



THE TOOLBOX

WYOMING
ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
ASSOCIATION

May 2010 • A NEWSLETTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUPPORTERS

President's Notes

It is a privilege to be addressing you as the new WEDA President. I enjoy being a part of this energetic and professional team and look forward to tackling a number of important issues facing us in the coming year. Economic development in Wyoming has met several successes in recent years, yet there is the potential for even greater goals to be accomplished. It is important to acknowledge that economic development activities are vital to the well-being of our communities.

Business and location decisions continue to be driven by competition. This competition exists between communities in many states who desire an influx of new jobs and capital investment. The very nature of this competition dictates that more communities are ready for new investment than there are companies to occupy the locations. Private investors have a plethora of choices when deciding where to locate their next operation. We face a choice of leadership: continue to build attractive communities in Wyoming and work to secure economic stability; or, take whatever happens as a matter of course.

As you probably know, WEDA works continuously to development professionals who are able to create, retain and expand jobs, attract businesses, and develop competitive communities. We partner directly with local economic development organizations, private businesses, and state entities to achieve these goals.

Through our work with strategic partners and the Wyoming Legislature, we saw the passage of HB44, which is a property tax exemption for economic development organizations; HB49, an extension of the sales tax exemption on equipment used in manufacturing; and HB70, which assesses vacant land at present worth and helps development. Next year we hope to make the manufacturing sales tax exemption permanent, revisit tax increment financing, and support the Wyoming Business Council as a vital strategic partner. These and other measures will continue to build Wyoming's "business friendly" climate and make us competitive not only in the U.S., but globally as well.

Now more than ever, economic development is essential to our success. Remember, it's always a good time to invest in our communities by nurturing job growth, improving infrastructure, and attracting capital investment.

Robert Barnes, CECD
President, WEDA

Economic Development is a Long-Term Venture

(Editor's note: This story is part 1 of a 2-part story from an interview with Bob Jensen, CEO, Wyoming Business Council.)

The Wyoming Business Council (WBC) is the agency responsible to facilitate the economic growth of the state of Wyoming. "It's a simple mission that gets complex in the execution," said Bob Jensen, CEO of the Business Council. While the WBC has a high degree of public accountability, Jensen emphasized that many activities go unnoticed, especially business retention initiatives and entrepreneurial endeavors. "Those efforts are the unsung heroes of the business council."

One of the ways the Business Council promotes growth and diversification throughout the state is with the Business Ready Community Grant and Loan Program, which facilitates community readiness for new businesses by building needed infrastructure. The program has provided funding for a series of industrial and business parks across the state. Formerly, a company would have had to provide the infrastructure, including roads and sewers, to get on their feet.

"[The state of Wyoming] will be enhanced by the increased emphasis on business recruiting but we're not going to abandon readiness investment," Jensen said. "Not every community has the ability to have their readiness infrastructure where it should be."

In the past, Jensen said Wyoming lost companies that looked at empty parcels of land and basically said, "You want me to plow my business in the middle of that empty field?" Answering "yes" to that question was not the ideal solution for drawing new business to Wyoming.

The investment has been significant and, Jensen said, the program has been successful. Recent investment through Business Ready Com-



munity grants includes \$1.5 million in Big Horn County to install water and sewer lines, \$3 million in Hot Springs County for a two-phase business park development, \$1.5 million in Powell to develop the Gateway West Commercial Park and more. The Business Ready Community grant and loan program has generated about 2,500 new jobs in the state. "This is a critical foundational element to business growth," Jensen said.

The state created the Wyoming Business Council in 1998 to change the way Wyoming looked at economic development. "Fundamentally, working in economic development is a long-term venture," Jensen said. "You just can't try it for five years and turn it off."

The long-term development structure can make it difficult to analyze goals at times. However, the Business Council has seven regional offices located throughout the state to help local communities with their economic development goals.

"I work with cities, towns and counties, as well as businesses trying to achieve their development goals however they define them," said Leah Bruscolo, northwest regional director for the Business Council. "I don't know that it's ever something that is past tense. You can't ever say, 'I've accomplished it.'"

A legislative committee will review the mission, organization and results of the Business Council later this year, including economic development reporting. "The Legislature understands what we do, but

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"Fundamentally, working in economic development is a long-term venture...you just can't try it for five years and turn it off."

Is Your City or County Benefiting From Its Economic Development Efforts?

By Brad Sutherland, Green River Futures

Budgets are getting tight and many local governments are asking what they are getting in return for funding their local economic development organizations. This is always a valid question, in both good times and bad. However, during a period of decreasing sales tax and job losses, this is not the time to consider cutting such funding. Now is the perfect time to ensure your local economic development organization is working on projects that will help grow and diversify your economy.

To ensure the local economic development organization is providing the service you desire, there should be a contract between the organization and the city and/or county. It is best if these contracts are for two years starting on July 1st on odd numbered years so that the contract isn't binding future councils or commissions. The contract should specify the amount to be paid and the timing of such payments. The contract should also specify the services to be performed. This can be a little tricky as it should provide guidance, but allow for enough flexibility to pursue major projects as they become available. Major projects take two to four years to complete while studies can be kicked out in just one year. Studies are often required in order to obtain funding for larger projects.

Consider the following for your contract:

1. What large projects would you like the local economic development organization to start on, or to finish? If grants are required, is funding for the local cash match available? Should housing and quality of life issues be included or just economic development issues?

What studies need to be done in your area to show the feasibility and need for future large projects? Is funding available for such studies since grants generally only pay 50% to 75%?

Be careful of the common pitfalls:

■ If you are asking for yet another retail, service or professional business such as a restaurant, grocery store or clothing store, do you have the facts to indicate the retail leakage is sufficient to support the business given the fact that people will continue to shop out of the area? Grants may not be available if you want to help start a business that will compete with existing businesses in your area.

■ If you are hoping a museum will increase tourism in your area talk to other communities to determine how many people visit because of the museum and consider how long people will stay to visit your museum. Few museums have the potential to draw people for a special trip to an area, and if they only entertain people for an hour or less when they are passing through then it may cost

more to operate it than any return to the community.

■ Be sure the services you are requesting are negotiated with the economic development organization to ensure your ideas are realistic and will have the economic impact you are looking for. There needs to be enough funding for organization operations and for projects. There is no sense funding personnel

"Now is the perfect time to ensure your local economic development organization is working on projects that will help grow and diversify your economy."

who don't have the funds required to work on projects. If you are paying for economic information to be reported, be sure the information is being used to improve the economy or it could be a waste of funds.

Remember that your economic development organization has one or more experienced professionals and a dedicated board of directors. It should be able to determine the most suitable projects to work on, but your job is to ensure such projects will provide a sufficient return on taxpayers' dollars.

2010 WEDA
August
Conference

Holiday Inn
Riverton, WY

August 17-18, 2010



MARK YOUR
CALENDAR

2010 WEDA Events

August 17 & 18, 2010 WEDA Economic Development Conference, Holiday Inn, Riverton.

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 ECONOMIC
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WEDA News:

LINDA HEWITT MEMORIAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SCHOLARSHIPS – SEEKING NOMINATIONS FOR THE 2009 AWARD

Each year WEDA sponsors the Linda Hewitt Memorial Community Development Scholarship, which is awarded to a deserving community development person or organization in Wyoming. This person does not have to be a WEDA member – but is must be someone with an impressive community development track record in their area. The award, a \$750 educational scholarship, goes toward additional community development professional training for this person, or group. WEDA will award this scholarship at our WEDA Summer Conference August 17-18 at the Holiday Inn, Riverton. Now is your time to nominate an individual or organization from your area for this scholarship.

Please include a brief description that explains why this person is the best choice for the 2009 award. We need to receive nominations no later than Monday, June 21st, 2010.

Previous award winners are:

- 2000 Dave Reetz, Powell EDC
- 2001 Mary Randolph, WRDC
- 2002 Joe Coyne, CANDO
- 2003 Jim Davis, City of Evanston
- 2004 Big Horn County Ec. Dev. Inc.
- 2005 Tom Barritt, President, Weston County Dev. Corp., Upton, WY
- 2006 Alan Moore, Idea, Inc./RECDA
- 2007 Randy Bruns, Cheyenne LEADS
- 2008 Rhonda Shipp, U.W. Cooperative Extension Service

The 2009 winner will receive the award at the WEDA Summer Conference in Riverton and be acknowledged afterwards through local and statewide press releases. Please take a moment to recognize who would be deserving of this generous \$750 scholarship award.

WEDA BOARD DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS ELECTED FOR 2010/2011

WEDA board elections were held during the association's Winter Economic Development Conference in Cheyenne, Wyoming. James Klessens, Forward Cody, and Bruce Brown, Bruce Brown, CPA, were both elected as new board members to serve on the WEDA Board of Directors. They were elected by the WEDA general membership to serve three-year terms effective immediately, along with re-elected board members Robert Barnes of Casper Area Economic Development Alliance and Randy Bruns of Cheyenne LEADS.

The 2010/2011 WEDA Board Officers are: President Robert Barnes, Casper Area Economic Development Alliance, Vice-President Randy Bruns, Cheyenne LEADS, and Secretary-Treasurer Leah Bruscano, WY Business Council North West Regional Director. All will serve as part of the 13-member Board of Directors for the Wyoming Economic Development Association.

The following WEDA board members make up the remaining roster: Philippe Chino - Campbell County Economic Development Corporation; Linda Harris - North East Wyoming Economic Development Coalition (NEWEDC); and Craig Nelson - Rocky Mountain Power. Ex-officio members include Past-WEDA President Phil Christopherson, IDEA, Inc., Bob Jensen and Ben Avery, Wyoming Business Council; Tim O'Donoghue, President - Wyoming Chamber of Commerce Executives; and Paula McCormick, WEDA Coordinator.

Partnership Pays Off with Jet Air Service from Cheyenne

A dynamic partnership between Cheyenne LEADS, Cheyenne Regional Airport, the Greater Cheyenne Chamber of Commerce, Visit Cheyenne, the Greater Cheyenne Foundation and Wyoming DOT Aeronautics Division has culminated with the announcement of new daily jet service between Cheyenne and Dallas/Ft. Worth on American Eagle Airlines, the regional affiliate of American Airlines.

Twice-daily flights will begin on July 15, 2010 and will open travelers up to, literally, a world of possibilities. Dallas/Fort Worth offers big hub service with over 170 domestic and international city connections. This means Cheyenne flyers will have much more than just access to the Dallas area; the service will provide direct access to another major hub from which opportunities abound. Excellent connections will be provided with early morning and late layover options for maximum scheduling flexibility. The routes will be serviced by 44-60 seat Embraer ERJ-140 jets.

Business travelers, leisure travelers, military personnel and government employees will all be better serviced by the addition of dependable, affordable jet service that expands the travel opportunities in and out of Cheyenne. Cheyenne LEADS's CEO Randy Bruns remarks, "Regional economic development opportunities are greatly enhanced by increased availability of transportation options that this project delivers." Visit www.flycheyenne.net for more information about the new American Airlines jet service as well as Great Lakes Airlines and to book your flight today!



Laramie EDC Launches Wyoming's first online site-selection tool

Laramie Economic Development Corporation (LEDC) has launched www.laramiewygis.org, making it the first organization in Wyoming to provide businesses with access to powerful online site-selection analysis. The innovative website is designed to attract and expand businesses and jobs in the City of Laramie and Albany County, with the goal to simplify the process of preparing for relocation and expansion decisions. Businesses will no longer have to leaf through reams of Census Bureau reports for demographic information or contact multiple city departments for basic data and documents.

The free website program is now available to the public online at: www.laramiewygis.org. "Laramiewygis.org provides immediate access to critical business and development information needed to facilitate job growth in the region," said Gaye Stockman, CEO of LEDC. "Laramiewygis.org sends a clear message to potential business locators: The City of Laramie and Albany County are open and ready for business."

WHAT www.laramiewygis.org DOES

Laramiewygis.org speeds up and simplifies the process of business attraction and site selection for expanding businesses. It does this by efficiently answering the main questions that businesses have when they are involved in the site selection analysis process. These questions include:

What buildings and land are available in the community?

What are the market characteristics (demographics, workforce, consumer spending, etc.)?

What are the business synergies and opportunities in the community?

What are the unique geographic characteristics and advantages?

All of this information is provided to website users in minutes using the interactive Internet GIS mapping technology on laramiewygis.org.

In addition, laramiewygis.org provides dynamic mapping

capabilities, including the ability to zoom in/out, move the map, identify information and view geographic "layers" of information such as hospitals, railroads, and schools.

The importance of providing quality property and site selection information is critical because over ninety percent of the initial site selection screening is now done using the Internet. Recognizing that many cities and towns are often overlooked for new job investments if they do not provide quality information online, LEDC responded effectively by creating laramiewygis.org to attract new businesses and to deal with the needs of existing businesses.

Laramiewygis.org also strengthens the partnership between Laramie Economic Development Corporation and commercial real estate professionals. LEDC is promoting available properties and real estate professionals are assisting in attracting new and better jobs to the region.

HOW www.laramiewygis.org WORKS

At the heart of laramiewygis.org is a powerful GIS (Geographic Information System) technology called ZoomProspector Enterprise, developed by GIS Planning Inc., which makes this new Internet service more powerful than typical websites. GIS is an integration of software and geographic data designed to efficiently display and analyze information. In the case of laramiewygis.org, GIS allows visitors to rapidly tailor maps and reports to suit their needs and access data that would normally take weeks to collect and thousands of dollars to obtain from specialty data researchers.

For example, available properties can be viewed, along with size, use, cost, and contact information. Corresponding demographic reports such as labor force, education levels, consumer spending, and age can be created. In addition, businesses are mapped by industry showing their distribution and concentrations throughout the area.

High Plains Initiative Named Pilot Project for "Building the Wyoming We Want"

Earlier this year, Platte and Goshen counties accepted a challenge from Governor Dave Freudenthal to become the pilot project for the Building the Wyoming We Want initiative. The purpose of this project, or the High Plains Initiative as it is now called, is to create a long-term vision that will ensure a high quality of life for our residents for years to come. The High Plains Initiative will focus on the values of the region and engage citizens in a facilitated conversation about future land use, economic growth and transportation decisions.

"I think we will find that the two counties working together provides a synergism and energy that will help us gain some new ground as well," said Anja Bendel, Executive Director of the High Plains Economic Development Districts and member

of the High Plains Initiative project team. "We are cognizant of the efforts that have gone into previous assessments and will build upon and complement what is already in place. Our goal is that we'll end up casting into some deeper and richer waters before we're through, so we're looking forward to the process."

A steering committee of local elected officials and community leaders is heading the initiative, with support from Building the Wyoming We Want. Sponsoring organizations are the Platte County Economic Development Corp., the Goshen County Economic Development Corp. and the High Plains Economic Development District.

To read more about the initiative, please visit <http://www.buildingwyoming.org/highplains/>

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there's a wide variety of opinion on what business development should do," Jensen said.

Jensen anticipates the Business Council will continue to be an important component of Wyoming's continued economic development efforts for many years to come; from supporting needed infrastructure to helping communities and businesses turn these investments into jobs and economic diversification.

"We are going to be a little more aggressive in how we support entrepreneurial activity and new business development in the state," Jensen said. "Companies that have started in the last 10 years are creating jobs – those are the kinds of businesses we want to support."

The Wyoming Economic Development Association will continue to partner with the Wyoming Business Council in achieving this mission, mixing in its own vision of providing "leadership and support to foster economic development in Wyoming."

Conference Bulletin Board

2010 WYOMING PHILANTHROPY DAYS

The Wyoming Community Foundation and ServeWyoming will present the Seventh Biennial Wyoming Philanthropy Days, "Time, Talent, & Treasure," June 16-18, 2010.

An exciting line-up of workshops has been designed to provide an opportunity to understand the changing needs of our state and how to collaborate to facilitate these changes. The conference will be beneficial not only to the staff and boards of non-profits, but industry and private funders as well as local government leaders. The theme of the conference is,

Registration \$85, Laramie Hilton Garden Inn and University of Wyoming Conference Center. Some scholarship assistance is available. To register or learn more, visit: www.wycf.org or www.servewyoming.org.



Wyoming Business Council News:

Business Council seeks information on available commercial property

The Why Wyoming Website is being revamped along with the general Wyoming Business Council Website in the near future. The Why Wyoming Website contains the demographic information site selectors seek for their clients.

In addition to the new look and more user-friendly layout, the site will update the Available Commercial Property Database. The new database will include the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) recommended standard data points for commercial property. The Business Council is seeking input from the pub-

lic to fill the database with available commercial property. Forms can be downloaded off the Why Wyoming Website at <http://www.whywyoming.org/available.aspx>.

The Why Wyoming Website is marketed at trade shows, through advertisement, and in direct mailings to site selectors. More information concerning the Commercial Property Database should be directed to Carol Stearns at 307.777.2882 or email to carol.stearns@wybusiness.org.

Business Council welcomes new marketing manager

The Wyoming Business Council is pleased to announce Scott Balyo of Cheyenne as the new marketing and public relations manager.

Balyo replaces Rachel Girt and comes to the Wyoming Business Council from the Cheyenne Regional Medical Center, where he served as director of marketing and communications for over two years. Before that he was the director of marketing at Rocky Mountain International, a tourism marketing company located in Cheyenne, for five years.

"We're very pleased to have Scott join our team," said CEO Bob Jensen. "He brings an excellent mix of marketing and public relations experience to the Business Council."

Balyo expressed enthusiasm at the opportunity to join the Business Council in facilitating economic growth in Wyoming. "The Business Council is an outstanding organization with a lot of talented people," Balyo said. "I am very impressed with the wide array of services it offers, and I look forward to supporting their efforts." Balyo joins senior marketing specialists Matt Cox and Kim Sears.

Wyoming – "Opportunities Blowing in the Wind" Webinar

The Wyoming Business Council is sponsoring a Webinar concerning wind energy opportunities in the state on May 19 at 8:00 a.m. The Webinar is directed to wind power company executives worldwide including the UK and Europe who are interested in learning more about Wyoming as a strategic location for wind projects. Honeycomb Worldwide is hosting the 90-minute Webinar with Richard Walje, president of Rocky Mountain Power, Dr.

Jonathan Naughton, director of the University of Wyoming Wind Research Center, and Rob Hurless, policy advisor to Wyoming Governor Dave Freudenthal as presenters. Robert Jensen, CEO of the Wyoming Business Council, will act as moderator. More information on the Webinar can be found at <http://xtalks.com/xto392wyoming.ashx> or by contacting Sean Stevens at 307.777.2864 or sean.stevens@wybusiness.org

Conference Sponsored by WEDA and the Wyoming Business Council

**WEDA August Economic Development Conference
August 17 & 18, 2010
Holiday Inn, Riverton, WY**

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



Cody Manufacturing Incubator Ready to Provide Services

Forward Cody and the City of Cody partnered to acquire a 12,000 square foot building and 1.3 acres of land. The building is well suited for light manufacturing. The property will be used as a location for growing businesses to become well established or as a tool to attract new business. Tenants will receive a below market

rent, but cannot occupy the building for more than five years.

Forward Cody is working with two businesses who could share the facility temporarily. The investment came from a Wyoming Business Council Business Ready Grant of \$730,233 and a local match of \$86,000.

Goshen County Business Retention and Expansion Program

Eastern Wyoming College (EWC) and the Goshen County Economic Development Corporation (GCEDC) have teamed up to implement a business retention and expansion program in Goshen County. This program is co-chaired by EWC President Dr. Tom Armstrong and GCEDC board member Cactus Covello, under the direction of Lisa Johnson, GCEDC Director.

The purpose of this program is to retain existing businesses, help businesses with expansion plans, provide resources and support for local businesses and identify ways to improve the business climate.

"I had the pleasure of being one of the founding members of the GCEDC and have seen many exciting things happen within this group, but one of the most important tasks that this group performs is that of Business Expansion and Retention. Helping our locals to maintain or expand their business ventures in Goshen County will hopefully help and preserve the way of life we all hold so dear," shared GCEDC board member Cactus Covello.

A task force of approximately 60 members has been formed. This group will be contacting a sample of area businesses to participate in a survey. The survey is a Synchronist tool provided by the Wyoming Business Council. The questions on the survey are designed to gather predictive data such as a business's growth plan, community problems or the need or desire for assistance. Data collected on the survey is confidential and will only be reported in a holistic and statistical manner.

The goal of the program is to improve the business climate in Goshen County so that both new and existing businesses can prosper. Once the surveys are completed and

compiled, the task force will then work to identify problems. GCEDC will address any short-term problems and will work with the task force to develop strategies and address long-term problems.

"Eastern Wyoming College provides excellent training for business and workforce needs. Having a strong college makes a strong statement to existing and emerging businesses as well as those looking to relocate here; they are assured the community is future focused and on track. The college serves as a cultural hub that supports a diverse set of programming and lifelong learning activities. EWC will continue to support efforts in Torrington and Goshen County that advance learning, economic stability, and growth. I value our people and our partnerships," added EWC President Dr. Armstrong.

Task force members will contact businesses to participate in this survey. Business owners who have not been contacted and would like to participate should contact the GCEDC office at 307.532.5162.

"We are so pleased with the collaboration with Eastern Wyoming College and the business professionals and community representatives that volunteered to serve on the business task force," said Johnson. "When you have this many people involved, we will make great strides to ensure that Goshen County continues to be a great place to do business."

Preliminary results with 47 surveys tabulated show that 50 percent of businesses have expansion plans and will add 51 jobs in the next 3 years. Collectively, those expansions will be a \$3 million capital investment, and 7 of the companies plan to add a total of 40,000 sf to their facilities.

WEDA Member News:

Sweetwater Economic Development Association forms "Tiny Town Team"

In January the Sweetwater Economic Development Association (SWEDA) created the Sweetwater County Coalition of Small Towns a.k.a. The Tiny Town Team. At just over 10,000 square miles Sweetwater County is home to several very small communities that use SWEDA's services to varying degrees. Each month the new "team" has lunch, an educational presentation and time to network and mentor each other. The result has been better utilization of SWEDA's services by each community. Superior, Bairoil and Granger just applied for Energy Efficiency Grants. Superior is seeking a CDBG grant to renovate its former Senior Center into a new combined Senior Center, multi-generational learning center, doctor's office and food distribution location. Granger is applying for a Community Facilities grant for its first Community Center. Bairoil is considering projects and gathering possibilities from the "team" members. Together the small towns have found a voice for change and are each excited about preparing their respective community for growth.

LEDC and Cheyenne LEADS Enter Into Mutual Cooperation Agreement

In April 2010, Laramie Economic Development Corporation (LEDC) and Cheyenne LEADS entered into a mutual cooperation agreement. Both entities acknowledge there are significant advantages to collaborating on economic development activities that promote the positive business attributes of Albany and Laramie County. Marketing the labor, transportation, education, and cultural attributes of both counties presents a stronger case to prospective employers than if each county was promoted separately.

"There are employers that have significant economic impact that cross county lines. The agreement opens up opportunities to mutually address those employers' needs. We recognize the common goal to strengthen southeastern Wyoming's economic health and the ability for our existing employers to thrive," stated Gaye Stockman, LEDC CEO.

According to Randy Bruns, CEO of Cheyenne LEADS, "When working to promote the Albany/Laramie County area, we understand that both counties will likely experience economic benefit from a corporate location in either county. Working together to recruit and retain primary employers is advantageous to both organizations." For more information about the agreement, please feel free to contact either Gaye Stockman, LEDC at 307-742-2212 or Randy Bruns, Cheyenne LEADS at 307-638-6000.



Lander Growth Continues with Several Events

March was a big month for Lander, a small community of only 7,000 residents. First, Fremont County School District #1 held its groundbreaking ceremony at the new site of Lander Middle School. The 80,000 square foot, \$15 million building is expected to open in the fall of 2011. The new school will serve grades 6-8 and accommodate almost 500 students.

Then, a new Lifestyles Safeway opened at the site of the former Lander Valley High School in the Tiger Business Park. Safeway has operated at four different locations in Lander since 1937. Safeway presented several Fremont County School District #1 entities with over \$9,000 in contributions. U.S. Representative Cynthia Lummis was also present at the ceremony.

Over the last year, a new Holiday Inn Express and Fremont Toyota Dealership also opened in Lander. "These changes, along with several other improvements in our community, are representative of how Lander is moving forward toward the future. Both our economic and educational systems are evolving with modern times," said Gary Michaud, Community Resource Coordinator.

Housing Entities Form Unique Partnership to Help First-Time Homebuyers

Six Wyoming housing organizations and associations have formed a unique partnership to benefit the state's first-time homebuyers. The Wyoming Community Development Authority (WCDA) is administering the partnership that includes the Wyoming Housing Network, Inc. (WHN), the Wyoming Bankers

Association (WBA), the Wyoming Association of Realtors (WAR), the Wyoming Mortgage Lenders Association (WMLA), and the Central Wyoming Home Builders Association (CWHBA).

This first-ever partnership between all facets of the housing industry in Wyoming was formed for a singular purpose: to let Wyoming residents who are currently thinking about buying their first home know that this may be the best possible time to do so.

"What we are seeing right now is a rare combination of market factors that make this a perfect time for folks to buy their first home," David Haney, WCDA Executive Director said. According to Haney, those market factors include average home prices across Wyoming have stabilized, and in many areas, are coming down; mortgage loan interests rates for first-time homebuyers are currently very low; the number of available homes on the market is steadily increasing; rental housing costs remain high; and the federal first-time homebuyer tax credit is still in effect until the end of April.

The six-way partnership is emphasizing a simple message to potential first-time homebuyers – "Buy Now". A webpage has been launched that contains the "5 Steps to Homeownership" along with numerous links to other websites that will assist homebuyers through the process. "The bottom line here is that most of us in the housing business have not seen a 'perfect storm' of advantageous market factors like this in a very long time and we just want folks who are thinking about buying their first home to know about them," Haney said.

For more information about the partnership, log onto www.wyomingcda.com and click on the "Buy Now" link or call the WCDA at 307-265-0603.

Wyoming Rehabilitation & Acquisition Program will benefit homebuyers in four counties

Federal stimulus money is finally hitting "home(s)" in four Wyoming counties. According to Wyoming Community Development Authority (WCDA) Federal Programs Coordinator Jennifer Crawford, Campbell, Laramie, Natrona, and Sweetwater Counties are eligible for the Wyoming Repair & Acquisition Program (WRAP), a key element of the federal Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP).

This federal initiative utilizes stimulus funds for the purchase and rehabilitation of foreclosed and/or abandoned homes. The homes are then sold to lower-income residents.

The first phase of the NSP began last summer with the selection and purchase of several foreclosed houses in Cheyenne. Since that time, those houses have been in the process of being rehabilitated. Subsequently, additional houses have been purchased in Laramie, Sweetwater, and Natrona Counties and rehabilitation is either currently underway or is scheduled to begin shortly.

HUD's rules stipulate that all houses selected for the WRAP must be under contract to the WCDA or already purchased by the end of September 2010. The WCDA requires that all homebuyers be first-time homebuyers or have not owned a home in the last three years, and the property remain owner occupied.

Further HUD guidelines mandate that a portion of these rehabilitated houses be sold to homebuyers that are at or below 50% of the Area Median Income (AMI). The 50% AMI amount varies depending on the number of people that make up the household.

It allows lower-income individuals and households to realize their dream of homeownership. It also puts foreclosed and abandoned houses back into service, which will stabilize property values as well as extend the economic life of the houses.

To determine eligibility or to apply for the program, residents in the eligible counties can log onto www.wyomingcda.com, complete the application form, and mail the form along with the additional required documents to the WCDA (P.O. Box 634, Casper, WY 82602) or call Jennifer Crawford at (307) 265-0603.

New Faces, New Places

CTA Architects Engineers opens Gillette office

CTA Architects Engineers has opened an office in downtown Gillette at 204 Gillette Avenue. Architect, Karl DeCock, AIA, LEED AP has been named the Regional Office Manager. Karl also

serves on the Board of Campbell County Planning Commission.

CTA started in 1938 as a partnership between Ralph Cushing, an engineer, and Everett Terrell, an architect, over a day of fishing. Throughout its 72 years of service, the firm has grown to 17 offices in six states – Wyoming, Montana, Colorado, Texas, Idaho, Louisiana, and Washington. Gillette is CTA's second Wyoming office, serving the western portion of the state from the Jackson Hole office since 2002.

Recent CTA projects in Wyoming include:

- Gillette College Technical Education Center; Gillette
- Sheridan Early Childhood Center; Sheridan
- Wells Fargo, Sheridan (formerly Sheridan State Bank); Sheridan
- First Interstate Bank; across Wyoming
- First National Bank; Cody, Powell
- Pinnacle Bank; Cody
- Washakie Museum; Worland
- Park County Library; Cody
- Old Faithful Visitors Center; Yellowstone National Park
- Powell Southside School; Powell
- Worland Middle School; Worland
- Johnson County Healthcare Center; Buffalo
- Memorial Hospital of Converse County; Douglas

Casper Area Economic Development Alliance Welcomes New Incubator

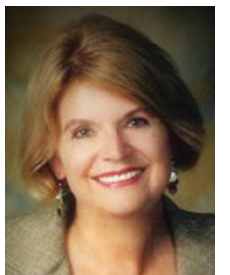
Manager DeAnna Adams

CAEDA has selected DeAnna Adams as the director of the Casper Area Business Innovation Center (Innovation Center). Ms. Adams currently manages the Mississippi Technology Alliance, a business incubator in Jackson, Mississippi; she comes to the Casper project with a wealth of experience, knowledge, and ideas. The highly competitive selection process for a director began last fall with 37 applicants. "We were very impressed with DeAnna's organizational skills, professional accomplishments and passion for incubators in general," said CAEDA Board Member Tim Kugler, who was part of the hiring committee for the position. DeAnna was introduced to the media, CAEDA investors and others involved with the incubator project at a press conference on Thursday, March 11, 2010.

DeAnna was a small business owner for over twenty years before she began working with incubators in 2003. She guided the growing Mississippi Technology Alliance, located at the Jackson State University e-Center, through a million dollar, 30,000 square foot renovation. Since that incubator's inception, graduates of the program have created more than 500 jobs in their community. In addition, she has worked closely with four other incubator programs in Mississippi to help them become viable.

Throughout her career, DeAnna has received numerous awards, including being recognized as one of Mississippi's Fifty Leading Business Women and Waldoff's Department Store Woman of the Year. She works with the Boys and Girls Club of America and the Bootstrap Program at Camp Shelby, Mississippi, which is a program to mentor at risk youth. DeAnna is also highly involved with the National Business Incubation Association and holds an Incubator Professionals Certificate from that organization.

DeAnna will also be taking an active role in the planning and design of the facility. The Innovation Center will be located in the old AMOCO administration building in the Platte River Commons. The historic building will be renovated and expanded into a 40,000 square foot multi-use facility with an emphasis on technology. The project has reached its funding goal of \$10.5 million and is currently in the design and development stages. Partners and contributors to the Innovation Center include the Wyoming Business Council, Amoco Reuse Agreement Joint Powers Board, Economic Development Administration, Economic Development Joint Powers Board, Housing and Urban Development, American National Bank, Casper College, City of Casper, First Interstate Bank, Hilltop National Bank, Natrona County, the Wal-Mart Foundation and Wells Fargo.



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

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