



Headwaters RC&D  
**2021 Addendum to the CEDS**  
**COVID-19 Regional Rebound and Recovery**



Serving the Southwest Montana Counties of:  
Beaverhead, Deer Lodge, Granite, Jefferson, Madison, Powell and Silver Bow

# Executive Summary

As the regional economic development organization serving a seven-county region in Southwestern Montana, Headwaters RC&D (Headwaters) works diligently for the communities within this boundary. As part of this work, Headwaters develops and updates the regional comprehensive economic development strategy (CEDS) every 5 years. This work provides a guiding document for the economic development work of Headwaters, as well as the counties and communities of Southwestern Montana.

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Survey Responses

The CEDS contributes to effective economic development in America's communities and regions through a locally-based, regionally-driven economic development planning process. Economic development planning – as implemented through the CEDS – is not only a cornerstone of the U.S. Economic Development Administration's (EDA) programs, but successfully serves as a means to engage community leaders, leverage the involvement of the private sector, and establish a strategic blueprint for regional collaboration. (eda.gov)

Improving the economic and social well-being of the residents of southwestern Montana in the midst of COVID-19 is the intended purpose of the goals and objectives outlined in this addendum to Headwaters' RC&D's 2017 CEDS. The addendum will serve as a roadmap in guiding Headwaters and area stakeholders through the process of economic community recovery. As the region's Economic Development District, Headwaters RC&D has taken the lead to ensure that this area of Southwest Montana makes a return to pre-COVID-19 efficiency and prosperity, and that the residents of this region can feel good about the communities they live, work and raise families in.

As of December 28, 2020, and since January 21, 2020, there have been 18,909,910 total cases in the United States. Where the U.S. average per 100,000 cases is at 5,696, Montana is seeing an average of 7,432 per 100,000. (CDC.gov). Continued attention to prescribed best practices such as social distancing, mask wearing, and staying home when sick may help to curb the spread and reduce numbers.

Additionally, 2 U.S. pharmaceutical companies, Pfizer and Moderna, received vaccine approval, and in December of 2020, front line healthcare workers and first responders have already begun receiving the vaccine.

Prior to the pandemic, the U.S. economy was doing very well. Unemployment was at a 50-year low and inflation was also below the Fed's target of 2.0%. However, because we closed a significant portion of the U.S. economy, 'real' GDP growth (i.e. the % increase/decrease in economic growth compared to one year prior, 'net' of inflation), fell during the second quarter by an astounding 31.40%. These are numbers not seen since the Great Depression. Unemployment spiked to its highest rate in the post WWII era, hitting 14.7% earlier this year. Although the rate has fallen for five consecutive months, it is still well above its February 2020 reading of 3.5%. (Forbes.com)

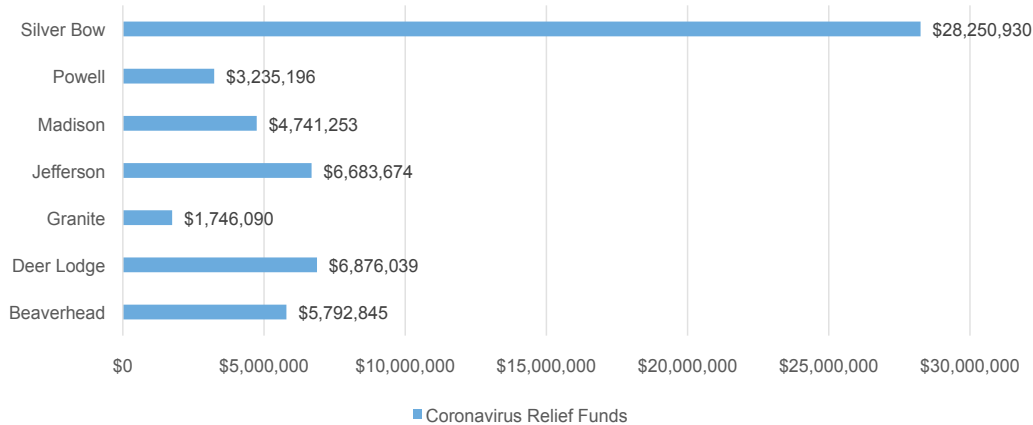
Montana hasn't fared much better. State unemployment peaked in April of 2020 at 11.9 percent, and while it had stabilized by November to 4.9 percent, it remains quite a bit higher than the low of 3.5 that we saw in February of 2020. (bls.gov)

The impact on local businesses has been extreme as well. From supply-chain issues to lost revenue, to reduced hours and the cost of increased safety measures, and from sick employees to an inability to give employees enough hours, business owners are stressed, and that doesn't even take into

account the large number of businesses that have closed altogether. While stimulus money has helped offset some of the damage, it hasn't been enough for many businesses.

Fortunately, as of February 2, 2021, the seven county Headwaters region had realized a total of \$57,326,027 in Montana Coronavirus Relief Funds, with more funding still available.

**Coronavirus Relief Funds by County**



Beginning in November 2020, Headwaters RC&D held a series of public meetings with community leaders and interested citizens of each county in the seven-county region, and distributed a survey to gain more input on the ramifications of the pandemic, the results of which are included in this document. We also used an app during these meetings called mentimeter.com to gauge public concerns and priorities moving forward.

In the survey results, the most-often noted negative impact was the toll the virus has taken on small businesses and tourism. Housing, broadband, mental health and small business struggles were common themes that came up in our research when we asked for input on community concerns.

A lack of affordable housing, a lack of housing for seniors, a lack of housing for the workforce and a lack of family housing were all cited as concerns facing the region. These housing issues were challenges before the pandemic and the influx of new residents to the region is only exacerbating matters.

In addition, a lack of adequate child care throughout the region has had a negative impact on the workforce, as do varying school attendance policies. Many locations throughout our seven counties lack child care facilities altogether.

Rural broadband is an ongoing challenge, with many of the counties in the Headwaters region underserved in terms of connectivity. Where many school kids are now having to learn remotely, there aren't always an adequate number of devices, nor the connectivity needed, to serve them all, resulting in kids being left behind. An article in the May 2020 issue of High Country News magazine points to "the expansion of tele-health to fill in gaps left by the closure of rural health care centers, and the importance of efficient broadband to support that."

A focus on the wellbeing of our youth, isolated seniors and business owners faced with previously unheard of challenges, are all a focus of the desire for improved mental health services in the region. Students and seniors are lacking the social connections they so need to thrive. Business owners are struggling with supply chain demands, keeping employees healthy enough to work while at the same time not always having enough work, resulting in layoffs and a lack of response when it comes to calling them back to work.

With emphasis on regional resiliency, the goals of this addendum seek to elevate our partners throughout the region with thoughtful and focused economic development strategies designed to help mitigate the negative impacts of the pandemic, and to help build resilience. Community resilience is "the ability to prepare for anticipated hazards, adapt to changing conditions, and withstand and recover rapidly from disruptions." (nist.gov)

# Goals and Objectives

The following goals arose from the input we've received at a series of public meetings, and via a survey we conducted, and will help to guide us in our efforts moving forward. A focused set of objectives has been set forth in support of these goals. We're working with our partners and stakeholders throughout the Headwaters region to ensure that the goals and objectives we've identified are given top priority, particularly in the short-term as we have additional support for the next 18 months.

## **GOAL #1** *Emphasize community resilience in each of the seven counties in the wake of COVID-19*

### *Objectives:*

1. Work with area healthcare professionals on a plan to help improve the mental health of business owners and community members.
2. Help to create stability within the community by improving awareness of COVID-19 guidelines and remaining alert to how they impact businesses and communities.
3. Focus on our youth in terms of providing the resources needed for both educational success and social outlets.
4. Continue to diversify economies in an effort to develop more resilient economies.
5. Develop a more fortified plan to market each community for economic development.

## **GOAL #2** *Support the return and revitalization of mainstreets, business districts and rural economies across the region*

### *Objectives:*

1. Keep stakeholders up-to-date by communicating changes in the availability of capital, as they occur.
2. Identify uses for vacant buildings and promote facade work to make them appear more attractive.
3. Create and promote more community forums, for business owners to share ideas and stay aware of what's happening in their area.
4. Support re-starting events that will increase business visitation and revenue streams
5. Connect the business community back to COVID-19 decision makers for more buy-in.
6. Find ways to involve and educate young entrepreneurs.
7. Develop leadership training programs for owners and management level employees.
8. Research and promote value-added agriculture initiatives, including, but not limited to, new meat processing facilities.
9. Promote and support business recruitment efforts throughout the seven-county region and support industrial development, business clustering and promotion of development parks.

## **GOAL #3** *Ensure that communities are appealing and healthy places to live and work*

### *Objectives:*

1. Develop a housing task force for the seven-county region to explore new avenues to create housing stability. Support efforts for affordable housing initiatives.
2. Work with communities to ensure that there are enough - and affordable - childcare options in each county.
3. Support nonprofits throughout the region, including food banks and critical support services.
4. Support community emergency healthcare and fire resources
5. Make main streets more appealing and more walkable.
6. Improve broadband access to encourage economic development opportunities and support community growth as well as provide critical infrastructure for distance learning.
7. Emphasize the importance of Urban Forests, specifically street trees, which are important for future growth.
8. Identify and invest in value-added agriculture businesses, with a focus on increasing capacity for Montana's beef industry and processing opportunities in the Headwaters Region.

## GOAL #4

***Emphasize that each community is COVID-19 safe and welcoming, and perceived as highly desirable by visitors***

### Objectives:

1. Coordinate as a region, and with help from Southwest Montana Tourism Region and the Montana State Tourism Office, to first, build awareness of each region, and second, to encourage more visitor days within the region.
2. Publicize existing trail systems located throughout the region, to in- and out-of-state visitors, appealing to those seeking more outdoor recreation opportunities.
3. Work in conjunction with each county's Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) to promote the offerings that make that county unique to tourists.
4. Develop appealing, dynamic marketing materials to promote each community, and partner with lodging facilities and tourist attractions when possible for added value.
5. Embrace historic character and focus on historic elements of each community to realize their potential as visitor attractions.

## GOAL #5

***Increase access to stimulus money, capital, and business assistance resources for business creation, expansion and retention***

### Objectives:

1. Update and re-introduce the inventory of funding opportunities available to our region.
2. Offer marketing assistance to help small businesses craft their story and tell it better.
3. Offer more education to guide small business owners, especially new entrepreneurs.
4. Expand access throughout the region to Headwaters' SBDC services.
5. Expand economic development services throughout the region with focus on developing regional hubs.
6. Seek opportunities in the fields of logistics, high-tech and the natural resources industry

## GOAL #6

***Assist communities with post-COVID-19 workforce development and education and training opportunities***

### Objectives:

1. Engage Highlands College, Montana Tech, and U of M Western in a regional training program to develop stronger candidates.
2. Support local business entrepreneurs with business assistance classes on business planning, financials and marketing.
3. Develop a job-shadowing program for real-life experience.
4. Utilize the soon-to-be formed workforce coalition to meet the need for a stronger workforce in each of our communities.
5. Prepare 8th-12th grade students with focused training programs in preparation for joining the workforce.
6. Develop a campaign to promote apprenticeship programs (on-the-job training) as an alternative to college.

## ... Conclusion

In our efforts to improve the economic and social well-being of those living, working and raising families in the Headwaters region, there is much work to be done to fortify the resilience that these communities have already shown.

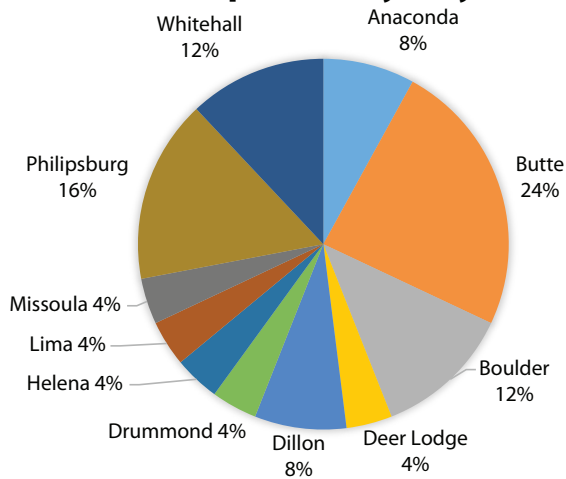
One way is to express that our communities are appealing places to live and work, and that they are COVID-19 safe and desirable to potential visitors. Another is by ensuring that community leaders have access to any stimulus money and business assistance that might be available to them, and that access to capital is unhindered. Yet another is to assist with workforce development through education and training.

From amplifying current economic development efforts to improving broadband access, stakeholders in the region will need to be laser-focused on solutions that can be implemented in the short-term, while identifying those that require a more long-term approach.

# Survey Results

25 survey responses were submitted, with respondents from Anaconda, Boulder, Butte, Deer Lodge, Dillon, Drummond, Helena, Lima, Missoula, Philipsburg and Whitehall, giving us some representation from almost every county in the region.

## Responses by City



Across the seven counties, respondents noted knowledge of 25 businesses having closed. When asked what worries them the most about the COVID-19 pandemic in regard to their community (more than 1 response accepted):

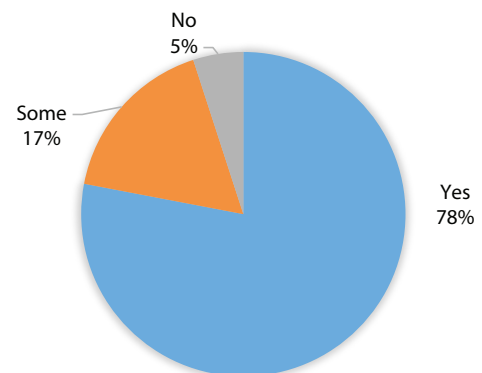
- 10% referenced business closures, loss of business, reduced business hours and the likelihood of more vacant storefronts to come.
- 10% expressed concern with a possible delay in economic development, economic impact, and a loss of growth in their community after making good strides recently.
- 40% replied (with some slight variation) the health of the residents, covid fatigue, needless deaths and mental illness.
- Other items of note were the influx of out-of-staters moving in and driving up home prices; a hit to tourism with down-sized or cancelled events; workforce concerns; food and rent insecurities; and the overall length of time that the pandemic has gone on - a delay in the 'return to normal.'

Of 23 respondents, when asked if they feel that their community has benefitted from Cares Act funding:

- 78% said yes
- 17% said some
- 5% said no

When asked what actions their community has taken to adjust to the pandemic, responses ranged greatly. From 'most people trying to maintain a positive outlook' to 'the town is set in survival mode and is trying to do just what is necessary to stay alive' and from 'many took advantage of the State's grant program' to 'caring for our neighbors any way we can', there are many different ways to look at overall pandemic response.

## Did Your Community Benefit From Cares Act Funding?



Asked what facets of community productivity haven been - or potentially will be - impacted by COVID-19, responses again ranged greatly. This is just a sample of what was noted (respondents replied with their top 3).

- A weakening of the local economy.
- Lack of workforce (this was a common thread); housing shortage (this was also a common thread); COVID-19 restrictions affecting business operations.
- Reduction of business hours; less visitors; less income.
- Mental health of our community.

Final thoughts shared included these comments (see full slate of comments on pages 14-19)

- The new normal cannot be tolerated long-term and it would be wise to take the time to discuss and prepare for the future.
- Overall, our revenues and business are down by two thirds in 2020. Bring on the vaccines!
- Assurance that economic growth and productivity will happen soon (next 3 years).
- Working together, pulling together, not tearing each other down.



# Public Meeting Feedback

Through each of our county-specific public meetings, a list of challenges and opportunities arose from the group discussions, and those responses are catalogued here, again, by county:



## BEAVERHEAD COUNTY

### Challenges

1. Job loss
2. Confusion over how to interpret COVID-19 guidelines
3. Employee's having to quarantine
4. Supply chain problems
5. Businesses closing
6. Broadband issues - connectivity and the impact of going remote / plus potential for missing out on economic development opportunities due to these issues
7. Online shopping and the impact it is having on local businesses.
8. Restaurant and bar sales down
9. Healthcare workers at risk
10. Business attraction and retention
11. Expanding amenities in and around the county for the expanding population, such as parks, trails and other recreational activities and opportunities.

### Opportunities

#### First

1. Technical support for businesses
2. Stability
3. Mask up for businesses
4. Promotion of businesses
5. Retraining for employees
6. Develop TBID (tourism business improvement district)
7. Marketing opportunities with use of COVID-19 monies

#### Second


1. Mental health support
2. Online business presence
3. Promote tourism
4. Support for hotels

#### Third

1. Local activity map
2. Community celebration as COVID-19 winds down
3. Community business support
4. Beaverhead-based resource
5. A local economic development employee and office, based within the county

# DEER LODGE COUNTY

## Challenges

- 
1. Workforce - how to manage staff that are quarantined? How can we keep employees paid? Responding to manufacturing training needs.
  2. Job services - resources for job seeking, training for resumes, interview techniques
  3. Broadband
  4. Housing development
  5. Business attraction and retention
  6. Impact to non-profits (Anaconda NPO Association)
  7. Reduction in tourism (50-60%)
  8. Inability to staff as a result of COVID-19
  9. Supply chain issues
  10. Trying to plan for 2021
  11. A need for more street trees

## Opportunities

### First

1. Supplemental income for payroll
2. Access to employee training applications
3. Sector Partnerships
4. Supporting existing businesses with economic development funds
5. How do we retain businesses through closures?

### Second

1. Building workforce housing
  - 40-60 new homes being built
  - Affordable units
  - 3rd street development
  - Ennis Peak and affordable housing network
2. Large-scale marketing and safe methods for tourism and trails
3. Potential for Vista volunteers
4. Capacity for visitor centers
5. Develop a tourism business improvement district (TBID)
6. Access to broadband internet
7. Easement dollars / land acquisition





# GRANITE COUNTY

## Challenges

1. Non-residents moving in
2. Atmosphere of COVID-19 fear among the locals and nervousness of visitors
3. Difficulty getting people to comply with COVID-19 regulations
4. Food service industry strained
5. Challenges getting employees, then to keep them, due to health impacts from pandemic. Harder to hire with new requirements.
6. Mental health; fear of exposure to the virus. Challenges of the pandemic are wearing on people.
7. School issues, not enough substitute teachers
8. Impact of VRBO's (vacation rental by owner), challenge for locals to purchase homes, desire for long-term rentals is diminished

## Opportunities

### First

1. Develop a plan for the future
2. Land use controls and long-term infrastructure
3. Lack of ambulance service emergency response
4. Lack of volunteers
5. Lack of industry
6. One potable water supply for the entire community
7. Remediating lagoons
8. Handicap access on sidewalks

### Second

1. Historic preservation
2. Land use planning
3. Opportunities to recruit telecommuters
4. Housing / Affordable Housing
5. Childcare

### Third

1. Housing
2. Engage with Realtors
3. Business development and communication among existing businesses
4. Encourage tourism
5. Rent costs
6. Higher wages
7. Develop a sustainable economy that's not as reliant on tourism
8. Broadband
9. Come back from 2020 stronger



# JEFFERSON COUNTY

## Challenges

1. New jobs
2. Economic
3. Affordable housing
4. Loss of event - ripple effect on businesses
5. Workforce
6. Childcare
7. Tourism - Restaurants - Delivery and Takeout
8. Ability to work remotely

9. Real estate markets are tapped
10. Influx of retirees
11. Broadband / need for co-working space
12. Huge influx of Air BnB;s - impact on affordable housing
13. Long - term temporary housing - waiting for housing in neighboring community
14. Broadband - adequate internet / TSS - local internet provider
15. Ability to communicate with the public

## Opportunities

### First

1. Tourism

### Second

1. Housing
2. Small business support and innovative businesses - recruiting new business, how can we help businesses adapt, increased workforce training, remote classes for small business training
3. Community Health Improvement Plan
4. Support for the restaurant industry
5. Utilize revolving loan funds
6. Emergency services throughout the county

### Third

1. Healthy community and coordinated health system, identifying how the health system can best function and communicate
2. Information flow - coordinated effort for local governments, local economic development, chambers of commerce
3. Education
4. Impact of outdoor recreation on local communities (ie. fire depts., hospitals, healthcare)



# MADISON COUNTY

## Challenges

1. Landlocked in Twin Bridges
2. Housing / Opportunities for land expansion for affordable housing in Twin Bridges / Lot of residential construction on Madison side / Commercial properties haven't moved
3. Retain employees in the restaurant industry
4. Hiring new employees - lots of advertising, few applicants
5. Employee recruitment
6. Losing employees to the construction industry
7. 400 home starts between Virginia City and Reynolds Pass
8. Opportunities for tourism in Virginia City and, how to move visitors from Virginia City down through the Ruby Valley
9. How to do economic development during COVID-19
10. Lack of events (cancellations) / Collaborative ways to host events during the pandemic
11. Less reliance on tourism, more on higher-paying jobs

## Opportunities

### First

1. Coordinated plan during the pandemic
2. Help existing businesses survive
3. Support the business community with out-of-the box ideas
4. New hotel ownership
5. Sight-unseen cash purchases of homes
6. Commercial property in Ennis
7. Cost of building materials outpacing wages

### Second

1. Support Workforce
2. Childcare
3. Lacking
4. Where it does exist, it's expensive
5. Grandparents can't help due to COVID-19
6. Ties back to lack of employees; can't work for \$15/hour when childcare costs \$8-10/hour
7. Mental Health Challenges
8. Engagement with County Commissioners
9. Financial support during COVID-19

### Third

1. Not lose long-term goals
2. How do we prepare for long-term change?
3. Involved in statewide legislation - support initiatives for economic development and social needs
4. How do we utilize revenue from marijuana law towards affordable housing and resulting mental health implications?
5. Workforce Housing
6. Impacts of legislation





# POWELL COUNTY

## *Challenges*

1. Economic destruction
2. Loss of restaurants
3. Mental health
4. Businesses closing
5. Fewer jobs, lower income
6. Youth interaction
7. Education
8. Unemployment incentives
9. COVID-19 denial

## *Opportunities*

### **First**

1. Broadband/ 5G service
2. Diversify job amenities
3. Technology upgrades
4. Affordable access to internet
5. Remote learning
6. Computer access for junior high and high school students
7. Affordable housing for seniors and general affordable housing

### **Second**

1. Property improvement
2. Solutions for long-term success
3. Block cleanup
4. New development
5. Look at opportunities for urban infill, redevelopment

### **Third**

1. Provider Capacity
2. Lack of services
3. Access for railroad land / potential for redevelopment / clean-up for the roundhouse



# SILVER BOW COUNTY

## Challenges

1. Economic insecurity
2. Small businesses suffering - closures, no travel, cancellation of festivals, job loss
3. Need for another stimulus to get through impact of early 2021
4. Fear
5. Lack of hotel stays
6. Broadband issues - connectivity and the impact of going remote / plus potential for missing out on

economic development opportunities due to these issues

7. Online shopping pulling \$\$ from local businesses
8. Restaurant and bar sales down
9. Healthcare workers at risk, such as in assisted living facilities
10. Mental health instability
11. Community is ripe for development
12. Opportunity for growth through the next 3-6 months
13. Create primary sector jobs

## Opportunities

### First

1. Small businesses (existing) and new businesses
2. Employee recruitment / make sure workforce is strong
3. Survival - keeping what we have, going
4. A healthier community
5. Adjustments to the new normal (business environment)
6. Increased interaction between Montana Tech and employers

### Second

1. Broadband Buildout
2. Leverage the value of the superfund cleanup activity
3. Business recruitment
4. Address blight and crime
5. Resiliency
6. Housing prices are exceeding wage growth
7. Neighborhood watch in racetrack area

### Third

1. Acceptance of change - looking out for the best potential for change
2. Vaccination acceptance
3. Workforce training
4. Engaging Highlands College
5. Workforce Committee
6. Continuum model
7. Workforce development
8. Get lost kids back on track



# Survey Responses

## *What financial impacts has COVID-19 had on your community?*

- Many community events were cancelled, including the fair and rodeo.
- Severe financial impact, spiraling debt.
- Lack of revenue throughout the community.
- Unemployment increase, bankruptcy, loss of fundraisers for nonprofit organizations
- foreclosures.
- Severe loss of revenue from sporting events and public events and reduced commerce due to restrictions and health risks of pandemic.
- Less travelers and tourism.
- Various as stated in above question “ impacts to our Community”
- Serious reduction in tourism related revenues. Dramatic increase in property prices.
- Sit-down Restaurants/bars have had a hard time.
- Businesses have closed.
- Struggling businesses not able to keep doors open.
- Less commerce.
- Isolation and quarantine time frames that people are not able to work or people have to stay home with children who are in isolation/quarantine.
- Reduction in travelers has a big impact on the town and trickles down to a lot of other businesses that may not be directly influenced by tourism. The restrictions placed on bars, casinos, and restaurants have also had a major impact on the economy. These businesses are not making it! Not only are they not getting the revenue they need to operate their businesses they also have difficulty with staffing. Most of these businesses pay their employees minimum wage and currently with unemployment benefits and then the added money that the state is giving these employees they make more by collecting unemployment than if they were working.
- Loss of funds for nonprofits; loss of income for businesses.
- Loss of retail sales revenue.
- Loss of business revenue.
- Businesses are struggling to keep afloat and following COVID protocols, especially eateries and bars.
- As a tourist based community we have earned less revenue.
- Loss of Business.
- Tough on Bars and Restaurants.
- Unknown.
- Future plans for development and growth are being pushed out.
- Job loss, crime is up.

## *What worries you the most about the COVID-19 pandemic in regard to your community?*

- The lack of affordable housing as many out of staters are purchasing property in the area and driving up the prices.
- Business closures, bank hasn't been open for months except for drive up... food insecurities, and rent insecurities. Covid rage, angst, and fatigue. Needless deaths.
- The longer the time period the more difficult it is to return to normal.
- The Financial and Social depression. Mental illness and increase of illegal activity.
- This has gone on for so long that it is taking a huge toll on our community physically of course as we lose neighbors to illness and death but mentally as well.
- Reduced business hours which affect visitors come to our community.
- Health, Economic impact, Financial distress Etc.
- Impact of people moving into rural communities.

- Tourism has taken a hit due to down-sized or cancelled venues.
- Loss of business or ability to open a business.
- People not respecting the guidance to wear masks, wash hands, and stay socially distanced.
- Economic down turn.
- COVID fatigue....the community will not support or engage in public health measures to slow the virus.
- The impacts on business is a major concern. Current businesses are having difficulty surviving. As these businesses close and there is no hope of new businesses opening our town will suffer greatly we are going to see a lot of vacant storefronts before things turn around.
- Safety and health of our aging community members and enduring the strain.
- Rebuilding workforce.
- Impact on healthcare and recovery for businesses.
- Our community was making great strides in growth before the Pandemic, I fear losing the momentum gained over the last 5 years.
- That polarization of the community.
- Recovery: Paying people not to work has decimated the workforce. Jobs are unable to be filled and those working are overworked.
- We want people to stay healthy.
- Length of time before returning to normal.
- That the economic development will be pushed out further and master plans will be put on the back burner.
- Health issues, last City Council they noted felonies have risen sharply.

### *Do you feel that your community has benefitted from Cares Act funding?*

- Yes
- Some, I have no knowledge of who has benefitted but I believe the one stimulus payment to families helped for a brief time.
- In some cases yes but.
- Yes in many ways.
- Yes, but it barely keeps many businesses afloat.
- Yes, it helped keep businesses open.
- I believe so but I have not seen the rewards yet.
- Absolutely.
- Yes. County Sheriff & Community Health received funds.
- Yes - especially our county hospital.
- Yes, I know many organizations who applied for and received funding.
- Yes, for those who applied.
- Yes. Businesses, governments have received funding to expand efforts in COVID response.
- No, I don't think that there are any positive things that have come about because of Covid. This pandemic has not only negatively impacted our town and business community but it has also had many negative impacts on our school age children.
- Definitely - Anaconda Community Foundation and Anaconda Local Development strongly participated.
- Yes - keeping some small business going.
- Yes I know businesses who have applied for funding have seen the benefits.
- Yes, many businesses and nonprofits have taken advantage of the State Grant program. We have leveraged these funds to use to our advantage, since payroll, etc. has been already paid out.
- Somewhat, assistance has been given to those looking for housing.
- Yes
- Every bit helps.
- No
- Very little.

### *What actions has your community taken to adjust to the pandemic?*

- Very little, very few people take it seriously.
- Most people are trying to maintain a positive outlook.
- Ingenuity, resources to the public including covid 19 response plan.
- Cancelled public events, modified commerce for safety.
- The town officials have not taken any action.
- A broader look at the impact it is having on small business. The financial effect on the Community as a whole.
- Some businesses required safety procedures.
- Chamber sponsored shop local events.
- Businesses have worked to keep people and employees safe.
- Reduced hours of operation, signs about wearing masks, cancellation of lots of events.
- Too many to list, however, not enough to ensure the safety and health of residents.
- Specific planning in schools, public health, healthcare facilities. Incident command has been set up to manage the pandemic and community partners are involved to discuss pandemic issues and find solutions.
- I really don't think we have done a lot. I really see that the town is set in survival mode and is trying to do just what is necessary to stay alive. At this point everyone is just trying to keep their heads above water.
- Online county commissioner meetings, encouragement to mask up, united efforts in April and May to support essential workers, schools gone beyond the extra mile.
- More on-line shopping opportunities.
- Availability of testing, mask mandate, information sharing.
- Yes, I know many took advantage of the State's Grant Program.
- Cancelling events, reducing capacity and wearing masks.
- Business closure, open hours adjusted, many work at home jobs.
- Caring for our neighbors any way we can.
- Social distancing, compliance with health mandates.
- The standard mask wearing, social distancing, reduction in gathering sizes, online meetings, etc.
- Our city leaders seem to think it's a joke and just want to go against anything that is recommended. Our county leaders have finally seen that what they have done too little Southwestern Mt News is now working with them to produce and distribute PSA on mask wearing and other COVID related information.

### *What facets of community productivity have been - or potentially will be - impacted by COVID-19? Please reply with your top 3.*

- Events like the fair and rodeo
- What an odd question. So as a biomass #1 an influx of residents from larger area communities but no local ties, #2 a weakening of the local economy with businesses closing #3 more de localization of goods and services as even more is moved to larger area towns.
- Restaurants and their employees.
- Lodging Facilities.
- Gift shops.
- Businesses, non profit and social.
- Restaurants, bars are hanging on by fingernails. Many offices are empty as employees work from home.
  1. reduction of business hours
  2. less visitors
  3. less income.
- Closing of Courthouse, Lack of retail shopping and people have to leave to shop further spreading the Virus & the overall disruption of services.
- Mask requirements caused serious friction within the usually united business community.

- Momentum in tourism has been blunted.
- Lack of workforce; housing shortage; Covid restrictions affecting business operation.
- Face to face meetings, communication about things happening, community gatherings.
- People are not eating out as much.
- Healthcare, businesses, schools.
- I really am not sure.
- Schools and educational achievements, business profits, slower non profit response for services.
- Retail Sales, Work force, Hospitality.
- Healthcare worker fatigue, inability/time to get to businesses to previous numbers to be profitable, fear.
- Workforce, mental health of our community.
- Inability to gather for meetings make them less effective, and our community thrives on events, celebrations and tourism, all of which have been postponed.
- People are used to being paid not to work. Recovering the workforce will be a main concern.
- Job growth.
- Job retention.
- New Business.
- Reduced business hours and slower response times.
- Implementation of master plan for community; Development for single family and multifamily housing, New business development
- Public Events, Kids activities, Volunteering and fundraising events.

### *What are your community's biggest opportunities for economic recovery/resiliency?*

- The fair and rodeo draw a large crowd every year and will continue to draw people in.
- Local stakeholders taking back the control over area planning.
- It is a day destination community because of its historical significance in its business district.
- Small businesses starting in the meat industry. New owners in two businesses that will bring in a diverse clientele. Real Estate prices are very competitive. People like the idea of living out of densely populated areas.
- Widespread availability of vaccines.
- None, no plan.
- A Vaccine.
- People want to live here and can work remotely.
- Programs to restart tourism.
- A time to plan for the future with community involvement in long term planning.
- Lots of people appear to be moving to Montana and Deer Lodge from California and Washington with substantial financial resources. We should find out how to get them to invest in the community.
- Not sure.
- Learn from the pandemic what "thinking outside the box" has had as far as the positive aspect and how it can be strategized to help businesses work more efficiently.
- Not sure.
- Better use of outdoor rec opportunities, golf courses (big increase in sport due to covid), and taking advantage of improved communications such as zoom commission meetings.
- More on-line sales.
- Location and ability to forge relationships.
- Utilizing Grant funds to supplement the County's budget and finishing up projects already in motion.
- The return of tourism.
- Open the state for business.
- New business and new residents moving to Butte.
- Construction, new residents.
- More housing; New Businesses; Master plan implementation.
- Need to stop fighting, realize we are all in this together and start backing local businesses.

*What kind of support would your community benefit from to ensure a strong economic recovery from Covid-19?*

- Help with obtaining affordable housing.
- Medical outreach, education, vaccination, consistent stimulus payments till there is sufficient population vaccinated. Education for business owners on the funding available and the paperwork that entails. Consistent continual outreach to the population to help them cope.
- We need some sort of long range economic and preservation plan.
- Financial
- Widespread availability of vaccines and safety to gather and travel.
- Promotion that the town is a COVID-19 safe area, still have recreation opportunities and the businesses are open.
- Stimulus package from Fed Government.
- Housing and infrastructure are challenged.
- Unemployment benefits extended; rent moratorium extended.
- Assistance in Long term planning and getting the county involved in the recovery.
- Getting covid tests and vaccines so we are able to return to normal operations.
- Networking events.
- Engagement and work together for a common goal.
- Programs to get people back to work instead of encouraging them to stay on unemployment.
- Share on social media events or opportunities in our community.
- Short-term debt solutions/grants.
- Ability to grow our employment base thus increasing our population.
- Strategic planning and figuring out what are the steps towards a strong economy.
- I think as the population as a whole has extra income, the town will prosper.
- Open the state so the tourism industry can attract people to our state. This would ensure money flowing into our communities.
- Federal Stimulus \$.
- Wide distribution of vaccines, this year and next.
- Grants; Matching Funding; Boots on the ground.
- Shop locale and come together.

*Please add anything else that you feel is essential regarding the impacts of COVID-19 on your community.*

- Nothing else.
- I think I said enough.
- The new normal cannot be tolerated long term and it would be wise to take the time to discuss and prepare for the future.
- Mental illness and increase of criminal activity.
- Overall, our revenues and business are down by two thirds in 2020. Bring on the vaccines!
- in town education about COVID-19 by the county health department on a regular schedule.
- No response.
- Grant funds have helped many businesses and our hospital. Not sure if the community has a clear vision of what a lot of new residents mean to town. Vacation rentals continue to take up housing stock without being replaced.
- More federal relief needed.
- Affordable housing shortage caused by influx of out of state purchases.
- Once we are through this, we need to focus priorities on kindness and connection to heal the social isolation we have been sitting in.
- None...
- Not sure.



- We have to learn to adapt to new ways (i.e. mask up, social distance, sanitize) so that we can hold our events (Anaconda Community Market) this summer. Figure out and go the extra mile to hold events smart and safe.
- Working together, pulling together not tearing each other down.
- Tourism.
- Some businesses waited to apply for grants because they were getting by at the beginning of the Pandemic, now, they are struggling to keep their doors open during the holiday season and are worried about January and February, the slowest months of the year. Will they be here in 6 months if there is no other aide available.
- I wish our community took this more seriously.
- Essential to recovery: eliminate paying people more than they would normally make.
- Stay Safe.
- N/A
- Assurance that economic growth and productivity will happen soon (next 3 years).
- The schools being on odd schedules, kids not having the contact they need I see this in my kids and have seen it with other children. I feel bad how they will adjust back to a regular schedule, along with parents that have made changes in work schedules etc.