



THE TOOLBOX

WYOMING
ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
ASSOCIATION

Jan. 2011 • A NEWSLETTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUPPORTERS

President's Notes

Economic development is a competitive endeavor. Competition continues to drive business and industrial location decisions. Consequently, we face a choice of leadership. We can become competitive by building attractive communities and working toward secure economic stability; or we can be apathetic and accept whatever happens as a matter of course. In short, investing in ourselves will encourage others to want to invest here as well.

Competition is intense between geographic regions and states who actively recruit new jobs and investment capital. As more communities prepare and plan for new investment, there will be fewer businesses to occupy the available locations. Private investors have a plethora of choices when deciding where to locate their next venture, store or industrial operation.

We must continue to promote and develop our strengths and competitive advantages, while proactively addressing our weaknesses and challenges. The most significant challenge will be a shift from a labor-driven economy to a knowledge-driven economy. While it is imperative that we concentrate on the development of talent and skills to meet this challenge, we cannot ignore the need for, and the cost of, developing the public infrastructure required to attract and support this new economy.

Economic Development is a vital component of any modern, progressive state. Wyoming communities have made key investments that contribute significantly to the quality of life and superior business climate we all now enjoy. However, we must realize that all sectors of our local community must be constantly engaged in making positive impacts on our business and economic environment. No single organization alone can address the myriad of issues before us. Success will truly require a team effort.

WEDA will focus on issues and initiatives that will lead our state into more intense economic development efforts. We will examine our strategic plan and key legislative issues to determine their impact on developing business sectors. In particular, we should focus our efforts on those issues with the ability to grow the economy and the overall economic base. Communities that innovate will survive within the new economy and will thrive in new, more dynamic ways.

WEDA is a respected institution that has been instrumental in training leaders, impacting policy and working with agencies that attract jobs and encourage investment in this vibrant state. Our members and investors love to tell the Wyoming story.

Robert Barnes, CECD
President, WEDA

Our Economy Can Thrive Again

By Governor Matthew H. Mead

Over a year ago when I started my campaign for governor, jobs and the economy were my main focus. Here we are a year later, and jobs and the economy are still the main focus because they absolutely need to be. As I have said before about the economy, it is not raining but it is cloudy. I remain positive about our state's future but, to continue the weather metaphor, it will be a while before we see the sun.



As we start a new year, it is instructive to look back at where we have been and look ahead at where we want to go. Looking back over the last decade, the economy has had major ups and downs. Indeed, it has been on a roller coaster ride – down after 9/11, then up, then down again steeply in 2009. A roller coaster ride is great at an amusement park but not so great for the economy.

Now, we look ahead to pulling ourselves out of the latest economic downturn. To turn things around, we need to create more private sector jobs, make sure our workers are educated and trained for them, promote and expand existing businesses and encourage new businesses to locate in Wyoming. We need to diversify our economy, broadening our economic base and trying harder to smooth out the up and down cycles. We need to continue to develop, produce and export our full panoply of energy resources and agricultural products, but we also need to promote value-added projects within our state as well.

As we work to improve the economy in Wyoming, we face some headwinds nationally. The unemployment rate for the nation as a whole rose to 9.8% in November. There was more quantitative easing by the Federal Reserve Board suggesting that group's concern about the national economy. A two-day forum sponsored by the Wyoming Business Alliance and Wyoming Heritage Foundation in Cheyenne in early December dealt with the effects of a national debt that has been growing unchecked for years.

Against that national backdrop, in Wyoming we have seen revenue forecasts better than previously predicted. We have a budget surplus, and as of mid-December the latest unemployment rate for our state is reported at 6.7%. The unemployment rate has hovered in that vicinity since last summer. States like Wyoming are getting it right in terms of balancing the books and focusing on economic development. Our state is a light at the end of the tunnel – an example for others to follow.

In 2011, my economic agenda will include the following: improving the regulatory environment; putting more surplus state funds toward infrastructure needs; improving connectivity; and assisting our cities, towns and counties. Each of these four areas relates to the economy and to improving it. For example, state regulations need to be certain, predictable, reasonable and not duplicative. It is hard for businesses to commit resources if they do not know the rules and if the rules are not fair. Agency decisions that affect businesses, such as permitting decisions, need to be timely, not unduly delayed. Delay creates uncertainty and hinders, if not prevents, economic development. State regulatory processes need to be simplified and if multiple agencies are involved, their efforts need to be coordinated. We do not seek shortcuts but must be responsive.

Business involvement by the private sector is vitally important to continuing our economic progress. And, for the private sector to be involved, our state has to have the most business-friendly environment, and I think we can do that. There are exciting new business ventures afoot, including timber businesses that use beetle-killed trees, wind projects, an expanded carbon dioxide capture plant, oil shale development, an online farmers' market, to name just a few. I want to see more.

SEE GOVERNOR, WEDA-3

"For the private sector to be involved, our state has to have the most business-friendly environment, and I think we can do that."

Taxes: Why Some Pass and Some Fail with Wyoming Voters

By Molly Absolon

No one likes taxes and lately the anti-tax fervor has grown increasingly virulent across the United States. In November 2010, voters swept a wave of anti-tax, anti-government candidates into office. And in many parts of the country, they also rejected new taxes designed to help meet a combined \$140 billion in state-budget shortfalls.

Wyoming's populace is as anti-tax as any; yet in 2010, Wyoming voters agreed to a variety of new taxes designed to fund everything from an aquatics center in Worland to a hospital expansion in Jackson and a tax to pay for economic development work in Goshen County.

Not all of the proposed tax measures on Wyoming ballots passed, however. Perhaps most striking was the voters' refusal to fund the completion of the Jackson Hole Museum's building project, targeting one measure out of 11 on the ballot to shoot down. The question to answer is, why is one project rejected while

others pass? What makes the difference to the voting public?

The state of Wyoming levies a 4-cent sales tax statewide with 31 percent of the money raised from this source funneling directly back to the city or county where it was collected. The rest of the money goes to state

"The question to answer is, why is one project rejected while others pass? What makes the difference to the voting public?"

government. The constitution allows counties to levy an additional 5th and 6th cent sales tax, known as local option taxes to garner additional revenues. The 5th cent tax is a general-purpose tax spent locally for operating expenses. The 6th cent is a special purpose tax used to pay for infrastructure and other specifically identified projects.

Most counties find the state sales tax in-

sufficient to cover their operating expenses or provide for capital improvements, hence the need to use local option taxes. The question is, in a climate where taxes are unpopular to put it mildly, what exactly are Wyoming voters willing to support?

Jonathan Schechter, an economist with the Jackson-based think tank the Charture Institute, believes it comes down to three basic criteria.

"One, voters need to feel comfortable that the project is not going to cost them a lot. Two, they need to feel a connection with the proposed project. And three, there has to have been a thoughtful advance effort to educate voters about the proposal in order to gain their support," he says.

Some projects have a natural constituency—bikers support pathways, swimmers and families aquatic centers, medical professionals hospital expansions—others require a concerted publicity campaign to explain the proposal and garner enough support

SEE TAXES, WEDA-2

MARK YOUR
CALENDAR

2011 WEDA Events

January 11 & 12, 2011 WEDA Winter Economic Development Conference, Little America, Cheyenne.
January 11 WEDA Economic Development Legislative Reception, Little America, Cheyenne.



Wyoming Business Council News:

The mission of the Business Council is to facilitate the economic growth of Wyoming. The Business Council, a state government agency, concentrates its efforts on providing assistance for existing Wyoming companies and start-ups, helping communities meet their development and diversification needs, and recruiting new firms and industries targeted to complement the state's assets. For more information, please visit www.wyomingbusiness.org.

JACKSON COMPANY RECEIVES FUNDS TO FURTHER TOXIN RESEARCH

Ethnobotanics, Inc., of Jackson, Wyo., received funding last month to further its work in developing a diagnostic test for specific toxins found in water samples.

The company received a \$5,000 Phase 0 award from the Wyoming SBIR/STTR Initiative (WSSI) to help them prepare and submit a Phase I Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) proposal to the National Science Foundation (NSF) in Decem-

ber. The majority of the Phase 0 funding will be used to add key consultants to Ethnobotanics' team and to support travel to the NSF for agency consultation. Remaining funds will be used for proposal development and the collection of preliminary data.

Ethnobotanics, Inc., is working to develop a diagnostic test that would identify toxins produced by cyanobacteria, also known as blue-green algae, at low concentrations. However, current tests require expensive laboratory equipment and sustained time and effort. Ethnobotanics' rapid diagnostic kit would provide a biotechnical solution to identifying whether water treatment processes are adequate and if further treatment is necessary to improve human and animal health safety.

"Cyanobacteria are an increasing problem," said Dr. James Metcalf, research fellow at Ethnobotanics. "These funds will be used to seek additional SBIR funding for further development of antibodies specific to cyanotoxins, allowing rapid and accurate determination of their presence in water samples."

"Ethnobotanics has put together an impressive team of

highly qualified researchers," said Kelly Haigler Cornish, WSSI outreach coordinator. "We are excited about their toxin research and the impact it can have on human health and look forward to helping them develop a competitive Phase I proposal."

The Wyoming SBIR/STTR Initiative (WSSI) is sponsored by the Wyoming Business Council and administered by the University of Wyoming Office of Research and Economic Development. The mission of this partnership is to increase the number of federal SBIR awards received by Wyoming small businesses by providing funding assistance through the WSSI Phase 0 program. The program facilitates the preparation of competitive proposals in the annual national \$2.5 billion SBIR competition for Phase I (up to \$150,000) and Phase II (up to \$1 million) awards. Any Wyoming tech-based, for-profit small business or individual desiring to submit a Phase I proposal to any of the eleven participating federal SBIR agencies is eligible to apply for a WSSI Phase 0 award. For further information on the WSSI and SBIR programs, go to www.uwyo.edu/sbir, or email: wssi@uwyo.edu.

TAXES, FROM WEDA-1

to ensure its acceptance.

Goshen County's quarter-cent tax to fund economic development is a classic example of a hard sell. Many voters have no idea exactly what economic development entails and so the concept needs defining to get people behind the idea of committing their hard-earned dollars to yet another tax for yet another cause. In spite of this potential obstacle, voters renewed the tax—which originally passed in 2006—this past fall by 56 percent.

Part of the reason for this year's success stems from the fact that revenues from the tax—which generated \$885,000 over two years for the county—have gone into developments that benefit the entire community such as the Cold Spring Business Park Development and the Hawk Springs Community Building. In total, the tax was used to fund 14 projects, assist seven organizations and match funds for development efforts that the small rural communities in Goshen County could not afford on their own. Voters could see the impact of their investment with these projects, and were, therefore, more inclined to continue to support the tax. Goshen County also did a good job marketing the tax and explaining its benefits to the public prior to the election.

"It was very important to the economic development board to provide information to voters about how the previously approved funds had been spent to show accountability, careful planning and so forth," says Lisa Johnson, the executive director of the Goshen County Economic Development Corp. (GCEDC).

"Another campaign strategy was to have a booth at the county fair with a huge county map showing the 14 projects that had been located throughout the county," she adds. "The booth was operated by economic development board members. Again, it was important for us to demonstrate accountability in order to ensure voter support."

"People are willing to pay for things. But you have to make an argument that makes sense," Charture Institute's Schechter says. "The Jackson Hole Museum did not run a good campaign. They took it for granted that people would be supportive of their efforts. Unfortunately for them, they were wrong," he says.

The Jackson Hole Museum board of directors conceded in a post-election *Jackson Hole News and Guide* article that they had not been effective at selling their proposal to the public. Schechter says he cannot recall seeing much in the way of advertisements or signs advocating for the measure. He also says that

he thinks the fact that the museum had asked for and received funds from a special purpose excise tax in 2006 and were now coming back for more may have swayed voters.

"No one could have foreseen the unexpected problems the museum has run into in making their building serviceable. They have had all sorts of legitimate issues and cost overruns that were not predictable," Schechter says. "But the public seemed to feel that they had gone back on their promise—the promise that they wouldn't come back to ask for more money—and that carried a lot of weight with voters."

Schechter wrote a column for the *Jackson Hole News and Guide* prior to the election breaking down the exact costs per Teton County resident associated with passing the one-cent special purpose excise tax. He determined people would spend approximately \$50 extra per year in sales taxes. In return the tax would generate more than \$9 million annually to help finance various projects, which this year ranged from a new transit facility for START buses to funds for library improvements, hospital expansion, and pathway projects. The total cost of all the measures on the ballot was \$38 million, which will take approximately four years to pay off. The Jackson Hole Museum request was for \$4 million. Many of the other proposals were for less money, and some, such as the hospital and library projects were for considerably more (\$11 and \$8 million respectively).

"My article pointed to the fact that these measures were not going to cost a great deal to people individually, so voters should not let their fear of taxes sway their decision. Rather they should base their vote on whether they believe the proposed projects merit their support," Schechter says.

In Fremont County, voters had two facilities projects to vote on in the November election. Here one passed and one failed. Voters agreed to an increase in their property tax to pay for a new health and science building at Central Wyoming College (CWC) but voted against supporting a 1-cent capital facilities sales tax to fund Meadowlark Cottages, a residential facility for senior citizens. Both projects were based in Riverton, but serve the entire county.

"I think the difference was that voters felt the CWC facility would benefit the entire county, while Meadowlark Cottages was seen as a Riverton-specific project," says Scott Goetz, the executive director of the Lander Chamber of Commerce.

The perception that a project will benefit everyone appears to be critical in swaying voters. In Park County, West Park Hospital asked voters to accept a one-cent tax to collect \$14.2 million of a projected \$26.2 million expansion and modernization project for the Cody-based facility. Sixty-two percent of county voters voted rejected the request. The tax failed in all but two of the county's 29 precincts and was particularly unpopular outside Cody. In Powell, 84 percent of voters voted against the proposal.

Larry French, a Powell insurance agent, formed a group—Citizens for Responsible Taxation—to oppose the West Park Hospital project. He said at a public meeting in Cody before the election, "We just feel the timing is poor and it is not a benefit for everybody in the county."

Opponents cited a number of concerns about the hospital



To read about 70 community and state economic development projects in the past year, see WEDA's annual Success Stories publication inserted in this issue of the Wyoming Business Report.

project, one of which was the fact that Park County has competing hospital districts—one in Cody and one in Powell. Voters outside the Cody district did not seem to buy West Park's argument that people living outside the Cody hospital district would see some positive effect from the West Park project.

The project's opponents also criticized West Park's board of directors for failing to include the public in the planning process. Hospital planners said they have been working on the project for five years and all their meetings were open, but opponents pointed out that hospital meetings are poorly publicized and sparsely attended, so most citizens had little knowledge of the planning going on.

Donald Bentzen, who ran for West Park's board in the November election but failed to secure a seat, was quoted in the Powell Tribune as saying, "People were not necessarily against the project, but they voted against it because they felt misled. Greater public involvement would have resulted in greater voter buy-in."

Voter buy-in was also the determining factor in Albany County's decision to vote in a 6th cent tax last May according to Joe Somodi from the Laramie Economic Development Corporation (LEDC).

"In October 2009 the Laramie City Council had a town meeting to get input from the city of Laramie, the Albany County Commissioners and the City of Rock River on funding needs for the community," he said. "They then put together a proposal based on that input. I think the projects were much more palatable to voters because they felt as if they were part of the decision. Even if you did not go to the town meetings, you knew there had been an opportunity for public involvement."

73.5 percent of Albany County voters voted in favor of the eight measures that ended up on the ballot after the public planning process. Somodi believes that not only was the public input critical to the successful passage of these measures, he also feels the fact that the revenue is only used for purposes identified by the voters helps ensure community support.

"Voters can look at our infrastructure and understand the need for funds. They see it as government's job to maintain and improve the community's infrastructure, and recognize they need to make sure resources are available for local government to do its job," Somodi says. "The resistance I see to taxes seems to have more to do with the way people are spending money and less to do with the tax itself."

Voters, in spite of their anti-tax rhetoric, are not totally naïve about how government works and have accepted the fact that some taxes are necessary. Just what they are willing to pay for depends, but in general Jonathan Schechter's three-point criteria seems to provide a useful guideline for determining what will and will not pass: Voters want to know things won't cost too much; they have to see a direct benefit; and, in many cases, they need to be educated in order to understand the first two points.

Conference Bulletin Board

Wyoming Governor's Hospitality & Tourism Conference
January 31-February 1, 2011, Little America, Cheyenne, WY
Registration: www.wyominggovernorsconference.com

GRO-Biz Conference and Idea Expo
February 22-24, 2011
Evanston, WY - Roundhouse
Registration: www.regonline.com/grobizidea
800-348-5194 or 866-253-3300

Wind River Business Conference/Native American Business Expo
Wednesday, May 4, 2011
Central Wyoming College, Riverton, WY
Intertribal Education and Community Center



WEDA Winter Economic Development Conference

January 11 & 12, 2011 • Little America, Cheyenne

Learn how to leverage your existing economic development dollars to make your projects happen with strategic partnering.

Hosted by Wyoming Economic Development Association
Sponsored by Wyoming Business Council, Rocky Mountain Power,
and Wyoming Community Development Authority

To register, go to www.wyomingeda.org/training.htm
or contact WEDA at 307-332-5546
info@wyomingeda.org

CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS:

TUESDAY, January 11

Starts 1:00 p.m. - Conference Registration, networking & refreshments

How to Leverage your Grants to "Git 'er Done"

State and federal experts can incorporate other funding mechanisms into your projects.

Funding Partners: Moderated by Shawn Reese, Wyoming Business Council

- Alana Cannon, USDA Rural Development
- Jodi Duncan, Economic Development Administration (EDA)
- Rob Tompkins, State Lands and Investment Board (SLIB)
- Rich Douglass, WyDOT Industrial Roads Program

Structuring Multiple Partners: Do's, Don'ts and Best Practices

When you have partners, what happens in the Business Ready Community grant/loan application process? Here are "best practices" to structure projects to make your application successful, from application development to procurement.

Shawn Reese, Wyoming Business Council and Funding Partners

Economic Development Legislative Update - Lynn Birleffi, WAGAN; Scott Sutherland & Linda Harris, WEDA Legislative Committee Co-Chairs

WEDA 6th Annual Economic Development Legislative Reception

Legislative Reception Sponsored by Rocky Mountain Power, Cheyenne Light, Fuel & Power, and Forward Casper

WEDNESDAY, January 12

Starts 8:00 a.m. - Breakfast & Recognition Awards

Leveraging the Use of Wyoming Business Council Regional Directors to Bring Value to Your Project

Leah Brusolino, James Klessens, Jim Davis and Dave Spencer

Discussion on Property Inventory on Wyoming Business Council Website, Ben Avery & Sean Stevens

WEDA Membership meeting - Election of Board

Lunch: Minerals, Business and Economic Development Committee Overview and Awards, Conference ends 1:00 p.m.

INSULTECH ARRIVES IN EVANSTON

The City of Evanston announced the arrival of InsulTech, a thermal and acoustical insulation manufacturer from Santa Ana, Calif. to the community in June, 2010. The company commenced their operations in the building formerly occupied by Everett Graphics in the Union Center Business Park.

"This is an exciting event for the City of Evanston," declared Mayor Will Davis. "At a time when people are talking about job losses and economic decline, it has been great to be able to welcome a new company to the community with national and worldwide customers. This company has excellent growth potential, and we anticipate many new, well-paying jobs in the Evanston area," Davis added.

InsulTech immediately assumed the lease agreement from original leasee, Everett Graphics. Due to the drastic economic downturn in late 2007, Everett Graphics, a carton manufacturer, reluctantly vacated the structure in the fall of 2008, but continued to honor their lease payments until June when InsulTech took over. The 62,500 sq. ft. building was initially constructed with the assistance of a Business Ready Community grant from the Wyoming Business Council (WBC) to the City of Evanston in 2005. In July of 2006, Everett Graphics moved into the facility, and at the height of their operation, employed approximately 25 full- and part-time workers.



WBC Southwest Regional Director Elaina Zempel remarked that the grant program was successful in that it created a facility capable of attracting new manufacturing businesses, such as InsulTech to the city. "The decision by Everett Graphics to leave the Evanston location was difficult; however, the building and surrounding infrastructure has served as a great marketing tool for the area. The Wyoming Business Council is pleased that InsulTech has come to Evanston, creating new jobs and occupying the building," Zempel said.

InsulTech was established in January, 1994 by Tom Bercaw and has since become an industry leader in the development and manufacturing of a wide range of insulation products. InsulTech's products are utilized in the oil and gas industry, renewable energy production, military applications, the aerospace industry, as well as marine applications and power generation. In recent years, the company began to outgrow their current headquarters in southern California, spurring the search for a larger facility. According to InsulTech President Chris Harano, the pursuit to find a more spacious structure began in earnest during the summer of 2009 when the economy, especially in California, started to stabilize. Exploring various locations throughout the West and in Wyoming, Bercaw and Harano came upon the building in Evanston and soon realized it would be ideal for their relocation and expansion plans.

"We are excited about our new manufacturing facility in Evanston, Wyoming. Our business is growing and our markets are competitive. We needed to find a location where we could expand our manufacturing capabilities and increase our competitive position. Evanston provided us the opportunity to locate in a community that is business friendly, attractive for our employees, and logistically central to servicing our customers in North America," said Harano.

Since assuming the lease in late June, InsulTech has ordered new equipment, hired a plant manager, will be hiring a production staff and is anticipated to commence operation late 2010. It is expected that between 20 to 40 new positions will be created by the company in the near future.

"We plan to move certain manufacturing operations from California to Evanston this summer, plus expand our manufacturing capabilities and capacity in the months to come. The types of jobs that will be created are manufacturing, engineering, management, sales and customer support," Harano stated. "We look forward to working with the local community and growing our business in Evanston."

GOVERNOR, FROM WEDA-1

Before the election last November, I wrote:

"I see State government as providing a welcoming environment for economic development. I see State government as partnering with others in WEDA for such development. I see the State as a provider of funds — through loans, grants, appropriations — to further economic development in Wyoming. The State has to support education and other efforts to develop the needs of businesses for workers. As economic development proceeds, workers need to be there for it. The State has to support workforce development fully.

An atmosphere favoring economic development has to come from the top down, and ... as the State's chief executive, I will create such an atmosphere. I will put Wyoming businesses and workers first because that is most important to me; and in my administra-

tion there will be a "Wyoming - open for business" attitude. The governor's voice in support of economic development means a lot, and my voice will be heard."

I meant what I said. There are benefits that flow in all directions — to citizens, businesses and localities — from economic development. A year from now, at the beginning of 2012, I would like to write an article that chronicles a year of business successes, economic progress, and many new private sector jobs. That will require the efforts of many, but I am confident our economy can thrive again.

As I noted above in this article, looking to the past can be instructive. When Governor Stan Hathaway took office in 1967, Wyoming was in a period of economic doldrums. During his tenure, Governor Hathaway worked hard to turn Wyoming's economy around and make it thrive. We can make that happen again.

and historic preservation.

Wisniewski is a recent graduate of the University of Colorado at Denver's graduate program in Urban and Regional Planning. Most recently, Wisniewski worked as a dual-departmental intern for the city of Greeley, Colo., supporting the Current-Planning and Historic Preservation offices. Prior to returning to graduate school, he worked for five years in construction management. Wisniewski may be reached at 307.777.2934 or scott.wisniewski@wybusiness.org.

Wyoming Main Street is a program of the Wyoming Rural Development Council and a division of the Wyoming Business Council. For more information visit www.wyomingmainstreet.org.

New Faces, New Places

Wyoming Main Street welcomes Scott Wisniewski

The Wyoming Main Street program welcomes newly hired Scott Wisniewski, a senior specialist who will help Wyoming communities revitalize and capitalize on their historic downtowns for economic development. Wyoming Main Street strives to improve the social and economic well-being of Wyoming's communities by assisting them in capitalizing on the unique identity, assets and character of their downtown areas through economic development

WEDA Member News:

Sheridan Announces Business Incubator Facility

The Sheridan County Board of Commissioners purchased condominium space within 1981 Double Eagle Drive and signed a subsequent lease agreement with Forward Sheridan, Inc., for 5,400 square feet of office space. The facility is managed as the Sheridan High-Tech Business Incubator.

Sheridan County purchased the facility with funds awarded by the Wyoming Business Council under their Business Ready Communities Grant program; the grant's matching fund requirements were met by Progressive Development, LLC, a private development company that constructed the facility.

Dick Weber, chairman of Forward Sheridan's Board of Directors, says "This is a great project for the Sheridan community. This new incubator facility will not just provide office space for new high-tech ventures, but will also provide technical assistance to those businesses through partners like the Wyoming Business Council, the Small Business Development Center, the Wyoming Technology Business Center, Sheridan College, and members of Forward Sheridan's board. We are focused on growing new companies and providing opportunities for local entrepreneurs to succeed."

Success will be demonstrated in hiring staff, growing business revenues, and eventually transitioning to commercial properties in Sheridan. Forward Sheridan will relocate their offices to the new facility. Additionally, the facility will provide space for the regional directors of the Wyoming Business Council and Small Business Development Center to work. For questions about the facility or incubator operations, please contact Jay Stender, Executive Director of Forward Sheridan, at (307) 673-8004 or via email: jay@forwardsheridan.com.

Green River Futures Projects Continue

Green River Futures was recently awarded a USDA Rural Development grant in the amount of \$73,000 to help start and expand small rural businesses. This grant requires a 10% match from Futures, which has already loaned out half of its available funds. In fact, with the additional cash in Futures' revolving loan fund, it can lend out up to \$60,000 more and it has been charging 4% on mostly five-year loans. This revolving loan fund has been used by 13 businesses that created or saved 27 jobs so far, and has grown to over \$160,000!

Green River Futures was also recently awarded a \$1.5 million Business Ready Community Development grant and a \$300,000 Community Development Block Grant to renovate a historic 30,000 square foot downtown building in Green River. Futures also received a separate \$300,000 CDBG and a \$146,474 SEP-ARRA Retrofit grant to purchase the building, remove all interior asbestos, put on a new roof, repair the brick walls and replace all the exterior windows and doors. The final \$1.8 million will be used to renovate the top two floors. The building already is used by six businesses that employ 12 people and when the renovations are completed it will help create another 48 jobs. The building is so large it is like having a small business park and when it is completed and rented out it will help revitalize the downtown area. The City of Green River has contributed \$100,000 to the project and Futures has contributed \$147,022 so far.

The City of Green River voted not to hire Green River Futures, Inc. during its budget vote in June of 2010. This was the major source of funding for Green River Futures, but the organization continues to operate with a nine-member board and Brad Sutherland as its President. Futures is considering its options, including merging with a multi-county or county economic development organization. If interested in such a merger with Futures, or for assistance, please call Brad Sutherland at (307) 871-1941.

Carbon County Unveils Moving Forward Together Campaign

The Carbon County Economic Development Corporation (CCEDC) announced the launch of Moving Forward Together, a five-year program of work to strengthen existing county businesses, and to attract new companies to the region. Lonnie Hobbs, CCEDC Board President, calls the plan "an opportunity to increase prosperity, and to lessen the shocks of cyclical energy prices."

"Cindy Wallace has changed the face of economic development for us in the last 12 months," Hobbs said, referring to CCEDC's new Executive Director. "Real companies, including manufacturers, are starting to look at us and locate here. But other communities are out-spending us by two, five, ten times. We need to give Cindy the tools she needs to compete."

Plans call for attracting 200 new, high-paying jobs to Carbon County. Targeted industries include light manufacturing, data centers, wind-energy supply chain, biomass and industrial/mechanical services.

"This will be a true public-private partnership," said Sherrod France, a local banker and a campaign volunteer. "The towns and county have shouldered the effort well, but it's time for business to step up as full partners. We can make a real difference."

National Community Development Services (NCDS) is assisting CCEDC with the fundraising process. NCDS has helped hundreds of communities across the country achieve their goals over the last 40 years, including western towns like Cheyenne and Sheridan, Wyoming and Great Falls, Montana.

Laramie EDC Fosters Technology Partnership For Region's Workforce

■ Why can't I find a qualified candidate who is able to fill my technical opening?

■ Once I hire a good employee, who seems to meet all the requirements for my job, why does he or she leave after a short time?

■ What technical knowledge, skills and talent are critical to my business now and in the future?

■ How will the strategic direction of my business affect the technology, innovation and skilled workforce I'll need to be successful?

Most growth oriented, technology-based employers have struggled with one or more of these questions. Finding good answers to workforce issues isn't easy, particularly if you think you're the only one affected by them.

To reduce these struggles, Laramie Economic Development Corporation (LEDC) is committed to assisting industries thrive and prosper by identifying and removing barriers to growth. As a reflection of this commitment, in 2010 LEDC submitted a proposal for a \$30,000 Stage I Industry Partnership Solutions (IPS) Grant from Wyoming's Workforce Development Council and Department of Workforce Services. LEDC was awarded that grant, which in turn provides an opportunity to help the region's technology sector businesses identify, and potentially resolve common workforce issues through partnership initiatives. As a regional advantage, southeastern Wyoming is rich with resources needed for successful partnerships.

The Wyoming Department of Workforce Services sponsored an IPS Academy in late September 2010. At that workshop, Laramie's partnership gave itself a new name, refined its mission and began planning the organization and processes that will guide future actions.

The partnership is now called SNAPIT (Solutions Networking Applied to People In Technology), and its mission is as follows:

SNAPIT is a collaborative partnership created to identify common issues, provide custom solutions and develop a skilled workforce to support the growth and provide a voice for technology-based companies, in order to strengthen the economic region.

A partnership Board was created to plan, coordinate and implement action needed to both stimulate and accommodate participation among technology-based businesses in the region.

The primary role of the SNAPIT partnership under Stage I of the Industry Partnership Solutions Grant is to identify and reveal root causes to common workforce issues affecting the region's technology sector. This will be accomplished through confidential interviews, surveys and the creation of baseline measurements with participating businesses.

The partnership is currently in the process of engaging technology-based companies, in order to gather applicable business and workforce data. It is anticipated that more focused employer input will be secured in the weeks ahead through group forum discussions.

For more information about the SNAPIT Partnership, call LEDC at 307-742-2212.

Plans Heating Up In Cold Springs Business Park

A new billboard marks the location of the Cold Springs Business Park, a 66-acre industrial development planned by Goshen County Economic Development Corporation (GCEDC). When completed, the development will feature 19 lots, ranging in size from 1.5 to 10 acres. The project is funded with local quarter-cent economic development sales tax funds and a Business Ready Community Grant from the Wyoming Business Council.

Goshen County received a \$3 million grant from the Wyoming Business Council to install infrastructure and construct a 60,000 sq. ft. manufacturing facility for the expansion of local company Schlager Manufacturing. The project was designed for Goshen County EDC to own the building and lease it to the company.

Schlager Manufacturing, founded by Ron Schlager fifteen years ago, designs and manufactures agricultural equipment, metal art and pickup accessories. In October the economic development office learned that Schlager Manufacturing would not expand in the new business park as planned due to Mr. Schlager's death.

The economic development board will recommend that Goshen County request that the scope and budget of the grant be amended to omit the construction of a building but install infrastructure – water and wastewater lines, electric service, and streets – to serve approximately 7 lots. Wyoming Business Council Regional Director Tom Johnson advised the economic development board meeting that the grant budget would need to be amended to a \$1 million project.

In June GCEDC advertised for proposals from design-builders and received 5 proposals. GCEDC had selected Hi Plains Construction, Inc. of Torrington for the construction project and was working to secure all sources of financing in order to enter a construction contract.

One of the events that led to the development of the Cold Springs Business Park was when Goshen County was selected as a finalist for the coal gasification research center proposed by the University of Wyoming and GE Energy. Cheyenne was ultimately selected as the location for the \$100 million project in 2008.

The UW-GE project required a 35-acre parcel with room for future expansion. The East Torrington Industrial Park owned by the City of Torrington has approximately 20 developable acres available, so GCEDC proposed a 35-acre parcel four miles east of Lingle. GE officials later told GCEDC that the site would have been more competitive with access to public water supply and wastewater treatment system and industrial zoning.

GCEDC located and purchased the 66-acre site with frontage along US Highway 85 for the Cold Springs Business Park using economic development sales tax funds. Construction on the infrastructure is expected to begin next summer. The total cost to fully develop all 66 acres is estimated at \$2.8 million. GCEDC intends to develop the park in two phases, or as funds become available.

Job Openings LARAMIE EDC

OFFICE MANAGER: Full-time, salaried position
Salary: \$25,000 - \$30,000 (Based on experience)
Benefits: Medical, dental, vision, vacation, sick leave, etc.

Entry level position in the field of community economic development. Employee will provide technical assistant to local development efforts. The employee will perform a wide range of activities and must be able to prioritize diverse duties and work with many projects simultaneously.

Submit a letter of application, resume, and the names, addresses, e-mail addresses and telephone numbers of at least three references. Review of applications will begin immediately and will continue until the position is filled. Applications should be submitted in electronic format (Microsoft Word or Adobe Acrobat). Applications, questions, and inquiries should be directed to Gaye Stockman at gstockman@laramiewy.org or (307) 742-2212. For information about the Laramie Economic Development Corporation visit our website at www.laramiewy.org.



**WYOMING ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
ASSOCIATION**
W E D A

WEDA's mission is to:
"Provide leadership and support to
foster economic development in Wyoming."

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