state.

"What's good for Arlington is good for

South Dakota," Werner said. **"I wanted to have every community willing to have a stake in the game to be able to have someone in their community that could wake up every morning to work on economic development."**

Now that the grant monies have established the position, the truly hard work will follow. Together, the residents of Arlington, along with the Development Corporation, the city, the school and GOED can work together to build a bright future. *

Jason Uphoff is the new executive director for the Arlington Community Development Corporation. Read his story of leaving and coming home to South Dakota online: <http://dakotafire.net/?p=8135>



POLITICAL CAPITAL:

The ability to influence standards, rules, regulations and their enforcement.

It reflects access to power and power brokers.

Pictured, from left, are Cherissa Wright, Kim Easland, Jason Uphoff and Pat Costello.
Courtesy photo

Towns find power in local ownership

by DOUG CARD, BRITTON
JOURNAL and LANGFORD BUGLE



Langford assistant utility manager Joe Keough, left, and utilities manager Blair Healy stand in front of the city's power substation. Langford has sold its own electrical power since the early 1900s. Photo by Doug Card

More than 100 years ago, early settlers in Langford, S.D., had the foresight to develop a municipal power system that is paying dividends over a century later.

In 2013, Langford Municipal Electric generated \$361,000 of the town's total \$639,000 in revenue, a whopping 56 percent of the budget. In turn, money generated by the town's electric system can be used for town improvements.

"Selling our own power does really help us and does provide for city infrastructure," said Langford City Finance Officer Melody Swearingen. "It also helps keep our real estate taxes down. A lot of towns our size don't have that extra income."

Langford, founded in 1886, is one of just nine Class 3 towns (population 500 or below) in South Dakota that have their own electric power systems. The city, population 313 in the 2010 census, has about 200 power customers.

"I assume all the little towns had the opportunity at one time to sell their own power, but most of them didn't take it," noted Swearingen.

Most towns did start with their own power generation systems, whether diesel or steam-powered, explained Jeff Mehlhaff, executive director of the South Dakota Municipal Electric Association. Many cities and towns later sold off their own power generation assets to investor-owned systems.

For the municipalities that kept their own systems, Mehlhaff said, "It probably was just those people in that community wanted to put forward that investment and say, 'The city owns this.'"

It's unclear when Langford began selling its own power, but the Langford Municipal Light system has been in operation since the early years of the town, according to utilities manager Blair Healy. Pictures from 1912 show electric distribution poles throughout the community.

"It was probably the smartest move they ever made," said Healy. "It's hard to make money off of water or garbage services when you take in just enough to cover expenses, but the electrical department always has a surplus. And our rates are right in the middle compared to other places."

One advantage for towns with their own electric utilities is that rates are set by a local group, explained Todd Chambers, president of the SDMEA board of trustees.

"Their purpose is to keep rates low and run an efficient operation," Chambers said. "They're not in operation to make money for shareholders or stockholders."

Cities can also share equipment with other municipal departments, which can reduce costs for the city overall.

A Feb. 10, 1938, edition of the *Langford Bugle* stated that "the town's electric distribution system was debt-free, and the earnings help finance the current expenses."

Following the establishment of the Pick-Sloan Missouri Basis program in the '50s and '60s, Langford requested and received an allocation of power generated by the Oahe Dam Power Plant. Additional power was provided by Northwestern Public Service. The distribution system was completely upgraded in 1960 in anticipation of receiving a Western Area Power Administration allocation and has provided reliable

Hecla's first electricity powered by straw

Hecla, S.D., is another community with its own electric utility. An electric light plant, steam-fired by straw, was begun by the Twaddle brothers in December of 1909. Lights were placed on major street corners on Main Street, and electric service stayed on until midnight.

In August 1914, the city bought the light plant business from R.D. Twaddle for \$1,000. The plant ran from before sundown until midnight, and electricity would be shut off around 4 or 5 a.m. The minimum charge for light was \$1 per month.

The power used to generate current in 1920 was an old threshing engine and a coal burner.

Today Hecla receives power from the Western Area Power Administration with supplemental power from the Heartland Power Consumer District. The city has about 200 customers.

Hecla City Finance Officer Gayle Lloyd



This switch gear is from the old diesel power plant in Hecla. It is no longer in use. *Photo by Jeff Mehlhaff*

said that having its own power system "has been a very strong point for us." She said it has also allowed the city to give customers a better rate by keeping costs down.

In 2014, revenue for the city due to sale of electrical power totaled \$376,204, 45 percent of the city's total revenue.

and affordable service ever since.

Other municipalities could still create their own electric utility, Mehlhaff said. "A court case determined they have that right," he said. The process involves purchasing the right to their service territory from the current service provider, plus purchasing the substations and other infrastructure of the system. It is a significant initial investment, while the benefits come in the long term, Mehlhaff said.

Maintenance continues to be an

ongoing need for any small municipal electric system, and Langford recently contracted with Lake Region Electric to perform any maintenance or major upgrades as needed.

"We are proud to be able to supply our community with an electric system that they can depend on, that can provide power at a very competitive cost, and still is able to finance many of the current expenses of the town," concluded Healy. "What more can you ask of your municipal electric utility?" *

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LEADERSHIP

COMMUNITY RESPONSE

We approach each topic in the Prairie Idea Exchange project in four ways: 1) a gathering of economic development professionals; 2) reporting in *Dakotafire* magazine; 3) community input—online, on postcards, on our forum page (www.pie4.us), and in person at a Dakotafire Café event, 4) and with a final report in the magazine that reflects the feedback. Here's what we learned on the topic of leadership.

What was in the magazine again?

- Our leadership issues are a supply-and-demand problem: Fewer people available to fill more leadership roles.
- Younger generations respond to leadership demands differently than older generations do. One to note: dedicated to organizations (older) vs. dedicated to causes (younger).
- We may need to rethink what's really needed. Some groups might not be. Some borders or boundaries may be limiting. Some goals might not require permanent organizations.
- Build up local leaders in three big steps: Invite them. Engage them. Train them.
- Don't say no one ever asked you to get involved. (Because we did.)

What readers had to say about leadership

FROM WWW.PIE4.US:

"I believe the lack of rural leadership may go hand in hand with the labor shortage we have in the state. When rural folks who are capable and in demand to lead, they can't because they can't leave their business, farm, etc., because they can't leave it in capable hands." —*blueheeler96*

"I see very few young people getting involved in leadership in our rural communities. I don't know if they are too busy or too afraid to speak up to help get the changes made that would benefit them. For a long time, my impression of a community leader was someone older and established and probably financially well off, so as to afford time to be a leader. My husband and I both grew up in rural South Dakota. We moved to the Twin Cities for college, but also thinking there would be more opportunities to get involved in community and be involved in something that matters. We stayed there for 10 years until a family illness prompted us to move home. After moving back to Watertown five years ago, I am finding I am much more motivated to make and be a part of a change for the future of South Dakota. I want to help build communities that are appealing to people like me and help us want to raise our families here. I want people to feel like they still have opportunities for entertainment and education. I would like to help find opportunities to get involved and also help others know about forums such as this one to get involved in!" —*Mackj02*

Want to add your own ideas? The conversation continues at www.pie4.us.

FROM READER RESPONSE POSTCARDS:

I pledge to become involved in my community by ...

- "Being a catalyst in our local community." —*Lisa & Jeremiah Klein, Rosholt, S.D.*
- "Keeping positive. Recruiting new leaders." —*Ben Hanson, Sisseton, S.D.*
- "Am an EMT—help some, but can do more." —*Karen Bolton, Clear Lake, S.D.*
- "Stepping out of my comfort zone and encouraging more people. Having a better outlook on our area and stepping up to the plate to do more for positive change in Sisseton and surrounding area. Encourage others to love our community." —*anonymous*
- "Being a better change maker." —*Aaron McCleerey, Sisseton, S.D.*
- "Building relationships and encouraging people." —*anonymous*
- "Being positive ... encouraging others to help bring change ... even without the title of being a leader." —*anonymous*
- "Begin the conversation and help organize a community event surrounding all the good groups/ideas/businesses." —*Lori Moen, Sisseton, S.D.*
- "Compliment past or current leaders for a job well done and encourage them to continue." —*Andrea Nelson, S.D.*
- "Sharing leadership and support wherever possible." —*Laura & Dan Overbo, Volga, S.D.*

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Need more leaders? Take time to ask

About 15 people gathered in Sisseton on Feb. 10 to talk about rural leadership: What's happening, what's possible, and what they can do about it. Here are some of the interesting ideas we heard during that gathering.



WHAT'S HAPPENING?

"The people in leadership roles are wearing 10 different hats."

"There are all sorts of choices today. Those choices mean there's much more of a pull on people."

WHAT'S POSSIBLE?

"People ask the question, what does it do for me to get involved? I guess I'd redirect that question: What can you do for the community to make it better? And how in turn can a better community have something positive happen for you and contribute to your success because the community as a whole is better for your getting involved."

"If we're wildly successful, we'll have a lot more choices in our community."

"If all the groups were filled, and there was a waiting line to get in, there would be a breakdown in resistance to new ideas. People are so against change, but if there was all this energy, it would break down some of that."

WHAT CAN WE DO?

"There's no personal invite—we need to ask people to come and share."

"We need to listen better to what people want in the community."

"Time commitment is always an issue. We have to be careful of STP—'same 10 people.' You want to do the ask, but make sure it's not the same 10 people all the time."



Continued on page 31

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What are leaders and potential/emerging leaders experiencing in your community?



What could be possible for your community if you were wildly successful recruiting and empowering more leaders?



... What could your community be doing differently to discover and empower more leaders?



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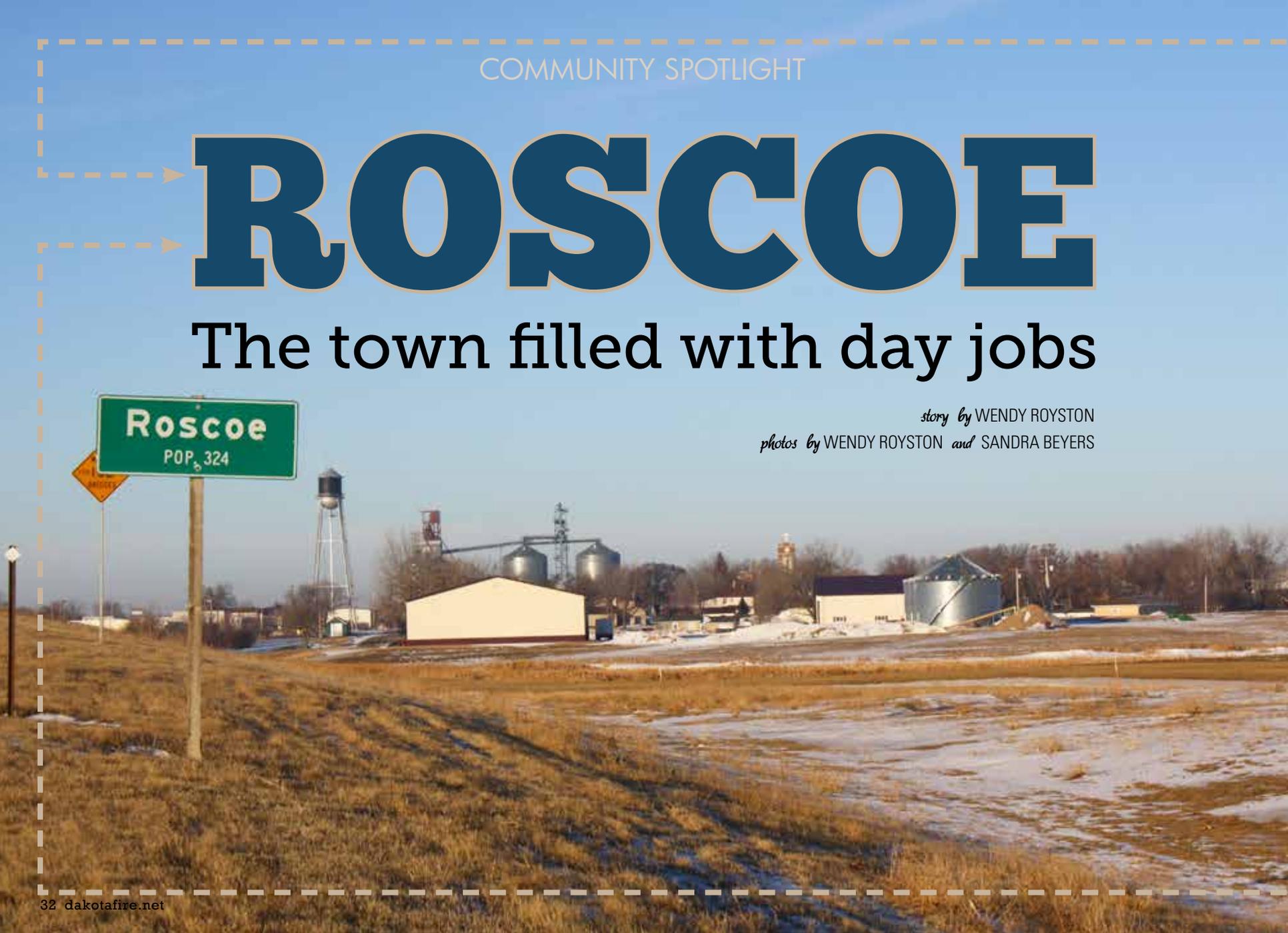
COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

ROSCOE

The town filled with day jobs

story by WENDY ROYSTON

photos by WENDY ROYSTON *and* SANDRA BEYERS



Roscoe
POP. 324

Roscoe, S.D., is different from a lot of rural communities. While many small towns are considered “bedroom communities,” the town of 324 is anything but that.

“I always think Roscoe is a working town,” said Patty Beyers, co-owner of Dakota Insurance Solutions. Beyers, who herself lives several miles out of town, said most of the employees of Roscoe’s businesses travel to the community 40 miles west of Aberdeen on Highway 12 during business hours, and then leave town to sleep.

“What we lack in people living here, the businesses and the people working here (make up for),” she said, indicating the community is “fuller” than the 324 people noted on the town’s population sign. “People sleep somewhere else, and they come here to work. I think it’s really unusual that a town our size has that. ... It’s a very different kind of a community; it’s a very busy town.”

Nearly everyone who does live in town, according to Beyers, owns one of the community’s businesses. A large factor in that phenomenon, she said, was a past housing crisis that coincided with the development of the community’s business district, as well as uncertainty in the future of the school. The Roscoe and Hosmer school districts consolidated in 1991, creating the Edmunds Central School District, postponing worries about school closure. Although a housing development was discussed two years ago, nothing has happened so far.

“When we’ve needed houses, older people have gone into nursing homes or assisted livings, and their houses have become available” to accommodate some of the need, Beyers said. “(Housing development is) probably something that should be done, because we have so many people working here. We probably have the people to fill the houses, but will they? Maybe a new school would help, because it would show promise for the school district.”

Growing pains

The Edmunds Central School campus has undergone multiple additions since the original, two-story schoolhouse was built in 1919, and Superintendent

Shawn Yates said it is time that the community take another proactive step to protect the assets that currently serve 140 students.

“In order to do what we need to do here for our students, we need to stay on top of things,” the second-year superintendent said. “We need to be more proactive than reactive and get to the point that we say, ‘We have no choice; we have to do something, or we close.’ I don’t want kids in trailers with the winters we have here.”

A public hearing was set for late February to discuss a potential \$8.5 million building project that would include a new cafeteria, competition-size gym and classroom space, and would replace the original building and a 1950s addition. A small gym, immediately surrounded by classrooms, would remain, but the space is inadequate for hosting tournaments and larger athletic events.

Continued on page 34



A strong ag sector has been the backbone of the success of businesses in Roscoe, according to, from left, John and Patty Beyers and Cliff Anderson. John Beyers owns First State Bank of Roscoe, which moved from the green building in the background to the new building across the street in December, just as he celebrated 50 years with the bank. Patty Beyers and Cliff Anderson co-own Dakota Insurance Solutions, which moved with the bank from the old location to the new.

Continued from page 33

"In a small community, you need a competition (or second) gym," said Yates, noting that the layout of the 1960s-era building makes renovation of the gym and surrounding space difficult.

Currently, some basketball practices happen as early as 6 a.m., because the school has just one gym, and the girls' and boys' seasons now happen concurrently.

"With Wednesday night church and other commitments, there's no time to be able to fit two practices in" after school, he said.

Although any plans for improvements to the school's facilities are preliminary, the spirit of Roscoe is one of pioneerism.

"Maintaining the status quo—it's good enough—doesn't work," said Patty Beyers, quoting her father, who retired from farming in his 60s, when he realized change was inevitable, despite his desire to cling to the practices he'd always used.

Giving back

"Good enough" is not a way of life for the Beyers family.

"When you're farming," Patty Beyers said, "your life is where your land is."

So, when John Beyers decided to hang up his farm cap and purchase the bank at which he'd worked the previous 33 years, he handed down the family farm to the couple's five sons, all of whom still live in the Roscoe area. Their two daughters live in Aberdeen and Ipswich, so all 32 Beyers descendants live within an hour of the farm.

"We're pretty vested in the community," Patty Beyers said.

Last year, the Beyers family made its commitment to the future of Roscoe obvious when John Beyers broke ground on a new bank building.

"The community has been good to us," John

Beyers said. "We have family here. We have friends here. We have a school here. We have churches here. If the bank doesn't take a stand, everything else eventually goes by the wayside. We have to be the leader of the community."

Investing in the community is the duty of local businesses, he said.

"You give back to your community; that's what we're here for," John Beyers said. "You give back to your community and your family."

Farmers in general have given much to the little town on the prairie that supports their business endeavors.

"It's definitely farming that has built this town," Patty Beyers said. "We have quite a few very large, prosperous farmers, and we have a lot of loyalty to the Roscoe area."

Encouraging entrepreneurs

Loyalty is another term synonymous with Roscoe,



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Superintendent Shawn Yates stands outside Edmunds Central Elementary at dismissal recently. In order to be proactive against possible future closure, the school district is discussing an \$8.5 million building project that would include tearing down and replacing the two buildings in this photograph, which were built in 1952 (single-story elementary building) and 1919 (original, two-story schoolhouse) with new classroom space, a cafeteria and a competition-size gym. A 1965 building (not pictured) would remain. *Photo by Sandra Beyers*

according to those who own businesses there.

Many clients of Sandra Beyers Photography travel to partake of the services Sandra Beyers provides, and she works hard to ensure that her clients don't just shop at her business, which is among the top 10 customers of a major printing lab in the Twin Cities. Beyers (who is John and Patty Beyers' daughter-in-law) routinely hands her clients discount and gift cards to the local restaurants, boutique and coffee shop, and she knows they do the same for her.

"We want our people who have driven 45 miles to

see what else we have in town, because we have a lot," she said. "We have people who want to see us succeed, and we try to lift up other businesses. ... I don't know if other small communities have that kind of relationship between businesses, but we do, and I think that's one of the things that makes our community more successful than others, as far as businesses."

She and others are hopeful that community support will keep Roscoe alive long term—not just for the current generation.

"We want to be a growing, progressive community,"

Sandra Beyers said. "We don't want to be a dying small town, because this is our home for our kids ... and we want our families to want to be here, to stay here and to thrive here. ... We don't want to be the community (whose) kids can't wait to be out of here."

That type of support is exactly what brought Megan Garner home last year.

"I worked 10 years in a busy emergency room," said Garner. "I needed a break. I needed something

Continued on page 36

Continued from page 35

with a different stress level. I like that fast pace, but I really just needed a change.”

While visiting family last winter, Garner took notice of the local gas station building, which had sat empty on the south side of Highway 12 for the past two years, and quickly formed a plan to turn her hobbies into a business that filled a niche in Roscoe, purchasing the building within 24 hours.

Trendy Threads opened last June, and Garner said she quickly found herself too busy to keep up with the part-time nursing home work she was doing in nearby Bowdle. The business consists of refurbished furniture and textiles created by Garner and others, as well as—tellingly—“trendy threads” for women and children, jewelry, cards and décor, as well as a full coffee bar with ice cream treats.

Opening a niche business in such a small town was a gamble, according to Garner, but it’s one she

feels she has won.

“To be honest, I made amazing money as a nurse in Minnesota, and here, it’s nothing compared to that, but that didn’t make me happy at all, and I’m very happy here,” she said. “There’s definitely value in ... support from the community.”

Trendy Threads doesn’t just bring a familiar face back to Roscoe; it also fills a void left when the grocery store, which carried cards and gifts, closed last summer.

“(The locals) come here to buy anything they can, instead of traveling out of town—especially cards and gifts,” said Garner. “I knew it would be OK to open a business in Roscoe because of how supportive Roscoe is to their local businesses.”

The support of a tightknit community made it no surprise when the call to fund new playground equipment at the local park, that the response was better than imagined.

Funding for fun

When Sandra Beyers and other members of the Roscoe Commercial Club initially looked through playground equipment catalogs in April 2013, they only dreamed of providing a jungle gym on which the children of Roscoe could learn, play and make memories.

“We don’t have a lot for our kids. We have a baseball program, but we don’t have a local pool ... and we ... have a lot of young families and a lot of kids, so I think people recognized that it was something that was ... worth it,” she said. “We decided (to) shoot for \$50,000. ... We had \$85,000 in a matter of a month, and that was completely donated by the people who live here and the businesses here.”

With additional funds coming in the following month and a \$40,000 grant, a \$120,000 playground was erected at the town’s only park that July. Sandra Beyers said the success of the request for financial support came in its rarity.

“We don’t have a lot of local fundraisers,” she said. “We provide what we need for our community, and we don’t ask outside communities to come in and support us, either. ... People were willing to give because they knew it was an important project that made sense.”

And those same businesses are investing in the youth of Roscoe in other ways, too.

FOCUS on the future

Although Edmunds Central runs a four-day school week, local educators and businesspeople are working together to provide their youths with a unique learning opportunity on Fridays.

“FOCUS Fridays’ is an acronym for Finding Our Creative and Useful Skills, which really is what we want for our kids,” Yates said. “We want to give them



Edmunds Central High School graduate Megan Garner decided on a whim while visiting family last winter that she would like to open a business in her hometown of Roscoe. Now she’s settled into a career as owner of Trendy Threads, a boutique and coffee shop.



Sandra Beyers knew from the very first time she held a camera in high school that she had found her calling. Now, after almost a decade as a photographer in her husband's hometown of Roscoe, she is helping Edmunds Central youths get a taste for the trade through the FOCUS Fridays program.

opportunities to try new things ... and find areas that they may be passionate about."

This semester, those areas include photography, karate, welding, worldwide animal studies, and "mental" games like chess, among others. Starting this school year, students in preschool through high school could sign up for age-appropriate programming that met six different Friday afternoons throughout the year, usually in conjunction with Friday morning "student help days."

Yates said the positive response for the program so far proves its importance.

"As a rural (school), we may not be able to offer all of these things as a class for the one or two students who might be interested, but here's an opportunity so they can at least ... see if that's something that (interests)

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them,” he said. “Anytime you’ve got three-quarters of your students coming in to the school on a day when they could be sitting at home and watching TV or playing video games, that speaks volumes. To get them out of bed and out of their house on a 30-below Friday afternoon ... and they’re excited ... that’s so much fun to see. ... That’s why we’re educators.”

And the program is allowing people like Sandra Beyers to become educators themselves.

“She’s certainly giving up some of her time, but at the same time, she’s helping fuel the passion for someone else,” Yates said. “We aren’t going far, but we’re getting them out to see different areas and aspects of our community, and showing them that we do offer a lot of opportunities. ... It’s a fantastic opportunity ... to spark an interest and show how they can (stay) in these areas. ... While it brings an extra level of busyness and time, it’s certainly worthwhile.”

An unintended home

Yates said his own interest in the Roscoe community was sparked quickly. When he was hired at Edmunds Central last year, he initially planned to commute from Aberdeen daily, but plans changed.

“It didn’t take me long to see the commitment that people have here, and the belief (and pride) that they have in their community,” so he moved his family of six to town before the start of the 2013-14 school year. “I recognized the commitment of the people who were here already, and that affects us. I wanted to be a part of that, and I want my family to be a part of that. I’m excited about what the future holds for Roscoe.”

Chef Dennis Grau never dreamed his future would be in Roscoe when he followed his parents to town upon their retirement and opened 3 Paws Baking Co. Initially, he did a little baking, and at the urging of others in town, he eventually began offering lunch and dinner specials.

“This was supposed to be a stopping point before I went back to the West Coast,” Grau said, “but



Roscoe was supposed to be a stop along the highway of life for Dennis Grau four years ago. But he has found a niche in the community of 324 with 3 Paws Baking Co., which soon will officially be “on the map” when it transitions to The D: 57471, named after Roscoe’s ZIP code.

the economy just never came back.”

Instead, the restaurant has become a “stopping point” for travelers along Highway 12.

“We do eclectic Americana,” Grau explained. “We couldn’t be more in the middle of the country, as far as coming to a melting pot, and our food reflects that.”

Now, Grau is looking to the future in Roscoe, and is changing his business’s name to reflect how it has “put Roscoe on the map,” by naming it The D: 57471.

“I’m proud to have created a destination spot,” Grau said. “I have people who, when they get off an airplane to visit family, I’m the first place they visit.”

Patty Beyers said small communities like Roscoe offer limitless opportunities, but keeping them alive is the duty of everyone in town.

“It is very possible to make as a good of a

living—or a better living—in a small town,” she said. **“You can make a good living in a small town, but in order to keep that small town going and active and growing, you have to be willing to put money—(and) time and effort—back into your small town. You can’t just take from it, or it won’t be there. ... The small towns that I have seen, it appears that—as it starts to get small—people hang on tighter and tighter and tighter to (their personal finance), and they choke the life right out of it. Roscoe has done very well at giving back.” ***

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“Each year I look forward to springtime and the migration. As an artist, photographer and hunter, it is very exciting to watch the birds come back. Getting outdoors to hunt and photograph is very thrilling. I spend many days scouting for the best spots to set up my equipment so that I can go unnoticed by the intelligent birds. Any kind of movement easily scares waterfowl, so I must be as still as possible to capture close shots of ducks, geese and any other wildlife they may come my way. I try to take close-up photos with brilliant lighting so that I have sharp details to refer to when I create a painting.”

—Nicole Heitzman

Nicole Heitzman is an artist and photographer from Parkston, S.D. Find her work at www.NicoleHeitzmanArt.com.





This is the first appearance of a new occasional feature called Perspective intended to share through images a unique viewpoint of life in the Dakotas. Are you a photographer who would like to submit an image for consideration? See details at dakotafire.net/perspective.



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