

2001 Annual Report Executive Summary

Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes Enterprise Community

In the operating year 2001, the Assiniboine & Sioux Tribal Enterprise Community continued to build on interactive partnerships with over 25 Reservation-based organizations, tribal government and educational institutions committed to developing a sustainable economy on the 2.2 million acre Reservation. The EC Board of Directors is a thriving 17-member group of Reservation based citizens representing health, education, economic development, finance, land management, senior citizens and low-income persons.

In 2001 the EC met bi-weekly to review grant applications and approve letters of support for programs targeted at developing new community and economic initiatives. The EC has granted approximately \$223,551 to Reservation-based socio-economic projects. Direct assistance and support on benchmarked activities have leveraged approximately \$43 million in federal and private funding. Two of the largest financial partners have been the Department of Education (\$13,061,410) and the USDA Rural Development (\$9,662,381). With the support of these key players the social and economic landscape of the reservation has been changed forever. Schools, Museums, Tribal Facilities, Industries and Technology have been updated to bring the Enterprise Community into the New Millennium.

In April 2001, the Enterprise Community collaborated with the Fort Peck Tribes, Fort Peck Industries, Department of Energy and the USDA/RD to sponsor the inaugural Fort Peck Economic Summit: Industries of the Future. Keynote speakers and breakout facilitators included; Lt. Governor Karl Ohs, USDA-RD State Director Tim Ryan, Johnathan Taylor from Lexicon - Harvard School of Business, Tribal Chairman Arlyn Headdress and other prominent national and community leaders were there to share and provide insight into the tools of "Nation Building" in Indian Country. Over 300 community residents, politicians, government representatives, business owners, tribal leaders, youth, elders and families attended the two-day event held at the Silver Wolf Casino & Convention center. The planning conference was videotaped; over 180 specific recommendations were submitted by participants of the eight breakout sessions. Numerous press articles were printed and broadcast from Great Falls to Missoula, Billings and Poplar. United States Senator Max Baucus of Montana declared the summit a "resounding success and a blueprint that should be considered by all American Indian Tribes serious about strategic planning". The recommendations derived from the Fort Peck Economic Summit were summarized in booklet form with the graphic design, layout and printing costs underwritten by the U.S. Department of Energy. The Enterprise Committee staff has integrated the recommendations into the current Tribal, Community and Regional planning. Areas of Capital Development, Housing, Nation Building, Education, Health and Industrial opportunities were the key areas of exploration and interaction.

The political and social climate for collaboration and partnerships is favorable. Governmental and other entities throughout the region are poised to advance common area interests and address mutual problems by sharing responsibilities, credit, resources and work. Recent history is especially promising, as seen in these examples. One prime example is the Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux Municipal and Rural Water Supply System, which was formed to meet the on- and off-reservation municipal, rural and livestock water, needs in the area. A consolidated Steering Committee representing both Fort Peck and off-reservation interests in the regional project has been established to meet project-planning needs. The legislative process is still very active at the state and national level. In 2001 the project was earmarked for \$4 Million in start up construction for the spring of 2002. The gap of the \$168 million has been drafted into legislation at the federal level with the support of Governor Martz and Senators Baucus and Burns.

Another example developed and supported by the Enterprise Community in 2001 is the Fort Peck Rural Health Care Advocates. With \$5,000 leveraged by the Enterprise Community this group has used a facilitator to involve the partnerships of tribal and non-tribal government, youth senior citizens, religious community, schools and medical community representatives dedicated to a shared vision of a healthier future. This volunteer group is seeking funding to build new hospitals, increase health care services and reduce the administrative boundaries between medical facilities to more readily and effectively serve the population on the Fort Peck Reservation.

Historical progress has been made to create and maintain safe, attractive and economically stable residential neighborhoods throughout the reservation. This past year the Enterprise Community and the State of Montana placed itself on the forefront of innovative housing practices by combining the resources of lenders, mortgage companies, housing service providers, Indian Country representatives and the lead State Agencies in a collaborative effort to bring affordable housing, counseling and down payment assistance for low-income and the undeserved. The historical step taken by the EC in this critical arena was the formation and inclusion upon the board of the newly formed Montana Homeownership Network. MHN is a unique partnership of approximately 20 nonprofit and private corporations, government entities and other organizations that provides homeownership information and opportunities for the people of Montana. Members of the EC's housing sub-committee were key in developing the organic documents, including a statewide development plan, for the organization. Federal Reserve Governor and Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation Chairman Gov. Gremlich attended the formal signing and met with the board in the summer of 2001. The agreements in place with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Fort Peck CC, Fort Peck Housing Authority and the Lead Agents (USDA-RD Housing/Fannie Mae) will provide lending institutions with the tools to finally assist low-income clients the opportunity to take part in the American Dream. Housing fair planned for June 2002.

Supporting quality education; strengthening families and community enhancement remain on the front burner of progress versus priorities. The Enterprise Community continues to call on Fort Peck Community College to collaborate with and leverage the resources afforded our higher education consortium. FPCC is an accredited Tribally chartered Community College and designated as a National Center of Excellence. The college is a leader in facilitating the partnerships and collaboration for a commitment to sustained economic development. Much like the Enterprise Community the diversity and leadership that FPCC demonstrates in the community is reflected in its Board of Directors (BOD). The BOD includes representatives from Tribal government, private business, education and the student senate. The college is a major employer for a scholastically and technically advanced staff and faculty. Dr. James Shanley has methodically developed a support staff to compliment his faculty. The college has actively recruited and selected individuals that bring experience from Fortune 500 companies, Technology Certified Instructors, Tribal Economic Planners, General Contractors with experience in design and facility expansion and former directors of Community Development Organizations. With an annual operating budgeting of \$6 million, the college provides \$725,299 in financial assistance, the school receives \$1.3 million in BIA/ISC funding from the Tribal Community College Act. The school's grant management workload has grown to \$8 million dollars. The annual payroll for the 115 employees who make up the institutions faculty, staff and part-time support is \$2.5 million. Involvement and leadership for economic and social development has been a primary focus and is a directive by the President of the College.

Capitalizing on the designation as a National Center for Excellence (NCE) the college provides or facilitates workshops on strategic planning, technical assistance, business development and internship opportunities. The NCE supports a Tribal Business Information Center (TBIC) that provides over 900 hours per year in technical assistance to local entrepreneurs and businesses. The TBIC has been averaging approximately 60 clients per month, with 25% of them being new clients. The EC leveraged \$30,000 into TBIC's Micro-Loan for start-up businesses. This has been parlayed into \$500,000 that will

be partnered with the TBIC's loan fund at the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation. The EC partners with the NCE/Tribal Business Information Center to stay involved in social, community and economic development efforts with local economic development organizations. Partnerships and shared sources currently exist with the Missouri Valley Development Corporation (MVDC), Great Northern Development Corporation (GNDC), the Small Business Development Center (SBDC), Rural Finance & Development Corporation (RFDC), the Montana Department of Commerce, the Fort Peck Tribes, and local community organizations. Clients of the TBIC have access to lending institutions that are conducive for access to capital for the traditionally underserved Native American Entrepreneur. Loans have been made possible by the TBIC for manufacturing, convenience store start-up and expansion, Arts & Craft retail, landscaping, glass blowing, legal services, jewelry, auto motive parts business and ranching. The TBIC administers a Rural Housing and Economic Development (RHED) grant for the Fort Peck Tribes. This grant has allowed for the formation of the Fort Peck Marketing Coalition which include; Enterprise Community, Tribal & City planners and Tribal Industries. The mission is to collectively promote the goods and services available from each entity. Public relations materials are being produced and new industries are actively being pursued.