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Results from the Community Asset Survey: Lincoln County, Nevada

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Introduction

The Nevada Economic Assessment Project (NEAP) is a statewide Extension program aimed at providing a baseline repository of socio-economic data for each county in Nevada. One component of NEAP includes a community asset mapping workshop conducted with community leaders and residents. The asset mapping component includes a community workshop, followed by an online community asset survey. The online survey is an opportunity to provide broader community participation, beyond the workshop participants, to help identify community assets.

As part of the NEAP process, the community asset workshop for Lincoln County was held in person with county officials and staff on Feb. 3, 2020. The community asset mapping component of NEAP is a “snapshot of assets”. It is not a full inventory of every asset that exists or is desired in the county. A snapshot provides a broad overview of the key assets in the community, at this moment in time (hence a baseline). Asset mapping is a positive way to promote and think about one’s community and can typically serve as a starting point for further discussions of possible actions and initiatives.

Asset mapping is a process to create awareness of local resources. Its intended purpose is for community members to recognize what their community already has while noting desired additions to their community. Typically, when community members gather, people begin by listing all the problems or needs within the community. When members begin with identifying needs first, they see an endless list of problems. Funding often tends to go to outside service providers, and residents view themselves and their community as deficient. As a result, residents can feel as though they are victims who lack the capacity to make change happen within their own community (Kretzman and McKnight 1993).

However, if residents focus first on assets and strengths within the community, they are far more likely to be committed to investing in their communities and use existing strengths to address needs. Empirical evidence strongly suggests community economic development is more successful when people are willing to commit to investing in themselves and their resources (Burkett 2011; Underwood and Friesner 2017).

Communities that focus on assets first are more able to effectively address needs by partnering with outside entities to leverage the resources and assets within the community (Kretzman and McKnight 1993; Pitzer and Streeter 2015).

Hence, successful community development must begin within the community itself. Results from the Lincoln County Community Asset Survey are provided in this special publication to provide a snapshot of existing and desired assets as provided by Lincoln County residents.

Survey Results

Following the community asset mapping workshop on February 3, 2020, an online community asset survey was open on Survey Monkey from Feb. 11, 2020, until April 14, 2020. Paper copies of the survey were also available at the Lincoln County Extension office for residents who were unable to access the online survey.

A total of 25 residents (n=25) completed the online community asset survey for Lincoln County. A majority of survey respondents were women (75%) compared to men (25%). Ages of respondents included a cross-sampling of adults, with the highest frequencies within the age range of 45-55 and 55-65 years. The online survey is not intended to be a complete inventory of all assets in Lincoln County, but rather a snapshot of assets identified by residents at this point in time.

Respondents who provided input into the survey were from three of the five zip codes in Lincoln County. The majority of respondents 68% were residents of the 89008 zip code (Table 1).

Table 1. Lincoln County Community Assets Respondent Zip Code Distribution, 2021

Zip Code	City	Survey Responses	Percent
89008	Caliente	17	68%
89043	Pioche	6	24%
89042	Panaca	3	12%
89001	Alamo	0	0
89017	Hiko	0	0

Respondents were asked on the survey to share, “*In one word, what is something you would like to brag about your community?*” The following word cloud (Figure 1) reflects respondents’ one word to brag about their community. The larger the word in the word cloud, the more often the word was used from residents on the survey. Therefore, the more frequently it was cited, the larger the word appears.

The process used to identify assets was grouped into six categories. These six categories were provided to residents during the community workshop and in the online survey as a framework to think about assets. The six asset categories are based on the seven community capitals (Flora and Flora 2013). The seven community capitals (i.e., built, natural, political, social, natural, human and cultural) are commonly identified as the ecosystem of a healthy community. The community capitals approach builds on the notion that all communities have assets. These assets may be inactive, or they may be invested to create more assets or leveraged to help fill gaps in the community.

Figure 1. Lincoln County Community Asset Word Cloud, 2021



Respondents were asked to provide what assets exist currently and what assets they desire for each of the six categories. The six asset categories can be fluid, implying the categories themselves are not the focus, but rather it is the the identification of the asset itself that is most important. For example, residents may identify a desired asset to have “reliable broadband”. This asset can be identified under the category of *Play*, *Economic* or *Values*. The six categories of assets are identified as follows.

1. Values
2. People
3. Places
4. Play
5. Economic
6. Group

Assets

1) Values:

Values are an intangible asset of a community; however, shared values add to the quality of life in a community. Examples of values may include “safe community,” “a small-town feel” or “rural values.” Community values are important because values are the foundation to a community and local decisions often reflect these core values. Table 2 outlines existing and desired assets of values as identified by workshop participants in Lincoln County. To be respectful of participants who completed the online survey, all comments (verbatim) are included in Table 2 regarding values as assets.

Table 2. Lincoln County Online Survey List of Assets: Values

Existing	Desired
Kindness, welcoming visitors	Tourism, diversity, economic development, local business
Low crime rate	More tourism based businesses
Friendly people	Prosperity
Quiet neighborhoods	Industry
Hot springs water	A place to soak for free - a pool that gathers leftover hot water for all
Respect for others property	Community outreach to help others maintain their property
Small class sizes	Safe, fun places and things for older children and young adults to do (age 13-20)
Churches	Recreation activities like bowling ally, gym, and movie theater.
Clean air and water, wide open spaces, safety,	New affordable housing
Turn-of-the-century small town atmosphere, rural environment, connoisseurs of flower gardens & beautiful trees, safety oriented speed limits, wide variety of religious affiliations that work together, support for elderly, support for low-income residents, patriotic, belief in "one nation under God," incredible star-filled night skies	More private landowners willing to sell land to newcomers, be more open to new people in the community, respect education more, encourage youth to succeed in school and further their education (technical or college), community support for business owners
Heritage and cultural sites	Community based learning and compatibility
	More Police Force thru-out the community. More Youth-oriented activities.
	More job opportunities for high school graduates, more available housing, more options for job training, more nationwide service organizations, county chamber of commerce, community college satellite such as the one that exists in Lander County, day care centers for working mothers
	Increased Commerce, Increased Amenities such as grocers, restaurants
	Better education opportunitites, more businesses
	Community acceptance of newcomers

Existing	Desired
	Community center

**All data in this table were submitted by residents and survey respondents. Please excuse any spelling, grammar, or other inconsistencies. These are not the views nor opinions of the authors of the report.*

2) People:

Everyone in a community has some gift or talent he/she can contribute to help strengthen the community. The core of community rests with the capacity of its residents, the individual members of the community and how individuals can contribute. When people use their skills and talents in the community, they make the community stronger. Table 3 outlines existing and desired assets of people as identified by workshop participants in Lincoln County. To be respectful of participants who completed the online survey, all comments (verbatim) are included in Table 3 regarding people as assets.

Table 3. Lincoln County Online Survey List of Assets: People

Existing	Desired
Welcoming to outsiders, kind, community-minded	Open to change, interested in growth and development, support local events and initiatives
Friendly people	More tourism
Hunters	Volunteers in public safety
Willingness to work together	Young people willing to be mentored to take over current functioning groups and activities
The trains are like people - I love the trains and the personality they add to the community	University of Nevada Caliente campus servicing the local communities with Alamo and Hiko - distance learning through remote connections this can also help the prison(s)
Gardening, but would love to be part of a community garden	Umbrella organization to assist with event planning
Value families, helping neighbors, gun smithing, innovative and self-reliant, grow gardens	Community Gardens in all towns, not just Caliente.
Spiritually minded, good Samaritans, charitable, rural values, neighborly, honest, straightforward, self-sufficient, hard-working, multi-skilled, DIYers, low crime rate, supportive of the education of their children, agronomists (farmers, ranchers, gardeners)	Less xenophobic, Initiate more of a welcome wagon to new residents, more appreciative of natural resources, more health-minded nutritionally, more interested in organic foods, more conservation-minded, more philosophically inclined, more interest in book clubs and literature, more interest in the arts, more interest in Farmer's Markets
Faith-based groups	Community events to bond towns together
	Discover talents of newcomers, sharing talents and trades, tradespeople, educated professionals that contribute to the community
	More engaged residents, participants in local and state government boards and commissions
	Service projects outside of churches

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3) Places:

Every community has special places where people come together. Community is about coming together, and the places where people congregate are spaces for building community. These places may serve as a microcosm of community. Places can also add to a community’s identity through a historic building or traditional stories about the community. Table 4 outlines existing and desired assets of places as identified by workshop participants in Lincoln County. To be respectful of participants who completed the online survey, all comments (verbatim) are included in Table 4 regarding places as assets.

Table 4. Lincoln County Online Survey List of Assets: Places

Existing	Desired
Mountain Bike Trails, community garden, Depot, Panaca Warm Springs, Pioche attractions, state parks, Rainbow Canyon, Highland Peak	Bike-related businesses, brewery, good coffee shop, bakery, health food market, health-food restaurant, larger grocery store with better hours, campground
Back country camping & hiking	Renewable energy development initiatives
The Historic Depot	Better grocery stores
Caliente Train Depot	A large events center for everything from city council meetings to dance classes and community affairs
Pioche museums	Repaired Caliente Train Depot
It is Neldon Mathews, the Depot	Coffee shop
The train station, is a bit wasted - why not make it a place where people can get more info about the town	More fresh vegetables and fruit
Local parks & hiking trails	Make the train station a place for local movies and interpretive talks
Walking trails	Indoor recreation venue
School gym only available to some people.	More places for ages 13-20 to hang out, theater, bowling alley
State parks, eagle valley, Panaca Spring, Bike Trails, hot springs	Community Center for kids and families.
Kershaw-Ryan State Park, Beaver Dam State Park, Cathedral Gorge State Park, Spring Valley State Park, Echo Canyon State Park, National Wildlife Refuge, Caliente Hot Springs, Elgin State Park, Eagle Valley Resort, Whipple Caverns, 17 Wilderness areas, Rainbow Canyon, Robbers Roost (lair of Butch Cassidy), Bristlecone pine forests, Ponderosa pine forests, Ghost towns, Pioche mining history, Caliente Train Depot, Panaca Warm Springs, Petroglyph sites, Extraterrestrial Highway, Mountain biking	National Park, National Monument, Nature center, Botanic garden, Demonstration garden, Community garden, Larger county museum, Area 51 Museum, Repair of Mathew Dam to create another fishable reservoir

Existing	Desired
trails, Silver State OHV trails, Meadow Valley Wash Linear Trail, Rose Memorial Park, Caliente Super Park and mountain bike training area, Lincoln County Museum, Oak Springs Trilobite collecting area, Pinyon and juniper forests, Barclay wild horse sanctuary, Ursine great blue heron roosting area, Whipple Cavern, scenic highways, Boothill cemetery	
Historical sites, buildings	Restaurants, hotels, liquor store, continuing education center, trade school
	Grocers, workforce training other than trades, more established trail network with wayfinding
	Indoor pool for year-round use. Movie theater
	Places for youth to hang out
	More marked hiking trails

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4) Play:

Play is an important part of life for all of us, from children to adults. Play gives us the time and space to meet and socialize with others, and improves our physical and mental health and our overall quality of life. The evidence outlining the benefits of play in the development of young children is overwhelming. Likewise, the value of play from children to adults offers wide benefits for a community. Locations for play are often seen as a focal point for communities. They offer opportunities for social interaction for the wider community, support the development of a greater sense of community spirit and promote social cohesion. Table 5 outlines existing and desired assets of play as identified by workshop participants in Lincoln County. To be respectful of participants who completed the online survey, all comments (verbatim) are included in Table 5, regarding play as assets.

Table 5. Lincoln County Online Survey List of Assets: Play

Existing	Desired
Canyons, trails, parks, springs, Rainbow Canyon rock climbing area	More mountain bike trails, art classes
Hunting & fishing & boating	Better shooting range
Extensive trail systems	Improved directional and informational signs on trail systems
Softball fields	Recreation center
Fishing	More hiking trails
Bike trail - should bring special events - need more places to host visitors and funnel activities	Hostel - make the old hotel into a hostel by night and a place to gather and have a beer/wine coffee bar/snacks/bakery by day

Existing	Desired
Outdoor Activities	Bowling Alley, movie theater, Rec Center. Indoor pool year round.
Comm parks, state parks, city parks, ball park, pool, rodeo grounds, camp grounds, camping, OHV trails, BLM land use, bike path	Bike path from Caliente to Pioche, paved bike path down the canyon
Camping, RV'ing, Mountain biking, Off-roading, Horseback riding, Rock climbing, Nature hiking, Backpacking, Canoeing, Foraging for pine nuts, Wildlife viewing, Birdwatching, Community celebrations, Rodeos, County Fair, Fishing, Hunting, Rock Collecting, Fossil Collecting, Picnicking	Movie theater, Plays, Concerts, Golfing on real grass greens, Frisbee golf, Old-fashioned May Day celebration, County-wide mountain bike trails that connect to each other, Street/leisure bike trails, Miniature golf, Country Western line dancing, Formal ballroom dancing, Jogging trails
Chamber of Commerce, tourism coalitions	Bowling, rollerskating, activities in Pioche
	More heritage tourism, Developed parks, wayfinding for established trails, hiking trailheads
	Youth activities
	Walking path in pioche

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5) Economic:

Communities have economic power in local businesses. This power includes who they hire, what they purchase, what skills they teach and what resources they offer. Revitalizing a community's economic life is at the very center of local economic development. Communities have many steps to rebuilding the local economy, and it begins by recognizing the local institutions and organizations that exist. Table 6 outlines existing and desired economic assets as identified by workshop participants in Lincoln County. To be respectful of participants who completed the online survey, all comments (verbatim) are included in Table 6, regarding economic assets.

Table 6. Lincoln County Online Survey List of Assets: Economic

Existing	Desired
Non-smoking bar (Side Car), AirBnB's	Financing for renovating public buildings to renewable energy
Agricultural economy	Restaurants, rental properties, campgrounds, better internet
Caliente business district	Better cell phone coverage
Casino - get another one bigger that has events/shows	Help improve existing Farmers Market
Automated car wash (Caliente)	Truck stop
Auto repair, hospital	Ask BLM to establish at Hot Shot crew; and tandam with the FS work crew - is there a chance that the FS can have a hot shot crew too? or work together with BLM? This is done in other places. It could be cool - an interagency hot shot crew

Existing	Desired
10,000 square miles and only 3 total grocery stores	Service/Trades contractors (Electric/HVAC/Appliance Repair)
Mobile food vendors, restaurants, banks, high speed internet, motels, airport, gas stations, groceries, the Y, Tillies	More places to shop, more restaurant options. Our Nevada earned dollars are spent in Utah!
Family Diners, Gas stations, Grocery stores, Thrift stores, Family Dollar, Motels, RV parks, Auto & Tire Repair, Car parts store, Radio Shack, Hardware store, Bank, Credit Union, Mercantile, J&J's Fast Foods, Caliente Youth Center, Box Car Museum	Bank of America ATM, Nationwide Hotel Chain, Tourist Railway Tour, Mexican Restaurant, Chinese Restaurant, Italian Restaurant, Steakhouse, Antique mall, Liquor store, Wine bar, Spa, 3 & 4-star resorts, Health food store, Furniture store, Coffee house, Honkytonk, Tour companies, Swapmeet/flea market
Outdoor Recreation, adventure and heritage tourism	More development of ANY kind in county, more businesses
	New homes, developer builder, restaurants, solar development, more industry, lumber yard/feed, better internet
	Grocers, materials and goods suppliers, Varied housing stock, lodging for temporary labor
	Businesses locating to Industrial Parks
	Low income housing
	Recreation centers, gym

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6) Groups:

Groups and organizations are the foundation to a community's social fabric. Linkages and networks among community groups create social capital. Community groups (whether formal or informal) can often serve as the avenue for creating social trust, build relationships, and connect networks among community members. Involvement in these groups builds individual skills and increases involvement in community associations. Those involved in groups often help "fill the gaps" in a community and take on leadership roles. Table 7 outlines existing and desired groups as identified by workshop participants in Lincoln County. To be respectful of participants who completed the online survey, all comments (verbatim) are included in Table 7, regarding groups as assets.

Table 7. Lincoln County Online Survey List of Assets: Groups

Existing	Desired
Trail Cats (now known as Caliente Area Mountain Bike Association (CAMBA)), Lincoln County Authority of Tourism (LCAT)	Grow nonprofit organizational presence, request greater investment and outreach by elected officials from local to federal, VFW or other Veteran groups
Pioche Chamber of Commerce, Rural Roundup conference, Faith-based groups, Social media community groups	More mentoring/guidance/assistance to improve economic diversity in Lincoln County

Existing	Desired
Lincoln County Economic Development Committee	Girl scouts
Search and rescue	Get another non- land management govenment agencies to move in like rural development or social security or prisons or something adminstrative
Conservation District, Search and Rescue	Better up to date medical facilities.
Government agencies	Support of libraries from public
4-H, FFA, LCAT, Regional Development Authority, LC Creative Artists, Volunteer fire department, Beautification Committee, Trail CATS, LC Coalition, VFW, Farm Bureau, Cinco de Mayo committee, Memorial Day Committee, Fourth of July Committee, Masons	Rotary-Interact, Lions, Elks, Moose, Shriners, Chamber of Commerce, Betterment Society/Organization, Young Farmers Association, Master Gardeners, Thespians, Toastmasters, Audubon chapter
Full time dedicated mental health office	Mountain bike clubs for kids and adults,
Fire protection, beautification, FAA, 4H,	
Library	
Church, senior center	
Local Fire Departments	
Mental health	

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Snapshot of Assets

As stated earlier in this document, asset mapping is a process to create awareness of local resources and strengths. Its intended purpose is for community members to recognize what their community already has while noting desired additions to their community. Identifying community assets is an important process in driving local economic development (Burkett 2011). To create a “snapshot of assets” across each category, comments were qualitatively grouped into key themes. Themes were identified based on survey responses for each of the six asset categories. Participant comments, as listed in Tables 2-7, were reviewed and categorized into dominant themes based on similarity of responses.

Developing themes from qualitative survey responses required responses to be reviewed and coded. Similar coded responses were grouped together to create a theme (i.e., the individual responses of all the service and civic clubs listed were placed under a general theme of “Service/Civic Clubs” to reflect a broader theme). The higher frequency of coded response per theme is reflected by a sequence of listing for each asset. A snapshot of assets for each category are summarized below.

Values

Table 8. Themes of Existing and Desired Values as Assets in Lincoln County

<i>Existing Values</i>	<i>Desired Values</i>
1. Rural Lifestyle	1. Education
2. Beautiful Environment	2. Economic Prosperity
3. Connectedness	3. Recreation Activities

People

Table 9. Themes of Existing and Desired People Assets in Lincoln County

<i>Existing People</i>	<i>Desired People</i>
1. Community Minded	1. Education
2. Innovative	2. Engagement
3. Agriculturalists	3. Open to Change

Places

Table 10. Themes of Existing and Desired Places as Assets in Lincoln County

<i>Existing Places</i>	<i>Desired Places</i>
1. Outdoor Recreation	1. Upscale Businesses
2. Historic Places	2. Community Gardens
	3. Community Events

Play

Table 11. Themes of Existing and Desired Play Assets in Lincoln County

<i>Existing Play</i>	<i>Desired Play</i>
1. Outdoor	1. Recreation/Information Hub
2. Chamber/Tourism	2. Community Center
	3. Walking/Bike Path

Economic

Table 12. Themes of Existing and Desired Economic Assets in Lincoln County

<i>Existing Economic</i>	<i>Desired Economic</i>
1. Local Businesses	1. Diverse Businesses
2. Tourism	2. Affordable Housing
3. Ag Economy	3. Renewable Energy

Groups

Table 13. Themes of Existing and Desired Group Assets in Lincoln County

<i>Existing Groups</i>	<i>Desired Groups</i>
1. Service/Civic Clubs	1. Economic Diversity
2. Regional Development Groups	2. Healthcare

Limitations

A few significant limitations need to be noted in this report. First, a very small percentage of residents completed the online community asset survey (n=25) out of a county population of 5,180 (U.S. Census 2019). Additional limitations to the survey are a majority of those who did complete the survey were female (75%), and survey respondents represented only three of the five zip codes in Lincoln County, with 68% of responses from zip code 89008. Given these limitations to the community asset survey, the results are a first step in identifying existing and desired assets within the community. However, the snapshot of assets identified in this report can be used as a **starting point for discussion** among a more diverse set of residents with local decision-makers to explore how existing and desired assets can guide economic development decisions.

Conclusion and Next Steps

Asset mapping is an important tool to assist communities in identifying resources and strengths that currently exist, and it can help reveal desired assets that residents believe should be improved upon to help drive local change in their community. The information provided in this report reflect results from the Lincoln County Community Asset Survey, in connection with the Nevada Economic Analysis Baseline Report. Both of these reports are tools that can be used to help inform and guide local decision-making for economic development and to understand what residents value and desire in the community.

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