

## Statewide Programs Fostering Collaborative Approaches

The State and Local Planning program of the Utah Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget (GOPB) is the primary entity looking state-wide at the impacts of growth on our quality of life. GOPB helps Utah grow in an intelligent and responsible way by creating tools to help our communities avoid the costs and inefficiencies that come from the lack of planning and coordination. GOPB’s purpose is not to create the plans themselves, but to support counties, American Indian tribes, and other agencies in their own planning and decision-making efforts. This perspective—gathered from across the state and a wide spectrum of issues—bridges the experience and expertise of many other entities and agencies. GOPB welcomes opportunities to participate in, facilitate, and develop tools to improve the future of our state and the communities within in it. As such, they are participating in this assessment and taking opportunities within the process to offer further assistance.

Some of GOPB’s programs and initiatives that could assist the future development of the communities and region surrounding the National Forests are described in this chapter. GOPB is also actively developing new programs that will draw from this experience of this social-economic assessment to further more collaborative projects.

### *21<sup>st</sup> Century Communities Program*

Many of Utah’s fastest growing communities are located outside the Wasatch Front in rural Utah. Small towns rarely have the staff, the budget, or the expertise to fully address their community planning concerns. Planning assistance is often needed for common tasks such as developing general plans, affordable housing plans, subdivision ordinances, economic development strategies, and in updating zoning ordinances. Many of these plans and their revision are required by state law.

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Communities Program has demonstrated itself to be one of the most cost effective and far-reaching rural planning initiatives in the country. It encourages rural leaders to look to the future and develop a game plan for community prosperity and success. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Communities program stands ready to assist rural leaders who accept the challenge of becoming 21<sup>st</sup> Century Communities. Its achievements to date include:

- Over 27 communities have achieved the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community designation.
- Over 100 communities and counties are now working toward this designation.
- Over 82 communities have completed affordable housing plans
- The development of a nationally acclaimed Community Assessment Tool has proven to be a valuable resource to quality community planning
- Regional Circuit Rider Planners, each dealing with anywhere from 12-25 communities, are providing local planning expertise to communities that could not otherwise afford the benefits of a planner

- The program provides communities with the process, tools, resources, and support they need to develop their own personalized “road map” to becoming a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community.

Over 30 communities in this study area have participated in this program. More information about the program and community accomplishments can be found at: <http://utahreach.org/rosie/21/>.

### ***Circuit Riders***

A major component of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Communities Program is access to certified professional planners, known as Circuit Riders. For what it normally costs to develop a single community’s General Plan (approximately \$40,000), Circuit Rider Planners are now providing planning assistance to communities in an entire region. These efforts play a significant role in preparing rural Utah for unprecedented growth, creating new jobs, reducing unemployment, diversifying rural economies, and protecting their quality of life.

Unfortunately, in the last round of budget cuts, State support for this program was cut, meaning that currently, the Circuit Planners are in danger of being eliminated because there is no money to pay for them. Staff of the Governor’s Office is searching for short term grant money to fund this program until addition funding from the legislature can be made available.

### ***Quality Growth Commission***

The Utah Quality Growth Commission was created in response to the Quality Growth Act of 1999. The commission consists of 13 board members who are appointed by the Governor. Members represent homebuilders, farming industry, real estate, city, county and state government, and citizens at-large. The primary role of the Utah Quality Growth Commission includes:

- Providing planning assistance and grants to local communities;
- Preserving critical lands through the LeRay McAllister Critical Land Conservation Fund; and
- Advising the legislature and Governor on growth management issues

The Planning Section of Governors Office of Planning and Budget plays a strategic role realizing the goals of the Quality Growth Commission. In addition, they are instrumental in promoting Utah’s Quality Growth Principles, which have been adopted by the Quality Growth Commission. These principles, which drive quality growth and responsible development include:

- Local Responsibility
- State Leadership
- Economic Development
- Efficient Infrastructure Development
- Housing Opportunity
- Conservation Ethic

More information about Quality Growth Commission programs and projects can be found at: <http://governor.utah.gov/Quality/default.htm>.

### ***Quality Growth Communities***

The Quality Growth Community program is the latest tool to be developed to promote responsible and intelligent growth throughout the State of Utah. A Quality Growth Community creates a responsible balance between the protection of natural resources—land, air, and water—and the requisite development of residential, commercial and industrial land to accommodate our expanding economy and population.

Designation is voluntary and incentive based. Communities who meet the established requirements have access to technical planning assistance and can receive priority state funding. To be designated a Quality Growth Community; a jurisdiction must plan for and address issues regarding:

- Economic Development
- Infrastructure
- Housing
- Conservation Ethic

The Quality Growth Commission is responsible for determining if a community has met the established requirements and making the final designation. A Quality Growth Community recognizes the impact it has on neighboring communities and seeks to cooperate to solve common problems while protecting private property rights. Addressing issues that currently threaten our quality of life today will allow Utah communities to strategically plan for a more promising tomorrow.

### ***LeRay McAllister Critical Land Conservation Fund***

A key component of Utah's quality of life is the amount and quality of land within it. The LeRay McAllister Critical Land Conservation Fund is used to preserve, protect and restore open and agricultural lands.

The Quality Growth Commission, in collaboration with the planning section of the Governors Office of Planning and Budget and experts from a variety of industries, review each project to ensure that public funds are used for projects that truly provide public benefits.

To date, the LeRay McAllister Critical Land Conservation Fund has accomplished the following:

- Preserved and/or restored 33,500 acres;
- Funded 31 projects in 13 counties;
- Leveraged roughly 9 million spent from the Fund with \$43.37 million of private, local, federal and other state funds—a 1/5 ratio; and
- Ensured that every project serves a compelling public interest and has local government support.

### ***Utah Rural Development Council***

The Utah Rural Development Council is another example of an effort with the intent of improving rural-specific employment. The Council assists rural communities to achieve their locally determined objectives, and is a very important communication link to build and strengthen working, collaborative relationships among private, local, state, tribal, and federal agencies.

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Current URDC programs include an annual rural summit, youth development, public land disputes, telecommunications and information technology, rural heritage industries, support of rural arts, rural health care, and value-added agriculture. One of their most successful efforts is in Heritage Industry development. The Heritage Highway project is an effort to enhance Utah's heritage products, crafts, artisans, shops, and related amenities, particularly in rural areas. By working with private individuals and businesses along the highway, the Council seeks to promote heritage tourism and economic growth in Utah's unique rural communities. Another program of the URDC is the Smart Sites technology employment program, described below. More information about URDC programs and projects can be found at: <http://utahreach.usu.edu/urdc/>.

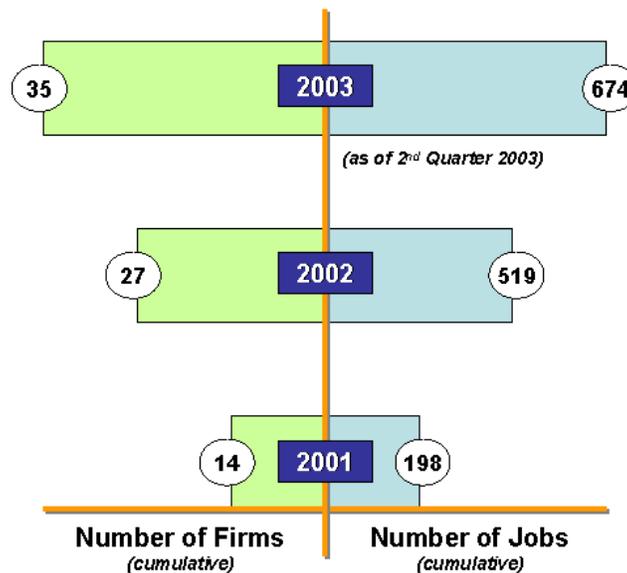
### Smart Sites

One example of a program that is intended to assist with providing family-sustaining, technology-based jobs for rural Utahns is the "Smart Sites" initiative.

A Utah Smart Site is a facility with high speed internet bandwidth where a company employs trained rural workers to perform computer, telecommunications or data entry services for remote clients. Examples of services include help desk support, website design, computer programming, data entry, digital mapping, database development and software testing.

The Smart Site program recently received national recognition when the U.S. Department of Commerce honored it with their "2003 Innovation Excellence in Economic Development Award." More information about Smart Sites programs and projects can be found at: <http://utahreach.org/rosie/silicon/>. The progress of this program, in terms of jobs created, is shown in *Figure A7-1*.

**Figure A7—1: Smart Sites in Rural Utah**



### ***Outdoor Recreation Economic Ecosystem***

Utah's public lands have long been recognized as a world-class resource for recreation and tourism. Developing this resource not only requires tapping into the individual elements of economic development, but creating a synergistic interaction between them. This perspective is similar to how a forest is much more than a gathering of individual trees, but innumerable natural processes and interactions as well.

On November 1st, 2003, Governor Leavitt signed an executive order creating an Outdoor Recreation Economic Ecosystem Task Force, with the objective of making Utah the “recreation capital of the world,” and directed the State Planning Coordinator to assist the group. The effort is intended to:

- Develop a marketing plan to promote Utah's outdoor recreation industry;
- Identify the state's premier outdoor recreation destinations and natural assets;
- Assess the land management practices already in place to ensure that those areas are adequately protected;
- Target outdoor recreation manufacturing, retailing, and tourism;
- Assure that local economies benefit from the outdoor recreation economy; and
- Recommend how outdoor recreation and heritage tourism experiences can be integrated

### ***County Resource Management Planning Tool***

The Governor’s Office of Planning & Budget is currently developing a toolkit to help local counties with county resource planning efforts. This tool is being developed in response to the numerous new planning and decision-making demands counties encounter. Except for a few notable exceptions, county governments in rural areas are generally not at the level they need to be with regards to their general plans and their on-going planning activities. County governments occupy a critical place in rural planning because of their role in coordinating with cities and other governmental jurisdictions within county boundaries, and because of their inescapable social and economic connections to Federal and state public lands—and thus with Federal and State lands management agencies. Counties governments also play a leading role in economic development activities, which inevitably affect, and are affected by, land use planning objectives. In contemplating the planning needs of rural counties, it appears that county planning efforts need to be strengthened in three key areas:

- 1) Planning for growth;
- 2) Inter-jurisdictional coordination; and
- 3) Planning relative to public lands uses, access, resources, and land management agency plans.

One of the most cost effective ways to strengthen county planning efforts in these areas would be to develop, and make available, a planning “toolkit” which would provide information, ideas, contacts, examples, self-assessments and other resources that could assist and support county planning efforts. With the toolkit resources in hand, and with the involvement of the regional circuit rider planners, counties will be able to significantly strengthen their general plans and better position themselves to deal with the challenges of a rapidly changing world. The toolkit would provide planning tools that are specific to the

three key areas of planning already listed: 1) Planning for Growth, 2) Inter-jurisdictional Coordination, and 3) Public Lands Planning.

The expected completion date is mid-2004. An outline of the toolkit is located in *Appendix A9—Draft County Resource Management Planning Tool*.

### ***Planning for Growth***

This would include aides for the development of policies and ordinances that address such issues as land use planning and zoning, lot size & density, critical lands preservation, and the cost effective provision of services and infrastructure for development that takes place outside of municipal boundaries.

### ***Inter-jurisdictional Coordination***

This section would identify the various entities and jurisdictions that should be included in effective planning processes, and would identify forums and mechanisms that can facilitate inter-local coordination. It would also provide information pertaining to such things as inter-jurisdictional sharing of services and infrastructure costs, and the legal vehicles for coordination and cooperation—such as Special Service Districts, MOUs, Associations of Government, ordinances, etc.

### ***Public Lands Planning***

The basis for local planning relative to Department of Interior lands is found in the Federal Lands Policy Management Act (FLPMA), Section 202, paragraph C9:

*Land use plans of the Secretary under this section shall be consistent with State and local plans to the maximum extent he finds consistent with Federal law and the purposes of this Act.*

The US Forest Service has similar guidelines respecting consistency with local plans (NFMA). At the same time, the State of Utah has an obligation to ensure consistency with local plans as it responds to proposed Federal plans and actions through its consistency review process. These provisions create a strong incentive for county governments to develop appropriate local plans and planning processes as a means for addressing public lands related issues.

In order for local objectives and desires to be appropriately considered in Federal decision making processes, the county's general plan must be very specific and articulate in addressing the issues that are pertinent to Federal land agency planning and decision making. It is important that these plan elements be identified, and that appropriate tools and language be developed to assist counties in strengthening their plans and ordinances in ways that are meaningful and impactful in the eyes of the Federal land management agencies.

The following are examples of the kinds of elements that could be considered for a public lands planning tool kit:

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- Watershed Protection/Management
  - Fire Suppression / Fire Preparedness Plans
  - Critical Lands and Critical Habitat
  - Transportation (including access, maintenance, and RS-2477 issues)

- Tourism (including visitor management, facilities, interpretation, permitting, guide & outfitter businesses, signing)
- Public Safety (including search & rescue, law enforcement, ambulance & medical services, communications)
- Recreation Activities
- Cultural & Historic Activities, Sites, Structures and Landscapes (as addressed in the National Historic Preservation Act)
- Economic Development (including extractive industries, agriculture and ranching, economic analyses)
- Fish and Wildlife (including hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing )
- Participation in Federal planning processes (such Cooperating Agency status)
- Water Issues
- Wilderness Designations
- Valid Existing Rights
- Vegetation Management (range & habitat issues, and weed control)
- Ranching and Grazing
- Air Quality
- Net Gain ( opportunities and means for achieving it)
- SITLA Lands (planning, development and exchange opportunities)
- Designations and Management Modes

