

Sheridan's next leaders poised and ready

Many of Sheridan's young workers are preparing to step into leadership roles in the community.

A solid core of young citizens is already involved and engaging in the community through the Jaycees, Chamber of Commerce events, Downtown Sheridan Association events, the City Planning Commission and Design Review Board, and various volunteer opportunities.

Another opportunity for community engagement and integration comes through HYPE (Helping Young Professionals Engage), an organization of young workers who are dedicated to recruiting and retaining young workers in Sheridan.

Participation by young workers in these activities and organizations gives invaluable experience and insight into Sheridan's community; partnered with education and career experience, these events are necessary to groom young workers for future leadership positions.

The future, however, is now. Sheridan's young workers are preparing to lead and already accepting leadership positions within the Sheridan community.

Young workers, through their participation in the community and organizations, have shown an interest and commitment to Sheridan.

In order to keep young workers vested in the community and to attract more young talent into the area, it is imperative that the initiatives laid out within the strategic plan are met.

Young workers in Sheridan have shown that they are willing to become

involved by participating in Forward Sheridan's Economic Development Strategic Planning process, ensuring their needs have a voice, and working to convert Sheridan's challenges to strengths.

Keeping the young workers of Sheridan involved in economic development may be a challenge in itself.

Young workers gauge a community by the progress they see toward addressing the challenges of that particular locale. The progress occurring in addressing Sheridan's challenges is motivation to continue forward.

Without seeing specific measurable outcomes, young workers in Sheridan are likely to become disheartened and disinterested. Once a young worker disengages, he moves on.

When Jason Dorsey, author and speaker, presented "Turning Potential Into Performance" to business leaders and students at Sheridan College, he spoke about the transience of Generation Y — if this generation doesn't see results, it moves on to the next thing.

Compounding the transience of the generation is the shrinking global economy — not only will young workers move to the next thing, but they are as likely to move on to the next state or country when they move to pursue the next job, degree, or lifestyle craze.

A Community Affair

Kevin
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Planning for Sheridan's economic development

Sheridan is not just competing with other Wyoming cities for this talent pool, but is competing on a worldwide spectrum for young, qualified workers.

As the global economy shrinks and the demand for skilled workers increases, those

workers are going to choose their location based on the amenities and services offered.

If Sheridan has not addressed its challenges, workers will not come here.

Not only do young workers want assurance that they can afford housing or that their children will receive quality care at a child-care facility, but also living in a well-planned, well-designed locale influences their decision-making process.

The current young work force has shown its commitment to Sheridan by its participation in the Economic Development Strategic Planning process and implementation, community events, and organizations.

By engaging in the community, young workers are able to accept ownership and responsibility for the community, thus allowing them to see the value of investing in Sheridan.

For a young worker to make this investment, progress in addressing Sheridan's challenges must be visible; if challenges are left unanswered or if no

headway is made, young workers will not commit to Sheridan, but rather move on to the next thing.

Many businesses and citizens have stepped forward to provide a vision for Sheridan, creating initiatives and goals to be accomplished over the next five years to ensure that future is what we have envisioned today.

Forward Sheridan's Economic Development Strategic Plan addresses challenges like child care, design and land-use planning, work force housing, and work force shortage; addressing these challenges will benefit the community as a whole.

However, addressing these challenges will be particularly important as Generations X and Y transition into leadership roles.

Kevin Messamer is supervisor of the Sheridan Workforce Center, Wyoming Department of Workforce Services. A native of Wyoming, he has traveled the globe through military service and returned to Sheridan to raise his family and become involved in the community.

In addition to his community service and participation in HYPE, the Sheridan County Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors, and other organizations in the community, he enjoys hunting, fishing, and the outdoor lifestyle.

"A Community Affair" is a weekly column from citizens who support Forward Sheridan, a professional business organization of invested partners whose purpose is to develop and maintain a sound economy in Sheridan County. Philippe Chino is president/CEO of Forward Sheridan.