

**Comprehensive Plan  
Davison County  
South Dakota**

**ADOPTED  
02/16/99**

**Prepared By:  
Planning & Development  
District III**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Resolution of Adoption .....	II
Chronology of Adoption Procedures .....	III
List of Officials .....	IV
List of Tables and Figures.....	V
Chapter I - Introduction .....	1
Chapter II - Background Information .....	3 - 25
Chapter III - Goals and Objectives .....	26 - 31

**NOTICE OF ADOPTION  
DAVISON COUNTY  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

HEREBY TAKE NOTICE that on the 16th day of February 1999, the Davison County Commission, County of Davison, State of South Dakota, pursuant to SDCL 11-2, has duly adopted a Comprehensive Plan:

**AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR DAVISON COUNTY, SOUTH DAKOTA, AND PROVIDING FOR THE ADMINISTRATION, ENFORCEMENT, AND AMENDMENT THEREOF, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF CHAPTER 11-2 SDCL 1998, AND FOR THE REPEAL OF ALL PRIOR ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT THEREWITH.**

The complete ordinances referred to above are on file with the Davison County Auditor and may be inspected, reviewed, or examined by any interested party by contacting the office at (605) 995-8608.

Pursuant to SDCL 7-18A-5, this summary and notice of adoption is published in lieu of publishing the entire ordinance since said ordinance adopts comprehensive regulations.

Dated this 16 day of February 1999.

  
Kathy Goetsch, Davison County Auditor

SEAL

Approved:  2/16/99

## RESOLUTION OF ADOPTION

WHEREAS, the Davison County Planning Commission has recommended this Comprehensive Plan for adoption by the Davison County Commission; and

WHEREAS, the required public hearing process has been accomplished; and

WHEREAS, the Davison County Commission finds this Comprehensive Plan to be satisfactory.

NOW THEREFORE, be it resolved by the Davison County Commission that this Comprehensive Plan, along with associated maps and attached descriptive matter, is hereby adopted for the purpose described in SDCL 11-2-12.

DATED THIS 16 DAY OF February, 1999.

Richard J. Ziegler Chairman

Kathy Hietala Attest

(SEAL)

## CHRONOLOGY OF ADOPTION PROCEDURES

- |   | <u>Date(s)</u>     |
|---|--------------------|
| 1. Planning Commission's Written Recommendation For Adoption<br>(See Attachments) | 1/12/99            |
| 2. Evidence of Public Hearing Notices<br>(See Attachments)                        | 1/30/99<br>2/6/99  |
| 3. Evidence of Public Hearing<br>(See Attachments)                                | 2/20/99<br>2/27/99 |
| 4. Resolution of Adoption   | 2/16/99            |
| 5. Board Action Filed with County Auditor   | 2/16/99            |
| 6. Review By States Attorney  | 2/16/99            |
| 7. Summary of Action Published  | 2/20/99; 2/27/99   |
| 8. Public Access To Plan  | 2/16/99            |
| 9. Effective Date of Plan<br>(20 Days After Notice of Action Published)           |                    |
| 10. Ordinance And Official Controls Filed with Register of Deeds                  | 3/11/99            |

## **LIST OF OFFICIALS**

### **Davison County Commission Members 1999:**

Gary Butterfield, Mitchell  
Carol Millan, Mitchell  
Bernie Schmucker, Mitchell  
Gary Stadlman, Ethan  
Richard Ziegler, Mitchell (Chairman)

### **Davison County Commission Members 1998:**

Tom Greenway, Mt. Vernon  
Rolland Loon, Mitchell  
Bernie Schmucker, Mitchell (Chairman)  
Gary Stadlman, Ethan  
Richard Ziegler, Mitchell

### **Davison County Planning Commission 1999:**

Gary Butterfield, Mitchell  
Troy Drath, Mitchell  
Tom Greenway, Mt. Vernon (Chairman)  
Rolland Loon, Mitchell  
Clyde Puetz, Ethan  
Don Stehly, Mitchell  
Richard Ziegler, Mitchell

### **Davison County Planning Commission 1998:**

Tom Greenway, Mt. Vernon (Chairman)  
Rolland Loon, Mitchell  
Clyde Puetz, Ethan  
Don Stehly, Mitchell  
Richard Ziegler, Mitchell

### **Davison County Zoning Administrator:**

Dan Sudrla, (605) 995-8615

## LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

FIGURE 1, Location of Davison County in South Dakota .....	Page 4
FIGURE 2, Local Government Jurisdictions .....	Page 6
FIGURE 3, Map of Fire District Service Areas .....	Page 10
TABLE 1, Changes in Population, 1980 - 2000 .....	Page 11
TABLE 2, Per Capita Income .....	Page 12
TABLE 3, Median Family Income .....	Page 12
TABLE 4, Number and Percent in Poverty .....	Page 12
TABLE 5, Persons Receiving Public Assistance .....	Page 13
FIGURE 4, Educational Attainment - Davison County - 1990 Data .....	Page 14
FIGURE 5, Educational Attainment - United States - 1990 Data .....	Page 14
TABLE 6, Women in the Work Force .....	Page 15
TABLE 7, Labor Statistics .....	Page 16
TABLE 8, Employment by Industry .....	Page 16
FIGURE 6, Davison County Taxable Sales (000's) .....	Page 17
TABLE 9, Business Openings & Closings Davison County, 1992 - 1996 .....	Page 18
TABLE 10, Number of Farms, 1978 - 1992.....	Page 18
TABLE 11, Farm Size, 1989 - 1992 .....	Page 19
FIGURE 7, Davison County, Value of Agricultural Products .....	Page 19
FIGURE 8, Volatility of Cattle & Hog Prices, 1996 - 1997.....	Page 20
TABLE 12, Housing Units - 1990 .....	Page 21
TABLE 13, Mean Value of Davison Housing Stock Percent of Persons Paying Over 30% of Income for Shelter.....	Page 21
FIGURE 9, Future Land Use.....	Page 24

## CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

---

### Authority & Purpose

Chapter 11-2 of South Dakota Codified Laws (SDCL) provides for the preparation of a county comprehensive plan to guide the physical, social, economic and environmental development of the county. As outlined in SDCL 11-2-12, this comprehensive plan is intended to:

1. protect the tax base;
2. encourage the distribution of population and land uses that will facilitate the economical utilization of public infrastructure;
3. lessen governmental expenditures;
4. conserve and develop natural resources; and
5. preserve agricultural lands.

Davison County will implement this plan through whatever ordinances, policies or controls as may be necessary. Implementation measures will change over time as conditions warrant.

### Primary Issues

Although this document pertains to the general  
several issues that require special attention  
revisions to environmental regulations  
to making the following issues

*DL 6000 10360 10400*

County, there are  
conditions,  
have contributed

- \* Preservation of the county entity.
- \* Influencing development
- \* Disaster mitigation (especially)
- \* Environmental Protection.
- \* Cost and provision of government (local, state and federal)

Chapter I  
Introduction

---

The County's ability to address these and other development issues will depend as much upon the attitude of its citizens as any government action. Public information and input will be key elements in all county development activities.

**Structure**

This document establishes the "foundation" for county planning initiatives by:

1. providing pertinent historical and contemporary data;
2. describing significant trends and conditions; and
3. identifying development goals and objectives.

The plan also outlines, where appropriate, specific activities or resources that may help Davison County achieve its goals.

By almost any definition, Davison County is a rural area. As such, it is subject to a wide range of social, economic and environmental influences, which are constantly changing. A comprehensive plan cannot adequately describe or anticipate every development factor or problem. However, it does establish a base line of information and a systematic process that may be used to evaluate future issues.

This plan is designed to be both concise and thorough. The next chapter contains descriptive information about Davison County. Certain data are presented in comparison to neighboring counties. Statewide statistics may also be used, if appropriate.

The last chapter focuses on development goals and objectives. The County will modify its goals as progress is made or situations change. Modifications should be made through recommendations from the Planning Commission to the County Commission.

The majority of goals will pertain to areas outside municipal boundaries. There may be issues and areas of mutual interest where the County and City governments will cooperate. The County recognizes the rights and obligations of municipalities to plan for their individual development.

The comprehensive plan should be periodically updated. Revisions in background data would be appropriate after each decennial census or as significant information becomes available. The entire plan should be updated every 10 to 15 years.

## CHAPTER II

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

---

#### Geography

Davison County is located in southeastern South Dakota. The County is 432 sections in area, with a 1990 population of 17,503 persons (40.42 persons per square mile.) Figure (1) shows the location of Davison County within South Dakota.

The nearest metropolitan areas are:

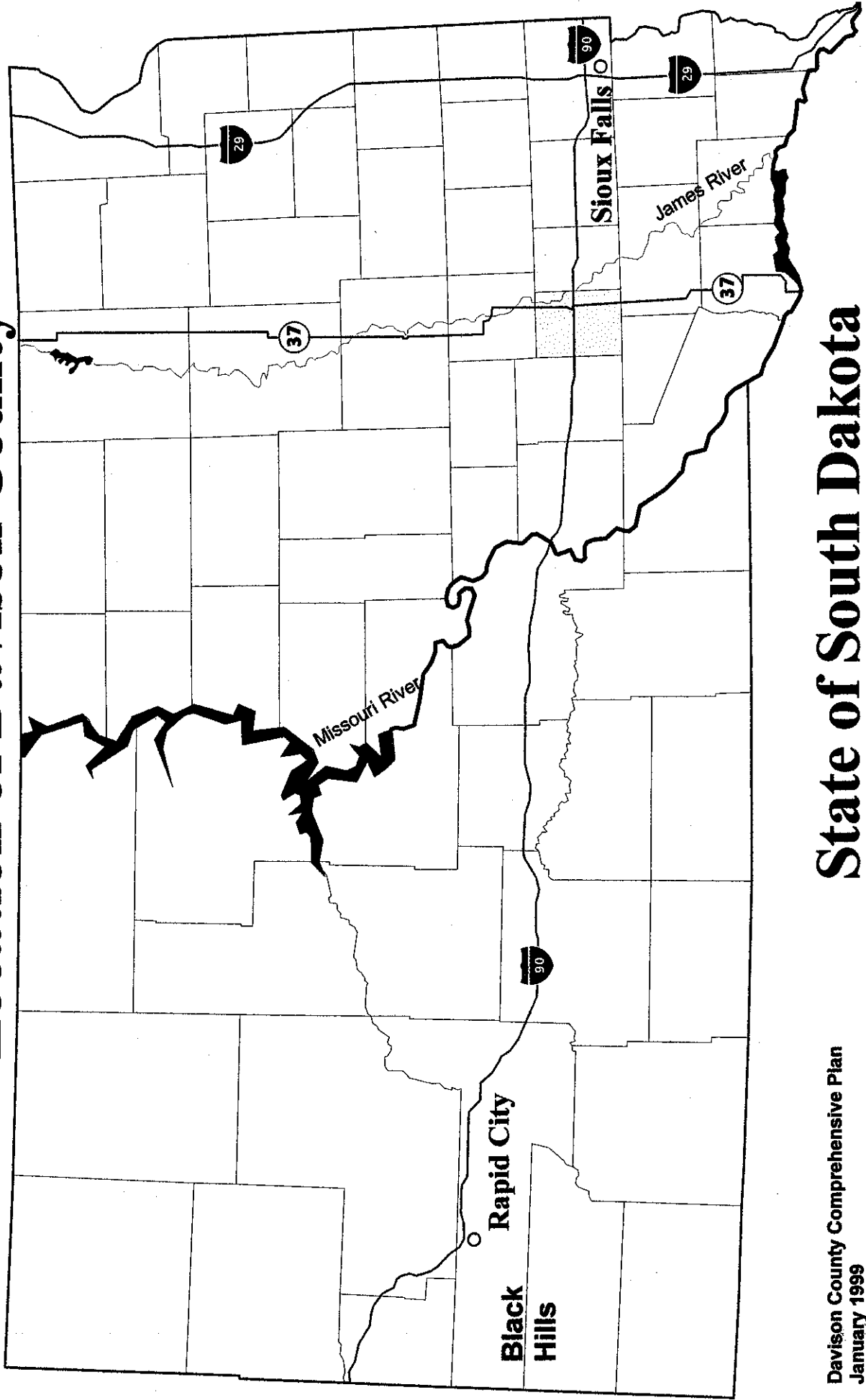
Sioux Falls	-----	71 miles east
Sioux City	-----	160 miles southeast
Omaha, Nebraska	-----	248 miles southeast
Minneapolis, Minnesota	-----	295 miles northeast

The James River Valley is the most prominent natural feature within Davison County. Other drainages, such as Firesteel, Dry Run and Enemy Creeks impact the local topography. Lake Mitchell is the largest water body in the County. Most of the land is fairly flat, with numerous seasonal wetlands.

The majority of soil types in Davison County are classified as having some type of use limitations. Approximately 76 percent of the soils are listed as "Class II," which means certain crops may have limited success or special conservation practices are necessary. Another 14 percent of the soil is "Class III." These soils are both limited in crop choices and require special conservation practices. Soil maps and additional classification information may be obtained from the United States Department of Agriculture Service Center.

Figure 1:

# Location of Davison County



## State of South Dakota

Chapter II  
Background Information

A total of 24 governmental units levy taxes against property in Davison County.

- \* Davison County
- \* City of Mitchell
- \* Town of Ethan
- \* Town of Mt. Vernon
- \* 12 Townships
- \* 7 School Districts (3 within and 4 outside the County)

In addition to the local entities, the James River Water Development District also levies taxes for services. Information on school district boundaries is presented in the attachments.

Mitchell is the County Seat and largest community with a 1990 population of 13,798. Ethan and Mt. Vernon contain 300 and 377 residents respectively. Figure (2) illustrates local government jurisdictions.

**Transportation, Public Services and Utilities**

A summary of the transportation systems available in Davison County are presented below.

**Road Miles  
(1995)**

<i>County Rural</i>	<i>----- 305.60</i>
<i>Township Rural</i>	<i>----- 464.49</i>
<i>City Streets</i>	<i>----- 101.55</i>

The surface types of rural county roads are presented below in miles.

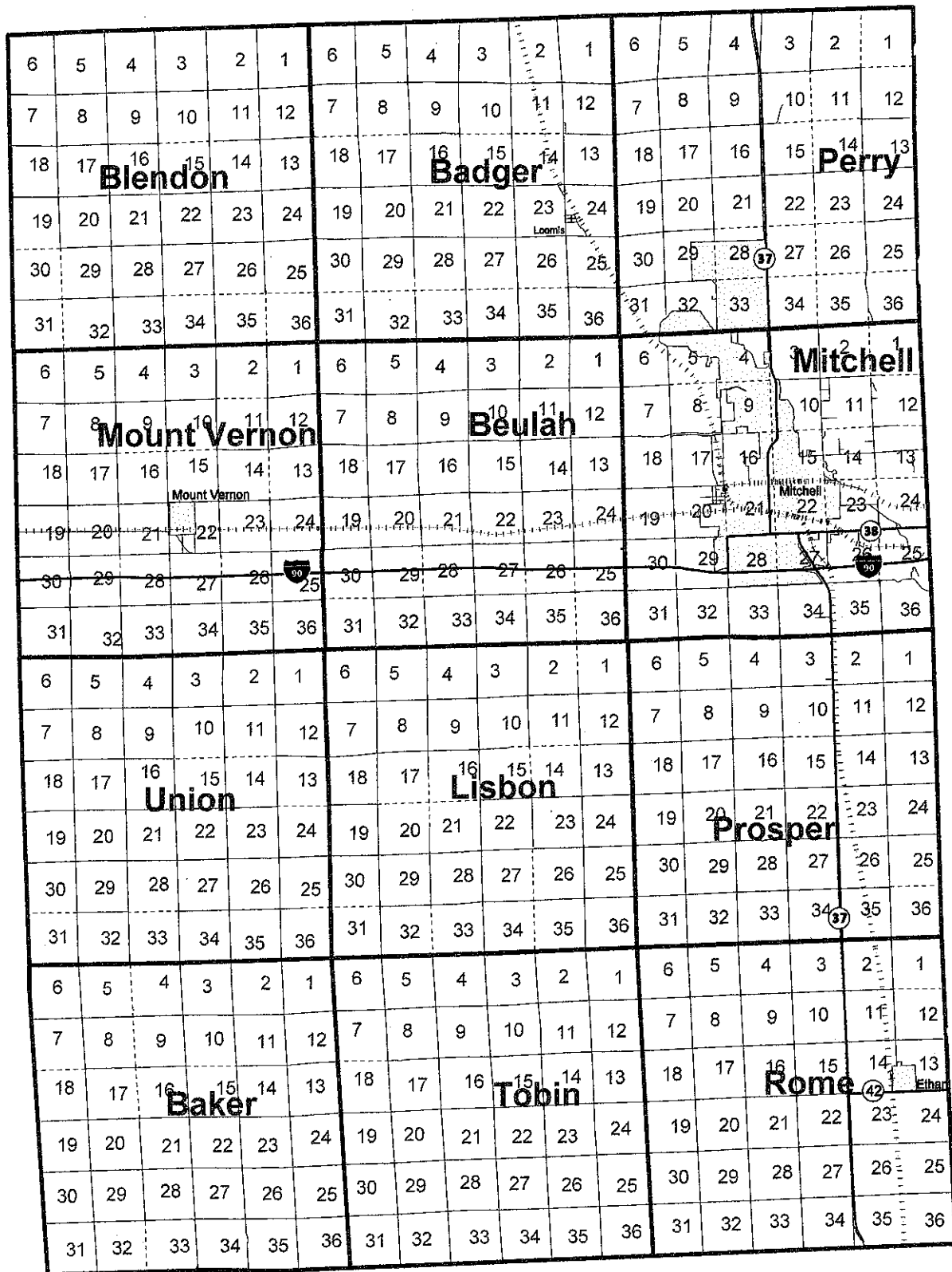
<i>Gravel</i>	<i>----- 153.00</i>
<i>Bituminous</i>	<i>----- 151.30</i>
<i>Concrete</i>	<i>----- 1.30</i>

**Davison County's main state and federal highways are:**

*North/South - S. D. 37 (Two-Lane, High Volume Arterial)*  
*East/West - U. S. I-90 (Interstate)*

County highway maps are available through the South Dakota Department of Transportation. County road information is available from the Highway Superintendent.

# Figure 2: Local Government Jurisdictions



Davison County Comprehensive Plan  
January 1999

Chapter II  
Background Information

---

**Bus Service**

Jack Rabbit Lines - Depot located at Siesta Motel in Mitchell.

**Air Service**

United Express - Has suspended service to the Mitchell Municipal Airport

**Rail Freight Service**

State Rail Line  
(Operated by Burlington Northern)  
MRC Regional Rail Authority  
(Operated by Dakota Southern Railroad)

Grain loading facilities or sidings are located in Mitchell, Ethan and Mt. Vernon

**Rural Water**

Two rural water systems serve the majority of rural and community customers within the County.

1. ***Davison Rural Water System***

Serving: 1,000 rural users      1 town (Loomis)

2. ***Hanson Rural Water System***

Serving: 25 rural users      1 town (Ethan)

The Aurora - Brule System serves a small number of users in the southwest corner of the County. A listing of rural water system phone numbers is included in the attachments.

**Sewage Treatment**

All of the municipalities have wastewater collection and treatment systems. The unincorporated community of Loomis and rural residences utilize individual septic tanks and drainfields. The density of septic systems and their potential for water contamination is an environmental concern. New sub-divisions are expected to add to this problem. Therefore, new developments need to be controlled through siting and development guidelines.

Chapter II  
Background Information

---

**Solid Waste**

Davison County is subject to federal regulations, under Subtitle D of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (P.L. 94-580) as amended to January 1, 1992. It must also comply with the waste reduction goals outlined by the South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

There are three permitted landfills in Davison County. Mitchell operates a RCRA exempt landfill, which can accommodate most household waste. The "life" of the Mitchell site is estimated to be approximately 5 years. Ethan and Mt. Vernon have rubble sites, which are limited in what they can receive. The South Dakota Department of Transportation operates a permitted "land farm" site near Loomis.

Additional information on the sizes and locations of county waste disposal sites is presented in the Davison County Solid Waste Management Plan. As recycling and disposal regulations limit waste management options, the County will have to consider new approaches. For example, the South Dakota Legislature mandated the following volume reduction guidelines.

- \* Beginning on January 1, 1995, all yard wastes shall be eliminated from landfill wastes;
- \* Beginning July 1, 1995, all lead acid batteries and waste motor oil shall be eliminated from landfill wastes;
- \* Beginning on January 1, 1996, all white good appliances shall be eliminated from landfill wastes;
- \* Beginning on July 1, 1996, all office and computer paper shall be eliminated from landfill wastes;
- \* Beginning on January 1, 1997, all printed paper products, corrugated paper or other cardboard paper shall be eliminated from landfill wastes; and
- \* Beginning on July 1, 1997, all containers made from glass, plastic, aluminum or steel, shall be eliminated from landfill wastes.

The above reduction goals were suspended during the 1998 Legislative Session, most communities had already opted out of the requirements due to the high expense ratio of recycling to landfilling. Environmental protection, user costs and operation efficiencies will all be considered in future solid waste management decisions. In addition, county officials are concerned with the adverse impacts of hazardous chemical or toxic material disposal. The development of these types of facilities needs to be regulated and possibly discouraged unless environmentally sound and minimum impact practices are implemented.

Chapter II  
Background Information

---

### **Fire Protection**

Davison County is served by six different fire departments. Ethan and Mt. Vernon have volunteer fire departments. The City of Mitchell has both full-time and volunteer firemen. A map of fire district service areas is presented in Figure (3).

### **Medical Services and Law Enforcement**

Ambulance services are dispatched from Mitchell. Avera Queen of Peace Hospital in Mitchell contains 120 beds and serves Davison County and the surrounding area.

Law enforcement services are provided by the Davison County Sheriff's Office in conjunction with the Mitchell Police Department. The County has contracted with Ethan and Mt. Vernon to provide regular patrolling. Davison County has completed a Public Health and Safety Center, which consolidates law enforcement and emergency services. The facility contains 72 beds for adult prisoners. In addition, the County recently finished rural addressing for an E911 dispatching system.

### **Electric and Telephone Systems**

Electric power is provided to county residents through Northwestern Public Service and Inter-County Rural Electric Cooperative. Communities and the area around Lake Mitchell comprise the majority of Northwestern's customers. Inter-County serves most rural users.

The primary telephone companies serving the county are U.S. West and Sanborn Telephone Company. Mid-State telephone has a small number of customers in the southwestern corner of the county.

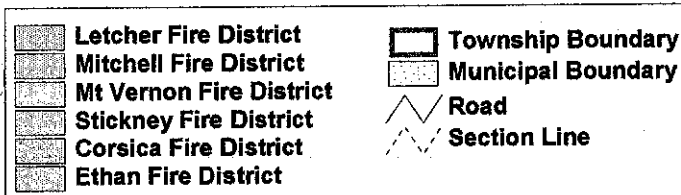
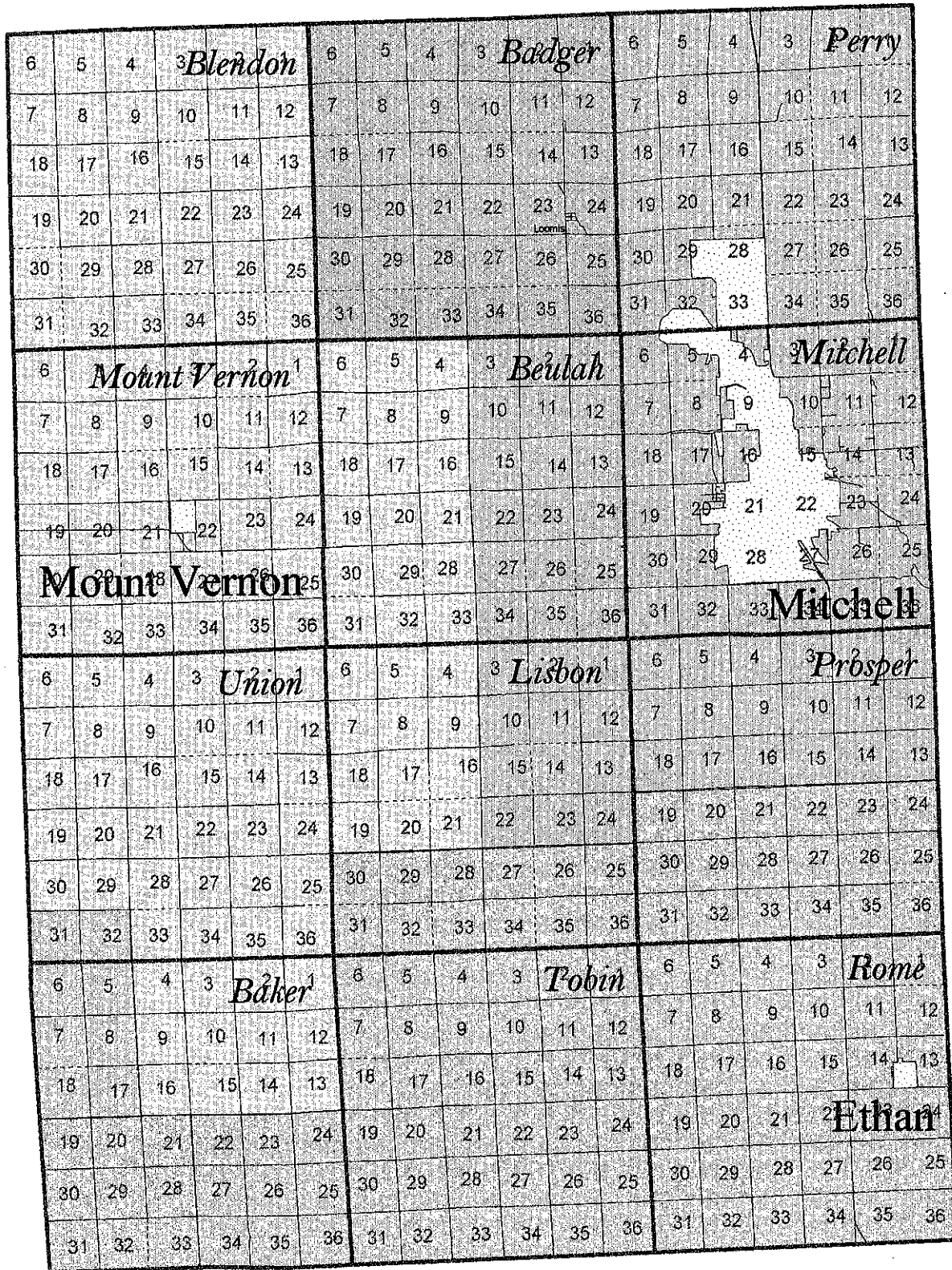
Two carriers; Cellular One and Commnet Cellular provide cellular phone services to the county and region.

### **Social and Economic Description**

The following information focuses upon county-wide data. The statistics for individual communities may point to different conclusions than the overall County numbers.

Davison County's population has been essentially "flat" over the past decade. This trend is expected to continue for the foreseeable future. Its population stability may be seen as a major asset when compared to the declines in neighboring counties.

Figure 3:  
**Fire District Service Areas**



Davison County Comprehensive Plan  
January 1999



## Chapter II

### Background Information

**TABLE 1**  
**Changes In Population 1980 - 2000**

County					% Change
	1980	1985	1990	*2000	1980 - 1995
Aurora	3,628	3,439	3,135	3,049	-2.7%
DAVISON	17,820	17,771	17,503	18,133	+3.5%
Douglas	4,181	3,886	3,746	3,583	-4.4%
Hanson	3,415	3,321	2,994	2,917	-2.6%
Hutchinson	9,350	8,882	8,262	7,974	-3.5%
Sanborn	3,213	7,229	2,833	2,778	-1.9%
South Dakota	690,768	708,118	696,004	750,775	+7.3%

\* Estimate

**SOURCE: State Data Center – SDC No. 97-106**

The County experienced an out-migration rate of 8.33 percent between 1980 and 1990. Out-migration is the difference between the “natural,” expected change in the population (i.e. births verses deaths) and the actual census count.

Davison County has an aging population. Between 1980 and 1990 the number of residents age 18 and younger declined by 6.5 percent (State Average = 5.2 percent.) The “senior” population (age 65 plus) increased by 10.1 percent during the same period. The state increase was 12.6 percent.

Senior citizens accounted for 17.4 percent of the County’s 1990 population. The statewide average is 14.7 percent. This population group is expected to require more services in the future.

Additional information on population characteristics may be obtained from the South Dakota State Data Center (Vermillion) or Planning & Development District III (Yankton.) Both these sources have state and federal statistics.

The County's income did not keep pace with state and national figures. Davison County's per capita income is less than 75 percent of the national average.

## Chapter II Background Information

**TABLE 2**  
**Per Capita Income**  
**1990**

AREA	Per Capita Income	% of S.D. Per Capita Income	% of U.S. Per Capita Income
Davison County	\$ 10,105	94.80%	74.60%
South Dakota	\$ 10,661	---	78.70%
United States	\$ 13,546	---	---

**SOURCE: 1990 Census**

The County's median family income figure is also less than state and national numbers. The difference may be traced to the area's dependence upon agriculture.

**TABLE 3**  
**Median Family Income**  
**1990**

AREA	Median Income	% of S.D. Median Income	% of U.S. Median Income
Davison County	\$ 27,249	81.20%	77.40%
South Dakota	\$ 27,602	---	78.35%
United States	\$ 35,225	127.62%	---

**SOURCE: 1990 Census**

The local poverty level is "better" than the regional or state figures. However, it is still much higher than the national level. (Table 5) The number of persons in poverty went up during the 1980's, while the regional and state rates fell.

**TABLE 4**  
**Number and Percent in Poverty**  
**1980 & 1990**

AREA	1980	% Below Poverty Level	1990	% Below Poverty Level
Davison County	2,414	14.00%	2,533	15.00%
South Dakota	112,739	16.30%	106,305	15.90%
United States	25,869,000	10.40%	27,967,000	11.20%
*248,709,873 Total United States Population				

**SOURCE: 1990 Census**

**Chapter II  
Background Information**

---

The 1980's were a period of economic difficulty for many area residents. The number of persons receiving public assistance grew substantially from 1980 to 1989. The numbers have declined recently, but are still a significant portion of the population.

**TABLE 5  
Persons Receiving Public Assistance**

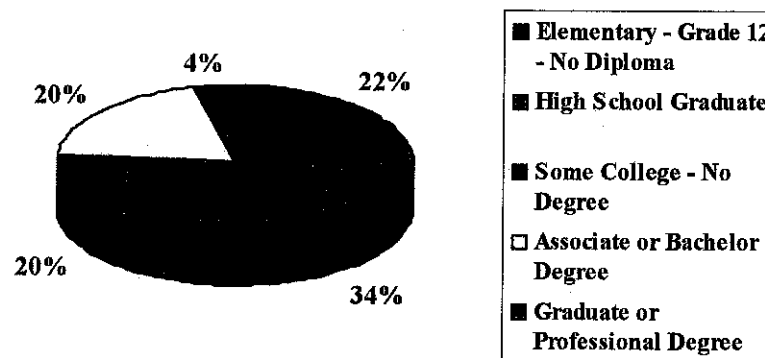
AREA	1980	1989	% Change	1989	1994	% Change
Davison County	1,112	1,522	26.94%	1,522	1,416	-6.96%

Figures 4 and 5 (on the following page) show educational attainment in Davison County in comparison to the United States.

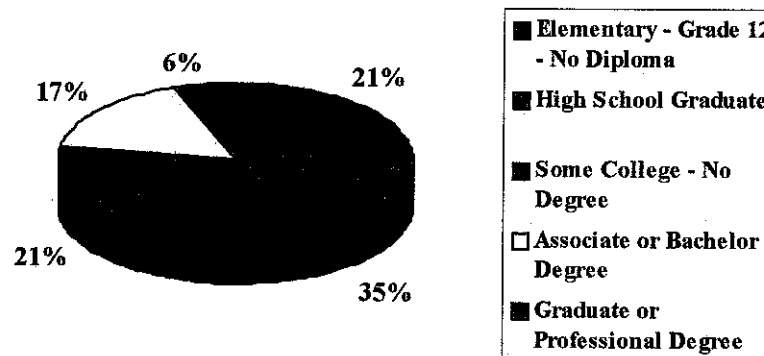
## Chapter II Background Information

The level of educational attainment in the County is comparable to national averages. There are slightly more persons with an Associate or Bachelors Degree in Davison County.

**FIGURE 4**  
**Educational Attainment**  
**Davison County - 1990 Data**



**FIGURE 5**  
**Educational Attainment**  
**United States - 1990 Data**



## Chapter II

### Background Information

The County contains a variety of educational facilities:

- One Senior High School (Mitchell)
- One Junior High School (Mitchell)
- Two K - 12 Public Schools (Ethan and Mt. Vernon)
- Three Public Elementary Schools (Mitchell)
- Four Parochial Schools (Mitchell)
- Dakota Wesleyan University
- Mitchell Technical Institute
- South Central Child Development (Head Start)

The post-secondary institutions are all located in Mitchell.

Davison County has undergone a dramatic shift in the make-up of its work force. In 1980, 57.5 percent of the women, with children under the age of six, were working outside of the home. By 1990, the number grew to 79 percent (Table 6). This trend brought about major social challenges, such as the need for more day-care facilities. Job advancement opportunities are limited for semi-skilled workers, regardless of gender.

**TABLE 6**  
**Women In The Work Force**

AREA	Total # Female Population		% of Women 16 Yrs & Over In Labor Force		% Women Working With Kids 6 Yrs & Under		% Women Working With Kids 7 - 17 Yrs	
	1980	1990	1980	1990	1980	1990	1980	1990
Davison County	9,303	9,161	51.00%	58.80%	57.50%	79.00%	65.10%	83.90%
South Dakota	350,028	353,506	49.30%	58.50%	50.90%	71.30%	64.50%	81.80%

The County's large number of "underemployed" persons, makes the unemployment figures misleading. Struggling farmers do not show up in the statistics as unemployed. Davison County's unemployment rate has been consistently below state averages (Table 7). Again, these numbers do not reflect wages or the number of persons working two jobs.

## Chapter II

### Background Information

**TABLE 7**  
**Labor Statistics**

AREA	Year	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployment Rate
Davison County	June - 1993	9,543	9,287	2.70%
	June - 1994	9,159	8,999	1.70%
	June - 1995	9,597	9,397	2.10%
	June - 1996	10,129	9,869	2.60%
	June - 1997	10,053	9,835	2.20%
	June - 1998	10,368	10,185	1.80%
South Dakota	June - 1993	374,869	363,315	3.10%
	June - 1994	382,000	369,600	3.30%
	June - 1995	378,600	370,300	2.20%
	June - 1996	399,200	388,200	2.80%
	June - 1997	402,400	391,200	2.80%
	June - 1998	412,100	400,900	2.70%

**SOURCE: South Dakota Labor Bulletin**

Davison County's employment base is heavily "tilted" toward retail and services (Table 8.) Manufacturing jobs have gone up, but not enough to significantly raise income levels.

**TABLE 8**  
**Employment By Industry**  
**Davison County**  
**1980 - 1991**

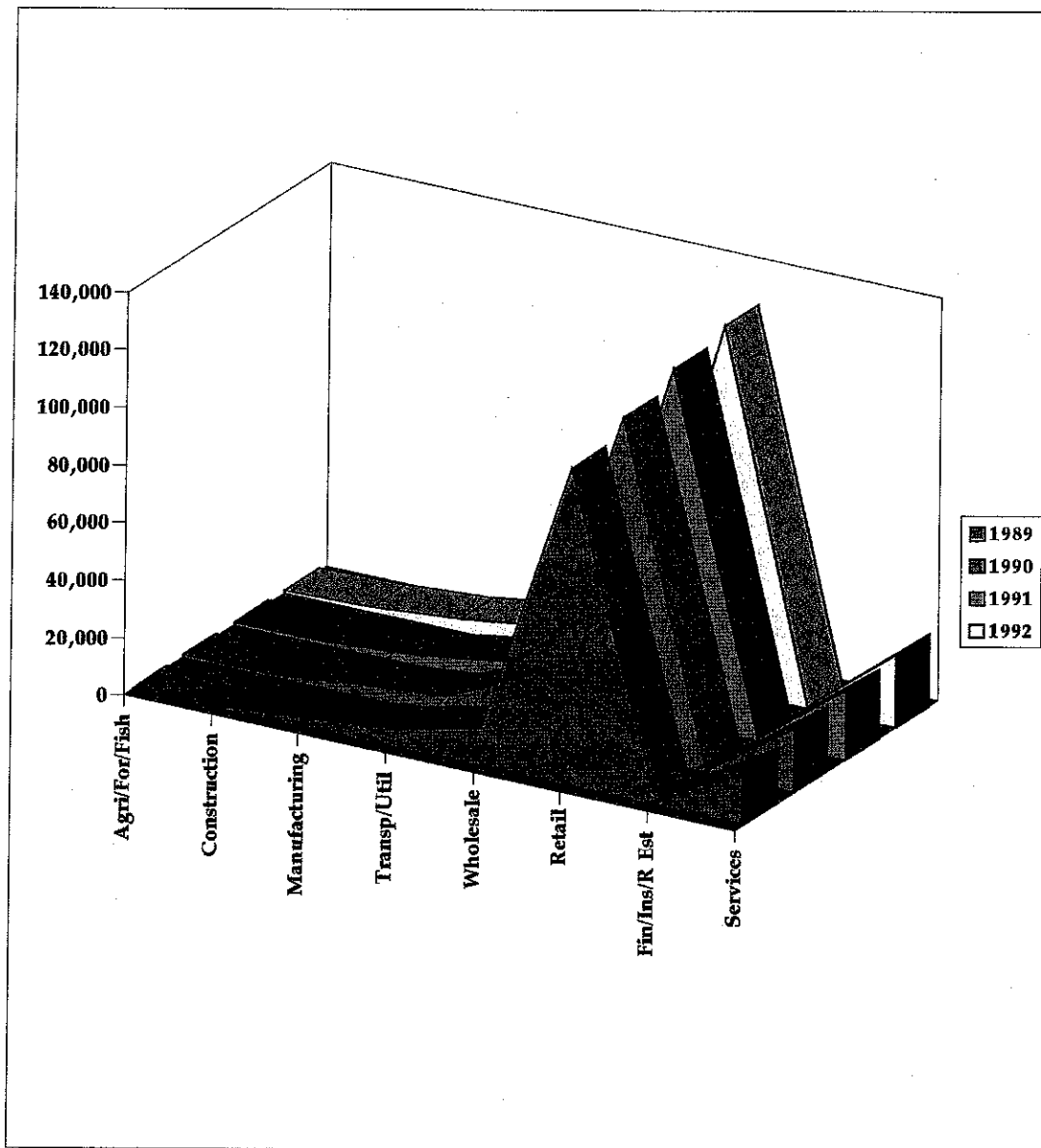
Employment By Industry	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
Ag.	541	517	510	499	500	498	494	492
Ag. Equip. Repairs	40	42	62	62	54	48	47	49
Minng.	(L)	(L)	21	18	18	19	15	90
Construction	462	501	444	460	479	517	481	508
Manufacturing	1,044	1,104	1,151	1,343	1,615	1,673	1,608	1,638
Transportation/Utilities	404	382	400	361	366	351	348	354
Wholesale	378	385	395	431	441	437	426	399
Retail	2,257	2,252	2,378	2,433	2,488	2,527	2,586	2,781
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	741	705	619	652	640	627	639	645
Services	2,639	2,666	2,787	2,899	2,943	3,088	3,241	3,203
Gov't/Gov. Agency	1,273	1,153	1,278	1,306	1,298	1,306	1,302	1,324

**SOURCE: State Data Center (1995 Community Abstracts)**

## Chapter II Background Information

Taxable sales “mirror” the employment figures (Figure 6). The dominance of retail is evidence of Mitchell’s regional trade prominence. It also illustrates the dependence upon other economic forces (i.e. agriculture) to bring money into the county. Business diversity is needed to expand the primary employment base.

**FIGURE 6**  
**Davison County - Taxable Sales (\$000's)**



## Chapter II Background Information

Between 1992 and 1996, Davison County had 186 business "open" (Table 9). During the same period, 186 businesses "closed." Economic diversity and a healthy agricultural sector, are important to the future of the County.

**TABLE 9**  
**Business Openings and Closings**  
**Davison County**  
**1992 - 1996**

AREA	1992 Open	1992 Close	Ratio Open to Close	1993 Open	1993 Close	Ratio Open to Close	1994 Open	1994 Close	Ratio Open to Close	1995 Open	1995 Close	Ratio Open to Close	1996 Open	1996 Close
Davison County	47	48	0.90	35	39	1.11	34	34	1.00	36	32	1.12	63	47
South Dakota	1,908	1,636	1.17	1,674	1,434	0.91	1,712	1,456	1.18	2,008	1,475	1.40	2,118	1,746

Information, Courtesy of Department of Labor, State Administration Office, Aberdeen.

Finally, Davison County has been declared a state of federal disaster area several times over the past ten years. The reasons have alternated between drought, snow and floods. The most recent designation stemmed from the 1996 - 1997 snowstorms and subsequent flooding. County damages were in excess of \$2 million. The long-term impacts of the disasters on the local economy are difficult to measure, but they far exceed the immediate damages.

### Agriculture

Davison County is an agriculturally dependent area. The "farm crisis" of the 1980's was a reality to many families. The County has seen a decrease in farm numbers and an increase in farm size. (Tables 10 and 11)

**TABLE 10**  
**Number of Farms**  
**1978 - 1992**

AREA	1978 # Farms	1987 # Farms	1992 # Farms	Percent Change 1978 - 1992
South Dakota	39,655	36,376	34,067	- 14.10%
Davison County	508	464	462	- 9.10%

**SOURCE: Census of Agriculture**

## Chapter II

### Background Information

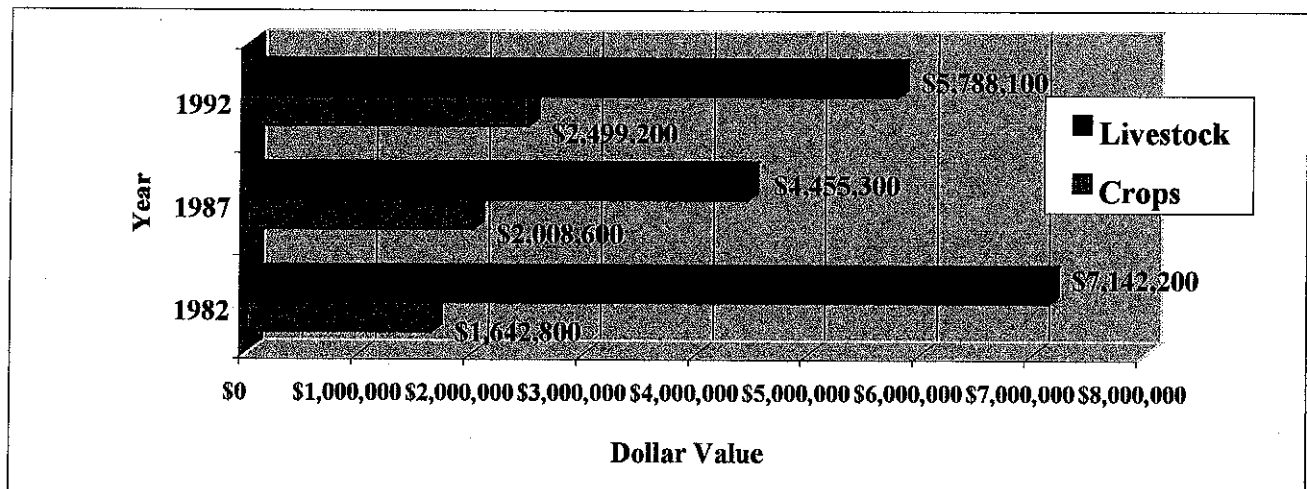
**TABLE 11**  
**Farm Size**  
**1989 - 1992**

AREA	1982	1987	1992	% Change 1982 - 1992
South Dakota	1,179 acres	1,214 acres	1,316 acres	+ 10.40%
Davison County	528 acres	531 acres	586 acres	+ 9.90%

**SOURCE: Census of Agriculture**

The value of agricultural products changes with global market fluctuations. The county experienced a rise in the value of crops between 1982 and 1992. The same period saw a decline in livestock prices. (Figure 7) It is the cyclic nature of farming that makes it difficult to rely upon. Many farm operators have secured accessory jobs to supplement their incomes.

**Figure 7 – Davison County**  
**Value of Agricultural Products**  
**SOURCE: Census of Agriculture**



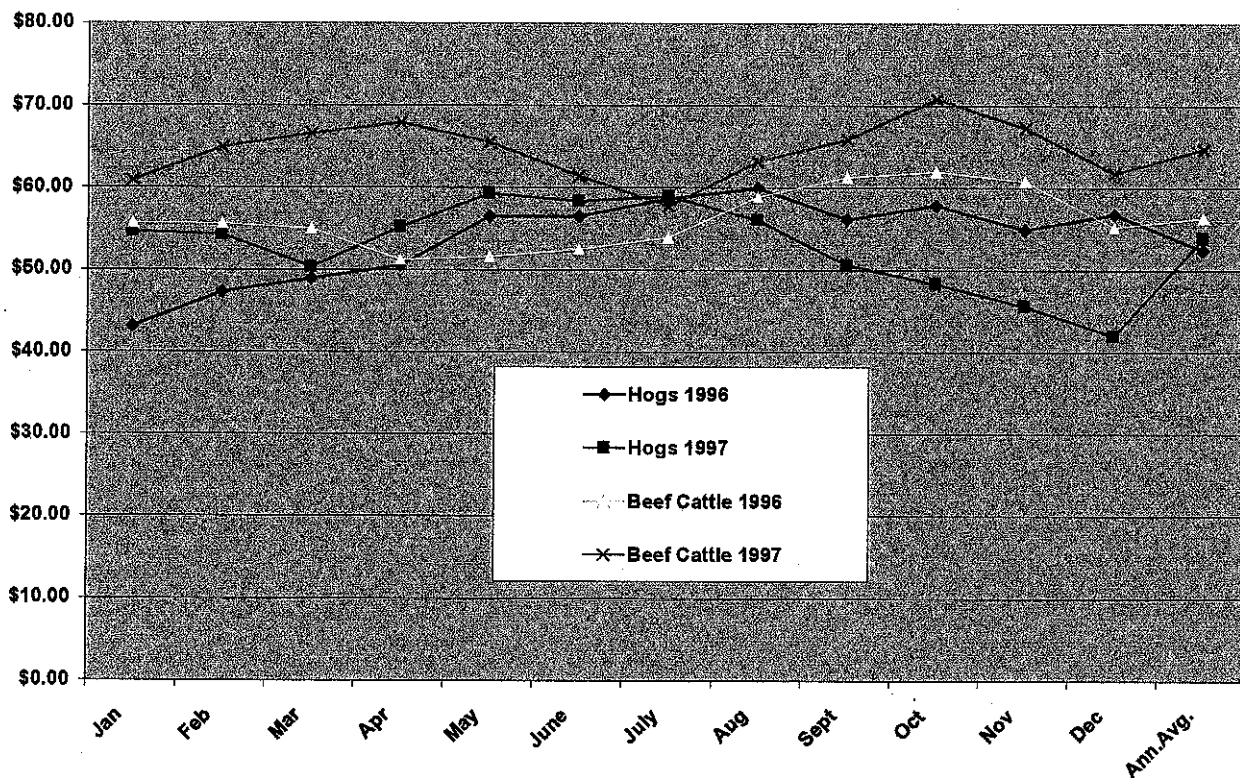
## Chapter II

### Background Information

Livestock prices have the largest impact on the agricultural economy. Figure 8 shows the volatility of cattle and hog prices.

**FIGURE 8**

**Average Livestock Prices Received by Farmers  
For Years 1996 & 1997**



SOURCE: U.S.D.A. South Dakota Agricultural Statistics Service (Prices represent butcher hogs and beef cattle)

Any action that would increase the local value of livestock as commodities or "finished products" would have a dramatic impact on the economy.

## Chapter II Background Information

### Housing

According to the 1990 Census, Davison County contained 7,490 housing units. The breakdown by unit type is presented below.

**TABLE 12**  
**Housing Units – 1990**      **SOURCE: U.S. 1990 Census**

TYPE	Number Of Units	Percent Of Total Units
Single Family	5,083	67.90%
Multi Family	1,783	23.80%
Mobile Home/Trailer	517	6.90%
Other	106	1.40%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,490</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

The number of mobile homes increased by 23.7 percent from the 1980 figure of 418 units. This trend may be related to economic factors and the limited availability of other housing opportunities.

The median age of housing units is 29 years, which is consistent with the statewide figure. The 1990 census found only 2.1 percent of County housing units with either inadequate plumbing or kitchen facilities. The statewide average was 4.3 percent.

The availability of affordable housing is an economic development issue. Large employers will not locate in an area that lacks housing. Likewise, senior citizens will not be able to stay in communities that lack the right type of housing for their special needs.

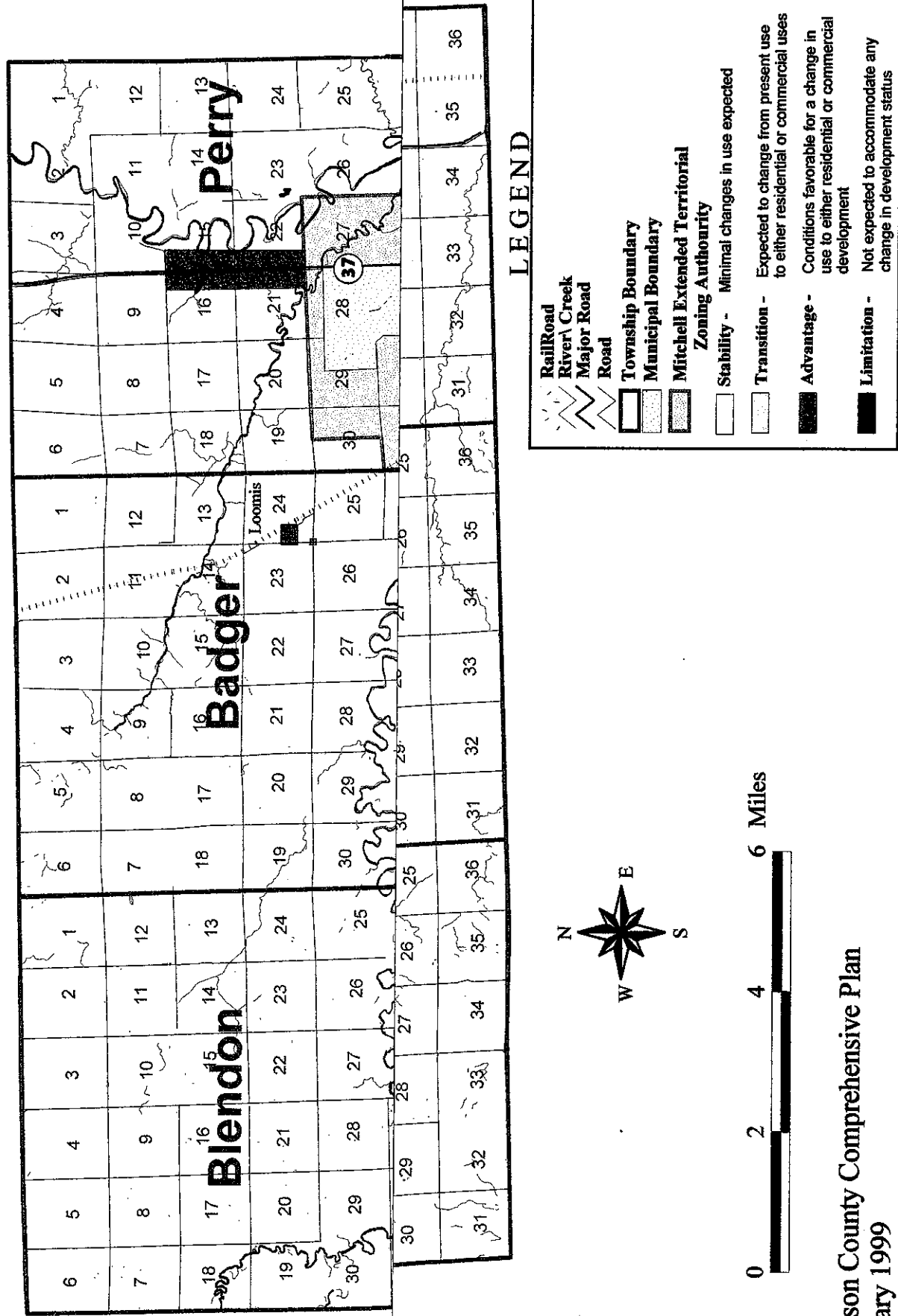
The following table shows the mean value of Davison County housing stock and the percentage of certain persons paying over 30% of their income for shelter. The 30 percent figure is often used as a "rule of thumb" for the maximum amount of income devoted to housing.

**TABLE 13**  
**Value of Housing Stock - Percent Paying Over 30% of Income for Shelter**

AREA	Mean Value Of Housing Stock	Median Income	% of Households Earning Less Than \$20,000 and Paying Over 30% of Income	% Of Persons 65 + Paying Over 30% Of Their Income For Monthly Housing
Davison County	\$ 42,709	\$ 20,733	49 %	20 %
South Dakota	\$ 49,571	\$ 22,503	33 %	17 %

**SOURCE: 1990 Census of Population and Housing; South Dakota State Census Data Center**

# Figure 9: Future Land Use Map



## Chapter II Background Information

---

The City of Mitchell and the Mitchell Area Development, Inc. commissioned a housing study in 1993. The housing consultant recommended a "three tiered approach" to addressing Mitchell's affordable housing problem. The same strategy would be appropriate for the county as a whole.

1. Creation of affordable home ownership opportunities for first-time buyers;
2. Increase the supply of move-up housing; and
3. Encourage the development of senior housing.

The South Dakota Housing Development Authority's 1998 "Consolidated Plan" also recognized the need for a multi-faceted approach to rural housing development. The Authority is focusing on senior housing and single family development in rural areas. Some small communities within more populated areas are often faced with the problem of high occupancy rates due to commuting workers looking for a bedroom community. In addition, it is often tempting for developers and private individuals to construct or install small clusters of homes around communities. These developments, if not properly planned may result in a wide range of problems. Public services, fragile environments, and the local road system may be adversely impacted.

### **Land Use**

As noted in the introduction, South Dakota Codified Law, notes guiding "land utilization" as one of the purposes of a comprehensive plan. This section will examine land use patterns and issues. It will also list several principles that will be considered in developing future land use policies. Again, the primary focus of this Plan is the area of Davison County, outside municipal corporate limits.

Davison County conducted a land use survey as part of its 1989 comprehensive planning process. County land use patterns have not changed significantly, since 1989, with the exception of the area around Mitchell. A brief survey was done as part of the South Dakota Department of Transportation Road Inventory Project in May 1997. Land use categories, such as agriculture, residential, and commercial may be better discussed in terms of their interaction and potential for change.

## Chapter II Background Information

---

Davison County has land use patterns that may be described in the following terms.

1. **Areas of Development Transition**

These areas are located near growing communities. They are experiencing residential or commercial development. The current land use is usually cropland or pasture. The areas could also be near a major recreation site that is being developed for residential units. Transition areas are going to be the major conflict zones in terms of public services, incompatible uses and municipal versus county regulations.

2. **Areas of Development Advantage**

These areas have qualities that make their development more likely in the future. They often have good highway access, are adjacent to already developed lots or present much better than average site characteristics (i.e. flat, good drainage, trees, view, etc.). A typical advantage area would be at the intersection of well traveled, hard surfaced roads, directly between two communities. Special access to rail, natural gas, the interstate, rural water or other facilities could also give an area a development advantage.

3. **Areas of Development Limitation**

These areas have characteristics that would either prevent them from being developed or would result in excessive construction costs. Regular flooding, steep slopes, fragile soils, and proximity to certain facilities (gravel pits, lagoons, landfills, etc.) would all be limiting factors. Transportation isolation or poor access to public facilities would also limit an area's potential.

4. **Areas of Development Stability**

This category represents the bulk of farm land and other sites that are not expected to change very much. There may be an occasional home or rural business constructed, but the primary agricultural focus of the land should be the same in the future. Major, land intensive projects such as a reservoir, landfill, or large confinement operation could dramatically alter certain areas. However, these things would normally involve both mandatory public input and environmental assessment procedures. They would also have to comply with state and federal regulations.

Figure 9 shows the location of areas in Davison County that meet these definitions.

## Chapter II Background Information

---

Land use controls (zoning ordinances, etc.) should be designed according to four basic principles.

1. Future development should be compatible with existing land uses;
2. Future development should take advantage of existing public infrastructure and road systems;
3. Future development should promote the public health, safety and the general welfare; and
4. Future development should be consistent with the rights of citizens to use their property for lawful purposes.

Development proposals, which do not follow these principles, should be carefully evaluated before being implemented.

The land use principles recognize that Davison County's future development will probably be a continuation of present activity, although, the effects may be less dramatic. For example, it may be beyond the ability of county officials to stop the loss of family farms. The 1989 survey counted 184 vacant farmsteads. Many sites have been abandoned for decades. Other vacancies are more recent.

The reuse of these sites for either residential or commercial development would meet the intent of the four principles, in the majority of situations. In the process, reuse would mitigate the impacts of new development.

## CHAPTER III

### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

---

#### **Definitions**

This chapter contains the development "vision" for Davison County. It is expressed through goals, objectives and policies. A definition for each term is presented below.

- Goal -** A general statement that reflects ideals, ambitions or hopes.
- Objective -** A statement concerning a specific, measurable target or purpose.
- Policy -** A statement concerning an action or position that will be taken to achieve an objective.

The following statements will direct the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. They are being presented under four headings:

- \* Environmental Protection;
- \* Economic Development;
- \* Housing Opportunities; and
- \* Management and Coordination.

Chapter III  
Goals and Objectives

---

**Environmental Protection**

**It is the goal of Davison County to avoid development in areas that:**

1. are environmentally fragile or unique;
2. consist of prime agricultural land;
3. present health and safety hazards to county residents; and
4. could degrade or otherwise negatively impact neighboring property.

**Objective 1.** Soil characteristics, topography and other construction limitations should be carefully considered in project site planning.

**Policy 1-A.** County officials shall be provided assurances of environmental protection measures, prior to the approval of any required permit or legal document, in areas having obvious or documented development limitations.

**Policy 1-B.** The County should provide information to the public concerning development proposals and their possible environmental impacts.

**Policy 1-C.** County officials shall compile and make available to the public, information on agencies having guidelines or regulations concerning environmental protection.

**Policy 1-D.** The County should compile information on environmentally sensitive areas, within its jurisdiction.

**Objective 2.** Development shall be limited within areas that are known to experience regular and/or severe flooding.

**Policy 2-A.** Citizens seeking county review for development within a known flood hazard area, shall provide documentation that their project will not present a risk to public health and safety.

**Policy 2-B.** Information on the National Flood Insurance Program and associated regulatory agencies, shall be compiled and maintained by the county.

**Objective 3.** Drainage, air quality, noise and other "non-stationary" environmental factors should be evaluated for their impacts on neighboring property, if the development is expected to exceed the conditions found in the majority of the County.

Chapter III  
Goals and Objectives

---

**Policy 3-A.** The protection and promotion of common and prevalent Farming practices should be a priority consideration in land use decisions.

**Policy 3-B.** In situations where a review and/or approval process is needed and the situation warrants an evaluation, the county will rely upon planning documents, scientific and technical sources, and public input in making decisions.

**Economic Development**

**It is the goal of Davison County to encourage the continuation of family farming, while promoting cost effective, value added manufacturing and other economic diversification efforts.**

**Objective 1.** Preferences should be given to agricultural production and processing activities that directly benefit the farming and local agribusiness economies.

**Activity 1-A.** County regulations must preserve individual property rights while promoting the economic opportunities of farm operators and other current county agricultural operators.

**Activity 1-B.** The conservation of prime agricultural land should be a consideration in land use decisions.

**Objective 2.** Higher density development such as commercial, industrial and concentrated animal feeding should take advantage of existing utility networks and transportation systems.

**Policy 2-A.** The locations, capacities and relationships of public infrastructure systems should be reviewed as part of development proposals requiring county review.

**Policy 2-B.** The redevelopment and reuse of existing business locations should be encouraged by local development officials.

Chapter III  
Goals and Objectives

---

**Policy 2-C.** The County should promote the development of agriculture business related processing and manufacturing facilities within the rural areas conducive to such activity.

**Objective 3.** Intense development similar to commercial, industrial and concentrated animal feeding should be compatible with adjacent land uses.

**Activity 3-A.** These types of projects should take place in designated industrial parks or already developed highway locations, whenever possible.

**Activity 3-B.** Developers should be encouraged to reserve "buffer" areas between different land uses, to minimize the potential for conflict.

**Housing Opportunities**

**It is the goal of Davison County to support a broad range of housing types, which are well designed and affordable.**

**Objective 1.** Housing development should take place within those areas identified as conducive to higher density residential development in order to minimize public infrastructure costs and promote safety.

**Policy 1-A.** Land use regulations should eliminate small single unit developments and promote innovative development planning.

**Policy 1-B.** Strip development adjacent to roads should be strongly discouraged by limiting individual access points.

**Policy 1-C.** Pedestrian and traffic safety should be considered in evaluating housing development proposals.

**Policy 1-D.** The rehabilitation or reuse of vacant farmsteads should be promoted through relaxed lot requirements.

Chapter III  
Goals and Objectives

---

**Objective 2.** Local developers and individual citizens should take the lead in proposing housing projects.

**Policy 2-A.** The County should balance actions, which would inhibit private development activity with the benefit of sound planning practices.

**Policy 2-B.** The County should encourage the development of senior care facilities such as congregate care or assisted living facilities.

**Objective 3.** Manufactured housing developments are an affordable housing alternative and should be further promoted by private developers.

**Policy 3-A.** Manufactured home developments may be allowed as conditional uses in those areas designated conducive to residential development.

**Policy 3-B.** Manufactured homes shall be allowed as permitted uses within those areas designated agriculture.

**Policy 3-C.** Manufactured homes should be subjected to development siting and development criteria similar to those required for stick or site built homes.

**Policy 3-D.** Manufactured homes shall be allowed as a second dwelling for farm operations.

**Management and Coordination**

**It is the goal of Davison County to provide efficient, cost effective services to all residents.**

**Objective 1.** Coordination should take place between local, state and regional entities on development issues.

**Policy 1-A.** Land use planning should be a joint city/county activity in areas of mutual interest.

Chapter III  
Goals and Objectives

---

**Policy 1-B.** The County should notify neighboring properties, whether individual or governmental of development activities, which possess the potential for impacts.

**Objective 2.** Citizen participation should be a major component of the development process.

**Policy 2-A.** Ample opportunity will be provided for direct public comment, in every appropriate situation.

**Policy 2-B.** The County will ensure every applicant equal protection under the law in all land use decisions.

**Policy 2-C.** Whenever possible planning and other development documents will be written using plain language, with an absence of jargon or specialized terminology.

**Policy 2-D.** The County will rely upon current planning documents, State of South Dakota Agencies, legal counsel, county staff, local officials, university studies, scientific and technical sources, and public input in making decisions.

**Objective 3.** Work towards improvement in county operations through various upgrades of the operational planning process.

**Policy 3-A.** Draft a 5 to 10-Year County Multi-Department Capital Improvement Plan.

**Policy 3-B.** Utilize a capital improvement plan to assist in the annual budgeting and purchasing processes.

**Policy 3-C.** Greater inter-governmental cooperation within the county and region should be sought in the purchase, operation and maintenance of equipment and facilities.