

# SAVE YOUR *.town*



*Colfax, Washington  
Photo by Sarah McKnight*

## Ideas Into Action: The Idea Friendly Way







**“We tried that once.”**

**“That will never work here.”**

**“Slow down, let us ask questions”**





**Negative  
people think  
they're helping**

*Rosalia, Washington  
Photo by Becky McCray*

# We overestimate the risk of failure and deny the cost of inaction.

Margie Warrell, author





**Even if you're on the right  
track, you'll get run over  
if you just sit there.**

Will Rogers, author



# We adapt

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*Yakima, Washington  
Photo by Becky McCray*





*Alva, Oklahoma  
Photo by Alva Friends of Play*



*Photo via Alva Friends of Play*

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# IDEA FRIENDLY

*Gather Your Crowd*

*Build Connections*

*Take Small Steps*





*Take  
Small  
Steps*

*Photo by Becky McCray*



# Start where you are

*Twisp, Washington  
Photo by Becky McCray*





# #*IfOurTown*

**If our town had...**

**If our town was...**

*Write it down now*



# Take Small Steps

*The Idea Friendly Method*

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*Pullman, Washington  
Photo by Becky McCray*



# Old way: Meet and plan



*Photo via Library of Congress*





*Hermiston, OR. Photo via Umatilla Electric Cooperative*

**New Way:  
Test it now!**



# Failure is free, high-quality research, offering direct evidence of what works and what doesn't.

Clay Shirky, author

*Walla Walla County  
Photo by Becky McCray*





Castle Rock, Washington  
Photo by Nancy Chennault



**Move quickly**

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# Small steps build up

Walla Walla  
Photo by Becky McCray





*Photo via Zuni Pueblo Main Street, FB*



# INNOVATIVE

## *Rural Business Models*



**#***If Our Town*

**If we took a small step...**

*Write it down now*



# Gather Your Crowd

*The Idea Friendly Method*

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Kendrick, Idaho  
Photo by Christine Frei





**Old Way: Serve on  
our committees**





**New Way:** *Be a movement*



**Not “our committees.”**  
*Your activities.*





**#***If Our Town*

**If we gathered our crowd...**

*Write it down now*



# More people will help than start



*Alva, Oklahoma  
Photo by Becky McCray*



*Photo by Becky McCray*

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# Old way: Another Clean Up Day



*Photo by Monica Babine*



# Idea Friendly way: #CleanYourOwnSidewalkDay



*Photo by  
Becky McCray*



# Not convincing. *Attracting.*





# Old Way: A few big volunteer jobs

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**Idea Friendly Way:**

*Lots of small but  
meaningful activities*





# Light the trees



*Webster City, Iowa. Photo by Deb Brown*







**#***If Our Town*

**Smaller, more meaningful**

*Write it down now*



# Build Connections

*The Idea Friendly Method*



Colfax, Washington  
Photo by Becky McCray



**SINGLE HILL  
BREWING**

**Big idea: microbrewery!**

*Yakima, Washington  
Photo by Becky McCray*



# Old way: present to the board









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**EV** **CAR**  
**CLUB**

*Photo via Middle Tennessee Electric*



Photo via Red Lodge Area  
Community Foundation

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Not meeting.  
*Gathering.*





# Community happens when *people talk to each other*

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Castle Rock, Washington  
Photo by Nancy Chennault



# Open networks for better ideas

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*Alva, Oklahoma*

*Photo by Becky McCray*





*Brownsville, Texas*  
*Photo via Charisma Charisma*

# **RURAL JOBS**

## *Creation Strategies*



**#***If Our Town*

**If we built connections...**

*Write it down now*





**You can't lose people  
who were never yours**

*Webster City, Iowa  
Photo by Deb Brown*





# Waynoka Council Faction Creates Own Fireworks - City Administrator Fired

*Photo by Mark Carson  
Woods County News*



**You build a stronger  
community through  
experiences that bring  
people together from across  
different groups to each play  
a meaningful role.**



- 1. Gather Your Crowd for shared experiences.**
- 2. Build Connections between people across different groups.**
- 3. Give everyone a meaningful way to Take Small Steps.**



# IDEA FRIENDLY

*Gather Your Crowd*

*Build Connections*

*Take Small Steps*



You don't have to  
know all the answers

*if you can be open  
to new ideas.*

Rosalia, Washington  
Photo by Becky McCray



# Open to new ideas *Rooted in tradition*

Carnell Chosa  
Jemez Pueblo



*Photo by USDA with permission of Jemez Pueblo*



# Iowa State University 99 town study



*Webster City, Iowa  
Photo by Deb Brown*



Photo CC by NKCR

# Let go of judging ideas





*Photo CC by FWC FWRI*



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# Start temporary



**Not voting.**  
*Testing.*



*Photo via Library of Congress*



**How will inaction cost us,  
one year from now?**

Margie Warrell, author



Pick one

Waynoka, Oklahoma  
Photo by Becky McCray





# New way: real life rendering

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*Waynoka, Oklahoma  
Photo by Jeanne Cole*



*Moscow, Idaho*  
*Photo by Becky McCray*

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# Your community is different



It will never go back to the way it used to be.

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*Colfax, Washington. Photo by Sarah McKnight*



# And still we love this place

*Twisp, Washington  
Photo by Becky McCray*



# #*IfOurTown*

**Send a text**  
**Block a time**

*Do it now*



# Idea Friendly Behaviors

## Old Way

Formal

Few

Control

Isolated

Decide

BIG

Failure is bad

## *Idea Friendly Way*

*Informal*

*Crowd*

*Chaos*

*Connected*

*Test*

*Small*

*Failure is valuable*



# 5 Idea Friendly Principles

1. Get out of the meeting room.
2. Be conspicuous doing your thing in public.
3. Do more cheap, approximate tests.
4. Do just a tiny part at first.
5. Build the community first.



# SAVEYOUR

*.town/signup*

**Share the Idea  
Friendly Method in  
your community**

*becky@saveyour.town*





# *Survey of Rural* **CHALLENGES**



*Get the full report*

<https://saveyour.town/survey-of-rural-challenges-2023-results/>

Lack of  
housing

Downtown  
is dead

Not  
enough  
volunteers

Losing  
young  
people

Lack of  
childcare



# Take the Survey of Rural Challenges 2024 here

## Please help us spread the word

[SaveYour.Town/survey2024](https://SaveYour.Town/survey2024)

