

2002 Annual Report Executive Summary

Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes Enterprise Community

The Fort Peck Assiniboine & Sioux Tribal Enterprise Community has leveraged and participated with over 75 benchmarked tasks in 2002. Health, Business Development, Education and Housing projects positively impacted the Reservation community.

In the health sector we were able to develop a grass roots and program focused coalition to address substance abuse, truancy, youth activity studies, planning developed for a long term treatment center and most importantly we were able to compile a comprehensive data base for services and assistance that relates to the epidemics we face. As a result the "Journey to a Healthy Community" with fifty strong members has been developed to sustain the goals and objectives laid out before it.

In the business and industry sector we have reached historical milestones. The Tribes have long been mired in economic distress that focused on jobs before profits. The task of overcoming seventy percent unemployment has always weighed heavy in on key decision makers and Tribal Executive Board members. "Nation Building" was introduced in our community in 2001. This year the Fort Peck Tribes created "Fort Peck Incorporated". The idea is that all tribally operated businesses would fall under the umbrellas of Fort Peck Inc. While in theory this sounds eutopic, it has been a huge learning curve for the politicians and the business community. The success comes from the continued support of the concept. How we get there will be the next hurdle.

Higher education continues to play a critical for an isolated geography that is a ten hours drive to the nearest University. The EC continues a strong relationship with Fort Peck Community College and their expansion of facilities across the reservation. A new facility is being built on the reservation, the four-year degree program via satellite continues to produce local teachers and the vocational trades curriculum has expanded to meet the unemployment demands of the industries.

The market for home ownership among low-income families is untapped. The EC worked with USDA/RD, Fannie Mae, HUD and local lenders in providing training, counseling and an interactive "Housing Fair" to inform and educate a community to the possibilities of home ownership. Thirty community members participated in a housing fair that involved credit checks, prequalification on site, local and state lending partners to provide information on their programs and ultimately home ownership for a few that worked through the process.