The Silver Bow Foundation: Designing a New Path for Economic Development in Butte-Silver Bow through Organizational Development and Technical Communication

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Montana Tech

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The Silver Bow Foundation:
Designing a New Path for Economic Development in Butte-Silver Bow
through Organizational Development and Technical Communication

by
Brendan R. McDonough

A project submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Science in Technical Communication

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Abstract

This paper analyzes economic development in Butte-Silver Bow and the challenges faced in growing and diversifying the local economy. The paper examines economic development in regards to past practices, traditional economic development policies, and Superfund issues. The trend in the Butte economy shows economic growth and investment originated by Butte residents or natives of Butte-Silver Bow. The Silver Bow Foundation is a proposed organization to build a network of professionals consisting of highly educated and skilled professionals that are Butte natives. This paper details the processes taken to define the organization and the design of its marketing materials.

Keywords: Butte-Silver Bow, economic development, foundation, Superfund
Dedication

I would like to dedicate this paper to my parents, Robert and Alice McDonough; grandparents: Patrick and Alice Downey; and Robert and Mary McDonough. I am inspired by their unwavering faith in Butte, Montana: its tradition, culture, and role in the fabric of our family’s story. This paper is dedicated to the love and support they have given me in my life and the sense of pride they have instilled in me for this place we call home: Butte America.
Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the Montana Tech Faculty for their instruction and guidance in my academic career at Montana Tech. I would like to acknowledge Dr. Chad Okrusch in particular who convinced me that the Technical Communication Program was a good fit for me personally and professionally, and he was my mentor for guiding me through the my journey. I must also acknowledge all of the wonderful people of Butte, Montana, who have supported me in my life in all of its facets. I am truly humble to have been born and raised and will forever reside in Butte, Montana.
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1. An overview of Butte’s economic challenges

1.1. The Boom and Bust Cycles in a Two Horse Town

Butte, Montana, is a unique place that while small in geographical area it played an immense role in the history of the United States of America and the world. The city that grew from the largest ore deposits in the United States at the turn of the 20th century Butte was a city created and forged by unfathomable wealth, an industrial revolution, and immigrant dreams of a better life. With the engine of American capitalism running full-throttle, Butte was a focal point in the American landscape for its copper ore production, a necessity for the creation of a modern society.

Butte was a melting pot of the United States where immigrants came from all over the world to find work and a new start. With the rapid expansion of mining, Butte’s economic engine at the turn of the 20th century was unrivaled in Montana. The mines required copper smelting, timber for the mines, and other vital services to support the mining operations; which in turn, created several other cities in Montana to support the growing concern in Butte. Anaconda, Montana, and Black Eagle, Montana, became the home of copper smelters while Bonner, Montana, became the lumber mill operation to support timber for the mines. The Montana Power Company was created with the absolute necessity to electrify the mining operations in Butte to expand the growth and improve the efficiencies of the operations.

The economy of Montana at the turn of the 20th century depended on the mining operations in Butte to drive much of the state’s economy. Like many of the industrial complexes growing up across the United States, Butte relied solely on the natural resource production and the energy demands it required to expand mining, and it essentially became a “two horse” town. While Butte had three Copper Kings who controlled the mining expansion and gathered its
wealth, eventually the operations consolidated to create the Anaconda Company. The other necessary component for unrivaled expansion was electrical power, and hence the Montana Power Company was created to serve not only Butte but the entire state of Montana.

For decades, Butte rode the boom and bust economic cycle tied to copper ore production and prices. The economy was never diversified to withstand the cyclical ups and downs of the market and supply and demand. When life was good in Butte, it was good, and when conditions were bad in Butte, Butte hung on and survived. In fact, not only did Butte survive economic downturns, but it seemed to embrace them. The diverse ethnic population consisting of many first and second generation immigrants knew that while times were tough, it was almost certainly better than the life they left behind before moving to Butte.

Once underground mining closed down for good in Butte and open-pit mining became the preferred method, both the economic climate and the physical landscape of Butte would change drastically. While today there is open pit mining in the Continental Pit, the former Berkeley Pit is now the largest body of toxic water and the largest Superfund site in the United States. The environmental devastation to the immediate area of Butte has been the source of decades of litigation and on-going remediation and rehabilitation efforts.

While at the turn of the 20th Century Butte boasted nearly 100,000 residents, today it stands at a small fraction of that population. In fact, the population of Butte has seen a steady decline for decades. In 1975, the population of Butte-Silver Bow was 43,500 residents, and in 2015, the U.S. Census reported 34,622 residents. The stagnant economy along with the stigma that comes with Superfund designation has created a real burden to the revitalization and economic well-being of Butte for the last forty years.
Butte today has much of the historic infrastructure that made the landscape of this city so unique and magnificent. The buildings comprising the Historic Uptown District reflect the incredible wealth, resources, and architectural magnificence of the time. Along neighborhoods in Butte’s West Side, there are mansions, craftsman homes, and miner’s cottages interspersed with each other. Many historic buildings that once were hotels or boarding houses for the immigrant miners are either vacant in need of great repair or seeing renovation and reinvestment.

1.2. **Diversifying the Economy with Tax-increment Financing and Infrastructure Development**

In the last decade, the Butte-Silver Bow Government and its economic development partners have positioned Butte to be more attractive with incentives and infrastructure; however,
the community still remains stagnant in job growth and increases in population growth and capital investment.

While Butte has worked tirelessly for a more diversified economy, the challenges of attracting or retaining business have been substantial. In recent years, Butte has seen some job growth and development; however, the population growth remained flat and consistent investment has been sporadic. Despite the challenges that exist, the Butte-Silver Bow Government along with its economic development partners have created more economic incentives in Butte today than have ever existed in Butte.

Butte-Silver Bow now has four tax-increment districts that include the Urban Revitalization Agency (URA), the East Butte Renovation and Rehabilitation Agency (East Butte RRA), the Ramsay TIFID that is the home of the Montana Connections Park, and the Basin Creek Targeted Economic Development District (TEDD).

In 2014, the Historic Uptown District in Butte renewed its tax-increment jurisdiction reestablishing the Urban Revitalization Agency. The previous district lasted 30 years, and it helped spur facade improvements, sidewalk repair, and other projects vital to the Historic Uptown; however, it did not return the historic district to a bustling commercial district. With the recent major investment of the new Northwestern Energy headquarters and the new parking garage uptown, the district looks to have new major tax increment to use to further enhance and continue working towards a fully redeveloped uptown business district.

The East Butte Renovation and Rehabilitation Agency (East Butte RRA) has seen some new infrastructure and investment in an area that for years had been abandoned due to the proximity of the Berkeley Pit and mining operations. The new buildings and businesses building
up in the area from East Park Street down to Mercury has made a drastic improvement to the area.

The Ramsay TIFID, which comprises the Montana Connections Business Park, has the largest capital investment in Butte-Silver Bow. The TIFID was created at the time through legislation in Helena at the Capitol to accommodate Butte’s efforts to attract ASIMI, a company that produced silicon for many uses in industry. ASIMI built a $500 million dollar plant in Butte in 1998, and the plant uses more electricity than the city of Billings to this day.

Since the creation of the Montana Connections Business Park, Butte-Silver Bow has been able to attract other major investment into the 1000-acre industrial park. In 2010, FedEx Freight built an $8 million dollar facility. Other major developments in the Business Park include the partnership between Seacast, a Seattle based foundry, and General Electric to build aerospace parts and pour titanium-based investment castings. Currently, there are several other projects coming online at Montana Connections as Butte-Silver Bow continues to add major infrastructure upgrades to the area.

The Basin Creek Targeted Economic Development District is a tax-increment financing district located at the south end of Butte including the Mike Mansfield Technology Center, the Butte industrial park, and Highlands College on the south end of Harrison. The district was approved in 2016 and should contribute to manufacturing and industrial uses in the area.
The tax-increment finance districts in Butte provide an economic incentive to any business willing to locate within these areas. Butte-Silver Bow can leverage the taxes paid by new investment and increment to the area to enhance infrastructure, brick and mortar projects, and financial incentives in the form of grants and low-interest loan programs. It has been beneficial to Butte to have tax-increment finance districts to promote economic development and revitalization of these areas within Butte-Silver Bow.

In 2008, Butte was the first city in Montana to secure a supercomputer that operates in the Thornton Building in Historic Uptown Butte. The State of Montana purchased the supercomputer with a $2-million-dollar, two-year state budget appropriation under Governor
Brian Schweitzer’s administration along with some private funding and two loans from Butte-Silver Bow. In 2014, Butte was the first city in Montana to establish a fiber-optic network. The loop consists of 28 miles of fiber optic cable running from the Uptown all the way south to Highlands College at the end of Harrison Avenue.

1.3. Traditional Economic Strategies Have Proven Inadequate

Butte, Montana, is like every other community across the country that invests substantial time and effort into economic development programs and incentives to enhance and grow its economy. Communities across the country use many of the traditional economic development strategies such as tax-increment financing, revolving loans, tax abatements, tax credits, business retention programs, small business consulting, and business recruitment. With similar models implemented across the country, the market is hyper-competitive for a community to distinguish itself from its competitors. “Economic development in small towns is more vulnerable to economic change. The theory of economic development is split into two main camps: those that feel local efforts generate sustainable growth and those who believe that outside forces determine whether a small town will grow” (Daniels 1989).

The economic development strategy of recruiting businesses at large to relocate or expand within a community and create hundreds of jobs at one time has been common practice across the United States. Every year, many communities invest substantial public dollars and thousands of hours putting together incentive packages and proposals to solicit companies looking to relocate or expand. David Birch, who wrote, “Job Creation in America: How Our Smallest Companies Put the Most People to Work,” stated that communities who are successful in landing a major external business rarely attain the projected economic benefits; the recruitment packages offered are so costly the community will simply never recover the
investment. John P. Blair, who wrote “Local Economic Development: Analysis and Practice” stated that if a community does recoup its investment, it often sees a loss of jobs or employment reduction from local firms that simply cannot compete with new, large business (Barrios & Barrios 2004).

Over the years, Butte has attempted to attract the project or company that would bring hundreds of jobs at one time, with the theory that it will revive the local economy and create immediate population growth. Since the 1980s, several projects received substantial media coverage along with public anticipation of job growth and an increased tax base. These projects included a Cambra Canola Oil plant in the former Safeway Warehouse; Luigino’s Foods, a frozen food plant; Destination Montana, a proposal to turn Butte into the next Branson, Missouri; US Jet, an import and export business; and Fuhrlander, a German wind-turbine firm. These projects did not become a reality.

Butte-Silver Bow and its economic development partners have used other traditional economic development strategies including BEAR Programs (Business Expansion and Recruitment), revolving loan funds, business counseling services, and several other services that have been more effective at addressing the needs of local small businesses.

1.4. New Approaches: Economic Gardening and Collaboration

There have been three economic development partners working alongside the Butte-Silver Bow Government since the 1970’s: the Butte Local Development Corporation (BLDC), Headwaters RC&D, and the Butte Chamber of Commerce. These agencies seemed to provide unique services while at times duplicating the efforts of another partner. During a review in 2014 of economic development contracts entered into with the Butte-Silver Bow Government, the
Butte Local Development Corporation and Headwaters RC&D came together to collaborate on a new direction of a “one-stop” shop for economic development services.

The two agencies moved into the Thornton building in the Uptown District together. Shortly after this effort to consolidate services and improve efficiencies, the groups reached out to other partners and large employers in Butte to form the Butte Economic Development Council. This group collaborated to create an effective and forward thinking branding campaign for Butte with the brand Butte Elevated. The Butte Elevated marketing campaign won the marketing campaign of the year award at the 2017 Montana Tourism Awards ceremony in March. The Butte Elevated campaign is based on the work of Chelsea Newman, a Montana Tech MSTC graduate in 2014. Chelsea Newman’s thesis is titled, “Branding Butte: Applying Visual Design Science and Culture Code Theory to Billboard Marketing of a Superfund Community.”

With the new effort amongst all of the entities, the Butte-Silver Bow Government under the direction of Chief Executive Matt Vincent also started a pilot program of Economic Gardening in Butte. In 2013, the Butte-Silver Bow Government invested in the Economic Gardening program. Economic Gardening is a proprietary economic development tool created by Christian Gibbons of Littleton, Colorado, that clearly states it is not a traditional economic strategy or policy. Gibbons used the work of David L. Birch and Dr. Paul Romer, each of whom had written a book regarding job growth and the economy, to develop the Economic Gardening program. Mr. Gibbons was the director of business and industry affairs in Littleton, Colorado. The program was so successful in Littleton that it doubled the job base in a 20-year period from 1990 to 2010 from 15,000 jobs to 30,000 jobs. Before the development of the Economic Gardening program, Littleton, Colorado’s, economy was dependent on Lockheed Martin and
Marathon Oil. These two companies had major employment reductions in Littleton following the economic recession of 1987.

The Edward Lowe Foundation administers the Economic Gardening program today. The principle concept of the program is targeting growth companies in a local economy and developing cutting-edge tools to increase their market share. The program uses experts in particular fields and uses sophisticated database information to define opportunities and business leads within their particular industry. The Economic Gardening model works with a participating business to provide the resources that they would never typically have access to outside of the program.

1.5. The Challenge of Superfund
Butte experiences a more challenging hurdle to attract outside business and investment in the community due directly to the environmental impact of a century of mining. The fact that Butte is now the largest Superfund site in the nation hinders the efforts of the Butte-Silver Bow Government and its economic development partners, which include the Butte Local Development Corporation, Headwaters RC&D, and the Butte Chamber of Commerce. The legal and financial battles regarding responsibility and remedy of the environmental catastrophes have held Butte back even further than our neighboring communities.

While a great deal of remediation work has been done in Butte-Silver Bow over the last thirty years, the majority of the work remains undone and tied up in litigation. In the meantime, Butte-Silver Bow and its citizens have endured the consequences emotionally, psychologically, and financially. It is the belief of many citizens in Butte-Silver Bow that the environmental problems are the primary reason companies or corporations will not relocate their businesses to Butte-Silver Bow. The perceived negative effect of the Superfund stigma holds Butte to a lower
standard than our surrounding communities or major cities in Montana. This holds true even with an educated and skilled workforce, affordable housing, lower property prices, available land, tangible incentives, and a prominent small university in Montana Tech.

A Butte native, Mr. Gary Dietrich, is the person who coined the term Superfund to categorize large environmental clean-up projects. He determined it would take a “Superfund” of money to address the costs associated with the necessary remedies. Mr. Dietrich spent his career working for the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

1.6 The Silver Bow Foundation: Leveraging Butte’s Greatest Export

Economic development can often be a concept that is hard to define in terms of scope, goals, objectives, and verifiable results. The goals always identified with economic development programs are job growth, increased tax-base, higher wages, and population growth. Butte-Silver Bow has struggled to accomplish these goals despite the work and investment of not only the Butte-Silver Bow Government but also its economic development partners.

A critical piece of effective economic development is determining the audience or the targeted industries and businesses that are well suited for a community. For the last several decades in Butte, it is difficult to identify a defined or focused strategy for economic development efforts. I can find no specific pattern or initiative that seems to take precedence over another strategy.

I recognized a pattern of Butte people leading the effort to revitalize the local economy as opposed to someone looking to relocate a business or company. There are several successful projects that originated here by locals, and they are paying good dividends to the community. In 1998, Advanced Silicon Materials was looking to expand or relocate its operations. Butte was selected to build a $500-million dollar plant with a team effort of local development leaders and
the foresight of Mr. Tod Higinbotham, a Butte native, who worked for ASIMI and convinced the corporation of the credibility of Butte, Montana. The ASIMI Plant now owned and operated by REC Silicon was the start of the Montana Connections Business Park.

The Seacast Foundry and Montana Precision Products are two complementary businesses sharing the same facility in the Montana Connections Business Park. The Seacast foundry in Butte pours production titanium investment castings in one section of the plant while Montana Precision Products welds aerospace parts in partnership with GE Aviation. The plant is co-owned by Butte natives Mike and Bert Robins who now reside in Seattle, Washington, where they own other foundries.

A new development slated for the Montana Connections Business Park is a $15-million dollar malt production facility to service the craft brewing industry for small to mid-size craft breweries. Ron Ueland, a Butte resident and native, is the principal partner in the plant along with an influential investment group. Mr. Ueland, along with his siblings, are responsible for the renovation and restoration of the historic Metals Bank building in the Historic Uptown. Ray Ueland is also responsible for re-opening the famous M&M Bar after several ownership changes and closures.

Butte-Silver Bow and the TIFID Board recently entered into a partnership with German Gulch Development LLC to build new manufacturing space in the Montana Connections Business Park. The principals in German Gulch Development LLC are Butte residents Dave and Elizabeth Erickson and Josh Vincent. The first manufacturing building is completed and occupied by SepticNet, a septic system manufacturing operation owned by the Erickson’s and Josh Vincent, and Blacklock Block Manufacturing, a cement paver manufacturer owned by Butte residents Whitney and Anthony Blacklock.
The Butte-Silver Bow TIFID Board and German Gulch LLC are moving forward with construction of a second manufacturing building with another planned phase to build three more buildings bringing the total to five new manufacturing buildings. The Erickson’s and Josh Vincent, who also founded Water & Environmental Technologies, are responsible for two new office buildings on East Park Street in the East Butte RRA that have greatly enhanced an area that has been undeveloped for decades.

The Butte-Silver Bow TIFID Board recently awarded a grant to Cape Peninsula Asset Management LLC to ship a mine waste reclamation machine to Butte that was developed in South Africa. The machine developed by PET Mining Solutions processes mine tailings with advanced technologies to further extract and clean metals and contaminants from tailings. While the technology has proven itself over and over in Africa, the technology is new to the United States. Cape Peninsula has had the PET 4K mining machine reassembled in Butte and plans to operate the new technology locally with plans to build a North American manufacturing facility for the machines in the Montana Connections Business Park. This company is owned and operated by Sofus and Jackie Michelsen. She is a Butte native returning home to bring economic development home.

While the Historic Uptown has seen many buildings over the years either fall into disrepair or have been mothballed, a recent wave of local investment from Butte people showing not only their pride and commitment to Butte, but their good business sense, have taken on large projects in the Historic Uptown District. In recent years, local families have put the Sears building, the Hennessy building, the Metals Bank building, the Hirbour Tower, the former Uptown post office, the Stephens building, the Pioneer Club, the Grand Hotel, the famous M&M, and the former Bronx building back into operation with substantial investment and
improvement to the entire area. This local investment far exceeds any investment from a non-native of Butte in recent years.

Headframe Spirits, owned and operated by Butte residents John and Courtney McKee, have seen rapid expansion of their business in Butte. The McKees have renovated the former Pioneer Club in Uptown Butte to include a tasting room for their distilled spirits. The McKees not only serve locally produced distilled spirits, but they also manufacture distillation equipment for other distilleries around the United States. The Butte-Silver Bow Government recently partnered with Headframe Spirits to lease the Kelly Mine Yard buildings overlooking the Butte valley to expand their manufacturing business. John and Courtney McKee won the 2016 Small Business Champions of the Year by the Small Business Administration and were named the 2013 Montana Entrepreneurs of the Year.

Butte residents have made substantial investments recently including the new tire distribution facility built by Mark Lisac, the Butte Brewery built by Tony Olson, and the renovation of the Copper King Hotel and Convention Center by Rex Leipheimer (a Butte native) and partner Matt Nistler. These facilities have increased the local tax base, provided job growth, and added investment into areas that have lacked commercial development.

I think Butte’s greatest export outside of copper has always been an educated, experienced, and valued professional that moves upon graduation to work and live elsewhere. If you ask most why they make this choice, they will tell you that the opportunity they were looking for in employment was not available in Butte or Southwest Montana. Whether it was their college degree or the skilled trade they acquired, they needed to move away to work and earn a living. Many former Butte residents state they would move back to Butte and Southwest...
Montana if they could have the same career opportunities here as they do elsewhere in their particular field.

There are several advantages to targeting Butte natives to rebuild and revitalize the local economy. Butte natives understand why there are Headframes on the Hill signifying the tunnels for the underground mines. They understand why there is an open-pit filled with billions of gallons of toxic water on the east side of town. They also understand why there is ongoing remediation of streambeds, tailing piles, and other environmental problems to the present and into the future. The mining operations in Butte paid for their family home that they grew up in, put food on the table for their family, paid for their education, and provided them an opportunity to build their dreams.

In order to bring Butte natives together to work collectively for economic development in Butte, I have been working to create an organization known as The Silver Bow Foundation. The Silver Bow Foundation’s primary mission initially will be to unite Butte natives who are willing to invest their time, resources, and potentially capital to put tangible projects together for Butte.

The Silver Bow Foundation would not be a competitor to any local economic development agency in Butte. The Butte-Silver Bow Government, the Butte Local Development Corporation, Headwaters RC&D, and the Butte Chamber of Commerce have institutional constraints and other objectives in terms of economic development that will not be the focus of The Silver Bow Foundation. In terms of loan programs and incentives, the Butte-Silver Bow Government along with the Butte Local Development Corporation and Headwaters RC&D would be the necessary partners.
2. Application of Technical Communication Core Competencies

2.1. Research

My research and project scope looked to find an answer to a common question asked by many residents and observers of Butte: Why isn’t Butte growing like other major cities in Montana? What are the reasons behind a lagging economy? These questions are common to the residents of Butte, the Butte native who now lives elsewhere, and any observer or resident in Montana. The health of the local economy determines so many factors relative to a resident’s quality of life that an analysis taking a different approach is worth exploring.

A defined core competency of technical communication is advocacy, and as a technical communicator and local government official of Butte-Silver Bow, I take this issue seriously (Baehr 2015). My interest in this research is to advocate for the citizens of Butte-Silver Bow and find solutions to problems that have plagued our community for roughly 50 years. A problem simply remains a problem until individuals advocate for a solution.

The research that I have done in regards to economic development has been an overview of accepted and commonly practiced economic development policies across the country, new approaches such as Economic Gardening, and my in-depth observation and research into the Butte economy. In my capacity as a Butte-Silver Bow Commissioner, I participate in many facets of economic development discussions and plans to implement economic policy. I serve on the Economic Development sub-committee of the Butte-Silver Bow Council, and I am the Council representative on the TIFID Board that oversees the Montana Connections Business Park, and the Council representative on the Bert Mooney Airport Authority Board.

In my recognition of the pattern that the bulk of projects and investment in the last five years are from Butte residents, I looked to compare how we as a community have approached the
implementation of economic policy over the last forty years. The concept of economic development can be difficult to track the return of investment, and it can be difficult to determine which economic tools are effective. There are many economic “tools” in the tool bag, but which of those tools is having an impact and which do you choose to use?

Butte has been fortunate to have people working in these economic development organizations who have worked tirelessly for Butte and have always advocated that Butte is a great place to live and work. I focused the research into the Butte economy on the approach and method of economic development policy and not on individuals or individual performance of personnel in any organization. As always, return to Normal text. Notice that every time you hit ‘enter’ after typing in your heading, you will return to Normal.

2.2. Project planning and analysis

As a technical communicator, I have to implement the core competencies of project planning and project analysis (Cappola 2011). While the scope of economic development is diverse, I am interested in Butte and the reasons for a stagnant economy. In order to have a better understanding of the local economy, I had to read and research how other communities approach economic development. I also spent a substantial amount of time looking through documentation and contracts from Butte-Silver Bow and its economic development partners.

My project planning when I began the research started at a broader scope of economic policy to gain a better understanding of the policies and procedures used by communities across the country. I planned to gain a broad understanding of the issue and then keep narrowing the focus to how we as a community develop and implement economic strategies. The timeline for the overall project and the necessary steps for research were guided by the course work for the MSTC program.
In analyzing the project and proposing to create The Silver Bow Foundation, I had to break the project into two deliverables both arriving at the same goal. My focus for my academic research is to define and expand on the rationale as to why a new organization would enhance economic development in Butte and fill the void without competing with other local development agencies. The technical communication deliverables are the website and video and a media kit for The Silver Bow Foundation. Outside of the scope of these deliverables and the project defense, I am working with several Butte natives and an attorney to refine the structure and goals of the organization once it is established.

2.3. Solution Design

I address the technical communication core competency of solution design by recognizing a real opportunity to create and maintain economic gain in Butte by forming a new organization to focus on recruiting Butte natives to form a professional network (Coppola 2011). There are Butte natives living across the globe who have a wealth of education, professional experience, advanced skill sets, an ethic of hard work, and capital that are currently not the focus of any agency tasked with economic development. The organization can be designed to bring together what is essentially a “think tank” of Butte natives who have an emotional tie to this community. In many ways, Butte and its culture helped create and foster the values that have made them successful in many aspects of their lives.

The key component to uniting Butte natives into a consolidated group to bring real and tangible economic benefits and activity will be effective and emotional marketing and communication to deliver the message of why Butte matters and is worth the effort. I have a subscription to the website, www.Lynda.com, and I worked through several courses pertaining to
communication and software applications to enhance my message and strengthen skills learned through course work at Montana Tech.

“Leading with Stories” with author and storytelling coach Paul A. Smith speaks to the importance of storytelling for professionals. The course emphasizes how effective the telling of a story can be rather than just presenting data with an audience. Paul Smith shares the quote from Jonathan Swift, an author and satirist from Ireland in the 1700s: “It is useless to attempt to reason a man out of a thing he was never reasoned into.” Smith then describes how the quote is still relevant today because cognitive science and research indicates that people make decisions in an irrational and emotional way on the right side of their brain. They then rationalize and justify the decisions on the left half of their brain. Therefore, Smith states that in order to engage leadership and decision-making, you must appeal to the audience emotionally (Smith 2014).

2.4. Visual and Written Communication

In today’s world, communication is universal; the isolation once imposed by distance and separation is no longer true (Norman 2004). The main component of the project deliverables is the website and video conveying the message and intent of The Silver Bow Foundation. For the website, I applied the concept of minimalism with a site that narrows the focus to three key areas of the organization: the message of whom and what the organization is through a promotional movie, the list of the Board of Directors, and a membership form that will eventually incorporate an ecommerce account to accept funds through the website. The use of large background images is also a minimalist technique. The minimalist design presents content and features in a simple and direct way (Meyer 2015).

I used the website Squarespace to design my website. I chose Squarespace because it provides the user with functional and stylish templates from which to build my own content. The
Squarespace platform also allows you to build a website that is mobile compatible and can be viewed on portable devices such as smart phones or tablets. I purchased a subscription with Squarespace and feel that it allows me to design a website free of advertising with the exception of one hyperlink at the bottom of the page. While there are free versions on other vendor websites, the trade off is the number of times and the prominence of where those vendors place their own advertising on your website.

The content of the website is also basic and essentially delivers the key points of what the organization does without going into detail. The website is an introduction to the organization, and print materials and literature can be developed to answer specific questions for potential members. In the online course at Lynda.com titled, “Write for the Web”, by Chris Nodder, he describes how people scan websites without reading. He recommends writing summaries on a webpage at a fifth grade level, the majority of content at an eighth grade level, and any supporting literature at no higher than an eleventh grade level. Since most people scan a website to click something, make it obvious to tell “what’s clickable” (Krug 2014).

I used Apple’s IMovie 10 to create the video with content being provided by several sources. The majority of the historical images were provided courtesy of the Butte Public Archives. In my search for historical images in a professional setting, the images were of either men or women only as most occupations and workplaces in Butte were segregated for decades. I obtained other images from individual contributors as well as the images I photographed of the Butte hill and the mining operations. Initially, I attempted to use Adobe Premier Pro, but I switched over to IMovie based on the limitations of my content. Because the movie is comprised with only still images and no video, the IMovie program worked well with different sized images and photo resolutions. The most dynamic feature of the program is the built in Ken Burns effect;
Ken Burns is a filmmaker who created and is recognized for his style of using archival footage and still images to produce documentaries.

The narration for the movie makes an emotional appeal to the audience by telling the story of how Butte’s immigrant population not only electrified the world with massive copper ore production, but their sacrifice also allowed the generations to follow an education and training to provide new opportunity and a better quality of life. The movie’s design speaks to the immigrants’ need that determined the task: work in the mines to provide food, shelter, and clothing; the culture of these immigrants defined their wants: education, safer employment, health care, etc (Norman 2004). I wrote the script and asked Seamus Egan of the Irish band Solas to do the voice over. Seamus Egan is no stranger to Butte. He had great great uncles who came to Butte to work in the mines from County Mayo, Ireland, and one of his uncles was beat to death by Butte police officers and buried in an unmarked grave at Holy Cross Cemetery.

Seamus and the band Solas wrote and recorded an entire album about Butte titled “Shamrock City”. The band is also working on a full production video and a musical based on the album and Butte. During the research that the band and Seamus did regarding his uncles, the unmarked grave of his great great uncle Michael Conway was located through records at the Butte Public Archives and Michael’s extended family placed a headstone on the grave. Seamus has a very accomplished musical career, and he co-wrote the Grammy award winning song, “I Will Remember You” with Sarah McLachlan that launched her career.

Solas provided the audio track “Welcome the Unknown” for the movie. The track was written by Winifred Horan, and the band recorded it on the Shamrock City album. It was written to convey what emotions someone might have leaving their home and coming to Butte never
knowing if they would return home. I felt it was the perfect track to use for the movie since it stimulates such emotion and was written specifically for Butte.

I collaborated with Dr. Chad Okrusch to create the logo that conveys the emotional appeal of Butte and The Silver Bow Foundation. The logo includes a headframe that is the universal identifier of Butte, and I think it signifies strength, sacrifice, and place. In the documentary film “Butte America”, Butte resident and miner John T. Shea spoke of the time in Butte when the Anaconda Company sold a headframe that they tore down for scrap steel. John told the men tearing it down, “You might tear the first one down but you’ll hang off the second. Scrap steel is worth $75 dollars a ton, what’s your heritage worth?” I think the culture of Butte instilled this same raw emotion for generations.

The logo is a black and white design that adheres to certain design choices to create effective design. In the “Universal Principles of Design”, author William Lidwell speaks of how humans have evolved specific associations with the colors white and black. The colors black and white influence how we think, feel, and act. The two colors are both considered to be classy, high value, and timeless. The color white is the choice for a minimalist aesthetic that I incorporate both in the website and in print materials. The color black is an easy way to make designs more polished and finished (Lidwell, Holden, Butler 2015).

The media kit for The Silver Bow Foundation includes a business card, letterhead, and a brochure. I used Adobe’s InDesign program to create the pieces. InDesign is an industry standard today in laying out professional quality print materials, and the software is highly regarded for its in-depth features. Through my course work at Montana Tech including the classes “Desktop Publishing” and “Technical Communication Production”, I have gained a strong foundation in the program and can navigate through to create various documents; however, I am continuing to
learn more applications and further my knowledge of the program and continue to develop and strengthen new skills.

For the business card, I used the typeface Baskerville, and the font is Baskerville Old Face 10pt. While business card designs can seem pretty standard for many, I used the principles discussed by Robin Williams. I continued with the two color design of black and white. I decided to right align the business card text as centered-aligned text often appears somewhat weak (Williams 2015). I then added a solid black column on the left border of the card.

For the brochure, I include three colored images, the logo, a brief description of what The Silver Bow Foundation will do moving forward. I have incorporated the copper color into the design to flow nicely with black and white. I chose copper because of the link to our copper heritage in Butte. I have left a placeholder to insert the names of the Board of Directors once that task is completed. The brochure has three-color images that include one of the Uptown district, one of the valley landscape with the Highland mountains, and one of the Big Hole River south of town. I specifically chose these pictures because Butte lies in a beautiful setting in Montana, and we are minutes away from some of the best outdoor recreation in the world. A native of Butte will identify with the images and recognize that there is much more to our location in Southwest Montana than just Superfund issues.

The letterhead for The Silver Bow Foundation incorporates the logo in the header and the contact information in the footer. I applied the concept of minimalism to the letterhead with the use of black and white colors only that makes the design polished and classy (Lidwell, Holden, Butler 2015).

I began soliciting interest in The Silver Bow Foundation with potential Board of Directors members with a professional letter stating my interest in creating the organization and
the reasoning behind it. I have spoken with several Butte natives who reside around the country and are very successful in their professions. It is my intention to continuing my conversations with them, and they have shared positive feedback about the proposed organization.

3. Formalizing The Silver Bow Foundation

3.1. Organizational Design

I am working through the organizational structure and filing of legal papers to formalize the organization. I have been in discussions with an attorney regarding the proper steps, and I have discussed the ideas with several Butte natives that I essentially handpicked for their advice and support. The Silver Bow Foundation would focus on the Butte native that both knows Butte well and can provide an outside perspective on business and job growth that I think can be overlooked at the local level.

There have been influential people that call Butte home, and these natives have gone on to contribute to the advancement and well-being of other communities across the world. I think it is time we have a concerted effort in Butte to invite them back to share their skills and knowledge in Butte. If you were to step back and have an overlook of economic activity recruitment and effort, you can see that recruiting the native back home is not a primary focus of any economic development partner in Butte-Silver Bow. I envision The Silver Bow Foundation successfully fulfilling this void in our efforts locally.

Butte is fortunate to have well respected and educated professionals working on economic development on a daily basis. I think that positive results of these efforts have been seen over the last five years, but I think we can all agree that there is so much more to do to grow our tax base, job growth, and population growth. My proposal is not intended to compete with other economic development partners in Butte-Silver Bow including the Butte Local
Development Corporation, Headwaters RC&D, or the Butte Chamber of Commerce. I feel that the institutional constraints placed on these entities prevent them from doing what I foresee The Silver Bow Foundation being able to accomplish.

Headwaters RC&D is a 501c3 nonprofit organization serving a seven county region in Southwestern Montana that includes Silver Bow, Deer Lodge, Beaverhead, Madison, Jefferson, Granite, and Powell. Headwaters RC&D has a competent staff and Board of Directors representing the region, and they provide many economic development services. This organization offers business technical assistance, financing programs, revolving loan funds, SBA loan packaging, and a host of other services.

The Butte Local Development Corporation is a 501c3 nonprofit organization in Butte that offers numerous services to local businesses in Butte, and they provide business assistance programs, revolving loan funds, and resources to entrepreneurs. The BLDC fosters business development in Butte and is often the lead agency in recruitment efforts of outside business for the Butte area. The BLDC is led by a qualified and dedicated staff and Board of Directors working daily to improve economic development and job growth in Butte.

The Butte Chamber of Commerce serves as the Ambassador of Butte and the business community and is responsible for organizing many events in Butte that make here a better place to do business. The Chamber oversees the Visitor Center, serves as the source for business and tourism information for residents and visitors, and advocates for the local business community. The Chamber also acts as the oversight to the Convention and Visitors Bureau.

These three organizations work well together and all three are part of the Butte Economic Development Coordinating Council. The Butte-Silver Bow Government also has economic development services as part of the local government, and Butte-Silver Bow oversees the TIFID
District where the Montana Connections Business Park resides, the Urban Revitalization Agency, the East Butte RRA, and the newly formed Basin Creek Targeted Economic Development District.

Butte Silver-Bow also works closely with the Port of Montana located adjacent to the Montana Connections business park west of town at the junction of Interstate 15 & Interstate 90 along with the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad and Union Pacific Railways. The Port of Montana is strategic for transportation and distribution and is the only Foreign Trade Zone in a five state radius. A qualified staff and Board of Directors operate the Port of Montana.

The Bert Mooney Airport Authority also plays an integral part of economic development efforts in Butte. Currently, the Bert Mooney Airport is building a new $7 million dollar terminal to service air travel to Southwest Montana. While the airport is smaller than its surrounding airports in Missoula and Belgrade, the Bert Mooney Airport serves as a regional hub for the six surrounding counties in Southwest Montana consisting of Silver Bow, Granite, Deer Lodge, Powell, Madison, and the Beaverhead. The Bert Mooney Airport Authority is operated with a qualified staff and Board of Directors.

I am working to keep the organization of The Silver Bow Foundation free from many institutional constraints that the other economic development partners deal with in their operations. I will continue to work with several natives of Butte who have very respected careers and reputations to construct the right model for the organization. I am working to develop a 501c3 nonprofit organization for the ability to accept and solicit both private and governmental funds to assist the organization’s effort to bring together this network of professionals.

The proposed formal structure for The Silver Bow Foundation is a non-profit 501c3 organization. In order to develop credibility, it must a formal organization and not a grassroots
effort. Butte has seen various grassroots efforts over the years fade away due to their lack of funds, volunteers, or a vision and mission. A formalized structure can also solicit funds from both private and public sources to bring stability and purpose to its goals. The Silver Bow Foundation will not be designed to duplicate any service provided by Butte-Silver Bow and its economic development partners.

The Silver Bow Foundation will create the captive audience that Butte-Silver Bow and its economic development partners can engage with and share their services to the membership if needed; however, many of these Butte natives have industry expertise and capital resources to eliminate much of the groundwork that it takes economic development agencies to bring a small business into existence. The Silver Bow Foundation will work to enhance our economic development in Butte by working collaboratively with all interested parties.

4. Strengths, Weaknesses, and Future Directions

4.1. Strengths

Economic development in Butte has never focused on our greatest export: a highly educated and skilled workforce. The Butte-Silver Bow Government or its economic development partners including the Butte Local Development Corporation, Headwaters RC&D, and the Butte Chamber of Commerce do not have a focused strategy of recruiting Butte natives and building a professional network. These agencies have institutional constraints and overhead that limit their ability to implement the idea of The Silver Bow Foundation.

Economic development can become reactionary in nature by servicing the needs of businesses soliciting assistance such as loan funds, small business consulting, promotional assistance, or expansion and retention programs. The goal of The Silver Bow Foundation is to reverse this trend and seek out business and industry growth from those entities that may not be
on our radar screen or currently seeking services from our economic development agencies. The Silver Bow Foundation will work complimentary to the other economic development partners in town by focusing in on the potential of the Butte native who has both an emotional interest in the community and an outside business perspective that we do not have locally in Butte.

The businesses that have invested recently in Butte have a broad vision of who is their customer base. With the production of copper ore, everyone in the world was essentially a customer based on the need for the metal used to modernize society. As mining tapered off in Butte, many of the local businesses narrowed their vision and services of their customer base; their market became the region of Butte and Southwest Montana. Headframe Spirits, Montana Craft Malt, Montana Precision Products, REC Silicon, Seacast, and Cape Peninsula Asset Management have products and services that have an international market. While they produce these goods and services in Butte, they are successful because their market is not narrowed to Southwest Montana.

The Silver Bow Foundation can be efficient in creating a network of professionals by giving due diligence to its mission and vision before the official formalization of the organization. The organization can eliminate much of the overhead or constraints that would limit productivity by focusing in on recruitment, development, and investment while staying clear of the other services already being offered by Butte’s economic development agencies.

Many natives of Butte are well respected, highly educated and skilled, and have name recognition in their fields of expertise. These individuals could assist Butte in obtaining business and industry using their own networks. The Silver Bow Foundation could serve as the conduit between new business and industry and existing economic development partners who provide the
other necessary resources such as business financing and loan programs; however, there are those entities that have sufficient capital that would not require these services.

4.2. Weaknesses

In order for The Silver Bow Foundation to be successful, it must have buy-in from people who have an interest in Butte and its economic health. The concept will falter if there is no buy-in to the concept of being able to create what is essentially a “think tank” of Butte natives who have gone on to build careers elsewhere. The organization could also be viewed as just another economic development organization or effort to improve a problem that no one will ever solve. The term itself, “economic development”, can have a negative connotation based on the economic situation of the individual who is the audience.

The Silver Bow Foundation also needs to remain a dynamic organization that is balanced in gender, age, and political views. If the organization cannot equally attract professional men and women of all ages, then its mission could veer from the original intention of economic growth for Butte-Silver Bow as a whole. The organization must also remain neutral in partisan politics as its focus is on economic development and not an extension of a political movement or party.

The other potential downfall of the organization could be facilitating people who are natural-born leaders. Many of the individuals The Silver Bow Foundation hopes to attract are often the visionaries of their own organizations, and it could be difficult to coordinate and facilitate ideas and discussion with these individuals. These leaders can become disenfranchised if their concerns are not given the same weight as others.
4.3. Future Directions

I plan to work with an attorney and some Butte natives to act as consultants in the formation of the organization and to develop its framework for operation. There needs to be more planning and consideration as to how the organization turns the education, experience, professional contacts, and capital of its members into actual projects in Butte-Silver Bow. In order to capitalize on the members contributions, there must be a process in place to facilitate project development.

There is also a need to produce technical communication pieces to address specific economic development opportunities and trends in Butte-Silver Bow. It is imperative that The Silver Bow Foundation, in coordination with other economic development agencies, reeducate the natives of the new infrastructure and economic incentives that Butte-Silver Bow now offers. Butte-Silver Bow has positioned itself to grow, but it needs the help of those with an interest in this town’s future.
References


www.lynda.com


Appendix A – The Silver Bow Foundation Website

A network of professionals designed to harness the power of Butte’s greatest export: highly educated and skilled professionals.
Appendix A – The Silver Bow Foundation Website

A network of professionals designed to harness the power of Butte’s greatest export: highly educated and skilled professionals.
Appendix A – The Silver Bow Foundation Website
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ABOUT US

The Silver Bow Foundation is a professional network of Butte natives and residents coming together for the purpose of creating economic gain in the Butte economy. For over a century, Butte, Montana, has produced copper ore and a well-educated and skilled workforce that have become innovators around the world. The Silver Bow Foundation’s mission is to recruit and unite as many Butte natives as possible to build a network where you can share your education, experience, and talent with your hometown. While Butte has had its economic challenges over the years, these issues can be resolved by coming together and collaborating as only Butte people know how. The Silver Bow Foundation encourages you to join us as we work together to bring economic development through investment and strategic planning. Butte, now more than ever, needs you to join us as we work towards the revitalization of the local economy.
Appendix A – The Silver Bow Foundation Website
Appendix A – The Silver Bow Foundation Website

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

BOARD CHAIRMAN

Board Member 1
Board Member 2
Board Member 3
Board Member 4
Board Member 5
Board Member 6
Board Member 7
Board Member 8
Appendix A – The Silver Bow Foundation Website
Appendix A – The Silver Bow Foundation Website
Appendix A – The Silver Bow Foundation Website
Appendix B – Brochure (Page One)
Board of Directors
(To Be Inserted)

Butte Montana’s two greatest exports are copper ore and an educated and skilled workforce. For over a century, Butte has produced leaders in medicine, law, education, politics, engineering, industry, and skilled labor.

The highly educated and skilled Butte natives, who were raised with the values of sacrifice and hard work, have gone on to become leaders and innovators across the United States and beyond.

It is imperative for Butte to engage you, the Butte native, to share your education, knowledge, experience, and leadership with us so that together we can move Butte back to a place of prominence.

If you feel that Butte played an influential role in the leader you have become today, we ask you to join us and together we will return Butte to “The Richest Hill on Earth”.

The Silver Bow Foundation’s Mission:

- Build a network of professional contacts with Butte natives and their associates

- Harness the education, experience, and reputation of the membership

- Create a network of Butte natives and residents to facilitate the Butte-Silver Bow Government and its economic development partners to solicit and incentivize business development and investment in Butte-Silver Bow
Appendix D – Business Card

Brendan R. McDonough
Board of Directors

406-560-0000
silverbowfoundation@gmail.com
www.silverbowfoundation.com
November 4, 2016

Mr. Paul Powers
The KPA Group
6700 Koll Center Parkway
Suite 125
Pleasanton, CA 94566

Dear Mr. Powers:

Butte, Montana, has always been the Richest Hill on Earth; this title recognizes the incredible amount of copper ore mined from the hill, but in a deeper sense speaks of the people of Butte. The magnitude of Butte’s contribution to electrifying the world, the pivotal role it played during the two World Wars, and its crucial role in organized labor and worker’s rights will forever be a part of the American story.

The people of Butte are a very resilient, hard-working, and loyal population who believes that this place is special. Butte people have banded together for over a century to keep giving back to the place that they call home, and they believe Butte is worth the effort and the investment. It is unexplainable to outsiders why Butte can raise tens of thousands of dollars for a medical benefit, the food bank, the local schools, or a given charity when the need arises.

For over a century, Butte experienced a “boom and bust” economy that survived with fluctuating copper prices and the success of the former Montana Power Company. Today, Butte has worked hard to diversify the economy, and it has seen some very positive developments in recent years. Butte has seen major investment from the new Northwestern Energy headquarters and strong investment from Montana Precision Products, FedEx, REC Silicon, and Montana Resources to name a few.

In my opinion, the key component to growing and diversifying the economy in Butte-Silver Bow relies in the knowledge, success, and capital resources of Butte natives who now live abroad building successful careers and raising families elsewhere. It has been a cliché of many economic development efforts over the years to spend countless hours and resources recruiting outside companies that have never made it to Butte, Montana. In most recent years, the slogan has changed to “bring your job home.” The idea of telecommuting or relocating back home is not new, and until this point, seems to be unsuccessful. I believe it has not had much success because there is not a coordinated effort or plan to actually reach out to Butte natives with reasons why “bringing your job home” makes sense.

I was elected to a four-year term to the Butte-Silver Bow Council of Commissioners representing District 8, and I am running for re-election during this campaign season. I am also in my final year of Graduate School at Montana Tech in the Masters of Science Technical Communication degree program. I have spent the last two years working to develop and execute a plan to create an organization in Butte that will build and diversify the economy here outside of the traditional economic development models that do not work effectively.
I have worked towards an implementation plan creating a non-profit organization that develops, fosters, and recruits Butte natives or former Butte residents with a passion for Butte, to collaborate together to create new investment and economic opportunity in Butte. There has never been a time in Butte’s history where there are more economic incentives to invest in Butte than exist now. My efforts to create this organization and to see it become successful relies solely on the personal knowledge, career experience, education, and fresh perspective that someone like yourself can bring to the table. If you believe in Butte as much as I do, I would like to discuss this organization with you and ask that you would consider serving on its Board of Directors.

I can be reached at the following, and I look forward to speaking with you. Thanks for your time.

Brendan R. McDonough
406-498-3983
bmcdonough@bresnan.net

Sincerely:

Brendan R. McDonough
Appendix F – Promotional Video

DVD Copy on File