

2014

Dawes County Comprehensive Plan

Prepared by: Panhandle Area Development District



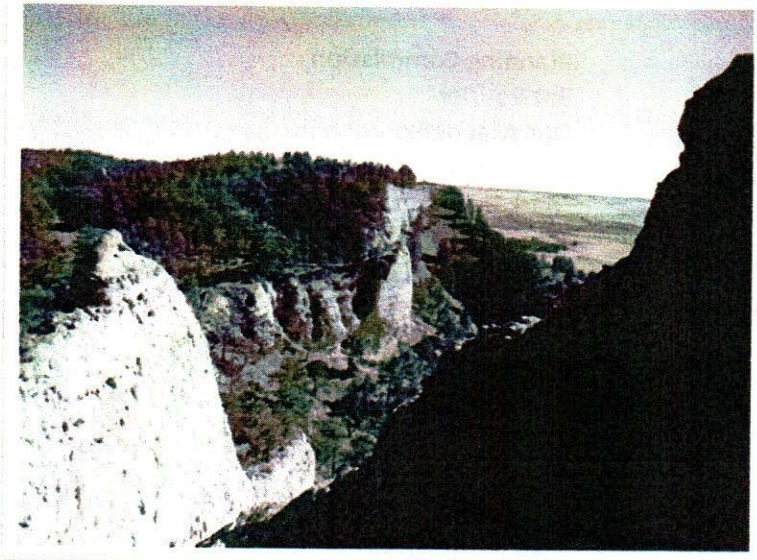
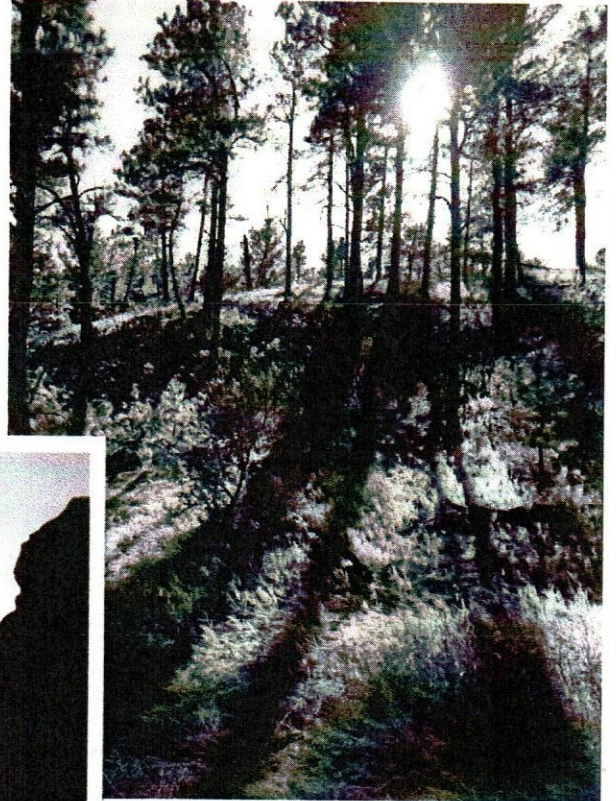
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PADD
Panhandle Area Development District

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Introduction

On January 13, 2011, Panhandle Area Development District (PADD) and the Dawes County commissioners signed an agreement of services for the update of the Dawes County Comprehensive Plan. The comprehensive plan not only is necessary by Nebraska law for a county to utilize zoning and subdivision regulations, but is useful in mapping out a strategic direction for future development within the county. Since plans should be adapted to fit the nature and needs of the county, this plan for Dawes County is based on the following principles:

- Dawes County must preserve and leverage its environmental resources and features for a great quality of life and economic opportunities. Included in these features are the two state parks, Chadron and Fort Robinson, the beautiful Pine Ridge, the White and Niobrara Rivers, sprawling grass lands and other prime agricultural land.
- Planning efforts in Dawes County should utilize community driven groups and efforts of collaboration from its citizens. A group of committed citizens and a forum for community issues are invaluable resources for a community and both are strong within the county. Planning efforts should utilize this resource and should strongly consider the vision of the people who have taken the initiative to get involved in their community.
- Chadron and Crawford should be enhanced as the economic and service hubs of the county, and should be at the frontier of improving quality of life and economic growth within the county. While most of the county is still rural, Chadron and Crawford provide the most opportunity for expanding business and industry and providing education and cultural community activities.
- Land use and development policies should preserve the character and function of rural areas not contiguous with current urban development. Land in the county's jurisdiction should provide a contrast to the urban development contiguous with Chadron or Crawford, and the unique environment should work with, rather than against opportunities of the land.
- All planning and development exists within a regional context. Any future growth, shrinking, or development occurs within a regional context and should consider the county's unique piece in the regional puzzle.

Legal Role of a Comprehensive Plan

The Nebraska State Statutes permits counties to utilize zoning or subdivision regulation to control physical development in the county. However, a comprehensive development plan must be adopted before zoning or subdivision regulations are implemented.

As Stated in the Nebraska State Statutes (23-114.02), The comprehensive plan shall, among other elements include:

A land use element which designates the proposed general distribution, general location, and extent of the uses of land for agriculture, housing, commerce, industry, recreation, education, public buildings and lands, and other categories of public and private use of lands;

A transportation element which designates the general location, character, and extent of existing and proposed major streets, roads, and highways, and air and other transportation routes and facilities;

The general location, type, capacity, and areas served of present and projected or needed community facilities including recreation facilities, schools, libraries, other public buildings, and public utilities and services and;

An Energy Element to assess the energy infrastructure, energy use by sector, evaluate utilization of renewable energy resources, and promote energy conservation measures that benefit the community.

As stated in the Nebraska State Statutes (23-114.03) "...Zoning regulations shall be consistent with the comprehensive development plan and designed for the purpose of promoting the health, safety, morals, convenience, order, prosperity, and welfare of the present and future inhabitants of Nebraska..."

More information can be found at:

www.npza.org/docs/NebrPlanningHndbk.pdf

www.nebraskalegislature.gov/laws/laws.php

2000 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

PADD also completed the county's most recent comprehensive plan 14 years ago in 2000. This plan was called for by a grass roots coalition of several residents and was carried out through the funding of a Community Development Block Grant from the Department of Economic Development. The 2000 document approached the plan with a topical approach based on the type of data collected and was fairly encyclopedic in nature.

While this approach provided useful data and a good overview of the county's assets, it has been identified that a more dynamic document that addressed issues by area of action, would be preferable. With this in mind, this plan includes recommendations for action based on strategic directions and guiding policies for a positive character of the area through orderly development.

2013-2014 PROCESS

In an effort to utilize current planning efforts already happening in the county, the methodology of this planning process 'piggy-backed' onto Dawes County Joint Planning (DCJP) as a resource and process. DCJP is a group of citizens who has met for 3 years addressing issues in the community with grassroots solutions. This bottom-up drive is an invaluable resource for the county which is why this planning effort worked in conjunction with the group.



Dawes County Joint Planning Meeting in January celebrated accomplishments and reestablished a vision

Public input was gained through a two public meetings and on-going dialogue with people in the county. After initial meetings and interviews with leaders in the county, the first meeting was held in December 2013 and drew out focus areas for collaboration and specific ideas for improvement within those focus areas. From this meeting, an understanding of the countywide issues and areas for attention was gained and the group also highlighted Dawes County's unique advantages compared to the region and nation.

The second meeting held February 6, 2014 focused more on the accomplishments of the DCJP group over the past three years and looked ahead to an update of the vision for Dawes County in the future. This meeting identified the real value in planning: inspired residents and connections. The group brought to light its capacity to influence initiatives within the county and a useful sharing of information between otherwise separate entities.

The draft of the plan was presented to the Dawes County Commissioners for comment on April 2, 2014 and to the Planning Commission and Joint Planning group on April 24, 2014 for approval and comment.

Members of Dawes County Joint planning served as the steering committee for the process and the structure of the DCJP's process served as a template for the framework for this update of the plan. The 2000 plan was used as a resource for an inventory of assets and data analysis was used in the identification of trends and demographics affecting Dawes County. While the data is essential for driving discussion on issues, the framework for the plan is driven by the people of the community and how they have outlined how the issues are to be addressed.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

From the vision, strategic directions were agreed to. The strategic directions of this plan were based generally on the strategic directions of the planning group and will form the chapters of the plan.

- **Executive Summary**
- **Population snapshot**
- **Economic Health: positioning the county for better success**
 - o Industry
 - o Businesses
 - o Retail
- **Enhancing local transportation**
- **Improving community livability**
 - o Land Use
 - o Housing
 - o Culture and Recreation
 - o Energy
- **Engaging the county in positive healthy living**
- **Appendix: County Statistics**

Within each of these chapters, the **bold** type outlines recommendations and general policies which are then expanded further. The executive summary following this introduction outlines these policies in bulleted form.

USE OF THE PLAN

This plan is intended to be revisited fairly frequently and distributed to several entities. The plan can be most useful when updated and amended periodically in conjunction with the work occurring in the county.

A fluid structure of updating the plan through a partnership between the commissioners, county departments, and community driven planning groups can ensure that the policies and laws of the county are in line with the current needs and visions of its residents.

Executive Summary

Economic Health

Economic health involves leveraging current economic assets and being prepared for economic opportunities that can increase wealth and prosperity.

Connect: Create networks for businesses, entrepreneurs, and creative partnerships. Intimately connected network of diverse skills and experiences to cultivate new ideas and innovation.

Deepen: Cultivate deep roots for businesses and individuals to invest in the future of the community. Depth is also important in leveraging a community's strengths to build a strong and sustainable base of activity.

Nurture: Attention to individual needs and small business growth is especially important in Dawes County where 90% of establishments have under nine employees. Likewise, the economic stability of families is important for individual health and a thriving community.

Industry Focus Clusters

- Education and Knowledge Creation
- Biomedical/Biotechnical (Health and related)
- Agribusiness
- Energy
- Mining
- Recreation and Visitor Industries

Education and Knowledge Creation Policies

- Form creative partnerships between the community and groups at the college.
- Seek out service learning opportunities that offer mutual benefit for students and businesses.
- Build on current capacities for job and skill training opportunities and services.
- Continue to support Western Nebraska Community College and other "feeder" institutions in the region.

Agribusiness Policies

- Pursue opportunities in agriculture that add value, innovate, and partner with other strong industries in the county and region.
- Utilize educational and training opportunities with Chadron State College, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and other organizations to make the most of technology in agriculture.
- Become active in encouraging local farmers and ranchers to participate in farmer's markets and local foods programs.

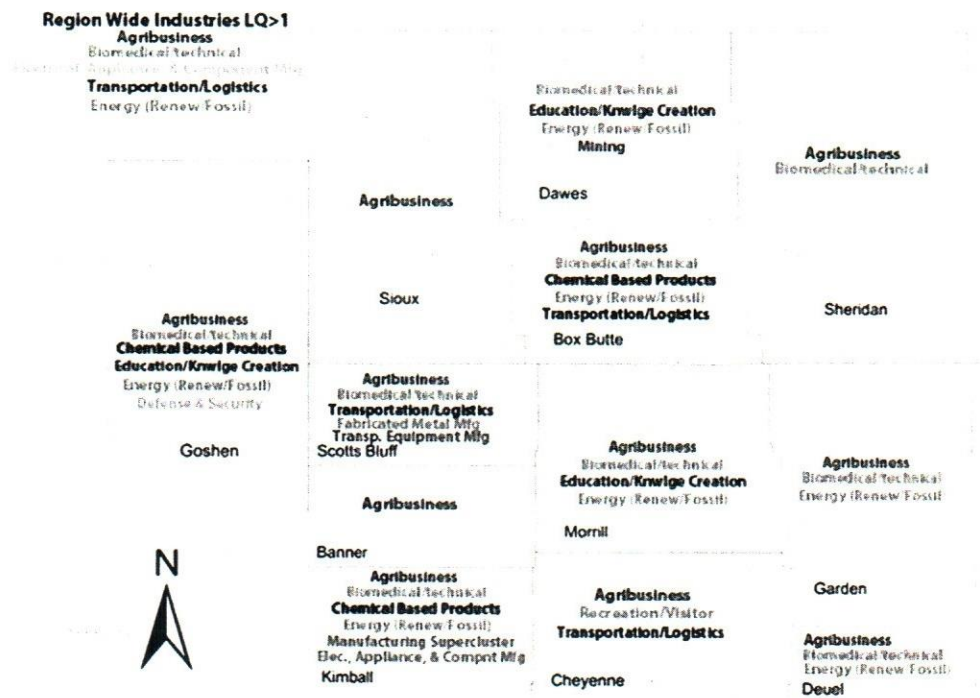
Energy and Mining Policies

- Support logistics, manufacturing, and other services and products related to the oil and gas industry activity in neighboring Wyoming and North Dakota.
- Prepare for and embrace commercial and small wind energy systems in the county through education, identification of land, and review of necessary procedures.
- Work with US and state representatives to expedite licensing and permit process for Crow Butte mine.

Tourism, Recreation, and Active Outdoor Living Policies

- Pursue depth in experiences and opportunities for local and regional residents before breadth of reach to attract visitors to parks and trails.
- Breadth of reach in marketing still important for local tourism establishments such as those in Northwest Nebraska High Country Association.
- Engage college students and retiring population more in visitation of local attractions.
- Assess and act on the entertainment desires of local residents and be diligent about filling those needs as a system.

Regional Industry Cluster Strengths



Industries shown have LQ's greater than 1 in at least two of employment, wages, or number of establishments and employment of at least 20 persons.

Embracing Large and Small Opportunities

- Help embrace big industry opportunities by being prepared to mitigate impacts and facilitate needs in transportation, utilities, land use, and business connections.
- Permit cottage industries that do not present a burden due to increased intensity of land use.

Equipping and Nurturing Businesses for Success

- Maintain a 'package' of resources available for start-up and existing business to thrive in the county.
- Encourage the creation of a digital literacy mentor program for business leaders in all industries.
- Equip both rural and urban areas to be on the digital highway for jobs and education.
- Encourage the revitalization of Chadron and Crawford's downtown districts through design standards and revitalization and streetscaping plans.

Retail Strategies

- Cultivate niche markets in the area focusing on college aged and retiring populations as well as the rural and western lifestyle.
- Pursue delivery cooperatives or other tools to limit the leak of money flow out of Dawes County.

Financing Governmental Needs

- Utilize self-sustaining ways for financing redevelopment in the communities such as a community redevelopment agency and tax increment financing.
- Budget for unpredictable expenses such as county burials as demographics change and the baby boomers age.
- Create and utilize a Capital Improvement Program to budget for and achieve goals for public improvements and services

Enhancing Local Transportation

Improving connections to opportunities within the county and enhancing business and resident accessibility to outside markets.

- Advocate for the completion of the Heartland Expressway from Chadron south to Alliance and North to the South Dakota border.
- Maintain an objective road prioritization system for road, bridge, and culvert maintenance and improvements.
- Maintain highway shoulders between Chadron and the state parks.
- Monitor safety and traffic conditions of Slim Butte Road.
- Enhance shuttle bus availability through scheduled times and after hours service.
- Encourage a transportation cooperative for out of area trips.
- Support and be active in keeping Chadron Municipal Airport a viable transportation option.

Improving Community Livability

Community Livability is about striving to make Dawes County a place that synchronizes legacy, beauty, and utility to create a great living environment.

Preserve: Direct higher intensity development to existing facilities and to be contiguous with incorporated areas. Preserve the natural and historical elements of the landscape that have value as legacy for future generations to enjoy.

Provide: Uphold a high standard of quality owner and renter occupied housing options, particularly targeting the maintenance of standards. Low-income, disabled, and elderly housing capacity needs to be increased.

Enhance: Enhance the community, especially the shared spaces, through beautification efforts, improved recreational and cultural activities, and revitalization projects.

Four Sections of Livability: Land use, Culture and Recreation, Housing, Energy

Land Use

- Review non-farm use on a case by case basis
- Direct higher intensity development towards existing facilities
- Pursue conservation development when applicable and desirable.
- Permit large lot splits for rural residential and small parcel farming use.
- Size of rural subdivisions and demand for county services is directly proportional to the level of improvements that should be required.
- Support mining activities that do not cause excessive environmental damage.
- Work with municipalities to identify and market certified and 'shovel ready' sites for targeted industries and businesses.
- Preserve and enhance aesthetic qualities of community gateways.

Culture and Recreation

- Improved connections and cooperation between entities and jurisdictions
- Improved coordination of communities to enhance, identify, and brand Crazy Horse Memorial Highway.
- Enhance cycling connections from Chadron to the two state parks and public lands.
- Pursue a plan for completing the Cowboy Trail in collaboration with municipalities from Chadron to the east.
- Complete signage and facilities to promote visitation of Belmont and the Belmont Tunnel.
- Collaborate on recreational programs and events unique to the county.
- Leverage Northwest Nebraska High Country Association to tap into the extensive bed and breakfast and outdoor network in the area for outside tourists.

Housing

- Pursue holistic home rehab programs with a focus on contractor attraction and private-public partnerships.
- Form partnerships for the development of middle to higher income housing.
- Monitor housing affordability
- Maintain, uphold, and enforce the Universal Property Maintenance Code.
- Enforce concerted nuisance abatement programs.
- Encourage programs that give in-home care to the elderly.
- Focus economic development attention on higher wage jobs.

Energy

- Study the fuel, waste, and water efficiency of county activities and pursue options that reduce consumption and work towards long term fiscal and environmental sustainability.
- Prepare county for commercial wind energy development by educating on the county wind systems regulations.
- Pursue use of steam energy in public buildings for local renewable energy and forest management less reliable on grant funding.
- Research biomass co-firing opportunities: mixing wood with coal for cleaner burns

Engaging the County in Positive Healthy Living

Becoming a healthier and happier community through lifestyle, culture, learning and social responsibility to the community

- Coordinate efforts between community and schools and between school districts to provide the best opportunities for the next generation.
- Work the Panhandle Partnership for Health and Human Services and the schools to promote the Search Institute's 40 developmental assets.

Community engagement

- Obtain early and frequent engagement
- Maintain a positive community forum

Culture of Wellness

- Partner with public health agencies on planning projects
- Support and grow local food options through adequate transportation, promotion, market space, and partnerships.
- Encourage worksite wellness
- Design community connections and amenities for active living

Community and Environmental Safety

- Support wildfire protection
- Map forested and restricted roads for emergency crews
- Increase sheriff staff, equipment, and training with demand
- Quality of service oriented community safety and emergency response

Population Snapshot

To understand the needs of Dawes County, it is important to understand the composition of its population. Students enrolled at Chadron State College cause a large swell in population from in the late teens and early twenties. Chadron's 5,851 people made up 63.7% of Dawes County's total population, continuing the trend of Chadron's growing prominence in the make-up of the county population. Larger numbers of people in the baby boom generation are still visible and noticeably lower population numbers exist for young adults outside of Chadron.

Figure 1: Population pyramid

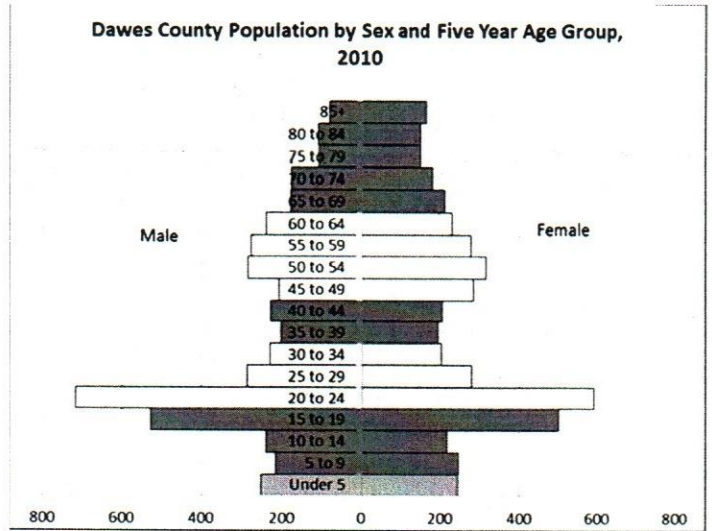
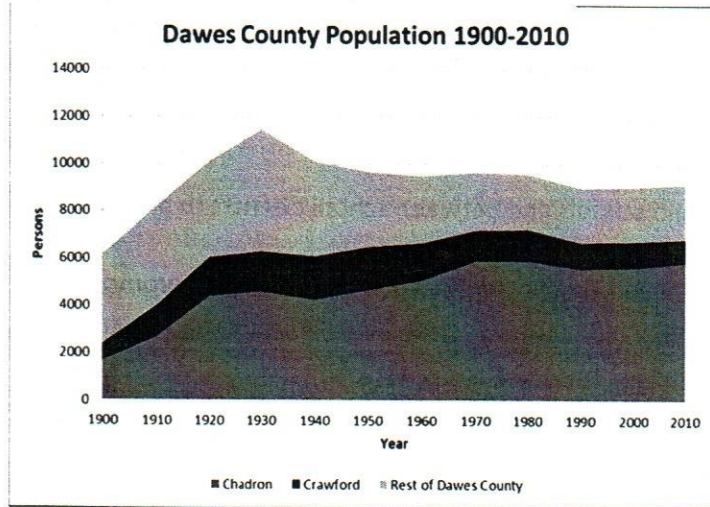
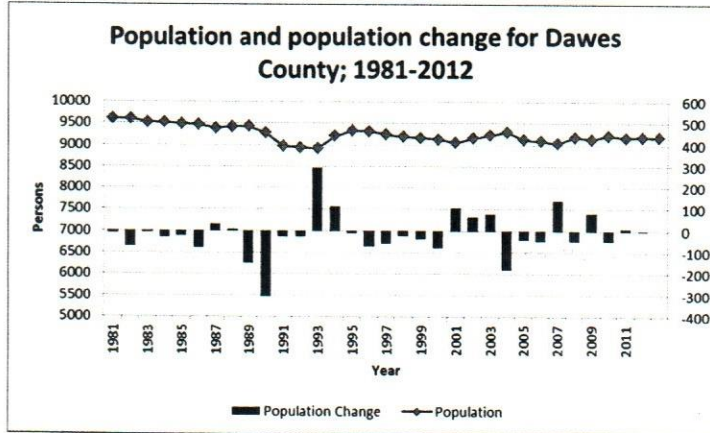


Figure 2: Population by jurisdiction



Chadron's increasing share of the Dawes County's population mirrors statewide population consolidation and the general trend toward urbanization worldwide. While Chadron is the engine for amenities and economic activity, it would not be what it is without the strong agricultural roots and the residents in the rest of Dawes County. County residents have suggested and national trends have affirmed that development and decisions work best when considering the county and region as an interdependent system.

Figure 3: Population and population change



Overall, Dawes County has slightly gained population from 2000 (pop. 9,054) to 2012 (pop. 9,176), reversing the trend of the 90s and contrasting the decline of most rural Plains counties. However, the population has generally held stable through the 2000s with some years of growth and decline. Increase in college enrollment and elderly people may have driven the county's slight growth.

Economic Health

Economic health involves leveraging current economic assets and being prepared for economic opportunities that can increase wealth and prosperity.

Pervasive themes: Connect, Deepen, Nurture

Connect: Successful entrepreneurs are people who have made and maintain the right connections. This principle also applies to entities and businesses within the county. Positive connections within the county can help to use resources more efficiently and create prosperous partnerships. New ideas and innovations also grow out of an intimately connected network of diverse skills and experiences.

Deepen: The deeper the roots of a business or individual in the community, the more likely they are to invest in the future of the community. Depth is also important in leveraging a community’s strengths, rather than investing in a breadth of industries or areas that are may not be sustainable and may not provide as favorable of a return.

Nurture: Equally as important as the big picture of an economy are the needs of individual people, businesses, and organizations. In a county where 90% of all establishments have under nine (9) employees, attention to individuals makes a big difference. Likewise, the economic stability of families is important for individual health and a thriving community.

Dawes County is a hub for economic activity in Northwest Nebraska, boasting a strong agricultural legacy, four year college, and amenities to serve the area. Two state parks, a national forest, and the rugged beauty of the Pine Ridge draw thousands of visitors each year and provide the scenic backdrop for many more years of prosperity in the county. Emphasizing connections, preparedness, and actively pursuing the next step for improvement can help ensure a vibrant economy and healthy community in the years to come.

Economic Composition

Table 1: Largest Employers

Dawes County is the northern most of the four economic hubs of the Nebraska Panhandle and is a center for business, retail, and education in Northwest Nebraska. Roughly one third of all jobs are government funded with Chadron State College, the

Largest Employers: Dawes County

	Employer	Employment Number	Products/Service
1	Chadron State College	327	College Education
2	Wal-Mart	245	Retail and Wholesale Trade
3	Chadron Community Hospital	183	Education & Health Services
4	Nebraska Game and Parks	155*	Parks and Recreation
5	Chadron Public Schools	140	Primary and Secondary Education
6	U.S. Forest Service	130	Government and Education
7	Your Selling Team	74	Professional & Business
8	Crow Butte Resources	58	Uranium Mining
9	Dawes County	52	Government
10	Ponderosa Villa	50	Nursing Care
11	Crawford Public Schools	48	Education

*seasonal peak

National Forest Service, and local government and schools making up some of the largest employers in the area. Also with a large presence in the area is health services with Chadron Community Hospital and senior living facilities, both of which have been a draw for an aging rural population. Small businesses (2-9 employees) and self- employed individuals make over 90% of establishments and

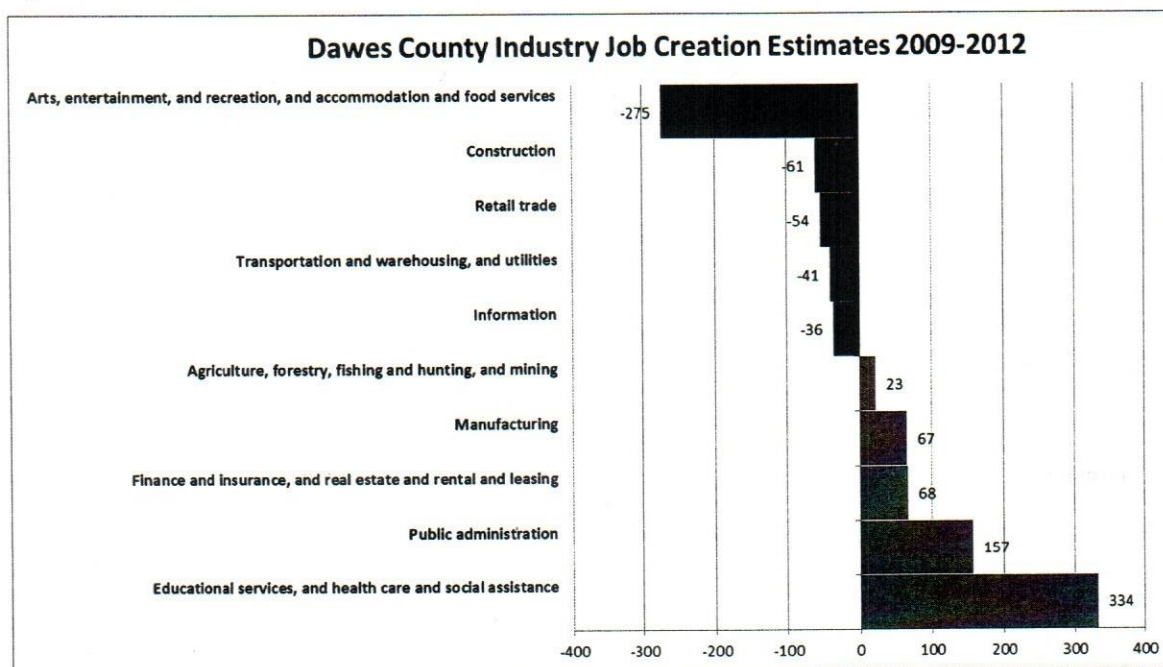
account for 40.8% of all employment. As will be discussed later, efforts that are geared toward individual education and improvement can make a big difference in local business health since many individuals are leaders in their business or organization.

Table 2: Industry composition by jurisdiction

INDUSTRY	2012					
	Dawes County		Chadron		Crawford	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	4,905		3,268		452	
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	515	10.50%	197	6.00%	44	9.70%
Construction	232	4.70%	130	4.00%	34	7.50%
Manufacturing	99	2.00%	82	2.50%	6	1.30%
Wholesale trade	80	1.60%	50	1.50%	26	5.80%
Retail trade	779	15.90%	560	17.10%	71	15.70%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	231	4.70%	119	3.60%	48	10.60%
Information	41	0.80%	14	0.40%	24	5.30%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental	152	3.10%	126	3.90%	3	0.70%
Professional, scientific, and management, and	310	6.30%	259	7.90%	24	5.30%
Educational services, and health care and social	1,617	33.00%	1,188	36.40%	107	23.70%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and	444	9.10%	290	8.90%	38	8.40%
Other services, except public administration	146	3.00%	67	2.10%	18	4.00%
Public administration	259	5.30%	186	5.70%	9	2.00%

Job creation was strong in the education and health industries but lagged in the arts, entertainment, and accommodation industry with an estimated loss of 275 jobs. Overall, the period between 2009 and 2012 was estimated to bring in 141 new jobs for Dawes County with the biggest gains coming in Educational services, Healthcare, Public Administration, Finance and Insurance, Manufacturing, and Agriculture.

Figure 4: Job Creation 2009-2012



Industry Composition and Focus Clusters

One aspect of economic development that has emerged in the last decade has been a focus on industry clusters. Strategies that revolve around industry clusters are based on the assumption that each area has certain economic strengths based on its workforce, businesses, assets, and natural endowment. In this strategy, regions should leverage what is already working well rather than pour money into creating services and businesses that are much stronger in other regions. Investing in our current strengths and assets increases the chances of successful economic development efforts and makes for a more efficient economic system across the country.

‘Clusters’ are just groups of closely related businesses. For example, the Energy cluster could include businesses in transportation, mining, heavy machinery, and manufactured metals. If an industry in an area is thriving, other opportunities should be sought for other businesses to also tap into that success.

By assessing the employment, establishment, and wage numbers for the county and region relative to the nation, we can find Dawes County’s industry cluster strengths.

- Education and Knowledge Creation
- Biomedical/Biotechnical (Health and related)
- Agribusiness
- Energy
- Mining
- Recreation and Visitor Industries

Table 3 shows the industries ratio of total employment in the county versus the ratio of that industry’s employment nationwide. A number higher than one means the industry is exporting that good or service, or more than meeting local demand.

Not surprisingly, education is one of the driving forces behind economic stability and success in the county, followed by Life Sciences, Energy, Mining and Agribusiness. Education, health care and social assistance together made up one third of the jobs in Dawes County in 2012 and the trend across the region and country are promising for these fields. From 2009 to 2012, education, health and social assistance employment grew by 26% in the county and by 48% in Chadron.

Table 3: 2012 Industry Location Quotients vs. Nation

Industry	Dawes County Location Quotient
Natural resources and mining	2.43
Construction	1.03
Manufacturing	0.05
Trade, transportation, and utilities	1.49
Information	0.9
Financial activities	0.77
Professional and business services	0.28
Education and health services	1.07
Leisure and hospitality	1.59
Other services	1.35
Unclassified	NC

Figure 5: Industry LQ versus the Neb. Panhandle

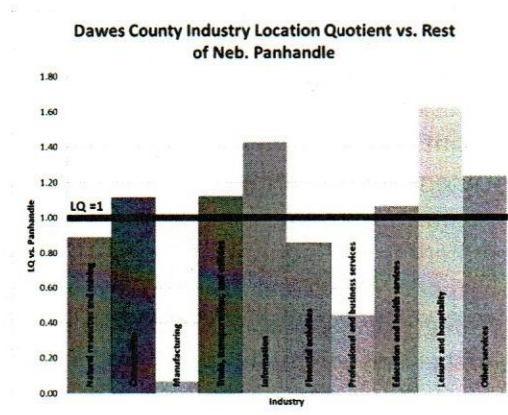


Figure 6: Chadron State Statistics

- Education and Knowledge Creation

One of Dawes County's greatest assets is Chadron State College. Not only does the college provide jobs and skill training opportunities for local residents but it also is a source of vitality with students from out of town as temporary members of the community.

Creative partnerships with groups and people in the college can prove to be especially useful for businesses and organizations looking for new ideas and quality work. Service learning opportunities benefit the community as well as the students who learn about the post-college application of their skill, trade, or knowledge.

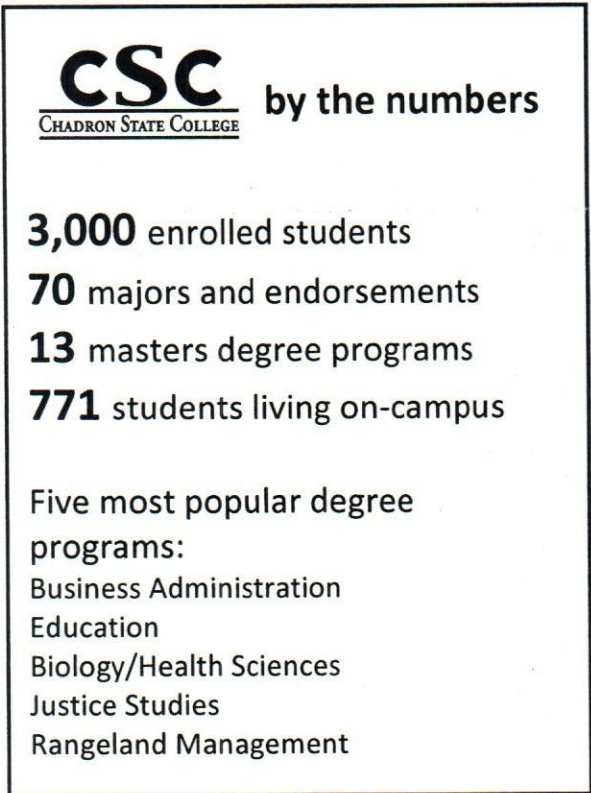
The presence of the college could be helpful for other education and job training related programs to take root in the area since the area already has a mass of knowledge, faculty, and infrastructure that are necessary. Higher education is increasingly important for high-paying jobs and innovation so an investment in the continued success of education in the county is likely going to be a good investment for the county. The county should be intentional in actively supporting and growing knowledge creation and residents and businesses should seek out creative partnerships with the college to leverage the knowledge and skills of its faculty, staff, and students. Not only would this benefit the businesses and community but it would also help students make connections with community leaders and lay down roots. The deeper the roots are cultivated in the students while they are in Dawes County the more likely they will be to extend their stay after graduation.

- Biomedical (Health Science related)

Health care has accounted for some of the most job creation in the Panhandle and is also one of the main drivers for in-migration to Dawes County as well. Related businesses like drug stores, home care, hospitals, and other health services have all shown job growth in the region. Quality healthcare is a draw for anyone but particularly elderly people who prefer a small town or rural lifestyle but want to be close to amenities. Infrastructure, services, and businesses should all strive to accommodate this trend utilize it to the benefit of the community.

- Agribusiness

Agriculture has always been the lifeblood of our region and as we move forward, it will be important to try to invest in the future of agriculture in new ways. The median farm size has decreased from 800 acres in 1997 to 720 acres in 2007 and the number of farms decreased by two from 471 to 469 farms in that time frame. However, the number of cattle and calves in the county has increased by almost 10,000 from 1997 to 2007 to 69,429 while the number of farms with livestock decreased from 341 to



Source CSC 2014

279. Overall, from 2009 to 2012 Agriculture, Mining, and Forestry gained jobs in the county to make up just over 10% of total employment in Dawes County. The agricultural base of our region's economy has kept unemployment low despite dips in the national economy. However, as Great Plains communities have seen for decades, the number of jobs available in farming has decreased with increased farming efficiency.

Pursue opportunities in agriculture that add value, innovate, and partner with other strong industries in the county.

To ensure the continued success of this industry in our area, our community should support agriculture in ways that add value, innovate, and partner with other industries. Dawes County should leverage the agricultural legacy of the region while also looking ahead to the next frontier.

Utilize educational and training opportunities with Chadron State College, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and other organizations to make the most of technology in agriculture.

Become active in encouraging local farmers and ranchers to participate in farmer's markets and local foods programs.

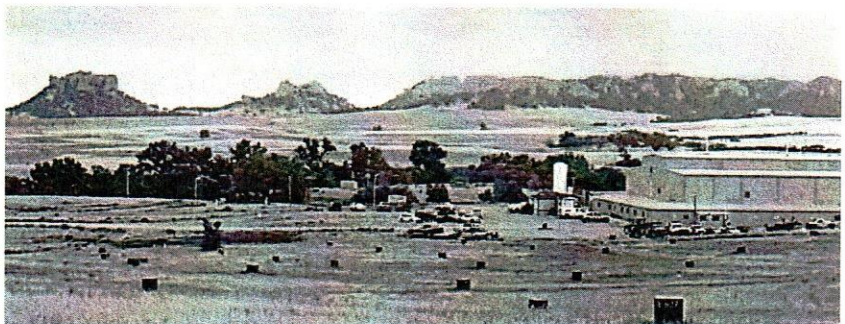
Being an active participant in the local foods movement not only takes advantage of the local foods movement but also fosters community between county and city residents. With the revitalization of Downtown Chadron and anticipated creation of a programming/gathering area, an effort should be made to include farmers and ranchers in the consideration for how the space could be utilized.

- **Energy and Mining**

Despite not having the wealth of oil and gas plays that our neighbors in Wyoming, North Dakota, and Colorado have, the Nebraska Panhandle has seen nearly 200 jobs created in the oil and gas industry related business. Logistics, manufacturing, and other services and products related the oil and gas industry could be pursued and supported.

Wind energy continues to become more feasible and a smarter investment as well. While development of wind energy in the Panhandle and may be many years out, Dawes County, with its high wind potential should consider positioning itself to be prepared for development in this industry. Key steps to take include advocating for investments, knowing where turbines are and are not desirable, and understanding the process of leasing land for development.

The Crow Butte uranium mine in Crawford is an important employer and an important financial contributor to Crawford Public Schools. The county should continue to support safe operation of the mine, including advocating timeliness of regulation and permitting to state and US representatives.



Crowe Butte Mine began recovering Uranium in 1991 and is a significant contributor to the local economy.

Photo obtained from Cameco

- **Tourism, Recreation, and Active Outdoor Living**

Dawes County's natural beauty and two historic state parks make it one of the best tourism destinations in the state. When compared to the rest of Nebraska and the region, Dawes County performs exceptionally well in tourism and visitor industries. However, Dawes County simply cannot outperform the nearby Black Hills when it comes to visitor volume, industry jobs, and revenue. Arts, entertainment, recreation, and food service jobs decreased by 38% from 2009 to 2012 in the county. These facts suggest the county should emphasize more local and regional marketing and recreational opportunities while continuing its legacy as one of Nebraska's premier outdoor and historical destinations.

Pursue depth in experiences and opportunities for local and regional residents rather than breadth of reach to attract visitors.

Dawes County should strive to achieve its maximum local potential in recreation, entertainment, and outdoor opportunities. While local residents do not spend as much money on food and accommodation as outside visitors, depth of opportunities for locals provides more sustained year round activity and taps into a population that may be underutilizing the wealth of opportunities in the county. Depth in opportunities may look like creating more bicycle trails and greater cycling connectivity or increased events and programming rather than relying on activities that would be novel to those from out of town.

Engage college students and retiring population more in visitation of local attractions.

Keying into the interests of the largest age groups in the county would be beneficial for business and community vibrancy. Several community members had noted in the planning process that the college population especially was not being served to its greatest potential and thus not being captured to their greatest economic potential. Ensuring that information is disseminated to the right people through media and interest groups is as important as the attractions themselves.



View of the many buttes in Dawes County. Picture provided by discoverdawescounty.com

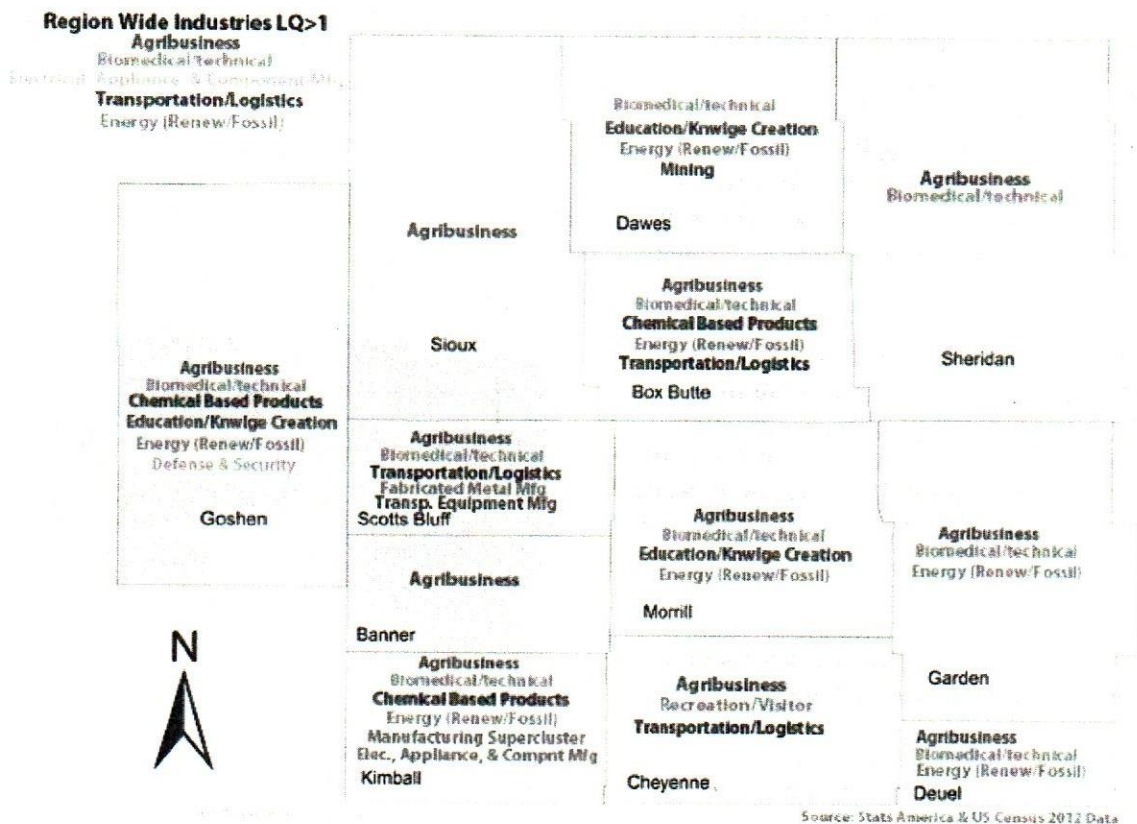
Stay keenly in tune to the entertainment desires of local residents and be diligent about filling those needs as a system.

One of the most attractive things to visitors is a community that serves its local people well. Vibrant communities in which to live are also exciting communities to visit. Working in conjunction with retail to systematically fill the needs of locals and visitors would be beneficial for quality of life of residents and the enjoyment of visitors.

Industry Linkages

Most important of all in the talk of clusters and industries is how these all work together as a system for the greatest benefit to the community. This is true not only within the county but on the larger regional level as well. Open communication and creative partnerships are essential for a healthy economic system in rural area with more limited money and stiff global competition. Utilizing the Dawes County Joint Planning group as an avenue for information sharing as well as collaboration with neighboring counties and communities is important in fostering mutually beneficial economic relationships.

Figure 7: Regional Industry Cluster Strengths



Industries shown have LQ's greater than 1 in at least two of employment, wages, or number of establishments and employment of at least 20 persons.

Embracing Large and Small Opportunities

Large industry can be an incredible boon to a community if the proper preparation and planning is done to accommodate for it. Without proper preparation, nuisance issues, property value issues, environmental degradation, infrastructure strain, and disgruntled residents can arise. Rather than shy away from big industry opportunities, the county should help in embracing these economic benefits responsibly by being prepared to mitigate adverse impacts. Two areas for industrial development have been outlined in previous plans, one by Northwest Nebraska Development Corporation and another in a University of Nebraska student study of Chadron. Both sites are within Chadron city limits so while direct infrastructure improvements and impacts would fall within the City of Chadron's jurisdiction, the county should be prepared to collaborate on the nature of those industrial sites and the discuss any impacts and issues that would affect county jurisdiction. The county should encourage this kind of development to be contiguous with incorporated communities to preserve the character of the rural areas and limit the expense and impact of infrastructure. Large industry that would be sustainable in the area should key into the county and regional strengths, particularly considering mining, energy, education, biomedical.

Cottage industries, or isolated non-residential uses, usually out of people's homes, were noted in community meetings and former plans as something that should be embraced as long as the small business conforms to rural character of the area and does not present itself as a burden for the county due to increased intensity of use.

Equipping and Nurturing Businesses for Success

An important part of maintaining a healthy economy is providing the social and technological infrastructure to position existing business and starting businesses for better economic success. With a stable population count, the maintaining the strength of existing businesses is just as important as supporting new start-ups.

Maintain a 'package' of resources available for start-up and existing businesses to thrive in the county.

Such a package could include one stop online link where necessary information on taxes, business planning, digital literacy, marketing, financing, and land use are all able to be found and inquiries can be directed to the appropriate contact people.

Encourage the creation of a digital literacy mentor program for businesses leaders in all industries.

'How to' courses have often proved to be costly and ineffective in reaching many people. A one-on-one mentoring program on digital literacy would provide more specialized information to those who need it and could also provide an opportunity to build social capital between the younger and older generations. Web presence is particularly important for local businesses and improvements should be very strongly encouraged.

Potential partnerships include county high school students, Nebraska Business Development Center, Chadron State College resources, and the UNL-Extension.



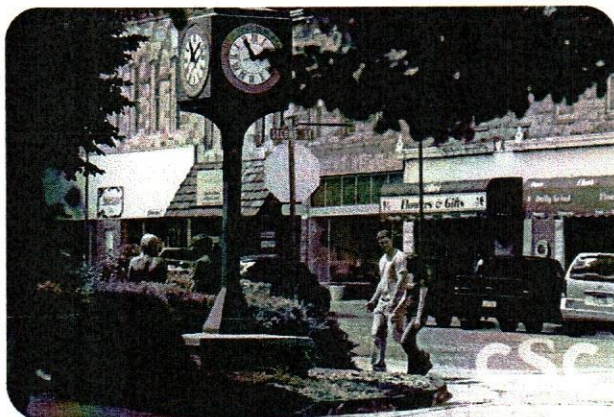
Nebraska Business Development Center

Equip both rural and urban areas to be on the digital highway for jobs and education.

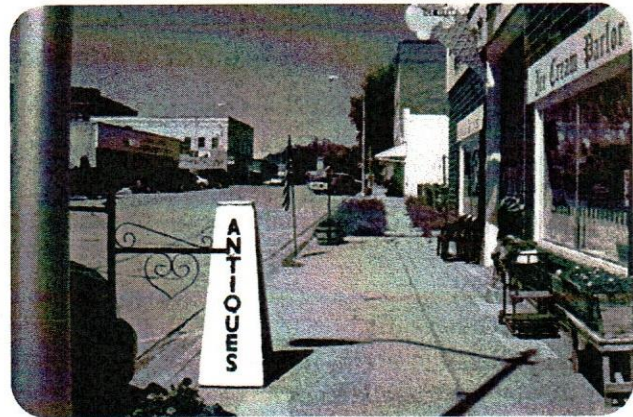
Main goals include working towards 100% rural broadband and city wide Wi-Fi in the incorporated communities. Broadband and internet accessibility is important for doing business, finding jobs, education, and being a connected part of the community.

Encourage the revitalization of Chadron and Crawford’s downtown districts through design standards and revitalization plans.

Healthy activity and retail nodes within the county also benefit the county itself by increasing community vitality and potentially boosting economic activity. At the writing of this plan, Chadron is in the process of creating and implementing a Downtown revitalization plan. Crawford also stands to benefit from a revitalization effort to enhance local businesses and help to establish it as a place to stop and spend time for tourists to Fort Robinson State Park.



Downtown Chadron
Photo by Chadron State College



Downtown Crawford
Photo by North Platte Post

Retail

Chadron is the retail hub for

much of northwest Nebraska as the next closest cities with over 2,500 populations are Hot Springs, SD (55 miles northwest) and Alliance, NE (55 miles south). Expanding further in the region, Rapid City, SD (102 miles north)

is about an hour and a half drive to the north and the Scottsbluff-Gering area (98 miles southwest) is about an hour and forty minute drive to the southwest and both provide more extensive shopping and retail variety. Chadron’s fairly remote location gives Dawes County a considerable pull factor for rural communities in the area when it comes to shopping, dining, and entertainment. A pull factor of almost 2 for Dawes County and the counties adjacent to it, drives retail in the community, which accounted for nearly 16% of all jobs in the county in 2012. The community should continue to enhance the experience of shoppers who travel for the county’s amenities.

Table 4: Pull Factor

Dawes County Pull Factor 2012	
2012 Pull Factor vs. Surrounding Counties	1.93
2012 Pull Factor vs. Nebraska	0.68

Sources: 2012 US Census Bureau ACS Estimates, Nebraska Department of Revenue: 2012 Tax Statistics by County, South Dakota Sales and Use Tax Report: SD Dept of Revenue

Cultivate niche markets in the area focusing on college aged and elderly populations as well as the rural and western lifestyle.

When looking at viability of a business or strategy, the county community should assess who will likely be served by the improvement or business. While Dawes County has a strong pull factor in surrounding counties, it is not quite serving the demand when assessed against the state and larger region. Because of this fact, the county should fully embrace its own identity and opportunities niche markets. Identifying and utilizing this identity and promoting community cohesiveness between all county businesses and residents are important.

Pursue ways to limit the leak of money flow out of Dawes County.

Finding ways to limit the amount of spending that migrates to larger cities, particularly Rapid City, could benefit local businesses. Where duplicating amenities in Rapid City would be unsustainable with the area's population base, creative solutions like a delivery cooperative purchases from Rapid City could be pursued. Regular scheduled events, activities, and programming in the downtown areas of Crawford and Chadron could help to keep out of town spending to necessary trips.

Financing Governmental Needs

Create a Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) in Crawford by 2015.

A CRA is a tool that can be used for redevelopment of a blighted area in a community. Crawford qualifies to designate 50 % of its community for redevelopment focus based on the results of a Low to Moderate Income survey in 2012. Designating an area of town as blighted is not so much of a judgment of the quality of that area as it is a way to target an area of redevelopment that will benefit the whole community. After 2015, Crawford would need to perform another survey to ensure it met the qualifications for these redevelopment tools.

Set aside money for unexpected expenses.

As the baby boom population ages, more county burials may be necessary in the next 10 years. Money may need to be set aside to cover these and other unpredictable expenses.

Worker Flows and Commuting Partners

Dawes County has an exceptionally high percentage of its population both living and working in the county with 94% of its residents staying in the county to work. Shannon County, South Dakota is the recipient of the largest number of Dawes County residents for work with 81, followed by Sheridan County with 39. 176 residents of Sheridan County and 62 residents of Sioux County commute to Dawes County for work. Across the region, workers generally flow most from the rural counties to the four 'trade' counties with the cities of Scottsbluff-Gering, Alliance, Sidney, and Chadron. High numbers of in-commuters can be indicative of a housing or school issue for a community and high numbers of out-commuters can be indicative of a lack of job opportunities.

Figure 8: Panhandle net worker flows

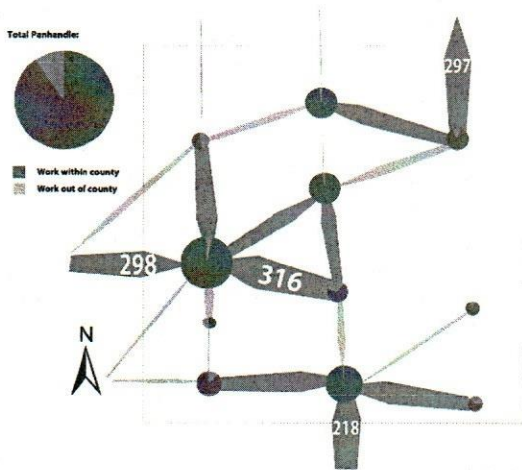
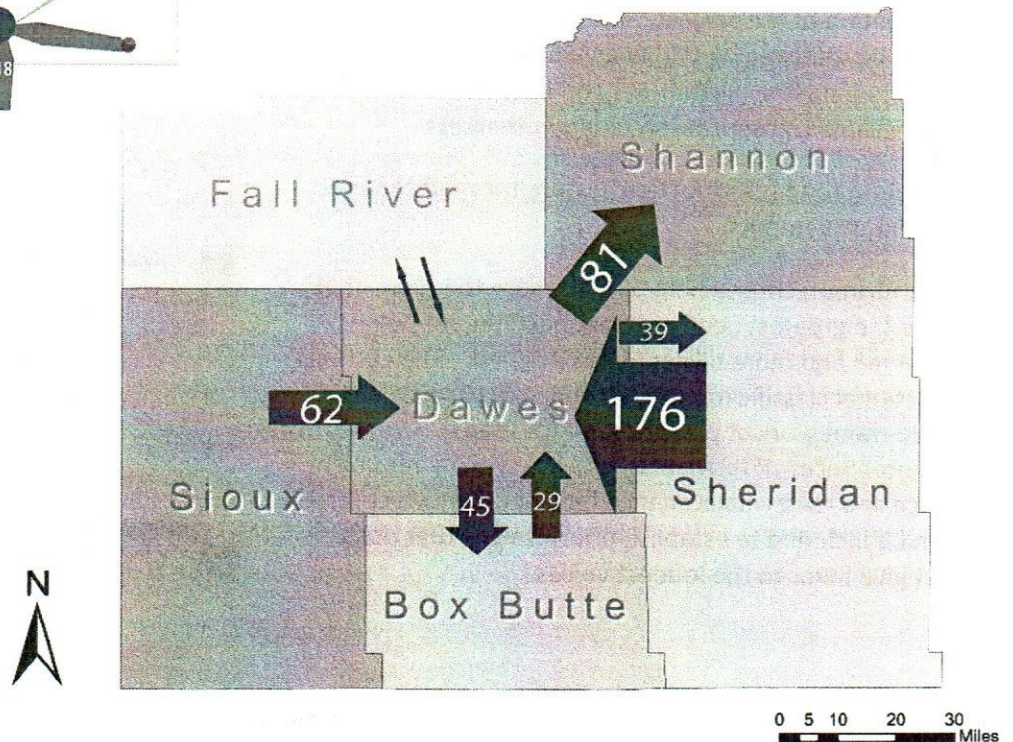


Figure 9: Dawes County worker flows



Enhancing Local Transportation

Improving connections to opportunities within the county and enhancing business and resident accessibility to outside markets.

Transportation's value comes from the people it connects and the commerce it serves. Good transportation is important because it can lower costs of doing business in a larger area. Quality transportation also connects people to opportunities, be it education, a job, or new experiences. The key to transportation is diligent maintenance and attention to where an investment in transportation could unlock economic or human benefit. Highways 385, 20, and 2/71 generally establish effective access across the county with gravel and dirt roads generally serving the rest of the county. Sufficient connections by walking, bicycle, or public service are also important in ensuring that those without an automobile can also be afforded mobility in the community.

Advocate for the completion of the Heartland Expressway from Chadron south to Alliance and North to the South Dakota border.

Continuing to be active in the political support of the Heartland Expressway is important for the timely completion of the project. The expressway would enhance safety along Highway 385 and would be a boon to industry, agriculture, and businesses with safe and reliable transportation to larger markets.

Maintain road prioritization system for maintenance and improvements.

Prioritization criteria help to make sure the roads that have the greatest need are the ones that are being assessed and more diligently maintained. The current functional classification system (Figure 10) provides a good framework of prioritization for roads maintenance. If further issues arise with community voice and roads maintenance further objective criteria can be included to establish prioritization that does not give favor to the loudest voices.

Figure 10: Status of Heartland Expressway completion

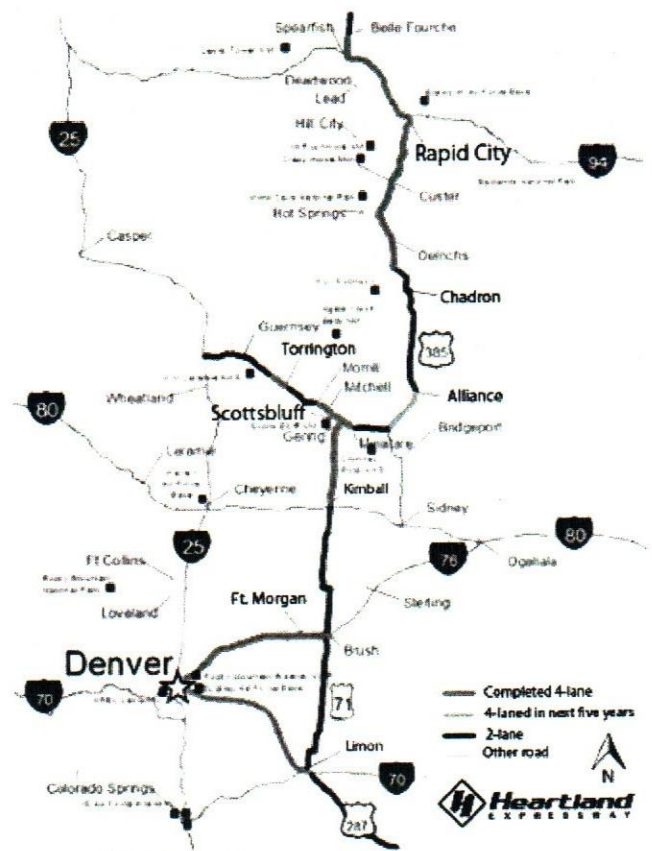


Figure 11: Roads Classification Map

Dawes County Roads; State Classification

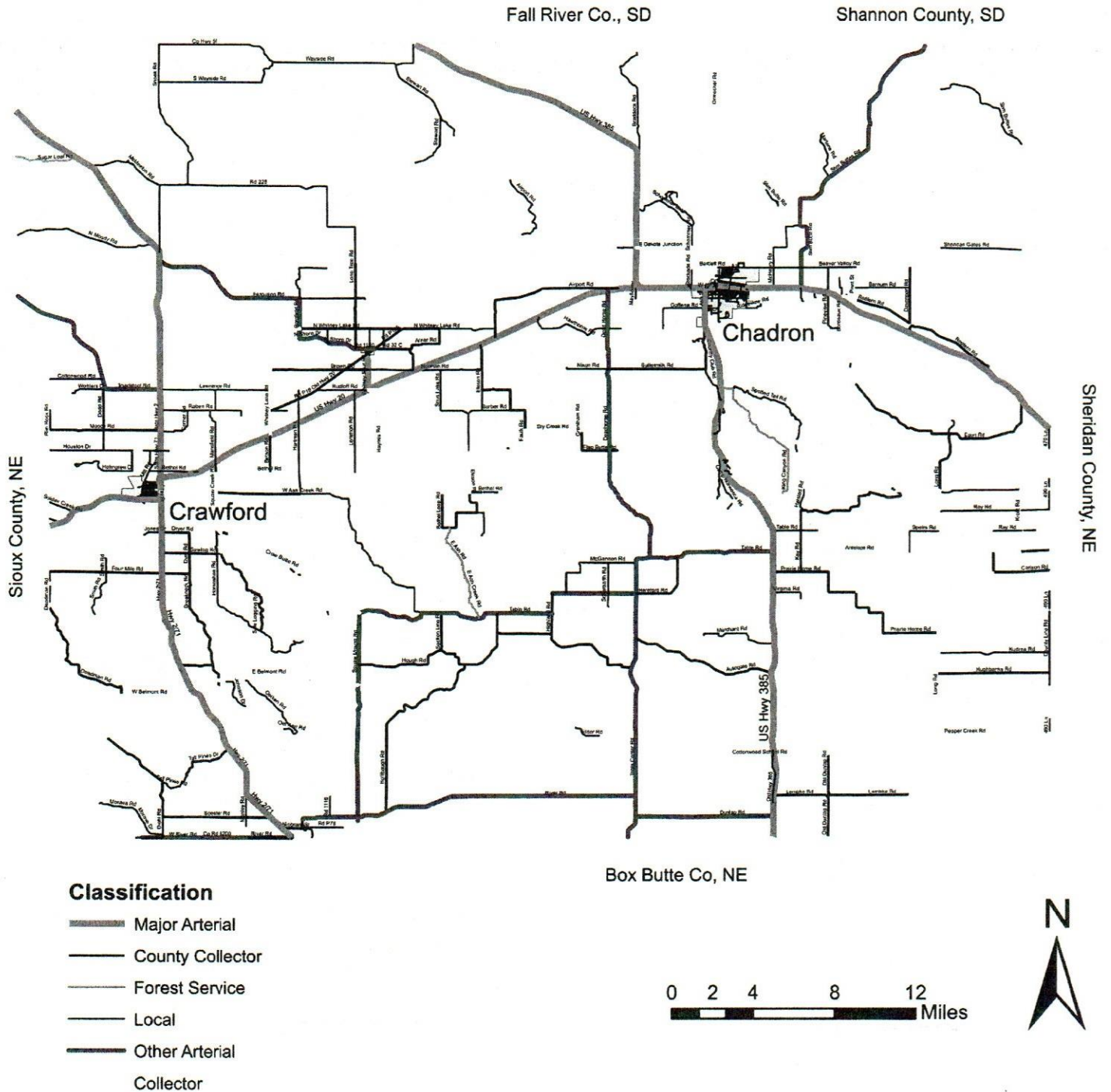


Figure 12: Flood zone and roads

Flood Zone and Road Classification

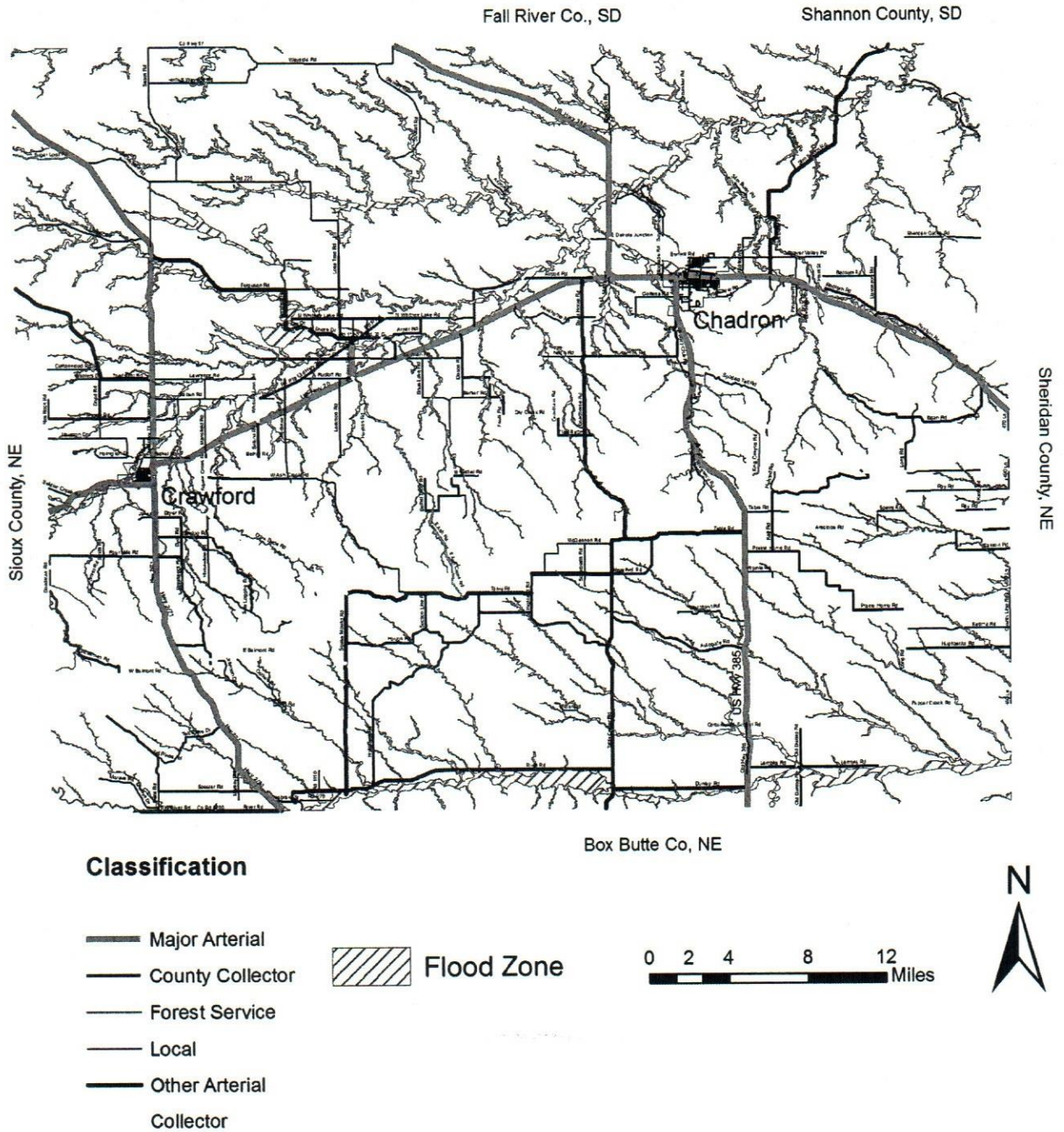


Figure 13: Rail lines

Dawes County Railines and Roads

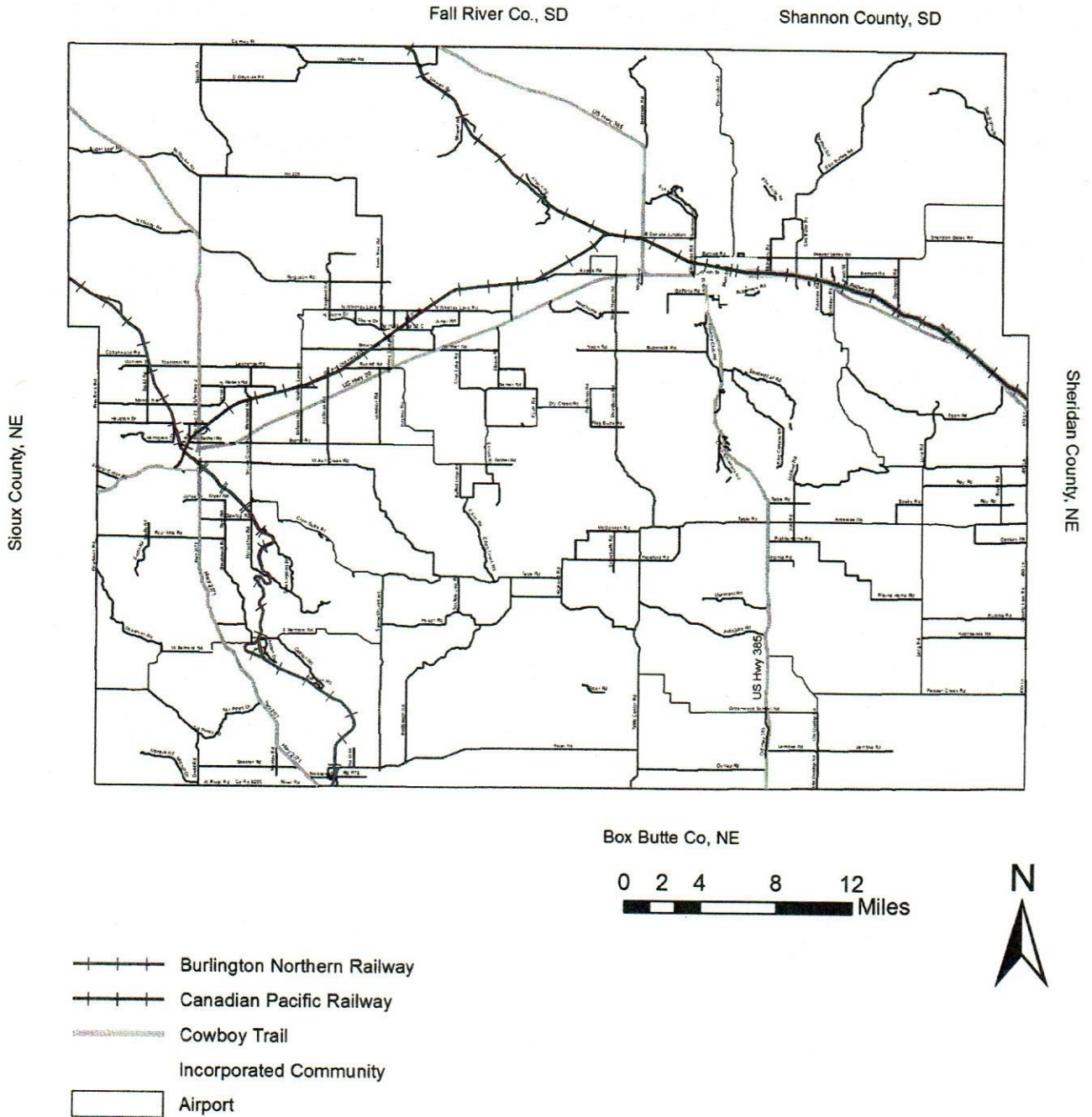
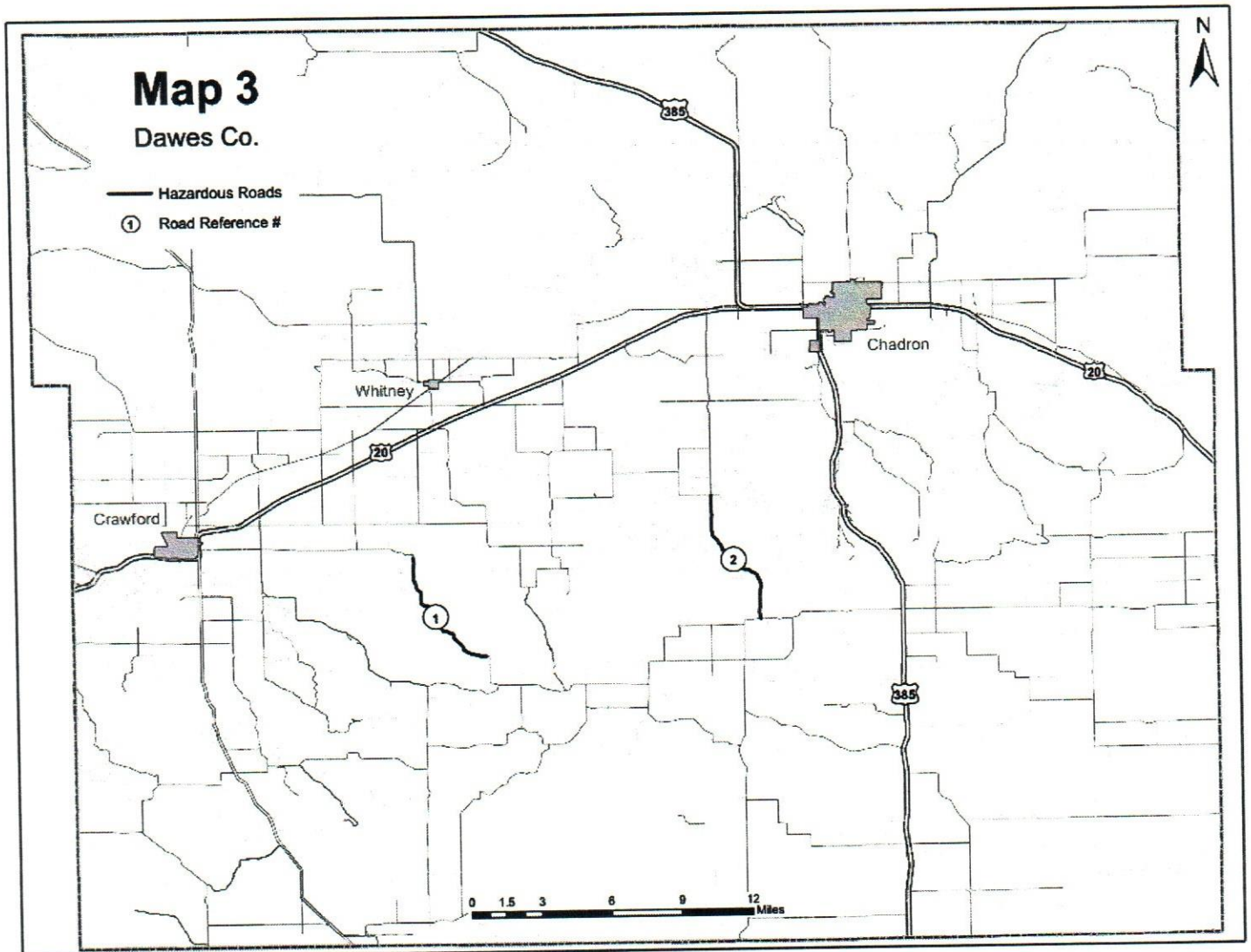


Figure 14: Hazardous Roads

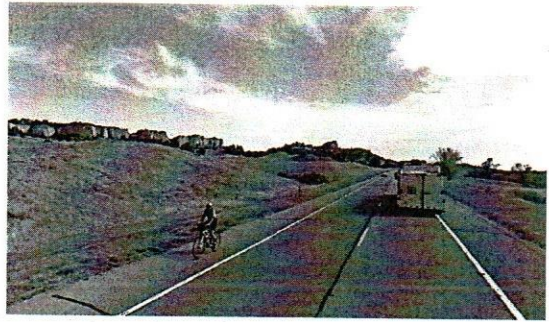


Roads identified by Nebraska Forest Service. Hazardous conditions can include: narrow, sandy, steep hills, tight turns, clay base, dead end and trail road.

Maintain highway shoulders between Chadron and the state parks.

Well maintained shoulders to accommodate on highways not only provides improved recreational and tourism opportunities for cyclists but it also enhances motorist safety for stops, emergencies, and maneuvering.

A five foot shoulder is recommended for comfortable cycling accommodations.



Monitor conditions on Slim Butte Road

Slim Butte Road has long been known to be a high traffic route with numerous safety concerns from travel between Chadron and Pine Ridge Reservation. While Slim Butte road is not on the program list in the foreseeable future, as it would rely on outside dollars, monitoring this road’s safety and traffic conditions should be a priority. Should the need arise, the county should take actions for improvement in both securing funding and developing a corridor development plan. A 2007 traffic count study revealed an average of 285 to 350 vehicles used the road per day.

Enhanced shuttle bus availability

Enhanced service for the elderly and others is important to help those people stay active members of the community. Increased frequency, evening and weekend hours, and adding another bus have all been expressed as possibilities to keeping elderly, disabled, and those without cars active in the community.

Encourage a transportation cooperative

Establishing a website or other method for cooperative transportation and delivery in the region could provide much benefit to residents. Ease of use and accountability would be key for a site that coordinated this service.

Support Chadron Municipal Airport

Chadron Airport’s viability has been identified as a need by numerous groups throughout the county including the Pine Ridge Job Corp who depend on reliable air transportation. Chadron’s airport has the potential to serve the greater region and efforts should be made to keep the airport viable. Dawes County already works jointly with Chadron for zoning. A strategic plan could help to mitigate uncertainty for the airport’s future service and capacity. The city of Chadron has scheduled a rehab of the main runway this year.

Figure 15: Airport Zoning

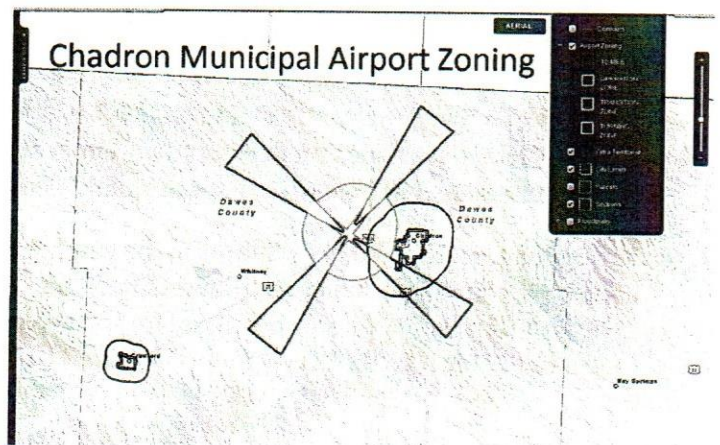


Image courtesy of GISworkshop

Improving Community Livability

Community Livability is about striving to make Dawes County a place that synchronizes legacy, beauty, and utility to create a great living environment.

Preserve, Provide, Enhance

Preserve: Land use in the county outside of the extra-territorial buffers of Chadron and Crawford is to be about preserving the rural character and natural beauty. Development of higher intensity should be directed to be contiguous with the incorporated areas and the rural areas should be reserved for agriculture, outdoor recreation, and low intensity residential use. Sites of historical significance and natural beauty should also be preserved to be enjoyed by future generations.

Provide: Those who choose to call Dawes County home should be able to pursue a diversity of housing options that are affordable and in which they are proud to live. Policies and activities that uphold a high standard of quality owner and renter occupied housing should be pursued to maintain quality housing stock for people looking to move to or stay in the county.

Enhance: Enhancing the community through beautification, improved recreational and cultural activities, and revitalization projects are important to ensure the community is a vibrant place of shared experiences. Public uses, common spaces, and cultural activities build a community's identity collectively and encourage ownership by its residents.

Livability will be broken down into three areas: Land use, Housing, and Culture and Recreation. Land use is important in shaping how our communities are experienced by inhabitants for living and business. A balance of utility and character is important for a good land use plan. Housing is critical not only for accommodating a workforce, but also for the social and physical well-being of the county's residents.

Land Use

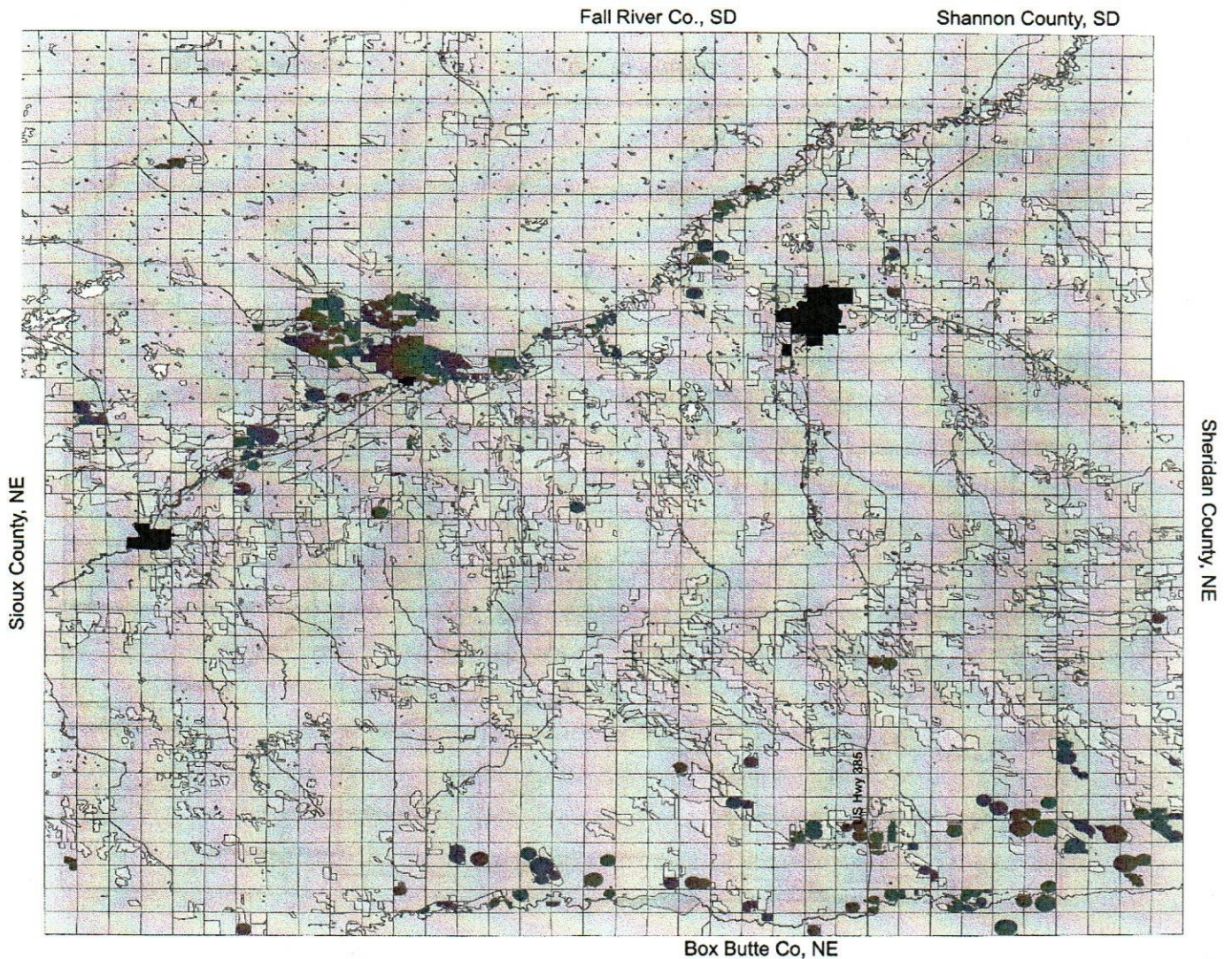
Maintain the rural and agricultural character and use of the county.

- **Review variations from agricultural use on a case by case basis.**
- **Direct higher intensity development towards existing facilities.**
- **Keep low density and estate residential areas near to incorporated areas**
- **Pursue conservation development when applicable and appropriate.**
- **Preserve and enhance aesthetic qualities of community gateways and vistas.**

The agricultural use and open spaces in the rural parts of the county is what makes the countryside distinctive from the urban areas. Dawes County currently does not have Large swaths of contiguous agricultural land are not only beneficial for the character of the area but also helps to manage intensity of use to the level the infrastructure is prepared to handle.

Figure 16: Land Type Map






Dawes County Land Type



Box Butte Co., NE



Land Use

-  Badland
-  Dryland Crop
-  Grassland
-  Irrigated Crop
-  WATER

Shapefiles and data courtesy of GISworkshop

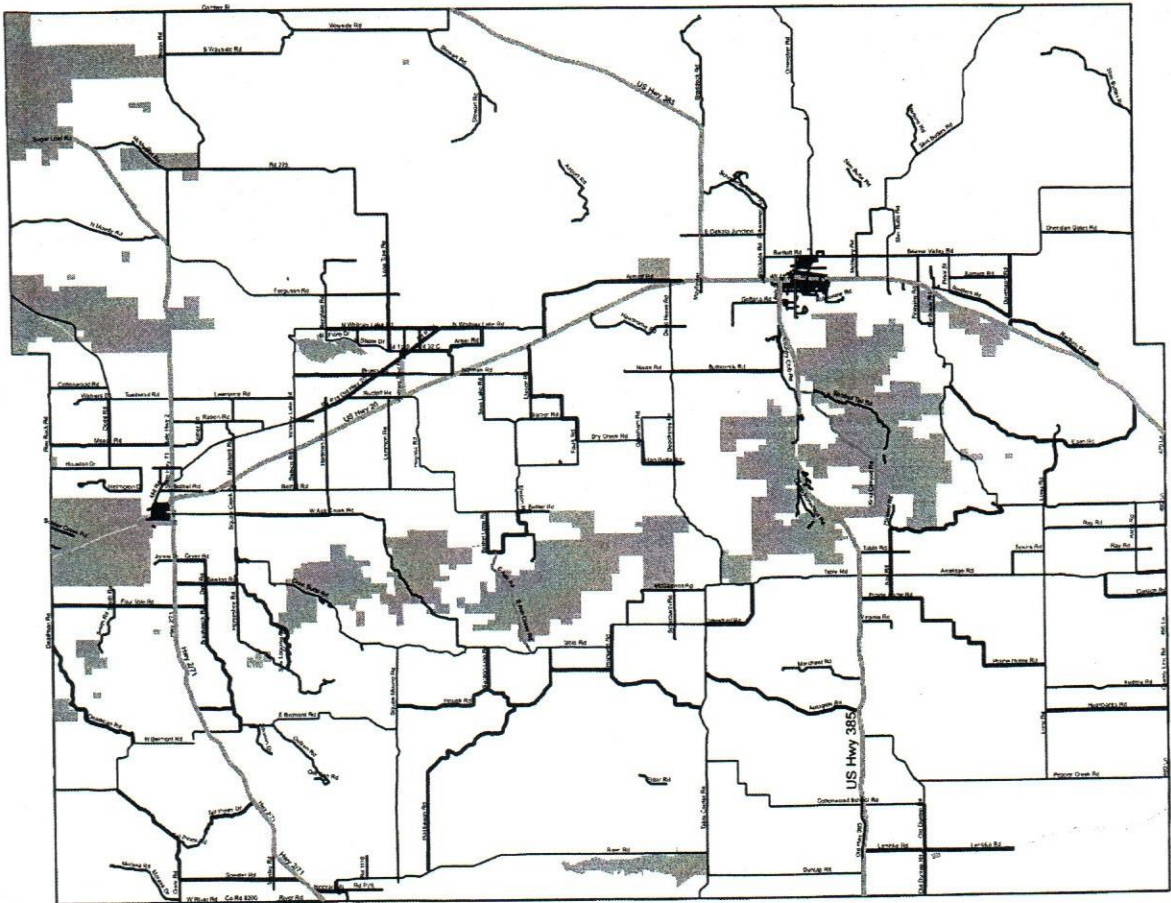
Government and Recreational Use

Fall River Co., SD

Shannon County, SD

Sioux County, NE

Sheridan County, NE



Box Butte Co, NE



 Government Owned and Recreational Use



Land Use Composition

Rural Dawes County is primarily agricultural but also blends public recreational and low density residential uses into the landscape. Without the eminent threat of encroachment by high intensity development from either Crawford or Chadron, the county should uphold its current policies to maintain the primarily agricultural use and rural character of the county.

Agricultural: Agricultural uses account for over 90% of land use in Dawes County. The vast majority (64%) of this is used for pasture and grass land. The largest continuous area of pastureland is north of the White River, where houses and population are also most scarce. Much of the land in the Pine Ridge is designated as grass land but is unsuitable for pasture land due to ownership, terrain, or trees.

Dryland farming is located throughout the county outside of the river valleys in the flatter terrain and makes up about 20% of county land use. Much of this land is found between Chadron and Crawford and just to the south of the Pine Ridge.

Making up just 1.8% of county land use, irrigated cropland is found mostly north and east of Whitney Lake. Other irrigated cropland can be found in the southern portion of the county near the Niobrara River and Box Butte Reservoir.

Public Lands: Dawes County is fortunate to have federally and state designated public land for Chadron and Fort Robinson state parks as well as Nebraska National Forest. Non-farmed government land comprises 6.6% of land use in the county. While the Oglala National Grasslands is the second largest public area in the county, most of the land is leased to ranchers or is in private ownership.

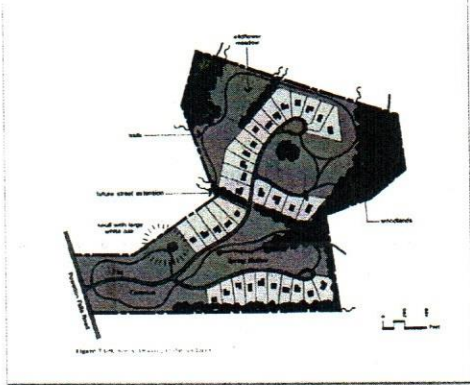
Residential: Most of the residences and buildings outside of the county's incorporated areas are south of the White River. An estimated 2,334 people live in rural Dawes County and many live clustered near the incorporated areas and along the major corridors of Highway 20, Highway 71, and Highway 385. Farm houses and buildings are more concentrated in areas which are farmed as cropland. Rural Dawes County only saw five building permits in 2012 after an eight year period with no permits. Any non-farming residential development should be designated for single family detached and on a large lot size if it is to be out of incorporated jurisdiction.

Review non-farm use on a case by case basis.

Some variations from agricultural use are beneficial to the community and should be permitted on a conditional basis. The county should continue to uphold its current conditions that the use in question be compatible with existing uses, future development, environmental quality, and should provide for the protection of health, safety, and welfare of inhabitants in the county.

Direct higher intensity development towards existing facilities.

Land adjacent to the community and within the extraterritorial jurisdiction zone of a community should be considered first for a rezoning of agricultural land for residential, commercial, or industrial use. Residential estate districts could be desirable outside of Chadron or Crawford to accommodate more choices of higher income housing but careful consideration should be made for the location and impact of those districts if the need arises.



Pursue conservation development when applicable and desirable.

Large lot subdivisions, when designed conventionally, can degrade the sense of low density and rural character that people seeking rural housing desire. Should large lot subdivisions threaten to encroach on vistas, waterways, forest, or other natural assets in an undesirable manner, a conservation subdivision can help to preserve these features. Floodplains, wetlands, stream corridors, and erodible slopes or bluffs are all areas that are particularly important for conservation. Greater development density in built up areas of

a subdivision are exchanged for the preservation of areas of environmental or scenic significance. The county could establish this as a tool for preservation by revising its subdivision regulations.

Permit large lot splits for rural residential and small parcel farming use.

Lot splits or large lot (5 or more acres) subdivision should uphold that each lot be along an existing street or else require a subdivision plat. The county should accommodate for the market need of these smaller rural parcels. However, to use due process with the zoning procedures, the county should consider either reducing the minimum lot size for agricultural zoning so that lot splits down to 5 acres are permitted. Otherwise, if the county would like to preserve certain land for profitable agricultural use on 80 acres of land or more, these zones should be designated separately.

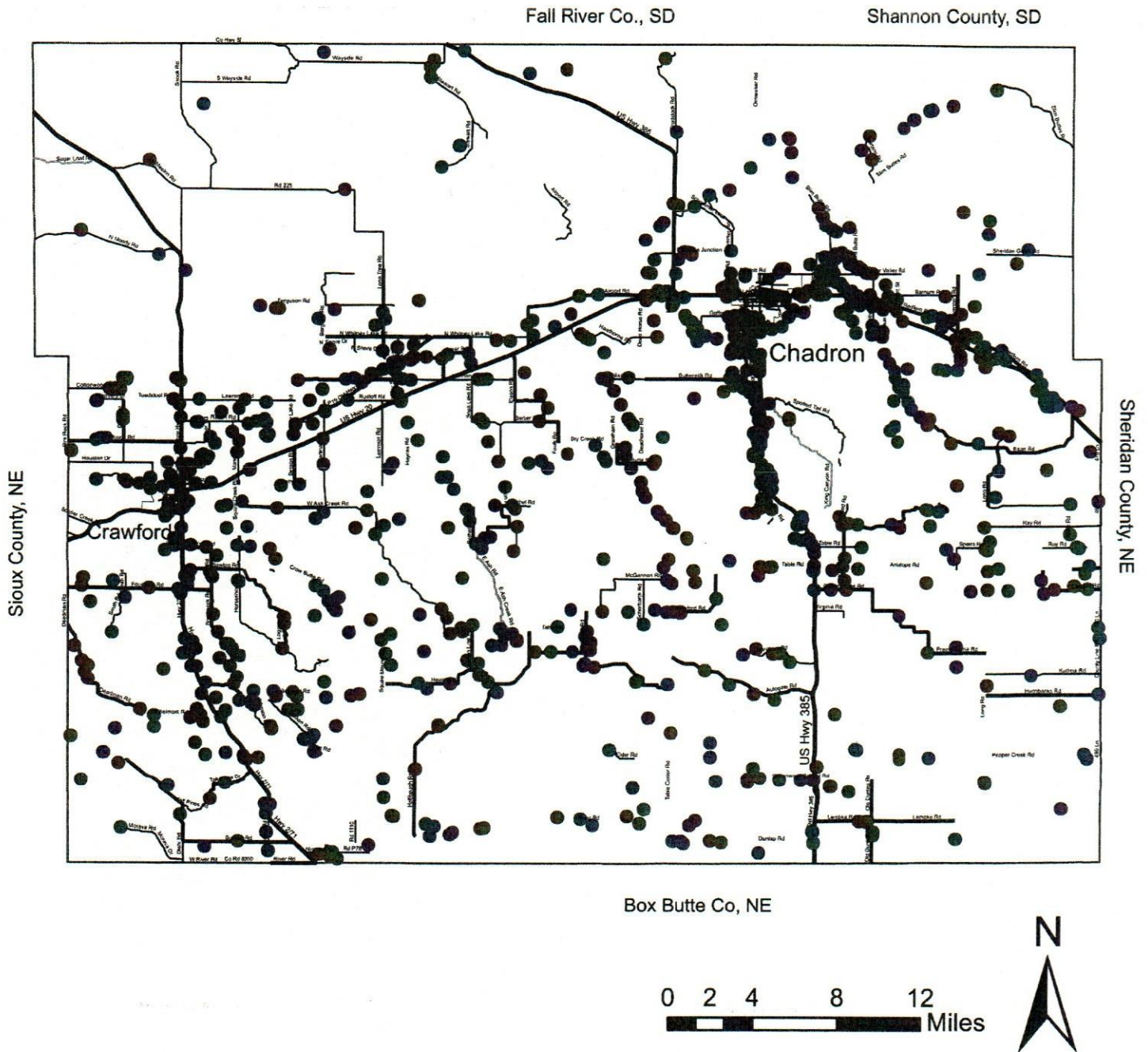
Size of rural subdivisions and demand for county services is directly proportional to the level of improvements that should be required.

A majority of the subdivisions in the county have been in the form of lot splits and the separation of farm dwellings. This is reflected in the low number of single family residential homes built over the last several years in county jurisdiction. If rural residential subdivisions become more common, however, the county would need to be more involved in facilitating the necessary improvements to support such developments. Water, sewage disposal, and road access would all need to be considered.

Single-Family Residential Building Permits 2002-2012 in Rural Dawes County

Year	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Building Permits	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5

Location of Homes in Unincorporated Dawes County



Shapefiles and data courtesy of GISworkshop

Support mining activities that do not cause excessive environmental damage.

Mining activities in the county particularly for Uranium and energy resources are important to the economy and the money generated by Crow Butte Mine is important for the revenue of Crawford Public Schools. While the county should be careful to pursue short term mineral gains that could cause permanent environmental damage, operations and companies that abide by the regulations and prove to pose no hardship for future generations should be supported in the permitting process.

Work with municipalities to identify and market certified and 'shovel ready' sites for targeted industries and businesses.

Ensuring the land use, zoning, permitting, and infrastructure are ready for sites that could attract new businesses is important to remove barriers in attracting businesses. Marketing these sites on a county wide basis would provide businesses looking to locate in the area with more options that could fulfill their needs.

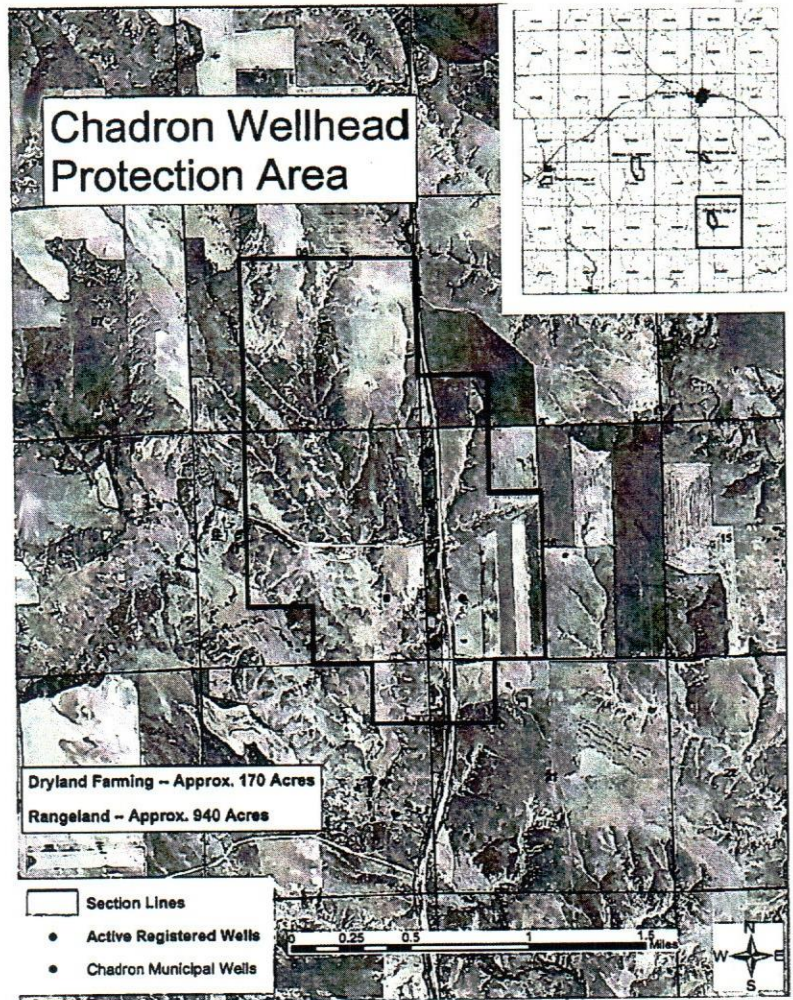
Chadron well head protection.

The county should be mindful of activity that poses threats to or encroachment on the City of Chadron well heads in the South Central portion of the county.

Preserve and enhance aesthetic qualities of community gateways.

The designation of Highway 385 and Highway 20 as scenic byways will protect the views from the road from billboards and other highway oriented development. However, efforts should be coordinated to enhance the gateways to the communities of Chadron and Crawford. The county could designate gateway districts leading up to these communities that uphold design or preservation standards and allow for limited way-finding. An inviting and interesting entrance to a community can lure visitors who may otherwise not come to the town. This is especially true with a high number of tourists either visiting the area or passing through on their way to the neighboring Black Hills.

Figure 17: Chadron Wellhead Protection Map



Culture and Recreation

Enhance programming, events, and community activities across the county through connections and creativity.

Throughout the planning process one of the things most heard was the benefit that could be gained from increased coordination between separate entities. Coordinated social and cultural events and programming can increase the reach and efficacy of the programs so duplication and scheduling conflicts are kept to a minimum. Seeking out ideas and strategies that play into the communities' niche strengths would also be useful in leveraging the county's assets relative to the region.

Improved connection and cooperation between entities and jurisdictions.

The more Crawford and Fort Robinson can complement each other's needs and services, the more each will stand to benefit in the form of enhanced visitor experience and economic benefit. Often and earnest communication on how to better fill each other's needs is important for growth. Likewise, residents in the county stated that better coordination and promotion of the state parks and recreational opportunities would be beneficial to leveraging the county's assets. Formalizing a structure of communication and an assignment of roles in the region would help for enhanced collaboration. The Northwest Nebraska High Country Association has been a great benefit for local bed and breakfasts and outfitters and should continue to be promoted and utilized in online marketing materials.

Improved coordination of communities to enhance the identity of Crazy Horse Memorial Highway.

Coordinating points of interest along the memorial highway and also improved branding along the route can help to distinguish the unique offerings of the corridor to outside communities. Strong identity and cohesiveness translates to better outside understanding and an increased likelihood of visiting more of the corridor.



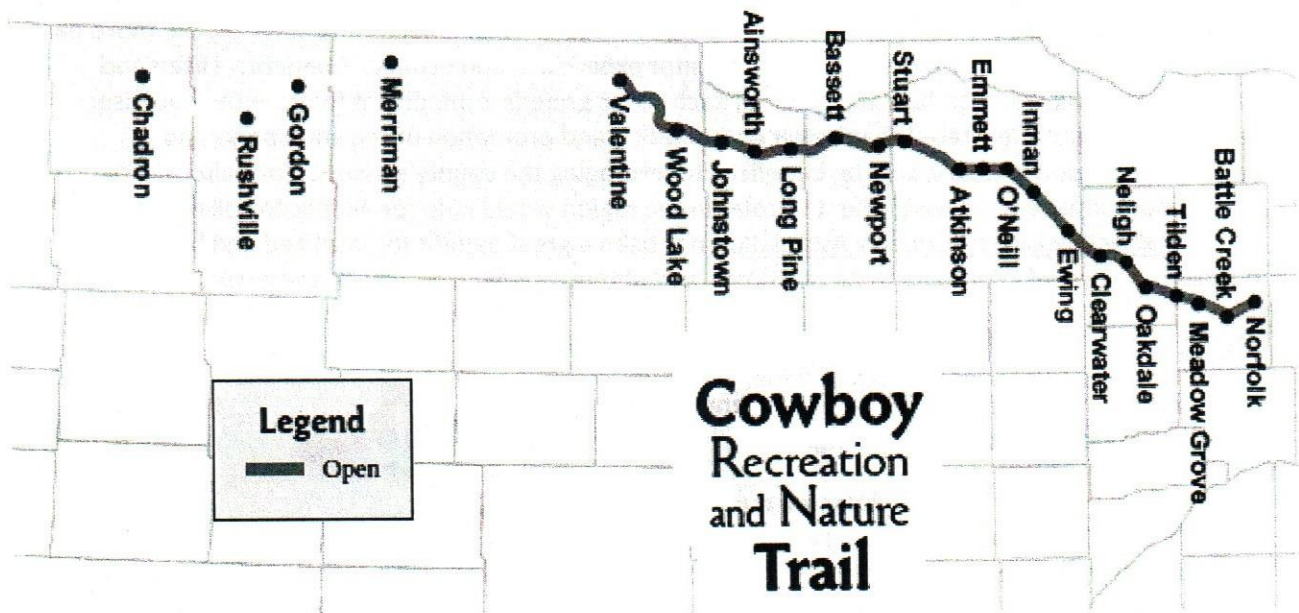
Enhance cycling connections from Chadron to the two state parks and public lands.

Cycling connections within the county can be an important boost to tourism and recreation opportunities. Wide and maintained shoulders on Highway 20 between Chadron and Crawford and Highway 385 between Chadron and Chadron State Park would be useful in providing more opportunities for local cyclists and tourist. The White River Trail provides a good connection from Crawford to Fort Robinson State Park though marking could be improved in Crawford and at intersections. Ease of route finding and trail connectivity are all important to help establish Dawes County as an outdoor recreation destination. The county should also support efforts by the cities of Chadron and Crawford to better connect residents to county recreation facilities.

Pursue a plan for completing the Cowboy Trail in collaboration with municipalities from Chadron to the east.

The Cowboy Trail's current 195 completed miles makes it one of the longest contiguous rails to trails bike paths in the United States and can be a boon to area tourism when completed. Work could begin on the trail east out of Chadron to bring cycling connections into town and reaching out towards the Museum of the Fur Trade and other points east. Parking and signage in the communities should be pursued and coordinated and branded the same way. Coordination of services and points of interest along the route in both in both Dawes and Sheridan counties would be important in making the most of this opportunity.

Figure 18: Cowboy Trail



Complete signage and facilities to promote visitation of Belmont and the Belmont Tunnel.

Although a sign of population decline, ghost towns are one of the most interesting features of the plains to outsiders. Historical signage in Belmont and basic upkeep of the grounds around the vacant buildings (perhaps through volunteers) could add to the list of things to see in the county. The Belmont tunnel is particularly impressive and could also be enhanced through signage and potential walking or cycling trails leading to it if negotiations were made with the railroad and property owner. In any tourism project, connectivity to the existing attractions should always be considered.



Collaborate on unique recreational programs and events within the county.

A session of inclusive brainstorming and collaboration on events the county could hold to engage residents and visitors alike has been suggested and could be beneficial to a coordinated cultural and recreational schedule in the county. Ideas suggested at the public meetings included, equestrian opportunities, locally brewed or distilled beverage festival, 'pig n pit', hunting, and cycling. Ideas pursued should leverage the county's strengths and assets, particularly ones involving railroad, outdoors, military, geology, and history.

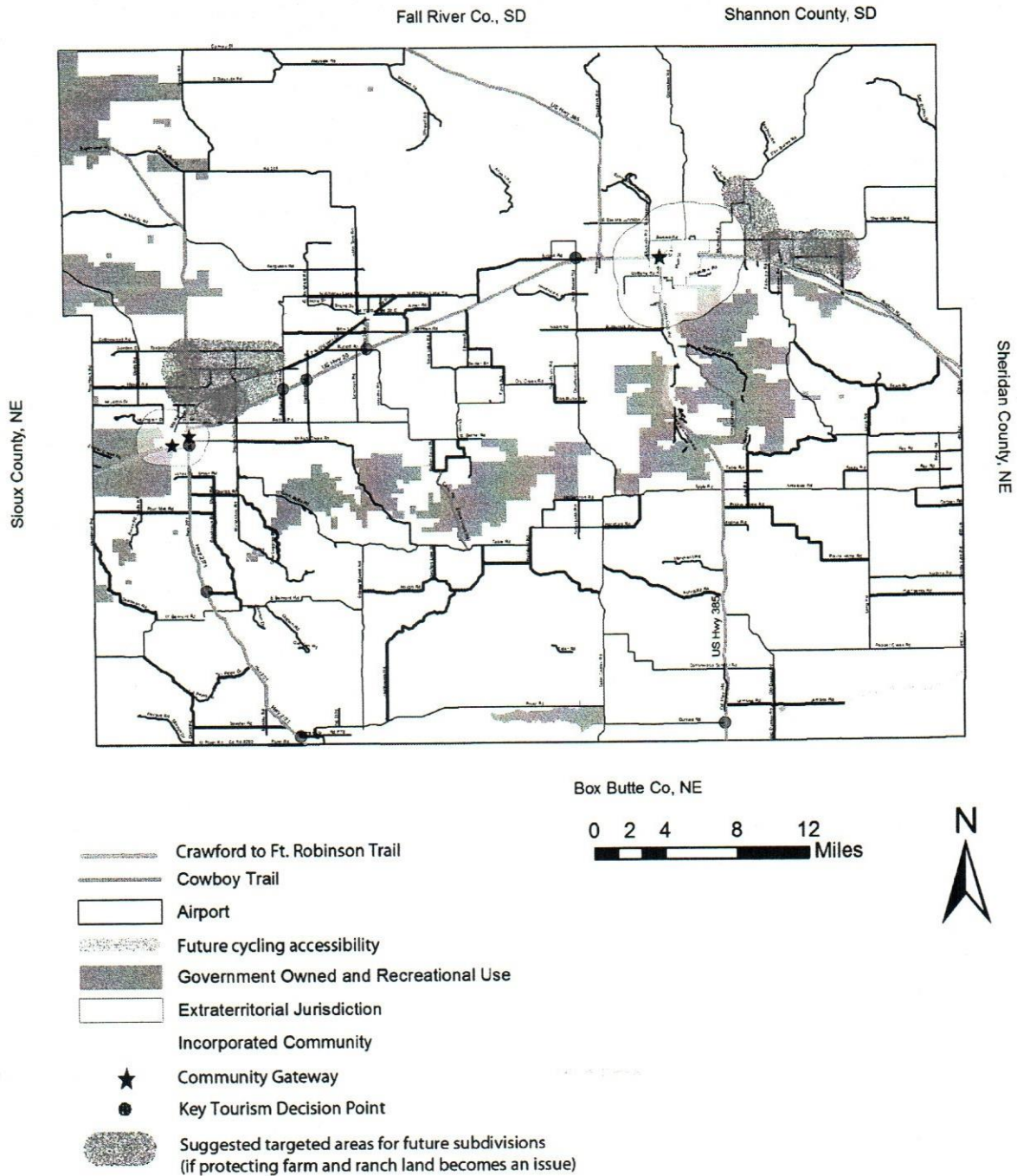
Actively pursue formal way-finding and visitor guidance mechanisms.

A good system of signage and information offerings is important to help visitors feel comfortable in a community. Way-finding and information for visitors would be beneficial not only for tourists but also for prospective new students or those looking to relocate for a job. Identification of key decision points along transportation corridors and within towns can help to be places where signage or information should be made available.

Continue to promote the unique topography and opportunities of the area

Figure 19: Future land use and livability guide

Land Use and Recreation Summary



Housing

Provide quality rental and owner occupied options that offer excellent comfort, safety, and health conditions for the value

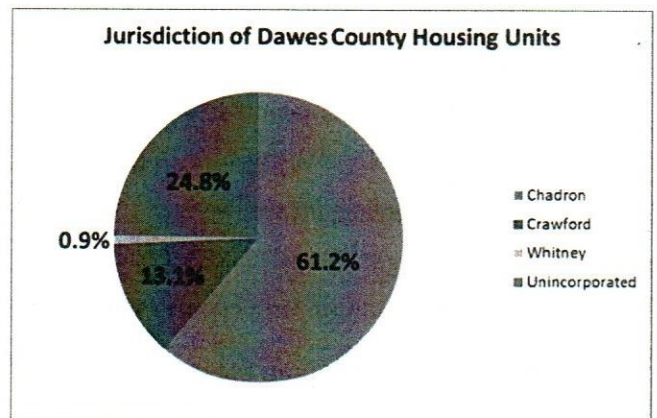
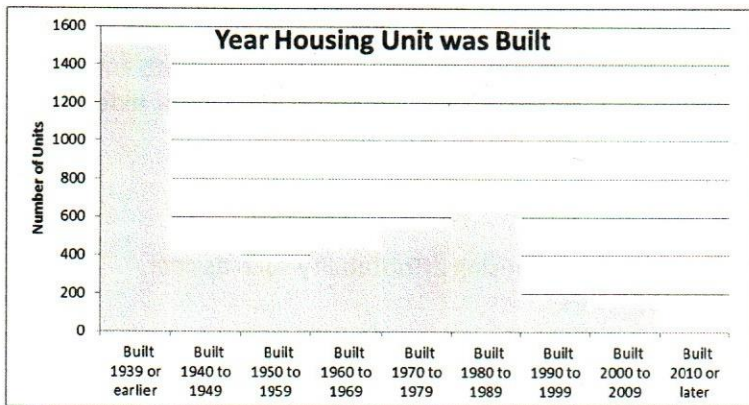
Housing makes up a critical aspect of what makes a community a great place to live. An important and sometimes deciding factor that potential residents observe when considering a move into an area is the availability of quality, affordable housing. Options should be available for residents to have a place to live whether they are below the median income, first time home buyers, looking to move up to a larger house, or elderly and looking to downsize. A community that provides a variety of housing units will be best able to fill the needs of a diverse population.

Housing Snapshot

	Dawes County		Chadron		Crawford		Whitney		Unincorporated	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Total housing units	4,237		2592		554		40		1,051	
Occupied housing units	3,772	89.00%	2372	91.5%	467	84.3%	40	100%	893	85.0%
Vacant housing units	465	11.00%	220	8.5%	87	15.7%	0	0%	158	15.0%

HOUSING TENURE

Occupied housing units	3,772		2372		467		40		893	
Owner-occupied	2,364	62.70%	1263	53.2%	361	77.3%	27	67.5%	713	79.8%
Renter-occupied	1,408	37.30%	1109	46.8%	106	22.7%	13	32.5%	180	20.2%
Homeowner vacancy rate	1.4	(X)	0	(X)	3.7	(X)	0	(X)	*	
Rental vacancy rate	5.6	(X)	5.6	(X)	1.9	(X)	0	(X)	*	

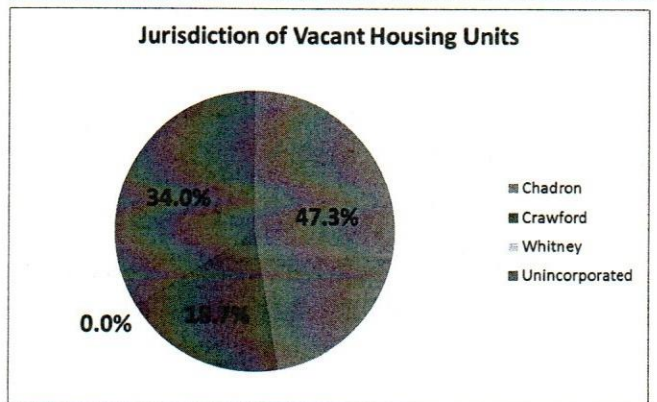


Median monthly rent: **\$506**

Median owner-occupied value: **\$96,100**

Monthly Housing Costs as a Percentage of Household Income

	Estimate	Percent
Total Occupied Housing Units	3,749	
Less than 20.0 percent	1626	43.4%
20.0 to 24.9 percent	493	13.2%
25.0 to 29.9 percent	395	10.5%
30.0 to 34.9 percent	118	3.1%
35.0 percent or more	925	24.7%



Pursue holistic home rehab programs with a focus on contractor attraction and private-public partnerships.

With slow population growth, and a decline in number of housing units in the county, rehab programs could be more important than new construction. Finding and keeping contractors to do the work will require some creative solutions potentially involving incentives, temporary housing, and “green” sustainability standards and training. Rehab programs that do not go through public agencies would have less income and regulatory conditions but a private partner would need to be pursued in that scenario. Purchase, rehab, resale programs can be effective in private-public partnerships as well.

Starter homes and quality rentals- One of the areas Dawes County can capitalize is in retaining its college aged population and returning young adults. Supporting the rehabilitation or development of housing that can serve students and young professionals should be enacted. Such development should be planned around activity and educational nodes and be well-served by recreation and non-auto accessibility.

Home turn-over rehabilitation- Dawes County has a high population of people aged 65 and older living alone in their housing unit. While some of this population could be in assisted and independent living senior living facilities, some, like in Crawford could be in traditional single family housing. As these homes become harder to maintain by the home owner, a program to maintain the home would be beneficial in keeping capital costs of rehab lower when the house eventually turns over.

Form partnerships for the development of middle to higher income housing.

Providing adequate housing for middle and higher income families and individuals may best be facilitated through partnerships of two entities that stand to benefit from such development. Often, this partnership is between an employer and municipality where both would benefit from the attraction and retention of a talented workforce. Middle income housing has been identified as a need for elderly and disabled residents, as well.

Monitor housing affordability.

Collect, maintain, and disseminate information on county wide housing affordability such as cost, demand, condition, and supply of the affordable housing stock.

Maintain, uphold, and enforce the Universal Property Maintenance Code.

A deteriorating housing stock can be one of the biggest detriments to community growth particularly in a community with an old housing stock. Chadron’s almost 50% rental housing and large college student population would put an emphasis on maintenance of low to moderate income rental properties. Chadron’s Universal Property Maintenance Code adopted in 2009 should be utilized by the city and could be used as guidelines for properties in other county communities.

Enforce concerted nuisance abatement programs.

Nuisance abatement can be arduous but it pay-off in maintaining aesthetics and ownership in a community. Nuisance enforcement by a third party can provide a better way to manage nuisances than having community members enforcing the code on their fellow residents. Units that are beyond rehabilitation should be identified and demolished.

Encourage programs that give home care to elderly.

Home care programs and businesses can allow elderly residents to remain in their homes longer than they otherwise would be able to, improving their quality of life and keeping them off the wait list for public housing. Supporting current Home Health options like that provided by Chadron Community Hospital and Health services is important.

Table 5: Households with residents 65 and older

	Dawes County		Chadron		Crawford		Rural	
	Number of Housholds	Percent of Total Households	Number of Housholds	Percent of Total Households	Number of Housholds	Percent of Total Households	Number of Housholds	Percent of Total Households
Households with individuals 65 years and over	1,073	29.1	570	24.7	198	42.1	305	33.6
Male living alone	156	4.2	85	3.7	37	7.9	34	3.7
Female living alone	359	9.7	229	9.9	85	18.1	45	5.0

Focus economic development attention on higher wage jobs.

One of the key factors in housing issues in the Panhandle is the relatively low wages to the relatively higher prices of housing. Homes are often assessed as front range while wages are closer to typical lower wages of rural areas. Pursuing higher wage jobs can help residents afford the nicer housing they desire.

Energy

Free up opportunities for on-site and commercial renewable energy production, leverage steam potential, pursue more resource efficient county activities

Energy consumption continues to increase but more and more alternatives to fossil fuels are becoming viable for consumer use. Energy efficiency can be financially beneficial to residents and is also important for sustainable use of the county's resources and infrastructure.

Statewide, industrial consumption makes up the largest amount of energy use and has seen the largest increase since 1990 while residential and commercial have seen small but steady gains.

Utility gas and electricity were by far the most common methods of heating fuel in the county with 80.4% of homes being heated by the two methods.

Chadron Electricity Summary

Chadron is provided retail electric service by Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD). Three 115,000 volt transmission lines tie to NPPD's statewide transmission system and a fourth line is interconnected with the Western Area Power Administration. A 28 MVA 115/34.5 kV transformer, located adjacent to the city, provides ample capacity for present and future load projections. The city has a complete ring bus of 34,500 volts consisting of five substations with a combined capacity of 22,500 kVA. The distribution voltage is operated at 4,160 wye and 12,470 wye. The system is tied into the statewide grid system.

Crawford Electricity Summary

Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD) provides retail electric service to the city of Crawford. A 34,000-volt feeder from a 115,000-volt substation located east of Crawford provides service. The substation consists of three 1,000 kVA, 34.5/4.16 transformers. The system is connected to NPPD's statewide grid system.

Figure 20: Nebraska energy consumption by sector

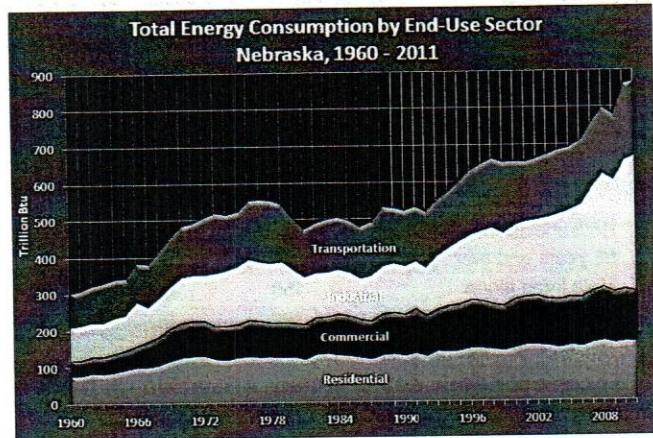


Image courtesy of Nebraska Energy Office statistics

Table 6: Dawes County heating fuel

	Dawes County	
	Estimate	Percent
Total:	3,772	
Utility gas	1,688	44.8%
Bottled, tank, or LP gas	384	10.2%
Electricity	1,344	35.6%
Fuel oil, kerosene, etc.	73	1.9%
Coal or coke	0	0.0%
Wood	225	6.0%
Solar energy	0	0.0%
Other fuel	54	1.4%
No fuel used	4	0.1%

Leverage the Pine Ridge wood burning steam capacity

Investing in boilers for steam energy takes advantage of the Pine Ridge wood resource. Steam is already being used for some Chadron State College buildings but expanding this capacity at the college, hospital, and other city and county buildings could take advantage of the 96% of wood fuel that is currently being underutilized from the Pine Ridge.

Investing in steam infrastructure not only would provide the county with a local, renewable resource but would help to better manage forest fire hazards and could make forest management activities less dependent on limited grant dollars.

10,000 tons of wood are currently being utilized annually compared to the 300,000 tons that grow and could be used annual.

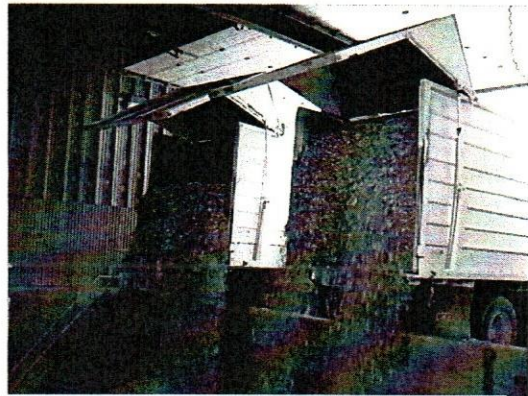
Prepare the county for commercial and small wind generation through education and organization

Beginning to encourage knowledge of county wind system regulations and the necessary steps for encouraging wind farm development in the county should be encouraged.

With turbine prices dropping nearly 30% in five years and the price of wind energy dropping 30% in the past three years, renewable energy will be more competitive with fossil fuels and be more in demand in years to come.

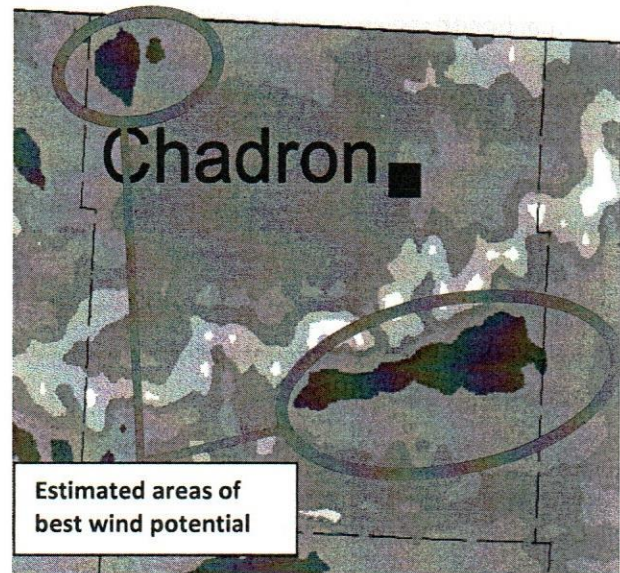
Research Biomass Co-firing Production

Introducing Biomass into traditional coal-fired boilers is one cost effective way to decrease greenhouse gas and pollutant emissions while still leveraging the infrastructure and efficiency of coal burning energy. This process fires organic material, like wood, along with coal. While the cost of operating is generally higher than a plant that burns only coal, biomass co-firing can reduce demand for the disposal of residues and provide a low risk, low cost, and sustainable renewable energy option for many power producers. This idea combines the nearby coal production with local forest management and timber harvesting to create a potential final product.



Picture courtesy of Nebraska Forest Service

Figure 21: Areas of best wind potential



Engaging the County in Positive Healthy Living

Becoming a healthier and happier community through lifestyle, culture, learning and social responsibility to the community

Engaging the county in healthy living and maximizing community strength through working together are perhaps the least tangible but arguably two of the most important aspects of community well-being. Schools are a critical part of a positive lifestyle for youth but the whole family should be considered when looking at health and positive lifestyles. Another important aspect of a healthy community is the ownership and engagement inhabitants have in the community. Both of these things require both bottom-up and top-down leadership to come to fruition.

Spiritual health is also important to total wellbeing and has long been important to the citizens of Dawes County. Residents of the county acknowledge the importance of a sound spiritual foundation can have in meaningful individual lives and being stewards of a positive, caring community.

Youth

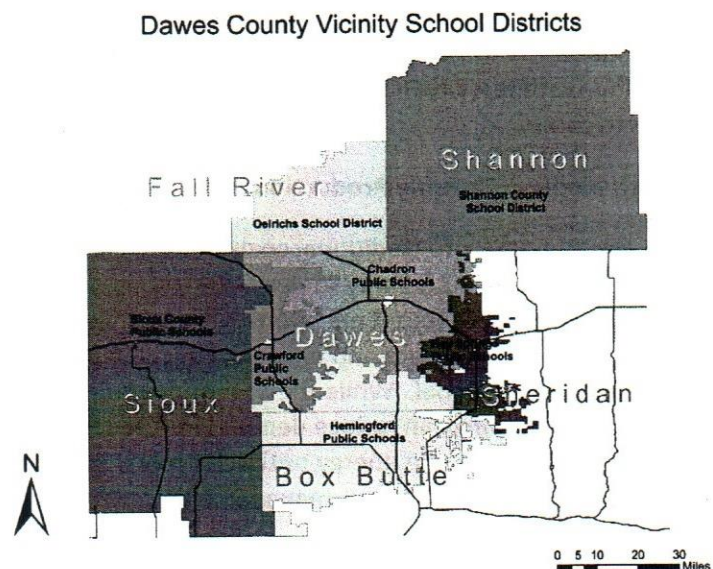
Education

Coordinated efforts between the community and schools and between school districts will be critical in providing the best opportunities for the next generation of Dawes County. Communication should be open and fluid on issues of facilities, programs, and achievements.

40 Assets

The 40 Assets are traits that have been identified in an individual as the building blocks for healthy development so that young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible. 40 Assets has been embraced by the Panhandle Partnership for Health and Human Services and school districts across the region for its guide to human and community development.

Figure 22: Area School Districts Map



Community Engagement

Obtain early and frequent engagement

Early and frequent engagement efforts work best for public engagement. Those working in the public sphere should always ask, rather than assume apathy.

Maintain a positive community forum

An online forum that lets neighbors discuss happenings and needs in the community can be a positive tool. KCSR currently hosts a Facebook facilitated forum and options such as MindMixer and Front Porch Forum are also options that could be pursued.

Culture of Wellness

Partner with Public Health

Public health staff can bring perspective on individual and community realities and needs when community initiatives are being considered. Many of the greatest factors of a person's health are also factors that make a community a great place to live such as access to transportation and housing, education, jobs, and a good living environment.

Support and grow local food options

Farmers markets and community gardens can be great resources for fresh produce to residents and should be facilitated with venues, land, volunteers, and promotion.

Worksite Wellness

Worksite wellness is effective because it engages people at work, where they spend a large part of their time every day.

Design for Active Living

Promote neighborhood and community design that encourages physical activity that provides easy access to parks and trails, and interesting routes in town that feature history, art, and other interesting elements. Attention to walking and biking traffic generators and destinations.



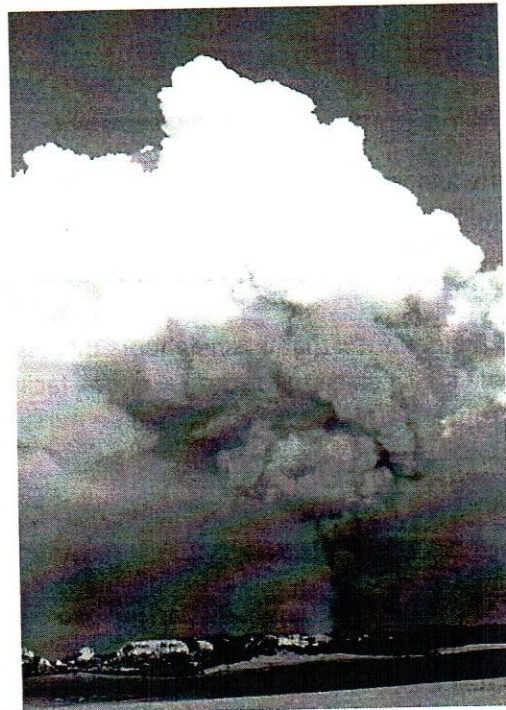
Photo courtesy of Discover Dawes County

Maintain Community and Environmental Safety

Support Wildfire Protection

The county should continue to support the Pine Ridge Community Wildfire Protection plan with specific attention to:

- Mapping forested roads on public or private grounds that can be used for emergency crews.
- Identify high value areas that need prescribed protection from wildfire.
- Coordinating the planning and implementation of hazard mitigation treatments between land jurisdictions.



West Ash fire of 2012

Photo by Linda Teahon /Chadron Record

Mapping forested and restricted roads for emergency crews

Mapping the counties forested, restricted, and hazardous roads on public and private land would be a huge benefit to emergency responders in the event of a disaster or wild fire. A partnership could be pursued between county departments, volunteer fire departments, and the Forest Service and could also make the county more competitive for FEMA and forest management grants. Figure 14 provides a start to this effort.

Increase sheriff staff, equipment, and training with demand

Number of call, complaints, and problems being asked of the sheriff department has steadily increased over the past 25 years. Illness, time off, transport, and paper service all put a drain on staff resources and as demand continues to increase, so will the need for increased staff capacity. Equipment such as new cruisers, trauma and first aid packs, traffic warning signs, and training for use of equipment and new skills will also be necessary to maintaining the level of service needed in the county.

Quality of service oriented community safety and emergency response

Safety and law enforcement entities in the county should always be oriented to providing the best quality of service for the residents and guests in the area. Cooperation, services, and consolidation should all focus first on the quality of service, not on the image or identity of the organization.

Appendix A: County Statistics

Population

Key Stories:

- Stable population in recent years, slight growth
- 63.7% of Dawes County's population in Chadron
- Young, college aged heavy population
- Aging baby boom population
- Generally stable/slight increase in births and increasing frequency in deaths
- Largest minority race is American Indian with 5.3%
- Low populations of children in rural Dawes County
- High median age (49.1) in Crawford.
- About 25% of households with children 18 and under.
- Increasing political weight to Eastern Nebraska in population

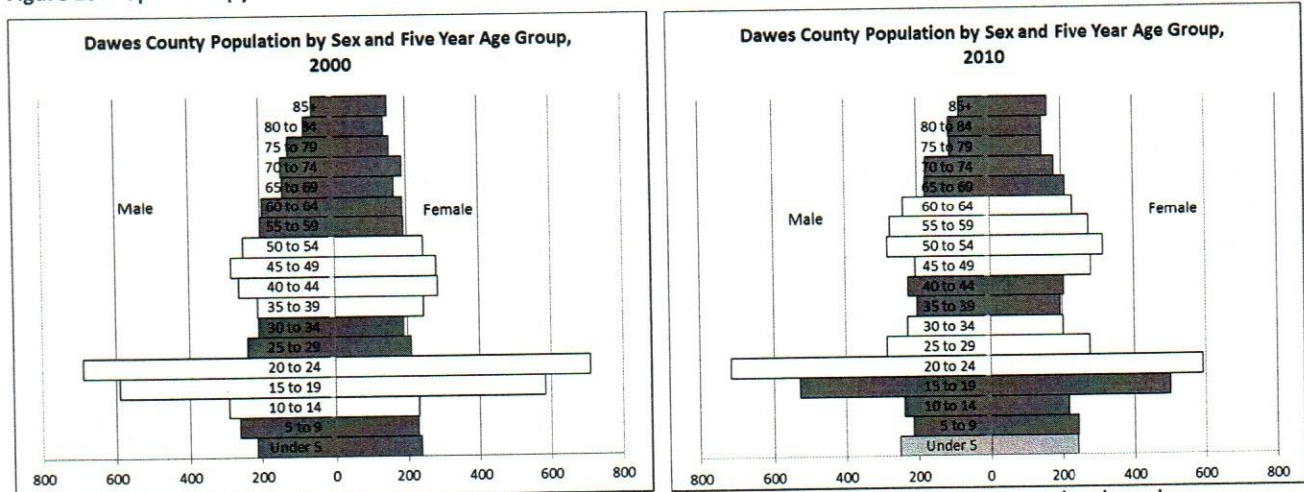
To understand the needs of Dawes County, it is important to understand the composition of its population. Students enrolled at Chadron State College cause a large swell in population from in the late teens and early twenties. Larger numbers of people in the baby boom generation are still visible and noticeably lower population numbers exist for young adults outside of Chadron.

Table 7: Population by jurisdiction

2010 Census Subject	Dawes County		Chadron		Crawford		Rural Dawes County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total population	9,182	100	5,851	100	997	100	2,334	100.0
Under 5 years	495	5.4	364	6.2	50	5	81	3.5
5 to 9 years	460	5	314	5.4	51	5.1	95	4.1
10 to 14 years	455	5	269	4.6	66	6.6	120	5.1
15 to 19 years	1,029	11.2	720	12.3	56	5.6	253	10.8
20 to 24 years	1,310	14.3	1,082	18.5	35	3.5	193	8.3
25 to 29 years	565	6.2	435	7.4	40	4	90	3.9
30 to 34 years	431	4.7	305	5.2	33	3.3	93	4.0
35 to 39 years	396	4.3	269	4.6	45	4.5	82	3.5
40 to 44 years	432	4.7	254	4.3	60	6	118	5.1
45 to 49 years	490	5.3	277	4.7	74	7.4	139	6.0
50 to 54 years	599	6.5	280	4.8	85	8.5	234	10.0
55 to 59 years	552	6	289	4.9	67	6.7	196	8.4
60 to 64 years	468	5.1	228	3.9	61	6.1	179	7.7
65 to 69 years	389	4.2	176	3	66	6.6	147	6.3
70 to 74 years	356	3.9	186	3.2	57	5.7	113	4.8
75 to 79 years	255	2.8	121	2.1	51	5.1	83	3.6
80 to 84 years	256	2.8	141	2.4	41	4.1	74	3.2
85 years and over	244	2.7	141	2.4	59	5.9	44	1.9

When shown graphically in a population tree, the age composition of the county becomes evident with 1 in 4 people in the county being between the ages of 15 to 24. Also evident is the aging baby boom population and the thinning out of people over 25 but younger than 40.

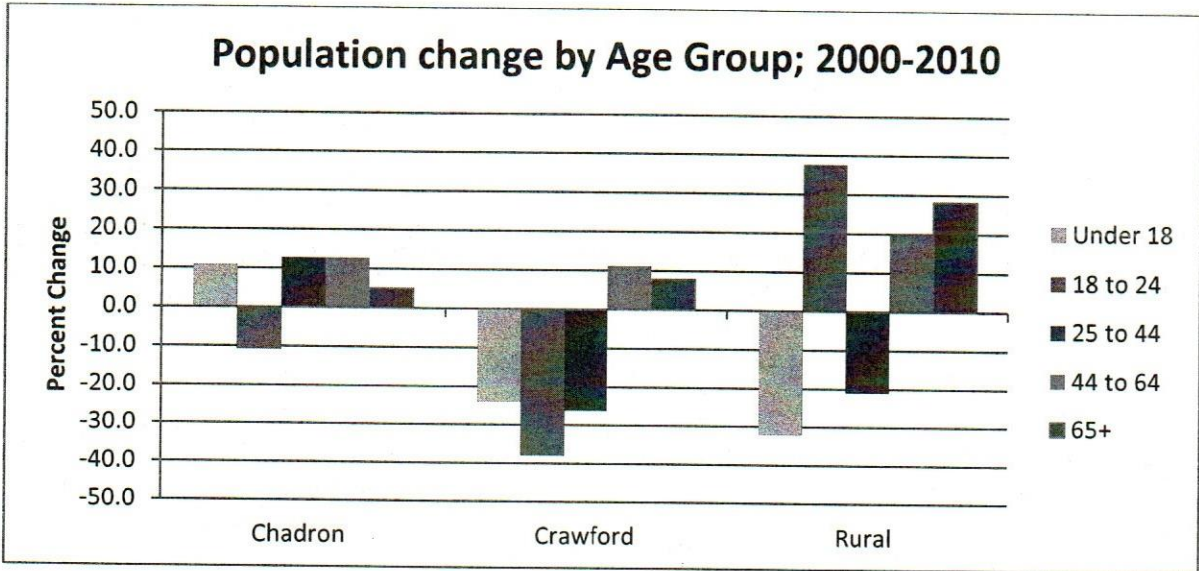
Figure 23: Population pyramids 2000 & 2010



Dawes County's large 18-24 population can be utilized to its advantage in business and cultural opportunities. The 'thinning' of the young adult population could be a point of concern as the baby boom generation ages and leaves roles of leadership vacant. Services for elderly will also be an issue to watch in coming years as this population becomes more dependent on services and health care.

The change in population by age group can be seen in each community of Dawes County with most of the positive change coming in Chadron, but also an increase in 18-24 year olds in rural Dawes County.

Figure 24: Population change by age group 2000-2010

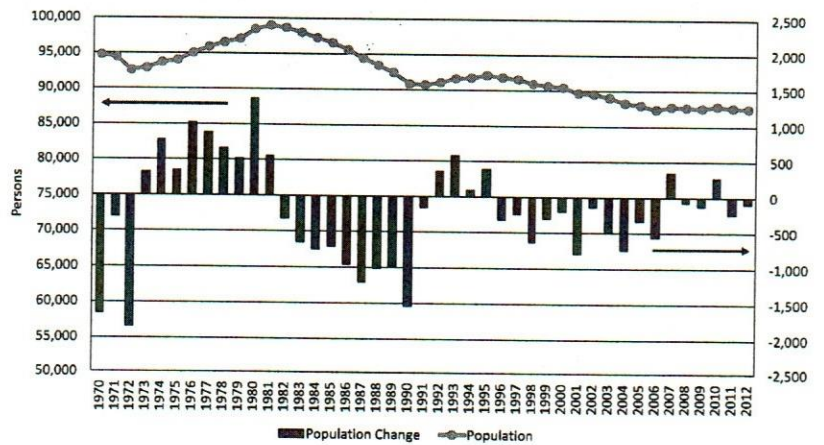


This graph also perhaps most clearly shows the decrease in younger people and aging older population in Crawford and rural Dawes County.

The population of the Panhandle has generally been decreasing since the 1980s although the decrease in population has slowed in recent years with the population generally just under 90,000 people in the 11 county region. This trend is due in large part to a decrease in farming job opportunities and a shift toward a knowledge economy in which an urban setting is desirable for education and employment.

Figure 25: Population and population change for 11 panhandle counties 1970-2012

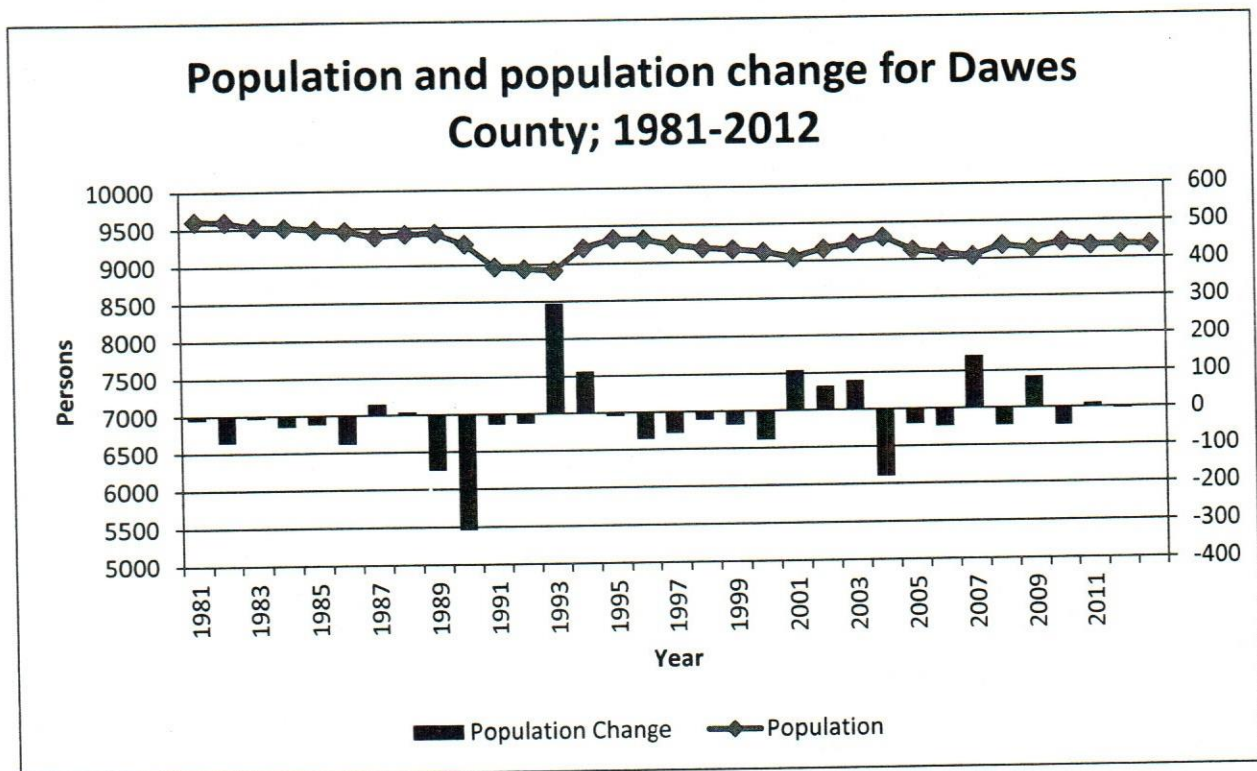
Population and Population Change for 11 Panhandle Counties, 1970 to 2012



Source: Annual Population Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau

Overall, Dawes County has slightly gained population from 2000 (pop. 9,054) to 2012 (pop. 9,176), reversing the trend of the 90s. However, the population has generally held stable through the 2000s with some years of growth and decline. Increase in college enrollment and elderly people may have driven the county's slight growth.

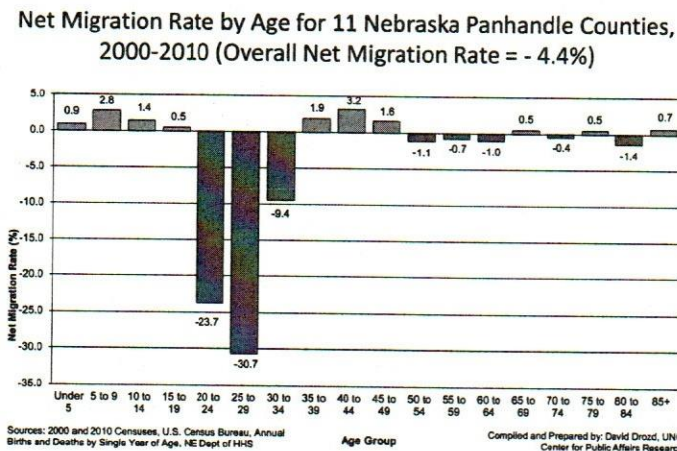
Figure 26: Population and population change for Dawes County; 1981-2012



In migration of middle and older aged

Population can change either by natural increase or decrease, that is, the net change of births and deaths, or by the net change of migration. In-migration perhaps is the most pursued way to make quick increased vibrancy in a community while also growing wealth. The following graphs show the net migration rate from 2000-2010. It should be noted the graphs should be read as the difference in population over 10 years from what would be expected given births and deaths for that time period.

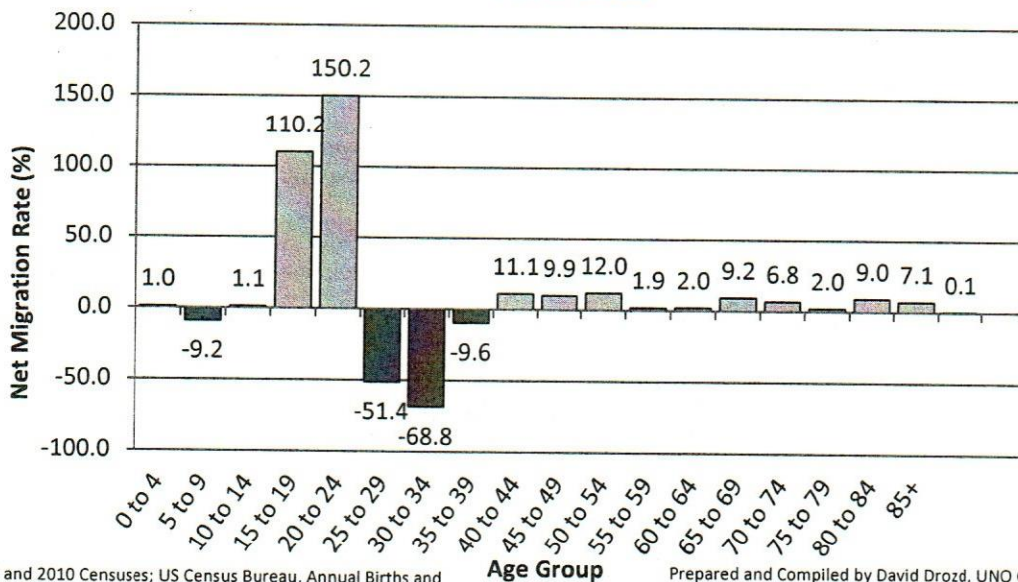
Figure 27: Net migration rate; Panhandle



Migration patterns for the panhandle show the exodus of people in their 20s and early 30s as they leave to seek an education or job opportunities in other areas, usually larger cities. It is important to acknowledge who is leaving and who is staying. The common issue is the rural "brain drain" as young people who pursue higher education and professional jobs tend to be drawn towards metropolitan areas. This has implications that must be considered in the development and education of rural children.

Obviously, Dawes County sees huge in migration numbers for ages 18-24 due attendance at Chadron State College. After college, most of the students then leave the town, resulting in sharp out-migration numbers for ages 25-39. Dawes County also saw considerable in-migration for people aged 40-54 and over 65.

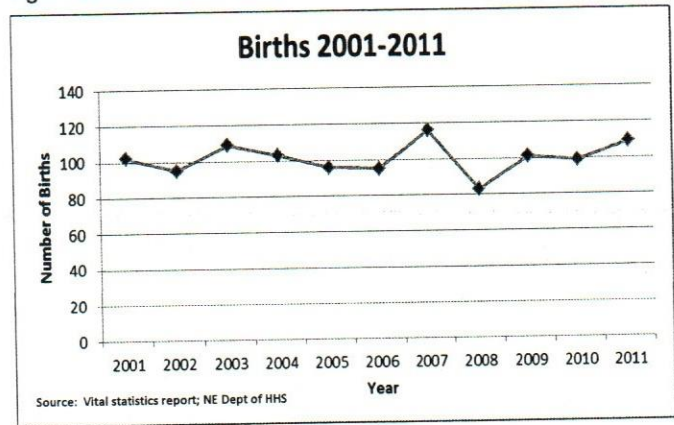
Estimated Net Migration Rate by Age; Dawes County 2000-2010



Slight increase in births

Aside from migration the county appears to be fairly stable in natural growth with an increase in recent years of births and school aged children. As the baby-boom echo comes of the age to bear children, an increase in children and births may occur.

Figure 28: Births 2001-2011



Population decrease and stabilization

Dawes County has seen the same general decrease in population over multiple decades that the Panhandle and most rural areas in America have seen, but its population has slightly increased in recent years and decreases have not been as dramatic. This can be in part due to Chadron's role as a trade hub in the area and the steady presence of the college.

Figure 29: Population trends 1930-2010

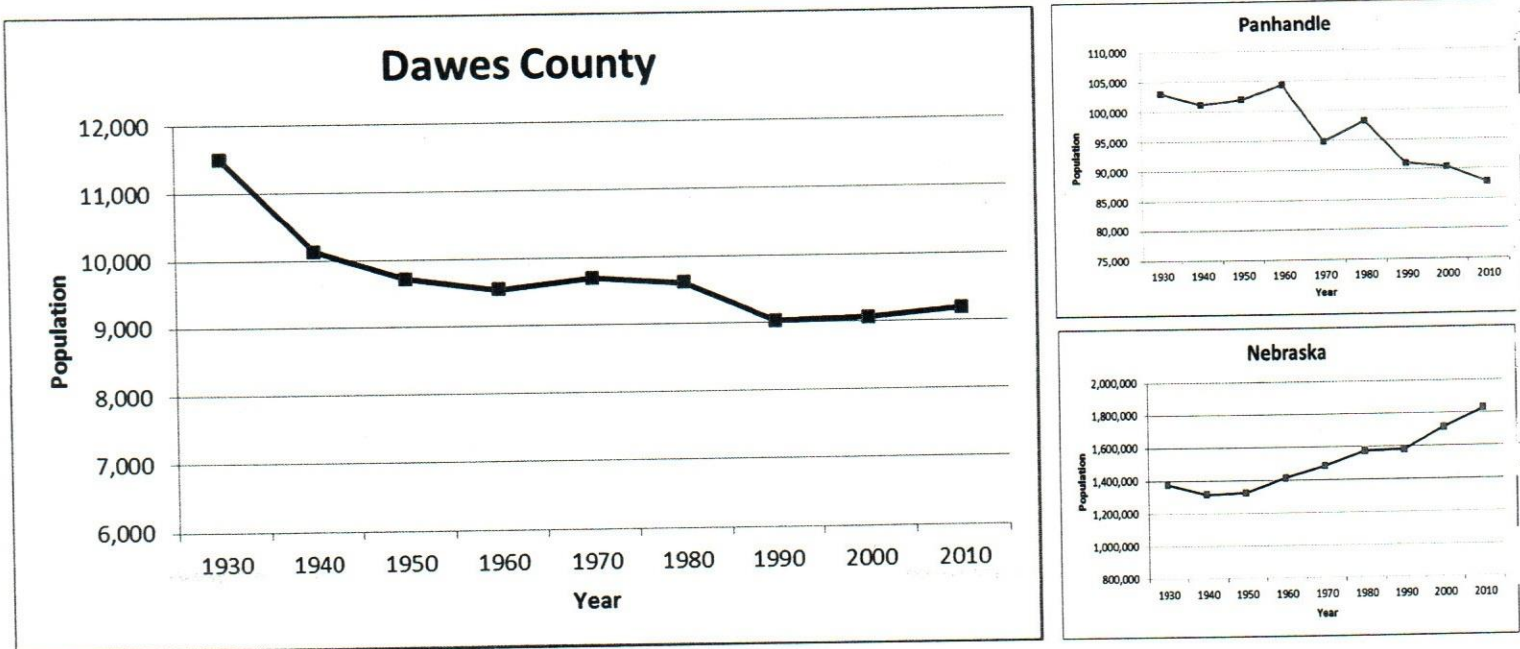
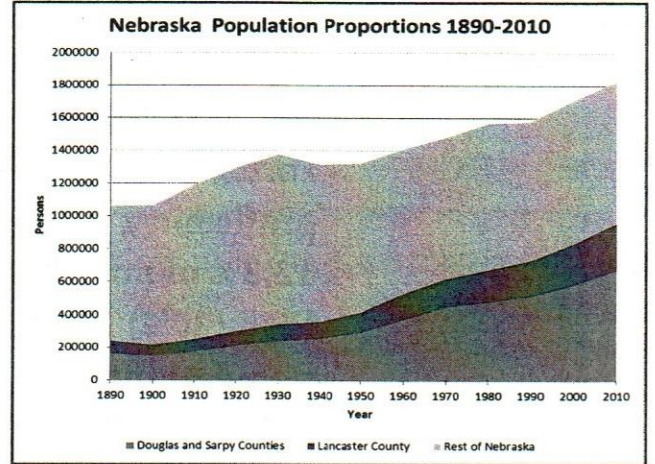
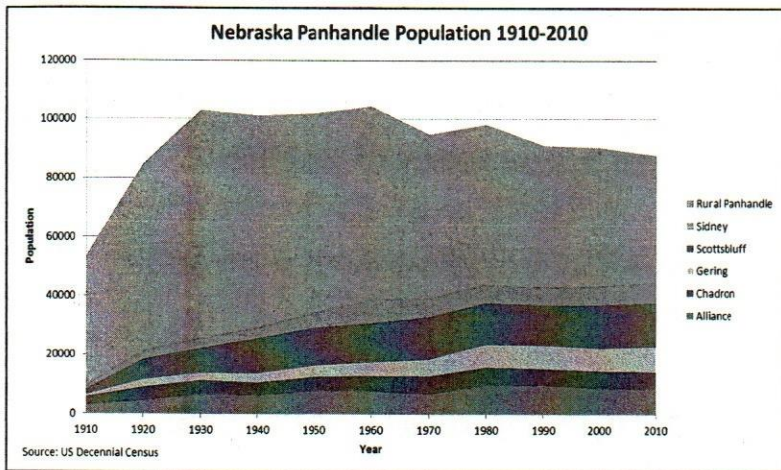
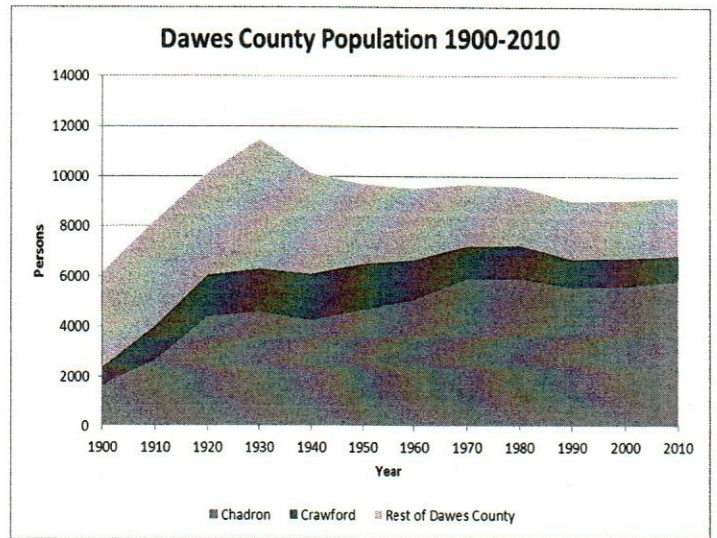


Figure 30: Population consolidation

Population Consolidation

Chadron's 5,851 people made up 63.7% of Dawes County's total population, continuing the trend of Chadron's growing prominence in the make-up of the county population.

While the state's population continues to increase, most of its increase has been concentrated in the metropolitan centers of Omaha and Lincoln. This parallels Chadron's increased share of the Dawes County's population and the general trend toward urbanization worldwide.

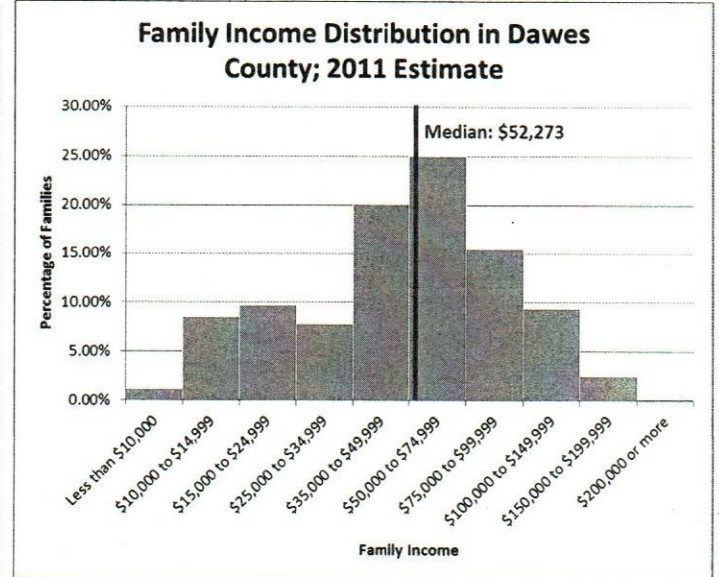
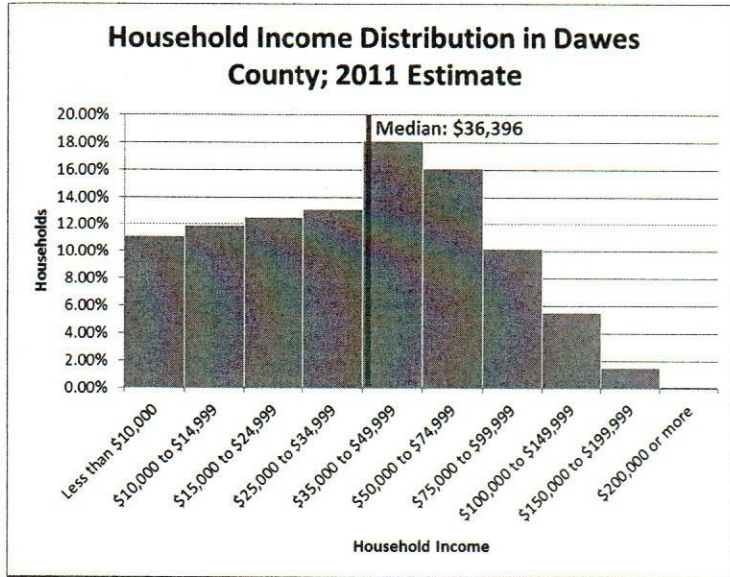


Social

Key Stories:

- High rate (37%) of individuals with bachelor degree or higher
- High college student population
- Increasing foreign born population
- Foreign born population with lower rates of English proficiency
- 12.3% of non-institutionalized population with a disability
- High (20%) poverty rate in Crawford and among minority populations
- Increasing enrollment in schools for lower grade levels.

Figure 31: Income distribution



High educational attainment

Educational attainment is higher in Dawes County than in other counties in the Panhandle. The 36% of residents with a bachelor's degree or higher is over 16% higher than the Panhandle as a whole. For minority groups, the educational attainment rate is drastically lower across the Panhandle with the percentage of those with a bachelor degree or higher in the Panhandle only being at 3.5%. Across the board, attainment for bachelor degree or higher is generally 5 or 6 percentage points lower than state and national rates.

Table 8: Dawes County Educational Attainment

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT	2012	
	Estimate	Percent
Population 25 years and over	5,604	
Less than 9th grade	146	2.60%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	317	5.70%
High school graduate (includes	1,276	22.80%
Some college, no degree	1,419	25.30%
Associate's degree	425	7.60%
Bachelor's degree	1,318	23.50%
Graduate or professional degree	703	12.50%
Percent high school graduate or higher	(X)	91.70%
Percent bachelor's degree or higher	(X)	36.10%

Table 9: Bachelor Degree or higher by race

	Bachelor Degree or Higher by Race					
	Hispanic or Latino (of any race)		American Indian		White Alone (not Hispanic or Latino)	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Banner County	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	105	21.6%
Box Butte County	0	0.0%	7	4.1%	1322	19.2%
Cheyenne County	14	4.8%	0	0.0%	1654	25.5%
Dawes County	39	26.7%	27	13.0%	1920	38.4%
Deuel County	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	248	17.8%
Garden County	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	301	20.4%
Kimball County	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	478	18.7%
Morrill County	29	8.1%	0	0.0%	671	22.0%
Scotts Bluff County	100	2.6%	0	0.0%	4859	24.3%
Sheridan County	8	10.3%	30	11.7%	735	21.4%
Sioux County	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	239	27.0%
Panhandle	190	3.5%	64	6.5%	12293	24.3%
Nebraska		10.1%		11.3%		30.2%
United States		13.4%		13.4%		32.0%

Table 10: Poverty by age

Poverty

Poverty in Dawes County is somewhat high largely due to the presence of college students with little money or income. The 24% figure is higher than the Panhandle which has around 15% poverty.

	Dawes County		
	Total	Below poverty level	Percent below poverty level
	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
Population for whom poverty status is determined	8,081	1,998	24.70%
AGE			
Under 18 years	1,601	359	22.40%
Related children under 18 years	1,556	321	20.60%
18 to 64 years	5,064	1,496	29.50%
65 years and over	1,416	143	10.10%

This table shows the lower poverty rates for people with a higher education. The higher number of those in poverty with some college can be attributed to those who are still in school. The Nebraska Panhandle has much lower poverty rates for those with a high school degree or less than metropolitan areas in the region and around the county, where poverty rates for those with less than a high school diploma can be near 50%. Across the Panhandle minority populations tend to have higher poverty. Extremely high poverty rates for minorities in Dawes County could be contributed to by the student population and small numbers of individuals in a particular race.

Table 11: Poverty by educational attainment

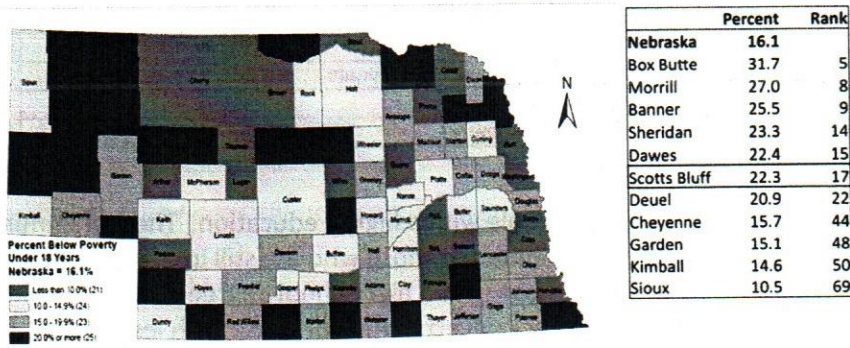
	Dawes County	Panhandle	Nebraska	United States
	Percent below poverty level	Percent below poverty level	Percent below poverty level	Percent below poverty level
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT				
Population 25 years and over	14.20%	10.8%	8.8%	11.4%
Less than high school graduate	25.80%	22.8%	23.1%	26.5%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	8.00%	11.1%	10.3%	13.1%
Some college, associate's degree	22.70%	11.3%	8.4%	9.6%
Bachelor's degree or higher	7.80%	3.9%	3.3%	4.1%

Table 12: Poverty by race 2012

	White	Black or African American	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian	Two or more races	Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)	White alone, not Hispanic or Latino
Banner County	18.0%	-	-	-	0.0%	0.0%	18.2%
Box Butte County	13.6%	0.0%	34.4%	2.3%	30.0%	60.2%	11.1%
Cheyenne County	13.1%	25.0%	11.8%	0.0%	14.7%	41.4%	11.4%
Dawes County	24.0%	78.0%	24.4%	19.5%	17.6%	62.1%	22.7%
Deuel County	12.2%	0.0%	-	-	38.7%	10.0%	12.2%
Garden County	10.2%	-	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	8.6%	10.3%
Kimball County	11.6%	0.0%	0.0%	23.5%	0.0%	39.3%	9.8%
Morrill County	15.4%	-	14.7%	0.0%	2.7%	15.3%	15.5%
Scotts Bluff County	13.0%	45.7%	50.3%	8.9%	18.3%	21.1%	12.0%
Sheridan County	14.0%	100.0%	29.0%	36.4%	56.7%	5.7%	14.3%
Sioux County	8.8%	-	-	0.0%	18.2%	20.0%	8.9%
Panhandle	14.2%	54.8%	33.1%	8.6%	24.3%	26.6%	13.1%
Nebraska	10.5%	32.5%	38.2%	16.0%	25.0%	25.4%	9.4%
United States	12.1%	26.5%	27.8%	12.1%	19.4%	24.1%	10.3%

Figure 32: Children under 18 below poverty; by county

Children Under 18 Years below Poverty as a Percentage of the Population for Whom Poverty is Determined for Nebraska Counties: 2007-2011



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 American Community Survey
 Prepared by: Center for Public Affairs Research, University of Nebraska at Omaha, December 2012

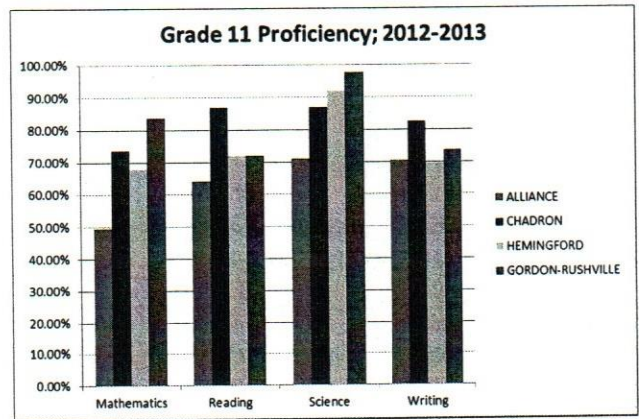
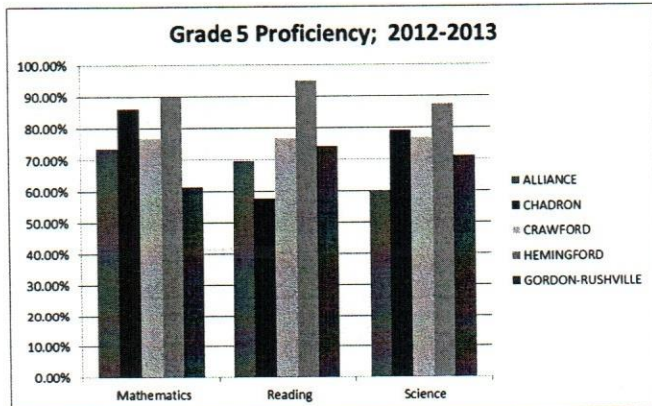
Schools

Dawes County’s schools have seen fluctuating enrollment over the 3 years from 2010 to 2012 with a slight decrease in enrollment for high school and college aged levels. Hemingford consistently performs highly on state proficiency testing with the Chadron and Crawford school districts following close behind.

Table 13: Area school enrollment and proficiency

Dawes County School Enrollment 2010-2012

	2010	2011	2012
Population 3 years and over enrolled	3,018	2,944	2,811
Nursery school, preschool	129	118	134
Kindergarten	73	81	79
Elementary school (grades 1-8)	714	655	672
High school (grades 9-12)	449	423	355
College or graduate school	1,653	1,667	1,571



Economy

Key Stories:

- **Strengths in education, health, agribusiness, energy, mining, and recreation industries**
- **Strong regional economic pull factor**
- **Economic “leakage” to bigger markets in Rapid City, Scottsbluff, and Denver**
- **High percentage of residents who also work in the county**
- **Higher family income than regional neighboring counties**
- **Job creation in education, health services, public administration, finance, and manufacturing.**
- **Job loss in recreation and accommodation, construction, and retail trade.**

Industry Composition

Figure 33: Industry employment; 2012 estimates

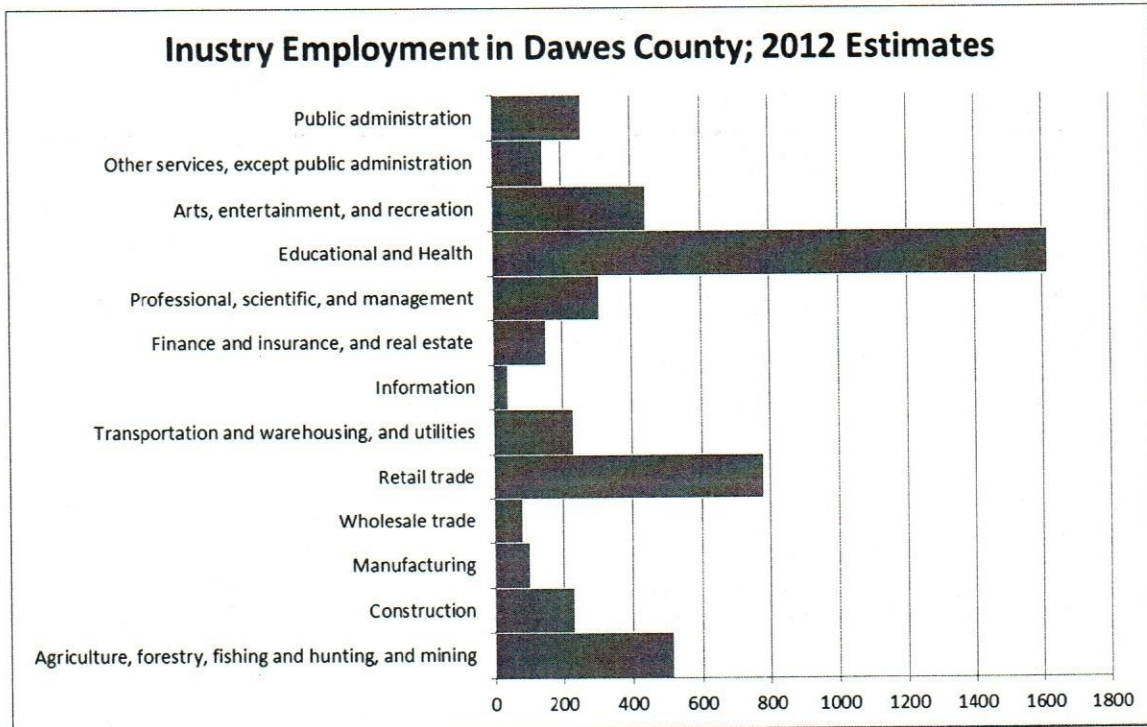


Table 15: Employment by occupation

	Dawes County		Chadron		Crawford	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	4,905		3,268		452	
Management, business, science, and arts	1,575	32.10%	885	27.10%	118	26.10%
Service occupations	1,065	21.70%	792	24.20%	76	16.80%
Sales and office occupations	1,213	24.70%	950	29.10%	124	27.40%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance	571	11.60%	370	11.30%	65	14.40%
Production, transportation, and material moving	481	9.80%	271	8.30%	69	15.30%

Table 14: Commute to work

	Dawes County		Chadron		Crawford	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Workers 16 years and over	4,812		3,209		436	
Car, truck, or van – drove alone	3,137	65.20%	2,008	62.60%	302	69.30%
Car, truck, or van – carpooled	583	12.10%	411	12.80%	76	17.40%
Public transportation	64	1.30%	64	2.00%	0	0.00%
Walked	619	12.90%	484	15.10%	34	7.80%
Other means	113	2.30%	81	2.50%	13	3.00%
Worked at home	296	6.20%	161	5.00%	11	2.50%
Mean travel time to work (minutes)	13.3	(X)	10.5	(X)	15.1	(X)

Largest Employers

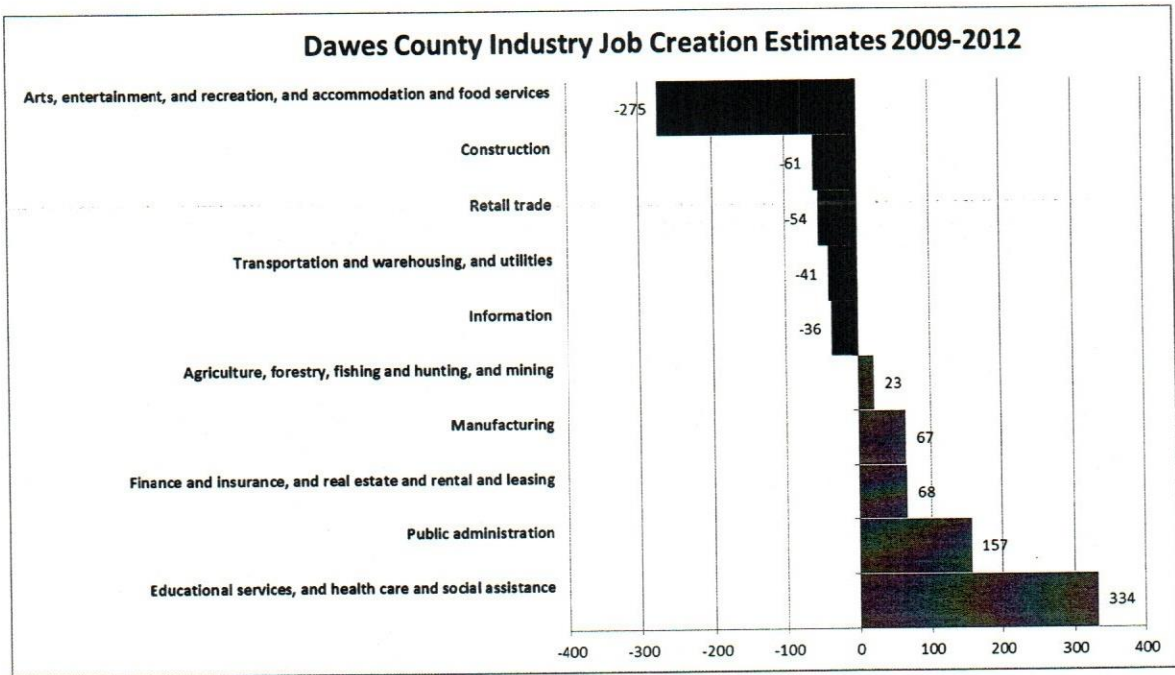
Largest Employers: Dawes County

	Employer	Employment Number	Products/Service
1	Chadron State College	327	College Education
2	Wal-Mart	245	Retail and Wholesale Trade
3	Chadron Community Hospital	183	Education & Health Services
4	Nebraska Game and Parks	155*	Parks and Recreation
5	Chadron Public Schools	140	Primary and Secondary Education
6	U.S. Forest Service	130	Government and Education
7	Your Selling Team	74	Professional & Business
8	Crow Butte Resources	58	Uranium Mining
9	Dawes County	52	Government
10	Ponderosa Villa	50	Nursing Care
11	Crawford Public Schools	48	Education

*seasonal peak

Table 16: Change in employment by industry; 2009-2012

	Dawes County,		Chadron city,		Crawford city,	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	141	3.0	328	11.2	7	1.6
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	23	4.7	44	28.8	4	10.0
Construction	-61	-20.8	-11	-7.8	9	36.0
Manufacturing	67	209.4	70	583.3	2	50.0
Wholesale trade	12	17.6	12	31.6	5	23.8
Retail trade	-54	-6.5	2	0.4	6	9.2
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	-41	-15.1	45	60.8	-11	-18.6
Information	-36	-46.8	-49	-77.8	15	166.7
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental	68	81.0	62	96.9	0	0.0
Professional, scientific, and management, and	-2	-0.6	-8	-3.0	12	100.0
Educational services, and health care and social	334	26.0	386	48.1	-15	-12.3
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and	-275	-38.2	-319	-52.4	-8	-17.4
Other services, except public administration	-51	-25.9	-35	-34.3	-10	-35.7
Public administration	157	153.9	129	226.3	-2	-18.2



Dawes County Pull Factor 2012

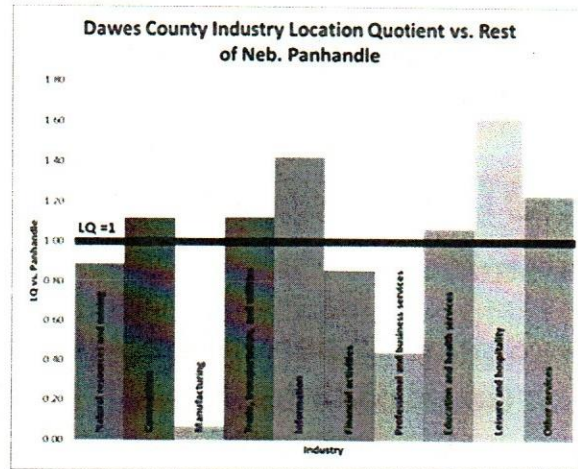
2012 Pull Factor vs. Surrounding Counties	1.93
2012 Pull Factor vs. Nebraska	0.68

Sources: 2012 US Census Bureau ACS Estimates, Nebraska Department of Revenue: 2012 Tax Statistics by County, South Dakota Sales and Use Tax Report: SD Dept of Revenue

Location Quotient: Strengths versus the Panhandle

Location quotient can reveal an area's strengths relative to another area or a larger area of which it is a part. These reveal some of Dawes County's strengths relative to the panhandle and the nation, respectively.

Industry	Dawes County Location Quotient
Natural resources and mining	2.43
Construction	1.03
Manufacturing	0.05
Trade, transportation, and utilities	1.49
Information	0.9
Financial activities	0.77
Professional and business services	0.28
Education and health services	1.07
Leisure and hospitality	1.59
Other services	1.35
Unclassified	NC



Region Wide Industries LQ>1



Industries shown have LQ's greater than 1 in at least two of employment, wages, or number of establishments and employment of at least 20 persons.

Housing

Key Stories:

- Similar owner occupied housing prices relative to the panhandle 'trade' counties.
- Almost 50% of housing units are rentals in Chadron
- Old housing stock
- High renter burden of costs versus income, despite lower median rent
- Relatively high rate of single, older home owners
- Tight market for middle to upper income households looking to move up
- High vacancy rates in Crawford (15%) and unincorporated Dawes County (15%).
- Tight availability for disability, low income, and elderly housing through the housing authority.

Locations, tenure, and vacancy

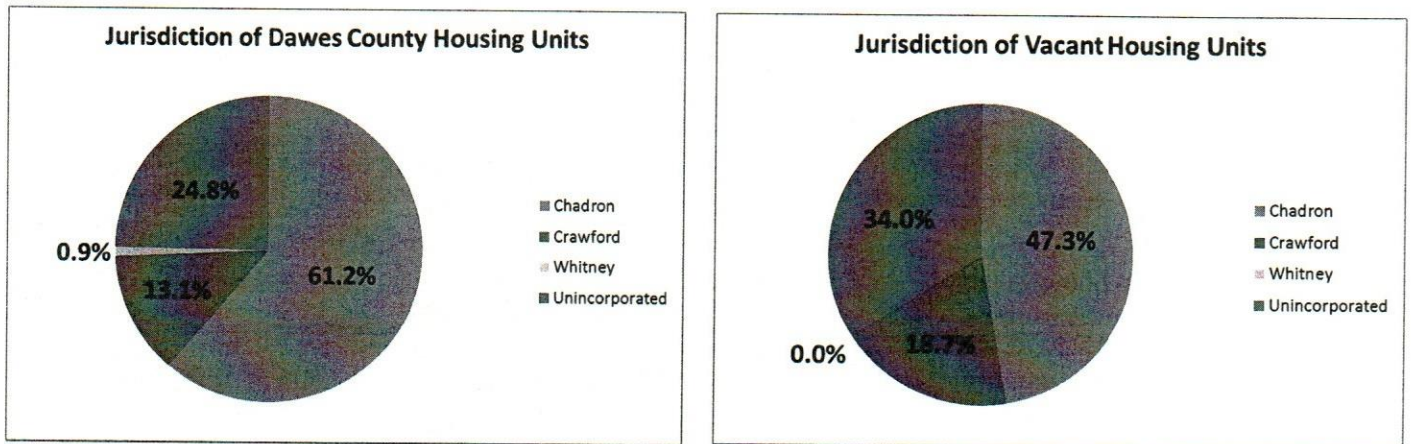
The college population in Chadron is reflected in the high proportions of rental properties with almost 47% of housing units being renter occupied. Crawford, Whitney, and the unincorporated areas of the county have higher home-ownership rates.

Table 17: Housing occupancy, tenure, and vacancy

	Dawes County		Chadron		Crawford		Whitney		Unincorporated	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Total housing units	4,237		2,592		554		40		1,051	
Occupied housing units	3,772	89.00%	2,372	91.5%	467	84.3%	40	100%	893	85.0%
Vacant housing units	465	11.00%	220	8.5%	87	15.7%	0	0%	158	15.0%
HOUSING TENURE										
Occupied housing units	3,772		2,372		467		40		893	
Owner-occupied	2,364	62.70%	1,263	53.2%	361	77.3%	27	67.5%	713	79.8%
Renter-occupied	1,408	37.30%	1,109	46.8%	106	22.7%	13	32.5%	180	20.2%
Homeowner vacancy rate	1.4	(X)	0	(X)	3.7	(X)	0	(X)	*	
Rental vacancy rate	5.6	(X)	5.6	(X)	1.9	(X)	0	(X)	*	

The location of housing units closely reflect the locations of residents in the county however vacancy rates are higher in Crawford and unincorporated Dawes County with 34% of all Dawes County vacant units being located in the unincorporated areas of the county.

Figure 34: Jurisdiction of total housing units vs. vacant housing units



Age of housing stock

Across the county, much of the housing is fairly old with 35% of housing units being built prior to 1940. This can lead to quality issues and a need for rehabilitation programs. Many of the multi-unit buildings have been built in the second half of the 1900s and early 2000s.

Figure 35: Year Housing unit was built; Dawes County

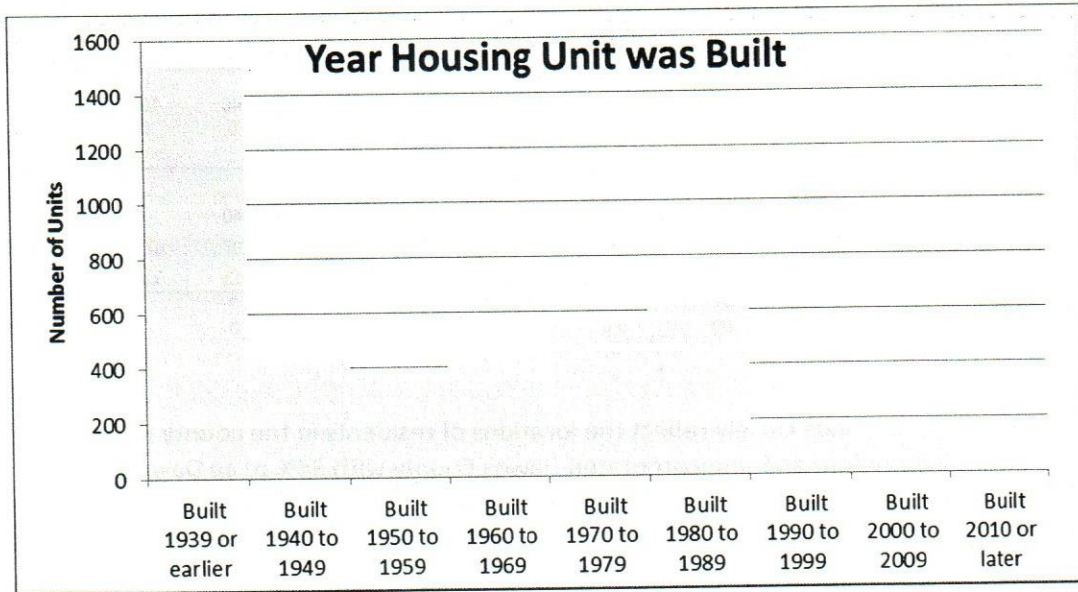
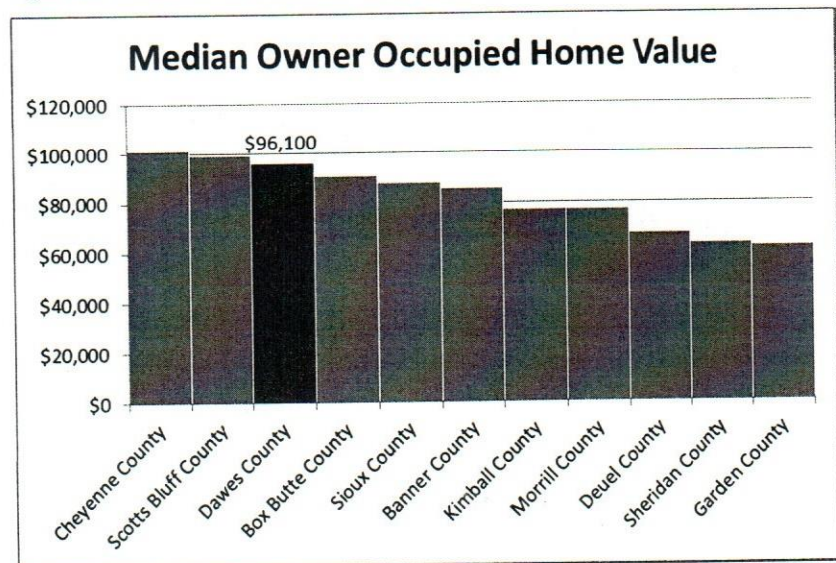


Table 18: Single family residential building permits 2002-2012 in Rural Dawes County

Year	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Building Permits	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5

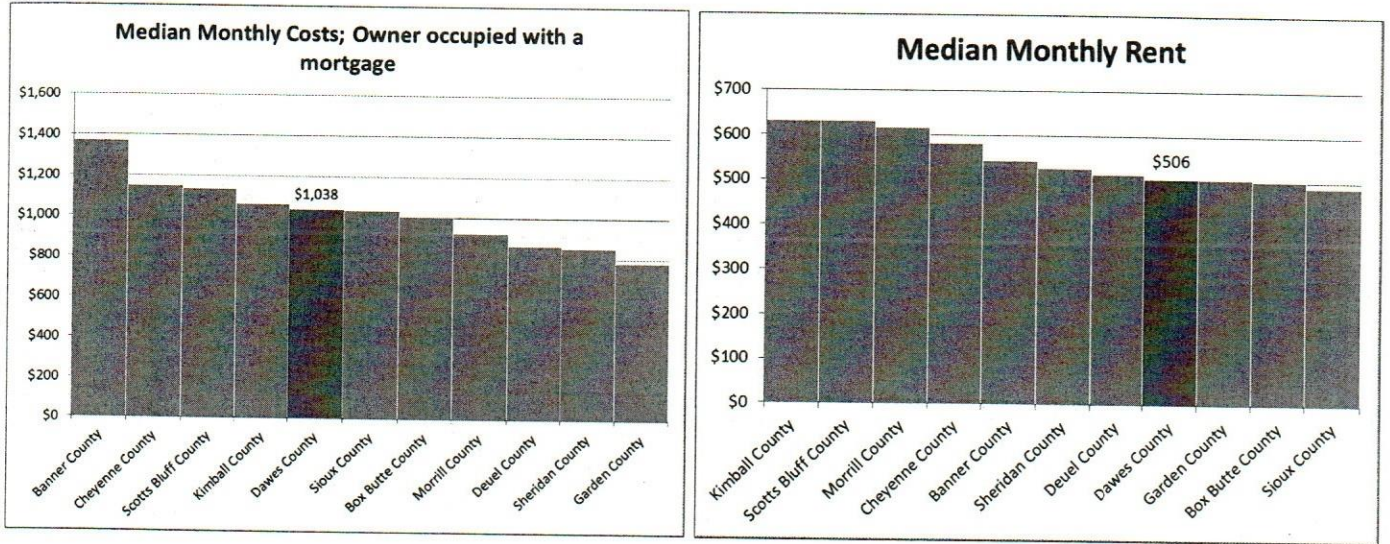
Figure 36: Median owner occupied home value by county



Housing Costs

Owner occupied home values are higher than most in the panhandle with the median value ranking third in third in the region. Despite median income numbers being pulled down by the presence of college students, the owner occupied home value remains generally unaffected since students tend to rent.

Figure 37: Median monthly housing costs; owner and renter occupied



Housing costs in relation to income

Table 19: Owner and Renter occupied costs as a percentage of household income

Monthly Housing Costs as a Percentage of Household Income

	Estimate	Percent
Total Occupied Housing	3,749	
Less than 20 percent	1626	43.4%
20.0 to 24.9 percent	493	13.2%
25.0 to 29.9 percent	395	10.5%
30.0 to 34.9 percent	118	3.1%
35.0 percent or more	925	24.7%

Gross rent as a percentage of household income; 2012 Estimates

	Estimate	Percent
Occupied units paying rent	1,193	
Less than 15.0 percent	126	10.60%
15.0 to 19.9 percent	225	18.90%
20.0 to 24.9 percent	176	14.80%
25.0 to 29.9 percent	119	10.00%
30.0 to 34.9 percent	28	2.30%
35.0 percent or more	519	43.50%

Owner occupants tend to pay generally a low burden of their income in the county with 43% paying less than 20 percent of their household income every month. Rental properties see over 43% of occupants paying 35% or more of their household income towards rent. The department of Housing and Urban Development maintains that it is undesirable for tenants to pay 30% or more of their income towards housing costs. This rental burden is considerably higher than the regional rate.

Table 20: Renter cost burden; Panhandle

Nebraska Panhandle		
	Estimate	Percent
Occupied units paying rent	10355	
Less than 15.0 percent	2212	21.4
15.0 to 19.9 percent	1359	13.1
20.0 to 24.9 percent	1262	12.2
25.0 to 29.9 percent	1138	11.0
30.0 to 34.9 percent	977	9.4
35.0 percent or more	3407	32.9

High burdens for renters

The following table shows that 28.8 percent of all people renting in the county earn less than \$20,000 a year and pay over 30 of their income for rent. 37% of all renters earn less than \$35,000 a year and pay 30% or more of their household income on rent. This can indicate both housing and wage issues. Across the Panhandle, wages have been seen to be lower than state and national averages, contributing to high cost burdens for housing.

Table 21: Renter high cost burden by income

	Dawes County	
	Estimate	Percent
Renter-occupied housing units:	1408	
Income under \$20,000 AND pay 30 percent or more of income for housing	405	28.8%
Income under \$35,000 AND pay 30 percent or more of income for housing	527	37.4%
Income over \$35,000 AND pay 30 percent or more of income for housing	20	1.4%

Owner occupied number show a story of generally lower burden. 46% of all owner occupants earn over \$35,000 and pay less than 20% of their income to housing. Owner occupants are typically wealthier

Table 22: Owner low and high cost burden by income

	Dawes County	
	Estimate	Percent
Owner-occupied housing units:	2364	
Burden under 20%	Income \$35,000 to \$49,999 AND pay less than 20 percent of income	168 7.1%
	Income \$50,000 to \$75,000 AND pay less than 20 percent of income	328 13.9%
	Income over \$75,000 AND pay less than 20 percent of income	595 25.2%
	Income over \$35,000 AND pay less than 20 percent of income	1091 46.2%
Burden over 30%	Income under \$20,000 AND pay 30 percent or more of income	238 10.1%
	Income \$20,000 to \$34,999 AND pay 30 percent or more of income	103 4.4%
	Income under \$35,000 AND pay 30 percent or more of income	341 14.4%

Income by Tenure

These tables show over 50% of all owner occupied housing earning a household income of \$50,000 or more and 45.5% of all renters in the county earning \$20,000 or less per year of household income. These lower income numbers for renters is about 14 percentage points higher than the regional proportions and could be attributed to the student population.

Table 23: Income by tenure

	Dawes County	
	Estimate	Percent
Owner-occupied housing units:	2364	
HH income less than \$20,000:	357	15.1%
HH income \$20,000 to \$34,999:	344	14.6%
HH income \$35,000 to \$49,999:	436	18.4%
HH income \$50,000 to \$74,999:	500	21.2%
HH income \$75,000 or more:	727	30.8%

	Dawes County	
	Estimate	Percent
Renter-occupied housing units:	1408	
HH income less than \$20,000:	640	45.5%
HH income \$20,000 to \$34,999:	324	23.0%
HH income \$35,000 to \$49,999:	77	5.5%
HH income \$50,000 to \$74,999:	97	6.9%
HH income \$75,000 or more:	55	3.9%

Age of householder

High numbers of single people over 65 in households could be contributed accommodated by assisted living facilities but the numbers are still worthy to note. Older populations living alone in housing can let the property deteriorate due to decreased ability to maintain it. More vacancies could also be on the horizon for the area.

Table 24: Households with individuals over 65

	Dawes County		Chadron		Crawford		Rural	
	Number of Housholds	Percent of Total Households	Number of Housholds	Percent of Total Households	Number of Housholds	Percent of Total Households	Number of Housholds	Percent of Total Households
Households with individuals 65 years and over	1,073	29.1	570	24.7	198	42.1	305	33.6
Male living alone	156	4.2	85	3.7	37	7.9	34	3.7
Female living alone	359	9.7	229	9.9	85	18.1	45	5.0

Public Facilities

- Courthouse
- Road and Maintenance Facilities
- Water and Wastewater
- Solid Waste
- Rural Fire Protection District
- Public Safety and Law Enforcement
- Schools
- Medical Facilities
- Broadband

County Courthouse

The Dawes County Courthouse houses the Dawes County clerk, treasurer, assessor, probation office, sheriff, county court and district court. Activities in the facility include the county court, district court, veterans' services, and the commissioner's meeting room.



Road and Maintenance Facilities

The only buildings, other than the courthouse owned by Dawes County are the county sheds for the three road districts. The sheds house the county's road grades, rock crushers, loaders, trucks, trailers, tractors, scrapers, dozers, and semi trucks.

Water

Most rural water users have their own wells. However, the public water supply for the City of Chadron comes from three sources; Surface water (Chadron Creek), infiltration water, and 5 wells located 18 miles outside of town. Two earthen reservoirs have a total capacity of about 100 million gallons and store water during the fall and winter months when water consumption is low in town. The Chadron water treatment plant has a capacity of 4.5 million gallons a day

In Crawford, a new water treatment facility was completed in 1999. Crawford's municipal water system, an infiltration gallery, is supplied by two wells, which have an average pumping capacity of 155 gallons per minute. The system has a maximum capacity of 2.83 million gallons with an average daily demand of 250,000 gallons.

Wastewater

In early 2014, Crawford completed construction of a new \$3.1 million wastewater treatment facility. The project was completed with the help of CDBG funds.

Chadron also operates its own sanitary sewer system and storm-water waste system. Most rural residents have private septic systems.

Solid Waste

Chadron, Crawford, Whitney, and the county are members of the Solid Waste Agency of Northwest Nebraska (SWANN). SWANN is a regional collaboration of eight communities in the region that have combined their resources to more efficiently dispose of solid waste. While rural residents do not get curbside pickup, they can bring their waste to drop off sites. SWANN provides recycling services as well at drop off sites. The greatest need is seen for education about recycling and waste disposal of what can and cannot be picked up, recycled, or thrown away.

Rural Fire Protection District

The Rural Fire Protection District serves the non-incorporated areas of the county. The rural fire district stores their equipment at the Chadron and Crawford fire stations. Their equipment includes seven tank trucks to go along with an equipment truck, two rescue units, and a command truck that the rural fire district shares with the City of Chadron. Equipment is aimed to be upgraded every 20 years and the rural fire district could use a larger water tanker. Grant funding is tried to be pursued before local taxes.

County Jail

While the jail is in good shape with staff and facilities, the building continues to age as demand continues to increase. The county should plan ahead for construction of a new jail in 10 to 15 years. Improvements and new jail facilities should include the capacity to hold women and juveniles to limit the resources used to transfer those individuals to other facilities.

Sheriff department equipment and vehicles

The sheriff's department currently drives used vehicles and is short on equipment particularly for first aid and trauma, road safety, and disaster preparations. The department could better serve the county with newer vehicles and improved first aid equipment and training.

Schools

Dawes County is served by five school districts, Chadron, Crawford, Hemingford, Hay Springs, and Sioux County, as well as by Pine Ridge Job Corp, Prairie View Adventist, Chadron State College, and WNCC.

List of Schools:

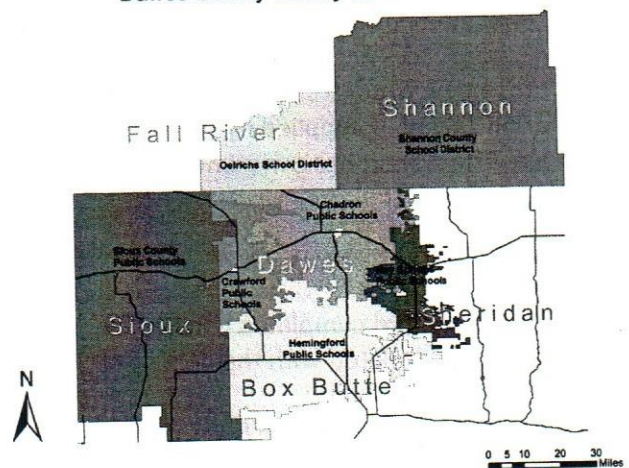
Chadron Primary School
Kenwood Elementary/Chadron
Intermediate School
Crawford Elementary
Adventist Elementary School
Head Start

Chadron Middle Schools

Crawford High School
Chadron High School
Prairie View Adventist School

Pine Ridge Job Corps
Chadron State College
Western Nebraska Community College

Dawes County Vicinity School Districts



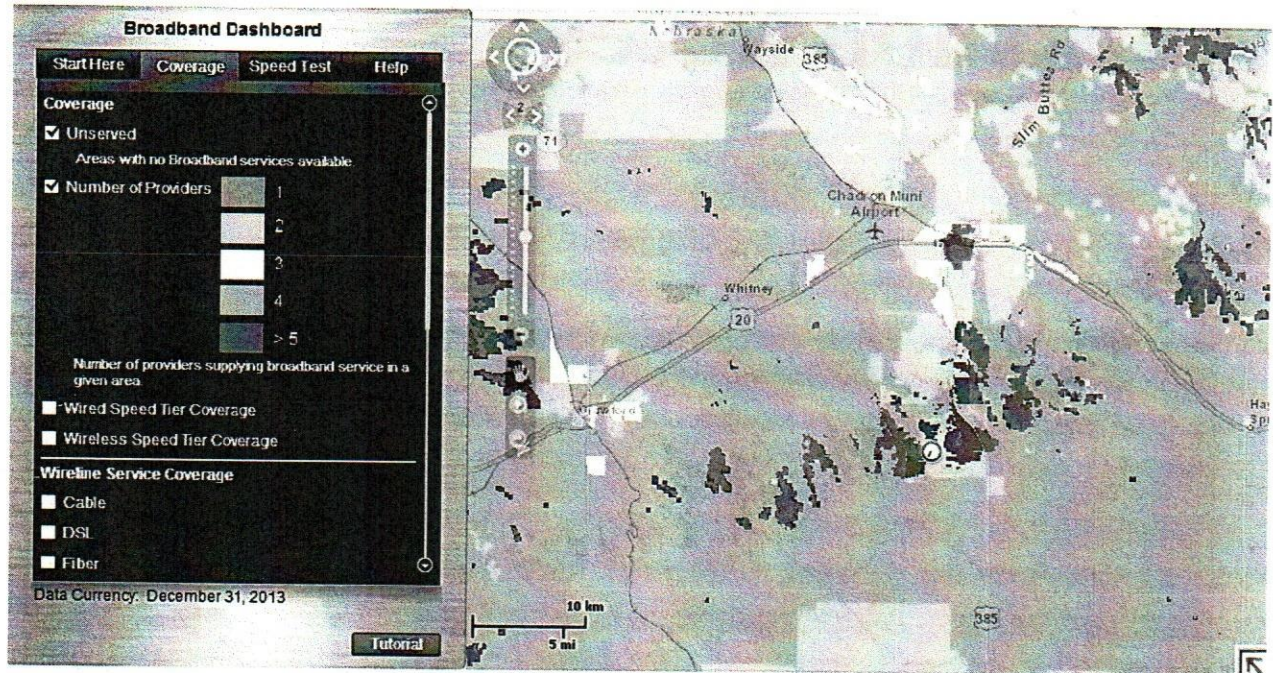
Medical Facilities

Chadron Community hospital has 25 beds. Between the hospital, Western Community Health Resources, Prairie Pines, and Legends Buttes Health clinic the organization employs 206 people. Services provided can be found at chadronhospital.com and include dialysis, cardiac rehabilitation, home health, emergency room, physical therapy and radiology. A number of community health services are also provided such as car seat checks, lactation consulting, and dietary menus. Prairie Pines and Crest View Care Center in Chadron and Ponderosa Villa in Crawford offer assisted living and nursing facility opportunities for the elderly.

Broadband

Some portions of Dawes County are still without broadband availability, and the number of providers is limited to one option in most of the county.

Figure 38: Broadband Availability



Appendix B: December Workshop Notes



Chadron Notes Meeting 12-10-13

Part I

Focus Areas:

- 1) Education in community about the plans
 - Who it affects
 - What does it cover
- 2) Education connection and opportunity awareness to the outside world
- 3) Infrastructure of technology needs to be upgraded
- 4) Improve and Enhance tourism opportunities
- 5) Tourist Infrastructure
 - Increase our amenity offerings
 - Restaurants
 - Hotels
 - Signage
- 6) Industry
 - Utilize existing resources
 - Federal/State lands such as:
 - o Wind generation
 - o Utilize home business "shop at home"
- 7) Roads/Infrastructure
- 8) Tax Efficiency, policies to promote growth
- 9) Roads plan/ prioritization of transportation investments
- 10) Healthy Living
- 11) Energy Industries (Shale, Wind, Solar)
- 12) Heartland Expressway
- 13) Value Added Agriculture
- 14) Inter-government communication
- 15) On-going collaboration
- 16) Connecting business and local workforce
- 17) Promoting and improving livability

Mind Sets:

- Can do attitude- thinking outside the box, embrace opportunity
- Dispelling Apathy-
 - o Engagement of community (Ask, don't assume apathy)
 - o Cheerleading- reinforce good behavior
- Shine Mindset: I don't shine if you don't shine
- Neighbors helping neighbors
- Taking initiative and community pride
- Being positive about our assets and what's happening in our community
- Being unapologetic about our home

What can we do to make the panhandle a smarter, happier, and more competitive place to live and do business?

Smarter:

- Greater communication with state government
- Efficiency with tax money
- Collaboratives
- DELTA

Happier:

- Build pride in our community, especially in lesser developed areas
- Healthy living promotion county wide (region wide too)

Competitive:

- Build up infrastructure
- Road improvements
- IT skills and jobs

Part II

Chosen Industry: Tourism

Natural Assets:

Forest, grassland, hunting, fishing, hiking, atv/biking opportunities, camping, fort Rob, Chadron State Park, Fur Trade Museum, Black Hills, Geological- Toadstool, Bird watching, equestrian, cross country skiing

Growing

- 1) ATV, Motorcycle trails
Winter: skiing, hunting, prairie dogs, coyote, mountain lion, antelope
- 2) Grow amenities, Develop tax increment financing and other tax break incentives
- 3) Summer- Rattlesnake Roundup, bird watching, equestrian, Janet's Dude Ranches, Festival of locally grown brewed and distilled beverages and products: steaks, beef, pig n pit.
Tie in with Crazy Horse ride

Industry

Other assets: Railroad, uranium, state parks

Grow:

Job opportunities

- 1) Microbrewery
- 2) Wind Industry
- 3) Dude ranch, Infrastructure
- 4) Promote shop @home including homebased cottage industry markets

- 5) Add tax to internet shopping, origin fee

Infrastructure

- 1) Plan for a comprehensive road plan, park equipment in yards, to better grade and maintain roads, less time with blades off the road, prioritization plan
- 2) Useable broadband access by every household, business, government agency, etc.

Assets:

Wind, solar, hunting, fishing, historical, museum, recreational ranches, post graduate education, workforce supported by college, uranium, people communicate and help each other, oil shale close by, good work ethic and good ideas

Appendix C: Dawes County Joint Planning Process and Strategic Framework 2011

Dawes County Joint Planning Meeting
Strategic Session
January 13, 2011
5:30 – 8:00 pm
Chadron, NE

Documentation of Work Products and Decisions Made

Strategic Focus Question:

What can we collectively do to make Dawes County a prosperous, healthy desirable place to live, work, learn, and play in the next 1-3 years?

Community leaders and members of Dawes County met on the Chadron State College Campus on January 13 to answer the following focus question:

What can we collectively do to make Dawes County a prosperous, healthy desirable place to live, work, learn, and play in the next 1-3 years?

Those present were: John and Vicki Chizek, Sandy Roes, Sandy Powell, Caroline Winchester, Don King, Terry Hinn, Tim Donahue, Levi Grant, Keri Nelson, Karin Fischer, Don Blausey, Bill Cebula, Betty Reading, Kim Madsen, Bruce Landen, Deb Cottier, Terrence Haugen, James Phelps, Dennis Brown, Charlie Kuskie, Roger Wess, Terri Haynes, George Ledbetter, Doris Harrington, Dale Grant, Lorye McLeod, John Booker, Clyde Franklin, Joe Simmons, Jamie Goffena, Leslie Caswell, Morie Carnahan, Matt Reeves, Colette Fernandez, Jane Darnell,

Andrea Voss, David Kinnamon, Jay Sutcliffe, Kerry Bailey, Stacy Swinney, David Johnson, Kristi Johnson, Jessica Davies, Mary Wernke, and Kim Engel.

John Chizek, mayor of Chadron welcomed the group to this opportunity of joint planning to assure that Dawes County would show growth into the future.

Kim Engel, PPHD Director, provided an overview of the process stating that the goal for this meeting was to establish our practical vision. There are 2-3 additional meetings planned where we will look more closely at what is blocking us from our vision, developing strategic directions, and an implementation plan.

Contextual information was provided by Sandy Powell and Keri Nelson, city administrators from Chadron and Crawford, Caroline Winchester – Superintendent of Chadron Public Schools, Jon Chizek an overview of the community survey recently completed in Chadron, Deb Cottier for economic development, and Kim Engel a report on the County Health Rankings (<http://www.countyhealthrankings.org>)

The following documents are the results of the meeting.

Recent Accomplishments	Recent Challenges/Setbacks
<p>New hospital upgrade Walking trail development Upgraded golf courses in both communities Waste water treatment plants improvement College recognized for tree planting Historical celebration Museum of the Fur Trade Crawford celebrations Marie Sandoz Center New railroad Increase in college population Danny Woodhead Higher student achievement in K-12 schools Boys and Girls Club Wind turbine and new water system at Job Corp Forest Service addition to building Growing dental clinics in Crawford and Chadron Park systems (Chadron State Park and Fort Robinson) 21% increase in 4-H participants New radio station Additional retail businesses</p>	<p>Forest fires Drought Hail storms Economic down turn Delayed infrastructure development (highways, streets, etc) Increased taxes Decreased population Aging population Increased gas prices Stagnant construction activity Increased obesity Decreased nursing home residents Vacant commercial frontages Poverty</p>

Trends impacting Dawes County	Benefits of Joint Planning
<p>Online education (not living here or spending money here) Online selling Teacher shortages People shopping elsewhere Out migration of young people Healthcare worker shortage Regulations Alternative energy</p>	<p>Decreased redundancy Shared resources Increased communication Decreased costs Increased community building Increased buy-in</p>

Practical Vision: What do we want to see in place in 3-5 years as a result of our actions?

EFFICIENT PHYSICAL CONNECTIONS	YEAR ROUND TOURISM DESTINATION	COMMUNITY BEAUTIFICATION	ACTIVE OUTDOOR LIVING	THRIVING, DIVERSE BUSINESS RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION	ENHANCED INVOLVED COMMUNITY	A CULTURE OF WELLNESS	ADVANCED TECHNOLOGICAL INFRASTRUCTURE	IMPROVED AGRICULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heartland Express • Heartland Express 4 lane • Transportation System 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Package Tourism – Connect Chadron, Crawford, Ft. Robinson, County Fair • Tourism • Heritage Tourism – Native History • Historical Resort – Interpretation Center • New Game and Parks District with our own Commissioner • Lower fees charged by Nebraska Game and Parks • Historical/recreational Tourism • Agro Tourism “City Slickers” • Art Industry Festival • Conference Retreat Center • Restore historical downtowns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beautification • Landscaping • Clean towns, streets, yards • Curb appeal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved recreation opportunities • People outside, active and communicating • Outdoor recreation • Recreation development • Trails, multi-use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community acceptance of large industry • Industrial park • Business recruitment team, capital investors • 100+ workers round house • Retain 50-60% CSC graduates • Affordable comparable housing • Creating tax incentives to keep residences and business • Worksite wellness attract quality staff, lower insurance costs • Art industry festival 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More community involvement • Recognize challenges work together, no politics • Community center holistic • Quality care and education for children • Personal freedoms restored • Better housing inventory • Library • Imaging living room of the community • Original sustainable Native American culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Center • Healthy food • Healthy choice is the easy choice • Coordinated wellness planning and implementation • Expanded health care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadband telework • Modern technology – market area – education • Alternative energy, wind, biomass • Alternative energy jobs • Broad band internet including rural area • Rural phone service • Green and Tech jobs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to/for agriculture industry • Develop local food production • Rangeland Center at CSC

Dawes County Joint Planning Meeting
Strategic Session
5:30 – 8:00 pm
February 3, 2011
Chadron, NE

Documentation of Work Products and Decisions Made

Strategic Focus Question:

What can we collectively do to make Dawes County a prosperous, healthy desirable place to live, work, learn, and play in the next 1-3 years?

Community leaders and members of Dawes County met on the Chadron State College Campus on February 3, for their second meeting to answer the following focus question:

What can we collectively do to make Dawes County a prosperous, healthy desirable place to live, work, learn, and play in the next 1-3 years?

Those present were: John Chizek, Sandy Roes, Sandy Powell, Caroline Winchester, Don King, Keri Nelson, Karin Fischer, Don Blausey, Bill Cebula, Betty Reading, Kim Madsen, Terrence Haugen, James Phelps, Dennis Brown, Roger Wess, Terri Haynes, George Ledbetter, Doris Harrington, Dale Grant, Jamie Goffena, Leslie Caswell, Jay Sutcliffe, Kerry Bailey, Stacy Swimney, Kristi Johnson, Diane Clark, Deb Kennedy, Joseph Applegarth, Jerry Moss, Pat Moss, Rosella Tesch, Susan O Boyle, Darrel Knot, Harold Krueger, Levi Grant, Jerry Schumacher, Pat Kaus, Annett Trylick, Mark Werner, Tracy Schuler, Steve Lenzo, Susan Hucke, Amanda Caswell, Mary Wernke, and Kim Engel.

Engel welcomed the group explaining the purpose of the planning sessions and had everyone introduce themselves.

The work product from the first meeting was reviewed. Those present were asked what was missing about the vision they had developed at the last meeting.

Items identified were:

- Consideration of the population according to age category and their willingness to change
- Housing – shortage of mid range housing to buy and intermediate housing to rent
- Technology – there is a 20 million dollar fiber optics project connecting all health services in the panhandle that will be completed sometime in 2011 (maybe as early as April). There are extra cables for commercial use and will be available through Great Plains. Rural access outside of town will still be microwave or wireless.
- Community safety
- UNL student assessment for community beautification

- Explore innovative ideas for agriculture (marketing, new crops ie: industrial hemp)

The goal for the evening is to identify the underlying contradictions that are blocks and barriers that prevent us from realizing our vision. They are like boulders in our path to the future. They can be found in historic and societal trends, in our images, our attitudes, our structures, and our patterns. They are so integrated into our experience that we don't always recognize them for what they are. They are unquestioned assumptions, mindsets, beliefs, and practices that oppose our vision. There is no one to blame for a contradiction. It is historical residue, and result of past actions to solve problems of a previous time, now blocking the changes called for in current times. You know you've got a contradiction when it becomes clear to people how they participate in keeping it alive.

A contradiction is like a dandelion root, neither good nor bad in itself, but it sustains the visible manifestation of a block to a vision of a smooth grassy lawn.

Wernke led the group to identify underlying contradictions by asking the following question: What is blocking us from achieving our vision?

The next meeting is planned for March 3, at 5:30 to 8:00 at the Chadron State College Ball Room. We will be looking at what innovative, substantial actions will deal with the things blocking us and move us toward our vision. Please RSVP to Sandy Roes at 308-432-2747.

Underlying Contradictions: What is blocking us from moving toward our vision?

<p>Low POPULATION AND AFFLUENCE (TO ACCESS OTHER MEANS) (CHALLENGES PROFITABILITY FOR AIR, BUS, AND OTHER TRANSPORTATION MEANS</p>	<p>INADEQUATE JOB OPPORTUNITIES PUT A DRAIN ON COMMUNITY</p>	<p>UNAVAILABLE VENTURE CAPITAL LIMITS ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SUSTAINABLE PROJECTS</p>	<p>INABILITY TO EFFECTIVELY ADVOCATE FOR STATE AND FEDERAL RESOURCES</p>	<p>LIMITED COMMUNICATION BLOCKS COLLABORATION</p>	<p>NEGATIVE MIND SET DISENGAGES COMMUNITY COLLABORATION</p>	<p>NO SHARED VISION FRAGMENTS PROGRESS</p>	<p>FAILURE TO RECOGNIZE OPPORTUNITIES WITH COORDINATED PROMOTION DILUTES THE MESSAGE AND RESOURCES</p>	<p>NOT RECOGNIZED AS A PRIORITY PREVENTS BEAUTIFICATION INFRASTRUCTURE EFFORTS</p>	<p>UNCOORDINATED ACCESS OF TECHNOLOGY BLOCKS ENTREPRENEURSHIP, TOURISM, COMMERCE, ETC.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient transportation options • Unreliable user-friendly air service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apathy at poverty level • Gap between desire to have and willingness to support with dollars • Poverty • Education development of skills for trade industry missing • Need for innovation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provisions for sustainability and maintenance • Ineffective fund raising • No local investment groups • Funding • Shortage of profitable ag processing facilities • Need for innovation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laws and codes • Change laws • Need for Game and Parks District in our area • Helmet law • Less federal funds threaten essential air services • We are not on the state plan for the heartland express • Need for innovation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gap between desire to have and willingness to support • General unawareness of initiatives and needs • A need for communication of facts • Closed minds • Limited shared communication for the use of public use of buildings • Coordination needed between city, college, high school, county 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bad attitudes • Cliques • Apathy • Unwilling to collaborate • Tired and burned out • Community pride • Fear of failure/risk • Laziness • Give up when defeated • Need more participation • People don't feel valued or can make a difference • Overworked 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision not valued by community leaders • Community unwilling to invest in itself • Shattered unified efforts not shared • Vision not shared • Self-serving leaders • Need to promote community interaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of promotion of our area • Lack of ag promotion • No writer activity • No promotion of renewable energy • Unwillingness to market business and tourism jointly • Need for innovation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missing sidewalks • Hamper active outdoor living • Abandoned cars • Art, statues and flowers needed • Shortage of walking and biking infrastructure • Poverty • Need for innovation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable rural access of technology • Inadequate broadband availability • Discourage new business to be able to use the information highway to work from this area • Need for innovation

Dawes County Joint Planning Meeting
Strategic Session
5:30 – 8:00 pm
March 3, 2011
Chadron, NE

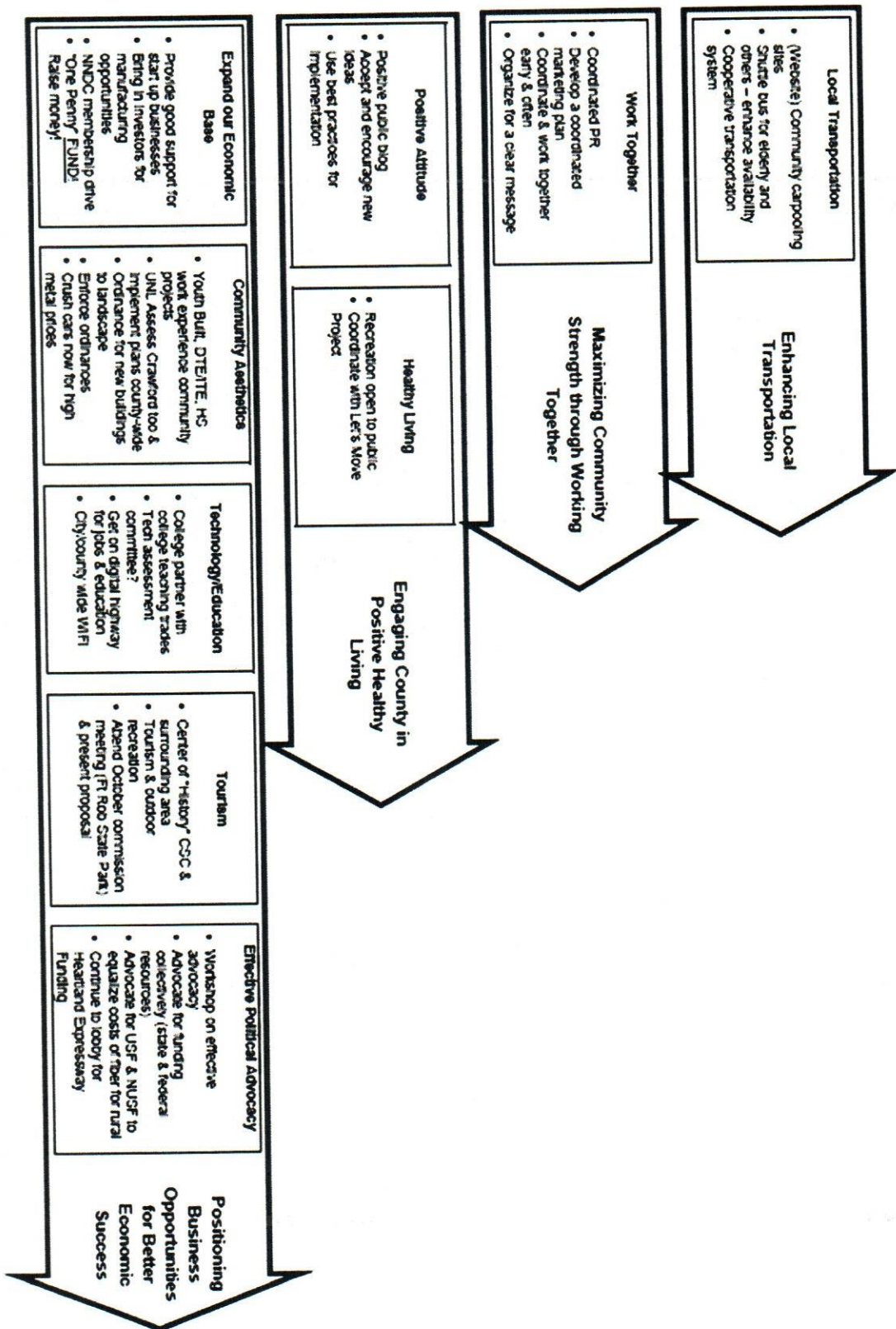
What can we collectively do to make Dawes County a prosperous, healthy desirable place to live, work, learn, and play in the next 1-3 years?

Community leaders and members of Dawes County met on the Chadron State College Campus on March 3, for their third meeting to answer the following focus question:

What innovative, substantial actions will deal with the underlying contradictions and move us toward our vision?

Those present were: Betty Reading, Jessica Davies, Sandy Roes, Jerry Schumacher, Dick Leshner, Karin Fischer, Greg Schenbeck, Don Blausey, Harold Mowry, Clyde Franklin, Lorye McLeod, William McLure, Kim Engel, Susan O'Boyle, Cathy Scherbarth, Trudy Scherbarth, Deb Cotier, Dennis Brown, John Booker, Dave Kinnamon, Matt Reeves, Kim Madsen, Darrel Knote, Mark Haynes, Leslie Caswell, Don King, Joseph Applegarth, Terry Haugen, Mark Werner, Philip Jensen, Levi Grant, George Ledbetter, Roger Wess, Dale Grant, Terri Haynes, Jay Sutcliffe, Caroline Winchester.

Strategic Directions: What innovative, substantial actions will deal with the underlying contradictions and move us toward our vision?



Dawes County Joint Planning Meeting
Strategic Session
5:30 – 8:00 pm
March 31, 2011
Chadron, NE

What can we collectively do to make Dawes County a prosperous, healthy desirable place to live, work, learn, and play in the next 1-3 years?

Community leaders and members of Dawes County met on the Chadron State College Campus on March 31, for their fourth meeting to answer the following focus question:

What will our specific, measurable accomplishments be for the first year?

Those present were: Kim Engel, Betty Reading, Joseph Applegarth, Leslie Bargaen, Sandy Powell, John Booker, Clyde Franklin, Harold Krueger, Karin Fischer, Levi Grant, Bill Cebula, John Chizek, Terri Haynes, Sandy Roes, Jana Jensen, Jerry Schumacher, Doris Harrington, Steve Lenzo, Don Blausey, Roger Wess, George Ledbetter, Kristi Johnson, Caroline Winchester

Strategic Direction:		
Enhancing Local Transportation		
Current Reality	1st Year Accomplishments	2-3 year Success Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community survey (need to address sidewalks) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan for pedestrian and bike transportation system/essential data collected • Funding applied for – LB 840 – others • City Council on board • Extend availability of existing local shuttle • Investigate bike rack designs – build 10 new bike racks and place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% - 75% of plan implemented • Funding secured

Strategic Direction:		
Maximizing Community Strength through Working Together		
Current Reality	1st Year Accomplishments	2-3 year Success Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal resource directory opportunity • Dawes County joint planning started • Inter-relationships could be strengthened 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance/redevelop the community resource manual – distribution @ chamber, hotels, restaurants, city website, service organizations • Still meeting in one year with other multidisciplinary representatives • Taxing entities will begin joint purchasing/budgeting • School/community/business will attend training/awareness of 40 Developmental assets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased community involvement by all sectors • Increased public awareness of resources – community calendar • Every citizen will have access to resource listing • Ongoing focused strategic plan for the community • 40 Developmental Assets philosophy/concepts/behaviors will be demonstrated by the members of Dawes County joint planning group

Strategic Direction:		
Engaging County in Positive Healthy Living		
Current Reality	1 st Year Accomplishments	2-3 year Success Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy food opportunities not used • Few worksite wellness programs/guidelines • Difficulty to purchase high nutrient dense foods in local food establishments • Low nutrient dense foods at checkout • Ignorance of availability of activity opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular cooking classes • 30% of business with worksite wellness • All food establishments have recognized/approved at least 1 menu items identified by logo/sticker • Grocery store aisles for checkout with high density (nutrient) foods • Education events calendar (website), blog • Walkability/bikeability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year round farmers market • Community supported agriculture • 65% of worksites with wellness programs in place • Fully utilizing current facilities • Access to forest service from city limits • Community center • All food establishments will have multiple menu items identified by logo/sticker

Strategic Direction:		
Positioning Business Opportunities for Better Economic Success		
Current Reality	1 st Year Accomplishments	2-3 year Success Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will have access to an enhanced internet interstate highway • Online courses college and high school • Call center • Grain terminal • Tourist attractions communicate • Human potential 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install an information server center with technical support <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Import training in computer technology b. City c. College d. County e. Hospital f. Financial/business g. Etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local students come back to Chadron and work online from here • Small businesses expand markets and new businesses • Work at a distance work center • New information based industries • Education materials • Information structuring • Bring in outside talent digitally

Data compiled using US Census Bureau, Nebraska Department of Education, Economic Census, Stats America, University of Nebraska-Omaha Center for Public Affairs Research, and Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services.

Another great resource for data information can be found through Nebraska Public Power District's [community information site](#).

Community and tourism information can be found on discoverdawescounty.com.

Plan compiled and completed by Daniel Bennett at Panhandle Area Development District.

Contact Information:

Panhandle Area Development District
1517 Broadway Suite 101
Scottsbluff, NE 69361

Phone: 308-436-6584 | Fax: 308-436-6577

