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Results of a county-wide survey were released mid-December along with results from town hall meetings held in Grant, Madrid and Venango.

In March 2010, the Perkins County Planning Commission, in cooperation with the Southwest Nebraska Community Betterment Corporation, held community meetings to gather public input for updating a comprehensive plan.

Information from a survey has been compiled on what residents desire from their community, what would benefit a community, the challenges they face, along with what each town's residents view as assets and opportunities.

### Grant Town Hall Meeting

Some of the attributes of living in a Perkins County community that came from a town hall meeting in Grant on March 22, 2010 include:

- Community strengths: Excellent emergency system, safety, good schools, an airport, clean environment, attractive farmsteads, return of young people, retirement facilities, youth center, growing hospital, friendly, ambitious, prosperous people, recreation such as the pool and library, several churches, organizations and clubs, motel and RV park and collaboration among businesses with the local organizations and public entities.

- The top five objectives in envisioning a strong future include:

1) Sustaining the health care systems, 2) creating multi-employee businesses, 3) maintaining a vibrant school system, 4) providing entrepreneurial options for young people seeking a variety of jobs.

- Individually, residents show willingness to work hard, satisfaction in working with youth, interest in being mentors or volunteers, a common desire to work for the public good, willingness to provide leadership or encouragement, ability to communicate, collaborate and organize, interest in solving problems, devoting time and leadership, working at recruiting residents, and striving toward beautifying the community.

- Challenges and opportunities listed for the city of Grant include combining technology with productivity (e.g. water use), creating awareness by educating the public (e.g. agricultural applications, etc.), recruiting more volunteers, leaders and mentors, maintaining a safety level in the community, regulating or restricting water, keeping hospital progressive by recruiting new practitioners, offering competitive wages, maintaining a vibrant downtown, and increasing networking with newcomers.

- Some of the trends the community needs to be aware of included government policy e.g., Environmental Protection Agency, farming, health care, regulations, clean air and water—water is a valuable resource that is being threatened; keeping a balance between growth and progress yet keeping the area clean and safe—zoning can inhibit progress.

### Madrid Town Hall Meeting

Patrons in the Madrid community met with the Perkins County Planning and Zoning Commission on March 23, 2010 to seek public input on updating the comprehensive plan.

- Community strengths include safety, peace, quiet, clean air, attractive farmsteads and homes,

clean water, good quality of life, good school, fire department and doctors, personal freedom, rural lifestyle, clean water, good climate, available ag land, community events, good and honest people.

- The top five objective visions for the future include keeping the quality of rural lifestyle, retaining the K-12 schools in Perkins County, preventing regulations that hinder development, protecting the clean air, water, safety and landscape, maintaining roads and retaining jobs and businesses.
- Assets brought to the table in the Madrid community include space for development, water supply, banks for financial needs, schools, health care, railroad, fire department, churches, roads, rural lifestyle, good people and close relationships, senior center, residents who work together and support each other, small businesses, easy access to a hospital, no-kill animal shelter, recycling, motel and a conservation service.
- Positive attributes of individuals include being neighborly, hardworking, self motivated, conservative, caring, knowledgeable, friendly, honest. They provide leadership and consultation and possess variety of skills.
- Opportunities listed include: Maintaining low cost of living, developing Texas Trail history, providing unique entrepreneurial opportunities, and business succession, attracting young people with broadband or internet access.
- Some of the challenges Madrid might face include economic and developmental due to government regulations, inaction, lack of labor pool, or wage competition.

The community is aware of the same trends in government policy and zoning that might inhibit progress.

Venango Town Hall Meeting

Coming together on March 24, 2010, Venango residents provided input for a comprehensive plan to the Perkins County Planning and Zoning Commission.

- Attributes of their community and county include: public transit, downtown development, mail delivery, arts council, wide open spaces, easy access to travel, outdoor recreation, farming community, vested community members, fiscal conservation, pride in children, facilities for elderly, excellent schools, good hospital, medical and emergency services, low crime and cost of living, good roads, clean air, good water, good law enforcement, churches, and alumni association.
- Looking down the road 10-15 years, the top five visions for the future include: Offering a variety of business options to retain and/or recruit young people, including encouragement for young people who want to farm; creating amenities such as lodging options, gas station, convenience store; protecting and meeting the water needs for drinking and agriculture, infrastructure to grow and support businesses such as the grain industry, fertilizer, agriculture and the railroad; invest in the community by collaborating for capital improvements through private funding, the county's community foundation, or tax increment financing.
- Venango has many assets, such as a fire department, water system, electrical system, churches, Lions and American Legion clubs, post office, businesses, and community development groups, support for community betterment.
- Ambitious individuals contribute to the community with knowledge and skills such as carpentry, writing, speaking, leading, and gardening. There are business owners, volunteers, and those who have knowledge of and access to information regarding community development block grants for business development, tourism, housing and community development.
- Challenges/opportunities include addressing day care needs, recreational opportunities, housing, marketing attributes in rural farming and reaching out to young people, encouraging grant application, recruiting and retaining employment, getting youth involved in the community.
- The community needs to be aware of legislation or regulations that create unnecessary barriers to such things as water usage and application of fertilizer, and tax increases. The community needs to try to retain young people and/or coax them to return. Developing wind

energy could benefit the community.