Chapter 4 - Economic Development

Purpose
The purpose of this chapter is to create a community action plan for economic development.

Vision Statement
To provide opportunities for positive change and diversified growth for the greater good of the community, resulting in a healthy, thriving, and balanced economy.

Purpose
The purpose of this chapter is to create a community action plan for economic development.

Introduction
A healthy economy is essential to the vitality and quality of life in the community. Planning for economic vitality provides an opportunity to establish guiding policies for the community’s sustained economic growth. This element includes an estimate of our growth and employment needs during the planning period. Outlined in this chapter is an active approach to providing for and encouraging the type of development that will provide stability for our local economy as well as economic growth.

The Economic Development element of our Comprehensive Plan will address the entire picture of our community. Good schools, an efficient government that works together with business to provide high quality services, including excellent infrastructure, affordable quality housing and child care are essential elements in attaining a good quality of life.

The Economic Development goals and strategies pursue the type of development and growth patterns that will support and complement the quality of life of the Gem Community along with a diverse array of employment opportunities that ensure an appropriate tax base is strengthened and sustained.

Commercial Trade
Emmett has developed into the major commercial center for the county. National retail and service operations are expanding in the region. This expansion is evident in Emmett and this trend is expected to continue.

Employment
Gem County is the 19th most populous of Idaho’s 44 counties. The population in Gem County has been steadily increasing over the past decade with a growth of 2,489 individuals since 1994. The population of Gem County according to 2000 Census figures is 15,963 compared to 13,474 in 1994. The growth rate of 18.5% over the decade is slightly lower than the State of Idaho’s
growth rate of 21.7% for the same period. Gem County has experienced a gain in population, but has not received an equal gain in economic benefit. The population increase is a result of commuters residing in the area while choosing to work and shop in Ada and Canyon Counties.

The Civilian Labor Force of Gem County exhibited robust growth with an increase of 1,336 individuals or 23.1% since 1994. While the number of individuals in the labor force increased, so did opportunities in employment. As a result, the number of unemployed persons remained fairly constant and the unemployment rate declined by 1.1% over the last decade. Gem County's unemployment rate in 1994 was 6.5% and in 2004 the rate was 5.4%. The highest rate of unemployment over the last ten years was 7.2% in both 1995 and 1996. As growth in Gem County continues, industries such as Construction, Education and Healthcare are where the economy will be growing in the next decade.

Existing Conditions

The major components of Idaho’s economy are agriculture, mining, timber and tourism industries. The Gem community is an important player in the agricultural component of Idaho’s economy. Over 7% of the State’s agricultural employment comes from Gem County farms and ranching operations. Supporting agriculture is the vast network of canals and river systems reaching to the reservoirs of Black Canyon Dam, Cascade Dam and Deadwood Dam – worth well over $200,000,000 (according to the Bureau of Reclamation). Agriculture brings to the valley a sense of community and vast, open spaces, which make it well worth protecting. Gem County ranks 41 out of 44 in tourism dollars generated.

The number of farms has increased by 51% since 1992. The amount of acres in farms has also grown 20% from 184,740 acres in 1997 to 221,200 acres in 2002, however the average farm size has dropped 4% to 276 acres as well as the Market Value of production has fallen 9% from $30,078,000 in 1997 to $27,467,000 in 2002. Out of the 44 counties in Idaho, Gem County is ranked 28 in market value of agricultural products sold.

The industry in Gem County with the highest employment is Government with 855 employees followed closely by farm employment with 850 employees demonstrating that agriculture remains a significant contributor to the area economy and should be encouraged.

The top five industries contributing to Idaho’s economy are manufacturing, healthcare, tourism, agriculture, and food & beverage processing. The composition of the economy in Gem County is led by healthcare, educational services, construction, retail trade, and manufacturing. Differences in the two can be attributed to regionally defining factors. With both total land in farms and acres of orchards declining, agriculture’s role in Gem County’s economy is changing, currently ranked 26th in market value of agricultural products sold in Idaho. Tourism earnings, primarily through day visits, increase yearly with a current ranking of 31st in the state, up from 41st. Though a viable option, due to land availability & low taxes, food & beverage processing is virtually non-existent at this time in Gem County. (Reference labor.idaho.gov for Major Industries of the Gem County Economy and usda.gov for Agriculture Production)
Industrial-Business-Centers

Emmett’s economic advantages include low taxes; a large well-trained labor pool (especially in manufacturing disciplines); low energy rates and affordable housing. Gem County and the City of Emmett, the Gem Economic Development Association, the Chamber of Commerce and other agencies the Economic Development Foundation work together extremely well to foster business expansion, retention and economic development. This partnership has helped new businesses expand or locate in the Gem Community.

There are several areas within the community that are designated and marketed for business expansion:

- Shadow Butte Industrial Park
- Enterprise Loop
- Airport Industrial Area
- Mill Road/Salesyard Road Mixed-Use Area
- Main Street/Cascade Road/Industrial Area
- Central Business District (Downtown Emmett area)

Future Conditions

The Gem Community is currently working towards diversification in employment and the community is working together to bring industrial and commercial growth to provide living wage jobs.

The community has railroad service to the valley, which is currently being utilized for commerce, as well as tourism. The regional airport located in Boise has both commercial airline passenger service and cargo service. The City of Emmett owns an airport with a 3,250 foot long runway that serves agricultural, recreational and business activities.

Although the Gem community loses some retail trade to Ada and Canyon Counties, it also benefits by tapping the same markets available to Ada and Canyon Counties. The land-prices are cheaper and the tax rate is far lower in Gem County than the urbanized counties to the south.

A goal of the community is to create an economy that is stable and not totally dependent upon economic activity in Ada and Canyon Counties. The economic relationship between the Gem Community and the Treasure Valley is symbiotic with each benefiting from the other. There is opportunity to draw economic development from the nearby counties and communities by providing retail, manufacturing, services and tourism unique to Gem Community.

Detailed employment forecasts prepared by Idaho Commerce and Labor in December 2004 indicate that Gem County will continue to expand its total employment throughout the planning period.

According to the Idaho Commerce and Labor forecast, the total employment in the Gem Community will increase by about one percent 1% each year between 2005 and 2020 during the 15 year projected timeframe. This may be a conservative estimate With the growth occurring in the Treasure Valley and the positive attitudes and aggressive recruiting of the local community, the percentage of employment growth should far exceed these projections.
Increasing migration to Gem County for the rural lifestyle, quality of life, lower taxes and proximity to the Treasure Valley for employment and various amenities of the Boise Metropolitan Area.

- Increased migration to the Gem Community for the rural lifestyle, quality of life, lower property taxes and proximity to the Treasure Valley for employment and various amenities of the Boise Metropolitan Area.
- Increasing demand for acreage lots for rural lifestyle.
- Increasing population growth of approximately four percent (4%) in the Gem community.
- A substantial steady increase in residential, commercial and industrial development throughout the planning period as a result of positive community economic development actions.
- An increase in employment in all sectors with a moderate to slow increase in government employment, with the exception of agriculture, throughout the planning period.
- An increasing number of retired workers re-entering the casual labor market.
- An increasing number of multiple wage earners per household.
- A substantial increase in business activities related to rural lifestyle.
- A substantial increase in infill type projects within the City of Emmett will continue.
- Increase the Gem communities' opportunities in destination tourism.
- Increase the Gem communities' cultural opportunities.

Economic Relationships

The Gem Community is very privileged with the economic development organizations currently serving it. Emmett is recognized as a Gem Community, and has an active Gem Team that is recognized by the State of Idaho Department of Commerce and Labor. There are many groups who are organized and work together for the betterment of the community. The organizations along with representatives of local government, with these entities there are also representatives from local service groups, administrators, students and concerned citizens meeting on a monthly basis.

There are many economic development resources within the region that the community and residents utilize. Gem County lies within the Boise Metropolitan Statistical Area. Individuals and organizations within the Gem Community are members of the Boise Valley Economic Partnership (BVEP) and/or the Boise Metro Chamber.

As the Boise job base expands, new residents will be drawn to the Treasure Valley for employment. Emmett and Gem County will experience increased residential development attributed to employment expansion in the Boise area. Also, any action to limit or increase housing costs in Boise, Meridian or Nampa will intensify the shift of population growth out of...
Ada and Canyon Counties and into the Gem Community housing market. This emerging trend of development shifting to the Gem Community is forecast to intensify in the future, depending upon development scenarios that occur in Ada and Canyon Counties. This development trend has been incorporated into the population and related forecasts within this Comprehensive Plan.

Forecast Needs

Residents strongly support economic development policies and actions that will create new jobs and encourage existing businesses to expand, while allowing for greater employment opportunities and diversity for residents. There is a direct correlation between government actions/policies and business expansion in the community. With emphasis on economic development, we will grow and create new employment and job diversity. With State funding, the community supports the improvements and extension of both Highway 16 and the Dewey Road Extension to Interstate 84. Two subcomponents of economic development will significantly affect future job expansion in the Gem Community. These subcomponents are described as follows:

1) Positive Community Partnerships: Continuation of programs to promote quality development and low-cost services to support employment gains. Continuation of city and county policies to maintain low tax rates and diversified housing opportunities.

2) Growth Shift to the Gem Community: Rapid growth in Ada and Canyon Counties will shift growth emphasis to the Gem community. Emmett will be perceived as "next door" to Boise and Nampa employment centers.

Based on a forecast analysis of population within the study area and these two economic development subcomponents, additional land and infrastructure for employment-related land uses would be required in the community. Table 4 in the Appendix presents key actions needed to accommodate forecasted employment growth.

1.0 Economic Development Goal Statement

Gem County and the City of Emmett will take the necessary steps to increase economic diversity, employment base, and tax base for continuing enhancement of quality of life and employment in the Gem Community.

To stimulate and support economic development in Gem County, the following goals and policies are provided:

Policies——

4.1.1—Develop long-term strategies for economic development and business assistance.

4.1.2—Support business retention, expansion and creation. Assist businesses with the tools and encouragement that will enable them to succeed.

4.1.3—Support a prosperous and inviting city center and historic town site.
4.1.4—Promote job creation to meet the employment needs of a growing workforce; therefore reducing the need for residents to commute outside of the community for employment. Ensure that needed infrastructure is provided for new and expanding businesses.

4.1.5—Maintain partnerships with Idaho Commerce and Idaho Department of Labor and regional resources.

4.1.6—The community should solicit economic activities that maintain and increase the community’s fiscal stability by providing high-quality development opportunities, which export goods and services.

4.1.7—Reserve and designate sufficient land to fulfill the community’s industrial and commercial needs.

4.1.8—Encourage efforts to develop and maintain quality neighborhoods and housing which project a positive image for economic development.

4.1.9—The community should support a continued working relationship with Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) and regional planning organizations to:

A. Designate a new portion of State Highway 16, which would extend south and connect with I-84.
B. Extend Dewey Road connection southwest to I-84.
C. Improve Highway 52 west of Emmett.
D. Support the continued feasibility study into the proposed Indian Valley-North-South Highway.
E. Support the expansion and extension of facilities at the existing City of Emmett Airport.

4.1.10—Support the development of non-motorized pathways connecting the commercial areas with schools and recreational areas.

4.1.11—Support the development of cultural and destination tourism opportunities.

4.1.12—Support educational opportunities that will meet the needs of the growing population.

4.1.13—The Gem Community recognizes that the Emmett Municipal Airport is an integral part of our local economy. We also recognize that development around the airport can cause conflicts that may limit the future expansion of an airport or threaten the existence of the airport altogether. It is our intent that the airport remain viable and free from future conflicts that may be created by incompatible development adjacent to the airport or in the flight path of the airport runway. We want to limit the circumstances under which the airport operation may be a nuisance to reduce the potential for the Gem community to lose the benefits the airport brings to our citizens and economy. The Gem community discourages the siting of incompatible uses adjacent to the airport or in the flight path of the airport runway.
Commercial Trade

Emmett has developed into the major commercial center for the county. National and regional retail and service operations are expanding in the region Gem Community. This expansion is evident in Emmett and this trend is expected to continue.

Employment

Gem County is the 19th most populous of Idaho’s 44 counties. The population in Gem County has been steadily increasing over the past decade with a growth of 7,489 individuals since 1994. The population of Gem County according to 2000 Census figures is 15,963 compared to 13,474 in 1994. The growth rate of 18.5% over the decade is slightly lower than the State of Idaho’s growth rate of 21.7% for the same period. Gem County has experienced a gain in population, but has not received an equal gain in economic benefit. The population increase is a result of commuters residing in the area while choosing to work and shop in Ada and Canyon Counties.

The Civilian Labor Force of Gem County exhibited robust growth with an increase of 1,326 individuals or 23.1% since 1994. While the number of individuals in the labor force increased, so did opportunities in employment. As a result, the number of unemployed persons remained fairly constant and the unemployment rate declined by 1.1% over the last decade. Gem County’s unemployment rate in 1994 was 6.5% and in 2004 the rate was 5.4%. The highest rate of unemployment over the last ten years was 7.2% in both 1995 and 1996. As growth in Gem County continues, industries such as Construction, Education and Healthcare are where the economy will be growing in the next decade.

Continued growth in the Gem Community will see significant increases in the industry sectors of Healthcare, Construction, Education, and Manufacturing. (See Department of Labor website for most current information on employment wages and labor forecast.)

Industrial /Business Centers

Emmett’s economic advantages include low taxes; a large well-trained labor pool (especially in manufacturing disciplines), low energy rates and affordable housing. Gem County and the City of Emmett, the Gem Economic Development Association, the Chamber of Commerce and other agencies the Economic Development Foundation work together extremely well to foster business expansion, retention and economic development. This partnership has helped new businesses expand or locate in the Gem Community.

There are several areas within the community that are designated and marketed for business expansion:

- Shadow Butte Industrial Park
- Enterprise Loop
- Airport Industrial Area
• Mill Road/Salesyard Road Mixed Use Area
• Main Street/Cascade Road/Industrial Area
• Central Business District (Downtown Emmett area)
• Washington Avenue: Highway 16 to Idaho Boulevard

Economic Relationships

The Gem Community is very privileged to have benefited from the economic development organizations who have and are currently serving it. Emmett is recognized as a “Gem Community”, and has an active economic development Gem Team that is recognized by the State of Idaho Department of Commerce and Labor and Idaho Department of Labor. There are many groups who are organized and work together for the betterment of the community. They include the City of Emmett, Gem County, The Chamber of Commerce, and the Economic Development Foundation. These organizations along with representatives of local government, with these entities there are also representatives from local service groups, administrators, students and concerned citizens meeting on a monthly basis should continue to cooperate and coordinate efforts for maximum utilization of resources and best outcomes.

There are many economic development resources within the region that the community and residents utilize. Gem County lies within the Boise Metropolitan Statistical Area. Individuals and organizations within the Gem Community are members of the Boise Valley Economic Partnership (BVEP) and/or the Boise Metro Chamber, involved with various economic development activities and organizations serving the greater Treasure Valley region and/or Region III.

As the Boise job base expands, new residents will be drawn to the Treasure Valley for employment. Emmett and Gem County will continue to experience increased residential development attributed to employment expansion in the Boise area. Also, any action to limit or increase housing costs in Boise, Meridian or Nampa will intensify the shift of population growth out of Ada and Canyon Counties and into the Gem Community housing market. This emerging trend of development shifting to the Gem Community is forecast to intensify in the future, depending upon development scenarios that occur in Ada and Canyon Counties. This development trend has been incorporated into the population and related forecasts within this Comprehensive Plan.

Forecast Needs

Residents strongly support economic development policies and actions that will create new jobs and encourage existing businesses to expand, while allowing for greater employment opportunities and diversity for residents. There is a direct correlation between government actions/policies and business expansion in the community. With emphasis on economic development, we will grow and create new employment and job diversity. With State funding, the community supports the improvements and extension of both Highway 16 and the Dewey...
Road Extension to Interstate 84. Two subcomponents of economic development will significantly affect future job expansion in the Gem Community. These subcomponents are described as follows:

2) Positive Community Partnerships: Continuation of programs to promote quality development and low-cost services to support employment gains. Continuation of city and county policies to maintain low tax rates and diversified housing opportunities.

2) Growth Shift to the Gem Community: Rapid growth in Ada and Canyon counties will shift growth emphasis to the Gem community. Emmett will be perceived as "next door" to Boise and Nampa employment centers.

Based on a forecast analysis of population within the study area and these two economic development subcomponents, additional land and infrastructure for employment-related land uses would be required in the community. Table 4 in the Appendix presents key actions needed to accommodate forecasted employment growth.

1.0 Economic Development Goal Statement

Gem County and the City of Emmett will continue to take the necessary steps to increase economic diversity, employment base and tax base for continuing enhancement of quality of life and employment in the Gem Community; to help Gem Community prosper and fulfill its destiny as the "Valley of Plenty".

To stimulate and support economic development in Gem County Community, the following goals and policies are provided:

Policies

4.1.1 Develop Encourage long-term strategies for economic development and business assistance.

4.1.2 Support business retention, expansion and creation. Assist businesses with the tools information and encouragement that will enable them to succeed.

4.1.3 Support a prosperous and inviting city center and historic town site.

4.1.4 Promote job creation to meet the employment needs of a growing the community work force, therefore reducing the need for residents to commute outside of the community for employment. Ensure that needed infrastructure is provided for new and expanding businesses.

4.1.5 Support the development of the necessary infrastructure for new and expanding businesses.

4.1.56 Maintain partnerships with Idaho Commerce and Idaho Department of Labor and other regional economic development resources.
4.1.67 The community should Mandate Support the position of an Economic Development Professional to solicit economic activities that maintain and increase the community’s fiscal stability by providing high-quality development opportunities, which export goods and services.

4.1.78 Reserve and designate sufficient land to fulfill the community’s industrial and commercial needs.

4.1.8 Support the development of the necessary infrastructure for new and expanding businesses.

4.1.9 Encourage efforts to develop and maintain quality neighborhoods and housing, which project a positive image for economic development.

4.1.10 The community should support a continued working relationship with Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) and regional planning organizations to: on future projects along with regional projects.
   
   B. Designate a new portion of State Highway 16, which would extend south and connect with I-84.
   
   F. Extend Dewey Road connection southwest to I-84.
   
   G. Improve Highway 52 west of Emmett.
   
   H. Support the continued feasibility study into the proposed Indian Valley North-South Highway.
   
   I. Support the expansion and extension of facilities at the existing City of Emmett Airport.

   J. Support the designation of the Lower Payette River Heritage Byway.

4.1.11 Support the development of non-motorized pathways connecting the commercial areas with schools and recreational areas.

4.1.12 Support the development of cultural and destination tourism opportunities.

4.1.13 Support educational opportunities that will meet the needs of the growing population.

4.1.14 The Gem Community recognizes and supports that the Emmett Municipal Airport is as an integral part of our local economy. We also recognize that development around the airport can cause conflicts that may limit the future expansion of an airport or threaten the existence of the airport altogether. It is our intent that the airport remain viable and free from future conflicts that may be created by incompatible development adjacent to the airport or in the flight path of the airport runway. We want to limit the circumstances under which the airport operation may be a nuisance to reduce the potential for the Gem community to lose the benefits the airport brings to our citizens and economy. The Gem community discourages the siting of incompatible uses adjacent to the airport or in the flight path of the airport runway.