

Introduction to the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

This Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) will serve as an update for the Overall Economic Development Plan (OEDP) submitted by the Northwest Missouri Regional Council of Governments (NWMORCOG) in 1992. The plan will outline objectives and goals for the area, in addition to assessing the region's economic progress. Furthermore, once completed, the CEDS will serve as a long-term guide for economic and community development for the region.

The initial portion of the CEDS is an assessment of Atchison, Gentry, Holt, Nodaway, and Worth Counties. The evaluation includes historical data, population trends, agricultural and natural resources, transportation, industry specifics, local economy information, available human resources, and infrastructure. The assessment section is followed by data solicited through a series of public meetings and newspaper advertisements. Using the information collected through the aforementioned efforts, regional strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats were identified; goals and objectives were established to strengthen the opportunities, while others were produced to eliminate the threats.

The NWMORCOG is recognized as the Economic Development District (EDD) for Northwest Missouri. The goals and objectives identified by the CEDS represent the efforts of the EDD to coordinate with other entities to most efficiently use the often-scarce natural, human and programmatic resources. This document exhibits the efforts of the region's economic development resources to diminish duplication of our endeavors and realize greater economies of scale in development practice throughout the EDD. The 2001 CEDS will serve as an outline for activities and program strategies that are to be implemented through the year 2006.

II. Northwest Missouri Regional Council of Governments

Organization and Management

The membership of the NWMORCOG is comprised of one representative from each of the five counties of Atchison, Gentry, Holt, Nodaway, and Worth. A representative is also chosen from each of the 42 incorporated cities and villages within these counties. The Executive Board is comprised of one representative from each county as chosen by the respective County Commissions, and one at-large and one minority representative as elected by the other 20 members of the Executive Board.

Northwest Missouri Regional Council of Governments Board of Directors, 2001

<i>Chairman:</i>	Larry Dougan	Nodaway County Commissioner;
<i>Vice-Chairman:</i>	Larry Hicks	Atchison County Commissioner;
<i>Secretary:</i>	Wayne Voltmer	Holt County Commissioner;
<i>Treasurer:</i>	Craig McNeese	Worth County Representative,

Atchison County

Inace Freeman
Larry Hicks
Dale Dickkut
Willis Weedin

Holt County

Rodney Meng
Wayne Voltmer
Duane Nauman
Bill Thurnau

Worth County

Bill Mozingo
Craig McNeese
Doris Owens
Marian Scott

Gentry County

James Gillespie
Stephan Lockhart
Ron Peterson
John Rieks

Nodaway County

Mike Thompson
Jack Baldwin
Chris Lamaster
Larry Dougan

At Large Members

Dr. Alex Ching
Dr. Duane Williams

History

The Northwest Missouri Regional Council of Governments, formerly called the Northwest Missouri Regional Planning Commission, is one of 20 regional planning commissions in Missouri, which grew out of the State and Regional Planning and Community Development

Act of 1966, permitting the establishment of regional planning commissions to resolve common community problems on a regional basis.

The formation of regional planning commissions was voluntary, requiring the consent of the governing bodies representing over 50 percent of the population. The Northwest Missouri Regional Planning Commission was established on June 11, 1968, under Revised Statutes Chapter 251 of the State of Missouri. The Council currently consists of the five County Courts of Atchison, Gentry, Holt, Nodaway, and Worth counties, and 42 towns in the area.

From the establishment of the Commission in 1968 until 1972, the Commission did not employ any full-time staff. However, the Commission did contract with various consultants for the development of plans. In 1970, they contracted with Larkin and Associates, Kansas City, to develop a comprehensive plan for water and sewer development in Northwest Missouri.

In 1971, the Commission contracted with the Missouri Department of Community Affairs for the development of goals and objectives, overall program design, and an initial housing study. In 1972, the Commission hired its first full-time staff.

During Fiscal Year 1974-1975, the Commission received additional funding under Missouri Senate Bill 68. These funds, along with matching funds and federal grants, enabled the Commission to expand its planning program.

Some of the programs undertaken included: economic development planning, regional comprehensive planning (transportation plan, land use plan, community facilities plan, recreation and open space plan, water and sewer plan). Since that time, and to the present, some representative programs are: Community Development Block Grant, drought assistance, governmental management assistance, state and federal program information, loan packaging, park and recreational grant assistance, local planning assistance, housing needs studies, Health Systems Agency assistance, library and educational grant and technical assistance, and foundation research.

In December 1975, the Commission changed its name to the Northwest Missouri Regional Council of Governments. It was felt by the members that the "Council of Governments" title would project a clearer image of the two-fold purpose of the organization. The first being that of local governments, working together to identify common concerns and planning for the solutions of problems which commonly affect the individual local governments or affect a larger area-wide concern. Secondly, the organization provides assistance to the local governments in implementing these solutions in order to solve problems and meet needs.

The Northwest Missouri Regional Council of Governments is a cooperative of governments. The designation of the Northwest Missouri region as an area-wide planning district affords the opportunity for better community planning throughout the region, and will enhance the planning capabilities of local governments. The NWMORCOG encourages all local governments in the region to take advantage of the opportunities afforded by membership in the Regional Council of Governments.

Membership in the NWMORCOG

Voluntary Membership - It is the responsibility of elected municipal and county officials to determine whether membership in the Regional Council will benefit their respective jurisdictions. For that reason, membership in the Council, while encouraged, must be voluntary. The state and federal governments are urged to refrain from enacting any legislation, administrative regulation, or other action, which could infringe upon the integrity of local governments to make this choice.

Composition of Governing Board - As a voluntary organization of local governments, the governing board of the Regional Council of Governments should accurately reflect Council membership and be composed of elected officials in general purpose local governments or their appointed designees. Regional special purpose committees, subsidiary task forces, or other regional agencies should be endorsed and membership chosen by locally elected officials. The chairperson of the Regional Council of Governments' governing body should be an elected official of a member local government or their chairperson's designated representative.

Responsibility of Membership - Maximum effectiveness of the NWMORCOG can be achieved only if delegates fulfill their responsibility to report frequently and fully to their constituencies on Council activities.

Professional Staff - The Council should be staffed by professionals, with compensation the responsibility of member governments. Regional Council of Governments personnel should be, in name, fact, and practice, employees of the local governments they serve. The Regional Council of Governments' executive director should be directly responsible to the Council's governing body. A Council executive director, or any other member of the Regional Council of Governments' staff, should not be directly or indirectly, an employee of the state or federal governments. This same principle applies to any regional board or agency that serves local governments.

Purpose and Function

Regional Multi-Purpose Planning - The basic purpose of the NWMORCOG is to perform regional, multi-purpose planning, to promote cooperative arrangements and coordinate action among its member governments, and to provide a meeting point for local governments to discuss and to determine among themselves the impact that any regional plan will have on their respective communities. For these purposes, the NWMORCOG should be designated as the lead regional planning agency with responsibility for regional planning functions. This includes comprehensive health, water and sewer planning functions among others. Existing laws and administrative regulators, which are contrary to this principle, should be amended so as to affect unified planning.

The 42 cities and villages with membership in the NWMORCOG and covered by this CEDS:

<u>Atchison County</u>	<u>Holt County</u>	<u>Nodaway County</u>	<u>Worth County</u>
Fairfax	Big Lake	Arkoe	Allendale
Phelps City	Bigelow	Barnard	Denver
Rock Port	Corning	Burlington Junction	Grant City
Tarkio	Craig	Clearmont	Irena
Watson	Forest City	Clyde	Sheridan
Westboro	Fortesque	Conception Junction	
	Maitland	Elmo	
<u>Gentry County</u>	Mound City	Graham	
Albany	Oregon	Guilford	
Darlington		Hopkins	
Gentry		Maryville	
King City		Parnell	
McFall		Pickering	
Stanberry		Quitman	
		Ravenwood	
		Skidmore	

A-95 Review - The A-95 review process has become an integral part of the federal grant system. The expansion in the number of federal programs subject to A-95 review is encouraging and continued expansion in the number of federal programs subject to this review is urged. The cooperative memo provisions of the revised Office of Management and Budget A-95 Circular are particularly endorsed as a means of achieving effective coordination between the Regional Council of Governments and any regional agency which is not the area-wide comprehensive planning agency where such council and agency cannot be merged. Further revisions in the A-95 Circular should insure the autonomy of local government. All state and federal plans or grant projects, which either directly, or indirectly, affect the region, should be subject to A-95 review by the region.

Service Delivery and Technical Assistance - The Northwest Missouri Regional Council of Governments was established to facilitate planning, to promote cooperative arrangements, and to coordinate actions among member governments. The NWMORCOG should restrict its activities and programs to those necessary to fulfill those purposes. General-purpose local governments, rather than the Regional Council of Governments, should be the purveyor and operator of all local government services. Technical assistance should be available from the Regional Council of Governments where such qualified assistance is not available in local government. No organized program in technical assistance should be undertaken unless approved by the governing body of the Regional Council of Governments.

Finances

Membership Assessment - Funds necessary to adequately operate the Regional Council of Governments should be the financial responsibility of member local governments. It is in the best interests of local government to retain direct control over the Regional Council of Governments by being the principal authority of the Council's financial support. The Council should establish its own system of, and annual rates for, membership assessments. Assessments should be sufficient to provide for the basic administrative cost of the Council.

Federal and State Revenue - The State should provide funds on a regular basis for the general administrative support of the Regional Council of Governments. Revenue from either the state or the federal government should include funds for specific regional projects which are initiated at the local level, as well as those initiated by the state and federal governments.

Other Revenues - The Regional Council of Governments should not have the power to levy taxes. However, the Council should have the authority to levy charges and fees for staff services for specific organized technical assistance contracts.

III. Political Geography

Counties

The Northwest Missouri region is comprised of the five following counties: A three-member county commission governs each county with two associate commissioners and one presiding commissioner.

<u>County</u>	<u>County Seat</u>	<u>Classification</u>
Atchison	Rock Port	Third Class
Gentry	Albany	Third Class
Holt	Oregon	Third Class
Nodaway	Maryville	Third Class
Worth	Grant City	Third Class

The State of Missouri divides counties into four classifications with different rules governing each category. The classification is based on the five-year average total assessed valuation of property in the county:

- First Class: Over \$450 Million
- Second Class: \$300 Million - \$450 Million
- Third Class: Under \$300 Million
- Fourth Class: Those counties that were designated Second Class prior to August 13, 1988, but have had changes in assessed valuation. They may still operate under state laws for Second Class counties.

The State does allow counties with a population greater than 85,000 to adopt Home Rule Status through a charter by a vote of the people, but this does not affect the five counties in the NWMORCOG service area.

Municipalities

Like counties, municipalities operate under state laws based on their population size. The following table describes the various classes of cities that are in the NWMORCOG region:

<u>Class</u>	<u>Population Requirement</u>	<u>Government Forms</u>
Class 3	3,000-29,999	Mayor-Council Mayor-City Adm.-Council Council-Mayor Commission
Class 4	500-2,999	Mayor-Board of Alderman Mayor-City Adm.- Alderman
Village	Under 500	Board of Trustees
Constitutional Charter	Over 5,000	Decided by the people
Legislative Charter	No Requirement	As set forth in the individual charter

In Northwest Missouri, Maryville is the only Class 3 city. The following are Class 4 cities:

Albany	Elmo	King City	Rock Port
Barnard	Fairfax	Maitland	Sheridan
Burlington Junction	Forest City	Mound City	Skidmore
Clearmont	Graham	Oregon	Stanberry
Conception Junction	Grant City	Parnell	Tarkio
Craig	Hopkins	Ravenwood	Westboro

The following communities are classified as villages:

Allendale	Corning	Guilford	Watson
Arkoe	Darlington	McFall	Worth
Bigelow	Denver	Phelps City	
Big Lake	Fortescue	Pickering	
Clyde	Gentry	Quitman	

Political Representation

Two state congressional districts represent the region. This should not change as the Missouri State Legislature begins to redistrict based on the figures from the 2000 U.S. Census data. The 4th District is made up of Atchison, Nodaway, and Worth Counties, while the 5th District is comprised of Gentry and Holt, plus Andrew County and the northern two-thirds of De Kalb County. The 12th District in the Missouri Senate represents the five-county area. Nationally, all five counties are part of the 6th District in the U.S. House of Representatives.

IV. Background Information and Physical Environment

The physical environment of an area often plays an important role in the growth and development of a community. These physical characteristics of a location include topography, geology, hydrology, climate, and soils. Building sites, construction techniques, and insurance costs are some of the variables that rely heavily on the attributes of the physical landscape. Evaluation of the physical environment potentially identifies constraints and negative factors to urban development.

Location

The Northwest Missouri EDD consists of five counties in the extreme northwest corner of Missouri. The location places the service area in close proximity to the three neighboring states of Kansas, Iowa and Nebraska. Located near the geographic center for the United States, the region is a crossroads for major transportation routes in the nation, and represents the hinterland for the major metropolitan areas of Kansas City, Des Moines, and Omaha.

Natural Resources

The Northwest Missouri region is bordered by parts two major river basins. The Missouri River Basin on the west includes several minor river basins: Nishnabotna, Nodaway, One Hundred and Two, Platte, and Tarkio. The Grand River Basin on the east is the largest in the state north of the Missouri River. The Grand River begins in Southwest Iowa and flows southeasterly through Northwest Missouri to its confluence with the Missouri River near Brunswick in the central part of Missouri.

The topography of the region is characterized as moderately rolling plains. Ground elevations range from a low of 750 feet above sea level in the Grand River Basin to a high of 1,300 feet above sea level in the river bluffs. The soils present throughout the region are rich and productive for agricultural production. The land is generally undulating to rolling with a few narrow strips of hilly land along larger stream valleys. Slopes in the area are generally

gentle, and do not pose a serious obstacle to development in the area. The entire region tends to increase in elevation from the west near the Missouri River towards the east.

Following the drought of the late 1980's, many municipalities turned to alternative sources for their water until their normal source was able to recover. While some explored the option of drilling new wells, others built large lakes to serve as community reservoirs. Maryville, the largest municipality in the region, completed construction of Lake Mozingo during the mid-1990's. The 1,100-acre lake east of town serves as both a water source and a recreational area. Additionally, a 170-acre lake was built in Gentry County to serve both the towns of Stanberry and Grant City (Worth County). As noted, many towns rely on underground wells for their water source but the water requires a great deal of softening because of the limestone present.

The region's mineral resources include limestone, sand, gravel, clay, shale, petroleum, and coal. Limestone is the only rock quarried in the region while sand is obtained by dredging the Missouri, One Hundred and Two, and Platte Rivers. Gravel is mined from ancient glacial deposits in the area and clay and shale constitute a majority of the region's bedrock. Some oil production has occurred in the past, but because of cost conditions in the industry, future exploration does not appear to be feasible.

There are still sizable coal reserves in the region, but they are located at such extreme depths that mining is very unlikely because of the prohibitive costs. However, during the late 1980's and early 1990's research was conducted on ways to drill for coal bed methane gas as an alternative fuel source. At this point no additional action has taken place, however in the event of aforesaid action, the Forest City Basin covers parts of the four-state territory of Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, and Iowa with the distinct possibility that Northwest Missouri could be part of a large production facility should the researchers choose to follow through on their findings.

Climate

Hot summers and cold winters characterize the climate of Northwest Missouri. The average winter temperature in the region is 25°, with an average minimum winter temperature of 14°. The average summer temperature is 73°, with an average maximum summer temperature of 85°. Precipitation is consistent with a location on the eastern edge of the Great Plains at an average of 35 inches a year. Seventy percent, or 25 inches, of the average yearly rainfall total occurs between April and September. The area is prone to heavy rains during the spring and early summer months. Area precipitation is supportive of corn, soybeans, and all wheat crops. An average year in the region will have 22 inches of snowfall and 19 days with at least 1 inch of snow on the ground.

Located in the Midwest, the region is prone to severe thunderstorms and tornadoes. While tornadoes can pose a serious threat to the loss of life and property, they are not a regular occurrence. The main threat from summertime thunderstorms is hail. Moderately sized hail falling from a thunderstorm for only a short amount of time can significantly damage or destroy a crop in the field. A stormy season with a high incidence of widespread hail can have drastic effects on the local agricultural economy, driving costs up and causing local farmers to take significant losses.

Other Information

Many of the communities served by the NWMORCOG lack an effective sanitary sewage treatment system, relying instead on septic tanks and other methods of treatment. While these alternative systems are the most cost-effective in areas of sparse population, continued pursuit of adding effective treatment systems for relatively densely populated areas as well as improvements to existing, aging systems is still a must in the region. It is crucial to provide municipal treatment facilities so smaller communities can grow. Currently, Environmental Protection Agency standards require a septic tank to be located on three acres so that lateral lines can distribute the effluent properly. This requirement makes it very difficult for development to occur in small communities because few towns have three-acre lots of available land in the city limits. Therefore, many communities are in a circuitous situation

in: the community cannot grow because they do not have the available acreage necessary for development, and therefore do not have the tax base or resources necessary to construct a municipal treatment plant.

One alternative for smaller towns is a collection system called the Septic Tank Effluent Pump (STEP) System. This system utilizes septic tanks to settle out solid material. A pump extracts liquid from the upper water surface to small (1 1/4") individual pressure service lines, which connects to larger service mains. The type of treatment facility is a recirculating sand filter. This form of treatment is an effective method of refining partially treated wastewater. The sewage is delivered from the septic tank to the sand filter, where it then passes through several layers of different sized aggregate. The effluent is then recirculated, while the filter removes suspended solids by filtration. These facilities are ideal in that they do not require a large acreage for treatment, and they are more cost efficient than traditional treatment facilities.

Early History of Northwest Missouri

Northwest Missouri was part of the territory acquired by the United States from France during the Louisiana Purchase on April 30, 1803, for \$15 million dollars (4 cents per acre). Although, the territory that made up the Louisiana Purchase changed hands on a number of occasions prior to this transaction. For instance, France originally claimed the area and ceded it to Spain in 1762, with the Treaty of Fontainebleau. Thirty-eight years later, Spain returned it back to France in 1800, during the Treaty of Ildefonso. Once in American hands (1803), the territory was divided into two parts-- the Territory of Orleans and the District of Louisiana. The present-day state of Missouri was part of what was known as Upper Louisiana (the District of Louisiana).

Missouri's call for statehood began in earnest with the Missouri Compromise of 1820, which joined Maine's bill for statehood with Missouri's. This compromise between the North and South during the Civil War gave Missouri statehood in 1821, which greatly encouraged European migration and settlement throughout the state, especially along the Missouri River. It must be noted, however, that European settlement was preceded by Native American

occupation. For example, at the time of European intrusion, several Native American groups occupied and/or claimed northwest Missouri as hunting territory-- various bands of Sioux, the Sac and Fox, the Otoe and Missouri, and the Ioway. Their removal from northwest Missouri was not fully completed until March of 1837, in what was referred to as the Platte Purchase.

The Platte Purchase significantly altered Missouri's state boundaries. Originally, the western boundary of the state of Missouri was a straight north-south line. Therefore, part of the area that would become three of the counties in this study-- Atchison (1845), Holt (1841), and Nodaway (1845)-- did not become part of Missouri until its annexation in 1837. The other two counties, Gentry (1841) and Worth (1861), originally were part of what was a much larger Ray County.

Also of historical note is the fact that Atchison, Nodaway, and Worth Counties all lost territory to the state of Iowa in what has been called the "Honey War." The boundary dispute arose when Iowa gained statehood in 1846 and surveyors found discrepancies in the territorial claims of both states; both states claimed land to the "rapids of the Des Moines River." Ultimately, the problem was resolved in 1848, although, Missouri lost possession of the northern eleven miles it had previously claimed.

Region Population Trends, 1900-2000

Interestingly, the five counties of Atchison, Holt, Gentry, Nodaway, and Worth peaked in population in 1900 and have steadily declined over the 100-year span (Table One). For the region, the total population has fallen from 96,898 in 1900 to 42,936 in 2000. Within the 100-year span a number of trends appear (Table Two). For example, population decline was steady from 1900 through 1930. During the 1930s, decline abated as the Depression hit and migration slowed by several percentage points. After World War II the United States' economy boomed and urbanization, along with suburban sprawl, took over, which is evident in the population losses for the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. In recent decades, depressed commodity prices and further farm consolidation has led to more population loss throughout Northwest Missouri.

Table One-- County Populations, 1900- 2000

Year	Atchison	Gentry	Holt	Nodaway	Worth	Region
1900	16,501	20,554	17,083	32,928	9832	96,898
1910	13,604	16,820	14,539	28,833	8007	81,803
1920	13,008	15,634	14,084	27,741	7642	78,109
1930	13,421	14,348	12,720	26,371	6536	73,395
1940	12,897	13,359	12,476	25,556	6345	70,633
1950	11,127	11,036	9833	24,033	5120	61,149
1960	9213	8793	7885	22,215	3936	52,042
1970	9240	8060	6654	22,467	3359	49,780
1980	8605	7887	6882	21,996	3008	48,378
1990	7457	6848	6034	21,709	2440	44,488
2000	6430	6861	5351	21,912	2382	42,936

Table Two-- Percent Change by Decade (Population)

Decade	Atchison	Gentry	Holt	Nodaway	Worth
1900-1910	-17.56	-18.17	-14.89	-12.44	-18.56
1910-1920	-4.38	-7.05	-3.13	-3.79	-4.56
1920-1930	3.17	-8.23	-9.68	-4.94	-14.49
1930-1940	-3.90	-6.89	-1.92	-3.09	-2.91
1940-1950	-13.72	-17.39	-21.18	-5.96	-19.31
1950-1960	-17.20	-20.32	-19.81	-7.56	-23.13
1960-1970	0.29	-8.34	-15.61	1.13	-14.66
1970-1980	-6.87	-2.15	3.43	-2.10	-10.45
1980-1990	-13.34	-13.17	-12.32	-1.30	-18.88
1990-2000	-13.77	0.19	-11.32	0.94	-2.38

Community-Level Population Trends, 1960-2000

Table Three demonstrates community-level trends in the population from 1960-2000.

Collectively, the five data sets for northwest Missouri communities reflect the out migration experienced by rural areas throughout the United States. For example, of the forty-two towns located in the five counties, nineteen had a peak in population in 1960. Nine more reached their maximums in 1970. Of all the communities, only Barnard, Oregon, and Ravenwood achieved their highest populations in 2000. As a group, the communities in the region lost 17.5% of their population from 1960-2000.

Table Three-- Population Trends 1960-2000

City	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
Fairfax	736	835	835	699	645
Phelps City	81	76	39	32	31
Rock Port	1310	1575	1511	1438	1395
Tarkio	2160	2517	2375	2243	1935
Watson	181	164	171	137	121
Westboro	262	234	188	182	163
Albany	1662	1804	2152	1958	1937
Darlington	169	164	131	104	113
Gentry	98	143	126	95	101
King City	1009	1023	1063	986	1012
McFall	206	203	139	142	135
Stanberry	1409	1479	1387	1310	1243
Big Lake	NA	NA	187	170	127
Bigelow	100	84	67	32	38
Corning	128	134	126	88	21
Craig	488	369	379	346	309
Forest City	435	365	387	380	338
Fortescue	78	63	51	46	51
Maitland	427	319	415	338	342
Mound City	1249	1202	1447	1273	1193
Oregon	887	789	901	935	935
Arkoe	36	49	63	64	58
Barnard	237	207	234	234	257
Burlington Junction	650	634	675	634	632
Clearmont	292	226	261	175	191
Clyde	90	158	71	61	74
Conception Junction	253	237	252	236	202
Elmo	213	203	215	179	166
Graham	215	213	253	204	191
Guilford	125	105	87	93	87
Hopkins	710	656	634	575	579
Maryville	7807	9970	9558	10,663	10,581
Parnell	260	232	223	157	197
Pickering	234	245	215	171	154
Quitman	113	95	66	47	46
Ravenwood	282	336	436	409	448
Skidmore	425	440	437	404	342
Allendale	136	104	95	58	54
Denver	116	104	74	53	40
Grant City	1061	1095	1068	998	926
Sheridan	277	251	220	174	185
Worth	135	113	137	103	94

Recent Population Numbers, 1990-2000

Overall, 2000 U.S. Census data does not bode well for our region. Northwest Missouri lost roughly 3.5 percent of its citizens during the 1990s (See Appendix A). Two counties, Gentry and Nodaway, gained minimal amounts, while Atchison, Holt, and Worth lost substantial numbers.

NWMORCOG Region	-1,552 (3.5%)
State of Missouri	+478,138 (9.3)

All five Atchison County communities lost population during the decade. Tarkio showed the most decline, losing 13.7 percent of its population. In Gentry County, three

communities gained population, while three lost citizens for an overall gain of 0.2 percent--no significant changes (positive or negative) were found in the communities. Holt County

lost over 11 percent of its population from 1990-2000.

Atchison County	-1,027 (13.8%)
Gentry County	+13 (0.2%)
Holt County	-683 (11.3%)
Nodaway County	+203 (0.9%)
Worth County	-58 (2.4%)

Within the county, three towns gained miniscule amounts, while five communities lost numbers, some to a significant degree. Big Lake lost over 25 percent and Corning lost an unprecedented 76.1 percent of its citizens. These losses were likely tied to the flood of 1993, as residents did

not rebuild or come back to their damaged homes in these two devastated communities.

During the 1990s, Worth County lost a total of 2.4 percent of its residents, with four of the five communities losing individuals, but not to a substantial degree. Nodaway County, which gained 0.9 percent, had several interesting population changes for the decade. It is noteworthy that Maryville-- the county seat and economic hub for northwest Missouri-- had a booming economy during the 1990s and still lost population (less than 1 percent).

Overall, nine of the fifteen communities in Nodaway County lost population during the decade. In terms of population growth, Barnard, Clearmont, and Ravenwood all grew approximately 10 percent, and Parnell (just Northwest of Maryville) gained over 25 percent.

Population Distributions by Age

Dividing the population into categories based on age can be an insightful way to examine the age structure of the overall population and to discuss potential population projections. For example, populations that are expanding will have a large proportion of individuals in the lower age categories. An even distribution between the categories reflects a population that is showing little or no growth. Finally, a population that is in decline will have a large number of its citizens in the oldest age categories and few young children and adults in their childbearing years. Based on the population data for northwest Missouri, it appears that little or no growth will occur in the recent future (Table Four). For instance, in all five counties the five and under age group lost numbers from 1990 to 2000. Another trend that is indicative of slow or no growth at all is in the 45 to 64 age group, where all five counties gained population during the 1990s. Based on these numbers, it is most likely that northwest Missouri will experience a slow, steady decline in the total population, as aging continues with little replacement.

Table Four-- Age Structure by County

<i>1990 Distribution</i>						
County	Under 5	5 to 17	18 to 24	25 to 44	45 to 64	Over 65
Atchison	398	1281	854	1892	1456	1576
Gentry	443	1244	459	1590	1392	1720
Holt	396	1147	419	1545	1151	1376
Nodaway	1244	3634	5047	5150	3351	3283
Worth	161	425	151	536	542	625
Region	2642	7731	6930	10,713	7892	8580
<i>2000 Distribution</i>						
County	Under 5	5 to 17	18 to 24	25 to 44	45 to 64	Over 65
Atchison	289	1258	416	1558	1555	1354
Gentry	426	1356	483	1627	1484	1485
Holt	256	1016	348	1303	1277	1151
Nodaway	1033	3212	5504	5071	4066	3026
Worth	132	447	162	560	551	530
Region	2136	7289	6913	10,119	8933	7546

Median Income and Poverty Level

Table Five shows the median income levels for the five counties in both 1989 and 1997. The robust economy of the 1990s led to a sharp increase in median incomes for all five counties.

Atchison and Nodaway Counties both increased median incomes by over \$11,000 during this period. On average, all five counties showed an increase of \$10,060.60. However, it is evident that not everyone shared in the economic windfall. Poverty rates in all five counties were over 12 percent in 1997, with Worth County's rate at 19.1 percent (Table Six). These economic data exemplify society at large; some are enjoying financial success, while a large portion of the population falls deeper into despair.

Table Five-- Median Income by County, 1989 and 1997

County	Median-1989 (\$)	Median-1997 (\$)
Atchison	20,126	31,287
Gentry	17,594	26,533
Holt	18,729	28,075
Nodaway	20,347	32,332
Worth	14,568	23,440

Table Six-- Percentage of Population below Poverty Level, 1997

County	Percentage
Atchison	12.4
Gentry	13
Holt	14.1
Nodaway	12.3
Worth	19.1

Unemployment Rates

Unemployment rates in the region during the 1990s ranged from approximately 6 percent down to almost 1 percent (Table Seven). During this period, Worth County typically had the highest unemployment rates ranging from just over 6 percent to just under 4 percent, while Nodaway County had some of the lowest unemployment rates in the country at just over 1 percent. For example, Nodaway County had the second-lowest jobless rate in the nation in December of 1999 at 0.7 percent. This is after Nodaway County reported an unemployment rate of just 0.5 percent, the lowest in the nation, and the month before--thanks in part to expansions at the Kawasaki and Energizer Plants, and the new Wal-Mart Super Center-- all of which are located in Maryville, Missouri.

Table Seven-- Unemployment Rate, 1991-2000

	<u>Atchison</u>	<u>Gentry</u>	<u>Holt</u>	<u>Nodaway</u>	<u>Worth</u>
1991	3.4	3.5	5.2	3.3	6.2
1992	4.3	3.5	4.7	2.1	4.6
1993	4.5	4.6	6	3.1	6.2
1994	2.7	3	4.6	1.9	4.5
1995	2.8	3.2	4.8	1.5	5.4
1996	2.8	3	4.6	1.4	5.3
1997	2.4	2.6	3.8	1.4	4.9
1998	2.2	3	3.8	1.5	5.3
1999	2.1	2.5	3.4	1.2	3.8
2000	2.2	2.9	3.1	1.3	5.8

Agriculture in Northwest Missouri

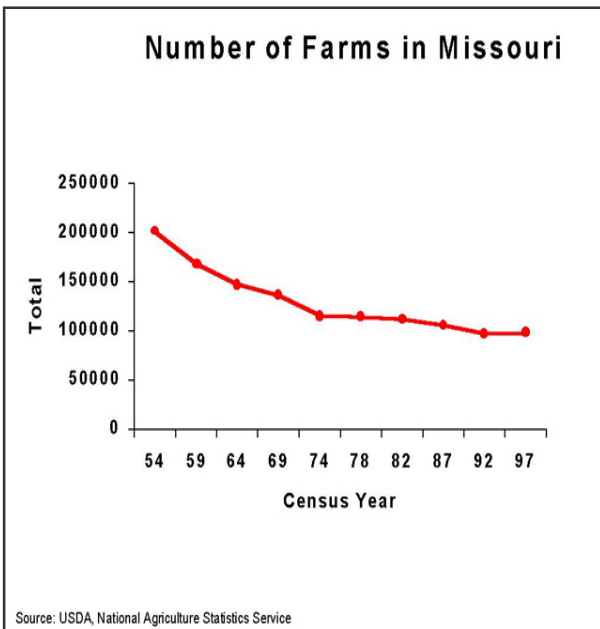
Northwest Missouri has abundant productive farmland. Agriculture has long been the lifeblood of the area's economy beginning with the early settlers, however, during the farm crisis of the 1980's, thousands left the agriculture industry. Nearly 20 years after this turning point, the long-term effects are still impacting the five-county region.

Crop and livestock prices fell dramatically in the mid 1980's, and many farms in Northwest Missouri were lost in bankruptcy courts or land was converted to the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), where it lies idle. Many families lost their farms and moved out of the region, which contributed to a four percent decline in population from 1980 to 2000. As noted, this emigration continues this decade. Those that did stay in the area have found employment in the area's industrial sector that developed during the last twenty years. A result of the farm crisis is the farm population dropped substantially. According to figures provided by the University of Missouri's Outreach and Extension, the farm population made up 15.7 percent of the area's population in 1980. Since then, this number has dropped to 9.8 percent. While the 2000 U.S. Census farm population numbers are not yet released, one can ascertain this trend will continue in this region.

	Farm Population	Farm Population as a Percent of Total Population
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	1990	1980	Percent Change	1990	1980
<u>Missouri</u>	180,097	282,074	-36.2	3.5	5.7
Atchison County	1,019	1,924	-47.0	13.7	22.4
Gentry County	1,261	1,986	-36.5	18.4	25.2
Holt County	1,115	2,027	-45.0	18.5	29.5
Nodaway County	3,244	4,988	-35.0	14.9	22.7
Worth County	532	1,000	-46.8	21.8	33.2

As the farm population statewide has continued to fall over the last twenty years, the number of farms in the Northern Missouri has increased from 1992 to 1997. According to the *Missouri Regional Social and Economic Profiles*, this area suffered a loss of 1,200 farms from 1987 to 1992. However, since that time the number of farms as defined by the US Census has increased nearly 400, or 2.3%. (The U.S. Census of Agriculture liberal in its definition of a farm. For Census purposes, a "farm" is any rural place that sells, or has the potential to sell, at least \$1,000 worth of agricultural commodities in the year preceding the Census. Agricultural commodities include traditional products such as corn, soybeans, wheat, hogs, beef cattle, poultry, dairy products, but can also include timber and/or horticultural products.) While this statistic might bid well for the Northern portion of Missouri, it does



little to affect the five-county region served by the NWMORCOG.

This is evidenced by the fact that the counties of Atchison, Holt, and Nodaway had significant losses from 1992 to 1997 after experiencing even greater losses from 1987 to 1992. Holt County dropped from 633 to 518 from 1987 to 1992 and dropped an additional 53 since 1992 to reach 465 in 1997 (a loss of more than one fourth of the county's farms over a 10

year period). Similar losses took place in Atchison County where the number of farms dropped from 622 in 1987 to 471 in 1997. Finally, Nodaway County, which has the greatest

	Number of Farms			Change		Percent Change	
	1997	1992	1987	1992-97	1987-97	1992-97	1987-97
Missouri	98,860	98,082	106,105	778	(7,245)	0.8	-6.8
Atchison	471	509	622	(38)	(151)	-7.5	-24.3
Gentry	667	624	691	43	(24)	6.9	-3.5
Holt	465	518	633	(53)	(168)	-10.2	-26.5
Nodaway	1,257	1,349	1,475	(92)	(218)	-6.8	-14.8
Worth	356	327	367	29	(11)	8.9	-3.0

number of farms, declined from 1,475 in 1987 to 1,257 in 1997- a loss of 218 farms in a ten-year period. The counties of Worth and Gentry each experienced slight increases (oseda.missouri.edu/seprofile/northwest/farms).

According to the University of Missouri’s Outreach and Extension, while there is no clear information available to explain the overall increase in the number of farms across the state, it seems most likely linked to the change in the purpose of farmland. Prior to the farm crisis, the family farm served as the primary source of income and therefore it was considered a full-time job. However, as families were forced to look for additional income, they became less reliant on the land. Today there are several fewer farms that fit this “primary income” definition and an increasing number of farms where people depend on off-farm incomes. Therefore, while the overall increase in the number of Missouri farms is likely a consequence of the shift from farmers to farm residents, the NWMORCOG region has yet to experience this change. Once again, there are no specific facts detailing why this trend is not echoed throughout the five-county region, but according to comments made during the CEDS’ public meetings, many area farms are being purchased by out-of-state farming operations, which in turn are incorporating the land into other operations.

Following suit, the number of acres farmed in Atchison, Gentry, Holt, Nodaway, and Worth Counties have continued to decline (See Appendix B). In 1987, the region farmed over 1,500,000 acres; just ten years later, this number decreased by 100,000 acres.

Exacerbating the loss of farm population, the loss of farms and fewer acres being farmed, is the market value of agricultural products sold. Gene Danekas, Missouri's State Statistician notes this trend in his article *Insights on Income*, which appeared in the Missouri Ruralist in June 2001. According to Mr. Danekas, technology improvements have improved the ability of farmers to produce more per acre, in turn, decreasing the value of the product. Resources such as hybrid seeds, fertilizers and chemicals, precision cropping practices, no-till farming, and biotechnology have all led to this situation. Currently, the amount of products being produced offset the decreased value of the commodity, but if prices were to drop further, this would drastically affect the Northwest Region.

Transportation

The NWMORCOG service area is approximately 2,657 square miles. Much of this land is farmed and accessible by automobile; therefore Federal, State, and County maintained roads are the predominant means of transportation (See Appendix C). However, the five-county region does have several small airports, a nearby port for barge traffic, and access to the rail system.

The communities of Albany in Gentry County, Tarkio in Atchison County, and Maryville in Nodaway County are served by either public or publicly owned airports. Albany's airport has a 3,300-foot, hard-surfaced, lighted runway. The Gould Peterson Airport is 3,875 feet and is located in Tarkio. Like the Albany airport, it has a concrete landing strip and is lighted. Maryville is the only community in the region to have two airports. The first is the Maryville Municipal Airport; the second is the Rankin Airport. Both facilities have hard surfaced and lighted runway, however the latter has a 4,000-foot landing strip, while the former has a 3,000-foot runway. As one might ascertain, the most common user of these facilities are private planes, however, the Maryville Municipal Airport does receive some occasional commercial flights.

Kansas City International Airport (KCI) is located approximately 80 miles from the NWMORCOG service area. KCI has three runways and can accommodate up to 139 aircraft operations per hour. In addition, it receives several commercial flights per day.

The Missouri River provides a conduit for commercial transportation; however, access to this resource is restricted due to the limited number of docks available. Atchison County does have access to a private barge dock, but the closest public port is located in St. Joseph, Missouri, which is 40 miles south of Maryville. Union Pacific Railway and Burlington Northern-Santa Fe Railway serve the St. Joseph Regional Port Authority. In addition, Kansas City also receives barge traffic.

As noted, the region does have rail, but it is primarily limited to Atchison and Holt Counties. Like many areas of the country, much of Northwest Missouri was settled according to where the railroad passed. As the nation became less reliant on railroads and more on other forms of transportation, such as truck and airfreight, the rail industry cut back its active lines leaving only a few in our area. In turn, this left many smaller cities without this economic development resource.

According to the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT), there are 1,277 miles of state maintained highway in the five-county area. In addition to this, the counties maintain over 3,100 miles of surfaced and graveled roads and over 1,000 bridges.

During the winter of 2000, the NWMORCOG was contracted by the MoDOT to gather information and complete a commuter survey on a regional and local level. A mail questionnaire was distributed to residents of the five-county service area. The questionnaire was designed to collect normative data from the respondents, in order to identify the general travel patterns of respondents along with safety and maintenance issues, of the specific roadways the respondents use most frequently. The target population of this study was the commuters of Northwest Missouri. With a response rate of 26.5 percent, an exceptional amount of data was collected to provide MoDOT with the opinions and concerns of the residents of Northwest Missouri.

Overall, constituents are satisfied with the condition of the transportation system in Northwest Missouri. The issues and complaints that seemed to be a general consensus of several individuals are:

- Attention given to roadways to improve condition and existence of shoulders.
- Attention given to roadways to rid of potholes and areas damaging and unsafe.
- More efficient and timely removal of ice and snow specifically in the early morning hours and on lettered routes.
- Completion of four lanes of US Highway 71 and US 136.
- Improvement of visibility at the US Interstate 29 and I-229 and US Highway 71 Intersection.

Health Care

The five-county area has several options in regards to health care. From regional hospitals to residential care facilities to mental health clinics, the area has an assortment of providers to care for the sick and aged.

The Fairfax Community Hospital provides Atchison County residents with a variety of medical services, outpatient clinics, general surgery and diagnostics, and is recognized as one of the leading rural hospitals in Missouri.

Gentry County Memorial Hospital (GCMH), located in Albany, opened in 1957. The hospital exists, thanks to some tremendous community support, which raised more than a quarter of a million dollars to match federal funding and build the original facility. Generous community backing has played a crucial role in the hospital's ability to provide the latest healthcare services and to complete necessary expansion projects. All of the projects were possible because of contributions from individual estates and local fundraisers, including one of the most recent projects, a \$1.3 million outpatient pavilion, completed in mid-1998. The GCMH Outpatient Pavilion houses an expanded patient waiting area, a state-of-the-art operating suite, the cardio-pulmonary rehabilitation and physical therapy departments, and an outstanding conference room/classroom. Earlier this year, the hospital completed the renovation and expansion of its Skilled Nursing Facility, which now boasts 10 private patient

suites with complete hotel-style accommodations. In addition, GCMH renovated all of its acute care patient rooms, including the addition of private bathrooms.

St. Francis Hospital and Health Services are located in Maryville and are owned and operated by the Franciscan Sisters of Mary, based in St. Louis, Missouri. St. Francis Hospital is a licensed 81-bed, not-for-profit facility which provides primary and acute care of patients with medical, surgical, rehabilitation, mental health, obstetrics, and 24-hour emergency care.

St. Francis recently completed a \$5.4 million dollar expansion and renovation project. The renovation/expansion project added and consolidated emergency, rehabilitation, laboratory, and imaging services. The project added 14,000 square feet of new construction and remodeled 24,000 square feet. St. Francis is the primary regional facility, however there are other health care facilities in nearby St. Joseph. Other regional hospitals include Kansas City, Missouri, Des Moines, Iowa, and Omaha, Nebraska.

Recreation

Recreational opportunities continue to increase for residents of Northwest Missouri. This growth has also increased the region's ability to attract visitors from outside the area, creating a need to further develop the tourism industry in the five counties. The following is a partial list of tourist and eco-tourist attractions and recreational opportunities available in the region:

Atchison County

Brickyard Hill Wildlife Area: seven miles northwest of Rock Port; a 1,500-acre conservation area. This wildlife area includes Charity Lake and serves as an excellent resource of hunting and fishing.

Gentry County

Limpp Community Lake: 70-acre lake near King City. This lake is maintained by the Missouri State Conservation Department and serves a destination for fishing and other water activities.

Holt County

Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge: near Mound City, this refuge is operated and maintained by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Squaw Creek is recognized nationally as a migratory waterfowl refuge.

Big Lake State Park: sits eleven miles southwest of Mound City. The 111-acre park adjoins the 625-acre oxbow lake that was once a part of the Missouri River, and offers a variety of water recreational activities.

Nodaway County

Bilby Ranch Wildlife Area: 4,664-acre wildlife area, 14 miles west of Maryville. Managed by the Missouri Conservation Department, the area is an excellent resource for several outdoor uses. Included in the park is a 110-acre lake that has a handicapped accessible fishing pier.

Mozingo Lake: completed in 1994, this 1,100-acre lake serves as the water supply for the City of Maryville and the Nodaway County Public Water District No. One. The lake offers many opportunities for boating, skiing, fishing, and swimming. In addition to the water activities, Mozingo Lake offers visitors amenities such as a campground, a nature trail, an 18-hole golf course, and wildlife habitat development.

In addition to the aforementioned recreation situations, there are countless other special events to provide entertainment for local residents and tourists in the area. Each county has numerous craft festivals, museums, historical buildings, fairs, golf courses, and music shows to attract visitors to their community.

Education

The NWMORCOG's five-county region is home to a number of elementary schools, 17 high schools, and a regional university. As noted, the five counties continue to lose population, which has affected the scholastic environment. In addition, there are fewer children enrolled in public schools in the area. This affects plans for the consolidation of school districts. While this has been less of a factor in the last decade, it still remains a concern for several of the smaller communities in which the school serves as a means of identification.

The high schools in the area have an excellent reputation for academics. Over the last five years, the state Mathematics Assessment Program (MAP) test scores have been higher than the state average and the region has averaged a graduation rate above the State's average. The following are graduation rates for the State of Missouri and the NWMORCOG's area high schools, beginning with the State's averages. The number of graduates divided by the number of dropouts determines the high school dropout rate multiplied by 100. The source for this data is the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

MISSOURI					
Year	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01
Graduation Rate (%)	75.9	77.8	78.5	80.3	81

ALBANY R-III	District				
Year	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00
Total Number of Graduates	42	39	23	37	43
Cohort Dropouts	6	6	6	8	4
Graduation Rate	87.5	86.7	79.3	82.2	91.5

CRAIG R-III	District				
Year	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00
Total Number of Graduates	14	14	14	15	11
Cohort Dropouts	2	1	2	3	3
Graduation Rate	87.5	93.3	87.5	83.3	78.6

FAIRFAX R-III	District				
Year	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00
Total Number of Graduates	17	25	13	22	17
Cohort Dropouts	1	2	5	2	2
Graduation Rate	94.4	92.6	72.2	91.7	89.5

HOLT CO. R-II	District				
Year	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00
Total Number of Graduates	21	29	24	19	20
Cohort Dropouts	1	0	1	2	0
Graduation Rate	95.5	100.0	96.0	90.5	100.0

KING CITY R-I	District				
Year	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00
Total Number of Graduates	31	16	29	36	29
Cohort Dropouts	1	2	1	1	0
Graduation Rate	96.9	88.9	96.7	97.3	100.0

JEFFERSON C-123	District				
Year	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00
Total Number of Graduates	10	14	11	13	14
Cohort Dropouts	0	0	2	0	0
Graduation Rate	100.0	100.0	84.6	100.0	100.0

MARYVILLE R-II	District				
Year	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00
Total Number of Graduates	104	140	130	114	113
Cohort Dropouts	15	14	17	18	10
Graduation Rate	87.4	90.9	88.4	86.4	91.9

NODAWAY-HOLT R-VII	District				
Year	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00
Total Number of Graduates	35	21	21	30	25
Cohort Dropouts	4	1	0	3	1
Graduation Rate	89.7	95.5	100.0	90.9	96.2

NORTH NODAWAY CO. R-VI	District				
Year	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00
Total Number of Graduates	26	30	24	20	27
Cohort Dropouts	0	3	4	4	2
Graduation Rate	100.0	90.9	85.7	83.3	93.1

NORTHEAST NODAWAY CO. R-V	District				
Year	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01
Total Number of Graduates	18	27	27	26	17
Cohort Dropouts	0	2	0	1	2
Graduation Rate (%)	100.0	93.1	100.0	96.3	89.5

ROCK PORT R-II	District				
Year	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00
Total Number of Graduates	37	35	31	34	30
Cohort Dropouts	6	4	7	7	3
Graduation Rate	86.0	89.7	81.6	82.9	90.9

SOUTH HOLT CO. R-I	District				
Year	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00
Total Number of Graduates	34	34	34	43	36
Cohort Dropouts	1	1	4	2	2
Graduation Rate	97.1	97.1	89.5	95.6	94.7

SOUTH NODAWAY CO. R-IV	District				
Year	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00
Total Number of Graduates	15	18	25	17	10
Cohort Dropouts	1	0	1	0	1
Graduation Rate	93.8	100.0	96.2	100.0	90.9

STANBERRY R-II	District
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Year	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00
Total Number of Graduates	25	35	38	26	50
Cohort Dropouts	1	1	0	1	2
Graduation Rate	96.2	97.2	100.0	96.3	96.2

TARKIO R-I	District				
Year	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00
Total Number of Graduates	35	35	32	33	42
Cohort Dropouts	5	3	2	6	6
Graduation Rate	87.5	92.1	94.1	84.6	87.5

WEST NODAWAY CO. R-I	District				
Year	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00
Total Number of Graduates	23	32	30	29	28
Cohort Dropouts	4	7	2	6	1
Graduation Rate	85.2	82.1	93.8	82.9	96.6

WORTH CO. R-III	District				
Year	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00
Total Number of Graduates	39	34	43	30	35
Cohort Dropouts	3	4	2	1	3
Graduation Rate	92.9	89.5	95.6	96.8	92.1

As noted, the biggest threat to academics in the NWMORCOG region is the loss of population. If population continues to decline, consolidation will continue. Furthermore, the region has a difficult time finding and retaining teachers. It is challenging for smaller districts to compete monetarily with nearby Kansas City. Finally, many of the schools are in

antiquated or inadequate facilities, and without the population base to support a levy for school improvements, the buildings fall into disrepair, thereby making it more difficult to recruit teachers and people into the community.

Maryville is home to Northwest Missouri State University, a regional, 4-year university. Northwest Missouri State is a moderately selective, learner-centered regional university, offering a focused-range of undergraduate and graduate programs. Historically, the University serves 19 Northwest Missouri counties, emphasizing programs relating to agriculture, business, and education.

- Northwest Missouri State University is a state-assisted, four-year regional university
- Governed by a state-appointed Board of Regents
- Accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools
- Located in Maryville, Missouri, a rural community of 10,500 (*90 miles north of Kansas City, 100 miles south of Omaha, 140 miles southwest of Des Moines*)
- Offers bachelor's, master's and specialist in education degrees as well as one- and two-year certificate programs
- Enrollment: 6,200
- 235 Full-Time faculty
- Students from 42 states and 22 countries
- Athletic affiliations: National Collegiate Athletic Association (Division II) and Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletics Association (MIAA) for men and women

In addition to Northwest, the region is served by Missouri Western State College in St. Joseph, Missouri. Missouri Western is a four-year, state-supported institution that provides a blend of traditional liberal arts and career-oriented degree programs. Other options for post secondary education include several community colleges, universities and vocational schools in Kansas City, Missouri, Creston, Iowa, and Omaha, Nebraska.

V. Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Process

Economic development, in the purest sense, is the creation of wealth and the improvement of the economic well being of the citizenry. On a more practical level, it is the creation of jobs and attraction of investment into a community. The citizens of Northwest Missouri are active participants in a diverse economic base that includes industrial, retail, and service-related businesses. It is the responsibility of the EDD to help insure that the economic base remains diverse, strong, and attractive to potential investors while protecting the existing quality of life for its residents. Any economic development efforts in the near future should be geared towards attracting better jobs for residents. These efforts will keep the local economic base more capable of withstanding national and international market fluctuations.

The CEDS process was multifaceted and tried to incorporate a number of means for participation. The following paragraphs explain the process that was implemented in order to gather information on the five-county region of Atchison, Gentry, Holt, Nodaway, and Worth counties, which the NWMORCOG serves. The aforementioned region was divided into two areas according to characteristics such as geography, transportation and industry. Other means in which to gain input included a focus group for area economic development professionals and a survey that was distributed to area industry.

Atchison-Holt Counties Community Leader Forum

This forum was held at The Klub in Mound City, Missouri, in July 2001. Mayors, elected officials, county commissioners, and the public were invited to participate. The decision to invite elected officials was decided upon to make the process more effective. Furthermore, we encouraged elected officials to invite community and organizational leaders.

NWMORCOG staff explained the CEDS and how it will serve the five-county area. Clint Gayler, who served as an AmeriCorps volunteer with the NWMORCOG, facilitated the meeting.

The attendees were first asked to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the noted two counties. Once these characteristics were identified, each attendee was given five votes to prioritize the previously identified items. Next, a strategic plan intended

to nurture opportunities through maximizing present strengths, was devised. The same was done regarding threats. A strategic plan was developed with the intent to curtail future threats by eliminating present weaknesses. The three most highly prioritized characteristics were addressed.

Gentry-Nodaway-Worth Counties Leader Forum

This forum was held at the Northwest Missouri State University Conference Center in Maryville, Missouri, in July 2001. Like the previous meeting, mayors, elected officials, county commissioners, university officials, community leaders, and the public were invited to attend. Attendees were asked to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the three counties. Once these characteristics were identified, each attendee was given five votes to prioritize the identified items. Next, a strategic plan intended to nurture opportunities through maximizing present strengths was devised. The same was done regarding threats. A strategic plan was developed with the intent to curtail future threats by eliminating present weaknesses. The three most highly prioritized characteristics were addressed.

Regional Economic Developer Forum

This forum was held at the Northwest Missouri Regional Council of Governments office in August 2001. Economic developers from across the Northwest Missouri region were invited to attend. Similar to the Leaders' Forum, Clint Gayler served as the facilitator for this workshop. Those in attendance were Laura Volker from Atchison County Development Corporation, Jack Briggs from NW Power, Rhonda Richards from Grant County Economic Development, Lee Langerock from the City of Albany, Lisa Macali from Nodaway County Economic Development, and Brenda Parman and Tom Bliss from the NWMORCOG. As with the other forums, attendees were asked to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the five counties in Northwest Missouri. Some of the key Strengths and Opportunities identified are as follows:

1. Value-added Agriculture

2. Close to a Bio-technology Cluster
3. Work Ethic
4. Good Leadership

Other issues identified included the following Weaknesses and Threats:

1. Aging Infrastructure
2. Lack of Jobs for Youth
3. Lack of Entry-level housing
4. A Lack of Branding
5. Apathy Among Citizens
6. Low Priority Placed on Economic Development
7. Death of the Small Town
8. Aging Population and Leadership
9. Decrease in Health Care Professionals

Once these characteristics were identified, each attendee was given five votes to prioritize the identified items. Like the other efforts, a strategic plan was developed, this includes:

1. Creation of a regional foundation. This will be an asset for all communities in the Northwest region.
2. Develop the telecommunication infrastructure.
3. Regional leadership programs.
4. Create regional cooperation and communication.

Industry Leader Survey

A survey was issued to industry leaders in the five-county area. (Industry leaders are identified as businesses employing over 50 workers.) This survey inquired into the opinion of these leaders regarding topics such as; overall business climate, availability of land, zoning of land, quality of labor market, availability and quality of utilities, availability and quality of transportation, availability of housing, education of labor market, availability and quality of state-funded customized training, and quality of life. These questions were rated

on a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest. Additional comments were encouraged. The leaders were asked to provide their opinions regarding the top three opportunities as well as the top three threats facing industry in this area. (See Appendix D)

In addition to the aforementioned survey, the NWMORCOG held a retreat for business and industry leaders this Spring, in Maryville. Over 30 individuals took part in this two-day seminar and a list of priorities was developed. The list included:

1. Create a regional economic development “tool kit.” The possibility of a revolving loan fund used for the purpose of small business development should be investigated.
2. Existing resources, such as the Small Business Development Center, the Northwest Missouri Regional Council of Governments, Nodaway County Economic Development, the Maryville Industrial Development Corporation, and Northwest Missouri State University, should be utilized in economic development efforts.
3. The region should investigate alternatives to traditional recruitment practices including outsourcing from larger industries, utility-based incentives, value-added industry, creative financing, and special districts. To change the focus of economic development from that of traditional initiatives (i.e. industrial recruitment, retail marketing, etc.) to a more holistic community development approach. In other words, affordable housing, telecommunications infrastructure, and retaining local college graduates, will have a more immediate and positive impact upon the region’s economic viability than traditional measures. To be sure, the area sees the exodus of literally hundreds of technologically proficient college graduates to major metropolitan areas (Kansas City, Omaha, Des Moines, etc.). It is time for the region to stop being an enclave for highly skilled, technically proficient students.
4. The region should support the retention and expansion of existing employers in the community.

5. The five counties should investigate alternative solutions for affordable housing. Maryville and the surrounding communities are lacking in affordable single-family housing. Working in conjunction with the Regional Council, area communities will be undertaking a housing survey later this year. The goal is to identify specific needs and present these findings to developers. Hopefully, the developers will recognize the opportunities and take advantage. An initiate program to increase single-family housing development will follow this effort. The initial step in the process will be to conduct a Community Housing Assessment Team (CHAT). A CHAT is a means in which we can identify the perceived need versus the real need for housing. This program is designed to help communities identify opportunities to find and develop competitively priced housing that, in turn, supports planned business growth and development. The CHAT process builds upon the successful experiences of one of the Midwest's best-known community planning and development consulting firms, RDG Crose Gardner Shukert of Omaha, Nebraska. It combines the resources of St. Joseph L&P/EnergyOne, state and regional groups, and business and civic leaders of the five counties to create a clear, achievable action plan designed to achieve results.
6. A marketing program to attract high-skill level jobs to the area should be implemented and funded.
7. Efforts need to be continued by the city to insure that there are appropriate transportation capacities to facilitate business. Additionally, there needs to be adequate technological infrastructure present to attract telecommunications and computer-based transaction businesses.
8. Special attention must be given to existing business to insure that they can remain competitive in their individual markets worldwide. This includes a constant examination by the city of technological infrastructure capacities, transportation needs, information access, and marketing outreach assistance.
9. Place special emphasis on value-added agriculture and biotechnology industry.

10. Creation of a business incubator. The NWMORCOG should begin looking at ways to develop a technology base in our community. Increasing our technology base would have several benefits, two of these being higher paying jobs and the retention of university graduates. One approach to this is the creation of a high-tech business incubator. This project would begin with the formation of a consortium of available players that would serve in the development of a strategy for a high-tech business incubator. Those involved might include United Electric, Morenet, Sprint, NWMORCOG, St. Joseph Power and Light/UtiliCorp, ClassicNet, Small Business Development Center, Maryville Industrial Development Corporation, Northwest Missouri State University, and the surrounding communities. Possible funding sources might include Community Development Block Grants' (CDBG) Micro-Enterprise Loan funds, US-Rural Development and CDBG Industrial Infrastructure Grant funds. Today, small businesses supply more jobs than corporations; business incubators help to create new small firms and new jobs. A business incubator is an organization of services designed to nurture young businesses. A wide range of services can be offered within an incubator, including management assistance, access to financing, business or technical support services, and shared office services such as access to equipment, flexible and affordable leases, and expandable space.

General Public Solicitation

A notice was placed in every local paper in the five-county region so we might solicit additional comments from the general public, particularly those that were unable to attend the workshops. The advertisement was intended to solicit public opinion regarding the state of affairs in each citizen's locality as well as the five-county area in general. Furthermore, we encouraged the use of the Internet, in that users could take advantage of the NWMORCOG website. The following is the solicitation that ran in area newspapers.

The Northwest Missouri Regional Council of Governments (NWMORCOG) is currently in the process of completing a Comprehensive Economic Development

Strategy (CEDS) for Atchison, Gentry, Holt, Nodaway and Worth Counties. The CEDS is a project that evaluates past trends and addresses present problems in order to effectively plan for future economic development. Current concerns about each county, such as the transportation system, business development, utility infrastructure and education, are gathered from various governmental agencies, community leaders, and interested citizens in an effort to obtain an overall economic picture of the region. If you are interested in taking part in this process, please submit your comments to the following address:

*Northwest Missouri Regional Council of Governments
c/o Mr. Clint Gayler
114 West Third Street
Maryville, MO 64468*

Or, you may E-mail your remarks to one of the following addresses:

tb-nwmorcog@msc.net

clg_nwmorcog@hotmail.com

Your feedback is very important in this endeavor and we look forward to your participation.

COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

COMMUNITY LEADER FORUM ATCHISON/HOLT COUNTIES

Attendance

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| 1. B.J. Ripley | Oregon, MO Merchants |
| 2. Marlin Logan | Atchison County Presiding Commissioner |
| 3. Jason Combs | Citizen, Fairfax, MO |
| 4. Roland Tullberg | Superintendent of Schools, Maryville, MO |
| 5. Brenda Parman | NWMORCOG, Maryville, MO |
| 6. Randy Railsback | NWMORCOG, Maryville, MO |
| 7. Clint Gayler | NWMORCOG, Maryville, MO |
| 8. Tom Bliss | NWMORCOG, Maryville, MO |
| 9. Joel Miller | NWMORCOG, Maryville, MO |
| 10. Larry Russell | Mayor, Mound City, MO |
| 11. Duane Nauman | Alderman, Mound City, MO |
| 12. Wayne Voltmer | Commissioner, Holt Co., Craig, MO |

Strengths

1. Education
2. Transportation (I-29, Missouri River, Airports)
3. Diversification (employment)
4. Conservation
5. Schools (buildings)
6. Health System
7. Location

Weaknesses

1. Declining Population
2. State Highway System
3. Economic Opportunities for Employment
4. Aging Infrastructure
5. Water Distribution Systems

Opportunities

1. Tourism
2. Untapped Workforce
3. Return of Graduates
4. I-29 Corridor (location)
5. Developmental Land
6. Alternative Crops
7. Alternative energy
8. Plentiful Energy Supply

Threats

1. Loss of Young People
2. Aging Population
3. Population Loss (overall)
4. Lack of New Investment
5. Reduction in Trade Centers (loss of retail trade)
6. Aging School Facilities
7. Lack of Housing
8. Low Per Capita Income
9. Lack of Career Opportunities for Youth
10. No Transfer of Business Ownership Upon Closing
11. Corporate Farming
12. Lack of Cohesive Approach to Business Development
13. Lack of Leadership or Leadership Education
14. Rivalry-Lack of Cooperative Leadership
15. Lack of Quality Technology (primarily information technology)
i.e. Cell-phone/Internet coverage
16. No Post-Secondary or Specialized Education

Strategic Planning

1. Market the Region's Existing Tourism Assets- the goal is to take advantage of eco-tourism opportunities. Timeframe for this particular objective is one to two years, and then on going.
 - a. Develop regional relationships (municipalities and multi-county).
 - b. Create a means of consistent and reliable communication between groups.
 - c. Incorporate area organizations to research and gather work plans from comparable communities.

- d. Using gathered findings, develop and distribute a brochure to market hunting, fishing, bird watching, and tourism opportunities.
2. Utilize Existing Economic Development Personnel- using NWMORCOG and Atchison County Economic Development personnel; develop mechanisms to encourage economic improvements in the region. This might entail creating an exclusive regional economic development “tool kit.” This will also include possibly hiring additional economic development personnel. Timeframe for this particular objective is immediate to five years.
3. Collect Information via Phone/Internet. Timeframe for this particular objective is immediate to five years.
 - a. Develop a region wide plan to encourage and develop technology infrastructure.
 - b. Research and approach various opportunities for improving technology infrastructure. Potential partners in this effort include the Economic Development Administration, US-Rural Development, Community Development Block Grants, utility providers, and local investors.
4. Develop Leadership Programs. Timeframe for this particular objective is one to two years. Once developed, the program will be on going.
5. Identify Leaders/Potential Leaders and Leadership/Participation- encourage community participation at all levels. This involvement should include both community leaders/planners and general public. Timeframe for this particular objective is one to two years.
6. Prioritize as Leaders.
7. Designate Appropriate Person/Persons for Said Tasks- stay committed to the tasks at hand. Recognize and implement a few simple projects and work through them to build and create momentum. With this, and the leadership described in the aforementioned goals, develop larger scale projects. Timeframe for this particular objective is one to five years.
8. Create Jobs Through News Projects or Businesses. Timeframe for this particular objective is an ongoing process.

- a. Utilize economic development personnel to market regional assets.
 - b. Survey existing businesses to determine their needs and then implement a business retention effort that could encourage expansion or tertiary businesses.
 - c. Create regional economic development “tool kit.” This might include tax abatement, tax increment finance districts, finder fees for people in the community that help attract new businesses, and low-interest revolving loan funds.
9. Identify Existing Successes and Use as Models for Future Potentials

**COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGY
COMMUNITY LEADER FORUM
GENTRY/NODAWAY/WORTH COUNTIES**

Attendance

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| 1. Bill Mozingo | Worth County Commissioner |
| 2. Don DeMott | Nodaway County |
| 3. Jerry Eckstein | Mayor, Clyde, MO |
| 4. Alex Ching | NWMORCOG Board of Directors |
| 5. Brock Pfof | White Cloud Engineering |
| 6. Matt Chesnut | Maryville, MO |
| 7. Tom Bliss | NWMORCOG, Maryville, MO |
| 8. Brenda Parman | NWMORCOG, Maryville, MO |
| 9. Craig McNeese | Grant City, MO |
| 10. Bob Bush | NWMSU, Maryville, MO |
| 11. Brad Lager | Maryville, MO |
| 12. Duane Williams | University of Missouri Outreach and
Extension |
| 13. Clint Gayler | NWMORCOG, Maryville, MO |
| 14. Lisa Macali | Nodaway County Economic
Development |

Strengths

1. Regional Cooperation
2. Diversity of Economy
3. Great Work Force and Work Ethic
4. Positive Lifestyle
5. Natural Resources
6. Agricultural Industry
7. Quality of Life
8. Environment
9. Educational Facilities
10. Regional Planning Commission
11. Communications Infrastructure
12. Inter-agency Relationships
13. Community Pride
14. Legislators
15. Expanding Manufacturing Industry—Job Creation
16. Recreation
17. Lower Cost of Living
18. Relatively Low Taxes

19. Good Mix of Educational, Agricultural, Manufacturing Industries

Weaknesses

1. The “Us vs. Them” Attitude (relating to both town rivalry as well as “city” and “country” dwellers)
2. Lack of Economic Base to Serve Infrastructure and Regulatory Needs
3. Agricultural Economy Dwindling
4. Infrastructure (with regard to increase cost per capita as population decreases)
5. Lack of Confidence
6. Transportation Infrastructure
7. Lack of Telecommunications Development
8. Lack of Communication with Corporate Telecommunications
9. Affordable Housing
10. Infrastructure (primarily utilities)
11. Lack of Youth Involvement in Community
12. Adapting to Non-Agricultural Economy
13. Lack of Curb Appeal
14. Lack of Incentive to Stay at Home for Career
15. Availability of Medical Care
16. Inadequate Housing for Older Population’s Needs
17. Lack of Rail System
18. Lack of Retail Businesses (especially in smaller towns)
19. Absentee Landlords
20. Inability to “Think Outside the Box”

Opportunities

1. Chance to Control Own Destiny
2. Space (availability of land)
3. Lower Overhead Costs
4. Marketable Quality and Way of Life
5. Northwest Missouri State University
 - a. Development of College Students as Potential Resources
 - b. Retention of Well Educated Work Force
6. Low Cost Housing
7. Recreation
8. Agriculture
 - a. Diversity of High Value Crops
 - b. Alternative Crops
9. Immigration of Retirees
10. Rural Water-Incentive for Immigrants
11. Infrastructure Improvement to Acquire New Businesses
12. Airport Not Being Fully Utilized
13. Availability of Small Industrial Sites

14. Increasing Information Technology Capability
15. Highway Infrastructure
16. Positive Leaders

Threats

1. Conservatism
(i.e. unwillingness to take risk, reluctance to change)
2. Loss of the Landfill
3. Rising Cost of Agricultural Production
(i.e. increasing price of equipment, production inputs, etc.
which in turn increases per unit cost)
4. Absentee Ownership
5. Farm Programs that Draw Money Out of the Counties (CRP)
6. Declining Retail Businesses in Rural Areas
7. The “Greener Pasture Syndrome”
(residents leaving for opportunities elsewhere,
which they perceive to not exist in this area)
8. Increasing Lifestyle Demand and the
Need to Offer More Options
9. Cost of Environmental Regulations
10. Loss of Population Through Expanding Highway System
11. Low Unemployment
12. Agriculture is No Longer the Center of a Viable Community
13. Isolation
14. Digital Divide
15. Declining Tax Base
16. The “Wal-Mart Syndrome” (large trade center decrease sales tax in some areas)
17. Environmental Regulations With Regard to Agriculture
18. Poor Roads
19. Lack of Community Involvement By Younger Generation
20. Lack of Planning
21. Loss of Confidence In Planners
22. Lack of Civic Discussion and Engagement
23. Migration to Urban Areas
24. Aging of Leaders
25. The “Small Town Mind-set”
26. Unwillingness to Invest Locally

Strategic Planning

1. Assess the Availability of Developmental Land for Small Industry. The timeframe for this activity is one to two years initially, however it would eventually be an on-going process.
 - a. Create a regional chamber of commerce to facilitate flow and/or gathering of information.
 - b. Create a database of available zoned land for industry. This database would include acreage and available infrastructure.
 - c. Market this database and have a single point of contact for this list.
 - d. Increase awareness of existing resources.
2. Aggressive Promotion and Develop Brochure of Marketable Assets. The timeframe for this activity is one to two years initially, however, it would eventually be an on-going process.
 - a. Aggressively promote business, industry, and tourism opportunities in Northwest Missouri. Create marketing tools identifying regional assets and initiatives. Using the aforementioned thought of a regional economic development “tool kit,” highlight specific incentives communities can provide to new, existing, and expanding business.
3. Buildings Pre-built to Retailer Specifications. The timeframe for this activity is one year initially, however, it would eventually be an on-going process.
 - a. Research trends in retail development. Work with area developers so they might understand these trends and build retail properties in accordance to the research.