

Westcliffe & Silver Cliff, CO
May 10-12, 2010

COMMUNITY
REVITALIZATION
PARTNERSHIP



*BUILDING BETTER COMMUNITIES BY PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO
DOWNTOWNS, COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS AND TOWN CENTERS IN
COLORADO THROUGH EDUCATION, ADVOCACY, INFORMATION AND
COLLABORATION*

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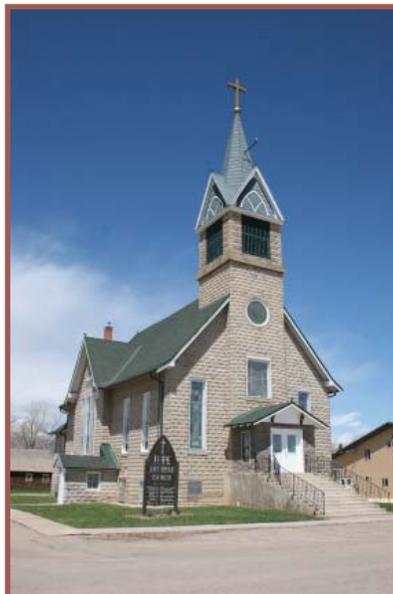
Introduction

Community Revitalization Partnership Program
Sponsored by the Colorado Department of Local Affairs
working in partnership with Downtown Colorado, Inc.
and the Towns of Westcliffe and Silver Cliff.

This program is partially supported by the State Historical Fund.

Welcome to the downtown assessment for the Colorado communities of Westcliffe and Silver Cliff. Colorado communities have the opportunity to apply for assistance through the Community Revitalization Partnership (CRP) program, a collaborative program between the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA), Downtown Colorado, Inc., the state's non-profit Main Street affiliate, and the local community.

Downtown Colorado, Inc. assembled a team of volunteer professionals including designers, planners, land use, and finance experts to work in Westcliffe and Silver Cliff for three days and then help write this report after the visit. The assessment team appreciated the invitation to learn about and assist your community and worked diligently to provide relevant and realistic input towards the betterment of Main Street Custer County.



Participating Stakeholders

- Towns of Westcliffe and Silver Cliff Elected and Appointed Officials and Staff
- Custer County Commissioners
- Custer County Area Merchants & Chamber of Commerce
- Custer County School
- Area Non-Profits
- West Custer County Library District
- West Custer County Hospital District
- Wet Mountain Valley Fire Protection District
- Wet Mountain Tribune
- Business Owners
- Residents

Report Structure and Four Point Approach

This report is structured based on a loose interpretation of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street Approach. The Colorado Main Street Program is a program to revitalize traditional downtown districts within the context of historic preservation.

The program uses an approach that advocates a return to community self-reliance, local empowerment, and the rebuilding of central business districts based on their traditional assets of unique architecture, personal service, local ownership, and a sense of community. This methodology addresses the following four areas and combines activities in these areas to develop a community's individual strategy for strengthening and redeveloping its central business district. The four points are:

(1) Organization – Establishing consensus and cooperation by building effective partnerships among all downtown stakeholders. The Main Street approach to central business district revitalization requires the effort of the entire community. The merchants, property owners, local government officials, and civic leaders must agree to support common goals for revitalization and join together in a partnership. Successful Main Street programs are usually structured as nonprofits guided by an active working board. The board will create four standing committees (design, organization, economic restructuring and promotion) that will develop projects and work plans for implementation. Local programs hire a paid program manager to coordinate the efforts of volunteers in implementing the program.

(2) Promotion – Creating and marketing a positive image based on the unique attributes of the downtown. The promotions of the central business district as a single, unified commercial area – in the same way that a major shopping mall is promoted – will help attract customers and strengthen Main Street's role as a viable business center. The Main Street organization can coordinate an aggressive promotion and marketing campaign that includes a program of special events, retail promotions, image promotion and on-going public relations.

(3) Design – Enhancing the unique visual quality of downtown by addressing all design elements to create an appealing environment. Good design is essential to all aspects of downtown revitalization. The Main Street design philosophy is rooted in historic preservation and seeks to use and enhance those elements of quality design which remain in our communities. Neglect and misguided improvements may have taken a toll on the appearance of downtown, affecting its perceived economic potential. Renovated facades and creative merchandising displays, appropriate landscaping and public improvements are all part of downtown's long-lasting visual appeal and a well-functioning physical environment.

(4) Economic Restructuring – Strengthening downtown's existing economic assets and fulfilling its broadest market potential. To become competitive, downtown must reposition itself. With a thorough understanding of today's market, downtown can develop strategies to enhance the competitiveness of existing merchants, recruit new businesses, create new anchors and convert unused space into new uses.

Executive Summary

The Towns of Westcliffe and Silver Cliff contacted DCI and DOLA to conduct a combined Community Revitalization Partnership (CRP) to look at the downtown and particularly how to create and sustain an economically viable business community which would look at: business mix, attraction, and retention, appearance of vacant buildings on main street, historic downtown structures while maintaining historical integrity, infrastructure and drainage issues. The request was made to create and sustain an economically viable business community through a community identity and marketing plan.

Westcliffe has a vibrant tourist and summer resident-based economy between May and September, however, the winter brings a slow-down that, for some businesses, is too much to survive. Silver Cliff suffers much of the same, but is also hampered by the fact there is no visually appealing, economically viable “main street” or “town center” where citizens and visitors can congregate, shop or celebrate.

Both communities, Westcliffe and Silver Cliff (collectively, “the Cliffs”) are filled with dedicated and passionate residents, organizations and elected officials that are striving to make each town a wonderful place to live, work and play. Efforts, however, are somewhat divided and this is contributable to not having a common direction or vision for each community and collectively too. The communities would benefit from determining a point organization to lead main street efforts. Also, by focusing organizational efforts it quite possibly will lead to better utilization of community resources, both financial and human. To ultimately pull this together, the main street corridor must have a clear vision of what it looks like, mix of businesses, and how people will be attracted to visit and also purchase goods and services.

From a promotional stand point, the Cliffs, is situated in such a majestic landscape with many natural, recreational and heritage resources. It seems, however, that the resources are viewed as ordinary because they are just part of “everyday life.” The two communities could better capitalize on the natural beauty and amenities at their doorstep.

Lastly, both Westcliffe and Silver Cliff struggle with an inconsistent year-round economy, which makes living and working in the area a challenge. This requires many to hold more than one job per household to make ends meet throughout the year, as either a business or resident. To address this, the Cliffs, along with the County, need to tackle the economic and market conditions that exist by completing an economic and market analysis to gain an understanding of government finances, population and employment trends, and forecasts as well as an understanding of the local and regional market and economy. The towns and county must create a clear plan for needs and the desired mix of sales tax and job-creating business development for the purpose of creating a 12-month economy.



Background Information

Westcliffe and Silver Cliff are located in south-central

Colorado nestled between the Wet and Sangre de Cristo mountain ranges. Westcliffe is the County seat for Custer County. Situated in the Wet Mountain Valley (Sierra Mojada) at the intersection of two state highways, the Town of Westcliffe presently covers approximately 1.1 square miles of land area and Silver Cliff, at the base of the cliffs to the east is 14.7 square miles.

Westcliffe

Dr. William A. Bell owned the ranch that the original town of Westcliffe is platted on and began to sell his subdivided lots after convincing the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad to extend its rail line to his property in 1881, nearby the booming mining town of Silver Cliff. Westcliffe was incorporated in July 1887 and is named for Westcliffe-on-the-Sea in England, the birthplace of Dr. Bell.

Over the past 113 years, the population of Westcliffe has fluctuated significantly, experiencing the “boom and bust” cycles common throughout Colorado’s history. Westcliffe is once again “booming,” with a strong national and state economy during the last decade fueling new population growth. From 1990 to 1999, Westcliffe’s population increased 52.6 percent, from 312 to 476 persons.



Westcliffe is the region’s economic center, the “downtown” for Custer County and the Wet Mountain Valley. Since 1990, the number of wage and salary jobs in Custer County has doubled, while unemployment rates have dipped to below 5 percent. Average annual wages are also increasing in Custer County, although they still lag behind the state average. Between 1994 and 1999, the average annual wage in Custer County increased from \$13,836 to \$19,117, a 40-percent increase. During that

same time period, average annual wages increased 31 percent statewide, averaging \$34,189 in 1999.

Silver Cliff

In June 1878 silver was discovered on a sheer cliff beside the present location of the town, and thus Silver Cliff’s boom began. Silver Cliff became an incorporated town in February 1879 and as was typical with most Colorado mining towns in the mid to late 19th century, the population grew rapidly. By 1881 it was estimated some 6,000 to 16,000 people were living in Silver Cliff with most searching for fortune in the form of a dark greasy-looking rock, which when melted turned out to be 75 percent silver.

As people continued to pour into the town, some had the forethought to begin the process of planning the physical growth of the town. Soon, streets were surveyed and lots were zoned for homes and businesses. This was also being done in preparation for the arrival of the Denver and Rio Grande narrow gauge railroad; however the railroad stopped a full mile west of the town. And, quietly, but very quickly, Westcliffe zapped the energy from bustling Silver Cliff and it became the central town of the Wet Mountain Valley.

By 1890 mining was dead, businesses went belly-up and the population decreased. The boom days of Silver Cliff were over. According to the 2000 U.S. census, the population of Silver Cliff was 512 and today the estimated population is 589.

There is no large employer in the town of Silver Cliff. With the exception of Family Dollar, the Silver Cliff businesses are homegrown and are operated with fewer than 10 employees and most employ five or less. Some business owners do not hire any employees. A majority of the workforce from Silver Cliff is employed at the county, school or clinic in Westcliffe, are self-employed, are building contractors or they travel to work down-the-hill in nearby Canon City, Pueblo, and Colorado Springs.

Observations

- Rich history
- Beautiful views and environment
- Very friendly people
- Enthusiastic community
- Great festivals
- Strong history of volunteerism and fundraising in the community
- Dedicated and focused community groups
- National Forest – waterfalls, lakes, mountains.
- Great restaurants
- Retirement Community backbone of non profits
- Not always business friendly
- Community divided: pro growth/anti growth
- Seasonal economy
- Lack of events in the winter
- Inconsistent communications between towns and from towns to residents and businesses.
- Failure to market the natural resources

Organization

The first section will look at Organization which includes developing collaboration, volunteer recruitment and management, fund-raising for the organization, and developing operational strategies. Organization involves getting everyone working toward the same goal and assembling the appropriate human and financial resources to implement a downtown revitalization program. The three principle components of organization are:

- Public and media relations;
- Volunteer development; and
- Fundraising.

A governing board and standing committees make up the fundamental organizational structure of the volunteer-driven program. Volunteers are best coordinated and supported by a paid, full-time or part-time program director as well. This structure not only divides the workload and clearly delineates responsibilities, but also builds consensus and cooperation among the various stakeholders. While a paid downtown coordinator may not currently be possible, it is something to strive for in the future.

Notwithstanding this fundamental description of a typical downtown organizational structure, numerous variations exist throughout the country and are driven largely by local circumstances. In some towns, for example, the Chamber of Commerce is strong enough to add an organizational component designated to focus on the downtown. Consider developing some form of district to dedicate resources and focus on downtown.

Regardless of the organizational structure chosen, one overriding factor is demonstrated time and again in communities undertaking a program of downtown revitalization—without first creating and developing a solid organizational component to oversee and manage the process, and despite the best intentions of all concerned, the program rarely accomplishes the desired outcomes and most often fades away before anything has a chance to succeed.

Given these realities, we cannot overemphasize the importance of placing organizational development among the highest priorities of early revitalization activities. Most, if not all, of the recommendations in this report are made within the framework of this understanding.

The downtown assessment team determined that it would benefit both towns to begin marketing the district as a whole, Cliffs' Commercial District. The idea is that you can work on the perception of one part of the area, but those who are just driving through may not see all parts of the commercial district. By working on the whole area simultaneously, you may impact all passers by as well as those audiences targeted for special events or promotions.

Observation: There is lack of clear vision, communication, and leadership to outline the activities and services on Cliffs' Commercial District.

Recommendations:

- One point of contact. Make it simple to find out information about your commercial district. Determine one point of contact and vision for Cliffs' Commercial District. This community will greatly benefit from having a one-stop for finding information about the commercial district. Consider creating a clearing house of information on every business, government services, organization's events, contact information, etc. This contact would be a Cliffs' Commercial District Liaison, and expert on who to contact to find a business, open a business, training for your business, etc. The major purpose of this recommendation is to make it easy for customers, business owners, property owners, partners, etc. to spend money, open a business, collaborate with other businesses, etc.
- Facilitate a conversation with groups working in the community – include everybody! Utilize the Custer County Non-Profit Collaborative/Wet Mountain Community Foundation groups to manage a facilitated discussion of all organizations to consolidate and reduce duplication in accessing resources. Consider using an outside facilitator such as a DOLA representative, or if you have trouble identifying a facilitator, contact DCI for suggestions.
- Streamline Communications. Develop clear communications between businesses, government, non-profits, and residents. See the communications section in this report to provide more detail on this topic.
- Use existing organizations to take the lead on downtown issues. Designate the Merchants & Chamber Association to head up a task force to coordinate all organizations and coordinate events and activities in downtown, create collateral materials that explain the benefits and activities of participation in the chamber. Keep reinforcing that the Chamber is going to work for the community, to make businesses stronger, and to ensure that businesses, citizens, and the community in general has a voice.

Observation: There are opportunities to better utilize resources in the Cliffs' Commercial District.

Recommendations:

- Consider stronger enforcement of sales, use, and lodging tax to expand the amount available for Cliffs' Commercial District marketing. Re-assess use of the lodging tax money to create a stronger PRODUCT to market. A healthy and vibrant commercial district attracts business interests by appealing to both the local year-round resident and the

visitor. Determine that a single entity, supported by the Town of Westcliffe and the Town of Silver Cliff, the Merchants Association and the Chamber of Commerce, will be the Cliffs' Commercial District promotional source. That entity could be an agency, an organization, or an individual. With Town/County funding comes public confidence and demonstration that the health of a commercial corridor is important enough to deserve focused attention and resources (such as part-time Chamber/Economic Development director). This part-time position should have government support and be accountable to all partners, but be an independent entity that is able to be responsive to business owners, the community, and the local governments. While financial support will be necessary in the initial stages, this entity must eventually become self-sustaining. A crucial step in any forward progress towards identified goals is the involvement and buy-in of the Westcliffe/Silver Cliff business community. Further research is recommended for ways that similar, small and rural Colorado communities have funded and implemented such endeavors.

To gain and garner community support, local governments must play a leading role to preserve, rebuild, and revitalize the Cliffs' Commercial District by working closely with businesses, organizations, and residents. There are many tools available to gain grants, reset policy, create incentives, and partner with the public sector to improve the commercial district. Long-term funding mechanisms are available in Colorado to address specific capital and promotional needs. Create a strategy for the Cliffs' commercial area to outreach to organizations and businesses to identify short-term outcomes, to develop collaborative partnerships, tap into potential volunteer pools, sponsorship possibilities, and long term community planning activities.

The term "marketing" has wide-ranging interpretations. Varying organizations are involved in the marketing of the Westcliffe/Silver Cliff area and bringing visitors to town. This marketing can be enhanced and more effective by establishing a more complete "product" of the Cliffs' commercial district. Marketing is not a substitute for content. Consistent messaging and content could be improved. In the long run, a more-defined product is easier to market. By creating the "look" and implementation strategy through a community-based process (with help from businesses, residents, local governments, and organizations), buy-in will be inherent. It is vital to determine short-term goals and then to make clear progress towards these goals while also working on long-term planning and visioning.

An established downtown is the heart and soul of any community. To a great extent, the perception of a location as a great place or just another place depends on a vibrant economy. Being vibrant means being lively, a place to go, a place to do things. But, it takes work from all stakeholders. Businesses may need to stay open later. Residents may need to consider shopping local for everyday items. Local governments may need to implement business-friendly policies. Volunteer organizations may need to increase collaboration for common community priorities. The immediate need is for organization – someone to focus on the existing resources, move forward with goals, and to put together a program that works for this specific area.

The benefit of the lodging tax collected by hotels, motels, B&B's and other short-term lessors, like retreats and vacation home renters, is to expand the capability of a community, through promotion, marketing or other initiatives, to attract travelers and increase occupancy at the various lodgings that are collecting the tax. In fairness to all lodging

businesses, the tax should be levied uniformly and spent in accordance with lodging tax rules and the priorities of the community. Enforcing the collection of this tax will benefit all collectors and other businesses in the community. We urge the county to review receipts periodically and request audits when necessary.

It is recommended any additional funding the Lodging Tax Board receives should be used to help support a Chamber/Economic Development Director who will organize and implement many of the community and business priorities, events and projects. It is recommended to continue the idea of mini-grants to help organizations hosting events which bring in overnight guests. Lodging Tax can be a built-in funding mechanism for sustainable assistance for businesses and to draw attention to the area. It is recommended that research is conducted into how other counties allocate Lodging Tax for maximum affect.

- Consider consolidating/sharing services to reduce duplication and conserve resources. The Wet Mountain Valley has spectacular resources - talented staff, committed elected officials, a strong volunteer base, a good mix of business establishments, and natural and scenic beauty. Are there ways to consolidate or share services – with government or with nonprofits or even with businesses? The concept of consolidating or sharing services provided by the towns and county, such as a building inspector, public works crews, administration and purchasing, could help save time and money over the long run. In addition to the potential savings realized through the sharing of resources, the increased collaboration can increase community buy-in. Each stakeholder will bring specific strengths and challenges to the table.

- Consider fundraising for improving the Cliffs’ business support organization. A part-time Chamber/Economic Development director will be able to develop sustainable and diverse funding mechanisms for the Cliffs’ business support organization. This may include Lodging Tax funds, annual donations from local governments, business memberships, private sponsorships, restricted donations, fee-for-service (the Youth Corps could be this), and product sales (historic building ornaments or some other unique product). The issue of membership vs. non-membership benefits will need to be discussed if public funding is utilized. Other communities have dealt with this issue and the National Main Street database provides case studies. A draft budget should be tied to a Diversified Funding Strategy to ensure sustainability and viability for a business support organization. This should include local government support including lodging tax funds, product sales, a plan for grant-seeking, private contributions, and fund-raising efforts.

Observation: Diversifying volunteers and projects may re-energize Cliffs’ Commercial District leadership.

Recommendations:

- Create a Junior Cliff Program to engage youth. Southwest Conservation Corps (SCCORPS.org) is a great resource. It is recommended to further explore opportunities for youth development in the region to accomplish commercial district improvement goals. The Community Youth Corps operate in many Southwest Colorado counties, such as Chaffee, Costilla, La Plata, Hinsdale, and Conejos counties. It is recommended that you invite a representative from the Salida office of the Southwest Conservation Corps to do a presentation. Lake City hires local adults, junior leaders, and 10 participants in 6th – 9th grades. The Lake City crew works on downtown beautification projects (trail building, flowerbed preparation, repairing benches, and painting). The students get a cash award at

the end & a voucher for an educational institute. This has been a way for us to provide an introduction to the workforce (also write resumes, are interviewed), learn work ethic (i.e. come to work on time and be prepared) and accomplish meaningful community service. This has also worked for us to develop community pride – connecting adults with youth with project managers. This multi-age approach is helping to create the civic leaders we will want tomorrow. We have also made sure that our Youth Corps does not compete with existing businesses (so no window cleaning, for example). It is recommended that you work with local businesses to develop a “work-path” for participants coming out of the Youth Corps.

- Consider a youth business program. Consider a youth business program in conjunction with your local school to provide lifelong business skills and as a way to connect multi-generations. Involving youth in a community service commitment will eventually translate into the next generation of community leaders. To be effective and to reduce volunteer burnout, volunteer projects should be planned in advance. Have projects planned, tools or supplies ready, and start and finish projects on time. Hinsdale County has more than 20 nonprofit organizations and local governments who utilize volunteers to stretch our services and amenities. We now host a community-wide volunteer celebration and each organization gets to recognize its volunteers and the work accomplished. We hold this during the National Volunteer Appreciation Week in April. This joint event accomplishes several goals – most of our volunteers assist two or more organizations so a comprehensive event increases the peer-recognition and reduces the number of volunteer-recognition events. The Lake City event culminates in the “Citizen of the Year” announcement. The cost is split. This is another example of consolidating and sharing of resources. Even though the actual volunteer work of an animal rescue organization or an Emergency Medical Service team may be different, the dedication and passion is consistent. A celebration highlights efforts of volunteers and the work accomplished.
- Challenge the high school, garden club, the theater club, etc. to take on a downtown improvement project. What is a high-priority “rallying” project in the commercial district that could be accomplished this year? Maybe this is the installation of a kiosk that includes a change-able business directory or maybe this means more flower barrels or gardens sponsored by businesses or individuals. Physical activity is great way to develop community relationships and get real work done. It can also create an informal forum for discussion and proactively involves everyone in a solution.
- Develop community-wide volunteer recognition celebrating each organization’s volunteers. Harnessing and engaging the energy of business owners, property owners, students, and seniors would benefit the commercial areas of the Towns of Westcliffe and Silver Cliff tremendously in terms of increasing outreach and support. Utilize volunteer planning tools to match tasks with volunteer strengths.

Communication

Effective and efficient communications tools will be critical to the success of implementing all of the Community Revitalization Partnership recommendations for Silver Cliff and Westcliffe. In any community, successful communications between diverse stakeholder groups is the key to creating programs and projects that truly work. Effective engagement in the development of these programs can also keep stakeholders actively engaged through implementation and beyond.

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES				
Everyone	Website <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create one website for communities/downtown to market. Consider something clever. Websites are among today's most important tools for communicating 	Social Media <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linked to website as a way to drive traffic to website, communicate up-to-date information Get youth involved in using these mediums to market the communities? 	Marketing/ Advertising <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create well established identity and package for branding Engage the communities in the role out of a joint marketing campaign 	Special Events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concentrate on year-round activation with emphasis on shoulder seasons
Community Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community events calendar Community news and projects Community resources Community business listings Newsletter opt-in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facebook 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shop Local campaign Standard window posters, in restaurant table tents or place-mats, etc. Bill stuffers to promote community events and business Community member discount cards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create special events task force consisting of Merchants Assoc., Chamber, community members, and businesses. Conduct an analysis of events, develop strategic initiatives <p>Event planning matrix – meet goals for audience, year-round activation</p>
Day-cation Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do they need to plan a trip for a day? Package experiences/ build an itinerary Maps (of businesses, historical trails & walks, recreational amenities, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Twisitor Center" – visitors can send in questions about the community via Twitter and get responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target marketing to key visitor areas (via ads/ billboards), tour bus groups, etc. Printed map(s) Strengthen Visitor's Center? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event series released in advance with cooperative ideas Unique experiences at camps for day visitors Bring people to town for the day or evening
Destination Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vacation planner Lodging resources in the region Links to other visitor sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flickr (gorgeous pictures of the town or view) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted viral marketing for key interest groups Visitor Info Packet 	
Business Owners/ Investors/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data about communities to encourage new business development Package "doing business" information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training to diversity with on-line businesses Social media training for businesses, link them to main website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market free business training & support (i.e. merchandising, basic customer service and hospitality training) Focus on consistent weekend hours Business Plan Contest Package "doing business" information for print 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signature event as business development strategy
Orgs (Govt, Chamber, Non-Profits, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Common place to post info about projects, community news 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All use same tools (one go to place for community to find latest news) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create and market similar business incentive policies between the two communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly informal meetings to share info w/& get input from businesses <p>Business planning/entrepreneurs training by SBDC</p>

In the case of Silver Cliff and Westcliffe, communications will be particularly important and critical, because both communities will need to work together to effectively leverage their resources and communications tools to tell their stories and spread the message to residents, regional visitors, and destination guests.

To that end, this section of the plan identifies key communication strategies that will effectively meet the following goals:

- Create more effective communication strategies to reach out to, and engage, members of the community, in an effort to support local community efforts and businesses.
- Reach out to regional "daycation" visitors and bring them "up the hill" to enjoy the amenities and events offered by Silver Cliff and Westcliffe.
- Speak to destination visitors looking for a unique vacation or visitor experience in the mountains via channels and messaging that speak to the locale and offerings of Silver Cliff and Westcliffe.
- Build better communications between and for business owners, investors and entrepreneurs to strengthen business offerings in the communities and encourage economic growth.

- Strengthen collaboration between civic organizations, including the governments of Silver Cliff and Westcliffe, the Chamber of Commerce and the various non-profits, to encourage efficiency in service delivery and community offerings

To achieve these goals, the two communities should engage in four primary types of communication efforts:

- **Marketing/Advertising:** Successfully marketing Silver Cliff and Westcliffe means leveraging the assets of both communities to market them together. A clever marketing campaign should be considered, as should a well-established identity and graphics package (consider a catchy campaign such as “Meet the Cliffs). To build support for the effort locally, the two communities should consider working together to engage the locals in the rollout of a joint marketing campaign.
- **Website:** Research shows that most people are accessing information about communities they live in or visit via online tools today. Therefore, the online presence of Silver Cliff and Westcliffe are critically important. Effectively utilized, they can become a very successful tool for communicating with key audiences. As part of the CRP process, it is recommended that the two communities create one website for both communities to market their offerings. The site should be built around the new marketing campaign for the area (for example: www.meetthecliffs.com).
- **Social Media:** Social media tools are increasingly being used by communities as a way to keep individuals informed of the latest happenings and news about a community, and to drive traffic to a community’s website. The increasing popularity of their use means implementing them should be considered sooner rather than later. For many communities, implementation is also great opportunity to involve the youth in community efforts.
- **Special Events:** Events are a tremendous draw to the Silver Cliff and Westcliffe communities. Looking ahead, the communities should consider ways to strengthen events offerings by concentrating on year-round activation with an emphasis on the shoulder seasons, and to use events as an economic driver for the communities.

The following chart summarizes the key communication recommendations for the Silver Cliff and Westcliffe CRP, and what follows is a detailed description of each and how they meet the outlined goals:

Observation: Both Silver Cliff and Westcliffe lack effective communications strategies to reach out to, and engage, members of the community. This results in a lack of local support for businesses and events. Residents and business owners expressed a lack of a central place of communication for information about offerings and events in the community.

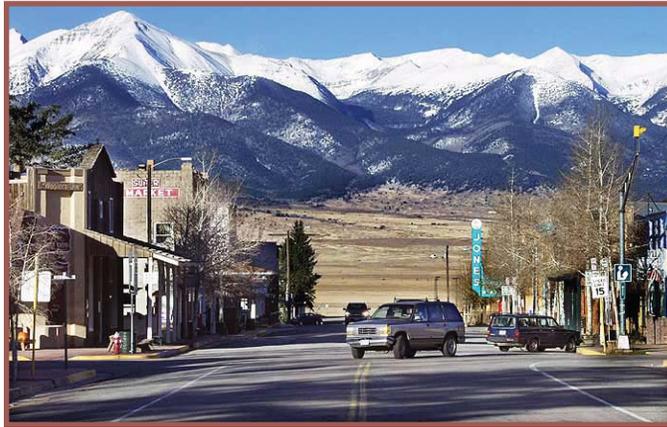
Recommendations:

- Utilize the newly created website to offer a community events calendar, community news and projects section, community resources area, business listings and the opportunity for locals to opt-in to a regular newsletter created specifically for them.
- Create a Facebook page for the Silver Cliff and Westcliffe communities to engage with each other about the latest community offerings, etc.
- Focus marketing and advertising on a Shop Local campaign. Consider local advertising options such as standard window posters, in-restaurant table tents, etc. and/or bill stuffers in utility/tax bills to promote community events and businesses. Also explore community

member discount opportunities (discount cards, etc.)

- To improve the engagement of local residents and businesses in events, create a special events task force consisting of key members in the community, business owners and investors, and civic organizations. Use this group to conduct an analysis of events, develop strategic initiatives for events and create an event planning matrix including meeting goals for audience, year-round activation, etc.

Observation: The Silver Cliff and Westcliffe areas offer tremendous opportunities for “daycation” visitors looking to escape for the day or a short weekend. Communications efforts need to be targeted towards reaching out to these regional daycation visitors and bringing them “up the hill” to enjoy the amenities and events offered by these two communities.



Recommendations:

- Consider creating a unique marketing campaign focused on the daycation visitor that speaks to exploring, adventuring and enjoying the “Cliffs” for the day. Consider a clever tagline, such as “Climb the Cliffs” to encourage them to come up the mountain to explore.
- Utilize the newly created website to help these visitors find all the information they need to plan a trip for a day. Package experiences for them and help them build an itinerary for a day or a weekend in both communities, based upon interests (i.e. recreational, historical, shopping, arts, etc.). Offer everything they will need once they get there, including maps of businesses, historical trails and walks, recreational amenities, business listings, etc.
- Consider creating a “Twisitor Center” using the Twitter social media tool. With such a tool, visitors to Silver Cliff and Westcliffe can send in questions about offerings in both communities via Twitter and get responses from a designated resource in the community (i.e. the Chamber, the Town staff, etc.)
- Create a well-packaged printed map/marketing piece for both the communities that easily demonstrates where key businesses, attractions, trails and visitor destinations are located for both communities. Distribute and target marketing to key visitor areas around the daycation “draw” area.
- Consider opportunities to strengthen/improve the visitor’s center with better signage, better information materials, more organization, and staffed with volunteers regularly.
- Event recommendations for the community include focusing on the development of new events to augment existing events, and to create a solid-year offering of programming. To market this, Silver Cliff and Westcliffe should work together to release a year-long event series calendar at the beginning of each year, along with cooperative idea of how to turn events into a long-weekend in the area. This information could be offered on the website, through social media tools and through calendars distributed to locals, daycation visitors and in limited advertising.

Observation: The Silver Cliff and Westcliffe areas offer extraordinary amenities for visitors from all over the country and world and already do draw such vacationers. Some communications efforts should aim to speak to these destination visitors who are looking for a unique vacation or visitor experience in the mountains via channels and messaging that speak to the locale and offerings of Silver Cliff and Westcliffe.

Recommendations:

- Utilizing the new website resource, create an online vacation planner that offers a variety of trip-building resources, including lodging and links to other visitor resource sites.
- Utilizing the Flickr social media tool, create a Flickr account for both the Silver Cliff and Westcliffe communities that offer photos of gorgeous pictures of the view and historical destinations as a way to draw in travelers and tourists.
- Invest time and energy into targeted viral marketing for key interest groups and create a visitor information packet that offers complete and comprehensive information about the communities to distribute to interested guests.

Observation: Improved communications infrastructure and tools to link the public and private sectors that are focused on economic development will be critical to strengthening the business environment in Silver Cliff and Westcliffe. The two communities should work together to strengthen economic development tools and offer unified information about doing business in an effort to strengthen business offerings in the communities and encourage economic growth.

Recommendations:

- Utilize the newly created website to be a portal of information for existing and new (and/or potential) businesses looking for information and data about the communities. Package the information in a “doing business” format to include all the information investors and entrepreneurs might need to know, including data about the town (demographics, trends, sales tax trends), spaces available for lease or rent, business incentives available, services available (i.e. things they may need just to get into business or rehab their store) as well as the availability of free business training and support opportunities (i.e. merchandising assistance, basic customer service and hospitality training, etc.).
- Provide ongoing training to businesses to help them increase and improve their marketing using online and social marketing tools. Several Silver Cliff and Westcliffe businesses noted that having an online presence and doing strong sales via the Internet aided their financial survival during the off-season months. Training more businesses to increase their capacity in this way could encourage stronger business practices and businesses with a longer lifecycle. Social media training should also be considered for businesses. Social media is an increasingly powerful marketing tool for small business and it’s free! The social media networks for the businesses could be linked to the main community website.
- Create a printed “Doing Business In the Cliffs” business packet that could be distributed to both current and potential businesses and entrepreneurs and could be used both as a support and marketing piece to encourage economic growth in the communities. This packet would contain all the information also included on the website.

- Explore a focus on communicating (and implementing!) consistent retail and restaurant hours focused on weekends and special events. Consider trying to advertise and encourage regular operations on Friday night, Saturday, Saturday night, and Sunday to start.
- Consider creating a unified signature event for the Silver Cliff and Westcliffe communities that serves as a business development strategy. The communities already have several events, but none of them truly serve to support exploration of the community's amenities or businesses. Consider a "Climb the Cliffs" event or something that could promote exploration of all that the communities have to offer today, while telling the story of the communities' historical past.

Observation: Strengthening collaboration and communications between civic organizations, including the governments of Silver Cliff and Westcliffe, the Chamber and the various non-profits, will encourage efficiency in service delivery and community offerings and will promote unity between the two communities and the residents and visitor populations they serve.

Recommendations:

- Utilize the new website as a common "bulletin board" to post the latest on community news and projects in both Silver Cliff and Westcliffe.
- As social media tools are developed, create them collaboratively between the two communities so that one voice is being used to market both the "Cliffs."
- The two communities – Silver Cliff and Westcliffe – should work together to develop similar business incentive policies for consistency, and then market those collaboratively realizing that a gain in business in one community will ultimately also benefit the other.
- Civic organizations from both communities should collaborate to hold monthly informal "Cliff Chatter" meetings to share information with and gather input from businesses and residents as a way to keep an open line of communications.

Promotions

Promotion is one of the four key points in building a vital downtown. According to the National Trust Main Street Center, promotion sells a positive image of the commercial district and encourages consumers and investors to live, work, shop, play and invest in the Main Street district. By marketing a district's unique characteristics to residents, investors, business owners, and visitors, an effective promotional strategy forges a positive image through advertising, retail promotional activity, special events, and marketing campaigns carried out by local volunteers. These activities improve consumer and investor confidence in the district and encourage commercial activity and investment in the area.

Observation: A well-established identity and message will improve the effectiveness of marketing to locals, visitors, and investors interested in the Cliffs' Commercial District. Before the Towns of Silver Cliff and Westcliffe can really begin making improvements to their downtowns and central cores, they must come to an understanding of where these improvements can and should take place; what type of community they are and what their vision is for moving forward. Understanding the identity of the community must be the first step in any process to downtown revitalization.

Knowing the true identity of your downtown and finding ways to effectively communicate and build on that message with your unique audience is a key element to downtown success. Success will occur when you learn to guide the change in perception through strong connections with your audience, the residents and businesses of Silver Cliff and Westcliffe. You must be consistent, persistent and patient. Find a message and stick with it.

Recommendations:

Initiate a branding process to develop an identity for Cliffs' Commercial District. Just as large corporations research tax structures and the business climate of a particular city before they make plans to build a new factory, tourists research where they would like to spend their time and money, before they even get in the car. Communities must be prepared for these visitors by having a strong, consistent message.

Utilize Cliff Hanger's to build and develop linked or consolidated websites. Utilize social media tools. Having a consistent message about your community makes it easier for businesses and residents to communicate what it is you are all about. Both communities should be engaged in a process of developing an identity for the entire commercial district, stretching from the eastern entry to Silver Cliff to the West End of Westcliffe.

Develop Cliffs' Commercial District information packets with map including all downtown businesses for all hotels, event venues, chamber office, and Forest Service office. It is imperative that information on all of the businesses in the commercial district is available to visitors and that they know how to get to those businesses. The maps must be kept up to date, must be legible, and should show an accurate scale of the district. The information packet should include lodging, recreational activities, arts and entertainment venues, community events, and goods and services, for example. These information packets must be available at all lodging, event venues and service buildings.

Create a clearing house of information about what is happening in Cliffs' Commercial

District for print and online distribution. There are currently a number of websites trying to promote the entire area and all of the events that take place here. This can lead to confusion, misinformation, or incomplete information for visitors or residents trying to learn about the area. There needs to be one centralized distribution point for all items related to this district. This could be done by the Chamber or one of the municipalities, but whoever decides to do it must be responsible for events going on in both communities and in the commercial district.

The identified brand for the commercial district should be included on all information distributed. This is true for all events put on by non-profits or the communities.

Consider corporate sponsorship for increasing funds raised from events. Contact Clif Bar. The residents and businesses of the communities donate a great amount of time and money to events that take place here. Why not identify corporate sponsors for some of the larger events that can directly benefit from getting their name on the promotional material? It could be a rather easy sell for some large businesses to see the advantage. And besides, what is the worst they could say?

Package and market existing businesses to target audiences (veterans, kid-friendly, etc.). Westcliffe and Silver Cliff host a variety of diverse businesses. It may be more difficult to attract and acquire a new business than to work with existing businesses to make them more sustainable. Look at innovative ways to market and package existing businesses. Some examples may include kid-friendly or family-friendly businesses - you are marketing specific sections of businesses (list things to do in the area for families - special tours or hikes or fishing at the lake, identify businesses with kid sections - toys or clothes or books, which restaurants with kids menu's, etc).

Consider focusing marketing/promotional efforts on specific target audiences. A great example of this is the May is Military Appreciation Month. How is this marketed outside the area? Another opportunity may be further embracing the heritage - a month-long celebration of the history (encourage all area museums/heritage nonprofits to host events during one specific month/time ... increase historical displays such as historic tools at the hardware store or demonstrations of mining/tours/presentations and utilize existing, regional marketing opportunities - such as through Downtown Colorado Inc - ask businesses to participate through special menu items or highlight specific books on the area, or invite local ranchers to come and speak -- consider moving the "interview a rancher" program into a coffee house and record live, and encourage businesses to stay open later following heritage events to feed crowd).

Observation: The two communities could better capitalize on the natural beauty and amenities at their doorstep. During the focus groups, many of the residents and businesses discussed the fact that visitors who come to the area for the outdoor activities spend very little time and money in the commercial district. For the most part outdoor enthusiasts bring their own food and beverages, don't need the services that are in the downtowns, and may not even be aware of what they can purchase here. It is up to the businesses and the community at large to drive these visitors to the commercial core.

Recommendations:

Work closely with Forest Service and Land Management to better market natural resources, Byways, etc. Visitors to the area may be stopping by the local Forest Service or Bureau of Land Management Offices to get maps, directions and permits. These agencies should be aware of what is going on in the commercial district. If this is the only place in the community where these visitors stop, then this is the only opportunity for the business district to get their information in those RVs. Especially for those businesses that cater to the outdoors people, this is an opportunity being lost.

Develop messages for Veterans, Department of Corrections Officers, etc. for outdoor activities. There are a number of specialized and target markets that live only an hour or so away that the business district could be encouraging to visit. With the number of prisons in the area (16) and Ft. Carson and Pueblo so close, the number of workers and retired officials who could be spending their time here is quite large. The business district and communities would be wise to develop a marketing campaign to get them to the area, along with their families, to enjoy the outdoor activities as well as the amenities located downtown.

Bring people up the hill with "Climb the Cliffs on Friday Nights" and Cliffs' Community Yard Sale. If you want to get out of town for a "night away" - where do you go? Salida? Canon City? Look at the year-round residents in these towns as potential market for specific events (you don't always have to look for high-profile, expensive marketing campaigns). Consider a special night every week and everyone who has a driver's license zip code of Salida or Canon City can get \$5 off a meal - a regional draw that is marketed (using grassroots tactics) and is consistent (every First Friday night). Consider looking at neighboring communities as partners in drawing visitors/residents and look for ways to encourage Custer County residents/multi-day visitors to go and experience (stay with us in Custer County - but go float the Arkansas River ...). If you are a business, maybe look for "sister businesses" - in Salida or Canon City and "trade" information and clients.

A simple and effective promotion done in Lake City is a town-wide yard sale. If you want to be listed on the map, it's \$5. The map is inserted into the weekly paper (so more newspapers are sold that week, plus DIRT paid the insertion fee to the locally owned newspaper). DIRT markets the town-wide yard sale regionally through classified ads/shopper ads and flyers and folks come from Montrose, Grand Junction, South Fork and Creede to shop at the more than 25 local yard sales. These are bargain hunters so they will probably bring their coolers and bologna sandwiches but the yard sale day really serves two purposes. First, it brings folks into town who may return year after year and 2) it encourages a lot of residents to clean up outside their homes, sell unneeded stuff, and generate a bit of income.

Develop materials highlighting trails, sports, and other outdoor opportunities to capture outdoor enthusiasts. Concentrate efforts on winter activities. Summer activities are not hard to find in the valley but during the winter the communities basically go into hibernation. Those businesses that cater to the outdoor visitors should be marketing themselves to that target market in a very strategic and obvious way and should be looking for opportunities to add winter sports activities to their inventory. If customers can purchase the goods they need in the winter locally, they may be more likely to visit the valley in the winter months.

Observation: Developing community objectives for events will help to maximize on impacts for the communities and businesses year round. There are a number of events taking place in the summer months when visitors and second home owners are in town. These events are long-held traditions in the community and seem to serve the purposes they were intended to. However, many businesses and residents feel the events don't really serve a purpose for the community at large, even though large numbers of visitors are coming in to town. Additionally, many of the events seem to be singularly purposed, that is, there are not a number of activities happening at the same time to engage a cross section of the population. Business owners downtown do not seem to get involved in the events and are finding it difficult to take full advantage of the number of people who attend these events.

Recommendations:

Conduct an analysis of all events, develop strategic objectives, and ensure that events are meeting some objectives. Volunteers in this community are in danger of becoming tapped out. With sixty non-profits, many of which are putting on events, the population of this community is constantly busy in the summer months volunteering. Additionally, many of the events in town seem to be for socializing or getting people out of the house or up the hill. But what else do these events do for the community? Are businesses downtown taking part and finding value in the events? To answer those questions and make sure any and all other events are meeting the needs of the community, conduct a strategic events matrix. This tool will help the community identify the objectives that are important for them to meet and help plan events that will help meet those objectives. Overall events calendar should be well thought out and very strategic. Key things to keep in mind:

- Objectives
- Quality not Quantity
- Comprehensive Community Events calendar including all of the large community events
- Capitalize on already successful events

Finally, persistence is the key. You must find events that meet your objectives and stick with them for more than just a couple of weekends or years. It takes time for people to form habits, including going to events and visiting the downtown.

Ensure a year-round schedule with emphasis on developing shoulder seasons. As with many Colorado mountain communities, the summer months have no shortage of things to do in and around town. The winter months, however, are long and there aren't many activities to bring people out of their homes or to the communities. A tool the communities should be using is the Event Calendar. This will help the communities see when events are taking place and where there are large gaps in activities. Use this tool to begin filling in events and activities for the rest of the year. And remember, they don't need to be huge events that bring in thousands of people. You can start with activities that get the locals downtown and build out from there. Use the Strategic Events Matrix to help you fill in activities in the winter months that meet the objectives you have already set forth.

Include a retail component for each event. Many of the current events do not incorporate specific retail opportunities for businesses to get involved. Be sure to use the Strategic Event Matrix to help you identify retail opportunities. For every event that takes place at either the West End in Westcliffe or the Cliff Interpretive area in Silver Cliff, there needs to be a reason for people to visit the commercial areas. Businesses need to market their wares and connection with the events and event organizers need to remember that the commercial core is the strength of the community and they need to direct people to these businesses.

Businesses should maintain regular and expanded business hours. When visitors are in town it is important for the businesses to be open and ready to serve them. This may involve opening earlier than usual or staying open later to accommodate the potential customers. Businesses need to be aware of when events are taking place in the area, either in the commercial core or in the county that could lead to more customers. Work with event planners to prepare for this increase in visitors and staff businesses accordingly.

Economic Restructuring

The focus of economic restructuring is to assist in efforts to recruit, retain and expand opportunities for investment in downtown. This is accomplished by ensuring that investors and businesses are aware of all of the resources available for assistance and all of the benefits of choosing to locate their business in downtown, including the opportunities that may exist to capitalize on promotional activities. It also works to build strong relationships between downtown businesses, residents, and users.

Observation: The Towns should function as extended living quarters.

Recommendations:

- Residents should take pride and interest in the look, feel, and condition of their respective towns. Visitors are so important to the economic health of both towns that all residents need to have their commercial districts ready for visitors. Everyone needs to promote community pride and provide place that is warm and inviting. Think of Westcliffe as a living room and Silver Cliff as a family room with tourists as your personal guests.
- The economic development questions should not revolve around opinions of growth vs. no growth, but rather: how do we make our community inviting to visitors and potential residents? In a long-term view, many visitors and second-homers will become permanent residents, customers, employees and be a part of the community. Second-homers and new residents are important economic development players in that they import money to local businesses. Additionally, second-homers and new residents tend to support nonprofits and community development organizations that contribute to a town spirit and friendly engaged environment.

Observation: Consider a Vacant Properties Campaign to address underutilized property

Recommendations:

- A vacant properties campaign is a strategic plan for a community to remove the blighting influences of underutilized, vacant, and abandoned property and to redeploy these assets for economic development. Vacant properties can become business-ready sites. Particularly for the Town of Silver Cliff, a vacant properties campaign could incorporate area-wide planning that considers transportation routes to, through, and around town.
- Land use planning should consider how land uses support each other: how commercial, retail, service, industrial, and cultural assets relate to each other. For example, Westcliffe is land-locked with little room for expansion, while Silver Cliff has sites that could accommodate light industrial, fabrication, and assembly businesses. Creating a predictable business development climate will enable entrepreneurs to be comfortable in the long term prospects of their surroundings. Perhaps design guidelines or standards could be adopted to promote a consistent “look and feel” through town. Appropriate zoning will enable different businesses to know exactly where they would fit; there is need to create industrial zoning to quickly accommodate these type businesses when they knock at the economic door.
- Perhaps the heart of a vacant properties campaign is to remove blighting conditions or position a property for renovation or redevelopment. There should be an inventory of properties available for sale, formatted in a way that speaks to development interests

and encourages the assemblage of land parcels. The Towns can identify grants, loans, and incentives (state, federal, private, or self directed) that can be assembled into a tool box that can help private sector businesses to buy, renovate, and occupy sites.

Observation: Sustainability should be considered as a guiding principal for property reuse

Recommendations:

- Property renovation and development should incorporate sustainable practices that may include deconstruction and recycling of building materials and incorporating energy efficiencies and renewable building materials in new construction. The natural setting is important to the long-term sustainability of the Towns; environmental stewardship includes addressing possible asbestos prior to demolition and evaluating and mitigating pollution from former uses.
- Renewable energy (passive/active solar, geothermal, other) could be integrated into existing and new buildings. There may also be opportunities to create locally generated electricity for local consumption and move towards energy self-sufficiency. The former landfill north of Westcliffe on Highway 69 may be a viable renewable energy site.

Observation: There is a need for the towns to communicate and connect with businesses.

Recommendation:

Each town should develop and distribute “business friendly town” packet materials on services for new and existing businesses – incorporate programs from towns, county, library, school, etc. Each Town should create similar business incentive policies so not to compete, but rather support each other. Economic development ambassadors should hold monthly, informal, topic-based “Cliff Chatter” meetings share information and get input from businesses. Include town/county and Chamber updates through e-newsletter to businesses.

Observation: Business attraction efforts would be improved by enhanced information.

Recommendations:

Economic development ambassadors should conduct market research to identify potential businesses and a diversity of product demands. Location neutral business development opportunities should be researched to identify a target market for economic development. Location neutral businesses would include telecommuters, lone eagles, sales consultants, and small shippers that don’t need ties to urban centers. One such distance-business that also provides a service to the community is pharmacy delivery from a regional pharmacy. The Towns’ natural surroundings would logically support the attraction and expansion of outdoor recreation businesses.

Observation: Residents of the two communities purchase most of their goods “down the hill” and many of the businesses do not feel the community supports them.

Recommendation:

The business community should develop a shop local campaign that makes clear the benefits of spending locally, products available locally, a rewards system for local spending, and a collaborative marketing initiative.

Observation: Training and education could significantly improve the business environment in the Cliffs' Commercial District.

Recommendations:

- Develop trainings with and for businesses to enhance internet presence, consistent hours, and improve merchandizing. Businesses could also benefit from training to provide basic customer service and hospitality training for employees. Part of this training could be provided through the library and chamber, which could re-introduce business planning and entrepreneur training in collaboration with the Small Business Development Center. Business management training should also include energy efficiency training for business operations and facilities.
- The community at large could also benefit from training. For example, residents would benefit from civics training reviewing the various levels of government, their representative entities, and how each interacts with one another and the community. High school students would benefit from a business education program, similar to a junior achievement approach.

Design

Design takes advantage of the visual opportunities inherent in downtown by directing attention to all of its physical elements: public and private buildings, storefronts, signs, public spaces, landscaping, merchandising, displays, and promotional materials. Its aim is to stress the importance of design quality in all of these areas, to educate people about design quality and to expedite improvements in the downtown. At the forefront of the design effort is the restoration of historic buildings which helps provide the backdrop for downtown's sense of place.

Observation: There is no combined vision for the social, economic, and physical improvements of the entire commercial district.

Recommendation: Capture the vision of the Cliffs' Commercial District. Westcliffe and Silver Cliff have a very unique situation in that together, these two towns function as the region's economic center, the "downtown" for Custer County and the Wet Mountain Valley. Town residents envision the commercial district as the heart of the community. As such, both communities need to work together to gain consensus on a cohesive vision for the social, economic and physical improvements of the entire commercial district to ensure long term vitality and sustainability in the long term. It's our understanding that both towns are in the initial stages of updating their Master Plans respectively. Key elements of each community's Master Plan should solidify the vision for the community and address growth, image and design, housing, economic development, transportation, public improvements, resources and environment, cultural, historic, education, and human services opportunities. Each town should capitalize on this unique opportunity to work cooperatively to make sure that the commercial district becomes that desired community-gathering place attracting visitors, new residents, and growing businesses with year round activity while preserving the rural, small town character of both communities and enhancing the existing qualities of the area. The two towns should work together to create a sub-area plan for the Cliffs' commercial district as an element of each towns Master Plan. The Cliffs' Commercial District Strategic Plan should address land use, parking, infrastructure improvements (including storm drainage), signage, design guidelines as well as include an in-depth market analysis to assist the towns in understanding the market, trade areas, demographics, visitor data, consumer spending potential, business retention and expansion, etc. It should also clearly define the commercial district boundaries, goals and objectives, organizational mechanisms, enhancement programs, design related improvements, promotion and provide a clear set of supported and actionable strategies and actions that can guide the decision making and prioritization of next steps into the future. A key aspect of the plan should include a combined streetscape design for the whole district.



Community Engagement

As with all planning efforts, public outreach, collaboration, consensus building and ownership of the Plan is the key to its ultimate adoption and implementation. Facilitate a community engagement process for a Commercial District Strategic Plan. The towns should consider the following community engagement strategies to ensure that issues, aspirations, and concerns are consistently heard, considered and feedback is provided on how public input influenced decisions:

- Identify your leaders - form a Mayor appointed Cliffs' Task Force. Their role will be to represent each town's interests, provide guidance and community insight throughout the development of the Commercial District Strategic Plan to ensure community ownership and support of the adopted document.
- Foster participation of elected and appointed officials (find a respected champion from each community). Facilitate joint meetings with Town Board and Planning Commission representatives.
- Gather public feedback about community desires for the district (utilize community surveying, visual preference surveys, workshops, stakeholder interviews, etc).
- Provide a transparent process for how public input is used. Be transparent and inclusive.
- Utilize the town's website, direct email notification and social media tools (i.e., twitter and facebook) to provide information about the project including background materials, draft documents, meeting summaries, as well as notification of upcoming community meetings and upcoming events.
- Conduct community outreach events (i.e., car shows, festivals, mining days,, etc)
- Partner with the Chamber to facilitate a Downtown Revitalization Education Program with the school as well other non-profits. Use the program to teach students about planning, downtown revitalization, the Main Street Four Point Approach, and historic preservation for use by the Town Boards and staff.
- Publish articles in the Wet Mountain Tribune.

Recommendation: Update Land Use Regulations and town policies in each town for consistency with the newly adopted Cliffs' Commercial District Strategic Plan. In order to implement the vision of the commercial district strategic plan element, the land use regulations in each town need to be updated for consistency with the new vision. Code revision can range from simply adding overlay zones to address infill challenges to rewriting particular zone district designations. The following are possible code amendments that would ensure successful implementation accordingly:

1. Facilitate a community engagement process, but be sure to collaborate with service providers, Round Mountain Water and Sanitation District and public works staff (Town Man) up front and test the regulations with developers, business owners, and civic associations as well.
2. Adopt a commercial district overlay zone or consider a new commercial mixed-use zone district.
3. Set forth an administrative review process (Town Manager approval) for projects in the commercial district mixed use zoning or overlay zone district.
4. Set forth an alternative compliance process within this overlay zone or zoning district. Upon request of an applicant, each Planning Commission may approve an alternative

approach that may be substituted in whole or in part for a plan not meeting one or more of the development standards contained in the standards. This approach provides flexibility to meet the development standards in the ordinance and should apply in circumstances in which an alternative approach would provide a result that is equal to or superior to that which would be provided by the standards in this ordinance.

5. Provide a "How to" sections and include graphics to convey intent of the regulations.
6. Establish criteria for accessory dwelling units.
7. Establish density bonuses and expedited approval for residential development in the commercial district.
8. Examine the palatability and ease to proactively rezone properties with the Commercial District (Legislative Rezoning of the District), or to provide incentive for incremental rezoning to new mixed-use zoning district(s).
9. Restrict inappropriate uses such as auto-related, outdoor storage adjacent to the street) and drive-through facilities.
10. Identify parcels off of the commercial district corridor that would be appropriate for light industrial district designations.
11. Consider adopting a Cliffs' Commercial District Development Handbook that includes flowcharts, checklists, submittal requirements, application forms, illustrations, resources (technical assistance and sources of funds) and incorporates the various code requirements for the district(s) or overlay(s) zone into a single document for ease of use by property owners, business owners, developers, citizens, and town staff(s).

Observation: The Cliffs' Commercial District appearance doesn't impart the feeling of pride reflective of the citizens' attitudes.

Recommendation:

- Capitalize on Community Pride. Throughout the focus groups, there was great pride in the unique attributes of each community as well as the stunning natural beauty of the area. Although many people value the physical beauty of the areas and the friendliness of the people, they voiced concerns about the first impression of the "downtown" area due to dilapidated buildings, random storage of equipment, junk, trash/litter, abandoned cars, etc. Sidewalks, curb-and-gutter, landscaping, street furniture, signage, and inviting building facades will promote a "downtown" that visitors can recognize as some place the towns of Westcliffe and Silver Cliff are proud of. Through the community engagement process of the joint planning efforts, the Cliffs' Task Force should challenge the Cliffs' Commercial District to develop a pride statement. The purpose of declaring a pride statement is to promote, as a matter of public policy, the preservation, protection and enhancement of those buildings, properties, structures, sites and incidental appurtenances within the commercial district, in the interest of prosperity, civic pride and general welfare of the both communities and to prevent blight by:

1. Providing a mechanism to preserve, protect, enhance, and perpetuate those structures, properties, sites, buildings and incidental appurtenances within the commercial district;
2. Fostering civic pride and respect in the community's future;
3. Maintaining and improving property values;
4. Protecting and enhancing the community's attraction to tourists and visitors;
5. Promoting such structures, property sites, buildings and incidental appurtenances for the general welfare of the community;

6. Fostering and encouraging preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation of structures, properties, buildings, sites and incidental appurtenances thereby preventing blight.

- Adopt a Pride, Health and Safety Ordinance. There is a direct correlation between a community's image and its economic well being. Adopting a pride, health and safety ordinance in both communities is the first step. Build in processes and tools to identify and abate blight conditions. The Cliffs' Task Force should help develop mechanisms for property owner improvement or for acquisition, clearances, and disposition. Blighted properties should not be limited to unsightly conditions, but should also include properties burdened by legal and illegal subdivisions, floodplains, or other physical or legal conditions. Consider the following action items to promote redevelopment and improvement of the appearance of properties within the commercial district.

1. Adopt a definition of blight conditions and nuisance.
2. Perform an inventory of blighted properties and develop comprehensive lists of property owners, blight conditions present and preliminary actions to be taken.
3. Develop and adopt forms, checklists, and formal proceedings to declare properties blighted.
4. Develop programs to afford maximum opportunity to the rehabilitation or redevelopment of any property deemed blighted.
5. Explore funding mechanisms and grant opportunities for purchasing or rehabilitating blighted properties.
6. Require registration of all motor vehicles.

- Facilitate public education efforts. The Towns' should take the lead in educating the residents, business owners, elected and appointed officials, as well as staff on the adopted Pride, Health and Safety Ordinance, Cliffs' Commercial District Strategic Plan, Town land use regulations, policies and code enforcement by facilitating a Citizens' Planning Academy. The Academy's ultimate goal would be to foster an understanding of the relationship and interaction between citizens and government bodies. It is also intended to educate citizens about all aspects of the planning and development review processes in the Commercial District and to stimulate citizen interest in implementation of the community plans, town regulations, policies, standards, and guidelines as well as continuing interest in the planning process over the long term.

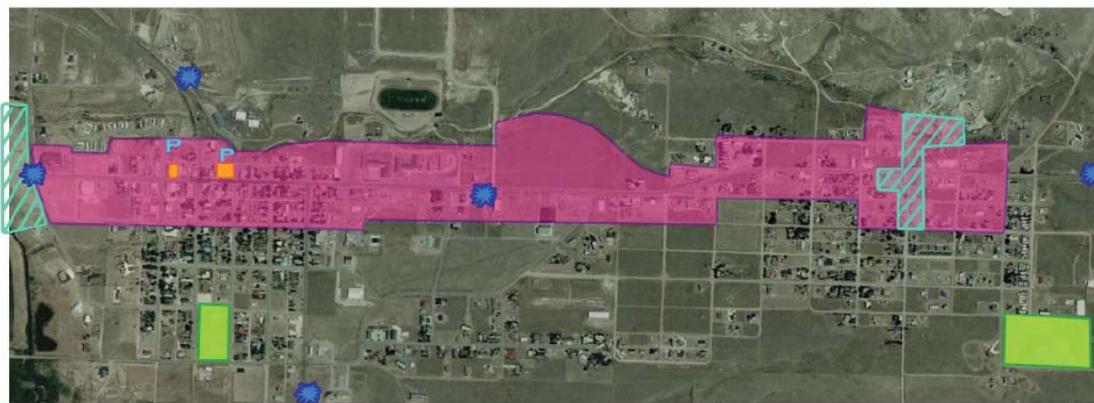
- Establish a process to consistently enforce town regulations. The benefits of code compliance are realized community-wide in that compliance can reduce vandalism, deter crime, maintain property values, and prevent deterioration of properties and structures. Small town living presents challenges in code enforcement due to the political environment, traditional public expectations and minimal support resources.

The first step to addressing these challenges would be to establish a process to consistently enforce town regulations and ordinances to ensure high quality design and clean and safe properties. Collaborate with other town entities including the Police Department to discuss enforcement strategies and abatement of chronic properties. Devote space on the town's website to inform citizens and prospective citizens about code enforcement and the benefits of code compliance. At the top of the page provide a picture of an "Honor Roll" property beside a picture of a property that needs improvement

(non-compliance). Include information about common violations, enforcing the ordinances and solutions and procedures (abatement actions). It is also nice to post some "frequently asked questions" page and provide responses to educate the public on code enforcement, processes, etc. Frequency asked questions could include: "Why do we need a nuisance ordinance?" "How does the public nuisance ordinance work?" "In case of rental property, who is responsible?" "I've heard my neighbor could get my property in trouble over a few frivolous complaints. Is this true?" After getting a violation notice, what would the property owners need to do?" Lastly, provide informational links to assist citizens in compliance e.g., provide a link to Colorado Weed Management Association, etc.

- Embark on community-wide beautification projects. To continue momentum, the Cliffs' Task Force should identify affordable beautification techniques such as installing banners, flower boxes, etc. Consider implementing an "Adopt-a-Pot or Planter" program. Planters are adopted on an annual basis by individuals, families, businesses, or organizations to be displayed around the Commercial District. The planters should include weatherproof plaques to recognize the adopting individual, family or organization. The program is also a great way to engage commercial district volunteers to maintain the planters, plant the flowers and spruce up the main street for minimal costs. Be sure to enlist a champion to educate a team of volunteers to assist with maintenance and planting. Reach out to the school kids and non-profits to assist in development of a window display program. Kick off a contest for the kids to design historical scenes to be displayed in the windows instead of "for lease or sale" signs. Research and pursue grants for façade improvements.
- Host the Cliffs' Clean Up Days. Clean streets, swept sidewalks, fresh painted signs, pruned trees, washed windows, and manicured landscaping (planters, etc), will promote a downtown that visitors can recognize as some place Westcliffe and Silver Cliff are proud of and want to show off. The Towns should host Clean Up Days. The objective is to improve the curb appeal of Commercial District just as one would do if they were selling their home. This could be done every spring and summer as a community event celebrated with a party at the end of the day.
- Utilize creative design and visual merchandising to get buyers through the doors. There is no better way of grabbing someone's attention than at the first instance and a well dressed window display does just that. Sell business owners on the importance of attractive window displays. Elect a local creative person to work with merchants monthly to change window displays regularly. Consider hosting a window treatment training for competition for current businesses as well as a competition for vacant buildings.

Observation: A Cliffs' Commercial District that includes the Main Street corridor in Silver Cliff and Westcliffe needs to be identified and delineated. This is the area where revitalization of the downtowns should be emphasized. We have provided the figure below as an example of what the Cliffs' Commercial District might include.



-  Signage
-  Town Park
-  Commercial District
-  Activity Node
-  Pocket Park
-  Additional Parking

Aerial Map illustrating the Cliffs' Commercial District: Figure showing the proposed commercial district boundary, event/activity nodes, trails, entry signage locations, and parks.

Observation: There is a need for designated pedestrian connections throughout the Cliffs' Commercial District from Main Street to area parks, trails and historic resources.

Recommendations:

- Identify and designate pedestrian connections from Main Street to area parks, trails and historic resources. These connections could be existing sidewalks, but they should all be clearly signed as a connection and what feature or features they are connecting to.
- There are no provisions for pedestrians along Main Street in Silver Cliff. Improvement plans need to be formalized and funding acquired for the installation of sidewalks, curb and gutters, street trees, and pedestrian level street lighting for this section of Main Street.

Observation: Silver Cliff needs an event and commercial node that can serve as the eastern anchor of the Cliffs' Commercial District.

Recommendations: Propose that the town facilitate the removal of the former cement plant facilities and other adjacent blighted structures to provide the land for a mining interpretive park at the base of the Silver Cliff mine. Using a private/public partnership, the Silver Cliff Mine Interpretive Park features could include:

- An amphitheater for events and attractions such as: melodrama, smaller scale (than the Bluegrass Festival) music events, dances, etc. These attractions would bring more people and revenue into the town of Silver Cliff and the entire Cliffs' Commercial District.



Amphitheater Graphic: Figure showing the proposed amphitheater at Silver Cliff Interpretive Park.

- The park could also serve as the southern terminus of a new commercial/activity node located along Mill Street that could extend from the park on the north side of Main Street to a couple of blocks south of Main Street. Architectural guidelines should be developed for this new area that would reflect the mining history of the area, such as shown in the figure below.



Mill Street Graphic : Figure showing typical commercial building façades for the new Mill Street commercial/activity node.)

Observation: There is a lack of public gathering spaces within the Cliffs’ Commercial District that encourage people to stop, eat, and play there.

Recommendations:

- A second possible commercial/activity node in Silver Cliff has been identified in the vicinity of Hermit Lane and Main Street. There is a large, currently undeveloped parcel on the north side of Main Street that could be used for this second node. This site is adjacent to the Family Dollar store and near the school. It is also close to the Silver Cliff/Westcliffe town boundary and could provide an improved transition from Main Street Westcliffe to Main Street Silver Cliff.
- The festival site at the west end of Main Street in Westcliffe and the proposed Silver Cliff Interpretive Park at the east end of Main Street in Silver Cliff should be designated special event nodes. They would provide activity anchors for both ends of Main Street and attract visitors to both communities.
- Identify and develop strategically located off-street parking lots within the Cliffs’ Commercial District that are within walking distance of the two special event nodes

(i.e. behind the 4th Street pocket park and at the vacant lot on the southeast corner of 2nd and North) in Westcliffe. People attending events at the festival sites would have to walk through the commercial areas to get to the festival site and then back again to their vehicles, giving the commercial district merchants opportunities to capture additional business.

- The parking in the large lot on Rosita, just east of the Westcliffe festival site, should be reserved for large RV vehicles during large events (i.e. the Bluegrass Festival, 4th of July, etc.). These vehicles are self contained and their owners are less likely to visit local restaurants and shops. By requiring the owners of regular vehicles to park “in town” they will need to walk back and forth through the commercial districts.
- Enhance the existing Westcliffe pocket park on Main and 4th Street by constructing a retaining wall and leveling out the north edge to create more usable space. This would provide enough space for the construction of a small gazebo or shelter that could be used as a venue for smaller entertainment events, etc. that would attract people to the commercial district. Some of these smaller events could be satellite to larger events such as the Bluegrass festival.
- Explore opportunities for other small pocket parks or other community gathering places located in both towns where small events or small groups could gather. For example, there is a small open space between two buildings on the north side of Main Street, just east of 2nd Street in Westcliffe where there is enough room for some landscaping and 2 to 3 checkers/chess tables could be located. This area would attract people looking for a rest area – some place to just sit and relax; or a location for couples who would like to have a place to meet and play a game of checkers, chess, or cards as shown in the figure below.



Pocket Park Graphic: Figure showing conceptual pocket park.

Observation: The image of the Cliffs’ Commercial District is inconsistent.

Recommendations:

- Develop a “brand” for the Cliffs’ Commercial District that should include appropriate graphic signage for the entry gateways on Highways 69 and 96, pedestrians and vehicles directions for facilities and attractions, and parking. While consistent in general

appearance (materials, lettering style, shape and colors), the signage should distinctly highlight the character of each town.

- Where space allows provisions should be made to allow businesses in the Cliffs' Commercial District to utilize sidewalks and street rights-of-ways adjacent to the face of their building for business expansion (food, drink, sidewalk sales, etc.).
- The Main Street makeover should include streetscape and façade improvements. The streetscape improvements could include landscape plantings; uniform sidewalk paving treatment; uniform pedestrian-level street lighting that would improve pedestrian safety, while embracing and protecting the dark sky initiatives; information kiosks; and coordinated street furniture including benches, trash receptacles, bike racks, etc. Façade improvements could be as simple as a fresh coat of paint up to a complete renovation of the façade. However, any façade improvements should consider and incorporate architectural features that reflect the character and history of each town.



Typical signage examples. Cohesive signage would assist in finding parking, businesses, gathering spaces, and other amenities.

Historic Preservation

Historic preservation can be associated with many values; the cultural, social, or aesthetic values may be the most commonly thought of. However, the environmental, economic, and educational values are also important aspects of historic preservation.

Observation: There have been significant steps taken to identify the individual community's history through heritage tourism.

Recommendation: Continue working with regional partners for planning and long range vision of your communities' identity through heritage tourism. This will support the overall personality of your community while promoting tourism.

Observation: There is a need for each community to establish a group committed to preservation efforts and educating their community.

Recommendations: Utilize the organizational recommendations to form a group to work on preservation efforts in your community.

- Publish a current list of historical buildings on the national, state, or community register in the local newspaper and encourage building owners to discover the age and history of their own properties. Provide contact information and support to those property owners seeking assistance registering their building.
- Distribute any new historical findings to the local schools and newspapers to educate the community on the group's progress and discoveries.
- Publish a bi-monthly report in the newspaper highlighting an existing historical site or a new discovery to promote community involvement in the preservation efforts.

Observation: There appears to be some buildings in the Cliffs' Commercial District that may qualify for a historical listing.

Recommendation: Access State Historical Fund money to conduct an inventory of historic buildings in the Cliffs' Commercial District. Involve property owners throughout the process to generate interest in a historic listing.

- Send out a list describing the benefits for being on a historic registry. There is often confusion between a National Register of Historic Places listing and a locally designated or zoned historic landmark or district.
- After an inventory has been made, incentives and support for property owners who seek a historic listing should be created.

Observation: There is a need to identify heritage tourism differences between each community through increased signage and appropriate marketing. This will promote the diverse history of each community.

Recommendations:

- Use heritage tourism and preservation as part of the economic development efforts because it improves your product!
- Make sure that all marketing resources available are promoting your communities unique heritage tourism opportunities.
- Keep residents and tourists interested year round by diversifying the activities and tours of each historic site.

FUNDING MECHANISMS

From the resource team's initial observations, the communities are being somewhat successful in utilizing several of the following financing mechanisms. It appears that there are other opportunities for grants and other fundraising. Some of the current and potential sources of funds include the following:

ORGANIZATION

- Continue to strengthen existing partnerships and explore new partnerships with other organizations that exist in the county and region. For instance, the library has provided business development training and the UAACOG and SBDC can provide one-on-one assistance to businesses seeking expansion, business plans and low-interest loans. This assistance is usually free.
- Combine efforts and cash contributions from the County, Westcliffe, Silver Cliff, businesses and the Lodging Tax Board to hire a Chamber/Economic Development Director to oversee event scheduling, reply to visitor and business developer requests. There may be dollars available from the UAADC Enterprize Zone program, Office of Economic Development and foundations to assist in start-up.
- Students can be used to develop a "Cliffs" webpage that coordinates and links all activities available in these two communities. The site can also be a place to host a "Cliffs" e-newsletter for better communication between the towns and businesses and the community in general. Students can be accessed through the DOLA-CSU Rural Technical Assistance Program.

PROMOTIONS

- Continue the use of Booth Fees: Where appropriate continue the practice of using these charges applied to concessionaires at events, parades, and community gathering places to support the events.
- **Heritage Tourism Office/Colorado Tourism Office Grants:** The Custer Merchant and Chamber Board and Director could work together with other chambers, the county and other regional entities to apply for a Colorado Tourism Office Marketing Matching Grant Program, which provides funding to not-for-profit organizations in the State of Colorado for the purpose of promoting the state or a region as a tourism destination.
- The local governments could apply for DOLA or OEDIT funding to complete a marketing study and plan that analyzes retail leakage and offers ideas on types of businesses to attract to the community or ideas on items existing businesses could add to their stores to keep locals from shopping "down the hill".
- The Cliffs' Merchant and Chamber Board can apply to foundations to complete a Marketing and Branding Campaign.

ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING

- **Public or Business Improvement District:** The development of a public or business improvement district could help facilitate and pay for the expansion and development of parking areas, streetscapes and other improvements as well as improve maintenance of these improvements.
- The attached matrix describes other possible funding structures that can help

provide additional financial resources for downtown infrastructure improvements and maintenance, but those include.

DESIGN

- **Governor’s Office of Economic Development and International Trade:** This agency has several programs from economic development assessments to small business development centers.
- **Governors Energy Office (GEO) Programs:** GEO has new funding programs to retrofit both public and business HVAC and lighting systems. The “Cliffs” businesses could utilize new technology and renewable energy sources to reduce costs. The Towns could upgrade existing facilities to achieve long term energy cost savings. One project may be the conversion of streetlights to more energy efficient LED type lights.
- **Small Business Administration and Economic Development Administration:** These are two Federal Programs that can assist local businesses in business startup, expansion and relocation.
- **DOLA** can provide preliminary design funds to Silver Cliff and Westcliffe to enhance Main Street or Town Center plans. In addition, DOLA, EDA, USDA and, even CDOT, can help fund the construction cost of sidewalks, gutter, signage, decorative street lighting, trees, benches and trash receptacles as a part of an overall streetscape project.
- **Local banks** should be asked to offer low-interest loans to businesses for façade improvements.

Potential Sources of Funds include the following list:

- **Heritage Tourism Office/Colorado Tourism Office Grants** – The Colorado Tourism Office Marketing Matching Grant Program provides funding to not-for-profit organizations in the State of Colorado for the purpose of promoting the state or a region as a tourism destination. For more information, visit the website <http://www.colorado.com/Articles.aspx?aid=42247>
- **Colorado Department of Transportation CDOT**
 - Safe Routes to School Grant to develop trails through Silver Cliff and Westcliffe to connect the community to the school in a safe manner.
 - Enhancement Program Funds are available for pedestrian and bicycle, trails, acquisition of easements on historic sites, landscaping and beautification improvements along State Highways.

If interested, contact the Regional Transportation Office in Pueblo.
- **Community Development Block Grant** - These are federal funds that are distributed by DOLA. The Division of Housing and Division of Local Government have funds available, as does the Office of Economic Development and International Trade. DLG money is used for public facilities, including roads, streetscapes, parking lots, blight removal, storm drainage, planning, preliminary design; DOH money is used to construct housing, and OED money is used for Economic Development. Visit each agency’s website to learn details.
- **Energy Mineral Impact Grant** –These grants are for public infrastructure. These funds could assist the community with public infrastructure improvements, including roads, streetscapes, parking lots, blight removal, storm drainage, planning, preliminary

design, etc.

- **Governor’s Office of Economic Development and International Trade** – This agency has several programs from economic development assessments to small business development centers. For more information: <http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/OEDIT/OEDIT/1165009699726>
- **EPA Brownfields Program** -This program provides direct funding for brownfields assessment and cleanup.
- **Governors Energy Office (GEO) and USDA Rural Development (RD) Energy Programs** - Both agencies have new funding programs to retro-fit both public and business HVAC and lighting systems. Silver Cliff/Westcliffe businesses could utilize new technology and renewable energy sources to reduce energy costs. The town could install the new streetlights to more energy efficient LED type lights.
- **Small Business Administration and Economic Development Administration** – These are two Federal Programs that can assist local businesses in startup, expansion and relocation.
- **Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO)**- GOCO uses a portion of Lottery proceeds to help preserve, protect, enhance and manage Colorado’s wildlife, park, river, trail and open space heritage. The town should investigate funding for the new swimming pool.
- **Economic Development Administration (EDA)**- EDA provides funds to distressed communities for attracting new industry, encouraging business expansion, diversifying economies and developing private sector jobs. For information, contact John Zender at 301-844-4902, jzender@doc.gov, www.doc.gov.
- **United States Department of Agriculture**-Office of Rural Development- Funds are available to finance acquisition, construction, conversion, enlargement, repair, modernization or the development of Colorado rural businesses. Typically, these are guaranteed loans. <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/co/rural-bus.htm>
- **State Historical Society**- The Fund assists in a wide variety of preservation projects including restoration and rehabilitation of historic buildings, architectural assessments, archaeological excavations, designation and interpretation of historic places, preservation planning studies, and education and training programs. Contact: 303.866.2825, toll-Free: 877.788.3780, email: shf@chs.state.co.us
- **Non-Profit Foundations**-Colorado Foundations such as Daniels Fund, Boettcher, Adolph Coors, El Pomar, The Colorado Trust, Gates Family, Colorado Health, Temple Hoyne Buell, Helen K. and Arthur Johnson, Kenneth King and Bonfils Foundations traditionally fund community priority projects through not-for-profit organizations in many communities.

Other Resources/Technical Assistance:

Downtown Colorado, Inc. – As a member of Downtown Colorado, Inc., Silver Cliff/Westcliffe will continue to be eligible for DCI services, training, and educational programs. It would be beneficial to review programs such as the Main Street Candidate Program that might offer some on-going training and support to Silver Cliff/Westcliffe’s downtown efforts. Additionally, Silver Cliff/Westcliffe should access the benefits of the collaboration of DCI and Colorado Brownfield Foundation (CBF). A half day workshop is available to communities interested in working on downtown revitalization and brownfield sites.

SCEDD - SCEDD is a non-profit organization whose membership is the 13 counties of Southeastern Colorado. SCEDD is a resource that has helped its member counties and

communities find ways to position themselves to attract and accept new businesses. SCEDD helps with strategic planning and grant writing for improving infrastructure so areas are ready when a business comes calling. SCEDD also helps members by developing community profiles, peer development and Business Retention and Attraction programs. SCEDD helps businesses build and expand by packaging SBA 504 loans through the Business Lending Center in partnership with the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Small Business Development Center - Pueblo's Small Business Development Center offers "one-stop" assistance to small businesses, making a wide variety of information and guidance available in central and easily accessible locations. The Pueblo SBDC provides services for Pueblo, Fremont, and Custer Counties.

The Small Business Development Center provides free one-on-one counseling for both existing and start-up businesses. We also sponsor seminars and workshops designed to help small business owners improve their business knowledge and entrepreneurs plan their start-up business. Contact: SBDC@pueblocc.edu , 719-549-3224

Upper Arkansas Area Council of Governments (UAADC) -The Upper Arkansas Area Development Corporation (UAADC) is a non-profit organization created by the Upper Arkansas Area Council of Governments to provide financing assistance to new and expanding for-profit businesses in Chaffee, Custer, Fremont, Lake, Park and Teller Counties. Each county is represented on a six member Board of Directors.

UAADC financing programs are not intended to compete with or replace private sector financing. A genuine effort to secure private sector financing is required of all borrowers. Two financing programs are available through the UAADC. The "GAP" loan program is designed to assist a borrower obtaining a primary business loan but needs to fill a financing "gap" to complete the overall financing needs of the business. The borrower obtains a loan commitment from the primary lender first and then seeks a UAADC GAP loan to fill the remaining needs. A successful financing structure includes a greater-than-half loan with a primary lender and a gap-filling loan with the UAADC. Contact on any of these services or programs: Jeff Ollinger, UAADC Administrator at (719) 395-2602 or jeffolli@chaffee.net.

CSU-DOLA Rural Technical Assistance Program - The program provides service on a wide range of projects with disciplines in the following areas: Landscape Architecture, Architecture and Interior Design, Historical Preservation, Research and Planning, Economic Development, Community Needs Assessment, Parks, Trails, and Open Space Planning, Web Page Design and Maintenance. The program utilizes students from CSU and other higher education programs in Colorado to perform this service. Student work is supervised by experienced community development specialists to insure that work is completed on time and within the guidelines set by the community. Contact Diana Laughlin in Pueblo at 719-545-9393