

# **TREASURE STATE ENDOWMENT PROGRAM (TSEP)**

The Treasure State Endowment Program (TSEP) is a state-funded program created in 1992. It was established to help solve serious health and safety problems and assist communities with the financing of public facilities projects. The program helps local governments with infrastructure planning as well as constructing or upgrading drinking water systems, wastewater treatment facilities, sanitary or storm sewer systems, solid waste disposal and separation systems, and bridges.

The purpose of this website is to keep you informed about Sweet Grass County's latest effort to upgrade the Old Boulder Road Bridge over the Boulder River.

Over the next several months we will provide you with information about the Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) the County is developing with assistance from Great West Engineering. We will also give you regular project updates, and in return, we hope you will ask questions about and comment on the project. Your input and support are vital to the success of the County's mission to provide you with safe and reliable infrastructure. So please, look around and come back often to see what's happening.

## ***What's a PER:***

The Montana Department of Commerce Treasure State Endowment Program (TSEP) offers funding assistance to communities to make improvements to their bridges. To be eligible to receive a TSEP grant, a community must include with the applications for funding a preliminary engineering report (PER) prepared by an engineer who is licensed by the State of Montana. A well-crafted PER includes the following information:

- Why is the project needed and condition of the bridge?
- Demographic data and population trends.
- What alternatives did the community consider?
- What is the preferred alternative and how did the community come to select the preferred alternative?
- What will be the environmental impact of the proposed project?
- An estimated cost of the proposed project.
- The funding sources available to the project.
- A project budget along with a summary of how user rates will be affected.

A good PER also describes the community's efforts to inform you about the project. With a PER, TSEP assesses the need for your project, confirms its eligibility for their funds, and base their decision to fund or not fund the application. Beyond funding, a PER is a valuable planning tool for communities to evaluate their systems and identify solutions for ensuring reliable, affordable, and resilient services and planning for the future

## **PROJECTS:**

Sweet Grass County received a Treasure State Endowment Program (TSEP) planning grant in 2017 to complete a County-wide Bridge Evaluation and Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and complete a Preliminary Engineering Reports (PER) for the Old Boulder Road Bridge.

An initial bridge inventory and bridge CIP was completed in 2001. The document was updated in 2003, 2005, 2009, 2011, 2013 and 2017. Since the original bridge inventory, the County has replaced or rebuilt fifty bridges. Sweet Grass County is currently responsible for 63 bridges located throughout a wide geographic area. Sweet Grass County has a progressive bridge maintenance program and has been proactive at maintaining, repairing, and replacing bridges as needed to be fiscally responsible and protect public safety.

The County has elected to complete a PER for the Old Boulder Road Bridge, located just outside the Big Timber city limits. The existing structure is a three-span, 145-foot long steel pony truss and timber bridge constructed in 1940. The bridge is currently in fair structural condition, narrow, has a restricted load capacity and is at the end of its useful life. The PER will evaluate improvement options for the Old Boulder Road Bridge and be the basis for the County to apply for TSEP funding to complete the construction project and make necessary improvements.