

Vision West ND Planning Session

Submitted by Andrea Boe

McKenzie County leaders and residents will get a chance to take part in strategic planning sessions as part of the Vision West ND project on May 20-21. The Vision West ND project, which covers the nineteen oil and gas producing counties in western North Dakota, officially kicked off its first Planning Session in Watford City in February 2012 and made its rounds to approximately 20 other communities and counties to conduct similar planning sessions.

The McKenzie County Planning Session will take place within a two-day time period. A steering committee of approximately two to three leaders from incorporated cities (Watford City, Alexander, and Arnegard), unincorporated communities (Cartwright, Charbonneau, Grassy Butte, Keene, and Rawson), Mandaree, Four Bears Village, and 16 organized townships is being assembled to take part in the Planning Session. This two day strategic planning session will cover everything from identifying the strategies most likely to succeed in the City to selection of the strategies and drafting a plan. The residents of McKenzie County will be invited to participate in the Planning Session process through a Town Hall public meeting process. The Town Hall public meeting will be held Monday May 20th from 7:00-9:00pm (CDT) at the

McKenzie County Courthouse Meeting Room located at 201 5th St. NW Watford City, ND. Citizens can carry on the conversation even after the planning session by going online at <http://ideas.visionwestnd.com> to share their ideas and comments.

Through this process, the primary goals of the project are to assist communities and counties in the western region of North Dakota in addressing immediate, short-term needs to meet growth management challenges and establish a diversified economy in the future through the development of local and regional strategic plans. The resulting plan will set the stage for economic diversification based on the strength of the oil and agriculture industries and will incorporate and support livability and environmental objectives which speak to the social issues of the region.

The Vision West ND project is funded through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Regional Substantiality Planning Grant and the ND Energy Development Infrastructure and Impact Grant Fund programs as well as in-kind contributions. For more information about the project and Express Plan Weeks, visit www.VisionWestND.com.