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**Building Good Communities for the Future**

Cooperative Extension, South Dakota State University

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Building Good Communities for the Future

Cooperative Extension Service
South Dakota State University
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WHAT THIS PUBLICATION IS ABOUT

Building a good community for our future will depend on three major conditions. First, we must understand what will be needed to meet our future demands and desires. Second, we need to make realistic plans in terms of our social and economic conditions. Third, we will have to carry out those plans with area action programs supported by people willing to work together; willing to compromise in achieving realistic goals; and having faith, courage, and determination that good communities for the future can be built in this agricultural region.

This publication identifies some of the major components of a good community in which to live with a few selected observations about what will be required to create or strengthen each component. It is an attempt to cause us to think in terms of an "area-community" that can socially and economically support our present and future demands. This is a challenge, an obligation, and an opportunity for all of us.


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INTRODUCTION

Changes affecting our communities are influenced by the thoughts and actions of all of us. Thus, the kind of communities that we will have in the future will depend on our plans and actions of the present. Sometimes we deplore the decline of the small town and the loss of serenity in the countryside, while praising the modern automobile and large farm machines that were important factors in bringing about these changes. We sometimes forget that one change is often closely associated with and greatly influences other changes. We cannot adopt modern transportation and equipment and at the same time hold on to a "horse and buggy" community.

Influencing change in desired directions begins with an analysis of reasons for change and forms in which it is appearing. It is the purpose of this publication to provide this background and suggest some of the major attributes of a good South Dakota community of the future. Also, alternative approaches to directing change to specific objectives are provided.

Definition of Communities

The basic structure of our society is community-oriented. However, a community is not easily defined. Some describe it in terms of a geographic area. Others speak of a community in terms of number of people that live in
some undefined area. It has also been described as groupings of people by ancestry; or associations such as church groups; or people of similar interests.

As used here, and particularly as it applies to rural areas, a "Community" is considered to be an area which furnishes most of the services commonly used by rural people. The community includes both farm and townspeople. It contains business firms engaged in providing goods and services as well as marketing the produce of the area. It has a governmental structure and provides credit, communication and transportation facilities. Schools, churches, health services and social and recreational activities are a part of the community. The number and types of all of these have changed over time.

This definition of a community should not be confused with a "Neighborhood." Neighborhoods are smaller and defined as areas in which only one, two, or perhaps three of these services are provided. Normally, a community will be composed of several neighborhoods.

These definitions provide clues as to why there have been disruptions in communities. Because of many changes some communities of the past should now be classified as neighborhoods. In earlier days, with nearly self-sufficient farmers, small groups made up both neighborhoods and communities and thus were identical.

How Communities Developed

Rural people are used to doing without some of the services and conveniences urban residents enjoy, though they are catching up. Their communities have been unable to provide all of the services. In nearly every case, towns sprang up in the midst of farmsteads already established in an area. These
farm people were often isolated from urban centers and had been nearly self-sufficient. Rudimentary schools and churches, if there were any, were provided by relatively small groups of neighbors.

The coming of the railroads initiated new services. Often the railroads established small service towns. Most of these towns were within a day's "wagon haul" from the farmers in the area, and eventually other services became available as the population increased. These towns became the center of a new community, providing high schools, drug stores and doctors, newspaper, telegraph, rail transportation and banks as well as providing entertainment, clothing, and basic foods. They eventually became a major center for social gatherings.

Changes in Communities

The advent of the auto and tractor brought changes almost impossible to trace. A few major changes can be noted, however.

Farm tractors reduced the reliance on horses and mules. This made possible an increase in the number of acres each individual farmer could till and released acres formerly needed for the production of feed for draft animals. Pressures to enlarge farms resulted. As newer and larger machines became available it was to the farmer's advantage to use them and he did. Improved implements brought about better farming practices such as weed and insect control, improved seeds and expanded use of fertilizers. These changes resulted in new types of purchases in towns. The farmer bought autos and trucks and made more frequent trips to town, often by-passing the local community center. The reduction in number of farmer customers made it difficult
for some businesses to succeed. Also, some businesses could no longer make
the needed repairs on the more complex and larger types of farm equipment
being developed.

The nearness of one town to another became important. The larger and
more progressive towns usually gained at the expense of the smaller. The
types and sizes of stores and service establishments in these towns changed
too.

Accompanying these changes were modifications in public services. Local
governments often found themselves with fewer taxpayers and sometimes reduced
tax bases with which to support growing public service demands. Local schools
found it increasingly difficult to maintain and improve educational systems in
areas of declining population and student numbers. Similar problems were
being encountered in small towns. Some school reorganizations and consoli-
dation took place. Churches in the outlying areas, as well as in towns, experi-
enced similar difficulties. In many communities, health services became
inadequate or non-existent. Many businesses closed their doors.

Many of the changes taking place within the community are related to
competition. Farmers compete with farmers of other areas for a market for
their produce; those that produce what the consumer wants at the most com-
petitive price usually prosper more than others. While businesses in small
towns compete against each other and against those in other neighboring towns,
they are also a part of the competition between areas or regions. For example,
for the farmers to be competitive their suppliers must furnish them with produc-
tion and consumption goods and services at competitive prices. Also, farm
marketing firms must be efficient, returning to the farmer as much of the sales price as is consistent with profitable operations.

Thus the entire community must be competitive. Besides competitive farmers and businesses, other sectors of the communities must provide services that people want. Also, these services must be of high quality at costs the community can afford. Sometimes these considerations may result in a redefining of the community as to the physical area it covers.

Many of the former communities will remain as neighborhoods, providing only a few selected services. But the mobile and relatively well-off rural population will insist on an expanded number of services more closely in line with those enjoyed by their city cousins. These communities of the future, therefore, will require: (1) competitive agriculture (2) competitive business centers (3) quality educational programs (4) modern and efficient government services (5) recreational opportunities, and (6) other services such as communication and transportation, financial services, medical centers, and religious programs.

All of these may not be provided by each community for itself, however.

These basic requirements of the community of the future are the subject of the remainder of this publication.

COMPETITIVE AGRICULTURE -- A MAJOR REQUIREMENT

In South Dakota, agriculture is the predominant occupation in most communities. We are not unique in this respect, however. All of the major agricultural products raised for sale by farmers and ranchers in the state can also be produced in many other localities, states, and regions of the nation as well
as in many foreign countries. Therefore, agriculture in our rural communities
must be efficient and productive enough to meet or surpass the competition
from other communities and regions.

Continual advancements in transportation and communication will make
this even more certain in years ahead. Higher standards of performance will
have to be attained for the agriculture of a community in order to maintain a
competitive basis in tomorrow’s world.

**A High Dollar Volume Per Unit Will Be Needed**

In many cases this will mean further increasing the size of the farm or
ranch business. The size of a business can be increased either by increasing
total acres, or by intensifying or changing the enterprises on the present unit.
Farms of the future will tend to have only a few, but large and highly special­
ized enterprises.

In terms of acres, the average size of all farms and ranches in South
Dakota in 1935 was 446 acres. By 1965 the average size had increased to
865 acres. Pressures for increasing farm size will continue. By the year 1980,
average size will likely be 170 to 210 acres larger than today, or an increase
of 20 to 25 percent per farm and ranch unit in the state.

Studies of farm records have repeatedly shown that over the years the
highest-earning farms in any group generally are above average in total volume
of business. Gross sales from a farming unit must be high enough to permit a
satisfactory net income for the family, after deducting all production expenses.
And, as we know, production expenses are taking a higher and higher percent­
age of gross farm sales.
In 1945 farm production expenses took about 50 percent of gross farm income. In 1955 the proportion had increased to 66 percent, while for 1965 it is likely that about 70 percent will go for this purpose. Farmers are purchasing more and more of their production inputs, such as tractor fuel, commercial feeds, electric power, and chemicals.

Farmers with the highest net earnings typically rank highest in labor efficiency; that is, they have the highest number of crop acres and head of livestock per farm worker. They usually rank highest in crop efficiency; obtaining above average yields per acre in their area. And, they rate high in livestock-feed efficiency having the highest returns over feed costs from their livestock. These are attained through better breeding, feeding, and management practices.

Wise Land Use Will Be More Important

Farmers with the highest net earnings typically have a major proportion of their cropland in the highest income-potential crops for that county or area. They practice profitable land use.

To keep agriculture in a community competitive it will be increasingly important to devote land to its highest potential income use, and yet maintain its fertility at an economic level. Demand for land has greatly increased and is expected to continue to do so. In areas where water is or will become available, irrigation will expand the highest potential return from land and should be developed as rapidly as economically feasible.

Forward Planning Will Be Necessary

The "Man" in Management will become increasingly important. Decision making will become even more critical than it is today.
profitable enterprise or combination of enterprises will distinguish top-level managers.

For this purpose, various economic procedures such as whole farm planning, enterprise budgets, partial budgets, and linear programming will need to be employed to meet competition from better managers.

**Complete Records Will Be Essential**

Business accounting practices will be applied to more farms and ranches in order to check on the financial position of farm business, and to measure the financial progress from year to year. Farm accounts can be used in analyzing strong and weak points of the farm operation and in addition serve as an aid in preparing income tax reports. Complete farm and ranch records also make it possible to keep a constant check on and close control over production costs.

**Modern Techniques Must Be Adopted Early**

For an agricultural community to be competitive, it is imperative that operators keep up-to-date with advances in science and technology. They must keep informed on new developments, and new ways of doing things. This includes all advancements associated with machines, fertilizers, chemical pesticides and weedicides, sprays, and better seeds, as well as new production techniques. Each must be analyzed in terms of "Will it pay -- on my farm or ranch?"

Farmers should adopt improved technologies as soon as there is evidence that costs per unit of product (per bushel of grain, or per pound of livestock product) are likely to be lowered. It is the early adopter who profits the most from new technologies by lowering his production costs before increases in
total production result in lower product prices. Those who fail to adopt new technology generally lose, both through continued high unit costs and overall lower prices for the product.

**Adequate Capital Must Be Available**

Financial requirements on farms and ranches have more than doubled in the past 15 years and are four to six times higher per farm than 25 years ago. They will likely double again in the next 15 years. More machines and production inputs are being purchased, and farm or ranch units are increasing in size. Both factors call for larger financial resources in the future. More capital is being used in place of labor because interest costs are usually less expensive than wages.

Increasing financial requirements in agriculture can be illustrated by figures for typical family-size Wheat-Corn-Livestock farms in north central South Dakota: $11,020 were required in 1940, $31,160 in 1950, $52,540 in 1960, and $63,080 in 1964. Perhaps $140,000 or more will be required by 1980. In addition, more short-run operating capital will be needed. Requirements of this magnitude mean that banks and other credit institutions in a community must meet these vastly expanded financial needs or operators will tend to look for them outside the community.

**COMPETITIVE BUSINESS CENTER REQUIREMENTS**

Also, important in the development and survival of a good rural community is that local businesses be competitive with those of neighboring communities or areas. Such competition depends on volume of sales and the ability of
business firms to supply the quality and types of goods and services demanded by people. These business services must be provided as efficiently and promptly as those obtainable from their neighboring competitors.

In addition to businesses serving consumers, most community centers will usually include businesses serving the major industries of the community. In most South Dakota communities, for instance, there will be supply, marketing and processing firms serving agriculture, and the efficiency of these will help determine the competitive strength of the agriculture in the region. Therefore, in this discussion of competitive business centers reference is not alone to establishments serving the consumer, but includes those serving agriculture as well.

**Quality Merchandise and Services**

The most difficult job the retailer has is one of merchandising. Merchandising is the planning involved in marketing - to have the desired merchandise in the proper quantity, at the right price, at the right place and at the right time. It is only through skillful merchandising that a retailer can serve his customers, make a profit and stay in business. If he is to accomplish this, he must know his customers' needs and desires and select from the millions of items available to him those that best meet their demands. He must attempt to serve and supply them at the lowest possible price consistent with a profitable operation.

**Skilled Management**

The most important aspect contributing to success of any business center is management. Deficiencies found in the operational areas of a business are
usually attributable to poor management decisions. Business firm operators often lack the ability and knowledge to manage successfully, or are unaware of aspects of management that could make them more competitive.

A manager must have adequate records if he is to make rational decisions. Records only sufficient for tax purposes are not adequate. Complete records are a necessity if a manager is to have tight control of his operation and avoid business difficulties. Records and controls are necessary in order to achieve efficient ordering and receiving practices; efficient use of storage; and proper scheduling of labor.

Cooperative Attitudes

The attitudes of businessmen toward one another are reflected in the spirit of the community. While local businessmen should be competitive, they should not have antagonistic attitudes. If a cooperative community spirit exists among them the community can be more competitive with other communities and regions of the country.

Cooperation among community businessmen and others is important in meeting the keen competition developing between areas for industry, government contracts, a larger share of an expanding national and international market, and other development projects. Thus, businessmen and leaders in rural communities must work together for their own mutual good. They must develop some advantages — social, cultural, and economic — if they are to hold their present customers and attract new ones. These same advantages are necessary to attract outside investment capital.
Marketing Facilities

Agricultural marketing is the vital link between the farmer and the consumers of his products. With the increase in specialization and commercialization of our farm operations, marketing becomes an increasingly important function to the farmer in moving his products into commercial channels. If local communities are to carry out the physical functions of marketing as a means of creating business activity and encouraging farmers to patronize the community, modern, up-to-date facilities must be provided to meet their needs.

Communities and marketing firms must be alert and ready to adapt to the many changes that loom on the horizon. Evidence points to increasing size and scale of all businesses. Agricultural products will likely experience more vigorous competition from nonagricultural products. Other new and different market demands, such as for nitrogen freezing, vacuum freeze drying and sterilized foods, will create opportunities for many communities and problems for others.

Competitive Prices

In our type of economic system most production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services is guided by prices. Prices affect decisions of producers, marketers and consumers. These decisions in turn influence prices.

It is extremely important therefore, for businesses in a community to be as competitive on prices as possible, if they are to retain their share of the market. Fewer and perhaps larger stores and service establishments in sparsely settled areas will likely result because of the importance of large volume sales in achieving competitive prices.
DEVELOPING GOOD EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

The educational facilities of the ideal community of the future cannot easily be prescribed. Most people agree that good educational systems are important, but there is often little agreement on how to measure or specify the level of "goodness." However, by taking a careful look at what our community educational systems will be asked to do in years to come, we can get some indication of the quality standards which will be required. As stated in previous sections the competitive position of the agriculture, business, and industry of the community depend heavily on the competency of management in each. In turn, the competency of management will depend heavily on the quantity and quality of education received by managers.

The Task of Education

Our public schools in the future will be required to do the following:

1. Prepare some boys and girls for management of $150,000 to $750,000 farm and ranch businesses which use complex and rapidly developing technology. (Actually our high schools may only be able to approach the very minimum required here. Where possible these students should be encouraged to attend a college or university and/or participate in agricultural short courses when available.)

2. Prepare some boys and girls for management of retail stores and industry which will be found in the business centers of new communities. (Here again, even good high schools will be barely adequate. College or university training should be encouraged.)

3. Prepare capable students for entering a college or university, in order that these students might enter without handicap or deficiencies. For many South Dakota students this is not true at the present.

4. Provide vocational training for those not planning to enter a college or university. At the high school level this will consist primarily of an introduction to the occupational skills which do not require a college education. The most effective vocational training will follow high school graduation. A supply
of skilled labor and vocational training facilities can be valuable assets to communities interested in attracting additional industry.

5. Provide retraining opportunities for adults who lack skills or who must learn a new skill.

6. Do all of the above at a quality standard which will enable graduates to compete with others from the best schools of the country, both in higher education and on the job.

The reader is encouraged to look at the adjustments required before his community attempts to provide an educational system which accomplishes the six things listed above. An investigation of this subject, of course, raises questions of adequate tax base, curriculum, needed facilities and the like.

The Quality Aspect of Education

The layman has great difficulty in evaluating the quality of an educational program. What is "quality education?" A few things can be looked for as indications, though not proof of quality. Almost all experts would agree that for secondary education it is important to have teachers who teach only in their own specialty and who are well trained in that specialty. At the primary level, the teacher's specialty becomes a particular age group. Schools with individual teachers teaching grades 1 through 6 or 8, or with teachers handling 3 to 5 different courses at the secondary level are still common in South Dakota. Poor quality instruction in these cases often occurs. In the measurement of quality, past standards can be misleading. The adequacy of the educational system for meeting the future demands to be made upon it is the important consideration.

Variety and completeness of curriculum is an important indicator of quality. Another indication is the quality of libraries and laboratories. Does your school
offer the courses needed for the student's future? Does it provide up-to-date reference books in all fields of instruction, and modern, well-equipped laboratories? Adequate health, counseling and guidance services are also important.

Finally, are there enough students in each class to stimulate competition and is the tax base sufficient to adequately support the kind of system needed?

The Efficiency Aspect of Education

While we want to be assured of quality in our school systems, we want this quality to be efficiently achieved. In South Dakota we have been willing to pay a relatively high price for educational programs of questionable quality. Because of our many small schools we have one of the lowest teacher-student ratios in the nation. If we hired the same quality of teachers as schools in other states our cost per pupil would be one of the highest in the nation. We have been able to hold this cost per pupil down, however, by hiring the kind of teacher we can get at salaries well below the national average. Good education can be achieved in a small school, but at a very high price. In general, however, the small South Dakota school districts have not been willing to pay the high cost to achieve quality.

Because of the sparsity of population in South Dakota it may well be that some communities will decide that they will want to support a school system of their own even though it might be a relatively small and inefficient one. If the citizens realize that the public cost of quality will be higher than it would be by joining a larger system, and are willing to pay this cost, this may be a rational decision when other factors are considered. Perhaps we have not yet explored all ways of achieving high quality education at
reasonable cost in units somewhat smaller than the ideal. Up to now there has not been sufficient concern with quality.

We need to be concerned that both the young people who stay in South Dakota and those leaving the state for employment opportunities elsewhere have training that will help and not hinder them in the competition they will be facing. Because education so greatly affects the future of all people and all communities it should be given a very high priority of attention. The cost of not providing quality of education can be very high also, and should be considered in assessing the alternatives.

MODERN GOVERNMENT SERVICES

A good rural community is one that also provides the desired variety of high quality government services in an efficient manner.

Along with the changing agricultural and business economy in our state has come a need for changes in state and local government operations.

Changes Affecting Government Services

1. Rural to urban migration has changed the tax base and number of individuals to be served in both rural and urban areas.

2. Changing demands for many types of public services, such as education, highways, and welfare programs, have altered the functions that different levels of government need to provide.

3. Developments in transportation and communication have made possible efficiency measures attainable through consolidation or reorganization of various governmental functions.

4. New technical developments in the tasks that machines can perform have changed the labor, capital and administrative requirements needed in carrying out the most efficient type of government services.
5. Financial assistance programs for various types of public services have affected the operation of federal, state and local governments.

6. Demands for government services have changed both in amount and in quality of services desired.

While it is quite obvious that governmental functions need to adjust or change in order to provide quality and efficient services, the types of changes needed and ways of bringing them about are not so readily recognized. In some cases traditional ways of doing things tend to be maintained long after they have become obsolete. People in rural areas need to consider what types of governmental functions are currently needed and what kinds of services might be demanded in the future. Government should and can be designed to provide vigor and strength to social and economic conditions.

Adjusting Government to Present and Future Conditions

Considering the decline in rural population and improvements in transportation, communication, and in functions data processing, micro-filming and other machines can perform, to what extent can county government tasks be centralized in regional and state offices? What would this mean in terms of improved services and decreases in local tax costs? What roads and highways will be needed in the future and what type of equipment will be needed to build such roads? Should a multi-county tax base be used for financing highways, education, welfare and health services or should townships and counties continue to try to provide their own?

County court house functions are being consolidated in some rural areas. Some Minnesota counties, for example, have established district or multi-county superintendents of schools as the number of districts decline.
There is often consolidation of administration of welfare programs. Microfilm recording and data processing systems are often incorporated to provide faster and better service.

In some cases the function of the county sheriff, county judge, clerk of courts and register of deeds are either broadened to cover more area or the functions of two or three of the above are merged into one. In North Dakota, for example, the constitution requires that in counties under 15,000 in population the county judge and clerk of court offices must be combined and if the county has fewer than 6,000 population the register of deeds office must be combined with the two above. In South Dakota the only major change occurred when one county, Armstrong, totally consolidated with a contiguous county, Dewey. Three other counties rely on adjoining counties to provide necessary administrative machinery except decisions made by a board of road commissioners to determine road policy.

These, and even more drastic types of changes in local government operations, need to be considered by both rural and urban people. By analyzing the nature of economic and social changes, decisions on governmental operations can be made that not only minimize costs but result in high-quality competitive services needed for the development of good rural communities.

DEVELOPING RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

Recreation opportunities are becoming increasingly important in the structure of a good community in which to live. The attitudes people have about a community are often greatly influenced by the variety and quality of
recreation opportunities open to them. For maximum recreation development, we need to be concerned about at least two kinds of recreation demands: (1) those demanded by local people and (2) those demanded by people living outside the region. The first is developed for the services of local people and the second for producing local income.

How well these two demands are met will depend on how well local people plan, cooperate and carry out a balanced program. To do this it is important to know what types of recreational activities people are seeking, what kinds of recreational services, both public and private are presently available, and most important, what improvements and additions can be made to develop a more desirable area in which to live.

Capitalizing on External Recreation Demands

There are many opportunities for income producing recreational enterprises. Space and sparseness of population can be an advantage in developing programs to meet special types of recreational demands of those living in more urbanized areas. With proper planning and action, improvements and developments are often possible in hunting, fishing, trail rides, hiking or just relaxation on a farm or ranch.

With the increase in leisure time and incomes most Americans are demanding and are willing to pay for quality recreational services. South Dakota already has a large and a growing tourist business. New enterprises and attractions can capitalize on this and add to it. City people, living in crowded conditions, are drawn to areas of space, fresh air and water. These resources are abundant in this state.
Very often programs which are designed to capitalize on demands of people living outside of an area or state also have the effect of meeting local demands as well. Because of this fact, it is important for local people to consider how their recreation program might be developed to provide a balance in meeting both local and external recreation needs.

Structuring a Balanced Recreation Program

The key to a balanced recreation program is planning. First to be considered is the number of people, both resident and non-resident, the public recreation facilities are intended to serve.

It should be recognized that the population using areas for sightseeing, camping, hunting, fishing and some outdoor winter sports is much larger than the population that might use a playground or swimming pool. Such scenic attractions are usually provided by State and National Parks and the U.S. Forest Service. Local communities should take these into account when planning local developments and should not attempt to duplicate them.

It is not the purpose of public recreation to replace or compete with private recreation enterprises. Oftentimes public and private recreation complement each other, especially if the public and private recreation programs are adequately planned.

In most South Dakota communities there is a gap between the facilities provided by National and State parks and those offered by city parks. This gap is being filled in many states and a few South Dakota counties by county parks and in the more sparsely settled areas by multi-county parks. Counties may use tax money for building and maintaining such recreation services.
The smallest area to consider in recreational planning is the area served by the local school. Many communities are now combining recreation facilities with those already provided by the school system, particularly those facilities that might be used daily by school age children. This is an economical and logical arrangement from the viewpoint of supervision, maintenance and utilization of equipment. Communities planning new schools as a result of school reorganization might wish to consider the park-school plan.

It must be emphasized that recreation programs need to be compatible with the physical and human characteristics of an area. For example, developing rodeo grounds, trail rides and antelope hunting areas might receive a high priority in western South Dakota but may not be considered very important in the eastern portion of the state. On the other hand, the development of the lake regions in eastern and northeastern South Dakota, reservoirs in the central part of the state, and pheasant hunting in several areas offers some real hope and challenge for those living in eastern and central South Dakota.

Communities desiring to build recreation facilities can oftentimes avoid costly mistakes by seeking professional guidance. Usually the fees charged are a very small proportion of the total cost and might assure the proper location and design for the health and safety of those using recreational facilities.
OTHER SERVICES

In order for a community to grow and prosper many additional services are required. Some of these are supplied from outside the local community itself, while others are contained within the community. The ability of centers to supply services can be a deciding factor influencing community growth.

Population within an area, and the mobility of the people between areas, determine not only how many other services are needed, but also how many of these services can be supported. Let’s look briefly at the nature of some of these services.

Communication and Transportation Adaptation

Communication and transportation services to and from a community and to other areas determine in part a community’s strength. Improved communication and transportation create a situation that allows, and provides pressure for, trade and service centers to be further apart. Those located at points where roads enter from all directions tend to become the strongest due to transportation advantages.

Meeting Financial Needs

Adequate financial services must also be available if a community is to grow and prosper to its full potential. This requires forward looking leaders in the financial institutions - leaders who recognize the need for adequate credit and who are able to supply it in all areas of operation - short term, intermediate, and long term. They must also supply daily banking services and savings opportunities to round out the whole financial program for the community.
Providing Health and Welfare Services

Physical well being of individuals of different ages and income levels requires a variety of services. For example, all individuals require medical aid in varying degrees over a period of time.

The one- and two-doctor hospitals are being replaced by fewer and bigger medical centers staffed by several doctors many of whom are specialists. Common and minor ailments are often treated by general practitioners located in an office or small clinic in small rural centers. Often these doctors are associated with larger medical centers. To be able to provide full medical treatment in a hospital requires specialized and often very expensive equipment along with an adequate-well-trained staff. Small communities often cannot support such centers as are needed and demanded, so again the trend is toward larger hospitals or area supported medical centers.

Another important aspect of a good community is to have comfortable and pleasant homes for the aged and access to specialists trained in mental health for all ages. Such services are of value to all in a community in one way or another.

If we are to have the best health services possible from available resources, careful planning within and between communities is required. Combining resources to provide adequate rather than minimum health services will require area cooperation and compromise. By so doing those living in sparsely settled areas can have health services comparable with other, more heavily-populated regions.
Strengthening Religious Programs

With declining numbers in our rural areas maintaining religious programs is also becoming a problem in some communities. The problem arises from two sides. First, the small church membership creates problems in financing. Second, there are not enough trained pastors and priests to fill the pulpits in all of the small congregations. Many of the problems associated with small schools are applicable to small churches. One proposal has been for small churches of particular denominations or closely related denominations to consolidate or reorganize into larger congregations. These larger congregations would then be able to carry on a more complete religious program for all age groups.

Providing Cultural Opportunities

Within a community, opportunities for adult education, summer youth programs, and for cultural broadening are desirable. Again, the direction and size of these programs depend on resources, both human and physical, available within each community. Perhaps most important is to have strong and informed leaders to help determine what are the most feasible types of programs for their area and to assist in making such programs a reality.

In those communities where the necessary resources are lacking for particular types of cultural or other programs, people will have to drive to neighboring population centers for such services. Cultural opportunities and adult education are examples of opportunities that may be available only if communities work together to schedule and support them in central locations.
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT--A RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALL OF US

Three major questions need to be answered in regard to community development. First, what goods and services will it be feasible for my community to provide in the years ahead? Second, what goods and services can become available on an area or multi-county basis? Third, will the total of these two provide the kind of community I will want for the future?

If after examination it is determined that our present community will not be able to provide future requirements of goods and services, then serious reconsideration of the situation is in order. Not all towns can be community centers. Some must assume subsidiary roles to the real centers. In situations where all towns are striving to be community centers and none are recognizing their subsidiary roles, community development is misguided and valuable resources are wasted.

If every South Dakotan would go through the process of defining his community along the guidelines suggested in this circular, we would perhaps have much valuable reorientation of loyalties and a better perspective for community development. How our communities develop and what services are provided is up to all of us. Each one can assist through individual actions, but perhaps most important is cooperation through group action.