From BR&E Theory to Practice in Minnesota: Lessons Learned from Local Community Modifications in Implementation

An evaluation of the
Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E)
process in nine Minnesota communities

Prepared for:
Michael Darger & Elizabeth Templin for the
University of Minnesota Extension Service

Evaluator:
Linda M. Bosma, PhD
President
Bosma Consulting, LLC
3422 44th Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55406
linda@bosmaconsulting.com
612.721.4998

Presented on:
March 5, 2007

Table of Contents

**From BR&E Theory to Practice in Minnesota: Lessons Learned from
Local Community Modifications in Implementation**

Executive Summary

Presented on March 5, 2007

University of Minnesota Extension Service staff implements the Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) process in Minnesota communities to assist communities in identifying strategies to support and address the needs of existing businesses in their communities. BR&E communities create a leadership team and a larger task force, who then conduct a survey through firm visits with local businesses. This information is analyzed by the Extension Service, and then used by the local community to develop priority projects for implementation to address concerns specific to their community. Some communities have modified the implementation process, implementing less or none of the plan elements. The purpose of this evaluation was to learn more about what happened in those communities, identify barriers or challenges, and learn how those communities viewed their level of success and the BR&E process. Extension Service staff also requested the evaluator make recommendations based on the findings. In addition, the evaluator was asked to consider community organizing concepts that might provide insight into the experiences of these communities. This information will be used in decision-making for future BR&E implementation and planning.

Evaluation Questions

The evaluation was qualitative and sought to answer the following main questions:
1. About half of the BR&E communities did not follow through on BR&E plans; what happened in those communities?
2. Extension Service had a central assumption that involving community members in data collection and planning would create a commitment to projects; to what extent is that assumption correct?

Information was gathered through 18 key informant interviews of participants from nine communities, document analysis of the nine BR&E community reports, literature review of community organizing literature, organization of information into rubrics, and expert meetings with Extension Service staff to inform analysis, sample, and the final report.

Findings

Even if communities did not implement their plans, they overwhelming found the process to be worthwhile for their community. This may be because to a large extent, communities viewed BR&E as a survey or information gathering process, rather than an implementation process. Respondents found the information gathered very useful. In addition, the relationships developed were important, even if plans weren't implemented. This included relationships with the business community as well as among those participating in the

groups. The opportunity for dialogue about issues of concern to the business community was seen as an important aspect of BR&E. The respondents largely felt their BR&E processes experienced at least partial success, even if it was limited to the survey, rather than the implementation process.

Some communities may not have completed their implementation plans because it was never their intent or understanding of the BR&E process. In at least three communities, the process was too dependent on one person. In these communities, a key person was the driving force behind the BR&E process, and when that person left the community, progress stalled. In these situations, ownership and buy-in to the implementation process had not been developed and no one stepped up to move the project forward.

All but one respondent conducted firm visits, which respondents generally enjoyed. They felt it was important that community members conduct the interviews at the firm visits, because it created trust, increased access to the local business community, and developed relationships. In addition, gathering the information first-hand increased its meaning to those participating in the process. The information was seen as useful, and was used to create reports and develop plans for implementation in their communities.

While Extension Service staff was curious about the red flag process, respondents remembered so little about red flags that it was impossible to draw meaningful conclusions about the red flag stage. Most thought they probably had red flag issues and vaguely remembered the concept, but few could relate any specific details about them.

All were able to remember the priority project they were assigned to, but only some felt they had implemented any or part of their plan. Only one of the nine communities felt it had successfully implemented its plan and was still working on several of the strategies. Often, success was identified as completing the survey and not connected to implementation. Some respondents differentiated survey success and implementation success. Perceptions of success in implementation were much lower than for the survey. Other successes identified were developing relationships and bringing people together.

The implementation processes were not well known or understood by respondents. Leadership and accountability for projects was not clear in most of the communities, or in some case, accountability rested one or two people, rather than be broadly shared. Few could identify partners who worked on strategies. Most communities did not continue to hold regular meetings for the recommended period of one year after the report was completed. They could recall little about the meetings and did not find them very effective. Some reported that even though they had some meetings, attendance dropped off as time went on. Respondents were not familiar with the funding and resources available to their BR&E process.

Only one community had staff specifically assigned and budgeted to work on BR&E. For the other communities that had staff committed to BR&E, it was an 'extra' assignment, not something they staff time dedicated for. Three communities experienced the departure of a

key person leading the process at a critical juncture. In these communities, no one took over the role of the person who left and the process stalled.

Staff changes or departures were one challenge to success cited in the communities. Other barriers or challenges included limited time and energy among volunteers, the need for more people to get involved, and lack of ownership among community members.

Recommendations

The findings suggest the following recommendations:

- More clarity on the implementation process should be provided to communities up front, during training, recruitment, and firm visits.
- Extension Service should consider offering a 'survey only' option as some communities seem to only want the data.
- Instill a deeper understanding among communities that the firm visit stage is just the beginning; better prepare participants for the implementation stage.
- Address staffing challenges by 1) increasing buy-in and ownership beyond one or two people, 2) encouraging communities to think about how they will deal with the departure of a key person, 3) encouraging communities to fund a dedicated staff person to BR&E.
- Assess the importance of the red flags as a distinct concept; if important, the red flag concept should be stressed more strongly with community groups.
- Recruit task force members with implementation in mind (not just for the firm visits).
- Re-examine the planning retreat and commencement meeting to be sure they adequately emphasize plan ownership and commitment to priority projects.
- Consider redefining how Extension staff define 'success' of BR&E projects; communities felt they had success in many cases, even if they did not implement their projects.
- Make sure impacted stakeholders are involved.

Limitations of evaluation

This evaluation was intended to be a qualitative evaluation. While frequencies are provided to give context to answers, no statistical inferences should be drawn from this information. The sample was not determined as a representative, statistical sample, but rather to provide access to people intimately familiar with the BR&E experience in their communities. Thus, understanding and deep description were favored over quantity and quantitative information.

Evaluation Design

Background: The University of Minnesota Extension Service has implemented the Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) strategy in at least 21 communities in Minnesota since the early 1990s. While several communities have experienced significant successes, several communities did not fully implement the model or carry out their priority plans to full completion. As many as half of the BR&E communities have successfully implemented plans and their achievements have been analyzed; however, less is known about communities that were unable to fulfill their plans and the factors that contributed to their challenges. In an effort to learn from those communities that modified their plans or did not appear to fully implement a BR&E plan, the Extension Service would like to learn more about the challenges and barriers these communities experienced, to determine reasons that they had different results. This information will be used to inform the Extension Service on future implementation and expectations around the BR&E strategy in Minnesota communities.

The evaluation design for this project was created with input from University of Minnesota Extension Service staff members Michael Darger and Elizabeth Templin, who also provided essential feedback throughout the evaluation process. Darger and Templin are both certified BR&E Consultants and have extensive experience implementing BR&E processes throughout Minnesota. The evaluator wishes to acknowledge and thank them for their contribution to this process.

Evaluation Questions

Two main evaluation questions were developed, with supporting questions, to explore the identified BR&E projects:

1. About half of the BR&E communities did not follow through on BR&E plans; what happened in those communities?
    a. To what extent were any adaptations or changes made in implementation?
    b. Which communities identified red flag issues and how did they respond to those situations, including who was involved?
    c. To what extent were any adaptations or changes made in implementation?

2. Extension Service had a central assumption that involving community members in data collection and planning would create a commitment to projects; to what extent is that assumption correct?
    a. To what extent were community members involved in the stages?
    b. To what extent were BR&E teams involved in the data collection?
    c. To what extent do/did community members support (buy into) the BR&E process and stages?
    d. To what extent do community members feel their BR&E projects were successful?
    e. What was the composition of the BR&E teams and to what extent were they representative of the community and key sectors and stakeholders?

Sample Selection

Nine communities were identified and selected by Darger and Templin. Communities were selected based on the perception of the Extension staff that they had modified or not fully completed the priority projects identified in their BR&E planning process. In addition, the communities selected had not been included in other evaluations prior to this project. Nine communities were selected in order to provide a range of experiences to examine; communities were selected that had begun their BR&E process in 1999 or after.

Two individuals were interviewed from each community. A list of possible informants to interview was identified by staff. Additional names were supplied for each community and prioritized by Extension staff based on their awareness of their likelihood of having knowledge of the BR&E process in their community. Interview respondents were contacted in the order prioritized by staff; several attempts were made for each potential respondent before attempting to reach the next individual on the list. In some cases, no current contact information was available for potential respondents and efforts were made to locate them. In one case, it was not possible to interview two people from the original list supplied by staff, and a snowball approach was used, seeking a recommendation from the other respondent from that community; this resulted in a second interview in that community. In one other case, a potential respondent could not make herself available for the interview and found someone else who participated in the BR&E process in her community to be interviewed in her place. All other interviewees were from the list of names supplied by the Extension staff.

The sample was made up of the following sectors (representing the sector they represented at the time of their BR&E process):

Economic Development organization staff	4
Extension Service staff	4
Elected officials	3
Local government staff	3
Banking	2
Chamber	1
Business Owner	1

Eighteen respondents were interviewed. To secure 18 respondents, it was necessary to attempt to contact 25 people. The evaluator made 62 attempts to contact respondents; 7 people from the original sample could not be reached or located; 3 who were reached declined to participate.

Methods
The evaluation was qualitative. While some quantitative information is provided, the primary purpose of the evaluation was to obtain a deeper understanding of challenges experienced within the communities that were examined to inform decision-making and program planning in the future. Quantitative information is presented only to highlight the representation within the sample and is *not* a statistical representation of information that is presented in this report. The evaluation methods employed in the evaluation were key informant interviews of a purposive sample, document analysis of BR&E materials and

reports from the nine communities examined, a limited literature review of community organizing literature concepts, a fidelity rubric to categorize information, and expert team meetings with the evaluator, Darger, and Templin to inform the evaluation process, coding, and analysis.

Key Informant Interviews: Key participants in each of the nine BR&E communities were interviewed. Qualitative key informant interviews "are especially good at describing social and political processes, that is, how and why things change" (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 3). Using a responsive interviewing technique encourages a respectful dialogue between the interviewee and the evaluator, allowing the evaluator to probe more deeply and gather richer, more useful information (Rubin & Rubin, p. 3). To prevent bias, it is important that interviews be combined with other sources of information (Yin, 2003, p. 92). Limited transcription of interviews was completed and analyzed using NVIVO© software, using a coding process based on categories created through expert team meetings and emerging themes.

Document Analysis: Document analysis was conducted on BR&E reports to assess the community's original intent and who was involved. Written documents, while not always complete stories of a project's history, can provide useful information on a program's content (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). As part of the BR&E process, a report was prepared for each community which included information on participants in the process, objectives, and priority projects identified. These documents were analyzed to provide basic information on the BR&E process, and to inform the interviewing process. These documents provided information to help assess the levels of fidelity of implementation (what communities intended to do), red flag issues and community response, adaptations, community member involvement, and involvement of team members in the leadership groups.

Fidelity/characteristic Rubric: A rubric of was created to assess characteristics of implementation experiences and adaptations to fidelity by the sites. These characteristics were identified from the supporting literature and previous evaluation work conducted by Extension Service staff, the community document analysis, the NVIVO© analysis from interviews, and the expert team meetings.

Literature Review: A limited literature review was conducted by the evaluator to learn the key aspects of implementation of the BR&E strategy and of the community organizing literature, to look for comparisons and lessons learned within the communities.

Expert team meetings: A leadership team composed of Darger, Templin, and the evaluator met periodically throughout the evaluation timeline to determine the communities that would be examined, identify the sample of community members to interview, and review information to form the fidelity rubric. Darger and Templin served dual roles, serving as both informants regarding how processes unfolded in specific communities, but also assisting in the evaluative process to analyze some of the information collected. These expert team meetings informed the evaluation process, coding, and final report.

Timeline

The evaluation took place between summer 2006 and March, 2007. The evaluation design and protocol were finalized between June and August, followed by document analysis and literature review of BR&E materials. The interview protocol was developed in October and the pilot interview was conducted in November. All remaining interviews were conducted in December and January, followed by coding, analysis, additional literature review, and preparation of the final report in January through March. Expert meetings occurred throughout the project timeline.

Limitations

The evaluation is limited by the small number of respondents and limitations of memory. Only two respondents were interviewed for each community. Limited resources prevented interviewing a larger sample of communities, and the decision was made to select fewer informants per community in order to examine a greater number of communities. Informants were strategically identified to select people who had greatest familiarity with the project. Since we were looking for lessons learned and experiential knowledge over statistical quantifiable knowledge, people who were heavily engaged in the process were prioritized over a larger number in the sample.

In some cases it was difficult to find the favored key informants, who may have moved or taken new jobs. This meant that some people may have been interviewed who did not have as sufficient knowledge of the process as would have been preferred.

An additional limitation was the length of time that had elapsed since some communities had participated in their BR&E process. The 'oldest' communities in the evaluation began their BR&E process in 1999, and recollection of details was challenging for some respondents. Additionally, it was difficult for most respondents to remember specifics related to the red flag stage of their BR&E process, resulting in minimal useful information on the red flag stage.

The evaluation was designed as a qualitative examination; thus it is not appropriate to draw statistical inferences from the data presented in this report. Some quantitative information is provided for context throughout, but should not be construed as a representative percentage from the communities as a whole.

**From BR&E Theory to Practice in Minnesota: Lessons Learned from
Local Community Modifications in Implementation**

BR&E Interview Protocol

Interviewee: **Date/Time:**

Community: **#1**   **#2**

Intro:
In _<year>_, Extension Service of the University of Minnesota worked with your community on a Business Retention & Development process. Do you remember this project? (Or paraphrase to be sure they understand that this is the Extension BR&E process. Make clear that this is U of M Extension Service BR&E before proceeding with interview.)

I'm going to ask you some questions about the Business Retention and Expansion process in   <your community>. We want to get a better understanding of how it worked and unfolded in communities, and what communities saw as the strengths or challenges of the process. (May add a sentence, if they are unfamiliar with the initials: In my questions, I'll be referring to the Business Retention and Expansion process as BR&E.) Your comments will be confidential, although we will use this information in a written report. I've been asked to do a 'candid' evaluation, to help the Extension program staff learn more about the factors that contribute to success or pose challenges in communities.

Questions:
(Note for interview process to self: throughout these sections on the process, make sure to be clear which section/phase of the BR&E process you are asking about.)

Background/understanding of BR&E process, history, goals:

To begin, I'd like to talk about the BR&E process overall—its goals, how it came to be in your community. So think back to the very beginning of the BR&E process.

Just to get us started, tell me what your understanding of the Business Retention and Expansion project was.

What did you see the goal of the BR&E process in your community?

Describe your role in the BR&E process for me.

When did you become involved in the process in your community?

How did that happen—who approached you to become involved, how did you hear about this concept or the effort in <u><community name></u>.

How did <u><community name></u> come to be involved in the BR&E process/team?

Were there any individuals or organizations that were influential in bringing the BR&E process to the community? (Probe for roles, key factors)

Was there any incident or condition that led the community to do BR&E? (Probe, some kind of galvanizing event that preceded it)

How deeply was that view held? (explain)

Firm visits: Involvement, ownership, likeness to community organizing concept of one-on-ones/relationship building:
(Note to interviewer: while this section is important in terms of buy-in and fidelity, do not get too focused or caught up in this section, as it is not primary area of interest in the study. Keep it in context as part of larger whole.)

Part of the BR&E process is to undertake visits to existing firms, to conduct a survey of their concerns and interests. Let's talk a bit about the firm visits. Are you familiar with the firm visit concept and do you remember that part of the process? (Paraphrase to be sure respondent understands this section is on the firm visits and that respondent has some familiarity with them, or else note otherwise if they do not recall or know about them.)

There were <u>###</u> firm visits undertaken in your community.
Who did those firm visits? (Probe for their roles)

To your knowledge, how involved were the people who did the firm visits in the BR&E team?

(Follow up probe), tell me more about the involvement of those people.

Were you involved in firm visits? Yes   No
(Follow up, probe) tell me about your involvement.

What motivated you to do the firm visits?

Tell me a little more about how you viewed participating in the firm visits—did you enjoy it, for example. (Probe for enthusiasm level of respondent)

Do you think all task force members did the firm visits?

Do you think it was important that all did (did not do) them? Explain.

How did your group use the information collected in the firm visits?

How useful do you think that information was?

Red Flags:
Next, I'd like to move on to the 'red flags'. Your group reviewed the firm visit surveys to identify problems or areas of concerns that were brought up by businesses, in order to address those problems right away. Do you remember that process?

Did your BR&E team identify any red flags? (If no, probe if that info is different in the report, if respondent still does not recall, make note of and move on to next section.)

What were they?

How did your group address those red flags, if at all?

Who was involved in working on the red flag issue you have described? (Probe to see if it was one or two people, more, etc, to learn about who did the red flag follow up)

How effective do you think that was?

Was there any continuing work around the red flag issues you have described?

If yes, who was involved in the red flag work?

Tell me more about how that work continued (probe based on responses)

Did this continuing red flag work result in any additional referrals?

Strategies/priority projects, community organizing concept of focusing on issue/plan of action/people involved:
Now we are going to move on to the projects your group chose to work on. Each group identifies a priority project to work on. My records show that you were involved in - <u>describe the strategy the person was involved in VERY briefly</u> then continue to ask if that is indeed the strategy they worked on and if that sounds familiar.

Is that the strategy you remember working on?

What were the strategies and priority projects of the BR&E team in <u>community name</u>?

What projects did you plan to undertake?

How successful do you think your group was in implementing your project?

What about it was <successful, unsuccessful>?

Were there people identified at the time to move those priority projects forward?

To what extent do you think that happened?

How often did the project team meet to move forward priority projects?

Did those meetings move the project forward, or if not, how did you move the project forward?

Did the group have people who took leadership of the project?

Who were those people? Tell me about how that worked.

(*If no one took leadership, ask the following instead:*)
How did meetings or activities happen if no one 'took leadership'? Tell me what happened instead?

In your project team, were people specifically assigned responsibility for specific tasks?

How was the business community informed of the project and its benefits to them?

Did you have partners in your work (such as other agencies or organizations)?

Were there staff people who were assigned to work on this project (such as reallocating their previous responsibilities to include BR&E project work)?

Who had accountability to see that the project moved forward?

Were there members of the task force or your project team that would benefit from the implementation of your project (probe and explain more if needed)?

What existing resources (other than financial) did you utilize in your project? (Things like expertise, contributions such as printing or in kind support, etc)?

Did you make links to resources outside your community (such as technical assistance, Michael Darger's role, consultants, non-local grants, etc.)?

Were any of your projects institutionalized in an on-going manner, such as becoming part of someone's job description and responsibilities (say an Economic Development Agency now includes one of your projects in its regular work or budget)?
Describe.

Did any of your BR&E projects generate or contribute to new or additional projects? (For example, did another project grow out of your work, or did your work inspire another group to do similar work)?

Funding
Did the funding for the project (project they are referring to in their interview, or other projects if they have knowledge of—item to watch for) come from within the community?

How was the funding raised?

Do you think it was adequately funded? Explain

Ongoing activity
BR&E recommendations are for the full task force (all the members working on the various strategies and priority projects) to get together at least four times a year for a meeting for at least a year after the priority projects are identified.

Did your task force have quarterly meetings for at least a year?

If not, how many did you have, to the best of your recollection?

What happened at those meetings?

Do you think they were effective?

Were all strategies represented at them, as best you can recall?

What was attendance like—did most of the task force members attend?
(Probe for more info on the meetings based on previous replies.)

BR&E community perception of success and contributing factors/barriers:
Now let's talk about the perceptions you and the community had of the project as it was implemented.

How successful do you think your BR&E project team was at implementing its project? (Probe for depth)

In what ways do you think the project was successful? (Probe for specifics.)

Were there any intermediate successes short of full implementation? (Probe to capture any intermediate successes if they are not readily identified)

What contributed to success, in your opinion? What things happened when you were successful?

What were some specific results of your BR&E project?

How was success identified or acknowledged in the project team?

      In the community?

Do you think there were areas in which your BR&E process or projects were NOT successful?

In what ways do you think the projects were NOT successful? (Probe for specifics)

What things prevented you from being successful? What things happened that prevented you from reaching your goals in the way you intended?

Were there specific barriers or impediments to your group's ability to progress? How did you try to overcome those barriers? (or note if they did not try to overcome them)

People involved/stakeholders/community organizing concept of involving those impacted by the issue:

Think now about the people involved in the process.
Do you think you had enough people involved? Why or why not? Explain.

Do you think you had the **right** people involved?

Were there people missing from the BR&E group that should have been there?

Any who were there who hindered progress?

Conclusion:

That concludes the structured questions I have for you, but is there anything we did not cover in our conversation that you think would be important for me to know, that would help shed additional light on any of the successes or challenges you experience in your BR&E process?

Continue, if there are……

Thank you so much for your time!

Evaluation Question	Information Needed	Source of Information	Potential Methods
1. About half of the BR&E communities did not follow through on BR&E plans; what happened in those communities?			
To what extent were any adaptations or changes made in implementation?	BR&E Model How each community implemented BR&E	BR&E Materials/Info Ind. Community Notebooks Extension Staff Community Participants	Lit Review Document Analysis Expert Team Meeting(s) Interviews
Which communities identified red flag issues and how did they respond to those situations, including who was involved?	How each community implemented BR&E	Ind. Community Notebooks Extension Staff Community Participants	Document Analysis Expert Team Meeting(s) Interviews
To what extent were any adaptations or changes made in implementation?	How each community implemented BR&E	Ind. Community Notebooks Extension Staff Community Participants	Document Analysis Expert Team Meeting(s) Interviews
2. Extension Services had a central assumption that involving community members in data collection and planning would create a commitment to projects; to what extent is that assumption correct?			
To what extent were community members involved in the stages?	Participation levels of community members	Ind. Community Notebooks Extension Staff Community Participants	Document Analysis Expert Team Meeting(s) Interviews
To what extent were BR&E teams involved in the data collection?	Participation levels of community members	Ind. Community Notebooks Extension Staff Community Participants	Document Analysis Expert Team Meeting(s) Interviews
To what extent do/did community members support (buy into) the BR&E process and stages?	Attitudes & opinions of cmty members	Community Participants	Interviews
To what extent do community members feel their BR&E projects were successful?	Opinions of community members	Community Participants	Interviews
What was the composition of the BR&E teams and	Who was involved;	BR&E Materials/Info	Lit Review

to what extent were they representative of the community and key sectors and stakeholders?	BR&E recommendation of who should be	Ind. Community Notebooks Extension Staff	

Findings

Key informant interviews were conducted with 18 respondents from 9 communities (two per community) that had participated in a BR&E process. Respondents were queried in the areas of their understanding of the BR&E process and their role, the firm visits, red flags, strategies and priority projects, people involved and leadership, funding, meetings and ongoing activity, perceptions of success, and people involved. Final comments and suggestions are summarized at the end of this section. Unless noted otherwise, numbers given in this section represent one respondent (rather than number of communities). In attempt to respect the confidentiality of the interview respondents, efforts have been made to remove information that would identify a specific respondent. These findings are grouped according to the general subject areas of the key informant interviews, and are informed by the document analysis of the community reports.

Section 1: Understanding of BR&E process and roles

Overwhelmingly, respondents described the BR&E process as a survey process, or an effort to gather information or data. They did not describe BR&E as an effort to create and implement a plan. Other than Extension Service staff people who were interviewed, respondents did not see BR&E as the implementation of a plan or a process of change in their communities.

One said BR&E was "for research purposes"; another described BR&E as "an objective process to gather objective struggles people were having", and another described it as "an interview process to find out what concerns, impediments there are for businesses". Less often, respondents identified the importance of developing a relationship with the business community, but these tended to be economic development practitioners or Extension staff: ""help local leaders become more aware, build relationships and knowledge". Extension staff, not surprisingly due to their experience and training with the BR&E process, articulated loftier goals such as "help local leaders to take some action to directly support their business communities" and "to engage community volunteers in some preliminary understanding of business activities in their community…to identify immediate needs, priority projects to enhance the business climate in their community and help community and businesses plan for long term future". Two respondents (from different communities) found the process to be time-consuming, one calling it, "a lot of emails and phone calls".

- Nine respondents from six different communities discussed BR&E as only a survey when asked to describe it. Both respondents in one community reported that they never intended to do anything more than the survey, from the very beginning.
- Seven respondents in five different communities referred to BR&E as a process for supporting growth and improvement among the business community, but these respondents included all four the Extension Service staff who were interviewed, two elected officials, and one banker who worked with the business community.

- Two people in two communities referred to the time consuming nature of the BR&E process, one to the extent that it was the only impression and description she could give of the process.
- One described it as program of the University of Minnesota.
- Three respondents (from two communities) referred to BR&E providing an opportunity for developing relationship and networking with the business community—two of these were Extension staffers and one was an economic development agency staff person.

When asked what the specific goals for their community were, six respondents (from five communities) expanded beyond the survey, identifying the need to preserve and/or maintain the community's tax base, stop the decline in the resort industry, use the information for their strategic planning process in an agency, providing opportunities to keep young people in the community, and making the community more attractive for business. While some goals and actions were discussed, again, the primary description was that of gathering information, rather than using it.

One respondent reflected, "I'm not fully pleased with the whole thing in our community, when I look back on it. Visits to businesses were great—we gathered a lot of good information, so much information, but we didn't use it".

Respondents' Roles and when they became involved

Twelve respondents said they had a coordinating function, while three described themselves as participants, and the other three said their role was as an elected official. Eleven respondents were involved from the very beginning, six got involved very shortly after the process began, and one could not be clear on when s/he became involved. There were no clear patterns between the roles of the respondents and at what point they became involved in the BR&E process in their community.

Only three respondents could identify a key person approaching them and asking them to get involved. Seven respondents (in five communities) did not know how they found out about the project or came to be involved, five (five communities) said it was part of their job expectations (either as Extension staff or economic development position), two (two communities) said they were approached due to their position in the community. One respondent reported becoming involved after being interviewed herself: "I became curious because I was interviewed as a business person, and was so impressed with the process I decided to get involved".

Half did not know how the BR&E process had come to their community (nine respondents in six communities), while six respondents (in four communities) said a key organization or agency (such as a power company or an economic development organization) was responsible for starting the process. Three people in two communities attributed the onset of the process to promotion by an Extension staff person.

Nearly all identified key entities in their community who were instrumental in the BR&E process to the community, including key agencies or organization (n=10), local government (n=4), Extension (n=4), and local Chambers of Commerce (n=3). Only three did not know of any key entity.

Eleven respondents (in seven of the nine communities) reported that there was no underlying crisis or galvanizing condition that spurred them to do BR&E. Issues identified in the other communities were challenges faced by resort owners, loss of young people and population due to lack of economic opportunity, and an empty industrial park.

Section 2: Firm Visits

The number of firm visits conducted ranged from 31 to 73. In all communities, firm visits were conducted by a combination of task force members and additional volunteers. In one community, it is not clear how many visits were done in person—this community mailed the surveys out ahead of time, and allowed businesses to return them by mail or else picked them up. They did not record how many were completed in person or mailed. All but one of the respondents were involved in doing the firm visits. Overwhelmingly, respondents viewed the firm visit process favorably. Three said their motivation to do them was because it was an expectation of their job, one saying "since BR&E was the tool, it's what you need to do". One said she would have done them even if it was not a job expectation, as "hands on" is how she does her work. One person's motivation was to learn more skills in her job, as she was reassigned to BR&E from a different topical area. Most found it interesting to be able to interact with business owners. One said, "It was one of the exciting parts of the process." Another said it was an opportunity to "create trust, build relationships, and do community service, for the greater good". One said, "I truly recognize the importance of business for the community and really wanted to hear, wanted to hear first hand."

While two people (from two different communities) saw the firm visits as necessary, they were not enthusiastic about them. But these two were the exception. People repeatedly described the firm visits as "enjoyable" and as an opportunity to learn about businesses and develop relationships, and to show businesses that the community was concerned. One respondent said the firm visits created a buzz in the community, with business people asking each other, "Have you been interviewed yet?"

Respondents felt strongly that it was important to have people from the community conduct the site visits, rather than a professional or outsider. Almost all (n=16) cited access and trust as key elements of having someone from the community do the interviews. Businesses were seen as more likely to make time for someone 'local' and to be more forthcoming in their answers, as well as more trusting of the results. Only one respondent felt it was not very important, but even this person said it would be important for the city to get the word out to businesses that a survey would be conducted prior to a professional/outside agency contacting them. Despite the belief that volunteers were important, three people did raise concerns about the quality and professionalism of the survey process, and that it was important to conduct them professionally. One respondent

was unable to respond to the question adequately, focusing instead on the large amount of work they entailed.

One respondent summed up the tension between professionalism and volunteer aspects of the firm visit process: "The advantage is that we know people; the disadvantage is concern over an owner going to another owner and hesitance to reveal things to a peer." Another concern raised was "sometimes people may NOT be comfortable to talk to someone from the county" while a third observed that "businesses might find less time for consultants, but on the other hand, sometimes a professional can come in and see things we can't."

Most people had no concerns and felt the volunteer aspect of firm visits was a crucial part of the process. "Again, it isn't just getting the information; it's the reaching out that is more important from their perception. We wanted to truly find out what they needed." Another mused, "I think it is everything in a post modern culture…much better than if a single person or firm had been hired to do it." Another advantage was how volunteers learned the information: "It was an eye opener as far as learning about the community. They understood it better than if they had just read a report." The credibility and trust were summed up by another respondent, "When local people and firms see local government leaders and people from the area go out, they realize that there's people involved that they didn't know were interested in keeping and helping businesses." Another cited momentum, saying the firm visits created their "own kind of energy".

Respondents reported that information gathered in the firm visits was used to make the report (seven respondents from six communities), develop plans (five respondents from five communities), implement projects in the community (three respondents from three communities), and to identify red flags (three respondents from three communities). One person did not know how the information was used and two did not answer the question. Most found the information useful (eleven respondents from eight communities), but five respondents (in four communities) did not know if it was useful. Two respondents (different communities) said it would have been useful if they had done what they identified in the firm visits. One respondent said she didn't remember the results of the survey or what they did with the information, and then said, "That's pretty sad." She remembers the process but not the outcomes. Another respondent said, "If that is all we did, it was NOT useful; but if it laid a foundation, it was useful. Maybe it laid some mental framework that there are issues that need to be addressed".

Section 3: Red Flags

While most people thought the red flag concept sounded familiar, and even thought they may have had some, only five people in three communities could remember anything specific about them. Thirteen respondents had no specific recall on the red flags. One respondent said their red flags were not so much red as "yellow" or "pink". Most respondents could not answer questions related to the red flags due to lack of recall. Red flags identified in one community seemed more appropriately the on-going planning

issues identified later in priority projects, so it also seemed there was not a clear distinction among some respondents between priority projects and red flags.

The red flag issues identified were 1) housing for the community's workforce and a need for more hotel rooms in one community (identified by both respondents), 2) a business planning to leave one community (identified by both respondents), and 3) information requests (one respondent). The housing and hotel room red flags became priority projects for that community that they continue to work on. Efforts to retain the business in the second community were unsuccessful, and it moved out of the community. The third community quickly resolved its red flags by responding to the information requests within days. Respondents had few specifics on who was involved in addressing the red flags, other than that the economic development agency or city/county staff handled things. In the case of the business threatening to leave, the entire task force was engaged in the red flag. One community continues to work on the housing and hotel room needs and feels it has been effective at addressing this issue; the community that lost the business felt they were ineffective, and the community that responded to the information requests felt they were effective at handling the red flag issues.

Section 4: Strategies and priority projects

One community claimed it never intended to move into the implementation stage, so they did not identify people to work on specific projects and could not remember the projects identified in their report. All other respondents were able to recognize the priority project they identified with in the written reports, although three respondents (from two communities) could not recall anything about how they proceeded on them. Five respondents (from four communities) reported that there had been no progress on the priority projects, and one said that while they identified a project, it then became an agency issue, rather than an issue for the workgroup, and that task force members were no longer involved in it.

Nearly half of respondents (eight in six communities) felt they partially implemented their plans. Five respondents (in four communities) said they were not successful at implementing their plans, while two respondents from one community said they did not follow the plans. One, while not identifying other accomplishments, stated that just bringing up the ideas was an element of success, even if they didn't implement the plan: "Anytime you bring up ideas to a group of people is good." One respondent could not recall what they did.

When asked what they thought was successful about their BR&E experience, six respondents (in five communities) thought the survey/information gathering process was what made them successful, while four respondents (all in different communities) identified the relationships that developed as their success. Four respondents (in four communities) felt they were not at all or not very successful and four (different communities) felt they had partial success at implementing their plans.

Some could point to very specific outcomes (such as housing, zoning changes, new hotel rooms, developing marketing tools for tourism, providing technology classes), but more often people felt the information they learned or bringing people together were the successful elements of their BR&E process. "When you recognize problems, that's part of success," one respondent stated. The community that never intended to do a plan said, "The whole process of collecting data is successful whether we were successful in implementing isn't inherent to the process." Another said, "People from different communities came together—this was a big thing in the county," even though their effort did not succeed and fell apart after this person left the community.

Others were not as positive about the outcomes. "When I look back, everyone was excited at first, but not much more happened except what the Chamber took on." Another said, "Gathering the information was good, follow up was not."

Section 5: People and Leadership

Half of respondents in six communities said that they didn't know if anyone was identified to move projects forward (n=4) or that no one was (n=5). Nine respondents in six communities said people were identified with specific tasks, but three of these respondents said that even though people were identified it did not last or there was not follow through. Most felt that even if someone was identified with a specific task or project, the follow through did not really happen.   "Interest started to dwindle at that point and people really started to drop off. I think people were frustrated at that point because a lot of it seemed to take money and we didn't have it at that point," according to one respondent. Another said, "Things sort of fell to one or two people—it shouldn't have but it did. Too much fell to city and agency staff."

Few project teams met with any regularity and in general people felt that meetings did not move the projects forward. Some said "meetings were not really held" or did not know. Another said that at meetings there "were less people each time, fell apart until it was finally just myself and a city employee and finally we just agreed 'this thing is just dead'". Even the community that most often cited successful results said, "People started to run out of steam and energy… [that happens] with the dependence on volunteers".

Few respondents were able to identify specific people who took leadership in their community's BR&E projects. Respondents from communities with some involvement from city/county staff, Extension staff, or economic development agency staff generally saw responsibility coming to rest with those individuals. Only two communities (both respondents in one, one in the other community) could name specific individuals who took leadership responsibilities and list specific tasks they took charge of.

There were not clear cut strategies to involve the greater business community. The main sources of outreach to the business community were the media (n=5), the report commencement meeting (n=3), the Chamber (n=3), or via a website in one case. There were only two communities in which the two respondents reported the same strategy to inform businesses.

There was no consistent pattern to the partners identified. Those mentioned most frequently included city or county government, the Chamber, local economic development agency/authority, banks, education institutions, elected officials, and Extension. It appeared people's idea of partners varied greatly when asking this question, it should be noted, and so no strong conclusions should be drawn from this data.

Only one community (both respondents) reported that there were staff people in the community who had time assigned to the project, both from the economic development organization and the city. (This is also the community that most consistently viewed their project as successful and had key people identified with tasks.) Six of the other communities had staff people working with the project, but those staff did not have any time specifically allocated or freed up just for BR&E—it was an 'extra' for the staff involved. Two communities identified Extension employees with the staffing responsibility, but in one of these at least one respondent saw it as an 'extra duty' for the Extension staff. One community said that all participants were taking part as volunteers. Three communities reported that key staff people left at a critical point in the project, leaving a void with no one to step in, or else not easily transitioning the responsibilities to the new person.

The two respondents from each community agreed on who was accountable to move the project forward in five communities; in two communities, the respondents thought different parties were accountable and in the other two, respondents did not both know who was accountable. An economic development organization was seen as accountable in two communities, city staff in one, the Chamber in one, and Extension staff in one. Only two individual respondents identified the members of the task force as the body accountable for moving the project forward; one respondent did not know and another said no one was responsible. Eleven respondents felt there were members on the task forces/project work groups that would benefit from the strategies, although often not directly. Most saw this benefit in a larger, altruistic sense of improving the business climate in the community or helping agencies or organizations that work with business. As one respondent said, "If one ship is rising, everyone is. The goal was to help the entire county. I don't think anyone saw it as individual or even local." One member reflected on the contradiction between members benefiting and their lack of follow through on their plans in his community: "Maybe they did not feel vested in implementation, unless they felt the conducting of the BR&E through the commencement meeting was enough—they may have felt that was enough."

Existing resources used included use of space, expertise in the task force membership, refreshments, printing, mailing, and time. Most did not know much about resources that might have been tapped into from outside the community. Some identified Extension staff people with expertise (example, Michael Darger), some grants and funds. One felt there was not enough help from Extension related to the survey questions: "The U needs to have a larger role in supplying the information that the survey asks for, like loans, financial management, ads, business plan, customer service, etc. If those questions are on the survey they should provide some more support to answer them."

Seven respondents in four communities said some projects have been institutionalized in their community, four (in three communities) did not know, and four (in three communities) said none had been institutionalized. Examples respondents gave of institutionalization included understanding the importance of supporting and retaining local businesses, on-going events sponsored by the Chamber for businesses, a new business that started in one community, housing development, increased hotel development, and resources to promote tourism. Three respondents in three communities said BR&E projects had led to new projects, six respondents in five communities said they had not, and six respondents from four communities did not know.

Section 6: Funding

Six respondents in five communities could recall the sources of funding for their BR&E process; ten respondents did not know or recall the funding sources. Nine did not know how funding was raised, while the other nine identified the sources of funding and how it was raised. (There is some inconsistency in answers in these two questions as one person who did not know where funding came from in the first question was able to answer how it was raised.) Identified funding sources were power companies (four respondents in two communities), foundation grants (three respondents in two communities), local businesses (three respondents in two communities), and local government (two respondents in two communities). People did not have detailed recall on the funding and talked about it quite broadly. It is not clear that the respondents in the sample had enough detail of recall about funding to draw specific conclusions about their responses.

Eleven respondents in seven communities thought funding for their BR&E was adequate. Here again, some respondents differentiated the survey process from the implementation process: four respondents (three communities) said that while the funding for the survey process was adequate, there was insufficient funding for implementation. Two did not know.

Section 7: Meetings and ongoing activity

The BR&E process recommends holding quarterly meetings of the working groups for at least a year. Respondents had only vague recall of these meetings, their focus, attendance, and effectiveness. This limited recall may be due to the fact that many in the sample did not remember these meetings taking place as intended, so some were unable to answer questions related to them while others had sketchy recollections of them. Only four respondents in three communities reported that they thought their community held quarterly meetings for the full year after the commencement meeting, and only two in one community said they thought their group had 'most' of them. Six respondents in five communities) said they did not hold them all and five did not know. For those that had fewer meetings, they were very vague as to how many they actually had, and were mostly guessing at how many it might have been.

Respondents also had low recall of what happened at the meetings. One said they coordinated activities and work, four said the meetings were a time to report back and share information and four said they discussed what to do next at them. One respondent said nothing much happened. One person described her experience, "Two people headed them up; we'd go through information, discuss it; plan when to meet. It seemed like we should have had someone outside the community say 'this is what you'll do' and facilitate." The person who felt little happened at the meetings said "Momentum wasn't very strong. It felt like we were meeting for the sake of meeting." Two people said the meetings reflected the loss of momentum and focus that occurred after key staff people who had been involved in BR&E left the community or were reassigned.

People were also not clear if all strategies were represented at the meetings, having difficulty remembering and often sounding more like they were speculating about representation. While two respondents clearly responded that all strategies were represented at the meetings, more typical responses were no recall or "probably" or that they "thought" they were represented.

Attendance was not strong in many groups. One respondent remembered there being 20 to 50 people at meetings, but the other respondent from that community did not remember attendance being that strong and was not familiar with what the other strategies did, meaning they may have been talking about different meetings or one respondent may have been confusing the quarterly meetings with the commencement meeting. Several reported that attendance dropped off over time, "slowly dwindling". One respondent speculated that their decline in attendance may have been due to a staff change soon after their report came out, saying it was hard to create momentum during a couple of key staff transitions, "ownership of the BR&E process was more with the person who left." Another wondered why they had attendance problems: "Did someone drop the ball?" Again, this information is limited since ten people could not answer or could not recall attendance.

Five respondents (different communities) answered affirmatively that they thought the meetings were effective. Respondents may have different perceptions of effectiveness, as the other respondent from one of these communities said not much was done at these meetings, one said they were effective but "nothing happened", and another had no recall of the meetings. The fourth thought the meetings were effective until a key staff person left, at which time all activity stopped. Respondents were not always clear about effectiveness. For example, one said, "I don't recall that they weren't" effective. One person who felt they were not effective said the group needed more direction on what to do at the meetings and said an outside facilitator would have been helpful. One person said since he could not recall how effective the meetings were, "apparently they weren't terribly effective."

Section 8: Perceptions of Success

Nine respondents thought the project was at least partially successful and two felt it was successful without qualification. Two thought it was NOT successful and three felt the survey part was successful but follow up was not successful. One did not know and one did not answer. When asked what things they thought made their project successful, seven respondents identified that success as completing the survey. Three said they implemented some of the strategies in their plans and two cited success in pulling people together. One person said it was a success just getting people to think together about economic development issues and another said it was successful in that they created awareness about business needs in their community. One respondent did not know.

The value of the firm visit process and data gathered was described by several respondents. "Out of the whole process the data has been the most valuable; one time, it was worth it to get the data, but would not do it again." Another said, "It gave us what we wanted: a tool, a project schedule, let us know what was needed. Things came out of that that may have come out differently than if done by a non-business group; a big part of our community that generally was not vocal—we reached out to them." Even someone who felt overall the process was not successful said she still uses the survey data and finds it helpful. Perhaps the most negative respondent still had something positive to say about the process: "An underlying thing that we probably can't even consciously say heightened awareness of community needs, that we lost some business but through the city, we've had some positive things happen, some new businesses, lakefront improvements, but not because of BR&E."

Five respondents felt their community had some intermediate or short term successes (from three communities). Most were unable to answer this question. In some cases respondents seemed to struggle with the idea of identifying intermediate successes because they had not felt the project overall was successful after the firm visit stage. Examples of intermediate successes did not differ greatly from overall success: offering of technology classes, housing development. One respondent cited a change in staffing in a city's building inspector as an intermediate success that was attributable to the information gathered through their firm visits.

When asked about factors contributing to success, the most common response was having people involved who were dedicated and committed and having *enough* people involved (six respondents from five communities). Buy in and ownership was mentioned by three respondents. Increasing awareness was a factor in success cited by two people. One person said the BR&E process itself was a factor in success, another said it was successful because they took businesses seriously, and another cited the importance of paying attention to the information learned during the site visits.

Increasing awareness of the importance of the resort industry was an important factor in getting people to take the task force issues seriously, according to one respondent. "People knew resorts were around, but not their impact on the community and area; one resort closing doesn't make news, but if losing several a year, more people have an awareness of that, its impact. They'll see less tourists, leading to less business; people at the county, city and state have recognized resorts are important and they should pay

attention to zoning, insurance, and taxes." The importance of the people involved in the firm visits was mentioned by several people, including this respondent: "Community people who worked on it were the 'yes people'—they always have time. Because of that dedication, only because of them, we got through the process."

Specific results of the BR&E process that were cited included housing development for work force, zoning changes in several communities (for housing and business), tax changes that addressed resort owner's concerns, ongoing luncheons to provide information to businesses, community events, Chamber reorganization, technology class offerings, and hotel rooms added in a community.

When asked how the teams identified success within their groups, four did not know, four said they acknowledged it at meetings, one said through the media, one through celebrations, one via their website, and one through the success of the survey. Success was not widely acknowledged in the greater community, it seems. Two didn't know and three said it was not acknowledged in the community. Two said community awareness took place through the firm visit process, one said at meetings, four said through the media, and another said through the Chamber. Seven respondents either did not know or could not answer the question.

The most frequent area in which lack of success was cited was in implementation. Nine respondents from six communities felt they were unsuccessful in the implementation stage. Two said they were not as successful as they could have been at getting enough people involved. Three people said they felt there were no areas in which they were not successful. (Two of these respondents were from a community that felt it had achieved numerous things in its process; the other respondent who said nothing was unsuccessful was from a community that did not make any progress on its plan.) One person said, "We needed people to be more responsible to get people to do things. We generated a lot of enthusiasm by going around and visiting with people and listening to them. The struggle came after listening to them and then we just weren't able to do a whole lot to help with the things that we heard that they wanted." One person felt they were so unsuccessful that it might impact their ability to turn people out and involve them in future community based projects and meetings, saying he is "afraid to some degree if we tried to have a community meeting, are we going to have much involvement??

One person said, "Long term momentum was not sustained. We couldn't keep people committed and at the table." Another said, "It just didn't happen," referring to the fact that their process stopped once the commencement meeting was held and a key staff person left the community.

Key staff leaving was identified as a significant reason that they were not successful by two communities. While not identified by respondents, this was also a factor in a third community even though not mentioned in this question. Time and energy and the need to get more people involved were each cited by four respondents. One respondent said it was a barrier not to have paid staff assigned to the project for implementation, that implementation was too much to do it with only volunteers. Territorial dynamics

between different governmental units contributed to lack of success in one community, lack of money in another and one person suggested that the group needed stronger direction and someone to push them harder.

When reframed to identify barriers to success, results were similar. Five respondents in four communities cited time and energy limitations, four (in three communities) cited key staff people leaving. One person cited lack of buy-in and one said new people were needed. One community experienced scheduling and logistics problems specific to scheduling the technology classes they were trying to offer, and also cited the impact of the Extension Service reorganization that took place during their project, as well as the chilling effect that 9/11 had on the business community. Two people cited lack of funds.

Section 9: People Involved

In general, most respondents felt they had enough people involved in their BR&E process, although several qualified that. One said, "I don't know if there are EVER enough people involved." Another said it was hard to say, you just need the right people involved. Another said they definitely could have used more people for the firm visit process so they could have interviewed more people, and another said they had enough for the firm visits, but needed more for the implementation stage. Almost all thought they had the 'right people' involved as well. One said they had the right people for the firm visits, but not for implementing the strategies. Another pointed out that several of their people were over-committed.

Few people identified folks that were missing and most had to think a bit to come up with someone. One identified the need for 'more bigger hitters' (bigger industries), another said 'maybe churches', and another said it would have been 'nice to have more people from public safety, planning commissions, more wide representation from residents, and geographic representation. While most people seemed to answer this question in the abstract, two people cited specifics for their situation. One respondent pointed out the need for more resort owners in their group, which focused on resort issues. He said "many of them are not active and were not in the process." Another respondent said the manufacturing industrial sector was missing in his community's process. He pointed out that this is the biggest sources of jobs in his community but that they were not involved at all. This same respondent felt that there was too much representation from what he called 'education', meaning Extension staff, professors, and academics.

Only one community identified people who hindered their process. This was a community in which the city administrator was the driving force behind the BR&E process. "The city administrator almost took too much responsibility without sharing it; not leaving people in the community to be vested in the process when he left, so ownership by volunteers did not happen. He got a little overzealous, over engaged." The other respondent from this community supported that assessment, but also pointed out that they should have had fewer education-based people in the group. It was "maybe too heavily weighted on the education side…each individual was good, but when you get into

academia, you specialize and when it's not your area it gets bumped to another person—maybe a broader brush person instead of so many specialists."

Final Comments

At the conclusion of each interview, respondents were given the opportunity to share any final thoughts and to comment on if they thought the process was worthwhile. All respondents but one indicated that it was a worthwhile effort for their community to go through, regardless of how they felt about their level of success in implementing their priority projects. Most respondents took the opportunity to reflect on suggestions for future implementation of the BR&E process.

Suggestions offered for implementation include:

- Streamline the BR&E process to make it more compact and less time consuming.
- Develop local leaders who are not paid staff.
- Make the task force meetings 'safe' for free expression of opinions and ideas.
- Provide other leadership opportunities for communities such as a leadership training being offered through the Blandin Foundation.
- Consider cultural diversity and immigration issues in planning.
- The University should follow up after a few months to two years to see if communities need additional help to follow through on their plans.
- It is important to have a development corporation to spearhead the process.
- Extension should consider structuring the BR&E process differently for really rural communities and those close enough to commute to the Twin Cities. (If someone loses a job in one of these cities, they may need to drive further, rather than move away, making the issues different in those communities.)
- Provide more support and resources for communities to help with implementation.
- The University should provide any information that is referred to on the survey.
- The University should intervene if a community is not buying in to the process:

One community's process came to a stop as soon as a key city administrator left his job. He had been deeply committed to the project, but did not develop ownership and buy-in among the larger community. When he left, no one was committed to continuing the work. A respondent in this community suggested that the University should have intervened when it saw that only one person was vested in the process and "put the brakes on". The respondent suggested the University develop a mechanism that prevents groups from going forward unless a community develops sufficient buy in. "It was probably not worth doing—the end strategies were not owned—we completed a report without completing a project. Buy-in was a problem from the beginning."

Despite challenges, respondents were more often than not positive about their BR&E experience. A respondent from a community that discovered it could make no progress on its project said, "Yes, it was worthwhile to do. We know where we stand [laughter].

We saw we couldn't pull the county together." Another emphasized the importance of letting the business community know it is being heard: "[BR&E] opened our eyes and ears to our business community…It's good for your businesses to know that you care and that you want to see what's going on with them." Another said, "Whether we used it (the information) wisely, it was good to go through the process." Finally, one respondent pointed out the value of people thinking and talking about business issues in a new way: "Yes, it was worthwhile to do. It gave people a better understanding of economic development in the county and helped tourism with strategies. [BR&E] brought people together to have different conversations that they would not have had otherwise. That's always useful—to get people talking in a way they haven't before."

Evaluation Question	Summary of Findings	Recommendations
1. About half of the BR&E communities did not follow through on BR&E plans; what happened in those communities?	Half of respondents viewed BR&E as a survey process, not an implementation process; one community never intended to do more than the survey from the beginning; two communities described BR&E as time consuming when asked what the process was; those most likely to describe BR&E as more than the survey were the Extension staff interviewed (n=4), elected officials (n=2) and a banker who works with business community.	BR&E consultants could provide more clarity on expectations around implementation up front before the process begins, so community has clear expectations that the survey (firm visit stage) is only the beginning of the BR&E **OR** staff may consider implementing the firm visit/data collection stage as an individual component of BR&E (a community might opt to only conduct the firm visits, for example, rather than the entire implementation stage); additional structure for staffing/support for implementation should be considered, including a mechanism for when staffing changes occur in key positions--need for more staff, consistent staff was identified numerous times.
To what extent were any adaptations or changes made in implementation?	Less adaptations than just not moving forward and doing less than planned or none of what was planned.	Communities may need a stronger process of planning for implementation and how it will happen, exactly what steps are needed AND increased expectation by people at the commencement meeting and in the site visit process that ongoing implementation is expected.
Which communities identified red flag issues and how did they respond to those situations, including who was involved?	Most claimed they had identified red flags, but most could not recall any specifics. Sometimes red flags discussed in interview were more appropriately actual priority implementation; so memory could be vague in this example as well.	The red flags as a distinct concept seems more important to BR&E staff than to people in the community who tended to view red flags and implementation as one (if they remembered red flags at all); they didn't see red flags as overly distinct from the BR&E process, or else found them insignificant enough to recall.

2. Extension Service had a central assumption that involving community members in data collection and planning would create a commitment to projects; to what extent is that assumption correct?	It created a commitment to data collection, but that did not automatically translate to a commitment to working on red flags or the implementation of projects; respondents did not indicate a strong investment in the priority projects, other than the one 'outlier' community that felt strongly that it had a successful project throughout.	Create better understanding among participants from the beginning that the data collection is BEGINNING stage, not the entire project; recruitment should keep the entire process in mind; and create a sense that it is their responsibility to carry the projects out; may also be important to pay more attention to involving business community stakeholders in priority projects.
To what extent were community members involved in the stages?	While there seems to have been buy in to the firm visit/data collection aspect, there was less buy in to the follow up implementation. People were confused by what happened, said things just dropped off, or said key people leaving caused a loss of momentum. The ownership/buy-in seems to have been to the survey NOT to the implementation process.	Emphasis should be placed on buy-in to the implementation process as well as to the firm visits. Recruitment of task force and firm visitors should include the expectation of implementation, the "why" of the data collection--so they can implement a plan. Participants need better understanding that THEY will implement the plan. It may be useful to examine the planning retreat (which includes creating a plan and identifying action steps) and commencement meeting (which includes data dissemination and celebration of the achievement of collecting the data). It may also be useful to look at how the plan is communicated from the smaller group at the planning retreat to the larger group at the commencement meeting to ensure that the larger group at commencement can develop ownership of the plan.

To what extent were BR&E teams involved in the data collection?	Highly involved in all communities; the firm visit approach utilizing community members/stakeholders seemed to have been followed in all but one case (one community encouraged businesses to return their surveys by mail and may have done less in person contact); almost all respondents felt that involvement of community members in the data collection was very important and valued it.	Staff seem skilled at creating buy-in around the data collection component--if anything, too skilled, as that is where the greatest buy-in is. Only two respondents felt the data collection piece was 'time consuming' and both seemed to have bigger issues around this piece, indicating they took on too much.
To what extent do/did community members support (buy into) the BR&E process and stages?	Good buy-in to data collection and very positive feelings about it (except 2 who complained of work load); low buy in to implementation; little to no recall of red flags (Red flags did not serve any motivating factor according to respondents).	Create more ownership of implementation stage; be more strategic in building momentum around red flags (perhaps involve people in greater numbers, tie red flag work into longer term visions); identify better support and responsibility for on-going implementation (staffing, key people ID'ed to be responsible, getting time allocated to the projects, etc).

To what extent do community members feel their BR&E projects were successful?	All but one community identified at least partial success in their BR&E and generally people had positive feelings about success, even if they wished they had done more, the data collection seemed useful. There were two 'outlier' communities on the spectrum: One community felt the project was unsuccessful overall and one community views their BR&E as very successful and identifies many strategies they are implementing as a result to this day; ten respondents felt it was at last partially successful. The other 7 communities felt there was at least partial success, even though many identified that success as being the survey data collection (not implementation).	BR&E staff may want to re-consider how they define success, or helping communities identify goals up front that determine what success is. The information gathered through the process was clearly valued--BR&E staff should consider if just data collection is a level of success they would be comfortable with for an outcome, or else making clear to communities that data collection alone is not success.
What was the composition of the BR&E teams and to what extent were they representative of the community and key sectors and stakeholders?	Business stakeholders were often under-represented. One community worked on resort issues but had only one resort owner involved, for example; another community did not have anyone from its largest manufacturing sector. City staff, ED staff, Chamber stakeholder, were more readily apparent on the leadership teams/task forces, along with Extension staff. One community member cites 'too many academics' on their group.	BR&E staff should explore recommendations to involve more of the impacted stakeholders in both data collection and implementation; perhaps more involvement of impacted business owners would help move the projects forward. BR&E staff should also explore if the priority projects were actually projects that represented what the business community (impacted stakeholders) want--are these the conclusions they would come to from the data? People who stood to benefit on the teams were often people working with businesses, rather than impacted as a business.

Comparison of Characteristics of Successful BR&E Processes and Modified Implementation Communities

Success Indicators	Present in Modification Communities?
Strictly follows BR&E approach?	Yes, the approach was followed through the survey stage and report process (one group appears to have relied more heavily on mailed surveys--sent and returned by mail--and may not have done as many in person visits as is suggested in the BR&E model), but not followed through on as closely in the implementation stage.
Presence of statement of goals--can team members identify them?	All communities had written objectives and priority projects listed in their reports; it is not clear that task force members were familiar with them at this stage or were committed to doing the work (or perhaps understood there would be an expectation to carry them out).
What did teams do to keep BR&E moving forward? Who was responsible?	Often teams did not continue meetings, or meetings were ineffective/unproductive. Specific people to be responsible for individual initiatives were usually **listed in the report**, but respondents generally did not hold that person accountable--often seen as a 'Chamber thing' or an 'EDA thing' or a 'city/county thing'.
ID of non-financial resources	Few were able to identify specifics in this area.
Links to non-local resources?	Few were identified by respondents either because they were uncertain or didn't think any outside resources were brought in; if identified, it was usually a foundation or extension.
On going project via job description/budget?	Rarely--few people saw it as an explicit part of someone's job description with sufficient resources or time allotted to BR&E; if someone saw it as part of their position, it was usually as an 'extra'.
Multi-sector of community involved in ID-ing project?	Yes, at least in the reports composition was diverse. The reports do not provide information on how involved various stakeholders were.
Partnerships established to implement projects	Minimal partnerships were identified by respondents.
Members of implementation team would benefit from project	Generally only in terms of making their job easier (such as ED staff) or just abstract 'better community'; a direct specific benefit to a key stakeholder(s) was not identified.
Responsibility for implementation specified	Task force members were listed in reports under specific priority projects, but does not seem like it was followed or owned in most cases.

Comparison of Characteristics of Successful BR&E Processes and Modified Implementation Communities (con't)

Was this a one-person project?	Often the project was identified strongly with one person, or too heavily invested or associated with one person causing it to fall apart when that person left the community/switched jobs.
Project adequately funded?	Most said yes, but seems they were likely answering this based on thinking about the survey, as several also identified need for staff and resources after.

Funding from within the community?	Most of the time. There was some foundation funding secured; a power company provided a lot of support in some communities--while customers were within the community, the power company may not have been based within the community, or been an employer there.
Do they build on their successes?	Most did not identify enough success to answer this question.
Accountability for project implementation clear?	In reports there is a team, but it's not clear that people took it seriously or followed through on those assignments.
Acknowledge intermediate success?	Not acknowledged, generally did not feel too successful (other than the survey).
Business informed of project and its benefit to them	Usually the business community was informed of BR&E through the survey, both conducting the firm visits and then in reporting out at the commencement meeting; when efforts were made to inform the business community about priority projects, it was generally through media coverage, newsletters, or marketing (as in the case of a series of tech classes being offered).
Demonstrated results	There were few demonstrated results and most of those were small in scale, like offering a few tech classes to businesses or hosting on-going lunch seminars through a Chamber; one community noted significant results in adding hotel rooms, housing, zoning changes, and a change in city response to businesses, but that project was an exception among the group examined.

Community Organizing Applied to the BR&E Process

(Note: Some of the analysis of community organizing in this document is drawn from previous work by the author published in 2005 as Evaluation of Community Organizing: Three Groups Implementing Communities Mobilizing for Change on Alcohol.)

The community organizing literature contains useful considerations for application of the Business Retention and Expansion process (BR&E). Extension Service operates under a central assumption that involving community members in data collection and planning will create a commitment to projects. Local community members are recruited to a BR&E Task Force to identify and implement priority projects based on data collected within the local business community. Community members, including but not limited to those on the Task Force, are recruited to contact members of the business community to conduct firm visits. While the primary purpose of these firm visits is to collect data about the needs of the business community, secondary purposes are to develop relationships with the business community and encourage their buy-in or engagement in BR&E strategies.

Background and Key Elements of Community Organizing

Community organizing, similarly, mobilizes community members to identify issues in order to "achieve social change through collective action" (Bosma, 1998). While Saul Alinsky's strident, confrontational organizing on the south side of Chicago may be the most famous example of community organizing in the United States (Horwitt, 1992), many movements have utilized community organizing methods, including the civil rights movement, the United Farm Workers, groups opposed to the war in Vietnam, and feminist groups (Fisher, 1995), Populism and labor unions (Garvin & Cox, 1995, in Minkler & Wallerstein, 1997, pp. 31-32), and groups such as public health efforts to reduce drinking and driving and restrict smoking, crime prevention block clubs, and gun control and fundamental religion based organizing (Bosma, 1998, p. 5).

Community Empowerment, Ownership

A key element of community organizing is to mobilize citizens through empowerment to tackle social justice problems. The difference between a programmatic approach and a community organizing approach is the focus on power—both challenging the power of the status quo, and recognizing and unleashing the power among the community members involved: "giving people a sense of their own power is as much a part of the organizing goal as is solving the problem" (Bobo, Kendall, & Max, 1991, p. 8). While Alinsky literally described this process as "revolution" in his *Rules for Radicals* (1971), other community organizing theorists are more pragmatic:

> Community organization is the process by which community groups are helped to identify common problems or goals, mobilize resources, and in other ways develop and implement strategies for reaching the goals they collectively have set…Implicit…is the concept of empowerment—an enabling process through which individuals or communities take control over their lives and their environment (Minkler & Wallerstein, 1997, p. 30).

The Midwest Academy places greater emphasis on the power element of community organizing, while maintaining a practical approach:

> For people to organize effectively for social, economic, and political justice, they must: 1) Win real improvements in their lives, 2) Get a sense of their own power, and 3) Alter the relations of power…Whenever there are changes for the better, it is fundamentally because people have taken charge of their own lives, transforming society as well as themselves (Bobo, Kendall, & Max, 1991, p. ix).

Si Kahn (1991) offers a mid-range tone in his book, *Organizing: A Guide for Grassroots Leaders:* "Organizing is people working together to get things done…Generally, the people who have the power are the ones who are best organized" (pp. 5-6). Fisher (1995) captures some of the tension between classic community organizing theory and the less confrontational approaches often favored in social work contexts:

> The "classic" social action effort is grassroots based, conflict oriented, with a focus on direct action, and geared to organizing the disadvantaged or aggrieved to take action on their own behalf…Unlike community development and social planning efforts, social action focuses on power, pursues conflict strategies, and challenges the structures that oppress and disempower constituents. It is the type of community intervention that most lives up to the social justice and social change mission of social work, and yet, because of its oppositional politics, tends to be the least practiced within social work institutions and social service agencies (pp. 53-54).

Beckwith and Lopez (2000) draw useful distinctions between community organizing and three other approaches frequently used to address community problems: advocacy, community development, and service delivery. In the latter three, staff with expertise work with community members as "clients", developing programming to address deficits or needs. The staff person either advocated on behalf of a client (advocacy), collaborates with authorities to develop projects for clients (community development), or provides treatments or services to clients (service delivery). Decision-making power and priority-setting functions remain with staff people, who are viewed as holding special expertise (Beckwith & Lopez, 2000).

Beckwith and Lopez contrast those models with community organizing, which views community members as citizens or constituents with the ability to make decisions and determine issues, and who focus on taking action to effect change, thus tapping into the expertise already within a community (2000). "The distinction between organizing and service provision is critical to community organizing," (Hart, 2001, p.30). Community organizing seeks to build a base of power to pressure decision makers to provide necessary services, rather than provide them themselves (Hart, 2001). Medoff and Sklar, who wrote about the Dudley Street organizing initiative often held up as an exemplary model of community organizing, point out, "Our community rebuilding strategy must be anchored in the power and strength of our people and our neighborhood… [W]e know the process of rebuilding and reknitting our community back together is *as* important as the goal itself (*emphasis in original)*" (1994, p. 171).

One-on-ones

The foundation of outreach in community organizing is the "one-on-one", an essential interpersonal conversation with individuals in the community to learn about their concerns and self interest (Bosma, 2000). Other organizing theorists agree. "The personal is political: Organizing is overwhelmingly about personal relationships. It is about changing the world and changing how individuals act together. The relationships organizers develop are their most important resource and most important talent" (Bobo et al., 1991, p. 6). Mondros and Wilson (1994) add, "Common bonds among members build solidarity and a sense of empowerment among the 'victims' of a situation and encourage people to lead" (pp. 90-91). Walker-Estrada (2003) says one-on-ones "are the first step for any organizer…One-on-ones are a fundamental part of organizing used with the objective of building relationships" (¶5).

Dudley Street community organizers did many of their one-on-ones by going door-to-door in their community, a common outreach method among neighborhood organizers. They not only learned that many people cared about their neighborhood, but gained valuable information while establishing credibility. "Common themes emerged…which then guided the early organizing campaigns" (Medoff & Sklar, 1994, p. 70). The one-on-one is an important motivator for community members to become involved in the organizing campaign (Bosma, 2004).

Training community members

Many community organizing theorists stress the need to train community members who participate in the community organizing process, in order to develop leadership among group members. Training should include practical skills (running meetings, planning agendas, public speaking, budgeting, working with elected officials, and content (Kahn, 1991, and Walker-Estrada, 2003). Members *and* staff should receive training (Kahn, 1991). Training is essential to leadership development, and organizers don't assume leaders are immediately evident. "Here again, organizing differs in that many of the people who come to be the most important leaders are not articulate at the outset. To involve only people who are would defeat the whole purpose of organizing. If the agents and beneficiaries of change are to be the same, people who are *not* used to being articulate public leaders will need to become so" (Hart, 2001, pp. 30-31). Mondros and Wilson (1994) agree, noting, "Few members enter an organization with fully developed leadership skills... Consequently, most potential leaders will begin as members and must evolve into leaders" (p. 88).

Staffing: The Community Organizer Position

Community organizing literature generally assumes the presences of a paid community organizer who is responsible to recruit participants, mobilize the community, and help them move their issues forward. The skills and experience of this position are essential. "A large percent of organizing may be persistence and will, but you have to find capable people who love the work, find it challenging, are angry at injustice, and understand the work is a marathon, not a sprint" (Fisher, 1994, p. 201). The Midwest Academy recommends hiring professional, experienced organizers or to "be sure to provide intensive training and support from an experienced organizing consulting group" (Bobo et al., 2001, p. 126). Bosma found hiring experienced community organizers and assigning them a sufficient number of hours was important to success in both the D.A.R.E. Plus Project (Bosma et al., 2005) and in an examination of communities implementing a model organizing program called Communities Mobilizing for Change on Alcohol (Bosma, 2005). Bosma cautions organizations not to rely on what she calls the Field of Dreams School of Organizing, where people think if you hold a meeting, they will come (2005). Participation does not just happen, but takes deliberate, skilled, strategic outreach. "Recruitment is the lifeblood of an organization. What kills groups fastest is that they stop recruiting new people. Growing, thriving organizations must train staff and leaders on how to recruit others and build recruitment strategies into their ongoing program work" (Bobo et al., 2001, p.117).

Similarities of Community Organizing to BR&E

Like community organizing, the BR&E process relies on community members engaging in a process of identifying, determining, and implementing strategies to improve the business climate of their communities by retaining and expanding existing businesses in their community, rather than having "experts" come in and create a plan for a community. While unlike community organizing, the BR&E process' emphasis is not explicitly on power, implicitly the BR&E process *does* seek empowerment outcomes for the local task force and leadership team members who implement the firm visit surveys, identify priority projects, and implement the community-developed BR&E strategies by prioritizing local information, expertise, and decision making at each step of the process.

The firm visit concept in BR&E has parallels to the one-on-one process in community organizing. Rather than conduct an anonymous survey, BR&E conducts firm visits. The firm visits are designed not just to collect data, but to bring together a business person with people from the task force in a face-to-face dialogue. Businesses are usually visited by a team of two (either two task force members, or often a task force member and an additional volunteer). While a survey is conducted, there is also opportunity for interaction and dialogue. The information from the surveys is analyzed (by Extension Service staff) for the community, then processed and

prioritized into strategies by community members, with assistance from professionals with expertise in relevant areas, such as Extension Service staff, tourism officials, etc.

Training is also an integral part of the BR&E process. Community members receive training from BR&E consultants on how to conduct firm visits and on the BR&E process itself.

Application of Community Organizing Concepts to the BR&E Communities in this Evaluation

Empowering the task force/task force buy-in

Challenge: In several instances, respondents in this evaluation said there was insufficient buy-in to the BR&E process and/or strategies. In at least two cases, the process or identified project was very closely associated with one individual in the community. One of these people still felt very strongly (years later) that the BR&E group should have carried out a project he believed very strongly in; yet there was not ownership among the community for that project, and it seems apparent that many people actually felt their own community's welfare would be threatened by that project. The main champion of the priority project left the community, and the project stopped immediately. In this case, the priority project may not really have been a reflection of the data and firm visits.

Recommendation: Future efforts should be made to ensure that priority projects truly are supported by the entire task force (or at least a substantial majority) and are not an agenda of one articulate or passionate person.

Challenge: In another setting, a city official was very enthusiastic about the project, but did not share the work with any others in the community. It became this individual's project. Thus no commitment and ownership was developed among the larger task force. As in the previous community, when this individual left the community for another job, the project stopped immediately. No one else was invested enough in the process to move anything forward. In this same community, one respondent felt the meetings had too many "academics" in attendance, compared to the community members.

Recommendation: Future projects should be planned and/or monitored to ensure that community members drive the process, and that it is not perceived as one person's or that of "outside" people.

Challenge: In some communities, people felt they either did not have the resources to implement their priority projects, or that the projects were too big. This may reflect insufficient training, planning, or buy-in among task force members. Picking feasible issues is an important element of successful community organizing, especially with new groups. The Midwest Academy manual advises, "The problem must be not so large or the solution so remote that the organization is overwhelmed. The members must be able to see from the start that they have a good chance of winning, or at least that a good strategy exists for wining" (Bobo et al., 2001, p. 25).

Recommendation: Efforts should be made to ensure that participants believe the priority projects are possible, as part of the buy-in and ownership aspect of BR&E.

One-on-ones

Challenge: The firm visits were similar to one-on-ones, although not always with the intent of recruitment. Whether it was a business person interviewed in a firm visit or task force members, people often did not view the BR&E process as implementation. Many thought upon completion of the survey, the process was over. Many people assigned to priority projects did not continue to lead or work on those projects after the commencement meeting. While sometimes this was attributed to the departure of a key person from the community, often it seemed somewhat mysterious to people that the implementation did not move forward.

Recommendation: Part of individual outreach, modeled on the concept of one-on-ones, needs to be more explicit about the implementation stage, and also find out what skills and intentions potential participants would be willing to bring to the implementation process.

Training

Challenge: Related to the previous challenge, some participants did not identify implementation as part of BR&E. Some felt their meetings were not effective at moving the process forward and felt they needed more guidance, better facilitation, and sense of direction in the implementation stage.

Recommendation: Training should include stronger understanding of the implementation stage of the BR&E process, clear expectations, and necessary guidance to ensure that participants have the skills necessary to make the ongoing meetings effective.

Staffing

Challenge: When key people turned over, some communities never recovered. Either no one picked up the tasks or ownership left with that person. Often the communities examined had difficulty identifying who was responsible for moving the project forward. Several said that it was not realistic to expect volunteers to be able to do all of the work required to move projects forward.

Recommendation: Groups should clearly identify who the responsible person or agency is, and what happens if key staff people leave. If resources are available, a designated BR&E staff person should be considered to coordinate, mobilize, and support the volunteers working on the priority projects.

References

Alinsky, S. D. (1971). *Rules for radicals: A pragmatic primer for realistic radicals.* New York: Vintage Books.

Beckwith, D. & Lopez, C. (2000). Community organizing: People power from the grassroots. In *Transforming Lives and Communities: Community Organizing for YOU!* Washington, DC: Center for Community Change.

Bobo, K., Kendall, J., & Max, S. (1991). *Organizing for social change: A Manual for activists in the 1990s.* Santa Ana, CA, Minneapolis, MN, Washington, DC: Seven Locks Press.

Bobo, K., Kendall, J., & Max, S. (2001). *Organizing for social change: Midwest Academy manual for activists.* Santa Ana, CA, Minneapolis, MN, Washington, DC: Seven Locks Press.

Bosma, L.M. (2000). *Community organizing basics.* Unpublished workbook, copyrighted material.

Bosma, L.M. (1998). *A discussion of community organizing and the limitations of community organizing campaigns when conducted by the public sector.* Mankato, MN: Mankato State University.

Bosma, L.M. (2005). *Evaluation of community organizing: Three groups implementing Communities Mobilizing for Change on Alcohol.* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

Bosma, L.M., Komro, K.A., Perry, C.L., Veblen-Mortenson, S., Farbakhsh, K. (2005). Community organizing to prevent youth drug use and violence: The D.A.R.E. Plus Project. *Journal of Community Practice. 13*(2): 5-19.

Bosma, L.M., Komro, K.A., & Toomey, T.L. (2004, November). *Community organizing evaluations: Qualitative methods that can inform our understanding of the community organizing process.* Presentation at the meeting of the American Public Health Association conference: Washington, D.C.

Bosma, L.M., Toomey, T.L., Matter, C., Timmermann-Goodpastor, S., Fabian, L.A. Changing alcohol policies at events: A case study of community organizing. *Manuscript submitted for publication.*

Fisher, R. (1994). *Let the people decide: Neighborhood organizing in America.* New York: Twayne Publishers.

Fisher, R. (1995). Social action community organization: Proliferation, persistence, roots, and prospects. In (1997) *Community organizing & community building for health.* New Brunswick, New Jersey, and London: Rutgers University Press.

Hart, S. (2001). *Cultural dilemmas of progressive politics: Styles of engagement among grassroots activists.* Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.

Horwitt. S.D. (1992). *Let them call me Rebel: Saul Alinsky, his life and legacy.* New York: Vintage Books.

Kahn, S. (1991). *Organizing: A guide for grassroots leaders.* Washington, DC: National Association of Social Workers.

Medoff, P. & Sklar, H. (1994). *Streets of hope: The fall and rise of an urban neighborhood.* Boston, MA: South End Press.

Minkler, M. & Wallerstein. (1997). Improving health through community organization and community building. In Minkler, M., ed. *Community organizing and community building for health.* New Brunswick, New Jersey, and London: Rutgers University Press.

Mondros, J.B, & Wilson, S.M. (1994). *Organizing for power and empowerment.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Walker-Estrada, L.P. (2003). The Education and liberation of the poor in community organizing: The personal growth and transformation of leaders in the Anti-Displacement Project. *Comm-Org Papers 2004.* http://comm-org.wisc.edu/papers2004/walker.htmRetrieved December 30, 2004.

Understanding of BR&E Process and Role of Respondent

Community	Understanding of BR&E	Community specific goals?	Roles	When got involved?	Who approached you to be involved?	How BR&E came to your community	Key Entity?	Galvanizing Incident/ Crisis?
Community 1-a	survey/info	yes	coordinating	start	DK	DK	Yes	Yes
Community 1-b	survey/info	no	coordinating	early, not start	Job expectation	DK	Yes	No
Community 2-a	survey/info	no	coordinating	start	DK	DK	DK	No
Community 2-b	survey/info	no	elected official	early, not start	DK	DK	DK	No
Community 3-a	grow	yes	coordinating	start	DK	DK	Yes	Yes
Community 3-b	survey/info	no	coordinating	start	Key ask	Extension	DK	Yes
Community 4-a	survey/info	no	elected official	start	DK	Key Organization	Yes	Yes
Community 4-b	grow	no	participant	early, not start	Interviewed	DK	Yes	Yes
Community 5-a	survey/info	no	coordinating	start	DK	Extension	Yes	No
Community 5-b	survey/info	yes	participant	early, not start	DK	Extension	Yes	No
Community 6-a	grow	yes	elected official	start	approached due to position	DK	Yes	Yes
Community 6-b	grow	yes	coordinating	early, not start	Job expectation	DK	Yes	No
Community 7-a	grow	no	coordinating	not sure	Job expectation	Key Organization	Yes	No
Community 7-b	network	no	coordinating	start	Key ask	Key Organization	Yes	No
Community 8-a	survey/info	no	coordinating	start	Key ask	Key Organization	Yes	No
Community 8-b	network	no	coordinating	start	Job expectation	Key Organization	Yes	No
Community 9-a	grow	no	coordinating	start	Job expectation	Key Organization	Yes	Yes
Community 9-b	grow	yes	participant	early, not start	approached due to position	DK	Yes	No

Firm Visits

Community	Team Involved in visits?	Respondent did visits?	View of doing	Important done by community members?	How data used?	Info useful?
Community 1-a	Yes	Yes	Positive	Access/trust	Plan projects	Yes
Community 1-b	Yes	Yes	Necessary	Non-response	No answer	Yes
Community 2-a	Yes	Yes	Positive	Not important	Report	DK
Community 2-b	Yes	Yes	Positive	Access/trust	Implement	Yes
Community 3-a	Yes	Yes	Positive	Access/trust	Plan projects	Yes
Community 3-b	Yes	Yes	Positive	Access/trust	Plan & Report	DK
Community 4-a	Yes	Yes	Positive	Access/trust	Implement	Yes
Community 4-b	Yes	No	Positive	Access/trust	Create awareness	If we had used it
Community 5-a	Yes	Yes	Positive	Access/trust	Report	Yes
Community 5-b	Yes	Yes	Positive	Access/trust	DK	DK
Community 6-a	Yes	Yes	Positive	Access/trust	Plan projects	DK
Community 6-b	Yes	Yes	Positive	Access/trust	Report	DK
Community 7-a	Yes	Yes	Positive	Access/trust	No answer	Yes
Community 7-b	Yes	Yes	Positive	Access/trust	Implement	Yes
Community 8-a	Yes	Yes	Positive	Access/trust	Report	Yes
Community 8-b	Yes	Yes	Positive	Access/trust	Report	Yes
Community 9-a	Yes	Yes	Positive	Access/trust	Plan projects	Yes
Community 9-b	Yes	Yes	Necessary	Access/trust	Report	If we had used it

Note: Number of firm visits was not included in this table as it would identify communities.

Red Flags

Community	Have red flags?	What were they?	Who was involved?	How effective?	Continuing work on?
Community 1-a	Think so	Zoning	DK	No answer	Yes
Community 1-b	Think so	Can't recall	DK	DK	DK
Community 2-a	No recall	NA	NA	NA	NA
Community 2-b	No recall	NA	NA	NA	NA
Community 3-a	Yes	Business moving	Task force	Business left	No
Community 3-b	Yes	Business moving	Task force	Business left	No
Community 4-a	No recall	NA	NA	NA	NA
Community 4-b	No recall	NA	NA	NA	NA
Community 5-a	No recall	NA	NA	NA	NA
Community 5-b	No recall	NA	NA	NA	NA
Community 6-a	No recall	NA	NA	NA	NA
Community 6-b	No recall	NA	NA	NA	NA
Community 7-a	No recall	NA	NA	NA	NA
Community 7-b	No recall	NA	NA	NA	NA
Community 8-a	Yes	Housing, hotels	City,EDA	Very	Yes
Community 8-b	Yes	Housing, hotels	City,EDA	Very	Yes
Community 9-a	No recall	NA	NA	NA	NA
Community 9-b	No recall	NA	NA	NA	NA

Strategies and Priority Projects

Community	Remember their project?	Describe the strategy	Progress made on priorities?	How successful?	What was successful?
Community 1-a	Yes	Cannot recall	NA	Did not follow plan	Survey
Community 1-b	Yes	No progress	NA	Did not follow plan	Partial accomplishment
Community 2-a	Yes	No progress	NA	Partial implementation	Not very successful
Community 2-b	Yes	ID'ed the issue	Yes	Partial implementation	Partial accomplishment
Community 3-a	Yes	ID'ed the issue	No	Not successful	Relationships
Community 3-b	Yes	No progress	No	Not successful	Not very successful
Community 4-a	Yes	ID'ed the issue	Yes	Not successful	Not very successful
Community 4-b	Yes	ID'ed the issue	Yes	Partial implementation	Relationships
Community 5-a	No intent	TF not involved	NA	No intent	Survey
Community 5-b	No intent	Cannot recall	NA	No intent	Survey
Community 6-a	Yes	Cannot recall	NA	Ideas are good	Survey
Community 6-b	Yes	ID'ed the issue	Yes	Partial implementation	Relationships
Community 7-a	Yes	ID'ed the issue	Yes	Not successful	Partial accomplishment
Community 7-b	Yes	ID'ed the issue		Partial implementation	Not very successful
Community 8-a	Yes	ID'ed the issue	Yes	Partial implementation	Survey
Community 8-b	Yes	ID'ed the issue	Yes	Partial implementation	Partial accomplishment
Community 9-a	Yes	No progress	No	Partial implementation	Survey
Community 9-b	Yes	No progress	No	Not successful	Relationships

People and Leadership

Community	People ID'ed to move projects forward?	Frequency of meetings?	Meetings move project forward?	People took leadership?	How business community informed?	Partners?
Community 1-a	DK	Not after survey	Not really	Some	Commencement	Diverse
Community 1-b	No	Not after survey	Not really	Just this person	Commencement	Gov, Chamber, ed
Community 2-a	DK	DK	NA	NA	Media	NA
Community 2-b	DK	DK	NA	NA	Media	No
Community 3-a	Yes	DK	Until staff left	Just this person	DK	City reps
Community 3-b	No	DK	NA	NA	Media	No
Community 4-a	Yes	Some	Not really	Just this person	Media	Chamber, bank
Community 4-b	No	Some	Not really	No	NA	Chamber
Community 5-a	No	Some	Not really	NA	DK	No
Community 5-b	DK	DK	NA	NA	NA	NA
Community 6-a	Yes	Some	For a time	ID'ed several	DK	DK
Community 6-b	Yes	5 or 6 times	Somewhat	No	Chamber	Cmty Ed
Community 7-a	Yes	Some	Not really	Just this person	Chamber	Chamber
Community 7-b	Yes, but didn't last	Some	NA	Came back to group	Media	Chamber,EDA,Gov
Community 8-a	Yes	Some	Yes	ID'ed several	Website	County,State
Community 8-b	Yes, but didn't last	Some	Yes	ID'ed several	DK	EDA, businesses
Community 9-a	Yes, but didn't last	Once	Not really	No	Chamber	No
Community 9-b	No	Not after survey	NA	No	NA	NA

Staff assigned?	Accountable entity for BR&E	Members on team who would benefit?	Community resources used?	Resources outside community?	Any projects institutionalized?	BR&E lead to new projects?	Community
No	Chamber	Yes	space, staff	State office	Yes	No	Community 1-a
Extra duty	Chamber	Indirectly	space, staff	No	Yes	Yes, continued	Community 1-b
Extra duty	City staff	DK	staff	DK	DK	DK	Community 2-a
DK	City staff	Chamber	DK	DK	DK	DK	Community 2-b
Extension staff	Extension staff	DK	space, expertise, printing	DK	DK	DK	Community 3-a
Extension staff	Extension staff	DK	NA	NA	NA	NA	Community 3-b
Extra duty	City staff	General climate	refreshments	No	Yes	No	Community 4-a
Extra duty	Chamber	No	printing	No	Yes	No	Community 4-b
Extra duty	ED Organization	No	no	No	DK	DK	Community 5-a
NA	ED Organization	General climate	NA	NA	NA	NA	Community 5-b
No	DK	DK	DK	No	No	DK	Community 6-a
No	No one	General climate	NA	E commerce	No	DK	Community 6-b
Extension staff	Extension staff	No	NA	Grant	Yes	No	Community 7-a
Extra duty	Group leaders	General climate	space	NA	No	Yes, continued	Community 7-b
Yes	ED Organization	Indirectly	space, refreshments	Extension	Yes	No	Community 8-a
Yes	ED Organization	Yes	space, expertise, printing	Extension	Yes	Yes, continued	Community 8-b
Extra duty	Leadership team	General climate	space	Funds	No	No	Community 9-a
NA	No one	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Community 9-b

Funding

Community	Where from?	How was funding raised?	Was funding adequate?
Community 1-a	DK	DK	DK
Community 1-b	Named donors	DK	Yes
Community 2-a	DK	DK	Yes
Community 2-b	DK	DK	Yes
Community 3-a	DK	Named donors, knew how	Survey, not implementation
Community 3-b	NA	Named donors, knew how	Yes
Community 4-a	Named donors	Named donors, knew how	Survey, not implementation
Community 4-b	NA	Named donors, knew how	Survey, not implementation
Community 5-a	DK	Named donors, knew how	Yes
Community 5-b	DK	DK	Yes
Community 6-a	Named donors	Named donors, knew how	DK
Community 6-b	DK	DK	Survey, not implementation
Community 7-a	Foundation, grant	Named donors, knew how	Yes
Community 7-b	DK	DK	Yes
Community 8-a	Named donors	Named donors, knew how	Yes
Community 8-b	Named donors	Named donors, knew how	Yes
Community 9-a	DK	DK	Yes
Community 9-b	NA	NA	NA

Meetings and Ongoing Activity

Community	Quarterly Meetings for a year?	What happened at meetings?	All strategies represented?	Meetings effective?	Attendance?
Community 1-a	No	NA	NA	NA	NA
Community 1-b	No	NA	NA	NA	NA
Community 2-a	DK	NA	Thinks so	Recall?	DK
Community 2-b	DK	NA	NA	NA	NA
Community 3-a	DK	Reports	Doubted it	Yes, until key staff left	Dropped off
Community 3-b	No	NA	NA	NA	NA
Community 4-a	Most	Discuss plans, reports	Probably	Not much done	OK
Community 4-b	Most	Discuss plans	Thinks so	Not effective	Poor
Community 5-a	No	Discuss plans	NA	Yes, but nothing happ	DK
Community 5-b	DK	NA	NA	NA	NA
Community 6-a	No	NA	DK	No	Yes
Community 6-b	Yes	Reports	Most of time	For those who came	Dwindled
Community 7-a	Yes	Not much	Some	Not much done	Yes
Community 7-b	Yes	Coordinate	Yes	Yes	Yes
Community 8-a	Yes	Discuss plans, reports	Yes	Yes	7 or 8
Community 8-b	DK	NA	NA	NA	NA
Community 9-a	No	Don't recall	No recall	Yes	No
Community 9-b	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

Perception of Success

Community	How successful?	What was successful?	Intermediate successes?	Contributions to success?	How group ID'ed success	Success shared in community?	How not successful?
Community 1-a	Partial success	DK	NA	Awareness	DK	Firm visits	Implementation
Community 1-b	Partial success	Survey	NA	Good people	At meetings	Chamber	NA
Community 2-a	DK	People together	NA	Buy-in	DK	DK	No
Community 2-b	Partial success	Survey	NA	Buy-in	Media	Media	Can't recall
Community 3-a	Partial success	Think together	NA	Buy-in	Celebrations	Media	Implementation
Community 3-b	Not successful	Survey	NA	NA	NA	NA	Implementation
Community 4-a	Survey success, Impl not	Some strategies	NA	Listen to business	DK	Media	Implementation
Community 4-b	Partial success	Some strategies	NA	Good people	Surveys	Media	Implementation
Community 5-a	Partial success	Awareness	NA	BR&E process	NA	Not aware	Implementation
Community 5-b	Survey success, Impl not	NA	No	NA	NA	NA	Not enough ppl
Community 6-a	Partial success	Some strategies	DK	Awareness	DK	DK	Implementation
Community 6-b	Partial success	Survey	Yes	Enough people	At meetings	Not aware	NA
Community 7-a	Partial success	Survey	Yes	Enough people	At meetings	Not aware	Not enough ppl
Community 7-b	NA	NA	Yes	NA	At meetings	Firm visits	NA
Community 8-a	Success	Survey	Yes	Good people	Website	At meetings	No
Community 8-b	Success	Survey	Yes	Good people	NA	NA	No
Community 9-a	Survey success, Impl not	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	Implementation
Community 9-b	Not successful	People together	NA	NA	NA	NA	Implementation

What prevented success?	Barriers to Success?	Community
Time & Energy	Time & Energy, need paid staff	Community 1-a
Time & Energy	Time & Energy	Community 1-b
Can't recall	None	Community 2-a
Can't recall	Can't recall	Community 2-b
Issue	Money	Community 3-a
Key staff left	Key staff left, buy-in	Community 3-b
Money	Money	Community 4-a
Lack of ppl	Time & Energy	Community 4-b
Time & Energy	Time & Energy	Community 5-a
NA	None	Community 5-b
NA	Can't recall	Community 6-a
Lack of ppl,time & energy	Scheduling	Community 6-b
Lack of ppl	Key staff left, Ext reorg	Community 7-a
Lack of ppl, need paid staff	Key staff left, 911	Community 7-b
NA	NA	Community 8-a
More pushing	Time & Energy	Community 8-b
Key staff left	Key staff left	Community 9-a
NA	NA	Community 9-b

People Involved in BR&E Process

Community	Enough people involved?	Right people?	Missing sectors?	People Who Hindered?**
Community 1-a	Yes	Yes	Impacted businesses	
Community 1-b	Yes	Yes	NA	
Community 2-a	Yes	Yes	No	
Community 2-b	DK	NA	NA	
Community 3-a	Ever?	Yes	Bigger industry	
Community 3-b	Yes	Yes	No	
Community 4-a	Yes	Yes	No, maybe churches	
Community 4-b	Yes	Yes	No	
Community 5-a	Yes	Yes	No	
Community 5-b	Yes	Yes	No	
Community 6-a	Hard to say	Yes	More business	
Community 6-b	Survey-Yes, Impl-No	Survey-Yes, Impl-No	Worker bees	
Community 7-a	Yes	Yes	No	
Community 7-b	Yes	Yes	No	
Community 8-a	Yes	Yes	No	
Community 8-b	No	Yes	Agency, city	
Community 9-a	Yes	Yes	No	
Community 9-b	Few more	Yes	Manufacturing	

**Only one community identified a specific individual who hindered the process. The position of this person would make that community easily identifiable, so individual responses are not included in this table to protect confidentiality.