August 15, 2011

Evaluation of Services & Direction

Background:

In August 2010, the director position for the Champion REAP Alliance was vacated. The parent organization, the REAP Investment Fund, Inc., chose not to fill that position. This decision was in part due to the question of whether the Champion REAP Alliance was a functioning group and should the existing format be continued, altered, or spun off.

The previous Champion REAP Alliance Director had indicated the agendas of the group had not enticed the membership and efforts to get a quorum at meetings was unsuccessful for a long period of time which led to a long lapse in meetings. Past membership, primarily community/economic developers, informed the members of the REAP Investment Fund that they felt the group had value for them. The past director did provide grant writing. The mini-grant program provided $500 grants for community projects and the *Rural Development Day* at the Capitol was a very successful event.

In May of 2011, the REAP Investment Fund, Inc. began this exploration of services and direction concerning the future of the Champion REAP Alliance. The REAP Investment Fund, Inc. contracted with SJB Consulting of Dickinson to address the following scope of work:

1. Create a steering committee for advice, support and interaction concerning small rural community development and small rural business needs and the tasks under this scope of work.
2. Explore existing networks such as EDND, Rural Development Council, SCORE, Center for Innovation, Center for Technology in Business and possibly others to disseminate their work and to determine gaps in services or any inability, reluctance, or barriers they have to serving rural areas. This exploration should also determine if there are opportunities for new partnerships.
3. Interview rural economic developers to investigate areas of need and concerns as well as determine any individual contributions available such as personal expertise which can be available to other developers or groups such as grant writing, guarantees, or program expertise, etc.
4. Provide a final report from the steering committee to the REAP Investment Board with recommendations for future actions.
5. Create methods and procedures for possible tasks identified in this scope of work if requested.

Report Summary

The execution of this work plan resulted in an important conversation that was not anticipated at the onset of this research. In addition to exploring the future of the Champion REAP Alliance and a probable work plan, this research presents the basics of good development practice and by default focused on the collaborative work of the economic development community in North Dakota. In many ways, it sets the stage for future conversations in development to strengthen the strong partnership we all share towards North Dakota's future.

This report is derived from the contributions of the sub-committee directing this scope of work, individual interviews with development staff working in North Dakota and a recent web-based developer survey. It is the hope of the sub-committee that the reader takes the time to read the entire report and by doing so catches the threads of this conversation.

It is also important to note the supportive response of the development community. Nineteen people were interviewed and each was more than willing to enter into a frank and direct conversation about development. Forty-six people responded with a willingness to be part of a mentoring program and of those, 35 people identified 51 areas of expertise. Others want to continue the conversation on important topics and some quickly offered to partner on specific needs.

At face value, the identified work plan being presented to the REAP Investment Fund represents a list of tasks, tools and services to support development work and increase knowledge and communication. Individually, the elements of the work plan aren't impressive ideas nor do they represent new or extremely creative ideas. Most are basic supports. Many tasks just need initial work or development and they need a home where they can reside and be accessed with some updating every now and then.

The subcommittee would like to continue to be involved in the implementation of the work plan recommended here and be recognized as the Champion REAP Alliance. They recommend the items in the work plan be bid in a fair competition under a request for proposal.

We would like to acknowledge the following agencies and staff for their help in this report. They are the USDA Rural Development State Office and their Dickinson Office, NDSU Extension Service Center for Community Vitality, North Dakota Department of Commerce Division of Community Services and the Economic Development Association of North Dakota.

Proposed Work Plan for consideration by the REAP Investment Board

1. Write a basic adaptable work plan for development corporations and job development authorities
2. Develop a presentation for funding sources like cities and counties on what developers do and what supports, tools, and direction are needed.
3. Assemble a web-based list of experienced facilitators and speakers
4. Assemble a web-based list of consultants or researchers by issues of experience
5. Create a Best Practices web page
6. Create or enhance an existing development based website to include (a) mentorship between developers by listing areas of expertise (beginning with surveyed volunteers); (b) a listing of development groups that have worked with specific programs successfully; and (c) include an area within the site where developers can "shout out" questions to the membership and other participating developers. The purpose of the "shout out" format is mentorship and for assistance to find business to business mentorship assistance.
7. Work to identify and create regional development groups throughout North Dakota in areas where they do not exist
8. Assist agencies and developers to hold meetings and workshops by webinar and identify the cost of this service to the agency or attendee; and identify the location, contact information and other pertinent details for all available interactive video systems and the approximate cost
9. Enhance and revive the One Stop review of projects by state & federal agencies
10. Create a 10 minute video/primer series that can be used at local meetings or played on community access channels to inform the public of how specific development programs work
11. Investigate and write a promotional piece on why small communities are important to North Dakota.

Items for Continued Discussion by the Community/Economic Development Community

It is hoped that this document and the contributions of all those surveyed and interviewed will lead to discussions on the items that are not addressed in the work plan. Some of those items include the following:

Information – it is all too much. Can we disseminate community/economic development information in a different manner?

What information and data do communities and counties in oil producing counties need in their decision making? And how can it be assembled and accessed?

Business networks – what do we have so far and what more do we need?

Is there funding for more one-on-one business counseling?

Should there be a regional level of development or statewide developers to work on

statewide problems and opportunities? And how could such levels be funded?

What do communities need to do to be proactive rather that reactive?

How can communities share or collaborate more (labor, purchasing, services)?

What are other states doing in development and what is working for them?

Legacy funding? How can we mobilize efforts in western North Dakota to raise investment and venture capital for sustainable development?

How do small rural communities level the playing field in community/economic development? How can agencies and organizations help?

Scope of Work

Work Plan Item 1. *Create a steering committee for advice, support and interaction concerning small rural community development and small rural business needs and the tasks under this scope of work.*

The following people were identified as the steering committee:

Brenda Dissette Foster, Executive Director, Rugby Job Development Authority
Melanie Bauer Dukart, Area Specialist, USDA Rural Development Dickinson
Patti Perry, Executive Director, Slope County JDA
Patricia Bowen, Executive Director, Ellendale Jobs Development Authority
Carol Goodman, Exec. Director, Cavalier County Jobs Development Authority
Diane Olson, Director, Bottineau Economic Development Corporation
Josh Kramer, Community Project Specialist, USDA Rural Development State Office
Becky Meidinger, Executive Director, Cooperstown/Griggs Economic Dev. Corp.
Art Wanner, REAP Investment Fund Board Member

This group met on May 25th, June 17th, June 22nd, July 2nd, August 2 and August 16th.

A primary decision of the group was to look at economic development activities from a statewide perspective and to target a task based work plan that would have benefits to the entire economic development community. The work plan would have three primary components – individual interviews, a web based survey and the identification of partnerships.

The sub-committee had a list of possible tasks based on their own experiences and needs and presented those within the survey. These included new or more deliberate avenues for mentorship for developers, business to business mentorship, a library of Best Practices, and presentations to economic development funding sources like city and county commissions.

Other concerns to be included in the survey were inquiries into whether economic development personnel had good wages and medical insurance. In addition, questions would be asked about education levels and years of experience.

Work Plan Item 2. *Explore existing networks such as EDND, Rural Development Council, SCORE, Center for Innovation, Center for Technology in Business and possibly others to disseminate their work and to determine gaps in services or any inability, reluctance, or barriers they have to serving rural areas. This exploration should also determine if there are opportunities for new partnerships.*

The sub-committee identified a list of North Dakota development agencies as the targets for agency interviews. In addition, several others representing development agencies and those involved in REAP were interviewed.

Those interviewed were:

Don Frye, Economic Development Consultant for Otter Tail Power Company

JoAnn Rodenbiker, Economic Development Consultant, Northern Plains Electric Cooperative

Kathy Tweeten, Director of the NDSU Extension Service Center for Community Vitality

Deb Eslinger, Executive Director for the Center for Technology and Business

Cindy Sanford, State Outreach Specialist for the Center for Technology and Business

Dale Van Eckhout, Business Program Director for the USDA Rural Development State Office

Bill Davis, Deputy State Director for the USDA Rural Development State Office

Dr. Lana Rakow, Director for the UND Center for Community Engagement

Bon Wikenheiser, State Director of the Small Business Development Center

Lynette Flage, Horizons Project Director, NDSU Extension Service Center for Community Vitality

Bruce Govig, Entrepreneur Coach & Director of the Center for Innovation

Paul Griffin, Deputy Director of the Consensus Council, Inc.

Paul Govig, Director of the Division of Community Services, North Dakota Department of Commerce

Marvin Erdmann, Chairman of the Bismarck Chapter of the Service Corp of Retired Volunteers

Gaylon Baker, Executive Vice President for Stark Development Corporation and President for the Economic Development Association of North Dakota

Paul Lucy, Director of Economic Development & Finance Division, North Dakota Department of Commerce

Pat Downs, Cooperative Development Specialist for North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives

Paul D. Markel, PhD, Professor of Psychology, Minot State University Department of Addiction Studies, Psychology and Social Work, Great Plains Center for Community Research & Service

Carissa Richter, Administrator for the Economic Development Association of North Dakota

Overall, the interviews were positive and *all* of those interviewed had a genuine concern for good development practices and want to see North Dakota communities to succeed.

On the topic of economic developers, those interviewed had many comments on what local developers need and what they need to know. They also had ideas for collaborative efforts within North Dakota's development community. The conversations often moved toward energy development and for this reason a short list of comments and ideas on energy development are also included.

The attachment, *Agency Interviews*, provides a brief synopsis of each interview. Reading the interview notes will provide a more in-depth view of each conversation which resulted in the comments and ideas presented here. The order in which the comments are presented are meant to provide a flow of ideas but not to give emphasis or importance of one comment over another.

What do local developers need to know?

1. Agencies really do appreciate local developers. It is more challenging to implement programs and workshops in communities without developers.
2. Communication, planning & implementation are key.
3. Local development groups need to have a written plan or action plan. The plan should be what the community or work area wants to get done.
4. Attend to the more mundane elements like knowing your housing, infrastructure, zoning, etc. These need to be on the agenda at every meeting. Know if you have water, sewer, and zoning, etc., in place or not.
5. Begin a succession plan if your current developer is retiring. Boards should be looking for people with good skills for networking and implementation - people who pick up the phone and interact with people they don't know. A college degree isn't absolutely necessary.
6. Have a loan program for existing businesses in your area. It supports buy-in for your development group.
7. Your EDC or JDA should be in partnership with community leaders to create more revenues for your community, not in competition for tax dollars.
8. Know the Century Code. Abide by open meeting and records. The Century Code allows a JDA to own, rent, buy and borrow.
9. Board members will take their role seriously with good fundamentals – meet regularly, update articles & bylaws, have good agendas & board trainings.
10. Attend the League of Cities meetings.
11. Stay in contact with your local businesses. Do surveys or attend luncheons.
12. Know what is going on in the community and what is coming up.
13. Get resources for training and be prepared up front. EDND provides $500 per member organization per year for training and provides a listing of approved trainings.
14. Revisit Economics 101 and Political Science 101. Developers need to know how an economy works and how governments work.
15. For new developers – initially pick areas from your plan where you can be successful.

Continued: What do local developers need to know?

16. Leaders should share everything.
17. Don't look at other communities as your competition. Learn or emulate.
18. Use local access channels to educate businesses and communities

Many suggestions were made concerning topics that could use some discussion or that could direct tasks for North Dakota's development community as a whole:

1. We need to do a better job of teaching communities how to do economic development with basic information on financing, leveraging and packaging loans.
2. We need to get more information to students on entering the trades.
3. An updated Best Practices web site would be very useful.
4. Finds ways to update and revive the One Stop review of agency projects.
5. Regional development groups like SW Developers should be emulated throughout the state. Two other similar groups are the Devil's Lake Regional Partnership and the South Central Economic & Tourism Developers.
6. More mentorship opportunities for developers and businesses.
7. We should begin discussions on whether to establish a level of regional development working closely with communities and development organizations on the more complicated projects or shared issues throughout the state.
8. We can do a better job of meeting technologically. That redistributes the cost for outlying areas to attend statewide meetings.
9. Access to information is great. But it is all too much. The problem is dissemination of information.
10. Create 10 minute videos on state funding programs. Developers need information to educate their boards, chambers and businesses on what funding and services are out there and how they work.
11. Create an informational piece on how projects are "packaged".
12. Establish more or new business networks.
13. Find funding or avenues for more one-on-one counseling for businesses.
14. Better coordination of data and information for community decision making.
15. Volunteer developers are often intimidated by the paid development community. Presenters use too many acronyms. The paid community developers know each other well and this can make volunteers feel like outsiders.
16. Volunteer developers and community based development groups need training, too.

On the topic of communities the interviewees had these statements:

1. A more *regional* focus on solving issues is needed.
2. Many communities are reactionary.
3. Small communities need to create other levels of communication within their community (note that the UND Center for Community Engagement reported 17 non-profits in one very small town and that 87% of North Dakota communities are under 1000 in population.).
4. Small towns need more efficiencies and collaboration between towns.
5. Is there a way for communities to share information and learn from one another? Example: What road surfacing products really work? Can communities collaborate more on labor, purchases and services.
6. Communities need access to research, planning, and data to determine needs and feasibility.
7. Communities need business retention strategies.
8. A resource bank of good facilitators, grant writers, consultants, planners, and speakers, etc. is needed.
9. We need to show why small communities are important to North Dakota.
10. Rural communities need extra support and help. Urban communities have larger sales tax incomes to drive successful development programs plus they have universities, businesses and access. It is not a level playing field for rural developers and rural communities. Leadership can overcome a lot but not all of these things.
11. Older volunteers are involved in many groups and are often lifetime volunteers. Younger volunteers seem more project specific and then move on to something else.

Many interviews included energy development needs:

1. How do communities continue to look at economic development broadly as though energy development isn't there - the motivation to create diversified sustainable jobs that are not stuck on one sector?
2. Not all communities are doing well with energy development or have the same resources. Energy development can be exciting to communities but they have to know when to say no.
3. We have gone from excess workforce and low wages to low workforce and high wages. It is a different than what we know and we have to change to attract long-term good business to our areas.
4. Oil impact communities need planners.
5. There is social poverty meaning due to the influx of people and businesses, the social part of communities can no longer respond as they would like or as they need to – good fire department, too many fires.
6. Oil impact did get legislative help but many living there are further impacted by rising costs for goods and labor, dust, and dangerous [roads].
7. More effort is needed to capture legacy funds for institutions, development capital and venture capital in western North Dakota.

Opportunities for New Partnerships:

For most of the agencies interviewed, staffing and funding were issues. Federal employee wages were frozen last year and continued federal cuts to programs are being announced. For example, the USDA BNI Guarantee limit of $25 million will now be $10 million.

Many of the agencies interviewed are working on the issues stated above or are willing to assist or partner in whatever ways they can. The Center for Technology can provide webinar assistance to agencies to reduce travel time and costs to attend meetings. This past year, their CRASH Course provided workforce information (professional and trades) at nine sites to parents and their children in grades 7-12. They do a limited amount of one-on-one business counseling. They have helped development groups with initial work plans for new developers. It should be noted that developers stated their costs of to attend a meeting in Bismarck were $200 to $400.

Horizons was a successful program and the NDSU Extension Service is looking for more funding. The NDSU Center for Community Vitality has developed a business retention and expansion training. Several economic developers and community volunteers have gone through their successful 18 month Rural Leadership North Dakota training. NDSU Extension is working to fund a shorter four-week community based program.

The North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives does have a two person development office. They sometimes fill the role of developer in communities without paid development staff on specific business opportunities. However, they are limited by their own funding and scope of work.

The UND Center for Community Engagement is working with several small towns. They have a web based forum for community discussion and engagement which has some Best Practices but it is understaffed. This group has begun discussions on non-credit on-line courses for community volunteers.

The Small Business Development Centers works closely with community/economic developers and do provide some developer trainings.

The Minot State University Great Plains Center for Community Research and Service is working under a federal grant to work with northwestern North Dakota communities to articulate challenges and solutions, involve students, and in that process, promote those communities as viable places for students to live. They are creating a database of economic and demographic information to assist in decision making for social development. Few current resources exist to provide data for community decision making and for funding sources.

EDND doesn't have paid staff beyond a part-time administrator but they are interested and willing to use their web site for work on web-based mentorship ideas for developers and businesses. Their administrator believes their web site has the ability to request

mentorship or services between developers by emailing questions, etc. They are also working on a listing of programs and services available on their website and are working to provide developer names to that listing of those with experience in those programs. Their website may also be a conduit for confidential requests for business-to-business mentors.

Work Plan Item 3. *Interview rural economic developers to investigate areas of need and concerns as well as determine any individual contributions available such as personal expertise which can be available to other developers or groups such as grant writing, guarantees, or program expertise, etc.*

The sub-committee decided on a developer survey as the means to address Work Plan Item 3. The NDSU Extension Center for Community Vitality allowed the use of their subscription to Survey Monkey for this purpose and provided technical assistance. The Department of Commerce Division of Community Services emailed an invitation to participate in the survey on July 15th to 241 email addresses from their contact database of Local Economic Development Professionals. This listing included persons identified as professional developers, volunteer developers, cities and counties (http://www.business.nd.gov/searchcenter/localdevelopers).

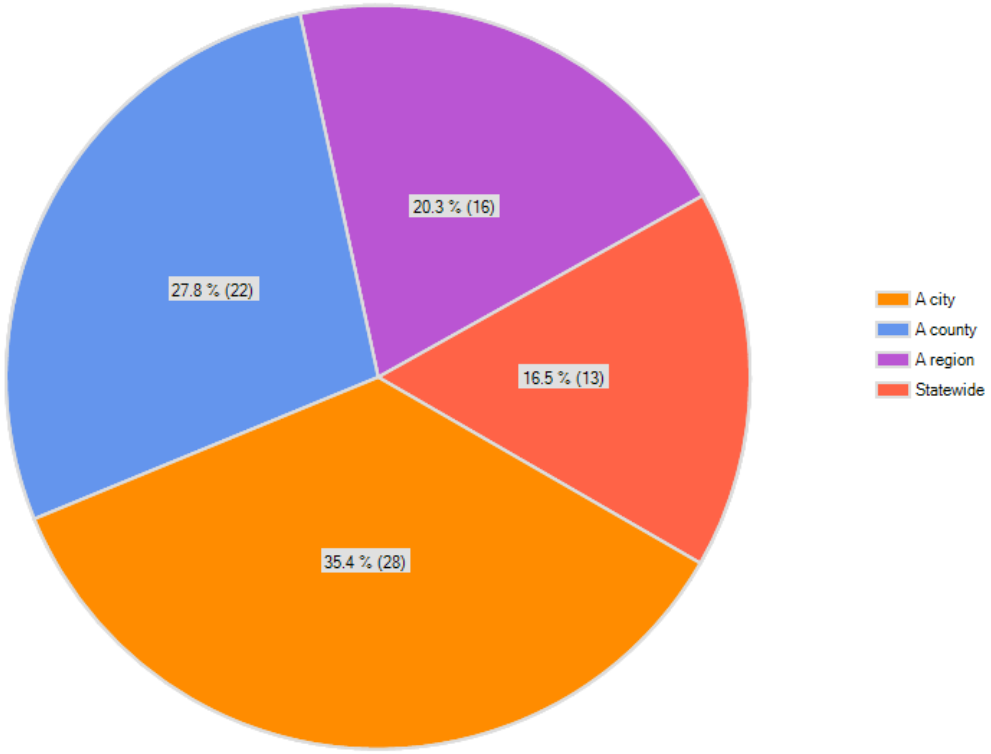
Reminders were emailed to the membership of EDND on July 19 and persons on the USDA Rural Development "Tools" email listing were sent a reminder on July 18th. A full copy of the ND Developer Survey is found in the appendix.

It should be noted the results of the survey are not statistically valid numbers. Statistically valid surveys require the data base be pared down (for example every fifth name is selected) and then every effort is made to get a response from only those selected names. Since the purpose of this survey was to gather responses from all persons in the community/economic development arena in North Dakota, the data collected is valuable to the collector and therefore not a perfect representation of the industry surveyed.

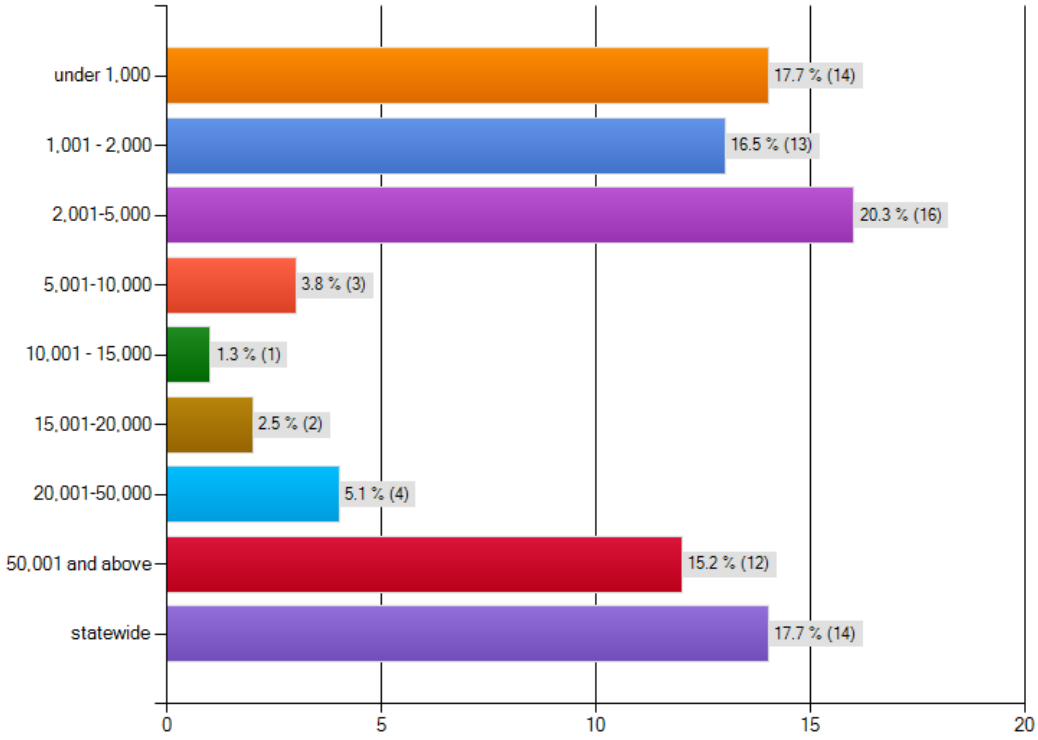
Eighty persons (33%) responded to the survey. Each respondent then was guided by skip logic. This is a term that simply means if they responded to a certain question with an answer that indicates the next few questions do not concern them, they logically go to the next question that does concern them.

In most cases, the number of people responding to each question is available in the chart or graph presented. For example, in the first chart "Which answer best describes your work area?" 79 people answered the question. *It is this group of 79 people that are represented in the pie chart.* Of those people, 35.4% of respondents or 28 respondents chose a city as their work area. Twenty-two people or 27.8% chose a county as their work area. Sixteen people (20.3%) considered their work area a region and thirteen respondents (16.5%) chose a statewide work area. Therefore, 100% of the 79 responses are graphed not the 80 people mentioned above.

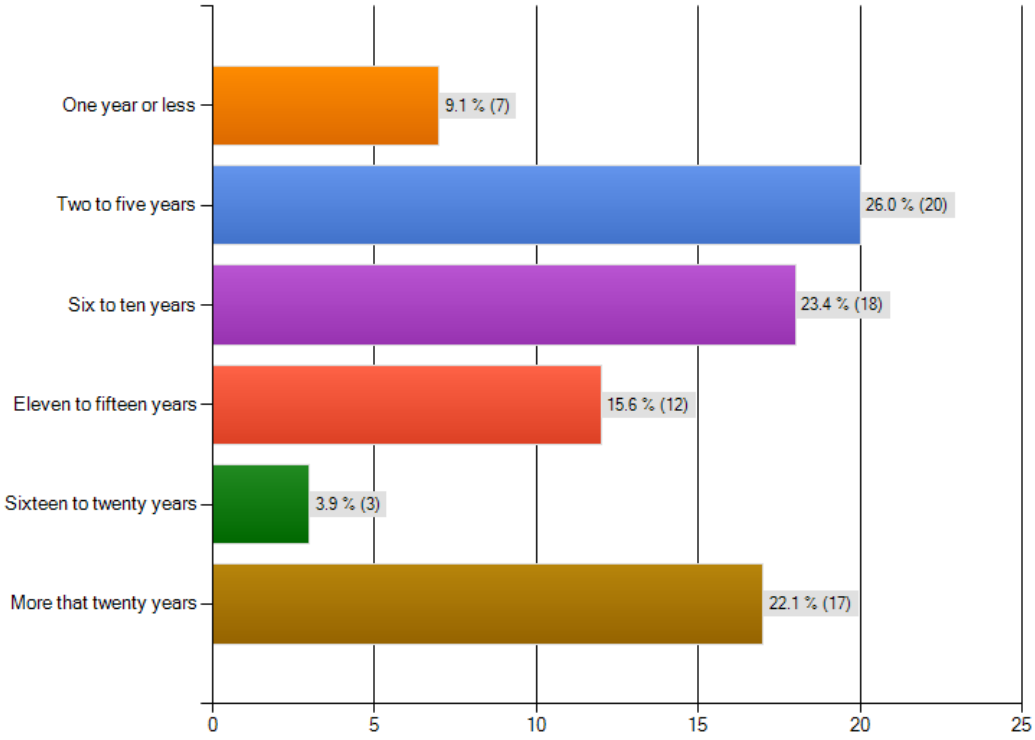
Which answer best describes your work area?



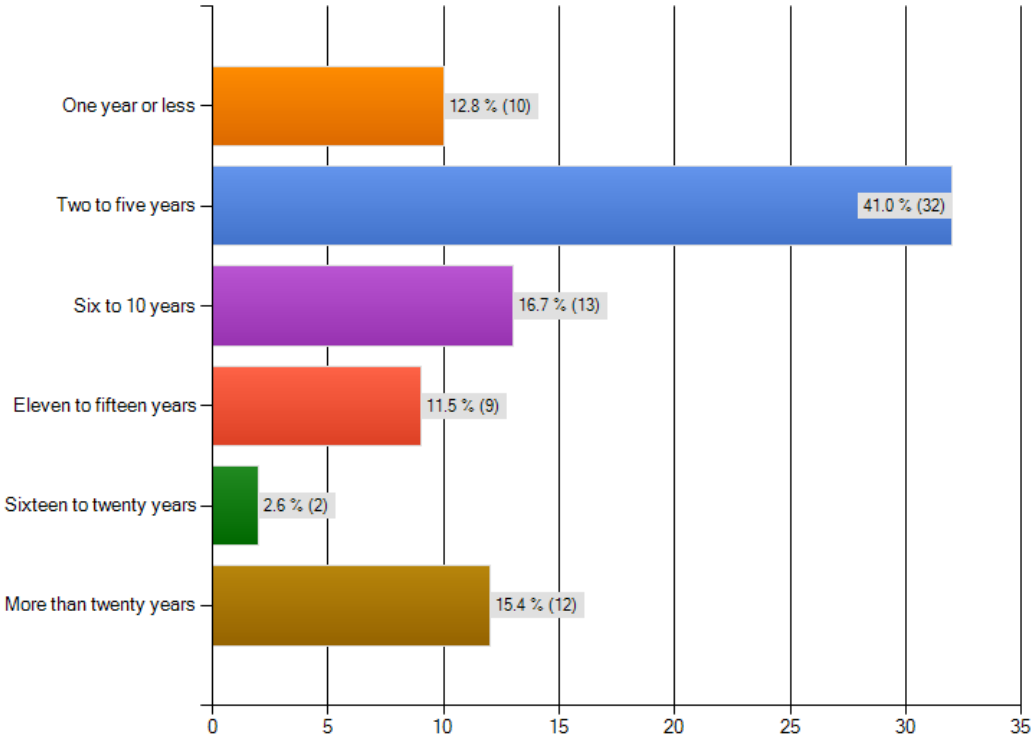
What is the population of your work area?



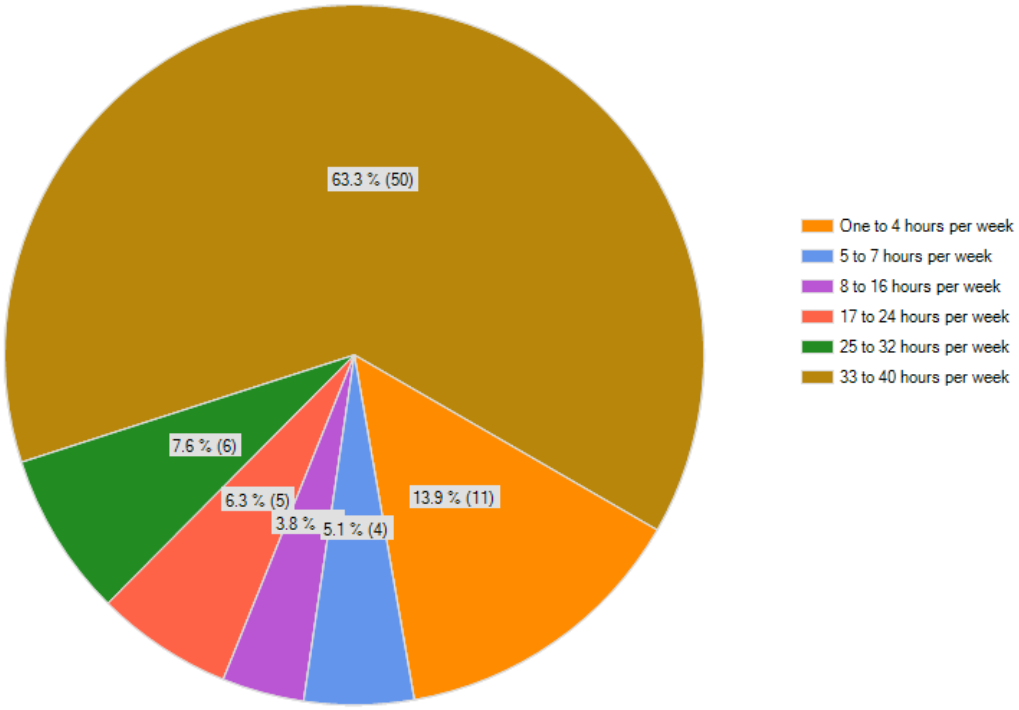
How many years have you worked in community/economic development?



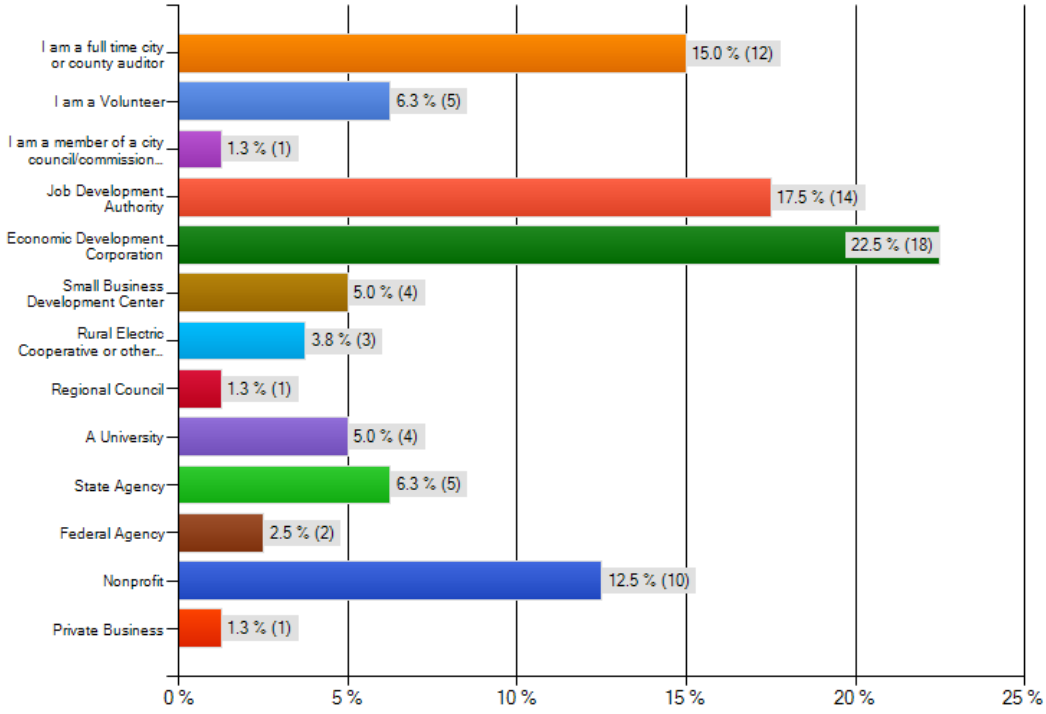
How long have you been in your current position?



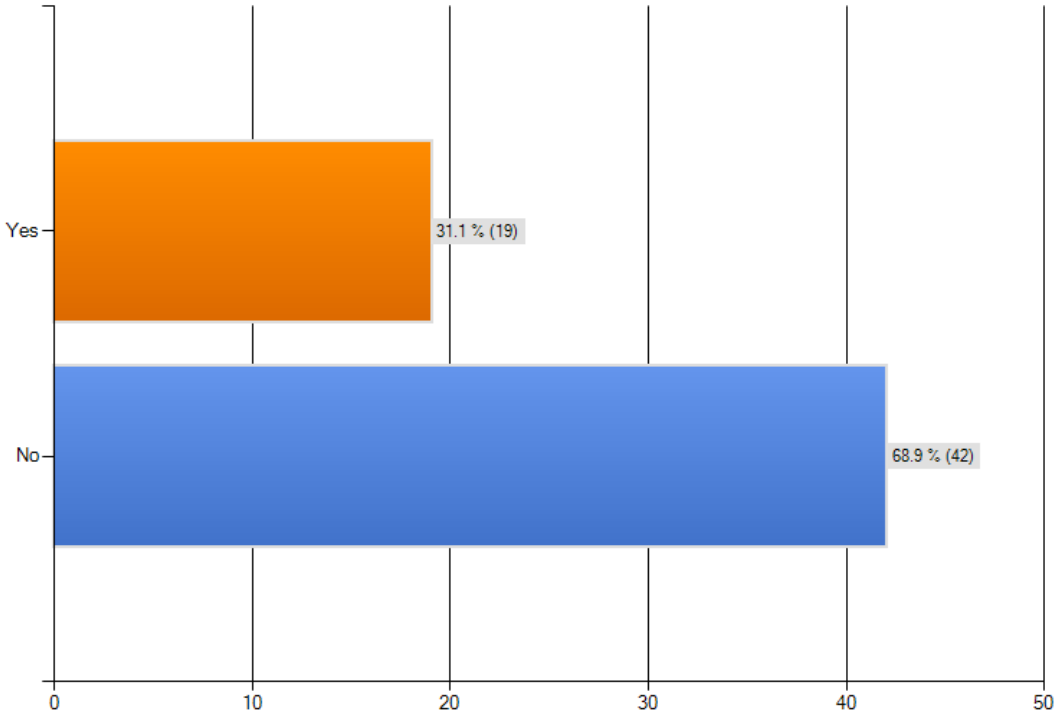
Pick the answer which best describes the number of hours you volunteer or you are employed to work in community/economic development?



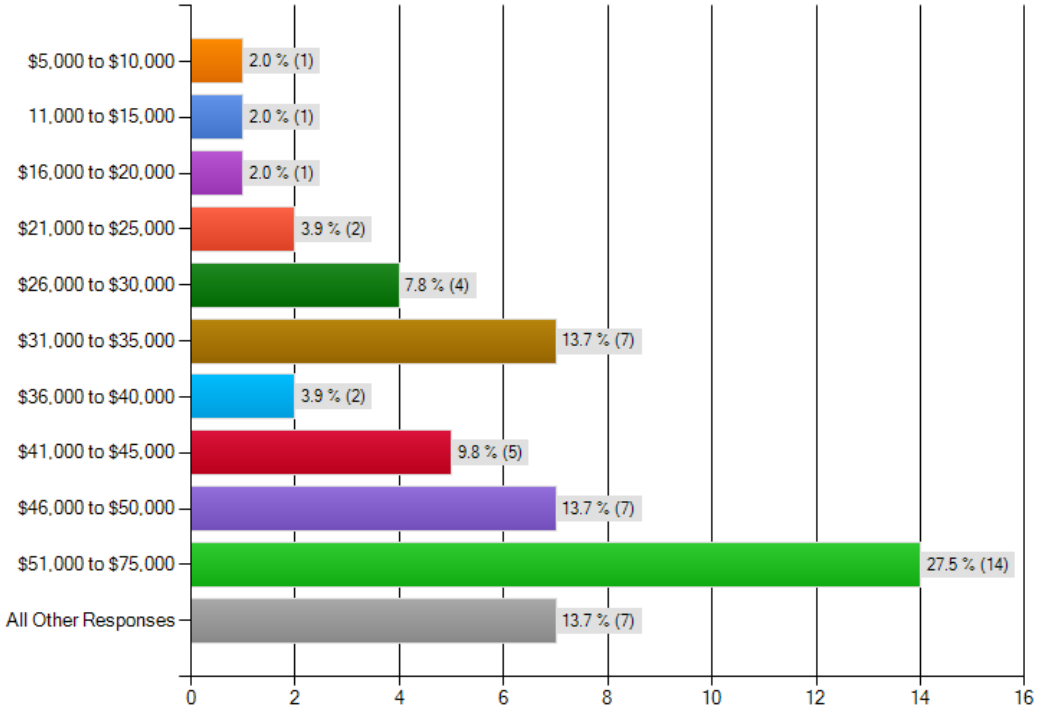
In your community/economic development work, which answer best describes your primary employer?



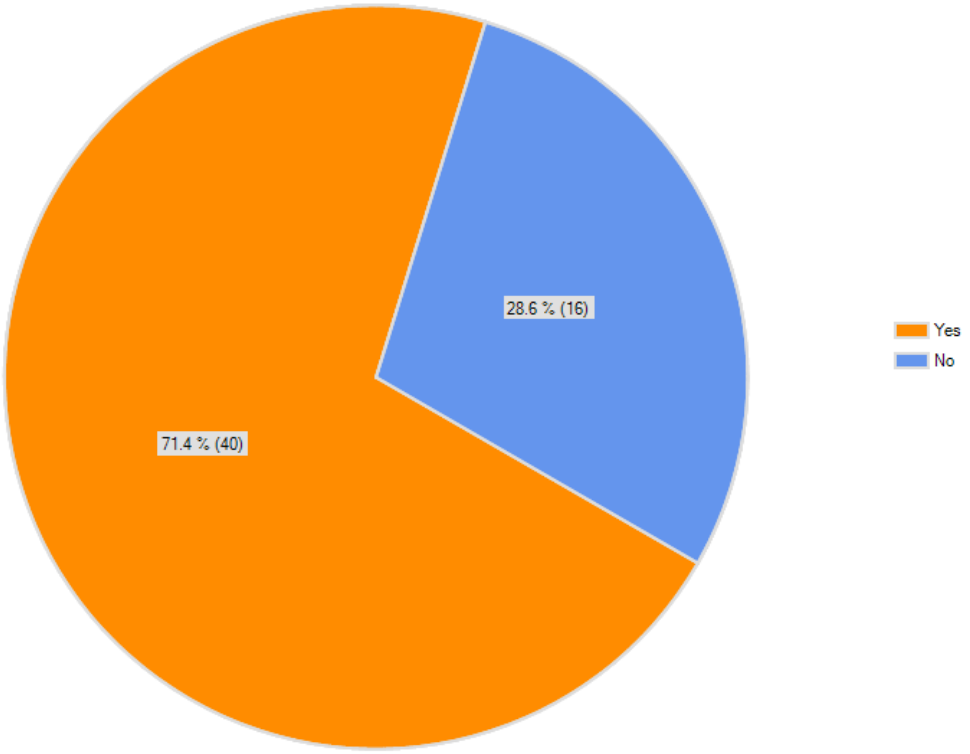
Do you have other formal responsibilities with your employer(s) that have a separate title(s)? Example: part-time economic developer and part-time auditor?



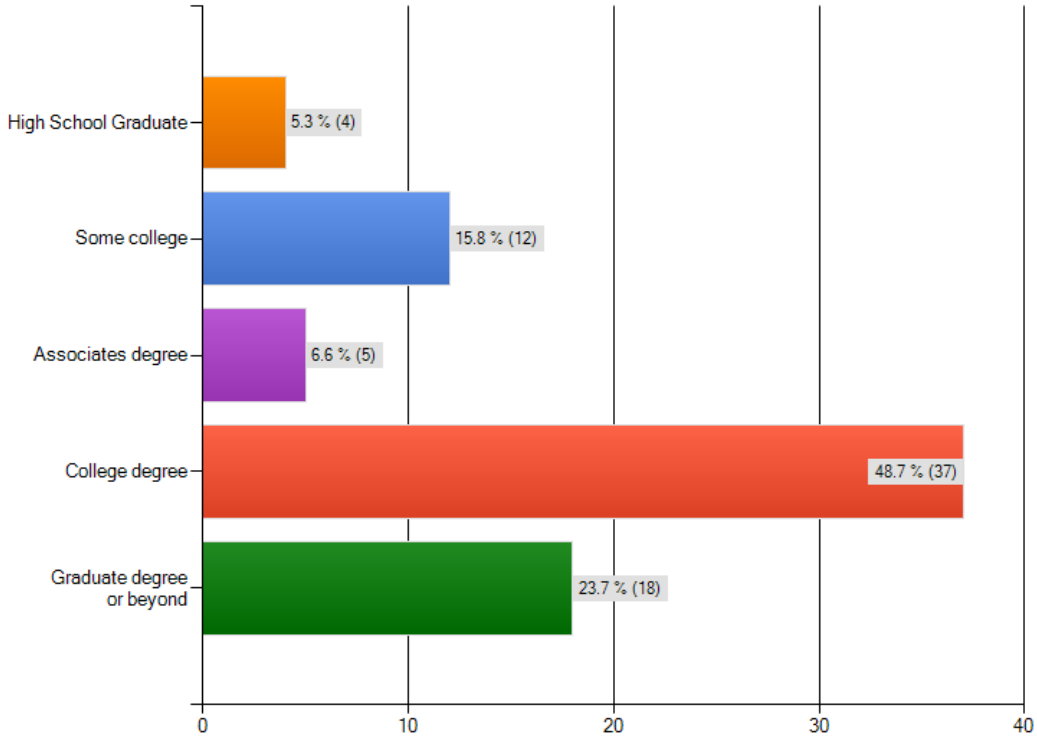
Which best describes the annual salary range for your work in community/economic developer?



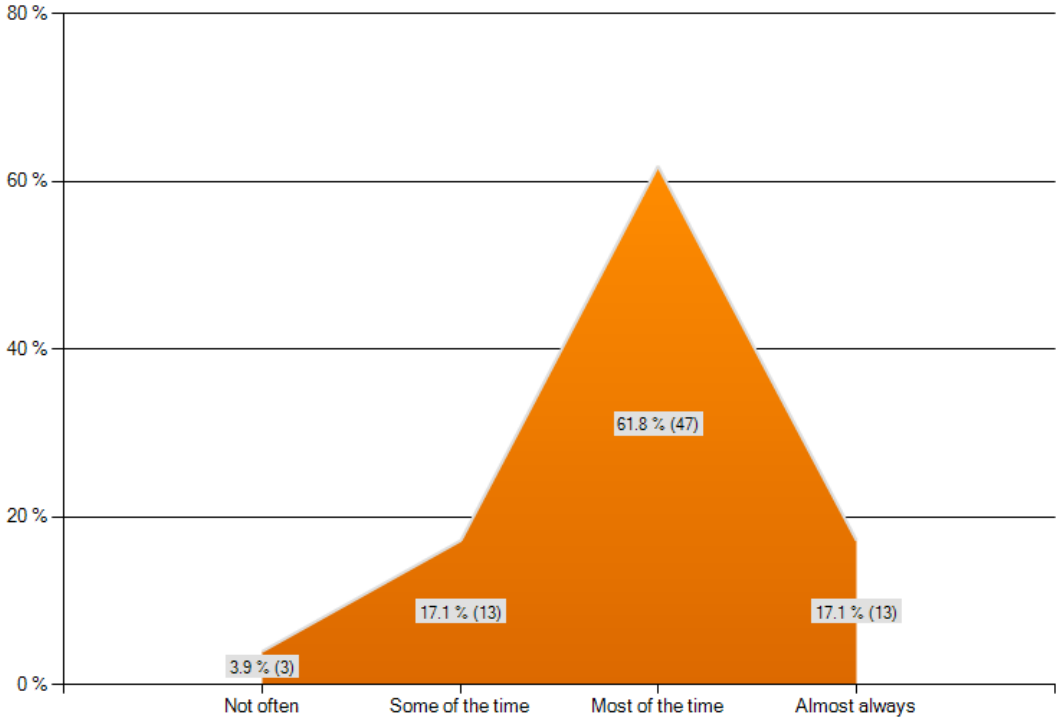
Does your position include medical insurance benefits?



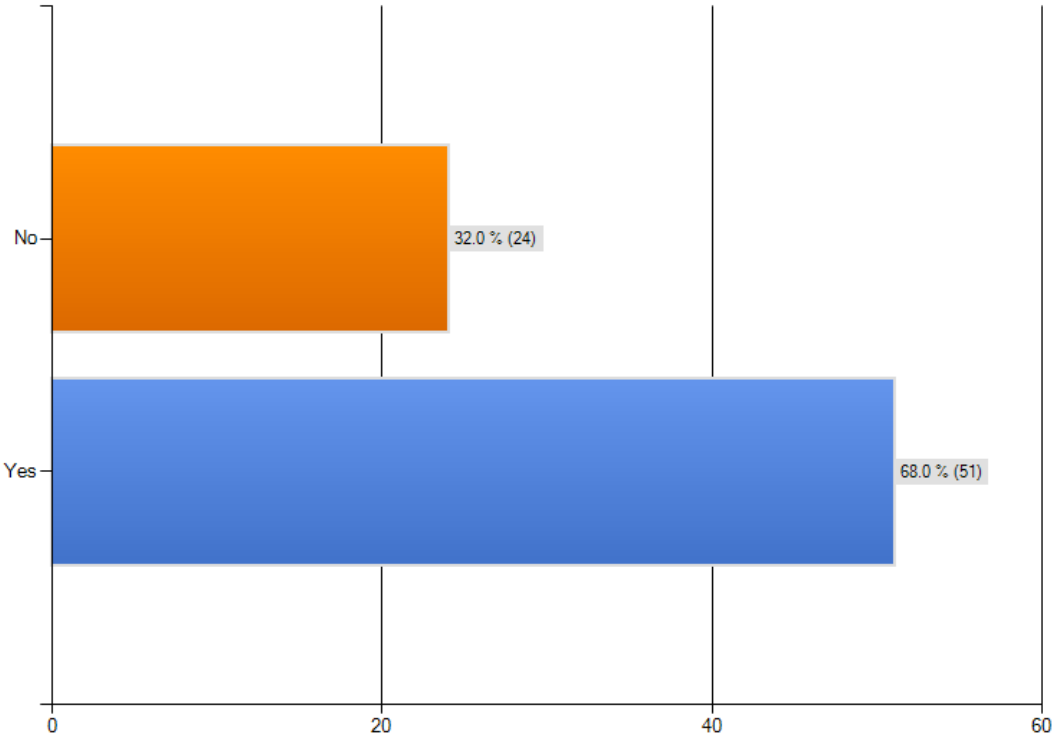
What is your education level?



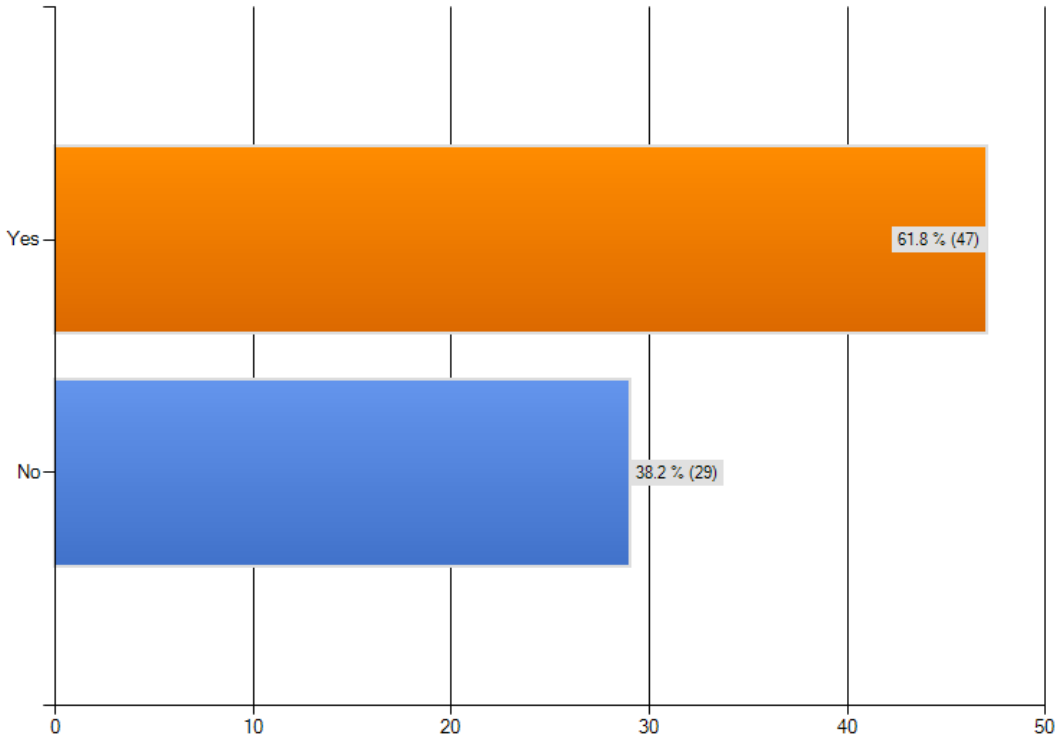
Do you feel you have the skills and training needed to do community/economic development?



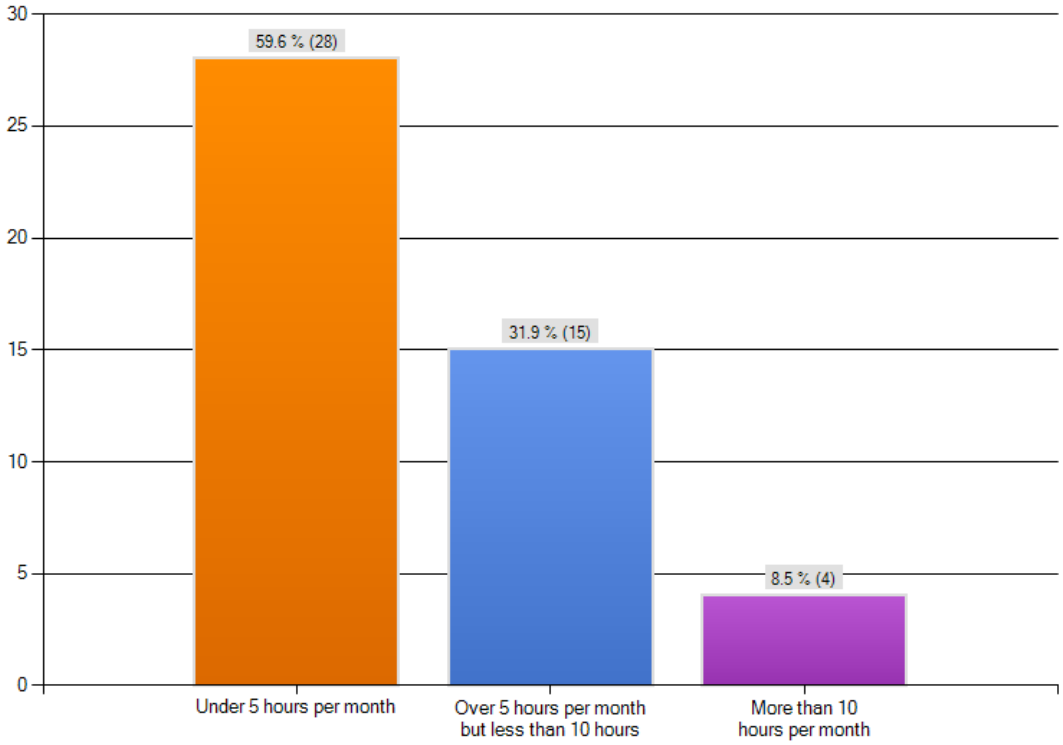
Do you have a mentor(s) to help you?



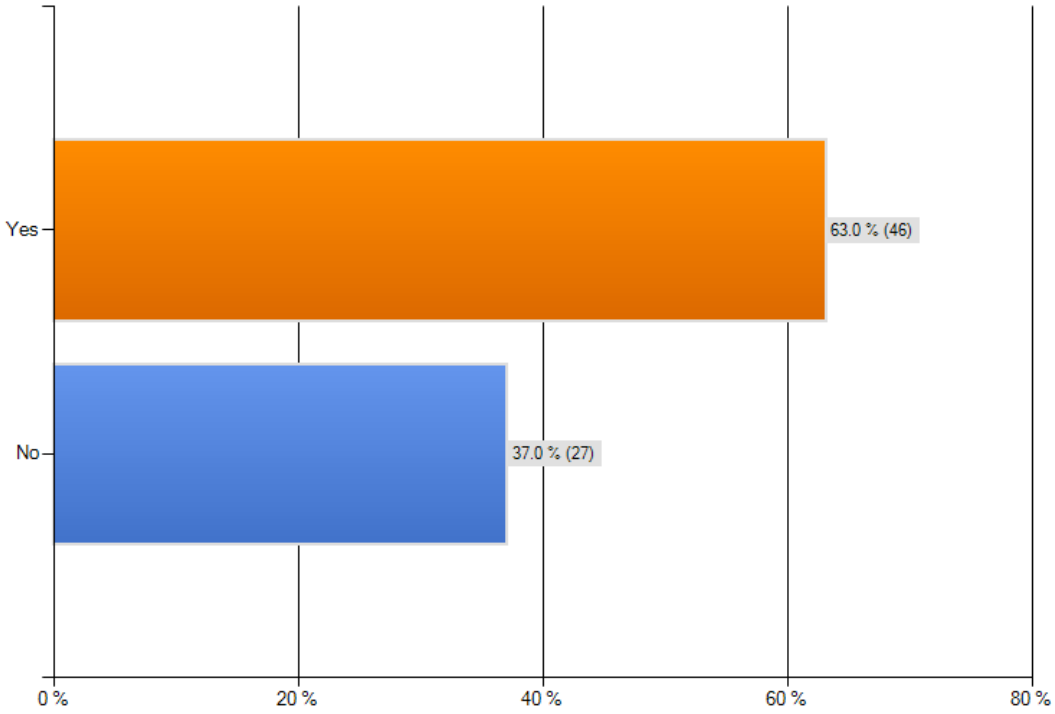
Do you mentor other people in community/economic development?



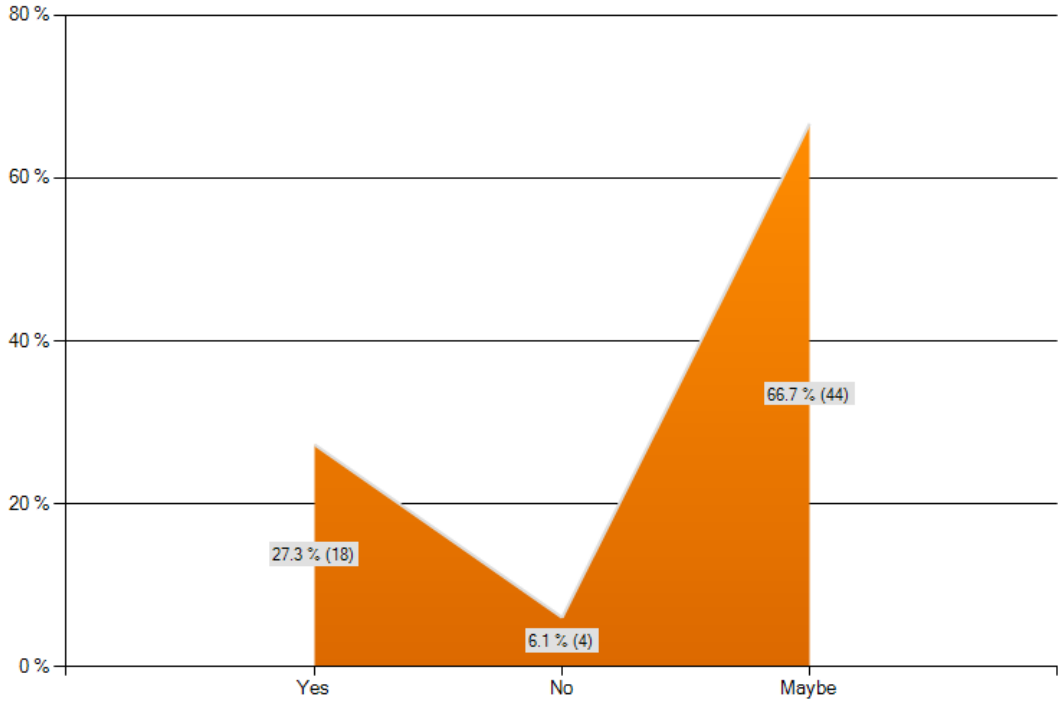
How much time do you spend mentoring other developers?



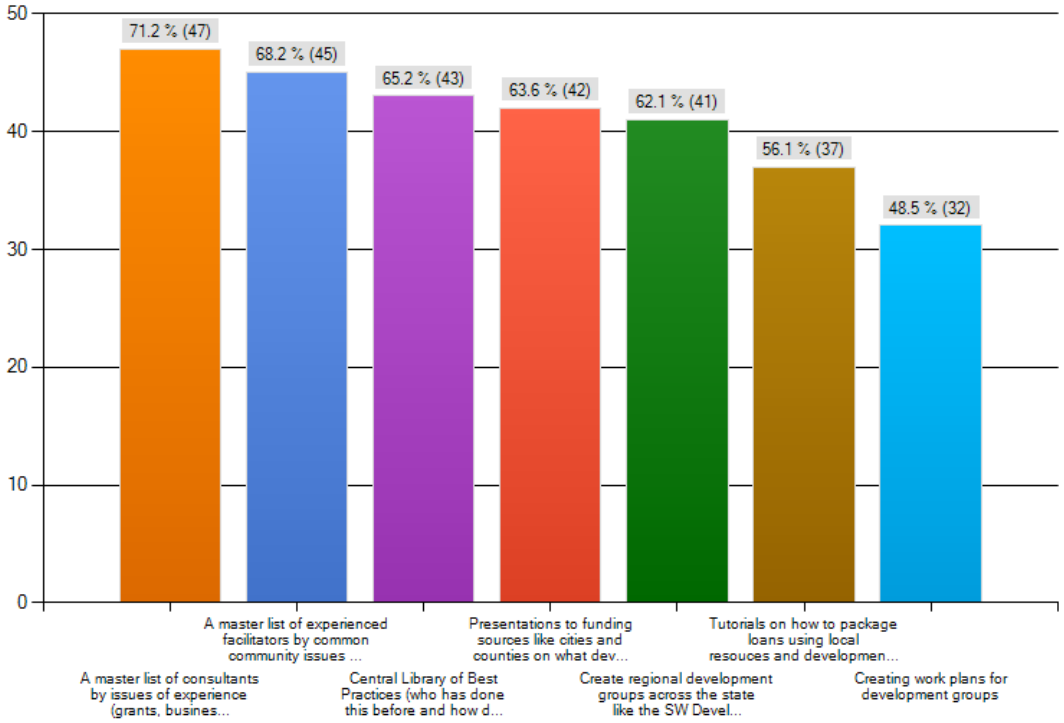
Would you be willing to be a mentor to other developers in your areas of expertise or experience?



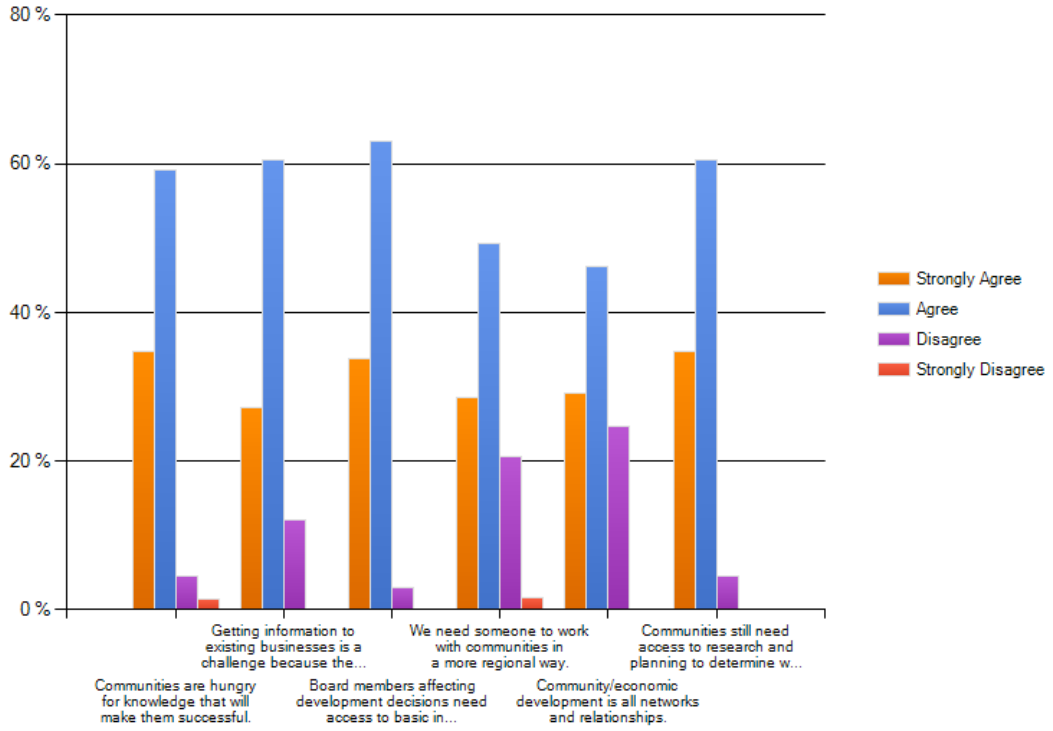
If a confidential system was devised for a business-to-business mentorship program, would businesses consider using it or participating as mentors? In this case, these mentors would be business people mentoring similar businesses.



Please check all items below that would be good supports for community/economic development in North Dakota.



The following statements were made during interviews with development staff.



The survey also contained open ended questions. Following are the questions and responses.

Question: Are you aware of development programs we should try in North Dakota?

Responses included several programs by name. They were (1) Masterminds, a woman owned business network and training program underway in southwest North Dakota, (2) Appreciative Inquiry, a program that builds actions upon existing strengths, (3) regional development cooperatives, or member based development groups, (4) First Impressions, a Canadian based program in which communities evaluate each other based on a set of criteria including visual appeal and services, (5) prison built housing in South Dakota, and (6) emulating the successful Nebraska economic development programs.

Several people mentioned they would like to know more about what is working in small North Dakota communities and that we needed to stimulate conversations about small communities. Some felt state and nonprofit agencies are doing the same type of work. Some communities need basic street signage information to comply with the Manual of Uniform Traffic Controls. Some said there were a lot of good development programs in North Dakota and they would like to know more about how they were working and results.

Question: What do you need to be more effective in community/economic development?

At the local level, needs were (1) finding people with vision and project champions to step forward, (2) getting a paid developer position or at least a mentor for volunteers, (3) evaluating the needs of the community and programs to address those needs, (4) how does a developer deal with a community that has a hard time dealing with change and is not welcoming to new people or new businesses, (5) a positive track record in order to gain the trust of the communities and businesses, (6) getting financial support from the community, (7) engaging younger people in economic development in the community, (8) more on working with prospective entrepreneurs, (9) a community willing to take risks and to start new incentive programs or opportunities, (10) a community that believes in its future and is willing to take risks to make that future happen, and (11) business people and entrepreneurs willing to take their business or hobby to the next level.

Several respondents mentioned they needed time and money. Other needs identified were (1) more on business retention and transfer, (2) more leads on potential businesses for small communities, (3) more updates on what is available to communities concerning statewide resources, (4) a seat at the table where policies are made, (5) what incentives & programs are being successfully used by other developers and how those incentives are funded, (6) a support network of experienced and successful developers to learn from, (7) training, (8) existing agencies, programs and services adapting to help small towns, (9) programs for moderate income housing.

Question: Who are your mentors?

Mentorship seems to come from every possible source and as one respondent wrote "you have to have brains on tap (resources)". Local mentors were mayors, board chairpersons, local development directors, business persons, bankers, fellow employees, employers and local professionals. Other mentors outside the local area included seasoned economic developers in other communities and national program staff from a variety of agencies and organizations.

Specific state and federal agency staff were identified including USDA Rural Development, Bank of North Dakota, Department of Commerce, North Dakota Housing and Finance, Child Care Resource & Referral, Rural Electric Cooperatives, Career and Technical Education, Small Business Development Centers, North Dakota Job Service, North Dakota League of Cities, North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives, the Center for Business and Technology, NDSU Extension Services and the university systems.

Question: What are your areas of expertise?

Forty-six people responded with a willingness to be part of a mentoring program and of those, 35 included areas of expertise:

finance	rural outreach	technical training
business development	data base management	conferencing expertise
meeting facilitation	communications	minute-taking
organizing events	research	grant writing
work plans	marketing	proposal writing
grant administration	consensus building	writing business plans
housing	community facilities	federal procurement
community planning	high growth planning	business consulting
tourism	leadership development	board development
public speaking	financial analysis	grant administration
oil patch issues	legislative consulting	infrastructure development
entrepreneurship	project management	leveraging resources
community organizing	real estate development	visioning
editing	making connections	byway development

municipal financial consulting
economic research & analysis
project development in healthcare
meeting & negotiating with business clients
community-based planning processes
infrastructure emergency services
communicating with community political leadership
organizational process of an economic development organization
coordinating creative financial packages (for private business & governmental bodies)

Work Plan Item 4. *Recommendations for future actions.*
Work Plan Item 5. *Create methods and procedures for possible tasks identified in this scope of work if requested.*

It was absolutely uncanny that so many of the people interviewed had similar if not identical views concerning community/economic development in North Dakota. Many of those views corresponded to the views of the subcommittee and the survey respondents.

For this reason, the subcommittee members believe this report should be distributed and should begin good discussions by the agencies and individuals in the North Dakota economic development community. They believe there are many areas of concern that could be addressed through collaboration by the development community.

Keeping in mind the observed willingness of the economic community to help, the subcommittee recommends to the REAP Investment Fund that their Executive Director provide contracts and oversight of the future work plan identified here. This is because each piece can be contracted out to existing developers, development groups, or consultants.

The partners identified for the implementation of the plan are:

Development Corporations	Job Development Authorities
Center for Technology & Business	NDSU Extension Services
Universities	Private consultants & researchers

In addition, the following agencies and groups are identified as interested in the outcomes, continued conversations and possibly collaborative efforts:

USDA Rural Development
North Dakota Department of Commerce
Small Business Development Centers
NDSU Extension Service Center for Community Vitality
North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives
Minot State University Great Plains Center for Community Research and Service
UND Center for Community Engagement

The future work plan identified by the subcommittee and probable costs are to be considered by the REAP Investment Fund is a follows:

Create community/economic development tools and house these tools on an existing community/economic development website:

1. Write a basic adaptable work plan for development corporations and job development authorities with staffing. Develop an annual local business survey for all developers to use in their community(s) or counties.

2. Develop a presentation for funding sources like cities and counties on what developers do and what supports, tools, and direction are needed. The presentation should be in the form of a PPT slide show or video or webcast type presentation with audio.

3. Assemble a web-based list of experienced facilitators and speakers by common community issues (youth, healthcare, daycare, planning, etc) with current references.

4. Assemble a web-based list of consultants or researchers by issues of experience (grant writing, business plans, research area, etc.) with current references.

5. Create a Best Practices web page, linked to other web sites as requested. Add more examples of Best Practices to include successful projects throughout North Dakota. Create an easy web based submission form on that site for future project submissions by the development community.

6. Enhance an existing community/economic development website to include (a) mentorship between developers by listing areas of expertise (beginning with surveyed volunteers); (b) a listing of which development groups have worked with specific programs successfully; and by (c) including an area within the site where developers can "shout out" questions to the membership and other participating developers. The purpose of the "shout out" format is mentorship and for assistance to find business to business mentorship assistance. Consideration needs to be given to a level of confidentiality for item (c) and how developers and volunteer developers would be included. In addition, the sub-committee would like to see a small fund established to pay for out of pocket expenses for businesses that are willing to mentor other like businesses.

Areas for Collaboration with the Community/Economic Development Community

7. Work to identify and create regional development groups throughout North Dakota in areas where they do not exist.

8. Work to assist state agencies to hold meetings and workshops by webinar and identify the cost of this service to the agency or attendee; and identify the location, contact information and other pertinent details for all available interactive video systems and the approximate cost of using them for meetings or workshops. Disseminate the information and update this information annually for at least three years.

9. Enhance and revive the One Stop review of projects by state & federal agencies with emphasis on using technology to meet while setting one point of contact with firm meeting dates each month for discussion and review of projects.

10. Find if existing videos are available or create a 10 minute video/primer series that can be used at local meetings or played on community access channels to inform the public of how specific development programs work and include videos that address specific topics of concern:
    a. state & federal funding and other development programs
    b. business retention
    c. business expansion
    d. basic information on financing and leveraging businesses
    e. how to package loans for successful development
    f. the Century Code concerning JDA's
    g. other topics as determined by interested agencies and developers
    Possible partners: Interested agencies and economic developers

11. Investigate and write a promotional piece on why small communities are important to North Dakota. Then possibly develop a video within the series mentioned above. Otherwise, dissemination of the information can be through press releases and via the REAP or partner websites.

It is hoped that this document and the contributions of all those surveyed and interviewed will lead to discussions on the items that are not addressed in the work plan. Some of those items include the following:

Information – it is all too much. Can we disseminate community/economic development information in a different manner?

What information and data do communities and counties in oil producing counties need in their decision making? And how can it be assembled and accessed?

Business networks – what do we have so far and what more do we need?

Is there funding for more one-on-one business counseling?

Should there be a regional level of development or statewide developers to work on statewide problems and opportunities? And how could such levels be funded?

What do communities need to do to be proactive rather that reactive?

How can communities share or collaborate more (labor, purchasing, services)?

What are other states doing in development and what is working for them?

Legacy funding? How can we mobilize efforts in western North Dakota to raise investment and venture capital for sustainable development?

How do small rural communities level the playing field in community/economic development? How can agencies and organizations help?

ATTACHMENTS:

Agency Interviews
ND Developer Survey REAP

Champion REAP Alliance Agency Interviews July 2011

The following interviews should not be considered verbatim or quotable nor should they be considered the views of anyone or any agency or group beyond the person being interviewed. It is possible some items have been noted in error. Those interviewed offered their ideas and comments with the best of intentions and it is hoped, the reader sees this information within the context it was provided and uses it with the best of intentions as well.

Each person interviewed was asked to comment on what is needed in community economic development in North Dakota and what they think developers need.

Don Frye, Economic Development Consultant for Otter Tail Power Company

We need leaders. We need to do a better job of telling communities how to do economic development. There is a basic lack of information and experience. They need to understand financing programs better. Also, don't put everything you have into leveraging more dollars. Projects will need discretionary money at some point in the project and if they don't have it, the business will not go forward. Save some local share for those problems. Have a plan B, C, and D to financing any one project. Remember some agency money is not accessed quickly and needs lead time for environmentals, etc.

Some communities don't understand their issues and see success in other communities and worry about them as competition. Don't worry about that. Share everything. Communities need to know alternatives. They don't need a housing authority if they have a JDA. The JDA can own, rent, buy and borrow. Read the Century Code.

North Dakota needs more experienced and educated people in the field to assist communities with complicated business starts and local challenges. State agencies could do this if we looked to the state for leadership not just programs.

We still need more one-on-one to learn and find out how to solve problems and meet needs and challenges and opportunities. Communities are hungry for knowledge that will help them be successful.

Find a way to use small town facilities for providing trainings, meetings etc. Some do have incentives to groups meeting there. Need more regional focus on issues in those regions. Developer groups are needed on regional basis.

Ask what kinds of trainings would you like to see? Promote schools; find ways to get trade school info out.

Pick out where you can be successful; go to funders or that community for funding and get them to work and spin out to other agencies.

Developers should attend the League of Cities regional meetings. At those meetings, you get education on the Century Code, open meetings & open records – we shouldn't look at open meetings as evil. Leaders share everything….

Communities or development agencies should do funds, even small funds or loans for local business. Be sure they buy local with the loan money unless it isn't available locally. These programs buys tons of positive attitudes towards local development. Give a share of the

development dollar to existing businesses which can feel left out if the focus is always new business starts.

Be aware that agencies do have turf and who gets to take the credit.

Mentorship or groups of mentors is a good idea. People from other communities could be good mentors and should be included.

We need to get more information to students about entering the trades. Use local TV access channels for information dissemination on the trades. Could use it for a wide variety of issues, leadership and trainings.

It is not too late to do some of these things in oil impacted counties. As to competition for economic development tax dollars – don't pound on it being "my money" for development. Make your Development Corporation or JDA a partnership with community leaders- a partnership to create more revenues for your community.

Kathy Tweeten, Director of the NDSU Extension Service Center for Community Vitality

We are all limited by staff and funding. The Center did a Business Retention and Expansion training but it wasn't as well attended as you would have thought. Was it a time issue? Wrong training? Wrong place?

Rural Leadership of North Dakota – have had several developers go through the 18 month course. There is a lot of interest in the short course – 4 weeks, community based. Staffing is an issue for them. They are looking for money to do more.

Horizons – NWA funding is over and they are looking for other sources of funds. The program does create leaders. Study circles were well attended and successful and the process did create skill building.

We need more one-on-one for new developing businesses. They need so much attention that no one can invest that kind of time in one business. A data base would be good for this – like medical doctors. All can share in it and learn what has been done, follow up, etc. Did talk with Omaha company about this at one time but didn't get beyond that. Possibly a client password protected file could work with SBDC ICE system.

We need a data base of best practices.

JoAnn Rodenbiker, Economic Development Consultant, Northern Plains Electric Cooperative

Communication and dissemination of information is a challenge. REC's now do webinars that have 2-way dialogue, are recorded and archived. If you can't attend, these are good to review and she can zoom through it to the info she needs if necessary. More use of webinars for meetings among the developers would be good. She said DOC has done some U-Tube presentations – less than 10 minutes – the concept was good. RECs do have interactive video conferencing and the local TV access channels would be good to provide information. Getting info to businesses is a challenge because they can't get away from their businesses.

Developers need a dissemination of information system. Josh's email list TOOLs…is good but it would be nice to add a little info on programs that could be used here in ND. EX: Socially

disadvantage Ag Producer grants – what does that mean and who should be looking at that? plus ND agency contact info would be good. Some work could be done to dissect the list and get the attention of the reader. Other info could just go to the bottom or not be forwarded.

Another area for developers would be to revive the One Stop agency review of potential projects. Currently the developer has to call all the agency participants and set up that meeting. It seems to have fallen to the wayside and there may be ways to revive that to a more responsive system.

Boards of people affecting development decisions need access to basic info on ND development programs. Example: the new REC Rural Development Finance Corp has development people on the board but the others are from REC board backgrounds. They will be assembling a presentation on state programs for them but it would be better to have a team that does that or some kind of data base to access – at their next meeting they are looking at Flex Pace. It would be great to run a 10 minute video or presentation on that.

Communities - the local governments focus on infrastructure and now the flooding. However, business retention is big right now and she is working on this with several communities. Some communities do not have developers, just volunteers. That makes it very difficult.

Deb Eslinger, Executive Director for the Center for Technology and Business
Cindy Sanford, State Outreach Specialist for the Center for Technology and Business

They do work closely with developers, mainly new developers and more rural developers. Last year they had Housing Roundtables in several communities as well as Childcare Roundtables.

They provide basic technology training (QuickBooks, Excel, social media management, ND Young Professionals facilitation which is growing in ND). The agency has a large network of people across the state that they work with both urban and rural.

They see a big disparity in the last two years between old and new developers with few developers in the middle ground. Succession planning is needed for retiring developers as there are a lot of them. They realize financial support is limited to developers statewide. DOC new developer training is good but so overwhelming with information. They see SW Developers as a good thing to emulate into other regions in the state. They see SW Developers as “ahead” of other regions.

The New Developer training should include old developers as the new ones need examples of how these programs were used. It would be good to add successful people and projects to program definitions on the EDND and DOC program description sites.

They have been very successful with their CRASH Course which provided workforce information to grades 7-12 with parents. In 2010, they did 9 sites within a 45 mile radius including area job needs, respective education requirements, as well as grant and loan info. They had a very good responses on this and positive feedback. Info is there but these events get the info out to those that need it.

They do one-on-one business counseling. To establish new business networks and development networks would be perfect. They have worked previously with new developers on initial action plans.

They can provide a wide range of technology supports and services. People can learn to do webinars through them but they can also do them for people and archive them on a contract basis.

Rural Development Council

This organization no longer has federal funding or a director. There is a board in place but it doesn't meet – appointed by the DOC and CTB. The RDC was put into state statues in the 2009 legislative session primarily to keep it in place should funding become available. It does have a work plan but no action on that plan. The Center for Technology in Business is listed as the phone number and contact but has no funding or staff available to be allocated to it.

Pat Downs, Cooperative Development Specialist for North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives

Felt we are on the right track with mentorship and communications as big issues. He observed the volunteer developers or communities representatives are not that comfortable around the "development" community as they use acronyms, know each other well, etc. and this alone can be difficult.

The NDAREC is not the first place developers call for help. In fact, much of their work is funneled through their membership or regional managers. They sometimes fill the role of developer in areas that do not have paid economic developers. They are sometimes limited by what they can do via their funding source (USDA) and the scope of work.

They could be involved in mentoring projects and will help where they can. They have good connections throughout North Dakota.

He sees many communities are reactionary and work on that deal that pops up but do not attend to the more mundane elements like housing, infrastructure, zoning, etc. These need to be on their agenda every meeting. If they are doing this, there would be less to do when the deal pops up. They would know they have water, sewer, and zoning, etc in place or not. The developers need to be in contact with local business – make it a point to visit with them. Do surveys, keep in touch with luncheons or something so you know what is going on in the community and what is coming up. Communication, planning & implementation are key.

Paul Govig, Director of the Division of Community Services, North Dakota Department of Commerce

He feels that REAP activities work well. The end of year report is interesting and can go to the legislature on what has happened and the focus is on what's going on. This solidifies the future of such an organization and should get to the right people each year. He likes the loose collaboration of people in REAP but would like to see that the roles and responsibilities in the Alliance are defined and the nitch it will address defined.

He would like to see development groups like SW REAP in other regions. The value is in getting people together for local and state development purposes. Such regional organizations are needed in development. Best Practices are needed. We could do a better job of meeting technologically. That redistributes the cost for outlying areas to attend if we all used it.

Dale Van Eckhout, Business Program Director for the USDA Rural Development State Office

Dale has participated in the New Developers Workshop given by the DOC to newly hired developers. Though it is a lot of information in a short setting, the information, discussions and the opportunity to meet state program people is valuable to that new position and helpful to all participating. He suggests doing the same thing on a regional basis for interested parties.

The SBA is holding a fall SBA Lenders Meeting coordinated through the SBDC's to include banking institutions and developers. Presenters will be the SBA, BND, USDA, and DOC. Those will be held in Minot and Bismarck on Sept. 1 and Grand Forks and Fargo on Sept 11.

We spoke briefly about those difficult projects – Dale said that often there are great projects but they lack a central point of contact or say a champion - someone who stays on task and gets it done.

Team efforts would be good for certain projects but the USDA staff may be limited to how involved they could get in such efforts.

Dale cautioned that the federal funding is just now being trimmed to limit project costs to them. BNI had a $25M limit and this will go to $10 million, etc.

He sees a need for communities to look to capture energy funding and legacy funding that is now leaving the state as few inheritors remain in residence. He noted the Impact Foundation has trained or paid for training to the Hettinger Hospital to do this.

Dr. Lana Rankow, Director for the UND Center for Community Engagement

This is something we think about all the time (at the Center) and it is nice to have someone ask about it. They have a program Community Connect www.communityconnect.und.edu . This idea is similar to a mentorship program. They currently bring people together in a community around a theme like community celebrations and what those mean and do for a community. They have an annual journal which includes a forum for discussion plus UND resources and other resources targeted to community. They would like to add more stories on community successes like community owned grocery stores as a ready reference for other communities to emulate and contact for advice including small hospitals, health care, etc,.

They are understaffed and working on the forum is slow as it needs staffing. She now regularly includes VISTA volunteers in her grant writing for projects and they are making some things possible.

They are working with Buffalo, ND on a curb appeal project and have identified a product to pave roads that is $80K for 5 miles of roads. Something the community thought they could never afford. Other communities may be interested in this product as well. They all need to talk to one another as to their experiences with it, other products, etc.

This project has made them rethink how to approach small communities. We need better communication, organization, and resources. Small communities need to create other levels of communication – say one member from all town organizations sit on a committee to collaborate on labor, funding, timing, revenue streams, volunteers, etc. (note this very small community had 17 non-profit organizations).

She believes we need someone to work with communities in a more regional way as 87% of all communities in ND are under 1000 people. North Dakota needs small communities. We need more efficiencies and collaboration among small communities i.e.: in grants; services, mobilizations, business sharing, etc. They have great opportunities to learn from one another. We have hardly scratched the surface of this to coordinate and collaborate with small communities. It is all networks and relationships.

There is a need for training and education and she has begun discussions on non-credit on-line courses for community volunteers.

She is more than willing to "put our heads together" on this.

Bon Wikenheiser, State Director of the Small Business Development Center

She likes the mentorship idea. SBDC does mentorship and training for local economic developers. As to community planning, she used a phase "social poverty" meaning due to the influx of people and businesses, the social part of the communities can no longer respond in the way they would like or that is needed – good fire department, too many fires, etc. We need to know how other states and other communities responded and coped. There are few organizations other than the regional councils to work with cities and counties.

Several years ago, the ND SBDC did set aside non-federal dollars to work with community owned businesses and startups (otherwise, they could only work with private business). This is needed. However, these communities still need access to research and planning to determine what they need and its feasibility. Oil impacted communities need planners. SBDC can help package projects or examples of redistribution of taxes, etc.

They are concerned and looking for solutions to basic community needs primarily to keep existing business and prepare for business transfers and new tradespersons, etc.

Another thing we need to learn more about in North Dakota is exporting. Markets in Asian and South America are exploding. Ag markets and exporting as well. We haven't spent enough time on that.

She noted the SBDC doesn't work with many ag-related businesses but they would if the need was there.

Lynette Flagge, Horizons Project Director, NDSU Extension Service Center for Community Vitality

Local developers played a large role in the Horizon Communities - 46 towns. They were the liaison between NDSU and the community – publicized events, provided facilitators, understood importance, set meetings and requested specific needs for specific trainings, etc. Developers did get training from the program that was relevant to their positions. They were key people. So often in small towns, the developer is the only paid person for community projects like Horizons and they are crucial. Towns without developers were far more challenging.

Developers need ready access to support, resources, connections. With our small state, we do well on this but could do more utilizing organizations like EDND.

Several ED's in her area are young and new and need friendly mentoring and assistance. How to do it? A resource bank of good facilitators would be nice as they need facilitators to come into their communities on tough issues, a master list – who is out there and are they right for our town and issue? NDSU and UND have these people, too. Also master lists for grant writers, consultants, planners, etc. They also need people outside there community (other than the developer) to stress that they have to have local skin in the game – resources and dollars. They need training on public issues and how to make it happen.

Oil and energy – these are huge public issues and local responsibilities. Training and regional cooperation is needed. Some oil towns have done well, others not so well. Stanley has lots to share with other communities. The whole oil thing is amazing but how do we do it right? She noted NDSU had a bulleting on oil site reclamation on their website but it was attorney prepared and hard to understand. They are working on it to improve/translate.

She agreed that for volunteers, the use of acronyms is tough for volunteers and they can be intimidated by the paid developer world. It would be good for them to have developer mentors as well. She was impressed by volunteers who came to Horizons meetings and got involved in difficult issues like housing and stepped up for the long haul to get it done. She notes that in small towns, there are many older folks who volunteer on the Lions, etc for a lifetime. Younger folks are more episodic and not long term. The will help with the project and then move on to something else. Volunteers do get burned out.

Now that Horizons is no longer funded, she will continue with Extension in leadership development and assisting staff and agents in energy impacted areas. She is attending a meeting today on what Extension can do for oil impacted areas, help extension people in those regions, look at the changing sense of community in those areas, etc.

I suggested Extension look at a program that would guide people who are taking energy workers into their home – provide information, leases, zoning, what to ask for – background checks, etc. This is a tremendous opportunity for locals to have income from it plus alleviate the housing shortage in the short term. Also, need place for energy workers to bring their families here for a week – few have adequate housing for that and would like to bring their families to North Dakota. Maybe a church or something could help on those kinds of things. They are a lonely group of workers with mortgages back home, etc. Lynette will present this to the Extension group today and would like similar ideas that are out there.

Bruce Govig, Entrepreneur Coach & Director of the Center for Innovation

He had just attended a regional meeting and those attending felt the need for capital and venture capital is the most pressing need in the state right now, specifically in the west to capture energy funding.

Without options for local investment, most of the royalty income will go to Wall Street investments. How do we get that here to develop our future capabilities, etc. and expand the western economy beyond oil?

Paul Griffin, Deputy Director of the Consensus Council, Inc.

The Consensus Council is a nonprofit created in 1989 to work with policies and policy makers, leaders, and citizens on state issues. They don't work directly on economic development but many of the issues concern economic and community impacts. Economic developers are part of

their community groups or involved in those issues. In their work on the Affordable Housing Fund, local developers signed off on that.

The Council deals with a mosaic of concerns from different groups, identifies those areas of concern and cross ties to other agencies (i.e. nutrition to schools to elderly to low income, etc). Housing concerns affect persons with disabilities, to low income, to community needs, rural needs, to REA/s, and oil impacts and then on to the ramifications – less ability to attract teachers, etc.

Oil impact did get legislative help but many living there are not connected to energy but impacted all the same - rising costs, dust, dangerous – rising tides do not lift all boats.

He believes we may be interested in their agency's work on the North Dakota Economic Policy project. They are connected to a national network on policies and how they affect low income families.

Paul D Markel, PhD, Professor of Psychology, MSU Department of Addiction Studies, Psychology, and Social Work Director, Great Plains Center for Community Research and Service

His current goal is to provide a data base of sources concerning a range of economics, demographic data for social development. Current data is needed for making decisions and for funding and funding sources.

They currently have a grant through the US Department of Education with 3 primary goals (1) promote NW North Dakota, (2) Establish collaborative teams including faculty, students, and community members to articulate problems or challenges and opportunities and create solutions, and (3) involve students in rural North Dakota now as students to find their role and their place in rural areas. They are conducting community meetings and plan an area meeting in the fall. The community meetings focus on what is working/what they like (2) Problems and challenges, (3) Improvements & solutions. Each are unique but share challenges such as the desire to engage young people in ways that give them reasons and places to stay in ND. Common challenges in northwestern ND is growing population and to establish housing.

Housing is a dilemma. To have affordable housing communities need good jobs with benefits first. Housing is the prominent challenge in Williston and Stanley but east of Minot is not seeing that same pressure. It is all connected. Stable growth requires people. The challenge is to pay the going rate if they can find housing. During the last four decades, small towns already had big issues without oil development. Zoning needs expertise and connections with current and updated needs – small towns don't have that.

Their challenge is also how do you continue to look at economic development broadly as though energy development isn't there? For a lot of folks, the motivation is needed to create diversified sustainable jobs. We can't rely on only one sector and we need to continue to look for sustainable opportunities for small communities. Not all communities are doing well with energy development. Not all have the same resources. Energy development can be exciting to communities but they have to know when to say no.

The idea of funding individual counties has less priority – strategic collaboration is far more fundable. We can expect a noticeable shift towards these coordinated efforts using centralized data and plans to see work on a common fundable problem. People need to band together with a willingness to articulate strategies.

He couldn't have predicted this energy economy for Minot. Tourism is suffering and competing for resources like hotel rooms with high prices. Government and manufacturing jobs are suffering with competition from energy for labor.

Communities don't want to make rash impulsive decisions but these decisions have to be made. The urge is to get it done and get it done quickly. Communities need timely information to make those decisions and there is not a lot of coordination in the data and information areas.

Paul recently read an article in the Wall Street Journal that stated North Dakota was a great place for higher education. We need to affirm and let kids know North Dakota is a great place to be. He moved back to North Dakota by choice and has never regretted it.

Gaylon Baker, Executive Vice President for Stark Development Corporation and President for the Economic Development Association of North Dakota

EDND – currently has one very part time staff for bookkeeping, web site maintenance and minutes. They have no staffing for implementation or projects.

His primary concern for developers is depth of training – people need resources available for training and need to be prepared up front. EDND provides $500 per member organization per year for training and provides a listing of approved trainings. He likes the National Development Council series. Also encourages all developers to revisit Economics 101 and Political Science 101. Seriously, Developers need to know how an economy works and how governments work.

One thing that is needed is community pride. You need to believe in your town and work together to accomplish all the little things that need to be done, including appearance when you drive through towns.

Currently, workforce is great subject of consternation. We have gone from excess workforce and low wages to low workforce and high wages. It is a different than what we know and have to change to attract long term good business to our areas.

EDND did fine at the legislature with the tax credit for Advanced Manufacturing and with the Angel Fund improvements. Housing was disappointing but he felt a more complete proposal for what works and implementation with reasonable and visible goals and results would have helped. The Centers for Excellence didn't do well and he felt that may be attributable to poor representation and testimony at the committee level.

He would support the idea of some one on a regional level with serious training to work on development projects. In fact, as a regional council director in Jamestown (many years ago), he had such a developer then and thought that would be the future model. He left the state and years later when he returned; it was all community or county developers. It may be that communities/counties wanted their own developer or that the regional councils found other funding sources and no longer pursued it.

Paul Lucy, Director of Economic Development & Finance Division, North Dakota Department of Commerce

Paul said he just had this conversation (on developers) with the Bremer Foundation. Leaders in rural areas have high expectations for new developers but they are starting from scratch – no connections and usually little or no budget to make those connections or for development.

Leadership is where we need assistance. People can call all day long and get answers, advice and direction, but those people need the skills it takes to put that information to good use. We need more assessments of skill sets and where development and training is needed. Both EDND and DOC provide training.

He doesn't feel a college degree is absolutely necessary. What boards should be looking for in developers is people with good skills for networking and implementation. The kind of people who pick up the phone and interact with people they don't know.

And though there is a great deal of information available to them - that is the problem. It is just so much to sort through and some way to assist in getting through that would have a lot of value.

He liked the idea of a basic strategic plan for new developers which their boards could build on.

We spoke a bit about mentorship and some ways for developers to connect with other developers on specific programs. He cautioned that there are consultants and others that would use web based connectors as advertizing or as ways to get information to approach businesses, etc.

A Best Practices site would be good and he believes there is something like that and to talk to Tracy Finneman who worked with the USDA some time ago on Best Practices.

Bill Davis, Deputy State Director for the USDA Rural Development State Office

He likes the ideas of an updated Best Practices site and any mentorship services. He would like to see all JDA's do a work plan for their community/work area. If they practice good fundamentals like updated articles of incorporation, bylaws, good agendas, and board trainings, it will be rewarding to be a JDA member and they will be a successful organization. It is important to have regular meetings to build content with minutes, etc. Board members will take their role seriously if they get that info.

Rural strategies for North Dakota – we need to outline why they are important (rural communities) and how we can support sustainability and support local developers and leaders. Leadership and skill sets for developers are essential. However, very rural developers have few resources to use. The challenge is that they lack critical mass to influence programs and policies that are designed to help them. More urban communities have large sales tax incomes to drive successful development programs. They have more people, businesses, local universities and access. Rural communities need extra support and help. It is not a level playing field for rural developers and rural communities. Leadership can overcome a lot but not all of these things.

In North Dakota, we need state institutions working in economic development to focus on rural community development. We need someone whose job it is to see that rural communities are successful and is evaluated on that. There was an idea of a circuit rider position in the past. But, I don't mean someone who works to market state programs. We need someone who knows how

development works, what programs are available and provides that expertise where it is needed across state programs and services.

We can have pure discussions about the cost of a water tower for instance for a community of 75 people. But, what is the cost of losing that community as an asset to North Dakota? People want to stay in small towns – they (communities) have to be worth something and it isn't our decision to decide their fate – it is up to them.

I would like to see the Alliance become a voice for rural communities. Not a political group but one that made life better by resource sharing and paying attention to rural communities. Byron Dorgan used to say that rural communities are the seed bed of values in this country. Rural is important to the fabric and fiber of North Dakota.

Carissa Richtor, Administrator for the Economic Development Association of North Dakota

Developer to Developer Mentoring. Can put together on their web site the ability to request mentorship or services between developers by emailing questions, etc.

Mentorship. They are also working on a listing of programs and services available on their website and are working to provide developer names to that listing of those with experience in those programs. Our survey could help on this information gathering and can use their listing as well – under resources on their website

Business to Business mentorship – could also use their website for confidential requests for business mentors.

Marvin Erdmann, Chairman of the Bismarck Chapter of the Service Corp of Retired Volunteers

There are four state SCORE chapters – Fargo, Bismarck, Minot and Grand Forks with satellite in Jamestown and Devils Lake. They would like to start a satellite in Dickinson. They have very little funding but the volunteers do get a small stipend.

Referrals are primarily from the website. Their volunteers have diverse backgrounds including finance, accounting, management, large and small retail, etc. Each client is matched with an appropriate counselor.

Their services assist businesses in business plans for investment or borrowing purposes. They work with the client on whatever issues brought them to SCORE. The organization could use funding for travel and out-of-pocket expenses for volunteers.

He likes the idea of business-to-business mentoring and sees there may be ways to collaborate with SCORE on such a program.

ND Developer Survey REAP

1. Which answer best describes your work area?

- ◯ A city
- ◯ A region
- ◯ A county
- ◯ Statewide

2. What is the population of your work area?

- ◯ under 1,000
- ◯ 15,001-20,000
- ◯ 1,001 - 2,000
- ◯ 20,001-50,000
- ◯ 2,001-5,000
- ◯ 50,001 and above
- ◯ 5,001-10,000
- ◯ statewide
- ◯ 10,001 - 15,000

3. How important are these issues for your work area?

	Extremely Important Issue	Important Issue	Not that important an issue	Not an issue
Housing	◯	◯	◯	◯
Business Retention	◯	◯	◯	◯
Business Transfer to New Ownership	◯	◯	◯	◯
Business Expansion	◯	◯	◯	◯
Business Starts	◯	◯	◯	◯
Daycare	◯	◯	◯	◯
Healthcare	◯	◯	◯	◯
Leadership	◯	◯	◯	◯
Infrastructure	◯	◯	◯	◯
Transportation	◯	◯	◯	◯
Workforce	◯	◯	◯	◯

Other (please specify)

4. How many years have you worked in community/economic development?

- ◯ One year or less
- ◯ Two to five years
- ◯ Six to ten years
- ◯ Eleven to fifteen years
- ◯ Sixteen to twenty years
- ◯ More that twenty years

5. How long have you been in your current position?

- ◯ One year or less
- ◯ Two to five years
- ◯ Six to 10 years
- ◯ Eleven to fifteen years
- ◯ Sixteen to twenty years
- ◯ More than twenty years

6. Pick the answer which best describes the number of hours you volunteer or you are employed to work in community/economic development?

- ◯ One to 4 hours per week
- ◯ 5 to 7 hours per week
- ◯ 8 to 16 hours per week
- ◯ 17 to 24 hours per week
- ◯ 25 to 32 hours per week
- ◯ 33 to 40 hours per week

***7. In your community/economic development work, which answer best describes your primary employer?**

- ◯ Rural Electric Cooperative or other Utility Service
- ◯ Job Development Authority
- ◯ Regional Council
- ◯ Private Business
- ◯ State Agency
- ◯ I am a Volunteer
- ◯ I am a full time city or county auditor
- ◯ I am a member of a city council/commission or county commission.
- ◯ Economic Development Corporation
- ◯ A University
- ◯ Small Business Development Center
- ◯ Nonprofit
- ◯ Federal Agency

8. Do you have other formal responsibilities with your employer(s) that have a separate title(s)? Example: part-time economic developer and part-time auditor?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

9. What is your work title(s)?

10. How are you compensated in your employment?

- ◯ Hourly employee
- ◯ Salaried employee
- ◯ Independent contractor

11. Which best describes the annual salary range for your work in community/economic developer?

- ◯ $5,000 to $10,000
- ◯ 11,000 to $15,000
- ◯ $16,000 to $20,000
- ◯ $21,000 to $25,000
- ◯ $26,000 to $30,000
- ◯ $31,000 to $35,000
- ◯ $36,000 to $40,000
- ◯ $41,000 to $45,000
- ◯ $46,000 to $50,000
- ◯ $51,000 to $75,000
- ◯ $76,000 to $100,000
- ◯ Over $100,000

12. Does your position include medical insurance benefits?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

13. What is your education level?

- ◯ High School Graduate
- ◯ Some college
- ◯ Associates degree
- ◯ College degree
- ◯ Graduate degree or beyond

14. Do you feel you have the skills and training needed to do community/economic development?

- ◯ Not often
- ◯ Some of the time
- ◯ Most of the time
- ◯ Almost always

15. Do you have a mentor(s) to help you?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

16. Who are your primary mentors? You don't have to name people but please name their position - a local businessman, another developer in the state, staff person for a state agency, etc.

17. Do you mentor other people in community/economic development?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

18. How much time do you spend mentoring other developers?

- ◯ Under 5 hours per month
- ◯ Over 5 hours per month but less than 10 hours
- ◯ More than 10 hours per month

19. Would you be willing to be a mentor to other developers in your areas of expertise or experience?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

20. What are your areas of expertise and experience?

21. May we contact you concerning possible mentorship ideas? Please add your first name and phone number.

Name:

Phone Number:

22. If a confidential system was devised for a business-to-business mentorship program, would businesses consider using it or participating as mentors? In this case, these mentors would be business people mentoring similar businesses.

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ Maybe

23. Please check all items below that would be good supports for community/economic development in North Dakota.

- [ ] Create regional development groups across the state like the SW Developers, an organization of developers serving 8 counties in southwest North Dakota
- [ ] Creating work plans for development groups
- [ ] Presentations to funding sources like cities and counties on what developers do and what supports, tools and direction are needed
- [ ] A master list of experienced facilitators by common community issues (youth, healthcare, daycare, etc.)
- [ ] Central Library of Best Practices (who has done this before and how did they do it)
- [ ] Tutorials on how to package loans using local resouces and development programs
- [ ] A master list of consultants by issues of experience (grants, business plans, etc.)

24. The following statements were made during interviews with development staff.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Communities are hungry for knowledge that will make them successful.	◯	◯	◯	◯
Getting information to existing businesses is a challenge because they can't get away from their businesses.	◯	◯	◯	◯
Board members affecting development decisions need access to basic information on North Dakota development programs.	◯	◯	◯	◯
We need someone to work with communities in a more regional way.	◯	◯	◯	◯
Community/economic development is all networks and relationships.	◯	◯	◯	◯
Communities still need access to research and planning to determine what they need and its feasibility.	◯	◯	◯	◯

25. Are you aware of development programs we should try in North Dakota? Do you have ideas for collaborative efforts to assist community/economic development? Please share your ideas or any comments below. If you don't want to write it all out, write down this number, 701-483-1447, finish the survey and then call our surveyor to explain your idea.

26. What do you need to be more effective in community/economic development?

***27. The remaining questions concern local development programs and are intended for local volunteers, city developers and county developers.**

- ◯ Yes, I am a volunteer, city developer or county developer and will continue with the survey.
- ◯ I am not a volunteer, city developer or county developer.

28. Are any of the following local grant programs available in your work area?

- ☐ Main Street or Storefront Improvement Grant
- ☐ Business relocation incentive grant
- ☐ Business start up grant
- ☐ Young entrepreneur business grant
- ☐ None of these
- ☐ Not sure

29. How are these grant programs funded?

- ☐ Sales Taxes
- ☐ Donations
- ☐ Fund raisers

Other (please specify)

30. Who is the contact for more information and program guidelines for these grant programs?

31. Is there a micro loan program available in your work area?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ Not sure

32. Who is the contact for the micro loan program or can you provide a web address?

33. Do you have gap financing programs in your work area offered by your economic development corporation or jobs development authority?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ Not sure

34. What EDC or JDA may we contact for more information on this gap-financing program?

35. Which of these types of gap financing programs are available in your work area?

- ☐ Rural cooperative or utility service program
- ☐ Regional council or other regional intermediary
- ☐ Not sure

Other (please specify)

36. Does your EDC or JDA have a progam for interest buy down participation?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ Not sure

37. What are the usual participation terms of the local EDA/JDA offered buy down participation program?

Buy Down Rate	
Months of Buy Down	
Repayment Required (yes/no)	
Source of Funds	

38. What are the local participation terms of the Bank of North Dakota's PACE, FlexPACE, or AgriPACE programs?

Buy Down Participation (100% or a portion and a partner)

If portion and a partner, what % is provided?

Who are the partners? (city, county, utility cooperative, private, other)

Months of Buy Down

Repayment Required (yes/no)

Source of Funds

39. Have cities or the county in your work area provided any of the following business support incentives?

- [ ] Renaissance Zones
- [ ] Deferrment of real estate taxes for development purposes
- [ ] Provided land for development purposes
- [ ] Provided infrastructure for development purposes
- [ ] None of these
- [ ] Not sure

Other (please specify)

40. What information is given to businesses interested in locating to your community?

Thank you for taking this survey. Survey results will be made available and the link emailed to you via the same organization that requested your participation.