



2006 REGIONAL FORUM SUMMARY Friday, May 12, 2006, Steamboat Springs, Colorado

The third and final forum in Yampa Valley Partner's 2006 Regional Forum series was held on Friday, May 12th 2006 at the Depot Arts Center in Steamboat Springs, CO. This particular forum focused on regional citizen action and development of regional ideas into action plans.

The meeting commenced with a welcome and overview of the regional forum's purpose of how we can anticipate and adapt to changes in our valley; understand how can talk with each other about the very complex issues and develop our regional ideas into action plans. Change is happening now – the intent is to focus on the future and utilize the prosperity from this growth and change. There is the possibility of new community discussions that include communication, recognize our valuable resources and that will support the community visions and plans.

Russ Martin, the Town Manager of Hayden, commented on the power of Citizen Action and the ability for grassroots efforts within a town to affect change. He noted that the previous evening's planning commission meeting had a full house simply to better understand a proposed development and a transformation of the community to publicly participate in planning forums.

The attendees introduced themselves around the room with a comment on what each individual needed to continue participation in a regional process. Resounding themes were Action; Regional Discussions; Partnerships and Information.

Jeff Devere from the Town of Rangely and Conrad Stanley with Colorado Northwestern Community College presented a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) model demonstrating how information can be visually and spatially displayed to better understand our region. They are interested in working with youth and organizations in our region to better develop the GIS capacity. They hope to assist Yampa Valley Partners with an index of Community Indicators. An interactive informational map is available at www.cncc-gis.net.

The group reviewed the possible regional initiatives that emerged from the previous two forums which included a Regional Leadership and Advisory Group; Youth Education; Regional Planning and Retaining Quality of Life in the Valley. The participants were asked to break into self-selected interest areas that would collaboratively develop action plans formed around these initiatives. An emphasis of ensuring the initiatives remain connected to the regional system and conversation was made.

A total of six "affinity groups" were formed with instructions that participants should select their group based upon their passion for the topic, with the premise that from passion comes action. The group was asked to apply the four principles of "open space" forums to their discussions: 1) Whoever comes is the right people; 2) Whatever happens is the only thing that could have; 3) Whenever it starts is the right time; 4) When it's over, it's over. (When it's not over, it's not over) and finally the Law of the "Two Feet"—Be involved with your "affinity group", go where your passion lies. An action plan template was distributed that listed specific steps, timelines and responsibilities for the group.

The six “affinity groups” that formed and their goals are as follows:

1) HERITAGE & LAND USE

Goal: Showcase our heritage and articulate our Heart and Soul to engage our residents and share with our visitors

2) SHIFTING ECONOMY/NEIGHBORHOODS

Goal: Strengthen neighborhood in an effort to maintain a sense of community and connections

3) REGIONAL POLICY AND PRACTICE

Goal: Develop A Routine Method for Including Regional Thinking into Public Policy and Practice of all Town and County Elected Boards and Planning Commissions in the Yampa Valley.

4) YOUTH REGIONAL LEADERSHIP

Goal: Youth Education and Regional Leadership

5) GIS TECHNOLOGY & HEALTHCARE

Goal: Regional De-Isolation of Healthcare

6) WORKFORCE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Goal: To provide sufficient workforce housing throughout the valley by 2016

The groups set up timelines and next meeting dates to take action upon their tasks.

Some of the insights that came out of the planning sessions and how the Regional Forums are affecting participants work included understanding the commonality of goals, the power of regional collaboration and the involvement and engagement of our youth in regional discussions.

Yampa Valley Partners recognized its appreciation for participating in the Regional Forum Series and the interest in Northwest Colorado. The commitment to share the action plan information and a summary of progress was made to enable the affinity groups to convene.

Detailed notes and action plans for the six affinity groups are available online at www.yampavalleypartners.com.

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