



Growth Policy - DRAFT

ROSEBUD COUNTY



February 2025



Growth Policy - Draft

February 2025

Adopted by Resolution: 2025, 2025

Prepared for the:
Rosebud County Commissioners

Prepared by:

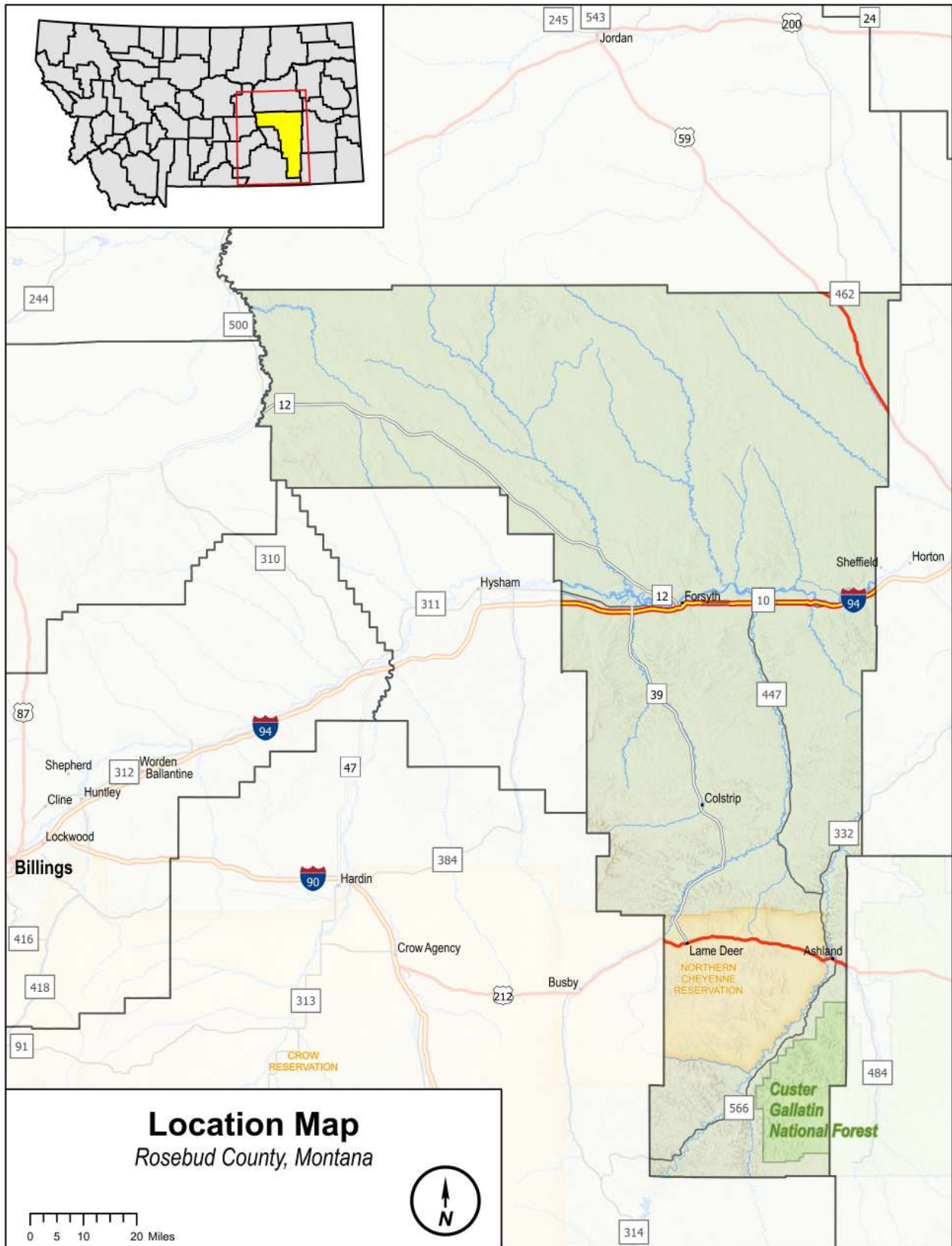


TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</i>	1
<i>GOALS AND OBJECTIVES</i>	4
<i>POPULATION</i>	12
<i>ECONOMICS</i>	13
<i>LOCAL SERVICES</i>	17
<i>INFRASTRUCTURE</i>	21
<i>HOUSING</i>	29
<i>NATURAL RESOURCES-CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS</i>	30
<i>LAND USE REGULATIONS</i>	39
<i>List of Maps</i>	
<i>Map 1 – Location Map</i>	1
<i>Map 2 -Transportation System Map</i>	24
<i>Map 3 – Land Ownership Map</i>	31
<i>Map 4 – Conservation Easements</i>	33
<i>Map 5 – Wildfire Hazard Potential</i>	34
<i>Map 6 – Gravel Pits</i>	36
<i>Map 7 – Land Use Map</i>	40
<i>List of Figures</i>	
<i>Figure 1 – Median Age, 2022</i>	12
<i>Figure 2 – Rosebud County Job Sectors, 2022</i>	13
<i>Figure 3 – Rosebud County Labor Earnings</i>	13
<i>Figure 4 – Rosebud County Poverty Level</i>	14
<i>Figure 5 – Tax Base and Tax Revenues</i>	14
<i>Figure 6 – Government Revenues and Expenditures</i>	17
<i>Figure 7 – Number of housing units, 2022</i>	29
<i>Figure 8 – Age of structures, 2022</i>	29
<i>Figure 9 - Landownership</i>	30
<i>Figure 10 – Average Temperature and Precipitation in Rosebud County</i>	30
<i>List of Appendices</i>	
<i>Appendix A – Subdivision Definitions</i>	43
<i>Appendix B – Sources</i>	46

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

▼ Map 1 - Location Map



Location Map
Rosebud County, Montana

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WHAT IS A GROWTH POLICY?

Growth Policies, by statute, are non-regulatory documents that provide a comprehensive plan for offering guidance regarding land development, as well as public investments. Growth Policies are typically implemented by adopting other local regulatory tools, such as subdivision regulations, zoning regulations, floodplain regulations, or similarly adopted ordinances. Growth Policies are developed with a thorough public process where the community leaders and members create a series of goals and strategies to assist in the future development and growth of the community.

This updated plan is meant to help the County Commission, Planning Board, residents, and potential new residents or prospective investors make decisions regarding the economy, infrastructure, local services, and land use. The update should help these stakeholders achieve specific goals instead of reacting to individual events and applying short-term fixes year after year. Issues of concern to the County range from providing local services and improving infrastructure (water-sewer-streets) to deciding what amendments to land use regulations are appropriate within the County.

This document contains eight sections that provide the rationale for understanding and achieving the goals listed in this document. These sections include:

Goals, Objectives and Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Taking advantage of opportunities and overcoming challenges does not happen by chance. County residents must be willing to set practical and achievable goals to make things happen.
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A description of the County, its location, features, and history.
Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A brief description of the County's population and demographics.
Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A description of the County's current economic situation and a vision for addressing issues and capitalizing on economic opportunities and challenges.
Local Services and Public Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A description of the County's revenues and expenditures, and services, including those that the County is responsible for operating and maintaining.
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A brief description of the County's infrastructure such as roads, bridges, water districts, sewer districts, and their current condition as well as identify opportunities and issues for improvement.
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A description of the current housing opportunities in the County.
Land Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A description of land use in the County including future growth, the impacts of flooding and wildland fire, historic preservation efforts, the potential for new land use regulations such as zoning and the administration of subdivision regulations..
Resident Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This section describes the process used to gather advice and guidance from County residents on issues of importance to them.

COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

Rosebud County is located in southeastern Montana. There are two incorporated municipalities: the City of Forsyth and the City of Colstrip. Forsyth serves as the County seat.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



VISION

Rosebud County has been impacted by uncertainty surrounding the coal-powered electrical generation plant and the associated coal mining located in Colstrip. The power plants and coal mining provide significant tax revenues to the County, as well as a multitude of well-paying jobs. However, the County is continuing to discuss new energy generation methods that would connect the western and eastern power grids with a large-scale transmission line. There is also continued development of sustainable energy practices through wind farms. The County provides incredible means of transportation by working with both the Burlington Northern Railroad and the Federal government for continued maintenance of the railroad and the interstate system. The agricultural economy has remained prevalent throughout the years in Rosebud County, with the capacity for growth. These industries, however, would not be in operation without the fine people of Rosebud County, who are arguably the greatest asset to the County.

COUNTY-CITY COORDINATION

Rosebud County will coordinate its efforts to implement this Growth Policy with the City Councils of Forsyth and Colstrip in the following ways:

- Lobby to the state legislature and congressional delegation to support coal industries.
- Leverage and coordinate resources with the Cities to hire and maintain a marketing coordinator to attract new businesses.
- Assist Colstrip with analyzing options for maintaining and/or updating its water supply system.
- Maintain the viability of Colstrip as an incorporated municipality.
- Working together to ensure residents have access to job training and reclamation jobs.
- Promoting improved broadband access.
- Development of a housing assessment and plan.

COUNTY-RESERVATION COORDINATION

Rosebud County will coordinate its efforts to implement this Growth Policy in junction with the Northern Cheyenne Reservation in the following ways:

- The County will ensure that they continue to provide cooperative efforts in various aspects with the tribe, as needed.
- The County will continue to provide election services cooperatively with the Tribe.
- The County and the Tribe will cooperate on any joint infrastructure projects as needed.
- The County will continue to honor the emergency mutual aid agreements already in place with the Tribe.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following are the goals, objectives, and actions meant to be achieved to address the opportunities and challenges identified in this plan. The goals and objectives in this section are listed by topic and area followed by the actions identified to achieve them. Actions meant to implement the Growth Policy include but are not limited to considering how to protect the natural resources of the County, evaluating the potential need for a zoning code, updating the County’s subdivision Regulations, ensuring cooperation between the municipalities and Rosebud County, the upgrade to infrastructure and providing day-to-day services.

ECONOMY

The County’s residents need economic opportunities and stability to prosper in an economy dependent on natural resource extraction and a constantly changing global economy.

Economic Goals	Economic Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ E-1: Ensure that Rosebud County has a strong and viable energy industry. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Support and promote all forms of energy production in Rosebud County. b. Maintain the long-term viability of existing energy production facilities. c. Support and promote transmission projects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ E-2: Ensure that Rosebud County’s natural resource development industry continues and expands into the future. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Encourage the retention, maintenance, and expansion of natural resource extraction operations in the County.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ E-3: Ensure that Rosebud County maintains a sustainable agricultural economy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Protect the most productive agricultural soil types from development, erosion, etc. b. Support the development of agricultural support businesses, such as value-added agricultural businesses.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ E-4: Rosebud will continue to work closely with all regional economic development partners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Support and regularly engage with the Southeastern Montana Economic Development Corporation (SEMDC).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ E-5: The County will build strong working relationships with private enterprises to strengthen the County’s economy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Support economic development efforts to increase the County’s tax base.

Economic Actions			
Objective	Action	Responsibility	Priority
E-4 a, E-5 a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collaborate with SEMDC to identify grant funding that will promote economic prosperity in the County. 	County Commissioners, SEMDC	1
E-1 a, b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to lobby the state legislature to encourage the state to support the coal mining industry and energy generation. 	County Commissioners	2
E-3 b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coordinate with SEMDC to attract value-added agricultural businesses to the County in support of the County’s agricultural industry. 	SEMDC, County Commissioners	3

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Economic Actions			
Objective	Action	Responsibility	Priority
E-1 a, c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Grid United on energy transmission projects by considering tax abatement opportunities. 	Grid United, County Commissioners	4
E-3 a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update the County Subdivision Regulations in section VI-B to consider prime agricultural soils during subdivision review. 	County Commissioners, Planning Board	5
E-2 a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Helix Exploration and the development of a Helium/Hydrogen Mine near Ingomar, as well as any other gas exploration projects in the County. 	County Commissioners	6
E-3 a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify soil types during any residential development land use applications to determine if the development infringes upon the most productive agricultural soil types. 	County Commissioners, Planning Board	7

HOUSING

Safe and structurally sound housing is essential for the well-being of each County resident. The County will work to identify ways to ensure housing availability and provide housing options for all residents.

Housing Goals	Housing Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> H-1: Ensure that Rosebud County has a housing market that is affordable and attainable for all its residents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Encourage the rehabilitation and redevelopment of existing substandard housing. b. Identify funding sources to create affordable housing. c. Promote the development of workforce housing where there is existing infrastructure and services. d. Support current and future legislation that invests in the creation of affordable and workforce housing. e. Identify the main barriers to creating additional affordable workforce housing in the County.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> H-2: Ensure that new residential development in Rosebud County occurs in areas with existing infrastructure and services, in order to reduce the strain on the County's tax base and resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identify ideal locations for additional housing that take advantage of local services and infrastructure.

Housing Actions			
Objective	Action	Responsibility	Priority
H-1 b, c, d	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for the County's housing needs while assisting the Community Reinvestment Organization (CRO) in the management and administration of the funds allocated from the state for House Bill 819. 	CRO, County Commissioners, Montana Department of Commerce	1
H-2 a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a GIS web map that identifies the most appropriate areas in the County for residential development that is located adjacent to County and municipal services and infrastructure. 	County Commissioners, Planning Board	2

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Housing Actions			
Objective	Action	Responsibility	Priority
H-1 b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the SEMDC and the CRO to identify and apply for housing grants. 	CRO, SEMDC, County Commissioners, Montana Department of Commerce	3
H-1 e	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As encouraged by MCA 90-6-146, adopt an ordinance that provides for an expedited development and construction review process to create attainable workforce housing. 	County Commissioners	4
H-1 a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to promote and support the Clerk and Recorder's tax lien auction process to auction off tax-deficient residential properties 	Clerk and Recorder, County Commissioners	5
H-1 d	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute funds to the CRO revolving account for developing attainable workforce housing. 	CRO, County Commissioners	6

LAND USE

To be successful, the County will need to attract new residents and businesses. The County must also ensure that the regulatory environment is predictable and fair. New development should be encouraged in areas with limited potential of natural hazards such as flooding, or wildfire and where it is efficient for the County to provide services.

Land Use Goals	Land Use Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LU:1 Ensure that land use in Rosebud County favors private property rights without harming agricultural resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Encourage land development where appropriate to increase the tax base in the County.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LU-2: Ensure residential, commercial and industrial growth and development in the County is logical and sustainable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identify suitable areas for development that do not strain County resources.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LU-3: Ensure that County regulatory land use reviews are all completed in a predictable and fair process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Support transparency in land use reviews b. Ensure consistency in the review process c. Engage with the County's land development community to get their input and advice on regulations and land use reviews. d. Foster public trust during land use reviews. e. Hold public meetings when deemed necessary.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LU-4: Work to ensure that Rosebud County becomes known for its legal compliance with all land use regulations and ordinances. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Adhere to all County land use regulations and state statutes. b. Regularly participate in land use training and guidance from Montana Association of Counties.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LU-5: Ensure that Rosebud County regularly reviews and updates its land use regulations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Reduce the cost to taxpayers for regulations updates. b. Utilize a variety of funding resources such as grants for the update of land regulations.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Land Use Actions			
Objective	Action	Responsibility	Priority
LU-4 a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor legislative changes to land use laws and amend regulations accordingly to ensure compliance with the statute. 	County Commissioners	1
LU-3 c, d, e	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that all the County’s public meetings comply with open meeting laws for notification and timing. 	Clerk and Recorder, County Commissioners	2
LU-5 a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and pursue grant funding such as Montana Department of Commerce Planning grants to reduce the cost to the taxpayers for any land use regulation updates. 	SEMDC, County Commissioners	3
LU-1 a, LU-2 a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage subdivision development in locations near public services and infrastructure. 	County Commissioners	4
LU-3 b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update the subdivision regulations as needed. 	County Commissioners, Planning Board	5
LU-3 a, b, c, d, e	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to provide County residents with public information regarding any land use applications per public notification requirements and retain documents for the public record. 	Clerk and Recorder, County Commissioners	6
LU-2 a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work closely with the City of Forsyth and the City of Colstrip on any proposed annexations. 	City of Forsyth, City of Colstrip, County Commissioners	7

LOCAL SERVICES

Quality of life for County residents depends upon many things, particularly the provision of services such as law enforcement, fire protection, parks and recreation, healthcare, education, emergency services, senior services, and solid waste management.

Local Services Goals	Local Services Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LS-1: Ensure that County services are high-quality, efficient and serve all residents equally. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure residents have high-quality services for all demographics and ages. Provide services to residents that are within the financial means of the County. Expand services as needed and as financially feasible.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LS-2: Ensure that that County’s senior population is well-cared for. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Support existing senior services and future expansion of the services.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LS-3: Ensure that law enforcement, EMS, and fire protection services are maintained and improved as needed to serve all County residents. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritize public safety services for budgeting. Respond to emergencies effectively. Review the allocation of County resources. Support the local 911 Board
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LS-4: Ensure that all of Rosebud’s residents have access to adequate health care. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure adequate health care services are available for all County residents. Improve community health and wellness.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Local Services Actions			
Objective	Action	Responsibility	Priority
LS-3 a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify grant funding for law enforcement and fire protection equipment upgrades. 	County Commissioners, SEMDC, Fire Districts	1
LS-3 b, c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to work with the Montana DNRC on the mapping of coal seams to better assist County fire districts in their mitigation of coal seam fires. 	DNRC, County Fire, County Commissioners	2
LS-1 c, LS-3 b, c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify appropriate locations for additional fire stations in the County to aid in coal seam firefighting as well as other types of wildland fires. 	County Commissioners, County Fire Districts, USFS	3
LS-4 b, c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work cooperatively with Rosebud Health Care to ensure that adequate health services are provided to all of the County's residents, and support transportation efforts. 	County Commissioners, Health Department, Rosebud Health Care	4
LS-3 a, b, c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue efforts to staff the Sheriff's Department through job postings in a variety of locations in the County and statewide. 	Rosebud County Sheriff's office, County Commissioners	5
LS-3 a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discourage new residential developments in areas that are determined to have a high risk for natural hazards in order to reduce the risks to private property owners and first responders. 	County Commissioners, Law Enforcement, EMS, Fire Departments, DES	6
LS-4 a, b, c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand mental health services to County residents. 	County Commissioners, Health Department, Sheriff's office, Rosebud Healthcare	7
LS-4 a, b, c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the County-sponsored EMT and paramedic organization by reviewing recruitment techniques, and support training possibilities. 	County Commissioners	8
LS-1 b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to administer the County's predator control program. 	County Commissioners	9
LS-4 c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote community health events by supporting the County Public Health Department to promote health and wellness. 	County Commissioners, Health Department	10
LS-1 a, b, c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist the Montana State University (MSU) Extension Office in bringing an agricultural agent into the local office. 	County Commissioners, MSU Extension office	11
LS-1 a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to enforce noxious weed ordinances throughout the County. 	County Commissioners, Weed District	12
LS-2 a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to maintain and upgrade vehicles used for senior transportation to Billings and Miles City. 	Senior Center, Health Department	13
LS-1 b, c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a new lined cell at the Rosebud Landfill for household garbage. 	County Commissioners, Department Heads	14
LS-1 a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an economically feasible recycling plan for the County. 		15
LS-3 a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and pursue FEMA federal grants for Fire Rescue equipment 	County Commissioners, FEMA	16

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC FACILITIES

Well-maintained infrastructure is necessary to ensure the health and safety of County residents and help promote economic growth. Infrastructure managed by the County can range from streets and buildings and water and sewer equipment such as loaders, trucks, and computers.

Infrastructure & Public Facilities Goals

- IPF-1: Ensure that Rosebud County provides access to services and facilities for all its residents.
- IPF-2: Ensure that County residents are provided with safe and cost-effective infrastructure.

Infrastructure & Public Facilities Objectives

- a. Achieve full ADA compliance for all County facilities.
- b. Promote ADA upgrades to existing facilities and infrastructure.
- a. Ensure all new and existing County roadways are safe and accessible and have longevity in infrastructure.
- b. As appropriate, collaboration with other federal, state, and local agencies and stakeholder groups on new infrastructure projects.
- c. Support water management practices at county-owned facilities.
- d. Provide County residents with clear guidance on the County's role and abilities to maintain roads.

Infrastructure & Public Facilities Actions

Objective	Action	Responsibility	Priority
IPF-2 b, c, e	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify the most efficient and effective irrigation system to be installed at the cemetery expansion. 	County Commissioners, Department Heads	1
IPF-2 c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coordinate with Fish Wildlife and Parks and the Army Corps of Engineers on permitting water intake systems for the Cemetery. 	FWP, USACE, County Commissioners	2
IPF-2 c, e	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assess water issues at the Cemetery and obtain engineering consultation on how to rectify the issues. 	County Commissioners, Department Heads	3
IPF-2 b, c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a water management plan for the cemetery by cooperating with FWP, and the Army Corps of Engineers. 	County Commissioners, FWP, USACE, Department Heads	4
IPF-2 b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assist the City of Colstrip with insuring the pipeline from the Yellowstone River which provides water to Castle Rock Lake and the City of Colstrip continues to be operated and maintained 	City of Colstrip, County Commissioners	5
IPF-2 a, e	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain the County's sand and gravel facilities to be used for public infrastructure projects. 	Department Heads, County Commissioners	6
IPF-2 d	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inventory and assess all stormwater culverts on County roads to determine if any upgrades are needed. 	County Commissioners, Road Department	7

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Infrastructure & Public Facilities Actions			
Objective	Action	Responsibility	Priority
IPF-2 b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the United States Forest Service to ensure that public access roads to the Custer National Forest are maintained. 	USFS, County Commissioners, Road Department	8
IPF-2 a, b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the current subdivision regulations annually to determine if any updates are needed to ensure that all new roads meet the County road standards. 	County Commissioners, Road Department	9
IPF-1 a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review all public facilities for ADA compliance issues and apply for grants to make upgrades as discovered. 	County Commissioners, Department Heads	10
IPF-2 b, c, e	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contract with a professional land surveyor to survey the cemetery and survey the proposed expansion to the cemetery. 	County Commissioners	11
IPF-2 d	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the best outreach methods to educate the public on the County road maintenance strategies to inform the public that private roads are not maintained by the County. 	Department Heads, County Commissioners	12
IPF-2 a, b, e	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to coordinate with Montana Department of Transportation on updates to any MDT rights-of-way in the County. 	MDT, County Commissioners, Road Department	13
IPF-2 b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist the City of Colstrip in the cleaning and refining of the ash ponds to recover the rare earth elements. 	City of Colstrip, County Commissioners, Department Heads	14

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Preserving, and at times, restoring natural and cultural resources within the County is vital to the well-being of the residents. The goals and objectives of this section hold an important place in the growth patterns of the County.

Natural & Cultural Resources Goals

- NR-1: Ensure that the Yellowstone River is well-protected to maintain robust recreation and agricultural industries.
- NR-2: Ensure that tourism, cultural, and community events are actively promoted within the County.

Natural & Cultural Resources Objectives

- Encourage the protection of the Yellowstone River floodplain for agricultural purposes.
 - Coordinate with state and federal agencies for floodplain mitigation and protection measures.
 - Promote safe recreational activities on, and adjacent to, the river.
 - Promote the conservation of lands that are good wildlife habitat for game animals.
- Better market the County's tourist attractions.
 - Cooperate with local business and cultural organizations and stakeholders to plan and fund community events.
 - Establish and maintain partnerships with regional tourism boards.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Natural & Cultural Resources Goals

- NR-3: The County will work to minimize the risk for wildfire.
- NR-4: Promote human-wildlife conflict mitigation strategies in the County to effectively reduce issues.

Natural & Cultural Resources Objectives

- a. Encourage a variety of effective fire protection measures throughout the County.
- b. Encourage the establishment of defensible space around residential and non-residential structures.
- c. Promote the use of fire-resistant materials in construction.
- d. Facilitate more effective cooperation among fire districts, state, and federal agencies.
- e. Promote substations in coal seam prone areas.
- f. Support Coal Seam Mitigation projects.
- a. Promote education efforts for human-wildlife prevention strategies.
- b. Promote wildlife management policies

Natural and Cultural Resources Actions

Objective	Action	Responsibility	Priority
NR-3 a, b, c, d	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Collaborate with the fire districts and USFS in educating the public on how to reducing wildland fire risks. 	USFS, County Fire Districts, County Commissioners, DES	1
NR-2 a, b, c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilitate community events by continuing to provide the County fairgrounds as an event space. 	County Commissioners, Stakeholder groups	2
NR-1 a, b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to work with the DNRC and FEMA on the update of Yellowstone River floodplain maps. 	County Commissioners, FEMA, DNRC	3
NR-1 a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to regulate the special flood hazard area to reduce flood risks to the public and to promote the continued use of agriculture adjacent to the river. 	FEMA, DNRC, County Commissioners	4
NR-2 a, b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support the promotion of the County's cultural sites in efforts to draw tourists to the County. 	Local cultural site operators, County Commissioners, Montana Department of Commerce Office of Tourism	5
NR-4 a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with FWP to disseminate information to private property owners on how to mitigate human-wildlife conflict. 	FWP, County Commissioners	6
NR-4 b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assist FWP and MDT in the removal of animal carcasses from public rights-of-way. 	MDT, FWP	7
NR-1 c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with business and recreation stakeholders to promote fishing tournaments on the Yellowstone River. 	Stakeholders, County Commissioners, FWP	8

POPULATION

TRENDS

In 2022, the total population of Rosebud County was estimated to be 8,310 people. From 2010-2022, Rosebud County experienced an overall population decline. During this period, the largest estimated decrease in population occurred in the 45-64 age category. While there was an overall decrease in population, the 65 and over age group experienced growth and increased from 2010 to 2022. The growing number of senior citizens is a trend that is being seen across the entire state. Senior citizens have a unique set of needs and to best serve them the community needs to ensure there are adequate Senior Services available.

AGE CLASSES

The median age of the population in 2022 was 36.4 years while the median age in the United States was 38.5 years. The biggest population groups in Rosebud County are Under 18 years coming in at 29.1% of the population and 45-64 years comprising 23.1% of the population. The 65 and over age group is 16.5 % of the total population.

The lower median age of Rosebud County may be explained by the Northern Cheyenne Indian reservation and Off-Reservation Trust Land. The biggest population groups for this area are Under 18 and 18-34 years. In 2022, the Under 18 age group was an estimated 39.9% of the population and the 18-34 group was an estimated 25.2 % of the population.

The 65 and over age group experienced the largest estimated increase from 2010 to 2022. The largest estimated decrease from 2010 to 2022 occurred in the 45-64 age category. There are several factors that may be driving the population changes in Rosebud County. Some of these may include:

- Uncertainties surrounding the electricity and mining industries may be pushing younger people out of the community as they are finding it economically difficult to stay
- People of retirement age are finding the community an attractive place to live due to the quality of life and rural, quieter lifestyle.
- The offspring of farmers and ranchers tend to move off the family farm and ranch, leaving Rosebud County.



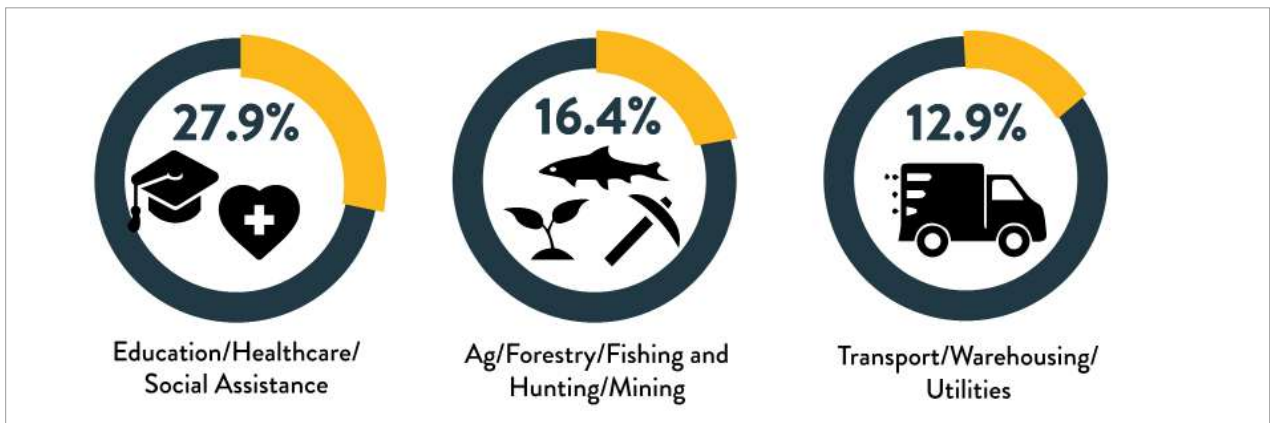
▲ Figure 1 - Median Age

ECONOMICS

JOBS

The agricultural, mining, and electrical generation industries have long had roots within Rosebud County. Farms and ranches are seen Countywide while oil and gas production prevails in the northwestern corner of the County. Colstrip is known as “the energy capital of Montana” and home to coal mining and coal-generated power operations.

In 2022, the largest industries within the County, according to Headwaters Economics, were the education health care, and social assistance (27.9%) as well as agricultural, forestry, fishing & hunting, and mining industries (16.4%) and Transport, Warehousing, and Utilities (12.9%)



▲ Figure 2 - Rosebud County Job Sectors, 2022

The working-age population in Rosebud County, which is ages 16 to 64, is 4,778 people in 2022. This accounts for 57.5% of the total population of Rosebud County. Of the 4,778, 57.4% worked more than 35 hours per week, which is considered full-time. 30.1% of these working-age people did not work in 2022.

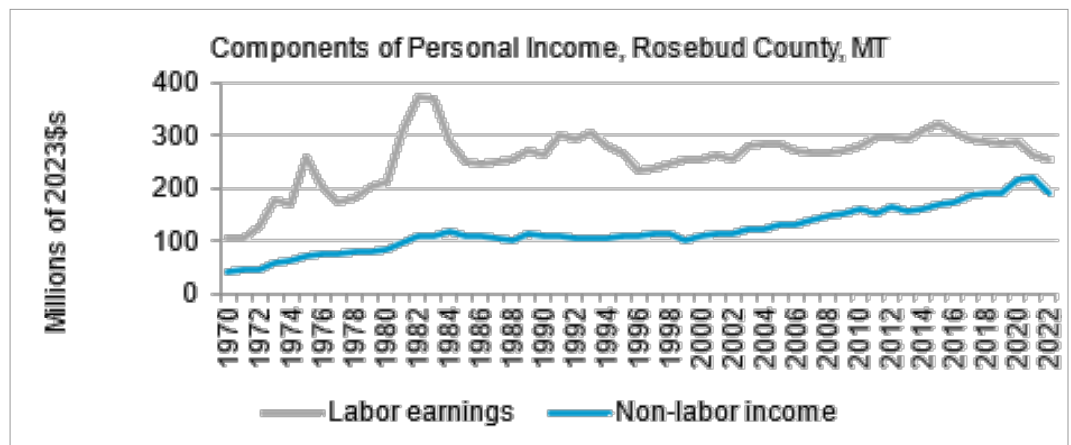
WAGE INCOME

Personal income measures the various earnings received by working individuals in a community. Personal income is the total money derived from wages, salaries, investment enterprises, and other sources. It is important to note that personal income data is collected at the Rosebud County level and can be compared as farm and non-farm categories.

From 1970 to 2022, personal income in the entire County increased from over \$103.9 million to \$253.5 million, or a 143 percent increase. The 2022 figure comprised labor earnings (57 percent) and non-labor income (43 percent). Non-labor income includes income dividends, interest, rent, and transfer payments (i.e., government retirement and disability insurance benefits, and medical payments).

▶ Figure 3 - Components of Personal Income, Rosebud County, Montana 1970-2022

U.S. Department of Labor. 2023. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Washington, D.C., as reported in Headwaters Economics' Economic Profile System (headwaterseconomics.org/eps).

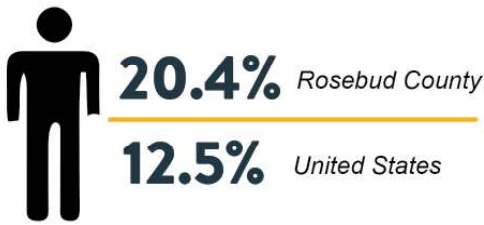


ECONOMICS

POVERTY

The Census Bureau calculates poverty by evaluating a set of income thresholds compared to family size and composition, then classified by directives set forth by the federal Office of Management and Budget. 2022 Census data for Rosebud County estimates that 20.4% of individuals and 12.4% of families are living below the poverty threshold, as compared to 12.5% and 8.8% in the United States, respectively. This is important for community planning, as it's not only an indicator of the County's economic well-being but also reflects the different needs and values of residents.

INDIVIDUALS BELOW POVERTY LEVEL



FAMILIES BELOW POVERTY LEVEL



▲ Figure 4 - Rosebud County Poverty Level

TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES

Based on figures from the Montana Department of Revenue, the market value of real property in the County has increased steadily, while the taxable value has decreased.

In 2014, the market value of all real property in Rosebud County was over \$447 million. By 2024 this figure had increased to over \$609 million, a 36 percent increase. During the same period, taxable values in the County decreased from over \$11.3 million to over \$11.0 million.



▲ Figure 5 - Tax Base and Tax Revenues

COAL MINING

Rosebud County currently has one coal mine, the Rosebud Mine, operated by Westmoreland Rosebud Mining LLC. The mine spans 25,000 acres and is primarily surface mining that extracts sub-bituminous coal. The mine supplies the Colstrip power plant with enough coal to power 1 million typical U.S. homes.

MAJOR UTILITIES

Rosebud County has two electrical power generation facilities, the Colstrip Generating Station and the Rosebud Power Plant Colstrip Energy Limited Partnership. The Colstrip station has a combined peak output of 2,094 megawatts and has been identified as the second largest coal-fired electrical station west of the Mississippi when both units are in generation. The Colstrip station has experienced a somewhat tumultuous few years, with two units shutting down and a change in ownership, as Northwestern Energy became the majority owner of the plant.

There is potential to bring in numerous electrical projects, including wind farms from Dawson to Colstrip, another near Rosebud and Miles City, as well as projects in Rosebud County and Treasure County.

ECONOMICS

The Rosebud Power Plant Colstrip Energy Limited Partnership is a 38-megawatt coal-fired power plant that is north of Colstrip. The energy that is being produced at this plant is being sold to Northwestern Energy.

Recently, Montana has received a \$700 million dollars from the U.S. Department of Energy to advance what is known as the “North Plains Connector” project. This is a 415-mile, high voltage, direct-current line between the substation located in Colstrip and Center, North Dakota. The line runs at 5250 kilovolts and would be the first of its kind to connect the eastern and western power grids. This would allow energy to flow from Portland, Oregon to Minnesota. The project is valued at approximately \$3.6 billion.

WIND ENERGY

The Clearwater Wind farm, located in Rosebud, Garfield, and Custer Counties, became commercially operated in 2023 and can produce up to 750 megawatts of energy. This is enough to power 597,000 homes. It was brought to Rosebud County by NextEra Energy Resources, as well as Orion Renewable Energy Group. The energy is connected to the electrical grid at an existing substation north of Colstrip. The transmission line is roughly 345 kilovolts and is 70 to 95 miles in length.

The Silverthorn Wind Farm may be located in Rosebud and Treasure Counties upon completion. The target start date for the construction of the wind farm is in 2025 with the estimated completion in 2027, per Silverthorn Renewables. This project is estimated to create 450-600 construction jobs and 12-20 full-time jobs and is expected to generate \$150 million in revenue. There is a proposed wind farm in Dawson and Prairie County where the power line would follow the Clearwater Line to Colstrip. The project is approximately a 339-Million-dollar investment.

TRANSMISSION LINES

Rosebud County currently has three major transmission lines located in the County. These lines are owned and operated by Colstrip Transmission System Owners, Northwestern Energy (which is now assuming majority ownership over the Colstrip Power Plant), and NextEra. Additional transmission projects are the upgrades to the Colstrip West main line and the Grid United Project.

Recently, Montana has received \$700 million dollars from the U.S. Department of Energy to advance what is known as the “North Plains Connector” project. This is a 415-mile, high voltage, direct-current line between the substation located in Colstrip and Center, North Dakota. The line runs at 525 kilovolts and would be the first of its kind to connect the eastern and western power grids. This would allow energy to flow from Portland, Oregon to Minnesota. The project is valued at approximately \$3.6 billion.

BROADBAND

The incorporated municipalities of Forsyth and Colstrip have access to Broadband internet, however there are still some concerns over speed and the cost of service available. The State of Montana in March of 2024 and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration approved the state’s plan to expand digital access as part of the federal \$2.75 billion Digital Equity Act. With this plan the state is looking to expand the access to broadband to more rural communities which could impact the more rural portions of Rosebud County. As of 2024, Rosebud County, among others, have less than 60% adoption of broadband satellites, cell phone data or DSL. The state’s plan would help combat the access as well as the affordability of broadband.

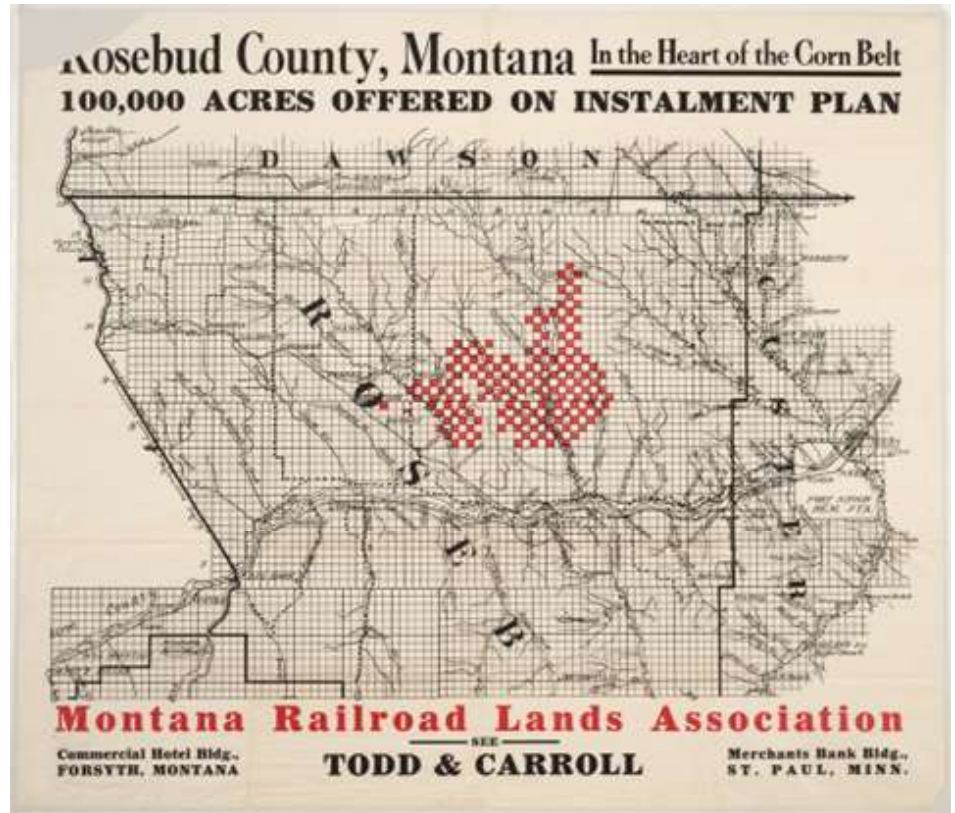
FIBER

Range provides fiber optic cable to Rosebud County. They are currently working on a variety of projects in Forsyth and Colstrip and are expanding their current fiber network. The Northern Cheyenne Reservation has also recently received a large federal grant to bring fiber to the reservation. It is likely that fiber availability will continue to increase throughout Rosebud County.

RAILROAD

One of the major employers in Rosebud County is the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railroad (BNSF). Railroad jobs in the County have fluctuated throughout the years due to varying economic factors. For example, in 2015 BNSF transferred 45 jobs from Forsyth to Laurel, Montana. The line from Forsyth to Colstrip remains inactive.

Rosebud County's key economic industry is power generation and mining. This has led to a fluctuation in the county's economy. The County should continue to promote the power generation plants that are in operation and also identify other means of energy production and entice those entities to do business within Rosebud County. The County should also be progressive in its planning as it prepares for a variety of future energy projects such as additional wind farms and transmission lines, and nuclear energy generation. The County should continue to look for ways to diversify the economy to aid in becoming economically resilient.



▲ Pictured above, is an advertisement from Todd & Carroll circa 1904-1920, Courtesy of the Montana State Library

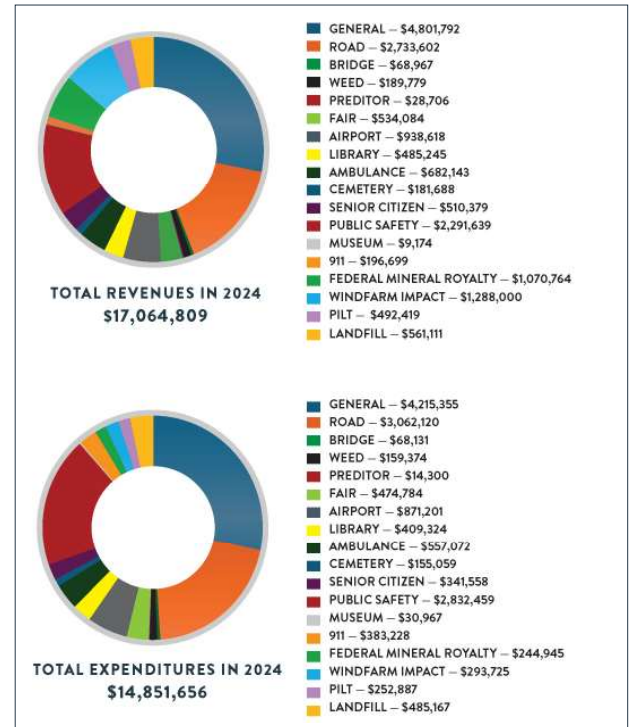
LOCAL SERVICES

GOVERNMENT REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES

Rosebud County Revenues and Expenditures from the fiscal year 2024 can be found in the graphic to the right. The total revenues for the County were approximately \$17 million dollars, and the expenditures were approximately \$14 million dollars.

SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

The Rosebud County Sheriff's Office, originally founded in 1901, provides law enforcement for all of Rosebud County. The main office and the detention center are found in Forsyth, and there are satellite offices in Ashland and Colstrip. The Department is currently staffed with 24 people. This includes the sheriff, undersheriff, two sergeants, nine deputies, six dispatchers, five detention officers, and 1 administrative assistant.



▲ Figure 6 - Government Revenues and Expenditures

FIRE

Fire services in Rosebud County include a mix of rural fire districts, municipal fire departments, and areas not within a rural fire district, with those areas being serviced by Rosebud County. Forsyth and Colstrip have their own municipal fire departments while the towns of Melstone and Ingomar contract with West Rosebud for fire services. Ashland currently has its own fire district.

There are a total of eighteen fire engines throughout the County. Like many rural counties, the fire services could benefit from more volunteers and updated equipment and facilities. Areas of particular need that should be prioritized are new non-winterized substations that have water year-round and new fill sites for water tanks.



The County is working on constructing three to four remote water filling stations for fire suppression. This project is mainly to combat coal seam fires; however, the filling stations will be able to assist in other wildland fires, and structure fires as needed. The locations identified in the County for these filling stations is the Bailey Ranch outside of Colstrip, the Davenport Ranch on Rosebud Creek, near Ashland, and south of Birney.

LOCAL SERVICES

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

The Rosebud County Ambulance provides EMS services for Rosebud County, specifically for the Forsyth, Ashland and Colstrip areas. There are currently 24 EMTs and paramedics who are paid volunteers on the staff. There is 24-hour coverage for call shifts. The fleet of ambulances is 7 and two quick response supervisor vehicles.

Like most EMS services, the department would benefit from additional staff, training, and updated equipment and vehicles.



HOSPITAL/HEALTH CARE

There are two medical facilities located in the County, one in Colstrip, and Forsyth. The Bighorn Valley Community Health Center provides health services to residents of the southern part of the County. Some of the services provided are integrated, behavioral health services, an attending physician, and a pharmacy. The Colstrip medical facility provides health exams, urgent care, X-ray, women's care, pediatrics, mental health services, and lab services. The Rosebud Health Care Center (RHCC) is an 11-bed critical access hospital located in Forsyth. A critical access hospital designation was designed by Congress in 1997 to reduce the financial vulnerability of rural hospitals and improve access to health care. RHCC provides a 24-hour emergency room, CT scan, X-ray, a full lab, and a 32-bed long-term care unit.



PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

The health department currently has a staff of four people who handle public health services and an on-call consultant who handles environmental health services such as the installation of septic systems.

LOCAL SERVICES

The County Health Department provides a variety of public health services to the County residents. These include:

- Childhood Vaccinations
- Adult Vaccinations
- Medical Injections (B12 etc.)
- Animal Bite and Rabies Investigations
- Communicable Disease Surveillance and State Reporting
- Inform & Educate Rosebud residents regarding public health issues
- Research solutions to health issues in the county
- Family Planning/Contraceptive Services
- STD/HIV testing and referrals
- Child & Domestic Abuse Prevention & Education
- Suicide Prevention/Anti-bullying prevention & education
- Drug/Alcohol abuse prevention & education
- Health & Wellness Education & Counseling
- Senior Citizen Home Visiting
- Foot Clinics for Senior Citizens
- Nurse Consultations
- Fetal, Infant, Child and Maternal Mortality Reviews
- Blood Pressure Checks
- New Mother and Baby Consultations
- School Screenings/Health Presentations
- Daycare & School Immunization Reviews
- Public Health Emergency Preparedness
- Wound Care/Stitch Removal
- Lice Checks
- TB Testing and Follow-up
- Ear Wax Removal
- Maintain Public Health Grants & Deliverables
- Collaboration Efforts with Medical Facilities/Providers

The on-call sanitarian provides the following services:

- Food service inspections
- Pool inspections
- Truck and train wreck inspections
- Sanitation inspections
- Environmental health services such as installation of septic systems.

The services provided by the Public Health Department are vital to the well-being of the County's citizens. The County should continue to ensure that the department is adequately staffed at all times and are up to date with all of its equipment.

LOCAL SERVICES

SCHOOLS

There are five school districts within Rosebud County: Colstrip, Rosebud, Birney, Lame Deer, Ashland. Currently, the students located in Ingomar attend school in Melstone, or Musselshell County. Ashland also has the only private school, St. Labre. All students in the Lame Deer and Ashland public schools qualify for free and reduced lunch, while Colstrip has 47.75%, Forsyth 39.44%, Rosebud 57.38%, and St. Labre 74.4%.

Rosebud County has one institute of higher learning, Dull Knife College in Lame Deer. The institute was chartered in 1975 and was known as Dull Knife Memorial College until it was renamed in 2001 to honor the significance of Dull Knife as a chief and leader of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe.



STOCKYARDS

The County owns and maintains a set of corrals and a scale at its stockyards east of Forsyth near the County Road Shop. Users can pay a fee, and the facility is used as a point of sale for many of the County's livestock producers who contract their calves.

PREDATOR CONTROL

The County offers a predator control service to its residents, specifically those involved in the ranching sector. This is a wildlife management program that reduces predator populations to protect livestock. Sheep and cattle owners across the County pay into this program.

In 2023, Governor Gianforte signed House Bill 59 into law authorizing the Department of Livestock to use state-appropriated money for predator control. Some of the programs the state now offers through project grants are offering guard dogs, carcass removal projects, and electric fencing for calving barns to protect the livestock from predators.

The predator control program faces several challenges, including a shortage of pilots, aircraft, and fuel. Given the vast size of the county, aerial operations are the most effective means of addressing predator control. If these resource constraints can be resolved, the county will be in a much stronger position to manage and reduce predator populations more efficiently.

WEED DEPARTMENT

The County Weed department contracts to spray weeds on County roads and has a 100- and 200-gallon slide sprayer that is available for public use. The Department also has a 25-gallon ATV sprayer and backpack sprayers that can all be rented out by the public. The Weed Department also offers a 50% cost share on herbicides for certain approved noxious weeds. Property owners must create their weed management plan that needs to be approved by the County Weed Supervisor to qualify for the cost-share program.

INFRASTRUCTURE

AIRPORT

Rosebud County currently has two airports: Tillitt Airport in Forsyth and Rick’s Airport in Colstrip. The County has established a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program that complies with the U.S. Department of Transportation federal code, which allows Rosebud County to access federal financial assistance for the airports.

The runway at the Tillitt Airport in Forsyth is approximately 10,000 feet from the threshold of the runway and is one (1) mile in width on each side from the centerline of the runway. There are three members appointed by the Rosebud County Commissioners that make up the Airport Zoning Commission, and five members that make up the Board of Adjustment. The ordinance designation of the airport creates an area of influence that has land use limitations.

Similar to the Tillitt Airport, Rick’s Airport in Colstrip has a runway of 10,000 feet from the threshold and one (1) mile in width from the centerline of the runway. The Commissioners appoint the same number of board members for the Airport Commission and the Board of Adjustment as listed above. There is also an airport area of influence that regulates land use adjacent to the airport.



Two fueling stations were recently installed, one at the Tillitt Airport, and one at Rick’s Airport. Both of these fueling stations take credit cards allowing easier access for pilots to obtain fuel. The Tillitt Airport in Forsyth is now offering short-term and long-term hangar rentals.

Both airports provide emergency medical airlift services to Billings.

WATER AND SEWER

Ashland Water and Sewer District (AWSD)

This fee-based district serves the unincorporated community of Ashland. The AWSD operates the wastewater treatment system. Three wells are used for drinking water, and all three are connected to a 250,000-gallon storage tank. The system was designed for 2,500 people but is only currently serving 98 users. The Ashland lift station has reached the end of its life despite the care and maintenance it has seen from the district. The lift station has challenges and safety issues with the dry well due to the depth of the well. The lift station would likely need pumps, controls, and appurtenances

INFRASTRUCTURE

replaced, or the entire lift station could be replaced. The district was unable to produce a match for ARPA funding, but the County obligated \$40,000 of the MAG funds for a Preliminary Engineering Report. The County should encourage the district to publish a request for proposals for the PER to ensure that the MAG funds do not return back to the state. The County should continue to cooperate with the district to ensure that the necessary upgrades can be made.

Colstrip City Water and Sewer

Colstrip obtains its water from the Yellowstone River, by way of a pipeline that distributes the water from the Nichols Pump Station six miles west of Forsyth into Castle Rock Lake. The water is then used by the power plants as well as for municipal drinking water. The plants consume approximately 5 billion gallons of water annually and the City uses an annual estimate of 200 million gallons of water.

The City of Colstrip maintains its own water and sewer systems, however, the pipeline bringing in water from the Yellowstone crosses the County. The City of Colstrip is currently undergoing a water feasibility study to maintain the water supply to the City of Colstrip in the event the power plant is closed in the future to ensure the residents continue to have clean drinking water.

Rosebud Sewer District (RSD)

The unincorporated community of Rosebud is located 10 miles east of Forsyth. The community formed a water and sewer district in 1975 and constructed a facultative lagoon system wastewater treatment plant. The system includes two lift stations and two cells. The system processes approximately 11,100 gallons of wastewater effluent per day from residential users. The district is funded through user fees. In October 2022, the Rosebud sewer district completed a preliminary engineering report. The PER report showed that the district has a few different problems that need to be addressed.

1. Exposed sewer pipe at Butte Creek at risk of rupturing and contaminating soils and waters.
2. Inoperable check valves at the Lagoon Lift station
3. No backup power for the lift stations.
4. Erosion on lagoon center dike.

There are two viable options to be considered for the above deficiencies. They are either construct a new lift station and forcemain under Butte Creek, or a new lift station and forcemain under Butte Creek to Lagoon. The County should continue to partner with the Sewer District to pursue funding mechanisms for sewer upgrades.

Ingomar Water District

The Ingomar Water District provides drinking water to ten (10) users in the unincorporated community of Ingomar. The system storage tank has a capacity of 20,000 gallons and is located 1.5 miles from the well and the tank is located 1.5 miles from the users. This is a fee-based District.

IRRIGATION DISTRICTS

There are currently four irrigation districts located within Rosebud County.

- Cartersville Irrigation District
- Hammond Irrigation District
- Yellowstone Irrigation District
- Tongue River Water Users Association (TRWUA)

INFRASTRUCTURE

Cartersville Irrigation District

The Cartersville Irrigation District began in 1904 and diverts water from the Yellowstone River near Forsyth on the north side of the river and runs from there to a point of approximately four miles east of Thurlow. The district comprises a narrow strip of land in the valley that averages about two miles in width and water is diverted from the river by a submerged dam. This is a fee-based district.

Hammond Irrigation District

The Hammond Irrigation Company was formed in 1909, and following the bankruptcy of the company, landowners formed what is known as the Hammond Irrigation District. The district is located on the north side of the Yellowstone River starting ten miles west of Forsyth and ending just north of the City. This is a fee-based district.

Yellowstone Irrigation District

The Sanders-Howard Cooperative Ditch Company began operating in 1906 and diverts water from the Yellowstone River to farms located near the Rosebud-Treasure County line. Water is diverted by a rock-filled submerged diversion dam. This is a fee-based district.

Tongue River Water Users Association (TRWUA)

The Tongue River Water Users Association was organized in 1938 to distribute water to landowners along the Tongue River. The water is allocated based on landowner-held shares and the association owns the stored water. There are approximately 75 users in the Association. The State of Montana owns the dams that the TRUWA uses, including the Tongue River Dam.

STREETS/ROAD

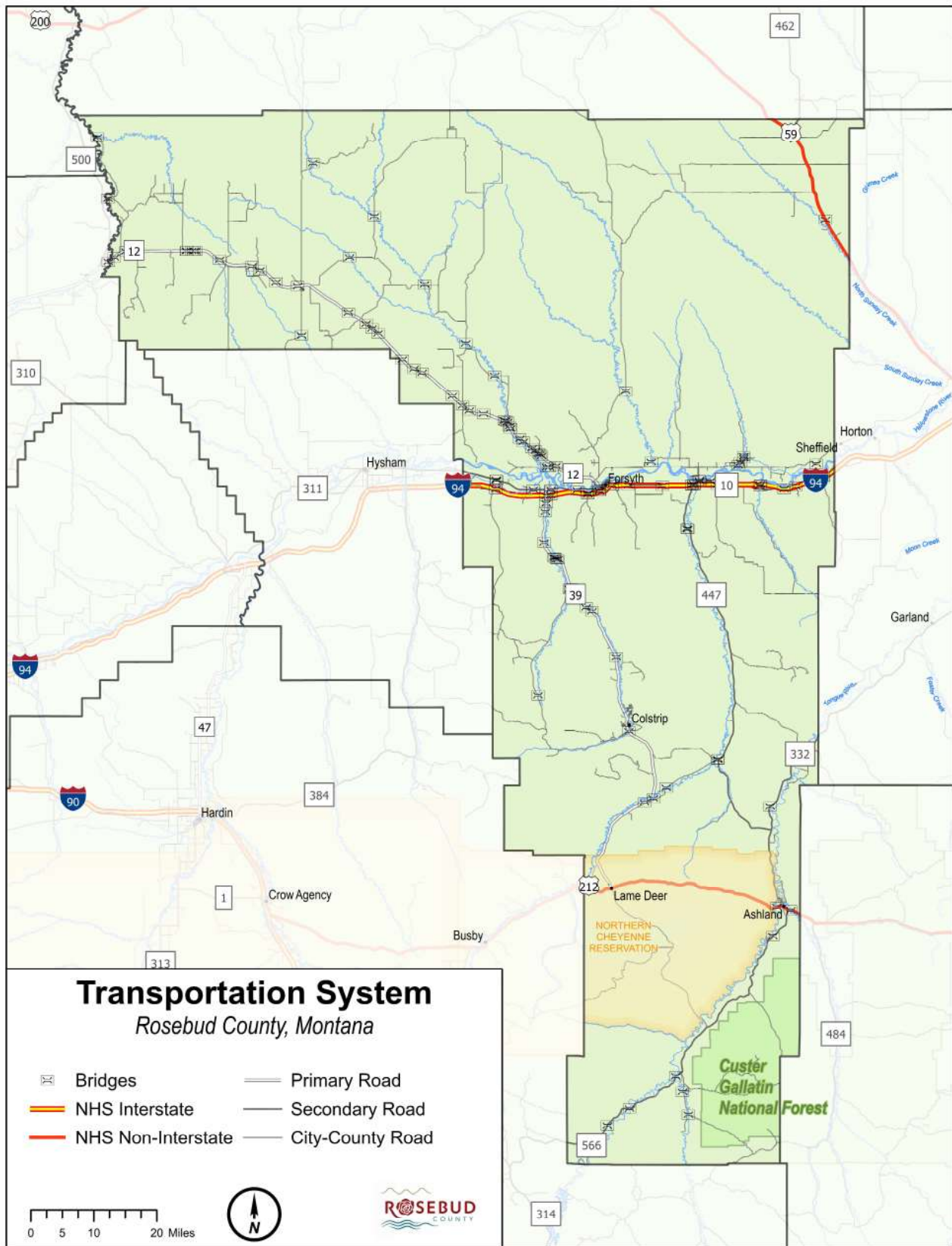
The primary road in Rosebud County is Interstate 94. I-94 runs east to west and is the primary access road through the County as a whole. Highway 39 is a paved highway that runs north-south and provides access to Colstrip and Lame Deer from I-94. Highway 212 intersects Highway 39 at Lame Deer. Route 447 provides southward access through the central portion of the County to Ashland, before intersecting with Highway 212. Route 566 allows access to the far southern end of the County along the Tongue River, and Highway 12 connects Forsyth to Melstone and Roundup. Highway 59 crosses the northern portion of the County and is a connecting route between Miles City and Jordan. The Montana Department of Transportation maintains I-94, Highways 12, 39, 59, and 212.

The County Road Department maintains an extensive network of roads and bridges. The size of the County makes maintenance a strenuous task, especially in the winter months when vehicle travel is difficult. Well-maintained roads are an important service for County residents. The County Road Department is responsible for maintaining approximately 1,165 miles of roads. The Department also maintains all County road signage, cattle guards, culverts and mowing along the County rights-of-way.

The County is responsible for maintaining numerous roads that provide access to federally owned public lands, such as United State Forest Service (USFS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land. These lands are found primarily in the southern portion of the County, and are used heavily for outdoor recreation, namely hunting. The County should continue to coordinate with these Federal agencies to identify funding sources that assist in facilitating ongoing maintenance and access to these public lands from County roads.

INFRASTRUCTURE

▼ Map 2 - Transportation System Map



INFRASTRUCTURE



FAIRGROUNDS

The Rosebud County Fairgrounds include two exhibition halls, an arena, grandstands, concession and restroom facilities, a rodeo office, a crow's nest, a media room, and horse stalls. The fairgrounds provide full-service overnight camping and a commercial kitchen space available for rent. Both the communities of Rosebud County and Treasure County (small fee and goes into fair fund) utilize the space for events including the fair, rodeos, 4H, sports tournaments, and fundraising events. Use of the fairgrounds has increased over the last five years and has created a need for improvements to the campgrounds and aging buildings.

BRIDGES

The County Road Department is responsible for maintaining what is known as an Off-system bridge, which are all the bridges that are not part of the Federal-aid Highway System. There are currently 33 bridges located in Rosebud County that are maintained by the County. This does not consider bridges that are less than 20 feet in length that the Montana Department of Transportation does not inspect.



INFRASTRUCTURE

BUILDINGS

Rosebud County has buildings located all over the County. Arguably the most notable of all county-owned buildings is the County Courthouse. With its own turbulent history, the courthouse stands today as one of the most notable buildings in the State of Montana. Some of the other buildings owned by the County are listed below, please note that this is not an all-inclusive list of buildings owned by the County:

Angela



Road Shop

Post Office

Ashland



Sheriff's Office

Birney



Road Shop

Colstrip



Human Services Building

Colstrip Police Department

Landfill Shop

Pilots Building

Forsyth



Library

Senior Citizens Center

Public Health Building

Museum

Fire Station

EMS Shop

Law Enforcement Center

Main Road Shop

Fairgrounds

Cemetery Shop

Airport Terminal

Weed District Building/IT

Mental Health Building

Courthouse

Ingomar



Road Shop



INFRASTRUCTURE

PARKS

Rosebud County does not maintain any parks in the County. However, the County does own the land that many of the City of Colstrip parks facilities are located on. The Colstrip Parks and Recreation District maintains these parks, and the parks are funded through the Colstrip Parks and Recreation tax district.

STORMWATER

Rosebud County, like most counties in Montana, does not have much in terms of stormwater management infrastructure. Most of the unincorporated areas in the County do not have curb cuts or a stormwater conveyance system. However, stormwater is taken into consideration when reviewing any new subdivisions and the detailing of the stormwater system at that time is up to the developer to design and construct the proper stormwater management system. This is reviewed by the Department of Environmental Quality during subdivision review.

The County does have stormwater management for the roadways by way of culverts, however, there are problem areas throughout the County where roads may become flooded during a rain event and are repaired as needed. For example, one of these areas is around Slaughterhouse Creek and the stormwater culverts on Highway 10. The County should continue to track and assess all County culverts to ensure that they are not in disrepair and are still designed for the proper conveyance of water, and repair roads promptly if needed, after a storm event.

SOLID WASTE

Rosebud County offers several landfill roll-off sites throughout the County. They are located in Rosebud, Ashland, Reservation Creek, Ingomar, and Birney. They are open 7 days a week, 24 hours per day. There are also attended Landfill sites in Colstrip and Forsyth. The landfill can handle a variety of different refuse, though there are certain items that either need to be called in ahead of time or need a different form of disposal. Some of these items include but are not limited to, asbestos, liquid pesticides, liquid herbicides, petroleum products, liquids in any form, and medical waste. The County offers a plethora of information regarding the landfill requirements and disposal information on the County's website.



INFRASTRUCTURE

The County landfill located near Forsyth requires a new cell to be developed for household garbage. The current cell for household garbage is anticipated to be full in the next 5-7 years. The County will need to develop a new lined cell. The County also anticipates a need to develop a recycling program for tires as well as other recyclables. There is also a need to upgrade much of the equipment used at the landfill sites.

CEMETERY

The County owns and operates a cemetery in Forsyth and relies on water pumped from the Yellowstone River to irrigate the grounds. However, the County has faced ongoing issues with the water intake system, resulting in a consistent shortage of water reaching the pump house. To address this, the County is exploring alternative water intake systems. Any upgrades to the irrigation infrastructure will require coordination with Fish, Wildlife & Parks and the Army Corps of Engineers, as well as securing a floodplain development permit. Another option under consideration is connecting to the City of Forsyth's water system, though this would entail significant costs for the County.

A sign listing all burial sites at the cemetery has been erected at the cemetery. There are plans to build a new shop at the Forsyth Cemetery. The County is currently expanding the cemetery with a fourth addition, which will require survey work and installation of a new watering system.

Rosebud County does not currently have a Capital Improvements Plan (CIP). CIPs are used to identify infrastructure needs and to place them into a prioritized list to be used in the operation and maintenance of said infrastructure, and equipment. A CIP provides a working schedule for completing projects or purchasing equipment. These plans can run the gamut from large-scale infrastructure projects across the County, such as a bridge replacement, to a smaller-scale equipment order such as a new lawnmower for the roads department, and anything in between. When the County pursues a CIP, it should include some of the following:

- An ongoing inventory of existing infrastructure
- An evaluation of needs based on state and federal requirements and infrastructure deficiencies.
- Opportunity for residents to provide input on priorities.
- A process for analyzing and prioritizing projects.
- Identification of potential project funding sources.

Until a CIP is produced, this Growth Policy will serve as the County's strategy for the maintenance and replacement of its infrastructure. The County should also continue to work in partnership with the Southeast Montana Development Corporation (SEMDC) to list the priority of the infrastructure projects.

HOUSING

NUMBER OF UNITS

In 2022, there were a total of 3,807 housing units located within the County. There was a total of 3,043 occupied housing units in 2022. This accounts for 79.9% of the total housing inventory. The remaining 20.1% were deemed vacant, per the American Community Survey Office. The ACS considers housing units that are for rent, rented but not occupied, for sale only, sold but not occupied, seasonal, recreational, occasional, or for migrant workers as “vacant”. Between 2018 and 2022, Rosebud County was approximately 10% higher than the national average in vacant housing.



▲ Figure 7 - Number of Housing Units, 2022

AGE OF STRUCTURES

As of 2022, only 2.1% of the housing stock in Rosebud County was built in 2010 or later. The majority of the housing units in the County were built between 1970 and 1989, making up 53.5% of the total housing units. This is likely due to the boom experienced in Colstrip during the 1970s and 1980s. The older a home is generally requires more maintenance. Older homes may be less energy efficient, and an increased cost of heating and cooling a housing unit may put added financial strain on the owner.



▲ Figure 8 - Age of Structures, 2022

HOUSING NEEDS

Like the majority of Montana, Rosebud County needs an increase in workforce housing that comes in at a more affordable rate. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines affordable housing as housing on which the occupant is paying no more than 30 percent of gross income for housing costs, including utilities. Compared to the rest of Montana, Rosebud County is still on the more affordable side, with there being only 194 of the 752 owner-occupied mortgaged homes that cost more than 30% of the household income. The median monthly mortgage in the State of Montana is \$1,611, and in Rosebud County, it is \$1,333. The median rent in Montana is \$1,005 and in Rosebud County, it is \$641. The County should utilize a housing needs assessment to determine any shortcomings in the different varieties of housing options located in the County.

Rosebud County is encouraged to assess the current housing stock in the County to obtain a more in-depth analysis of housing shortcomings. With the potential of other energy production methods coming into the County, there may be a need for increased work force housing. The County should work to identify areas of the County that could be developed for housing in a clean and effective manner.

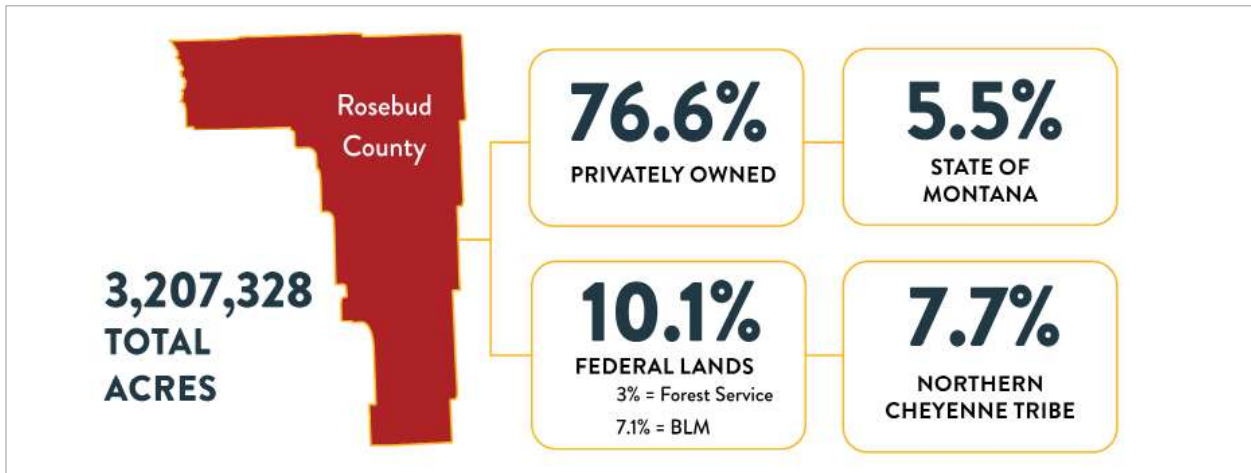
HOUSE BILL 819

The Montana Reinvestment Act was created to enable communities to provide attainable workforce housing. Rosebud County is working with the Southeastern Montana Development Corporation (SEMDC) to utilize state funding to address the housing needs of the County by utilizing a regional, community-based solution to create affordable housing infrastructure. The County and SEMDC should continue to implement the requirements of HB 819 to look for options to provide workforce housing, specifically for teachers and healthcare workers.

NATURAL RESOURCES-CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

LANDOWNERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

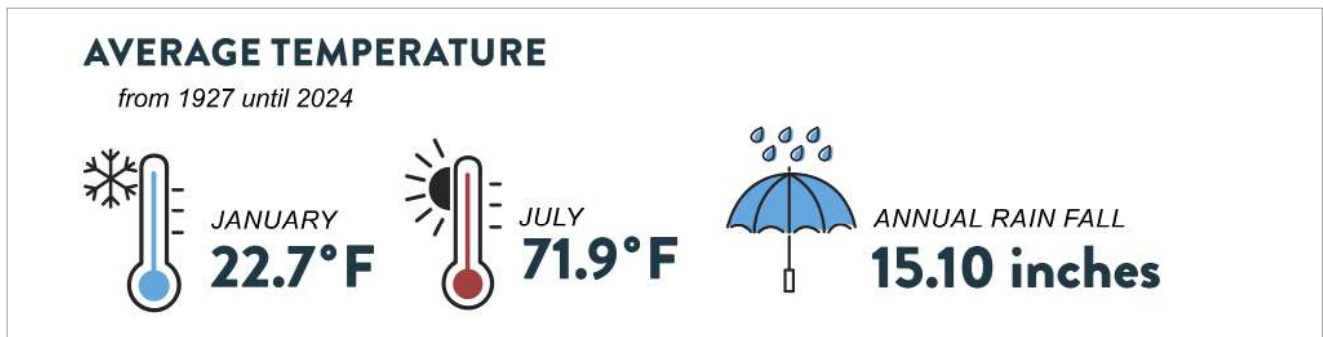
The total amount of land in Rosebud County is 3,207,328 acres. Of the total amount, 76.6% of all lands held within the County are privately owned. Federal lands make up 10.1% of the total amount. Within that 10.1%, the Forest Service holds 3.0%, and the Bureau of Land Management holds 7.1%. The State of Montana holds 5.5% of the lands in the State Land Trust, and 7.7% is held by the Northern Cheyenne Tribe which also owns land in Bighorn County.



▲ Figure 9 - Landownership

CLIMATE/WEATHER

Rosebud County is located in the continental climate zone, which experiences hot, dry summers, and dry, cold winters. The mean average temperature, taken from the weather station in Colstrip, shows that from 1927 until 2024 the average temperature was 22.7 degrees Fahrenheit in January, and 71.9 degrees Fahrenheit in July. The annual precipitation in Rosebud County since 1927 is 15.10 inches, with the wettest months being May and June.



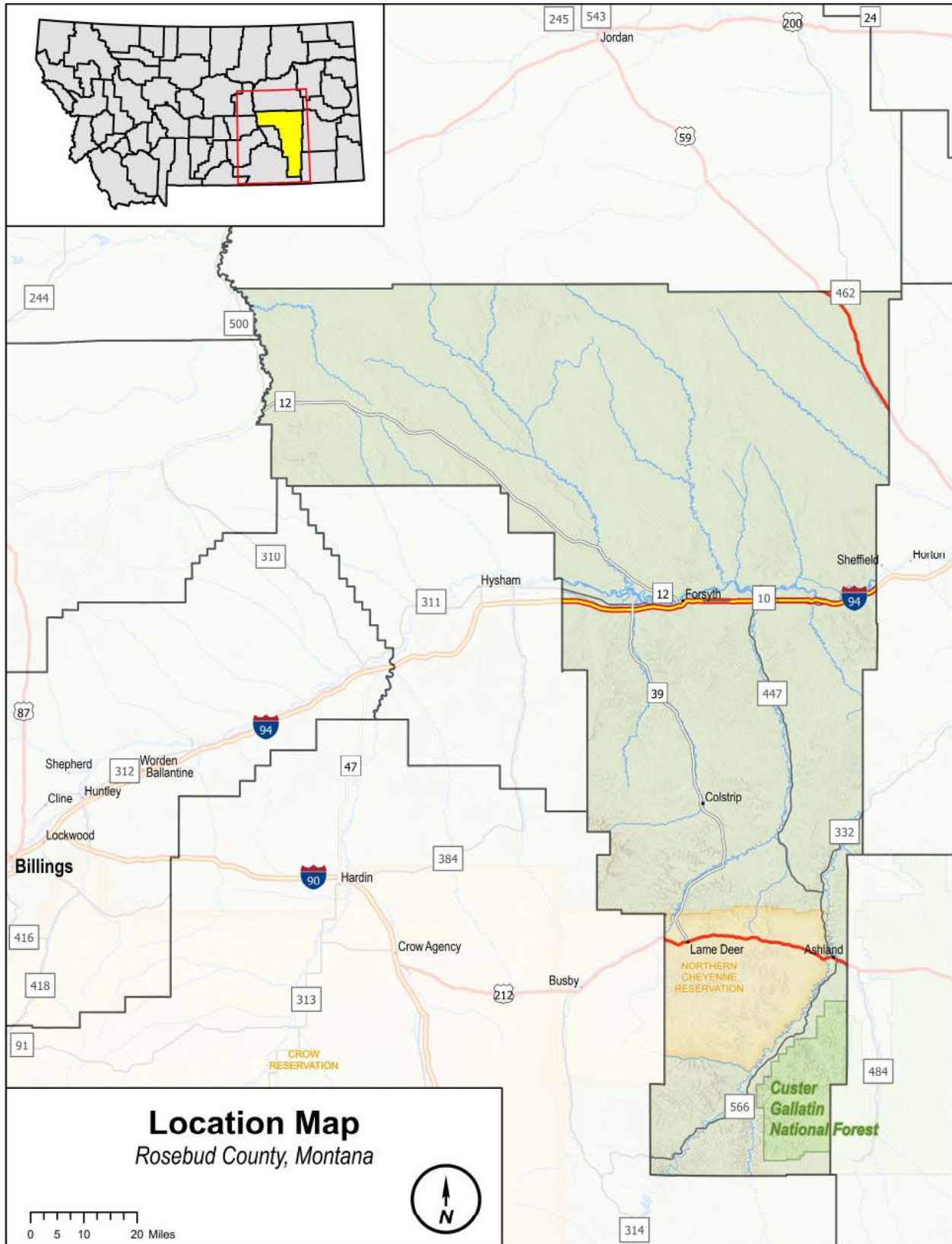
▲ Figure 10 -Average Temperature and Precipitation in Rosebud County

GEOLOGY

Rosebud County is home to the Powder River Basin coal deposits that are found in the central-southern portion of the County. Colstrip has had operational coal mining since the 1920's thanks in part to the sub-bituminous coal from the surface mines. Oil and gas production is prevalent in the northwestern corner of the County. There are currently 44 active oil and gas wells in Rosebud County per the Department of Natural Resources, Billings Oil and Gas Conservation headquarters.

NATURAL RESOURCES-CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

▼ Map 3 - Landownership Map



NATURAL RESOURCES-CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

Conservation easements are voluntary legal agreements between a landowner and a land trust that permanently limit the uses of the land in order to protect its conservation values. Conservation easements determine uses that are consistent and inconsistent with the conservation goals of the landowner. For example, agriculture, silviculture, outfitting, guest ranching, and other small businesses may be allowed for a conservation easement, while residential development, commercial or industrial activities, and surface mining are some examples of inconsistent land use goals.

Rosebud County currently has ten conservation easements within the County (see map on the next page).

WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE

Rosebud County has numerous areas that are classified as being in the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI). These include the cities of Forsyth and Colstrip, the unincorporated communities of Ashland, Rosebud, and Birney-Cash as well as the Wild Horse, Bascom, Poacher/Broadus, Four L Land and Livestock, and Hidden Valley subdivisions.

Developed properties within the WUI can increase the strain on the volunteer fire departments as well as increase the complexity of fire suppression. There are a multitude of issues for wildland fire fighting such as ingress and egress for firefighters, evacuation routes for citizens, and communication between firefighters and residents.

The County currently has wildland firefighting equipment spread throughout the County and actively promotes a fuels reduction project in an attempt to continue the aggressive approach to commercial and private harvesting of timber. The County would like the Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service to be more aggressive in their undertaking of controlled burns on public land to reduce fuel loading. There should also be a cooperative effort between the County and other wildland firefighting agencies to address and mitigate coal seam fires.

The County has adopted subdivision regulations that should be used as a tool to ensure that new residential and commercial subdivisions have proper fire suppression, such as fire suppression cisterns on the premises if they are located in the WUI. Developments should be encouraged to include fire mitigation techniques in the private covenants for subdivisions.

Property owners should also prepare measures to mitigate the risk of wildland fire. Properties should be maintained free of weeds and a 5-foot non-combustible zone should surround the home. New development should also consider fire-resistant design and materials to mitigate the risk of wildfire.

REMINGTON FIRE

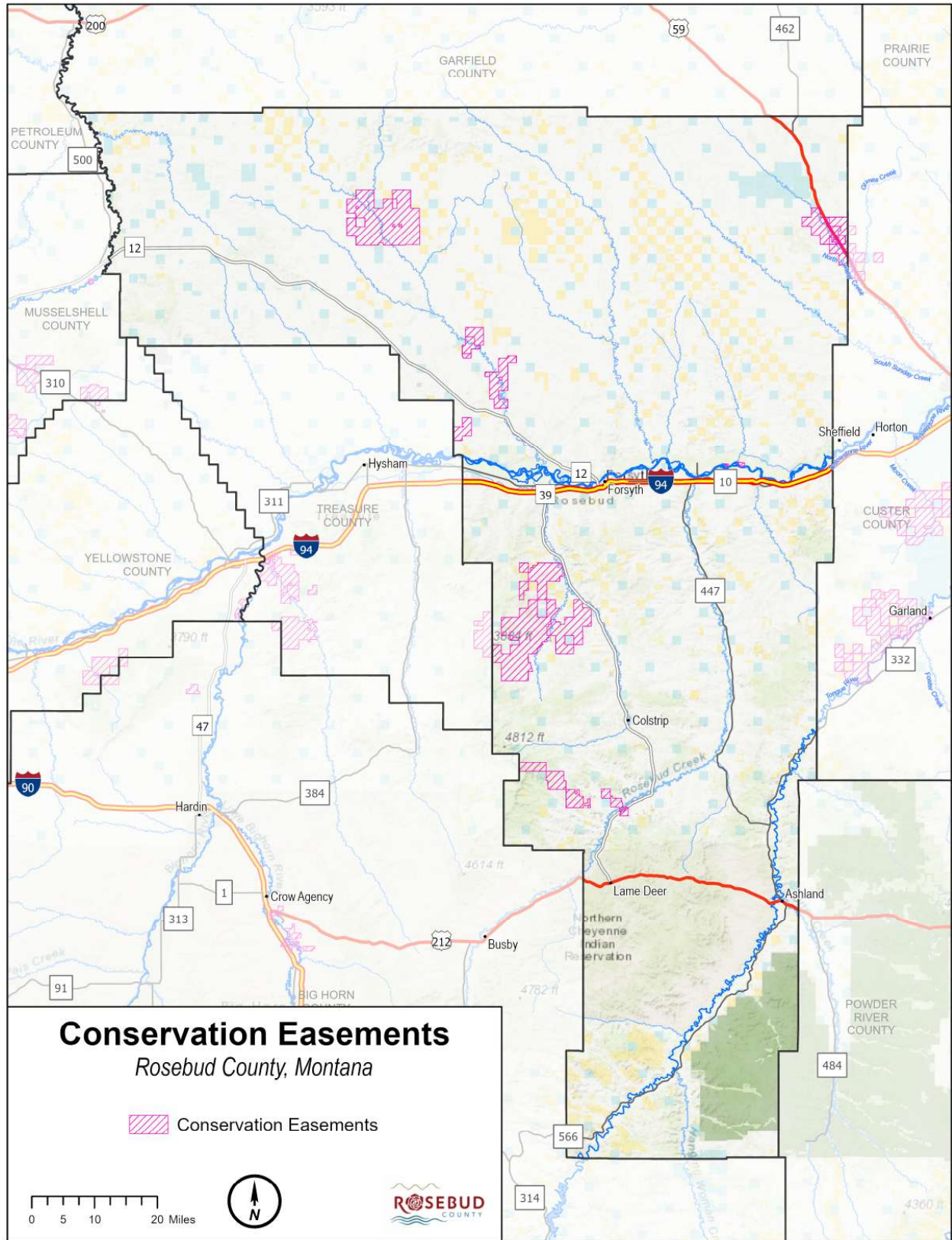
In August of 2024, the Remington Fire spread from northern Wyoming into Powder River, Bighorn, and Rosebud County. Though there was no identified source of the ignition of the fire, it took advantage of strong winds and dry fuel loads, burning an estimated 195,000 acres. The main fuels were short grass, timber with grass understory, and brush. Farmers and ranchers in the area were impacted by the fire the most, and elected officials continue to provide assistance to those who were impacted by the fire.

RICHARD SPRING FIRE

In 2021 the Richard Spring Fire devastated a large portion of Rosebud County. The cause of the fire was coal seams and totaled 171,130 acres of burned land. There were also 12 secondary structures that were lost in the fire before it was 100% contained. The abundance of coal seams within Rosebud County creates a wildfire hazard and the County should continue to ensure that they have the equipment and staffing to combat such a fire if it arises again.

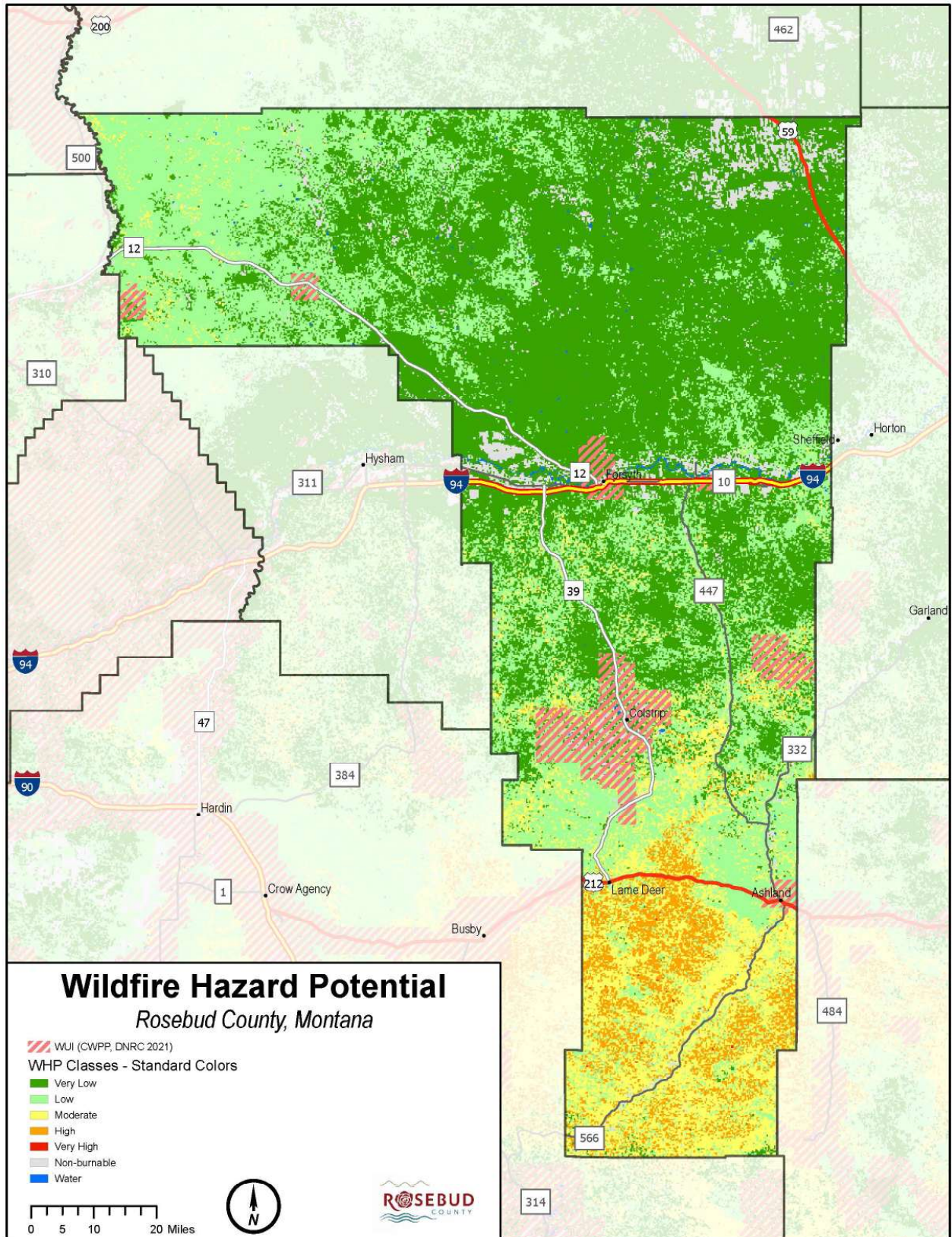
NATURAL RESOURCES-CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

▼ Map 4 - Conservation Easement Map



NATURAL RESOURCES-CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

▼ Map 5 - Wildfire Hazard Potential Map



NATURAL RESOURCES-CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

WATER RESOURCES

Some of the major drainages in the County include the Yellowstone, Musselshell, and Tongue Rivers. There are far more minor drainages within the County that may have intermittent streams within the network. These drainages are Arnells, Porcupine, Little Porcupine, Rosebud, and Sunday and North Sunday Creeks. The Yellowstone River provides municipal water to Colstrip and Forsyth and also plays a key role in the support of the power plants in Colstrip. The Yellowstone provides the most recreational opportunities for the residents of the County. Groundwater is usually tapped via a well. There are currently 966 domestic wells in the County, per the Montana Bureau of Geology and Mines Ground Water Information Center, with the average depth of a well being 212.35 feet.

Outside of major and minor drainages, Rosebud County has limited water quantity and is challenged by water quality. For example,

A predictor of development, especially residential development, is access to a reliable quality water source. Given this, development outside of the Yellowstone River area would be difficult and even the maintenance of a currently existing development could prove difficult during times of intermittent stream flow and drought. One way the County could support residents experiencing limited water quantity and quality is by providing a bulk water fill-up station for cisterns that allows water to be purchased by the gallon for a small fee.

VEGETATION

The majority of the vegetation found in Rosebud County is grassland, making up 50.4% of the land cover in the County. Shrubland comes in behind at 34.8% of the land cover, and forest at 7.8%. There is a lack of mixed cropland in the County, with the majority of the cropland being located near the Yellowstone River. The lack of water coverage in the County (0.3%) and the majority of the County being grassland creates an environment more poised for ranching than farming.

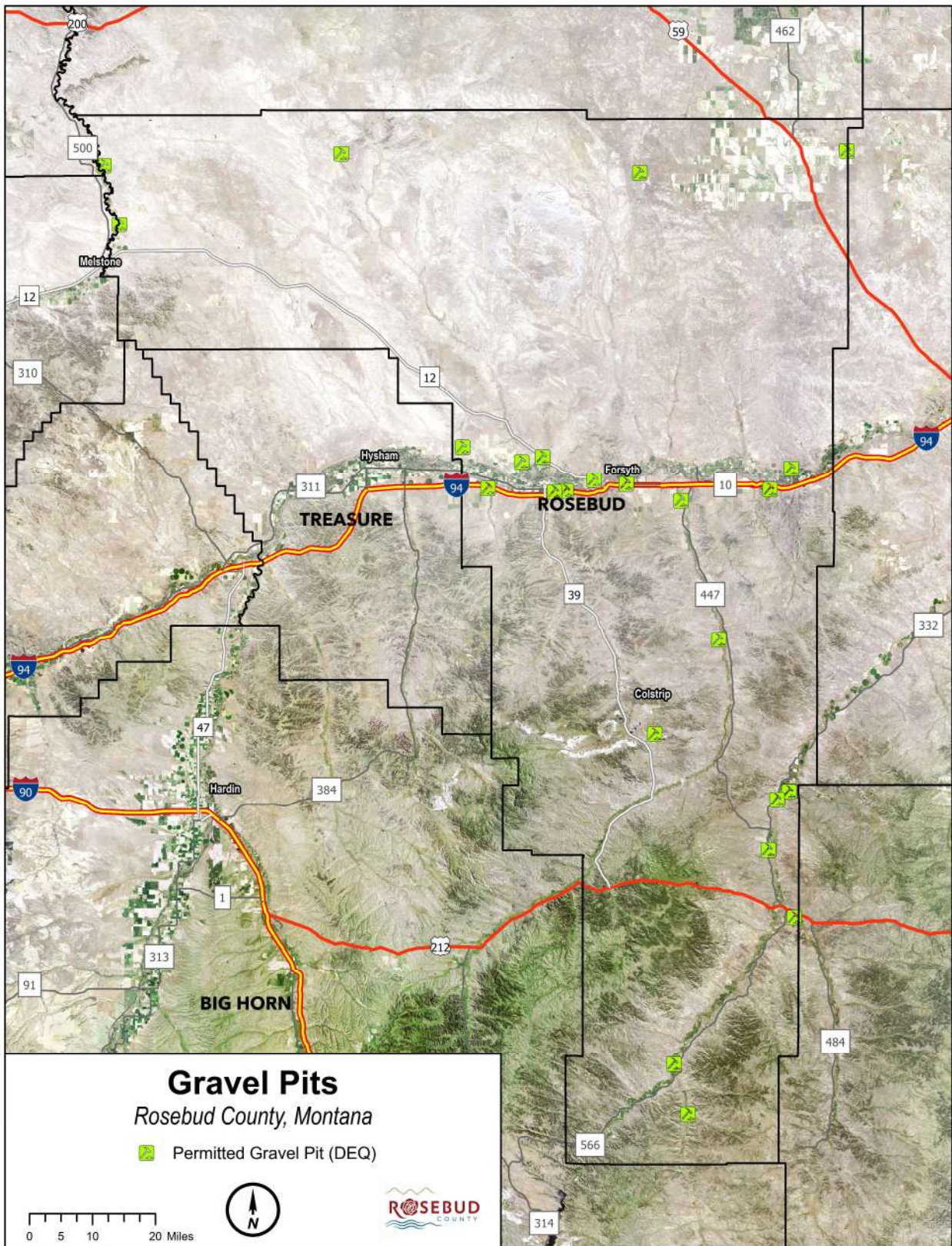
The grassland environment acts as a natural carbon sink and provides the benefits of improved soil and air quality, and ample wildlife habitats. Conserving the rich species diversity that the grasslands provide can attract visitors, including hunters and birders presenting the County with seasonal tourism opportunities.

SAND AND GRAVEL RESOURCES

Access to sand and gravel is important for the construction and maintenance of streets and roads as well as the construction of new homes and businesses. According to the Montana Department of Environmental Quality Open Cut Mining Program, there are currently 24 open-cut mining permits located in the County. The County does not regulate opencut mining, but the Department of Environmental Quality issues opencut mining permits.

NATURAL RESOURCES-CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

▼ Map 6 - Gravel Pits Map



NATURAL RESOURCES-CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS



HAZARD AREAS

Rosebud County is included in Montana’s Hazard Mitigation Planning for the Eastern Region, which is expected to be finalized in 2024. The plan indicates that Rosebud County’s main hazards are flooding, and fires.

FEMA’s National Risk Index ranks Rosebud County as “Very Low Risk”. This index identified Cold waves, drought, and heat waves, as the top three risks for expected annual loss, though wildland fires are often a very high risk as well that is associated with heat waves and drought.

CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

The rich history of Rosebud County is evident by the number of historical sites. Early settlers, railroads, and mining all played a significant role in establishing Rosebud County and the communities within it. Long before 1901 when the County was formed, Native Americans from the Plains Indian Tribes lived off the land and the Lewis and Clark Exploration traveled the Yellowstone River through what is now Rosebud County.

Rosebud County contains thirteen (13) properties and three (3) districts on the National Register of Historic Places. The historical properties include the Howard School, Cold Springs Ranch House, Forsyth Bridge, Forsyth Water Pumping Station, Herman and Hannah Anderson House, Clause O. Marcyes House, Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers Hall, Blue Front Rooming House, First Presbyterian Church and Manse, Rosebud County Court House, Rosebud County Deaconess Hospital, St Philip’s Episcopal Church, and Poker Jim Butte Fire Lookout. The three historical districts are the Forsyth Main Street Historic District, the Forsyth Residential Historic District, and the Bones Brothers Ranch Historic District.

Rosebud County is rich in historical and cultural significance, with notable sites such as the Battle of the Butte battleground and Captain Benteen’s campsite, now located at the present-day Far West Fishing Access. These, along with numerous other historic locations tied to the Seventh Cavalry Regiment’s expedition to find the Lakota and Cheyenne tribes, are scattered along Rosebud Creek. The Northern Cheyenne Tribe also plays a pivotal role in shaping the cultural identity of the region, as do the historical impacts of mining in the Colstrip area. Additionally, Castle Rock Lake serves as a vital natural resource, further influencing the county’s cultural landscape.

NATURAL RESOURCES-CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

Rosebud County has an extensive amount of natural and cultural resources. These resources need to continue to be maintained due to their capabilities of providing jobs to the community, tourism opportunities, and historic preservation. It is recommended that the County identify and prioritize preservation projects to ensure that these resources can be utilized to their full extent. By updating and creating planning documents the County can use progressive planning techniques to aid them in natural and cultural preservation.

LAND USE REGULATIONS

EXISTING LAND USE

Rosebud County is the fifth largest county in the State of Montana, covering 5,009.5 square miles of land and 15.8 square miles of surface water, the County stretches 85 air miles from the northern edge of the County to the southern edge. The majority of the County is open grassland or shrubland that is used for agricultural purposes, typically, grazing cattle. The Yellowstone River valley is used for cropland, and there is some timber extraction in the southern portion of the County. Other major uses include coal mining and electrical generation, either via the coal-fired power plant, or wind energy.

Colstrip and Forsyth both have a mix of commercial, residential, and industrial uses, where many of the unincorporated areas are mainly rural residential areas with ties to agricultural land uses.

ZONING

There are no zoning regulations in Rosebud County other than those within the municipalities of Colstrip and Forsyth.

AIRPORT AFFECTED AREA REGULATIONS

Airport Affected Area Regulations for the airports outside of Forsyth and Colstrip. The established ordinances for both airports are to regulate land uses within the airport area of influence to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the general public by preventing hazards to air navigation in the airport area of impact. Both airports have adopted ordinances that restrict incompatible land uses around the airport and establish a board of adjustment to review land use applications in this area.

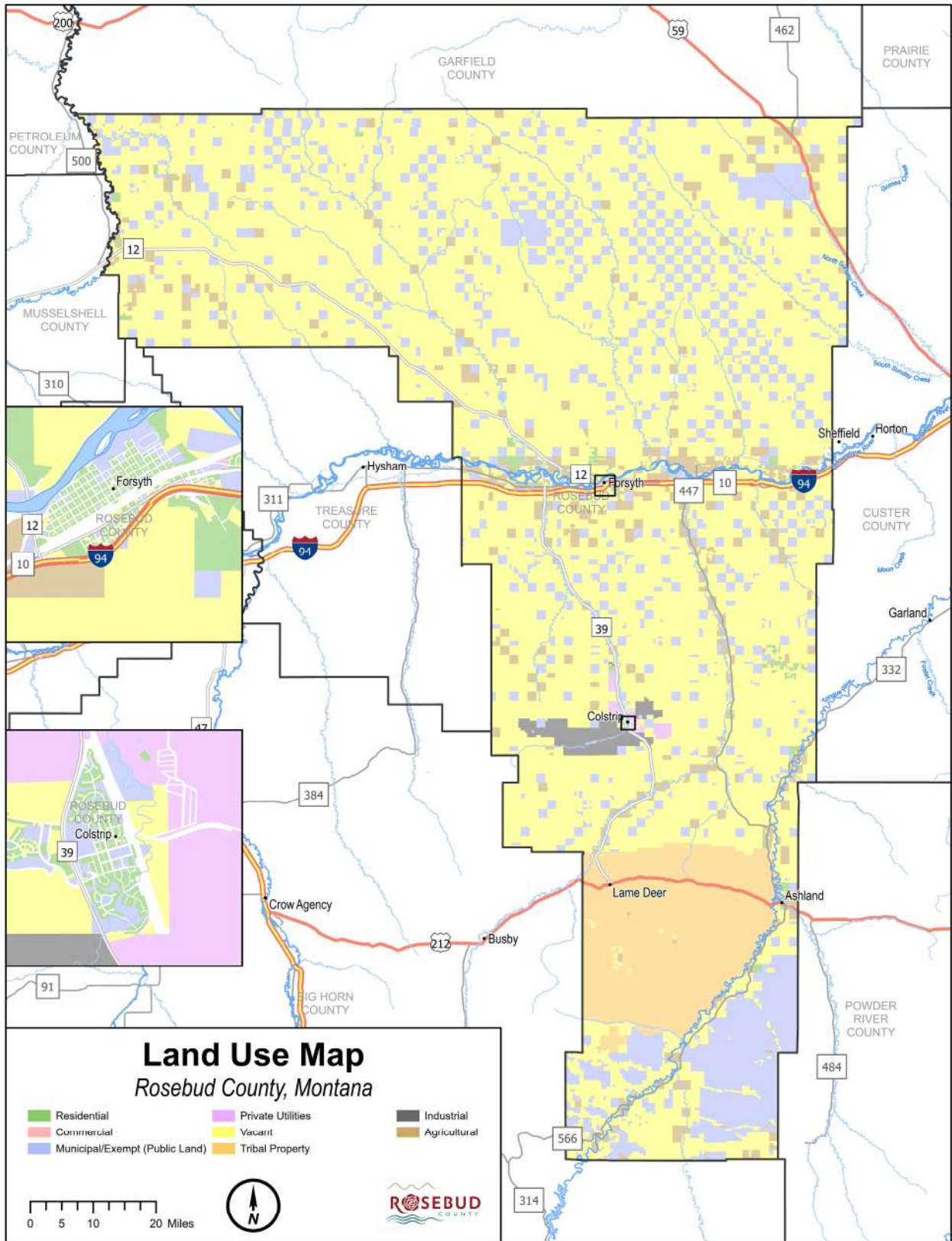


SUBDIVISION

Rosebud County has adopted subdivision regulations that were last revised in 2018. The Montana State statute for subdivisions can be quite fluid and susceptible to legislative changes depending on the current land use issues and government administrations. The County is encouraged to keep an eye on any legislative changes that may pass that would have an impact on the subdivision requirements for the County. The County should review the current regulations to ensure that they meet the current statute and amend or revise the regulations accordingly.

LAND USE REGULATIONS

▼ Map 7 - Land Use Map



LAND USE REGULATIONS

FLOODPLAIN

Rosebud County is a participant in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) (1977) and recently adopted the new model regulations for floodplain management created by the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation.

The County currently has 47 effective Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and one Flood Insurance Study (FIS) for the entire County. There are currently no FEMA FIRM maps for the Yellowstone River, however, the County has been regulating development within the floodplain of the Yellowstone.

The DNRC is currently drafting new floodplain maps for the mid-Yellowstone Basin, which includes Rosebud County. The projected date of the floodplain maps to go into effect is 2027-2028.

SURVEY REVIEW

Rosebud County is required to review subdivision exemptions through the process of survey review. The most common surveys that Rosebud County often reviews are retracement surveys and family exemptions.

OTHER REGULATIONS

The County requires septic permits through the County sanitarian, and road encroachment permits through the County road department. Building permits for residential and commercial structures are obtained through the State of Montana Building inspector.

The results of the community survey, distributed throughout the county showed that many of the residents would like to see more growth in the County, however, there is an expressed need to preserve the agricultural farmlands. As of late, there has not been widespread encroachment into the agricultural lands by residential or commercial development, however, the County should continue to periodically review its land use regulations to ensure that they are compliant with all state statutes and reflect the current nature of development within the County.

Developers and property owners are also required to submit a weed management plan to the County Weed Department that meets the Montana Code Annotated requirements for weed management found in Title 7, Chapter 22, Part 21 of the MCA.

RESIDENT OUTREACH

The update of the County Growth Policy has been based on the advice and guidance of County residents and Commissioners over the last Seven (7) months.

The County created a community survey to assist in gathering advice and guidance from residents about what opportunities and issues were their priority. The survey was available to residents in a hardcopy format and online. One hundred and twenty-eight (128) people participated in the survey.

Some of the more notable results of the survey showed the following:

- Respondents like the County's quality of life, safety rural lifestyle, and affordability.
- The five (5) most important economic developments that respondents would like to see are:
 - retail,
 - energy and transmission projects
 - single-family residential development,
 - agricultural-related development, and
 - more family farms/ranches.

LAND USE REGULATIONS

The County Commissioners worked through and discussed the various drafts of the growth policy.

The County Commissioners worked through and discussed the various drafts of the growth policy.

The County Planning Board held a hearing on March 10, 2025, and recommended the adoption of the Plan to the County Commissioners. The Commissioners held a public hearing on [INSERT DATE] to consider the Planning Board's recommendation. The Commissioners formally approved the Growth Policy by a vote of [enter vote] on [INSERT DATE].

APPENDIX A - SUBDIVISION DEFINITIONS

SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS

The Montana Code Annotated requires that the County provide information in this plan explaining how they will:

- Define the review criteria found in 76-3-608 (3)(a) M.C.A. i.e., impacts upon agriculture, local services, public health, and safety etc.; and
- Evaluate and make decisions regarding proposed subdivisions with respect to the criteria in 76-3-608 (3)(a) M.C.A.

Definition of 76-3-608 Criteria

Rosebud County will use the following definitions, as referenced in the Rosebud County Subdivision Regulations, effective September 12, 2017.

- Agriculture: The practice of cultivating the ground, raising crops, and/or rearing animals.
- Agricultural Water User Facility: Any part of an irrigation system used to produce an agricultural product on property used for agricultural purposes.
- Local Services: Any and all services and facilities that local government entities are authorized to provide.
- Natural Environment: The physical conditions which exist within a given area, including land, air, water, mineral, flora, fauna, noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic considerations.
- Public Health and Safety: A condition of optimal well-being, free from danger, risk, or injury for a community at large, or for all people, not merely for the welfare of a specific individual or a small class of persons.
- Wildlife: Living things which are neither human, nor domesticated nor plant.
- Wildlife Habitat: Place or type of site where wildlife naturally lives and grows.

Evaluation of Subdivisions Based Upon 76-3-608 Review Criteria

The review of subdivision applications by the County will include documentation and an analysis as to whether or not the proposed subdivision will impact agriculture, agricultural water user facilities, local services, the natural environment, wildlife, wildlife habitat, and public health and safety.

The County will evaluate each subdivision with regard to the expected impacts upon each of the criteria, and the degree to which the subdivision applicant proposes to mitigate any adverse impacts. This evaluation will be based upon the subdivision application, staff review, reports and the information gathered from public hearings and other sources of information as deemed appropriate.

Upon completion of its review and evaluation, the County will render a decision on the proposed subdivision with respect to the requirements of the County Subdivision Regulations County Zoning Code, the County Growth Policy, other applicable plans and the Montana Subdivision and Platting Act.

Evaluation Criteria for Effects on Agriculture

- a. How many, if any, acres of land would be removed from livestock or crop production?
- b. Are any of the lands taken out of production irrigated?

Evaluation Criteria for Effects on Agricultural Water User Facilities

- a. Will the subdivision interfere with any irrigation system or present any interference with agricultural operations in the vicinity?
- b. Will the subdivision comply with water rights requirements set forth in 76-3-504(1)(i) and (j) MCA?

APPENDIX A - SUBDIVISION DEFINITIONS

Evaluation Criteria for Upon Local Services

- a. Will the subdivision connect to central water and sewer systems? Who will pay the cost of connecting to the central system?
- b. What, if any, increased costs for maintenance and operation will be incurred, and what approximately will be those costs? Will the lot buyers pay regular water and sewer charges?
- c. Which agencies will provide law enforcement, fire protection, and ambulance services? Will providing these services to the subdivision create increased costs to any of these agencies or County of Fort Benton? Approximately how much will the subdivision increase agency costs? Will the subdivider or subsequent lot buyers bear those increased costs, or will the taxpayers and/or rate payers bear the costs?
- d. At an average of eight vehicle trips per day per lot, how many average vehicle trips per day will the subdivision generate? Will the extension of public streets or roads be needed and, if so, who will bear the costs? Will the subdivision increase the costs or road maintenance and, if so, by approximately how much? Will the subdivider/lot buyers or the public bear those increased costs?
- e. At an average of 1.5 school-age children per lot, how many elementary and high school students will be added to public schools? What net financial effect would these additional students have for the public schools?
- f. How much does the land affected by the proposed subdivision currently pay in local property taxes? After the subdivision is fully developed, how much will the land and improvements be expected to pay in local property taxes, at current mill levies?

Evaluation Criteria for Effect on Natural Environment

- a. Will the subdivision increase stormwater run-off: interfere with natural drainage ways, or cause or increase erosion? Has the County Department Heads Director determined that the size, location, and installation of any culverts meet design standards? Will the terrain create significant surface run-off problems? Will the grading and drainage plan minimize run-off and adverse impacts?
- b. Is the subdivision expected to adversely affect native vegetation, soils, or the water quality, or quantity of surface or groundwater. Will areas disturbed by cutting, filling, and grading be reseeded in the same season to minimize erosion?
- c. Are weed control measures proposed to prevent the proliferation of weed growth within the subdivision and on areas disturbed by construction?

Evaluation Criteria for Effect on Public Health and Safety

- a. Is the subdivision subject to potential natural hazards such as flooding, snow or rockslides, high winds, wildfire, or excessive slopes, or potential man-made hazards such as high voltage power lines, high pressure gas lines, nearby industrial or mining activity, or high traffic volumes? If so, what measures has the subdivider proposed to minimize those hazards?

Evaluation Criteria for Effect on Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat

- a. Will the expected effects of pets and human activity generated by the subdivision significantly affect wildlife?
- b. Will the subdivision be located in an area of significant wildlife habitat or in any critical wildlife area?

Public Hearing Procedure for Subdivision Proposals

The County Planning Board conducts its public meetings following the public notification requirements, as described in State statute and the Rosebud County Subdivision Regulations. Major subdivisions and those minor subdivisions treated as major subdivisions are subject to public hearings.

APPENDIX A - SUBDIVISION DEFINITIONS

The County Planning Board shall provide public notice of proposed subdivisions following the notice requirements as prescribed by statute. Public hearings are required for major subdivisions and subsequent minor subdivisions. Hearings are not permitted for first minor subdivisions.

Public hearings held by the Planning Board shall use the following format:

1. The Planning Board Chair opens the hearing. The planner will present a report that provides background information and describes the key technical points of the application and the proposal's relationship to any land use regulations the Growth Policy, and the draft Findings of Fact.
2. The subdivider or representative may present information and testimony relating to the proposed subdivision. Planning Board members are permitted to direct any relevant questions to the planner or the applicant.
3. Any written comments submitted prior to the hearing will be noted and made available to the public upon request. The President may read correspondence aloud. If the Chair deems that the written comments are numerous or voluminous, he may request that the written comments be summarized.
4. Members of the audience will be given an opportunity to comment on the application or proposal. Comments should be factual and relevant to the proposal. Each person speaking must give his or her name, address, and nature of interest in the matter.
5. After public comment is complete, the subdivider or representative may respond briefly.
6. Planning Board members may voice other considerations and may pose any relevant questions through the Chair.
7. The Chair closes the hearing on the subdivision proposal.
8. The Planning Board will then deliberate the Findings of Fact and Conditions outlined in the planner's report, then vote to make a recommendation to the County Commission for approval as proposed, approval with conditions, or denial.

The Rosebud County Commission will hold a public meeting to review the County Planning Board's recommendation and render a decision for approval, conditional approval, or denial of the proposed subdivision.

APPENDIX B - SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- Rosebud County, Montana
- DailyMontanan.com
- Inciweb.wildlifre.gov
- Federal Emergency Management Agency
- Federal Emergency Management Agency National Risk Index
- Headwaters Economics' Economic Profile System
- Housing and Urban Development's Low- and Moderate-Income Area Data
- Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology
- Montana Code Annotated
- Montana Department of Administration's Local Government Services Bureau
- Montana Department of Commerce's Census and Economic Information Center
- Montana Department of Environmental Quality's Opencut Mining Map
- Montana Department of Revenue
- Montana Department of Natural Resources Conservation Service's AgACIS Climate Data
- Montana Department of Natural Resources Conservation Service's Wildfire Risk Assessment
- Montana Department of Transportation
- Montana Freepress.org
- Montana Labor Market Information
- Montana Natural Heritage Viewer
- Montana Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Program
- Montana State Library's Montana Cadastral
- National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places
- NextEraenergyresources.com
- Office of Public Instruction's School and District Profiles
- On the Map (Census.gov)
- Rosebud County, Montana
- Rosebud County Disaster and Emergency Services
- Rural Health Information Hub
- Silverthorn Renewables
- United States Census Bureau's Longitudinal-Employer Household Dynamics
- United States Department of Agriculture

