

TOWN OF

FLAGLER

COLORADO

Community Economic Development (CED) Assessment
January 9-10, 2008
Draft CED Assessment Report

Session I: Recreation & Tourism Development

Strengths:

- ✚ Flagler Lake
- ✚ Second Central School Museum
- ✚ Hospital Museum
- ✚ Flagler Theatre
- ✚ Golf Course
- ✚ Restaurants
- ✚ I-70
- ✚ Homecoming Celebration
- ✚ Airport
- ✚ Swimming pool
- ✚ Parks
- ✚ Hal Borland History
- ✚ Main street sign and new business district sign
- ✚ Historic Prairie Trails Conference Center
- ✚ Hunting

Weaknesses:

- ✚ No tourism demographics
- ✚ Restrooms in the park closed winter months
- ✚ Lack of upgrades to lake facilities
- ✚ Restrictive signage laws
- ✚ Lack of updated website
- ✚ Lack of community education on tourism opportunities and potential
- ✚ Limited overnight accommodation
- ✚ Loss of events to surrounding communities due to the lack of adequate facilities (i.e., weddings, graduations, etc.)
- ✚ Community lacks event coordinator

Opportunities:

- ✚ Develop tracking systems to gather demographics
- ✚ Develop Second Central School Museum into a historic square with walking tours & outdoor historic signs
- ✚ Develop a town/community walking tour
- ✚ Develop tourism packages: biking, birding, walking tours, hunting, bird seed tours, etc
- ✚ RV parking in town and at the lake

- ✚ Welcome directional corner at the park
- ✚ Educate community on the value of tourism and customer service
- ✚ Regional Shopping Trek (several towns, overnight & make a loop)

Threats:

- ✚ Drought
- ✚ Distance from regional attractions

Recommendations:

- ✚ Research how to connect main street sign to additional signage off Ruffner Road
- ✚ Verify I-70 signage laws
- ✚ Develop Second Central School Museum into a historic square with walking tours & outdoor historic signs
- ✚ Request additional lake signage (informational & directional)
- ✚ Research putting the theatre on the national register for improvements
- ✚ Incorporate donation drop boxes for hospital museum and Second Central school museum to generate maintenance funds
- ✚ Coordinate a meeting about future recreation opportunities at the lake (biking, walking, horseback, bird watching, etc.)
- ✚ Develop a strategic marketing plan to include the 7 slices of tourism (eating, attraction-things to do; sleep).
- ✚ Identify the different market segments (group tours, school tours, day camps, youth hunting opportunities, recreation, I-70 market, etc.)
- ✚ Market the conference also as a B&B
- ✚ Develop tourism and recreational tours
- ✚ Create marketing and advertising opportunities locally in restaurants: table tents, placemats-laminate with different attractions of the community and highlight historic events
- ✚ Create events: Hal Borland, 50s Dance at Diner in parking lot, movies in the football field, dinner and movie nights, etc.
- ✚ Develop a theme/brand for tourism, business, community, etc. to incorporate in brochures, website for the informational packet.
- ✚ Develop a welcome/informational/directional corner at the park (2nd Ruffner)
- ✚ Include in website community, business, school, tourism, recreation, (keys words for search: bird seed, free land, Borland, 50s Diner, etc)
- ✚ Research agri-tourism opportunities and feasibility (i.e.: pizza farm, ag tours, etc.)
- ✚ Develop and distribute town map
- ✚ Develop additional recreational and tourism attractions opportunities: i.e., flag bikes and Crystal Springs Stage Stop

Session II: Infrastructure & Community Development

Strengths:

- ✚ Land: FREE, water, flat and location of land
- ✚ Town not landlocked
- ✚ Flagler School System
- ✚ I-70 & Accessibility
- ✚ Railroad Accessibility
- ✚ Central US location
- ✚ Library
- ✚ Flexibility to develop infrastructure as needed
- ✚ Close proximity to Front Range
- ✚ High school pool

- ✚ Local ownership of vacant buildings
- ✚ Technology infrastructure
- ✚ On-line educational classes
- ✚ RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program)
- ✚ Housing affordable and available
- ✚ Plains Medical Center, Local NP, building owned by town
- ✚ Tender Care Village
- ✚ Pioneer Valley
- ✚ Country Roads Housing
- ✚ In-home healthcare services
- ✚ Town services are great (snow, trash, paved streets, etc.)

Weaknesses:

- ✚ No defined plan for growth
- ✚ No concise business package
- ✚ Lack of organized beautification plan
- ✚ Vacant buildings
- ✚ Appearance of town hall
- ✚ Hard to find downtown
- ✚ Lack of marketing technology strengths
- ✚ Aging housing stock
- ✚ No pharmacy and dental services
- ✚ Lack of annexation on east side of town

Opportunities:

- ✚ Work with CSU on conceptual plan for the new development
- ✚ Infrastructure in new development
- ✚ Small distribution centers
- ✚ Public access to Internet at I-70 business and market the accessibility
- ✚ Potential second exit off I-70 for future growth and business loop

Threats:



Recommendation:

- ✚ Develop a master plan (a community plan of action which identifies vision, mission, role of town, boards and committees).
- ✚ Explore opportunities to advertise business environment to site selectors...free land, accessibility & water (coloradopropect.com, Site Selection Magazine, Real Estate Developer, etc.)
- ✚ Research the *211 opportunity for business services
- ✚ Suggest the school incorporates Hall Borland literature in curriculum
- ✚ Develop a signage plan which may include the following:
- ✚ Direct traffic from I-70 exit by changing the street name from 2nd Street to 2nd Main and incorporate a directional change at 2nd and Ruffner to drive people downtown automatically
- ✚ Painting signs around town, water tower & grain elevators, etc.
- ✚ Directional map at park corner
- ✚ Consider using direction flags leading to downtown
- ✚ Inventory housing stock to identify structural and safety issues
- ✚ Annex I-70 interchange businesses in the town to generate additional revenues and earmark how the additional revenues will be spent annually.

Session III: Business Development

Strengths:

- ✚ Flagler Community Development (FCD)
- ✚ Alumni Database
- ✚ Community perception business environment is friendly and accommodating
- ✚ Local leadership is progressive
- ✚ 90% of businesses are owned Flagler graduates
- ✚ Strong relationship between school, town, businesses and community
- ✚ Flagler School System
- ✚ EPICS
- ✚ Wagner Bird Seed Factory (largest employer)

Weakness:

- ✚ No current business retention program
- ✚ Hard to find employees/drawing from the same pool
- ✚ Inconsistent business of hours of operation
- ✚ Loss of ag jobs due to changing times

Opportunity:

- ✚ On-line retail opportunities for local businesses
- ✚ Clearly define and identify the rapid response team
- ✚ Mentor youth to come back to community (business, farm, ranch, etc.)
- ✚ Involve youth in leadership

Threats:

- ✚ Youth out migration
- ✚ Aging ag workforce

Recommendations:

- ✚ Expand membership of FCD to include agricultural community, county, utilities, etc.
- ✚ Create a simple business appreciation campaign (i.e., dinner, letter from Mayor)
- ✚ Develop a shop/buy local program
- ✚ Research the feasibility of a business incubator in one of the vacant buildings
- ✚ Target transportation industry for business opportunities
- ✚ Explore ways to mentor youth to come back to community (business, farm, ranch, etc.)
- ✚ Appoint youth leader to community boards (town council, school board, FCD, etc.) to get them involved in leadership
- ✚ Continue to pursue the feasibility for a childcare center
- ✚ Develop an informational business package that markets Flagler as a place to do business

General Comments & Overall Recommendations:

- ✚ Dedicated volunteers
- ✚ Strong sense of community
- ✚ Great town staff
- ✚ Overall great community hospitality.
- ✚ Employee a Town Community Development Coordinator that would coordinate efforts of recreation, tourism, community, economic development and be central point of contact. Develop a job description utilizing assessment team and pursue funding avenues for sustainability.