

*Since 1910*  
**SACAJAWEA INN**  
THREE FORKS ♦ MONTANA



1/11/95

Dear Bud & Esther,

What a pleasure it was to have you present at the Chamber meeting yesterday. We are delighted about your plans - please let Smith or I know if you need any assistance!

I've enclosed a copy of our  
application for the Tourism Assessment  
Program - call Mary or I if you have  
any questions.

Looking forward to seeing you again  
soon!



Best wishes

P.O. BOX 648 ♦ 5 NORTH MAIN STREET ♦ THREE FORKS ♦ MONTANA 59752

Jane



Since 1910  
**SACAJAWEA INN**  
THREE FORKS • MONTANA

P. O. Box 648 ♦ 5 N. Main Street  
Three Forks, Montana 59752

TO: Bud Lilly  
2007 Sourdough Rd  
Bigman MT 59715

# THREE FORKS MONTANA

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AT THE HEADWATERS OF THE MISSOURI RIVER

COMMUNITY TOURISM ASSESSMENT PROGRAM APPLICATION  
DECEMBER 1994

# THREE FORKS MONTANA

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AT THE HEADWATERS OF THE MISSOURI RIVER

COMMUNITY TOURISM ASSESSMENT PROGRAM APPLICATION  
DECEMBER 1994

## #1. Community Commitment

### A.) Project Coordinator

The Executive Director of the Three Forks Economic Development Council will occupy the position of project coordinator.

- As Secretary of the Three Forks Chamber of Commerce and Executive Director of the Three Forks Economic Development Council, the proposed Project Coordinator has extensive proven experience in scheduling and coordinating regular meetings, including recording and distributing minutes and planning agendas.
- She has worked with the public in the tourism industry for many years and is very familiar with the local attractions.
- She has served as volunteer chairperson for various community projects such as the Three Forks Rodeo Weekend Parade and Flea Market.
- As Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, the proposed Project Coordinator has been responsible for the design of the Chamber brochures, fliers, promotional advertisements, and a monthly newsletter. She is currently manager of a Secretarial Service and is proficient in the use of all office equipment, including computers, fax machines, and photocopiers.
- As a home- and business-owner, the project coordinator is extremely interested in the economic development of the town. Payment for this position has been allocated by the Economic Development Council for a minimum of ten hours per week.

### B.) Meeting facilities and office equipment

The Sacajawea Inn, owned by a member of the Economic Development Council and of the Community Tourism Action Committee, has donated use of its meeting room for regularly scheduled committee meetings. The Chamber of Commerce office equipment is readily available.

### C.) Proposed Community Tourism Action Committee

Patricia Wherley	President	Three Forks Chamber of Commerce
Brandon Hardin	Vice-President	Three Forks Economic Development Council
Ruth Myers	Executive Director	Headwaters Museum
Jane Roedel	Owner	Sacajawea Inn & Restaurant
	Vice-President	Three Forks Chamber of Commerce
Lydia Crossman	Owner	Railway Express Subs and Pizza
Stan Nachtrieb	Owner	Zahnow Construction
Nancy Peterson	Owner	Three Forks Saddlery
Sylvia Vander Wall	Owner	Suncatcher Gifts
Konnie Ewan	Co-Owner	Leather-n-Lace Gift Shop
Gina Pickett	Townsperson	
Rob Norman	Boardmember	Three Forks City Council
Bud Lilly	Owner	Violet's and Bud Lilly's Angler Retreat



D.) Community Volunteer Experience

The Three Forks community has had an excellent record of successful volunteer projects.

- Five years ago , a committee was formed to create a non-profit golf course. Working with only volunteer efforts, the Headwaters Golf Course was opened and has maintained a consistent membership and a support from residents in neighboring towns, as well as tourists. The golf course has been extremely successful, has had recent improvements and is featured on the cover of the new Three Forks brochure (enclosed).
- Three Forks has its own Medical Clinic founded by members of the community. The Economic Development Council was instrumental in putting together a health care committee to monitor its future progress. This committee meets monthly to ensure the community of Three Forks will continue to receive quality health care services.
- Through its volunteer efforts, the Three Forks Historical Society raised the money necessary to purchase a Main Street building to house the Headwaters Heritage Museum. The museum, relying solely on a volunteer staff and visitor and community donations, has been completely self-sufficient for the past ten years.
- In 1976, the Three Forks Economic Development Council was awarded a grant to develop the Headwaters of the Missouri River as a state park. Three Forks received this grant despite being in competition against much larger towns, such as Billings and Fort Benton, and the state park has become a popular camping and fishing area.
- The Economic Development Council has created a video and informational brochure on Three Forks to attract perspective businesses to the town.

In recent years, Three Forks has seen a substantial growth in population and development. With this revival in community and business, there is an increase in enthusiasm about the area among the townspeople and a willingness to get involved.

E.) A letter of endorsement by Gene Townsend, City Mayor of Three Forks is attached.

F.) The Economic Development Council will continue meeting on a regular basis. Projects to promote tourism will be created and committees formed. The projects will be evaluated by the Economic Development Council for impact, progress and any additional action needed.

## #2 Community Narrative

In March of 1993, a town meeting was held to discuss the future of Three Forks. The purpose of this meeting, led by speaker Jim Traglia, was to set specific goals in order to guide the growth of the town over the next decade. Many of the following list of positives and negatives about Three Forks are from the minutes of that town meeting:

### Positives

Nearby State Parks (Headwaters, Lewis and Clark Caverns, Madison Buffalo Jump)

Historic Significance of Area (Lewis and Clark Expedition, Sacajawea, Railroad)

Historic Buildings (Sacajawea Inn)

Fishing Access

Low Crime

Clean Air

Health Clinic and volunteer ambulance and fire departments

Mild climate

Small town

Western Atmosphere

Trend in renovation of both private and commercial buildings

Unexploited

### Negatives

Lack of youth activities, especially at night

Lack of evening tourism activities

Lack of future planning and enforcement of zoning

No horseback riding facilities

Needs a plan for continued beautification (i.e., trees, storefronts, community clean-up)

### #3 Urgency of Need

Through a town meeting called "Three Forks - 2000," tourism was rated as a top industry the people of Three Forks wished to see developed for our community. Three Forks is experiencing an rapid increase in both population and tourism, due to the growing popularity of fishing, hiking, western culture and natural history. Our town's National Historic Landmark, the Sacajawea Inn, being completely renovated in 1991-2 has greatly helped in the increase of tourists extending their stay here. A new motel, the Fort Three Forks, also recently opened and all of the motels/hotels have reported a fair occupancy rate during the summer season. However, the majority of these stays are for only one night as tourists pass through and pass by Three Forks and all the area has to offer. With the Headwaters State Park, the continued expansion of the Lewis and Clark Caverns, the Madison Buffalo Jump, the various outdoor activities of the area and our central location in southwestern Montana, we feel that Three Forks is an ideal destination for visitors who hope to experience an authentic, western atmosphere and an active vacation. At least 66,000 people tour the Lewis and Clark Caverns each summer, where are they staying, eating, buying souvenirs? We need to inform these people that Three Forks exists and show them all we can offer.

The local Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Council have been promoting our community and its attractions. They have been somewhat successful in their promotions but we lack the proper tourist planning to further extend tourist stays within the community for longer periods of time and during the off-season. We feel that with the appropriate direction, tourism will boost the economy of Three Forks, providing the jobs that are desperately needed for the town to retain its independence and self-sufficiency. The largest employer, Luzenac America, closed one of it's plants and 15 jobs were lost last year. Yet, the town's population increased 10% last year, with the majority of newcomers commuting to Bozeman for employment. Our hope is, with the proper planning, Three Forks will be able to promote all of its attractions, resources and amenities, encourage new businesses to increase local employment opportunities, and discover new ways to attract year-round visitors while maintaining its small-town, unexploited atmosphere.

Please direct any further questions concerning this application to:

Patricia Wherley  
(406)285-3198

Thank you for your consideration.

City of Three Forks

PHONE 285-3431

BOX 187 • 206 MAIN

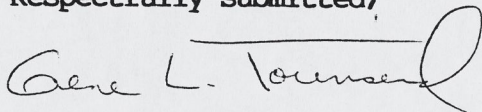
THREE FORKS, MONTANA 59752

December 20, 1994

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

The Three Forks City Council does support the Economic Development Council and the efforts to promote Community Tourism in Three Forks. The promotion of Tourism could stimulate the economy in the area.

Respectfully submitted,



Gene L. Townsend  
Mayor of Three Forks

sgs/GLT

## COMMUNITY TOURISM ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

*Draft  
only*

### Program Overview

The Community Tourism Assessment Program was initiated as a pilot project in the community of Choteau, Montana. The Montana State University Extension Service, United States Forest Service, the Institute for Tourism & Recreation Research and Travel Montana combined efforts in developing the program's process steps. The program is designed to assist rural communities considering tourism as an economic stimulus. Designed to be primarily 'self-administering,' this program encompasses a process whereby a community is guided in taking an introspective and objective look at itself. Participating communities will be required to make a significant commitment by investing manpower and time necessary to complete the various program steps.

Included in this comprehensive assessment process is the building of a community profile to include: lifestyle, attitudes toward tourism, economic structure, existing asset inventory and long-range community vision. Having identified and prioritized potential tourism development products and projects acceptable to the community, review studies will be administered to gauge each project's social, economic and environmental impacts, both positive and negative. Community leadership, project development, marketing and follow-up are also program components.

With the Community Tourism Assessment Program complete, a community will be well informed and able to address basic questions such as "Is tourism for us?", "What are the potential costs and benefits associated with specific tourism-related developments?", and "To what extent, if any, should community tourism-related projects be further developed and promoted?"

A more complete outline of the 14 sequential process steps of the Community Tourism Assessment Program is attached for your reference.

### Program Scope

Travel Montana will facilitate and coordinate the implementation of this new program in up to three rural Montana communities in FY 94 (July 1, 1993 - June 30, 1994). In providing this overall program direction, Travel Montana will draw on the technical expertise of numerous other public sector agencies and private sector consultants.

## Selection Process

### Method of Selection:

Communities wanting to participate in the Community Tourism Assessment Program will be required to complete and return the attached application form. Applications will be reviewed and scored by a selection committee, with the highest cumulative point scores given preference for inclusion in the FY 94 program. The selection committee may elect to interview the highest scoring communities prior to making its final determination.

A Letter of Agreement summarizing program tasks and expectations will be drafted and signed with selected communities.

### Selection Committee:

The selection committee will be comprised of one representative from the Director's Office of the Montana Department of Commerce, Montana Extension Service, Montana Department of Transportation, United States Forest Service, Tourism Advisory Council and Travel Montana.

### Timelines:

Completed community applications are to be returned to Travel Montana **no later than December 1, 1993**. The selection committee will then review and score the applications and make final community selections. Initial program preparation work will begin in the selected communities in January 1994.

### Eligibility Standards:

- \* Selections will be made from applications received from communities with less than 15,000 population
- \* Community shall mean an area of population such as a town, city, or Indian reservation. An 'area of influence' immediately adjacent to a city or town may be considered as a part of a specific community
- \* No preference will be given regarding geographic locations of communities
- \* Communities may be incorporated or unincorporated

APPLICATION FORM

COMMUNITY TOURISM ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

Name of Community \_\_\_\_\_

Name of local contact \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Fax Number \_\_\_\_\_

**General Instructions:**

Please complete the following three questions; responses should be concise, thorough and limited to no more than two type-written pages per question. The total of the scores awarded for each question will be the total score awarded to the applying community. Communities with the highest cumulative scores may be interviewed by the selection committee prior to final committee selections.

Questions concerning the program or application process may be directed to Clint Blackwood, Travel Montana (444-2654).

Completed application forms are to be returned to:

Travel Montana  
ATTN: Community Tourism Assessment  
1424 9th Avenue  
Helena, MT 59620

**Selection Criteria: (A maximum of 100 total points to be awarded)**

**#1. Community Commitment** (maximum of 50 points)

Community responses will be awarded points based on their expressed interest, commitment and ability to provide for, or can demonstrate evidence of the following:

**A)** A local contact person to serve as an administrative secretary, at local expense, during the community tourism assessment process. The anticipated secretarial duties, preferred applicant qualifications, and time requirement are outlined below:

\* Meetings: Prepare and distribute meeting announcements, assist with development of meeting agendas, record and distribute meeting minutes.

\* Clerical and Correspondence: File and catalog project documents (news clippings, committee reports, research material, etc.), draft periodic project progress updates.

\* Project Monitor: Monitor progress of various community project task forces and committees to ensure deadline compliance and project goals are met.

\* Applicant Qualifications: Effective oral and written communication skills, ability to take accurate meeting notes, strong organizational skills, proficient operation skills of office equipment (word processor, typewriter, photocopier, fax machine). Is well acquainted with local area, has experience working with groups, and is interested in community economic development.

\* Time Requirement: Anticipating 1/4 time (30-40 hours per month) for a 12-month period.

B) An appropriate location for committee meetings and necessary office equipment for local administrative secretary.

C) A Community Tourism Assessment Action Committee representing the local public, private and civic sectors is identified (**Please attach a list indicating occupations and professions of proposed committee membership**).

D) Evidence of successful VOLUNTEER community economic planning (has the community completed programs such as the Montana Certified Communities, Superhost, R&D area planning, overall community strategic planning to include infrastructure needs, business retention and expansion or attracting retiree planning? Does the community have an active economic development group?).

E) Letters of endorsement and support from appropriate local government or community council entity (i.e. city manager, town council, community council, county commission or tribal council).



**#2. Community Narrative** (maximum of 25 points)

Community responses will be awarded points based on the insights expressed in addressing the following question:

From an overall viewpoint, and with a specific focus on tourism development, what does the community see as its positives and negatives?

**#3. Urgency of Need** (maximum of 25 points)

Community responses will be awarded points based on the insights expressed in addressing the following question:

Why is the community applying for inclusion in the Community Tourism Assessment Program at this time? Describe the urgency of community need (i.e. plant closures, changing employment trends, population changes, etc.)

## COMMUNITY TOURISM ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

### Process Outline

#### **Step One:** Community Application and Orientation

Interested communities will apply by completing a brief application form. Selection for inclusion in the program will be on a competitive basis, with successful applicants demonstrating broad community support and the capacity to complete the 14-step process. Upon selection, a program orientation will be presented to the community outlining tasks to be completed, process timelines, anticipated manpower needs and summarizing program expectations.

#### **Step Two:** Organization and Leadership Training

An organization and leadership training session will be presented to the community enabling a refinement of committee and task force roles, responsibilities and timeframe commitments. Communications, Conflict Management, Program Management, Public Decision-making Process and Volunteer Management Skills will be addressed.

#### **Step Three:** Resident Attitude Survey

A scientific resident attitude survey will be administered. The survey will assess how the tourism industry 'stacks up' in minds of residents when compared to other industries, and what level of change is acceptable to the present community way of life. This snapshot of the community will be key in determining local receptivity to potential tourism development and promotion. The community, with technical direction, will assist in the process of completing step three.

#### **Step Four:** Visioning/Goal Setting

Utilizing a facilitation process, step four will allow the community to develop their vision of where they would like to see themselves in the future. A vision statement will be drafted by community members that will reflect a strong community consensus encompassing a commitment to work toward realization of their vision.

#### **Step Five: Tourism Marketing Training**

A basic tourism marketing session will be presented to highlight the importance of offering value to the tourist as well as the community. The community will learn how to identify realistic markets and how to develop products of value to those markets. The marketing basics of supply (what we have to sell) and of demand (what do visitors want) will be key elements of this marketing introduction.

#### **Step Six: Current Economic Impact and Visitor Characteristic Analysis**

Data will be collected and compiled that will capture an accurate 'present-day' economic analysis of the community illustrating the impact of tourism on the overall local economy. Additionally, visitor travel patterns and characteristics will be analyzed to determine demographics and market potential. The analysis necessary to complete this step will be provided by consultants, utilizing community input and assistance.

#### **Step Seven: Attraction and Facility Inventory**

During this step the community will inventory all existing attractions and tourism-related facilities in their immediate area. The attractions and facilities will be rated on their value to tourists and comparative to their competition. Additionally, an assessment will be made of the community's capability and capacity for supporting infrastructure such as water, sewer and transportation systems.

#### **Step Eight: Potential Product and Project Identification**

Through the previous steps the community learns the area's strengths and weaknesses, and has identified likely marketing opportunities. In step eight the community will reference this knowledge-base in identifying potentially acceptable tourism products and projects (i.e. develop new lodging facility(s), build water slide, expand community museum, clean-up community areas, etc.). These products and projects are then rated in terms of value to the tourist, economic return to the community, and probable impact on the local way of life. Those with the highest value to the tourist, greatest economic return, and the least negative impact on the local way of life will be selected for further exploration. The top rated product developments and projects will also be categorized as being either short term or long term efforts (those that could be initiated and completed immediately or within one year, and those which could be initiated soon, but with completion anticipated in three to five years or longer).

### **Step Nine: Initial Product and Project Scoping**

Once the potential products and projects have been identified and rated according to their overall benefit, the next step is to 'scope' them out. What is intended with a specific proposed product development or project? How large will it be? Who will be involved? What is the projected cost? When would it be completed? Committees will be formed to 'flesh-out' each of the selected products and projects.

### **Step Ten: Impact Analysis**

With the scoping process completed, impact analysis will be conducted to predict the probable economic, social, and environmental impacts of each selected product development and project. The analysis will suggest who or what may be positively impacted, and who or what may be adversely impacted from proposed community product developments and projects. The analysis processes will help the community determine which, if any, tourism product development or project should proceed. The analysis will be conducted by the community with expert consultant assistance.

### **Step Eleven: Project Development**

Project development plans will be prepared for specific product developments and projects selected as priorities at the conclusion of the impact analysis processes. The community will take the lead in preparing appropriate development plans which will outline what needs to be accomplished, by whom and by what date.

### **Step Twelve: Implementation, Management**

Referencing the development plan(s) prepared in step eleven, additional research and/or development efforts will be put into motion. Funding alternatives will be identified and the process of drafting business plans will be initiated. Community committees, with initial technical guidance and consultant expertise, will complete the necessary work of step twelve.

### **Step Thirteen: Marketing**

Marketing plans will be drafted by the community; consultant expertise will be available as needed.

### **Step Fourteen: Monitoring, Evaluating**

The community will assume on-going responsibility for projects identified and initiated as part of this program. Agency assistance will be available on an as-needed basis. The community will be encouraged to monitor and evaluate selected projects to ensure that acceptable levels of change to the community way of life are not exceeded.

