



# FY2024 ANNUAL REPORT



Downtown Sheridan



## WYOMING BUSINESS COUNCIL STRATEGY

Through leadership, policy, and investments, the Wyoming Business Council (WBC) stands firmly upon Wyoming's heritage while advancing innovation, business creation, recruitment, and growth in order to build resilient communities and create opportunities to thrive. We envision a future where traditional Wyoming values and innovation go hand-in-hand to create opportunities so communities can confidently withstand economic uncertainties and continue to thrive for generations to come.

As a program under the WBC umbrella, Wyoming Main Street builds community capacity and fosters economic resilience by partnering with grassroots organizations to revitalize downtowns and create genuine place-based experiences.

## OUR MAIN STREET VISION FOR WYOMING

Empowered communities with distinctive downtowns, resilient local economies, and dedicated local leaders.



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# EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES

## STATUTORY AUTHORITY & PROGRAM 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.

Then, in 2007, the 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 is now being addressed in W.S. 9-12-1101 through 9-12-1105.

## WYOMING MAIN STREET ADVISORY BOARD

Governor Mark Gordon appoints the seven-person advisory board. The current roster of Advisory Board members includes Matt Ashby (Cheyenne), Carly-Ann Carruthers (Cheyenne), Jennifer Ford (Jackson), Bruce Heimbuck (Cheyenne), Derek Smith (Gillette), David Tate (Rock Springs), and Bonnie Gregory (Sheridan). All 7 positions are currently filled.

## MAIN STREET APPROACH

Wyoming Main Street is a program of Main Street America and the Wyoming Business Council, focused on building capacity and resilience.

Wyoming Main Street works with all sizes of communities across the state. The Main Street Approach is a grassroots method of economic and community development, focusing on historic preservation, small business, and inclusivity. Main Street is community-led, relying on resident feedback and volunteers.

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

The approach advocates a return to community self-reliance, local empowerment, and the rebuilding of traditional commercial districts.



# THE MAIN STREET APPROACH

The Main Street model, established by Main Street America, is comprised of working in four broad areas or pillars.



## Organization

involves creating a strong foundation for a sustainable revitalization effort, including cultivating partnerships, community involvement, and resources for the district.



## Promotion

Positions the downtown or commercial district as the center of the community and hub of economic activity, while creating a positive image that showcases a community's unique characteristics.



## Design

Getting the downtown into top physical shape; preserving a place's historic character and creating a safe, inviting environment for shoppers, workers, and visitors.



## Economic Vitality

Focuses on capital, incentives, and other economic and financial tools to assist new and existing businesses, catalyze property development, and create a supportive environment for entrepreneurs and innovators that drive local economies.



*Main Street communities are a hands-on and community-centered approach to downtown revitalization. I think of the methodology as economic development for non-economic developers. The economic impact of a vibrant Main Street can be tracked and monitored through indicators like sales tax and traffic monitors, and thus the investment's impact in the community is often more easily explained and understood.*

*- Kristin Fong, WBC Northwest Regional Director*

# MAIN STREET LEVELS

**Candidate Communities** are exploring downtown revitalization and formalizing their organizational structure. We currently have two aspiring communities: Glenrock and Riverton.

**Affiliate Communities** are formalized programs leading downtown revitalization efforts, usually comprised of a volunteer base. Affiliate programs are practicing the 4 Point Approach, and are supplied with technical assistance to continue strengthening their work. There are currently six affiliate communities: Cheyenne, Douglas, Evanston, Goshen County, Platte County, and Thermopolis.

**Accredited Communities** have paid staff and mature downtown development programs. They are recognize and accredited at the national level, recognized as a high-performing and impactful program. There are currently five Accredited communities: Gillette, Laramie, Rawlins, Rock Springs, and Sheridan.

## PARTNERSHIPS

The Wyoming Main Street program partners with many different agencies and organizations. Some of are key partners are listed below.

- Alliance for Historic Wyoming
- State Historic Preservation Office
- Wyoming Arts Council
- Wyoming Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources
- Wyoming Department of Transportation
- Wyoming Economic Development Association
- Wyoming Humanities Council
- Wyoming Pathways
- Wyoming State Chambers of Commerce
- National Main Street Center
- National Trust for Historic Preservation

## NOTABLE SUCCESSES OF FY2024

- Wyoming Main Street celebrates 20 years as a state-wide program.
- The “Wyoming Blocks” pilot program launched with a partnership between the Wyoming Business Council and Downtown Rock Springs combining problem-driven iterative adaptation (PDIA) and a physical location to create more spaces for residents and visitors to enjoy downtown. Learn more at [wbc.pub/WY\\_RS\\_BlockGrant](http://wbc.pub/WY_RS_BlockGrant)



Facade improvements in downtown Rock Springs

- Hosted a Best Practices Workshop in Alabama: an innovative two-day mobile workshop that places Wyoming downtown leaders in new communities to learn about successes and lessons in implementing the Main Street approach. Wyoming is a leader as the only state that hosts this workshop.



Workshop participants in Lafayette, Alabama





15  
NEW  
BUSINESSES



\$49.2M  
PUBLIC INVESTMENT

40

JOBs CREATED



## MAIN STREET IN FY2024

8,896  
VOLUNTEER HOURS



\$12.8M  
PRIVATE FUNDS FOR  
BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS



Numbers are self-reported from nine Main Street communities' downtown districts, spanning July 2023 to June 2024.

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