



CONVERSATIONS for Communities

UND Center for Community Engagement
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Strong Communities - Cavalier Forum, April 25

Communities in North Dakota and Minnesota strive to be strong, viable, and relevant in today's global economy. Communities both cooperate and compete to attract new residents and businesses. Small town Main Street struggles to compete with urban big boxes and internet mega-stores. The friendly, personalized nature of locally-owned businesses lend small-town charm that many people find appealing. Speaker Becky McCray will provide many insights on this topic at the 8th Annual Community Connect Forum, Saturday, April 25. She will show how communities of any size can be successful economically, culturally, and civically, and "feel" like a small town in the way that people interact.

Across the region there are many communities that have maintained a viable presence but are looking for ways to be stronger. While other communities have seen their civic and economic institutions decline and are looking for new ways to promote growth. All communities may need to be reminded of their existing assets and how to utilize them to promote strength.

Increasing the strength and vitality of a community can make it less vulnerable to the impacts of local, regional, or national changes. It is the quality and quantities of opportunities that set a strong community apart from one that is just maintaining. This makes the community appealing to new residents, businesses and tourists, providing additional strength for the community.

Come learn about this and more at the community-university forum on Saturday, April 25, 2015 in Cavalier, N.D., 90 miles north of Grand Forks, which is coordinated by the University of North Dakota Center for Community Engagement. This event is free and open to a lunch with a free lunch provided. A free bus will be provided from Grand Forks for UND faculty, students and staff.



Cavalier is working to be a strong community. Get ideas on strengthening your community at this year's Community Connect Forum in Cavalier on April 25th (Photo Credit: Cavalier Chamber of Commerce)

Becky McCray Opens 2014 Forum

Author and rural small business, and social media, expert Becky McCray will open the 8th Annual Community Connect Forum, April 25, in Cavalier, North Dakota. Her work is focused on a variety of topics related to small towns, including entrepreneurship, tourism and community collaboration. McCray's down-to earth style makes her approachable, and engaging. Her goal is for participants to leave with practical ideas they will be able to implement in their community.

McCray is from Hopeton, Oklahoma (population 30), where she is a small-town business owner and rancher who enjoys helping com-



Becky McCray is the featured speaker at the 8th Annual Community Connect Forum.

munities become better and stronger. She is a 1993 graduate of Northwestern Oklahoma State University with a degree in Business Administration. She has worked as a city administrator, a non-profit executive and a business and computer consultant and instructor.

McCray's experience has given her a positive view of the future of rural communities and a certainty that locally-owned small businesses build community prosperity. She loves to help communities learn how they can be successful by taking full advantage of trends that other rural communities use to be successful.

She is coauthor of the award-winning book, *Small Town Rules*. She has been featured in *The New York Times*, *Entrepreneur Magazine* and the *High Plains Journal*. Her website, *Small Biz Survival*, has been ranked in the top 20 small business blogs worldwide.

McCray is a fourth-generation teacher and promises a highly interactive presentation, filled with practical, implementable tips and ideas. Attendees will leave the session excited and ready to take action to implement new ideas in their own community.