



We've got Mail

A story of sacrifice

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MANDAREE**

The Vision West ND Project Mandaree Steering Committee met with Brian Cole, President of Building Communities, Shirley Brentrup, Executive Director, Lisa DeVille Consortium T.A.T Representative on August 10 and 11, 2012 at the Mandaree School Music Room. Participants were T.A.T Easement, Elbowoods Memorial Health Center, Mandaree Roads, Mandaree Inc. Board and community members.

The Mandaree Community Volunteers Needs Assessment has been completed with the results we were able to identify together the Qualities of Life and Strategies for the Mandaree Strategic Plan. Also completed is the Introduction/Purpose that reads:

For generations, our story has been one of sacrifice.

The story of how Native Americans lost their land in the 17th, 18th, and 19th Centuries is well known throughout the world. What few people understand is how our people at Elbowoods sacrificed in the 20th Century.

How our homeland was flooded. On purpose.

Today, we are in the center of the fastest growing economy in the United States, yet we share our homes three families at a time.

We are right in the middle of the Bakken Oil Boom, and yet we cannot afford to fix our schools.

Oil companies are paying millions each month in royalty payments, and yet our roads crumble.

People are moving from thousands of miles away to work and live near us, and yet the economy passes us by.

Within just a few miles of the community of Mandaree on the Fort Berthold Reservation operate more oil drilling rigs than anywhere else on the North American continent. For the first time ever, our nation is on the path to energy independence. Yet those of us living here that are sacrificing our land, our water, and our air are not gaining our own economic indepen-

dence.

We are not complaining. We are convening.

We are not retreating. We are renewing.

What this plan is all about is how we overcome our circumstances in the 21st Century.

Mandaree wants to be a part of a new vision for the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nations. We want to set a new plan in place, work with our tribal leaders, and shape our new circumstance into a better tomorrow. We appreciate how our neighboring counties have come together to build this Regional Plan for Sustainable Development. After all, this is what we believe in. Sustainability.

The very conditions that are most negatively affecting our lives today are the same conditions that give us a renewed hope. For the first time since our people were required to leave the fertile lands of Elbowoods in 1953, we can see a glimpse of a better time ahead.

Royalties paid to our Tribe have amassed a Trust Fund that has accumulated over \$100 million just in the last three years. While we have yet to see the benefits of potential investment from these funds—funds that have largely been generated from oil activity in our very community—we believe that this plan will set the stage for this investment in a way that is smart in the short term and visionary in the long term.

Yes, our story remains a story of sacrifice. But today, with this plan, our story is one of hope as well. Hope for better schools to serve our future generations. Hope for better roads to serve our people and our temporary guests. Hope for better health care to serve a population that needs healthy food and healthy habits. Hope for all of our people that simply want to live the way that our forefathers did—*independent and self-sufficient.*

This is the first segment out of four segments that confirmed with Vision West ND Project to assist with building their communities with a strategic plan, with White Shield and Twin Buttes at the end of August and Four Bears in September.