

## **Community Economic Impact Study of Effects of Silica Sand Mining in Buffalo County**

Carl Duley, UW-Cooperative Extension, Buffalo County Agriculture Agent

Major role is to bring in a local unbiased perspective and facilitate the local discussions.

Steven Deller, UW-Madison/Cooperative Extension, Community Development Economist

Major role is the design of the study and economic analysis of the various scenarios that are developed.

A series of 4 community meetings will be planned and developed. Each meeting will have an educational component and a time for a “study group” or committee to react and reflect on the materials presented. This is a plan for the events, but will change some depending on the discussion by the local committee. The first two meetings will have a public education portion followed by a working session for committee members. These will be closed to allow the committee to get work done. The later two meetings will be “working sessions” and will in general be closed to the public.

All committee minutes will be posted on the Buffalo County Extension web page. Remember this study will focus on the economics of silica (frac) sand mining and the discussion will be primarily limited to economic factors. This committee will not be making recommendations to the Buffalo County Board or to the community. They will only be reporting the findings of their study to the public. Decisions by the committee will be done by consensus, facilitated by UW-Cooperative Extension Faculty. The report will include information that they were able to find and what information may not be available and needs to be studied.

- **Meeting One:** Initial community meeting.
  - Introduce the process of the project
  - Basic information about the local economy is presented, including a brief discussion on possible economic development in Buffalo County.
  - Economic problem/issue is defined.
  - Local Committee (6-10 people) is identified – these are people that are willing to work toward a common solution, regardless of where they stand personally on the issue. These people will have been identified and asked to join the formal working group.
  
- **Meeting Two:** Further baseline data and begin scenario development.
  - Literature review of what is currently out in the reviewed literature on sand mining.
  - Staff paper presented by Steve Deller.
  - Explain limitations of economic modeling.

- Local committee discusses the literature and what “we” have and what we need to know – information that we will try to get.
- Begin developing possible scenarios for the economic impact model.
- **Meeting Three:** Initial scenarios are discussed.
  - Discuss the model results of scenarios that the committee selected.
  - Talk about pros and cons of the results.
  - Limitations of model results will be discussed.
  - Committee will refine the inputs for the model.
  - Committee will discuss the possible effects of the results on their community.
- **Meeting Four:** Committee develops action plan.
  - Committee reviews model results.
  - Action plan is drafted.
  - Strategies are developed and specific steps are drafted for Buffalo County.
  - Plan for community forum is developed.
  - Define what information is missing for a complete analysis.
- **Public Forum:** Results of committee work presented.

This plan, as with all plans, is subject to change as information is made available.

The economic results are only one part of community change. Many non-economic factors may or may not be part of the economic analysis, but are equally (any many times) more important than economic factors. These include environment, health, safety, cultural history, etc.

**Keys to success:**

- Local commitment to the process.
- Community ownership, especially from the local committee.
- Reliable, quality information.
- Process must challenge the community to think in new ways.
- Committee members that are “reasonable” (willing to listen to all sides of the issue) and develop consensus on solutions, as much as possible.
- The final “report out” will be a joint product of the community members of the committee with facilitated input from UW-Cooperative Extension.