

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**EWU PLANNING STUDENTS PRESENT COMMISSIONERS
WITH PORTRAIT OF LINCOLN COUNTY'S ECONOMY**

(Davenport, WA, December 5, 2011.) Twelve Eastern Washington University students attended the last regular Commissioner's meeting on behalf of the Lincoln County Economic Development Council (EDC.) The students, two of which are from Lincoln County, had performed the Vision Process for the County's Economic Development Plan as their senior project.

The EDC went to EWU's Planning Dept. for assistance because they wanted a neutral party to conduct the Vision Process. The Vision Process determines where you want to be in 10 or 20 years and how you want to get there. It is the basis for the actual Planning Process and it is important to the overall effectiveness of the plan that the vision comes from the people who live here.

The students researched the past and current economic situation in Lincoln County to form a baseline for the Vision. They then collected and analyzed survey data from all eight communities in the County using a SWOT analysis (identifies Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats.) They told Commissioners that they were met with enthusiasm everywhere they went and were pleased with the willingness of people to stop and talk to them. Their survey results were presented to the Commissioners both on a countywide basis and broken down by City and Town.

Here is a sample from their countywide results:

- The County's greatest strength is Dry Land Wheat Production (38% of responses) followed by Recreational & Tourism Attractions (19%) and Willingness to work together for a common good (18%.)
- The County's important weaknesses are Insufficient Support for Local Business (25% of responses) followed by Limited Municipal Revenues and Lack of Skills Training Opportunities (both with 18%.)
- The County's most important opportunities are Potential for Value-Added Ag (24% of responses) followed by Expanding Production and Distribution of Wheat (16%.)
- The threats that are most important to the County are Outmigration of Younger Population and Declining Population (both received 23% of responses) followed by Reductions in External Government Support (16%) and Costly Government Regulations and Mandates Required of Municipalities (15%.)

Given the limited 10-week window the students had to work within, they used survey data from listening posts outside of stores and post offices of all eight communities and from billing inserts from five communities. Additionally, the EDC staff has been surveying Chambers and other focus groups, but no single survey method is enough. That's why the EDC is now offering the survey online. If you live in Lincoln County and have not had the opportunity to give your input, the EDC encourages you to take the survey online either by linking from their website www.lincolnedc.org or by linking to it directly at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/26B3XQ3>. In the end, the plan will incorporate all responses collected and will be made available to the public for input before it is finalized.

For more information about the County's Economic Development Plan, please contact the EDC office by email edcinfo@centurylink.net , phone (509) 725-1172 or by mail at P.O. Box 1304, Davenport, WA 99122.