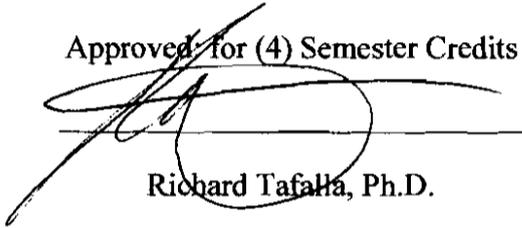A Needs Evaluation for

Dunn County, Wisconsin

by

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A Research Paper
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ABSTRACT

Dunn County is ranked the 17th fastest growing county among Wisconsin's 72 counties.

Even though there is a significant growth rate, economical and environmental problems will

begin to emerge in the future. The current research study examines the needs of Dunn County

regarding resources that must be improved to keep the county sustainable. 151 participants

attended a community dialogue session and provided their insights, concerns, and desires for the

future. The data were analyzed by using a content analysis method to categorize and record the

frequency of responses. The results indicated that the community members perceived rural

integrity and agriculture, new leadership, and planned growth and development as the most

significant immediate needs in the county. It is recommended to initially focus on these

particular areas because they raised the most concerns, while working toward meeting the needs

of other areas in the community.

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"Words mean more than what is set down on paper. It takes the human voice to infuse them with shades of deeper meaning. " Maya Angelou

Quite simply put, this study was concerned with reaching out to a diverse group of individuals in the community of Dunn County who may not voice their opinions for their desired outcomes in the future. Instead of having one voice for the community there needed to be a representative voice for everyone. I wanted to help make dreams become a reality for everyone in this particular community.

First, I would like to thank Juliet Fox who initiated this project. Without Juliet I would not have had the opportunity to engage others about creating a shared vision for the future. I would also like to thank my fellow A-team members: Bridget Murphy, Mark Wilcox, Maureen Casey, and Andie Lueck. It was a great pleasure learning and growing with them during the course of this project. I am grateful to Dr. Richard Tafalla for his guidance and support as my thesis advisor. His valuable input made this study achievable. I must also acknowledge the support I received from my family and friends during my time in graduate school.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Rural America covers over 2,000 counties and 75 percent of the nation's land is home to

approximately 49 million Americans (Hession & Waves, 2004). Of the 49 million Americans

roughly only 11 million work in rural communities across the country (McGranahan & Whitener,

2003). Some rural communities have changed dramatically since the 1990s due to shifts in age

and ethnic composition, economic and industrial restructuring, and population loss. The number

of rural counties that have experienced population loss went from 600 counties in the 1990s to

well over 1,000 since the year 2000. While population loss affects all regions in the nation, it is

particularly widespread in the Midwest. However, the long-term challenges facing rural America

are providing job opportunities, improving public services, and developing strategies tailored to

improve specific rural communities rather than broad rural policy (Waves & Whitener, 2005).

Statement of the Problem

There are many global and regional drivers of change that are impacting Rural America.

Many rural communities are facing several challenges from environmental degradation to the

loss of youth population to economic decline. Some communities recognize this trend and have

taken the initiative to address the issues while other communities have taken a "back seat"

approach to the situation. The communities that have taken the pro-active approach are engaging

in actions to strengthen the economy and education, health care, environment, recreation and

entertainment opportunities, youth, and all other aspects of community life. This is the defining

quality that builds community connections and a healthy sustainable environment (Bregendahl,

Fey & Flora, 2006).

Purpose of the Study

Dunn County is a rural community in the state of Wisconsin. The global and regional drivers of change will have an impact on the county in the near future. The purpose of the study is to identify the needs in the community regarding resources that must be improved to keep the county sustainable. By using the community capitals framework developed by the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development (NCRCRD) it will serve as a guide to identify specific characteristics that need enhancement or expansion in each of the seven community capitals. Finally, it is the purpose of the study to determine what action steps should be taken and to develop recommendations for community leaders to consider using in the future.

Research Objectives

The primary research objectives are:

1. To examine the various challenges and opportunities which linger in Dunn County.

2. To determine which, if any, can be altered to support the sustainability of the community.

3. To formulate recommendations for community leaders to engage in action steps toward change.

Assumptions of the Study

The primary assumption of this study is that the participants involved in the community dialogue sessions would be residents or work for employers in Dunn County. These individuals would have a greater perspective regarding what type of resources need improvement in opposition to individuals who do not reside nor are familiar with the county. Also, this study

postulates that there is a general necessity to explore opportunities and address challenges in order to build community connections for the future.

Definition of Terms

For clarity of understanding, the following terms are defined:

> *Capital* - A critical community characteristic (Bregendahl, Emery, Fey & Butler, 2005).
>
> *Rural America* - Population with less than 50,000 individuals (Daschle, Leahy, & Lugar, 1993).
>
> *Urban America* - Population of 50,000 or more individuals and a population density exceeding 1,000 people per square mile (Daschle, Leahy, & Lugar, 1993).
>
> *Visioning* - Statement of goals that are typically focused on long-range issues (Ellis, Gordon, Murk and Div, 1992)

Methodology

A PowerPoint presentation with four discussion questions (Appendix A) was developed and presented to 151 participants who attended a community dialogue session. Qualitative data was collected regarding future choices and direction of the county as well as critical action steps. The presentation also addressed plausible scenarios that the county could strive toward. The data collected was analyzed using a content analysis method, and recommendations were based on the most common responses made during the dialogue sessions.

Organization of the Paper

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter I includes a statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objectives, assumptions of the study, definition of terms, methodology, and organization of the study. Chapter II contains a review of literature with focus on the definition of rural America, a national overview of statistics, demographic trends of the Midwest, global and regional drivers of change, visioning- the process, the importance of participation, limitations, case studies, community capitals, attributes of successful communities,

and current and future information about Dunn County. Chapter III looks at the subject selection and description, instrumentation, data collection procedures, data analysis, and limitations of the study. Chapter IV discusses the content analysis results. Chapter V concludes with a discussion regarding limitations and recommendations of the study.

Chapter II: Review of Literature

Definition of Rural America

What is rural America? There are many definitions of the term rural, but seldom are any

in agreement with each other. Additionally, the term rural can be considered to be a dichotomous

definition that only describes two categories, such as rural/nonmetropolitan and

urban/metropolitan. This limited range does not encompass the variation which exists in areas

surrounding the nonmetropolitan. However, with most broad generalizations it is nearly

impossible to include all components. Even though rural America is very open to interpretation

there are three primary federal definitions created by the Department of Commerce's Bureau of

the Census, Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service (ERS), and the White

House's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) which attempt to capture the characteristics

of rural and urban areas (Daschle, Leahy, & Lugar, 1993).

The U.S. Bureau of Census defines an urbanized area by population density. There must

be a population of 50,000 or more and a population density exceeding 1,000 people per square

mile. Abiding by this definition all individuals outside of these areas are considered rural. The

Economic Research Services use rural and urban continuum codes to distinguish metropolitan

counties by size and nonmetropolitan counties by their degree of urbanization or proximity to

metropolitan areas. The codes range from zero to four for metropolitan and five to nine for

nonmetropolitan. Lastly, in 2003 the Office of Management and Budget released the census 2000

version of urban/metropolitan and rural/nonmetropolitan areas, which is a classification system.

Because of all the changes in definitions for metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas, there are

significant shifts in rural geography and population. The changes consist of how to measure rural

land outside of urbanized areas. It still remains the same that rural areas consist of open country

and small settlements with fewer than 2,500 residents. However, small cities and towns with

adjourning towns are now considered urban clusters in contrast to the past when they were considered rural. As one can see there are several different criteria that have been developed to distinguish rural and urban areas. According to the Office of Management and Budget system, 298 former nonmetropolitan counties are now considered as metropolitan leaving only 2052 rural counties in existence. Likewise, the rural population declined from 59 million residents to 49 million residents. This latest classification system illustrates the continuous changes that are occurring for rural America (Daschle, Leahy, & Lugar, 1993).

National Overview

The report issued by the Carsey Institute at the University of New Hampshire recognizes current trends and conditions in rural America. First of all, forty- nine million people which is only 17 percent of the nation's total population resides in rural America. Looking back around a century ago there was only 30 percent fewer individuals than there is now. However, this slow growth trend does not prove to be identical for urban areas. Today there are 248 million urban residents in contrast to 70 million residents a century ago. Rural areas may not be an ideal location for the typical American because of the limited opportunities for growth and development. The more remote and sparsely populated areas tend to have a significantly higher rate of lower income families and individuals, a decline of jobs for the unskilled labor force, and a continuous population loss (Colocousis, Duncan, & Salant, 2006).

The report proceeds to emphasize how poverty rates have been higher in rural than urban America since poverty was first measured in the 1960s. However, the gap has started to narrow. For example in 2003, 14 percent of rural Americans were poor compared to 12 percent of urban Americans. Nevertheless, the rural poverty rate is significantly higher in the South than any other region in the nation. Also, family dynamics has a direct influence on poverty. The majorities of

rural families with a single parent household are making significantly less income per year and are living underprivileged than a two parent household (Colocousis, Duncan, & Salant, 2006).

The report also suggested international competition is creating unforeseen challenges for rural workers. Many industries in rural areas prefer to employ lower wage workers outside of the United States. Consequently, there is a continued decline of jobs for the unskilled labor force especially in the South. From 1997 to 2003, 1.5 million rural American workers lost their jobs. In congruence with the decline of job opportunities is persistent population loss. The Midwest region is experiencing the greatest amount of residential decline in comparison to all the neighboring regions in the nation. In particular, the counties that are experiencing the greatest losses are in the Great Plains, parts of the Corn Belt, Mississippi Valley and central Appalachia. These counties lack natural amenities and close proximities to urban areas that make other growing rural counties more appealing (Colocousis, Duncan, & Salant, 2006).

Demographic Trends of the Midwest

The Midwest is the most rural part of the nation, and the states that are part of this region include the following: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. The report issued by the Carsey Institute pointed out almost a quarter of Midwesterners live in a rural county, which is an estimated 15.6 million individuals. The stereotypical belief that the Midwest is known for farming is not highly supported by statistics. Even though much of the land is in agriculture, only a small seven percent of Midwestern residents live in counties where the economic foundation is farming. On the other hand, 47 percent of residents live in counties where manufacturing is highly depended on for economic survival. Nevertheless, the loss of the young adult population has been a constant battle for decades. Young adults between the ages of 20-29 are more likely to

move away from rural areas than stay. Thus, the rural counties have a higher percentage of older

residents. Consequently, the fatality rate is surpassing the mortality rate in many counties

(Colocousis, Duncan, & Salant, 2006).

Global Drivers of Change

There are three major issues that are emerging around the world: financial risk, food

security, and the role of energy. These issues will not only have a direct influence on shaping the

next few years, but the proceeding decades. It is impossible to eradicate the risks. One can only

gain a better understanding of these issues and how to manage them properly for the well being

of global society.

The report issued by the World Economic Forum acknowledged that financial risk is the

most immediate and severe of the three issues. At the beginning of the year of 2007, the general

consensus suggested a strong global economic expansion. Yet warnings were voiced by the

Global Risk Network that risks could be expected. Over the course of 2007 three major

economic challenges were acknowledged: a housing recession, a liquidity crunch, and high oil

prices. First, the United States housing recession slowly started in 2006 and rapidly accelerated

in 2007. Housing prices started to drop nationally and housing construction was at the lowest

level since the 1990s. Second, financial institutions across the globe experienced a decrease in

liquidity and in turns financial instability. Thus, the viability of smaller institutions was

threatened even in well regulated markets, such as the United Kingdom and Germany. Finally,

the dollar price of oil increased to a record all-time high comparable to the inflation peak in the

early 1980s. Likewise, the U.S. dollar started losing value, which is instigating unintended

pressures and perhaps foreshadowing into the future. These challenges prove to be unpredictable

yield in as little as ten years. It is hard to determine if soaring food prices will be sustained or not. Policy makers may need to enforce food policies if the circumstances become severe enough to threaten the well-being of global society. Nevertheless, the resilience of the world's food system will be tested in the years to come especially in vulnerable communities (World Economic Forum, 2008).

Research has shown energy is a key input to the global economy, but its sustainable provision is questionable. There are few reasons to believe energy prices will be reduced due to supply and demand. In the year 2006 oil prices soared, which was comparable to the 1980s inflation prices. The supply end is unable to keep up with the pace of demand. The International Energy Agency has predicted a 37 percent rise in demand for oil with a need for 116 million barrels per day by 2030. However, oil production is unlikely to make it over 100 barrels. The ultimate desired goal is to have reasonably priced energy and reductions in emissions of greenhouse gases (World Economic Forum, 2008).

Contrary to this goal it may be unattainable because of limited options for fossil fuel. First, the only inexpensive and widely available fossil fuel is coal, but it is heavily linked to carbon emissions. Second, the oil reserves are located in regions of geopolitical uncertainties. Third, natural gas which is the cleanest fossil fuel is difficult to transport. Forth, nuclear power which is the best option for carbon neutral energy does come with its own drawbacks including problems with disposable waste, nuclear accidents, and concerns with the spread of nuclear technologies. Lastly, green technologies including wind power and bio-fuel at face value seem to be unproblematic. Still, the abundant use of crops for bio-fuel may create inadvertent consequences with food and water sources. As one can see worldwide energy supplies are beginning to be less readily available while greenhouse gas emissions continue to increase.

Moreover, future energy shortages are inevitable if drastic changes are not made. Policy makers need to collaborate to devise shifts in energy policies to prevent energy conditions from worsening (World Economic Forum, 2008).

Regional Drivers of Change

There are many factors that are contributing to regional changes in the United States. Some factors are likely to vary in their effects depending on the local or regional conditions. In particular, attention will be paid to the motivation for population growth in nonmetropolitan counties as well as the implications for new energy practices in the Midwest. In addition, the adverse effects of these factors will be acknowledged.

In the past rural communities were appealing because of the abundant resources including soil, forests, animals, minerals, and so forth. Yet today bodies of water, scenic landscapes, and mountains and valleys attract new visitors and residents. Research indicates areas with more appealing natural amenities will experience more growth by drawing in both retirees and geographically mobile workers (Aldrich & Kusmin, 1997). Similarly, Beale and Johnson (2002) examined the development and population change of counties in nonmetropolitan regions that are rich in natural amenities and recreational attractions. They identified a total of 327 nonmetropolitan recreation counties nationally with the majority of counties located in either the Mountain West with 47 counties or the Upper Great Lakes Areas with 70 counties. Additionally, the Upper Great Lakes have countless amounts of lakes which prove to be a popular location for summer vacation homes. It is typical for at least 30 to 50 percent of all the housing to be seasonal. Although there are winter recreational activities including snowmobile trails and ice fishing that are attracting individuals throughout the year.

Beale and Johnson (2002) firmly believe that outstanding recreation activity is strongly linked to population growth. Consequently, the continued growth is not all positive. The increased number of retirees migrating to the Upper Great Lakes results in an older population subject to high mortality rates. In some counties, the death rate is likely to exceed the birth rate. Likewise, many counties have environmentally sensitive areas that are likely to experience more stress as the human activity increases. It is possible to aggravate fire control in populated forests as well as cause difficulties in agricultural operations and impair the quality of water and air. Despite all the potential harm to the natural resources, the decline of farm, mine, and timber jobs creates a demand for rural recreation to continue the vitality of many small and nonmetropolitan communities.

Corn growing regions in the Midwest may see opportunities for new industries for employment and economic activity because there is growing realizations that the crude oil reserves are likely to start running low in the not so distant future. A significant amount of the world's oil supplies are being consumed by China and India. An alternative is to use bio-fuels from crops to supply a source of energy. An advantage of bio-fuels is their ability to be renewed whereas fossil fuels are finite (Campbell, 2006). The Renewable Fuel Standard established in the new energy bill states there will be an increased use of renewable fuels to 7.5 billion gallons by the year 2012. This will amplify the demand of corn and soybeans creating a better market for farmers (Steel, 2005). The price of corn has increased from 10 to 20 cents per bushel so many farmers will be able to make greater profits from investing in ethanol rather than other farm products (Davidson, 2004).

Research reported in the World Economic Forum indicated potential drawbacks to using ethanol for a source of energy. By the year 2010, bio-fuels will consume 30 percent of the U.S.

the general public. Priorities and performance standards can be part of visioning too. Priorities are set to distinguish essential goals. Performance standards allow an evaluation of progress toward goals over time.

In addition, Ding (2005) states that visioning is useful because it offers the widest possible participation for developing a long-range plan. It is self-governing in its search for opinions from all stakeholders and it attempts to identify often overlooked issues about quality of life and draws upon individuals with diverse viewpoints for input. Nonetheless, visioning takes into consideration the relationship between issues, and how a solution to one problem can indirectly create other problems for different levels of community development. Through widespread public participation various issues and problems, different points of view, and competing demands begin to surface. Visioning assists in finding solutions to these conflicts.

The Process of Visioning

Ellis, Gordon, Murk and Div (1992) have developed a six step process to visioning. The process involves six phases: 1) preparation, 2) visioning workshop, 3) community feedback, 4) action planning, 5) implementation of action planning and 6) evaluation. The first phase is to collect preliminary data concerning the following characteristics:

- Community resources, strengths, and capacities.
- External factors that supply constraints, support, or opportunities to the community.
- Previous plans that have been attempted or tried in the past.
- Attributes about the community.
- Future changes in the world, country, state, and community that will have an impact.

It is advisable to have community residents collect the data rather than hire external consultants to save on expenses. This approach makes it more community wide. However, the only

exception to hiring professionals is if there is information that requires expertise opinion that is unavailable in the community.

The second phase is to collect data from community members to generate a "shared vision". A community visioning workshop must be organized that invites a representative sample of the population including community leaders and the general public. The event will begin with a lecture to explain the purpose and process of visioning along with an overview of the goals and objectives. Afterwards, workshop activities will be done to gather data to answer questions including: a detailed description of the community, and the hopes and dreams for the community in the next 15 years. In addition, the facilitator explains that everyone has been brought together to develop a shared community purpose and vision, to organize the vision into themes, and to develop goals and measureable outcomes. Small groups will be formed to brainstorm ideas and then the larger group will reconvene to gather input.

The third phase is to compile a visioning booklet to distribute to the community. Using informal organizational networks, additional community input is collected. Community residents are asked what needs to be changed or modified to improve the vision. Then the data is compiled, synthesized, and redistributed to community leaders who participated in the workshop. The materials must be reviewed prior to the next phase.

The fourth phase is the action planning event. All of the individuals who previously attended the workshop will be invited to attend the event as well as new individuals who show an interest. The purpose of the event is to make any necessary revisions to the community vision plan and develop detailed action agendas that will work toward the vision. Next, individuals will be grouped into theme task forces depending on their specific interests and abilities. Specific

projects will be assigned to each task force to promote the vision and make appropriate changes for the future.

The fifth phase is the implementation of action planning. The community has established a shared vision with concrete action items, so the community is now ready to begin. Plans need to be established on who is going to be the team leader for the project as well as how to track the progress of the project. During the project, there will need to be a constant process of making revisions and adaptations as circumstances and community resident's visions change.

The final phase is evaluation. As the action phase gains momentum, the visioning process must never seize to be ongoing. As projects are accomplished, new projects must be initiated. The results of the action plans must be monitored, evaluated, and improved as time passes. Additionally, new leadership needs to be occurring regularly. It is unreasonable to expect the same familiar faces to play significant roles when the vision process is a group effort. Finally, an anniversary community visioning workshop can be created to identify the process of the vision as well as to formulate new plans for the future (Ellis, Gordon, Murk, & Div, 1992).

The Importance of Community Participation

Morrissey (2000) points out that in most general terms participatory community visioning programs can be referred to as a diverse range of stakeholders whose contributions are an on-going process from the identification of problems, to the development, implementation, and evaluation stages. Participation can fall into both instrumental and intrinsic scopes. Instrumental participation is considered to improve planning efforts because it has the support of local knowledge of a community. Also, local knowledge emphasizes ownership to the planning process and outcomes. Yet, the advantages of instrumental participation stem from intrinsic values linked to democracy, empowerment, social justice, and self-determination, which allow

community members who are typically excluded from the planning process to be directly involved in the decision making process (Keough,1998). Professor Patricia Wilson from the University of Texas at Austin states: "Deep democracy is the exercise of one's membership in a larger whole, the acceptance of one's responsibility for that whole, and the desire to act for the good of the whole: the realization that I care" (Wilson, 2004). The inclusion of diverse perspectives as well as a broad range of information from various individuals in a community allows for collaboration and commitment between the community and the individuals who play a part in the planning process (Wilson, 2004).

Limitations of Visioning

Even though visioning can be seen in a positive manner, there are some drawbacks. Time and volunteer requirements are significant to maintain contact with community participants and carry forward the visioning process. The amount of participants can vary from 100 to 10,000, and regardless of the number, listening to participants can be very time consuming. Furthermore, the volunteers need to have the ability to balance time and schedule requirements, interact with many diverse views and individuals, and manage complex issues and interrelationships. Without a tolerant group of individuals and a significant amount of time, it can prove to be rather difficult to accomplish a visioning project (Ding, 2005).

Examples of Successful Community Visioning Projects

There are many communities that have the desire to engage in a visioning process, yet difficulties arise in creating common goals and values. Therefore, the communities are unable to follow through with the agenda items to make the vision a reality. By contrast, not all visioning projects are unsuccessful. There are a number of global benchmark visioning projects. In particular, a leading expert in long range planning and writer on visioning by the name of Steven

Ames was directly involved in two triumphant visioning projects in the United States called Flagstaff 2020 and Hillsboro 2020.

Steven Ames stated in his interview that there are multiple reasons for the success of Flagstaff 2020. Most importantly, there was a significant amount of community participation. Many people volunteered their time to see the process through. It was estimated that 5,000 people participated in a community with 60,000 residents. Likewise, the budget for the project was limited so many groups in the community made donations. For example, meeting rooms were provided and printings of visioning statement signs were free of charge. As a final point, the visioning statement was progressive. It proposed dramatic changes to the community that eventually started to happen (Ding, 2005).

Steven Ames claimed that the Hillsboro project was successful for different reasons. The visioning process took over three years to complete. Nine months out of the year extensive data collection was conducted about the concerns and desires for the future of the community and so forth. Then the remaining three months would be used to analyze the data. This was a time consuming method, yet thorough. Subsequently, the action plan and implementation phase was well thought-out and organized. Likewise, a vision implementation committee was created to ensure the action plan would occur. Last of all, four years after the visioning process was implemented 94 out of 114 action items have been accomplished (Ding, 2005).

Community Capitals

To gain a better understanding of how communities operate a community capitals framework was developed. A capital can be defined as a critical community characteristic. Based on previous research from the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development (NCRCRD), it was determined that successful communities paid attention to seven types of

capital: natural, cultural, human, social, political, financial, and built. In addition to establishing

the capitals, this framework focuses on the interconnectedness among the capitals. Thus, the

interconnectedness can make measurement difficult because each capital involves separating one

from the other and determining where to place individual indicators. For instance, a measure of

the political capital in one situation might be a measure of social capital in another instance. By

contrast, using qualitative data can be a more effective method than quantitative data to identify

the implied capitals by different indicators (Fey, Flora, & Flora, 2004; Emery & Flora, 2006).

The natural capital is an important starting point because it is the foundation of a

community's assets. The natural capital is very visible in a community. It is the landscape, lakes,

rivers, mountains, green land, biodiversity, farming, and so forth. Hence, it is not as easy to

measure how it directly affects the well being of a community. Recreational activities can assist

with building onto other capitals such as financial and social. However, a heavy dependence on

natural resources is not suggested. If a community's natural resources make the economy boom,

a depletion of the resources could also make it plummet. Communities that are dependent on

natural resources for economic stability develop their own culture and norms and may lose some

of their culture if it is not sustained. Moreover, making improvements on the natural capital can

draw the attention of new individuals. Many communities have an abundance of natural assets,

but they are not recognized. Communities need to maximize their potential by investing in the

natural capital and continue adjusting to meet the social and economic needs of residents while

still preserving the environment (Bregendahl, Fey & Flora, 2006).

The cultural capital includes the values and symbols reflected in the art, language, dress,

tradition, and ritual. It makes life more meaningful for everyone. Culture can be an individual or

group experience. It gives one the opportunity to view the world as well as personal values. As

an individual, one can encounter culture by visiting another country and making direct observations about the community norms and daily functions of life. Afterwards, comparisons can be made to identify similarities and differences between two cultures. A group can experience culture by sharing the same sense of place or an incident. Altogether it may be difficult to measure a community's cultural capital, but it is important to identify how a community invests its time and finances (Bregendahl, Fey & Flora, 2006).

The need for building and sustaining human capital is very evident in rural communities and includes education, healthcare, and skills; yet, the out-migration of young people especially women is a threat to sustainability. As this happens, human capital prospers outside of the communities. An assumption for the cause of women leaving is the lack of educational opportunities for them after they graduate from high school as well as employment opportunities. Men are more likely to remain in rural communities because they have opportunities for trade and skill jobs and circumvent attending college. One method of measuring how a community invests in the human capital is by calculating how many young individuals leave annually. Additionally, a loss of the human capital directly affects the financial and social capitals. Communities must work to have available education, employment, and healthcare to sustain their population (Bregendahl, Fey & Flora, 2006).

The social capital can be defined as features of social organizations, such as networks, norms, and trust that develop connections across different groups within a community and connections to groups outside the community. Social networks are extremely important because they help maximize the resource potential of a community's social diversity. Additionally, trust is a key element for mobilizing resources considering and accepting alternative viewpoints. Likewise, individuals who are more likely to trust others in their community will more likely

take initiative to make a difference in community action. The social capital can be measured by modes of communication, culture patterns, social institutions, and between individuals and collective entities (Bregendahl, Fey & Flora, 2006).

The political capital is the ability for a community to access public resources or impact rules that govern daily functions through elected officials. Communities that want to make changes or improvements need to engage local individuals who already have political power and control over decision making so that others in the community will want to become involved and work together toward future success. Then local residents are making an investment in the community's political capital to make an overall impact. Furthermore, one individual or group should not make all of the decisions for everyone in the community. It needs to be a collaborative effort and all individuals should be considered a valuable asset (Bregendahl, Fey & Flora, 2006).

The financial capital encompasses tax revenue and abatements, debt capital, savings, investment, security, and income. The built capital includes water systems, sewers, utilities, health systems, building, roads, and information technology infrastructure. To identify the financial and built capital in any community local planners and government must first assess the current financial situation as well as examine the projected future outcomes. Then leaders can determine how to invest and build the capitals for positive outcomes and growth for the future. Looking internally at how to invest in existing assets can prove to be beneficial (Bregendahl, Fey & Flora, 2006).

Attributes of Successful Communities

Along with using the community capitals framework to measure outstanding communities, Innovative Leadership Australia (2006) adapted a top ten list of vital community

characteristics from research conducted at the Heartland Center for Leadership Development. These characteristics define the differences between communities experiencing a wide range of positive outcomes and those experiencing less optimistic outcomes. Based on the research it was discovered that benchmark communities demonstrate the following:

1. *Strong community pride and inclusive culture.* Communities have a strong and positive local attitude and support a culture of risk taking and innovation. Likewise, diversity is often celebrated and new groups of people are welcomed.

2. *Investment in the future.* All decisions are made with an outlook for the future. Expenditures are considered investments as well as individuals.

3. *Participatory approach to decision making.* Leaders in the community collaborate and share resources to work together toward a common goal and concentrate on encouraging results.

4. *Build new economic opportunities.* The key is to build on existing economic strengths in a realistic manner. Further, explore new economic opportunities and ideas for new businesses.

5. *Support local businesses.* Local loyalty is encouraged, but thriving communities position themselves against competitors in the area.

6. *Deliberate transition of power to new leaders.* Individuals under the age of 40 hold significant position in civic and business affairs. Women and minorities hold positions as elected officials and entrepreneurial developers.

7. *Strong belief in and support for education.* Focus is on the education systems for secondary and higher education.

8. *Strong presence of traditional institutions.* Churches, schools and service clubs have a strong influence on social activities and development.

9. *Willingness to seek help from outside resources.* Individuals seek assistance from others to make improvements and build a stronger community. Moreover, government grants and contracts for economic and social programs are pursued.

10. *Communities are self-reliant.* Leaders take a pro-active approach rather than a reactive approach.

All in all many communities may represent several of the previous stated attributes, but it is important to keep in mind that over time change will undeniably occur from one community to the next. To remain sustainable with a competitive edge, it is the responsibility of community leaders to take the initiative to plan for change and be adaptable for the future. As one can see, both communities in Flagstaff and Hillsboro were proactive and made changes that would ultimately benefit everyone. Now community leaders in Dunn County, Wisconsin are beginning to realize if they want to become a successful community, changes and improvements will need to be made sooner rather than later. Hence, it is important to first acknowledge the dynamics and current characteristics of the rural county before determining the future direction the community must pursue.

Background of Dunn County

In 1854 Dunn County was created out of Chippewa County. The County was named after Charles Dunn who was the chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Wisconsin. Dunn County is located in the Northwest part of Wisconsin. It has several neighboring counties including:

Chippewa, Eau Claire, Pepin, Pierce, Polk, and St. Croix. The county has twenty-two towns,

seven villages, and one city (Menomonie: Area facts and history, 2005).

The city of Menomonie is the largest and is the county seat. The city is very traditional in

nature. The main street represents the historic district with the restored Victorian era Mabel

Tainter Memorial Theater. Hence, Menomonie is starting to become a progressive city as well.

It houses several industrial organizations, such as 3M, Ford Motor Company, Wal-Mart

Distribution Center, ConAgra Foods, Cardinal FG, Andersen Windows, Phillips Plastics

Corporation, and so forth. In terms of health care and education, there is the Red Cedar Clinic

and the Myrtle Werth Hospital which are both part of the Mayo Health System. There are two

local institutions of higher education which are the University of Wisconsin-Stout and the

Chippewa Valley Technical College. Moreover, the county and the city of Menomonie attract

many visitors, commuters, and new residents with its close proximity to the Minneapolis and St.

Paul metropolitan area with a distance of only 60 miles east. The county has excellent access to

transportation. The major highways that serve the area are Interstate 94, US 12 and State

Highways 25 and 29 (Menomonie: Area facts and history, 2005).

There are many recreational opportunities in Dunn County. It is clearly evident with a

total of 15,823 acres designated for recreational purposes and 864 acres have been developed

including the Red Cedar State trail and the Hoffman Hills State Recreation area. The available

activities on these acres can interest a wide variety of individuals, such as public hunting

grounds, snowmobiling, hiking, horseback riding and biking trails, golfing courses, an array of

bowling and tennis court establishments, and so on. Furthermore, Dunn County has 3,364 acres

of lakes, 3 canoe trails consisting of 77 miles, and over 200 miles of streams and rivers. This

provides the opportunity for many water activities including fishing, boating, canoeing, swimming, and water skiing (Menomonie: Area facts and history, 2005).

In terms of agriculture there are 415,000 acres specifically dedicated to agriculture. Statistics have shown dairy farming is the primary area for profitability while fish farms, fruit tree orchards, and tree farming has begun to gradually decline. However, this decline is far less in Dunn County compared to other counties in the state. For example, 11.3 percent of the workforce in Dunn County is concentrated in agriculture in comparison to only 4.6 percent statewide (Menomonie: Area facts and history, 2005).

Current Status of Dunn County

The report issued by the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development estimated the historical population for Dunn County was 27,341 in the 1950s, and surrounding counties had very similar populations. However, at each ten-year period since the 1950s, the St. Croix growth rate has surpassed all of the counties. Interestingly, Dunn County's growth rate since 1985 has been paralleling and even outpacing Chippewa and other counties. Nonetheless, the close proximity to the Minneapolis and St. Paul metropolitan area, the cities of Chippewa Falls, and Eau Claire have had a significant impact on the population in Dunn County. The population in Dunn County was 34,314 in 1980 and grew to 39,858 in 2000. This clearly illustrates a growth of 16 percent within the 20-year gap. At a larger picture the 50 year gap between 1950 and 2000 generated approximately a 46 percent growth rate for Dunn County. Dunn County is ranked the 17th fastest growing county among the state's 72 counties. Nevertheless, the population continues to grow. From 2000 to 2007 there was an additional 3,260 new residents making the county population a total of 43,118 individuals (Dunn County Workforce Profile, 2007).

According to the Wisconsin Department of Administration population projections by the year 2025 can expect to see a population increase of 9,247 people. The largest increase in age groups will be the 65-79 years of age with a five percent growth rate followed by the 45-54 years of age group growing by three percent. The increase in county population can be attributed to net migration meaning more individuals are residing in the county than moving away. New residents who migrate are typically older and have families. Still there are fewer fatalities than mortalities in the county. Additionally, the city of Menomonie which is home to the University of Wisconsin-Stout has the largest population. There is a constant increase in young residents between the ages of 20-24 primarily due to post secondary education opportunities in the area. Consequently, the spike from college aged students generally does not sustain because students leave the county after graduation (Dunn County Workforce Profile, 2007; Dunn County Population Projections, 2007).

Statistics point out that Dunn County's 7,027 residents, which is approximately 35 percent of the workforce, travel outside the county for work. However, ten prominent employers in the county attract 3,850 workers who commute from local counties in Eau Claire, Chippewa, Barron, and St. Croix. There are ten top industries in Dunn county including:

- Educational services
- Nursing and residential care
- Food services and drinking establishments
- Warehousing and storage
- General merchandise stores
- Paper manufacturing
- Administrative and support services
- Ambulatory health care services
- Professional and technical services
- Wood product manufacturing

Over half the jobs in the county are with employers in just ten industries. The largest industry is educational and health services followed by warehousing and storage. In addition, the manufacturing sector provides a large source for jobs. Two out of the ten industries are part of this sector (Dunn County Workforce Profile, 2007). In addition, there are ten prominent public and private sector employers in the county such as:

- Wal-Mart Associates
- University of Wisconsin-Stout
- 3M Company
- Menomonie Public School
- County of Dunn
- Red Cedar Medical Center
- Conagra Packaged Foods Co.
- Andersen Corp
- Phillips Plastics Corp
- Cardinal Glass Industries Inc.

Over one-third of the jobs in Dunn County are with the previously stated ten employers and three of the employers are in the public sector. The largest employer in the county is Wal-Mart. While many individuals work at the store, the majority work at the distribution center. Furthermore, Menomonie's location near Interstate 94 makes it an ideal location for transportation. The Wal-Mart distribution center was built in Menomonie for this purpose and now there is a high concentration of transportation and material moving jobs. The University of Wisconsin-Stout is the second largest employer and generates many jobs for faculty and students. Food services and bartending make up the largest segment for jobs in the county. The relatively low skill, low paying, and part-time jobs are typically a result of the demand from students at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. Lastly, five out of the ten employers are manufacturers led by specialized paper manufacturer 3M. There are many products produced, such as food, paper, plastics, glass,

and wood products. All of these products are very important to the county's economy (Dunn County Workforce Profile, 2007).

Future Trends and Predictions

According to the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development even though there is a significant growth rate occurring in Dunn County, workforce problems will emerge in the future. The county has one of the youngest populations in the state, but many young adults are college students who will not be permanent residents in the area. Consequently, this has major implications for the available workforce in the future. The population for individuals less than 25 years of age is 43 percent, but it is suspected to decrease to 39 percent by 2030. On the other hand, the population for individuals between the ages of 25 through 59 is estimated to decrease from 43 percent to 34 percent by 2030. Subsequently, approximately 15 percent of the current population is 60 years of age and older, but by 2030 it will expand to 26 percent. Ultimately, the labor force is getting progressively older, and the younger population can only insulate the effects of the aging baby boomer generation provisionally (Dunn County Workforce Profile, 2007).

The baby boomers were born from 1946 to 1964. The oldest baby boomers turned 61 in 2007 which is only a few years away from retirement. Nonetheless, it is hard to predict exactly when this generation will exit the workforce. Many issues will be raised from finding a sufficient amount of replacements to preventing the loss of retirees' accumulated expertise. Even still there will be labor shortages due to a significant amount of retirements especially in occupations that rely on younger workers or require specialized skills. In addition, the aging population will impact the economy as elderly demands change the types of services needed in the community especially in health care and leisure opportunities (Dunn County Workforce Profile, 2007).

Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to identify the specific needs and future direction in the community of Dunn County. By using the community capitals framework as a guide, it will be more recognizable as to what qualities are lacking, need improvement or development, or must to be continual. Recommended action steps as well as suggestions for community involvement will be developed from the findings of the content analysis. Ultimately, this study will empower community residents to take a more pro-active approach for the future and offer insight on improvements for Dunn County.

Chapter III: Methodology

Subject Selection and Description

A wide variety of organizations representing several of the community capital

characteristics in Dunn County were selected to discuss with current members their insight on

the future of the county. There were a total of 109 individuals who were members of various

organizations in the county who participated in a community dialogue session. In no particular

order, the following organizations were involved: Sustainable Dunn, Bremer Bank, Western

Wisconsin Renewable Energy, Dunn County Partnership, Park and Recreational Center, Farm

Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, Workforce and Educational Community, Kiwanis Club,

Optimist's Club, TNT Logistics North America, Dunn County Historical Society, and Rotary

Club.

To further reach out to additional citizens in Dunn County, community dialogue sessions

were held at town halls to engage more individuals and discuss their viewpoints on the future

direction of the community. The sessions were strategically planned in various town halls around

the county to reduce traveling time and costs for residents. Eight community dialogue sessions

were held at the following locations: Knapp, Dunn, Colfax, Ridgeland, Otter Creek, Elk Mound,

Rock Creek, and Hay River. There were a total of 42 individuals who attended a community

dialogue session at one of the eight town halls.

Instrumentation

A PowerPoint presentation was developed to engage participants. The presentation

consisted of slides containing information about community visioning and strategic planning, the

community capitals framework, global and regional drivers of change, key drivers that would

shape Dunn County, several plausible scenarios for Dunn County, and discussion questions. The

plausible scenarios were developed from a brainstorming session. The purpose of the brainstorming session was to identify key drivers shaping the future of Dunn County while considering the triple bottom line of social, economic, and environmental impacts. The top twenty most influential drivers were selected and mapped out in terms of importance and uncertainty on a scatter chart. Two scenario shaping clusters of drivers were identified including: entrepreneurial and responsive community environment and providing and protecting physical resources. Then four scenarios were created based on the two scenario shaping clusters. The first scenario called Vintage Village had an emphasis on providing and protecting physical resources, but there was no emphasis on entrepreneurial and responsive community environment. Vintage Village scenario had characteristics, such as attractiveness to elderly and tourists, conservative leadership, but it lacked opportunities for youth. The environment is protected and attracts business, yet there is a lack of local skilled workforce. The second scenario called Destination Dunn had an emphasis on both providing and protecting physical resources and entrepreneurial and responsive community. Destination Dunn scenario had characteristics including good health care and workforce development, network of public infrastructure and transport, strong focus on sustainable development and renewable energy businesses, open and welcome community that celebrates diversity, and strong leadership with community decision making. The third scenario called Boom to Gloom had no emphasis on providing and protecting physical resources, but it did have an emphasis on entrepreneurial and responsive community environment. Boom to Gloom scenario was characterized by an intensive development along transportation corridor, environmental degradation, unplanned rapid growth, domination by large companies and attracts few families or new businesses. The final scenario called Snooze; You Lose had no emphasis on providing and protecting physical resources or entrepreneurial and responsive community

environment. Snooze; You Lose scenario had characteristics, such as lack of public funding and decay of infrastructure, increased community fragmentation, highly polluted, and an increase in sand mining and pollution industries.

The discussion questions were drawn from the information extracted from the PowerPoint and were open-ended. No demographic information was collected. In order to determine the desired changes and improvements for the community, the participants were asked the following questions:

1. What does the scenario planning tell us about our future choices and direction of Dunn County?

2. Which scenario do you think the community of Dunn County should strive toward? Why?

3. What action steps do you think are going to be critical as we move toward creating our preferred future?

4. What role do you think you/group can play to help make this a reality?

Data Collection Procedures

An informative PowerPoint presentation was presented to the participants at the community dialogue sessions. After the presentation had concluded, the participants were informed that they had the choice to actively participate in the discussion piece or leave this segment of the session. Afterwards, four open-ended discussion questions were presented sequentially. Each question was thoroughly discussed until the participants had no further input. Once all of the questions had received in-depth attention, the discussion concluded. Subsequently, the participants were presented with contact information for future inquires or

concerns about the study. Likewise, participants were treated in accordance with APA ethical guidelines. All of the discussions were recorded via laptop. Audio taping the conversations between the participants and the facilitator was not a feasible option because it would have been too time consuming and costly to transcribe all of the discussion notes.

Data Analysis

A content analysis was conducted on the data retrieved from the community dialogue sessions. The content analysis found several themes for each research question, and broke the responses down into categories creating quantitative data for each category.

Limitations of the Study

A major limitation of the current study is the small sample size, due to the lack of attendance at the community dialogue sessions. This study did not attempt to reach out to all citizens who live/work in the county. Thus, the conclusions and generalizations gathered from the study were not representative to the entire population of Dunn County. Another limitation to the study was that only qualitative data were collected. It was not possible to run any quantitative statistical analyses so the data was very limited in its ability to be generalized. As a result, the data were only analyzed for themes and recommendations were based on the number of responses in each category. Also, the time frame for this research was limited in regard to the data collection process. The researcher was unable to audio tape the community dialogue sessions and transcribe all of the discussion session conversations due to a rigid time schedule. The only records of the conversations at the community dialogue sessions are recorded via laptop. Finally, when researchers are part of a measurement procedure it is possible to have inconsistencies. Inter-rater reliability analysis is typically used to assess the degree to which

different raters give consistent estimates of the same data. This study did not conduct this particular analysis due to confounding factors. As a result, there is potential for subjective bias in the coding and analysis of the qualitative data.

Chapter IV: Results

The purpose of the study is to identify resources in the community that must be improved to keep the county sustainable and to recommend action steps that should be followed for radical improvements in the future. A PowerPoint presentation with four discussion questions (Appendix A) was developed and presented to 151 participants who attended a community dialogue session. Qualitative data was collected and analyzed using a content analysis method.

Content Analysis

Content analysis is a research tool that is used to determine the presence of words or concepts within a given text. Content analysis has two basic methods of analyzing text: conceptual analysis and relational analysis. To initiate the conceptual analysis, research questions needed to be identified. After this process has been completed, the text can be broken down into categories. By creating categories that consist of either a word or a set of words and phrases, one can concentrate on coding for specific word patterns that respond to the research questions. Then one would quantify and tally the presence of these words. In this particular study it is not necessary to examine the relationship between the concepts which is known as relational analysis (Neuendorf, 2001).

There are seven steps that occurred when conducting the content analysis. First, the level of analysis was determined. The text was coded for a set of words or phrases rather than a single word. Second, a pre-defined set of categories was established. It was recognized that it was not necessary to code for every single set of words or phrases in the text. Only certain words or phrases that are the most relevant to the research questions were coded. The four research questions from the PowerPoint presentation focused on future choices and directions, plausible scenarios, and critical action steps and roles for the community. Third, it was determined that the

text would be coded in terms of frequency and generalization. Each time a similar theme, concept, word, or phrase was identified, it would be tallied into the same category. Forth, rational translation rules were created to organize the process of coding. The rules insure that the coding is consistent throughout the text. For example, if "community involvement" was coded in a separate category from "active participation", then it could not be later coded into the same category or else it would be invalid. The logical rules help give the coding process a degree of consistency and coherence. Fifth, it was determined that information which was irrelevant to the research questions within the text would be ignored and not used in the coding process. This would prevent impacting the outcome of coding. Sixth, after all of the previous steps have been accomplished, it was necessary to code the text. The text was coded manually by reading through the text, writing down themes, concepts, phrases, and words that pertained to the research questions, recording the occurrences, and organizing them into specific categories. Each category had a number which represents the total number of responses. Finally, once the coding was finished, the data were examined to draw conclusions and generalizations.

Question 1: What does scenario planning tell us about our future choices and direction of Dunn County?

Responses to question one were the most varied of all the questions with sixteen categories (Table1). "Rural Integrity and Agriculture" was the most common response with eleven responses fitting into the category. Tying for one of the top categories with ten responses each were "New Leadership" and "Planned Growth and Development". Categories including "Manage Water Systems", "Affordable Housing and Land", and "Attract More Industries" each received six responses. There was a variety of different perspectives that had between three to five responses each ultimately creating six additional categories. The least amount of responses

went to the categories "Safe and Vibrant Community", "Create an Entrepreneurial Community",

and "Improve Health Care System" with two responses each.

Table 1: Question 1 Categories

Question 1: What does scenario planning tell us about our future choices and direction of Dunn County?

Rural Integrity and Agriculture	11
New Leadership	10
Planned Growth and Development	10
Manage Water Systems	6
Affordable Housing and Land	6
Attract More Industries	5
Population Growth of Youth	5
Available Services/Attractions for all Ages	5
Water Quality and Control	4
Support Local Businesses	4
Enhance Technology and Communication Systems	4
Improve Transportation and Roads	3
Safe and Vibrant Community	2
Create an Entrepreneurial Community	2
Improve Health Care System	2

Question 2: Which scenario do you think the community of Dunn County should strive towards- Why?

The scenarios were themed into five categories (Table 2), based off of the possible options from the PowerPoint presentation as well as combining various scenarios together. The most common category was "Destination Dunn" with a total of seven responses. Four responses were themed into the "Vintage Village" category. Following close behind with three responses was the "Combination of Scenarios" category. This category paired together Destination Dunn and Vintage Village and Destination Dunn and Boom to Gloom. The least common responses went to both "Snooze; You Loose" and "Boom to Gloom" with only one response each.

Table 2: Question 2 Categories

Question 2: Which scenario do you think the community of Dunn County should strive towards-Why?	
Destination Dunn	7
Vintage Village	4
Combination of Scenarios	3
Snooze; You Loose	1
Boom to Gloom	1

Question 3: What action steps do you think are going to be critical as we move towards creating our preferred vision?

Responses to question three varied significantly (Table 3), with the most common category being "Create Goals and Plans" at seven responses. Furthermore, other common categories including "County-Wide Involvement", "Educate Others about County Issues", and

"Overcome Differences and Collaborate". There was a variety of different perspectives that had

between two to three responses each ultimately creating six additional categories. The least

amount of responses went to the categories "Create a New Culture", "Involvement from

Churches", and "Foster Farming Operations" with one response each.

Table 3: Question 3 Categories

Question 3: What action steps do you think are going to be critical as we move towards creating our preferred vision?	
Create Goals and Plans	7
Countywide Involvement	5
Educate Others about County Issues	5
Overcome Differences and Collaborate	4
Assessable Countywide Communication Systems	3
Disregard Personal Agendas	3
Sponsorships for Local Businesses	3
Take Pro-active Approach	3
Elect Desired Officials	2
Arrange Community Meetings	2
Create a New Culture	1
Involvement from Churches	1
Foster Farming Operations	1

Question 4: What role do you think you/group can play to help make this a reality?

Responses to question four were themed into twelve categories (Table 4), with "Active

Involvement in Community" categorizing the most responses. Other common categories were

"Empower Youth", "General Awareness", "Be Environmentally Friendly", "Use Technology to
Communicate", and "Attend Community Meetings". Subsequently, with two responses each was
the "Hire Professional Planner" and "Be an Advocate" categories. The least amount of
responses went to the categories "Loyalty to the Community" and "Direct Involvement with
UW-Stout" with one response each.

Table 4: Question 4 Categories

Question 4: What role do you think you/group can play to help make this a reality?	
Active Involvement in Community	5
Empower Youth	4
General Awareness	4
Be Environmentally Friendly	3
Use Technology to Communicate	3
Attend Community Meetings	3
Hire Professional Planner	2
Be an Advocate	2
Loyalty to the Community	1
Direct Involvement from UW-Stout	1

Chapter V: Discussion

The purpose of the study is to identify the needs of Dunn County regarding resources that

must be improved to keep the county sustainable. The study results will provide community

leaders with the research and support to take the initiative to engage in actions that will

strengthen the economy, environment, and all other aspects of community life. Community

leaders will have the opportunity to make a difference for everyone.

The study used a PowerPoint presentation with four open-ended discussion questions as

the data collection tool. Please refer to the appendix for the instrument used. The data collection

process yielded 151 participants. The responses from the community dialogue sessions were

analyzed using a content analysis method to categorize responses.

Limitations

A major limitation of the current study is the small sample size, due to the lack of

attendance at the community dialogue sessions. This study did not attempt to reach out to all

citizens who live/work in the county. Thus, the conclusions and generalizations gathered from

the study were not representative to the entire population of Dunn County. Another limitation to

the study was that only qualitative data were collected. It was not possible to run any quantitative

statistical analyses so the data was very limited in its ability to be generalized. As a result, the

data were only analyzed for themes and recommendations were based on the number of

responses in each category. Also, the time frame for this research was limited in regard to the

data collection process. The researcher was unable to audio tape the community dialogue

sessions and transcribe all of the discussion session conversations due to a rigid time schedule.

The only records of the conversations at the community dialogue sessions are recorded via

laptop. Finally, when researchers are part of a measurement procedure it is possible to have inconsistencies. Inter-rater reliability analysis is typically used to assess the degree to which different raters give consistent estimates of the same data. This study did not conduct this particular analysis due to confounding factors. As a result, there is potential for subjective bias in the coding and analysis of the qualitative data. However, the information gathered from this study provides guidance for future directions in Dunn County.

Conclusions

Though the number of responses was low from the study, those who did respond provide precise information and insight to what they want from their community. This input is valuable to improving the conditions of the county. The research found that community members perceived rural integrity and agriculture, new leadership, and planned growth and development as the most desired direction one needs to focus on for the future. However, the results indicate other possible areas for improvement. For example, there were several responses that suggested managing water systems, affordable housing and land, attracting more industries, and providing services and attractions for individuals of all ages in the county as important choices.

The data gathered from this study suggest that the most desired scenario the community should strive toward is Destination Dunn. This particular scenario was concerned with having a balance between providing and protecting physical resources and having an entrepreneurial and responsive community. The large number of responses suggests a significant need and interest to model after this ideal community because it has a strong emphasis on sustainable development without jeopardizing the natural amenities.

The data showed much overlap between the action steps and roles that community members would need to be involved in to reshape the county. Respondents to this study indicated creating goals and plans as the most critical action step. Followed by this, educating others about county issues, having countywide involvement, and overcoming differences and collaborating are further critical action steps that need to take place as changes are implemented. The most frequent response to a role an individual or group can take part in is active involvement in the community. Additionally, empowering youth and a general awareness about the community are highly sought out as ideal roles individuals and groups can partake in during the transitional phase. With that said, if there is a significant amount of community interest and involvement to address challenges and explore opportunities it will be possible to achieve a desired future.

Recommendations

Based on previous research from the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development (NCRCRD), it was determined that successful communities paid attention to seven types of capital: natural, built, social, financial, human, cultural, and political. By using this framework as a guide, it helped to distinguish characteristics in each capital which needed enhancement or expansion in Dunn County.

Based on the results of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. *Natural Capital.* The characteristic that were sought out as requiring change were rural integrity and agriculture, planned growth and development, and water quality and control. It would be highly beneficial to develop an environmental group to educate others on the benefits to preserving forested areas, wildlife habitat, and all other environmentally sensitive areas in the county that are threatened by urban

neighborhood watching to strengthen community connectedness and safety. Also, there needs to be change in the public perception of the county. Various groups and organizations must come together to re-invigorate the image that the county portrays.

4. *Financial Capital.* The qualities that needed improvements were attracting more industries, create an entrepreneurial community, and support local businesses. To attract more industries, the county must promote acceptance and willingness to help support new organizations as they move to the community. In terms of creating an entrepreneurial community fostering partnerships and showcasing available resources for businesses is necessary. Nonetheless, to support local businesses community leaders must identify the specific needs of the businesses to continue financial achievement as well as improve communication of financial resources available for businesses long-term stability.

5. *Human Capital.* The characteristics that were sought out as requiring change were population growth of youth and improving the health care system. To increase the population of youth, the county needs to provide more job opportunities after high school and college graduation. Furthermore, there should be more local amenities to satisfy the needs of young people. On the other hand, to improve the health care system existing programs should be used to address the health care concerns to local officials.

6. *Cultural Capital.* The quality that needed improvement was the availability of services for all ages. It would be beneficial to increase the promotion of activities in the county as well as collaborate with other towns to create a variety of activities.

Increasing participation of UW-Stout in the activities could improve communications of available activities too.
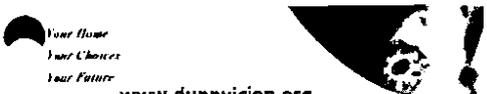
7. *Political Capital.* The characteristic that was identified as needing an improvement was enhance technology and communication systems. The county should utilize existing electronic structures to enhance community connections, and take advantage of new technologies, such as wikis and podcasts to improve communication.

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Appendix A: PowerPoint Presentation Slides

Slide 1:

Your Home
Your Choices
Your Future

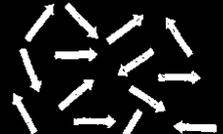www.dunnvision.org

Dunn County Community Visioning

Community conversation about the future for our County

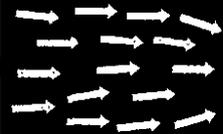Dunn County Community Visioning Process - 2007

Slide 2:

Why vision?

Successful regional communities create a shared vision which helps groups and people strive towards a common future.

Committed groups - unfocused   Committed groups - focused

Dunn County Community Visioning Process - 2007

Slide 3:

Benefits of Community Visioning

- Adequacy of products and services available to residents
- An upward trend in employment
- Decentralized decision making
- Optimistic attitude towards change
- Community foundation resources
- Population with a higher average level of education
- A healthy exchange of ideas internally
- An upward population growth

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Slide 4:

Community Visioning

Your Home
Your Choices
Your Future

The process we are following.......

May 10 – Scenario Planning – Part 1
- Explore global and regional trends and internal community dynamics.
- Identify key drivers potentially shaping the local region.

May 31 – Scenario Planning – Part 2
- Define four plausible future directions for the region.
- Develop detailed narratives of the implications of each of the four possible directions.

Summer 2007 – Community Conversations
- Community-wide conversations – identify the preferred future.

Fall 2007 – Identify Actions
- Identify key strategic actions needed to move towards the preferred scenario.

Dunn County Community Visioning Process - 2007

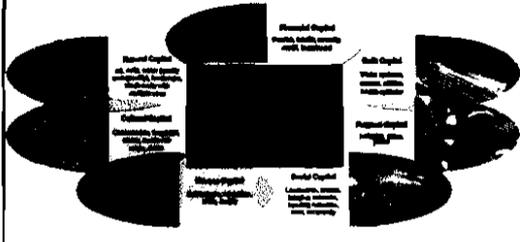Appendix A: PowerPoint Presentation Slides

Appendix A: PowerPoint Presentation Slides

Forces impacting the world – what are the emerging global drivers.....

- Energy consumption is increasing
- Wealth in the US being distributed to fewer people
- Dramatic increase in wealth and workforce size in China and India – and expected to continue to grow
- Decline in US economic power in the world
- Climate change emerging as major global issue
- Media power shifting to internet and away from traditional media

Forces impacting the region – what are the emerging regional drivers.....

- Twin cities sprawl – increasing population
- Loss of young people – aging population, lack of suitable jobs
- Energy – rising costs; potential for renewable energy in region
- Loss and degradation of natural resources – water and farm land

Dynamics at play inside our community....

- We are weak at encouraging new leaders to step forward.
- We have strong traditional organizations – which are the 'backbone' of our community.
- We have strong community pride; but are not very inclusive of new people and ideas.
- We are weak at supporting local businesses.
- We are not very self reliant and don't look to the long term future.

Dunn County – score against top ten attributes of successful communities

Attribute	Strong %	Weak %
Evidence of strong community pride and inclusive culture	71	29
Invest in the future—built to last	32	68
Participatory approach to community decision making	35	65
Creatively build new economic opportunities	54	46
Support local businesses	26	74
Deliberate transition of power to new leaders	2	98
Strong belief in and support for education	54	46
Strong presence of traditional institutions	96	4
Willingness to seek help from the outside	57	43
Communities are self-reliant	12	88

Appendix A: PowerPoint Presentation Slides

What are the key drivers that will shape the future of Dunn County?

Key drivers shaping the future of Dunn County
(as determined by workshop participants)

- New leadership developed
- Cost and availability of energy
- Understanding human diversity
- Education – utilizes technology
- Protect water resources
- Affordable housing
- Public transportation
- Twin City sprawl
- Building on arts, history, culture
- Land-use planning
- Strength of Downtown

- Attractability and retainability to young people
- Availability of skilled workforce
- Infrastructure development
- Equity across community – equal access to benefits
- Cost and availability of healthcare
- Sustainability of agriculture
- Changing technology
- Responsive, responsible, and cohesive policy and political environment
- Entrepreneurial economic environment

Mapping the key drivers

Scenario shaping 'clusters' of drivers

Entrepreneurial and responsive community environment
- New leadership developed
- Political and policy environment
- Attracting and retaining young people
- Availability of a skilled workforce
- Entrepreneurial economic environment

Providing and protecting physical resources
- Cost and available of energy
- Cost and availability of Health Care
- Protect water resources
- Land-use policies
- Sustainability of agriculture

Appendix A: PowerPoint Presentation Slides

Scenarios based on two scenario shaping clusters

Scenario A   Scenario B

Scenario D   Scenario C

Developing the four plausible scenarios

- The Scenario Planning workshop participants explored how the future might unfold under each scenario.
- In their deliberations, they considered the 'triple bottom line' of social, economic; and environment impacts.
- They looked out to 2010, 2020 and 2030 to see how the future might look.
- They looked at how the key sets of drivers will shape the future.

Scenario A - 'Vintage Village'

Predictable Characteristics

- Environment in good health and protected.
- Attractive for elderly and tourists, but lack of opportunity for youth.
- Business attracted by physical resources but lack of local skilled workforce.
- Less smaller local entrepreneurial businesses, but healthcare sector and tourism industries vibrant.
- Stagnation and conservative leadership – less open and tolerant community; resists new ideas and change.
- More people commute to work; and less community support for education system.

Scenario B - 'Destination Dunn'

Predictable Characteristics

- Engaged citizens and strong leadership with participatory community decision making.
- Open and welcoming community that celebrates diversity end creativity.
- Strong focus on sustainable development and renewable energy businesses.
- Network of public infrastructure and transport.
- Development of energy efficient commuter systems and recreation trails.
- Strong collaborative approach – public /private partnerships common and effective.
- Good health care and workforce development.

Appendix A: PowerPoint Presentation Slides

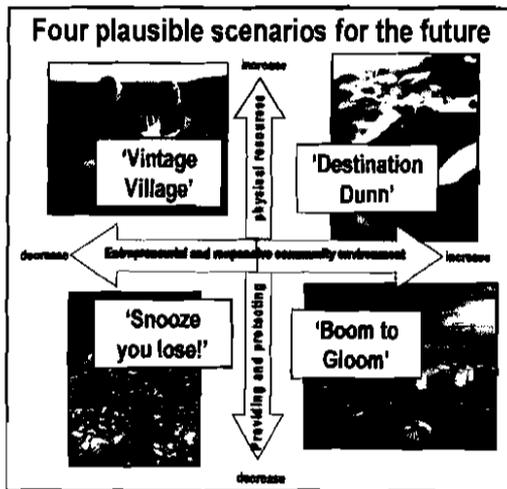## Scenario C - 'Boom to Gloom'

Predictable Characteristics
- Starts with strong economic growth and good well paying jobs – local entrepreneurs do well.
- Unplanned rapid growth begins to stress public infrastructure and public funding.
- Environmental degradation begins to occur with more pollution and loss of farming land and less open public space.
- Intensive development along transportation corridor with urban sprawl into countryside.
- Large companies begin to dominate industry sectors, and area starts to become less attractive for new businesses, families and young people.

Scenario D - 'Snooze; you lose!'

Predictable Characteristics
- Poor decisions see environment degraded and sold off for any development.
- Lack of public funding and decay of infrastructure – roads, health, education all suffer.
- Pollution increases and attractiveness declines
- Increased community fragmentation – crime, drug use, social unrest increases.
- Community apathy and widening of gap between the 'haves' and 'have not's'.
- Increase in industry such as sand mining, coal fired power stations and polluting industries.
- Agriculture declines and water is polluted.

Four plausible scenarios for the future

'Vintage Village'

'Destination Dunn'

'Snooze you lose!'

'Boom to Gloom'

Discussion

• What does this scenario planning tell us about our future choices and direction of Dunn County?

• Which scenario do you think the community of Dunn County should strive toward- Why?

Appendix A: PowerPoint Presentation Slides

Discussion

•What action steps do you think are going to be critical as we move towards creating our preferred future?

•What role can you/group play to help make this a reality?

Dunn County Community Visioning Process - 2007

Thank You For Your Input!

Questions or Comments?

For more information please visit our website

www.dunnvision.org

Dunn County Community Visioning Process - 2007

Appendix B: Institutional Review Board Form

University of Wisconsin Stout
Protection of Human Subjects in Research Form

Data collection/analysis cannot begin until there has been IRB approval of this project.

Directions:

- **Individuals who have completed the UW-Stout Human Subjects Training and can prove certification are eligible to file this form.**
- **This form must be filed and approved prior to any student (undergraduate or graduate), faculty, or staff conducting research.**
- **Complete this form on-line and print. Handwritten forms will not be accepted.** *For your benefit, save your completed form in case it needs to be revised and resubmitted.*
- **Send or take the completed form, with required signatures and required materials attached, to Research Services, 152 Voc. Rehab. Building.**
- **This is a professional document; please check spelling, grammar and punctuation.**

Research is defined as a systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge.

A human subject is defined as a living individual about whom an investigator obtains either 1) data through intervention or interaction with the individual; or 2) identifiable private information.

Investigator(s):

Name: Cassandra Cantu   ID: 0447918   Daytime Phone # 715-302-4132

e-mail address: cantuc@uwstout.edu   Signature: _____

For students:

Research Advisor's Name: Dr. Richard Tafalla   Department: Psychology

Signature: _____ Date of Approval: _____

Research Advisor: Have you completed UW-Stout's Human Subjects Training? Yes ☒   No☐.

Reminder: You must have completed the new training after January 2, 2007.

Project Title: Dunn County Community Visioning

Sponsor (Funding agency, if applicable):

Is this project being supported by Federal funding? Yes ☐   No ☒

You must answer all of the following questions completely and attach all required forms.

1. Describe the proposed research/activity stating the objectives, significance, and detailed methodology (approximately 250-500 words; descriptions are to be written in future tense).

    Objectives:

    It is proposed that randomly selecting individuals in a community will provide more authentic results than a population of individuals who voluntarily participate. It is important to identify if there are significantly different responses between these two different groups (random sample population vs. active participants population) in terms of visioning for Dunn County.

    Significance:

    The primary significance of this project is to determine if the hypothesis is true or not. The hypothesis for this project asks the question "Is it beneficial to do random sampling?" It is important to recognize if random sampling does provide a diverse amount of viewpoints that can be representative to the population in comparison to not having a random selection of participants.

    Detailed Methodology:

    The randomly selected participants will be sent a copy of the survey by the investigator with instructions. They will be invited to attend a town hall meeting for information or review a PowerPoint presentation on a hardcopy format or on-line. Then they will have two choices to choose from either take the survey on a hardcopy (paper & pencil format) or take the survey on-line. The investigator will inform the participants in writing (implied consent form) that completion of the survey is voluntary and that data is being collected for use in the Dunn County Community Visioning project. In addition, all participants will be instructed not to place their name or any identifying information on the survey. Participants will read instructions on the survey and anwer the questions. Given the length of the survey it should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Participants will then return the survey to the investigator by mail, in person (at town hall meeting) or submit the survey on-linc. There will also be an open call so individuals who attend a town hall meeting will be categorized as active participants because they willingly choose to attend a meeting. They will be asked to complete the same survey and turn it into the investigator at a town hall meeting. Afterwards, data analysis will be conducted to identify if there are differences between randomly selected participants' responses to the survey versus active participants who willing choose to attend a meeting and complete a survey.

2. **Is this research?**
    (a) Is your activity intended for public dissemination? Yes ☒ No ☐
    (b) Can it reasonably be generalized beyond the research sample? Yes ☒ No ☐
    If you answered no to these two questions, do not continue with this form. Stop here and submit form.
3. Does your research involve human subjects or official records about human subjects? Yes ☒ No ☐
    If yes, continue with this form. If no, stop here and submit form.

4. Are you requesting exemption from IRB review in one of the federally approved categories? If yes, please reference OHRP website http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/45cfr46.htm#46.101 and select category that applies and continue with form. **If no, continue with Question #6 regarding Human Subjects Training.**

    ☐ (1) Is your research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal education practices?

☒ (2/3) Is your research involving the use of educational tests, survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior, AND identifying information will not be collected?

☐ (4) Is your research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, or pathological or diagnostic specimens?

☐ (5) Is your research involving studying, evaluating, or examining public benefit or service programs AND conducted through a federal agency?

☐ (6) Is your research involving taste and food quality evaluation or consumer acceptance studies?

5. Human subjects training must be completed prior to filing this form. Have you completed UW-Stout's Human Subjects Training (http://www.uwstout.edu/rs/hstraining/index.htm)? Yes ☒ No ☐

6. Please note that research cannot begin until this project has been approved by the IRB. When is the data collection for the research *intended* to begin and end? **8/1/2007** to **8/20/2007** (enter month/year)

7. Can the subjects be identified directly or through any type of identifiers? Yes ☐ No ☒ If yes, please explain.

8. Special precautions must be included in your research procedures if any of these special populations or

    research areas are included.

Are any of the subjects:

(a) minors (under 18 years of age)? Yes ☐ No ☒
    (consent from parent & subject required)

(h) legally incompetent? Yes ☐ No ☒

(c) prisoners? Yes ☐ No ☒

(d) pregnant women, if affected Yes ☐ No ☒
    by the research?

(e) institutionalized? Yes ☐ No ☒

(f) mentally incapacitated? Yes ☐ No ☒

Does the research deal with questions concerning:

(a) sexual behaviors? Yes ☐ No ☒

(b) drug use? Yes ☐ No ☒

(c) illegal conduct? Yes ☐ No ☒

(d) use of alcohol? Yes ☐ No ☒

9. Voluntary participation/consent form:
    Expected Number of Participants **400**

    Describe the method:
    (a) for selecting subjects.
    1. Participants will be randomly selected via database of county records that consist of households OR

    2. There will be an open call, such as local newspaper advertising, Dunn County Community Visioning website, local television news, and so forth that will broadcast the town hall meetings to attract participants to come willingly.

(b) for assuring that their participation is voluntary. If subjects are children and they are capable of assent, they must give their permission, along with that of their parent, guardian, or authorized representative. NOTE: A school district cannot give permission or consent on behalf of minor children. **N/A**

10. Procedures: Describe how subjects will be involved in detail.

The randomly selected participants will be sent a copy of the survey by the investigator with instructions. They will be invited to attend a town hall meeting for information or review a PowerPoint Presentation on a hard-copy format or on-line. Then they will have two chocies to choose from either take the survey on a hardcopy (paper & pencil) format or take the survey on-line. The investigator will inform the participants in writing (implied consent form) that completion of the survey is voluntary and that data is being collected for use in the Dunn County Community Visioning project. In addition, all participants will be instructed not to place their name or any identifying information on the survey. Participants will read the instructions on the survey and answer the questions. Given the length of the survey it should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Participants will then return the survey to the investigator by mail, in person (at the town hall meeting), or submit the survey on-line. There will also be an open call so individuals who attend a town hall meeting will be categorized as active participants because they willingly choose to attend a meeting. They will be asked to complete the same survey and turn it into the investigator at the town hall meeting. Afterwards, data analysis will be conducted to identify if there are differences between randomly selected participants' responses to the survey versus active participants who willingly choose to attend a meeting and complete a survey.

If the study:

(a) involves false or misleading information to subjects, or
(b) withholds information such that their informed consent might be questioned, or
(c) uses procedures designed to modify the thinking, attitudes, feelings, or other aspects of the behavior of the subjects,

describe the rationale for that, how the human subjects will be protected and what debriefing procedures you will use. **N/A**

11. Special precautions must be included in your research procedures if you are doing an online survey.

Are you doing an online survey?   Yes ☒   No ☐

If yes, please answer the following questious. If no, please skip to the next question.

(a) Will your survey results be posted on a website that could be accessed by individuals other than the investigators?   Yes ☐   No ☒

(b) Does the URL for the survey include information that could identify individuals, such as a student ID?
Yes ☐   No ☒

(c) When you send out an email inviting subjects to complete the survey:

Will you place all of the email addresses in the "bcc" line?   Yes ☒   No ☐

Will you have the "read receipt" function turned off?   Yes ☒   No ☐

(d) If your survey contains questions where the subjects choose from a drop-down menu, do they have the option to choose "no response" or to leave the question blank?

Yes ☐   No ☐   No drop-down questions ☒

If in question #11, you answered "yes" to question (a) or (b), or if you answered "no" to question (c) or (d), please address your reason(s) when completing question #12.

12. Confidentiality: Describe the methods to be used to ensure the confidentiality of data obtained.

The survey has minimal identifiers so the participant's anonymity will not be compromised. There is NO personal demographic questions asked, such as names, birthdates, and so forth. In addition, there will be an implied consent form so the participants will not have to sign their name on any documents.

13. Risks: Describe the risks to the subjects and the precautions that will be taken to minimize them. (Risk includes any potential or actual physical risk of discomfort, harassment, invasion of privacy, risk of physical activity, risk to dignity and self-respect, and psychological, emotional, or behavioral risk.) Also, address any procedures that might be different from what is commonly established practice for research of this type.

Risk of completing this survey should he minimal, and no more than participants experience in the course of their daily lives. The survey has minimal identifiers so one's anonymity will not be compromised. The participants will not be asked to place their name on any documents so there would not be potential harm of identify them in the future.

14. Benefits: Describe the benefits to subjects and/or society. (These will be balanced against risk.)

Participants in this study will be given exposure to an important part of the visioning process to assist with problem solving, and exploring opportunites to build a sustainable county. Likewise, participation in this study will assist in discovering if random sampling does produce a diverse amount of viewpoints that can be representative to the population.

15. Attachments to this form: (NO ACTION WILL BE TAKEN WITHOUT THESE FORMS)

(a) Consent form(s). Form(s) should include explanation of procedures, risk, safeguards, freedom to withdraw, confidentiality, offer to answer inquiries, third party referral for concerns, and signature (only if the subjects can be identified by any means). If the survey is strictly anonymous, then a signature is not required). Sample consent forms can be found at http://www.uwstout.edu/solutions/rs/documents/cform.doc

(b) Questionnaire/Survey Instrument. The final version of the Questionnaire/Survey instrument must be attached. Also, if the survey is being conducted verbally, a copy of the introductory comments and survey questions being asked must be attached to this form. If your survey includes focus group questions, a complete list of the questions should be attached. For research using a published/purchased instrument, a photocopy of the complete survey will suffice.

(c) Printed copy of the UW-Stout Human Subjects Training Certification

The project or activity described above must adhere to the University's policies and institutional assurance with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services regarding the use of human subjects. University review and approval is required. **REMINDER: You are in violation of UW-Stout, UW System, and federal government policies if you begin your study before IRB approval is obtained.**

Projects that are not completed within one year of the IRB approval date must be submitted again. Annual review and approval by the IRB is required. Projects that are determined to be exempt from IRB review hold exempt status for a period of 5 years, unless there are significant changes to the project.

Institutional Review Board Action:

_____ Project is exempt from IRB review under category _____. Exemption holds for 5 years.

_____ Project approved through expedited review.

_____ Project approved through expedited review provided minor modifications are completed.

_____ Project approved through the full board review process; date of meeting: _____

_____ Additional information is requested. Please see attached instructions and resubmit.

_____ Project not approved at this time.

_____ Project does not include human subjects.

_____ Project is not defined as research.

Signature: _____

Institutional Review Board Chair or Designee   Date

IRB Approved 12/15/06

Appendix C: Institutional Review Board Approval

Research Services
152 Voc Rehab Building

STOUT
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

University of Wisconsin-Stout
P.O. Box 790
Menomonie, WI 54751-0790

715/232-1126
715/232-1749 (fax)
http.//www.uwstout.edu/rs/

Date: July 27, 2007

To: Cassandra Cantu

Cc: Dr. Richard Tafalla

From: Sue Foxwell, Research Administrator and Human
                Protections Administrator, UW-Stout Institutional
                Review Board for the Protection of Human
                Subjects in Research (IRB)

Subject: **Protection of Human Subjects in Research**

Your project, *"Dunn County Community Visioning,"* is **Exempt** from review by the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects. The project is exempt under Category 2/3 of the Federal Exempt Guidelines and holds for 5 years.

> This project has been reviewed by the UW-Stout IRB as required by the Code of Federal Regulations Title 45 Part 46

Please contact the IRB if the plan of your research changes. Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB and best wishes with your project.

*NOTE: This is the only notice you will receive – no paper copy will be sent.