KEEPING THEM HOME – USING UNIQUE COMMUNITY ASSETS

Seward County is working to create a family-friendly environment that attracts and retains people in the area. By gaining a greater understanding of new residents' needs, we're creating an action plan to become a "sticky community."

WHO ARE THE PEOPLE IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD?

- Take a look at your community's demographics. Determine where your newcomers are concentrated and create welcoming opportunities that are focused on those groups. Through work with interns from Rural Futures Institute in the summer of 2018, we were able to develop some "onboarding" programming for newcomers to the area. That programming included a magnet that was given to local resource offices (utilities, village clerks, public schools, larger employers). The magnet includes a website that was designed specifically for newcomers and features important community information (www.SewardCountyNewcomers.org).

- Organize a "Meet and Greet " group of community-minded folks who are willing to seek out newcomers and invite them to events, community meetings, and networking opportunities (share Seward Newcomers bag).

- Create networking opportunities for newcomers in your community that meet their needs to connect. For example, Seward has a large population of young families and retirees. To encourage "stickiness" we've held a couple events recently to welcome newcomers. One was a summer ice cream social at the local bandshell. It was a family-friendly event right before a municipal band concert. The other event was a meet & greet at a local brewery during their Oktoberfest celebration. Both events were assisted by local civic groups who facilitated introductions and conversations.

HELP CREATE EXPERIENCES
LEARN FROM THE "AMAZONIFICATION OF OUR CULTURE"

It's happening every day. More people are shopping online for basic goods and services because of the perceived convenience of having items delivered directly to their door. Saves money and time, right? Maybe not! If you can successfully introduce local retailers to the community by creating engaging experiences, people will keep coming back for those experiences (which they can't get by going online). Some recent successes in the Seward County community include the local brewery hosting "Food Truck Friday." It's a family-friendly environment that helps to support an under-served restaurant market by providing more choices for unique dining experiences. Clustering of small retail businesses is another way to attract shoppers to an area (e.g., antique stores, trendy boutiques, tasting rooms, and art galleries) to showcase local personalities and one-of-a-kind experiences. These walkable outings can help make your community become a destination location.

Sticky communities are ones that are adapting to the "Amazonification" of our culture.

CULTIVATE
SEWARD COUNTY
CHAMBER & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT