

May 7, 2007
Workforce Recruitment
1:00 PM

Patrick Schilling (First Federal), Brooke Kaercher (Holiday Inn/ Sugarland Enterprises), Terry Burgess (District 2 – Instruction and HR), Cody Sinclair (District 2 HR), Randy Wilson (VA – HR), Rena Appel (contractor to employ transitioning military), Barbara Hall (Workforce Services), Dick Kindt (Homebuilders), Linda Gostas (Senior Center HR), Kevin Price (Sheridan College HR), Carmen Rideout (Senior Center Exec Dir) Shari Peddicord.

Discussion regarding the weaknesses identified in the Strategic Planning process -- workforce shortage was specifically identified as a major weakness.

Purpose of this meeting is to meet with employers and industries (building, hospitality, medical, etc.) We need to verify with employers.

It was pointed out that training monies up to \$3,000 are available through the state for training new hires.

Employers introduced themselves and their needs.

Reviewed Strategic Planning Task Force Findings to date: Do employers agree with the findings?

Geographical isolation – hindrance?

Not being located near metropolitan area is sometimes a hindrance.

Spouses can be unhappy with choices.

Easy to sell positive about living in small town.

Marketing “quality of life” is usually not a strategy that attracts people.

Amenities are what sell a community – cultural, shopping, etc.

For those tired of congestion – short commuting time.

Sense of community, sense of family, safety issues, etc.

Services available in this community.

Could be used to target people from states similar to ours – smaller communities.

Some targeting could be done among people who left and want to come back.

People move for quantifiable reasons.

Workforce Shortage inhibits growth. Businesses are looking to Sheridan as a possible location for their businesses, but because they can't find staff, they are choosing not to come. Current employers want to grow during the boom cycle, but can't find help.

Lack of child care – Huge.

Waiting list at this time.

Trailing spouses can't work if can't find childcare.

Aging workforce at this time. Average is 50+, but when they retire and are replaced, it will be even worse.

Spouses may require flexible schedules.

Low unemployment – Number at less than 3%.

No workforce to choose from in a local pool.

Creates opportunities for trailing spouses.

According to study done for the state, there are about 5,000 who are not looking for work and are not included in the unemployment statistics– 59% women (low wages, child care)

Some are unable to pass a drug test.

Lack of qualified workers/training

Food service, dieticians, technically trained, skilled workers, etc.

Grants available for workforce training.

VA has access to funds for training, but most positions are immediate need positions.

Ads in paper appear to be exclusionary, so they may be screening people away.

VA recruits nationally.

VA – Custodial and food service are hardest positions to hire.

DK Construction – People going into the trades right now are older -- training people for lower salaries to work into a career.

School district: Lack of workers in the skilled trades. School systems have hard time hiring custodial positions and bus drivers. Skilled trades for maintenance are not as hard to find. This takes people from the trades for benefits.

Lack of resources

Lack of agencies

Monies to do recruiting

Good point to prepare CD about community

Drug/Alcohol use

Sheridan is not currently a drug-free workplace community

75% of companies in Sheridan do not test for drugs

Sheridan is unwittingly attracting people who use drugs from communities who do test

People are afraid to test for fear of losing employees

Need investment of community as a whole – publicize reduced premium.

Committee is working on a community-wide drug testing program

Cost of Living

Lack of housing – Major problem!

People back out after accepting a job, because they can't find housing

Interest rates qualify to \$205,000.

Cost of housing services is almost double from last year. 15-18% inflation in construction over the last year due to pressure.

Sheridan is the most expensive place in WY to get permits. The City is bringing in many times the cost to run the building department, and fees are going into the general fund. Originally the fees were supposed to simply cover the cost to operate the building dept. Working with city to help reduce cost of permits.

There is a lot of inventory in the pipeline, which will eventually help the supply. Several housing developments are underway and SHAC is helping bring prices down for the consumer (165-195K). Tremendous need in the range of 140-205K.

Need for transitional housing for a few months while people get settled into their jobs.

Housing is very high

Taxes are low

Groceries are equivalent

Gas below national average

Health care

2nd highest cost of living in state

Wyoming is in top 10 states to retire in.

Wages are not high for service industries (not enough professional wages)

School district has gained on the cost of living with wages for teachers. State is making huge gains, and is now in the upper half – Sheridan is higher than Wyoming average.

Important to have trailing spouse employment due to cost of housing and/or child care.

Cost of living comparisons are used a lot online.

Michigan people (6-7) came and could not find homes, could not sell homes in Michigan, so went back.

Generational differences –

People are placing demand on goods and services, but not working to provide goods and services themselves.

Age 35-50 are leaving for better opportunities

How do we attract 35-50's back to the community

Spousal employment is important

Trailing spouse program – Forward Sheridan?

Have Realtors entertain spouses

Send resumes to us and we broadcast to investor group

Job Postings so we know who to get with when candidates come

Child care is important

Amenities are important

Amenities for “Y” generation regarding electronics and flexibility in work schedules

Links to other communities job announcements

Retirement community – greater demands on goods and services

Attract retirees back into the workforce -- may want flexibility – project type work

Solution: Training older workers and marketing specific to older workers

Education re cultural differences between generations

SHRM – October conference – generational differences

Attract young families

Organizations: Senior Center/AARP – Senior Center has an “Employment Board”

Employers put up their cards.

Structure – specific times people are available
Job Fair – collaborative effort – with business community – actual activities.
Retraining for new careers or jobs.
Senior Program (Workforce Services) – “Experience Works.”
Need to look at long-term, incremental, consistent programs.

Training – retiring communities require lower wage jobs – what kind of training.
What various industries need for training will be different. – different strategies for different industries.

Next Meeting: Monday, May 14, 2007, 1:00 PM.

**Assignments: Quantify. Brainstorm potential objectives.
Specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and timely.**

Isolation -- Kevin Price, Sheridan College

Untapped labor pool (potential workers) who are already here (low unemployment) – Rena Appel.

Untapped labor pool (potential workers) at military bases willing to come back to Wyoming. – Rena Appel

Big retirement community – untapped labor pool of senior citizens – Carmen Rideout

Lack of resources – tools – training gaps that are not being filled -- how to get started – where to turn to for help for monies for training– Barbara Hall, Dept of Workforce Services.

Generational Differences – Marketing issues – Brooke Kaercher.

Marketing to attract 35-50 year olds (young families) who left and want to come back. Len Gross, Sheridan Hospital

Workforce shortage inhibits growth – result instead of issue in and of itself.

Lack of housing – task force already in existence

Child care – task force already in existence