

**Nº1** IN THE NATION FOR  
GUN OWNERSHIP



# SET YOUR SIGHTS *On Wyoming*

*Past, Present, Future*  
**CODY HITS THE MARK** PG. 3

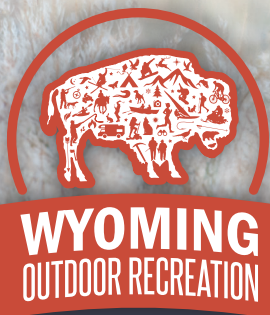
*Sheridan*  
**TAKES CENTER STAGE** PG. 14



**BOOTH #14449**



# FIND YOUR CALLING



## LIVE, WORK, & PLAY IN WYOMING.

Wyoming is a state that provides unmatched beauty and endless opportunities for businesses. We are committed to providing a tax-friendly climate and establishing an environment that helps your company prosper.

Don't just take our word for it, come see for yourself. Plan your next big game hunt or outdoor adventure with

Wyoming Outfitters and Guides Association at 307-265-2376 or [www.wyoga.org](http://www.wyoga.org).

**WYOUTDOORREC.ORG**





# PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

## Cody Hits the Mark

By JAMES KLESSENS | Forward Cody

Photo courtesy of James Klessens

A recent business relocation prospect to Cody stepped out of his car, strapped on his revolver and belt and strode down the street. It was apparent that he was attempting to get a reaction. And a reaction he got. It wasn't long before a passerby stopped him asking, "Is that a Smith & Wesson?" So it goes in Cody – a place where not having a firearm is more unusual than having one.

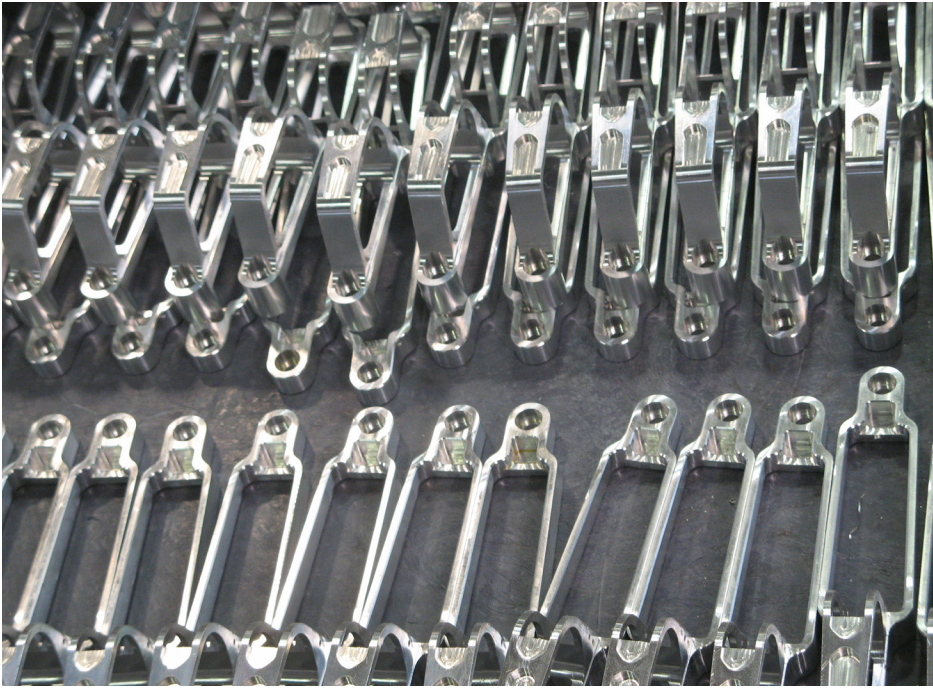
Firearms in Wyoming are as common to its residents as having a shovel or a hammer. To us, they are tools. Tools of protection and tools of provision. Our people know firearms and they know how to handle them. As the number two state for gun ownership, nearly two-thirds of Wyoming residents own a firearm. Most have several.

It makes sense to also be home to the manufacturers as well. Cody is home to a host of specialty

firearms manufacturers including, Gunwerks, Best of the West, Big Horn Armory, Wyoming Arms and the Wyoming Armory. A half dozen shops carry munitions and about that many offer gunsmithing services. It's also home to well-known industry names Randy Selby, Jim Zumbo, and John Linebaugh to name a few.

Why these people and companies chose to live in Cody is a short conversation. It's a place where





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or a hammer.**

you can live and use firearms and not be challenged for your beliefs. The conservative views of the residents carry an appeal to those wishing to escape a growing anti-gun culture. Our world-renowned museum, the Buffalo Bill Center of the West proudly displays over 7,000 firearms. Their display tells the story of how guns were instrumental in the development of the West. It also helps people see value in guns as a tool – not a weapon. Tens of thousands of people from around the world travel to visit the Cody Firearms Museum and view their exhibits.

Hunting in the shadow of Yellowstone Park and some of the wildest country in the world doesn't hurt either. The area boasts some of the finest elk, deer, and Big Horn sheep hunting anywhere. And when you can't hunt, you can fish any of the four major rivers in the area or any of the dozens of mountain lakes. Outdoor recreation is a leading sector of our local economy.

But then there's work to do too. With quality infrastructure to support growing companies and positive support from the community, firearms companies find Cody to be a welcoming home. As a community of 10,000 residents, the ability to attract a workforce exists and for those needing growth in skills, training opportunities are nearby. We have what you need for your business to succeed.

The people who have chosen Cody as a place to set up business did so by intention. They chose to spend their time living the heritage they love, in country that you can't help but love.





# EXPANDING SCOPE AND SIGHT: CHEYENNE WELCOMES FIREARMS BUSINESS

By RACHELLE ZIMMERMAN

Cheyenne LEADS



Photo courtesy of Stag Arms

It's no secret that the changing climate for firearms manufacturers and firearms-related companies is leading to an exodus from states with burdensome regulations to Wyoming. The Cowboy State understands the value of this fast-growing sector, and local communities are more than happy to welcome those companies with open arms.

"Cheyenne came out on top on most of the individual criteria, and, considering our requirements as a whole, it was by far the superior site," said Elie Azar, Founder and CEO of White Wolf Capital LLC which owns a controlling interest in Stag Arms. "Not only is Wyoming an incredibly hospitable place to do business, but it is also a top destination for outdoor recreation, including hunting and shooting sports, which reflects its citizens' unwavering support for the Second Amendment."

Wyoming continues to affirm its support of the Second Amendment, and a Wyoming State Constitutional Provision also states that, "The rights of the citizens to bear arms in defense of themselves and the state shall not be denied." This sets the

stage for personal gun ownership rights and the rapid growth and extensive opportunities for firearms manufacturing and distribution.

Cheyenne, located in the southeast corner of the state and 15 miles north of Colorado, is a community that has used that support to attract firearms related companies including Magpul Industries, Thunder Beast and Stag Arms. Cheyenne LEADS, the economic development organization for Cheyenne and Laramie County, has assisted several companies by providing discounted land in their business parks and favorable lease agreements for those looking to move or expand their operations.

LEADS began purchasing land and developing infrastructure in two business parks starting in 1992. The Cheyenne Business Parkway and the North Range Business Park, both owned by LEADS, offer shovel-ready property of varying acreage, all dedicated to economic development. You will find both Stag Arms and Magpul in these parks. Other business parks also offer business friendly development opportunities, including the Cheyenne Logistics Hub, a privately owned park that

boasts complete infrastructure, dual rail, and immediate access onto Interstate 25. With a growing demand for development, the Bison Business Park is currently under construction.

Cheyenne is at the crossroads of Interstates 80 and 25, with one connecting San Francisco to New York City, and the other connecting Cheyenne to Mexico via Denver, Santa Fe and Albuquerque. The state's capital also offers rail versatility with two Class I railroads, BNSF and Union Pacific.

While the availability of transportation is a key component of relocation decisions, so is the ability to run a business with minimal interruption. Wyoming has remained open for business throughout 2020 and 2021. With a current labor shed of over 183,000 and the continued migration of workers from more restrictive states, workforce availability will continue to increase. Add that to low crime rates, great outdoor spaces, good schools, clean air, and an involved community, it's no wonder that businesses continue to consider Cheyenne and Wyoming for relocation and expansion.



# RIGHT TO BEAR ARMS

## *State Constitutional Provision – Article 1, Section 24*

*“The right of the citizens to bear arms in defense of themselves and the state shall not be denied.”*

### **Wyoming ranks No. 1 in the nation for gun ownership (59.7 percent).**

*Source: General Social Survey's Trends in Gun Ownership in the United States (1972-2014).*

### **Wyoming resident women who hold a hunting license increased nearly 19 percent from 2011 to 2016. The increase in resident women anglers follows suit, increasing 18 percent during the same period.**

*Source: Wyoming Game and Fish Department*

Wyoming does not restrict any type of firearm or magazine.

In 1994, the Wyoming Legislature modified the Weapons Statutes (W.S. 6-8-101 et. seq.) in two important ways. First, Wyoming became a “shall-issue” state, which meant that, subject to certain conditions (age, clean record and training,) no one could be denied a concealed carry permit. Second, state pre-emption over all local ordinances allowed the permit holder statewide privilege.

In 1999, in response to the spate of city and state lawsuits against gun manufacturers whose products were used in criminal activity, the Wyoming Legislature passed and the governor signed the Second Amendment Defense Act (W.S. 9-14-101). This bill authorized the state attorney general to intervene in court cases involving Wyoming firearms manufacturers and citizens as defendants.

In 2001, reciprocity was authorized. As of April 2013, Wyoming has reciprocal concealed carry agreements with 35 states, including every state with which it shares a border.

In 2010, out-of-state concealed carry permit holders were provided more legal protection in Wyoming by the State Legislature. Wyoming licensees benefited when traveling to reciprocal states.

In 2011, the Wyoming Legislature approved concealed carry without a permit, recognizing the right to personal protection absent government licensure. Wyoming is one of 10 states to acknowledge this right.





# Firearms Manufacturing



## #1 BUSINESS TAX CLIMATE

- **NO** state income tax
- **NO** state corporate tax
- **LOW** sales and property tax
- **NO** manufacturing sales tax
- **NO** inventory, franchise, occupation or value-added tax

## Success Stories

### Weatherby

After announcing their plans to relocate at SHOT Show in 2018, Weatherby has since celebrated two years of being located in Sheridan, WY. They employ over 100 people in their state-of-the-art facility that fits right into the backdrop of the beautiful Big Horn Mountains.

### Maven Optics

Maven Optics, a locally grown company that opened in Lander, WY in 2013, had the privilege of supplying the United States archery team with custom-made spotting scopes and binoculars during this summer's Olympics. Maven is built around a direct to consumer model that allows them to provide quality and high performance equipment while avoiding retail markup.

### Stag Arms

Since its founding, Stag Arms has specialized in the advancement of the AR firearms platform, and pioneered the first left-handed Modern Sporting Rifle. In November of 2019, Stag announced its move to Cheyenne, WY from Connecticut. That move inspired a whole new rebranding and product offering, showcasing the pride in their new Wyoming home.

## #1 in gun Registration

Registered guns per capita is 5x more than the #2 ranking



**48 PERCENT**  
of Wyoming is  
federal land.  
That's more than  
**30 MILLION**  
**ACRES**

“

Wyoming is like the incubator of great gun companies, and that's going to create a critical mass of talent here”

– Zak Smith, co-owner  
Thunder Beast Arms  
Corporation



# Why Wyoming Firearms Manufacturing



## Diverse Business

Wyoming has a diverse profile of businesses within the firearms industry. From rifles to optics, and sights to ammunition, our local communities support these thriving businesses.

Like many other outdoor recreation businesses across the country, the pandemic created an increased demand for these local companies, most of whom found creative ways to hire additional workforce, increase production capacity, and add new product lines.

## Supporting Industry Training

Wyoming's seven community colleges located across the state offer a wide array of programs that serve the needs of firearms and advanced manufacturing training needs. Community colleges work diligently with local businesses to help provide training programs in CNC machining, fabrication and welding, that bolster the talent of the manufacturing workforce.

Manufacturing Works, the state's Manufacturing Extension Partnership, is also available to assist Wyoming manufacturers, producers and entrepreneurs strategically identifying and solve their most pressing issues – enabling them to take their business to the next level.



## Favorable Culture

Wyoming enjoys easy access to year-round recreation opportunities and wide-open spaces. Here the great outdoors and economic opportunity go hand-in-hand, making Wyoming an ideal spot for firearms manufacturing and other supporting outdoor recreation-related businesses.

## Available Workforce

The Wyoming Workforce Development Training Fund offers Training Grants of up to \$1500 per employee per year. They also have a robust apprenticeship and internship program. Find out more by visiting [wyomingworkforce.org/businesses/wdtf](http://wyomingworkforce.org/businesses/wdtf).



To see how Wyoming might be a great fit for your business, visit [www.WhyWyoming.org](http://www.WhyWyoming.org)  
View available properties in Wyoming at [www.WyomingSites.com](http://www.WyomingSites.com)



**Wendy Lopez**  
Business Recruitment Manager  
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# Why Wyoming



Photo courtesy of Wyoming Office of Tourism

## Positive Regulatory Support

Wyoming does not believe in regulating honest American companies out of business. That's why Gov. Mark Gordon is committed to promoting the firearms industry in our state.

Wyoming's open-door access to the Governor and legislators is especially attractive to companies in highly regulated industries like firearms. This access, coupled with numerous grant, loan and incentive programs, provides businesses with key financial resources.

In addition to earning the nation's "Most Business Friendly Tax Climate" by the Tax Foundation every year since 2013, Wyoming provides a variety of advantages for businesses looking to relocate or expand.

## Wyoming is where your business meets your lifestyle

Quality of life makes a community worth living in: comprehensive planning/visioning, cultural and recreational opportunities, adequate and affordable housing, health care, good schools, police and fire protection and curb appeal.

Wyomingites enjoy boundless recreational and cultural opportunities. Residents and visitors alike can enjoy the outdoors and a night on the town – all in the same day. Wyoming features two national parks, 12 state parks and five national forests along with plenty of open spaces to hunt, fish, bike, hike and climb.

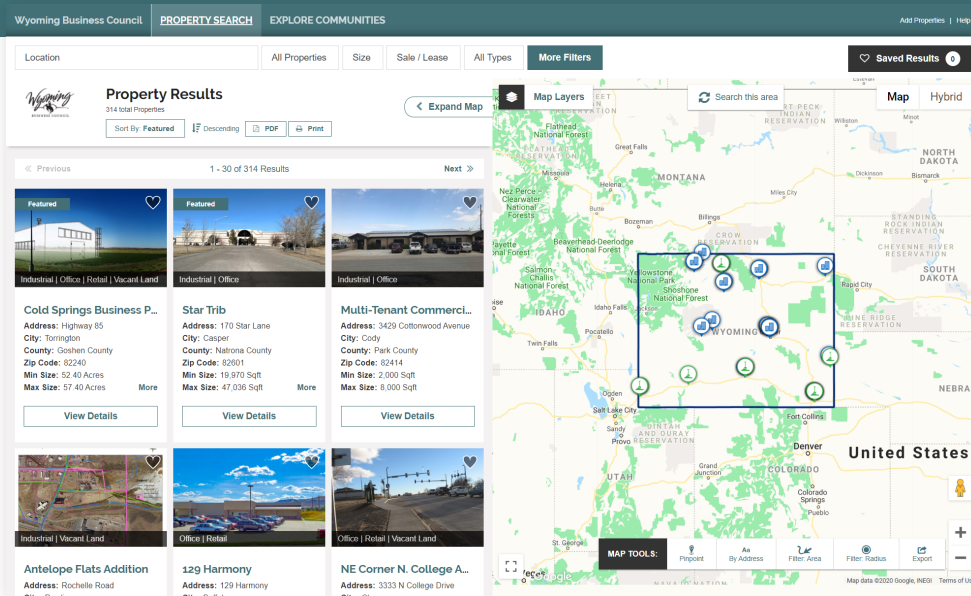
The state is home to seven ski areas and resorts, from Jackson Hole in the northwest corner to minutes from Laramie in the southeast.

Arts and culture? Wyoming offers an array of Western- and urban-themed events throughout the state: rodeos, galleries, symphonies, farmers markets, brew fests and more.

Find the Travel Wyoming calendar of events at [travelwyoming.com/events](https://travelwyoming.com/events).



# Available Sites, Properties and Community Data



Wyoming has available sites and buildings across the state, ranging from shovel-ready to shell buildings and existing industrial building.

Whether you need 2,000 square feet or a 50,000 square feet, or are looking for office space with room to expand, you can explore current inventory as well as relevant community data and facts at **WyomingSites.com**.

## Workforce Development Training Fund

Wyoming's Department of Workforce Services offers two types of workforce development grants:

### Business Training Grants

Up to \$1,500 per trainee is available each year to Wyoming companies. Businesses can receive \$50,000 per year.

### Pre-obligation Grants

Up to \$1,500 per trainee is available each year to incentivize business recruitment and expansion. These grants bypass the monthly competitive award process. Please go to [www.wyomingworkforce.org/businesses/wdtf](http://www.wyomingworkforce.org/businesses/wdtf) for more information.

## Wired for Business

The Wyoming Business Council aims to leave no Wyoming citizen behind and position every business to compete on a global scale by ensuring they each connect to the rest of the digital world with broadband internet capabilities that set the standard for all others to follow by 2025.

Using a new broadband infrastructure grant program as well as a coalition of public officials and private telecommunications leaders, the state is working to improve service to rural areas of Wyoming.



# *Why* WYOMING?

## ➤ **Manufacturing Sales Tax Exemption**

The sales tax burden is exempt on the sale or lease of machinery to be used in the state of Wyoming directly and predominantly in manufacturing tangible personal property.

## ➤ **Sales Tax Exemption on Electricity Used in Manufacturing**

The sales tax burden is exempt on sales of power or fuel to a person engaged in the business of manufacturing, processing or agriculture when the same is consumed directly in the manufacturing process.

*That's WY*<sup>™</sup>

Find out more at  
[whywyoming.org](http://whywyoming.org)

*Wyoming*  
BUSINESS COUNCIL





# The WYOMING WORKFORCE is ready

By BAYLIE EVANS | Writer

Sheridan College student Kayla Fischer works on a project in the Machine Tool Lab.

Photo by Dennis Jacobs, Sheridan College.

**W**ith plenty of breathing room, gorgeous vistas and an abundance of outdoor recreation, it's easy to see why Wyoming residents consider their state a best-kept secret for quality of life.

Still, with its low population and all that wide-open space, Wyoming has had to get creative to address the state's workforce needs. From its high-schoolers to its adults headed back to school, Wyoming's unique training programs nurture a nimble, ready-to-work population for a wide range of industries.

## Hathaway Scholarship

Wyoming consistently ranks among the best per capita for K12-education funding.

The Hathaway Scholarship offers need- and merit-based scholarships to graduates from Wyoming high schools to attend the University of

Wyoming, the state's only four-year university, which ranks among the best-value universities in the nation. It's one way the state is investing in its future workforce.

Recently, the Hathaway rules were changed to allow students to use it to gain career-technical education at the state's community colleges, as well.

## Community Colleges

With so much geography to cover, the University of Wyoming partners with the state's eight community colleges to provide a network of educational opportunities.

This year, the state of Wyoming authorized its community colleges to offer Bachelor of Applied Science degrees through the University of Wyoming, a move advocates hope will offer young Wyomingites an opportunity to stay, learn and work in their communities.

Wyoming colleges continue to offer outstanding career and technical training to meet unique, local needs. The community colleges are designed to be flexible enough to adjust quickly to ever-shifting industry demands and the state empowers them to do so.

Every Wyoming community college has robust advisory committees that include industry partners in their towns who inform their programs and curricula. And with Wyoming's excellent broadband coverage, many programs can be completed online from anywhere.

## Manufacturing and Machine Tool programs at Sheridan College

Workforce availability was a question on Adam Weatherby's mind when he was considering where to relocate his internationally renowned firearms





University of Wyoming campus in Laramie, Wyoming.

manufacturing company, said the business recruitment manager for the Wyoming Business Council, Wendy Lopez.

“Sheridan College really stepped up to support Weatherby’s needs,” she said. “The school staff demonstrated their ability to tailor their machining program to turn out exactly the types of employees Weatherby needed. And when Weatherby announced it would move its headquarters to Sheridan, they did exactly what they said they would.”

Adam Weatherby said the College growing its manufacturing and machine tool program was a “deciding factor” in his relocation decision.

“We will continue to strengthen and grow our technical programs and provide opportunities for students to learn valuable skills that will serve them well in the future,” said Dr. Walt Tribbley, Northern Wyoming Community College president.

### **Welding at Laramie County Community College**

In the southeast corner of the state, Laramie County Community College (LCCC) also stays attuned to local industry needs and responds accordingly.

In 2013, it began its welding program in response to an enormous need for welders nationwide as well as right in Cheyenne. The welding industry predicts a shortage of about 450,000 welders by 2022.

The College’s program has grown from about 12 students in its first year to about 50 students in the past few years.

“We are excited about the growth and the direction this program is headed and how we are able to serve this industry,” said Jill Koslosky, the dean of the School of Business, Agriculture and Technical Studies. “The trades are outstanding opportunities for all students and a great way to make a good living without a huge student-loan debt.”

The welding program has been so influential that LCCC created Weld Works, a free teach-the-teachers program for instructors of high-school welding classes.

### **Electrician programs at Gillette College**

Wyoming produces about 40 percent of the nation’s coal, and Campbell County provides about 80 percent of Wyoming’s coal. As the seat of Campbell County, the city of Gillette calls itself the Energy Capital of the Nation.

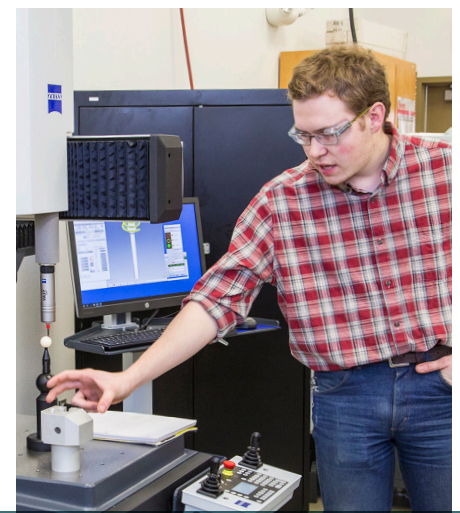
The oil, mining and power

industries in Wyoming and the surrounding states are among those looking to hire trained electricians. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that by 2026 more than 59,600 new jobs will be added to the field of electricians, an increase of 9 percent.

“The mines and all associated industries need electricians, so the Industrial Electricity and the Electrical Apprenticeship programs at Gillette College were created in response to those specific needs in Campbell County’s extraction industry,” said Tribbley, president of the Northern Wyoming Community College District, which includes Sheridan and Gillette Colleges.

The industry needs have evolved since the programs were created, he added, and the classes and curricula have adapted over time.

“The programs have active advisory boards made up of local industry professionals that guide the subject matter,” Tribbley added. “Those advisory boards ensure the students are learning what they will actually need to know to be hired and successful in the field.”



Sheridan College student Ben Conklin explains how the Zeiss Duramax CMM works and demonstrates how the probe measures parts.

Photo by Dennis Jacobs, Sheridan College.



# SHERIDAN

## Takes Center Stage

By SHAWN PARKER

Sheridan Travel  
and Tourism

**B**oasting secluded canyons, miles of hiking, biking, and riding trails, secret fishing holes, epic climbing lines, and so much more, the Bighorn Mountains have been at the center of the essential Wyoming experience for generations. Spanning over 1.1 million acres and encompassing 1,200 miles of trails, 30 campgrounds, 10 picnic areas, 6 mountain lodges, and hundreds of miles of waterways, the Bighorn National Forest offers near limitless outdoor recreation opportunities.

At the heart of the Bighorn National Forest stands the iconic Cloud Peak Wilderness, long recognized as having some of the most majestic alpine scenery in America. For 27 miles along the spine of the Bighorns, the 189,039-acre Cloud Peak Wilderness preserves many sharp summits and towering sheer rock faces standing above glacier-carved valleys. Located roughly halfway between Mount Rushmore to the east and Yellowstone National Park to the

west, the Bighorns span across Johnson and Sheridan Counties, two of the most authentically western destinations in the Mountain West. What we lack in crowded parking lots and tour bus traffic we make up for in blissful serenity, wide-open spaces, and sensational craft culture.

Northern Wyoming's beauty extends far beyond the mountains. At first blush, the picturesque City of Sheridan is all archetypal mountain verve and Wyoming vigor, but there is an artistic dynamism and cultural allure here the belies its cow-town reputation. Sheridan's ranching roots run centuries deep, but so too does its polo legacy, which is 120 years old. The flagship Sheridan WYO Rodeo draws nearly 30,000 visitors to the town every July, while the Sheridan WYO Film Festival, WYO

Theater, Brinton Museum, and the Whitney Center for the Arts have become artistic touchstones with significant regional cachet. National attractions also abound starting with the Historic Sheridan Inn is a siren song to the legend and lore of the Wild West. The ancient Medicine Wheel, at an altitude of 9,462-feet, lords over the mountains with a mystical presence that defies explanation. And the Indian battle sites like Fort Phil Kearny, the Fetterman Fight, and the Wagon Box Fight, all located along the Bozeman Trail, offer endless educational and historical attractions.

It's even a wild place in the winter – the Bighorns are home to two ski areas, 6 mountain lodges that are popular among snowmobile, cross-country, and fat biking enthusiasts, and the annual







Sheridan WYO Winter Rodeo, a spectacle that transforms chilly downtown Sheridan into the skijoring capital of the nation every February.

There's no surprise that Northern Wyoming is booming – frankly, what is surprising is that it didn't boom sooner. Long viewed as an outdoor paradise, the eastern slope of the Bighorns has become a destination for both established businesses and startups searching for a business-friendly climate, a community where the quality of life is paramount, and a place where they can grow on their terms.

With a population of 17,866 and six constituent neighborhoods, Sheridan is the sixth-largest city in Wyoming. With the bedroom communities in Sheridan County that include Ranchester, Dayton, Big Horn, Story, Arvada, Clearmont, and Ucross, the total county population of 30,210. There's a myth that says it's difficult for employers to attract workers to Wyoming, but when Weatherby set up shop in Sheridan, they had several thousand applications come in from across the nation for their first round of jobs. That myth must have come from someone on a crowded California freeway.

29.63% of adults in Sheridan have obtained at least a bachelor's degree, versus the American average of 21.84%. Residents report some of the shortest commute times in the country at an average of 13.74 minutes per day. Just think of what you can do with all your free time when your commute lasts less than half a Chris LeDoux album.

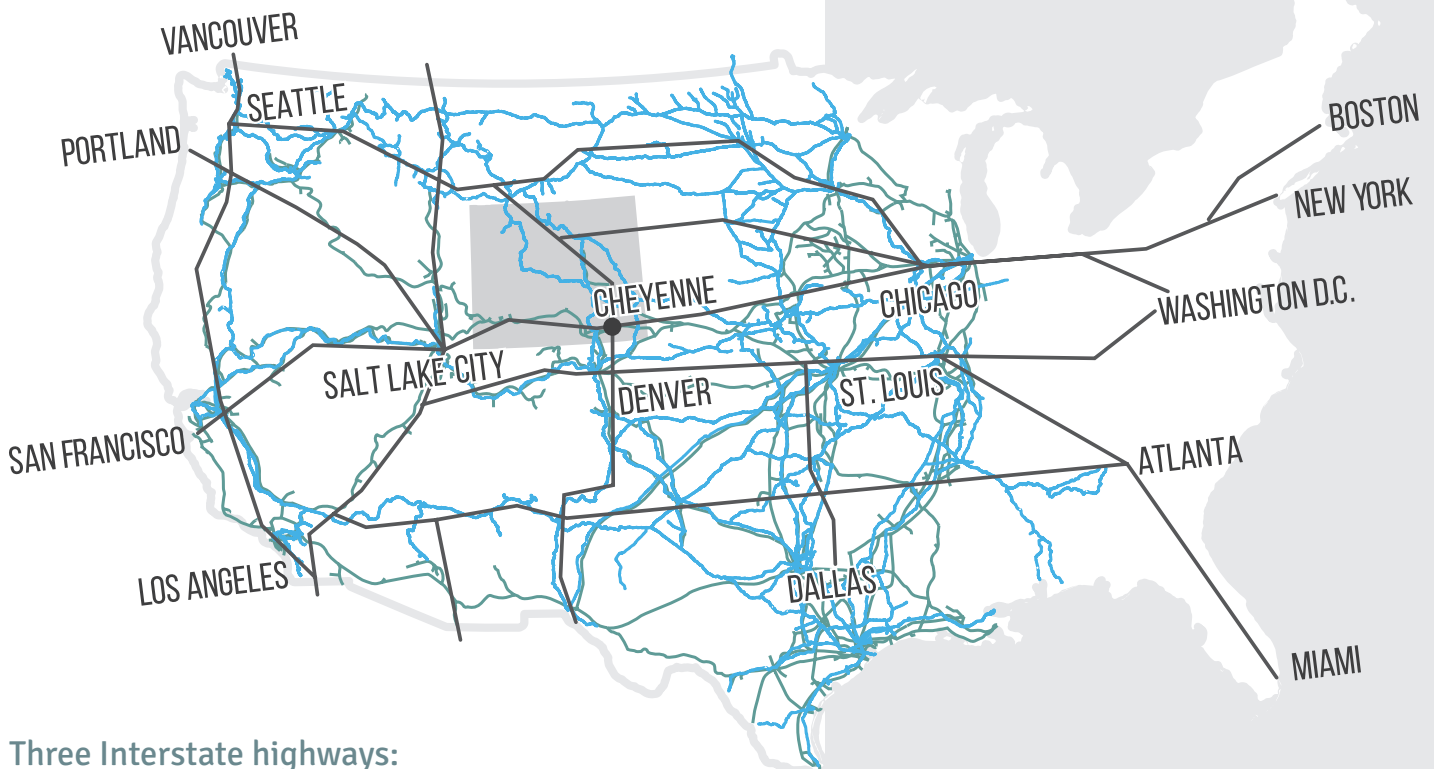
Sheridan is home to more than 40 foundations, non-profit groups, and community organizations, with a strong focus on education, the arts, senior care, recreation, and history. Air service is provided by SkyWest Airlines, flying as United Express, with daily return flights between Sheridan County Airport (SHR) and Denver International Airport (DEN). Sheridan is served by rail facilities operated by Burlington Northern Santa Fe, a Class 1 Railway, and has interstate access to I-90, with three interchanges serving the community, with access to I-25 a little more than 30 miles to the south.

All this begs a simple question. Why Sheridan, and why now? This artsy little outdoor playground at the base of the Bighorn Mountains is not just the finest postcard-perfect western getaway in the United States; it is also among the best small towns in the nation to live, work, and raise a family.



# Crossroads of the West

Wyoming's advantageous geographic location and ample transportation infrastructure provide reliable access to and from communities statewide.



**Three Interstate highways:**  
I-80 (New Jersey to California)  
I-25 (New Mexico to Wyoming)  
I-90 (Massachusetts to Washington)  
**915 interstate miles cross Wyoming**

— Interstate Routes  
— Union Pacific Routes  
— BNSF Routes



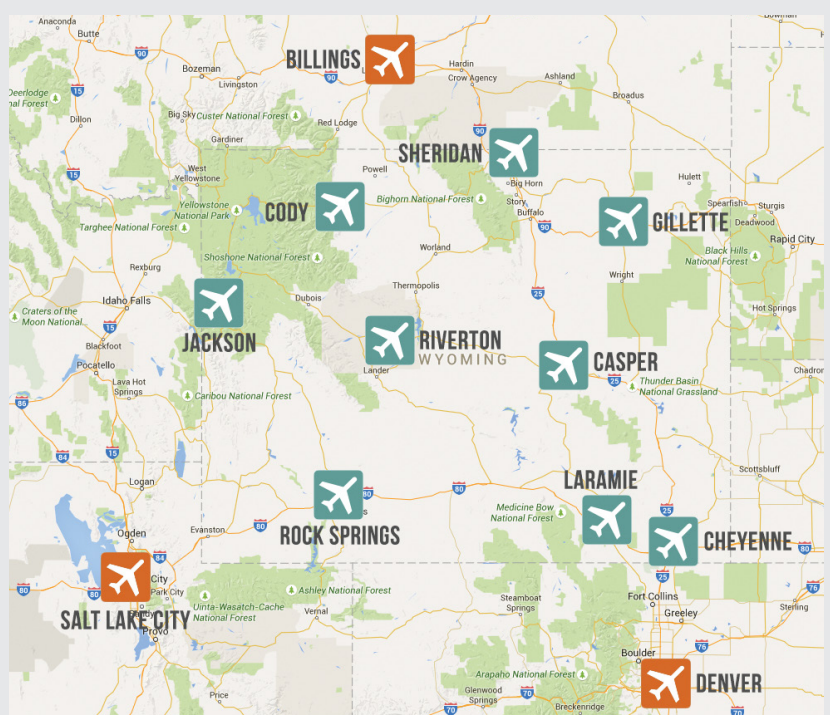


## 466 mile radius from geographic center



11,307,444 consumers can be reached within  
8-hour drive/466 miles from Wyoming.

## Airports in and near Wyoming



Three major international airports about the state in Billings,  
Montana; Denver, Colorado; and Salt Lake City, Utah.



Two class-one railroads connect  
Wyoming to major markets.



There are 9 commercial  
airports in Wyoming, with final  
destination service to major  
cities around the world.



# Where Business and Adventure Meet

## #WYrelocate



All photos this page courtesy of Wyoming Office of Tourism



### RELOCATE FOR A LIFE OF ADVENTURE.

More and more, the cities and suburbs have begun to feel like concrete cages. With our world changing so rapidly, there's never been a better time to make a move. Relocating to Wyoming means building a life you want, where you can spend less, earn more and adventure most. This is your chance to Plant your roots where they have room to grow.

### THE FACTS.

*Spend Less & Earn More:* Wyoming has the most business-friendly tax climate in the nation.

*Lucrative Business Climate:* No personal or corporate state income taxes, manufacturing sales tax exemptions and low sales and property taxes.

*Room for Adventure:* Wyoming boasts two national parks, five national forests, 12 state parks and countless acres of public land to hunt, fish, bike, hike, climb and roam.



# What Makes Wyoming a Hunter's Paradise?

A conversation with a Wyoming game warden

By BAYLIE EVANS | Writer



Photo by Gary Sundberg

**L**ander Game Warden Brady Frude took a few moments away from dealing with a rogue elk eating people's haystacks in Lander to chat with the Wyoming Business Council about his job, what makes Wyoming special for outdoorsmen and the sense of connectedness that keeps him going when the job gets tough.

**Wyoming Business Council:** Let's start with the first question people always want to know: where are you from?

**Brady Frude:** I'm a Wyoming native; I grew up in Laramie.

**WBC:** What was your path to becoming a game warden?

**BF:** I grew up hunting and fishing, so ever since I was a little kid, I wanted to work for Game and Fish. I wanted to be

a red shirt. So, I earned associate degrees from Casper College in biology and wildlife management, and a bachelor's degree from the University of Wyoming in biology. I spent two summers in college with research grants to study bighorn sheep on Whiskey Mountain near Dubois, and several other fun wildlife projects as well.

I've been a Wyoming game warden for almost 10 years now. I started as a trainee in Laramie, then I got my first district assignment in Rawlins. I transferred to Lander in 2015, and I've been the warden here ever since.

**WBC:** What makes Wyoming unique in its outdoor opportunities?

**BF:** That's a little hard to answer because there's just so much that makes Wyoming special. With nearly 50 percent public land, Wyoming is very

accessible to the public. That access and our robust wildlife population create a really good draw for a lot of folks who just don't have that kind of access to wildlife and wide-open spaces where they live.

The Thoroughfare area is the most remote place in the lower 48. It's true backcountry wilderness. You can't drive or even ride a bike there; you can only go miles and miles into the backcountry on foot or horseback. That remoteness allows Wyoming to fulfill a desire to get away. To someone that's never experienced that level of remoteness, it can be hard to explain how unique and special that is.

**WBC:** What makes the job unique?

**BF:** One main difference between being a warden and most other jobs is we don't work shifts. We live in state-

(Continued on page 20)

*To someone that's never experienced that level of remoteness, it can be hard to explain how unique and special that is.*

Photo by Adam Lukac from Pexels.com





Photo courtesy of Wyoming Game and Fish Department

provided housing, and with that comes the expectation that you are there and ready to respond to issues 24 hours a day, which we do. People stop by all the time and call throughout the night. In most districts, there is only one warden for miles and miles around. You're it. And that's just part of the job.

**WBC:** What's drawing people to Wyoming right now?

**BF:** We're the epicenter of the pronghorn population. Wyoming has something like two-thirds or three-fourths of the world's population of pronghorn. So, many of the world records come out of Wyoming, and that's pretty cool.

Also, we're really in the age of elk right now. Almost every herd is thriving, and it's not difficult to find elk in the state right now. So, a lot of people want to come here to hunt elk.

Plus, I always tell people to never go anywhere in Wyoming without their fishing pole.

**WBC:** Where do you suggest people go for their first Wyoming hunt?

**BF:** That will really depend on the experience they're looking to have. This state offers so much, from forest to

mountain to big, wide-open prairie. It's incredible. Again, I encourage people to have an idea of what they're after, and then call the local folks – the game wardens and biologists. They'll be able to really help people narrow down their trip.

**WBC:** What do non-residents need to know about getting hunting tags in Wyoming?

**BF:** It depends on the type of animal and landscape they want to experience. For big game, non-residents apply for the draw. It's quite a complex process, but we really try to help folks out as much as we can. People can always call the local game warden or regional office for help, and I always direct people to the Game and Fish Department's online hunt planner:

<https://wgfd.wyo.gov/Hunting/Hunt-Planner>

**WBC:** What are some common assumptions or misconceptions about you or your job?

**BF:** I hear the comment all the time, "game wardens aren't like that where I come from." In most states, wardens are cops. They have law-enforcement backgrounds. Here, a

law-enforcement background isn't enough to become a game warden. Wardens need degrees in wildlife management or something similar, and that comes with a completely different perspective on the job and a completely different personality profile. There's a misconception out there that we're going to be cops first and we're looking to make criminals out of people, and it's not like that at all.

I get hundreds of calls a year to give advice on prospective hunt areas, pleas for help from people stuck in snow banks, complaints from landowners struggling with wildlife nuisance issues, etc. We help people as much as we possibly can. Wyoming game wardens have a 90-something approval rating, which is just astronomical. Other states don't see that at all. We're here to help folks. That's our primary objective. I think that makes the experience of hunting in Wyoming different from what someone might experience elsewhere.

**WBC:** What is your favorite part of the job?

Every spring and fall, I get to climb into a helicopter or a fixed-wing plane and fly over the landscape to do classifications, count critters, check habitat, etc., and I absolutely love that. If I wasn't a game warden, I'd be a pilot.

Doing those flights is part of determining the level of hunting pressure we can handle that year, which is a big part of the job. There's some science, some art and some politics in that.

Also, I get to be out every day experiencing Wyoming on a truck, snowmobile, four-wheeler or boat. I feel so connected to that core part of Wyoming. That feeling of being connected to the landscape, it is so rewarding. It feels like you're a part of something greater.

*I feel so connected to that core part of Wyoming. That feeling of being connected to the landscape, it is so rewarding. It feels like you're a part of something greater.*



# Outdoor Recreation



## Wyoming Recreation

“This year, we saw the revival of the ‘Great American road trip’ as travelers looked to explore the outdoors. As the least populated state with the most room for adventure, Wyoming experienced high visitation throughout all national forests and parks, state parks and other popular outdoor destinations. As we continue to see an increase in outdoor recreation, Wyoming has a unique opportunity to be the leading voice behind sustainable and mindful travel.”

**Diane Shober**

*Executive Director  
Wyoming Office of Tourism*

The National Outdoor Leadership School in Lander teaches 26,000 students a year.

The Wyoming Outdoor Recreation Office enhances and expands the outdoor recreation industry and improves infrastructure and access in Wyoming.

## BUSINESS CLIMATE

- ▶ **NO** income, corporate or manufacturing sales tax
- ▶ **LOW** sales and property tax
- ▶ **10** commercial airports
- ▶ **2 Class 1 railroads** and **3 interstates** crisscross Wyoming
- ▶ **11.3 million** customers within 8 hours of Wyoming
- ▶ **Incentives** include infrastructure grants, loan programs and workforce training grants

**\$2.9 BILLION**  
IN VISITOR SPENDING

**#2** Industry in Wyoming is **tourism**



**27,000 jobs** created by outdoor recreation industry



**41% increase** in State Parks visitation



**180,000 miles** of rivers in Wyoming, with anglers spending \$612 million annually



**2,160 hiking trails** in Wyoming, contributing \$19 million to the state GDP



**311 RV Campgrounds** in Wyoming, contributing \$76 million to the state GDP



**#1 per capita** in outdoor recreation participation



# OUTDOOR REC STATS

**\$147 million** dollars contributed to the State GDP through snow activities

**7.9 million** visitors to Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks in 2021

**94%** of Wyomingites call public lands essential to Wyoming's economy.

**74%** of Wyomingites say the state's public lands help attract high-quality employers and good jobs.

**48.4%** of Wyoming, more than 30 million acres, is federal land.

**41** State Parks and Historic sites encompassing 49,400 acres of public lands.

## Favorable Culture and Climate



### CULTURE

Wyoming enjoys easy access to national and state parks, year-round recreational opportunities, open spaces and events. Here, recreation and economic opportunity are connected.

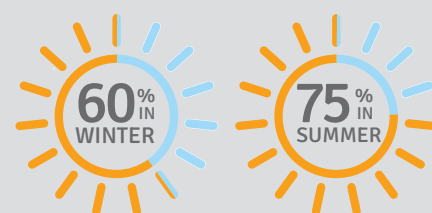
Wyoming recognizes investing in outdoor recreation attracts employers and active workforces.

“

"Owning an outdoor business in Wyoming is really a privilege. We have residents that live here in part to be close to our amazing recreation opportunities and are avid outdoor participants. Plus, every year, millions of other people come from around the world to join us in enjoying Wyoming's unparalleled wilderness areas and national parks. No matter what flavor of outdoor rec your business serves, there is an opportunity to have a healthy enterprise."

- Wes Allen, Owner,  
Sunlight Sports

### CLIMATE



The sun shines 60% of the time in winter and 75% in summer.

Outdoor products made in Wyoming include: hunting and shooting accessories, fishing lures & flies, knives, optics, outdoor gear & clothing.

“

"The rawness of Wyoming and untamed beauty cannot be matched by places of concrete. Consumers today are looking for not just a product but authentic branding and Wyoming offers that to outdoor companies like Weatherby."

- Brenda Weatherby  
Director of People and Culture  
Weatherby, Inc.

Learn more about Wyoming at [whywyoming.org](http://whywyoming.org)



**Wendy Lopez**  
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### **Wyoming Business Council**

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As Wyoming's economic development agency, the Wyoming Business Council has been entrusted to cultivate economic opportunities for current and future generations of Wyomingites. With a wide breadth of experience in recruitment, development, and investment services, the WBC works hard to create an economic framework so that Wyoming businesses and communities can thrive.