

# ***A Local Economic Development Plan for Solomon***



## **Workshop Participants**

Joe Curran  
Cynthia Gray  
Marvin Curran

## **Top Five Priorities**

1. New Housing/Housing Improvements
2. Health Care
3. Sewer and Water
4. Landfill & Dumpsite
5. Tourism

# **CREATING LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANS**

Local Economic Development Plans (LEDPs) analyze local conditions, identifies problems and opportunities, sets goals, designs strategies to achieve these goals, coordinates activities to implement the strategies, and evaluates accomplishments. The mission of each Local Economic Development Plan is to:

- Foster a more stable and diversified economy
- Create and sustain employment opportunities
- Strengthen the skills and qualifications of our workforce
- Improve living conditions throughout the Region

The Bering Strait Region has one of the highest unemployment and poverty rates in Alaska, and several non-profit, state and federal agencies are currently attempting to alleviate economic distress in the Region. By creating Local Economic Development Plans for each community in the Bering Strait Region, local governments and entities will possess a tool that identifies community needs and provides development strategies. A LEDP facilitates a consolidated effort to implement economic development strategies that will subsequently decrease unemployment and welfare dependency. Without LEDPS, a duplication of efforts may occur in various projects and programs, and hinder the ability to improve the economic and social well-being of each community.

## **HOW WERE THE LEDPS DEVELOPED?**

To create LEDPs, Kawerak staff adhered to US Department of Commerce's "Guide for Area Overall Economic Development Program," as well as the USDA Rural Development's "A Guide to Strategic Planning for Rural Communities." Both publications emphasized grassroots involvement to assess and maximize local resources, and provided outlines for creating a strategic plan. Kawerak's Community and Economic Development (CED) staff began the process by incorporating previous strategies and studies into the plan, then facilitated planning workshops in 13 communities throughout the Region. Representatives from native corporations, tribal and city councils, local businesses, and interested residents identified community strengths, concerns, goals, and specific projects associated with economic development. The result is a consolidated record of economic needs and activities for our Region. Each LEDP analyzes local conditions; identifies problems and opportunities; sets goals; designs strategies to achieve these goals; coordinates activities to implement the strategies; and evaluates our accomplishments. Because local residents developed it, this document truly represents how each community will improve their economy.

Each workshop began with the distribution of workshop packets and introductions; a description of the Overall Economic Development Plan, the Bering Strait ARDOR Board, and Kawerak's CED program activities; followed by the purpose of the community workshop. Worksheets were given to each participant with instructions to identify the community's most critical economic issues. Once completed, every participant voiced his or her concerns by reviewing his or her list with the other participants, and their thoughts were written on a flip chart. Participants were then asked to approach the flip chart to identify the top three economic issues/concerns in their community. While priorities were tallied, workshop participants determined

as many local strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOTs) as possible.

## **STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS**

SWOT identifies community strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats brought about through economic and social change. Strengths and weaknesses identify current issues, while opportunities and threats focus on those in the future. Strengths represent positive activities in the community, and are the foundation for community and economic development. Weaknesses on the other hand, are challenges the community needs overcome, and paves the way toward improvement. Identifying opportunities offers a chance to brainstorm on activities that will benefit their community, and to determine benchmarks for future development. And finally, identifying threats helps community and economic developers prevent or reduce the negative impacts of continued economic and social change. Discussing community values and concerns provides the opportunity to expand an individual's perspective to ideas never considered before. While one individual may identify an issue as a strength or opportunity, another may perceive the same issue as a weakness or threat. When clarifying these differences is conducted in a positive manner, the process can be a healthy experience for a community and spark the potential for growth.

The organization of SWOT lists and regional priorities are based seven economic foundations developed by the Committee for Economic Development, an independent research and educational organization of over two hundred business executives and educators. The CED believes the important role for state and local governments is to invest in economic foundations that enable the economy to grow, adapt and compete. These foundations include a capable and motivated workforce; sound physical infrastructure; well-managed natural resources; knowledge and technology; enterprise development; an attractive quality of life; and fiscal management. (Committee for Economic Development 1986) Additional categories included in our analysis to reflect the needs of our communities include geography and climate, and community capacity. Basing our analysis on this framework enable us to determine how we should spend our limited resources in the most cost-effective manner.

### **STRENGTHS**

- Minerals (gold, gravel, etc.)
- Tourism (geography)
- Wildlife
- Natural Resources
- Accessibility (road system)
- Historical Value
- "Last Train to Nowhere"
- Mining History
- Community
- Elders

## **WEAKNESSES**

Land Knowledge (assessment of resources available)  
Financial Base  
Low Population  
Lack of Facilities  
Cultural Base for Developing Tourism (i.e. Native dancing)  
Lack of Basic Local Infrastructure (i.e. roads, walkways)

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

Mining  
Tourism (ex. Housing for bird watchers)  
Population Growth  
Community Facilities  
Quick Stop Store  
Hiking Trails  
Bird Watching  
Canoe Trips

## **THREATS**

Pollution (i.e. mining)  
Environmental Concerns  
Crime from "Outsiders"  
Wildlife Population (as it relates to land use, sustainable development)  
Alcohol Abuse

# **STRATEGIC PLANS FOR SOLOMON**

## **PRIORITY #1: LACK OF HOUSING**

**Problem:** Lack of housing.

**Cause:** Funding availability is poor.

**Need:** Contacts, sources, grant writer, people to follow up on things.

**Solution:** Take advantage of existing resources for training (i.e. funds for grant writer training).

**Goal:** Adequate housing for ten members.

### **Objectives:**

1. Conduct survey on who wants housing.
2. Identify funding sources.
3. Hire a grant writer (training).

**Prospective Agencies Responsible:** SIC, Kawerak Housing, Bering Strait Regional Housing Authority

**Time Table:** 5 year goal (2004).

**Possible Funding Sources:** Federal & State Agencies

## **PRIORITY #2: PLAN FOR HEALTH CARE**

**Problem:** No health care available.

**Causes:** Location, availability of professionals willing to go there.

**Need:** Itinerant health care, on-site emergency equipment & supplies.

**Solution:** Lobby Norton Sound Health Corporation & utilize their resources.

**Goal:** Provide adequate healthcare to those choosing to live there year round.

### **Objectives:**

1. Invite staff to council meeting.
2. Coordinate with NSHC.
3. Document need.

**Person(s)/Agency Responsible:** NSHC

**Time Table:** As soon as possible

**Possible Funding Sources:** NSHC

## **PRIORITY #3: SEWER & WATER**

**Problem:** Need for adequate disposal of sewer & water.

**Cause:** Lack of funding & population (need 25 people living there).

**Need:** To have adequate sewer & water.

**Solution:** Outhouses or septic tanks.

**Goal:** Get sewer and water in Solomon.

### **Objectives:**

1. Document existing need.
2. Provide data to appropriate funding sources.
3. Coordinate with applicable agencies for funding sources & planning.

**Person/Agencies Responsible:** Public Health Service & State of Alaska.

**Time Table:** Begin process as soon as possible.

**Possible Funding Sources:** NSHC, ANHB, State of Alaska

## **PRIORITY #4: DUMPSITE**

**Problem:** No existing landfill.

**Cause:** No location identified or selected.

**Need:** An adequate dumpsite.

**Solution:** Coordinate with Solomon Native Corporation & get permission.

**Goal:** Eliminate pollution by providing an adequate dumpsite.

### **Objectives:**

1. Meet with Corporation & shareholders to select site.
2. Find funding sources.

**Person/Agency Responsible:** Solomon Native Corporation & Traditional Council, NSHC.

**Time Table:** Start process ASAP to complete in 5 years.

**Possible Funding Sources:** Department of Community & Regional Affairs, NSHC, EPA, ANHB.

#### **PRIORITY #5: TOURISM**

**Problem:** Tourism hasn't been developed in Solomon.

**Cause:** No expertise or desire in membership.

**Need:** To develop a sustainable tourism (also jobs/economy).

**Solution:** Acquire proper training/funding.

**Goal:** Have a successful tourism venture operated and managed by Solomon membership.

#### **Objectives:**

1. Coordinate with other native corporations.
2. Identify funding sources & train people.

**Person/Agency Responsible:** Solomon Traditional & Native Corp., Kawerak CED.

**Time Table:** Running in 5 years. Initialize planning process within 2 years.

**Possible Funding Sources:** DCRA, State Tourism Council.

## **ADDITIONAL ISSUES FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION**

Landfill Access Road

Fish Camp Access Road

Boardwalk to Water at Manilla