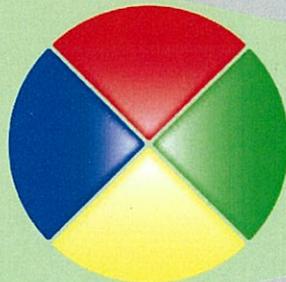


# Snyder, Texas

## Community Assessment/ Five Year Strategic Plan

May 2010



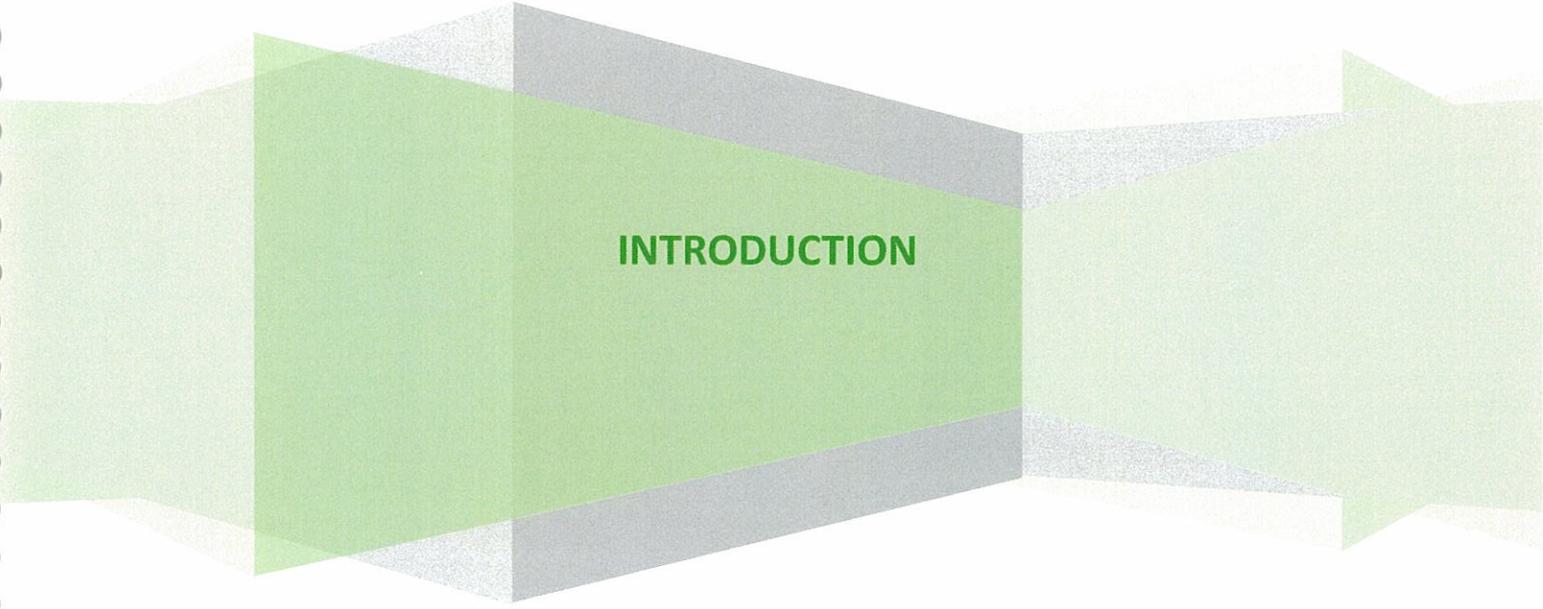
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# Snyder Community Assessment

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# INTRODUCTION

The City of Snyder, Texas with a population currently in excess of 10,000 (10,406) is located 20 minutes north of I-20, 84 miles from Lubbock , 76 miles from Abilene, 88 miles from Midland, 100 miles from San Angelo, and 238 miles from Fort Worth, Texas. Snyder is located at the crossroads of western Texas being situated equidistant from four large population centers. This excellent western Texas location is conducive to a wealth of economic possibilities.

Snyder had its beginnings in 1878 when a buffalo hunter and trader, William Henry (Pete) Snyder (a native of Pennsylvania) built a trading post on the banks of Deep Creek. Other hunters were attracted to the post, and a colony of buffalo-hide dwellings grew up around it. These dwellings, as well as the occasionally dubious character of their inhabitants, gave the town its first names, "Hide Town," and "Robber's Roost."

In 1882, Snyder drew up a town plan and invited immigration. The first public school was established sometime that year. In 1884, when Scurry County was organized, Snyder's settlement was chosen as the county seat. Snyder remained a farming and ranching community until 1948 when oil was discovered on the Canyon Reef formation north of town. Within a year the population jumped from around 4,000 to over 12,000 and a tent and trailer city sprang up on the town's northern edge. The boom was over by late 1951, and the population (which had peaked at around 16,000) stabilized at 11,000.

Scurry County became the leading oil-producing county in Texas as the result of a locally developed method of injecting carbon dioxide into the formation to increase the pressure and thereby increasing the yield. Ranching and cotton farming also continued to employ a large part of the population.

The backdrop of Snyder, once dominated by herds of wild buffalo, now consists of cotton fields, wind turbines, oil field pump jacks and beautiful West Texas sunsets. More than 2,000 oil wells in the vicinity are busy generating one of America's most precious commodities.

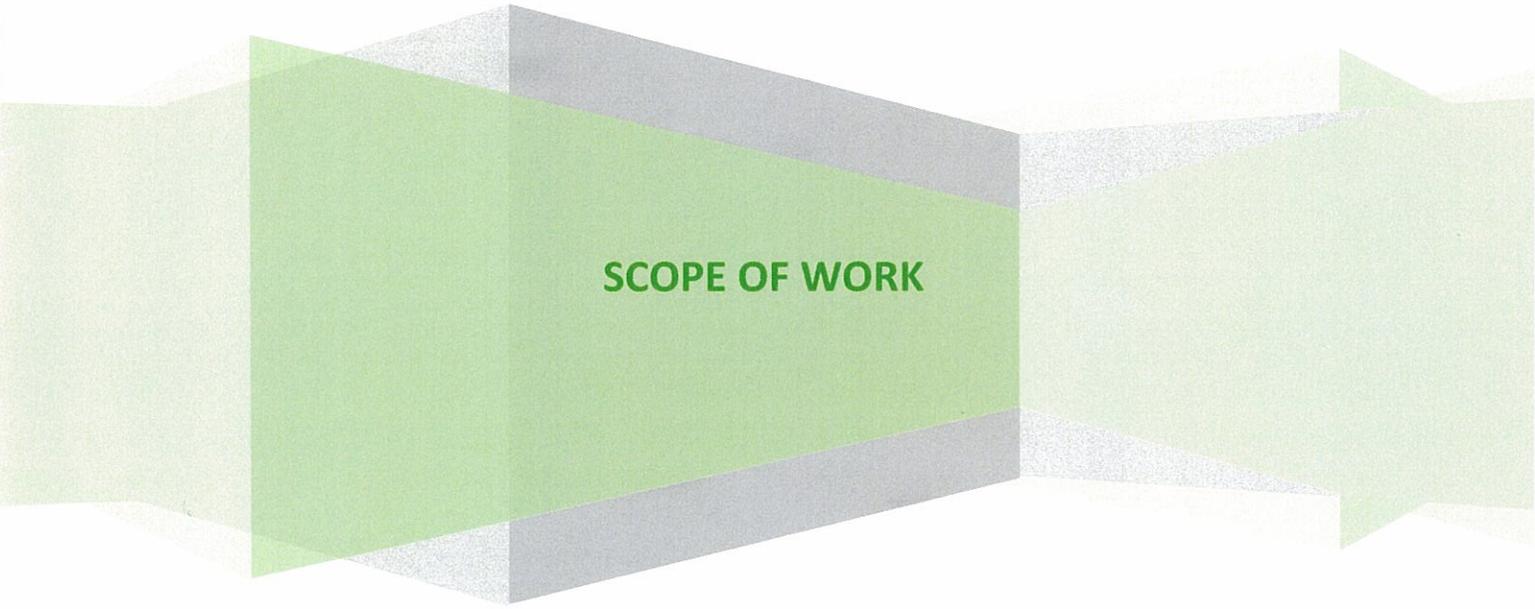
From the agriculture fields to the production fields, this community has plenty to offer residents and travelers. Snyder, the county seat for Scurry County, is a great place to live or visit, with shopping, dining and recreation highlights that include the Ritz Theatre, Windmill Ranch Preserve, Western Texas College, Cogdell Memorial Hospital, SnTx Industrial Park, and Mrs. Kathy's.

Along with its ideal setting, Snyder presents a small town feeling with a modern attitude to economic development and growth. The community has developed a three hundred acre fully developed industrial park. The SnTX Industrial Park has only just begun bringing new business into the area. There is ample electricity, natural gas, and water and sewer capacity. Snyder is also able to provide a greenfield site. The industrial park is located in an area designated by the state as an enterprise zone, which qualifies its residents for tax credits for capital investment and job creation. Snyder also offers local real estate tax abatements, as well as a job-creation cash incentive in some cases.

The county has a labor pool of around 7,000. According to Snyder's manufacturing employers, employees can be found who are trainable, have a good work ethic, and who show initiative in solving problems. In the city, the population is spread out with 27.8% under the age of 18, 10.5% from 18 to 24, 24.0% from 25 to 44, 20.8% from 45 to 64, and 16.9% who were 65 years of age or older. The median age is 36 years.



With all the amenities of a large city but the comforts of a close community environment, Snyder presents a well situated economic possibility for a variety of business ventures that are sure to bring prosperity to the city.



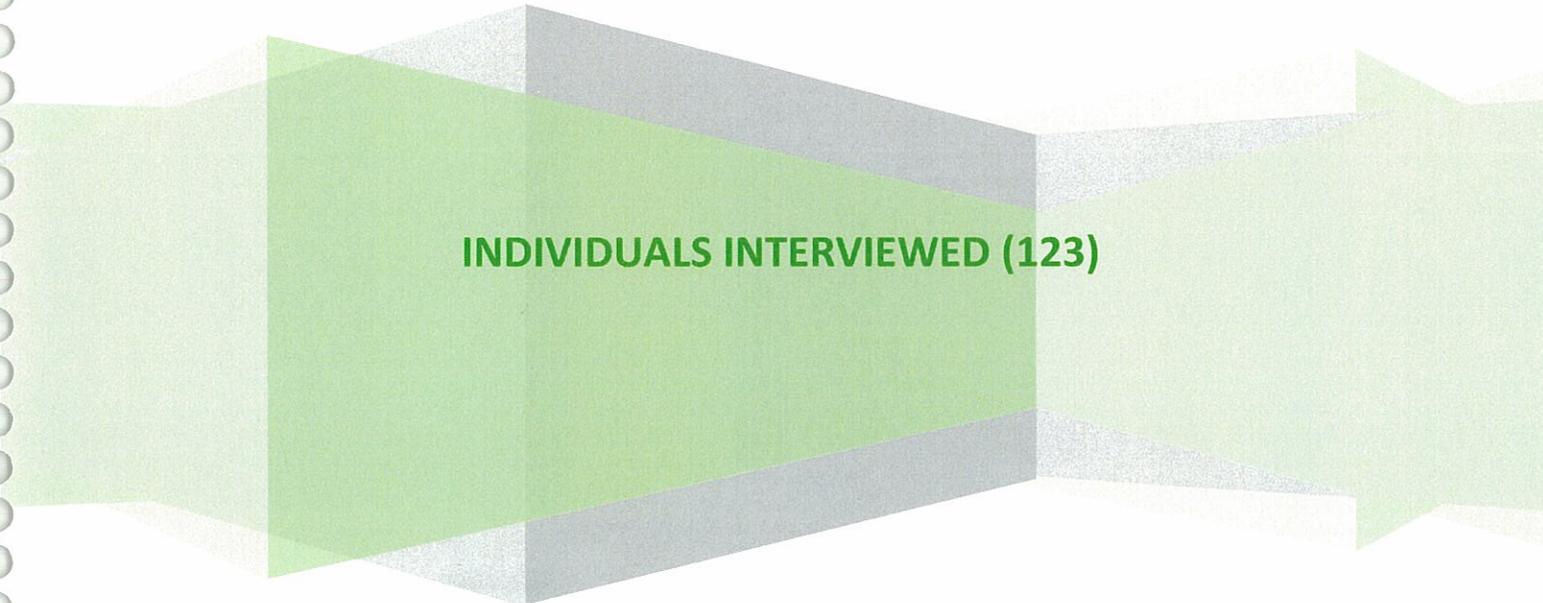
**SCOPE OF WORK**



Steve Vassallo, owner and CEO of Global Colors of Economic Successes (Oxford, MS), a Certified Economic and Community Developer as well as a Certified Economic Development Finance Professional, performed a Community Assessment for Snyder, Texas during the weeks of May 10- May 21, 2010. A complete and thorough review of all influencing factors to the city's Economic Development program and future successes were examined.

The primary focus of the Assessment was to make an objective analysis of Snyder's strengths and weaknesses and to provide realistic, achievable recommendations that would enhance Snyder's quality of life as well as maximize the potential development of the city. A number of community leaders, as well as regional and elected officials, were interviewed (123) in an attempt to obtain as much local and regional input as possible. Of the twenty-eight Recommendations that were presented at the May 21, 2010 Strategic Planning Retreat to the community leadership, all twenty-eight were evaluated and approved. Preceding the introduction of the Recommendations, a presentation was made on global economic trends.

The assessment could not have been performed without the tremendous assistance and total cooperation extended by Merle Taylor and Melissa Elam. Our appreciation to everyone who contributed input to this review is extended with considerable gratitude. We believe that the information contained within is 100% accurate; however, there are some conclusions reached that are based upon the knowledge of the individual resource and therefore could be subject to interpretation.

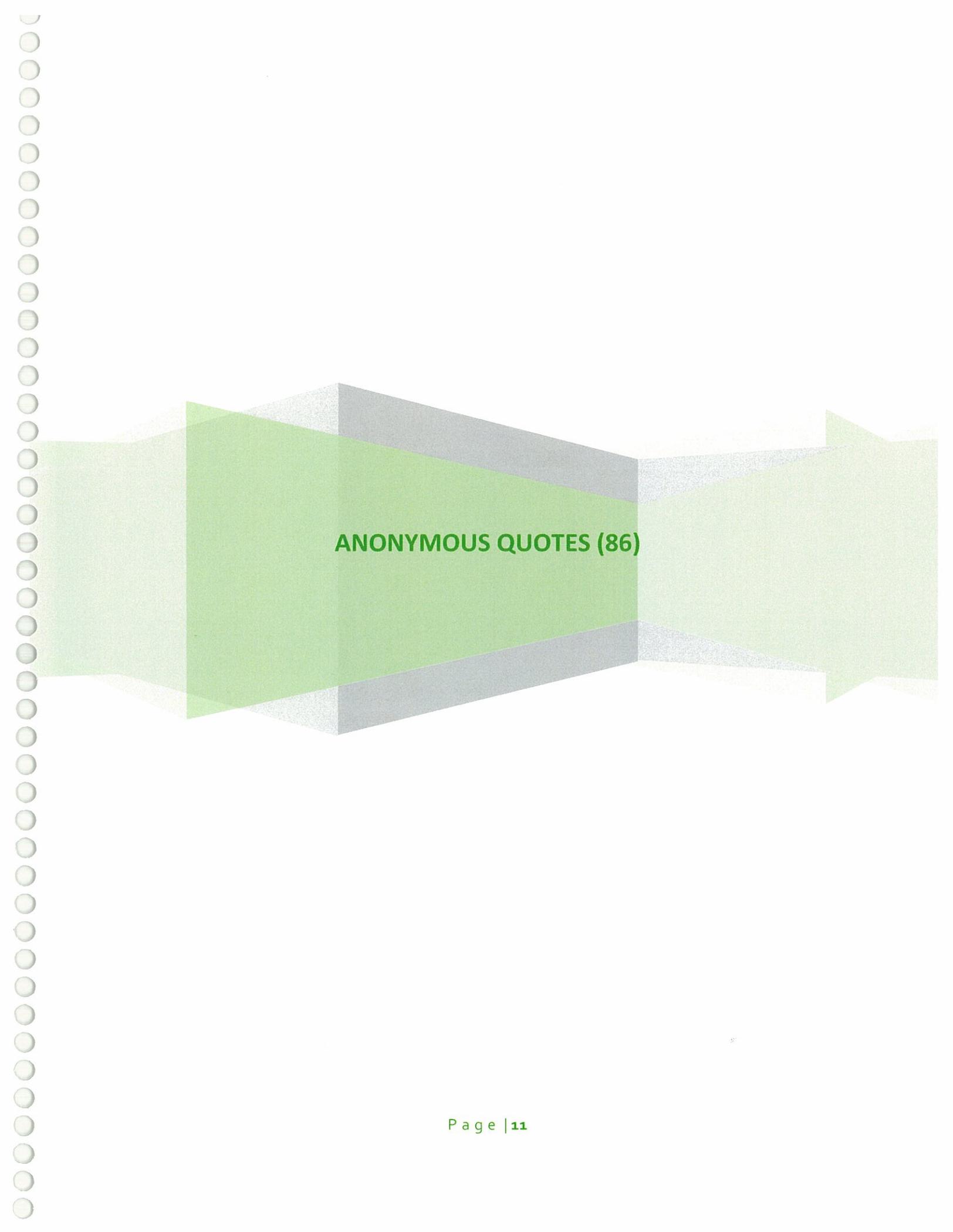


**INDIVIDUALS INTERVIEWED (123)**

- 
1. Dalvin Alexander
  2. Mayor Francene Allen-Noah
  3. Larry Anderson
  4. Rex Andrews
  5. Melody Appleton
  6. Glenna Bane
  7. Chris Bargas
  8. Ben Barkley
  9. Roy Bartels
  10. Susan Blackard
  11. Stephanie Bretz
  12. Drew Bullard
  13. Barbara Burney
  14. David Cain
  15. Darryl Calley
  16. Jim Bob Cave
  17. Venna Clay
  18. Jim Clements
  19. Keith Collier
  20. Dana Cooley
  21. Joe Coronado
  22. Dan Cotton
  23. Lanny Covey
  24. Elliott Cox
  25. Larry Crooks
  26. Rep. Drew Darby
  27. John DeLille
  28. Bubba Dennis
  29. Dr. Mike Dreith
  30. Trent Drigger
  31. Stephanie Ducheneaux
  32. Mark Eads
  33. Melissa Elam
  34. Chet Erwin
  35. John Everett
  36. Dink Foree
  37. John Gibson
  38. Dewey Grinslade
  39. Keith Hackfeld
  40. Bill Harris
  41. Michael Hartman
  42. Paula Hatfield
  43. Eddie Hedges
  44. David Holt

- 
45. Rita House
  46. Jerry House
  47. Joe Jackson
  48. Sheriff Darren Jackson
  49. Jeanne Johnson
  50. Paul Jones
  51. Janell Jones
  52. Wade Lancaster
  53. Lyn Lancaster
  54. Terry Leatherwood
  55. Barbara Leatherwood
  56. Morris Light
  57. Howard Limmer
  58. Cholanne Lindsey
  59. Charles Long
  60. Daphny Lopez
  61. Chief Terry Luecke
  62. Bennie Marricle
  63. Terry Martin
  64. Tim McCullar
  65. Roy McQueen
  66. Evan Moore
  67. Judy Moss
  68. Lisa Nix
  69. Jerry Owen
  70. Aline Parks
  71. Stan Pavalik
  72. Per-Erik Persson
  73. Keith Pitner
  74. Mike Post
  75. Richard Powell
  76. Terry Preuninger
  77. Doc Procter
  78. Elois Pruitt
  79. Shawn Ragland
  80. Judy Ragland
  81. Teresa Ragland
  82. Marianne Randals
  83. Kris Randolph
  84. Sandra Reynolds
  85. Greg Rhodes
  86. Rose Roberts
  87. Bill Robertson
  88. Michael Rodriquez

- 
89. Sonya Rodriquez
  90. Rosemary Rodriquez
  91. Nolan Von Roedor
  92. Gary Rotan
  93. Sandra Salina
  94. Geron Scates
  95. Daniel Schlegel, Jr
  96. Will Senn
  97. Jim Shearer
  98. Rona Sikes
  99. Ann Smartt
  100. Kristin Smith
  101. Justin Speary
  102. Janet Spence
  103. John Stewart
  104. Roger Sullenger
  105. Warden Steven R. Swift
  106. Suzanne Swinney
  107. Merle Taylor
  108. Carla Thompson
  109. Vernest Tippens
  110. Elyndabeth Toland
  111. Mike Tyrrell
  112. Beverly Velasco
  113. Bill Voss
  114. Judge Rod Waller
  115. Wade Warren
  116. Jeff West
  117. Terry Williams
  118. Mark Williamson
  119. Robyn Wilson
  120. Tony Wofford
  121. Kent Wright
  122. Kathy York
  123. Jana Young



**ANONYMOUS QUOTES (86)**

- ✓ "I am in favor of developing the square and seeing it become an active hub for Snyder."
- ✓ "We are missing a tremendous opportunity with hunting-related businesses that could be profitable here."
- ✓ "The theatre here does not have a digital projector; therefore, the screen images are not sharp."
- ✓ "Many of the business owners in Snyder are not knowledgeable about the importance of websites and what this could contribute to their profit margins."
- ✓ "Because of limited retail competition within Snyder, prices are typically higher which places an added economic burden on our residents."
- ✓ "This town is not very pretty."
- ✓ "We need a back-up plan (alternative industry) to the oil fields."
- ✓ "We should begin the planning process now for the construction of a new city hall."
- ✓ "The people (on the whole) in Snyder are averse to taking risks."
- ✓ "There are 13.7% of the families in Snyder below the poverty level which is 4.5% higher than the national average."
- ✓ "An additional restaurant is needed on the square."
- ✓ "We have a continuous problem finding qualified employees."
- ✓ "From Snyder, you can reach any Texas destination within ten hours driving a truck."
- ✓ "Snyder needs to get more proactive in Economic Development."
- ✓ "The primary skills lacking with Scurry County employment applicants are in the area of social skills."
- ✓ "An evening Men's Basketball League for adults 40 and under would be of interest."

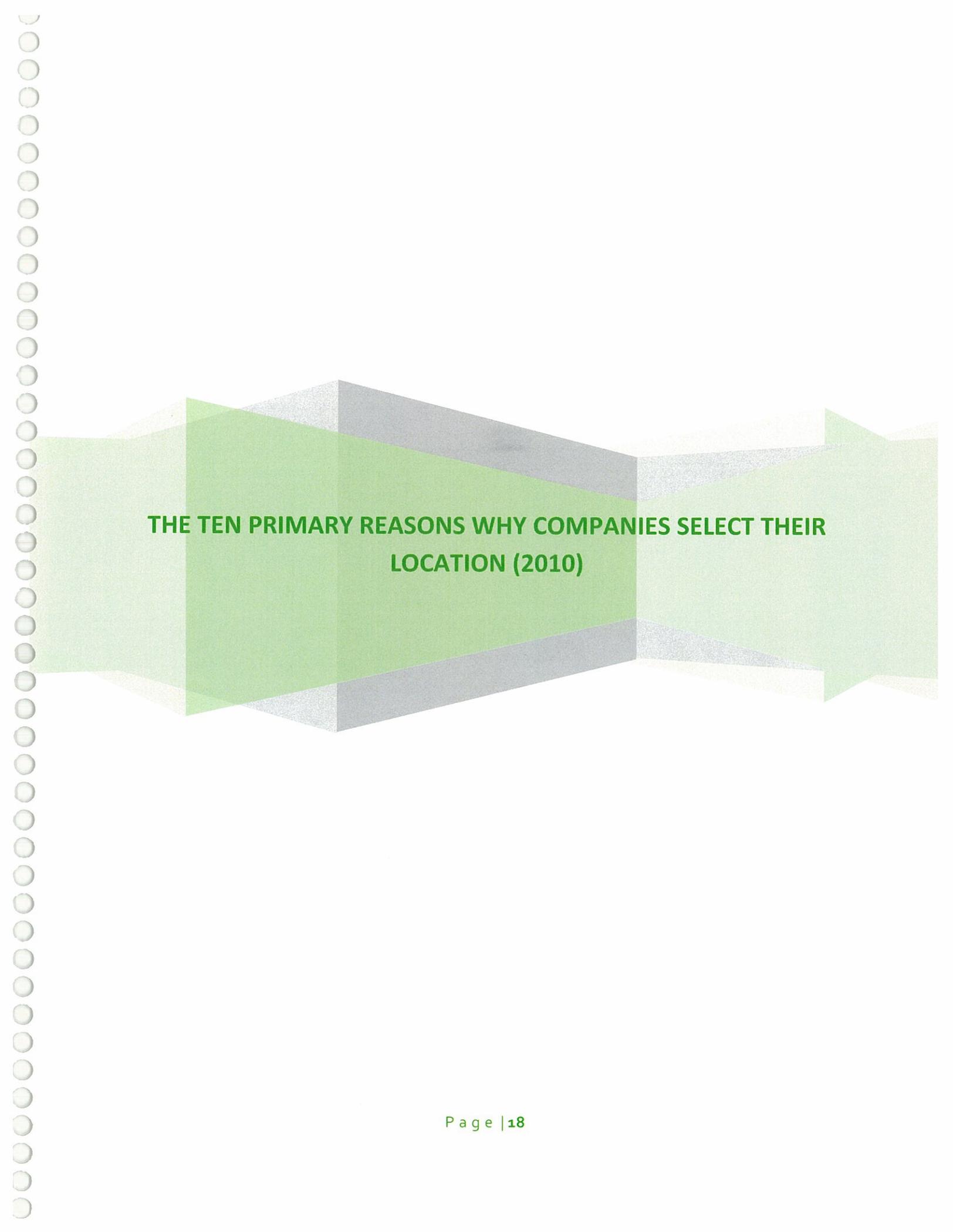
- ✓ "The biggest reason we are not growing is due to the lack of job opportunities."
- ✓ "Scurry County has always been a mineral-based community."
- ✓ "The Chamber currently has 260 members."
- ✓ "Four big industries dominate the employment here. These are the Price Daniel Unit; The Hospital; Kinder Morgan; and WSI."
- ✓ "We need more diversity in our industries."
- ✓ "Lack of a proactive vision is the community's primary problem."
- ✓ "Snyder could be the capital of Country and Western Music."
- ✓ "We have to become more building friendly."
- ✓ "We need to have a more fluid relationship between the entities in town."
- ✓ "Most oil wells around here are 7,000 ft. down."
- ✓ "A better working relationship among entities is very much needed."
- ✓ "Snyder is basically a safe community."
- ✓ "The work ethic in Snyder is exceptionally good."
- ✓ "If we can reach 15,000 in population, this would change Snyder tremendously."
- ✓ "We need to create jobs for older men who are basically in good health."
- ✓ "I don't see DCOS making progress."
- ✓ "DCOS is trying to hit a home run opposed to a single."
- ✓ "In 1976, there were 7 grocery stores in Snyder."
- ✓ "The promises of the results of the wet/dry election have not materialized."
- ✓ "Twenty-five percent of the people in Snyder oppose change. Half of the other 75% don't care one way or the other."

- ✓ "If I could change just one thing about Snyder, it would be to make the county and city more cooperative."
- ✓ "Ten percent of Wal-Mart customers (in Snyder) are also shopping at the Super Wal-Mart in Sweetwater, primarily for groceries."
- ✓ "We need more awareness here to encourage people to shop at home."
- ✓ "The 2008 Highway 84 traffic counts through Snyder range between 7,500 and 9,200 daily."
- ✓ "The student enrollment at the High School has decreased dramatically in the past 11 years."
- ✓ "Snyder is definitely a blue collar town."
- ✓ "The housing situation here is a turn off."
- ✓ "There is not enough diversity here. We are too dependent upon oil fields."
- ✓ "Bikefest has placed Snyder back on the map."
- ✓ "There is a tremendous potential here for concerts."
- ✓ "Someone could get shot on the square on Friday afternoon and the body would not be discovered until Monday morning."
- ✓ "We are not taking advantage sufficiently of the Highway 84 traffic from a retail perspective."
- ✓ "The extension of I27 through Snyder would be the key to turning around the city."
- ✓ "Between 50% to 60% of pet owners in Snyder are leaving the city for their veterinary needs."
- ✓ "Snyder is actively pursuing certification of the State of Texas' retirement communities."

- ✓ "The Scurry County Airport was ranked #1 in the State of Texas by TXDOT Aviation for Smaller Airports."
- ✓ "We need greater competition for grocery sales."
- ✓ "We need opportunities for our children to want to return here if they would like to start their own business."
- ✓ "The city is not very user friendly at all. The longevity of the people may be contributing to this."
- ✓ "The square needs to be cleaned up."
- ✓ "There is a significant need for additional rental properties."
- ✓ "WTC is the fastest growing community college in Texas, growing at a 30% rate. There are 50 community colleges total."
- ✓ "A state-of-the-art training center was built here for electrical linemen."
- ✓ "The biggest challenge Snyder has is with qualified labor."
- ✓ "We need more starter homes in the \$120,000 range."
- ✓ "We need to be more aggressive in accepting new ideas."
- ✓ "FM Station 101.5 reaches 66 counties with audiences ranging as high as 80,000 listeners at a given time."
- ✓ "Young girls (4-18 age range) which number about 400 must wait continuously for a softball field."
- ✓ "The American Wind Energy Assn. events are a good opportunity for prospects."
- ✓ "We desperately need a sporting goods store here similar to the one in Sweetwater (Hibbett)."

- ✓ "The community needs to come together. There is too much division between key players."
- ✓ "When it comes to distribution companies, we have missed the truck (not the boat)."
- ✓ "Snyder needs to consider an annual trade days similar to the City of Stanton."
- ✓ "There are 12-16 felonies each month in Scurry County that are indicted by the Grand Jury."
- ✓ "We need a hook to draw people into Snyder."
- ✓ "The houses here are too dated."
- ✓ "We need to take more pride in our property."
- ✓ "The first impression of Snyder is critically important."
- ✓ "The College on the Square is one of the best things that has ever happened in Snyder."
- ✓ "What Marianne Randals has accomplished here has been tremendous."
- ✓ "The cost of living here is approximately 20% less than the Dallas-Ft. Worth metropolis."
- ✓ "Patterson UTI Drilling is the second largest onshore drilling company in the lower 48 states."
- ✓ "Snyder needs to be a thriving community once the oil is depleted."
- ✓ "The average worker here is 50 years old."
- ✓ "At WTC's graduation this year 31 states and 14 countries were represented."
- ✓ "Within 3 years, the Snyder ISD will be the premier district in West Texas."
- ✓ "Our Emphasis needs to be on Highway 84 and getting motorists to come into town."
- ✓ "The only thing worse than making a bad decision is making no decision."

- 
- ✓ "If there is one thing that cannot be left out of the Strategic Plan is an assisted living center."
  - ✓ "Almost 55% of Texas Tech students are from Dallas-Ft. Worth area."



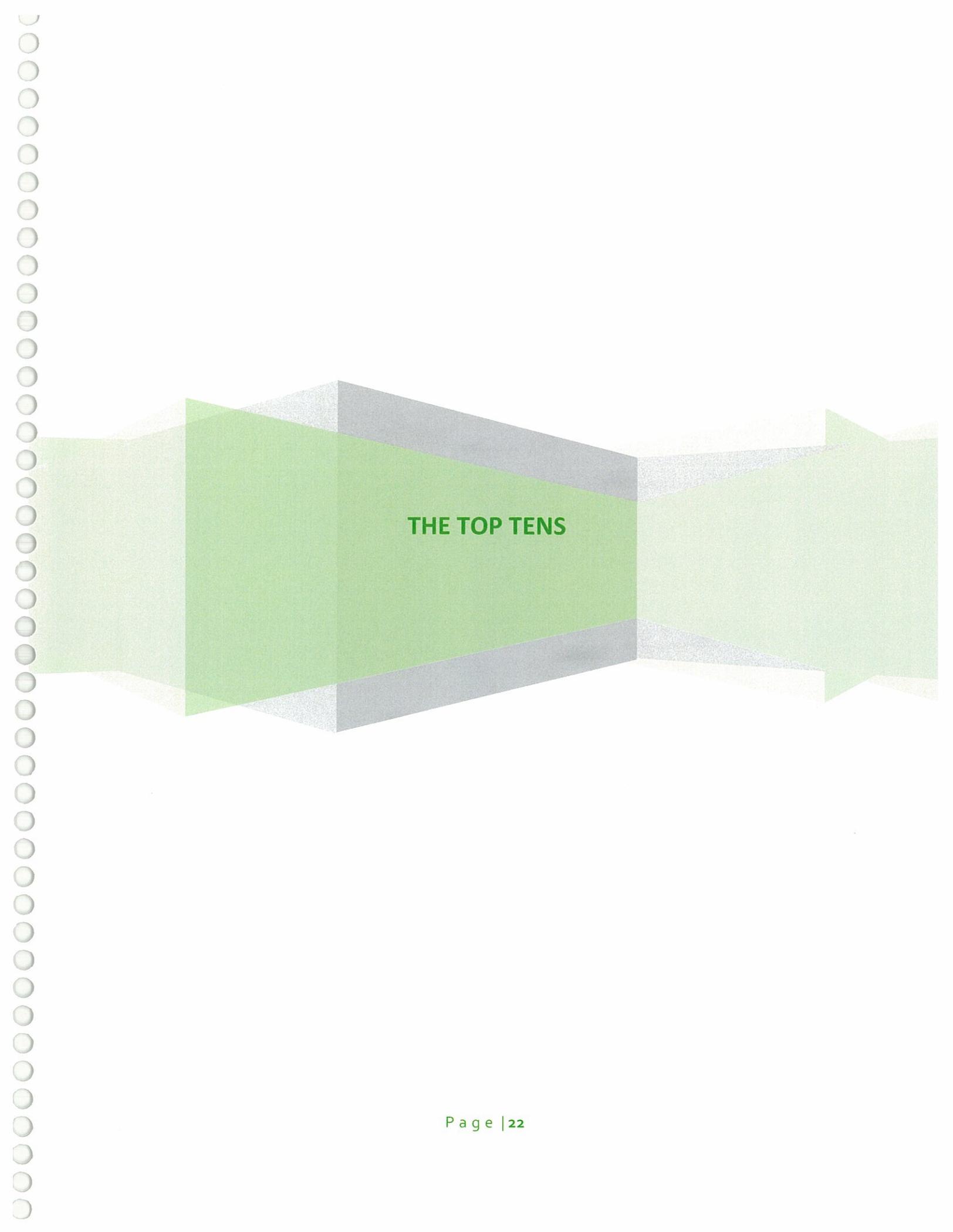
**THE TEN PRIMARY REASONS WHY COMPANIES SELECT THEIR  
LOCATION (2010)**

1. An educated workforce that possesses the skills that the business/industry requires
2. Proximity to Customer Base (with direct access to transportation options)
3. Proximity to Primary Suppliers (natural resources a prime example)
4. Quality of Life Issues
  - A. Exceptional Schools
  - B. Cultural Amenities
  - C. Entertainment/Sports/Recreation
  - D. Retail Choices
  - E. Safety/ Security
  - F. Healthcare
  - G. Climate Related
  - H. Cost of Living Index
5. Incentives
  - A. Are the Incentives we are willing to offer meaningful to the industry?
6. Costs of Operations
  - A. Taxes
  - B. Labor Rates
  - C. Utilities
  - D. Real Estate
  - E. Transportation
  - F. Employee Benefites
  - G. Insurance

7. The Community/ Area Trends
  - A. Population/ Business Growth
  - B. Crime
  - C. Housing Values
  - D. Graduation Rates (HS)
  - E. Taxation
  - F. Stability of Government
  - G. Are Businesses Expanding?
8. A Global Perspective
  - A. International Alliances
  - B. Acceptance of Different Cultures
  - C. Course Curriculums in HS/ Middle Schools Offer Foreign Languages
  - D. Exporting As a Percentage of Industrial Sales
  - E. Composition of Community
9. Pro-Business Reputation of Community/State
10. Economic Development Presentation
  - A. Facilities
  - B. Marketing Materials
  - C. Professionalism of Staff
  - D. Partnering with New Businesses
  - E. Creative Proposals
  - F. Extending the Recruitment Reach

## Quality of Life Issues: "The Big 15"

| Points | Ranking | Issue   |
|--------|---------|---|
| 6      | 1       | The Climate   |
| 6      | 2       | Cost of Living  |
| 7      | 3       | Cultural Amenities  |
| 7      | 4       | Recreational Amenities  |
| 7      | 5       | Sophistication of Healthcare Facilities                                 |
| 7      | 6       | Appearance of Community   |
| 7      | 7       | Access to "Timely" Air Travel   |
| 6      | 8       | Access to Daily Communications (eg. USA Today)                          |
| 7      | 9       | Retail Opportunities (5 star restaurants, <u>alcohol common sense</u> ) |
| 7      | 10      | Safety (Domestic Crime/ Terrorism)                                      |
| 7      | 11      | Clean Air and Water   |
| 6      | 12      | Traffic Congestion  |
| 6      | 13      | A University Presence   |
| 7      | 14      | A Thriving Economy  |
| 7      | 15      | Exceptional Elementary/ Secondary Schools                               |



**THE TOP TENS**

## TOP TEN COMMUNITY STRENGTHS\*

1. Western Texas College and its accelerated growth. (The success of the rodeo program is exciting.)
2. Natural resources.
3. The proactive spirit and aggressive posture of the City Council, City Staff, and the Chamber of Commerce; And the large number of “passionate people” within the community who are willing to serve.
4. The tremendous potential that the Square presents.
5. The Industrial Park and the willingness to offer tangible incentives in the form of “free land.”
6. The ability to attract considerable financial resources due to key stakeholders residing in the area.
7. The central location of the city outweighs the absence of an interstate highway.  
The near proximity to several hundred thousand Texans is powerful!
8. Existing international ties and ability to develop these ties.
9. The City and County’s history and the ability to capitalize on this heritage.
10. Small town friendly community that has created an environment basically void of serious crimes.

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\* Note: Not ranked in order of importance.

## TOP TEN COMMUNITY WEAKNESSES\*

1. Amount of sales leakage resulting from primarily groceries, clothing, sporting goods, and small appliances.
2. Limited water resources for the larger industries dependent upon water for their processing needs.
3. Trends: The population of Scurry County has basically been stagnant the previous ten years. The decline in enrollment in the Snyder School District is a concern.
4. The perception of political divisions and an unwillingness to work together in a spirit of cooperation among the major entities within the community is strong.
5. The limited quantity of newer homes, especially in the starter pricing range of \$125,000, as well as the absence of recently-constructed apartments.
6. The general appearance of entry ways leading into the city.
7. The external marketing program funded by Economic Development tax dollars.
8. The unemployment rates for Scurry County and Snyder both exceed the national average. The number of available job listings is down considerably from normal postings.
9. Availability and flexibility of daycare facilities.

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\* Note: Not ranked in order of importance

- 
10. The absence of a business incubation program that can assist in developing new businesses and identifying entrepreneurs.



## TOP TEN PLEASANT SURPRISES

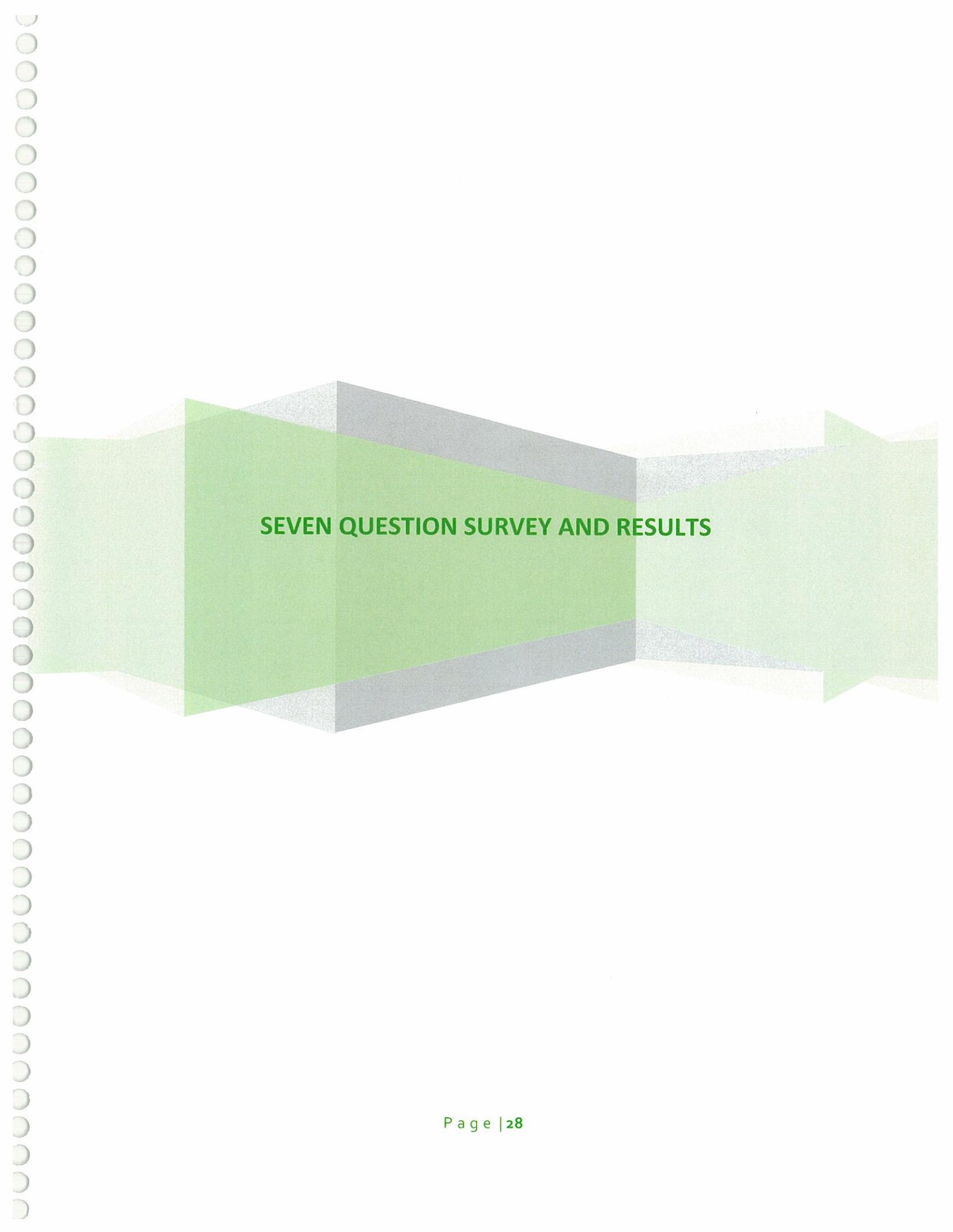
1. Scurry County Airport (Winston Field)
2. United Supermarkets
3. Kinder Morgan's financial ability
4. The degree of hunting opportunities
5. The level of cotton farming
6. The number of restaurants
7. The size of the Texas Tech student body
8. The magnitude of the 2011 Wind Turbine Project
9. The Manhattan Coffee House and Big Apple Deli Square effect
10. Melissa Elam

## TOP TEN LEADING EMPLOYERS\*

| Business/ Organization | Employees   |
|------------------------|-------------|
| Snyder ISD             | 400         |
| TDCJ                   | 350         |
| Cogdell Hospital       | 280         |
| Kinder Morgan          | 250         |
| Patterson UTI          | 232         |
| Scurry County          | 170         |
| United Supermarkets    | 160         |
| WTC                    | 130         |
| Wal-Mart               | 127         |
| ED Walton              | 115         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>           | <b>2214</b> |

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\* Top Ten Snyder/Scurry County Leading Employers (5/19/10)



**SEVEN QUESTION SURVEY AND RESULTS**

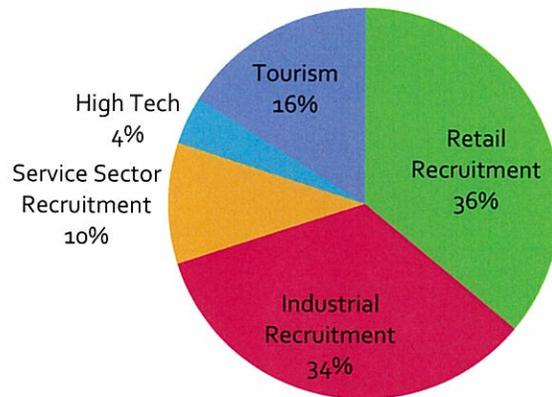
1. What is Snyder's greatest appeal to prospective businesses?

Twenty-one different answers

Top Two:

- ✓ The Location
- ✓ Family-Friendly Atmosphere

2. Which of the following should be Snyder's highest Economic Development priority?



3. How would you concisely describe Snyder to someone who has never been here?

Twenty-three different answers

Top Three:

- ✓ Very Friendly City
- ✓ Small Town America
- ✓ Family Oriented

4. If you could change only one thing about Snyder, what would it be?

Thirty-seven different answers

Number One:

- ✓ Clean up blighted areas

5. Is there a current "business void" that you would like to see brought to Snyder?

Twenty-eight different answers

Number One:

- ✓ Another Grocery Store

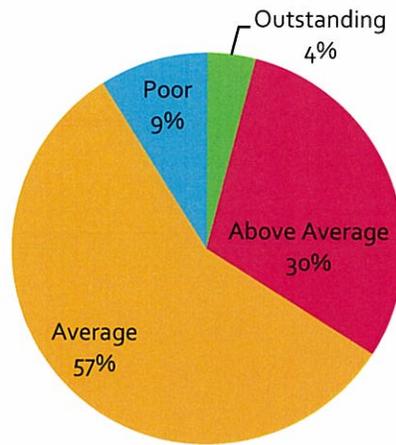
6. What do you like most about living in Snyder?

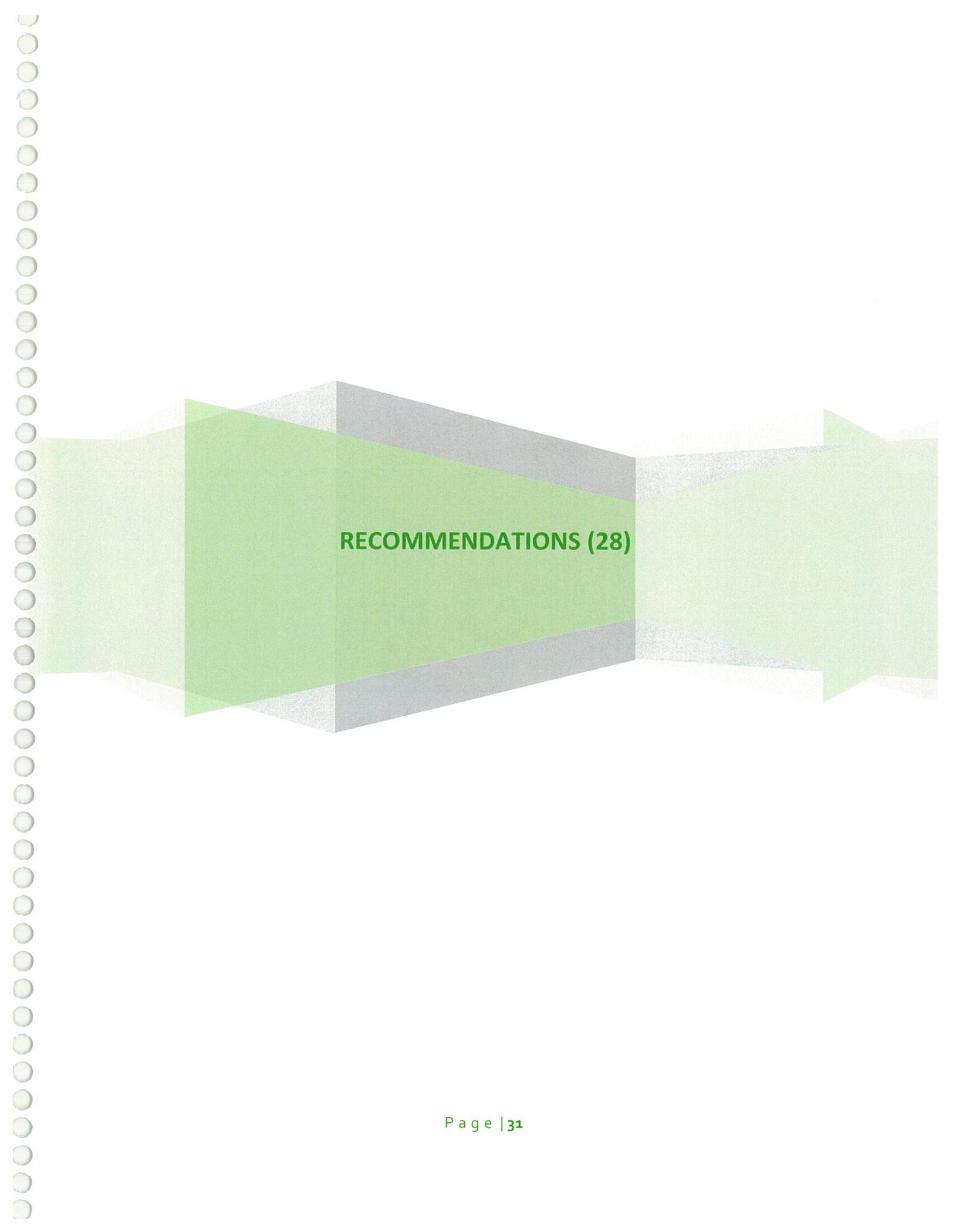
Ten different answers

Top Two:

- ✓ Country, Small Town Atmosphere
- ✓ Friendly People

7. How would you rate "economic opportunity" in Snyder today?





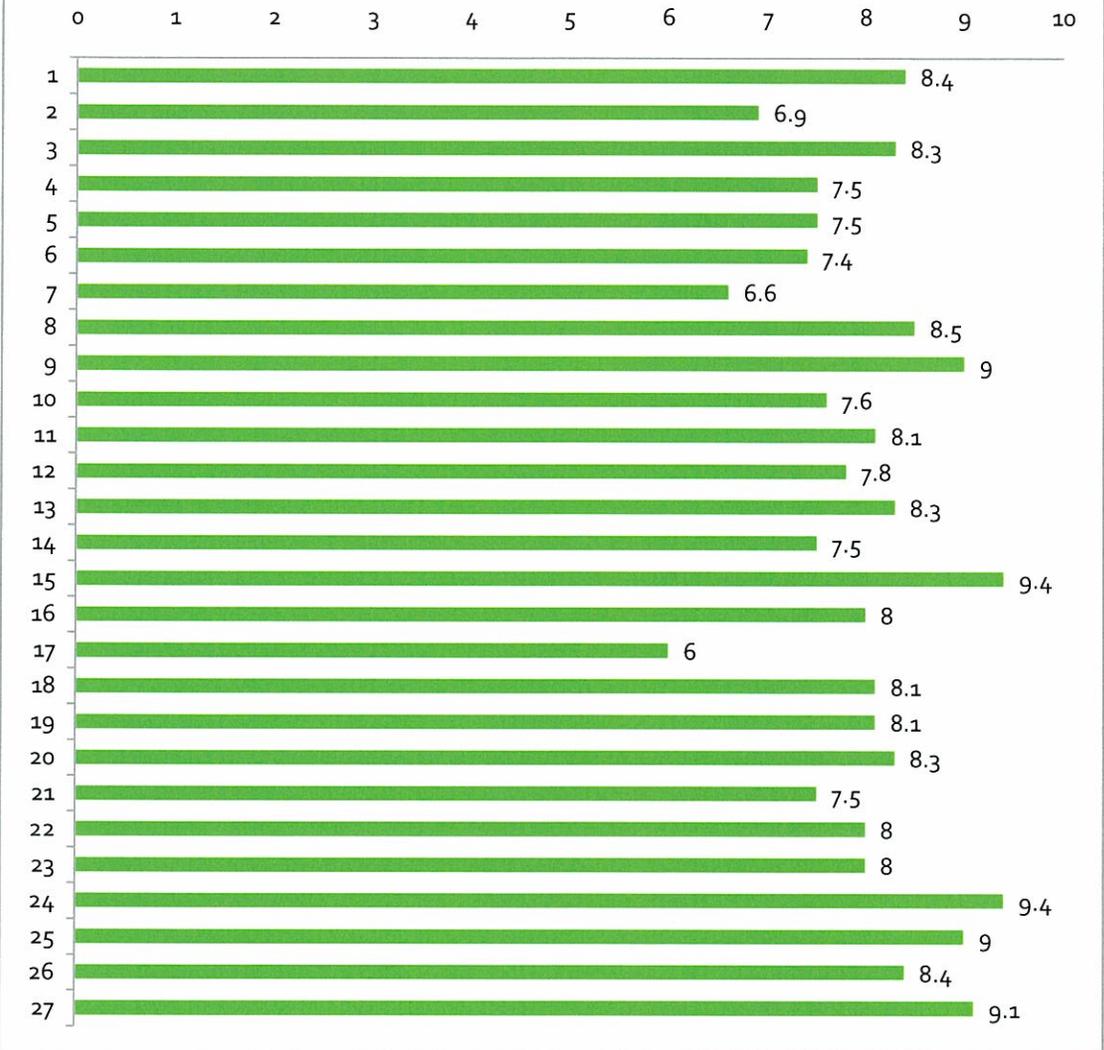
**RECOMMENDATIONS (28)**

## **Listing of Recommendations**

1. Recruitment Emphasis on Distribution/ Logistics Companies
2. Creation of a Private Economic Development Foundation
3. Leadership Development of Future Adults
4. Business Retention: An Annual Business Appreciation Day
5. Aggressive Recruitment of an Assisted Living Center
6. Construction of a Permanent Indoor Rodeo Arena
7. Creation of a Business Incubator Facility
8. Fact Finding Mission: Five Texas Squares
9. Focus on Retail Recruitment
10. Monthly/ Quarterly Trade Days
11. Website Overhaul
12. Snyder: The Music Capital of Texas
13. The Targeted Recruitment of Wind Technologies and Related Businesses
14. The Creation of a Regional Sports Complex
15. Additional Housing/Apartment Complex Needed Now
16. SAEDA
17. I-27 Corridor Promotion
18. Hunting: A Targeted Industry for Business Development
19. Community Assistance Program: Internet Marketing
20. Marketing of Available Buildings Via the Internet
21. Creation of a Mayors Youth Council

- 
22. Community-Wide Hospitality Training
  23. October 7<sup>th</sup>: A Very Special Day
  24. Ongoing Press Releases/ Feature Articles About Snyder
  25. Highway 84 Opportunities: Building & Advertising
  26. Super Wal-Mart
  27. A Central “Marketing” Theme for the Community
  28. Brazil

# Scoring Summary of Recommendations



### Scoring Legend

|      |                  |              |
|------|------------------|--------------|
| 10-9 | Implement Within | 1-6 months   |
| 8-7  | Implement Within | 7-12 months  |
| 6-5  | Implement Within | 13-24 months |
| 4-3  | Implement Within | 25-48 months |
| 2-1  | Implement Within | 49-60 months |
| 0    | Do Not Implement |              |

**Recommendation 1**

**Recruitment Emphasis on Distribution/ Logistics Companies**

Snyder and Scurry County enjoy an above average highway access despite the absence of an interstate highway system. Highway 84 (to Lubbock); Highway 180 (to Roby); Highway 350 (to Big Spring); and Highway 208 (to Colorado City) all converge on the city within a short radius. In lieu of this, companies engaged in distribution/logistics that emphasize shipping by truck (opposed to rail) should be a targeted priority. The City's industrial park is also conducive to locating these types of operations with sufficient land holdings.

## **Recommendation 2**

### **Creation of a Private Economic Development Foundation**

In an attempt to complement public (4A) dollars to enhance Economic Development initiatives, it is suggested that a private foundation be set up with emphasis on advertising and marketing. There are considerable private sector resources in Snyder and Scurry County that could jump start the initial membership and funding thereof. In addition to the advertising and marketing initiatives, grants to prospective businesses could be considered once cash reserves have been accumulated sufficiently. Over the next five year period, the creation of a private foundation could have a significant impact on future business development.

### **Recommendation 3**

#### **Leadership Development of Future Adults**

A constructive forum to develop future leaders in a community is the establishment of an elite “Jr. Ambassador Program” spearheaded by the Chamber of Commerce. This actually serves multiple purposes. Students benefit from not only the exposure to community involvement, but this also helps them tremendously in the pursuit of academic scholarships. The program needs to be selective in that it only will accept a limited number of students (4 sophomores; 4 juniors; 4 seniors) in a given school year. A committee should be appointed to screen the applicants. Once the students are chosen, a monthly program starting in September should commence focusing on community activities and their personal participation. Graduation would occur each May with sophomores and juniors advancing within the program should they wish to remain involved.

#### **Recommendation 4**

##### **Business Retention: An Annual Business Appreciation Day**

In order to nurture and maintain strong business relationships between corporations located within Snyder and the community leadership, it is encouraged to host an annual event officially expressing gratitude for their employment base and support of the local economy. This is especially important for those businesses that have external management offices. This endeavor also has a secondary benefit in that it promotes and enhances expansion and relocation referrals with the primary business suppliers and customers. The cost of hosting such an event is insignificant compared to the potential loss of full-time jobs.

## **Recommendation 5**

### **Aggressive Recruitment of an Assisted Living Center**

The community's interest in becoming a Certified Retirement City in the state of Texas has considerable merit. Many of the necessary pieces are already in place with the exception of one significant facility. Already in existence is a community college, a hospital, and an appealing cost-of-living index which attracts seniors. The compelling void is the absence of an Assisted Living Center. During the course of the Community Assessment, it was stated repeatedly of the loss of seniors to competing communities such as San Angelo, Abilene, and Midland due to available healthcare facilities located there. An integral part of the city's targeted business approach should be the attraction of such a facility with incentives offered as needed.

## **Recommendation 6**

### **Construction of a Permanent Indoor Rodeo Arena**

An Economic Impact Analysis was performed in June 2009 by the AgriLife Extension of the Texas A&M System. The purpose was to identify the economic contribution of a proposed annex activity in conjunction with the coliseum. The conclusions reached included 42 additional events with an additional 19,160 attendees, including 11,440 residing out of state. The sales impact was projected at \$1,954,590 with an annual labor income contribution of \$687,180.

The projected construction cost of the facility would range between \$3M and \$5M. A meeting was held in November 2009 between WTC officials and approximately 50 leading ranchers to discuss the preliminary application of such an initiative. The response was very positive. It is our recommendation that the community endorse this proposal, working with WTC to secure funding in an effort to bring the project to fruition.

## **Recommendation 7**

### **Creation of a Business Incubator Facility**

At a recent national conference of the International Economic Development Council, a presentation on job creation highlighted the fact that the most cost effective way to create jobs in a community is through a business incubator. The national average equates to \$216 per job, which translates into the “Best Return on Job Investment” in the U.S. today. With 1900 of 3100 US counties labeled as “distressed”(according to the EDA,) it is important to be exploring multiple ways to grow and create jobs. A business incubator facility should not be ruled out of consideration.

There is a multitude of success stories throughout the U.S. (and especially in Texas) in this regard. Incubators can focus on different industrial and business sectors with a common denominator to create jobs from within. The regulations can vary considerably by the host organization. Looking at this from a long range perspective makes a great deal of sense. If a community has the financial ability to accomplish this, it is highly recommended to do so.

## **Recommendation 8**

### **Fact Finding Mission: Five Texas Squares**

In an attempt to infuse some successful ideas and concepts into the Snyder Square, a “road trip” by the Chamber Executive Director (and one or two max. associates) is highly encouraged. This two day trip should focus on the “best of the best” success stories for Texas squares. We would recommend visiting five with Jefferson, Albany, and McKinney being considered for three of the five.

Information that would be significant should include: photos, landscaping comparisons, mix of stores, operating hours, lease rates, vacancies, promotional activities, and recent success stories (2009-10). Once the information is gathered, a presentation with recommendations should be made to the Chamber Board and other interested parties. The “Square of Snyder” has great potential if a strategic plan can be implemented that is achievable with broad-based community support. The more attractive and appealing “The Square” becomes, all of Snyder will benefit as it will generate new growth throughout the city. The “Square” is the heartbeat of Snyder and should become the shining (sparkle) jewel of the city in every respect.

## **Recommendation 9**

### **Focus on Retail Recruitment**

There is a significant level of “sales leakage” resulting from several retail voids within Snyder. Based on numerous interviews, the items and merchandise that citizens are routinely leaving the city for are groceries, clothing, appliances, and sporting goods. In addition, an estimated 10% of Wal-Mart shoppers in Snyder are frequenting the Super Wal-Mart in Sweetwater primarily for groceries. Another retail interest expressed throughout the Community Assessment was the recruitment of additional restaurants.

Because of the commuting time and distance to neighboring cities coupled with the loss of sales tax revenues, a concerted effort needs to be made in the recruitment and emphasis of additional retail establishments. The ICSC (Int’l Council of Shopping Centers) annual conference in Las Vegas (late May) is an excellent forum to initiate this activity. Several areas within the city can be targeted for location of these businesses.

**Recommendation 10**

**The Implementation of Monthly/Quarterly Trade Days**

There is considerable interest within the community to establish either a monthly or quarterly “Trading Days” to attract many more visitors into the city. Many cities have profited from these events with Canton, TX being one of the most successful nationwide. Because Post and Stanton have already implemented this type of event with a regularly-fixed schedule, one suggestion was to host a Snyder event on the second Saturday and Sunday of each month which would provide a “Four ‘S’” logo.

Should the community leadership elect to pursue this, it would be advised that an ad hoc committee appointed by the Chamber Board investigate several successful programs and implement the “best ideas” for Snyder. Merchants on the square would benefit significantly from the increased traffic and this would provide an additional venue for west Texans to visit Snyder.

## **Recommendation 11**

### **Reconstruction of Economic Development Website**

An estimated 95% of all economic development site searches begin on the internet. Because of this it is imperative that all websites promoting and representing Snyder should be superior in every respect. In reviewing the DCOS website, the following observations were made:

- ✓ The information contained is dated in many respects. For example, enrollment at WTC is reflected at 2,000 when in fact, it exceeds 2,500. Labor information highlighted is as of 2004.
- ✓ Entry level wages are below federal minimum guidelines. Wage data is as of 2000.
- ✓ The initial appearance is dated looking and bland. The format is elementary.
- ✓ Incentives need to be stated in definitive terms, i.e. "spelled out."
- ✓ Major area employers need to be updated.
- ✓ More detailed information is needed on available properties.
- ✓ It is suggested that a targeted listing of industries and retailers desired by the city be highlighted.
- ✓ The website should also be displayed in Spanish and Portuguese.

## **Recommendation 12**

### **Snyder: The Music Capital of the Texas**

Based upon the city's strategic central location within west Texas and the potential for the establishment of an entertainment center for music and concerts, strong consideration should be given to the promotion of a year-round concert series. This would not just be limited to country and western music, but would also include popular music of the 50's, 60's, and 70's eras.

There are multiple reasons to incorporate this with the following as obvious:

- ✓ The size of the square and the proximity to the Belle Opry House.
- ✓ Individuals willing to promote who have the expertise.
- ✓ A radio station that covers 66 counties and carries 100,000 watts.
- ✓ Entertainment venues have been proven to be recession proof in many instances.
- ✓ The ability to draw from a half million Texans.
- ✓ Availability of entertainers including those with name recognition.
- ✓ An added amenity for local residents.

### **Recommendation 13**

#### **The Targeted Recruitment of Wind Technologies and Related Businesses**

Area Economic Development organizations are making considerable gains in the recruitment and cultivation of wind technology businesses and related companies. A prime example of this is the recent success of SEED, the Sweetwater Enterprise for Economic Development, Inc. EMA Electro Mechanics, an Argentine-based company, was recruited in 2007 at an American Wind Energy Assn. event in California to construct a 20,000 sq. ft. (build-to-suit) facility in the Sweetwater Industrial Park with the initial hiring of 14 employees.

WTC is to be commended along with DCOS for their pro-activeness in the establishment of a training center for electrical linemen. Big Country Co-op also participated. As a result of the 20 graduates this spring, 14 companies have either visited Snyder or have expressed significant interest.

In addition of the aforementioned, an escalated initiative should be directed in this area which would include a more intense marketing plan. Several suggestions would include an active participation at tradeshow, a designated section of the DCOS website emphasizing Snyder's interest and resources, and the external reach to Danish companies and technologies to make them aware of Snyder's resources.

**Recommendation 14**

**The Creation of a Regional Sports Complex**

One of Snyder's greatest strengths is the ability to draw visitors from a radius in all directions. The considerable interest that exists among the residents, especially younger families, of an expanded sports complex makes a compelling argument from an economic perspective. By expanding the existing sports fields, two objectives could be accomplished. The first of which is to have more opportunities for the Snyder youth to participate in. Secondly, the appeal that this would create for regional events could be quite significant.

Our recommendation is for the City Council to appoint a Sports Authority with representatives from WTC, the Snyder School District, DCOS, the County Government, and the City with the goal to study this issue and make a proposal later this year. By all of these entities working together, in a concerted effort, the chances of success would be greatly enhanced.

## **Recommendation 15**

### **Additional Housing/Apartment Complex Needed Now**

The shortage of available, affordable housing, including apartments, is greatly restricting the growth of the community. Numerous complaints were expressed during the Community Assessment. One extreme, recent example (2009) involved a new management (younger) employee who had to wait until an “eviction” occurred before he could move into a rental house. Another testimonial that was provided stated that a young couple would not have accepted the Snyder job offer had they known in advance about the condition of housing.

We are recommending that an aggressive recruitment of both “track” housing builders and an apartment developer be initiated to address this current need head on. If incentives are necessary to ensure a timely, successful endeavor, the community must devise a program to accomplish this. This is an immediate concern that cannot be postponed, especially with the forthcoming wind turbine transmission project to launch in 2011.

## **Recommendation 16**

### **The Scandinavian American Economic Development Alliance**

There is a six state coalition that is national in scope that was created in 2005 to introduce companies and technologies from the five Scandinavian countries into the United States. This region of the world is the leader in alternative energy including wind and solar technologies, cleantech products and companies, and all aspects of sustainability. Denmark excels in the area of wind technology which is important to the state of Texas and Snyder. Because of this common interest, it would seem apparent that inclusion in SAEDA could be significant to both the state and Snyder. The potential market size in Texas alone should be very appealing to Danish and Scandinavian companies interested in a U.S. expansion.

Should Snyder have an interest in pursuing this activity, the city leadership could take the lead by inviting the state of Texas to apply for membership with Snyder being assured of at least one of the five Board Seats. The states currently comprising the coalition are Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Tennessee.

## **Recommendation 17**

### **Promotion of I-27 Corridor through Scurry County**

The distance between Lubbock and Sweetwater is an approximate 108 miles which could link Interstates 27 and 20. This would not only be a significant benefit to residents of Snyder and Scurry County, but the additional access to the Dallas Metroplex for Texas Tech students, the cities of Lubbock and Amarillo, and cities between Amarillo and Sweetwater would be considerable. The distance between Pagosa Springs, CO to Midway, GA (along Highway 84) is 1,919 miles. This improved link in the highway system would benefit ultimately thousands of motorists and tourists.

Through our interview process, we have learned that available state and federal funds for a road project of this magnitude currently do not exist. In light of this, should the community be interested, a coalition involving other cities and counties could be formed to promote this future route of I-27 opposed to an alternative location further west. There appears to be considerable merit in promoting this argument. Should Texas Tech have an interest, this could, in turn, be beneficial in other areas as well.

## **Recommendation 18**

### **Hunting: A Targeted Industry for Business Development**

Within an hour's drive of Snyder, there are vast land resources for the hunting of Quail, Dove, Turkey, Deer, and Hogs. These are seasonal for the most part with the exception of Hogs which are year round. The number of support and service-related businesses to this industry is considerably limited. In an attempt to enhance and magnify this industrial sector, a joint effort should be initiated.

One starting or beginning point is to become an active participant with the Texas Trophy Hunter's Association, by advertising in their bi-monthly publication and attending one of their three tradeshows each year. Typically vendors, suppliers, and hunters attend these events, which could be an important outlet for Snyder to embrace. The dates and locations of the next three shows are July 9-11 in San Antonio; August 6-8 in Houston; and August 20-22 in Fort Worth. One or more representatives from Snyder should consider attending and commence a marketing program upon their return to prospects identified.

## **Recommendation 19**

### **Assisting Business Owners in Internet Marketing**

With the ever-increasing impact that the internet is having on all businesses, the greater the influence that this resource can become for Snyder businesses, profitability should be directly increased. Not only do Snyder businesses need a professional website, the links and marketing presentation are of equal importance. The community can assist Snyder businesses in a number of different ways by promoting this activity. Some of these are as follows:

- ✓ Sponsoring a semi-annual seminar on web development; Facebook; Twitter; Constant Contact; etc. at no cost to chamber members.
- ✓ Providing a regular, routine communication between chamber members with “network” enhancement for their products and services by introducing new links to organizations and businesses that would complement their business.
- ✓ Providing financial assistance to “trigger” development of new websites and enhancement of those currently in place.

## **Recommendation 20**

### **Marketing of Available Buildings via the Internet**

There is an abundance of available, vacant buildings throughout the city that could present a number of significant opportunities for future business owners. Marketing these properties in an aggressive, comprehensive approach could spur interest and entice new businesses to enter the community. It is our recommendation that all pertinent information be obtained for these properties and marketed through an independent website that is linked to the City's, Chamber's, and DCOS.

All properties included should feature a recent photo, in addition to the essential information of asking price, zoning, dimensions, age, parking spaces, environmental issues (if any) utilities, etc. Key contact information for either sale or leasing information is essential. The nominal cost for this endeavor could be shared by business/property marketed. These properties provide a broad range of investment opportunities for both local and external entrepreneurs.

## **Recommendation 21**

### **Creation of a Mayors Youth Council**

In an attempt to get younger people involved in civic activities and to assist students with their scholarships applications, the creation a Mayor's Youth Council is highly recommended. The program is typically for sophomores, juniors, and seniors from area high schools, both public and private. A limited number of students are admitted each year with those chosen as being a most prestigious selection. A comprehensive program is administered which will educate the students while at the same time getting them actively involved in community projects. A screening committee will review the applications of the students, taking their grades into consideration for their selection process.

A recommended number for Snyder would be between 15 and 21 students with a proportionate number of students from each grade. Two volunteers who are interested in student development should administer the program with an active monthly curriculum organized for the students. It is highly suggested that a page of the city's website be dedicated to the Mayor's Youth Council. A goal for starting in September should be targeted.

## **Recommendation 22**

### **Community Wide Sponsored Hospitality Training**

As tourism becomes even more important to the future of Snyder’s economic vitality, every citizen engaged in any aspect of tourism should receive hospitality training. This would include, but not be limited to: all waiters and waitresses, motel employees, retail shop employees, tourism destinations such as the museum employees, Chamber of Commerce officials, and government employees who interact with the general public.

WTC should be asked to assume the leading role in this effort as this type of training would be ideal with their expertise. One city in the nation that excels in this area is San Antonio. This city serves as a model of inspiration for the entire nation as its citizenry fully understands the importance of “customer satisfaction” and the economic value of repeat business.

### **Recommendation 23**

#### **October 7<sup>th</sup>: A Very Special Day**

In an attempt to capitalize on Snyder's history, an annual celebration of October 7th should be commemorated. This would serve as an excellent forum to attract political leaders throughout the state to visit Snyder which, in turn, could result in additional tourism and legislative assistance. Because this date is prior to the November elections, it makes added sense to take advantage of.

A prime example of a similar success story is the Neshoba County Fair held every August in Philadelphia, MS. State political aspirants would not dare miss the exposure because of its tradition and the size of the crowds. We can envision in Snyder that politicians address an audience assembled "on the square" with a morning celebration of speech making and even political humor. A 20th century bandstand can be assembled to provide a visual effect that will further promote Snyder's appeal to visitors and tourists. This activity could possibly evolve into one of Texas' premier political attractions in a relatively short time.

## **Recommendation 24**

### **Ongoing Press Releases/Feature Articles about Snyder**

In an attempt to get the younger people of Snyder more involved in community affairs, as well as senior citizens, a program should be implemented that would promote the writing and submission of both press releases and feature articles to major news outlets. In the short amount of time that we have been engaged in Snyder, there are ample subjects to write about that would be of significant interest to local, regional, state, and national audiences. Targeted publications could include: The USA Today; area newspapers including Lubbock, Fort Worth, and Midland; state tourism publications such as Texas Monthly; magazines that are directed to a specific target group such as hunting and similar areas where Snyder has a large investment; and all facets of the entertainment industry.

We recommend that an ad hoc committee be appointed by the Chamber Board with at least one member having journalism experience who will direct this activity. WTC and Texas Tech students should not be excluded. Snyder has many unique stories to share; we need to start getting the message out.

## **Recommendation 25**

### **Highway 84 Opportunities....Building and Advertising**

In an attempt to capitalize on the traffic flow on Highway 84, a concerted effort needs to be made to attract more travelers into the city. This can be accomplished in various ways. Additional signage directed at motorists in north and south lanes should be implemented. An electronic billboard that can change the message to coincide with events within the city is preferred. In addition to billboard type advertising, the city's plan for future growth should include as many potential sites as possible along this corridor.

During the Community Assessment, an estimate was received that over one half of the 28,000 Texas Tech students are utilizing Highway 84 en route to the Dallas - Ft. Worth Metroplex . We also received a 2008 traffic count of 9,200 vehicles daily along this corridor. These numbers are too high to be ignored. Advertising is most effective when it reaches a realistic targeted audience such as those already in reach.

**Recommendation Number 26**

**Super Wal-Mart**

There may be an excellent opportunity between now and May 2011 to aggressively pursue a Super Wal-Mart store for Snyder. Next May, a \$1M renovation is scheduled for the 51,000 square foot store. The building is currently being leased with the lease expiration occurring in 2015.

Following a meeting with the Snyder store manager, it was learned that Wal-Mart officials take into account the desires of a community's officials and leadership. It is our recommendation that an official team headed by the Mayor, City Manager, and Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce meet with Wal-Mart officials in Dallas to express the city's strong interest in acquiring a Super Wal-Mart Center. Following this initial meeting, a planned approach will be chartered to determine the best course to accomplish the objective. The average construction time for a Super Wal-Mart Center is 6-8 months.

## **Recommendation 27**

### **A “Central” Marketing Theme for the Community**

It is advantageous to develop a central marketing theme for a community to enhance the opportunities to attract both visitors and investors. With Snyder’s history in cattle drives, ranching, and rodeo, the one common denominator is horses. Almost everywhere one turns in the city and county, the influence of horses is apparent. Equestrian activities reflect a quality of life that is desired throughout the United States. It is not unusual to find new, upscale subdivisions with an equestrian presence such as stables and riding trails.

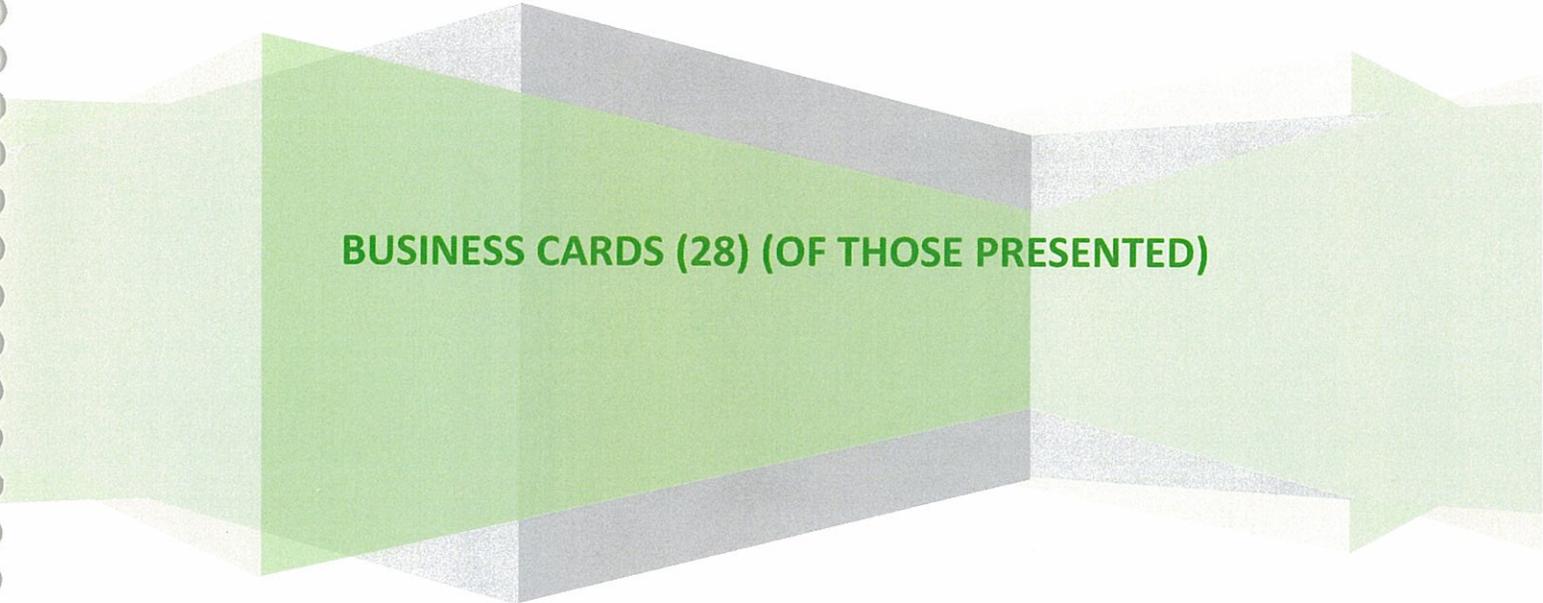
It is our recommendation that the community at large endorse a central marketing theme whether it is “the horse” or another alternative. The final decision would then be incorporated within ALL marketing activities and materials including websites; signs and billboards.

## **Recommendation 28**

### **Brazil**

Because of a tremendous resource within Snyder and WTC, a relationship already exists with the country of Brazil. Charles Long, WTC Soccer Coach, has a dual citizenship and has an established network within Brazil. To enhance this relationship for Economic Development objectives, a sister city relationship should be explored.

Considering the possible relationships with the City of Iracemapolis (population 25,000), Charles has a personal contact with the Mayor and is aware of two companies that are already desiring a U.S. expansion. The economy in Brazil has simulated the U.S. economy from the early 1950's, and is presently in a significant upward spiral. The primary reason for this is the cultivation of numerous natural resources. Because of the vastness of the country, the potential for Economic Development success is considerable once a network has been established. It was learned that an appealing incentive to Brazilian companies is the "teaching" of English as a second language for those employees relocating here.



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