



# TOUR 23 State Report

## Introduction

**TOUR 23** was a Wyoming Business Alliance inspired and organized event to

Reach Out  
Listen  
Report Back

With community leaders across Wyoming, four hour facilitated sessions were held in each of Wyoming's 23 counties. The Wyoming Business Council was a strong partner in the multi-county effort. Wyoming Business Alliance President Bill Schilling led a five team member effort involving himself, Anne Alexander from the University of Wyoming Fred Catchpole as the Vice-President of the Alliance, Jennifer Duncan, the Alliance's Office Manager, and Jordan Harper, a University of Wyoming journalism student.

The central focus of **TOUR 23** was, and continues to be, economic development and business (and community) sustainability across Wyoming...and for the state overall. Each four hour session featured interactive "Break-Out" groups of 4-6; and four "Report-Backs" (to the whole group)" via discussions and summaries. These are outlined in the three step building block **TOUR 23** Agenda, and were preceded by Introductions and **TOUR 23's** purpose by Bill Schilling, Wyoming Business Alliance and State and County Economic Outlooks by Dr. Anne Alexander, University of Wyoming.

The following **TOUR 23** State Report addresses **TOUR 23's** successes, the building block agenda process for each meeting, ideas expressed from the grassroots up, and a summary **Reading Reality Truthfully** observation. The individual county reports – 7-12 pages in length – can be reviewed on the Wyoming Business Alliance home page at [www.wyomingbusinessalliance.com](http://www.wyomingbusinessalliance.com).

## TOUR 23's Successes

- \* Meetings in every Wyoming county—including two in Lincoln county
- \* First time ever done in Wyoming, or any state in America
- \* 853 attendees
- \* 48 mayors and city council members, 50 county commissioners, 41 state legislators, economic development and chamber of commerce directors from 20 counties, 20 Wyoming Business Alliance Steering Committee members, 11 Wyoming Business Council board members and the Council's CEO and eight state and regional staff, and 96 Leadership Wyoming graduates.
- \* 2028 expressed **Wyoming Hallmarks** in Wyoming's 125<sup>th</sup> year of statehood. Three time frames: 1890-1940; 1940-1990; 1990-2015
- \* 317 economic development **beliefs and observations** were given in "report outs"
- \* 974 County goals, **objectives and action steps** – categorized and studied
- \* 23 inclusive county reports -- 7-12 pages in length, were completed by July 2015
- \* Over 100 county **TOUR 23** participants attended the Governor's Business Forum November 17-18
- \* 243 attendees at the **TOUR 23** concurrent breakfast sessions November 18; 85 surveys completed; full forum report out led by the **TOUR 23** volunteer chair.

## TOUR 23 Agenda

- 1.) Introduction and Purpose of **TOUR 23** -- "**Reach Out, Listen, Report Back,**"-- Bill Schilling, Wyoming Business Alliance (30 minutes)
- 2.) Wyoming and County Economic Outlooks, Dr. Anne Alexander, University of Wyoming (30 minutes)
- 3.) Wyoming and Local Hallmarks (45 minutes)
  - \* Three Time Frames:  
**1890-1940; 1940-1990; and 1990-2015**  
Fred Catchpole, Facilitator
- 4.) Economic Development (45 minutes)
  - \* **Current Situation:** Moving Ahead, Holding On, or Slipping
  - \* **Key Beliefs:** Is economic development important and essential?
  - \* **Observations:** Essentials to making economic development and growth happen  
Fred Catchpole and Bill Schilling, Facilitators
- 5.) Sustainability Essentials (1 ½ hour)
  - \* **County Goals/Wish List**
  - \* **Measurable Objectives**
  - \* **Action Steps**  
Bill Schilling, Facilitator

The discussions regarding **TOUR 23's** building block agenda -- **Hallmarks**, economic development **Beliefs and Observations**, and sustainability essentials regarding **Goals, Measurable Objectives** and **Action Steps** -- were spirited and engaging. The ideas expressed were captured on flip charts and recorded for every Wyoming county report. These twenty-three reports, as listed sequentially from April 13 to June 25, additionally include “**Reading Reality Truthfully Statements**” prepared by Business Alliance President Bill Schilling which briefly summarize staff observations regarding conditions and opportunities for each county.

## Wyoming Hallmarks

Focus on Wyoming Hallmarks was the first **interactive building block** exercise. Break out groups of 4-6 were asked to **1.)** frame Wyoming Hallmarks for three time periods: 1890-1940; 1940-1990; and 1990-2015 aligned to our 125<sup>th</sup> year of statehood and **2.)** categorize within these time frames what they considered the most important state and local events. The 2028 responses are summarized as follows.

### 1.) Overview/Summary

Time Frame	State	Local	Total
<b>1890-1940</b>	308	334	642
<b>1940-1990</b>	372	340	712
<b>1990-2015</b>	341	333	674
	1021	1007	2028

### 2.) Specific State and Local Hallmarks

<b>A.) 1890-1940/308 Total</b>		<b>1890-1940/334 Total</b>	
1.) Agriculture/Ranching	18%	1.) Agriculture/Ranching	18%
2.) Railroads	15%	2.) Tourism	12%
3.) National Parks/Tourism	14%	3.) Railroads	10%
4.) Women’s Suffrage	10%	4.) Oil/Gas	9%
5.) Statehood	9%	5.) Dams/Reservoirs	7%
<b>B.) 1940-1990/372 Total</b>		<b>1940-1990/340 Total</b>	
1.) Oil/Gas	27%	1.) Tourism	15%
2.) Interstates	14%	2.) Oil/Gas	13%
3.) National Parks/Tourism	8%	3.) Coal	8%
4.) Coal	7%	4.) Agriculture/Ranching	7%
5.) Agriculture/Ranching	6%	5.) Dams/Reservoirs	7%
<b>C.) 1990-2015/341 Total</b>		<b>1990-2015/ 333 Total</b>	
1.) Oil/Gas	23%	1.) Oil/Gas	12%

2.) Hathaway Plan	12%	2.) Technology/Internet	9%
3.) Technology/Internet	11%	3.) National Parks/Tourism	8%
4.) Wyoming Business Council	8%	4.) Energy	4%
5.) Coal	7%	5.) Education Funding	3%

### 3.) Hallmarks by Timeframe: State and Local Combined

#### 1890-1940:

Agriculture/Ranching	17%
National Parks/Tourism	13%
Railroads	13%

#### 1940-1990:

Oil/Gas	20%
National Parks/Tourism	12%
Interstates	10%

#### 1990-2015:

Oil/Gas	18%
Technology/Internet	10%
Hathaway Plan	8%

### 4.) Total for State and Local: 125 Years of Statehood

1.) Energy Overall	457/23%
2.) National Parks/Tourism	214/11%
3.) Agriculture/Ranching	165/8%
4.) Railroads	109/5%
5.) Interstates	89/4%
6.) Dams/Reservoirs	75/4%
7.) Technology/Internet	67/3%
8.) Hathaway Plan	52/3%

### 5.) Hallmark Comment and Summary

The range of **Wyoming Hallmarks** across all twenty-three counties in the state demonstrates dominating economic influences and local differences.

Wyoming's **first fifty years** (1890-1940) of statehood was dominated by agriculture/ranching and the railroads, with tourism and oil emerging. The **second fifty years** (1940-1990) was dominated by oil and gas, with the influence of the interstates and tourism following, with ranching slipping and coal rising. Over the **past twenty-five years**, oil and gas has remained the dominant influencer, plus coal, with technology and the Hathaway Plan following and then the Wyoming Business Council.

From a **transportation and communication linkaging** perspective, it is important to note that the railroads (first 50 years), interstates (second 50 years) and internet/technology (last 25 years) have been vital to both state and local community sustainability and business competitiveness.

With regard to governmental services, including education, the energy revenues such as PMTF taxes and coal bids have been decisive. Without these funds, there would be no Hathaway Plan, new K-12 schools, business parks, University of Wyoming and Community College advancements and other state programs.

## **Economic Development: Is It Essential?**

### **1.) Current Situation**

This discussion by local groupings was the **second building block** to frame **TOUR 23** discussions across Wyoming. Economic shadows across Wyoming were obvious, and increased as **TOUR 23** progressed from April through June. It is important to note that the desire for positives and moving forward far outweighed negatives. Specifically, with regard to the three point question, most of the 853 participants expressed a belief that Wyoming can and should move forward:

64% Move forward;  
29% Holding our own; and  
7% Fear of slipping.

Understandably, those who came to the **TOUR 23** events were local leaders – private, government, and non-profit – are active in their respective communities. For the most part there existed across the state (during the April through June time period) hope and optimism, belief in the future, and appreciation of the local community lifestyle and core “friendship” values. In five counties, 95% or more felt the county had to move forward and in four counties, 70% or more believed the county had to move forward; in eleven counties 30%-89% felt the county was best to hold its own; and four counties registered 10%-40% thinking that the county was going to slip backward.

### **2.) Economic Development Beliefs and Observations**

**Four hundred and seventy-one** economic development “report out” beliefs and observations were actually presented and reported out by participants in the twenty-four county sessions. The most prominent ones – 317 -- are summarized as follows, based on frequency.

### A.) Beliefs – “164 Break Outs”

With respect to **Beliefs** the second phase of the **Economic Development: Is It Essential** building block, the dominating trends were authentic and sustainable public sector partnerships, clear visions and strategic planning with guided focus, persistence and sustainability whether “feast or famine”, and community will, public understanding and buy-in because of good public communications.

24	Importance and need of private/public sector partnerships for funding, balance and sustainability. (14.5%)
19	Sustainability, consistent engagement and persistence through feast/famine time a key. (11.5%)
19	Clear vision and perspectives for the future are essential with stakeholder involvement/strategic plans and guided focus a must. (11.5%)
18	Economic diversity and broadening the base is economic development's top priority. (12%)
17	Essentials: Job creation is the key/tax base and personal income (10%)
16	More than just business growth; overall community quality of life and downtown “main street strength”, and local customers create a stability factor. (10%)
16	Strong and diverse leadership and buy-in, plus positive attitudes are essential. (10%)
14	Must be locally driven with private sector as a driver, not government. (8.5%)
13	Economic development takes a long time, is complex, multi-faceted, and must be sustainable. (8%)
8	Capitalize on opportunities. (5%)
<b>164</b>	<b>Grouped Responses</b>

### B.) Observations – 153 “Break Outs”

Regarding **Observations**, the importance of diversity and broadening the economic base is apparent; local communications and community pride are essentials. Standing still is not an option if you want to move forward was often reported. So too, was fostering entrepreneurship and having new millennials -- they go hand in hand. Having and supporting local champions and local organizational structure are essential ingredients to success and sustainability.

18	Community will, support, and buy-in. Accurate and frequent communication for community/public understanding important. (12%)
16	Essential to communicate locally why economic development is important/educate the public; develop community pride; understand local versus state roles. (10%)
16	Support the local economy/take care of our own. When business is up,

	community stability happens. (10 %)
15	You can't stand still while others are moving forward; if you don't grow, you die; resistance to change has to be overcome; incentive for growth. (10%)
14	Labor force and workforce development a key factor. (9%)
13	Smaller communities have challenges. Collaboration and working together regionally important. (8.5%)
12	Federal, local, and state mandates and regulations, in general are obstacles. (8%)
11	Success requires "can do" champions who are innovators and consensus builders; they need to be supported not run off. (7%)
11	Economic development needs organizational structure – office, board, staff, solid funding, etc. Government should support but not lead. (7%)
10	Foster entrepreneurship; economic development a necessity like infrastructure; more risk taking needed. (6.5%)
9	Infrastructure is key ingredient. (6%)
8	Commit to new millennial/youth as priority and they need to be involved/recruited. (5%)
<b>153</b>	<b>Grouped Responses</b>

## County Goals as “Wish Lists”

This was **step one** for a detailed interactive process focusing on setting the stage for local agreement, consensus and action regarding economic development interests and sustainability. When looking at the different goals – County by county across the state by breakout groups of 4-6 individuals each. There were sixty-nine essential mentions, in seven categories as outlined below. The most prevalent ones were:

- \* **Diversify and Expand Economic/commerce base – Eleven Counties:** Albany, Campbell, Goshen, Johnson, Laramie, Lincoln, Niobrara, Sublette, Teton, Uinta, Washakie.
- \* **Unified County “brand”, vision, and marketing plan – Eleven Counties:** Campbell, Carbon, Crook, Hot Springs, Johnson, Lincoln, Niobrara, Park, Platte, Sheridan, Uinta.
- \* **Downtown Vitality, appeal, beautification and livability – Ten Counties:** Albany, Big Horn, Carbon, Hot Springs, Laramie, Lincoln, Natrona, Niobrara, Platte, Sheridan.
- \* **Communications and Benchmarks** about economic development between the private and public sectors and with the general public – **Ten Counties:** Big Horn, Carbon, Converse, Crook, Fremont, Lincoln, Platte, Sheridan, Sublette, Sweetwater.
- \* **Community Entryways and Beautification– Eight Counties:** Albany, Big Horn, Carbon, Converse, Natrona, Niobrara, Sheridan, Weston.
- \* **Air Service within the state and beyond – Eight Counties:** Albany, Big Horn, Campbell, Fremont, Hot Springs, Johnson, Laramie, Sheridan.
- \* **Affordable Housing for the poor and new millenials – Eight Counties:** Carbon, Converse, Fremont, Lincoln, Niobrara, Platte, Sheridan, Sublette.

The individual county goals, along with respective objectives and action steps, revealed diversity of thinking, consensus about local community vitality hopes for the future, pride for neighbors and local institutions and historic outdoor assets.

Each county had (and has) its target “wish list”. The following are just a few of the 209 other mentioned goals: outdoor lifestyle in Big Horn, North Lincoln, and Natrona Counties; Sheridan College being a four year college (Campbell and Sheridan Counties); a “Washakie County Focus Group” in Washakie to refocus economic development; tech center in Albany County and dependable broadband in Goshen

County; air service in Fremont, Laramie and Sheridan Counties; Industrial Heartland in Sweetwater and Lincoln South; cultural center for Park and Sheridan; capturing interstate traffic for Wheatland and Rawlins; health and wellness in Hot Springs; better grocery store in Sublette; High School computer classes in Teton; community center in Converse; benchmarks and synergy for all four communities in Crook; ownership for, and pride in, community for Weston; property tax base in Uinta; internet capacity in Goshen; predictable funding for economic development in Johnson; and Carnegie Library trail in Niobrara.

## Aligning Goals and Measurable Objectives By Wyoming Counties

Every county established **1.)** goals, **2.)** measurable objectives and **3.)** action steps. There is, and was, no ideal or average number for each of these steps by county. For a number of **goals** by County, the range was two in Crook to 17 in Albany; for **measurable objectives**, 11 in Goshen to 33 in Natrona; and for **action steps**, 3 in Lincoln South to 22 in Carbon and Teton.

The listings for all the different County goals, measurable objectives and action steps can be found on the individual County reports. Go to [www.wyomingbusinessalliance.com](http://www.wyomingbusinessalliance.com) and click on the desired County report on the home page of the website.

The following is a random sampling of one goal (among many) identified by every Wyoming county and the commensurate measurable objectives. As stated, and implied, local leaders expressed their ideas regarding economic development and community sustainability (and progress) openly and with enthusiasm. Robust discussions took place county by county. The lists developed were recorded as accurately as possible. No priorities were assigned to the goals, measurable objectives or action steps. The intent was to generate ideas, prepare county by county (and the state) reports and urge follow-up county meetings under the auspices of **TOUR 23** Phases II and III.

**Wyoming Counties** by **1.)** “Quote of the Day”, Number of Attendees **2.)** Selected Goals and **3.)** Respective Measurable Objectives

Albany	Goal Measurable Objectives	<b>“Dig where the gold is;”</b> 51 attendees Tech Center Tech center amenities – community beautification, entryways, and improved fibre.
Big Horn	Goal Measurable Objectives	<b>“Economic Development is a necessity like infrastructure;”</b> 27 attendees Increase communications about economic development. Support existing plan, celebrate “champions”, and provide support.
Campbell	Goal	<b>“Air service – You die if you don’t have it;”</b> 49 attendees

	Measurable Objectives	Consistent, sustainable and reliable air service. Without air service, most potential businesses to Wyoming will bypass the state; develop required transport system to outlying communities; expand statewide and regionally.
Carbon	Goal Measurable Objectives	<b>“Understand the ROI importance of economic development;”</b> 35 attendees Brand. Say Rawlins in a positive voice. Be ambassadors for the community; word of mouth within and outside the community.
Converse	Goal Measurable Objectives	<b>“DURT – Delays, Uncertainty, Regulations and Taxes;”</b> 33 attendees Create communities people want to stay in. Develop a check list for what community offers: housing, jobs, training, recreation, promote what we have.
Crook	Goal Measurable Objectives	<b>“Clear vision for the future is the highest priority;”</b> 49 attendees An agreed upon vision for the county with dedicated private and public sector leadership which recognizes the important of volunteerism. Establish and maintain an enduring economic development focus; develop a collaborative and measurable plan, with established timeline and funding; determine each community’s strengths to leverage for the good of the whole.
Fremont	Goal Measurable Objectives	<b>“Shark Tank approach to validate business ideas;”</b> 49 attendees Improve expectations: education/graduation rate; workforce/worth ethic; community/beautification and culture. Kindergarten readiness to decrease drop-out rate; 90% by 2017.
Goshen	Goal Measurable Objectives	<b>“Wyoming’s leading agriculture county.”</b> 29 attendees Stabilize existing farms, ranches, and business first. Expand from within. <b>Sustained job creation</b> over time. Repurposing of sugar plant (Potatoes?). Repurpose old buildings downtown.
Hot Springs	Goal Measurable Objectives	<b>“Become Wyoming’s health and wellness center;”</b> 31 attendees Become health and wellness center. Establish businesses that support health and wellness tourism. Hospice retreat.
Johnson	Goal	<b>“Grow or die;”</b> 31 attendees Streamline regulatory process for business.

	Measurable Objectives	Communicate with legislators and local government on accountability and issues faced; increase rate of permitting and start up.
Laramie	Goals  Measurable Objectives	<b>“Put your egos aside”</b> 67 attendees Enhance downtown livability; destination of choice for younger demographic; and create downtown entrepreneurship. Catalyst housing project; grocery store downtown; business openings; identify unused/underutilized buildings.
Lincoln (North)	Goal Measurable Objectives	<b>“America’s Little Switzerland;”</b> 29 attendees Implement Star Valley “Way Finding” system. Coordinate with communities and mayors; develop system; increase signage; make Swift Creek/Intermittent Spring a state park.
Lincoln (South)	Goal Measurable Objectives	<b>“Relationship building is the key;”</b> 22 attendees Jump start South Lincoln economic activity. Expand local leadership; empower and move ahead with Joint Powers Economic Board.
Natrona	Goal Measurable Objectives	<b>“Exporting talented youth...family follows family;”</b> 71 attendees Market Casper as hub of Wyoming. Increase number of events at Events Center; greater hotel occupancy; host more community events; city, schools and YMCA get together; indoor youth sports facility and county wide aquatic center; and more appreciation for marketing sports.
Niobrara	Goals  Measurable Objectives	<b>“Destination rather than a weigh station;”</b> 31 attendees Expand tourism and get high volume traffic to stop and stay; advertise Carnegie Library as national historic site. Advertise National Historic Buildings in the community; promote and market town as a destination; develop “Carnegie Trail” between Wheatland and Newcastle which have Carnegie Libraries; complete and outreach brochure.
Park	Goal  Measurable Objectives	<b>“Epic, undiscovered, and achievable;”</b> 41 attendees Develop county-wide plan and vision – “Epic, undiscovered, and achievable.” Improve understanding of 1% tax for economic development; develop clean industry; industrial training center at Northwest College; dependable and constant revenue stream to sustain the long term; and develop value added energy.
Platte	Goal Measurable Objectives	<b>“I-25, 2 million vehicles per year;”</b> 25 attendees Pull people off of I-25/capture I-25 traffic. Signage, completion of 16 <sup>th</sup> street project.

Sheridan	Goal Measurable Objectives	<b>“The Whitney effect...sustainability, adaptability, and global while maintaining a sense of place;”</b> 36 attendees Make downtown healthy and vibrant. Case studies of other successful communities; county plan and engagement, address housing shortage in county with downtown option, and inside parking.
Sublette	Goal Measurable Objectives	<b>“We need a plan to make a plan;”</b> 34 attendees Sustain local small business climate/local money stays local. Improve grocery store, expand retail base, promote and encourage seniors to stay in the county, recruit a pharmacy and other high paying jobs, educate residents and create a capacity to keep “buying” local, and encourage and incentivize full occupancy of businesses/storefronts.
Sweetwater	Goal Measurable Objectives	<b>“Can’t solve a problem if don’t know what the issues are;”</b> 44 attendees Develop Industrial Heartland concept/project. Get community buy-in across county, with county as the lead; county appoint a task force.
Teton	Goal Measurable Objectives	<b>“Growth on our terms;”</b> 45 attendees More/better computer science high school courses. More classes and curriculum/more students; raise understanding of benefits of computer sciences career.
Uinta	Goal Measurable Objectives	<b>“Sturgis of fireworks;”</b> 40 attendees Determine acceptable way forward for economic development. Identify types of growth or sectors for business to focus on – appropriate to county wishes; continue to market shovel ready property; spend money for recruitment and retaining professional diversity, and increase tax base population and business formation.
Washakie	Goal Measurable Objectives	<b>“Why not a Washakie County Focus Group;”</b> 37 attendees Establish a county-wide vision; “Washakie County Focus Group”. Assess existing economic development groups to coordinate efforts, engage younger people to be involved in destiny of the county, get more young folks into leadership positions, and advertise/market Worland.
Weston	Goal Measurable	<b>“Economic development must take a long term vision;”</b> 33 attendees Citizens and leaders must work together for a unified plan and business growth. Identify key leaders in groups, get collaboration in

	Objectives	reaching regional goals, establish a county-wide “coordinating council” to meet quarterly, look for examples and reasons for success set by other places – including leadership training.
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## Conclusion: Forge Ahead

### Overall Goals

- 1.) Continue **TOUR 23 “Reach Out, Listen, Report Back”** Process
- 2.) Respond to struggling economy and state economic swings
- 3.) Implement strategies to sustain and strengthen communities
- 4.) Identify the resources to achieve stability and growth
- 5.) Push for achievable goals at the local and state level
- 6.) Establish an inclusive participatory framework
- 7.) Compliment the Wyoming Business Council and local economic development and business organizations
- 8.) Pro-actively communicate ideas across the **TOUR 23** spectrum – 23 counties; 853 leaders across Wyoming

### TOUR 23 Time Frames

**Phase I** – April – June, 2015; **TOUR 23** Meetings

**Phase II** – July, 2015 – November, 2015; **TOUR 23** reports (individual county); 2+2 match; Wyoming Forum/Governor Mead’s Wyoming Business Forum; December, 2015 – June, 2016: Follow-up to Governor’s Business Forum; final **TOUR 23** Report; **TOUR 23** communications/networks; State legislator interim committee considerations.

**Phase III** – July, 2016 – June, 2017: Advance community/state foundational anchors and sustainability of local leadership, resolve and program commitments.

### Overview:

#### Summary: Reading Reality Truthfully

Each Wyoming county **TOUR 23** report concluded with a “**Summary: Reading Reality Truthfully**” page outlining impressions about each respective county – opportunities, county interests, priority issues, and capabilities to move forward. These summaries

were reviewed by county **DRAFT** Review Team volunteers – generally 4 to 8 individuals, often representing private and public sector perspectives.

The county by county **Reading Reality Truthfully** summaries are at the end of each county report. These capture, and track in many respects, local citizen understandings about 1.) county and Wyoming historic **hallmarks**; 2.) beliefs and observations about the **essentiality of economic development**; and 3.) county **goals, measurable objectives** and **action steps**.

The following two **Focus Strategies** are based on county by county expressed interests. They were subsequently validated by surveys taken at the Governor’s Business Forum.

Many, if not all of these, can/or should, involve private and public sector discussions, strategies, and partnerships at the **state, regional** and **local levels**. Legislative Interim Committees and state agencies could be vehicles at the state level. Locally it would be county and city government and economic development organizations.

## **Two Focus Strategy**

### **I. Strategy One: State, Regional and Local Levels – Advance community anchors across Wyoming.**

#### **A.) Six Priority Issues/Foundational Interests**

- 1.) Wyoming’s economic future will increasingly necessitate increased air service – both interstate and intrastate. No air service, or interrupted air service, presents a looming negative for local economic development efforts – both for existing business expansion and new business location prospects. Local skin in the game has been a decisive factor; creative economics and utilization of intra-state service has not progressed, much to the detriment of Wyoming’s public and private sector workforces. The prospect of no air service to the state capital has image and realistic consequences. **Eight counties** list air service as a priority--- Albany, Big Horn, Campbell, Fremont, Hot Springs, Johnson, Laramie and Sheridan.

**Recommendation. Structure a “fresh eyes” task force with practical entrepreneurial leadership to provide solutions to both Wyoming’s interstate and intrastate air service needs.**

- 2.) Wyoming’s small business economic future depends on interconnectivity via the internet and sufficient broadband capacity and seamless cell phone service. Great strides have taken place; more needs to be done. A community with spotty coverage – especially for the business sector – is a community which becomes an increasingly non-competitive business climate community. The state has made great progress through state agency hard work and legislative support.

The workforce of the future, and the new millenials, expect and are accustomed to the broadband and internet way of life. Without these, they will not stay or come to Wyoming.

**Recommendation. Determine which communities have insufficient coverage and which want, and need, expanded service.**

- 3.) Increase visitation to Wyoming’s local historical sites, downtowns, and unique attractions/assets. This is more than a “tourism” issue, it is a community identity issue. Every Wyoming community visited in **TOUR 23** expressed community pride and the importance of showcasing their respective communities. The list of “assets” is limitless. Imagine a museum tour between the new Brinton Museum in Big Horn, the Buffalo Bill Center of the West in Cody and National Museum of Wildlife Art in Jackson; development of the Big Horn Canyon as America’s other “Grand Canyon”, a “Carnegie Library” trail involving Wheatland, Lusk and Newcastle, or Intermittent Falls in Afton.

**Recommendation. Research the advantages of increased local tourism and longer stays – whether for a few more days/nights; and how travel division may enhance these initiatives.**

- 4.) When looking at Wyoming hallmarks, especially for the 1940-1990 and 1990-2015 periods, it is self evident that mineral taxes and employment have shaped Wyoming’s economic landscape – highway and school construction, the Hathaway Plan, and state and local government funding and services.

**Recommendation. Educating the general public and students about Wyoming’s resource heritages (oil and gas, agriculture/ranching, and tourism), and movement to value added opportunity horizons which involve innovative technology and career tech is essential.**

- 5.) Wyoming’s interstates and two-lane highways are more of a detriment, not an asset, for downtowns across the state. **Eight counties** identified this issue. Attractive and thematic signage, creative highway communications and multi messaging, along with attractive and easy to negotiate entryways to downtowns should become pathways to increased retail sales and added sales tax revenue. The “Lost Opportunity” from traffic across Wyoming is obvious. The Nova Scotia model is worth studying – local funding and local themes for signs to “catch” the traveling public.

**Recommendation. Develop an imaginative plan, with feasibilities, involving the eleven interstate corridor communities and the state to capture 5% of the 12,000 daily vehicles on I-80 and I-25.**

- 6.) Many downtowns across the state are withering, yet there is general recognition that vibrant downtowns impart community pride, and a sense of togetherness

and millennial roots; empty storefronts and abandoned buildings (other than government buildings) broadcast stagnation, dampen community spirits, and investment interest. **Ten counties** identified this as an issue. Imagine more national recognition for best small towns/downtowns.

**Recommendation. Determine ways to make the community ready grant program more applicable to stabilizing and enhancing downtown business activity, beautification, and livability across the state; have greater local challenge match efforts and civic organization “hands on” involvement versus over reliance on government.**

## **II Strategy Two: Regional and Local levels – Sustainability of Local Leadership, Resolve, and Program Commitments.**

### **A.) Three Essential Supports**

- 1.) Linkages.** Wyoming people want the best for their local communities. **Eleven communities** had diversified and expanding economic base for their goals. Leaders recognize the important of economic growth and job creation and understand the quality of life essentials. The stumbling blocks are community will, financial assets, steadfast champions, and consistently moving from idea talk to accomplished action, year in and year out.

**Recommendation. Link the want for sustained and diverse economies to the how (and what it means) to achieve and maintain proactive business/leadership, public/private partnerships, and persistent champions.**

- 2.) Dialogue and Collaboration.** The Wyoming Business Council was recognized quite favorably as a visible “Hallmark” for the 1990-2015 time frame; local business/economic development organizations were not at the forefront...**but referenced on occasion as vehicles to facilitate progress. TOUR 23** updates and communications, facilitation of local efforts, sharing ideas and information and knowledge regarding other Wyoming community programs, and following up to Spring, 2015 county meetings are essential action steps. **Ten counties** addressed the importance of communications and benchmarks.

**Recommendation. Establish an open ended and wide spectrum communication, “reach out, listen, and report back” system linking TOUR 23 participants and attended (public, private, and non-profit) influencers to assure understanding and support of economic development.**

- 3.) Concrete and Self-reliance Focus.** Provide organizational structure models and funding approaches to support and sustain local economic development efforts.

**Recommendation. Make coordinated public, private and non-profit leadership training availability a priority – locally, by region and collectively across the state on a proportional basis for volunteers and full time staff.**

## **Conclusion**

### **TOUR 23 Report**

Wyoming is known for its small town friendliness – be it Casper and Cheyenne, or Cody, Evanston, Newcastle, Lander or Douglas. All of these communities -- in fact virtually every Wyoming community -- are challenged by not having enough job growth to meet the needs of graduates and those wishing to stay in the state. The future job holders and millennials—for now, not five years from now – want mobility, downtown vitality, air service, housing, quality of life amenities, and reliable internet service. These are ingredients for entrepreneurship in the future and sustainable communities throughout Wyoming.

### **Special Recognitions**

#### **TOUR 23 County Coordinators**

<b><u>COUNTY</u></b>	<b><u>COORDINATOR</u></b>
Crook	Linda Tokarczyk
Albany	Dan Furphy
Big Horn	Dave Reetz
Campbell	Phil Christopherson
Carbon	Cindy Wallace
Converse	Joe Coyne
Fremont	Kevin Kershisnick/Lori Ridgway
Goshen	Ashley Harpstreith
Hot Springs	Amanda Moeller
Johnson	Dave Simonsen
Laramie	Anja Bendel
Lincoln (N)	Ron McCue
Lincoln (S)	Jerry Greenfield
Natrona	Gilda Lara

Niobrara	Tom Wasserburger
Park	James Klessens
Platte	Keith Geis
Sheridan	Dixie Johnson
Sublette	Dave Bell, Paul Ulrich
Sweetwater	Dave Hanks
Teton	Liz Brimmer
Uinta	Amy Grenfell
Washakie	Ron Harvey
Weston	Carmen Diehl

## **TOUR 23 Sponsors**

### **Major Sponsors**

1. Black Hills Corporation
2. Black Hills Energy NE
3. Black Hills Power
4. First Interstate Bank
5. Hilltop National Bank
6. Little America
7. Rocky Mountain Power
8. Timberline Hospitality
9. Tronox
10. Silverstar Communications
11. Spradley Barr Motors
12. University of Wyoming
13. Wyoming Banker's Association
14. Wyoming Business Alliance
15. Wyoming Business Council

### **Individual Event Sponsors**

16. Laramie Holiday Inn; University of Wyoming – Coe Library (Albany)
17. Big Horn Federal Bank; Historic Hotel Greybull (Big Horn)
18. Black Hills Energy NE WY; Black Hills Corporation; First Interstate Bank, South Fork Apartments (Campbell County)
19. Bureau of Land Management; Carbon County Economic Development Corporation Rawlins Downtown Development Authority (Carbon)
20. Eastern Wyoming College; CANDO (Converse)
21. Rural America Matters Center (Crook); Rare Element Resources (Crook)
22. Central Wyoming College (Fremont)
23. Goshen County Economic Development Corporation (Goshen)
24. Hot Springs County Museum (Hot Springs)
25. First Interstate Bank; KBJ Economic Development (Johnson)
26. Little America (Laramie)

27. Silver Star Communication (Lincoln North)
28. Lincoln County Commissioners; Lincoln County Courthouse (Lincoln South)
29. Ramkota; Timberline Hospitality / Comfort Inn (Natrona)
30. The Fine Grind; Niobrara County Fairgrounds/UW Extension (Niobrara)
31. Holiday Inn Cody (Park)
32. Platte Valley Bank (Platte)
33. Sheridan Chamber of Commerce; Sheridan College (Sheridan)
34. Baymont Inn and Suites; Sublette County Library (Sublette)
35. City of Rock Springs and Sweetwater County Chamber of commerce (Sweetwater)
36. Antler Inn; Wort Hotel (Teton)
37. City of Evanston (Uinta)
38. Firenze Italian Steakhouse (Washakie)
39. Black Hills Power; Black Hills Energy NE; Joe's Food Center; Upton Community Center  
Wesco Gas (Weston)

## **Tour 23 Committee Members**

Ron McCue, Chairman, Silver Star Communication, Thayne  
 Anne Alexander, University of Wyoming, Laramie  
 Mickey Beaver, Rocky Mountain Power, Cheyenne  
 Dave Bell, HUB Insurance, Pinedale  
 Liz Brimmer, Brimmer Communications, Jackson  
 Fred Bronnenberg, Groathouse Construction, Cody  
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 Paul Ulrich, Jonah Energy, Pinedale  
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