

What's Developing

We live in a small town, and all of us have our own reasons for living here. We have the option of living someplace else. The world is a very large place and we could choose to live anywhere on the planet. Yet, we are still living in Eureka. Probably every single one of us has heard about the downside of Small Town, USA, but many of those are just myths.

In a recent iGrow online publication from South Dakota State University six myths were identified, then explained as to why they are merely myths. Have you ever heard these, or even had these thoughts yourself? Can any of this information be used to make Eureka a better or more profitable community?

Wanda Jundt

6 Myths About the Future of Small Towns

by Milan Wall and Vicki Luther, Ph.D., Heartland Center for Leadership Development

Myth 1 – Towns that are “too small” have no future.

The truth is that there is no magical number at which a town can survive. Heartland Center research has shown that even very tiny towns, with populations as small as 100 or less, manage to survive through thoughtful planning, entrepreneurial genius and hard work. No community should perceive itself as “too small” to survive.

Myth 2 – A community's location is key to its survival.

In an Information Age, leadership, not location, is the most important fact in community survival.

Myth 3 – Industrial recruitment is the best strategy for economic development.

Study after study shows suggests that industrial recruitment, alone, is not a realistic long term answer. Communities must adopt a broad-based economic development plan that supports existing businesses and encourages entrepreneurship.

Myth 4 – Small towns can't compete in the global economy.

Many rural communities have small manufacturers that are producing high-quality products for a unique marketing niche, which extends beyond the local area to a regional, national or even international market. Small towns throughout America are home to an amazing variety of highly sophisticated, entrepreneurial successes.

Myth 5 – The “best people” leave small towns as soon as they can.

It is true that many people find opportunities elsewhere, but it's also true that many talented and capable people choose the quality of small town living.

Myth 6 – The rural and urban economies are not interdependent.

It's not really news that rural industries such as agriculture, mining or land management are playing a smaller role in the rural-urban economic mix. This doesn't mean, however, that cities

and counties could maintain their quality of life without farm products, coal, oil and the natural resources, available to the city and country person alike.