



BUSINESS COUNCIL

## MAIN STREET

# FY2021 Annual Report







## 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.

In 2020, the Business Council began housing the Wyoming Main Street program in the newly formed Services Division. This new division focuses on delivery of services and expertise to businesses and communities in Wyoming. The Main Street Program, Rural Development, Entrepreneurship, Business Recruitment and Agribusiness are all housed in the Services Division, as the "customer facing" direct services of the Wyoming Business Council.



- 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. The 2007 changes resulted in the original legislation being amended and renumbered and the Main Street Program now being addressed in W.S. 9-12-1101 through 9-12-1105.

### MAIN STREET ADVISORY BOARD

Governor Mark Gordon appoints the seven-person advisory board. The current roster of Advisory Board members includes Matt Ashby (Cheyenne), Jennifer Ford (Jackson), Bruce Heimback (Cheyenne), Carly-Ann Carruthers (Cheyenne), David Tate (Rock Springs) and Mayor Roger Miller (Sheridan). There is currently one position 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

### 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.

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 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 two aspiring communities: Cokeville 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 three affiliate communities: Douglas, Platte County, 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 nine certified communities: Cheyenne, Evanston, Goshen, 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 WAYS TO LEVERAGE FUNDS

The Wyoming Main Street program, in coordination with the Wyoming Business Council, pursued several federal grants in FY2021. Wyoming was selected as one of four states for a National Park Service façade grant program, receiving \$140,625 distributed to three selected Main Street communities for façade grant improvements on privately-owned historic buildings.

The Wyoming Business Council was awarded a USDA grant for \$50,000 to develop revitalization roadmaps and host development readiness initiative trainings in six communities. Wyoming Main Street communities were selected as part of those six.

The National Main Street Center and Wyoming Main Street partnered to pursue a \$62,250 USDA grant focused on job creation and providing training to small and emerging businesses, particularly artisans and makers of Wyoming.

## FY2021 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- ▶ Afton Main Street Alliance continues to pursue the Main Street approach and continues their status as an Aspiring level 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, and Thermopolis.
- ▶ 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 for projects.
- ▶ Wyoming Main Street partnered with the Wyoming Economic Development Association and Wyoming State Chamber of Commerce to develop a "Shop Smart, Shop Safe" campaign in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This campaign focused on encouraging people to take safety precautions while supporting their local businesses in a much-needed time.

## WYOMING MAIN STREET

- Wyoming Main Street partnered with several other state coordinating programs, including Colorado, Washington, Oregon, and Michigan to extend networking and learning opportunities to local Main Street staff.

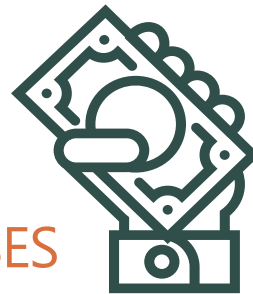


### RETURN ON INVESTMENT:

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 CY2020.



**40** NET NEW  
BUSINESSES



**\$5.8** MILLION IN PRIVATE FUNDS FOR  
BUILDING AND INFRASTRUCTURE  
IMPROVEMENTS

**19,110** **\$1.9M**  
IN PUBLIC INVESTMENTS

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



**191**  
NET NEW JOBS

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





### Wyoming Main Street Communities

#### Certified

- ▶ Cheyenne
- ▶ Evanston
- ▶ Goshen
- ▶ Gillette
- ▶ Green River
- ▶ Laramie
- ▶ Rawlins
- ▶ Rock Springs
- ▶ Sheridan

#### Affiliate

- ▶ Douglas
- ▶ Platte County
- ▶ Thermopolis

#### Aspiring

- ▶ Afton
- ▶ Cokeville



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