

NEWSLETTER

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



WYOMING ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
ASSOCIATION

May 2008

W E D A

President's notes

Partnerships vs. Handouts

I have recently moved from a "Revenue Challenged County" (low sales and property tax per capita) to a "Mineral Impacted County" (rapid growth due to mineral extraction). These terms have been used by the legislature to justify giving both areas more money for their infrastructure needs, which includes water, sewer, streets, roads, sidewalks and local government buildings. The state has generously pumped millions of dollars into these communities to help them provide essential services to their residents. However, we may have finally reached the point of declining state revenues.

The state will continue to enjoy record revenues for a while, but they may not be increasing, which means the state cannot fund new programs without taking funds from existing programs. So how should the state continue to help fund the many expensive infrastructure needs of our communities, which includes new landfills and water systems that must meet the more stringent and more expensive environmental standards?

The state cannot afford to fund the majority of our infrastructure needs with legislative handouts. But, it still has adequate revenue to partner with communities and counties that are willing to make significant contributions. Those counties that levy a one-cent sales tax for infrastructure should receive priority for receiving state assistance. The sales tax provides a reliable consistent source of revenue that all local governments feel is necessary for them to carry out their duties.

For those counties that claim to be too conservative to pass a sales tax for their infrastructure needs,

See President's Notes, WEDA-2

Ben Avery Shares His Thoughts with WEDA

By Tom Lacock, Senior Marketing and Public Relations Specialist, Wyoming Business Council

After a near 25-year career banking in Lander, Powell and even Denver, Ben Avery joined the Wyoming Business Council in 2001 as the Loan/Portfolio Program Manager where he oversaw the Challenge Loan Program working with lenders throughout the state to find financial tools for businesses in Wyoming. In August 2007, Avery was named the Director of the Business and Industry Division of the Wyoming Business Council, which is the lead business recruiting division within the Business Council. Last week, Paula McCormick of WEDA asked Avery a series of questions that she received from WEDA's Board members.

Q: What is Wyoming's greatest strength in economic development?

A: I think there are two – one being the experience and depth of knowledge of all the local economic development directors and the way they all work together through WEDA. When we go to national trade shows accompanied by our WEDA partners, those strengths really stand out. The second strength is the State has excess funds and is putting them to work through the Business Ready Communities Grant Program, which is a tool no other state in the nation has, to develop infrastructure in their business parks and buildings for businesses who are committed to grow to or expand.

Q: What do you see as the greatest challenge for economic development in Wyoming?

A: I think there are two challenges there, too – workforce and workforce housing probably are the greatest challenge not only in Wyoming but everywhere. That, coupled with how we attract and retain workforce. The second factor, due to the rising fuel prices, is our distance to markets. Any business that requires bringing in raw material or sending out finished product will be looking more and more at the cost of fuel, so our distance from major markets will be an impediment. It is too bad that we don't have a lot of inter-modal distribution. I think Cheyenne is developing some of that, and thanks to their most recent Business Ready Community grant, Casper is developing some of that too. We are also missing some short-line railroads whose target markets would be businesses that need to fill one railroad car or a series of cars to tie into UP or Burlington Northern. Without those short-lines and



Ben Avery

See Avery, WEDA-3

Community College District Focused on Creating Workforce Training Programs

By Lisa Bisbee

In the midst of a workforce shortage, the Northern Wyoming Community College District (NWCCD) is working closely with business and industry officials to create new programs and customize training to help area companies train both new and current employees. "Our purpose is to serve industry through training," said Cindi Thiede, NWCCD's Assistant Vice President for Program Development. "That's why we want to be responsive to the industry in our area."

Whether businesses need their workers to have upgraded skills or want new employees to have customized training, the college is working to respond to those needs, Thiede said. Recently, a new Workforce Training and Development Plan was prepared by the college to give businesses a road map on how the college plans to provide higher quality educational services. As part of that plan, Thiede met with more than 20 area business and industry officials

earlier this year in order to understand what area businesses need in the form of training. Those officials became a private industry council that the college will continue to rely on as they look to respond to the needs of area businesses. "Developing industry relationships is prominent in our mission and vision," she said.

Ranging from energy officials to hospitality and retail owners, Thiede said the private industry council helped gather key information to determine new training courses and industry certificates. The private industry council is imperative to the success of the college responding to future needs for training, educational courses and industry certificates. "We determined what kind of training they would like us to offer," she said. "They gave us a lot of input on our goals."

Through the council's guidance throughout the year, the college can create meaningful and engaging learning opportunities through innovative teaching and learning. Through the

partnership with a business-driven council, Thiede said they hope to strengthen community and industry relationships by providing new and improved programs and services. "They will be very instrumental for us in the future," she said. "They will serve as a sounding board. It's very beneficial to us, as well as the companies."

Though unique to Wyoming, the idea of a private industry council is not a new idea. In fact, Thiede helped develop a similar council at a technical college in Wisconsin where she worked for eight years. Though the main industry there was manufacturing, Thiede said the approach was similar and proved successful.

NWCCD's workforce training varies from professional development courses, to industrial training and continuing education courses. Through Industrial Training courses, or I-TEC, incumbent and emerging workers in the construction and energy industry can find upgraded skill training. But the college

See NWCCD, WEDA-3

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Mark Your Calendar

2008

May 14-16 "Preserve Wyoming 2008: Main Street and Beyond," Cheyenne
May 28-29 Governor's Workforce Summit, Laramie
May 29-30 WEDA Board Meeting and Strategic Planning Meeting, Hilton Garden Inn, Laramie
Sept. 23-24 WEDA Fall Conference, Holiday Inn, Laramie
Oct. 9-10 Idea Expo, Little America, Cheyenne

2009

February 9 WCCE Winter Conference & Leadership Dinner
February 10 WCCE Business Day at the Legislature & WEDA/WCCE
Legislative Reception, Little America, Cheyenne
February 11 WEDA Winter Conference, Little America, Cheyenne

Economic Development Grant Tank Filled Up by Legislature

By Brodie Farquhar

Wyoming drivers are, by definition, long distance drivers. We've all experienced the anxiety of watching the gas gauge drop ever lower toward empty, with nary a filling station in sight.

That riding-on-empty anxiety is similar to how state officials must have felt late last year, as local governments overwhelmed the coffers of state agencies funding economic development efforts — all driven by the Wyoming energy development juggernaut.

Fortunately, the Wyoming Legislature came to the rescue during the 2008 session, and responded to the "fill 'er up" request with \$234.4 million in grants — a bit more than the \$197 million in the past biennium. Wyoming Governor Dave Freudenthal and legislative leaders all emphasized that money was tighter, thanks to lower-than-expected energy revenues, while local governments still faced energy-driven growth demands.

Thanks, but ...

"While we appreciate the efforts by the legislature to address pressing infrastructure and growth needs for towns like Pinedale, we are still faced with large infrastructure updates that are required as soon as possible," said Pinedale Mayor Steve Smith, in that epicenter of energy development called the Jonah Field and the Pinedale Anticline. With Pinedale facing \$25 million in sewer, water and road infrastructure projects, Mayor Smith is disappointed that the Legislature has required more reports from municipalities, while providing \$2 million less than from the most recent

biennium.

Business ready

Shawn Reese, Director of the Wyoming Business Council's Investment Ready Communities program, said the Business Ready Community Program is funded at the \$79,250,000 level for the 2009-10 biennium, while the Community Facilities grant program has \$15 million for the next two years. He defined the purpose for the Business Ready program as infrastructure to start or grow businesses, with the facilities owned by local government and leased to business. The Community Ready program is more keyed to recreation or town beautification programs.

"An example of a Business Ready program would be extending a water line in Etna to help Teton Truss expand," said Reese. A community program example would be downtown improvements in Riverton and Laramie, or cleaning up a stretch of the Bear River and installing a kayak course," he added.

Reese said that as communities catch up on their infrastructure needs, the community readiness component of his programs will diminish over time. "We want to be nimble and be ready to react to opportunities," Reese said, of the Business Ready grants program. "It is difficult to forecast opportunities over the next year or so." He said he had a better feel for the Community Ready grants program, since that emerges from local government planning efforts.

More grants for communities

All told, the county block grants for

capital projects in Wyoming have \$191 million to work with for the 2009-2010 biennium, beginning July 1, 2008 and ending June 30, 2010. That's different from "direct distributions," which are not grant funds but may be used by cities, towns and counties as a match for grants.

There's also \$10 million for emergency capital projects (say a town's water system was declared unsafe due to pollution) and a \$33.4 million for unfunded or partially funded large capital construction projects.

To be eligible for these grants, the board of county commissioners and the governing bodies of the cities and towns within that county — that comprise at least seventy percent of the incorporated population — have to agree on which projects need funding. These block grants represent a continuation of the countywide consensus list process that was expanded statewide in 2007.

The State Loan and Investment Board had \$197-million for the 2007-08 biennium (the highest ever), said Robert Tompkins of SLIB's grants and loans office. This biennium, SLIB has \$234.4 million to work with, he said. We'll have a preliminary consensus list available by May 15th," said Tompkins.

He suggested that local governments applying for grants not count on the Legislature to come up with supplements next year. Grant applicants who are ready to break ground immediately could conceivably get funded by July 1, while others will want to stagger projects out over two construction seasons.

One innovative program this year is

based on the desire to save money on energy bills down the road. SLIB has \$1 million to conduct energy audits by experts who can fine-tune a building's energy conservation features in the planning/design stage, or retrofit a structure. "Teton County has what they call their 10/10 Project, to save 10 percent on their energy bill by 2010," said Tompkins. "It really is a wise and prudent use of state money."

On another front, Tompkins is surveying the 99 incorporated communities in Wyoming about the state of their sewer lines — many of which were installed 50 years ago and are breaking down now. Tompkins wants to assemble a report for the Select Committee on Local Government Financing this summer, to give legislators an idea of the scope of the problem facing Wyoming.

Job training

Jerimiah Rieman, policy analyst for the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services (WDWS), said the department is working on a more systematic way to distribute job training grants around the state. He said there has been concern in the Legislature that grants were distributed more on a first-come, first-serve basis, rather than a more targeted approach.

Rieman said the department has \$650,000 to work with in job training grants this upcoming year, and is responding to industry needs. WDWS is training and upgrading skills for the oil patch, he said, as well as the jobs of tomorrow, such as alternative fuel plants, wind power and National Center for Atmospheric Research super-computing center.

Wyoming Business Council Updates

BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS IDEA EXPO RETURNS

By Brandon Marshall

The Wyoming Business Council and its partners at the University of Wyoming are currently planning the 2008 Business-to-Business Idea Expo at the Little America Conference Center in Cheyenne, October 9-10.

The inaugural Idea Expo was held in Casper last Sept. as the Wyoming Business Council, the Small Business Development Center, Manufacturing-Works, Gro-biz, Wyoming Market Research Center, SBIR/STTR programs and Wyoming Research Products Center partnered to provide a one-stop business conference for Wyoming's entrepreneurs and established businesses to offer ideas and practical assistance for growth. The

Idea Expo is the only full-service business conference put on by the Wyoming Business Council and these partner programs at the University of Wyoming.

The keynote speaker for the Idea Expo is Doug Hall of Eureka! Ranch® (www.eurekaranch.com). Doug's high-energy presentation focusing on "igniting the chain reaction of top-line growth, helping companies to avoid the spiral of death" will be sure to help Wyoming's companies take on a new world of challenges and opportunities.

For more information on the conference, check out the conference website, www.wyomingideaexpo.com. The 2008 Business-to-Business Idea Expo is being sponsored by Rocky Mountain Power, Bresnan Communications, and the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services.

YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP

SEMINAR LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS

The Wyoming Business Council will once again be the lead for the Hugh O'Brian Youth (HOBY) Leadership Seminar in Cheyenne June 7-9. The Business Council helps sponsor and manage the event as a way to promote entrepreneurship to the youth of Wyoming. HOBY Leadership Seminars are designed for high school sophomores to recognize their leadership talents and apply them in becoming effective, ethical leaders in their home, schools, workplace and community. Currently, nearly 9,000 sophomores, representing as many high schools nationwide, attend one of over 70 HOBY Leadership Seminars held nationwide each year. HOBY Wyoming 2007 brought 29 students from around the Cowboy State to Cheyenne for

three days of leadership training.

This year's Wyoming HOBY seminar will take place at Laramie County Community College in Cheyenne June 7-9. Guidance counselors and principals around Wyoming have been given information on how to register students and there are already 45 signed up. The HOBY Wyoming committee seeks adult volunteers to offer their talents either before during or after the seminar. Among the tasks HOBY Wyoming is seeking help with are: finding speakers, fundraising, student recruitment and working with student ambassadors during the event. For more information or to become a volunteer contact Annie Wood (307.777.2844 or annie.wood@wybusiness.org) or Tom Lacock (307.777.2834 or tom.lacock@wybusiness.org).

President's Notes from WEDA-1

they sure don't have a problem asking the state for handouts in either grants or direct legislative appropriations. This is not a conservative versus liberal issue, but an issue of those who are willing to help pay for their needs (the responsible) versus those who want

everyone else in the state to pay for their needs (the cheap).

One more thing to keep in mind is that every time we look to reduce a tax, such as on property or groceries, we make ourselves more reliant on mineral taxes. I was here during the last boom and I worry this boom will not last forev-

er, either. Are we prepared to increase property taxes and start taxing groceries when this boom is over and the state needs additional revenue? It sure is difficult to increase taxes during economic downturns. If the state really wants to determine how much the elimination of grocery taxes has affected

communities, it should reinstate a half cent sales tax on groceries. This is not enough to hurt the consumer, but will provide accurate information to the state so it can truly make the communities whole as was promised.

Brad Sutherland, WEDA President

Avery from WEDA-1

more inter-modal, we are having a tough time getting UP or Burlington Northern very interested in adding any number of cars to any unit trains.

Q: What new programs are at work in the Business and Industry Division at the Wyoming Business Council?

A: We don't have any new programs planned. We are certainly open to new suggestions from WEDA members or the WEDA board. Most of the programs B&I does, as well as the Investment Ready Communities Division, are somewhat statutory driven, so we create programs to meet the obligations we have in statute. If we add a new program or if we determine internally a new program needs to be added, which requires more staffing, then quite often we need to budget for staffing and administration. Planning for a new program could take a year or longer to make sure you have the capacity to budget and administer it.

Q: What are the highlights of the Wyoming Business Councils B&I marketing plan for FY 2009-2010?

A: We have added a couple of trade shows in the areas of data centers and technology, which are industry sectors in which we need to have a presence. We will continue our presence at manufacturing and power generation trade shows, and the outdoor products venues such as the Wyoming Outdoor Product Days and SHOT Show. Those are all targeted industry sectors that have not changed through the years and we need to be there. In addition, any advertising we are doing is being done with publications that are more industry-specific. Hopefully the businesses in those industries will see our ad in those publications.

Q: How can WEDA members better partner with B&I?

A: I think they are all doing a great job. We encourage more WEDA members to attend trade shows with us, but I understand some of that is restrictive due to local budgets. Something else that has been helpful is the targeted industry studies. CAEDA just released theirs and in the fall Forward Sheridan completed one. The more that local communities look within themselves and figure out how they can build on their industry clusters and what fits their communities, the more we can support their efforts. We have procedures in

place to do a better job at the state level in qualifying inquiries from applicants. We are doing more background research on companies and individuals. Before anyone comes to the state and we show them around, we have vetted that they are the real deal. In the future, any time we get an inquiry from a business and collect a response, we will do a follow-up and try to set up a meeting with that company at their place of business. We'll invite our regional director as well as the local economic developers, so we can hopefully do a better job of closing the deal.

Q: What is the best source of business leads for B&I?

A: Sometimes that is hard to measure. I think a lot of business leads come from our presence at a trade show. Generally within a few weeks after a trade show, there is a stimulus of activity from businesses that were there. Regarding site selectors, it is hard to measure whether their interest in a state happened at a trade show or at an event years ago.

Q: How does B&I better promote relationships and partnerships with our local Economic Development Organization?

A: I make sure B&I has a presence on conference calls as well as at the WEDA Fall and Winter Conferences. We will always let WEDA members know of the trade shows we are going to and invite them to come with us.

Q: Studies have shown that Wyoming is losing a large percentage of its brightest citizens in the 18 - 35 year-old demographic. This loss is largely due to a lack of professional job opportunities. What is the WBC plan to address this lack of professional jobs in Wyoming?

A: This is really a mission of ours because we all have friends and family who have left the state because of a lack of opportunity to do the job they were trained for - either in college or through other methods. One of our goals in recruiting businesses is to find companies that require predominantly higher-paid professional positions. We target these companies at the diverse trade shows we attend and through other marketing efforts.

As we - B&I and WEDA - have more success in diversifying business identified through targeted industry studies, more managerial and professional types of jobs should be available. Although that is our primary focus, I

think it is important to remember that a significant amount of the available jobs in the workforce are not necessarily professional. High wages for many of Wyoming's young people are available without a college degree, but do require some sort of specialized skill training in order to compete for very attractive jobs in the construction trades, manufacturing and mineral industry.

The Wyoming Business Council is a partner in the task force created by the Department of Workforce Services to do research of sector strategies for workforce training. The studies will determine the best structure and types of training to be delivered to the workforce and how the method of training should be delivered, whether that is through Universities, the community college sector or private training facilities like the McMurry Training Center.

Q: Should the Business and Industry Division have workforce training as one of their focus goals?

A: B&I and the Wyoming Business Council have always had a very strong business partnership with the Department of Workforce Services (DWS), which performs that function for the state. The lead role for workforce training and workforce development is carried by DWS with our support.

Q: What is the nature of the Business Council's relationship with the Governor?

A: From my perspective we have a very positive relationship with the Governor and the Governor's staff. There is a major conference in Australia on energy and Rob Hurless couldn't go, so the Governor asked Bob Jensen to go for the state. I think from the Governor's office that shows a high level of respect towards Bob, and the rest of the council.

Q: How was the relationship between the WBC and the legislature this past session?

A: When you look at the tightness of the available funding, the fact that they added \$2 million to the Challenge Loan fund is encouraging. I think the legislature is supportive of the program and understands the benefit the program is providing to businesses of the state. Overall the Legislature was very supportive of the entire Business Council's base budget.

Q: What was the most helpful item to come out of the legislature for B&I this year?

A: I think it would be the increase in



allocation of funding for the Challenge Loan Program as well as the SBIR Phase 0 program allotment. Other than that all the other budget appropriations pretty much remained the same.

Q: What effect will the Workforce Housing Loan Program will have in Wyoming? What is needed to make this a more effective tool?

A: I think the program as currently directed by statute as a loan program will probably not get much, if any, use by communities in the state. We've been told for over a year now from WAM that very few communities are interested in it as a loan program. It is my personal opinion there are people on all sides of the fence. I think there are those who think it should be a grant program with a large amount of funding. Others don't think the State should be involved at all and the private sector should fill the infrastructure and development needs to pass that cost along through the price of the lots. To make this a useful program for communities, it probably needs to be converted to a grant program with an adequate amount of funding.

Q: Why is it most elected officials think bringing an Applebee's to town is economic development and don't understand that retail and services are a spin-off from good economic development and recruiting of primary jobs? It seems many elected officials want to see new restaurants, clothing stores, grocery stores etc. and instruct their Economic Development Directors to get them to the community.

A: Our primary job at the state level and the local level is to recruit more core jobs. However, it is always important to note that it takes every kind of business to create an economy. If all you have is industry or core jobs without retail, hospitality or recreation, you can't recruit workforce. The job of recruiting recreation or retail isn't the job of the local Economic Development Organization, but we should always be open and help those other types of business if they need a little assistance.

NWCCD from WEDA-1

also offers career skills development courses such as customer service, supervisory skills, computer training and basic auto maintenance. "We have three different types of courses that all fall under one umbrella: workforce training," Thiede said.

The private industry council isn't the only way the college is getting feedback from business owners and officials. Through one-on-one visits to businesses throughout the region, Thiede said she continues to learn how important customization is to area

companies. They want education tailored to meet their needs, instead of trying to fit their needs into an off-the-shelf product, she said. And that's exactly what the college can offer. Training may range from one day air conditioning training to an 80-hour electrical MSHA classes. "We can customize our training or we can design new programs to fit their needs," Thiede said.

With the challenges of many companies' around the clock schedule, Thiede said the college works diligently to tailor services to meet individual operating structures and schedules. While many

businesses cannot train employees during company time because they do not have enough workers to replace those in training, Thiede said the college can work with the company's schedule to ensure that workers receive needed critical training.

Teaming up with Forward Sheridan executive director Philippe Chino, Thiede and Matt Jones, Director of Workforce Development/Continuing Education, have already conducted visits to dozens of businesses in the region. "Your companies have to have an opportunity to grow," Chino said. "What we're doing is meeting with

companies just to find out about their need for workforce training." For some that might mean new training for upcoming projects, while for others it means customer service classes, he said.

As a result of several of individual visits, Thiede said the college is currently developing an energy technician program. A need voiced by several companies, Thiede said the college wants to respond to that request. "What we've heard from our visits is new programs and certificates are needed," she said. "I'm putting what I hear right into practice."

WEDA Member News:

Washakie Development Association Stimulates Workforce Housing

"Affordable and workforce housing continue to be talked about among the top issues throughout our state and nation. Rather than just join the buzz, the Washakie Development Association decided to try to quantify the need and work on the solution for the Worland-Ten Sleep area," according to Le Ann Baker, Washakie Development Association (WDA) Executive Director.

The idea for an event came from Maraca Homes, a local contractor coming to the WDA with the wish to build some affordable homes as a way to help people and give back to their community. The questions were, "Is there a need? How do we identify those in need?"

WDA contacted USDA Rural Development and brought interested parties together to make a plan. Less than 30 days from the first meeting, the first Home Ownership Opportunity Days was held on April 4th and 5th. The event was held in partnership with USDA Rural Development, Maraca Homes, Hake Realty/GMAC, and WCDA represented by Big Horn Federal Bank.

Maraca Homes came to the event with multiple plans for two and three bedroom single family homes, samples of cabinets, carpet, tile and windows for energy efficient homes to be built on existing town lots for a total price to fit the parameters of the USDA programs. Hake Realty/GMAC came with a variety of starter homes in a variety of price ranges for low to moderate incomes.

Thirty-two people attended the event in search of more information, of which 29 visited with USDA Rural Development and were pre-qualified for programs, with 25 applications being taken for further consideration and follow-up. In several cases applicants were counseled in ways to make their chances in six months more positive by paying down existing debt. Of the 32 attendees, more than half also visited with the WCDA representative.

Baker continued, "At the end of the day the contractor believes he will build two homes and possibly four, the realtor was thrilled to have a variety of leads to work with and the agencies representing multiple programs have completed some very important outreach. The Washakie Development Association can now truly say there is a need for workforce/affordable housing in Washakie County and we are working toward a solution."

The event was deemed a success and a second Home Ownership Opportunity Days is being planned for the fall. Baker concluded, "It might not seem like a big deal to large communities but four new homes in a small town has an impact. This could be just the beginning. The results could span the next few years as we see the attendees get to the right place in their lives to reach their goal of homeownership!"

Big Horn Mountain Coalition New Officers, Board Members

The Big Horn Mountain Coalition has announced new officers for the 2008-09 term, which begins June 1. A. L. "Smokey" Wildeman of Buffalo is president; Terry Wolf of Worland, Vice President; Philippe Chino of Sheridan, Treas-

urer; and Michael Lewis of Basin, Secretary. Wildeman and Wolf are county commissioners in Johnson and Washakie Counties, respectively. Chino is President/CEO of Forward Sheridan, Inc. and Michael Lewis is a council member for the town of Basin. New board members are Cindi Thiede, Ph.D., Asst. Vice President for Program Development, Northern Wyoming Community College District.

The Coalition represents a four-county Economic Development District (EDD) of the Economic Development Administration, U. S. Department of Commerce. Counties within the District include Big Horn, Johnson, Sheridan and Washakie. Federal funding makes it possible for the Coalition to enhance economic activities and provide leadership, coordination and cooperation between local, state and Federal entities. Funding is also provided by the four counties and seventeen incorporated cities and towns throughout the four-county District. Coalition headquarters office is in Kaycee, 214 Center Street, P. O. Box 250, 82639.

Hot Springs County EDC Business Park Update

In March 2007, Hot Springs County received a Business Ready Community Grant to develop 22 acres south of Thermopolis into a business park, which will be divided into 14 business ready lots. The land is owned by the Thermopolis-Hot Springs County Economic Development Company. The grant is divided into two phases and funding for each phase is \$1.5 million for a total grant of \$3 million.

Phase I consists of all on-site improvements including streets, sidewalk, curb and gutter, water lines, sewer lines, street lights and landscaping. This phase went to bid in December 2007, was awarded to JTL Group of Casper, Wyoming and construction began in January 2008.

Phase II consists of extending the main sewer line 3,000 feet to the business park boundary. This phase went to bid in February 2008, was awarded to DRM of Gillette, Wyoming and construction is scheduled to begin in April. Phase II also included obtaining six private property easements.

The Red Rock Business Park should be ready for occupancy by September 2008. The Thermopolis-Hot Springs County Economic Development Company is currently working on a marketing plan.

Laramie Regional Airport Breaks Ground on DeltaNu Facility

Laramie Regional Airport Joint Powers Board broke ground on a new 12,000 square foot facility on March 27, 2008. Attending the celebration was their new tenant, DeltaNu, which is the leader and innovator in free-space Raman spectrometers. This state-of-the-art facility will feature a 7,000 square foot manufacturing and production area with loading docks, several laboratories for product demonstrations and applications research, an area for research facilities and product development, and the remainder of the space will be devoted to office space.

With the introduction of several new products and increased sales the new, larger building was a necessity for the company and offers multiple options for

future expansion. The new building will accommodate Delta Nu, a rapidly growing company and provide space for projected growth. The new building is scheduled for completion in October 2008 and will be part of the Professional Airpark and Research Center adjacent to the Laramie Regional Airport.

This project is being funded through the Business Ready Community Grant funds and was slated as a "spec" building. The Laramie Regional Airport and Laramie Economic Development Corporation worked on the grant application and received \$1.8M in funding from the Wyoming Business Council. This is the first building in the Laramie Regional Airports business park and according to former Airport Board member will not be the last. "This is one of the few 'shovel ready' sites that exist in a business park in Laramie and we are set up to be able to accommodate businesses which need immediate airport access," Ockers said.



Campbell County EDC introduces "POWER Topics"

"Skip the minutes. Skip the reports. Just get to the point...Let's discuss the issues!!" was a comment made at CCEDC's Board Visioning Retreat last fall. Concluding that traditional board meetings aren't interesting or engaging, CCEDC is introducing an informative alternative to the traditional board meeting, called "POWER Topics." To help the community stay informed, topic-driven forums will be held quarterly to address economic issues that are important to the community, replacing the traditional Board of Director's meeting on those months.

The first forum in the POWER Topics series was "Harnessing Wyoming's Wind...An Energy Resource for the Future." Hosted at P&H MinePro Services, a CCEDC Investor, two experts in the wind resource industry gave presentations. Roy Douglas of Carbone of America, and Ed Werner of Werner Solutions, LLC talked about their keen interest in developing our nation's natural resources in an environmentally sensitive and fiscally responsible manner. Over 50 investors and citizens attended.

Google Alert!!!! I posted my Blog as a Podcast on Facebook...which Instant Messaged My-Space and I am Freecycling right after I join Twitter.com!! Does this make any sense to you? If not, you're not alone...CCEDC's second forum, "Communication Technology for Dummies" will be held June 5th at the Gillette College Presentation Hall from 5:00-6:30 pm, hosted by Powder River Energy and Gillette College, and will present information about new communications technology and how it can help us in our everyday lives. In addition, businesses must stay current with technology in order to attract bright, young employees. With demonstrations by young workers and a question & answer session, the forum will help narrow the communication gap between generations!

For more information, contact CCEDC at 307-686-2603.

Community Facilities Grant Helps Basin City Arts Center Brings Vitality to Town



The Basin City Arts Center (BCAC) was originally built as a Fraternity Hall in 1902 in downtown Basin. It was in this building that two famous murder trials took place in the early 1900s for those involved with the "Spring Creek Raid". After the two-story structure burned down, it was rebuilt as the three-story structure on the current site. The building became the center of life for the town of Basin and the surrounding farms. Battery B of the Wyoming National Guard, County court trials, dances, and many civic organizations meetings were held there. In later years, the building's first floor became the Wigwam Theater. The merchants would donate money so a free movie could be shown to the youth while their parents came to town and shopped. This was known as "Basin Day" during the 1920s and 1930s. The Wigwam closed its doors as a movie theatre in the 1980s. Since then the building was targeted for tear down. Concerned citizens saved the building through a renovation project in 1997. The town of Basin currently owns the building.

In 2003 the BCAC board obtained a CDBG grant in the amount of \$150,000 and a TEAL grant from WYDOT to restore the first floor of the theatre, and upgrade the sound system and bathrooms. Soon community plays, talent shows, school programs, melodramas, concerts and movies were once again shown at the BCAC. Their goal of bringing affordable entertainment opportunities for all ages of residents had been realized.

The next goal of the BCAC board and the town of Basin was to provide a community hall facility since Basin doesn't have one. The upper floors of the BCAC were deemed perfect for this. They applied for a Community Facilities Grant from the Wyoming Business Council. This grant would be used to refurbish the upper floors, install an elevator and a lift. The vision includes classrooms, a kitchen, museum, dance floor, and to restore much of the historical feel of the building.

The grant was written by Mary and Mark Hillman of Basin. They, along with the board members, have donated 100% of their time and services to bring this project to life. The Wyoming Business Council and SLIB approved \$750,000 for the project; \$60,000 now and the rest in July 2008.

This facility will benefit the community in many economic development levels. The local entertainment dollar stays in town. The venue also draws revenue from surrounding communities as far away as Cody and Thermopolis. A beautiful building located in the core of downtown is maintained and used, which gives a positive impression of the town. Once the classrooms, meeting rooms and museum are completed, additional income for the town and Center will be generated. Beyond the local impact is the draw that the BCAC will have to businesses and families wanting to relocate to a small Wyoming town. Having a facility that offers such a variety of arts, entertainment and a sense of community will help Basin stand out as a great place to live.