

FROM POSSIBILITIES TO REALITY

Save Your Small Town with these Uniquely Do-able
Ideas, Projects, and Success Stories

by Deb Brown



**SAVE
YOUR**
.town

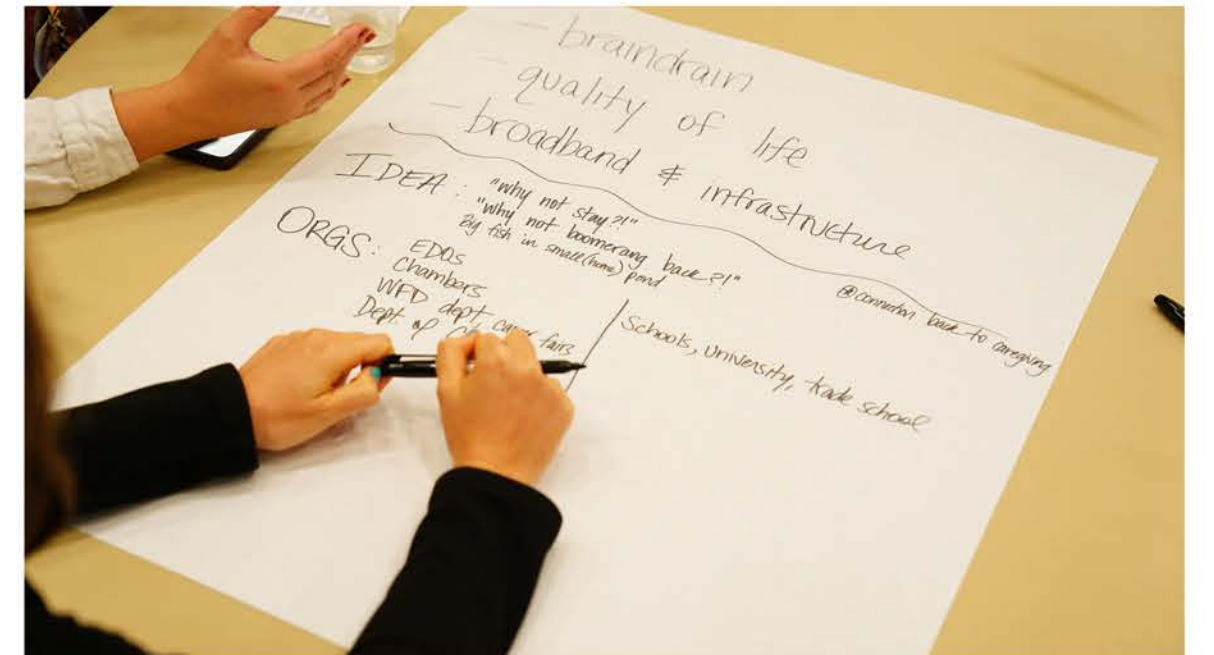


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what is this?

It is a comprehensive guide filled with stories and actions from the author's own experiences working with small towns as cofounder of SaveYour.Town

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who's it for?

The usual suspects. And small town people.

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stories

You want stories, I got stories!

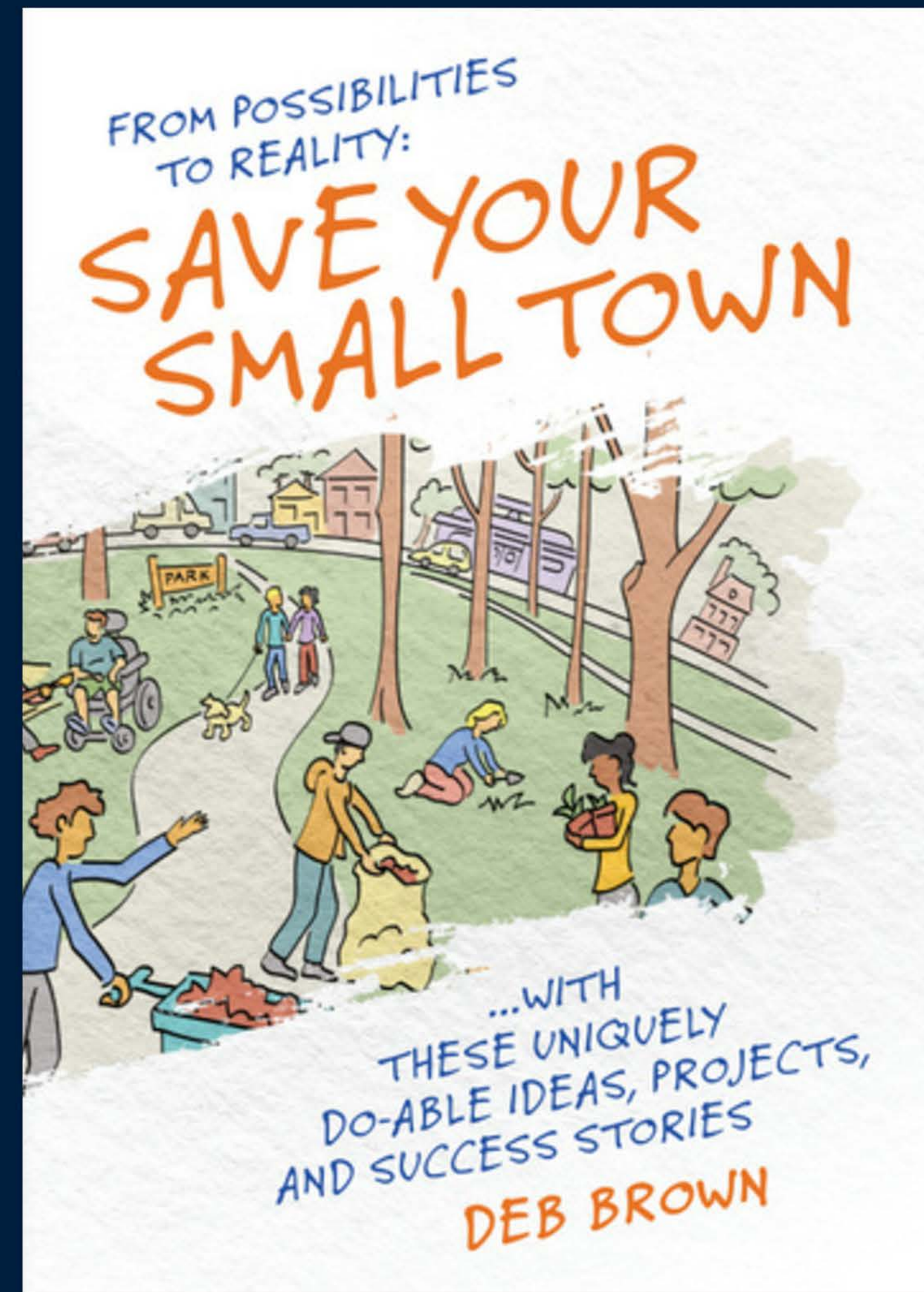
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ideas

Go home with some ideas you can put into practice right away.

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PEOPLE TELL ME THINGS

Listening is a skill. Ask a question. Wait for the answer.

I like to start with: what do you want?

for your community, for your neighborhood, for your family.

Ask all kinds of people, not just the ones you feel safe with.





WHO IS THIS BOOK FOR?

You.

**And anyone who wants to see a brighter
community.**

**Anyone who's willing to try their ideas out.
New school thinkers.**

**Business owners, chambers, city officials,
retirees, students, and people like you.**



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STORIES

Incubator Project



Art



Youth



Shared Spaces



1 in 5 people live in rural areas, over 66 million people. And most of them have learned to work with what they have and not rely upon big government or big cities for support.

Common themes in media coverage and policy conversations around rural communities don't match rural views

Small towns offer an unmatched quality of life, but they need our help to thrive. This book offers a comprehensive guide to tackling challenges like population decline and lack of investment.

Abandoned buildings, shuttered businesses, and dwindling populations - these are harsh realities facing many small towns

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Art



Shared Spaces



Youth



IDEA FRIENDLY



Gather Your Crowd



Who do you know that likes your idea and will help?



Build Connections



Who can help with what you don't know?



Take Small Steps



Small but meaningful

You start with your big goal for your community, one that excites people and makes them feel like they can play a role in it.

You use that goal to **Gather Your Crowd** and become a movement that people can get behind.

You turn your crowd into a powerful network by **Building Connections.**

And you and your newly-powerful network accomplish that goal together by lots of you **Taking Small Steps.**



Gather Your Crowd Coffee and Calendars

Coffee and Calendars

PARTNER TO COMPARE CALENDARS

Invite the nonprofits and organizations that plan activities to an hour or two of Coffee and Calendars. Hold this gathering in a comfortable location with tables where people can spread out. Provide coffee! Ask them to bring their calendars.



You'll find out things about the organizations you didn't know. You'll figure out how to create a day full of events, instead of a day with events happening all at the same time. Coming together helps to build community.

We did this when I was a chamber director in Webster City, Iowa. We had about ten non-profit people at our first gathering. I thought we knew pretty much everything there was to know about each organization. Boy, was I wrong! **Each person had the opportunity to talk about what they did for the community, what they needed to be successful and share what they were planning.** One example of a project I didn't know anything about came from Building Families. They had a funding program to help people who wanted to have a daycare from their home. Funding to fence in the yard, get their state licensing, and other small items they might need to bring their home up to code.

Don't tie yourself to just nonprofits. Your businesses could do this too. It's a great activity to do quarterly to prepare for the next quarter. Learn to work together

Success Stories:

WALL, SOUTH DAKOTA POPULATION 695

Wall held a "Coffee and Calendars" event. Cheyenne said, "The event was a success! About ten community members joined the meeting, shared their calendars, and enjoyed coffee and conversation. This was a community need that is now filled. We look forward to more "Coffee and Calendar" events and continued community collaboration."

RINGGOLD COUNTY, IOWA POPULATION 4,670

Jodie, the Ringgold County, Iowa Development director told us they hosted two cookies and calendar meetings. One was for town representatives and one for the Mount Ayr retail businesses. The town reps wanted to meet again. That's a sign they thought it was worth their time! The retailers met and planned dates for the ladies' night out events for the entire year. Normally, this is done sporadically, with not enough communication.

Jodie also started a Google doc for each group to communicate within their groups. She's finding out that the younger people don't read email!

Build Connections Don't Do It Alone

“WITHOUT THE
CONNECTIONS, MONEY IS
NOT ENOUGH,”

MATTHEW FLUHARTY, ART IN
THE RURAL

Take Small Steps



IDEAS TO STEAL



Yarn Bombing

The What's Good Project

<https://whatsgoodproject.com/toolkits>



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