



MAIN STREET



FY2020 Annual Report





Downtown Rock Springs



MAIN STREET

Wyoming Business Council Strategy

The Wyoming Business Council's (WBC) Board of Directors adopted a new purpose and vision for the agency in May 2019. The purpose is "creating new opportunities for current and future generations of Wyomingites by adding value to Wyoming's core industries and leveraging them to activate new economic sectors." It is the Business Council's vision to realize diverse, broad and lasting growth so Wyoming can prosper no matter the economic climate or status of individual sectors. The Business Council serves Wyoming through local economic development, strategic partnerships, investments and services, and by providing expertise.

It does this by focusing on efforts that expand the state and local tax base and addressing economic development building blocks: leadership, infrastructure, quality of life, workforce, entrepreneurial development, existing business retention and expansion, and business recruitment.

In 2016, the Business Council moved the Wyoming Main Street program under the Community Development Division (CD). The CD Division houses the federally funded Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and the state-funded Business Ready Communities (BRC) program that assists cities with community and economic development goals. Program staff work closely with communities to provide technical assistance and public infrastructure. Including the Wyoming Main Street program in the CD Division furthers these goals and allows all programs to integrate fully for the benefit of communities.



- Improve livability of communities
- Grow and sustain local economic development efforts
- Empower communities to sustainably develop their unique economies

STATUTORY AUTHORITY AND HISTORY

In 2004, the Wyoming Legislature created the Wyoming Main Street program to assist Wyoming communities of various sizes and resource levels with downtown revitalization efforts. The program was originally created under statute W.S. 11-45-101 through 11-45-105 as a pilot program. The act created the Wyoming Main Street program, an advisory board, an appropriation, staff positions and a provision for a building façade revolving loan fund. Duties of the original bill were delegated to the Wyoming Department of Agriculture-Wyoming Rural Development Council. The 2007 Legislature passed Senate Bill 126, which removed the word “pilot,” changed the revolving loan fund to include building structure projects and moved the duties of the program to the Business Council.

MAIN STREET ADVISORY BOARD

Governor Mark Gordon appoints the seven-person advisory board. The current roster of Advisory Board members include Matt Ashby (Cheyenne), Marla Brown (Rawlins), Jennifer Ford (Jackson), Bruce Heimback (Cheyenne) and Mayor Roger Miller (Sheridan). There are currently two positions open on the board.

MAIN STREET APPROACH

Wyoming Main Street is a state-level coordinating effort that promotes and manages the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s Main Street program for Wyoming. Wyoming Main Street’s purpose is to assist Wyoming communities of various sizes and resources with downtown revitalization efforts or transformation strategies. The Main Street program provides communities with technical assistance for revitalization of commercial business districts using the Main Street approach. That approach is centered on Transformation Strategies, which is a focused planning process specific to revitalizing a downtown or commercial district. Combined with local and regional data as well as a robust community engagement plan, Transformation Strategies remain true to the four pillars of Main Street:

The Main Street approach is incremental; it is not designed to produce immediate change. For

Organization.

Organization establishes consensus and cooperation by building partnerships among the various groups that have a stake in the commercial district.

Promotion.

Promotions communicate a commercial district’s unique characteristics — its cultural traditions, architecture, history and activities — to shoppers, investors, visitors and potential business and property owners.

Design.

Design means getting downtown into top physical shape; preserving a place’s historic character and creating a safe, inviting environment for shoppers, workers and visitors.

Economic Vitality.

Economic vitality is a strategy to retain and expand successful business by providing a balanced commercial mix, sharpening the competitiveness and merchandising skills of business owners, and attracting new businesses that the market can support. Converting unused or underused commercial space into economically productive property also helps boost the profitability of the district.

a community to succeed, a long-term revitalization effort requires careful attention to every aspect of downtown. It advocates a return to community self-reliance, local empowerment and the rebuilding of traditional commercial districts based on unique assets such as distinctive architecture, a pedestrian-friendly environment, personal service, local ownership and a sense of place. The underlying premise of the Main Street approach is to encourage economic development within the context of historic preservation.

MAIN STREET COMMUNITIES

The Main Street program provides increasing degrees of technical and architectural assistance to three tiers of communities.

■ **Aspiring Communities** are those that are exploring downtown revitalization and wish to become an affiliate or certified community within the next two years. There are three aspiring communities: Cokeville, Goshen County and Afton.

■ **Affiliate communities** are those that do not have the capacity to pay for staff dedicated to the Main Street Approach, so the downtown revitalization efforts are mainly led by a volunteer base. The program provides access to training and some on-site assistance. There are four affiliate communities: Douglas, Platte County, Sundance and Thermopolis.

■ **Certified communities** are those that have paid staff and mature downtown development programs. The program provides access to training, on-site assistance and resources for additional technical assistance. There are eight certified communities: Cheyenne, Evanston, Gillette, Green River, Laramie, Rawlins, Rock Springs and Sheridan.

PARTNERSHIPS

The Wyoming Main Street program partners with many different agencies and organizations. Some of those partners include: Alliance for Historic Wyoming, State Historic Preservation Office, Wyoming Association of Municipalities, Wyoming Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources, Wyoming Office of Tourism, Wyoming Department of Transportation, Wyoming Economic Development Association, Wyoming Arts Council, Wyoming State Chamber of Commerce, National Main Street Center and National Trust for Historic Preservation.

NEW COMMUNITY SELECTION

The Wyoming Main Street program held its annual community selection process in February 2020 and accepted Afton as an aspiring program.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO MAIN STREET COMMUNITIES

The Wyoming Main Street program provided \$110,750 in technical assistance and training funds to communities throughout the state in fiscal year 2020. The money is used for projects like downtown sound systems, marketing, business assistance, sound systems, and the Made on Main pilot program.

HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL ASSISTANCE FUND

Wyoming Main Street invested \$34,812 in nine projects throughout Wyoming with the Historic Architecture Assistance Fund (HAAF). The assistance included structural and façade assessments, use concepts and feasibility studies, rehabilitation recommendations and cost estimates.

FY2020 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ▶ Afton was accepted as an Aspiring Program in the Wyoming Main Street Program. An Aspiring Program will have two years to organize and develop strategies that reflect the National Main Street Center's criteria for a program.
- ▶ The National Main Street Center (NMSC) awarded accreditation status for Cheyenne, Evanston, Gillette, Green River, Laramie, Rawlins, Rock Springs, and Sheridan as Main Street Programs.
- ▶ Affiliate programs acknowledged by NMSC were Douglas, Platte County, Sundance and Thermopolis.
- ▶ Wyoming Main Street invested \$34,812 throughout Wyoming with the Historic Architecture Assistance Fund.
- ▶ Wyoming Main Street awarded training and technical assistance funding in the amount of \$110,750 to Wyoming Main Street communities.
- ▶ Placemaking training projects continued with Kim Porter, Community Development Initiative Director, and Wyoming Main Street's assistance. Kim Porter's Placemaking report includes information on projects and funding. The Rural Development program also has funds available

WYOMING MAIN STREET

for projects.

- ▶ Wyoming Main Street collaborated with Colorado's Main Street program to host a Best Practices Workshop in Rawlins, Laramie, Granby, and Steamboat Springs. Training focused on light manufacturing in downtowns, community and business development programs focused on downtown growth, art as economic development, and historic preservation.

(Accomplishments continued page 6)

RETURN ON INVESTMENT:

Communities with robust Main Street programs benefit from new businesses, more jobs and significant private investment. The figures below represent some of those positive effects from FY2020.



39

NET NEW
BUSINESSES



\$19

MILLION IN PRIVATE FUNDS FOR
BUILDING AND INFRASTRUCTURE
IMPROVEMENTS

16,223

VOLUNTEER HOURS
INCLUDING EVENTS, BOARD MEETINGS,
BOARD COMMITTEE PLANNING, AND
MISCELLANEOUS HOURS

\$2.8M

IN PUBLIC INVESTMENTS



141
NET NEW JOBS

*Note:
Communities
self-report data for
their Main Street
boundaries.



Downtown Thermopolis

(Accomplishments continued from page 5)

- ▶ Laramie and Rock Springs were chosen to pilot the Made on Main program developed by the National Main Street Center.
- ▶ In response to the COVID outbreak, Wyoming Main Street facilitated a Shop Smart, Shop Safe campaign with Wyoming Economic Development Association and Wyoming State Chamber representatives.
- ▶ With a decline in retail sales, Wyoming Main Street created a campaign called Wyo Wednesday to encourage local shopping.
- ▶ To provide networking opportunities and moral support during the pandemic, Wyoming Main Street partnered with Michigan’s Main Street program in conducting a monthly webinar to share ideas, frustrations, and successes.
- ▶ Linda Klinck, Wyoming Main Street Program Manager, was elected to serve on the National Main Street Center’s Leadership Council.

Wyoming Main Street Communities

- Cheyenne
- Evanston
- Gillette
- Green River
- Laramie
- Rawlins
- Rock Springs
- Sheridan
- Douglas
- Platte County
- Sundance
- Thermopolis
- Cokeville
- Goshen County
- Afton



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