

White Earth Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)



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White Earth Economic
Development Office

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I. Methodology

Introduction

A key challenge confronting Native American Tribes today is creating sustainable economic development and building wealth for tribal members. The White Earth Reservation is preparing to address these issues by developing an economic development plan that not only identifies strategies to diversify the Tribe's economy, but also identifies strategies to improve the quality of life for tribal members. This Comprehensive Economic Development Plan (CEDS) expresses the vision and goals of the White Earth Reservation as they emerged from discussions with tribal policy makers, an economic development taskforce, and members of the community. The purpose of this plan is to direct the Tribes' economic development strategy for the next five years. It does this in four ways:

1. Provides Tribal policy makers with a strategic direction to use in prioritizing projects and resources.
2. Provides Tribal Council members with a way to check the effectiveness of Tribal economic development efforts and to be better informed when participating in policy making.
3. Provides Tribal staff with a directive and a work plan for achieving priority goals.
4. Maintains the White Earth Reservation's eligibility for federal economic development funding, especially in the areas of infrastructure, community development projects, business finance, and technical assistance. Specifically, this project meets the funding requirements of the US Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration.

This report is divided into nine sections. Section I is this introduction and description of methodology. Section II provides a very detailed look at the natural, human, and financial resources on the Reservation. It contains detailed information from the 2010 Census of Population and other data sources. Section III provides an assessment of where we are, past and present economic investments and a Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis used to guide the strategy. Sections IV through VII. focus on the vision, strategies, and timelines to guide the Reservation's economic development efforts in the future. Section VIII. lists the performance measures used to evaluate success in implementing the CEDS. Section IX details the disaster resiliency strategy priorities to stabilize and support our community's economic resiliency should a disaster occur.

CEDS Strategy Committee

The White Earth Office of Economic Development (WEEDO) led the planning process for this Economic Development Strategy. The Headwaters Regional Development Commission (HRDC) worked closely with WEEDO and the Tribal Council throughout the planning process. The approach that was chosen by the Tribal Council and WEEDO

was characterized by the inclusion of leadership and the community, with an emphasis on long term results, and fostering the environment to sustain economic development projects.

Assisting WEEDO with the planning effort was a Steering Committee made up of Tribal Government employees and the members of the White Earth community. The members of the Strategy Committee and their affiliations are identified below:

2013 CEDS Strategy Committee	
Name	Representation
Jerome Lhotka*	Economic Development, White Earth Nation
Liz Foster-Anderson*	Executive Director - White Earth Enterprises, LLC
Michael Neusser*	Economic Development Director
Pam Keezer*	Grant Writer
Jeremy Syverson*	Grant Writer
Michael Triplett*	Planner
* denotes persons representing one of the main economic interests/employers/industries on the tribal reservation	

2009 Steering Committee

This Comprehensive Economic Development Plan was approximately a one year process in 2008 and 2009. Assisting WEEDO with the planning effort was a Steering Committee made up of Tribal Government employees and the members of the White Earth community. The White Earth Tribal Council would like to thank the following for their dedication to the project: Much of their work is still relevant and is incorporated in this updated document:

Cooperation and integration of the CEDS with the state’s economic development priorities

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (MN DEED) is the Agency that carries out the economic development investment strategies for the State of Minnesota. Their mission is to *“enhance the economic success of individuals, businesses and communities by improving opportunities for prosperity and independence.”* They plan to accomplish their mission through following objectives.

These include:

- Attract, retain and expand businesses and create jobs
- Cultivate entrepreneurs
- Connect workers to jobs, prepare workers for jobs in demand and assist people to live independently
- Stabilize and stimulate the economy through benefit payments
- Help communities thrive

This CEDS is closely aligned with these objectives.

As one reviews the strategies established by MN DEED, and the Region's Local Workforce Investment Board, the major theme is on developing soft and occupational skill in all Minnesotans to meet the workforce demands of the 21st century. Three goals were developed by the Governor's Workforce Council to address these needs"

- Strengthening the skills of our current workforce
- Creating work and lifetime learning options for Minnesota's aging workers
- Ensuring all high school graduates are ready for career and post-secondary success

When comparing this theme to the themes with the White Earth Reservation's economic development problems and opportunities outlined within the S.W.O.T. Analysis, one can easily see that they align very closely. The Reservation is focused on developing a skilled workforce that meets the needs of the 21st century economy.

This relationship between the State's Economic Development Goals, the Local Workforce Investment Board Strategies and the Region's economic development needs will ensure that the economic development activities and workforce activities undertaken at the state, regional and local workforce area will align very closely.

Community and private sector participation in the CEDS effort

A CEDS Strategy Committee was identified by the Tribe's Economic Development Director in May 2013 to guide the 2013 CEDS Update. Much of the work accomplished in the development of the 2009 CEDS remains extremely relevant to the work of this the Strategy Committee. A new group of advisors has been convened. to consider the elements of the revised document.

In 2008/2009 Community Town Halls were held in each of the tribal community resulting in community feedback that remains of considerable value. Community Council meetings were visited in many of the communities on the White Earth Reservation, where the strategic plans focus areas and goals were discussed with the community. Feedback, suggestions and comments were provided by the public and were incorporated into the plan.

Compliance with the public comment period requirement

The monthly tribal newspaper, Anishinaabeg Today, is distributed to all residential and business postal address within the Reservation and by unpaid subscription request to tribal members living off-reservation. Notice of this CEDS document's development and availability for comment was published in the July 3 issue of the Anishinaabeg Today. The comment period extended for 30 days, from July 7 until August 31. A notice of availability that was placed in the newspaper is appended to this document along with a copy of a news article summarizing the plan's Vision Statement, Goals and Objectives, Suggested Projects, and Implementation Plan.

Tribal Resolution

The White Earth Reservation Tribal Council reviewed the proposed CEDS Update on June prior to its publication for comment. Subsequent to the completion of a 30 day comment period ending on August 7, the WERTC adopted on September 15 passed a resolution adopting the 2013 CEDS Update document reaffirming and authorizing the Comprehensive Economic Development Plan for the White Earth Reservation. The tribal council resolution follows.

II. Background

Geography

The White Earth Reservation is a federally recognized Indian tribe. It contains 829,440 acres and is located in the northwestern Minnesota. It encompasses all of Mahnomen County and portions of Becker, and Clearwater Counties. The reservation is located 68 miles east of Fargo and 225 miles northwest of Minneapolis/St. Paul. The Tribal headquarters is located in White Earth, Minnesota.

Located in northwestern Minnesota, the White Earth Reservation encompasses about 1,300 square miles. Most of that land is no longer Native-owned, due to allotment and tax forfeiture losses in the early 20th century. The Reservation was established by the Treaty of March 19, 1867 with the Chippewa of the Mississippi.

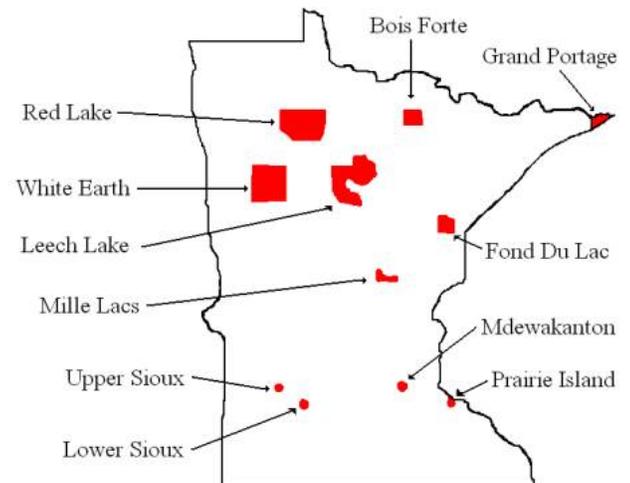
The White Earth Reservation is located in Northwest Minnesota within the counties of Becker, Clearwater, and Mahnomen. It is on the edge of the fertile Red River Valley. The boundaries of the present day Reservation were set in 1867 to encompass 829,440 acres of land, or about 1,300 square miles, and contain 36 townships.

The White Earth Reservation includes five incorporated cities and five villages. These include: Mahnomen (population 1,214), Naytahwaush (population 578), White Earth (population 580), Waubun (population 400), Pine Point (population 338), Rice Lake (population 235), Callaway (population 234), Ogema (population 184), Elbow Lake (population 95), and Bejou (population 89)

Approximately 38 percent of Native Americans living on the Reservation live in the rural communities described above. The incorporated cities of Mahnomen, Waubun, Ogema, Bejou and Callaway house approximately 14 percent of Native Americans, while the remaining are disbursed in the rural areas of the Reservation.

Transportation/Access

The Reservation is located in a very rural area, is sparsely populated, and is remote from major metropolitan areas. The distances from White Earth, in the heart of the White Earth Reservation, to major Metropolitan State Areas (MSAs) are as follows:



- Fargo/Moorhead 68 miles
- Grand Forks, ND 92 miles
- St. Cloud, MN 161 miles
- Duluth, MN 220 miles
- Minneapolis/St. Paul 225 miles

There currently are no four-lane highways within the boundaries of the Reservation. However, the Reservation is within easy driving distance to U.S. Highway 10 (36 miles), U.S. Highway 2 (23 miles), Interstate 94 (77 miles), and Interstate 29 (58 miles). A breakdown of the roadways on the Reservation by ownership can be found in the table below.

There are no major commercial airports on the Reservation. Mahnomen County has a non-commercial airport located just south of Mahnomen, accessible from T. H. 59. The closest commercial airports are located in Bemidji MN, and Fargo ND.

Unlike many rural areas of Minnesota, the White Earth Reservation continues to have access to rail transportation. The Canadian Pacific Railroad serves the area along U.S. Highway 59 through the cities of Waubun, Mahnomen, Bejou, Callaway, and Ogema on average two to three times daily. In addition, unit trains can be loaded in the City of Mahnomen at the Mahnomen Farmers Coop Grain Association. The Burlington Northern Railroad Company also has a short section of track along the northern portion of the White Earth Reservation.

Road Ownership	Total Miles
Federal	36.9
State	130.4
County/Township	967.9
Tribal	84
Forestry	569.8

Source: White Earth Highway Department

Land Use

Within the White Earth Reservation is the transition between the Red River Valley to the west and the lake and pines region to the east. These two distinguishing characteristics dominate the resulting land use in the Reservation.

The nearly 850,000 acres of land in the reservation are broken down as follows:

- Agricultural 367,857 acres
- Forested 360,637 acres
- Lakes and other waters 48,362 acres
- Wetlands 53,243 acres
- Other 7,755 acres

The eastern half of the Reservation is dominated by forest cover. All total, nearly one-half of the entire Reservation is covered by forests. It is these forests that provide much of the natural resource based revenue to the Reservation.

In contrast, the western half of the Reservation is dominated by cultivated or agricultural land. Cultivated land covers approximately one-third of all land on the Reservation.

The current land ownership pattern on the Reservation is checkerboard. This checkerboard ownership pattern has become a significant factor with regard to the White Earth Reservation Tribal Council's ability to create economic development on the Reservation with so little tribally-owned or controlled land in appropriate locations for economic development. Much of the controlled land are wetlands, lakes or beneath housing and public buildings in tribal communities. It is difficult to specifically determine the exact division of land ownership on the White Earth Reservation. The most recent estimate, however, is as follows:

- Tribally Owned 10.8%
- Privately Owned 62.4%
- Government Owned 26.8%

Of the original reservation, 62 percent is now in private ownership. Although scattered throughout the Reservation, a majority of the private land ownership consists of farms on the western section of the Reservation.

The second largest owners of land on the Reservation are the three counties of Becker, Clearwater, and Mahnomen. These three counties combined own approximately 15 percent. The remaining government ownership of land on the Reservation is broken down between State (8 percent) and Federal ownership (4 percent).

Just over nine percent (9 percent) of the original 36 township Reservation remains in tribal ownership. Eighty percent (80 percent) of the tribally owned lands are forested, while less than five percent (5 percent) are cultivated. Nearly all of the tribally owned land is concentrated in the eastern two thirds of the Reservation, outside of the valuable agricultural land of the western section of the Reservation.

Environment

The White Earth Reservation is located in a humid continental zone which results in wide variations in seasonal temperatures. A natural funnel of cold, Arctic air provides some of the nation's coldest temperatures, dropping as low as 50 degrees below zero in the winter. In the summer, warm gulf air increases temperatures, at times to over 100 degrees, with a maximum recorded temperature of 107 degrees. The average summer temperature on the reservation is 65 degrees and the average winter temperature is 11 above zero. July is the hottest month, January the coldest.

The average annual precipitation on the reservation is 24 inches, about 75 percent of which falls during the growing season. The growing season lasts about 120 days. The snowfall on the Reservation averages between 45 and 55 inches annually, with snow cover lasting approximately 130 days each winter.

The White Earth Reservation's soils are generally divided in half into a line running north/south through the middle of the Reservation. The western-most section of the Reservation consists of clay soils characteristic of the Red River Valley. These clay soils have very high fertility.

The eastern section of the Reservation has generally sandier soils with low fertility.

The eastern half of the White Earth Reservation is covered by forest. All total, the Reservation has over 360,637 acres of forestland.

The Reservation is located on the edge of three differing geographic regions which results in a wide variety of tree species. The major forests of the Reservation lie in the north central hardwood region (Deciduous Forest) and adjacent to the Northern Pine and Conifer Region to the east.

Of the 57,000 acres of land that are tribally-owned, 80 percent, or 47,000 acres, are forested. White Earth is responsible for the management of the forested acres on tribal-owned lands.

These forested acres have proven to be a valuable and renewable economic tool for the White Earth Reservation. On average, the tribal-owned forest lands produce nearly 1.7 million board feet annually.

After extensive research, as part of the White Earth Integrated Resource Management Plan approved in August 2002, the WERTC agreed to follow a policy of maintaining the present allowable cut of forest acres, with a focus on cutting over mature trees, particularly aspen. This policy, in addition to other policies agreed to in the report, will ensure that White Earth will continue to reap the economic benefits of a healthy forest for generations to come.

In July 1995, straight-line windstorms on consecutive nights leveled large blocks of timber on the reservation. The blow down was most extensive in Clearwater County, but also affected large areas of Becker and Mahnomen Counties. Over mature aspen and recently thinned pine stands were the major resources lost. Over the next two years, substantial volumes of damaged timber were salvaged. Hazard reduction projects were implemented which cleared fire breaks around homes adjacent to blow down areas, and winter sheared some severe areas to reduce the fire threat and clear space for planting.

Since the windstorms of 1995 and the subsequent salvaging, the forestry program has fallen far short of its annual allowable cut. This has been primarily due to the difficulty in locating and accessing viable aspen stands for harvest. It is expected that within five years, aspen harvesting will be reduced to a byproduct of hardwood management.

The portions of the forest unaffected by the blow down event are for the most part healthy and fairly vigorous. Maintaining a healthy, vigorous forest with a focus on sustained yield management is the objective of this plan. By continuing to concentrate management efforts on reducing the amount of mature and over mature aspen and shifting the balance of the forest into younger, more vigorous growing stands, insect and disease problems will be greatly reduced. This plan will also concentrate on improving the quality of hardwoods on the forest and in converting poor quality and upland brush sites to higher quality species such as red and white pine, and red oak. Effort will continue on restoring all unproductive or marginal blow down sites to a productive state by planting or other treatment.

Valuable mineral resources on the White Earth Reservation are limited to deposits of sand, gravel, and peat. More valuable deposits, in particular metallic deposits, have not been produced on the Reservation with little potential for new findings.

The sand and gravel deposits are located in small amounts in each of the three counties included in the Reservation. Marl or marlstone is a [mudstone](#) which contains variable amounts of [clays](#) and [aragonite](#). It has been utilized as a soil conditioner and acid soil neutralizing agent. There are limited Marl deposits located primarily in the southern section of the Reservation.

Beyond the limited extraction of the minerals currently occurring on the Reservation, there is limited potential for economic benefits from the Reservation's mineral resources.

The water resources on the White Earth Reservation, like that of much of north central Minnesota, are among the best in all the Midwest. The Reservation enjoys both abundant and good quality surface water and adequate groundwater supplies.

The surface waters on the Reservation are divided among lakes, streams, rivers, and wetlands. The surface water resources include 530 bodies of water encompassing over 48,000 acres. In addition, the Reservation has over 300 miles of rivers and streams.

The lakes in the southern portion of the Reservation have steep slopes and sandy bottoms. They are good lakes for fish habitat. On the other hand, the lakes in the north are generally shallow and are suited for wild rice production. The lakes vary from very good to adequate water quality.

Confined aquifers are the major supply of groundwater on the Reservation. Distributed throughout the Reservations, the aquifers are generally located between 50 to 300 feet

below the surface and are 5 to 25 feet thick. Yields in these aquifers reach up to 100 gallons per minute. With only few exceptions, the groundwater aquifers on the Reservation meet drinking water standards set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The quality water resources and forests on the White Earth Reservation provide the natural setting for an abundant fish population and a variety of wildlife. Fish and wildlife have become an important industry unto themselves on the Reservation. Along with the area's beautiful lakes and forests, the fish and wildlife provide an attractive and scenic site for vacationers.

There are a variety of fish in the some 530 lakes and rivers on the Reservation. Types of fish found include walleye, northern pike, largemouth bass, sunfish, and crappies. Trout, catfish, sager, and muskellunge are also present. Rough fish, especially carp and suckers, are also present. The most valuable fish on the Reservation, both for the sportsman and industry, is the walleye.

The White Earth Biology Office actively manages over 6,600 acres of lakes on the Reservation. In addition, the Biology Office manages, on a cooperation basis, an additional 14,000 acres with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

The goal of the Fisheries Program is to maintain a renewable resource through active fishery management and to ensure the equitable distribution of that resource. Currently, only 15 percent of the fish resource on the Reservation is harvested by Tribal members.

In order to ensure that the resource is available to future generations, the White Earth Reservation Tribal Council approved a fishery plan as part of the White Earth Integrated Resource Management Plan. The plan, in addition to collecting new and extensive data on annual harvest, will actively manage 44 of the Reservations lakes and six rivers. The White Earth Reservation Tribal Council will generate lake management plans on 12 of the Reservation's lakes and will produce 5,000 pounds of walleye annually. To reach that goal, the White Earth Fishery Program must construct two additional rearing ponds.

Overall, the fish resource on the Reservation is growing in importance from an economic standpoint. It provides an important enticement for tourists to the area and does support modest industrial development. The White Earth Reservation Tribal Council has taken important steps over the past decade to ensure an adequate and renewable resource for future generations.

Management of the Reservation's resources, particularly its forests, water and soils, is extremely important to the wildlife habitat. Management plans developed as part of the White Earth Integrated Resource Management Plan each included an analysis on the impacts on wildlife prior to implementation.

Wild rice production on the Reservation is significant. Currently, there are 53 wild rice beds on the lakes in the Reservation, totaling over 3,000 acres. A majority of the

acreage, some 1,400 acres, is on the Lower Rice Lake. Lower Rice Lake alone is capable of producing nearly 300,000 pounds of green wild rice for harvest. Currently, the harvest of wild rice on the Reservation generates an estimated \$600,000 annually.

Forty of the 53 wild rice beds on the Reservation, including Lower Rice Lake, are actively managed by the WERTC. Management of wild rice beds include monitoring and regulating water levels, removing beaver dams, cutting aquatic vegetation, and reseeding.

Tribal members have consistently supported expansion of wild rice production and harvest on the Reservation. Toward that end, the WERTC recently implemented a plan to increase production of wild rice on the Reservation. This would be accomplished through the development of wild rice lake management plans, construction of at least one new water control structure annually, and development and construction of new lake accesses.

As shown, the natural resources on the Reservation are abundant and important to the cultural and economic interests of the WERTC. The White Earth Integrated Resource Management Plan provided an estimate of the economic impact of the Reservation's natural resources at \$2.2 million annually. Included in that estimate are the following:

- Fish/Wildlife \$1,050,000
- Wild Rice 600,000
- Forests 107,000

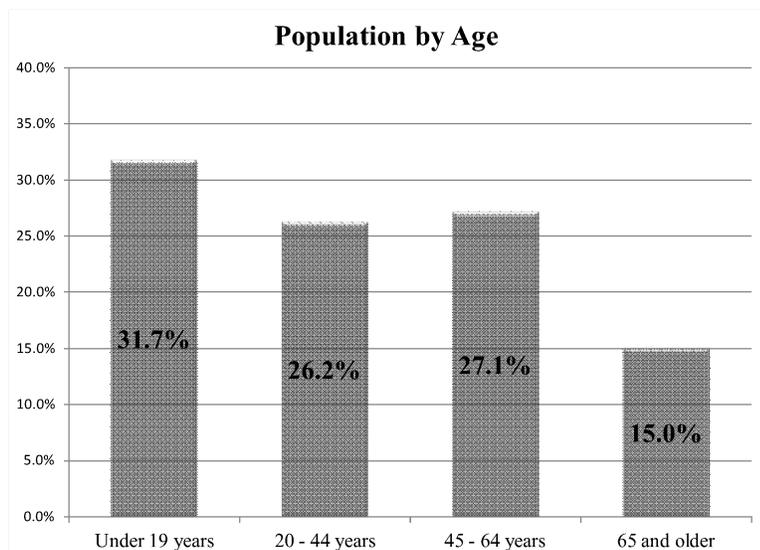
Clearly, the management of the Reservation's natural resources is vitally important to the future economic strength of the Reservation.

Population

Demographics

White Earth Reservation has a total population of 9,919 people and 3,720 households. The average household size is 2.64 people

The median age is 38 with 8.5% of the population under age 5, 31.7% of the population under 19 years of age, and 15.0% aged 65 years and older. Meeting the needs and challenges of children and seniors is an important focus of economic security programs.



The most recent census found the total population on the White Earth Reservation in 2010 was 9,562 people, an increase of four percent over 2000 (9,192 people). The data summarized below reflects the Population Trends from 1980-2010.

In analyzing the population figures based upon Race, the racial makeup of the White Earth Reservation is predominantly White and American Indian. The population demographics are as follows: 90.5% identifying as one race, 49% White, 40% American Indian, and less than 1% for each category of African American, Asian, and other races. Furthermore, there are 9.5% of residents that identified as two or more races. The category “two or more races” was added to the 2000 Census. Previously, respondents were not given a choice of more than one race.

Population on the White Earth Reservation 1980-2010				
	1980	1990	2000*	2010
Native American on the Reservation	2,554	2,746	4,029	4,250
Total Population on the Reservation	9,088	8,727	9,192	9,562
*A change in how racial data was collected in the 2000 Census of Population does not allow for comparison with previous Censuses.				

The White Earth Reservation is made up of a number of small communities and villages. The City of Mahnomen, with 1,214 people and 529 households, is the largest community on the Reservation. Naytahwaush is the largest village with 578 residents and 161 households.

Population and Number of Households on the White Earth Reservation, 2010		
<u>Community</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Households</u>
Mahnomen	1,214	529
Naytahwaush	578	161
White Earth	580	222
Waubun	400	160
Pine Point	338	93
Rice Lake	235	72
Callaway	234	79
Ogema	184	73
Elbow Lake	95	38
Bejou	89	37

Source: U.S. Census of Population - 2010

The three counties that encompass the White Earth Reservation are expected to grow slightly in the next twenty five years. From 2015 to 2040, Becker County's population is projected to increase by 4,848 people. Over the same period, Clearwater County is projected to grow by 295 people. Mahnomen County has a projected increase of 80 people from 2015 through 2030, with the population decreasing from 2030 to 2040 by 64 people. Becker County is expected to see the largest growth in population but the Reservation population increase is not expected to be a significant factor in this increase. Similar to many communities in northern Minnesota, the populations of Clearwater and Mahnomen County are projected to see slight growth over the next 20 – 25 years.

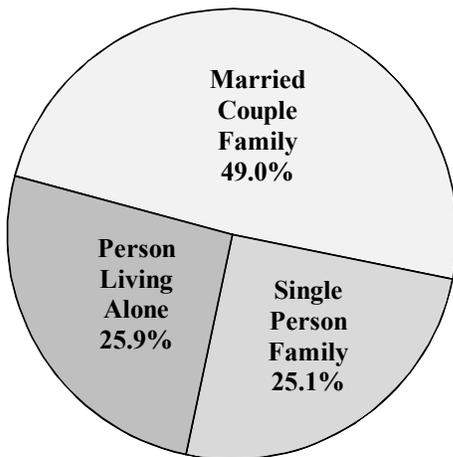
Historical and Project Population, Area Counties, 1910-2040			
<u>Year</u>	<u>Mahnomen County</u>	<u>Clearwater County</u>	<u>Becker County</u>
1910	3,349	6,870	18,840
1920	6,197	8,569	22,851
1930	6,153	9,546	22,503
1940	8,054	11,153	26,562
1950	7,059	10,204	24,836
1960	6,341	8,864	23,959
1970	5,638	8,013	24,372
1980	5,535	8,761	29,336
1990	5,044	8,309	27,881
2000	5,190	8,423	30,000
2005	5,270	8,600	31,300
2010	5,413	8,695	32,504
2015	5,405	8,803	33,571
2020	5,452	8,918	34,728
2025	5,478	8,998	35,777
2030	5,485	9,047	36,714
2035	5,479	9,076	37,579
2040	5,469	9,098	38,419

Source: State Demographers Office

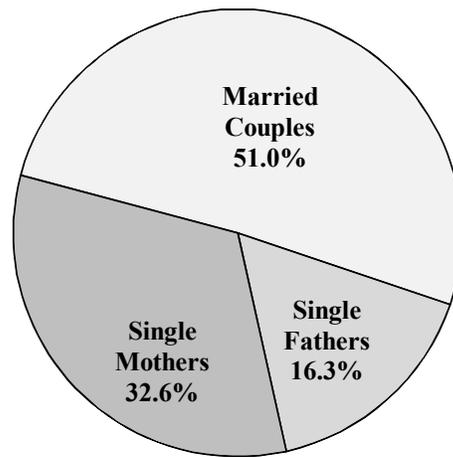
Households

Families make up 74.1% of households. Nearly forty percent (37.4%) of families have at least one child under the age of 18 and 15% of families have at least one adult over the age of 65. Of families with related children under the age of 18, 51.0% live in a family with married parents, 32.6% live with single mothers and 16.3% live with single fathers.

Households by Type



Family Households with Related Children Under Age 18



Economy

The community of White Earth has historically served as the center of activity on the White Earth Reservation. Residents on the Reservation, however, rely on the incorporated cities for commercial services. Within the Reservation, the City of Mahanomen, the county seat for Mahanomen County, serves as the commercial trade center. The residents of the Reservation also utilize regional centers surrounding the Reservation for goods and services, including the cities of Detroit Lakes, Bemidji and Fargo/Moorhead.

Income

The median income of all tribal households is \$37,413. This figure is significantly lower than Minnesota's statewide median household income of \$58,476. More than three-quarters (76.0%) of households have income from earnings. More than one-third (35.2%) have income from social security, 10.9% from cash public assistance and 18.0% have received SNAP benefits during the previous 12 months.

Income and Earnings		
	MN	White Earth
Median Household Income	\$58,476	\$37,413
With Earnings	81.6%	76.0%
With Social Security	25.7%	35.2%
With Cash Public Assistance	3.3%	10.9%
With SNAP Benefits	6.7%	18.0%
Median Earnings, Male Full-Time, Year-Round Workers	\$50,906	\$34,617
Median Earnings Female Full-Time, Year-Round Workers	\$39,799	\$29,702

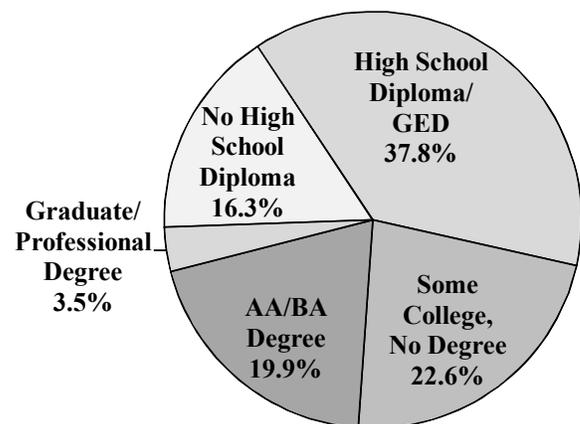
Poverty

Poverty is a persistent problem that affects the health and well-being of the entire community. Poverty rates on the reservation are significantly higher than statewide Minnesota rates. In comparison to 11.0% of all Minnesotans, 24.6% of people on the reservation live in poverty. The poverty rate for children under the age of 18 is more than double the statewide rate at 35.4% and also higher for people age 65 and over at 11.3%. While 19.1% of all families live in poverty, the rate for female-headed families with related children under 18 years is dramatically higher at 52.4%.

Percentage of People and Families with Income Below the Poverty Level in the Past 12 months		
	MN	White Earth
All People	11.0%	24.6%
Under 18 Years	14.0%	35.4%
65 Years and Older	8.3%	11.3%
All Families	7.1%	19.1%
Families with Related Children under 18 years	11.6%	30.5%
Female Headed Families with Related Children under 18 years	34.7%	52.4%

Households experiencing poverty face a variety of challenges in meeting their basic needs and accessing opportunities for economic mobility. Poverty has particularly negative effects on children who may not receive adequate access to healthy food, preventative health care, high-quality educational opportunities and enrichment programs. Children, seniors and families living in poverty need services that not only meet their short-term needs, but also provide opportunities for them to help themselves and improve their economic security.

Educational Attainment, 25 years and over



As with income, poverty rates have seen dramatic improvements, yet still remain a concern. In 2010, 25 percent of the White Earth Reservation overall population and 35 percent of its children lived in poverty. Those numbers represent a slight increase from 2000 figures, when 20 percent of the overall population and 26 percent of children lived in poverty.

Comparing with the statewide average, however, does show how far the area still has to go. While 11 percent of the state’s residents lived in poverty in 2010, 25 percent of the White Earth residents did. Even more dramatic, 14 percent of the state’s children live in poverty, as compared to 35 percent of children on White Earth Reservation.

Decreasing the number of people living in poverty must be a focus of the economic development efforts of the White Earth Reservation Tribal Council. Studies have shown that children living in poverty tend to drop out of school more often and have higher incidents of criminal behavior. Improving the income conditions on the Reservation will send a rippling effect throughout the social conditions on the Reservation.

Income on the White Earth Reservation - 2010				
	<u>White Earth Reservation</u> 2009	<u>Minnesota</u> 2009	<u>White Earth Percentage of State Average</u> 2011	<u>White Earth Percentage of State Average</u> 2000
Median Household	\$37,737	\$58,476	63.9	60.5
Median Family	\$47,346	\$73,046	60.7	58.3
Per Capita	\$18,721	\$30,310	61.8	55.1

Source: U.S. Census, Population – 1990-2010

The most significant growth in employment on the Reservation from 1990 to 2010 was in the arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food service industry largely as the result of the building of the Shooting Star Casino and Events Center in the early 1990’s. This sector saw an increase of 25 to 692 employees from 1990 to 2000, followed by an increase of 692 to 763 from 2000 to 2010. Over the past two decades this sector has seen growth of almost 3,000 percent. Other industries growing rapidly from 1990 to 2010 were:

- construction (57.9% growth)
- public administration (68.3% growth)
- education, health and social services (77.6% growth)
- finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing (86.5% growth).
- additional sectors that have experienced growth over the past two decades but had growth rates below 50 percent.

Industry of Employed Persons, White Earth Reservation					
1990, 2000, and 2010 Censuses					
<u>Industry</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>% Change 1990- 2010</u>	<u>% of White Earth Workforce 2010</u>
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining	458	379	299	-34.7	7.3
Construction	219	356	346	57.9	8.5
Manufacturing	221	253	198	-10.4	4.9
Wholesale trade	66	49	83	25.8	2.1
Retail trade	406	286	355	-12.6	8.8
Transportation and warehousing and utilities information	196	205	235	19.9	5.8
Information	0	23	20	N/A	0.4
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	89	107	166	86.5	4.1
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	95	107	113	18.9	2.8
Educational, health and social services	575	809	1,021	77.6	25.3
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food service	25	692	763	2,952.00	19
Other services (except public administration)	122	127	161	32	4
Public Administration	167	247	281	68.3	7

Source: U.S. Census of Population – 1990, 2000, and 2010

Three industries declined in employment on the Reservation from 1990 to 2010.

- Retail trade (12.6% decline)
- manufacturing (10.4% decline)
- agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining (34.7% decline)

In 2010, the largest economic industry sectors on the Reservation were:

- education, health, and social services (25%)
- arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodations, and food service (19%).

Notice that retail accounts for the third highest portion of the workforce, yet observe that it has experienced some of the greatest decline.

Occupational data on the White Earth Reservation collected by the 2010 census is shown on the following table. In addition, the table compares the White Earth Reservation with the statewide average.

The largest occupation categories on the Reservation were the management, professional related occupations, and the service occupations. Together, these two occupational categories represent over 55 percent of all employers. Farming, forestry and fishing occupations represented only three percent of the White Earth Reservation's workforce in 2000 and due to decline over the past decade, that category has been merged with others.

When comparing the Reservation's occupational distribution with the State of Minnesota

- the White Earth Reservation had a greater percentage of their employment - the service and the natural resources, construction, and maintenance categories.
- the state had a higher proportion of their labor force employed in management, professional related occupations, sales and office occupational, and production, transportation, and material moving occupations.

Occupations of Employees on the White Earth Reservation			
	<u>Total Employees</u>	<u>Percent of White Earth Reservation Employees</u>	<u>Percent of State of Minnesota Employees</u>
Management, Professional and Related Occupations	1,174	29.1	38.2
Service Occupations	1,065	26.4	16.2
Sales and Office Occupations	783	19.4	24.4
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	567	14	8.3
Production, Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	452	11.1	12.9

Source: U.S. Census of Population, 2010

Workforce Indicators

The most important resource for economic growth in the future will be the workforce. Knowledge and skills are critical to the future development of the Reservation. The section on human resources will examine trends in the general population and labor force that affect the Reservation's economy and the economic development. It will examine general population characteristics, including population count, age, gender, race, education and income characteristics.

Education

For many tribal members, low levels of educational attainment and training limit access to employment and other economic opportunities. Of adults 25 years and over, 16.3% have not graduated from high school. More than one-third (37.8%) are high school graduates and 19.9% have an associate's degree or higher. Civilian veterans make up 11.9% of the population. Lower educational levels are strongly related to poverty and economic insecurity. However, even individuals with higher levels of education face limited employment opportunities in the area. Available jobs do not necessarily

compensate higher levels of education at the level required to lift families out of poverty or provide long-term career advancement and economic mobility.

While the educational attainment is troubling, it is important to note the huge strides made on the Reservation. As early as 1970, nearly three-fourths of the American Indian population on the White Earth Reservation did not have a high school diploma. That number has declined significantly. In recent years the White Earth Reservation has continued to see an increase in educational attainment. As seen below, White Earth has a significantly larger percent of its population that have not received a high school diploma. Moreover a significantly larger percent of people in the rest of Minnesota have obtained a Bachelors Degree.

Educational Attainment on the White Earth Reservation - 2010			
	<u>White Earth Reservation</u>		<u>Minnesota Average</u>
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Less than 9 th Grade	378	6.1	3.5
9 th – 12 th Grade, No Diploma	634	10.2	5
High School Graduate	2,356	37.8	27.5
Some Post High School	1,406	22.6	22.5
Associate Degree	609	9.8	9.8
Bachelor Degree	629	10.1	21.5
Graduate/Professional Degree	215	3.5	10.3
High School or Higher	X	83.7	91.6
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	X	13.6	31.8

Source: U.S. Census, Population 2010

There has been substantial improvement in the labor force participation, employment, and unemployment rates on the White Earth Reservation from 2000 to 2011. Labor force participation rates jumped nearly four percentage points, increasing from 59.6 percent in 2000 to 63.8 percent for 2011. The growth indicated in the labor force can be attributed primarily to the increase in job opportunities in the area, as well as the ability of the White Earth Reservation to attract workers.

Total employment on the White Earth Reservation grew by 400 people, an increase of 11 percent from 2000 to 2011. However, with the population growth and other economic factors over the past decade, unemployment has increased by over 90 percent. The Unemployment Rate on the White Earth Reservation increased from 8.2 percent to 13.4 percent over 2000 to 2010. Additionally, those not in the labor force has dropped by about 1.5 percent over the past decade, and decreased by almost 14 percent since 1990.

Some sources have the unemployment rate in excess of 50 percent. The relatively low labor force participation rate on the Reservation is a clear indication that there are a significant number of discouraged workers. Discouraged workers are individuals who have been unemployed for a long period of time who have generally given up seeking

employment. They are not seen as part of the labor force from the Census Bureau's perspective, and as a result are not reflected in the unemployment rate shown above.

In addition to the low labor force participation rate, area labor market studies have shown the underemployment on the Reservation in excess of 24 percent. Underemployment is defined as currently working at a job that is less hours, pay or skill level than the worker is qualified for.

The strong employment and labor force growth on the Reservation clearly has been primarily the result of the development of the Shooting Star Casino and Event Center and ancillary businesses resulting from the development of the Shooting Star.

Labor Force Information on the White Earth Reservation –2000-2011				
	<u>White Earth Reservation 2000</u>	<u>White Earth Reservation 2011</u>	<u>% Change 2000-2011</u>	<u>State Average</u>
Persons 16+	6,654	7,315	9.9	
In Labor Force	3,968	4,668	17.6	
Employed	3,640	4,041	11	
Unemployed	326	627	92.3	
Not in Labor Force	2,686	2,647	-1.5	
Percentage in Labor Force	59.6	63.8		70.9
Unemployment Rate	8.2	13.4		6.9

Source: U.S. Census of Population – 2000 and 2011

Occupation Outlook-Northwest Minnesota 2010-2020			
Occupation	Estimated Employment 2010	Projected Employment 2020	Percent Change 2010 - 2020
Total, All Occupations	251,220	287,455	14.40%
Management Occupations	22,008	22,689	3.10%
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	8,884	10,371	16.70%
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	1,997	2,259	13.10%
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	3,125	3,558	13.90%
Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	1,854	1,995	7.60%
Community and Social Service Occupations	6,432	7,771	20.80%
Legal Occupations	1,148	1,315	14.50%

Education, Training, and Library Occupations	16,207	16,926	4.40%
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	3,886	4,406	13.40%
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	13,456	16,736	24.40%
Healthcare Support Occupations	10,308	13,274	28.80%
Protective Service Occupations	3,734	4,020	7.70%
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	20,863	22,452	7.60%
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	10,179	11,654	14.50%
Personal Care and Service Occupations	12,042	15,838	31.50%
Sales and Related Occupations	23,538	26,564	12.90%
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	31,563	34,795	10.20%
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	3,610	3,581	-0.80%
Construction and Extraction Occupations	12,220	15,606	27.70%
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	8,986	10,496	16.80%
Production Occupations	19,346	22,628	17%
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	15,834	18,521	17%

III. Assessment

Cluster Analysis

In conjunction with the Headwaters Regional Development Commission, Bemidji, Minnesota cluster analysis has been done for Northwest Minnesota. With the lack of a very highly developed economy that is still largely dependent upon tribal casinos and governmental employment - as with the other tribal reservations in the region – industry clusters are not present that are inclusive of the White Earth Reservation.

Discussion of other plans

The White Earth Reservation Tribal Council (RTC) has responsibilities and operates programs that in many ways are very similar to state governments while also engaged in activities common to that of a local government, obtaining federal, and state to pursue its mission of serving its community.

The White Earth RTC routinely:

- Seeks HUD funding for the maintenance of tribal housing stock
- Seeks HUD funds to complete infrastructure projects – mainly tribal buildings in supported of increased public sector delivery of services
- Seeks USDA funding for economic development
- Seeks USDA funding for community facilities projects
- Seeks Department of Justice funding for domestic violence, court development, diversionary programs, and law enforcement
- Seeks HSS funds for substance abuse prevention programs

that can positively impact tribal communities and economic development.

The White Earth RTC also currently:

- engaged in ongoing discussions with the State of Minnesota transferring social and health service delivery from the State through the Tribe to tribal members vs. through Minnesota Counties

Identification of past and present economic development investments

The White Earth Reservation has worked to leverage funding resources from a number of federal and state agencies in order to grow its economy. Fundamental to this growth is the development of community and economic infrastructure.

Recent investments include:

- Funding of an on-reservation Workforce Development Center

- Funding and construction of the initial phases of the White Earth Tribal and Community College - now employs xxx
- Acquisition of property for and the development of the Oshki Manidoo youth treatment facility - now employs xxx
- Development of the Circle Back youth recovery community reintegration center – now employs xxx
- Ongoing discussions with the State of Minnesota transferring social and health service delivery from the State through the Tribe to tribal members vs. through Minnesota Counties – potential employment - xxx

These investments have focused on bringing resources to the Tribe and developing the local workforce to meet local workforce needs, and with these investments those specifically in the social work and healthcare field.

S.W.O.T. Analysis

As part of the planning process a series of community forums were held throughout the White Earth Reservation. At these meetings anyone who wanted to participate was welcome to give feedback, suggestions and comments. Community feedback helped to define the strategy; it was a priority of this plan to have as much feedback as possible to ensure that the strategy represented the goals of the community members of White Earth.

The key findings at these meetings were as follows:

- **Lack of Cohesion in Communities:** There was a perception about unfairness in the distribution of Reservation resources. Every community we visited felt slighted when it came to distribution of scarce resources and projects. Many of the commenter's felt that "they get forgotten about when the Tribal Council makes decisions." Comments were also made about a need to find a way to overcome community differences and find a way to work together.
- **Assisted Living Facility:** A number of individuals raised the point that there was no assisted living facility on the Reservation for elders.
- **Lack of Jobs:** Unsurprisingly, the fact that there are limited job opportunities on the Reservation came up in community meetings. It was also said that jobs that were available were mostly low wage.
- **Blight in Communities:** Every community we visited mentioned problems of blight. Abandoned and rundown housing, garbage in yards and the sides of the roads, and graffiti, was mentioned as a problem that needs to be addressed.
- **Renewable Energy:** Community members were excited about the possibility of investment in renewable energy as a potential catalyst for economic development.
- **Desire for Entrepreneurship:** Community members spoke of a desire to see Native owned businesses open on the Reservation. Many also spoke about the barriers facing potential entrepreneurs on the Reservation.
- **Outdoor Recreation Amenities:** The majority of the Communities spoke of the abundance of opportunity to enjoy outdoor recreation on the White Earth Reservation.

Many felt that there needed to be more trails, fishing piers, etc., to help community members enjoy the rich natural environment.

- **Maximize the Tribal College as an Asset:** The Tribal College was mentioned as the greatest asset for the future of the Reservation's economy. The ability to retain talent, creating a skilled workforce, and provide tribal members with new opportunities was all cited as possibilities for the growing tribal college.

SWOT Analysis

To evaluate the effectiveness of the White Earth Reservation Economic Development efforts, tribal community members were asked to identify the Reservation's **strengths, weaknesses, challenges and opportunities** in each of the following key economic development categories:

Incentives, Infrastructure, Business Recruitment and Marketing, Existing Business Retention, Entrepreneur Support, Work Force Development, Natural Resources, Growing and Attracting Talent, Technology, Quality of Place, Culture of Innovation, and Futures Development

Their responses are as follows:

- **What are the strengths?**
 - The Reservation offers an array of resources for businesses for start-up and expansions.
 - The Reservation can leverage their own incentives with State, Federal and private funding resources.
 - Mahnomon has adequate industrial lots currently available with infrastructure that can support most businesses.
 - Most villages are served by sewer, storm sewer, water, and roads that small businesses would need.
 - Tax incentives and other resources many communities cannot boast.
 - There are a number of programs, organizations, and policies designed to help businesses grow on the Reservation.
 - Many of the necessary services are available in the Region.
 - A desire to see more local businesses.
 - There is a large available labor force.
 - The White Earth Tribal College is an excellent resource for training and educating the workforce.
 - The Reservation has diverse natural resources.
 - A well designed strategy is currently in place to manage natural resources.
 - Outdoor recreation amenities
 - The White Earth Tribal College is an excellent resource for creating a network of talent on the Reservation
 - Most communities have adequate high speed internet.
 - There are Communities on the Reservation that have technological infrastructure that is competitive with anywhere in the state.

- Abundant outdoor recreation opportunities
- Limited but diverse entertainment activities
- Close-knit traditional communities
- White Earth Tribal and Community College
- Entrepreneurial interest
- Willing leadership
-
- **What are the weaknesses?**
 - White Earth communities may not be doing their best to streamline, coordinate & market their resources.
 - There is a need for business education/training funds to assist small businesses.
 - Outside of the City of Mahanomen, no village has the infrastructure to support industrial development.
 - White Earth communities are undertaking little or no recruitment or marketing activities.
 - There are communities who do not believe they should market or recruit because they could not presently support the needs of employers for land and workforce.
 - We are not good at letting people know about the range of services provided.
 - No business visits are currently being done.
 - We are not as good as we should be at aligning or publicizing our services.
 - Access to start up capital.
 - Lack of trainings local to the Reservation.
 - The Reservation's existing workforce cannot meet employers specialized needs.
 - The limited funding sources for training make it difficult to serve small, rural employers.
 - Many of the non-skilled workers are also lacking work-readiness skills.
 - While diverse, the Reservation economically valuable natural resources are not abundant.
 - Little research or commitment into value added bio-products.
 - The Reservation's rural isolated character.
 - Educational attainment figures for the people of White Earth are very discouraging
 - A lack of professional high skilled jobs available
 - A lack of professional technology jobs available
 - Some communities have obsolete technological infrastructure
 - Limited trails, parks, etc.
 - Perception of unsafe communities
 - Blight, rundown character of some areas of the Reservation
 - Limited entertainment amenities
 - Skill/education level
 - Lack of innovative assets
 - Risk adverse culture
 -
- **What are the challenges faced in delivery of specific services/activities?**
 - Making businesses aware of the incentives they may be eligible for.
 - It is tough to help non-manufacturing businesses with current resources.
 - Infrastructure is very expensive to install and funds are scarce.
 - Entrepreneurial business development in the rural areas may be inhibited by the limited availability of infrastructure.
 - Marketing activities can be very time consuming and expensive.

- The communities that make up White Earth Reservation have some significant differences within-both from a cultural standpoint, as well as an economic standpoint.
- The Region is very large geographically, with limited concentrations of people – making effective and wide-spread service delivery a challenge.
- Consistently serving people in the Reservation’s vast rural areas can be very difficult.
- Financial ability to start a business does not exist for many community members.
- Competition for the same workers.
- Training delivery can be very difficult in sparsely populated, large geographic areas.
- Checkerboard land ownership patterns
- Fluctuations of energy prices
- Competition from other communities for skilled workers.
- Cultural understanding in the schools.
- Outside perception of Reservation communities
- Geographical dispersion of people.
- A workforce that may not be ready for high tech 21st century business.
- Limited financial resources of Tribal Council/ members
- Geographic dispersion and rural character of Reservation villages
- Where to start in building assets
- Patience in taking one step at a time
- Need for a long term commitment
-
- **What are some opportunities White Earth can take advantage of?**
 - Develop an investment fund for smaller non-traditional businesses.
 - Develop Education/Training resources for small businesses.
 - Better align and market existing resources.
 - Monitor Federal and State funding opportunities to expand infrastructure.
 - Formalized local marketing approaches.
 - Formalized regional marketing.
 - Business Assistance:
 - Better coordination of all resources (one-stop-shop for business assistance).
 - Peer marketing groups to help teach essential skills to new business owners.
 - Provide ongoing technical assistance to start-up businesses with business planning, projections, loan applications, loan term negotiations, etc.
 - Business Retention:
 - Assist employers with employee recruitment strategies (and develop work-readiness programs/strategies that employers can access).
 - Create business education business classes developed by businesses and not educational institutions.
 - Localized business training programs.
 - Business Training courses – similar to the “Homestretch” concept, but for new businesses loan recipients. An incentive for completing the courses would be a decreased interest rate upon the loan recipient successful testing out of these courses.
 - Develop training modules and enable people to set their own pace for moving through the trainings.

- Financial planning and management program for middle school age and high school age students.
- Increase funding for employer training opportunities.
- Develop and incorporate work readiness training programs.
- Growth in the White Earth Tribal College presents new opportunities to train workers for skilled living wage jobs.
- Increased partnerships between the White Earth Tribal College and other educational institutions can leverage opportunities available to White Earth Tribal members.
- Develop the needed training programs or identify an existing training provider and offer tuition reimbursement to tribal members.
- Implement a soft-skills training course that is targeted for better preparing community members entering the workforce.
- The growth of the Bio-products industry.
- Renewable Energy.
- Rising cost of natural resource commodities.
- Growth in the White Earth Tribal and Community College presents new opportunities to train workers for skilled living wage jobs
- Increased partnerships between the White Earth Tribal College and other educational institutions can leverage opportunities available to White Earth Tribal members.
- Implement aggressive early childhood and K-12 improvement programs that are culturally relevant
- Financial incentives for graduates who reside on the Reservation
- Establish Technical and Trade programs for students who would like to learn a trade.
- Growth in the White Earth Tribal College presents new opportunities to train workers in latest technology.
- Keep track of State and Federal funding opportunities.
- Home based business
- Create more parks, trails, fishing piers to capitalize on excellent inherited amenities
- Community clean up campaigns
- Neighborhood watch type organizations to help prevent crime
- There is some potential to build the skills needed with the WETCC and its partners
- There is interest among leaders to support entrepreneurs on the Reservation

IV. Vision Statement

Vision and Mission

The White Earth Nation's Mission Statement and Vision guides the CEDS:

Mission: To preserve, promote and enhance our quality of life.

Vision: The White Earth Tribal Council will be a proactive organization promoting mino-bimaadiziwin (the good life). The White Earth Reservation will be a safe place where all people will have access to quality employment, housing, education, health and human services. While protecting our inherent right to self-governance and identity, we are a community of respect where cultural, historical and environmental assets are treasured and conserved for future generations.

V. Goals and Objectives

Goals	Objectives
To bring prosperity to the White Earth Nation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Develop WE Enterprises capabilities➤ Expand WE Enterprises led tribal enterprises➤ Develop new business entities as part of WE Enterprises management/ resource allocation model➤ Develop CDFI, CDC
To develop natural indigenous resources for the benefit of the White Earth Nation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Continue to develop the wild rice marketing program – White Earth Foods – wild rice, maple syrup; crafts, etc.➤ Identify and expand other marketing opportunities
To provide transportation access	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Continue to strengthen WE Transit
To balance resources through sound management of development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Ag programs
To leverage federal, state, and non-profit organization resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Continue to seek and implement federal, state and non-profit organization funding to help the White earth Nation to address environmental and economic factors that hinder economic development

VI. Suggested Projects

The SWOT Analysis provides a listing of suggested projects/opportunities, as follows:

- Develop an investment fund for smaller non-traditional businesses.
- Develop Education/Training resources for small businesses.
- Better align and market existing resources.
- Monitor Federal and State funding opportunities to expand infrastructure.
- Formalized local marketing approaches.
- Formalized regional marketing.
- Business Assistance:
 - Better coordination of all resources (one-stop-shop for business assistance).
 - Peer marketing groups to help teach essential skills to new business owners.
 - Provide ongoing technical assistance to start-up businesses with business planning, projections, loan applications, loan term negotiations, etc.
- Business Retention:
 - Assist employers with employee recruitment strategies (and develop work-readiness programs/strategies that employers can access).
 - Create business education business classes developed by businesses and not educational institutions.
- Localized business training programs.
- Business Training courses – similar to the “Homestretch” concept, but for new businesses loan recipients. An incentive for completing the courses would be a decreased interest rate upon the loan recipient successfully testing out of these courses.
- Develop training modules and enable people to set their own pace for moving through the trainings.
- Financial planning and management program for middle school age and high school age students.
- Increase funding for employer training opportunities.
- Develop and incorporate work readiness training programs.
- Growth in the White Earth Tribal College presents new opportunities to train workers for skilled living wage jobs.
- Increased partnerships between the White Earth Tribal College and other educational institutions can leverage opportunities available to White Earth Tribal members.
- Develop the needed training programs or identify an existing training provider and offer tuition reimbursement to tribal members.
- Implement a soft-skills training course that is targeted for better preparing community members entering the workforce.
- The growth of the Bio-products industry.
- Renewable Energy.
- Rising cost of natural resource commodities.
- Growth in the White Earth Tribal and Community College presents new opportunities to train workers for skilled living wage jobs

- Increased partnerships between the White Earth Tribal College and other educational institutions can leverage opportunities available to White Earth Tribal members.
- Implement aggressive early childhood and K-12 improvement programs that are culturally relevant
- Financial incentives for graduates who reside on the Reservation
- Establish Technical and Trade programs for students who would like to learn a trade.
- Growth in the White Earth Tribal College presents new opportunities to train workers in latest technology.
- Keep track of State and Federal funding opportunities.
- Home based business
- Create more parks, trails, fishing piers to capitalize on excellent inherited amenities
- Community clean up campaigns
- Neighborhood watch type organizations to help prevent crime
- There is some potential to build the skills needed with the WETCC and its partners
- There is interest among leaders to support entrepreneurs on the Reservation

VI. Implementation Plan

Implementation Plan – How do we achieve our vision?

- *Vital Projects – a section identifying and prioritizing projects, programs, and activities derived from the Background, Assessment, and Vision*
 - *Identify sources of funding*
 - *Identify lead organizations responsible for the project/program's execution*
- *Plan of Action – A section elaborating on implementation of goals and objectives.*
 - *Promote economic development and opportunity*
 - *Foster effective transportation access*
 - *Enhance and protect the environment*
 - *Stay consistent with State of Minnesota goals*
 - *Promote the use of technology in economic development*
 - *Balance resources through sound management of physical development*
 - *Obtain funding*
 - *Create programs that will eventually be self-sustaining – post funding*

Using the background information, the case studies and the economic development gap analysis as a foundation, WEEDO and the steering committee has developed strategies or initiatives to help move the economy of the White Earth Reservation forward. The resulting strategies should serve as an action plan for the White Earth Reservation Tribal Council and the WEEDO staff over the next five years.

There are many opportunities and challenges facing the economy of the White Earth Reservation that were revealed in the background research and the economic development gap analysis. In selecting what initiatives to target for the next five years, the steering committee:

- Tried to focus on projects and initiatives that would serve as “tipping points” for the economy. As such, we were looking for initiatives that, if successfully completed, had the potential to lead to additional successful strategies in the future. These initiatives were chosen because they serve as a beginning point for long-term success;
- Chose initiatives that balanced short and long term success. Some initiatives will allow for fairly quick completion and results, while others will take years to show success. The White Earth Reservation Tribal Council and WEEDO staff are encouraged to understand that, even though some initiatives take some time to show any results, that does not make them less important. In fact, the long term initiatives may be the most critical to the long term success of the economic development efforts of the area; and
- Consciously focused on both traditional economic development strategies, as well as positioning activities. As mentioned in the gap analysis, traditional economic development activities remain essential to moving the White Earth Reservation economy forward, but in and of themselves they aren't sufficient. Successful economic development programs also focus on positioning activities that lay a stronger foundation

for success, including the development of telecommunications, talent and education, and a strong quality of place.

Current Initiatives-

- Educational facilities, workforce center, tribal college
- Expansion of social and health services
- Diabetes/dialysis center
- Oshki Manidoo and Circle Back treatment facilities
- Wild rice marketing
- Renewable energy
- Tribal enterprise expansion
- Diversification - tribal enterprise opportunities

Vital Projects

The following were the initiatives that were chosen for the next five years:

- Marketing plan
- Expanding tribal businesses and business opportunities
- One-stop center
- Tribal college
- Additional housing choices
- “Green” business development
- Park, trail and wellness plan - Lacrosse – culture, health, recreational
- Infrastructure improvement
- Workforce council

A summary of each initiative follows.

Project: Strengthening and Implementing a Marketing Plan for the White Earth Reservation

Timeline: 2014-2018

Leadership: WEEDO

Partners: Private Businesses, Area Chambers of Commerce

Summary: The White Earth Reservation has historically never marketed itself as a good place for new business and economic development projects.

Understanding this, the White Earth Reservation Tribal Council recently

gave the responsibility to WEEDO to ensure that a coordinated marketing plan is in place.

WEEDO staff will lead an effort to create and implement a marketing plan that includes:

- A market analysis that helps identify business development opportunities in the area;
- An identification of target markets for marketing;
- Development of marketing materials; and
- Implementation of the marketing plan.
- Establishment of a regional partnership outreach plan

Project: **Strengthening and expanding a corporate structure for White Earth Reservation Tribal Council businesses and economic development functions**

Timeline: 2014-2018

Leadership: White Earth Reservation Tribal Council

Partners: WEEDO

Summary: The case studies, community input and other background research clearly showed that successful tribal economies have found a way to separate tribal enterprises and economic development functions from the governance of the reservation. Having a separate corporate structure for businesses and economic development from tribal governance is important to allow the businesses to operate as a business, working to ensure that the both is profitable as well as meets their public objectives. Having a separate economic development authority also helps to overcome the perception that doing business on the reservation is complicated and difficult.

Project: **Entrepreneurial One-Stop Center**

Timeline: 2014-2018

Leadership: WEEDO

Partners: White Earth Investment Initiative, Regional Economic Development Agencies, SBDC, Area Banks

Summary: Access to resources and information for entrepreneurs on the reservation is a critical problem. Too often, potential entrepreneurs are left without information on the programs and assistance available to help them start or expand their businesses. In addition, it's important that the services available are coordinated to ensure there is no gaps.

To overcome this challenge, the reservation will develop an entrepreneur center that will include:

- Access to direct, one-to-one business assistance;
- Access to micro loans and other financing;
- A database of information on available programs; and
- Building space to serve as a business accelerator for new companies.

Project: Continuing development and promotion of the White Earth Tribal and Community College

Timeline: Ongoing

Leadership: WETCC

Partners: White Earth Reservation Tribal Council, WEEDO

Summary: As mentioned previously, a successful economy on the reservation is directly linked to developing the education and skills of the workforce. The White Earth Tribal and Community College is a wonderful asset to begin to improve the skills and abilities of the area's workforce. It provides opportunities for students to gain valuable skills to help build the area's economy.

As an economic development strategy, it is critical that the WETCC is successful at growing and developing. It is also important that the skills needed for furthering the economy are taught. Students need marketable skills that are in demand in the area, and the WETCC is nicely positioned to provide the training the workforce needs.

This initiative includes:

- Linking the workforce needs to the curriculum of the WETCC
- Helping develop links between the WETCC and other higher educational institutions throughout the area
- Ensuring the WETCC is successfully marketed to students and businesses

Project: Developing additional housing choices including Assisted Living Facilities for on and off-reservation tribal communities

Timeline: 2014-2018

Leadership: WEEDO

Partners: White Earth Health and Housing Departments

Summary: Assisted living is a growing residential option for seniors. The potential for an assisted living facilities would not only provide options for seniors, it would also create new jobs and generate significant investment.

Project: Expand upon market analysis specifically focused on the potential for "Green" business development

Timeline: 2014-2018

Leadership: WEEDO

Partners: White Earth Natural Resources, HRDC, AURI, NRRI,

Summary: There is growing interest and demand for green and alternative energy businesses ranging from wind energy to biomass pellets. The White Earth Reservation Tribal Council has been on the leading edge of some of the research in this area, yet there are so many other opportunities to study and investigate.

WEEDO will continue to investigate the potential for green enterprises on the reservation, and will complete a feasibility study on the top three potential opportunities.

Project: Implement a Reservation-Wide Park, Trail and Wellness Plan

Timeline: 2014-2018

Leadership: White Earth Natural Resource Department

Partners: White Earth Health Department, Community Councils, HRDC

Summary: A growing number of economic developers are recognizing the link between economic development and the 'livability' of their communities. In a time where businesses and the workforce is more mobile than ever before, leaders must ensure that the communities they are looking to develop are desirable places to live, work and raise a family.

While livability is a very broad term, the steering committee recommends a strong focus on parks, trails, and wellness. The White Earth Reservation is blessed with many natural amenities that lay the foundation for a wonderful quality of life. However, there has never been a comprehensive effort to improve and develop the Reservation's parks and trail system.

Wellness is an important part of creating healthy livable communities. The White Earth Reservation should work to provide its members with a healthy local food system that sustains both food producers and consumers in our community, and to promote the policy and infrastructure necessary to make physical activity easy, fun, and accessible.

Project: Develop a five year infrastructure improvement program for the White Earth Reservation communities

Timeline: 2014-2018

Leadership: WEEDO

Partners: White Earth Health Department, White Earth Natural Resources, Community Councils, HRDC, USDA, US EDA, HUD, BIA.

Summary: Despite recent progress, there remains significant infrastructure issues throughout the reservation. Similar to a five year capital improvements plan many cities develop, WEEDO will develop an infrastructure improvement plan that will effectively address priority economic development infrastructure needs in a coordinated, comprehensive way. Included in this program will be water, sewer, electrical, technological and other physical infrastructure, as well as land recovery initiatives.

Project: Establish a workforce council for the White Earth Reservation.

Timeline: 2014-2018

Leadership: White Earth Reservation Tribal Council

Partners: WEEDO, Community Councils, White Earth Tribal and Community College, Casino.

Summary: There are significant challenges and opportunities in the area of workforce and skill development on the Reservation. Significant federal funding is being invested in the workforce training, and it is important that the myriad of programs and organizations involved in workforce development are working together in a coordinated fashion to ensure the needs of workers and employers on the reservation are met.

Plan of Action

Promote economic development and opportunity

White Earth's strategy is to proactively address economic development, building upon internal and external relationships leveraging these to achieve measurable results.

Foster effective transportation access

White Earth is now going into its fifth year of operating a commuter bus system that provides access for workers of the major employers on the reservation reasonably cost transit service between their resident community and work places. Services is provided to the tribal casino employees, tribal governmental employees and employees of the federally-operated tribal health clinic, and additionally to the general public in assisting with health clinic visits.

Enhance and protect the environment

White Earth recognizes the sacredness of its land base and chooses to take care in how it is developed. Every effort will continue to be made to promote proper stewardship of the land and to implement sustainability. Green energy development will continue to be pursued to reduce the use of non-renewable resources and to appropriately utilize local resources thus saving precious tribal dollars.

Stay consistent with State of Minnesota goals

White Earth regularly participates in regional economic development forums where the State of Minnesota's economic development and workforce development entity, DEED (Department of Employment and Economic Development) maintains communication with local economic development entities regarding its objectives, plans, programs and activities. White Earth finds that these are critical linkages and will continue to participate in these venues.

White Earth will continue to provide economic development leadership within the region.

Promote the use of technology in economic development

White Earth will take advantage of GIS technology in its continued planning.

Balance resources through sound management of physical development

White Earth will implement the recently completed land use plans for each of its tribal communities.

Obtain funding

White Earth works closely with many federal agencies that have various types of resources that can contribute to the implementation of each of the identified projects – from funding of feasibility studies, funding for expertise, and short term expertise to funding for infrastructure design and construction. Among these agencies of prime interest are the Indian Health Service, USDA, DOE, EPA, and HUD. White Earth will also creatively access housing tax credits and new market tax credits as available to accomplish its housing and economic development goals.

Implementation Activities

Calendar Year 2014

- Marketing plan
 - a. Complete an Economic Impact Analysis of tribal expenditures and payroll impact on the area communities
 - b. Establish working relationship with Mahnomen Business Council
 - c.
- Expanding tribal businesses
 - a. Complete Transfer Station construction
 - b. Seek USDA RBEG funding to expand WE Enterprise businesses
 - c. Reestablish wild rice marketing business site at WE Enterprises
 - d. Seek out complementary mail order fulfillment opportunities for WEE
 - e. Seek 8(a) and HUBZone designation for WEE business sub-entities

- f. Analyze establishment of housing deployment initiative within WEE
 - g.
- One-stop center
 - a. Hire business accelerator program manager
 - b. Mentor 25 clients in looking at business opportunities
 - c.
- Tribal college
 - a. Assist college in launch of community instructional sites
 - b. Establish business accelerator program at college
 - c. Seek funding for completion of remaining wings of college's principal building
 - d.
- Additional housing choices
 - a. Assist Iron Range Community Council with tax credit application process
 - b.
- "Green" business development
 - a. Assess status of renewable projects
 - b. Develop marketing program for private sector marketing
 - c. Seek DOE funding for casino biomass deployment
 - d.
- Park, trail and wellness plan
 - a. Initiate park/trail plan
 - b. Establish youth lacrosse program
 - c.
- Infrastructure improvement
 - a. Continue to identify infrastructure needs
 - b.
- Workforce council
 - a. Assist college in launch of community instructional sites
 - b. Assess the value of conducting a WF survey
 - c. Develop WF survey template
 - d. Test distribute WF summary
 - e. Establish day labor initiative

Calendar Years 2015-2018

- Marketing plan
 - a. Complete an Economic Impact Analysis of tribal expenditures and payroll impact on the area communities
 - b. Establish working relationship with Mahnomen Business Council
 - c.
- Expanding tribal businesses
 - a. Complete Transfer Station construction
 - b. Seek USDA RBEG funding to expand WE Enterprise businesses
 - c. Reestablish wild rice marketing business site at WE Enterprises
 - d. Seek out complementary mail order fulfillment opportunities for WEE
 - e. Seek 8(a) and HUBZone designation for WEE business sub-entities
 - f. Analyze establishment of housing deployment initiative within WEE
 - g.
- One-stop center
 - a. Hire business accelerator program manager
 - b. Mentor 25 clients annually re business opportunities
 - c.
- Tribal college
 - a. Establish business accelerator program at college
 - b. Seek funding for completion of remaining wings of college's principal building
 - c.
- Additional housing choices
 - a. Assist Iron Range Community Council with tax credit application process
 - b.
- "Green" business development
 - a. Assess status of renewable projects

- b. Develop marketing program for private sector marketing
 - c. Seek DOE funding for casino biomass deployment
 - d.
- Park, trail and wellness plan
 - a. Initiate park/trail plan
 - b. Establish youth lacrosse program
 - c.
- Infrastructure improvement
 - a. Continue to identify infrastructure needs
 - b.
- Workforce council
 - a. Assess the value of conducting a WF survey
 - b.

VIII. Performance Measures

The White Earth Nation Economic Development Organization will annually review the performance of the Reservation in meeting the vision and goals articulated in this Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The White Earth Economic Development Organization will report the results of its evaluation in the CEDS Annual Report, and will share the results with the Tribal Government, communities and stakeholders in the Region.

A comprehensive economic development strategy is to contain a list of performance measures used to evaluate successful development and implementation of the CEDS. The following performance measures are traditionally used to provide an objective way to measure the progress made towards the CEDS.

- ***Number of Jobs created after implementation of the CEDS:***
 - We anticipate that the Reservation, in the next three years, the Region will create at least 300 new jobs as a result of the CEDS implementation.
- ***Number and types of investments undertaken in the Region:***
 - In terms of the number of investments to be undertaken in the Region, we anticipate that the EDA will make 15 investments in the Region between 2013 and 2018.
- ***Amount of private sector investment in the Region after implementation of the CEDS:***
 - We estimate that the Region's private sector will invest \$5,000,000 after implementation of the CEDS.
- ***Changes in the economic environment for the region***

In addition to these traditional progress indicators, the White Earth Nation evaluation of progress will focus on the extent the Region has been able to reach the goals and objectives contained in this CEDS report. The goals will serve as the performance measures for the White Earth Nation.

IX. Disaster Resiliency Strategy

Emergency Planning, Response and Recovery Plan

- White Earth will assign its Business Accelerator Program manager to begin working with impacted businesses
- White Earth will make available business incubator space to impacted businesses
- White Earth will create and maintain a database of all know businesses operating within its boundaries
- White Earth will utilize its tribal newspaper as a method of communication to local businesses and the consumer public to deliver messages and technical knowledge in support of disaster recovery

Implementation Priorities

- White Earth will continue to develop, maintain and improve Disaster and Hazard Mitigation plans with surrounding Local, State, and Federal partners during the duration of this CEDS
-
- White Earth is seeking USDA Rural Development Opportunity Grant funding to hire a Business Accelerator Program manager to work with mentoring those seeking to start businesses, strengthening the resiliency of the private sector.
- Part of this effort involves the creation of appropriate business incubator facilities in support of this mission.
- White Earth is launching an initiative with the Minnesota Extension Service to begin looking at the attributes of the local tribal economic, initially beginning with the attributes of the impact of tribal finances on the local area economy
- White Earth will seek to improve relationships with local non-tribal economic development entities on behalf of jointly strengthening local economies
- White Earth Enterprises will seek ways to expand and birth appropriate new businesses within the tribal enterprise platform wherein these needed businesses might not initially thrive without a high level of nurturing

Appendices

2009 CEDS Steering Committee	
Toni Merdan, Tara Mason, Mike Swan, Dean Johnson, Lorna LaGue, Gloria Lafriniere, Audra Highelk, Sam Mason, Steven Day, Marshall Brown, John Annette, Pam Keezer, Marvin Tibbetts, Pat Cobb, Brenda Lundon, Brent Gish, Monte Fox.	
Representation	Names
Business:	Tara Mason, Dean Johnson, Gloria Lafriniere, Audra Highelk, Sam Mason, Steven Day, Marshall Brown, Pat Cobb, Brenda Lundon.
Industry:	Tara Mason, Mike Swan, Dean Johnson, Lorna LaGue, Steven Day, John Annette, Pat Cobb, Brent Gish, Monte Fox
Finance:	Toni Merdan, Dean Johnson, Lorna LaGue, Audra Highelk
Agriculture:	Mike Swan, Marshall Brown
Professions:	Brent Gish, Monte Fox
Organized labor:	Tara Mason, Gloria Lafriniere, Sam Mason, Marshall Brown, Marvin Tibbetts
Utilities:	Dean Johnson, Lorna LaGue
Education:	Brent Gish
Community organizations:	Tara Mason, Mike Swan, John Annette, Brent Gish
Public health agencies	Monte Fox
The aged:	Dean Johnson, John Annette, Brent Gish
Disabled:	Tara Mason, Gloria Lafriniere, Sam Mason, Marshall Brown, Marvin Tibbetts
The unemployed	Tara Mason, Gloria Lafriniere, Sam Mason, Marshall Brown, Marvin Tibbetts
Racial or ethnic minorities:	Tara Mason, Mike Swan, Dean Johnson, Lorna LaGue, Gloria Lafriniere, Audra Highelk, Sam Mason, Steven Day, Marshall Brown, John Annette, Pam Keezer, Marvin Tibbetts, Pat Cobb, Brenda Lundon, Brent Gish, Monte Fox

Women:	Toni Merdan, Tara Mason, Lorna LaGue, Gloria Lafriniere, Audra Highelk, Pam Keezer, Pat Cobb, Brenda Lundon
Non-Government/ Government Affiliation	<p>Non-Government (10): Tara Mason, Dean Johnson, Gloria Lafriniere, Audra Highelk, Steven Day, Marshall Brown, John Annette, Pat Cobb, Brenda Lundon, Brent Gish</p> <p>Government (7): Toni Merdan, Mike Swan, Lorna LaGue, Sam Mason, Pam Keezer, Marvin Tibbetts, Monte Fox</p>