

Community Response Team  
SWOT Analysis: 2017-2018  
Facilitated by Harney County through  
Harney County Economic Development

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## **1. History of the Project:**

The Harney County Court charged Harney County Economic Development with rejuvenating the Community Response Team, a group formed for the purpose of business and industry development in Harney County. The first revised format meeting was held in October 2017 and was attended by 26 business owners, agency representatives and interested community members. A brainstorming session was conducted to determine current barriers to local business development and to attracting out of the area industry. Monthly meetings continued to develop the main themes and group participation has been strong, averaging 25-40 attendees.

Main topics were identified early in the process and it was decided the full group would perform a SWOT analysis for each area before setting goals. This work took place over the winter and the spring of 2018, Work Teams then met in breakout sessions to develop action items for their topic area. As the three main topics became more clearly defined, it became apparent that many cross over issues impacted the areas of Workforce, Housing and Small Business. A fourth area was formed from information gathered in the initial brainstorming effort. The General Infrastructure team will work on strategic planning, infrastructure challenges such as broadband connectivity and keeping up to date on water issues.

Work has begun in all topic areas and the Work Teams are accessing resources at the regional and state levels as well as asking Harney County Economic Development to continue to facilitate and provide oversight and assistance.

The following sections will outline participants, raw information gathered, steps defined, and the work accomplished to date.

## 2. Businesses, Agencies and Populations Represented in the CRT Group:

The Community Response Team has been an inclusive group, open to all residents and others who are interested in the healthy development of Harney County business and infrastructure.

Representatives of the following businesses and entities have been actively involved in the process:

Harney County Court	DHS-Voc. Rehab.	Gourmet & Gadgets
City of Burns	DHS-Community Services	The Tree Service
City of Hines	BLM-Burns District	Family Eye Care
HC School District and Burns High School	US Forest Service	The Central Hotel
Crane School District	Eastern OR Agricultural Research Center	L&M Hemphill LLC
Harney County Fair	Burns Paiute Tribe	Silvies Ranch & Retreat
Harney District Hospital	Symmetry Care	Harney Electric Cooperative
HC Senior and Community Services	Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative	Bank of Eastern Oregon
Oregon Housing & Community Services	Umpqua Bank	Greater Eastern Oregon Development Corporation
Harney County Safe Communities	Business Oregon	Hines RV Park
Community in Action	HC Restoration Collaborative	Gallery 15
Harney County Chamber of Commerce	Training & Employment Consortium	Eastern Oregon Stitch & Print
Parks & Recreation District	WorkSource Oregon	Hotchkiss Ranches
High Desert Partnership	Steen Mountain Brewing	A Parts Store
HC Biomass Cooperative	Glory Days Pizza	BodyMind Wellness
Harney Arts Foundation	Vantage Point	
Rimrock Recycling	<b>Many community members</b>	

### 3. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats - Brainstorming Housing in Harney County

<p><b>Strengths:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The community gets all the right people at the table</li> <li>• Affordable housing</li> <li>• Good quality of life, safe</li> <li>• Stable living</li> <li>• Good services-cities, hospital, county</li> <li>• Accessible public officials</li> <li>• Opportunities to do things here</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 40-60% of homes are pre-1980, 50% are pre-1940's</li> <li>• Flood zoning insurance and financing</li> <li>• <b>No actual assessment of need</b></li> <li>• Local government willing to address zoning and other issues</li> <li>• Quality of housing – mobile units</li> <li>• No tiny house rules</li> <li>• Multi-family housing not income balanced. Avg. \$15K range needed</li> <li>• Getting appraisals difficult</li> <li>• Cost of new housing development here</li> <li>• HUD turn around too slow-vouchers not consistent with rent value</li> <li>• Inspections monthly out of Ontario</li> <li>• Construction workforce not adequate, not enough labor</li> <li>• Distance +/- from other communities</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permit process for inspections, could capture a permit fee</li> <li>• Assessment of current data</li> <li>• Absent owner incentives to maintain property</li> <li>• Need for housing</li> <li>• Vocational Ed. through schools</li> <li>• Power cooperatives work with high power bill residents to replace older mobile units. Savings helps pay mortgage</li> <li>• Tax credits for electrical upgrades</li> <li>• Local revolving loan fund - fewer strings</li> <li>• <b>USDA connection – John Huffman?</b></li> <li>• Local training in asbestos abatement</li> <li>• LID fund-Local Improvement District</li> <li>• Build Skills in community *</li> <li>• Career planning related to workforce housing development *</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workforce turning down jobs here for lack of housing</li> <li>• Same with lack of daycare</li> <li>• Owners are making rentals Air B&amp;B</li> <li>• Squatting in vacant homes</li> <li>• New business development and recruiting impacted</li> <li>• Threatens tourism</li> <li>• 25% of seniors on fixed income want to stay in their homes but need accessibility</li> <li>• Loss of professionals – potential new residents-100</li> <li>• Importing LCD, “marketing” to them</li> <li>• Stagnant growth</li> </ul>

\*Items added in the January review meeting

#### 4. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats – Brainstorming Workforce Skills and Availability in Harney County

<p><b>Strengths:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaged community!</li> <li>• Phenomenal schools</li> <li>• No commute times</li> <li>• Beautiful place to live</li> <li>• Cheap to live</li> <li>• Greater opportunities- to create jobs</li> <li>• Great medical</li> <li>• People work here want to be/stay here</li> <li>• Quantity of employees</li> <li>• Network and support each other in businesses</li> <li>• Smart people</li> <li>• Opportunities to share employees</li> <li>• Diversity of jobs</li> <li>• Resource people who care</li> <li>• Major highway</li> <li>• Isolated</li> <li>• Increased speed limit</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of learned skills</li> <li>• Work ethic issue</li> <li>• Buddy/good old boy system</li> <li>• Lack of job coaches</li> <li>• Changes in Federal hiring practices</li> <li>• Unwillingness to work, career “system” people</li> <li>• Need to engage youth</li> <li>• Lack of opportunity for disabled and special needs youth to gain job skills</li> <li>• Generation gap-different work ethic</li> <li>• License/credentials needed</li> <li>• Recruiting challenges</li> <li>• Lack of child care-quality of same</li> <li>• Background check and drug screen limits pool of potential employees</li> <li>• Broadband not robust enough for work at home</li> <li>• Low wages</li> <li>• Not enough housing-rentals</li> <li>• Not enough middle-wage jobs</li> <li>• Winter weather</li> <li>• Community amenities-pool, food, rec.</li> <li>• Groceries are expensive</li> <li>• Infrastructure not here</li> <li>• Isolated</li> <li>• Rules and regulations related to apprenticeships inhibit</li> <li>• Community College linked to local presence*</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Opportunities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share employees</li> <li>• On the job training</li> <li>• We know our resources</li> <li>• Train youth</li> <li>• Apprenticeships</li> <li>• Lot to talk about-find out what is available – go to specific businesses</li> <li>• Laws and regulations re: cattle industry</li> <li>• Job fairs</li> <li>• Great chamber!</li> <li>• People want to come here-great natural resource area</li> <li>• Social support groups – “clubs” to make learning fun for adults</li> <li>• Grow your own-come back to HC</li> <li>• Build upon what makes us <i>Us</i> -Oregon’s Frontier City</li> <li>• Can make it more visually appealing</li> <li>• Teach youth job skills</li> <li>• Businesses are willing to take on kids for internships</li> <li>• Natural resources – new opportunities happening; check out Crook Co. high school program for natural resources</li> <li>• Build confidence in youth*</li> <li>• Get one person responsible for the career development, establish one stop shop for workforce needs*</li> <li>• Baker Technical Institute mobile unit available to provide hands on skills*</li> <li>• OTEC scholarships*</li> <li>• Need career fair with professionals from out of the area, thinks we don’t think of here*</li> <li>• Get workforce statistics for high wage, high need jobs*</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don’t want to be Sisters, but we don’t want to be Brother either</li> <li>• Kids leave and don’t come back, brain drain</li> <li>• Educate those opposed to change</li> <li>• Land use planning</li> <li>• Community push back</li> <li>• Regulations – BOLI, Land use planning, FEMA</li> <li>• Drug and alcohol abuse</li> <li>• Public assistance can take away motivation and incentive to work</li> <li>• Consistent jobs, lasting over time</li> <li>• Overwhelmed business owners- too much to do</li> <li>• Politics – especially things not in local control</li> <li>• Efficiency in business is lost</li> <li>• Want fully qualified employees, no time to train</li> </ul>
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\*items added in the January review meeting

## 5. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats - Brainstorming Small Business Support and Development in Harney County

<p><b>Strengths:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ~ 30% entrepreneurs in the mix</li> <li>• Economic development capacity, active office</li> <li>• Available space for growth</li> <li>• Commitment</li> <li>• Hard workers</li> <li>• Excellent exposure</li> <li>• Strong work ethic</li> <li>• Strategic location</li> <li>• Isolated</li> <li>• Electric Co-op Managers engaged</li> <li>• Potential</li> <li>• Room for growth</li> <li>• Friendly 100%</li> <li>• Great Chamber</li> <li>• Local financing options</li> <li>• Low overhead</li> <li>• Clean air</li> <li>• Forgiveness vs. permission</li> <li>• Easy to start a business</li> <li>• Regional/state agencies want us to be successful</li> <li>• Support for small businesses</li> <li>• Traffic</li> <li>• Restoration collaborative</li> <li>• Excellent education system</li> <li>• FFA, 4H</li> <li>• We value collaboration</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infrastructure-sewer and water</li> <li>• Internet availability and quality</li> <li>• Isolation</li> <li>• Workforce</li> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Not enough skilled labor</li> <li>• Don't know the resources in area</li> <li>• Stronger community college presence needed</li> <li>• Lack core services – trades</li> <li>• Need more professionals</li> <li>• FEAR</li> <li>• Lack of local customers</li> <li>• Transportation and cost of shipping</li> <li>• No railway</li> <li>• Delivery</li> <li>• Inventory on hand-supplies, equipment not in stores</li> <li>• Skill sets needed to grow</li> <li>• Appraisers needed – 3-4 weeks out</li> <li>• Professional services same</li> <li>• Water availability</li> <li>• Lack of community involvement</li> <li>• Shifting responsibility</li> <li>• Media – radio</li> <li>• Accepting change</li> <li>• Locations/space need updating</li> <li>• Real estate valuations</li> <li>• Absentee owners don't take care of properties</li> <li>• HC representation at community action groups</li> <li>• Education facilities need updating</li> <li>• Lack of vision and possibilities</li> <li>• Pool of customers small</li> <li>• Government regulations-Oregon</li> <li>• Perception of costs and value is depressed here-food, fuel, wages</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Opportunities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arts and culture bring economic dev.</li> <li>• “big business” starting to get interested</li> <li>• Full spectrum growth</li> <li>• IT capacity—steal some from Bend</li> <li>• Transload-E logs</li> <li>• Market what we do well</li> <li>• Natural resources – trails, wide open space</li> <li>• Tourism</li> <li>• Neighborhood watch-gather together</li> <li>• Chance to recruit</li> <li>• Develop jobs for youth</li> <li>• Governor Brown interested in rural</li> <li>• Grass and timber resources</li> <li>• Do NEW things for rural areas</li> <li>• Be unique</li> <li>• People want to relocate</li> <li>• Location-pretty</li> <li>• Share successes—mentor new business owners</li> <li>• Youth, attract and keep</li> <li>• Planning work with cities is good, streamlines efforts</li> <li>• New money</li> <li>• Pass through traffic</li> <li>• Entire county has businesses, all over Harney County</li> <li>• Time-compile all resources</li> <li>• Growth of broadband infrastructure</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No one will come</li> <li>• Population declines</li> <li>• Spiral down</li> <li>• Retail businesses fail</li> <li>• Declining revenues</li> <li>• Skill sets decline</li> <li>• Morale goes down</li> <li>• Increase in out of town ownership</li> <li>• Property values decline</li> <li>• County receipts down</li> <li>• Increased rates if customer base declines</li> <li>• Workforce ages out</li> <li>• Infrastructure erodes</li> </ul>
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**6. Prioritized Work Items by Group Vote at March Meeting- Progress to Date 8/2018**

<b>Housing</b>	<b>Work Item</b>	<b>Notes/progress</b>
	Housing inventory assessment	Grant to complete received 6/2018
	Revolving loan fund-gap funding for buyers	
	Contact John Huffman, USDA	
	Contact Tina Kotek, House Speaker	
<b>Work Force</b>	Apprenticeship programs	Info. from WorkSouce OR 7/2018
	Collaborative Internship programs focused with schools and youth programs	
	Contact Baker Technical Institute for program specifics	BTI mobile unit here 6/2018
	Skill development through non-traditional work sources	
	Recruit key skill sets from outside the area to strengthen local workforce	
	HDP partnership of school liaison position	
	Work ethics workshops for youth and those in the workforce	
	Identify resources available for training and employment	
	Key location/person responsible for career development	
	Youth business plan writing competition	
<b>Small Business Dev/Support</b>	Share resources between cities	
	Identify future building investors	
	Recreational rental business (cars, bikes, scooters)	Regional letter sent 6/2018
	Find well-financed investors	
	Educational opportunities for business owners to grow	
	HR 101 for business owners	
	Training for staff in service jobs to promote area	
	Media outreach to promote the region	
	County shuttle bus service	

	Active, regular mailing to reach regional like-businesses	
	Educate benefit of businesses grouping together	
	Arts festival as a tourism promotional event	
	Clean up Brownfields	RFQ final selection October
	Educate residents on the impact of tourism on the economy	
	Inventory of existing businesses	
	Set up support and navigation systems for current businesses	
<b>General Infrastructure</b>	Update strategic plans for the county and cities over 5-10-15 year goals for the community	Econ.Dev plan under review 9/2018
	Grant writing capacity	
	Explore geothermal development	
	State fair booth for business recruiting	
	Identify available industrial lands (Oregon Prospector)	
	Develop fiber infrastructure	
	Partner recreation website (chamber, cities, agencies)	

It was noted, many topics were considered and discussed to achieve this more manageable project presentation. Lower vote tally does not necessarily reflect the importance of a topic but could mean another group is making progress.

## 7. Action Steps: Committee Leaders and Volunteers Task Assignments

<b>Housing:</b>	<b>Workforce:</b>	<b>Small Business Dev/Support:</b>	<b>General Infrastructure:</b>
Curt Blackburn	Brenda Smith	Forrest Keady	Pete Runnels
Jen Hoke	Sammie Masterson	Jen Keady	Mark Doverspike
Kirby Letham	Ashley Tiller	Myndi Hemphill	Marjorie Thelen
LaNeva Gilliam	Dan Grigg	Luke Hemphill	Mark Owens
George Heinz	Martha Corrigan	Angie Lamborn	Curt Blackburn
Kathy Rementeria	Fred Flippence	Chelsea Harrison	Scott Fairley
	Brandon Baron	Mark Doverspike	
	Dennis Goss	Nic Smith	
	Kathy Rementeria	Judy Erwin	
	Myndi Hemphill		
	Kenton Dick		
Team Chair(s)			

## Housing Chairpersons: Curt Blackburn and Jen Hoke

	<b>Task</b>	<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Timing</b>
	<b>Top priority is to get an inventory of homes and their conditions.</b>	County received a grant to hire consultant to perform work	Summer 2018
<b>Action Step 1</b>	Inventory Section 8 and low-income housing, and provide some education on the data and terms.	George Heinz	
	Provide market list of inventory. A vacant homes inventory will be compiled with assistance from Sandra at OTEC.	Curt Blackburn	
	OTEC Member to Member Round-Up with funding for the district.	Sandra Ghormley	
<b>Action Step 2</b>	Obtain the range of costs for new builds in Burns/Hines from contractors.		
<b>Action Step 3</b>	Inventory of buildable bare land in the county, ready to build.	Scott Fairley will send a housing evaluation template to Jen Hoke for reference.	
<b>Action Step 4</b>	Set up a meeting with Nick Green in John Day to learn about the Urban Renewal Housing program.	Curt Blackburn	<b>Completed Sept CRT</b>

**Workforce: Chairperson Brenda Smith**

	<b>Task</b>	<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Timing</b>
<b>Action Step 1</b>	*Investigate apprenticeship programs. While the group noted barriers from both sides they identified the following potentials for the county: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Electrician</li> <li>b. Accountant</li> <li>c. Plumber</li> <li>d. Contractor</li> <li>e. Mechanic</li> <li>f. Medical</li> <li>g. Janitorial</li> </ul>		
<b>Action Step 2</b>	*Conduct a skill survey of local businesses to see who may be interested in participating and what skills they feel would add to their workforce.	HC Economic Development	Fall/winter
<b>Action Step 3</b>	Take advantage of a visit to Burns High School by the Baker Technical Institute mobile unit on June 7 <sup>th</sup> to discuss how the project started, how it is funded.	Brenda Smith	<b>BTI at HC Fair in September</b>
<b>Action Step 4</b>	Survey schools to determine student interest level and the fields they are interested in pursuing.		

Commissioner Dorroh noted that she would be able to provide some contacts from the Statewide Workforce committee.

**Small Business Development and Support: Chairpersons Jen Keady, Forrest Keady**

	Task	Assignment	Timing
<b>Action Step 1</b>	Address commercial buildings that are in decay and/or dangerous buildings. Create and ENFORCE ordinances and incentives (or disincentives) for owners to either repair and/or remodel or sell to someone who will. Build an inventory of available (or possibly available) property to include in the brochure (below item).		Can inventory be done as part of housing inventory?
<b>Action Step 2</b>	Follow up on obtaining renderings of downtown buildings, as they may have looked historically to show investors the potential. Developers are getting priced out of other markets and could be interested in rehabilitation and restoration projects, especially older buildings.	Follow up or pass on contacts, Keadys?	
<b>Action Step 3</b>	*Create a template brochure for potential business owners and have available at cities, county planning, chamber and economic development. Include information about shared services and provide a “one-stop shop” regardless of where they present first.	Suggested: Judy Erwin, Dauna Wensenk, Denise Rose, and county planning staff	
<b>Action Step 4</b>	A report of research on the recreational rental idea that was discussed last month showed small-town success stories across the country. The group will work on compiling a list of what businesses are “needed and successful” in small towns.		

**Infrastructure and Strategic Planning: Chairperson Pete Runnels**

	Task	Assignment	Timing
<b>Action Step 1</b>	* Update the Harney County Strategic Plan completed in 2012. This was due to be updated in September 2017 and is a requirement for the county. The group will try to incorporate work done in the CRT group in their efforts.	Business Oregon has expertise available in the planning field, Scott Fairley	
<b>Action Step 2</b>	Grant writing is a need. Good people are in place in so many areas but we need success in proposal writing to obtain the dollars to move forward. Out of the area expertise is less effective and general proposals are more successful when there is a connection to the community and the project. The group will explore possible solutions.		
<b>Action Step 3</b>	Continued discussion about combined services. It was noted that the fire, police and public works from the municipalities already work together cooperatively. This may be a low priority item until cost-benefit and current status can be obtained.		
<b>Action Step 4</b>	The group adapted the original text to read: 3 – 5 – 10-year goals when developing the strategic plan.		<b>completed</b>

\*Indicates an Action Step the group felt could use help from Harney County Economic Development