

Business Issues Solution Group

The second meeting of the Business Issues group was held at Bucks T-4 Lodge at 6:10 PM on October 28, 2004.

Members present were Ruby Delzer, Eric Becker, Burt Mills, and Bob Biggerstaff. Marne Hayes was present as well to present information on demographics and business resources and contacts. Marne gave the group a list of business resources and contacts that have been instrumental in helping the Chamber of Commerce collect information about economic trends and both residential and commercial growth patterns. Although there is not a great amount of information that is specific to Big Sky, there is quite a bit of information that can be obtained about Madison and Gallatin Counties that is somewhat representative of Big Sky and which has been useful in encouraging interested businesses to Big Sky.

Marne talked about where to find demographic information and noted that the most useful information has come from the US census, the last one which was reported in 2000. At that time, according to the census, Big Sky had a year round population of 1221 people. The Gallatin County Land Use Permits reported from the Gallatin County Planning Commission have also been useful in measuring new population growth, and a good way to keep up with the additions of homes and businesses, although not necessarily growth specific to year round residents. However, the Commission has stated that they can separate out the commercial permits issued from the residential permits, which would give a more specific indication of population growth. The Gallatin Development Corporation, Madison County Economic Development Council, and the Small Business Development Center in Bozeman were also suggested as good sources for information and avenues to find out what might encourage new business activity. Marne pointed out that Bootleg Enterprise in Bozeman is currently doing research for an Economic Impact Study of Big Sky, and that the preliminary report would be done by sometime mid-November. She said that as soon as the information was given to her, she would share it with the group.

There were two methods discussed on how to improve the business climate in Big Sky.

- 1) Continue bringing tourists to the community and getting them to come back
- 2) Encourage business that is not tourist driven in Big Sky so that jobs which create a full time local base can exist

The group agreed that tourists are already being served by local businesses and we need to see what opportunities and subsequent new businesses could round out the experience in Big Sky. The businesses which are not tourism driven are a different facet of the economic community than what we have concentrated on in the past. There were three general areas discussed that the group agreed would be important areas for the future of Big Sky's business climate. The new Town Center, the potential highway 191 commercial area, and the entrance to Big Sky off of 191. For future meetings we thought that having someone from Simkins group, the Taylor family and the landowners of the Big Sky entrance talk to our group about where they stand now as well as what their

plans or projections are for those areas. It is believed that there needs to be an understanding of the future development of these three areas in order to plan for successful businesses in the future.

Marne will contact Ryan Hamilton of The Town Center about addressing our group at our next meeting. Burt Mills offered to make contact with the Small Business Development Center and Bob will meet with the Gallatin Development Corp. about what information they might have that would be useful for Big Sky business or what they might suggest as far as encouraging a good business climate in Big Sky.

Next meeting is tentatively scheduled for November 18, 2004. Will be dependent on speaker, room availability, and schedules.