

# Wyoming Business Council

## Mission and philosophy

The mission of the Wyoming Business Council is to facilitate the growth of Wyoming's economy. To accomplish its goals, the Business Council helps to retain and expand existing Wyoming businesses and industries; recruits industries and their support businesses to the state; and works with communities to develop infrastructure to become business-ready.

The Business Council's divisions include Agribusiness, Business and Industry; Investment Ready Communities; Minerals, Energy and Transportation; and Travel and Tourism. The Business Council has regional offices in Casper, Riverton, Powell, Cheyenne, Gillette, and Rock Springs.

The Wyoming Legislature created the Wyoming Business Council in 1998 to strengthen and diversify the state's foundation industries and to retain our youth through the creation of better job opportunities. For more information, visit [www.wyomingbusiness.org](http://www.wyomingbusiness.org).

## Results of outcomes Agribusiness Division

The Agribusiness Division works with agricultural producers to find ways to diversify their income through value-added goods, consumer-ready products and commodities; to sustain ranching and farming operations; to create jobs; to increase competitiveness in the national and international marketplaces; and to stimulate industry growth.

This division offers workshops and resources on a variety of topics including the production of organic and naturally-grown products and has marketing programs to showcase Wyoming's premium, dairy-quality hay and to increase exposure of Wyoming's genetically superior livestock.

This division is also involved in coordinating the Wyoming Leadership Education and Development program (Wyoming L.E.A.D.).

### **Organic/Natural Foods and Value Added Program**

This program is designed to encourage and promote the development of organic/natural foods and value-added agribusiness opportunities and markets for Wyoming agricultural products.

The objective of the program is to provide market information, data base publication, and trade show subsidization; the organic/natural foods and value-added program strives to expose companies to local, national, and international marketing opportunities. The program also aims to educate businesses on federal and state programs, government regulations, and third-party business organizations. This education is done through seminars and individual counseling.

### **Agency contact**

Tucker Fagan, CEO  
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Cheyenne, WY 82002  
[Tfagan1@state.wy.us](mailto:Tfagan1@state.wy.us)

307/777-2800

### **Other locations**

Southeast Regional Office – Cheyenne  
Northeast Regional Office – Gillette  
West-Central Regional Office – Riverton  
East-Central Regional Office – Casper  
Southwest Regional Office – Rock Springs  
Northwest Regional Office – Powell

### **Year established**

1998

### **Statutory references**

W.S. 9-12-105 through 9-12-401

### **Number of authorized personnel**

57 Full-time

### **Organizational structure**

Executive, Comptroller, Support Services, Agribusiness, Business and Industry, Investment Ready Communities, Minerals, Energy and Transportation, Travel and Tourism.

### **Clients served**

Businesses, industries, communities and tourists.

### **Budget information**

Not available

The following occurred during the year: a program that deals with production, certification, processing and marketing of organic and natural food products was implemented for the State of Wyoming; the first Organic Educational Conference was held in Laramie; Wyoming products were successfully exhibited at the Natural Products Expo in California, as well as in the Organic Trade Association Convention in Texas; and secured over \$125,000 in new Federal Grant dollars (source-USDA), in addition to management of over \$500,000 in previously awarded federally granted "Value-Added" projects.

### **Livestock and Forage Program**

Livestock programs help Wyoming producers of genetically superior livestock get their product into the domestic and international marketplace. Bringing buyer and seller together is a major goal of this program and is achieved through: promotion at national and international trade events; trade missions; reverse trade missions; web published directories and hard copy published directories.

Forage programs are designed to get more Wyoming hay into the national marketplace. This is achieved through: promotion at national and international trade events; Web published directories; hard copy published directories and the Wyoming Hay hotline.

The division worked with the Wyoming Beef Cattle Improvement Association to develop a new strategic plan for Wyoming beef.

A promotional video to highlight Wyoming's premium quality alfalfa and hay was produced.

The first "Agri-Canadian" trade mission was conducted. Producers from Wyoming and Eastern Canadian provinces participated.

### **Wyoming Agribusiness Directory**

The Wyoming Agribusiness directory is one of many tools to aid the promotion of Wyoming agribusiness, their products and services. The intent of the directory is to provide potential buyers with a resource for finding Wyoming products and related services. This type of cooperative effort is important to the continued success of marketing these state agricultural products to the United States and the world.

### **Wyoming First Program**

The program is designed to assist Wyoming companies with the identification and promotion of their Wyoming Made products or substantially enhanced products and services. Membership allows Wyoming First participants to use the familiar "Bucking Horse and Rider" design stickers and hang tags on their products.

Made in Wyoming products were given added visibility and exposure through the expanded Wyoming Products Pavillion at the state fair and the "Wyoming First" Program grew by 25 percent in total businesses enrolled.

### **International Trade Development**

The Wyoming Business Council established an International Trade Development function to link Wyoming firms with new markets overseas, promote foreign investments, provide protocol, education and export promotion assistance.

The program above:

Hosted the Taipei, Taiwan Cultural Exchange Director General.

Held an International Trade Conference in Cody. There were videoconferences with trade offices in the United Kingdom and Mexico. Speakers included representatives from the Export/Import Bank, the US Department of Commerce and several exporters from around the state. There were over 60 attendees.

Maintained an Export/Import Bank country/state partnership agreement.

Sponsored the World Grain Outlook by Lynn Clarkson the for Wyoming Wheat Commission.

Established presence with the State International Development Organization to assist in promoting the Wyoming identity.

Obtained a \$25,000 grant from WUSATA for export marketing efforts to Canada.

Hosted the Japanese external trade organization in Casper and Laramie.

Disseminated relevant international trade leads to Wyoming producers.

## **Business and Industry Division**

The Business and Industry Division works to create new and better job opportunities in Wyoming by encouraging further business start-ups, strengthening retention and expansion programs to help existing Wyoming companies, in addition to targeting and recruiting businesses to Wyoming. This division works with local organizations such as economic development groups, chambers of commerce and local governments to help build the foundation for economic development.

This division offers assistance with business permitting as well as consulting and resources regarding financial assistance available to Wyoming businesses and businesses looking to relocate to the state.

This division also administers Tradeshow Incentive Grants to assist Wyoming businesses with the costs to attend trade shows.

### **Market Research Center (WMRC)**

The Wyoming Market Research Center provides cutting-edge market analysis and research at no or low cost for Wyoming-based businesses.

Services provided; basic research; Geographic Information Systems Services; evaluation of marketing materials for proper fit with research results; original research / developing raw data.

Information is generally provided to clients at no charge, using sources purchased by the WMRC. Each client receives a credit of \$150 in search data expenses. Costs for research or data excess of the basic allowance will be passed on to the client.

### **Commercial Properties Database**

This tool is designed to help site selectors and business professionals locate information about available land, business and industrial parks, as well as commercial buildings across the state for sale or lease.

The new database reflects the Business Council's continued efforts to make Wyomingbusiness.org a comprehensive, interactive tool for business and professional site selectors as well as Wyoming business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs.

### **Trade Show Incentive Grants**

The purpose of the Wyoming Trade Show Incentive Grant program is to encourage Wyoming businesses to promote and sell their products statewide, as well as to national and international audiences.

#### **Participants:**

AFIVEPLUS, Inc.  
BAF Knifeworks  
Bear Creek Originals  
Bottom Line Marketing  
Britz-Heindbrink, Inc  
Byan Systems, Inc.  
CC Technology  
Coal Creek Coffee Company  
Covey of Quail  
Cowboy Adventures  
Eagle Bronze, Inc.  
Elite Exteriors, Inc. dba ABC Seamless  
Everyday Mysteries  
Fitsimones' Manufacturing  
Foster's Fine Art  
Gwamma's Gifts  
Indian Paintbrush Studio  
Interfold, Inc.  
Leading Edge Taxidermy  
Longhorn Trading Co  
Marinades and More, Inc  
Millennium Sensor, LLC.  
O'Connor Trucking, Inc.  
Organics Unlimited  
Ornamental Designs Clothing  
Performance Oil Tools  
Platte River Fly Shop  
Quality Hedge and Tree, Inc.  
Queen Bee Gardens  
R T Corporation  
Ranger Creek Guest Ranch  
Sewing Prose  
Snowy Mountain Outfitters  
The Western Way

Tim's Archery  
Training Online/Enviro Win  
TriHydro Corporation  
Wahoo Toppings, LLC.  
WellDog Inc.  
Western Heritage  
Wind River Molds  
Wyoming Livestock Roundup  
Wyoming Writers, Inc.

## **Investment Ready Communities Division**

The Investment Ready Communities division works to help Wyoming communities become "business-ready" by administering the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program and the Business Ready Communities (BRC) program. This division also partners with the Wyoming Rural Development Council to conduct community assessments throughout the state.

The CDBG program provides funding for activities in economic development, community development and housing. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) gives Wyoming annual funding of approximately \$3.5M for this program.

### **Business Ready Communities Grant and Loan Program**

The purpose of the Business Ready Community Act (W.S. 9-12-601 through W.S. 9-12-603) is to promote economic development at the city, town and county level in order to create additional economic health and a stronger state economy by providing grants and loans to finance the development of infrastructure.

Draft rules were presented to the Joint Minerals, Business and Economic Development Committee on May 22, 2003. No changes were suggested in the version sent to the governor.

A notice of intent was distributed through the Casper Star-Tribune. The public comment period started on Friday, July 25, 2003.

Eligible Applicants were identified and are as follows:

Cities, towns, counties, joint powers boards. State and local community development organizations could assist and provide project development under contract to the primary applicant.

Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho Tribes: The Business Council may enter into contracts/cooperative agreements with the Eastern Shoshone Tribe and the Northern Arapaho Tribe in order to promote the purpose of the program and fund infrastructure projects.

Two Types of Projects were defined to fall under the program:

Direct Job Creation Projects – Company committed

to locate or expand in the community. It is proposed that a portion of the annual funding be set-aside as a rapid response fund to react to opportunities when a company has committed to expand or locate in a community.

Community Readiness Projects — These are “build it and they will come” projects. No specific company is committed to expand or locate in the community. The community wants to build facilities to ready itself for new business development under a specific strategy or plan of action. A community must demonstrate that appropriate planning has been conducted and capacity exists to accommodate new business development.

Eligible Grant and Loan Activities were identified:

Infrastructure such as water, sewer, streets, telecommunications, airports, Right-of-way, land, “spec” buildings, or amenities within a business park, industrial park, industrial site or business district or other appropriate physical projects in support of primary economic development.

Grant and Loan Amounts were allocated as follows:

Infrastructure Grants Maximum - \$1,500,000  
 Infrastructure Loans - Maximum \$1,500,000

Match Requirements: Infrastructure grants to have a 5 to 10 percent match based on the amount of the grant. Up to \$250,000 – a minimum 5 percent match. Over \$250,000 and up to \$1,500,000 – a minimum 10 percent match.

**Community Development Block Grant Program**

The Wyoming Business Council administers the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. The CDBG Program is a federally funded pass through grant program from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Wyoming has received an annual allocation from a low of \$2.2 million, to a high of \$3.7 million. For the 2003 program, the state received \$3,674,000.

The Wyoming Business Council administers the CDBG program for economic and community development projects, and the Board of Directors approves grant recipients. The Wyoming Community Development Authority (WCDA) manages the portion of funding designated by the Wyoming Business Council for housing in Wyoming.

A total \$3.4 million was awarded to forty projects. Project type ranged from flood damage restoration in Kaycee to public infrastructure that serves the needs of Minserco, a company in Gillette committed to expansion and creation of new manufacturing jobs. The high demand for CDBG funds is indicative of the strength of the Wyoming economy.

**Community Assessments**

Community assessments average one to three days and consist of public town-hall forums within a community for interest groups such as middle and high school students, senior citizens,

educators, business owners, parents, government officials, health professionals and law enforcement. A team leader and resource team of approximately six people are assigned to each community to help facilitate the meetings.

After all meetings are concluded, the resource team develops a report for the community detailing key issues, recommendations and lists of resources. This report gives the community a road map to implement strategies for improvement or growth.

A total of 13 assessments were completed during the year:

Greybull	9/02
Glenrock	9/02
Burlington	9/02
Powell	10/02
Glendo	10/02
Pine Bluffs	1/03
Albin	2/03
Frannie/Cowley	3/03
Basin	3/03
Midwest/Edgerton	4/03
Mt. View/Bridger Valley	4-5/03
Wind River Reservation	5/03
Pinedale	5/03

During this fiscal year, follow-up teams were implemented into the assessment process. The purpose of the follow-up team is to better help the communities execute the recommendations for improvement made by the original resource team.

**Minerals, Energy and Transportation Division**

The Minerals, Energy and Transportation Division works with industry to enhance the value of the state’s energy and mineral resources and to assist the private sector’s continued development of technologies. This division manages the state air service enhancement directive as a means of air improving transportation and enhancing economic development in the state.

This division is charged with streamlining communications between industry and the regulatory agencies of Wyoming.

This division also manages the Wyoming State Energy Program, serving the public, private, commercial and industrial sectors by providing training and funding to Wyoming businesses to help them conserve energy resources to become more energy efficient.

**Wyoming State Energy Program**

The State Energy Program uses federal money to assist serves public, private, commercial, and industrial sectors with training and funding for energy efficient and conservation projects.

The Wyoming State Energy Program provides: training seminars for building maintenance person-

nel in pneumatic controls and efficient boiler operation fields; access to Petroleum Violation Escrow funds to be used for the demonstration of off-the-shelf energy efficiency demonstrations; access to many funding mechanisms available on a competitive basis from the U.S. Department of Energy; grants to non-profit schools and hospitals for technical audits of their facilities; low interest loans for the implementation of energy conservation measures.

During this fiscal year, the State Energy Program accomplished the following:

The Energy Section made a total of \$8,000 available to Wyoming school districts for exit light replacements. These monies are available on a first come basis until June 30, 2004, unless all funds have been obligated prior to that date.

The Energy Section made a total of \$8,000 available to Wyoming towns for traffic light replacements. These monies are available on a first come basis until June 30, 2004, with no more than \$2,000 for any one applicant.

The Energy Program in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Energy awarded two educational scholarships totaling \$2,000.

The first place scholarship of \$1,250 was awarded to Ashley Sylvester from Greybull Middle School. Her project involved the production of ethyl alcohol.

The second place winner, Erica Shed of Shosoni Junior High presented a study on different types of insulation and their effectiveness. Her award totaled \$750.

The projects eligible for the awards focused on renewable energy, energy efficiency or innovative and cost effective energy development.

John Nunley, manager of the State energy program for the Wyoming Business Council, was chosen to chair the STAC committee. This committee leads energy research and development efforts on behalf of the Department of Energy, state research institutes, and state energy officials.

### **Wyoming Air Services Financial Aid Act**

The Wyoming Air Services Financial Aid Act (Senate File 120), enacted in March 2003, gives the Business Council the responsibility to contract with air carrier(s) to increase air traffic and enplanements; increase ridership between commercial airports in Wyoming and regional airport hubs; lowering air fares and increasing the number of routes flown in the state.

The Wyoming Business Council retained SH&E International Air Transport Consultancy to assist with the Business Council's legislative mandate to enhance air service in the state.

SH&E has assisted the Business Council in developing contract(s) for air services at the ten state commercial airports. SH&E will also provide the Business Council with necessary information and follow-on service to make the best choice for air service carriers to the varied markets in Wyoming.

The Wyoming Business Council, in cooperation with WYDOT Aeronautics traveled to ten Wyoming cities to discuss their commercial airports, and to seek comments and input on future air service. The ten cities that were visited included: Cody, Sheridan, Worland, Gillette, Casper, Riverton, Jackson, Rock Springs, Cheyenne and Laramie.

### **Travel and Tourism Division**

The Travel and Tourism Division works to bring visitors to Wyoming. By actively marketing Wyoming as a vacation destination to both the domestic and international markets, this division contributes significantly to Wyoming's economic fiber by building a strong tourism industry. In addition, the Film, Arts and Entertainment program markets Wyoming locations to production companies and promotes Wyoming's cultural amenities to further increase economic development and statewide tourism.

By creating and implementing a fully integrated marketing campaign, Travel and Tourism adds strength to the Wyoming travel industry - an industry made up almost exclusively of small, independent businesses that have little or no budget for these activities - by leveraging its budget and maximizing resources through cooperative programs. This division has also established marketing partnerships with tourism entities in surrounding states and gateway communities to the region, Wyoming-based lodging tax boards, other state and federal agencies and a large number of private sector businesses to maintain Wyoming's position as the premier Rocky Mountain visitor destination.

Through printed brochures; an interactive website; and a seven day a week customer service program responding to in-person, written, email and telephone inquiries, this division also provides information on all accommodations, eating establishments, attractions, activities, outfitter/adventure businesses, and events to a global audience.

Responded to 141,493 email, website, telephone and mail inquiries requesting a Wyoming Vacation Directory.

Serviced 501,550 visitors at five Wyoming Visitor Information Centers.

Installed computers with internet connection at Wyoming Visitor Information Centers, thereby making it possible for the centers to receive daily and weekly tourism news and events via email in a timely fashion, i.e. fire updates, road closures.

As a result of a footnote to the current state budget bill, a tourism industry specific Board of Directors was appointed in February 2003 by Governor Dave Freudenthal to oversee and provide insight to the Travel and Tourism Division. Recognizing tourism as an economic engine for Wyoming, Travel and Tourism continues as a department within the Wyoming Business Council.

In May 2003, Diane Shoher was named as the director of the division. A Wyoming native, Shoher

brings more than 15 years experience within the travel and tourism industry.

### **Domestic Tourism Marketing**

The Domestic Travel Program shows off the many scenic and beautiful aspects of vacationing in Wyoming to groups and individuals. Educating travel agents, counselors, group tour operators, wholesalers and individual/family travelers on Wyoming travel amenities generates leads. A large focus has also been placed on the group tour industry for suppliers, marketing organizations and convention and visitors bureaus.

Yielded 3,028 Wyoming-related articles, stories, news clips as a result aggressive public relations efforts.

Coordinated and assisted with the production of 19 television commercials, television specials, film documentaries and photography shoots at 11 Wyoming locations.

### **International Tourism Marketing**

This program is designed to promote Wyoming as a travel destination to international travel industry professionals (including tour operators, wholesalers, receptive tour operators, and travel agents) and assist them in the development of tour products to Wyoming. This program also markets the state to international media (trade publications, general interest consumer publications, and travel publications) to generate consumer demand for the state.

Hosted 54 travel writers and journalists from 14 states and six countries.

Participated in 16 domestic and 36 international travel trade shows, consumer shows and sales missions promoting Wyoming as a vacation destination.

Utilized newly acquired digital video editing equipment and CD duplication/printing equipment to produce Press Kits, Domestic and International Tour Planner on CD with embedded video clips, calendars of events, and other handouts replacing traditional printed material and at substantially less cost than commercially produced materials.

Introduced a new online database providing Wyoming tourism suppliers with leads online, label generation, and access to our contact management system, primarily for international tour operators and some domestic tour operators.

### **Film, Arts and Entertainment**

This program works to develop strategic marketing and branding efforts for the film and arts industries in cooperation with the Travel and Tourism Division. Wyoming filming locations and crew services are marketed to production companies to increase economic development and statewide tourism. This program also creates partnerships with various art agencies to package and promote Wyoming's cultural amenities.

Sponsored post production and hosted premier of film documentary The Last Link, which was

filmed in and around Johnson County and centers on a Basque sheepherder and the historical and cultural contributions made by a hardworking rural community and family-oriented Basque culture in Wyoming.

## Wyoming Business Council organization chart

