



ACTION PLAN



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document, the Kick Start Sheridan Action Plan, is a strategic blueprint for the growth and development of the community of Sheridan, Grant County, and the Sheridan School District in Arkansas over the next five years. The action plan was created as a result of public forums and action teams working together over the past nine months to identify a vision and goals for the community, as well as promising long-term strategic opportunities.

Many people and organizations worked together on this effort, including representatives from the City of Sheridan, Grant County Chamber of Commerce, Sheridan School District, the Grant County Cooperative Extension Service, churches and nonprofits, business owners, local banks, and many other community leaders and citizens. To craft this document, the community worked with the University of Central Arkansas Center for Community and Economic Development (and their Community Development Institute program) and the Breakthrough Solutions program at the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service.

The interaction between the universities and the community began in August 2018, when a group of community and economic development professionals visited Sheridan to assess the community's current situation and help identify breakthroughs to move the community forward.

As a result of that session, and monthly meetings since that time, priority areas and several breakthroughs have been identified as part of this process. A summary of these key breakthroughs is identified in the next section. The priority areas identified were:

- **Downtown Development**
- **Education and Economic Development**
- **Infrastructure**
- **Recreation and Things to Do**
- **Small Business Development and Entrepreneurship**

Many projects are already underway, and many others are planned and outlined in this document. Community and economic development is a long-term effort that can take many years to bear fruit. The Kick Start Sheridan Action Plan lays the groundwork for those efforts and focuses the enthusiasm and passion that our citizens have exhibited throughout the planning process.

COMMUNITY BREAKTHROUGHS

In times of rapid change, successful communities create breakthroughs to move forward toward their desired future. Congratulations to the community leaders and citizens of Sheridan, Grant County, and the Sheridan School District who have developed these breakthroughs and breakthrough solutions:

Breakthroughs - Downtown Development

Revitalize our downtown by:

- Beautifying our downtown and updating our storefronts
- Developing and promoting unique entertainment and dining destinations
- Creating wayfinding signage downtown and throughout the community
- Developing public space downtown for events and a farmers' and craft market
- Connecting the high school arena, downtown, and junior high with sidewalks

Breakthroughs – Education and Economic Development

Strengthen education and the capacity for economic development by:

- Connecting businesses with our schools
- Creating a business retention and expansion program
- Creating a fact sheet for potential employers
- Developing support for a full-time Chamber of Commerce position
- Creating a marketing plan to attract and retain Millennials
- Developing more experiential and service learning opportunities for our youth

Breakthroughs – Infrastructure

Strengthen our infrastructure by:

- Creating a branded wayfinding signage system
- Keeping Google Maps and business listings updated
- Developing the land around the bypass to make it development ready
- Connecting and improving streets, sidewalks, and trails in Sheridan
- Strengthening code enforcement
- Developing high speed infrastructure (Internet) for all citizens

Breakthroughs - Recreation and Things to Do

Develop things to do that will appeal to citizens and visitors by:

- Creating a centralized communication system for disseminating information on events and activities
- Utilizing existing social media to publicize community events
- Developing bike paths and walking trails
- Developing after-hours programs and activities

Breakthroughs – Small Business Development and Entrepreneurship

Strengthen our small business infrastructure by:

- Creating a “shop local” campaign
- Supporting entrepreneurial development
- Surveying businesses on training needs and supporting needs of existing local businesses
- Strategically recruiting businesses for the area along the bypass

CORE VALUES

The citizens of Sheridan, Grant County, and the Sheridan School District chose the following core values to guide the Kick Start Sheridan development process:

- Serving as a catalyst that brings people together to make things happen
- Being proactive, with a can-do attitude
- Tackling tough issues honestly, with respect for each other's point of view

These core values are a guide for the development process. As our community, county, and school district continue to come together and work to improve our quality of life, these values will inform all of our decisions because they are the most important to our citizens.

VISION STATEMENT

In our vision for the future of Sheridan, Grant County, and the Sheridan School District, the community will be known for its:

- Rich history and traditions that honor the past and embrace the present
- Top-notch school system that prepares our youth for employment in the 21st century economy
- Small town atmosphere and rural living
- Safe environment and a great place to raise a family
- Close proximity to Little Rock, Hot Springs, and Pine Bluff
- Vibrant downtown that offers retail opportunities and activities for residents and visitors
- Strong small business and manufacturing base that provides jobs to local residents
- Natural resources and the economic opportunities they bring
- Strong sense of community with visionary, pro-active leaders committed to creating a healthy, sustainable future for the next generation



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Thanks to our Kick Start Sheridan Executive Committee and Kick Start Sheridan Action Team co-chairs for their hard work and dedication. These individuals are dedicated to creating a bright future for Sheridan, Grant County, and the Sheridan School District.

Co-Directors

- Brad McGinley, Grant County Cooperative Extension Service
- Carrie Smith, City of Sheridan Clerk-Treasurer

Communications Manager

- Lauren Goins, Sheridan School District Communications Director

Secretary

- Jerrod Williams, Sheridan School District Superintendent

Treasurer

- Lisa E. Grove, Grove & Company CPA

Action Team Chairs

Downtown Development

- Lisa E. Grove, Grove & Company CPA

Education and Economic Development

- Lauren Goins, Sheridan School District Communications Director

Infrastructure

- Deric Wyatt, Arkansas Department of Transportation District Engineer
- Ben Hammond, City of Sheridan Fire Chief

Recreation and Things to Do

- Mayor Joe Wise, City of Sheridan
- Justin Wise, Harmony Health Clinic Executive Director

Small Business Development and Entrepreneurship

- Tina Hurtt, Grant County Chamber of Commerce Executive Director

Additional Executive Committee Members

- Council Member Betty Cook, City of Sheridan
- DJ Wallace, Resurrections Antique Mall Owner
- Jake Easley, Affordable Insurance Solutions Owner
- Jan Wallace, Resurrections Antique Mall Owner
- Judge Randy Pruitt, Grant County
- Tammy Winters, McCoy Tygart Drug Office Manager
- Shelley Short, Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce/AIA Vice President Programs and Partnerships
- Andy Mayberry, Mayberry Advertising Owner and former State Representative
- Ken Bragg, Arkansas House of Representatives
- Craig Manatt, Peoples Bank President
- James “Gart” Pitts, Windstream Field Operations Manager

ACTION TEAM GOALS

Kick Start Sheridan developed goals based on the following citizen-identified priority areas:

- **Downtown Development**
- **Education and Economic Development**
- **Recreation and Things to Do**
- **Small Business Development and Entrepreneurship**
- **Infrastructure**

Kick Start Sheridan understands that we will need the following to achieve the goals outlined in this section:



Funding



Public Policy



Partnerships



Awareness

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT

Chairperson: Lisa E. Grove, lisa@grovecompanycpas.com

What would it look like if Sheridan/Grant County/Sheridan School District became known for its vibrant, thriving downtown because of its beauty, and opportunities for shopping, dining, entertainment, and cultural activities?

1. Beautify downtown Sheridan by hosting clean-up days, installing public art and planters, and updating storefronts and building interiors.

Short-term objectives

Stakeholders: Garden Club, downtown businesses, City of Sheridan, Joann Gartman (planters), William Guffy (clean up), Infrastructure Action Team

- Organize a county-wide clean-up day.
- Work with Master Gardeners to better utilize the existing planters downtown.
- Recruit bankers, realtors, and downtown merchants to support and/or sponsor other beautification projects.

Long-term objectives

Stakeholders: City of Sheridan, downtown businesses, Grant County Chamber of Commerce, Infrastructure Action Team

- Enforce codes that are in place and review codes to see what needs to be updated.
- Establish a plan for maintaining beautification projects.
- Identify boundaries for downtown.
- Design and install wayfinding signage downtown and throughout the county to draw visitors downtown and to points of interest.

2. Develop and promote unique entertainment and dining destinations that appeal to families and young people, support arts and cultural activities, and draw residents and visitors downtown.

Short-term objectives

Stakeholders: Recreation and Things to Do Action Team, Small Business Development and Entrepreneurship Action Team, Grant County Chamber of Commerce, downtown businesses

- Enhance marketing efforts for current downtown events (i.e., Christmas on the Square).
- Research ideas for promoting downtown (e.g., Roger Brooks videos).

Long-term objectives

Stakeholders: Georginia Daniel, UA Cooperative Extension, local government (mayor and county judges), Recreation and Things to Do Action Team, Small Business Development and Entrepreneurship Action Team, Chamber of Commerce, downtown businesses

- Establish a farmers' and craft market downtown, which would include:
 - Training for growers.
 - Extended hours: 4-7 p.m.
 - Arts, crafts, food, music, etc.
- Create a public space for more events/festivals downtown.
- Develop a connected corridor with new sidewalks between the new high school arena, downtown, and junior high (4-6 block area).

RECREATION & THINGS TO DO

Chairpersons: Mayor Joe Wise & Justin Wise, justinwiseonline@gmail.com

What would it look like if Sheridan/Grant County/Sheridan School District became known for its recreation and things to do for people of all ages that come from all over the nation?

1. Create a centralized communication system for disseminating information on events and activities.

Short-term objectives

Stakeholders: Downtown Development Action Team, City of Sheridan, Sheridan Headlight, Grant County Chamber of Commerce

- Utilize existing social media to publicize community events.
 - East End Community Events/Info (existing Facebook group)
- Establish new Sheridan/Grant County/Sheridan School District Instagram, Facebook and YouTube accounts and encourage the use of hashtags.
- Update the City of Sheridan website to include an online calendar of events.
- Include calendar of events in the local newspaper.
- Establish and utilize a physical bulletin board(s) in the community for posting fliers and calendar of events.
- Post fliers and calendar of events at the Chamber of Commerce office.

2. Create biking and walking trails citizens and visitors can enjoy.

Short-term objectives

Stakeholders: City of Sheridan and local organizations

- Installation of bike route signage and asphalt painting along roads.

Long-term objectives

Stakeholders: City of Sheridan and local organizations

- Development of bike paths.
- Development of walking trails.

3. Develop after-hours programs and activities.

Short-term objectives

Stakeholders: Sheridan School District, downtown businesses, Downtown Development Action Team, Grant County Chamber of Commerce

- Create a Community Theater Group to conduct plays throughout the year.
- Develop a Pets Committee that will focus on animal adoption and altering clinics.
- Host after-hours programming like Movies at the Park.

Long-term objectives

Stakeholders: Sheridan School District, downtown businesses, Downtown Development Action Team, Grant County Chamber of Commerce

- Establish a Downtown Business District:
 - Later and more consistent business hours.
 - Merchants need to share their announcements with the community to draw traffic.
 - Take advantage of Small Business Saturday.
 - Expand Christmas on the Square and improve marketing efforts for the event.



EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Chairperson: Lauren Goins, laurengoins@sheridanschools.org

What would it look like if Sheridan/Grant County/Sheridan School District became known for its motivated, skilled workforce that supported its strong business and economic development initiatives?

1. Develop a work-ready workforce by connecting businesses with our school and creating programs that will assist unemployed and underemployed citizens.

Short-term projects and ongoing objectives

Stakeholders: ACT Work Ready Communities Initiative, Arkansas Department of Workforce Services, Sheridan School District, local businesses, local nonprofits

- Continue to work on making Grant County a Work Ready Community.
- Promote and publicize Career Technical Education (CTE) and Workforce Ready Community (WRC) initiative.
- Collaborate with Adult Education and Workforce Services to bring more services to our community.
- Host career fair to include resume assistance and the National Career Readiness Certification.
- Leverage the Sheridan Schools career coach for building relationships with employers.

2. Develop a local economy that has a diverse mix of businesses and industries.

Long-term objectives

Stakeholders: Grant County Chamber of Commerce, Kick Start Sheridan Executive Committee, Grant County Industrial Development Corporation

- Develop a partnership with the local economic/industrial alliance.
- Develop a fact sheet for potential employers to get them interested in opening a business in the community.
- Create a list of businesses that our local citizens would like to see in town.
- Create a list of potential employers and begin meeting with them.

3. Create a business retention and expansion initiative.

Long-term objectives

Stakeholders: Grant County Chamber of Commerce, Kick Start Sheridan Executive Committee

- Build the capacity of the chamber:
 - Research what other chambers of commerce are doing to generate revenue, engage the business community to identify the greatest opportunities and challenges, and develop funding support for a full-time chamber staff person who can help sustain Kick Start Sheridan initiatives.
- Partner with the chamber to promote current businesses.
- Partner with the chamber to research the challenges of our current businesses.

4. Create a marketing plan that attracts millennials to the community.

Long-term objectives

Stakeholders: Sheridan School District, local businesses, developers, local coffee shops

- Establish who will manage the marketing plan.
- Target recent graduates of Sheridan High School and those who have left to return to Sheridan.
- Connect with the class presidents of recent graduating classes.
- Gather insight from recent graduates about what would make them come back to the community.
- Establish high school internship program to connect students with local industry.
- Host a focus group with Millennials currently living or working in the community.

5. Develop more experiential and service learning opportunities for our youth.

Long-term objectives

Stakeholders: Local 4-H, The Well, daycare providers, faith-based organizations, Recreation and Things to Do Action Team

- Support access to high-quality early childcare and education opportunities.
- Bring a tutoring business to the community.
- Support The Well in East End.
- Collaborate with the Recreation and Things to Do Action Team to bring a Boys and Girls Club (or similar organization) to Sheridan.

SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Chairperson: Tina Hurtt, thurtt79@gmail.com

What would it look like if Sheridan/Grant County/Sheridan School District became known as a tremendous place to start or operate a business because of its supportive business climate, services, and 21st century infrastructure?

1. Strategically recruit businesses for the area along the bypass.

Long-term objectives

Stakeholders: Hotel investors, local businesses, downtown businesses, Grant County Chamber of Commerce, Grant County Industrial Development Corporation

- Focus on key businesses such as hotels, convenience stores, and chain establishments.
- Ensure that businesses on the bypass are connected to and partnered with downtown businesses.
- Gather and utilize statistics to justify the need for certain businesses (such as a hotel).
- Partner with the local economic/industrial alliance.

2. Support entrepreneurial development by simplifying the process of starting a business, providing mentors, and creating an entrepreneurship program. Support needs of existing local businesses.

Short-term objectives

Stakeholders: Local business owners, students, local institutions of higher learning, Small Business Administration

- Survey businesses on training needs.
- Research what other cities are doing to assist in the creation of small businesses (entrepreneurship programs, training, etc.).
- Create an information packet for potential small business owners and entrepreneurs. It will be in online and paper format (available at the Chamber and city).
- Utilize local experts to provide training and mentoring, including the U.S. Small Business Administration in Little Rock, UALR, and Henderson.

3. Create a “shop local” campaign.

Short-term objectives

Stakeholders: Grant County Chamber of Commerce, City of Sheridan, Recreation and Things to Do Action Team, Downtown Development Action Team, Sheridan Headlight

- Create a marketing plan: “Shop Local” signs and banners, social media efforts, pamphlets, and engage businesses in the plan.
- Create and place “Shop Local” window/door signs in businesses throughout town.
- Create “shop local” events in which all local businesses may participate and local goods and services can be promoted (i.e, monthly shop local days).

INFRASTRUCTURE

Chairpersons: Deric Wyatt and Ben Hammond, deric.wyatt@ardot.gov

What would it look like if Sheridan/Grant County/Sheridan School District became known for its broadband and infrastructure that provides a foundation for economic development in the 21st century economy?

1. Create a branded wayfinding signage system and keep Sheridan’s Google Maps and business listings updated.

Short-term objectives

Stakeholders: Grant County Chamber of Commerce, students, local businesses, City of Sheridan, Downtown Development Action Team

- Update Google business listings
- Partner with the Grant County Chamber of Commerce to lead this project.
- Provide training for local businesses.
- Partner with high school students to assist with this project.

Long-term objectives

Stakeholders: Grant County Chamber of Commerce, students, local businesses, City of Sheridan, Downtown Development Action Team

- Update Google Maps listings (to improve navigation)
- Design and install wayfinding signage downtown and throughout the county.

2. Develop the land around the bypass to make it development ready.

Long-term objectives:

Stakeholders: City of Sheridan (City Engineer), City of Sheridan Fire Department, State Representative Ken Bragg

- Develop 5, 10, and 20-year plans.
- Contact the Delta Regional Authority and Southeast Arkansas Economic Development District (SEAEDD) to see if funding is available for Long Range Plan Development.
- Expand water and sewer system along Hwy 167 Bypass for future development.
- Review state laws pertaining to rural water associations boundaries within city limits.
- Address fire protection (establish minimum standards for water systems to provide fire protection).
- Determine funding sources for infrastructure (e.g., tax or bond initiative).

3. Connect and improve streets, sidewalks, and trails in Sheridan.

Long-term objectives

Stakeholders: City of Sheridan, Sheridan School District, Recreation and Things to Do Action Team

- Develop a map with proposed sidewalks connecting all schools and downtown.
- Research grants and other funding sources for sidewalks.
- Develop a plan for future trails connecting downtown, rec center, ball fields, and new library.

4. Keep Sheridan beautiful and eco-friendly by strengthening code enforcement, hosting clean-up days, and creating recycling initiatives.

Short-term objectives

Stakeholders: City of Sheridan, Downtown Development Action Team, County Judge

- Review existing city codes and develop a list of needed building/property codes.
- Host waste disposal events (research available funds for waste disposal fees).

Long-term objectives:

Stakeholders: City of Sheridan, Downtown Development Action Team, County Judge

- Hire part-time code enforcement officer.
- Address abandoned structures, junkyards, and safety issues.
- Assess need for recycling programs.
- Research potential for a “Class 4” county landfill.

5. Make Sheridan competitive in the 21st-century economy by providing high-speed internet access to all citizens.

Short-term and ongoing objectives

Stakeholders: Windstream, other broadband service providers

- Regularly communicate with local providers to discuss broadband needs.

Long-term objectives

Stakeholders: Windstream, other broadband service providers

- Improve speeds of existing Internet service and expand broadband coverage.



KICK START SHERIDAN FACILITATORS

The Community Development Institute Central (CDI), established in 1987 at the University of Central Arkansas (UCA) in Conway, trains community and economic development professionals in Arkansas and surrounding states. The complete CDI experience is a three-year training program, with one week of training per year. Participants are exposed to a comprehensive, applied approach to the field of community and economic development. CDI is relevant for both new and seasoned professionals because it focuses on best practices and current trends. CDI is coordinated by the Center for Community and Economic Development team at UCA, as follows: Assistant Vice President, Community and Workforce Development Amy Whitehead, Managing Director Shelby Fiegel and Project Coordinator Moriah Bruner.

The Community Development Kick Start program was created to provide a unique opportunity for CDI graduates to apply their knowledge and skills to a real-life situation and to kick start a community and economic development process in one community.

Community Development Kick Start uses the Breakthrough Solutions Model from the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service, with Dr. Mark Peterson, professor of Community and Economic Development, serving as facilitator and partner for this initiative. The Breakthrough Solutions Program is a partnership initiative with the purpose of equipping communities and regions in Arkansas to be vibrant, sustainable, and resilient in this 21st century economy.

Communities in Arkansas were invited to apply for this unique opportunity, and Sheridan was selected. Once Sheridan was selected as the Kick Start community, leaders began collaborating with CDI and U of A Cooperative Extension Service in July of 2018.

To learn more about CDI visit www.uca.edu/cdi.

To learn more about Breakthrough Solutions, visit www.uaex.edu/business-communities/strategic-planning/breakthrough-solutions.aspx.



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