

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE for VISION WEST ND PLAN DIRECTORS

REPORT TO: REAP Investment Fund, Inc.

MONTH ENDING: April 2015

REPORTED BY: Deb Nelson, Karalea Cox

Technical assistance for the Plan Directors and counties in the VWND Region for the month of April focused on retreat planning, coordinating and hosting, a Funder's Forum Conference call with the USDA on the RDBG, newsletter preparation, communication, assistance with funding opportunities, plan director requests, gathering information from Plan Directors on projects and plans, conducting in-person visits for the week of April 13th, research, feedback from retreat attendees and the upcoming Western Rural Sustainable Grantees Gathering. Counties and Plan Directors actively seeking assistance in February were: Burke, Divide, Golden Valley, McHenry, Mercer, Stark, Ward and Williams. Plan Directors that have been in active communication with VWND TA are Burke, Divide, Dunn, Golden Valley, McHenry, Mountrail, Ward and Williams. Other Plan Directors are receiving emails, newsletters and phone calls.

Communication with Plan Directors in April focused on the Spring Retreat, funding, assistance with funding applications, opportunities to connect with potential funders through the Funders Forum, capacity building ideas, communicating with stakeholders and updating existing plans.

The Spring 2015 Technical Assistance Retreat held April 15 & 16 was well attended. When surveyed, all attendees that responded indicated that the retreat was positive or very positive! A copy of the agenda is attached, as well as the results from the Feedback Survey. There were 28 attendees and 10 counties represented. Resources from Don Macke's presentation and rural case studies from Deb Nelson's presentation were shared with attendees following the retreat. All logistics for the retreat were coordinated and finalized prior to the event. Reimbursements were recorded and checks were cut for all who requested travel reimbursement for the retreat.

Don Macke's presentation on Economic Diversification that was held during the Spring TA Retreat was recorded and placed on the website. All the counties' economic resources that he used in the presentation were also placed on the website.

Each of the representatives who attended the spring retreat in Minot were provided with a 2015 regional plan and 50 plan summaries. They were asked to put the summaries out in public places so they could be picked up by the public.

The newsletter in April focused on child care. There has been no feedback from any of the recipients on the newsletter.

On April 28, 2015, VWND TA hosted the third "Funders Forum." Dennis Rodin from the USDA was the "guest" funder. He was joined by Denise Johnson. They presented information about the new Rural Business Development Grant and then took questions from the attendees. There were 15 attendees representing 11 different organizations and/or counties. Five of the participants were Plan Directors. The call lasted about an hour.

Adams, Bowman, Dunn, Divide, and Golden Valley PD's report they have been meeting regularly. Personal visits with Williams county and Burke county were held. The Planning Department from Williams County has new staff and wants to be involved in VWND and the Technical Assistance opportunities provided by the Bush Community Innovation Grant. Since all of the Williams county staff are new, we spent some time explaining VWND, the regional plan, and the Williams County plan and planning process. Four staff members from Williams County attended the retreat. We visited Burke County and toured a few new projects. We also spent time with the Plan Director from McHenry County in organizing a planning/prioritizing day with all of the communities in McHenry County. The event was scheduled for April 18, but the Plan Director cancelled the meeting the day before due to "poor attendance."

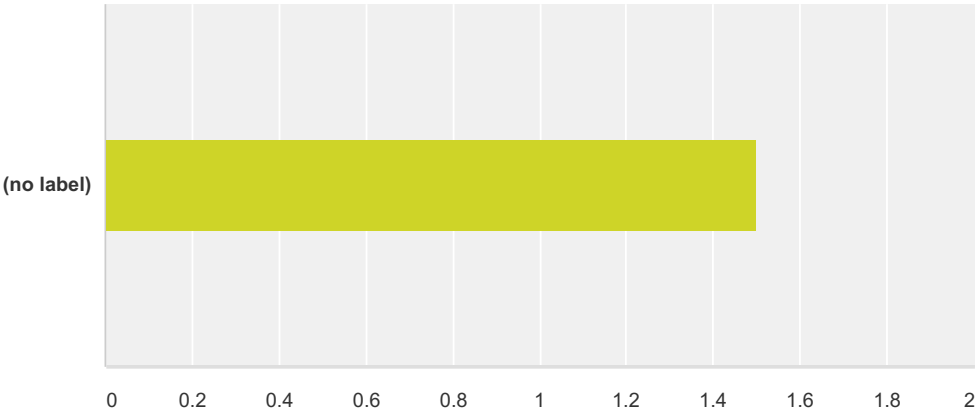
VWND TA is working on a newsletter focused on transportation. We are also attending the HUD Sustainable Communities Grantees Gathering in early May. The purpose is to bring back to the Plan Directors and VWND the information and opportunities for SCI Grantees in the future.

Deb attended the Bush Foundation reception held at the ND Historical Center in Bismarck on April 23. She visited with several of the people at the booths and gathered information on the Leadership Network Grant, Bush Fellowship, and Consensus Council's Community Innovation Grants.

After reviewing the budget, and because there have been requests for further training and networking opportunities from several of the plan directors, we have decided to hold a third retreat before the grant expires. More information will be provided as planning details are worked out.

Q1 How would you rate your overall experience at the Spring Retreat?

Answered: 12 Skipped: 1

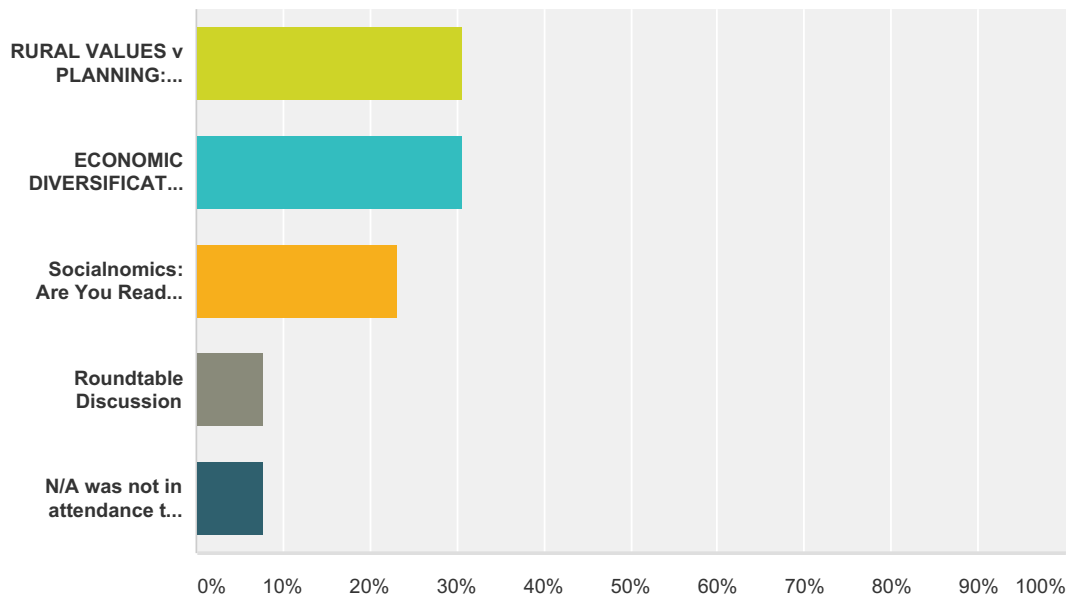


	Very Positive	Positive	Average	Could have been better	Was a waste of my time	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	12	1.50
	6	6	0	0	0		

VWND TA Spring Retreat Evaluation

Q2 Of the sessions offered on the first day, which one was the most valuable to you?

Answered: 13 Skipped: 0

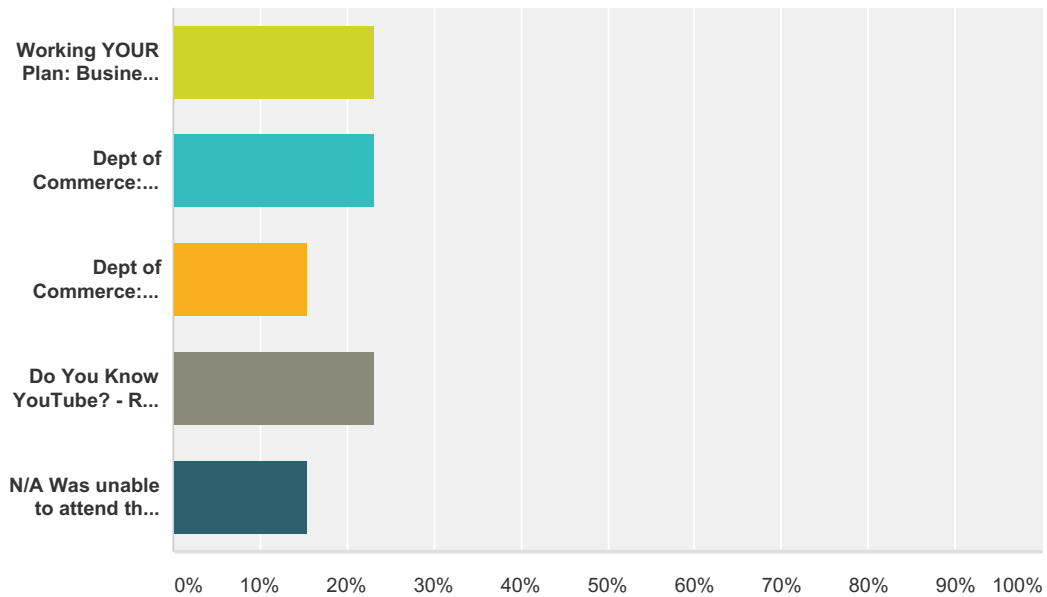


Answer Choices	Responses
RURAL VALUES v PLANNING: Cultural Clash or Cultural Harmony - Deb Nelson	30.77% 4
ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION: Foundational to Economic Prosperity - Don Macke	30.77% 4
Socialnomics: Are You Ready? - Katelin Dukart & Karalea Cox	23.08% 3
Roundtable Discussion	7.69% 1
N/A was not in attendance the first day.	7.69% 1
Total	13

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	And Economic Diversification primarily.	4/27/2015 2:52 PM

Q3 Of the sessions offered on the second day, which one was the most valuable to you?

Answered: 13 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
Working YOUR Plan: Business Retention & Expansion & Local/ Regional Tourism - karalea Cox	23.08%	3
Dept of Commerce: Business Retention & Expansion Services - Paul Lucy	23.08%	3
Dept of Commerce: Tourism - Dean Ihla	15.38%	2
Do You Know YouTube? - Russ Gagnon & Dakota College Photography Students	23.08%	3
N/A Was unable to attend the second day.	15.38%	2
Total		13

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	And both DOC presentations.	4/27/2015 2:52 PM

VWND TA Spring Retreat Evaluation

Q4 What was your single best "take away" from the retreat?

Answered: 10 Skipped: 3

#	Responses	Date
1	The handouts on the economic drivers	4/29/2015 4:06 PM
2	When you get a group of people like us together, there becomes a lot of collective wisdom that is available from the participants.	4/29/2015 10:12 AM
3	networking with the folks we don't get to see and work with often	4/28/2015 10:43 AM
4	planning is in our hands	4/28/2015 7:05 AM
5	Upstream....there is the boom and there is the "stuff" that can make a difference later	4/27/2015 3:54 PM
6	The econmic diversification by county	4/27/2015 3:35 PM
7	Loved that you brought in social media information, as I think that is so very important and a huge tool to use!	4/27/2015 3:00 PM
8	Reminder to get on Economic Diversification in our region.	4/27/2015 2:52 PM
9	All of it, it was excellent	4/27/2015 2:50 PM
10	Social media impact	4/27/2015 2:44 PM

VWND TA Spring Retreat Evaluation

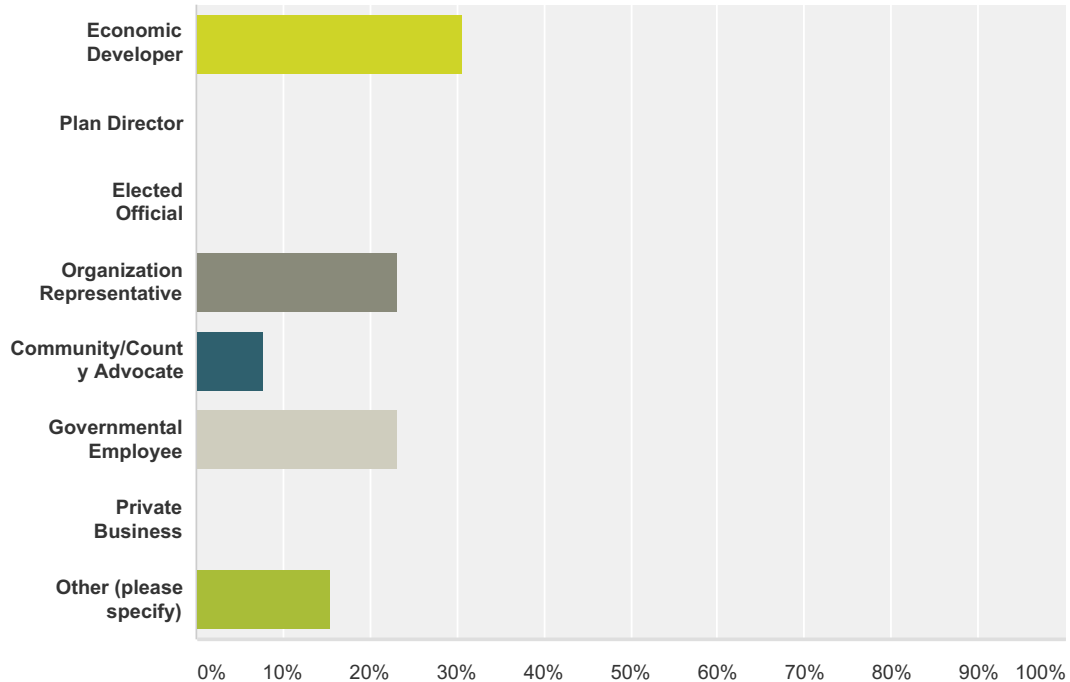
Q5 If you could change anything about the retreat, what is the ONE most important change you would make?

Answered: 9 Skipped: 4

#	Responses	Date
1	More about working the plan and educating us on which things are the most important trees in the forest.	4/29/2015 4:06 PM
2	Not having all our voting members stay for the ctually meeting was a bit frustrating to me personally. We all have conflicts at times, but I beleive I heard some lame excuses as to why people thought they needed to leave early. Not real professional if you ask me.	4/29/2015 10:12 AM
3	Hard question. Maybe better attendance.	4/28/2015 10:43 AM
4	location	4/28/2015 7:05 AM
5	nothing.	4/27/2015 3:54 PM
6	a	4/27/2015 3:46 PM
7	Always like to hear what is happening in the region - maybe more time for those reports	4/27/2015 3:35 PM
8	Room set up - more round table than classroom - I think it would increase interaction with attendees. Right now we see backs and for those not overly engaged yet there is no real relationship building except perhaps at the table.	4/27/2015 2:52 PM
9	Nothing, good cross section of information	4/27/2015 2:50 PM

Q6 How would you describe your role in the county, community or organization that you represent? You may choose more than one.

Answered: 13 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Economic Developer	30.77% 4
Plan Director	0.00% 0
Elected Official	0.00% 0
Organization Representative	23.08% 3
Community/County Advocate	7.69% 1
Governmental Employee	23.08% 3
Private Business	0.00% 0
Other (please specify)	15.38% 2
Total	13

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	can't choose more than one	4/29/2015 4:06 PM
2	could not choose more than one above...gov, comm advocate	4/27/2015 3:54 PM



Technical Assistance Retreat: Are You Ready?

April 15 & 16, 2015

Sleep Inn & Suites, 2400 10th Street SW

AGENDA

Day	Time	Topic	Presenter
April 15th	9:00 AM	Registration / Networking	
	9:30 AM	Welcome and Introductions	Karalea Cox, DLN Consulting
	10:00 AM	RURAL VALUES v. PLANNING: Cultural Clash or Cultural Harmony?	Deb Nelson, DLN Consulting
	12:00 PM	Lunch and Learn VWND Update	Buster Langowski & Deb Nelson
	1:00 PM	ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION Foundational to Economic Prosperity	Don Macke, Center for Rural Entrepreneurship
	2:30 PM	Socialnomics: Are You Ready?	Katelin Dukart & Karalea Cox
	4:00 PM	Catching Up: Roundtable Discussion	All Attendees
April 16th	9:00 AM	Working <i>YOUR</i> Plan Business Retention & Expansion & Local/ Regional Tourism	Karalea Cox
	9:30 AM	Dept of Commerce, Business Retention & Expansion Services	Paul Lucy, Director of Economic Development and Finance Division
	10:30 AM	Department of Commerce, Tourism	Dean Ihla, Tourism Development Manager
	11:30 PM	Lunch and Learn Networking	
	12:30 PM	Do You Know YouTube?	Russ Gagon, & Students, Minot State University

NEWSLETTER

Housing Issue



Vision
WEST ND

MARCH 5TH, 2015

ISSUE #4

In this Issue:

“Having the ability to articulate the need as it relates to financial performance is a conversation that can **move a project from concept to reality more quickly** since all partners can easily see the impact of their support.” Ray Ann Kilen, ND SBDC

This is the first issue of a series of newsletters that will look directly at an issue facing western North Dakota. This issue will look at housing- one of the top five areas identified in the VWND Regional Plan. Our featured article will look at the ND SBDC and how they can be a resource for you.



Mark Your Calendars! For Retreat 2015!

Plan Directors please mark your calendars for April 15th and 16th in Minot, ND. We are working on a jammed packed retreat this Spring you don't want to miss. Look forward to more updates!

Featured Article: ND Small Business Development Center

Are you looking for solutions to housing challenges?



SMALL BUSINESS
DEVELOPMENT CENTER
NORTH DAKOTA

The ND SBDC can provide assistance to small businesses, entrepreneurs, building developers, contractors and economic development professionals who are working to address housing challenges. In western North Dakota both Keith Olson (Williston Region) and Ray Ann Kilen (Dickinson Region) can assist with development of the financial pro formas through which a project can be evaluated for financial fitness such as debt capacity and cash flow. Utilizing standardized tools available to build financial projections, Keith and Ray Ann bring additional knowledge on the localized resources available that can positively impact the overall financial performance of an affordable housing project such as HIF, FlexPACE and other incentive programs. Through developing a baseline understanding of the project's financial performance the ND SBDC can help the housing developer or partner evaluate the number of affordable units and their pricing structure that a project can sustain complemented with market rent units to find a financing strategy. Both Keith and Ray Ann engage frequently with partner resources to strategize access to the resources available, whether they be through the Bank of North Dakota, ND Housing Finance Agency or local community resources. Applications and assistance on completion and submission is also available. The services are free to small business clients and are available by appointment.

Featured Article: ND Small Business Development Center (continued)

Where does this all fit in developing affordable housing? These services move the conversation from a concept plan to an implementation plan by providing the developer who will ultimately be charged with building the project, carrying the debt and renting the units with a comprehensive look at the impacts of their financial strategies and provide assurance and



guidance with access to the resources that make these projects work – if they can.

When should you refer a developer to an SBDC? When the developer has a pretty good outline of the costs associated with the project: Land, Construction, Equipment, Revenue & Expense assumptions. At this point in the journey the ND SBDC can assist with evaluating varying financial scenarios to quickly and reliably coach the developer to understand “how it could work”. Once the significant success factors are identified these financial assumptions can be used to build support for economic incentives and financing supports.

Here’s an example: Wanna Build It Company comes to a local developer to understand how to partner building affordable housing in a community or for a specific workforce need. Discussion takes place about how the community can help Wanna Build It Company by providing land and ensuring that the units have a market and are full. Wanna Build It Company has heard about the Housing Incentive Fund but doesn’t understand how it works or what they need to do to get to those funds. They’ve also heard about FlexPACE but don’t understand the process as it relates to the community’s local share and “how it works” but they want to build affordable housing for their community. A lot of conversations happen with planning and “what if” conversations and local leaders are approached for their support with a gift of land or local share on FlexPACE but they are met with resistance. The financial projections developed can clearly show the impact and importance of these partner investments in the project. Having the ability to articulate the need as it relates to financial performance is a conversation that can move a project from concept to reality more quickly since all partners can easily see the impact of their support – whether it be land, interest buy down or other local incentives. Often what we observe is that companies like Wanna Build It Company want the incentives to help them but can’t clearly show “why” these incentives make the project work – or are adverse to even looking at these projects as they perceive they can’t work because they’ve done their rough budgeting – not considering or even aware of what might be available to support the project. Taking the conversation from discussion to clearly articulated “tools” changes the ability of Wanna Build It Company. With the assistance of the ND SBDC companies gain the necessary supports and ultimately move to financing – which at the end of the day drives whether they project can go or not.



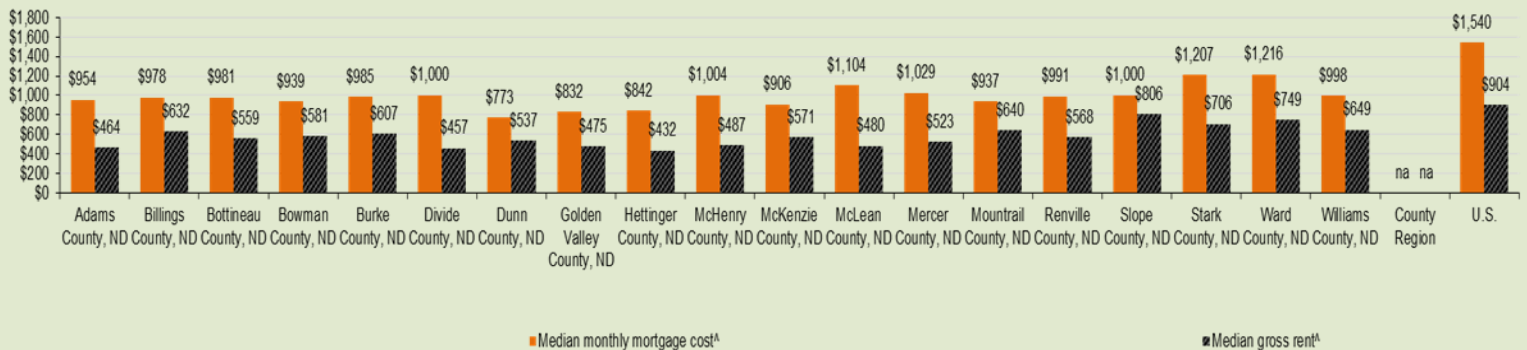
Keith Olson can be reached at keith.r.olson@willistonstate.edu.
Ray Ann Kilen can be reached at rayann.kilen@dickinsonstate.edu.

Did You Know? – Telling the Housing Story

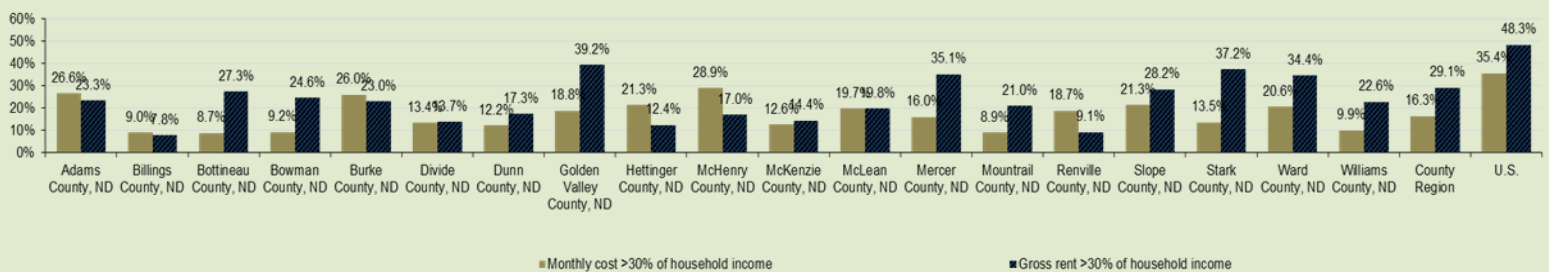
- 10 of the Counties in the VWND Region had 3.0 % or more population growth due to net migration from 2012 to 2013. Check out this interactive map for more information on your county. <http://storymaps.esri.com/stories/2014/census-county-population-change/#>
- According to the U.S. Dept of Commerce (2013):
 - In the 2009-2013 period, the U.S. had the highest estimated monthly gross rent for renter-occupied homes (\$904), and Hettinger County, ND had the lowest (\$432).
 - In the 2009-2013 period, the U.S. had the highest estimated monthly mortgage costs for owner-occupied homes (\$1,540), and Dunn County, ND had the lowest (\$773).

For more information checkout <http://headwaterseconomics.org/> and download the free Socioeconomic Profiles software to see your county or the regions housing statistics.

Median Monthly Mortgage Costs and Gross Rent, 2013*



Housing Costs as a Percent of Household Income, 2013*



Calendar

Friday March 13, 2015-VWND University of Pennsylvania Focus Group – The Strom Center. Dr. Coston will formally welcome the University of Pennsylvania group to Dickinson and Dickinson State University. Consortium members who plan to participate may join in that 9:15 AM session. The Focus Group will formally meet from 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM MST.

Friday March 13, 2015 – VWND Consortium Meeting via a one-hour conference call starting at 1:00 PM mst/2:00 PM cst.



Announcement:

A group will be attending the “Climate & Economic Resilience” convening in Boston at the end of March. Five local plan directors – Mark Resner, KayCee Lindsey, Carie Boster, Teran Doerr, and Deb Walworth – along with Shirley Brentrup will be attending.



ABOUT US

visionwestnd.com ~ 701.483.2801 ~ 2493 4th Ave. W Dickinson, ND 58601 ~ visionwest@dlnconsulting.com

NEWSLETTER

child care issue

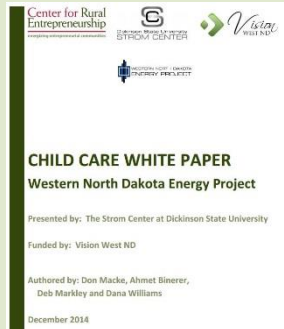


April 27, 2015

Issue # 5

The Continuing Challenges of Child Care

This issue of the Vision West ND Technical Assistance Newsletter is devoted primarily to Child Care. Child Care was identified as one of the top priorities for the Region during the Sustainable Communities Planning Phase. While there has been considerable progress made in identifying the issue and local successes in addressing the issue, there is still work to be done. Most of the material in this issue comes from the Child Care White Paper developed by the Western North Dakota Energy Project (WNDEP) and supported by VWND and the Strom Center at Dickinson State University. It is available in its entirety at <http://www.visionwestnd.com/documents/ChildCareWhitePaper.pdf>. It is evident from the Child Care White Paper that key stakeholders must continue to come together to address this issue. Leadership and participation in the discussion are the primary factors needed to find solutions.



Is Child Care Just Old News?

As a leader in your community, you may feel as if this issue has lost momentum or that people are discouraged and just don't care. WNDEP has identified five stakeholder groups that do-or at least should-care about Child Care. Assisting your community in understanding how Child Care impacts them personally may help you to renew interest and action in this important issue.

Parents – Care Givers – Educators – Employers – Communities

Parents – continue to struggle to find child care services.

Care Givers - private sector child care investment may continue to be constrained until there is a revenue model that covers costs and enables a reasonable risk-adjusted return on investment.

Educators - First, educators have a stake in increasing the quality of early childhood education so that those entering elementary school are ready to learn and succeed. Second, educators are committed to the health, safety and success of their students. Issues of inadequate pre- and after-school care, weekend care and vacation care are concerns and may impact the ability of students to stay in school and succeed.

Employers - The struggle of employers (both energy and non-energy) to secure workers, particularly long-term workers and their families, is well documented and substantiated by the low unemployment rates in the region. The child care challenge that leaders across the region have acknowledged makes these workforce challenges even more limiting as employers try to attract employees who they hope will establish roots in the region and stay in their jobs for some time to come.

Communities - Attracting permanent workers and their families is a challenge in the Bakken environment. Communities must consider what mix of services, including child care, will contribute to attracting and keeping these working families.



ND Child Care Professionals

www.childcarend.com

This is a great site for anyone in your community needing more information on child care. This can help with questions on licensing, size and trainings. Created with funding from Vision West ND.

ND Child Care
Professionals

ChildCare Aware of North Dakota

www.ndchildcare.org

Another tool that can be used to answer questions about childcare in North Dakota. Check out the new blog!

www.childcareaware.areavoices.com



The Right-Sized Solution

The lack of comprehensive research coupled with the very dynamic nature of the Bakken energy boom makes it very difficult to estimate the size and nature of private and public funding necessary to meet the need for child care facilities and programs in the region. Western North Dakota has struggled with other funding gaps including those related to roads, education, housing and other infrastructure needs. The child care situation is no different. To arrive at sound solutions, first, there is a need for additional research to better define the funding gap related to facilities, programs and qualified care givers. Second, there is an opportunity to evaluate innovative and creative solutions being implemented in other regions. Remember, all across America, parents, communities, employers and states are striving for solutions. The smart solutions optimize both public and private investments into child care. Finally, there is evidence, based on our review of research and interviews, that current state investments are inadequate to meet funding needs in the near term. The most vexing of the funding problems is raising compensation and cost of living support related to attracting and retaining child care workers. As a result, increasing subsidies will likely be required.

Getting to the “right” solutions is often as much about the process as it is about the solution itself. The building blocks of this process include the following sequence of actions:

1. Researching and documenting the child care challenge in the region;
2. Exploring possible solutions, and their costs, being explored in other similar places; and
3. Creating a “right-sized” approach for adapting solutions to the realities of the region.



News from the Vision West ND Child Care Committee

The child care committee met in early March via conference call. They met to discuss how they wanted to effectively move forward as a group. The committee agreed to initiate work on four of the 10 recommendations of the Regional Plan.

The recommendations chosen were :

- **Recommendation 5.** Monitor/Adjust Financial Incentives for Child Care.
 - Discussed framing Child Care providers/teachers as essential workers.
 - Continue to monitor legislative issues related to Child Care and report relevant developments.
 - Lead KayCee Lindsey
- **Recommendation 6.** Encourage k-12 and Higher Education to collaborate on Program Development to bring students into the Child Care Career Pipeline.
 - Investigate the ability to integrate this discussion into Regional Career and Tech programs
 - Lead Russ Gagnon
- **Recommendation 9.** Increase the capitalization of the Child Care Grant Program through Oil-impacted Counties.
 - All agreed that it is important to continue to promote and support the use of the ND Commerce Department facility grants and help to develop and find additional local funding for facilities and established providers.
 - No lead established
- **Recommendation 10.** Study the challenges of existing State Child Care Programs to determine effectiveness and viability.
 - Investigate the existing facility types and discuss successes/issues/roadblocks to present status. Example of Corcoran School in Williston - <http://www.corcoranschool.com/> was discussed.
 - Neil may engage students in this process. Carie will approach Child Care Aware.
 - Lead Carrie Boster & Neil Sharpe

The Child Care committee was formed by the Vision West ND Consortium. Members include Carie Boster, KayCee Lindsey, Neil Sharpe and Russ Gagnon. Carie Boster is the lead representative of the committee.

Calendar

Funders Forum

USDA – Rural Business Development Grant, Tuesday, April 27, 2015, 2:00 pm CDT

Conference Dial-in Number: (530) 881-1000

Participant Access Code: 596832#



Shale Energy Supply Chain Sustainability Workshop (flyer attached.)

Did you know?

- FY 2014 Total State K-12 Spending = \$911 Million
- FY 2014 Household Spending on Child Care = \$127 Million
- Child Care as a Percent of K-12 Spending = 14%
- Current Biennium Enhanced State Child Care Funding = \$10 Million
- Annual Enhanced State Funding as a Percent of Household Child Care Spending = 7.9%

CHILD CARE

Childcare is a workforce issue not a social services issue
in western North Dakota

ND needs to create space for 21,000 more children,
or nearly 1600 spaces per year by 2025

Increase capitalization of Child Care Grant Program

Address childcare business model; create innovative
solutions for opening/running a facility

Think teacher instead of babysitter for a childcare
provider/professional

Open communication between licensing agencies,
regulatory agencies and developers



Contact us at www.visionwestnd.com