

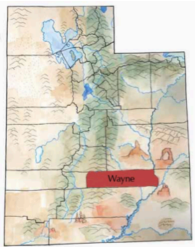


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Wayne County, Utah / Economic Development Plan
<http://www.waynecountyutah.org>

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The Wayne County Economic Development plan is to guide the creation and maintenance of a vibrant rural economy in Wayne County, Utah that (1) provides living wage jobs to residents while (2) maintaining rural characteristics and a high quality of life.

Wayne County is located in south central Utah, with the fourth lowest population among Utah counties and a population density of one person per square mile. Wayne County is 97% public lands, one of three counties nation-wide with such a high concentration. Typical of rural counties, and over time, Wayne County has experienced its share of economic highs and lows. On the whole, however, Wayne County's employment status has remained relatively stable with construction, tourism, grazing, and at one time, forestry providing main sources of income.

Through out Wayne County's history the population of Wayne County has remained at approximately 2,700 full time residents. Today, leisure and hospitality is presently the leading economic sector, although worker wages in this sector are generally low and employment mainly seasonal.

Wayne County has considerable assets including a spectacular environment, outstanding outdoor recreation opportunities, stable and hard-working resident base with natural resources that include timber and world class paleontology. Issues that hamper economic development are similar to many other rural areas including lack of adequate living wage jobs, challenges in access to available goods, services and markets, lack of affordable and quality housing, growing need for improved broadband and shortage of infrastructure. Wayne County does face challenges with declined health of public lands vegetation and lack of economic opportunity on federal lands.

The purpose of this plan is to define objectives for new jobs and a path toward creating these jobs. To establish a foundation for considering what economic development strategies to adopt the plan will (1) describe current economic conditions in Wayne County, (2) identify assets that Wayne County might use to stimulate economic development, and (3) identify the issues that constrain economic development based on that information, the plan will (4) define a set of guiding principles, and (5) define a mission statement which will define employment objectives based on these principles, with an action plan that will then identify the strategies and specific activity that will lead to new jobs.

Economic Profile of Wayne County

Population. In 2019, Wayne County's year-round population is 2,719, an increase of 75 residents over a four-year period. Wayne County is the fourth least populated county in the state of Utah. Residents over age 65 are the only age group that show a notable increase; others are either holding steady or decreasing.

Geography. At 1,051 square miles, Wayne County is Utah's fourth smallest county in Utah. Wayne County's population density of one person per square mile is one of the lowest in the State and one of the lowest in the continental U.S.

Public Lands. Wayne County is 97% public lands, 84% federal lands, (the highest percentage in Utah and the third highest in the continental U.S.) An additional 10% is state owned, leaving only 3% in private hands. The high concentration of federal lands is particularly evident in the County's eastern half, where 96% is federal, 3.5% state, and private less than one percent.

Business and Employment. According to Division of Work Force Records, Wayne County has 1,318 full-time jobs. Seasonal employees add another 64 jobs. Leisure/hospitality is the County's largest employment sector followed by local

government (primarily schools,) federal government, and health care/social services.

Economic Status of Residents. Wayne County's median household income is \$42,444.00; with an average wage of \$27,730.00, two-thirds the statewide average. The poverty rate is 9%, 2% above the State average.

Sources of Income. Wayne County residents primarily receive their income from one on three sources (1) earned income from a job or a business, (2) unearned income from investment, royalties or inheritance, or (3) government transfers, including social security, and welfare.

Public Schools. In 2019 the Wayne County School District reports there are 440 students enrolled in the Wayne School District, down from 560 in 2010.

County Assets

People and Communities. Wayne County has a work force that is reliable, hard-working, resourceful, and resilient, communities that are safe, stable and retain their rural character.

Environment. Wayne County includes one national park, Capitol Reef National Park, world-class paleontological, archeological, and geological resources and a wide range of wildlife species including significant populations of elk, mule deer, pronghorn, black bear and desert big horn sheep.

Infrastructure. Installation of in-ground fiber optics is in progress and cell service is being upgraded. Wayne County benefits greatly from a high-quality rural healthcare facility.

Road Network. Roads of particular importance include SR 24, SR 95 and SR 12 (an All-American Road.)

Natural and Cultural Resources. Natural resources of particular economic importance include scenic and recreational attractions, forest products, rangelands, paleontological resources and a rich rural cultural heritage.

Energy and Mineral Resources. Wayne County lacks in Energy and Mineral natural resources

Wayne County Issues;

Rural Realities. As is the case with many rural areas Wayne County has an aging population, older housing resources, significant lack of young families, and shortage of services and infrastructure.

Rural Character and Quality of Life. Rural heritage, character and quality of life are fundamental values that are critical to retention of existing residents and attraction of new businesses, tourists and residents. Quality of life factors that are particularly important in rural Wayne County include living wage jobs, quality and affordable housing, quality public schools and opportunities for advanced training, access to quality healthcare, vital attractive and livable communities, the availability of goods and services, a healthy and resilient environment and access to outdoor recreation opportunities. Wayne County's future is in retaining and strengthening its rural character and rural economy, and maintaining livable, sustainable and diversified communities.

Payments in Lieu of Taxes. Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) and Secure Rural School (SRS) payments are unpredictable, unreasonably low and not in line with private lands property taxes. In relation to population densities federal PILT formulas discriminate against counties like Wayne County.

Housing. Wayne County has a recognizable lack of affordable high-quality housing for residents with young families, prospective residents, seasonal employees, and elderly residents requiring accessibility.

Public Schools. There is a continued, countywide trend of declining public school enrollment an occurrence that is expected to persist.

Access. In Wayne County there is no Interstate, rail access, or commercial air service. To date significant road closures have been implemented on forestlands; except where road maintenance is the responsibility of the County.

Jobs. There has been a significant decrease in living wage natural resource jobs replaced by tourism-based jobs that are typically lower paying and seasonal. Living wage jobs in other sectors are limited. Wayne County business owners report that it is exceedingly difficult to fill service sector jobs during the tourism season.

Infrastructure. Infrastructure improvement needs include (1) a sustainable culinary, irrigation and remote area livestock and wildlife watering facilities, (2) electricity for remote areas and industrial applications, (3) reliable cell service, (4) data transfer mechanisms, (5) housing, (6) federal lands roads access.

Tourism. Prime issues include seasonality employment.

Percentage of Federal Lands its Management. Extensive federal lands and increasingly restrictive management of these lands have resulted in (1) lack of private land available for economic activity, (2) lack of economic uses on federal lands, and (3) a small property tax base.

Political Pressures. As growth rate in Wayne County and cultural changes take place, regional and national special interest organizations are in some instances

challenging economic uses of federal lands (93% of Wayne County) and causing some communities to become increasingly polarized.

Forest and Range Health. Threats to forest and range health include invasive plants and grasses, and chronic diseased timber, which increases the risk of wildfire and adversely affect timber production, livestock, wildlife habitat, and water resources.

Drought. 2018 brought extreme or exceptional drought to 27% of Utah, with the hardest-hit area being Wayne, Garfield, Piute, San Juan, Sanpete and Sevier counties.

Wayne County Principles for Guiding Economic Development; Wayne County's economic development strategy is built on a set of diversified principles, which provide a separate set of tracks for establishing solid economic development strategies. These principles (1) respond to Wayne County's demographic and changing conditions, that (2) take into account the previously mentioned assets and issues, and (3) draw from best management practices related to the disciplines of rural planning and rural economic development. These principles are as follows:

Infrastructure. In some instances Wayne County lacks essential infrastructure needed to create a sustainable rural economy. The term infrastructure refers to the basic underlying physical and organizational systems, services, and facilities needed for an economy to function and be sustainable over time. Narrowly construed, infrastructure includes systems of roads, airports, water supply, communications and power. More broadly it also includes housing, schools and medical facilities. It also includes essential facilities and services related to health, safety and welfare, with the ability to prevent and control catastrophic fire related instances. In a county with such a high percentage of public lands, infrastructure must also include the ability to use public lands as the location for essential infrastructure including water, power, road and communication corridors. Currently, Wayne County, has deficiencies in several important infrastructure categories, most notably housing, electric power, secure sources of culinary and irrigation water and, especially in some areas, communications. Many communities are vulnerable to catastrophic fire, which can adversely affect several types of infrastructure.

Existing Businesses. The businesses that currently operate in Wayne County are the foundation for moving forward with economic development. There are three reasons: (1) the fact that these businesses continue to operate is indication that there is a need for them by residents and visitors. (2) The fact that their owners elected to establish and operate these businesses indicates the owners' commitment to Wayne County and suggests a corresponding need for county government and residents to support these businesses and (3) experience and academic research strongly indicate that it is far more efficient and effective to support the continuation and, when appropriate, expansion of an existing business than to attract new businesses.

Economic Diversification. Diversification within and across business sectors and industries is critical to the health of the local economy. Without diversification Wayne County is vulnerable to unforeseeable occurrences that might severely disrupt a given sector of the economy. If the disrupted sector is dominant (i.e., tourism) the adverse effect is much more severe than if there are a range of viable economic sectors. Economic diversification promotes resilience and stability. Economic diversification also prepares Wayne County, for unforeseen economic opportunities in the future.

Traditional Natural Resource Industries; Jobs in traditional natural resource industries such as livestock and forestry are important to Wayne County's cultural identity as well as the local economy. The fact that these natural resource industries have persisted suggests that the key environmental and socio-economic elements needed to survive are locally available. Wayne County jobs in forestry and livestock management are relevant and should not be considered to be in competition with jobs in the tourism sector. With diversification across Wayne County's employment spectrum being encouraged, new approaches within traditional natural resource industries, specifically including incorporation of, value added, and niche strategies, are of prime importance.

Tourism. Tourism is a fundamentally important component of Wayne County's economy and will remain so into the future. Capitol Reef National Park will continue to be the major focus of Wayne County tourism, bolstered by the increasing trend of visitors to bundle visits to multiple parks in one trip. In this regard, Capitol Reef National Park takes on special meaning, particularly as a significant portion of the park is in Wayne County, and a remote part of Canyonlands National Park is in Wayne County. A robust, county-wide tourism initiative must seek to (1) expand the length of the tourism season, (2) extend the length of time that visitors stay in Wayne County, (3) extend the range of people who visit Wayne County and the reasons why they come to Wayne County and (4) a continued effort to expand outdoor recreation opportunities.

Outdoor Recreation. Wayne County offers a wide range of outdoor recreation opportunities that are made all the more compelling by Wayne County's exceptional natural environment. Wayne County's outdoor recreation assets provide an important underpinning for the overall local economy. Presently the focus is mainly on traditional national park sightseeing and backcountry hiking and backpacking. While these are important and should remain so, there are a range of additional recreational activities that have potential for attracting visitors and providing enhanced recreation opportunities for residents. Bicycling is tremendous untapped potential in Wayne County. Others include OHV riding, viewing of night skies and scientific and historical studies.

Public Lands. With so little private lands in Wayne County, the federal government and the public lands managed by the federal government absolutely must contribute to Wayne County's economy. While open spaces are important to both

environmental quality and the rural character of Wayne County, single purpose management of public lands is environmentally unsound and a detriment to community sustainability and economic development. Measured, responsible multiple use must be a significant component of public lands management and federal agencies must accept that their participation in economic development is crucial to Wayne County's survival and long-term prosperity. Federal lands must also contribute to paying for essential public services, including education, law enforcement, social welfare and search and rescue. Per acre, federal PILT and SRS payments are far lower than local property tax payments on private lands.

Natural and Historical Resources. The Colorado Plateau is a nationally significant repository of paleontological resources. Paleontological resources constitute one of Wayne County's most distinguishing and valuable assets, and one that must be carefully managed. Beyond their obvious scientific importance, and their ability to attract researchers who contribute to the local economy, paleontological resources have potential to boost Wayne County's tourism industry and, not to be overlooked, serve as a source of pride Wayne County residents. Initiatives to develop the local economy must respect the need to protect and conserve these extraordinarily important paleontological resources. Archeology, cultural history, geology and biology are additional resources that deserve special management and that should be viewed as economic assets.

Eastern Wayne County. While remote the eastern-most half of Wayne County is an important part of the County's identity and economy. If Wayne County as a whole is to prosper into the future, the eastern portion of Wayne County will be an important asset.

State Highways. Wayne County's location, geography, undeveloped nature and concentration of public lands all contribute to a situation where state highways are absolutely critical to economic development within Wayne County, especially when other modes of transportation are lacking. The importance of highways is due to the fact that state highways (1) provide access to almost all of the areas where new or enhanced economic development might occur and (2) serve as the major means to transport raw materials, finished products and visitors. State highways directly adjoin the commercial areas of all of Wayne County's towns. State highways also play a significant role in site-specific development, as highways bisect commercial areas and highway rights-of-way can affect the ability of vehicles to access private lands along these highways. This reliance on state highways indicates the need for the Utah Department of Transportation to be viewed as a vital partner in future economic development.

County/Community Coordination. There is need for a coherent, countywide vision that articulates shared economic development values and needs. Wayne County's incorporated and unincorporated communities are unique and have their own specific needs. The town councils and residents of each community must assume the major role in determining how the countywide economic development vision and

plan might best be applied within each community and what specific economic development initiatives should be that community's priorities.

Measuring Progress. Key metrics that should be used to measure economic progress are (1) an increasing percentage of jobs that pay a living wage, (2) stable to increasing population, (3) the availability of quality housing to meet demand and (4) increasing school enrollment in all public schools.

Economic Development Mission Statement and Employment Objectives

Wayne County's economic development mission is to establish and maintain a stable economy that benefits residents now and into the future. Such an economy will support flourishing and sustainable communities and enhance quality of life. Specific objectives for living wage job creation and the effect of job creation on population, housing and school enrollment are listed as follows. These jobs will come from a combination of re-invigorated natural resource jobs, additional tourism and hospitality jobs, jobs from new enterprises including technology and scientific research, and from increased demand for services and construction.

Economic Development Strategies

Wayne County has identified six strategies for meeting job creation objectives, as follows:

1. Support existing enterprises. Bring about conditions that support the continuation and expansion of existing local businesses. Target existing business sectors include:

- Commercial businesses and services
- Forest products
- Livestock production
- Tourism
- Healthcare
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2. Develop infrastructure. Provide infrastructure to support countywide economic sustainability. Target areas include:

- Water supply
 - Culinary supply, storage, distribution.
 - Agricultural storage and distribution.
 - Remote area livestock/wildlife water facilities.

- Communications
 - Cell service.
 - Data transfer.

- Roads
 - Maintenance of existing county and community roads.

- Access on federal lands.
- Airports and airstrips
 - Community-level.
- Electric power
 - Remote area electrification.
 - High capacity (three phase) power for industrial and commercial applications.
- Housing
 - Affordable and high quality housing for families, new residents, seasonal workers, people with disabilities and senior citizens.
 - Reuse of vacant and underutilized homes, restoration of older homes,
 - Phase out of older, deteriorated mobile homes.
 - Responsible short-term vacation rental ordinances and practices.

3. Manage federal lands to benefit both the environment and communities. Bring about a situation where federal land management agencies make meaningful contributions to county wide economic stability and expansion, especially in the areas of tourism, forest products, ranching and community infrastructure. Tourism is addressed below. Specific actions include:

- Evaluation and agreement regarding federal actions to support communities. Discussion topics with each federal land unit may include:
 - Land management
 - Forest management, including timber sale contracting
 - Rangeland management
 - Public access
 - Tourism
 - Recreation management
 - Law enforcement
 - Utility corridors
 - Administration
 - Personnel (access to government contracts, wage grade jobs and career civil service employment for local residents.)
- Systematic restoration of vegetation 11 county intergovernmental restoration initiative aimed at increased environmental health, decreased fire risk for communities, structures and culinary and irrigation water supplies, and employment for local residents
- New and enhanced livestock/wildlife water sources
- CRNP land use plans/policies/operations
- County/municipal land acquisition for beneficial public purposes
- Reasonable, responsible and equitable PILT and SRS payments.
- Modifications in public policies
 - Public lands grazing reform
 - Timber harvest reform and contracting

4. Diversify and expand tourism and outdoor recreation opportunities. Ensure a tourism industry that is sustainable, robust, and serves a diverse range of year-round visitors, which may include;

- Road improvement and legal road access
- Directional and public safety signage
- Enhanced tourism and economic opportunity in the eastern half of the County
- Establishment ATV trail system
- Snowmobiling and ski touring
- Cultural resourced-based recreation
- Continued Wayne County Tourism Office outreach
- Prepare a County-level recreation guide
- Enhanced bicycle recreational opportunities, on and off road, including:

5. Attract New Enterprises. Attract and retain a range of diverse businesses and economic enterprises that offer living wage employment for existing and prospective County residents. Priorities include:

- Computer technical services (including educational opportunities for prospective employees)
- Light manufacturing
- Retail and commercial services
- Visitor and resident commercial services
- Professional services
- Trades (e.g., appliance repair, plumbing)
- Value-added forest products Value-added livestock products

6. Initiate Special Projects. Develop new projects that provide multiple economic and community benefits. While a select number of special projects have been identified, others may be added to the list as need arises and resources become available. Priority near-term projects include:

- A natural history museum in Hanksville.

Implementation Priorities;

1. Existing Businesses
2. Infrastructure
3. Federal Lands

Incentives;

- Identify incentive opportunities and assist businesses to secure these incentives.

- Continue use of Utah State business and incentive programs.
- Housing. Initiate housing programs throughout the County with federal, state and private partners.
- Water Supply. Survey municipal water supply status, identify issues and corrective measures.
- Federal Agency Contributions. Initiate outreach with each federal land unit.
- Vegetation Restoration. Initiate comprehensive WRI program. • Livestock/Wildlife Water Facilities. Initiate WRI water projects

Federal and State Economic Development Incentives State of Utah.

State of Utah economic development incentive programs that Wayne County believes are likely to most benefit county economic development are listed below.

Wayne County will help facilitate businesses and other organizations in participating in appropriate State incentive programs.

- Enterprise Zone Non-profit
- Business Expansion and Retention
- Targeted Business Tax Credits
- Protection tax credit Utah Rural Jobs Program • Smart School
- Outdoor Recreation Grants • C-PACE • High Cost Infrastructure Tax Credit, Rural Fast Track
- Enterprise Zone Tax Credit

USDA Rural Development

USDA Rural Development has a portfolio of programs that provide loan guarantees, direct loans and, in some cases, grants. Wayne County will apply for, or facilitate businesses, cooperatives and individuals in applying for assistance that is consistent with achieving the County's economic development plan's goals and objectives. USDA has a range of specific programs within the following categories:

- Rural Housing Programs
- Rural Community Programs
- Rural Business Programs
- Rural Cooperative Programs

State of Utah Participation in Plan Implementation

Wayne County has productive, ongoing relationships with several State of Utah agencies. For economic development activities our primary contact is Governor's Office of Economic Development (GOED) Office of Rural Development. For public land policy activities our contact is the Governor's Public Lands Policy Coordination

Office. For on-the-ground natural resource activities our contact is the Department of Natural Resources. Wayne County desires to retain these important relationships and to establish relationships with additional State agencies aimed at advancing economic development.

Technical Assistance

Department of Natural Resources (Water Resources Division):

USU Extension,

University of Utah, Southern Utah University

GOED, Southern Utah University and/or the Utah College of Applied

Technology: In accordance with the Rural Online Initiative legislation, assist in design and initiation of a digital technology service center/training program.

Department of Workforce Services: Assist with planning for (a) affordable housing for families, senior citizens and seasonal workers; (b) business development.

For further information and inquires please contact;

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** The Wayne County Economic Development Plan is a living document, subject to continuous edits and updates.*

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