

**Skill Building Session II:
Engaging Special Populations –
Rural Communities**

**Leading the Way in Public Health
Nutrition and Physical Activity:
Blazing New Trails**

**Salt Lake City, Utah
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Produced by the Alabama Department of Public Health Video Communications and Distance Learning Division

**Skill Building Session II:
Engaging Special Populations –
Rural Communities**

What's Working in Rural Montana



Produced by the Alabama Department of Public Health Video Communications and Distance Learning Division

Faculty

**Cathy Costakis, MS
Montana Nutrition and Physical
Activity Program
Physical Activity Coordinator
Montana State University
Bozeman, Montana**

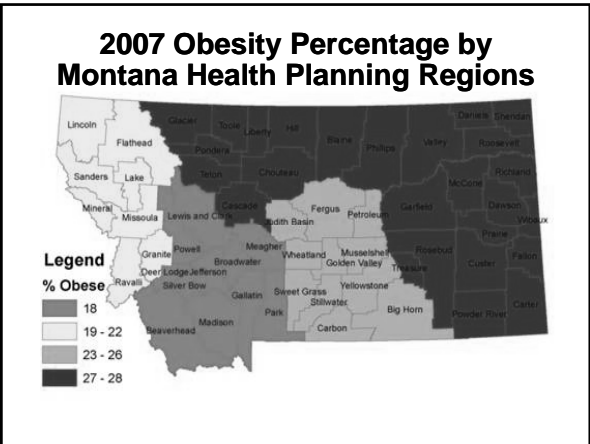
Montana Profile

- Large rural state
- Largest city: Billings
 - 100,000 population
- Six cities over 25,000 population
- Fourth largest state geographically
- 44th by population
 - Less than 1 million residents
- Many very small communities



Health Disparities

- Obesity more prevalent in rural and frontier regions and on the seven American Indian Reservations



Objectives

- Unique challenges and opportunities in rural towns
- Two SRTS programs
- One project to increase trail accessibility

Challenges

- Large geographic area
- Sparse population
- Isolated communities
- Aging state
- Politically conservative in general
- Low-resourced state

Opportunities

- Small population
 - Close network of professionals and close-knit communities
- Small cities and towns can create big impact
- Technology is making it easier to connect and share best practices
- Cultural norms shift beginning to take place at least for trails and PA

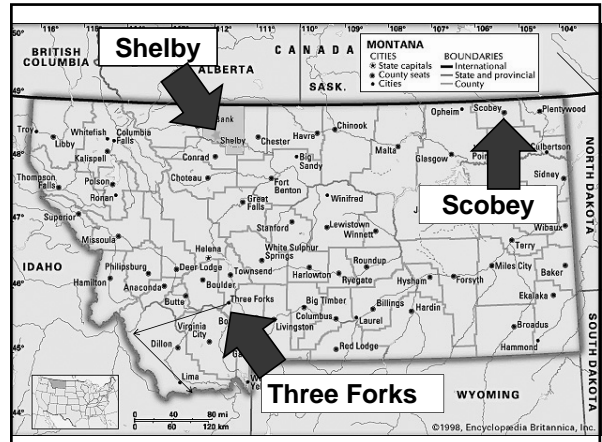
Successful Built Environment Strategies in Rural Areas

- Trails
- Safe Routes to School Programs
- Community gardens
- Community recreation centers



Two SRTS Stories... and More!

- **Shelby: 3,500 population**
- **Scobey: 925 population**
 - One accessible trail story
- **Three Forks: 1,970 population**



Shelby Traditional Main Street



Shelby, Montana

- **Located on the Hi-line**
 - 50+ trains each day



Shelby Civic Center

- **Community fitness center**
 - Open 24/7 with key card
 - Smoke-free campus
 - Discount for employees
 - Classes and teen center



Shelby Roadrunner Recreation Trail

- Access to places to be physically active



Shelby Roadrunner Recreation Trail

- Trail amenities added gradually



Trail and "Wild Turkey Tree and Turf Farm"



Shelby Garden: A Community Affair



**Shelby Garden:
A Community Affair**



**Shelby Garden:
A Community Affair**



**Shelby Garden:
A Community Affair**



Shelby Senior Garden

- 80+ year old farmer helps create new Senior Garden in Shelby



Shelby Senior Garden

- Creating raised beds from old guardrails



New STRS Infrastructure Project



Walking Wheeling Wednesdays



Walking Wheeling Wednesdays



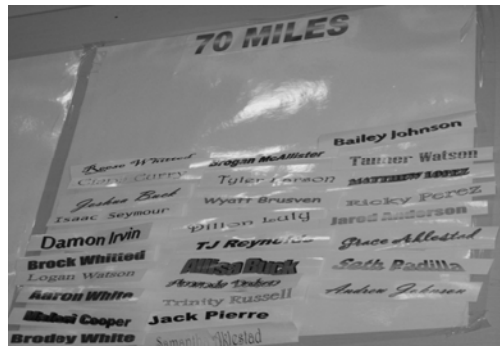
Walking Wheeling Wednesdays



School Walking Club

- School counselor
 - “Less behavior issues since walking club began.”
- PE teacher
 - “First year all our students passed fitness testing.”

School Walking Club



Bike Lanes, Narrow Wide Roads, and Slow Speeds



Shelby Sidewalk Policy

- Require sidewalks in new construction
- Retrofit projects
 - Opt-in Special Improvement District
- This year 1million dollars of sidewalks will be built

Lorette Carter: Community Development Director



Community Development Director

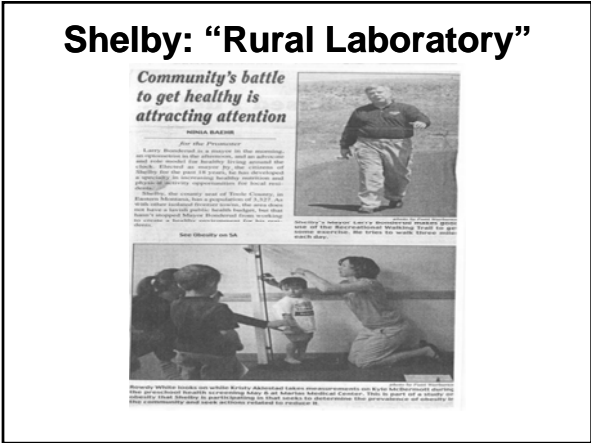
- Hired six years ago
- Raised six million dollars in grant funding
 - \$400,000 for trail and SRTS programs and projects
- Walking/Wheeling Wednesdays leader

Community Development Director

- Spearheaded community garden project

Shelby: “Rural Laboratory”

- Partners ⇒ Rural Health Initiative (RHI)
 - City of Shelby
 - Marias Medical Center
 - Office of Rural Health
 - AHEC
 - Schering-Plough Pharmaceuticals
 - Senator Baucus’ Office
 - NAPA



Scobey, Montana

- Northeastern Montana
 - 14 miles from Canada
- 925 people live in Scobey
- 1,703 live in the county
- Scobey School is the only school in the county
 - K-12 with 265 students

Scobey, Montana

- NAPA contractee
 - Public health nurse

Activities

- Formed Active Living Task Force
 - Community survey to assess interest
 - RHI Incubator Grant
 - Assess feasibility of building a trail
 - Education and awareness campaign to reduce screen time

Activities

- Start SRTS program
- Assess feasibility of community garden project

SRTS Activities

- Formed SRTS committee
- Student Tally and Parent Survey
 - Parents concerned about safety issues
 - Top concern: crossing Main Street (state highway)
- Applied for SRTS funding and was awarded non-infrastructure funding

SRTS Activities

- Media and promotion of kick-off
- Art contest
- Mapping exercise to determine WSB route
- Walking audit with the mayor and parents
- MDT safety study conducted on Main Street

SRTS Activities

- PHN attends Journeys from Home training

Journeys from Home

- Elementary Traffic Education Program
- Focused on skill building and decision making
- Statewide regional trainings
- Target:
 - Health enhancement teachers and SRTS teams

Journeys from Home

- OPI and college credits
 - Making a Difference in Your Community



SRTS Activities

- **Walking Wheeling Wednesdays**
- **Bike/Ped safety classes incorporated into PE class and Walking School Bus**
- **Incentive program started with calendars placed in all K-6 classrooms**
- **Partner with law-enforcement**

SRTS Activities

- **Apply for infrastructure funding for sidewalk improvements**

SRTS Activities

- **City agrees to use Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP) money to add to SRTS infrastructure project**
- **SRTS funding for sidewalks denied**
 - **Infrastructure projects over subscribed nine-fold**
 - **CTEP project put on hold**

Next Steps

- **Continue incentive and education program**
 - **Using seed starter kits and terrariums as this year's incentive awards to encourage interest in gardens**
 - **Very popular**

Next Steps

- **Community garden project has begun**
- **Worksite wellness project envisioned**
- **Combine coalition work across programs**

Connecting Rural Communities Through Trails

- Lewistown: population 5,933
- Sidney: population 4,843
- Cascade: population 770
- Three Forks: population 1,970

Lewistown

- Extensive network of rails to trails



Sidney, MT Ditch Project



Sidney, MT Ditch Project



Trail Project



“This trails project is the most popular project with the public we have ever done.” - Public Works Director

Cascade, MT

- High-speed, rural road has no shoulder
- Now it has “Joe’s Trail”



Cascade, MT

- Joe’s trail spells freedom for many



Three Forks, Montana

- Population: 1,928
- 15% of the population is over 65



Headwaters Trail



Five Key Partners

- City of Three Forks
- Montana Nutrition and Physical Activity Program
- Montana Disability and Health Program
- MonTECH
- Montana Independent Living Project

Three Focus Groups

- 20 informants
- 50 minute sessions
- Perceptions of physical activity, experience using walking trails and specific suggestions for improvements of the trail



Trail Assessment of Accessibility



Running and Cross Slopes



Bathrooms and Bridges

- Difficult access



Bathrooms and Bridges

- Accessible



Difficult Transitions

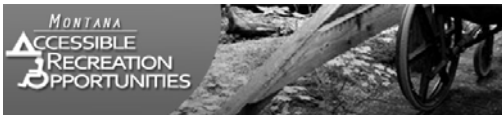


Difficult Intersections for Visually Impaired Individuals, Older Adults, or Mobility Impaired Individuals



Web Access

- For information on Headwaters Trail GIS mapping for visually impaired individuals



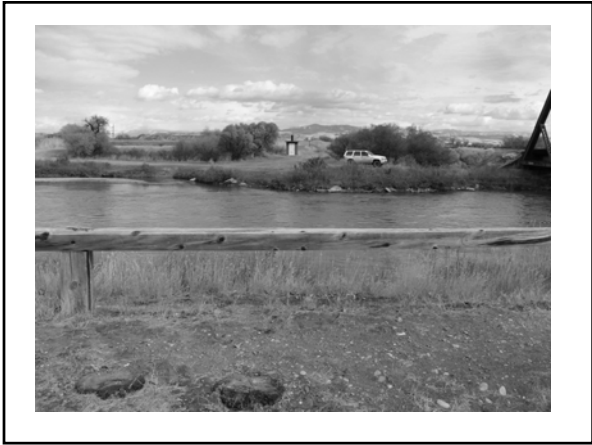
Web Access

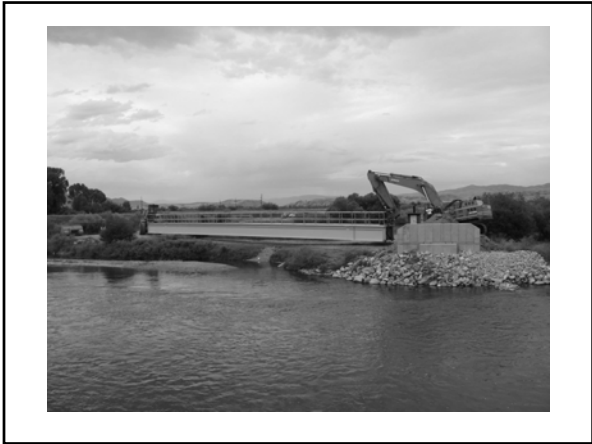
- Website lists accessible recreation activities
- Activities available at this location
- Symbol key

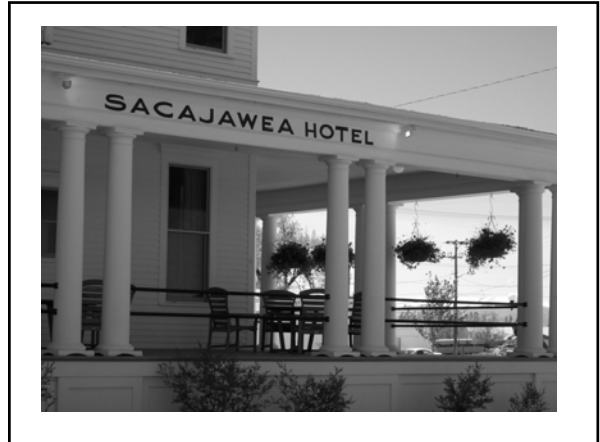
Web Access

- Accessible activities:
 - Biking 
 - Fishing 
 - Hiking 
 - Picnicking 
 - Wildlife viewing 
- Non-accessible activities: none









- ### **Keys to Success and Limitations**
- Strong leadership
 - Resourcefulness
 - Opportunistic
 - Creative use of funding sources
 - Community cohesion and partnerships

- ### **Keys to Success and Limitations**
- Information limited
 - Resources limited
 - Personnel limited

- ### **Lessons Learned**
- Important to get out and work at the local level to build capacity
 - Partnership with SRTS program has been key
 - MSU Extension

Lessons Learned

- **Statewide support**
 - **Journey's from Home trainings**
 - **Rural Health Initiative**
 - **Disabilities and Health Program**

Thank You

Cathy Costakis, MS
Montana Nutrition and Physical
Activity Program
Physical Activity Coordinator
Montana State University
Bozeman, Montana

costakis@montana.edu

(406) 994-5734

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