Chapter 1 Introduction

VISION FOR CHERRY COUNTY'S FUTURE

This is what the people of Cherry County set out as their vison for the Comprehensive Plan in 1997, and what they wanted to be able to say about their community in the future. We also seek to likewise honor our roots as we plan for the future grounded in this timeless Cherry County vision.
(From the Cherry County Comprehensive Plan 1997)

Cherry County is a great place to live. The changes recent years have brought to our landscape have been well-managed by the community itself. There are still far more cattle than people, and everyone finds that balance acceptable.

The county's residents and communities are separated by many miles, but united by a shared history, the mutual respect of good neighbors, pride in being skilled stewards of the Sandhills landscape, and active participation in governing the communities, the county, the state, and the nation; Cattle Country traditions are cherished, but the cultures of all residents are respected. People care about each other and the land and water resources on which everyone depends.

Cherry County residents enjoy healthy lifestyles, a safe environment, and a stable economy. Public facilities and services, health care, education and training, recreation and entertainment, and employment and business opportunities are adequate to meet the needs of people of all ages. Efficient transportation and communication systems link people with each other, and the world, enhancing the sense of community and prosperity.

Private and public land and water resources are used wisely, sustaining for generations the ecological, economic, social, cultural, recreational, and aesthetic values that support the quality of life treasured by county residents. Maintaining these values also ensures that visitors have a memorable experience.

Cherry County was named in honor of Lt. Samuel A. Cherry of the Fifth United States Calvary of Fort Niobrara. He was murdered May 11th, 188, eight miles north of the fort near Rock Creek, South Dakota (*Perkey's Nebraska Place Names, 1995*)

People could live other places. They choose to live in Cherry County.

LOCATION

Cherry County is, the largest county in Nebraska and one of the largest in the United States, comprised of 3,828,500 acres. Established on April 4th, 1883, it, is located in north central Nebraska, along the Nebraska-South Dakota state line. The county is bounded on the north by the State of South Dakota and the Rosebud Indian Reservation;

on the east by Brown County and Keya Paha County; on the south by Grant, Hooker, Thomas, and Blaine Counties; and on the west by Sheridan County.

Seven highways cross the county including Nebraska Highways 12, 61, 97, Spur 16B, Spur 16 F, US Highway 20 and US Highway 83. The county is home to the communities of Cody, Crookston, Kilgore, Merriman, Nenzel, Valentine (county seat) and Wood Lake; plus, the unincorporated communities of Brownlee, Elsmere, Purdum, Sparks and Eli.

Planning Principles

The purpose of the Cherry County Comprehensive Development Plan is to help citizens and decision makers guide change into the framework of this vision, which includes both a traditional respect for property rights and a strong sense of responsibility and stewardship.

The goals, objectives and policies set forth in this Comprehensive plan are developed to fulfill the following core principles:

1. All programs, services, activities and land-uses shall support, and not diminish, the continuation of the agriculture industry that is the foundation of the Cherry County culture and prosperity;
2. Private property rights shall be fully protected, and those activities that erode the full use and enjoyment of these rights by the citizens shall be deterred or prohibited as allowed by law; and
3. Protecting the health, safety and welfare of the citizens is the Counties highest priority and is the purpose for the policies contained within this plan.

These core principles are set forth to ensure the full measure of Article 1.1 of the Constitution of the State of Nebraska will be honored in Cherry County, which states:
"All persons are by nature free and independent, and have certain inherent and inalienable rights; among these are life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, and the right to keep and bear arms for security or defense of self, family, home, and others, and for lawful common defense, hunting, recreational use, and all other lawful purposes, and such rights shall not be denied or infringed by the state or any subdivision thereof. To secure these rights, and the protection of property, governments are instituted among people, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." (Neb. Const. art. I, sec. 1 (1875); Amended 1988, Initiative Measure No. 403.)

Comprehensive Planning

The Cherry County Comprehensive Plan is designed to promote orderly growth and development for the county, as well as providing policy guidelines to enable citizens and elected officials to make informed decisions about the future of the county.

The Comprehensive Plan will provide a guideline for the location of future developments and uses within the planning jurisdiction of Cherry County. The Comprehensive Plan is intended to encourage a strong economic base for the county so all goals can be achieved.

The Comprehensive Development Plan is a vision presented in text, graphics and tables representing the desires of the County and its residents for the future.

The Comprehensive Development Plan is intended as an information and management tool for county leaders to use in their decision-making process when considering future developments. The Comprehensive Development Plan is not a static document; it should evolve as changes in the land use, population or local economy occur during the planning period.

The Planning Process

The Comprehensive Development Plan begins with the development of general goals and policies, based upon current and future issues faced by the county and its residents. These are intended to be practical guidelines for addressing existing conditions and guiding future growth.

The Plan is only one of several tools within the toolbox that helps guide the community into the future.

In conjunction, the data collection phase will be occurring. Data is collected to provide a snapshot of the past and present conditions within the county. Analysis of data provides the basis for developing forecasts for future land use demands, as well as future needs regarding housing and facilities.

Planned growth will make Cherry County more effective in serving residents, more efficient in using resources, and able to meet the standard of living and quality of life every individual desires.

The Comprehensive Development Plan is a **blueprint** designed to identify, assess, and develop actions and policies in the areas of population, land use, transportation, housing, economic development, county facilities, and utilities. The Comprehensive Development Plan contains recommendations, when implemented, that will be of value to the County and its residents.

The Comprehensive Development Plan identifies the tools, programs, and methods necessary to carry out the recommendations. Nevertheless, the implementation of the development policies contained within the Comprehensive Plan is dependent upon the adoption of the Plan by the governing body, and the leadership exercised by the present and future elected and appointed officials of the County.

Plan Preparation and Duration

The Plan was prepared under the direction of Cherry County Planning Commission, with the assistance and participation of the Cherry County Board of Commissioners; County staff; the Plan Review Committee and citizens of Cherry County. The time period for achieving the goals, programs, and developments identified in the Cherry County Comprehensive Plan is 20 years. However, the county should review the Plan annually and update the document every 10 years (2030), or when major, unanticipated opportunity arises.

Completing updates every ten years or so will allow the county to incorporate ideas and developments not known at the time of the present comprehensive planning process.

Comprehensive Plan Components

Nebraska State Statutes require the inclusion of certain elements in a Comprehensive Plan. A "Comprehensive Development Plan," as defined in Neb. Rev. Stat. § 23-114.02 (Reissue 1997), "shall consist of both graphic and textual material and shall be designed to accommodate anticipated long-range future growth" and contain the following elements:

(1) A land-use element which designates the proposed general distribution, general location, and extent of the uses of land for agriculture, housing, commerce, industry, recreation, education, public buildings and lands, and other categories of public and private use of land;

(2) The general location, character, and extent of existing and proposed major streets, roads, and highways, and air and other transportation routes and facilities;

(3) When a new comprehensive plan or a full update to an existing comprehensive plan is developed, an energy element which: Assesses energy infrastructure and energy use by sector, including residential, commercial, and industrial sectors; evaluates utilization of renewable energy sources; and promotes energy conservation measures that benefit the community; and

(4) The general location, type, capacity, and area served of present and projected or needed community facilities including recreation facilities, schools, libraries, other public buildings, and public utilities and services.

The Cherry County Comprehensive Plan is comprised of the following chapters:

- Introduction
- Population
- Housing
- Economics/Economic Development
- County Facilities
- Parks and Recreation
- Public Safety
- Communication, Utilities, and Energy
- Hazards
- Natural Resources and the Environmental
- Land Use
- Transportation
- Implementation

Analyzing past and existing demographic, housing, economic and social trends permit the projection of likely conditions in the future. Projections and forecasts are useful tools in planning for the future; however, these tools are not always accurate and may change due to unforeseen factors. Also, past trends may be skewed or the data may be inaccurate, creating a distorted picture of past conditions. Therefore, it is important for Cherry County to closely monitor population, housing and economic conditions that may impact the County. Through periodic monitoring, the County can adapt and adjust to changes at the local level. Having the ability to adapt to socio-economic change allows the County to maintain an effective Comprehensive Development Plan for the future, to enhance the quality of life, and to raise the standard of living for all residents.

The Comprehensive Development Plan records where Cherry County has been, where it is now, and where it likely will be in the future. Having this record in the Comprehensive Development Plan

will serve to inform County officials as much as possible.

The Comprehensive Development Plan is an information and management tool for County leaders to use in their decision-making process when considering future developments. The Comprehensive Development Plan is not a static document; it should evolve as changes in the land-use, population or local economy occur during the planning period. This information is the basis for Cherry County's evolution as it achieves its physical, social, and economic goals.

Comprehensive Plan and Zoning

Nebraska Revised Statutes §23-114.03 states: *Zoning regulations shall be adopted or amended by the county board only after the adoption of the county comprehensive development plan by the county board and the receipt of the planning commission's specific recommendations. Such zoning regulations shall be consistent with an adopted comprehensive development plan and designed for the purpose of promoting the health, safety, morals, convenience, order, prosperity, and welfare of the present and future inhabitants of Nebraska, including, among others, such specific purposes as:*

1. Developing both urban and nonurban areas;
2. Lessening congestion in the streets or roads;
3. Reducing the waste of excessive amounts of roads;
4. Securing safety from fire and other dangers;
5. Lessening or avoiding the hazards to persons and damage to property resulting from the accumulation or runoff of storm or flood waters;
6. Providing adequate light and air;
7. Preventing excessive concentration of population and excessive and wasteful scattering of population or settlement;
8. Promoting such distribution of population, such classification of land uses, and such distribution of land development as will assure adequate provisions for transportation, water flowage, water supply, drainage, sanitation, recreation, soil fertility, food supply, and other public requirements;
9. Protecting the tax base;
10. Protecting property against blight and depreciation;
11. Securing economy in governmental expenditures;
12. Fostering the state's agriculture, recreation, and other industries;
13. Encouraging the most appropriate use of land in the county; and
14. Preserving, protecting, and enhancing historic buildings, places, and districts.

The Comprehensive Plan provides policy direction for the elements listed above that are issues of concern and relevant to Cherry County. These can be found at the end of the Chapter discussions.

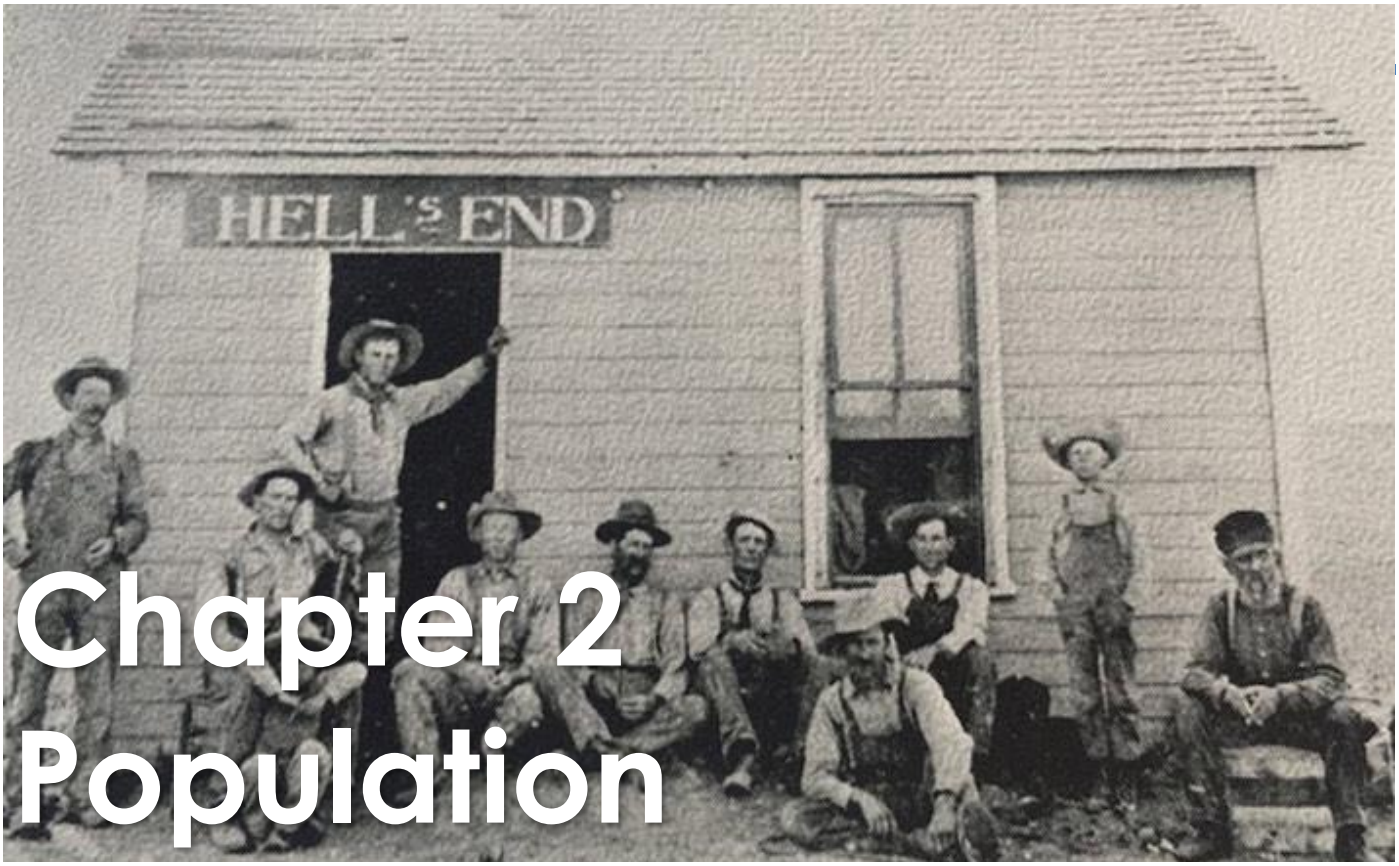
Adoption

Zoning regulations shall be reviewed and developed to comply with the updated and approved Comprehensive Plan. Zoning regulations must comply with, and be consistent, with the adopted comprehensive plan.

Jurisdictional Organization

The Cherry County Board of Commissioners, which is a board of elected officials, performs the governmental functions for the County. Each incorporated community in Cherry County also has elected officials and officers overseeing how their community is governed.

The planning and zoning jurisdiction of Cherry County, pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 23-114 (Reissue 1997), includes all of the unincorporated portions of the County, excluding the established extraterritorial jurisdiction of each incorporated city or village.



Chapter 2 Population

Population Profile

Population is the major catalyst driving everything in a municipality or a county including housing, local employment, economies and fiscal stability. It is critical to understand how past population trends when applied to the future impacts the overall area. Cherry County needs to understand where the County has been, where it is currently, and where it appears to be going.

Understanding the historic populations aid in identifying where the population may go in the future and aids in determining potential impacts on future housing, retail, medical, employment, and educational needs within Cherry County. In addition, when future populations appear to be declining, it provides a benchmark from which to direct and gauge economic development activities.

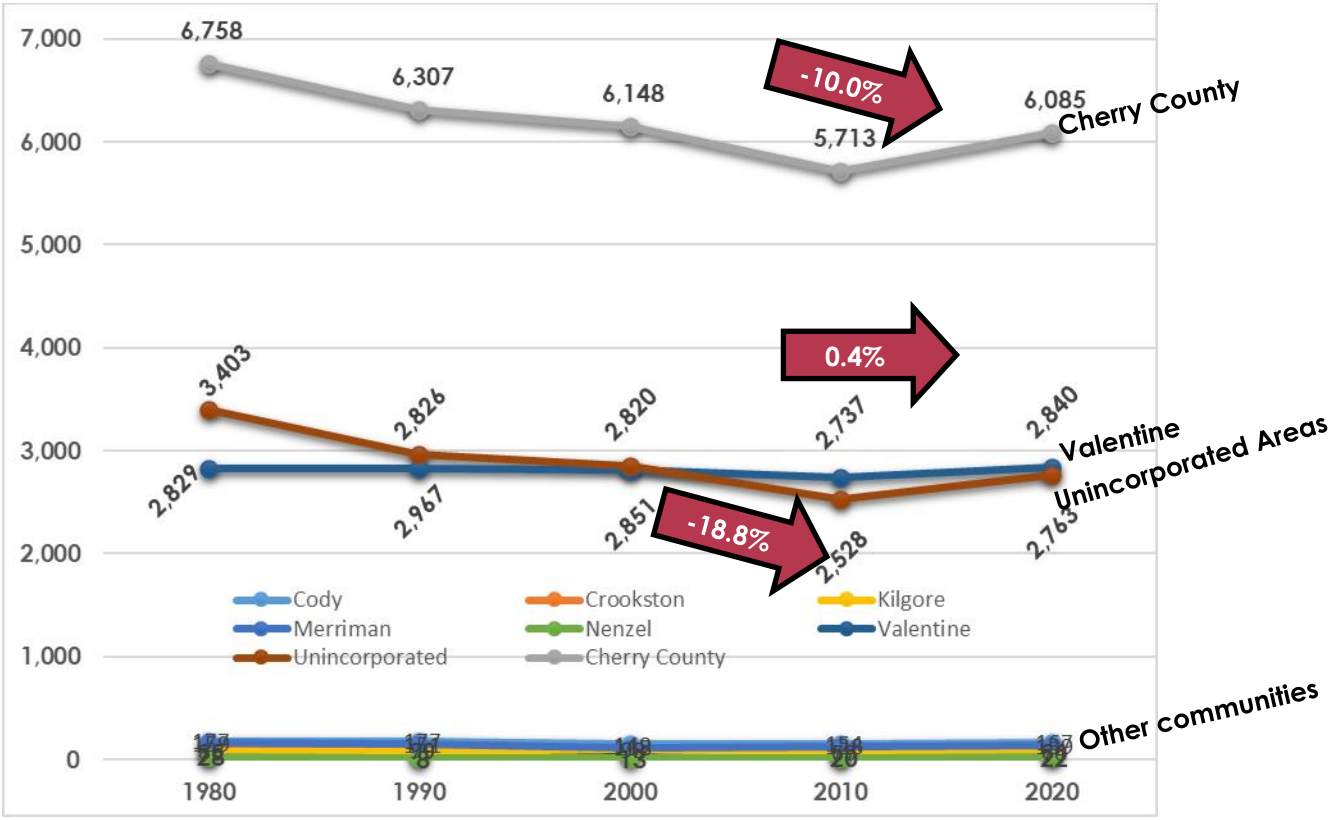
Projections provide an estimate for the County to base future land use and development decisions. However, population projections are only estimates and unforeseen factors may affect projections significantly.

Population Trends and Analysis

The population from 1980 through the 2020 ESRI estimates can be found in Figure 2.1 for Cherry County, as well as the incorporated communities within the county, and the unincorporated areas. The data provide a look at where the county has been and allows for the eventual projection of populations in the County. Figure 2.2 contains the population data for each community, for the same period, but shown at a legible scale.

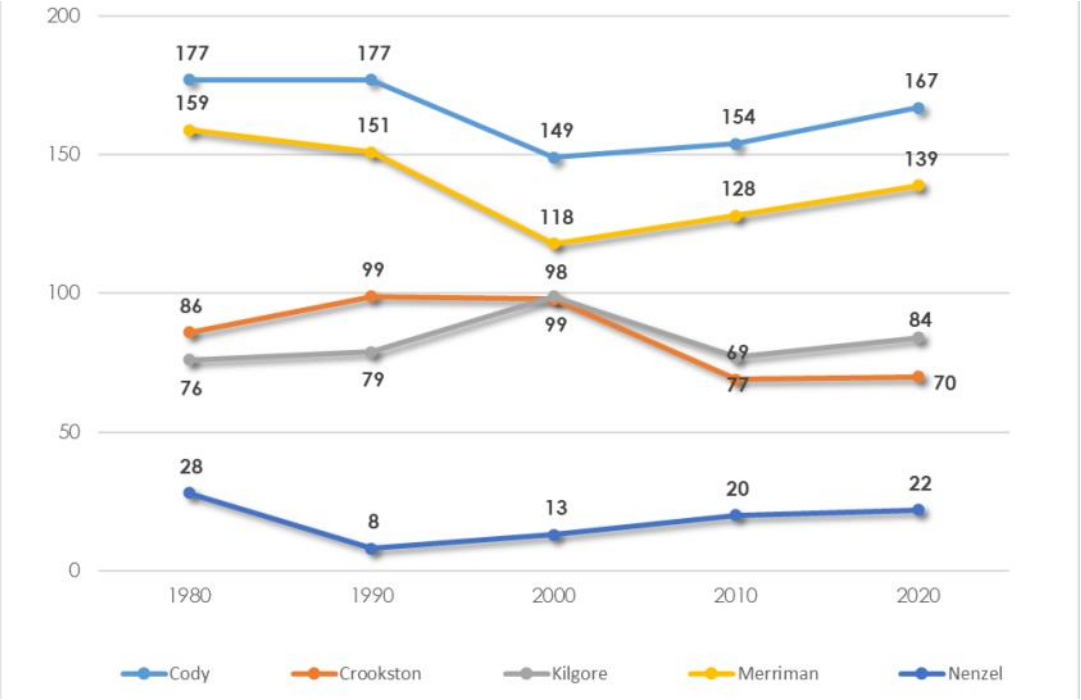
Overall, Cherry County has seen a –10.0% (-673 people) decline in population from 1980 to 2020. This decrease was based mostly on the population loss in the unincorporated portions of the county. The unincorporated portions of Cherry County declined by 640 people or –18.8% from 1980 to 2020. Valentine saw an actual increase of 11 people or 0.4%. Growth within the smaller municipalities has been mixed with some slight decreases and increases.

Figure 2.1: Population Trends and Analysis
Cherry County 1980 to 2020



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 1980 - 1990, 2000, 2010, ESRI Business Analyst 2020

Figure 2.2: Community Populations
Cherry County 1980 to 2020

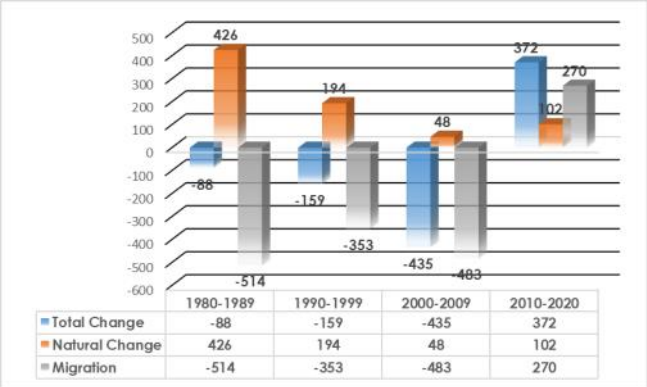


Source: U.S. Census Bureau 1980 - 1990, 2000, 2010, ESRI Business Analyst 2020

Migration Analysis

Migration Analysis is a tool which allows the County to understand critical dynamics of the population shifts. Total Migration indicates the population size migrating in or out of the County over a given period of time.

Figure 2.3: Migration Analysis Cherry County 1980 to 2020



	1980-1989	1990-1999	2000-2009	2010-2020
Total Change	-88	-159	-435	372
Natural Change	426	194	48	102
Migration	-514	-353	-483	270

Sources: Nebraska DHHS 1980-2018, ESRI Business Analyst 2020

Figure 2.3 indicates the overall population change, countywide, as well as the two key components of population change, migration and natural change.

Overall from 1980 to 2019, Cherry County has declined by 310 people. The overall decline was mostly associated with out-migration, which saw 1,080 people move out of Cherry County over the 40 year period.

During the 40 year period births exceeded deaths every decade between 1980 and 2020. During the time period, there were 770 more births in Cherry County than deaths.

Age Structure Analysis

Age structure is another important component of population analysis. By analyzing age structure, one can determine a key dynamic affecting the population of Cherry County. Note: the data in Figure 2.3 is based on a calendar year and the data in Table 2.1 is for 2010 and 2020.

Each age group affects the population in a number of different ways. For example, the existence of large younger age groups (20-44 years) means there is a greater ability to sustain future population growth compared to large older age groups. Understanding what is happening within the age groups of the county's population is necessary to effectively plan for the future.

Table 2.1: Age/Sex Characteristics

	Male and Female Populations			2010-2020	
Age in 2010	2010 population	Age in 2020	2020 population	Cohort Change	% Change
		0-4	291	291	
		5-9	328	328	
0-4	310	10-14	369	59	19.0%
5-9	358	15-19	329	-29	-8.1%
10-14	358	20-24	251	-107	-29.9%
15-19	344	25-29	298	-46	-13.4%
20-24	228	30-34	316	88	38.6%
25-29	285	35-39	360	75	26.3%
30-34	307	40-44	321	14	4.6%
35-44	639	45-54	780	141	22.1%
45-54	911	55-64	960	49	5.4%
55-64	783	65-74	795	12	1.5%
65-74	593	75-84	480	-113	-19.1%
75 & older	597	85 and over	207	-390	-65.3%
Total	5,713		6,085	372	6.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010, ESRI Business Analyst 2020

Table 2.1 contains the age group structure for Cherry County in 2010 and 2020. The examination of age structure provides an understanding of where some of the population shifts are occurring. These data allow for a better understanding of what could occur in the future. Reviewing population in this manner permits a detailed analysis of which specific groups are moving in and out of the county. Negative changes in a group indicate out-migration or a combination of out-migration and deaths.

Cherry County saw growth in four age groups. The 0 -4 and 5-9 groups are always an increase, since these individuals were not alive for the 2010 Census. Outside of the 2020 age groups of 0-4 and 5-9 years, the other increases were in the 10-14, 30-34, 35-39, 40-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65-74 age groups. Overall, there was an increase of 1,057 persons in these age groups. When you eliminate the first two younger populations, 438 people actually moved into Cherry County during this period. This population increase consisted primarily of family aged adults and children.

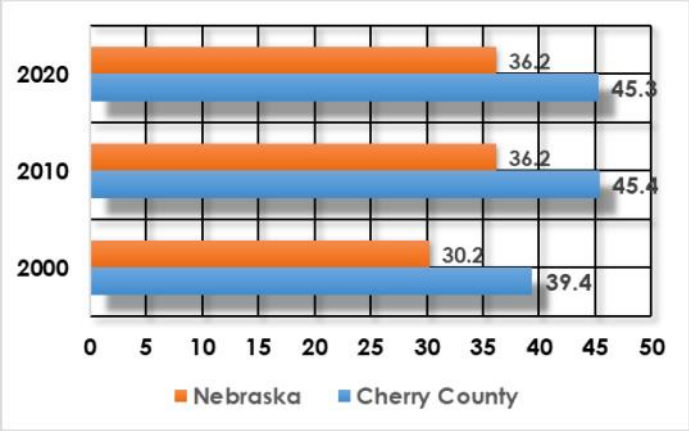
There were five age groups from 2010 with declining numbers in 2020. The group with the greatest loss was the 85 years+ (2020), which lost 390 persons over the period. This loss can be attributed to two causes: 1) people moving on after 75 years to other communities and senior care facilities, or 2) a dying population base. The latter is most likely since between 2010 and 2020 there were 629 resident deaths in Cherry County. Overall, Cherry County saw significant decreases in key age

groups with nearly all of the losses attributed to out-migration.

Median Age

Between 2000 and 2020, the median age in Cherry County increased from 39.4 years to 45.3 years. This increase equaled 5.0 years or 15.0% for the period. During this same period, the state of Nebraska saw a similar increase in the Median Age going from 30.2 in 2000 to 36.2 in 2020 or an increase of 6 years or 19.9%.

Figure 2.4: Median Age - 2000 to 2020



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000-2010, ESRI Business Analyst 2020

Dependency Ratio

Dependency ratios examine that portion of Cherry County's population which is supporting age groups historically dependent upon others for survival (18 years and under and 65 years and older), see the box above for details on calculating the ratio. The importance of this ratio focuses on the number of dependent persons and is there enough employed persons in the county to support these populations as well as themselves.

Figures 2.5 and 2.6 indicate the dependency ratios for 2010 and 2020 in Cherry County. The portion of persons less than 18 years of age decreased by 10.9% between 2000 and 2010; while those aged 65 years and older increased by 16.8% overall.

In 2010, Cherry County had a Dependency Ratio of 0.75 (42.9%/57.1%); however, by 2020 the Ratio had increased to 0.79 (44.0%/56.0%). This is supported by the slight decrease in the 18 and under age group, plus the increase in the 65 and older group.

Dependency Ratio

The dependency ratio examines the portion of a community's earnings that is spent supporting age groups typically and historically dependent on the incomes of others.

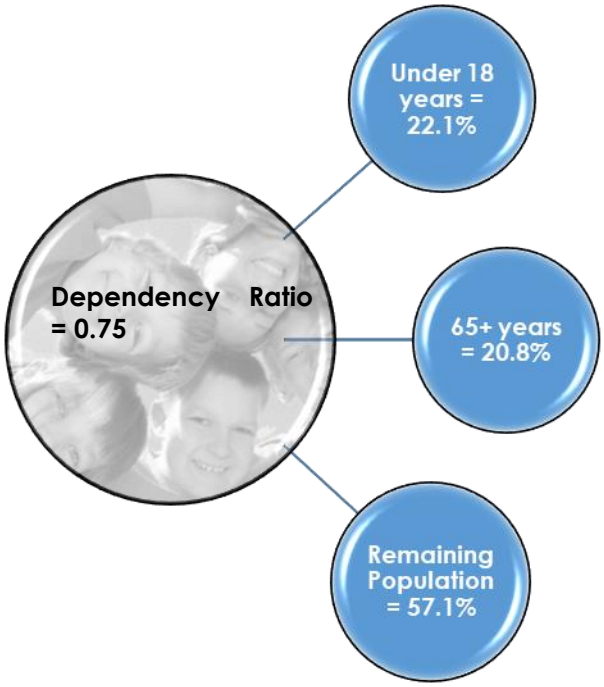
< 1: **1 Independent resident is able to support more than 1 Dependent resident**

=1: **1 Independent resident able to support 1 Dependent resident**

>1: **1 Independent resident able to support less than 1 Dependent resident**

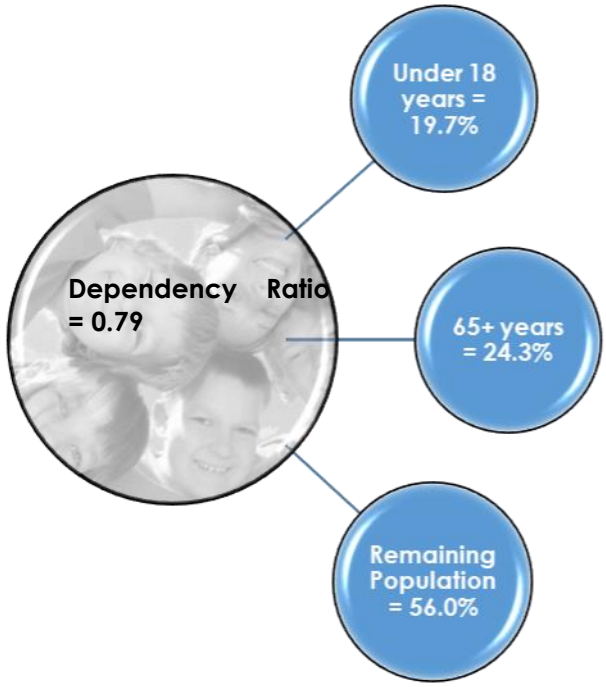
(%18 years and younger + %65 years and older)
% of remaining population

Figure 2.5: Dependency Ratio - 2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000-2010, ESRI Business Analyst 2020

FIGURE 2.6: DEPENDENCY RATIO – 2010



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000-2010, ESRI Business Analyst 2020

ETHNICITY

Cherry County during the past decade has seen a slight shift in ethnicity within the County. Analysis of the ethnicity provides more detail as to the changes being seen in a county. Ethnicity is more than additional people living in the county since these new residents bring their own cultures and beliefs to the area; some of these may not mesh well with those already in place. The changes in Cherry County saw increases in all non-white ethnic groups between 2010 and 2020.

TABLE 2.2: POPULATION BY ETHNICITY

Race	2010		2020		2000-2010	
	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	Net Change	% change
White, not Hispanic	5,180	85.1	5,396	88.7	216	4.2
Black or African Am.	13	0.2	30	0.5	17	130.8
Am. Indian & AK. Native	335	5.5	387	6.4	52	15.5
Asian & Pacific Islander	21	0.3	40	0.7	19	90.5
Other, not Hispanic	23	0.4	35	0.6	12	52.2
Hispanic	95	1.6	197	3.2	102	107.4

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000-2010, ESRI Business Analyst 2020

The largest change (numerically) was the White, non Hispanic and American Indian Hispanic population. The White, non Hispanic population saw an additional 216 people (4.2%); while, the Hispanic population grew by 102 people (107.4%) between 2010 and 2020.

The third largest change (numerically) was the American Indian and Alaskan native. American Indian and Alaskan native population grew by 52 (15.5%) people between 2010 and 2020.

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Population projections are estimates based upon past and present circumstances. The use of population projections allows Cherry County to estimate the potential population in future years by looking at past trends. By scrutinizing population changes in this manner, the County will be able to develop a baseline of change from which future scenarios can be generated. A number of factors (demographics, economics, social, etc.) may affect projections positively or negatively.

At the present time, these projections are the best crystal ball Cherry County has for predicting future population changes. There are many methods to project the future population trends; the projection technique used below are intended to give Cherry County a broad overview of the possible population changes that could occur in the future.

TREND LINE ANALYSIS

Trend Line Analysis is a process of projecting future populations based upon changes during a specified period of time. In the analysis of Cherry County, four different trend lines were reviewed: 2000 to 2020, 1980 to 2020, 1990 to 2020, and 1960 to 2020. A review of these trend lines indicates Cherry County will see varied levels of population changes between now and 2050. The following projections summarize the decennial population for Cherry County through 2050.

SUMMARY OF POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Three population projection scenarios were selected and include (1) a Low Series; (2) a Medium Series; and, (3) a High Series.

Low = *1960 to 2020*

2020	6,085 persons
2030	5,788 persons
2040	5,505 persons
2050	5,236 persons

Medium = *2000 to 2020*

2020	6,085 persons
2030	5,961 persons
2040	5,900 persons
2050	5,871 persons

Cherry County Trend Analysis

Year	1960 to 2020
2020	6,085 persons
2030	5,788 persons
2040	5,505 persons
2050	5,236 persons

Year	1990 to 2020
2020	6,085 persons
2030	6,013 persons
2040	5,941 persons
2050	5,871 persons

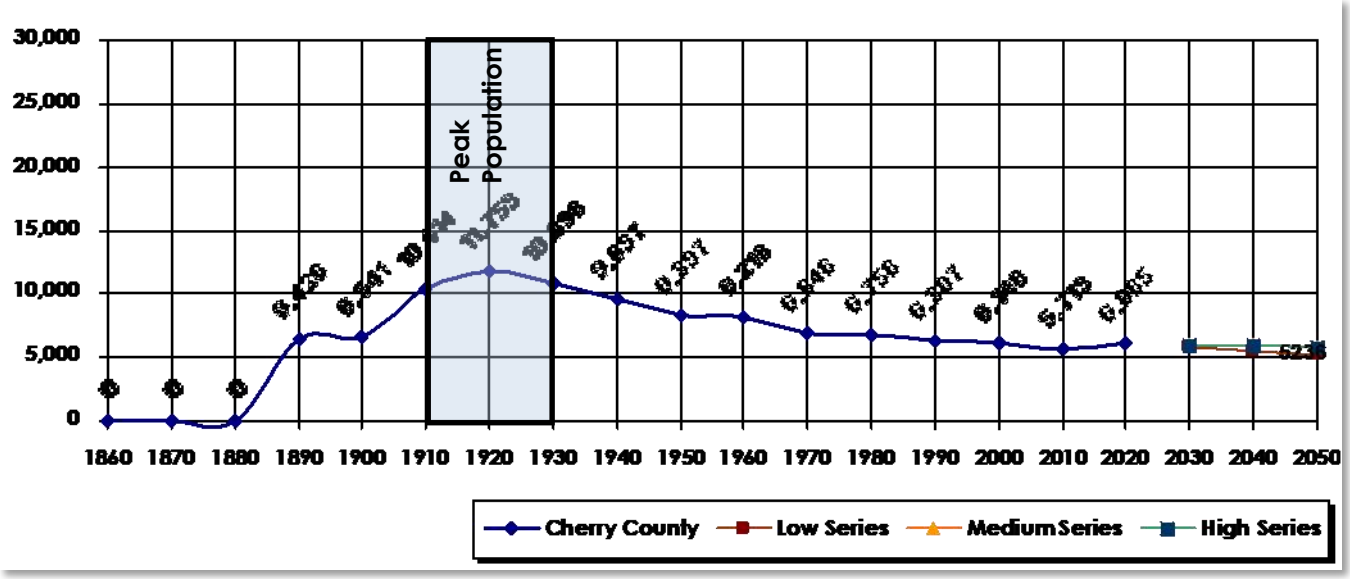
Year	1980 to 2020
2020	6,085 persons
2030	5,927 persons
2040	5,774 persons
2050	5,625 persons

Year	2000 to 2020
2020	6,085 persons
2030	5,961 persons
2040	5,900 persons
2050	5,839 persons

High = 1990 to 2020

2020	5,437 persons
2030	6,013 persons
2040	5,941 persons
2050	5,871 persons

FIGURE 2.7: POPULATION AND PROJECTIONS



Source: Nebraska Department of Economic Development, ESRI Business Analyst, MPC 2020

Figure 2.7 reviews the population history of Cherry County between 1860 and 2020, and identifies the three population projection scenarios into the years 2030, 2040, and 2050. Figure 2.7 also indicates the peak population for Cherry County occurred between 1910 and 1930. Since 1930, the population of the County has been on a declining trend line.

Chapter 3 Housing

Housing Profile

The Housing Profile identifies existing housing characteristics and conditions for Cherry County. The primary goal of the housing profile is to allow the County to examine past and present conditions; while, identifying potential needs including provisions for safe, decent, sanitary, and affordable housing for every family and individual residing within the County.

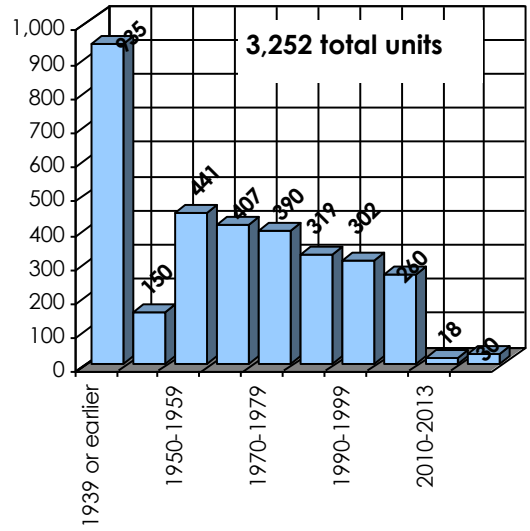
Projecting future housing needs requires several factors to be considered. These factors include population change, household income, employment rates, land use patterns, and residents' attitudes.

The following tables and figures provide the information to aid in determining future housing needs and develop policies designed to accomplish the housing goals for Cherry County.

Age of Existing Housing Stock

An analysis of the housing stock age can reveal a great deal about population and economic conditions of the past. Examining the housing stock is important in order to understand the overall quality of housing in Cherry County.

Figure 3.1: Age of Existing Housing Stock Cherry County 2010



Sources: ESRI Business Analyst 2020

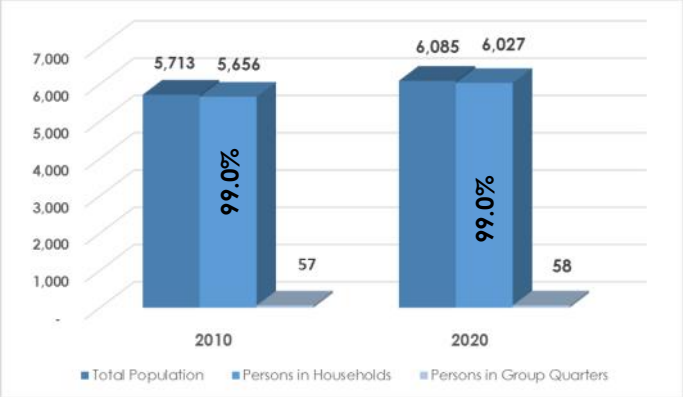
Figure 3.1 indicates 935 homes, or 28.8% of Cherry County's 3,252 total housing units, were constructed prior to 1940. This statistic is county-wide, including each community, and will consist of older well-kept homes as well as homes likely in need of repair or demolition.

Cherry County saw very positive construction activity between 1950 and 2009 with 2,119 (65.2%)

homes constructed. This was especially true between 1950 and 1999 which saw 1,859 (57.2%) new homes built during the four decades. These data indicate the economy was relatively good during these decades. Between 2000 and 2009, Cherry County saw new housing drop off to only 260 units and then only 48 units between 2014 and 2019.

A total of 71.4% of all housing units in Cherry County were constructed prior to 1980. Due to the age of these homes, there may be a need for special weatherization programs in the County and communities to bring these homes up to current energy efficiency standards.

FIGURE 3.2: HOUSING POPULATIONS



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey 2010

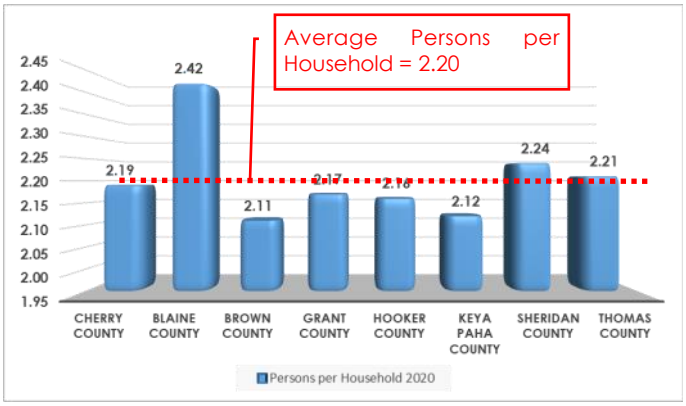
HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

Figures 3.2 through 3.10 identify several different housing characteristics in Cherry County. The figures indicate the breakdown between owner– and renter-occupied housing as well as the number of people living in group quarters.

Persons in Households/Group Quarters

In 2020 there were 371 additional people living in households than in 2010, this represents a change of 6.6%. Between 2010 and 2020, the number of people living in group quarters went from 57 people in 2010 to 58 in 2020, a change of 1.8%.

FIGURE 3.3: PERSONS PER HOUSEHOLD - 2020



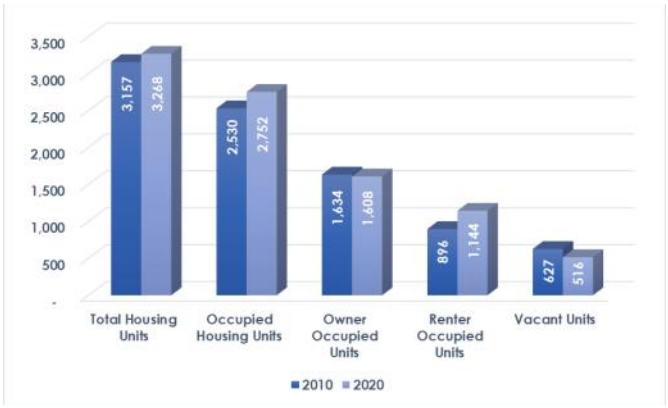
Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000-2010, ESRI Business Analyst 2020

Persons per Household

Figure 3.3 also includes the number of persons per household. The average persons per household in Cherry County in 2020 was 2.19 persons. The trend nationally has been towards a declining household size; however, the persons per household in Cherry County is average for the entire north-central Nebraska region. The region average is 2.20 persons per household. The surrounding counties in 2020 were:

- Blaine County has 2.42 persons/household
- Brown County has 2.11 persons/household
- Grant County has 2.17 persons/household
- Hooker County has 2.16 persons/household
- Keya Paha County has 2.12 persons/household
- Sheridan County has 2.24 persons/household
- Thomas County has 2.21 persons/household

FIGURE 3.4: OCCUPIED VS. VACANT HOUSING

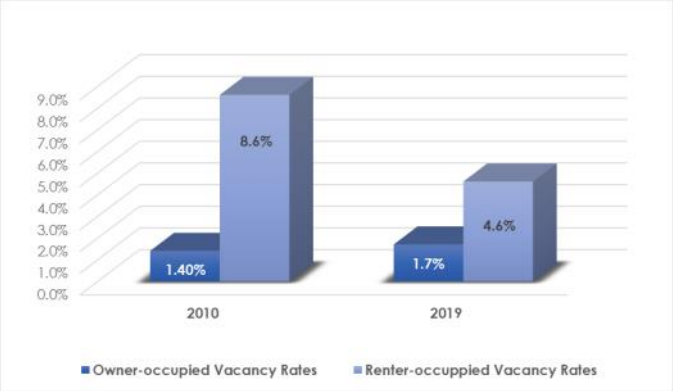


Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2000/2010, ESRI Business Analyst

Occupied vs. Vacant Housing Units

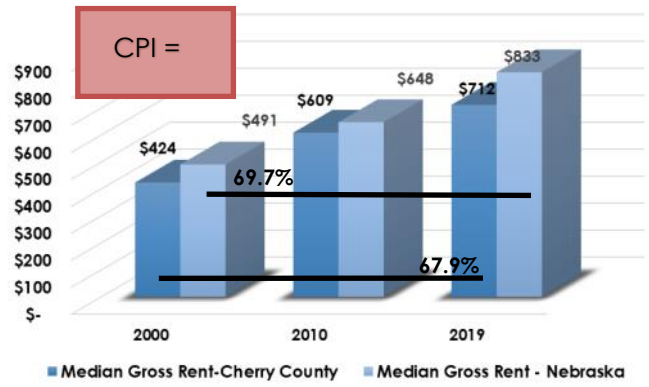
Occupied housing units in the County increased by 8.8% between 2010 to 2020; this was a 222 unit increase over 2010. During the same time frame, vacant housing units declined from 627 units to 516 units or –17.7%. Between 2010 and 2019 vacancy rates basically tightened up with owner-occupied rate increasing slightly from 1.4% to 1.7% and renter-occupied dropped from 8.6% to 4.6% in 2019.

FIGURE 3.5: VACANCY RATES BY TYPE OF UNIT



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau 2010, American Community Survey 2019

FIGURE 3.6: MEDIAN GROSS RENT CHERRY COUNTY AND NEBRASKA 2000-2019



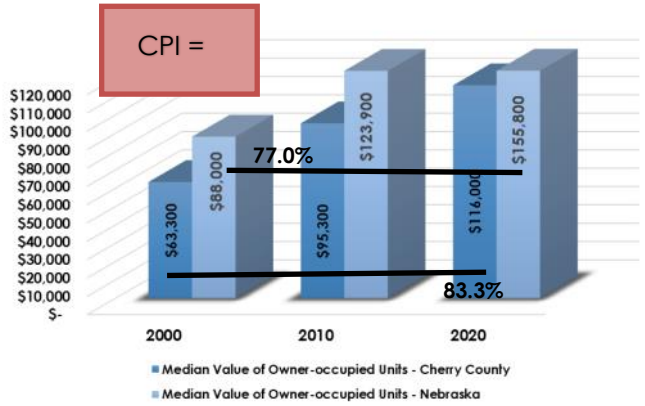
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2000/2010/2019

Median Gross Rent

Median gross rent in Cherry County increased from $424 per month in 2000 to $712 per month in 2020, or 67.9%. The State's median monthly gross rent increased by 69.7%. This indicates Cherry County has seen a gross rent increase 97% of the State. However, the County's median gross rent was 86.4% of the State's median gross rent in 2000 and 85.5% in 2019. Meaning the county lost ground to the state in this housing condition.

Comparing changes in monthly rents between 2000 and 2019, with the Consumer Price Index (CPI), enables the local housing market to be compared to national economic conditions. Inflation between 2000 and 2019 increased at a rate of 48.4%, indicating Cherry County's rents increased by nearly 1.5 times the rate of inflation for the 10-year period. Thus on average, Cherry County tenants were paying considerably more in monthly rents in 2019, in terms of real dollars, than they were in 2000. Landlords were potentially making more on their investment.

FIGURE 4.7: MEDIAN VALUE OWNER-OCCUPIED CHERRY COUNTY AND NEBRASKA 2000-2020



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2000/2010; ESRI Business Analyst 2020

Median Value of Owner-Occupied Units

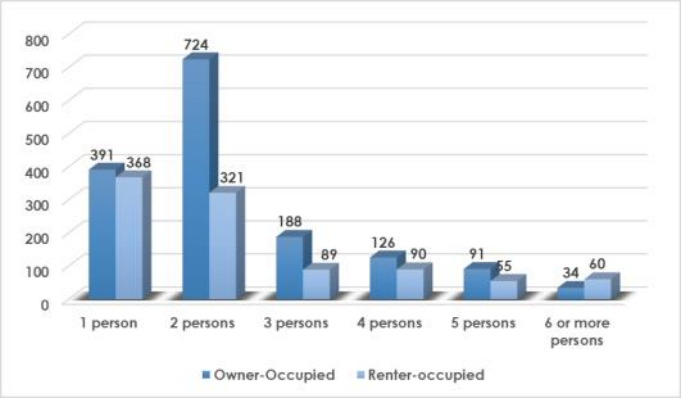
The median value of owner-occupied housing units in Cherry County increased from $63,300 in 2000 to $116,000 in 2020, and represents an increase of 83.3%. The median value for owner-occupied housing units in the state showed an increase of 77.0%. Housing values in Cherry County grew at approximately 1.1 times faster than the state. In addition, the median value of an owner-occupied unit in Cherry County was 71.9% of the state median in 2000 and 74.5% in 2020.

In comparison to the CPI, the local value of owner-occupied housing increased at a rate greater than the CPI. This indicates housing values in the County were worth more in 2020 compared to 2000 dollars.

Persons Per Household

Figure 3.8 and 3.9 show tenure (owner-occupied and renter-occupied) of households by number and age of persons in each housing unit. Analyzing these data gives Cherry County the opportunity to determine where there may be a need for additional housing.

FIGURE 3.8: PERSONS BY HOUSEHOLD TYPE - 2019

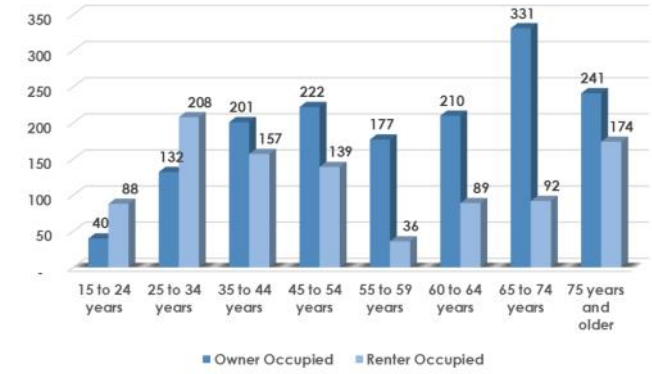


Sources: American Community Survey 2019

In 2019, the largest section of owner-occupied housing in Cherry County was in the two-person household, with 724 units or 46.5% of the total owner -occupied units. By comparison, the largest household size for rentals was the single-person households with 368 renter-occupied housing units, or 37.4% of the total renter-occupied units.

In 2010, the age cohorts representing the largest home ownership group were those 65 to 74 years. Of the total residents living in owner-occupied housing units, 21.3% were between 65 and 74 years of age. The 75 and older group was second with 15.5% of the total owner-occupied units.

FIGURE 3.9: AGE BY HOUSEHOLD TYPE - 2019

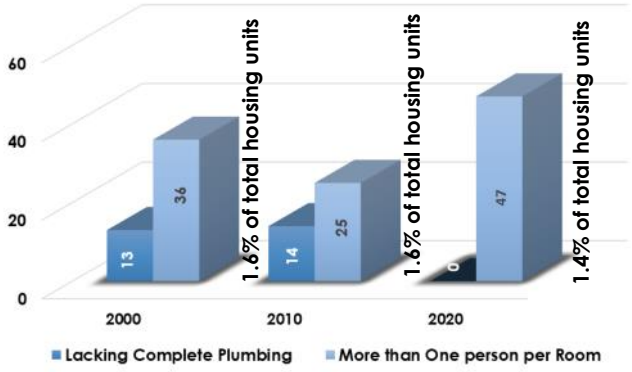


Sources: American Community Survey 2019

The renter-occupied housing was also dominated by the four different cohort groups; 25 to 34 (21.2%), 75 years and older (17.7%), 35 to 44 years (16.0%) and 45 to 54 years (14.1%). These four cohorts represent 69% of all the renter-occupied units in 2019.

Cherry County was comprised of 1,804 1- or 2-person households, or 69.2% of all households; which represents 7/10 households in Cherry County. Countywide, households with 5- or more persons accounted for 240 units, or 9.2% of the total.

FIGURE 3.10: SUBSTANDARD HOUSING CONDITIONS



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau 2000, ACS 2010/2019

Substandard Housing

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) guidelines, housing units lacking complete plumbing or that are overcrowded are considered substandard housing units. HUD defines a complete plumbing facility as hot and cold-piped water, a bathtub or shower, and a flush toilet; overcrowding is more than one person per room. In addition, anytime there is more than 1.0 persons per room, the housing unit is considered overcrowded, thus substandard.

This criteria, when applied to Cherry County, 49 units were substandard in 2000. This figure was reached by adding the number of housing units meeting one criterion to the number of housing units meeting the other criterion. However, the largest amount of substandard units was based on overcrowding with 36 units.

In 2010, the total number of substandard housing units decreased to 39 units. The primary contributing factor was overcrowding, which accounted for nearly 64.1% of the substandard issue.

By 2020, the total number of substandard housing units increased to 47 units. The only contributing factor was overcrowding.

What these data fail to consider are housing units that have met both criterion and counted twice. Even so, the County should not assume these data overestimate the number of substandard housing.

Housing units containing major defects requiring rehabilitation or upgrading to meet building, electrical, or plumbing codes should also be included in an analysis of substandard housing. A comprehensive survey of the entire housing stock should be completed every five years to determine and identify the housing units that would benefit from remodeling or rehabilitation work. This process will help ensure that a county maintains a high quality of life for its residents through protecting the quality and quantity of its housing stock.

Goals and Policies

Housing

Housing Goal 1

Housing developments other than those associated with a farming or ranching operation should be located in or adjacent to the municipalities of the county.

Housing Policies and Strategies

H-1.1 Housing should be limited in the rural areas of Cherry County.

H-1.2 Housing density should be established in the Cattle Country Agricultural District for housing not associated with a farming and ranching operation.

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Chapter 4 Economy and Economic Development

Economic and Employment Profile

Economic data are collected in order to understand local changes in economic activity and employment needs and opportunities within Cherry County. In this section, employment by industry, household income statistics, and commuter analyses were reviewed for Cherry County and Nebraska.

Income Statistics

Income statistics for households are important in determining the earning power of households in a county. The data within show household income levels for Cherry County in comparison to the state. These data were reviewed to determine whether households experienced income increases at a rate comparable to the state of Nebraska and the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

Figure 4.1 indicates the number of households in each income range for Cherry County for 2000, 2010 and 2020. In 2000, the household income range most commonly reported was $15,000 to $24,999, which accounted for 20.1% of all households.

In 2010, the income range reported most was the $50,000 to $74,999 and represented 23.8% of the total households.

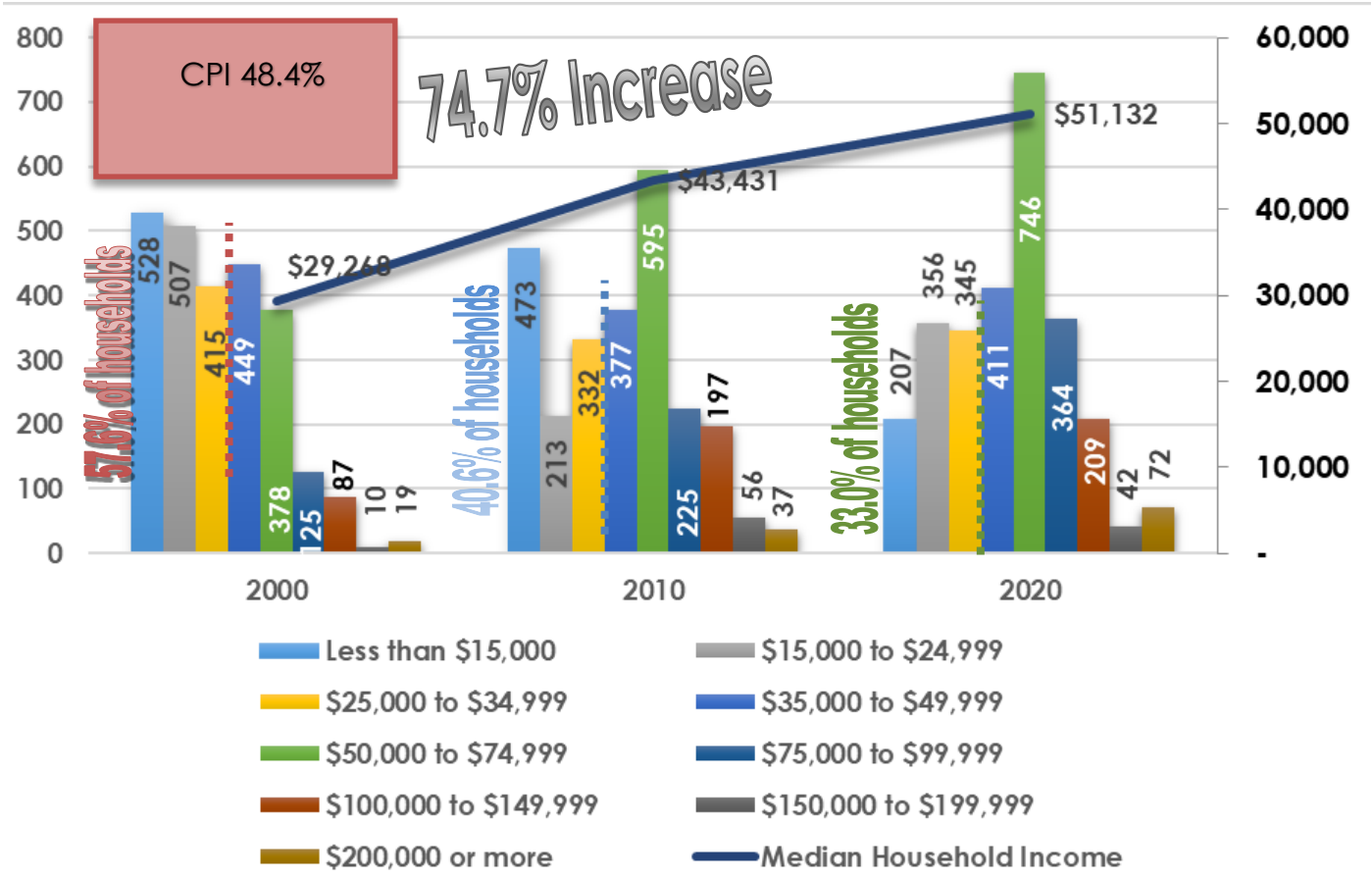
By 2020, the household income range most commonly reported was $50,000 to $74,999, which accounted for 27.1% of all households.

Those households earning less than $15,000 decreased from 20.9% in 2000 to 18.9% in 2010. However, 2020 data shows this income group made up only 7.5% of all the different households in Cherry County. The level of change was based upon more households moving into the middle to lower-high income ranges. However, those households earning less than $15,000 account for the poorest of the poor in the county.

In addition, the households earning less than $35,000 in 2000 accounted for 57.6% of the households. In 2010 these households had decreased to 40.6% of the households. By 2020 the numbers decreased to 33.0% of the households. Therefore, in 2020 67.0% of the households were earning more than $35,000.

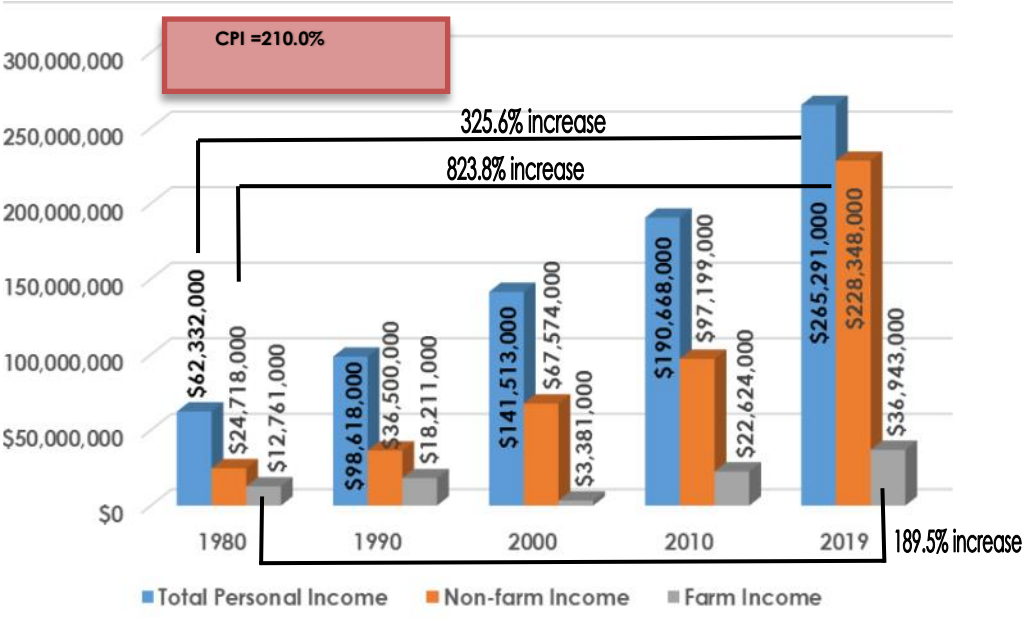
The median household income for Cherry County was $29,268 in 2000, which was considerably less than State median income of $39,250. By 2010, the median household income increased to $43,431 or an increase of 48.4%. Finally, in 2020 the median household income was at $51,132 or an increase of 74.7% since 2000. However, the 2010 and 2020 median household incomes were still less than the State of Nebraska median household income.

FIGURE 4.1: HOUSEHOLD INCOME



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000, American Community Survey 2010, ESRI Business Analyst 2020

FIGURE 4.2: INCOME BY SOURCE 1980 TO 2019



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000, American Community Survey 2010, ESRI Business Analyst 2020

The CPI for this period was 48.4%, which indicates household incomes in Cherry County exceeded inflation. Therefore, households were actually earning more in real dollars in 2020 than in 2010. This difference basically indicates for every $1.00 earned in a household during 2000, it was earning over $1.50 in 2020.

Income Source/Public Assistance

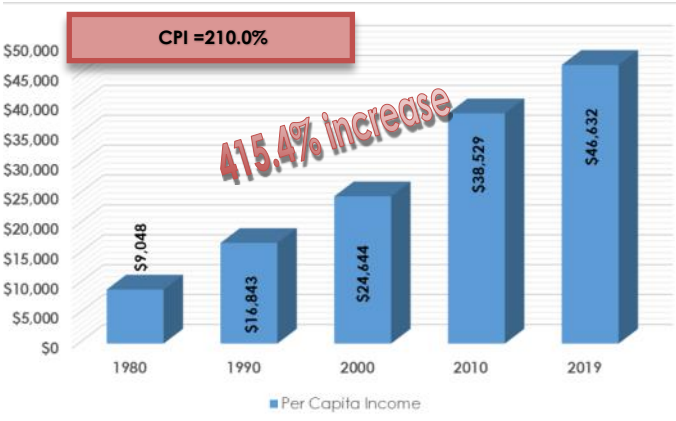
The graph to the left shows personal income by source for Cherry County. These data are compared to the CPI, in order to determine if increases are consistent with inflation and in terms of real dollars. Between 1980 and 2019, the CPI was 210.0%.

Overall Personal Income in Cherry County went from $62,332,000, in 1980, to $265,291,000, in 2019 or an overall increase of 325.6%. Total personal income for the county increased by 1.5 times the rate of inflation over the 39 year period.

Non-farm and Farm Income

Non-farm income increased from $24,718,000 in 1980 to $228,348,000 in 2019, or an increase of 823.8%, which was nearly 4.0 times the CPI. By 2019, farm income had risen from $12,761,000 to $36,943,000, or 189.5%, which is 90% of the CPI.

FIGURE 4.3: PER CAPITA INCOME



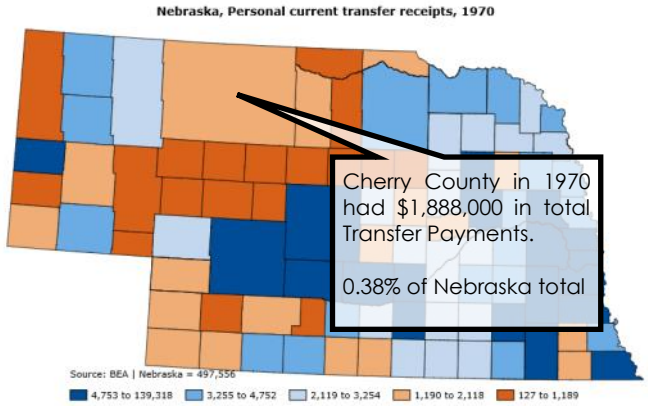
Source: BEA, Regional Economic Information System

Per Capita Income

The per capita income in Cherry County increased from $9,211 in 1980 to $46,632 in 2019, or an increase of 415.4%, which was 2.0 times the CPI. Cherry County's per capita income was 147.9% of the state's per capita income level of $31,539.

Another income source deserving examination is the amount of Transfer Payments to individuals in Cherry County from 1970 to 2019, which is provided in Figure 4.4 and 4.5. Note the total amount of Transfer Payments equals Government Payments to Individuals plus Payments to Non-Profit Institutions plus Business Payments.

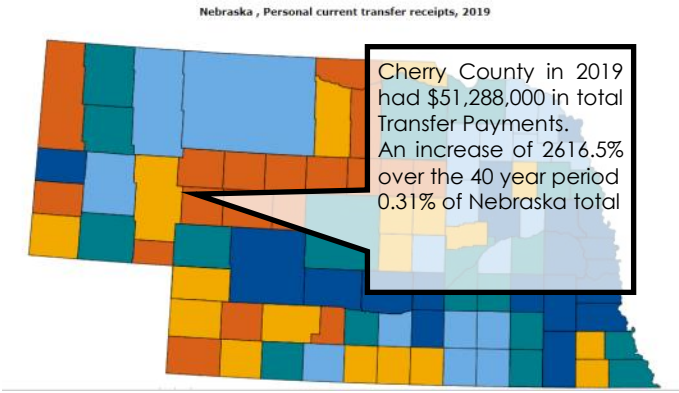
FIGURE 4.4: TRANSFER PAYMENTS 1970



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System, 2019

In 1970, Total Transfer Payments to Cherry County added up to $1,888,000. By 2019, Total Transfer Payments to Cherry County were $51,288,000, or an increase of 2,616.5%. Figure 4.6 shows in 2019, transfer payments per capita in Cherry County were $9,015.

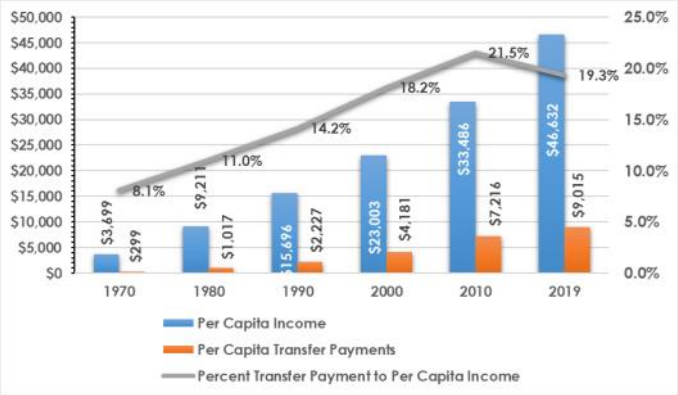
FIGURE 4.5: TRANSFER PAYMENTS 2019



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic 2019

The trend for transfer payments per capita between 1970 and 2019 indicates payments increased significantly to individuals in Cherry County, increasing by nearly 2,600% in 49 years. However, transfer payments, as a proportion of per capita income, increased at a much lower rate between 1970 and 2019. In 1970, transfer payments comprised 8.1% of total per capita income, and in 2019, transfer payments were 19.3% of total per capita income, which is an annual increase of 2.8%. However, the peak for this comparison was in 2010 at 21.5%.

FIGURE 4.6: TRANSFER PAYMENTS PER CAPITA



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System, 2019

Industry Employment

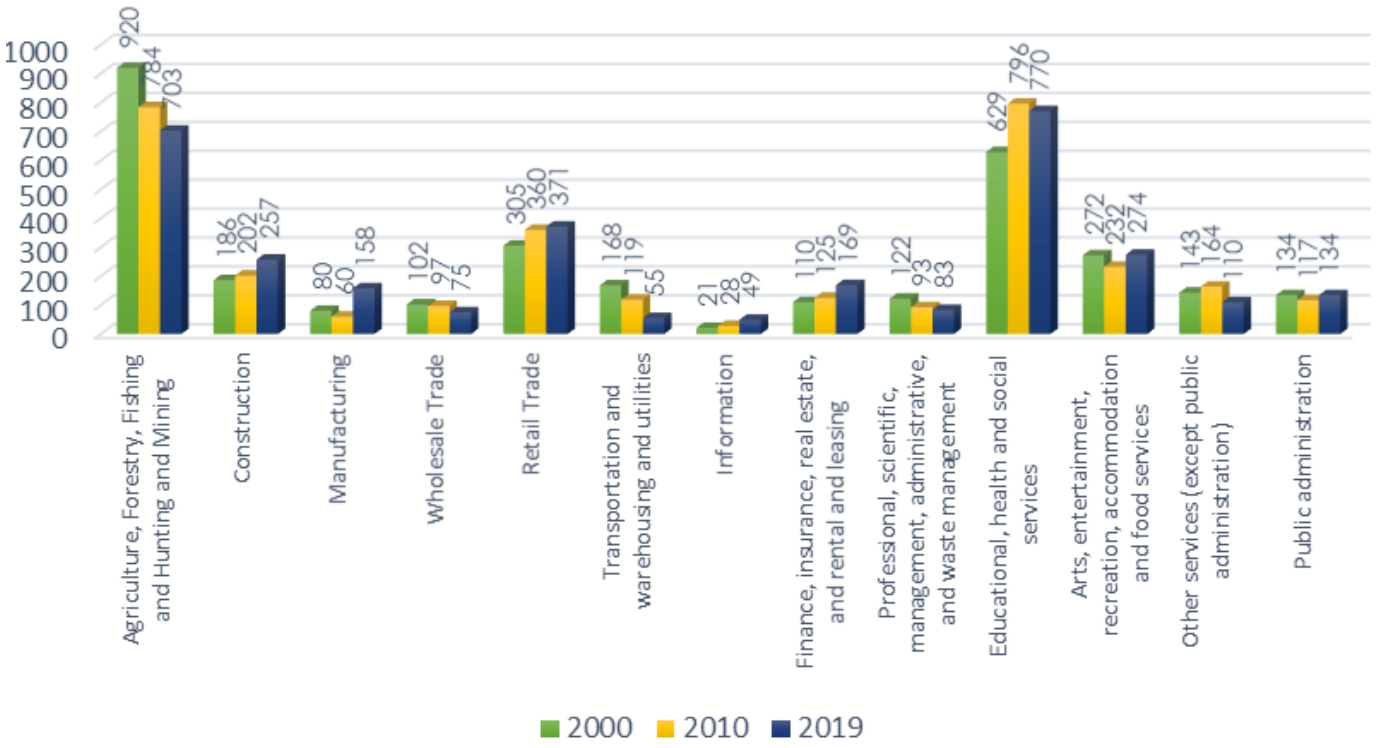
Analyzing employment by industry assists a community in determining the key components of their labor force. This section indicates the type of industries making up the local economy, as well as identifying particular occupations employing residents. Figure 4.7 indicates employment size by industry for Cherry County for 2000 and 2010 (these data indicate the types of jobs residents have, not the number of jobs locally).

The employment sector with the most employees in 2000 was Ag./forestry/Fishing/and Hunting and Mining. This sector employed 920 people or 28.8% of the total employed residents in 2000. In 2010, the largest employment sector was Educational, health, and social services with 796 employees or 25.0% of the total. In 2020, Educational, health, and social services continued to be the leading employment sector. Cherry County has seen major fluctuations during the time period in Figure 4.7.

Overall the top five industries in Cherry County for 2000 were as follows:

Industry	***People***
•Ag./forestry/Fishing/and Hunting and Mining	920
•Educational, health, and social services	629
•Retail Trade	305
•Arts, Entertainment, recreation, accommodations and food services	272
•Construction	186

FIGURE 4.7: EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY (NUMBERS)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000, American Community Survey 2010, 2019

By 2010, the overall top five industries in Cherry County were as follows:

Industry	*People*
•Educational, health, and social services	796
•Ag./forestry/Fishing/and Hunting and Mining	784
•Retail Trade	360
•Arts, Entertainment, recreation, accommodations and food services	232
•Construction	202

Finally, by 2019, the overall top five industries in Cherry County were as follows:

Industry	*People*
•Educational, health, and social services	770
•Ag./forestry/Fishing/and Hunting and Mining	703
•Retail Trade	371
•Arts, Entertainment, recreation, accommodations and food services	274
•Construction	257

Non-Basic employment is business activity providing services primarily within the local area through the sale of goods and services, and the revenues of such sales re -circulate within the community in the form of wages and expenditures by local citizens.

In order to establish a number of Basic jobs, a comparative segment or entity must be selected. For purposes of this analysis, the state of Nebraska will be used. This allows the analysis to establish where Cherry County is seeing exports from the state as a whole.

TABLE 4.1: BASIC/NON-BASIC BY OCCUPATIONS - 2019

Location	Management business, science, and arts occupations	Service occupations	Sales and office occupations	Natural Resources, construction and maintenance occupations	Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	Base Multiplier
Cherry County	35.9%	**17.0%**	19.5%	**17.9%**	9.6%	**10.6**
Blaine County	**43.5%**	9.3%	13.8%	**24.8%**	8.5%	**3.9**
Brown County	**38.1%**	**22.3%**	17.3%	**11.0%**	11.2%	**12.7**
Grant County	36.8%	13.2%	20.7%	**21.6%**	7.8%	**7.6**
Hooker County	33.6%	**23.4%**	15.9%	**19.5%**	4.7%	**5.0**
Keya Paha County	**45.8%**	8.6%	**25.0%**	**16.7%**	3.9%	**4.5**
Sheridan County	35.6%	**19.0%**	17.1%	**13.9%**	**14.5%**	**13.7**
Thomas County	34.4%	13.2%	**22.6%**	**20.9%**	8.8%	**7.3**
Nebraska	37.8%	16.3%	21.5%	10.0%	14.3%	NA

Source: American Community Survey 2019

Regional Basic/Non-Basic Analysis

The following data examine five occupational areas established by the U.S. Census Bureau to evaluate trends in employment and the area economy. Basic employment and non-basic employment are defined as follows:

Basic employment is business activity providing services primarily outside the area through the sale of goods and services, the revenues of which are directed to the local area in the form of wages and payments to local suppliers.

This analysis is used to further understand which occupational areas are exporting goods and services outside the area, thus importing dollars into the local economy. The five occupational categories used in the analysis are listed below:

- Managerial business, science, and arts occupations
- Service occupations
- Sales and office occupations
- Natural Resources, construction and maintenance occupations
- Production, transportation and material moving occupations

A related concept to the basic/non-basic distinction is the Base Multiplier. The base multiplier is a number, which represents how many non-basic jobs are supported by each basic job. A high base multiplier means that the loss of one basic job will have a large potential impact on the local economy if changes in employment occur. The rationale behind this analysis is that if basic jobs bring new money into a local economy, that money becomes the wages for workers in that economy. Therefore, more money brought in by basic jobs creates more non-basic jobs that are supported.

Basic Employment

The occupation categories are compared to the same categories for the state and where Cherry County's percentage exceeds the state's percentage there is Basic employment. Table 4.1 indicates there are three categories having Basic

employment with the largest being Management business, Science, and Arts Occupations The other two occupation sectors are Natural Resources, construction and maintenance occupations. And Service occupations.

Overall, 18.6% of the employment base in Cherry County is tied to the exportation of goods or services. The county needs to continually work on their Business Retention and Expansion process in order to make these employers stay in Cherry County.

Base Multiplier

The information in Table 4.1 shows Cherry County has a base multiplier of 10.6, which means for every job considered to be basic, 10.6 other jobs in the county are supported and/or impacted. This is illustrated by comparing the basic and non-basic percentages against each other. Therefore, if Cherry County lost just one of the jobs tied to exports then there is the potential to lose approximately 10.6 other jobs from the non-basic employment side.

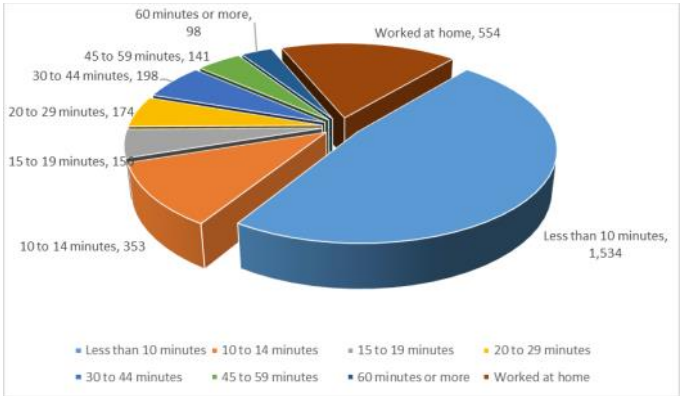
There is no magical multiplier a county can aim to achieve. Every county is different and the dynamics involved are different. The unique and ever changing dynamics are what make a particular county unique and attractive to different employers. It is critical for a county to determine their future vision for business and industry and work towards that end. As previously mentioned it is also critical to diligently work towards a successful Business Retention and Expansion program to support those employers already located in the county. Some counties become too focused on attracting the next big catch and forget about the opportunities existing employers can offer through expansion of their operations.

Commuter Trends

Figure 4.9 show the commuter characteristics for Cherry County in 2019. Travel time to work is another factor used to gauge where Cherry County's workforce is employed. Figure 4.9 shows how many residents of Cherry County travel to work in each of several time categories.

Figure 4.9 indicates, in 2019, 47.8% of the commuters were traveling 10 minutes or less to work. In addition, 17.3% work from home. Those traveling 20 minutes or more to work totaled 611 people or 19.0% of those driving to work.

Figure 4.8: Travel Time to Work - 2019



Source: American Community Survey 2019

Agricultural Profile

Table 4.2 identifies key components affecting Cherry County's agricultural profile. This Table examines the number of farms, size of these farms, cropland data, and certain value criteria for these farms. The data are for 1997 through 2017.

Number of farms

The table indicates the number of farms within Cherry County decreased between 1997 and 2017, which was the norm throughout Nebraska. The total number of farms decreased from 672 in 1997 to 567 in 2017, a change of –15.6%.

Land in farms/Average size of farms/cropland

Table 4.2 also shows the total land in farms within Cherry County. From 1997 to 2017, Cherry County actually had a decrease in the total land considered to be in farms. The overall decrease was 8.2% or an approximate decrease of 318,870 acres. The total land in farms accounts for 92.7% of the total acres in Cherry County, which is a

decrease from 101.0% in 1997.

The average size of each farm increased from 5,777 acres in 1997 to 6,284 in 2017. This trend has been the norm across Nebraska and the United States for the last several decades. The overall increase was 8.8%. The total cropland in Cherry County decreased from 395,141 acres in 1997 to 383,698 acres in 2017.

The next data to review is harvested cropland. Harvested cropland is as it sounds, cropland actually harvested and yielded a crop. In 1997, the Harvested Cropland in Cherry County was 358,232 (90.6%) of Total Cropland and only 9.2% of the Total Land in Farms). By 2017 the Harvested Cropland decreased to 331,558 acres (86.4%) of Total Cropland and only 9.3% of the Total Land in Farms).

Estimated Market Value

Table 4.2 also shows the Estimated Market Values of Land and Buildings, both by average per farm and average per acre. In 1997 the average value per farm acre was $200. The average value increased in every Census of Agriculture until it reached an average per acre of $933 in 2017; an increase of 366.5%. The CPI for this same period was approximately 46.7%; therefore the average value per acre increased nearly 10 times the rate of inflation in Cherry County.

The increase in the average per acre also translates into an increase in the average per farm. The average value per farm in 1997 was $1,153,465 and increased to $5,862,309 in 2017, an overall increase of 408.2%. Again, this increase exceeded the CPI and the rate of inflation for the period. The average per farm, statewide, was $550,705 in 1997 and $2,674,492 in 2017, an increase of 385.6%. Therefore, the average farm value in Cherry County is over double the state average and the value has been growing at a greater rate than the state.

Table 4.3 indicates the number of farms by size from 1997 to 2017. The category with the only increase was in the farms averaging with 1,000 acres or more, increasing by 248 farms or 240.8%. However, all other farm sizes indicated decreases in the number of farms within Cherry County. The farm size indicating the greatest decrease was the 180 to 499 acres which lost 260 farms or a decrease of 86.1%. Overall, Cherry County went from 971 farms in 1997 to 567 farms in 2017 or a change of –41.6% for the period.

TABLE 4.2: AGRICULTURAL PROFILE CHERRY COUNTY 1997 TO 2017

Agricultural Characteristics	1997	2002	2007	2012	2017	% Change 1997-2017
Number of Farms	672	557	560	566	567	-15.6%
Land in Farms (acres)	3,881,831	3,777,285	3,759,629	3,756,545	3,562,961	-8.2%
Average size of farms (acres)	5,777	6,781	6,714	6,637	6,284	8.8%
Total area for Cherry County	3,845,197	3,845,197	3,845,197	3,845,197	3,845,197	0.0%
Percentage of land in farms	101.0%	98.2%	97.8%	97.7%	92.7%	-8.2%
Total cropland (acres)	395,141	425,907	414,749	358,507	383,698	-2.9%
Harvested cropland (acres)	358,232	334,745	319,873	326,998	331,558	-7.4%
Estimated Market Value of Land & Bldg (avg./farm) $	1,153,465	1,088,912	2,725,129	3,521,118	5,862,309	408.2%
Estimated Market Value of Land & Bldg (avg./acre) $	200	225	406	531	933	366.5%

Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1997, 2002, 2007, 2012, 2017

Table 4.3: Number of Farms by Size Cherry County 1992 to 2017

Farm Size (acres)	1997	2002	2007	2012	2017	% Change 1997-2017
1 to 9	48	4	26	59	18	-62.5%
10 to 49	73	30	32	25	43	-41.1%
50 to 179	223	47	68	39	67	-70.0%
180 to 499	302	35	40	42	42	-86.1%
500 to 999	222	58	44	29	46	-79.3%
1,000 or more	103	383	350	372	351	240.8%
Total	**971**	**557**	**560**	**566**	**567**	**-41.6%**

Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1997, 2002, 2007, 2012, 2017

Table 4.4 indicates the number of farms and livestock by type for Cherry County between 1997 and 2017. The predominant livestock raised in Cherry County have been cattle and calves. Cattle and calves have been followed closely by Beef Cows. Both types of livestock production saw decreases in the total operations in place. Both of these operation types saw an increase in the Average Number of Livestock Per Farm; Cow and calves went from 554 animals in 1997 to 637 per farm in 2017, which is the peak during the period. Beef Cows went from 308 per farm in 1997 to an undisclosed average per farm in 2017. There was one category which actually saw an increase in both farms and animals; Chickens (layers and pullets).

Table 4.4: Number Farms and Livestock by Type

Type of Livestock	1997	2002	2007	2012	2017	% Change 1997 to 2017
Cattle and Calves						
farms	586	475	430	461	447	-23.7%
animals	324,871	291,535	264,458	261,834	284,602	-12.4%
average per farm	554	614	615	568	637	14.8%
Beef Cows						
farms	544	456	407	403	419	-23.0%
animals	167,527	161,744	149,401	135,852	(D)	#VALUE!
average per farm	308	355	367	337	-	#VALUE!
Milk cows						
farms	30	22	6	12	2	-93.3%
animals	170	92	13	24	(D)	#VALUE!
average per farm	6	4	2	2	-	#VALUE!
Hogs and Pigs						
farms	9	3	4	8	8	-11.1%
animals	905	(D)	(D)	140	100	-89.0%
average per farm	101	-	-	18	13	-87.6%
Sheep and lambs						
farms	9	5	7	2	8	-11.1%
animals	300	26	135	(D)	304	1.3%
average per farm	33	5	19	-	38	14.0%
Chickens (layers and pullets)						
farms	20	16	18	31	40	100.0%
animals	531	246	243	751	605	-
average per farm	27	15	14	24	15	-
Chickens (broilers)						
farms	1	-	-	1	-	-
animals	(D)	-	-	(D)	-	-
average per farm	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1997, 2002, 2007, 2012, 2017

Table 4.5 indicates the number of farms and crop by type for the period from 1997 to 2017. The table shows the prominent crops grown in the county. In addition, the table indicates the total number of farms producing the specific crop and finally an average per farm.

Corn and soybeans have been the two most frequently raised crops in Cherry County since 1997. Three of the eight categories shown increased in acres farmed; these include Corn for Grain, Corn for Silage, and Soybeans. The crop with the largest percentage increase (acres) was Soybeans at 1,956.4%, while Corn for Grain increased by 87.5% and Corn for Silage increased by 20.7%.

Comparing Table 4.4 and 4.5, the noted increase in Corn for Silage is directly connected to the increase in Beef Cows shown in Table 4.4.

Agriculture has historically been a major part of the Cherry County economy. It appears its importance will only grow during the planning period of this document. It will be critical to maintain a balance in the type of livestock and grains raised in order to minimize future economic downturns.

Table 4.5: Number Farms and Crops by Type

Type of Crop	1997	2002	2007	2012	2017	% Change 1997 to 2017
Corn for Grain						
farms	46	24	38	48	41	-10.9%
acres	13,236	9,950	20,315	26,919	24,821	87.5%
average per farm	288	415	535	561	605	110.4%
Corn for Silage						
farms	18	19	17	16	21	16.7%
acres	2,034	3,211	2,265	2,172	2,455	20.7%
average per farm	113	169	133	136	117	3.5%
Sorghum						
farms	2	1	1	-	3	50.0%
acres	(D)	(D)	(D)	-	150	#VALUE!
average per farm	-	-	-	-	50	#VALUE!
Wheat						
farms	13	9	8	6	8	-38.5%
acres	3,394	1,877	3,975	1,959	3,108	-8.4%
average per farm	261	209	497	327	389	48.8%
Oats						
farms	5	6	3	4	5	0.0%
acres	754	560	(D)	329	751	-0.4%
average per farm	151	93	-	82	150	-0.4%
Soybeans						
farms	5	3	3	7	11	120.0%
acres	225	840	380	3,052	4,627	1956.4%
average per farm	45	280	127	436	421	834.7%
Dry Edible Beans excluding Limas						
farms	-	6	3	3	4	-
acres	-	3,250	(D)	3,019	3,180	-
average per farm	-	542	-	1,006	795	-
Potatoes						
farms	-	1	1	2	1	-
acres	-	(D)	(D)	(D)	(D)	-
average per farm	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1997, 2002, 2007, 2012

With agriculture's importance in the Cherry County economy, It will be critical to develop policies and strategies expanding this sector or at least maintaining its impact on the county's economy. Even though agriculture, as shown in Figure 4.2, makes up 13.9% of the total Personal Income for Cherry County, the remaining 86.1% would be considerably lower or nonexistent. In reality, agriculture likely supports 6.2 jobs in the non-agricultural businesses.

Goals and Policies

Economics

Economic Goal 1

This plan and the accompanying zoning regulations should protect the culture and agricultural industry that is the foundation of Cherry County's economic prosperity.

Economic Policies and Strategies

ECON–1.1 Conservation easements should be reviewed by the Planning Committee and Board of Commissioners pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. §76-2112(3) to ensure that proposed easements do not inhibit the continuation of unrestricted use of the lands for agriculture purposes. (See Conservation Easement Policy, Chapter 11)

ECON-1.2 Policies need to be adopted regulating non-agricultural uses within the Agricultural Districts.

Economic Goal 2

The plan and accompanying zoning regulations should protect the value and productivity of the land, to ensure the current and future economic stability of the County and its citizens.

Economic Policies and Strategies

ECON–2-1 Conservation easements and all conservation programs that change the use of the land should be reviewed by the Planning Committee and Board of Commissioners pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. §76-2112(3) to ensure that proposed easements and programs do not reduce the taxable value of the land in the short-term nor in perpetuity. (See Conservation Easement Policy, Chapter 11)

Economic Goal 3

Cherry County is home to some of the States most unique recreational uses as a result of the conservation practices of the Cherry County agriculture community. The economic policies of Cherry County will continue to foster "the state's agriculture, recreation and other industries," as required by Nebraska statue, by ensuring agriculture continues to be the priority use of the majority of lands in the County.

Economic Policies and Strategies

ECON-3.1 Cherry County should require the review of all conservation easements, land purchases, and conservation programs that prioritize recreation uses and conservation purposes above agriculture use.

ECON-3.2 Easements transferred to a non-profit or entity potentially exempt from paying property taxes, should be reviewed by the Planning Committee and Board of Commissioners pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. §76-2112(3) to ensure proposed easements do not permanently reduce the taxable value of the lands. (See Conservation Easement Policy, Chapter 11)

ECON-3.3 Encourage additional tourism by promoting points of interest, recreation, hunting, fishing and the scenic beauty of the Sandhills and the Niobrara River valley. These items should always be driven by the local property owners and not state or federal governments. Expansion of recreational uses should be established in a manner that they protect the existing local tax base.

Economic Goal 4

Recognizing that the local farmers and ranchers are by far the best individuals to decide the long-term economic and conservation practices of the region, the County should advance policies that help landowners productively use their lands independent of federal, state and other local programs that may lead to increased restrictions on the uses of the land.

Economic Policies and Strategies

ECON-4.1 The County encourages landowners to carefully review federal conservation agreements, for provisions which may lead to the restriction of land uses and reduction in the county tax base.

ECON-4.2 Cherry County desires for all landowners to enjoy the freedoms associated with landownership, and to recognize that with land ownership comes the

responsibility to steward the land for future generations, as well as, protect the tax base allowing the County to provide specific services and protections to all.

Chapter 5 County Facilities

County Facilities

State and local governments provide a number of services to their citizens and are referred to as public facilities. Public facilities represent a wide range of buildings and services built and maintained by the different levels of government.

It is important for all levels of government to anticipate the future demand for their services if they are to remain strong and vital. The analysis of existing facilities and future services are contained in the County Facilities Chapter. Alternatively, in some instances, there are a number of services not provided by the local or state governmental body and are provided by non-governmental private or non-profit organizations for the community as a whole. These organizations are important providers of services and are in integral part of the community.

County Facilities Plan

The Facilities Plan component of a Comprehensive Development Plan reviews present public and private facilities and services.

The Facilities Plan for Cherry County is divided into the following categories:

- County Buildings
- Historic Sites and Places
- Education
- Health Care

County Buildings

County Courthouse

The original Cherry County Courthouse in Valentine was completed in 1901. This original courthouse was a masonry structure building. The courthouse had an annex constructed, in 1954, next to the 1901 structure. The annex contained many of the offices as well as the county jail.

Photograph 6.1 Cherry County Courthouse Complex
Source: Google Earth

In 2011, the county finished a new Justice Center which contains as an addition to the existing County Courthouse Annex, a new Justice Center was constructed. The new facility includes a 30-bed jail, law enforcement offices, courtroom and support offices, new entrance, lobby and circulation space. Areas of the existing courthouse

Annex were also renovated to provide law enforcement space.
Source: https://www.beckenhauerconstruction.com/cherry-county-justice-center

The courthouse houses the offices of the Clerk, Assessor, Treasurer, Clerk of the District Court, County Court, Election Commissioner, Board of Supervisors, Emergency Management, Planning and Zoning, Highway Department, Extension Office, Register of Deeds, Veteran's Service Officer, and Sheriff's Office.

Photograph 5.2 Cherry County Fairgrounds
Source: Google Earth

Cherry County Fairgrounds

The Cherry County Fair takes place in August each year in Valentine and is operated by the Cherry County Ag Society. The grounds have a recently renovated hall, a new pavilion, two barns, a large rodeo arena, and parking.
Source: http://www.cherrycofairgrounds.com/

Historic Buildings and Site

Former Valentine United States Post Office

The former Valentine United States Post Office, constructed in 1936-37, is a one-story, brick and limestone Modernistic style building. While the building retains a high degree of integrity, its historical significance derives from the mural painted on an interior wall. Through New Deal programs such as the Public Works of Art Project and the WPA Federal Art Project, thousands of artists were employed. In 1934 the Section of Painting and Sculpture (renamed the Section of Fine Arts in 1938) was organized under the auspices of the Treasury Department to provide murals and sculptures for the many federal buildings constructed during the New Deal era. Between 1938 and 1942 the Treasury Department's Section of Fine Arts (generally known as "the Section") commissioned twelve murals for twelve newly constructed post offices in Nebraska. Valentine, along with the other eleven post office murals in Nebraska, represent the Section's goal of making art accessible to the general population by reserving one percent of new building construction budgets for art.
Source: Nebraska Historical Society

Photograph 6.3 Former Valentine US Post Office
Source: Nebraska Historical Society

County Line Bridge

The County Line Bridge is a well preserved example of a Pratt through truss bridge type and retains all seven aspects of integrity. Following the flood of 1916, the Pratt through truss was widely used to replace damaged and destroyed bridges along the Niobrara River. It represents a once common bridge type for medium length river crossings in Cherry County, Nebraska.
Source: Nebraska Historical Society

Photograph 6.4 County Line Bridge
Source: Nebraska Historical Society

F.M. Walcott House

This one-and-one-half-story frame house, located in Valentine, is a simplified example of a Neo-Classical Revival dwelling, based upon earlier Greek Revival style houses in the eastern and mid-western states. F. M. Walcott established one of the

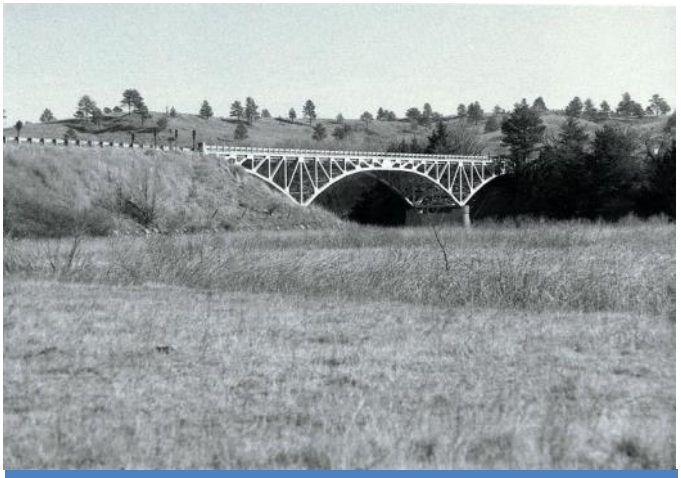
largest legal practices in the state and also held the offices of county judge and county attorney.
Source: Nebraska Historical Society

Photograph 6.5 F.M Wolcott House
Source: Nebraska Historical Society

Valentine Public School (Centennial Hall)
The bond issue to build the Valentine Public School was approved in February 1897. It was designed by Omaha architect Charles F. Beindorff, and construction was completed in 1898. The two-story brick structure was built for primary and secondary students of Cherry County School District 1. The building incorporates Queen Anne and Romanesque Revival design elements. The school is owned by the Centennial Hall Corporation, a non-profit organization which uses it for community functions.
Source: Nebraska Historical Society

Photograph 6.6 Valentine Public Schools (Centennial Hall)
Source: Nebraska Historical Society

Bryan Bridge
The Bryan Bridge, constructed in 1932, is located on a turnout off of U.S. Highway 20/83 over the Niobrara River about two miles southeast of Valentine. The 289-foot bridge consists of a 145-foot central steel pin-connected cantilever arch with 72 -foot half-arch anchor arms at each end. It was named after former governor Charles W. Bryan and is the only one of its kind in Nebraska.
Source: Nebraska Historical Society



Photograph 6.7 Bryan Bridge
Source: Nebraska Historical Society

Cherry County Courthouse
Although Cherry County is the largest county (in square miles) in Nebraska, early settlement did not occur until the late 1870s. By the early 1880s, however, settlement began to increase, spurred on in part by the construction of the railroad. In 1883 Cherry County was organized. The following year Valentine, the county seat, was incorporated. Initially, the county rented office space in Valentine. In 1900 voters approved a bond issue to finance the construction of a courthouse. Events moved quickly thereafter and in November 1901 the courthouse opened its doors.
Source: Nebraska Historical Society

Photograph 6.8 Cherry County Courthouse
Source: Nebraska Historical Society

Museums

Arthur Bowring Ranch State Historical Park

The history of Sandhills ranch life is on display at Arthur Bowring Ranch State Historical Park, a 7,202-acre ranch located three miles north and east of Merriman off Highway 20. Former U.S. Senator Eve Bowring managed the ranch until her death in 1985 at age 92. Her wish was to preserve the ranch as a turn-of-the-20th-century working cattle ranch and living history museum.

It's a great opportunity to see ranch life up close. A visitor center houses artifacts and memorabilia of early ranching days. Corrals, barns, bunkhouses, and even a sod house are open to the public.

The park also boasts a collection you might not expect on a ranch. Eve Bowring was a world traveler and passionate collector of antique china, silver, and glass. Her amazing collection is displayed inside the ranch house.

Buildings and grounds are open Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The grounds are open from 9 a.m. to sunset the rest of the year.

Source: https://visitvalentine.org/arthur-bowring-ranch-state-historical-park/

Photograph 6.9 Eve Bowring Visitor Center
Source: http://outdoornebraska.gov/bowringranch/

Cherry County Historical Museum

The Cherry County Historical Society Museum is a virtual treasure trove of the history of Cherry County, beginning with how it was settled and by whom. The museum has a variety of displays devoted to early-day cattlemen, Fort Niobrara, Native Americans, U.S. Wars, and the daily life of the pioneer era. An archival library includes historic newspapers and genealogical records. Located at the corner of Main Street and Highway 20, the museum is open Memorial Day to Labor Day, Thursday through Saturday from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. or by appointment.

Source: https://visitvalentine.org/places/cherry-county-historical-society-museum/

Education

Public Schools

The public schools in Nebraska are grouped into six classes, depending upon the type of educational services provided and the size of the school district. The six classes, as defined by the State of Nebraska, are:

Class 1 Dissolved by Legislative action

Class 2 Any school district with territory having a population of 1,000 inhabitants or less that maintains both elementary and high school grades under the direction of a single school board.

Class 3 Any school district with territory having a population of more than 1,000 and less than 100,000 that maintains both elementary and high school grades under the direction of a single school board.

Class 4 Any school district with territory having a population of 100,000 or more and less than 200,000 inhabitants that maintains both elementary and high school grades under the direction of a single school board.

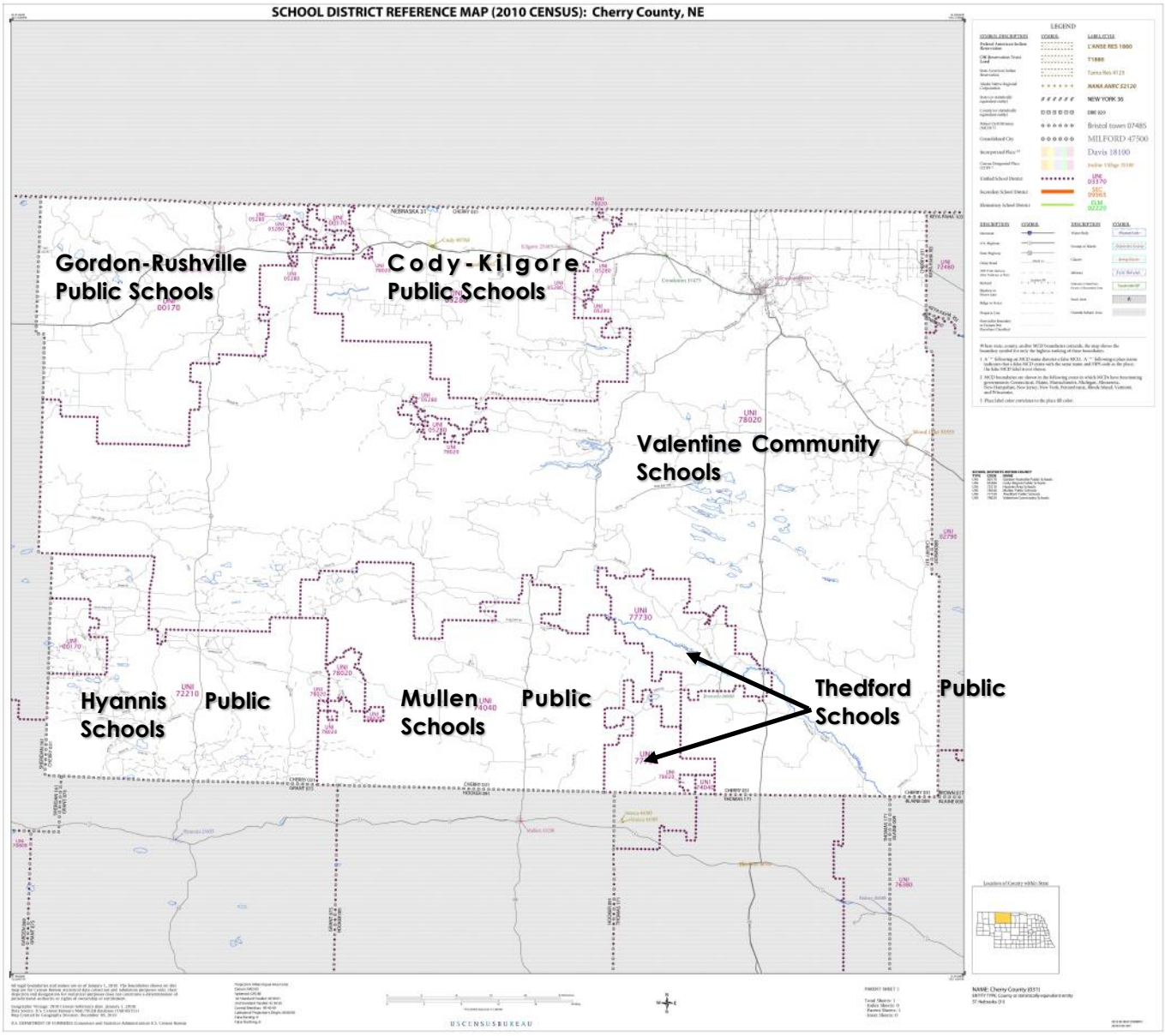
Class 5 Any school district with territory having a population of 200,000 or more that maintains both elementary and high school grades under the direction of a single school board.

Class 6 Any school district that maintains only a high school under the direction of a single school board. The territory of Class 6 district is made up entirely of Class 1 districts (or portions thereof) that have joined the Class 6.

Cherry County is served by a total of seven public school districts:

- Cody-Kilgore Public Schools
- Gordon-Rushville
- Hyannis Area Schools
- Mullen Public Schools
- Thedford Public Schools
- Valentine Community Schools

FIGURE 5.1: CHERRY COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT BOUNDARIES - 2010



Source: US Census Bureau

Cody-Kilgore Public Schools

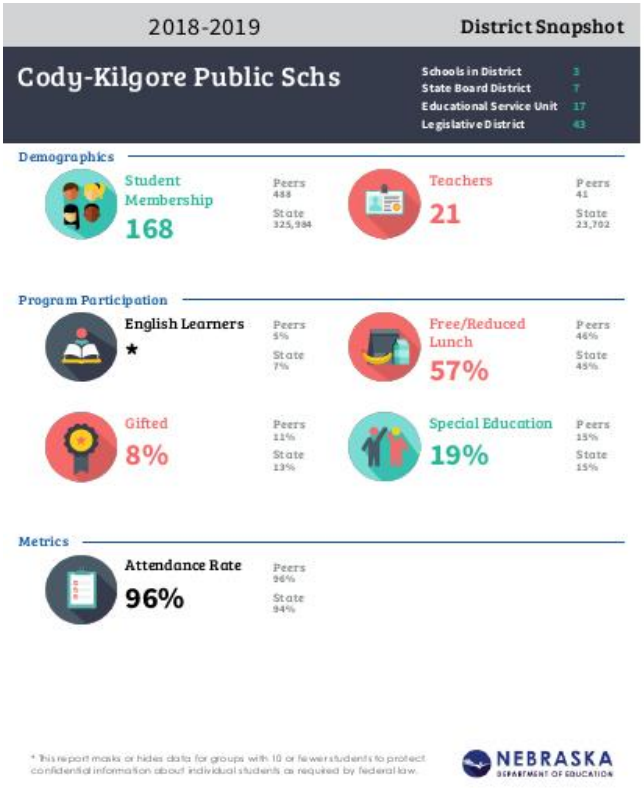
The Cody-Kilgore Unified Schools serves approximately 170 PreK-12th grade students. It is located in North Central NE with a sparsely populated constituency yet covering one of the largest geographic areas among NE Class II Districts. The district provides regular transportation services for students that cover a 312 mile round trip in a 553 square mile area. Some students log as many as 76 miles round trip in a day on our buses. Our staff is 100% NCLB Qualified. They have received an Entrepreneurship and Incubator Business Grant with the Village of Cody. This enhances our Career Education curriculum by providing real world experiences. Expanded Distance Learning and Dual Credit classes are helping them provide more curriculum offerings. At CKUS they are: Committed, Knowledgeable, Unified, and Successful.

There are three schools in the District.

- Cody-Kilgore Elementary School located in Kilgore
- Cody-Kilgore Middle School located in Cody
- Cody-Kilgore High School located in Cody.

Source: https://nep.education.ne.gov/snapshot.html#16-0030-000/about

FIGURE 5.2: DISTRICT SNAPSHOT - CODY-KILGORE PUBLIC SCHOOLS (2018-2019)



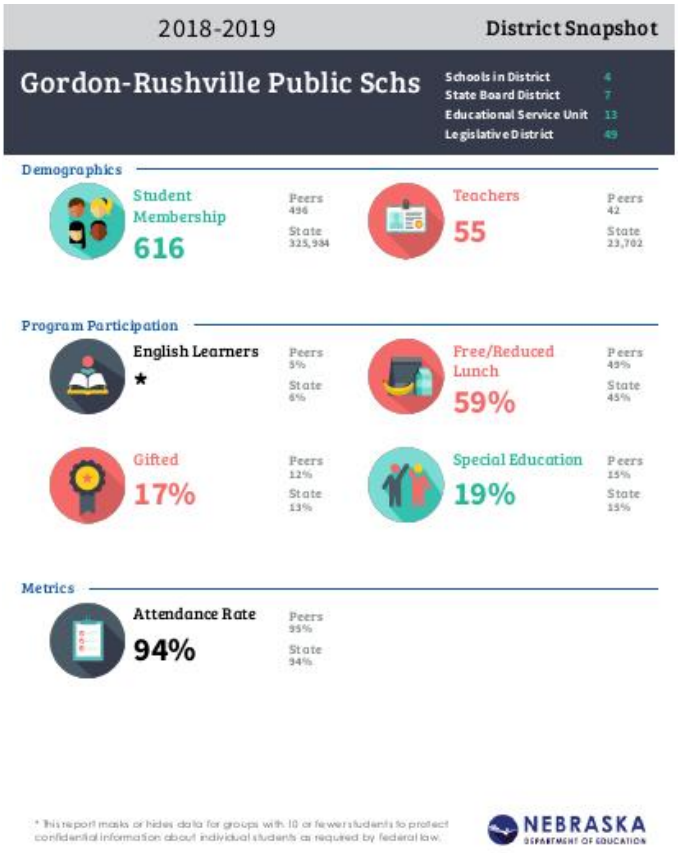
Source: Nebraska Department of Education

Gordon-Rushville

GRPS is a consolidated district. The district covers 2300 square miles consists of one 9-12 high school located in Gordon, a 6-8 middle school located in Rushville and two K-5 elementary schools including Pre-K located in Rushville and Gordon. Schools in the district are AdvancEd and NDE accredited. With a high poverty rate, bordering a socio-economically impacted area, they are striving to positively impact student populations geographically and economically. GRPS has an enrollment of approximately 624 students and serves a population that is one fourth Native American. The district offers courses through distance learning and other modes of technology in addition to the district taught curriculum. The staff and students actively work with mentoring programs to build relationships, develop cultural awareness and promote positive choices.

Source: https://nep.education.ne.gov/snapshot.html#81-0010-000/about

FIGURE 5.3: DISTRICT SNAPSHOT - GORDON-RUSHVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS (2018-2019)



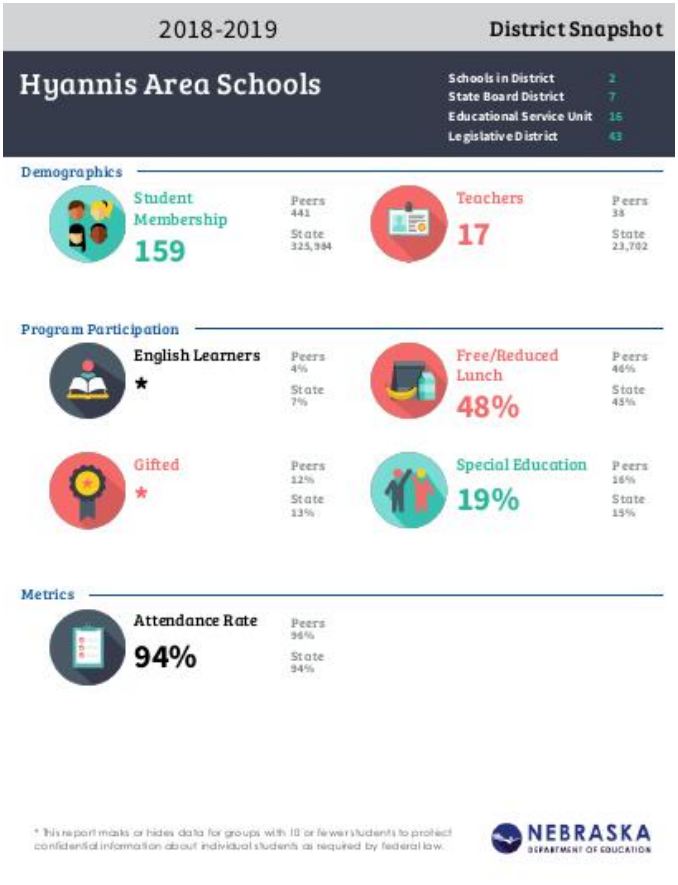
Source: Nebraska Department of Education

Hyannis Area Schools

Hyannis Area Schools is located in four different counties (Arthur, Cherry, Grant, and Sheridan) encompassing over 1,755 square miles. The district has 19.0 FTE teachers and 1.5 FTE administrators. All teachers have been involved in the standards/ assessment process. The beautiful Nebraska Sandhills serve as a backdrop for our school district . Cattle ranching is the primary industry.

Source: https://nep.education.ne.gov/snapshot.html#38-0011-000/about

FIGURE 5.4: DISTRICT SNAPSHOT - HYANNIS AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS (2018-2019)



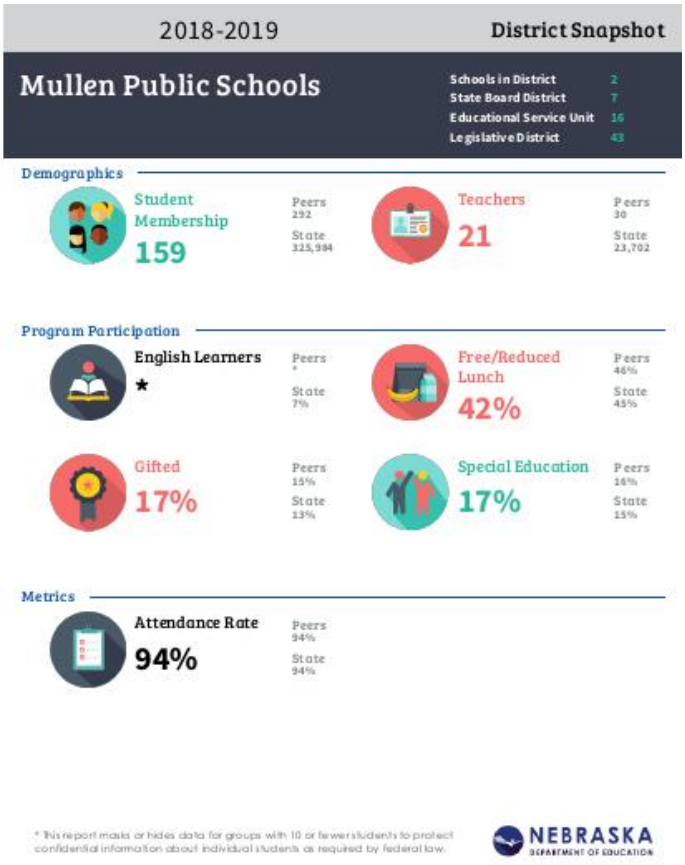
Source: Nebraska Department of Education

Mullen Public Schools

The Mullen School District is a Class III K-12 District encompassing an area of 1,383.8 sq. miles, including all of Hooker Co., 520 sq. miles of Cherry Co. and 72 sq. miles of Thomas Co. To meet these needs of the vast district, Mullen Public Schools have adopted the Nebraska Standards and Assessment system. The elementary staff includes nine teachers and the secondary staff includes 15 teachers in particular content areas. All staff members have received extensive training provided by ESU #16. All Mullen teachers, K-12, have been trained through the Academic Literacy Project through ESU #10. A.L.P. helps teachers to focus on engagement, vocabulary and comprehension. Teachers share their expertise through structured learning walks allowing them to collaborate on improvement of instruction. Mullen experiences little student mobility and low staff turnover creating a very personal and positive learning environment. The school also participates in DIBELS, ACT, and NWEA MAP tests.

Source: https://nep.education.ne.gov/snapshot.html#46-0001-000/about

FIGURE 5.5: DISTRICT SNAPSHOT - MULLEN AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS (2018-2019)

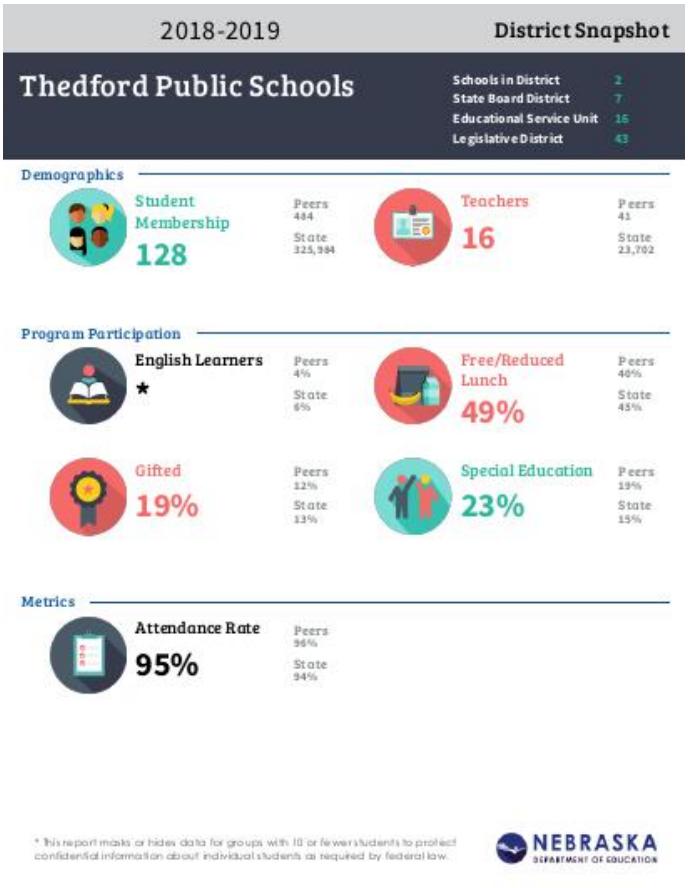


Source: Nebraska Department of Education

Thedford Public Schools

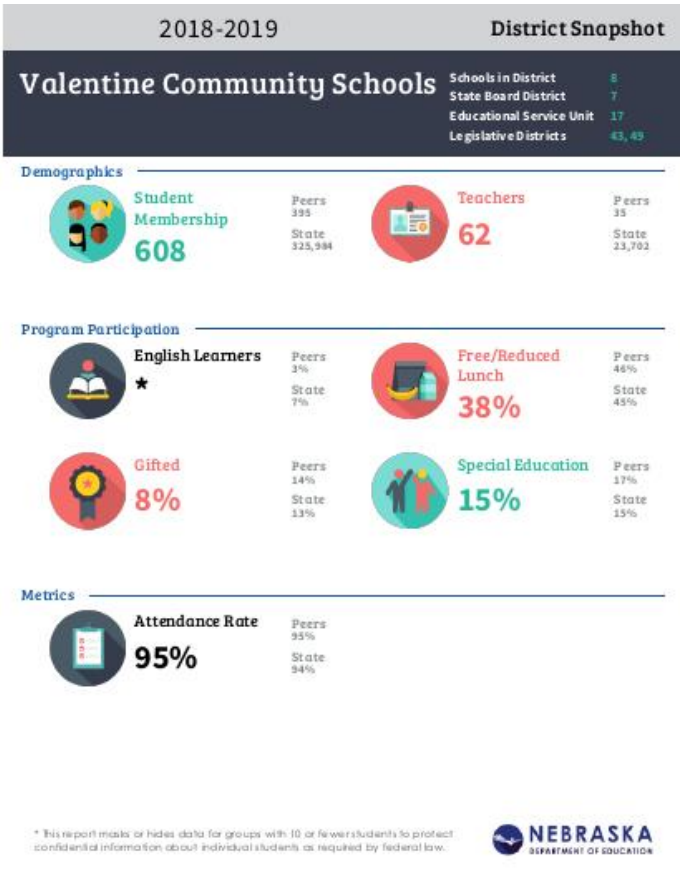
Thedford Public Schools is a Class III school located in the Sandhills cattle country of Nebraska. The student population consists of students covering a large, rural area. Many of the students drive from 5 to 50 miles to school each day. Total enrollment for the school, grades K - 12, is 108 students. Preschool is offered to 3 and 4 year old students. They are at the crossroads of Highways 83 and 2 and are a hour from Broken Bow, North Platte, and Valentine. The student to teacher ratio is about 7:1, they offer

FIGURE 5.6: DISTRICT SNAPSHOT - THEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS (2018-2019)



Source: Nebraska Department of Education

FIGURE 5.7: DISTRICT SNAPSHOT - VALENTINE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS (2018-2019)



Source: Nebraska Department of Education

Valentine Community Schools

Valentine Community Schools is a class 3 district located in north central Nebraska. The district is comprised of Valentine High School, Valentine Middle School, Valentine Elementary, and four rural attendance centers. Valentine Community Schools encompasses a geographic area of approximately 3400 square miles covering most of Cherry County.

Source: https://nep.education.ne.gov/snapshot.html#16-0006-000/about

Parochial Schools serving Cherry County

There is one parochial school located in Cherry County.

- Zion Lutheran School in Valentine

Post-Secondary Education

There is one post-secondary educational facility located in the county in Valentine. Mid-Plains Community College offers college classes, dual credit classes for high school students, and services as GED and English as Second Language classes.

The residents of Cherry County and the surrounding area have a large selection of in-state post-secondary schools to select.

Some Nebraska institutions include:

- Chadron State College
- Northeast Community College
- Wayne State College
- University of Nebraska-Lincoln
- Hastings College
- Nebraska Wesleyan
- Union College

- Southeast Community College
- Central Community College
- University of Nebraska-Kearney
- University of Nebraska-Omaha
- Creighton University
- University of Nebraska Medical Center
- Methodist College of Nursing and Allied Health
- Midland Lutheran College

Health Care

Health care facilities in Cherry County are limited. There is only one hospital located in the county. The facility is Cherry County Hospital and Clinic located in Valentine. The Hospital is a County Hospital run by an appointed board.

Cherry County Hospital provides general medical and surgical care for inpatient and outpatient, as well as providing an emergency room. Below is a listing of several of their services, but it is not exhaustive.

Among the services we provide are:

- Ambulance Service,
- Cardiology,
- Dialysis,
- Emergency Room,
- Home Health,
- Laboratory,
- Nursing Service,
- Physical Therapy,
- Occupational Therapy,
- Prenatal Care/Labor/Delivery,
- Radiology,
- Respiratory Therapy,
- Surgery

Source: www.cherrycountyhospital.org/getpage.php?name=mission&sub=About+Us

Goals and Policies

Educational Goals

Educational Goal 1

Quality education is a vital component of positive growth. Although the County's role is limited, objectives and policies need to be established with regard to locating development to insure cost effective use of existing facilities.

Educational Policies and Strategies

ED-1.1 Continue to cooperate with the school systems in expanding public uses of educational facilities.

ED-1.2 The school districts should review all new development proposed within the zoning jurisdiction of Cherry County so they can accommodate future school populations.

Educational Goal 2

The county should coordinate with the school districts to insure adequate areas for future educational needs. Above all, the main goal is to encourage excellence in the school curriculum and facilities.

Educational Policies and Strategies

ED-2.1 Cooperate with school systems on any future expansion or the development of new joint facilities.

ED-2.2 Work with students to continually identify new facilities needed in the future.

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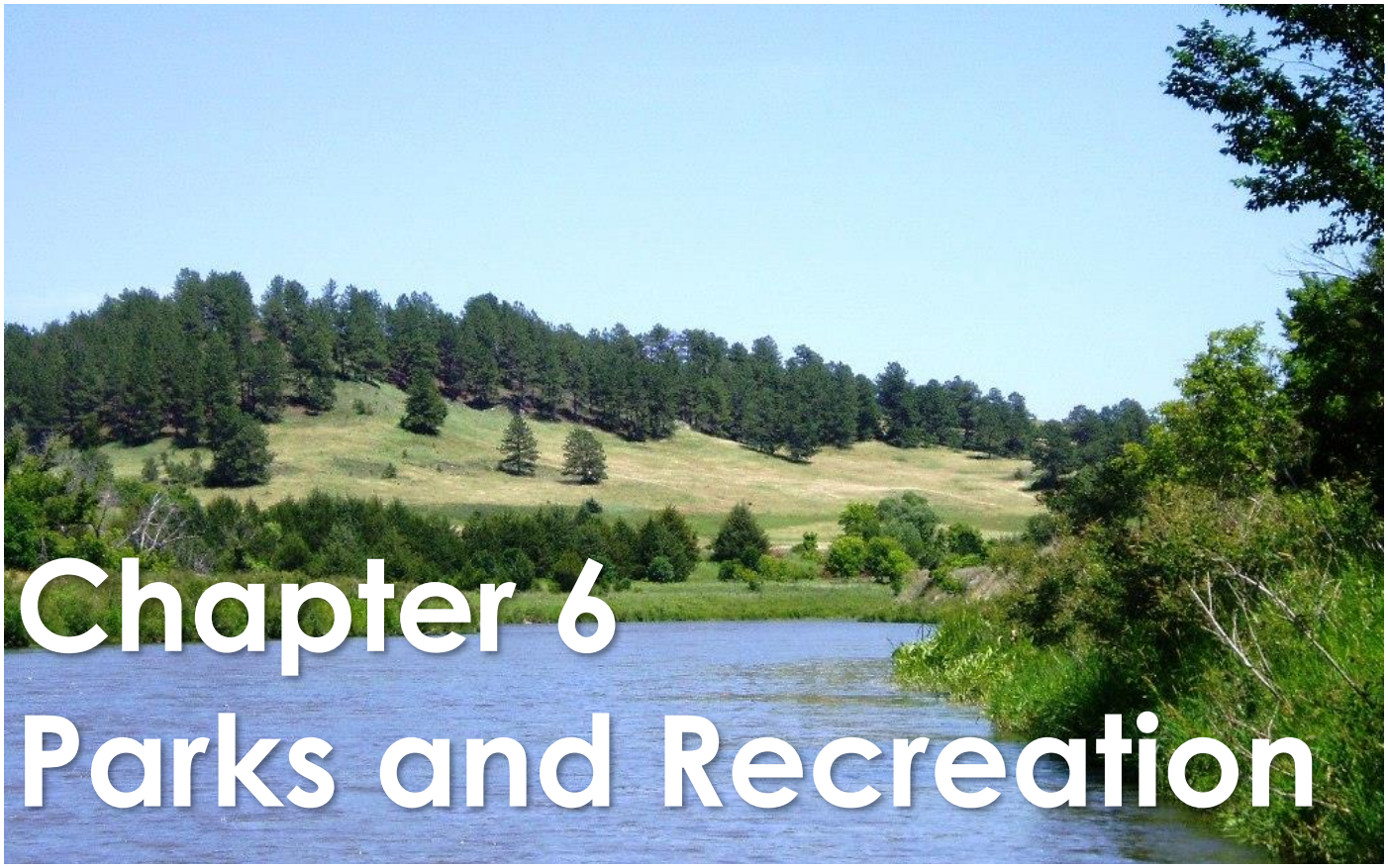


Chapter 6
Parks and Recreation

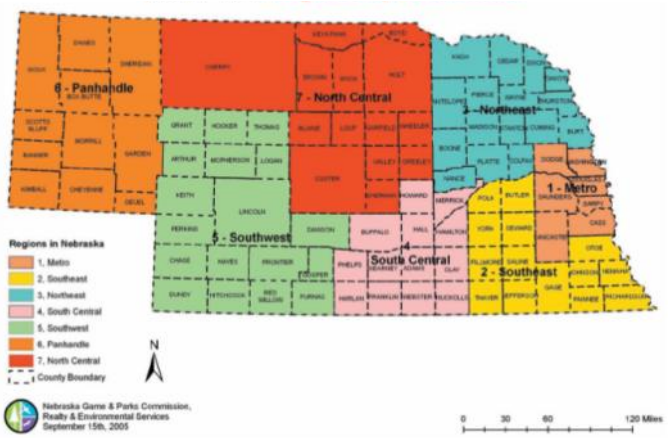
Parks and Recreation

Cherry County has the most protected acres of land managed by the federal government in Nebraska. It is also home to several state parks and the Niobrara Wild and Scenic River.

Over the past decade the recreation use of the federal and state lands in the County has increased. The openness of Cherry County provides many recreational opportunities for residents and visitors, winter and summer. Conflicts between recreation users and other users of the lands are minimal, and can be kept to a minimum when federal and state land managers coordinate their planning efforts and management activities with the County.

The following is a brief description of the facilities within the jurisdiction of Cherry County that are operated by the U.S. Department of Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service and National Park Service, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, and Cherry County.

Figure 6.1: Nebraska Game and Parks Regions



Source: Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

National Wildlife Refuges

Fort Niobrara National Wildlife Refuge

Fort Niobrara National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) is 19,131 acres in size and located along the Niobrara River in north-central Nebraska. Fort Niobrara NWR was established by Executive Order in January, 1912 as a "preserve and breeding ground for native birds." Its purpose was expanded later that same year to include the preservation of bison and elk herds representative of those that once roamed the Great Plains. Furthermore, the unusual, and unique assemblage of plant communities currently present at the Refuge (Sandhills Prairie, Mixed Prairie, Rocky Mountain Coniferous Forest, Eastern

Deciduous Forest, and Northern Boreal Forest) support a rich diversity of wildlife generally unchanged from historic times. Under the Wilderness Act of 1964, a 4,635-acre portion of Fort Niobrara was designated a Wilderness Area in 1976; a portion of the Niobrara River through the Refuge was designated a National Canoe Trail by Congress in 1982; and, in 1991, a 76 mile stretch of the Niobrara River including the River through this Refuge was designated Scenic under the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. (Fort Niobrara Comprehensive Conservation Plan - September 1999)

Fort Niobrara National Wildlife Refuge is managed as part of the Fort Niobrara/Valentine National Wildlife Refuge Complex. Included in this complex is the Valentine and John W. and Louise Seier National Wildlife Refuges. The Refuge Complex headquarters is located at: Fort Niobrara National Wildlife Refuge, 39983, Refuge Road, Valentine, Nebraska 69201.

Prior to the creation of the wildlife refuge, the lands were grazed by livestock owned by Cherry County ranchers. Since the refuge was established, livestock grazing has been significantly reduced as the Service has prioritized bison and wildlife management. This has harmed the Counties ability to protect the backbone of its agriculture economic engine, making it more difficult for the County to support the essential services that allow hunters, fisherman, and other recreationist to enjoy the refuge and other recreational areas within Cherry County.

It is because of this experience the County opposes the additional expansion of the refuge system through federal or state land acquisitions, or by conservation easements held by government or non-profit entities without prior County approval.

Valentine National Wildlife Refuge

Valentine National Wildlife Refuge was created by Executive Order 7142 in 1935. The facility is managed as part of the Fort Niobrara/Valentine National Wildlife Refuge Complex. A National Wildlife Refuge Complex is an administrative grouping of two or more refuges, wildlife management areas or other refuge conservation areas that are primarily managed from a central office location. Refuges are grouped into a complex structure because they occur in a similar ecological region, such as a watershed or specific habitat type, and have a related purpose and management needs. Typically, a project leader or complex manager oversees the general management of all refuges within the complex and refuge managers are responsible for operations at specific refuges. Supporting staff, composed of administrative, law enforcement, refuge manager, biological, fire, visitor services, and maintenance professionals, are centrally located and support all refuges within the complex.

Samuel R. McKelvie National Forest

Managed by the United States Forest Service

Located south of Nenzel in Cherry County, the Samuel R. McKelvie National Forest is a 116,000-acre area representing the unique Nebraska Sandhills. The area is used by the public for hunting, fishing, horseback riding, camping and bird watching. There is one small campground located on the southwestern edge of the forest, Steer Creek Campground, which has 23 campsites, 8 horse corrals, potable water, and the 1-mile Blue Jay hiking trail.

The Niobrara River Canoe Launch is a day use site on the Niobrara River for launching small water craft. Fishing is available in the nearby Merritt Reservoir. The Lord Lakes wetland complex has been recognized for its outstanding fishing.
source: https://www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/nebraska/recreation/hiking/recarea/?recid=30324&actid=50

Niobrara National Scenic River

Managed by the U. S. National Park Service

The 76 miles of the Niobrara National Scenic River was set aside by Congress in 1991 to preserve "outstandingly remarkable values" including Fish and Wildlife, Scenery, Fossil Resources, Geology, and Recreation. The river was designated by Backpacker magazine as one of the 10 best rivers for canoeing in the United States.

Along the National Scenic River are numerous waterfalls that empty into the river from the surrounding cliff and canyon walls; the highest one is Smith Falls, which drops almost 63 feet (19 m) into the river valley. There are short sections of Class I and II rapids on the river, and several locations further downstream require a portage around the rapids. The westernmost 26 miles (40 km) of the Scenic River section, from the Fort Niobrara National Wildlife Refuge (just east of Valentine) to the Rocky Ford portage, offer outstanding canoeing, kayaking, and tubing opportunities.

The river has retained its world renowned qualities largely because it has been properly managed and conserved for generations by the private

landowners that surround its banks. It has been this stewardship of the river that attracted national attention and led to its Wild and Scenic designation. The landowners remain the rivers most important conservationists. Access to many resource.

Around 75,000 people visit the river annually, with the months of June through August being the busiest. Water levels decline slightly in late summer, but the river can still be enjoyed by canoe, kayak, and inner tube. To reach the first public access on the Scenic River is on Nebraska Highway 12, northeast of Valentine.

Considered an extraordinary example of a Great Plains river, the Niobrara is home to over 500 plant species many at or beyond their usual range, including many not otherwise naturally found within several hundred miles. These species include birch, ponderosa pine and a rare hybrid aspen (quaking X bigtooth). Species from six different vegetation communities can be found in proximity. Northern boreal forest types occur on north facing slopes where shade and abundant ground water create cooler microclimates. Species growing here include paper birch, aspen, ferns and club mosses. Rocky Mountain forest plants include ponderosa pine, serviceberry, and horizontal juniper. Eastern deciduous forests grow on the moist bottom lands and islands of the Niobrara. They include American elm, basswood, cottonwood, green ash, bur oak, hackberry and box elder. Three types of prairie are found in the river valley, displaying a botanical transition between among the eastern tallgrass prairie, the Sandhills mixed-grass prairie, and Northern Mixed-grass prairie. Mule deer, beaver, mink, pronghorn, river otter and even bison can be found in the area. Approximately 300 bison and a few dozen elk are protected in the 19,000 acre (77km2) Fort Niobrara National Wildlife Refuge, which is located along the river.

In the Niobrara river, minnows such as sand shiners, red shiners and flathead chubs search for their food of aquatic insects near streambank margins. Larger fish, such as rainbow and brown trout, prefer cooler, clear water where springbranch canyon tributaries enter the river. Channel catfish, a popular game fish, prefer deeper waters or cover during the day and feed at night in the riffles. Softshell, snapping or painted turtles may be found sunning on logs in summer.

The scenic river is spanned by 15 bridges, including six which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Niobrara_National_Scenic_River

Arthur Bowring Ranch State Historical Park
See Chapter 5 of this Plan.

Smith Falls State Park
Scenic Smith Falls State Park is home to Nebraska's highest waterfall, also called Smith Falls. Smith Falls and the facilities are actually on private property with a 99-year lease given to the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. The state park is a popular destination for campers, as well as canoers, kayakers, tubers and others who visit the area to experience the beautiful Niobrara River, a National Scenic River. Many outfitters use the park as a take-out spot, which make it a convenient camping site for those planning to paddle or float the river.

Smith Falls is named for Frederic Smith, who filed the first homestead patent on the land that encompasses the falls. The site became a state park in 1992. Not only is the land home to the beautiful falls, it is also an area of biological significance where several ice age species can still be found.
Source: http://outdoornebraska.gov/smithfalls/

Merritt Dam
Located in a picturesque valley of the Snake River 26 miles southwest of Valentine. The facility is managed by the Nebraska Games and Parks Commission. Merritt Reservoir offers some of Nebraska's best fishing, along with boating and camping. It is a deep lake with excellent inflow from the Snake River and Boardman Creek.

Merritt Reservoir and Irrigation
The Reservoir provides water to irrigate approximately 34,500 acres of farmland in the area.

The Ainsworth Canal originates at Merritt Dam outlet works and extends eastward through the Sandhills to the project lands. The canal is concrete lined for its entire length to minimize seepage losses in the sandy soils it traverses, is 52.8 miles long, and has an initial capacity of 580 cubic feet per second.

The lateral system which delivers the water to the project lands has a total length of 169.7 miles and the initial capacities range from 530 to 4 cubic feet per second. Five miles of surface water disposal drains and several disposal ponding areas have

been constructed. Other surface water disposal and subsurface drainage facilities will be constructed as necessary.

Golf Courses

There are three golf courses serving the Cherry County area. One is The Prairie Club and the second is Fredrick Peak Golf Club; while the final is CapRock Golf Course.

The Prairie Club

The Prairie Club is a membership club containing two 18-hole courses (Par 73) called the Dunes Course and the Pines Course. The third course, the Horse Course, is a 10-hole Par 3 course. The Prairie Club is located south of Valentine on Highway 97.

Fredrick Peak Golf Club

The Fredrick Peak Golf Club is located outside of Valentine. The course is a 10-hole course with driving range facilities. The golf club is open to the public. The clubhouse serves food and beverages.

CapRock Golf Club

CapRock Ranch is an 18-hole, private golf course tracing the caprock cliffs of the Snake River Canyon, in the Sandhills of Northwest Nebraska. Located south of Valentine on highway 97.
Source: https://www.caprockranch.com/

Goals and Policies

Parks and Recreational Goals

Parks and Recreation Goal 1

In order to ensure the continued robust recreation and tourism activities, and the health, safety, welfare and economic prosperity of the citizens, the County requires that all state and federal agencies coordinate the management of the recreation and conservation lands with the Counties Comprehensive Plan, Natural Resource Plan and Zoning Regulations.

Parks and Recreation Goal 2

Coordinate with federal and state agencies to increase multiple recreation uses in Cherry County including on all federal agency administered lands located within its boundaries. These should include high quality recreational opportunities and experiences at developed and undeveloped recreation sites by allowing historic uses and access while maintaining existing amenities, and by providing new recreation sites for the public's enjoyment.

Coordinate with federal and state agencies to increase public access opportunities in both motorized and non-motorized settings. Recognize that multiple recreation uses are mandated by the multiple use concept and that adequate outdoor recreation resources should be provided on all federal and state agency's administered lands and waterways.

Parks and Recreation Goal 3

Cherry County will continue to work closely with different entities within the jurisdiction of the County, including the communities and Natural Resource Districts to maintain and enhance the existing parks, camps, riverfront, and lakes.

Parks and Recreation Policies and Strategies

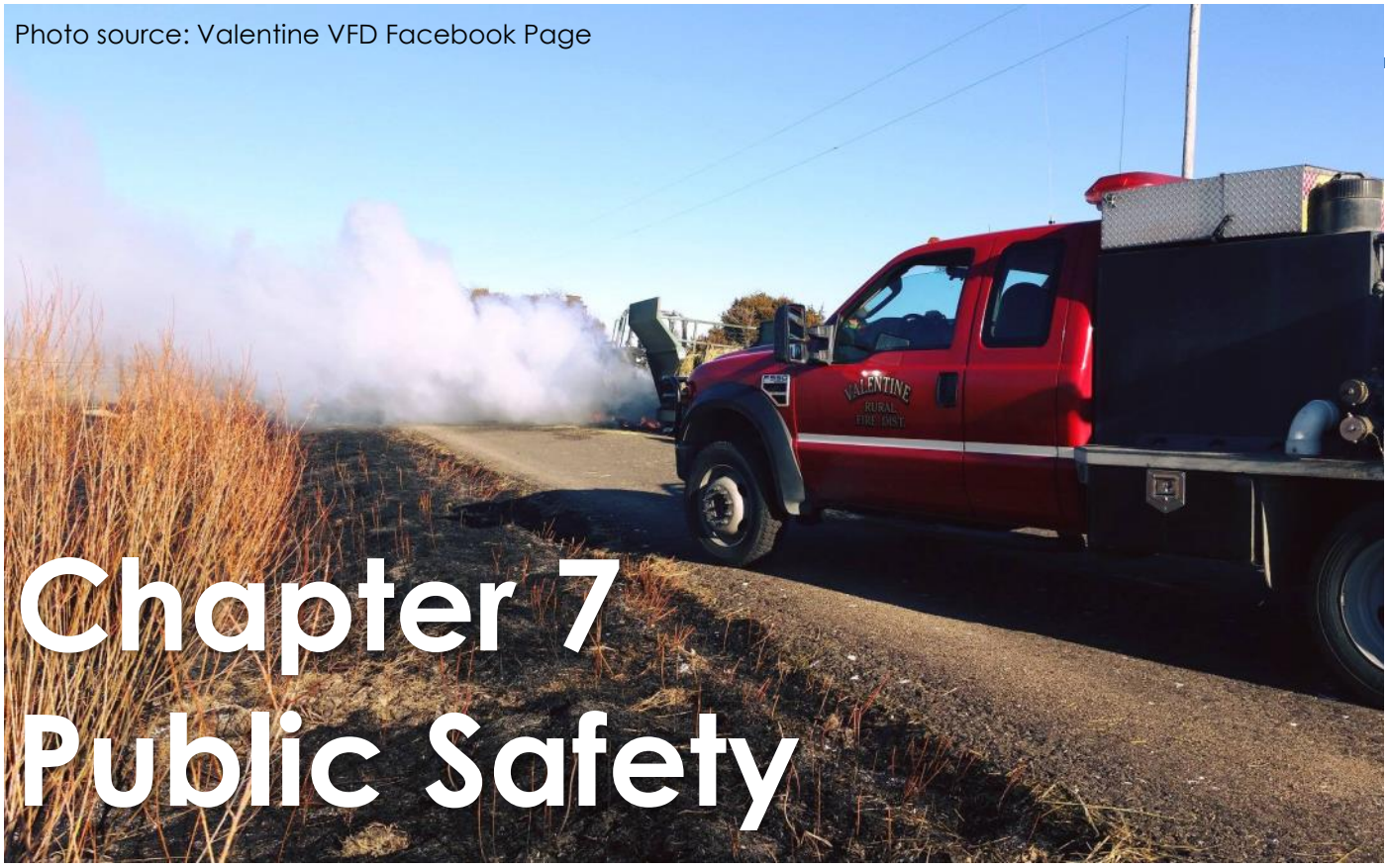
PR-3.1 The County should continue promoting the areas recreational destinations.

PR-3.2 The County should continue to promote local Agri-tourism.

Parks and Recreation Goal 4

There shall be no additional designations of Wild and Scenic Rivers in Cherry County without County approval, as the existing rivers, segments or tributaries do not meet the standards for designation.

Photo source: Valentine VFD Facebook Page



Chapter 7 Public Safety

Fire Protection

Fire and Rescue

Fire and rescue in Cherry County is handled through 14 different departments/agencies:

- Barley
- Cody
- Gordon
- Hyannis
- Kilgore
- Merriman
- Mid-Cherry
- Mullen
- Purdum
- Thedford
- US Fish and Wildlife
- US Forest Service
- Valentine
- Wood Lake

Each of the agencies listed above, provide varying levels of fire and rescue service to their respective territories. Detailed information is not provided since the type and age of equipment can vary annually.

Figure 7.1 is a map showing the location and boundaries of the 14 different agencies proving fire protection in Cherry County.

Figure 7.1: Cherry County Fire Districts

Source: Nebraska Department of Transportation

Valentine Volunteer Fire Department

Valentine Fire Departments provide fire protection and emergency response services to the Valentine, NE community with a mission to prevent the loss of life and property. In addition to responding to calls for fire suppression, Valentine Fire Departments respond to medical emergencies, incidents involving hazardous materials, rescue calls, and motor vehicle or other accidents.

Source: https://www.countyoffice.org/valentine-ne-fire-departments/

Barley Rural Fire Department

Barley Rural Fire Department is located approximately in the middle of Cherry County. The fire district covers approximately 156 square miles of Cherry County.

Cody Volunteer Fire Department

The Crofton Volunteer Fire Department is located Cody. The district is in northwest Cherry County. The fire district covers approximately 231 square miles.

Gordon Volunteer Fire Department

The Gordon Volunteer Fire Department is based in Gordon, within Sheridan County. The district covers approximately 674 square miles of Cherry County.

Hyannis Volunteer Fire Department

The Hyannis Volunteer Fire Department is based in Hyannis, within Grant County. The district covers approximately 457 square miles of Cherry County.

Kilgore Volunteer Fire Department
The Kilgore Volunteer Fire Department is based in Kilgore, in north-central Cherry County. The district covers approximately 190 square miles of Cherry County.

Merriman Volunteer Fire Department
The Merriman Volunteer Fire Department is based in Merriman, in northwest Cherry County. The district covers approximately 750 square miles of Cherry County.

Mid-Cherry Volunteer Fire Department
The Mid-Cherry Volunteer Fire Department is based in Nenzel, in central Cherry County. The district covers approximately 336 square miles of Cherry County.

Mullen Volunteer Fire Department
Mullen Volunteer Fire Department is based in Mullen within Hooker County. The fire district covers approximately 719 square miles of Cherry County.

Purdum Volunteer Fire Department
Purdum Volunteer Fire Department is based in Blaine County, southeast of Cherry County. The fire district covers approximately 390 square miles of Cherry County.

Thedford Volunteer Fire Department
Thedford Volunteer Fire Department is based in Thedford in Thomas County, south of Cherry County. The fire district covers approximately 500 square miles of Cherry County.

US Fish and Wildlife Fire Department
The US Fish and Wildlife Fire Department is a Federal agency and covers the two different refuges located in Cherry County. US Fish and Wildlife is responsible for approximately 128 square miles of Cherry County.

US Forest Service Fire Department
The US Forest Service Fire Department is a Federal agency and covers the National Forest lands located in Cherry County. The Forest Service is responsible for approximately 151 square miles of Cherry County.

Wood Lake Volunteer Fire Department
Wood Lake Volunteer Fire Department is based in Wood Lake, in eastern Cherry County. The fire district covers approximately 450 square miles of Cherry County.

Law Enforcement
Cherry County Sheriff's Department

Cherry County is served by the Cherry County Sheriff's Department, which provides policing services to a majority of the county as well as support and operation of the county courts and jail facilities.

The following are other law enforcement agencies in Cherry County:
- Valentine Police Department
- US Fish and Wildlife
- US Forestry Service

Based upon data from the Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice, the Cherry County Sheriff's Department had five full-time sworn officers in 2016 and 2018. Table 7.1 shows the employment levels for the past three years. When examining the number of sworn officers per 1,000 people, the Cherry County Sheriff's Department had an average of 1.6 sworn officers per 1,000 people from 2016 to 2018. Table 7.1 also shows the Valentine Police Department has maintained between five and six sworn officers for the same period.

Table 7.1: Sworn Officer Comparison

Agency	2016		2017		2018	
	Sworn Officers FT/PT	Officers per 1,000 Population	Sworn Officers FT/PT	Officers per 1,000 Population	Sworn Officers FT/PT	Officers per 1,000 Population
Cherry County Sheriff	**5/0**	**1.7**	**NA**	**NA**	**5/0**	**1.6**
Blaine County Sheriff	1/0	1.9	NA	NA	NA	NA
Brown County Sheriff	5/2	1.7	5/4	1.7	NA	NA
Grant County Sheriff	1/3	0.9	1/1	3.1	2/0	3.1
Hooker County Sheriff	2/0	2.8	1/1	1.4	2/0	2.8
Sheridan County Sheriff	5/1	1.4	NA	NA	5/0	1.4
Valentine PD	5/0	1.8	6/0	2.1	6/0	2.1

Source: Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice 2016 through 2018

The ratio of law enforcement officers per 1,000 persons in the population for any given area is influenced by many factors. The determination of law enforcement strength for a certain area is based on such factors as population density, size and character of the county, geographic location and other conditions existing in the area. The data

indicate Cherry County has been maintaining a ratio of 1.6 sworn officers per 1,000 people over a period of time; apparently this is a good balance for Cherry County. Table 7.1 also shows the number of sworn officers and officers per 1,000 persons in the surrounding counties.

Emergency Management

Cherry County Emergency Management is locally operated by Cherry County. Emergency Management has a local Manager located in Valentine. However, the county's office works directly under the state agency, Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA). The local offices were created under the Nebraska Emergency Management Act of 1996.

The Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) is part of the Military Department. The state's Adjutant General serves as the director of the agency as well as the commanding officer of the Army National Guard and the Air National Guard. The three units comprise the Military Department.

Originally, the agency was located in a bunker built in the 1960s during the height of the Cold War. It was intended to serve as Nebraska's government headquarters if nuclear confrontation was likely. In 2012, the agency headquarters was relocated to the Joint Force Headquarters, on the Nebraska National Guard base in Lincoln. NEMA is a small agency with less than 40 full-time and part-time employees. Day-to-day operations are managed by the assistant director.

Emergency management in the United States has been divided into four phases: preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation. Even with the emphasis on terrorism since the 9/11 attacks, emergency management's role has not changed a great deal. Nebraska must still deal with a host of hazards, both natural and man-made.

Preparedness

During the preparedness phase, NEMA monitors the situation across the state. This is accomplished by using a duty officer system; state, National Weather Service and North American Warning and Alert System (NAWAS); local emergency management organizations, police and fire departments across the state and the general public.

A member of NEMA staff serves as the duty officer on a rotational basis taking calls for a host of incidents in addition to severe weather such as tornadoes, floods and blizzards. A terrorist attack would be handled in the same manner as a tornado strike or flood.

During the preparedness phase, the agency coordinates the state Radiological Emergency Preparedness Program (REP), which develops emergency plans for the two nuclear power plants – Cooper and Ft. Calhoun Nuclear Stations.

The agency also monitors low-level and high-level radiological material shipments, which traverse the state by highway and railway. Any abnormality can trigger a call to the duty officer and alert the rest of Nebraska government.

NEMA conducts an extensive training program for emergency managers and first responders, such as police, fire and emergency medical personnel. The training classes cover a wide range of topics, including counter terrorism, hazardous materials, radiological emergency, public information and incident management. Classes, schedules and other information are listed on NEMA's training page.

An important part of preparedness is the development of state and local emergency operations plans, which NEMA coordinates. The agency has also developed an emergency operations exercise program that assists local jurisdictions in exercising their emergency plans.

Each year, once in the spring and again in the fall, the agency conducts public awareness campaigns. The severe weather awareness campaign tests the state's emergency systems in advance of the spring thunderstorm season and the winter weather awareness campaign does the same before winter. Both are sponsored by NEMA and the National Weather Service.

Response

In the event of an emergency anywhere in the state, the local jurisdictions are responsible for first response to the emergency. If local resources are inadequate to deal with the situation, the local political leader declares an emergency and requests state assistance.

Normally, the agency would be aware of the developing situation and would have alerted the governor's office and other state agencies. NEMA could also activate the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) located in the agency headquarters. The SEOC becomes the center for any state response. Depending upon the nature of the emergency, state teams can be dispatched to

the disaster area.

If deemed necessary the Federal Emergency Management Agency' s (FEMA) Region VII office, which is located in Kansas City, can be alerted. They, in turn, can notify FEMA National in Washington, D.C.

Upon the advice of the agency director, the governor can proclaim a state emergency and sign a declaration. This declaration formalizes the state response and places all the state's resources at the disposal of the adjutant general. This can involve the National Guard, State Patrol, Department of Transportation, Game and Parks Commission, Department on Aging, Health and Human Resources or any other agency that can be of assistance.

The formal declaration process also allows the adjutant general to use money in the governor's Emergency Fund to pay for the disaster costs. This fund, which was created and is maintained by the Legislature, usually is kept at around $1 million.

If the governor determines state resources are not sufficient to deal with the emergency, a federal disaster declaration can be requested. The issuance of a Presidential Disaster Declaration means all the resources of the federal government can be brought to bear on the emergency.

Recovery
Under a Presidential Disaster Declaration, NEMA and FEMA coordinate state and federal activities in a Joint Field Office. The two disburse recovery funds for two types of federal disasters. A Presidential Disaster Declaration can be for public assistance, individual assistance or both.

Public assistance is used to help local and state governments recover their disaster expenses. Public assistance is used to pay for roads, bridges, public buildings and other facilities damaged in the disaster and to pay for costs such as the National Guard, police, fire and public works employee salaries and other costs. Normally, the Federal Government pays 75 percent of all eligible public costs. Traditionally, the state and local governments equally split the remaining 25 percent.

Individual assistance is provided to the survivors of the disaster. Individual assistance can come in the form of low interest loans both to families and businesses, or individual family grants to pay for losses to families or businesses that are not eligible for loans.

Mitigation
Following a federally-declared disaster, the state receives funding assistance for hazard mitigation. This can amount to substantial sums of money, because 15 percent of the total federal share of the disaster is earmarked for mitigation. Hazard mitigation is designed to lessen or mitigate the impacts of future disasters.

For example, hazard mitigation for flooding might mean the buyout of flood-prone structures in the disaster area, or it might involve raising structures above the 100-year flood level. In the case of tornadoes, mitigation might involve better warning systems or structural improvements. The state and federal governments must agree to whatever mitigation projects that are designed.
Source: https://nema.nebraska.gov/overview/nema-overview

Public Safety Goals and Policies

Public Safety Goals

Public Safety Goal 1
The goal of Cherry County is to maintain fire protection, rescue and ambulance programs by exploring programs and alternative services to insure optimum service levels and public costs.

Public Safety Policies and Strategies
PS -1.1 The different fire and rescue organizations and the county should continue to work to maintain quality equipment levels.
PS-1.2 The fire departments should continue to expand fire safety education and prevention throughout the county.

Public Safety Goal 2
Cherry County should work collectively to address and minimize wildfires within the county.

Public Safety Policies and Strategies
PS–2.1 Continually train for wildfire conditions.
PS-2.2 Continue to work with state and federal entities on land management in order to prevent wildfires.

Public Safety Goal 3
The County will continue positive planning for law enforcement in Cherry County.

Public Safety Policies and Strategies
PS–3.1 The County will continue urging consultation, cooperation and coordination between federal and state agencies and local law enforcement personnel.
PS-3.2 The County will provide to protect all Cherry County citizens, private property rights, and

natural resources located within the county while complying with Nebraska laws, the Nebraska Constitution, county ordinances, Federal laws and The United States Constitution.

Public Safety Goal 4

The goal of Cherry County is to maintain quality law enforcement throughout the county.

Public Safety Policies and Strategies

PS-4.1 Continue to identify specific ways to work cooperatively with the County Sheriff regarding protection in the County.

PS-4.2 Continue to support minimum standards regarding equipment used by law enforcement.

Public Safety Goal 5

The goal of Cherry County is to maintain regulations to protect the general health and safety of all residents.

Public Safety Policies and Strategies

PS-5.1 Establish regulations protecting the county residents from the secondary effects of adult entertainment.

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Chapter 8 Communications, Utilities, and Energy

Communications

Telephone Services

The primary telephone providers in Cherry County include CenturyLink and Great Plains Communication.

Radio Stations

There are multiple stations available to listeners in Cherry County. Local stations (Valentine) are: KMBV 90.7 FM, KKNL 89.3 FM, KSDZ/KDJL 99.5, and KVSH 940 AM.

Television Stations

Presently there are no local television stations located in Cherry County. The over the air stations serving the area originate out of South Dakota, Colorado and Nebraska.

Internet/World Wide Web Service Providers (ISP)

High speed Internet service in Cherry County is primarily provided by CenturyLink and Great Plains Communications. There are various other small providers in the area.

Cellular Service

All of the mainstream cellular providers have a presence in Cherry County. Viaero, Verizon, and US Cellular has a local office in Valentine.

Newspapers

The residents of Cherry County are served locally by the Valentine Midland News which is a weekly paper. Daily news is provided by the Omaha World Herald, Scottsbluff Star-Herald and the North Platte Telegraph.

Listed below are other newspapers with weekly circulation within the Cherry County area:

- Hooker County Times in Mullen
- Thomas County Herald in Thedford
- Sheridan County Journal-Star in Gordon
- Grant County News

Utilities

Sanitary Sewer Systems

The sanitary waste in the rural parts of Cherry County is handled via individual septic systems. The level and complexity of these systems varies greatly throughout Cherry County due to soil conditions, see Chapter 11: Natural Resources and Soils for more detail.

Sanitary waste within the communities of Cherry County are typically addressed via community-wide collection and treatment systems if available.

Water Systems

Water in Cherry County is supplied by wells drawing groundwater up for consumption or other uses. The unincorporated communities and the farmsteads,

and acreages typically have individual wells supplying the needs of the user. However, within some of the primary incorporated communities of the county, the wells are owned and operated by the local government. The local government runs a centralized system.

Solid Waste
Sanitation collection in Cherry County is provided by private haulers.

Sanitary Improvement Districts (SIDs)
Sanitary Improvement Districts in Nebraska are a form of taxation which allows a development group and/or homeowner's association to establish a special taxing district for purposes of installing or improving infrastructure such as a water system and/or a sanitary sewer collection and treatment system. SID's may also construct and/or maintain streets within such a district. The creation of an SID is controlled by the District Courts of Nebraska. Cherry County does not have any SID's within the county.

Electricity
The Nebraska Public Power District provides power to Cherry County retail and wholesale to local public power districts. There are five primary rural public power districts serving Cherry County:
- KBR Rural Public Power
- Cherry-Todd Electric Cooperative
- La Creek Electric based in S. Dakota
- Northwest Rural Public Power District
- Panhandle Rural Electric Membership, and
- Custer Public Power District

KBR Rural Public Power
KBR Rural Public Power District is a non-profit public utility whose mission is to safely provide customers reliable, high quality and reasonably priced electricity and other energy related products and services.

KBR is one of 32 rural electric systems located in Nebraska and one of nearly 1,000 electric systems nationwide. They provide electric service to over 5,400 electric accounts scattered across over 5,000 square miles of service area located in the counties of Brown, Rock, Keya Paha and Cherry in the sandhills of north-central Nebraska.

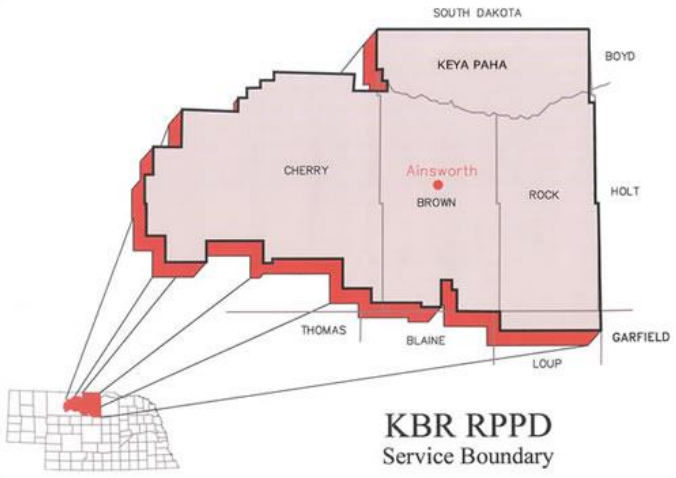
They are a distribution utility — they do not generate electricity. They purchase all of their power from the Nebraska Public Power District through the Nebraska Electric G&T, both headquartered in Columbus, Nebraska.

KBR has 17 full-time employees; three working out of our Valentine Outpost, three serving out of the Springview Outpost and the balance headquartered in the general office located in Ainsworth, Nebraska.

KBR is governed by nine elected board members, three from Keya Paha County, three from Rock County, two from Brown County and one from Cherry County. Each board member is elected at the November general election and is elected for a six-year term.

Note: All first person references were modified by MPC
Sources: https://kbrpower.com/

Figure 8.1: KBR Service Area



Cherry-Todd Electric Cooperative
Central-Todd Electric Cooperative part of a Touchstone Energy Cooperatives.

The Touchstone Energy Cooperatives brand represents a nationwide alliance made of more than 750 local, consumer-owned electric cooperatives in 46 states. Touchstone Energy coops collectively deliver power and energy solutions to more than 30 million members every day. Electric cooperatives distribute power for 56 percent of the U.S. land mass over 2.4 million miles of power lines.

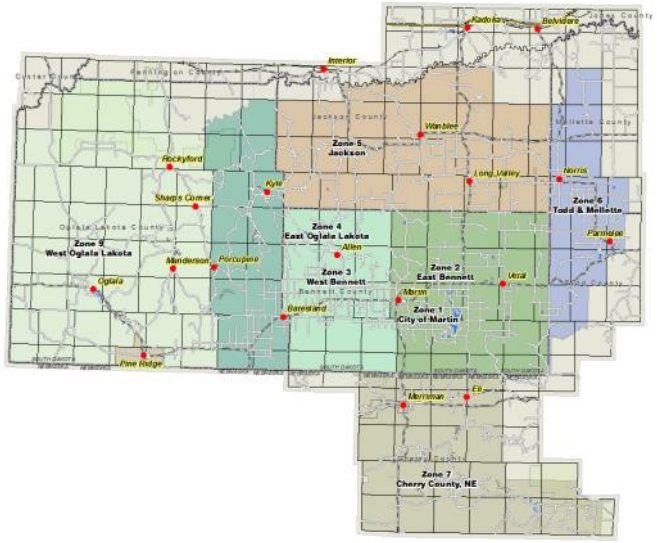
Electric cooperatives were established to provide electricity to rural America, and now make up the largest electric utility network in the nation. Touchstone Energy is the national brand identity for that network.

Touchstone Energy co-ops are owned by the members they serve and are committed to providing reliable electricity at the lowest price

possible. In short, co-ops "look out" for the members they serve.
Sources: http://www.cherry-todd.com/

Lacreek Electric
Lacreek Electric Association, Inc. was incorporated in 1948. It is headquartered at Martin, along the north edge of the Great Sand Hill Plains in southern South Dakota. LEA is a rural electric cooperative serving more than 4,000 members in six counties across 5,174 square miles of south central South Dakota and northern Nebraska.

Figure 8.2: Lacreek Service Area

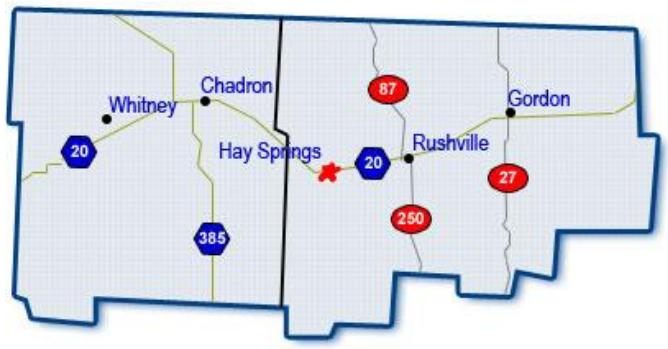


Sources: lacreek.com

Northwest Rural Public Power District
Northwest Rural Public Power District is located in the northern part of the Nebraska Panhandle, and is a Touchstone Energy partner. They provide electricity and many other quality products and services to customers in Northwest Nebraska. The service area covers the Oglala National Grasslands and the national forest and dryland wheat areas in the West, to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, pine trees and rugged rock terrain in the North, to the sandhills and cattle ranches to the East and to the irrigated farmland to the South.

The main office is located in Hay Springs, a town of 650 population with a high school, grade school, medical clinic, parks, swimming pool and much more. A hospital and four-year college are within 20 minutes of Hay Springs.

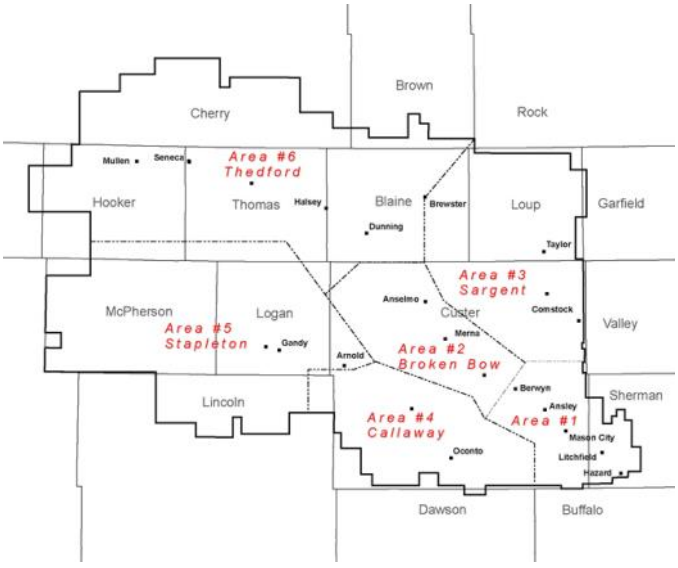
Figure 8.3: Northwest Rural Public Power Service Area



Sources: http://www.nrppd.com/

Panhandle Rural Electric Membership
PREMA is a local rural electric cooperative. Articles of Incorporation were filed in the offices of the Secretary of State and County Clerk of Box Butte County on April 5th, 1945, organizing Panhandle Rural Electric Membership Association (PREMA). The goal of the organization being, "to provide electric service to every farm and ranch within our area." For more than 70 years we continue to provide power to all or parts of 11 western Nebraska counties which include; Arthur, Box Butte, Cherry, Dawes, Garden, Grant, Hooker, McPherson, Morrill, Sioux and Sheridan.
Sources: http://www.prema.coop

Figure 8.4: Custer Public Power Service Area



Custer Public Power District

Custer Public Power District believes community ties are what sets "Public Power" apart from other utility services. Public Power is owned by the customers we serve. Whether it is a residential, commercial, or agricultural account, that customer-owner has a voice. The Board of Directors are voted to the Custer Public Power District's Board of Directors to represent the customer-owner. Custer Public Power District strives to provide the most reliable, affordable, and personal electrical service available. Providing "Public Power" to the communities, serving rural Nebraska, and powering the "Good Life".

Sources: https://www.custerpower.com

Electrical Distribution

The overall distribution systems are in good condition. The systems are owned and operated by each of the power districts. The distribution systems not only supply power throughout Cherry County but are the foundation for power transmitted to other customers in Nebraska.

Energy

Nebraska law requires that new or updated Comprehensive Plans include an energy element that "Assesses energy infrastructure and energy use by sector, including residential, commercial, and industrial sectors; evaluates utilization of renewable energy sources; and promotes energy conservation measures that benefit the community." This section addresses these issues by analyzing the energy use by residential, commercial, industrial and other users, and examining the different types of energy sources that are utilized by these different sectors, and available for future needs.

Energy Use by Sector

Residential Uses

Within Cherry County, residential uses are provided a number of options for both power and heating and cooling. These include electrical power (both fossil fuel and renewable resources), oil, propane, and wood. The most dominant of the energy sources available and used by the residents of Cherry County is electricity produced from both fossil fuels and renewable resources.

The use of oil, propane and wood will be found typically as heating sources during the winter months. The type of fuel used will depend a great deal on where a residence is located within the county. Residents located within the more urbanized parts of Cherry County are more likely to have electrical furnaces. Propane and wood stoves are most likely found in the rural parts of the county where other sources are not always available.

Commercial Uses

Cherry County's commercial uses also have a number of options for both power and heating and cooling. These include electrical power (both fossil fuel and renewable resources), propane, oil and wood. The type of energy source is very dependent upon the specific commercial use and the facilities employed to house the use. The most dominant of the energy sources available is electricity produced from both fossil fuels and renewable resources.

Similar to residential uses, the use of oil, propane and wood will be found typically as heating sources during the winter months. The type of fuel used will depend a great deal on the type of commercial use and the construction of the building(s) involved.

The location of the commercial uses will also dictate, similar to residential uses, what type of heating fuels are used. However, in commercial uses such as repair garages and other uses in larger metal buildings, they may be dependent upon recycling used motor oils to heat their facilities.

Industrial Uses

Cherry County's industrial uses will be very similar to those discussed within the commercial section. However, in some cases, diesel fuel can play a role in both power generation and heating and cooling.

Renewable Energy Sources

There are other energy sources advancing in technology that use wind, solar, water, geothermal and methane gas as an energy source. While Cherry County encourages the use of technological advances to improve and support the agriculture industry, this is done while carefully considering the long-term impact such systems may have on the unique Sandhills landscape.

Large-scale wind and solar farms in particular have a significant footprint on the landscape, requiring substantial infrastructure for roads, turbine and panel siting, and the required transmission lines. The people in Cherry County have been careful to limit those activities that may change the character of the unique Sandhills grazing and farming lands that may negatively impact the conservation and use of these lands for agriculture.

Unlike metropolitan communities, Cherry County does not have air quality issues and currently has

no need to encourage the development of large-scale wind or solar energy systems. Nor does the County need an additional energy supply to service its citizen's needs. Large-scale renewable energy farms, if installed within the County, would be for the purpose of supplying energy to other areas. Careful consideration should be given to such projects that may negatively impact to the Sandhills for the purpose of outsourcing energy.

Large-scale renewable energy systems may be appropriate in places such as open, high-desert landscapes, that are so sparce it takes 50 acres to feed a cow, and where extreme weather events are rare. But this is not the landscape in Cherry County. Rather the opposite is true.

What may be appropriate in the County, however, are small-scale renewable sources to power windmills, rural buildings and other similar energy needs.

Wind Energy in the Cherry County area
Valentine Wind LLC
Currently, the Valentine Wind LLC project consists of one 1.7 MW turbine to supply power to the city of Valentine.

The C-BED State Program

In May 2007, Nebraska established an exemption from the sales and use tax imposed on the gross receipts from the sale, lease, or rental of personal property for use in a community-based energy development (C-BED) project. The Tax Commissioner is required to establish filing requirements to claim the exemption. In April 2008 L.B. 916 made several amendments to this incentive, including: (1) clarified C-BED ownership criteria to recognize ownership by partnerships, cooperatives and other pass-through entities; (2) clarified that the restriction on power purchase agreement payments should be calculated according to gross and not net receipts; (3) added language detailing the review authority of the Tax Commissioner and recovery of exempted taxes; and (4) defined local payments to include lease payments, easement payments, and real and personal property tax receipts from a C-BED project.

A C-BED project is defined as a new wind energy project that meets one of the following ownership conditions:

- For a C-BED project that consists of more than two turbines, the project is owned by qualified owners with no single qualified owner owning more than 15% of the project and with at least 33% of the power purchase agreement payments flowing to the qualified owner or owners or local community; or
- For a C-BED project that consists of one or two turbines, the project is owned by one or more qualified owners with at least 33% of the power purchase agreement payments flowing to a qualified owner or local community.

In addition, a resolution of support for the project must be adopted by the county board of each county in which the C-BED project is to be located.

A qualified C-BED project owner means:

- a Nebraska resident;
- a limited liability company that is organized under the Limited Liability Company Act and that is entirely made up of members who are Nebraska residents;
- a Nebraska nonprofit corporation;
- An electric supplier(s), subject to certain limitations for a single C-BED project.

In separate legislation (LB 629), also enacted in May 2007, Nebraska established the Rural Community-Based Energy Development Act to authorize and encourage electric utilities to enter into power purchase agreements with C-BED project developers.

Solar

Solar energy has been around for decades and it last hit a high in popularity in the 1970's. However, today's solar energy design is much more efficient and aesthetically pleasing. Some of the aesthetic improvements have to do with the fact that today's systems are not as bulky as their ancestors. Today, solar is being used much like wind turbines, on a small-scale level (home or business) or a much grander level (solar farms). Small-scale operations are generally compatible with the Cherry County landscape while large-scale operations would be viewed as incompatible depending on the scale and design.

Geothermal

Geothermal energy is typically utilized through a process where a series of pipes are lowered into vertical cores called heat-sink wells. The pipes carry a highly conductive fluid that either is heated or cooled by the constant temperature of the ground. The resulting heat exchange is then transferred back into the heating and cooling system of a home or other structure. This is called a geothermal heat exchange system or ground source heat pump.

Methane

The use of methane to generate electricity is becoming more cost-effective to use in Nebraska. Methane electrical generation can be accomplished through the use of a methane digester which takes the raw gas, naturally generated from some form of decomposing material, and converts the gas into electrical power.

There have been some attempts to take the methane generated from animal manure and convert it into electricity; most have been successful but were costly to develop. Another approach to methane electrical generation is to tap into the methane being generated from a solid waste landfill; instead of burning off the methane, it can be piped into a methane convertor and generated into electricity for operating a manufacturing plant or placed on the overall grid for distribution.

Methane convertors make use of unwanted gases and are able to produce a viable product. As long as humans need to throw garbage into a landfill or the production of livestock is required, there will be a source of methane to tap for electrical generation.

Net Metering in Nebraska

LB 436, signed in May 2009, established statewide net metering rules for all electric utilities in Nebraska. The rules apply to electricity generating facilities which use solar, methane, wind, biomass, hydropower or geothermal energy, and have a rated capacity at or below 25 kilowatts (kW). Electricity produced by a qualified renewable energy system during a month shall be used to offset any kilowatt-hours (kWh) consumed at the premises during the month.

Any excess generation produced by the system during the month will be credited at the utility's avoided cost rate for that month and carried forward to the next billing period. Any excess remaining at the end of an annualized period will be paid out to the customer. Customers retain all renewable energy credits (RECs) associated with the electricity their system generates. Utilities are required to offer net metering until the aggregate generating capacity of all customer-generators equals one percent of the utility's average monthly peak demand for that year.

State law of solar and wind easements

Nebraska's solar and wind easement provisions allow property owners to create binding solar and wind easements for the purpose of protecting and maintaining proper access to sunlight and wind. Originally designed only to apply to solar, the laws were revised in March 1997 (LB 140) to include wind. Counties and municipalities are permitted to develop regulations, or development plans protecting access to solar and wind energy resources if they choose to do so. Local governing bodies may also grant zoning variances to solar and wind energy systems that would be restricted under existing regulations, so long as the variance is not substantially detrimental to the public good.

LB 568, enacted in May 2009, made some revisions to the law and added additional provisions to govern the establishment and termination of wind agreements. Specifically, the bill provides that the initial term of a wind agreement may not exceed forty years. Additionally, a wind agreement will terminate if development has not commenced within ten years of the effective date of the wind agreement. If all parties involved agree to extend this period, however, the agreement may be extended.

Chapter 9 Hazards

Introduction

This Chapter of the Cherry County Comprehensive Plan contains the description of specific hazards within the planning area. Good planning would dictate the need to include such issues as Hazards within the Comprehensive Plan. The information found in this Chapter has been taken from the current Hazard Mitigation Plan written for the counties of Boyd, Brown, Cherry, Keya Paha and Rock through the 2015 Region 24 Emergency Management Area. The discussion herein will be focused on those with a land use impact and only for Cherry County.

Since 1967 Cherry County has been directly involved in 10 Presidential Disaster Declarations including: floods, ice jams, tornadoes, severe storms, COVID-19, and severe winter storms. The most recent (two declarations) was during the development of this Comprehensive Plan, COVID-19.

Hazards Section

One of the key items within the hazard mitigation plan is a risk assessment for the future. The assessment is based upon the type of hazard event and likelihood of it occurring again in the future.

The type of hazards assessed are:

- Ag Diseases
- Dam Failure
- Drought
- Earthquakes
- Expansive Soils
- Extreme Heat
- Flooding (Riverine and Flash)
- Landslides
- Levee Failure
- Severe Thunderstorms (Thunderstorm and Lighting)
- Hail (Hailstorm)
- Severe Winter Storms (Severe Winter Storms and Extreme Cold)
- Sink Holes
- Tornados
- High Winds (Windstorms)
- Wildfires
- Civil Disorder
- Fixed Site Hazards (Chemical and Radiological)
- Terrorism
- Transportation Incidents (Chemical, Radiological, and Severe Incidents)
- Urban Fire

Hazard Mitigation Plan

Section 4 of the ***Region 24 Hazard Mitigation Plan*** rates the different hazards and rates them on Historic Occurrence, Probability, and Extent.

It is critical to monitor hazards, even the ones rated as a Low Risk. The key to successfully addressing these incidents is to follow through with the Goals and Strategies developed to mitigate the issues. Successful mitigation will aid in minimizing the overall loss occurring from any hazard situation.

Table 9.1: Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment Region 24 - 2015

Regional Risk Assessment			
Hazard	**Previous Event Occurrence Occurrence /Year**	**Approximate Annual Probability**	**Likely Extent**
Ag Animal Disease	23/14	100%	Limited
Ag Plant Disease	7/14	50%	Limited
Chemical Fixed Sites	0	Not Calculated	Limited
Chemical Transportation	3/43.25	7%	Limited
Civil Disorder	0	< 1%	Limited
Dam Failure	0	< 1%	Limited
Drought	19/225*	8.40%	Moderate
Earthquakes	0	< 1%	< 4.0
Extreme Heat	38/1	100%	> 90°
Flooding	28/18.75	100%	Minor
Grass/Wildfires	558/15	100%	<100 acres
Hail	1239/18.75	100%	H4 - H9
High winds	69/18.75	100%	9-10 BWF
Landslides	57/(no time frame available)	Unknown	Limited
Levee failure	0	0%	No federal levees in the planning area
Radiological Fixed Sites	None in the planning area	Not calculated	NA
Radiological Transportation	0	< 1%	Limited
Severe Thunderstorms	318/18.75	100%	≥ 1" rainfall
Severe Winter Storms	318/18.75	100%	.25—.5" ice
			20 - 40° F below zero Wind Chills
			4 - 8" snow
			25 - 40 mph winds
Terrorism	0	< 1%	Undefined
Tornadoes	78/18.75	100%	EF0
Transportation Incidents	Auto (225/5)	100%	Limited
	Rail (0/5)	< 1%	
	Kilgor (51/75)	Aviation (89%)	
Urban Fire	413/9	100%	Limited (single structure fire)

Source: 2015 Region 24 Hazard Mitigation Plan

See the actual document for more detail on how these were calculated and the estimated losses for each hazard type.

Table 9.2: Cherry County Risk Assessment

Hazard	Previous Occurrence	2014 Cherry County HIRA	Specific Concerns
Natural Hazards			
Prolonged Power Outages	Yes	High	Lack of Generators
Wildfire	Yes	High	Valentine
Tornado / High Winds	Yes	High	Safe Rooms Needed
Severe Thunderstorms	Yes	High	--
Drought	Yes	High	--
Hail	Yes	N/A	--
Animal Disease	Yes	High	--
Severe Winter Storms	Yes	High	--
Plant Disease	Yes	High	--
Extreme Heat	Yes	N/A	--
Flooding	Yes	High	--
Dam Failure	No	Medium	--
Landslide	No	N/A	--
Earthquake	No	High	--
Man-made Hazards			
Radiological Incident (during transport)	No	N/A	--
Transportation Incident	Yes	Medium	--
Chemical Spills (during transport)	Yes	Medium	--
Radiological Incident (fixed site)	No	N/A	--
Chemical Spills (fixed site)	No	Medium	--
Urban Fire	Yes	High	--
Terrorist Incident	No	Medium	
Civil Disorder	No	Medium	

Source Region 24 Hazard Mitigation Plan

Prolonged Power Outages

Cherry County officials identified food supply, water supply, and school closure having the greatest impact from prolonged power outages. Cherry County receives its power from NPPD, the City of Valentine, KBR REA, Cherry Todd REA, and Panhandle REA. Approximately 10 percent of the county's power lines are buried. The county indicated that the power supply is sufficient to meet current demand. The county has backup generators at the Justice Center/Courthouse, the hospital, and at the communication towers.

In an effort to mitigate the impacts of this hazard, Cherry County included mitigation actions in the plan update. These include purchasing additional backup generators for critical facilities, public awareness initiatives, and improvement emergency communications.

Wildfire

The county has 14 fire departments dispersed throughout the county. These fire departments, as well as the Forest Service, regularly conduct education and outreach initiative to mitigate the impacts of wildfire.

Cherry County identified mitigation actions which address this hazard. Included in the plan update are actions such as improved emergency communication and warning sirens, although the main mitigation measure which addresses this hazard will be public education and awareness initiatives. The majority of the counties offices and critical facilities are located in Valentine, which is a Firewise Community and regularly conducts wildfire mitigation measures, such as debris removal and other educational initiatives in coordination with the Nebraska Forest Service.

Tornado / High Winds

Ten percent of the county's power lines are buried. The county has safe rooms at their schools, the hospital, and the courthouse. The county does have mobile home parks, which may be particularly vulnerable to these hazards. The county also offered emergency text alerts for severe weather through Code Red. Valentine is also a Firewise Community. The county has mutual aid agreements with neighboring counties.

Cherry County identified a need to stabilize/anchor fertilizer, fuel, and propone tanks, which will mitigate the impacts of this hazard. Other actions identified

during this plan update include developing additional safe room locations and installing weather radios and warning sirens around the county. The Niobrara River Council, which is based in Valentine but operates throughout the county, also identified a safe room project during this plan update.

Severe Thunderstorms

The county uses surge protection at its critical facilities and also has a tree board. There are weather radios at the hospital, at the schools, and at Pineview Nursing Home. The county indicated that is does have education programs which address this hazard.

Actions identified in this plan update include installing weather radios at critical facilities and improving warning sirens around the county.

Post Hazard Mitigation Plan

Since the completion of the Hazard Mitigation Plan in 2014, there have been three additional declarations in Cherry County, two for COVID-19 and one for severe winter storms, Straight-line Winds, and Flooding.

Hazard Goals and Policies

The goals of Cherry County and Region 24 are as follows:

Hazard Goal 1
Protect the Health and Safety of Residents.

Hazard Policies and Strategies

HZ -1.1 Reduce or prevent damage to property or prevent loss of life or serious injury (overall intent of the plan).

Hazard Goal 2
Reduce Future Losses from Hazard Events

Hazard Policies and Strategies

HZ-2.1 Provide protection for existing structures, future development, critical facilities, services, utilities, and trees to the greatest extent possible.

HZ-2.2 Develop hazard specific plans, conduct studies or assessments, and retrofit jurisdiction to mitigate for hazards and minimize their impact.

HZ-2.3 Minimize and control the impact of hazard events through enacting or updating ordinances, permits, laws, or regulations.

Hazard Goal 3
Increase Public Awareness and Educate on the Vulnerability to Hazards

Hazard Policies and Strategies

HZ-3.1 Develop and provide information to residents and businesses about the types of hazards they are exposed to, what the effects may be, where they occur, and what they can do to be better prepared.

Public Safety Goal 4
Improve Emergency Management Capabilities

Hazard Policies and Strategies

HZ-4.1 Develop or improve Emergency Response Plan and procedures and abilities.

HZ-4.2 Develop or improve Evacuation Plan and procedures.

HZ-4.3 Improve warning systems and ability to communicate to residents and businesses during and following a disaster or emergency.

Table 9.3: Mitigation Projects

Goal / Objective	Action Item #	Action Item	Summary	Hazards Addressed
Goal 2 Objective HZ -2.1	2.1.1	Backup Generators	Provide a portable or stationary source of backup power to redundant power supplies, municipal wells, lift stations, and other critical facilities and shelters.	Tornados, High Winds, Severe Winter Storms, Severe Thunderstorms
	2.1.2	Expand Water Storage Capacity / Emergency Water Supplies / Dry Hydrants	Evaluate the need to expand water storage capacity through a new water tower, stand pipe, etc. to provide a safe water supply for the community and additional water for fire protection. Establish emergency water supplies such as dry hydrants and individual or community cisterns for defending structures from wildland fires.	Wildfire, Urban Fire
	2.1.3	Hazardous Fuels Reduction	The Nebraska Forest Service (NFS) Forest Fuels Reduction Program creates strategically located corridors of thinned forests across the landscape, reduces fire intensity, improves fire suppression effectiveness, increases firefighter safety, and better protects lives and property.	Wildfire
	2.1.4	Hazardous Tree Removal Program	Identify and remove hazards limbs and/or trees.	Severe Thunderstorms, Hail, High Winds, Tornados, Severe Winter Storms
	2.1.5	Power and Service Lines	Communities can work with their local Public Power District or Electricity Department to identify vulnerable transmission and distribution lines and plan to replace or retrofit existing structures to be less vulnerable to storm events.	Tornados and High Winds, Severe Winter Storms, Severe Thunderstorms
	2.1.6	Safe Rooms	Design and construct storm shelters and safe rooms in highly vulnerable areas such as mobile home parks, campgrounds, schools, and other areas.	Tornados, High Winds, Severe Thunderstorms
	2.1.7	Stabilize/Anchor fertilizer, fuel, and propane tanks	Anchor fuel tanks to prevent movement. If left unanchored, tanks could present a major threat to property and safety in a tornado or high wind event.	Tornados, High Winds
	2.1.8	Stormwater System and Drainage Improvements	Larger communities generally utilize underground stormwater systems comprised of pipes and inlets to convey runoff. Undersized systems can contribute to localized flooding. Stormwater system improvements may include pipe upsizing and additional inlets. Retention and detention facilities may also be implemented to decrease runoff rates while also decreasing the need for other stormwater system improvements. Smaller communities may utilize stormwater systems comprised of ditches and culverts to convey runoff. Undersized systems can contribute to localized flooding. Drainage improvements may include ditch upsizing, ditch cleanout and culvert improvements.	Flooding, Dam Failure, Levee Failure
	2.1.9	Stream Bank Stabilization/ Grade Control Structures / Channel Improvements	Stream bed degradation can occur along many rivers and creeks. Grade control structures including sheet-pile weirs, rock weirs, ponds, road dams, etc. Can be implemented and improved to maintain the channel bed.	Flooding, Dam Failure, Levee Failure
	2.1.10	Windbreaks / Living Snow Fence	Installation of windbreaks to increase water storage capacity in soil.	Severe Winter Storms, Drought
	2.1.11	Facilities for Vulnerable Populations	Ensure that facilities which will house vulnerable populations in the future are placed in the least vulnerable areas of the community.	All hazards
	2.1.12	Install Vehicular Barriers	Install vehicular barriers to protect critical facilities and key infrastructure where possible.	Transportation Incidents
	2.1.13	Vulnerable Population Support Database	Work with stakeholders to develop a database of vulnerable populations and the organizations which support them.	All hazards

Goal / Objective	Action Item #	Action Item	Summary	Hazards Addressed
Goal 2 Objective HZ-2.2	2.2.1	**Dam Engineering Analysis / Improvements and Reinforcement**	Conduct a preliminary engineering analysis for dam repairs and reinforcement. Dams serve to provide flood protection to businesses and residents during large storm events. Improvements to existing dams will increase flood protection. The Emergency Action Plan, Dam Breech Analysis, and/ or inspection/ safety equipment training may need to be updated along with improvements.	Dam Failure, Flood
	2.2.2	**Drainage Study / Stormwater Master Plan**	Preliminary drainage studies and assessments can be conducted to identify and prioritize design improvements to address site specific localized flooding/drainage issues to reduce and/or alleviate flooding. Stormwater master plans can be developed to help identify stormwater problem areas and potential drainage improvements.	Flooding
	2.2.3	**Drought Monitoring Plan**	Develop and implement a plan/ program to monitor the effects of drought.	Drought
	2.2.4	**Flood Prone Property Acquisition**	Voluntary acquisition and demolition of properties prone to flooding will reduce the general threat of flooding for communities. Additionally, this can provide flood insurance benefits to those communities within the NFIP. Repetitive loss structures are typically highest priority.	Flooding, Dam Failure, Levee Failure
	2.2.5	**Groundwater/Irrigation/Water Conservation Management Plan**	Establish a plan to reduce total consumption of water resources by irrigators of agricultural land in the area and to conserve water use by the citizens during elongated periods of drought. Potential restrictions on water could include limitations on lawn watering, car washing, farm irrigation restrictions, or water sold to outside sources.	Drought
	2.2.6	**Source Water Contingency Plan**	Villages and cities can evaluate and locate new sources of groundwater to ensure adequate supplies to support the existing community and any additional growth which may occur. Also, identify and develop water sources for fire protection.	
	2.2.7	**Community Continuity Plan**	Develop continuity plans for critical community services	All hazards
	2.2.8	**Hail Resistant Roofing**	Encourage the use of hail resistant roofing for any new construction.	Hail
	2.2.9	**Preserve Natural Floodplain**	Preserve natural and beneficial functions of floodplain land through measures such as: retaining natural vegetation, restoring streambeds; and preserving open space in the floodplain.	Flooding, Dam Failure, Levee Failure
	2.2.10	**Adopt a No Adverse Impact**	Adopt a no adverse impact approach tof loodplain management.	Flooding, Dam Failure, Levee Failure
	2.2.11	**Low Impact Development**	Utilize low impact development practices and green infrastructure to reduce flood risk.	Flooding, Dam Failure, Levee Failure

Goal / Objective	Action Item #	Action Item	Summary	Hazards Addressed
Goal 2 Objective HZ-2.3	2.3.1	Firewise Community	Work to become a Firewise Community/USA participant through the Nebraska Forest Service and US Forest Service in order to educate homeowners, community leaders, planners, developers, and others in the effort to protect people, property, and natural resources from the risk of wildland fire. The Firewise Communities approach emphasizes community responsibility for planning in the design of a safe community as well as effective emergency response, and individual responsibility for safer home construction and design, landscaping, and maintenance.	Wildfire
	2.3.2	Floodplain Regulation Enforcements/ Updates	Continue to enforce local floodplain regulations for structures located in the 1-percent floodplain. Strict enforcement of the type of development and elevations of structures should be considered through issuance of building permits by any community or county. Continue education of building inspectors or Certified Floodplain Managers.	Flooding
	2.3.3	Maintain Good Standing with National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)	Continue to comply with and maintain good standing with the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).	Flooding
	2.3.4	Participate in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)	Participate in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) if eligible. This will not only benefit the community, but gives them eligibilityto specific federal cost share programs.	Flooding
	2.3.5	Floodplain Management	Continue or improve floodplain management practices such as adoption and enforcement of floodplain management requirements, floodplain identification and mapping, description of community assistance and monitoring activities, explanation for failure to participate in the NFIP, CRS, and participation in FEMA's Cooperating Technical Partners Program to increase local involvement in the flood mapping process.	Flooding
	2.3.6	Tree City USA – Tree Maintenance Programs	Work to become a Tree City USA through the National Arbor Day Foundation in order to receive direction, technical assistance, and public education on how to establish a tree maintenance program in order to maintain trees in a community to limited potential damages when a storm event occurs. The four main requirements include: 1) Establish a tree board; 2) Enact a tree care ordinance; 3) Establish a forestry care program; 4) Enact an Arbor Day observance and proclamation.	Severe Thunderstorms, Tornados And High Winds, Severe Winter Storms
	2.3.7	Promote Higher Code	Promote the use of higher codes and standards, such as the Fortified for Safer Living Standard, in order to provide greater protection for any new construction or building retrofits.	All hazards

Goal / Objective	Action Item #	Action Item	Summary	Hazards Addressed
Goal 3 Objective HZ-3.1	3.1.1	Public Awareness / Education	Through activities such as outreach projects, distribution of maps and environmental education increase public awareness of natural hazards to both public and private property owners, renters, businesses, and local officials about hazards and ways to protect people and property from these hazards. Also, educate citizens on water conservation methods, evacuation plans, etc. In addition, purchase equipment such as overhead projectors and laptops.	All hazards
	3.1.2	Promote First Aid	Promote first aid training for all residents.	All hazards
	3.1.3	Business Continuity Plans	Educate local businesses on the value of continuity planning.	All hazards
	3.1.4	Mitigation Education	Educate the public and business owners regarding rain gardens, green roofs, and other minor mitigation measures.	All hazards
	3.1.5	Sheltering in Place Outreach	Ensure that all critical facilities, businesses, and residents located near major transportation corridors and near fixed site chemical facilities are aware of how to safely shelter in place in the event of a chemical incident.	All hazards

Goal / Objective	Action Item #	Action Item	Summary	Hazards Addressed
Goal 4 Objective HZ-4.1	4.1.1	Civil Service Improvements	Improve Fire Department and Rescue squad equipment and facilities. Providing additional, or updating existing emergency response equipment; this could include fire trucks, ATV's, pay loaders, etc. This would also include developing backup systems for emergency vehicles, and identifying and training additional personnel for emergency response.	All hazards
	4.1.2	Improve and Revise Snow/Ice Removal Program	As needed, continue to revise and improve the snow and ice removal program for streets. Revisions should address situations such as plowing snow, ice removal, parking during snow and ice removal, and removal of associated storm debris. This would include equipment that is needed and paving routes.	Severe Winter Storm
Goal 4 Objective HZ-4.3	4.3.1	Alert/Warning Sirens	Perform an evaluation of existing alert sirens in order to determine sirens which should be replaced or upgraded. Install new sirens where lacking.	All hazards
	4.3.2	Emergency Communications	Establish an action plan to improve communication between agencies to better assist residents and businesses during and following emergencies. Establish inter-operable communications.	All hazards
	4.3.3	Warning Systems	Improve city cable TV interrupt warning system and implement telephone interrupt system such as Reverse 911, emergency text messaging warning system, etc.	Tornados and high winds, severe winter storms, severe thunderstorms
	4.3.4	Weather Radios	Conduct an inventory of weather radios at schools and other critical facilities and provide new radios as needed.	All hazards
	Source: Region 24 Hazard Mitigation Plan—2015 *Note: Yellow highlighted areas are areas Cherry County has committed to doing.*			

Table 9.4: Mitigation Actions - Cherry County

ACTION 2.1.1	Backup Generators
Analysis	Provide a portable or stationary source of backup power to redundant power supplies, county wells, lift stations, and other critical facilities and shelters.
Goal/Objective	Goal 2/Objective 2.1
Hazard(s) Addressed	Tornados, High Winds, Severe Winter Storms, Severe Thunderstorms
Benefits	Reduce the danger to human life/health by keeping utilities operating. Reduce the economic downtime associated with utility loss.
Estimated Cost	$15,000-$30,000 per generator
Potential Funding	HMGP, NEMA, County Funds
Timeline	6 months
Priority	Medium
Lead Agency	County Board, R24 Emergency Management
Status	Ongoing. This action was listed in the previous mitigation plan. Cherry County currently has generators at the courthouse and communication towers, but would like additional generators at other critical facilities.

ACTION 2.1.6	Safe Rooms
Analysis	Assess, design and construct fully supplied safe rooms in highly vulnerable urban and rural areas such as mobile home parks, campgrounds, schools, and other such areas throughout the planning area. Assess the adequacy of current public buildings to be used as safe rooms. Construct safe rooms in areas of greatest need, either as new construction or retrofitting.
Goal/Objective	Goal 2/Objective 2.1
Hazard(s) Addressed	Tornados, High Winds, Severe Thunderstorms
Benefits	Reduce the risk of death or injury in areas vulnerable to tornados, severe thunderstorms and other hazards.
Estimated Cost	$200-$300/sf stand alone; $150-200/sf addition/retrofit
Potential Funding	PDM, HMPG, NEMA, County Fund, NPS

ACTION 2.1.6	Safe Rooms
Timeline	One year
Priority	Medium
Lead Agency	R24 Emergency Management, Niobrara Council
Status	Not completed. This action was listed in the previous mitigation plan. This project has also been identified by the Niobrara River Council.

ACTION 2.1.7	Stabilize/Anchor Fertilizer, Fuel, and Propane Tanks
Analysis	Anchor fuel tanks to prevent movement. If left unanchored, tanks could present a major threat to property and safety in tornado or high wind event.
Goal/Objective	Goal 2/Objective 2.1
Hazard(s) Address	Tornados, High Winds
Benefits	Limits the chance of fuel/chemical spills. Reduces chance that propane tanks and other items become missiles during tornado events.
Estimated Cost	$1,000 plus
Potential Funding	PDM, HMGP, LPG, Diesel
Timeline	One year
Priority	Medium
Lead Agency	R24 Emergency Management
Status	Not completed. This action was listed in the previous mitigation plan.

ACTION 2.1.8	Stormwater System and Drainage Improvements
Analysis	Larger communities generally utilize underground stormwater systems comprising of pipes and inlets to convey runoff. Undersized systems can contribute to localized flooding. Stormwater system improvements may include pipe upsizing and additional inlets. Smaller communities may utilize stormwater systems comprising of ditches, culverts, or drainage ponds to convey runoff. Drainage improvements may include ditch upsizing, ditch cleanout and culvert improvements. Retention and detention facilities may also be implemented to decrease runoff rates while also decreasing the need for other stormwater system improvements. Bridges typically serve as flow restrictions along streams and rivers. Cleanout and reshaping of channel segments at bridge crossing can increase conveyance, reducing the potential for flooding. Replacement or modification of bridges and other flow restrictions may be necessary to provide greater capacity, maintain or improve structural integrity during flood events, and eliminate flooding threats and damages. Flood protection for critical and/or highly vulnerable facilities, areas, populations, and infrastructure are key.
Goal/Objective	Goal 2/Objective 2.1
Benefits	These improvements can serve to more effectively convey runoff within cities and towns, preventing interior localized flooding. May also reduce the risk of illness/ disease by eliminating standing water.
Hazard(s) Addressed	Flooding
Estimated Cost	$10,000 to $100,000+
Potential Funding	N/A
Timeline	N/A
Priority	N/A

ACTION 2.1.9	Stream Bank Stabilization / Grade Control Structures/ Channel Improvements
Analysis	Stream bank/ bed degradation can occur along many rivers and creeks. Stabilization improvements including rock rip rap, vegetative cover, j-hooks, boulder vanes, etc. can be implemented to reestablish the channel banks. Grade control structures including sheet-pile weirs, rock weirs, ponds, road dams, etc. can be implemented and improved to maintain the channel bed. Channel stabilization can protect structures, increase conveyance and provide flooding benefits. Flood protection for critical and/or highly vulnerable facilities, areas, populations, and infrastructure are key.
Goal/Objective	Goal 2/Objective 2.1
Hazard(s) Addressed	Flooding
Benefits	Protects structures near banks from flooding and shifting by reducing risk of flow disruption. Low maintenance solution to reduce the risk of recurring maintenance from banks falling in and increase conveyance.
Estimated Cost	$50,000 to $100,000+
Potential Funding	USACE, PDM, HMGP, Natural Resource District, County and Local Governing Agency
Timeline	One year
Priority	Medium
Lead Agency	Cherry County Roads Department
Status	Ongoing. This action was listed in the previous mitigation plan. This action would affect multiple water bodies.

ACTION 2.2.5	Groundwater/Irrigation/Water Conservation Management Plan
Analysis	Develop and implement a plan/ best management practices to conserve water use and reduce total use (high water use to low water use) and consumption of groundwater resources by citizens and irrigators of agricultural land during elongated periods of drought. Identify water saving irrigation projects or improvements such as sprinklers or soil moisture monitoring. Potential restrictions on water could include limitations on lawn watering, car washing, farm irrigation restrictions, or water sold to outside sources. Implement BMPs through water conservation practices such as changes in irrigation management, education on no-till agriculture and modified crop selection, and use of xeriscaping in communities.
Goal/Objective	Goal 2/Objective 2.2
Hazard(s) Address	Drought
Benefits	Conserving water during periods in which the demand increases along with best management practices will reduce the total consumption of groundwater resources and ensure an adequate water supply during drought periods and reduces the risk of depleting the water supply. This protects the residents and the local agricultural economy.
Estimated Cost	N/A
Potential Funding	N/A
Timeline	N/A

ACTION 3.1.1	Public Awareness / Education
Analysis	Through activities such as outreach projects, distribution of maps and environmental education increase public awareness of natural hazards to both public and private property owners, renters, businesses, and local officials about hazards and ways to protect people and property from these hazards. Also, educate citizens on water conservation methods, evacuation plans, etc. In addition, purchasing education equipment such as overhead projectors and laptops.
Goal/Objective	Goal 3/Objective 3.1
Hazard(s) Addressed	All hazards
Benefits	Public awareness reduces the risk of property loss and damage, injury and death. It increases knowledge on emergency procedures, facilities, conservation, and is key to preparedness.
Estimated Cost	$0-$5,000+
Potential Funding	HMGP, PDM, County Funds, State Funds
Timeline	One year
Priority	Low
Lead Agency	R24 Emergency Management, Niobrara Council
Status	Ongoing. This action was listed in the previous mitigation plan.

ACTION 4.3.1	Alert / Warning Sirens
Analysis	Perform an evaluation of existing alert sirens in order to determine sirens which should be replaced or upgraded. Install new sirens where lacking and remote activation.
Goal/Objective	Goal 4/Objective 4.3
Hazard(s) Addressed	All Hazards
Benefits	Reduces the risk of death/injury associated with severe weather; promoting awareness and ensures people take shelter when needed.
Estimated Cost	$15,000+
Potential Funding	HMGP, PDM, Natural Resource District, County Funds
Timeline	Three to Five years
Priority	Low
Lead Agency	County E911, R24 Emergency Management, County Board
Status	Ongoing. This action was listed in the previous plan.

ACTION 4.3.3	Warning Systems
Analysis	Improve city cable TV interrupt warning system and implement telephone interrupt system such as Reverse 911.
Goal/Objective	Goal 4/Objective 4.3
Hazard(s) Addressed	Tornados, High Winds, Severe Winter Storms, Severe Thunderstorms
Benefits	Reduces the risk of death/injury associated with severe weather; promoting awareness and ensures people take shelter when needed.
Estimated Cost	$10,000+
Potential Funding	HMGP, PDM, Natural Resource District, County and Local Governing Agency
Timeline	One year
Priority	High
Lead Agency	Cherry County, Region 24 Emergency Management
Status	Ongoing. This action was listed in the previous mitigation plan.

ACTION 4.3.4	Weather Radios
Analysis	Conduct an inventory of weather radios at schools and other critical facilities and provide new radios as needed.
Goal/Objective	Goal 4/Objective 4.3
Hazard(s) Addressed	All Hazards
Benefits	Reduces the risk of death/injury associated with severe weather conditions by communication.
Estimated Cost	$50 per radio
Potential Funding	HMGP, PDM, Natural Resource District, County and Local Governing Agency, Schools
Timeline	One year
Priority	High
Lead Agency	Region 24 Emergency Management
Status	Not completed. This action was listed in the previous mitigation plan.

ACTION 4.3.2	Emergency Communications - New
Analysis	Establish an action plan to improve communication between agencies to better assist residents and businesses during and following emergencies. Establish inner-operable communications.
Goal/Objective	Goal 4/Objective 4.3
Hazard(s) Addressed	Tornados, High Winds, Severe Winter Storms, Severe Thunderstorms
Benefits	Coordination and clear and efficient communications between agencies increases the capabilities to protect and rescue, increases safety, and reduces the risk of mistakes due to miscommunications.
Estimated Cost	$10,000+
Potential Funding	Homeland Security, Natural Resource District, County and Local Governing Agency
Timeline	One year
Priority	High
Lead Agency	Region 24 Emergency Management, Cherry County Board
Status	Not started. This is a new action that has been identified by Cherry County during this plan update.