

## Wyoming Business Council Annual Report 2006

### Wyoming Quality of Life Result:

- Wyoming has a diverse economy that provides a livable income and ensures wage equality.
- Wyoming state government is a responsible steward of State assets and effectively responds to the needs of residents and guests.
- Wyoming values the unique aspects of its western heritage, providing residents and visitors expanding access to cultural, historical and recreational experiences.
- Advanced technologies and a quality workforce allow Wyoming business and communities to adapt and thrive.

### Department/Division/Program: Wyoming Business Council

#### Contribution to Wyoming Quality of Life:

The Wyoming Business Council's role is to help build a diverse economy that provides a livable income and ensures wage equality with programs to grow and diversify the businesses and jobs in the state.

#### Basic Facts:

The Wyoming Business Council has 65 full time staff with a total biennium budget of \$85.1 million (\$74.8 million general funds, \$7.8 million federal funds and \$2.5 million special revenue and other funds). To achieve our mission, we help communities by funding infrastructure improvements; providing programs to assist existing businesses grow and remain in business; and recruiting new businesses to the state.

#### Performance:

Please see the other sections for performance.

#### Story Behind the Last Year of Performance:

Please see the other sections for the story behind performance.

#### What has been Accomplished?

Please see the other sections for accomplishments.

#### Supplemental Budget Implications:

None

**Department/Division/Program: Community Assistance**

**Contribution to Wyoming Quality of Life:**

The Wyoming Business Council's role is to help build a diverse economy that provides a livable income and ensures wage equality with programs to grow and diversify the businesses and jobs in the state.

**Basic Facts:**

The Wyoming Business Council spends \$53.4 million of its budget on community development activities. Expenditures help build attractive, high quality-of-life communities that have "business ready" infrastructure. Divisions and programs primarily focused on this are:

- Business Council Investment Ready Community Division (7 people, \$53.4 million)
  - Business Ready Community Grant and Loan Program (BRC)

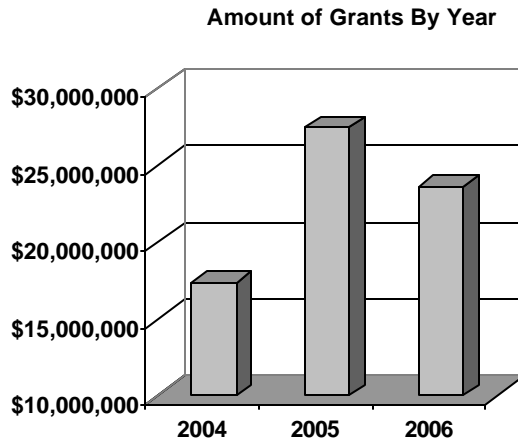
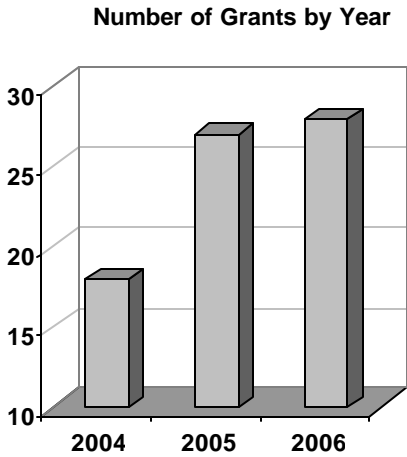
▪ July 2003	\$ 8.4 million
▪ July 2004	\$25.0 million
▪ March 2005	\$11.6 million
▪ July 2006	<u>\$46.0 million</u>
TOTAL	\$91.0 million
  - Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) (Federal)

▪ 2004	\$ 3,754,809
▪ 2005	\$ 3,571,002
▪ 2006	<u>\$ 3,225,175</u>
TOTAL	\$10,550,986
  - Community Facilities Grant and Loan Program (CFP)

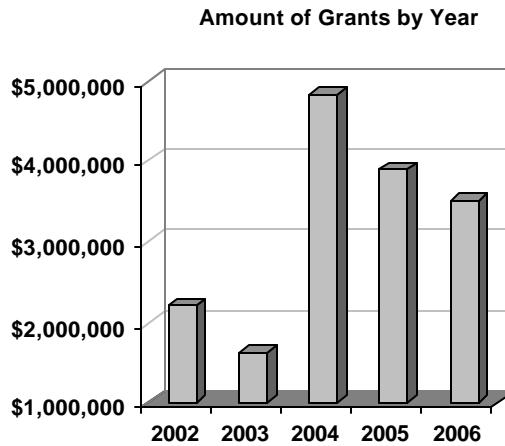
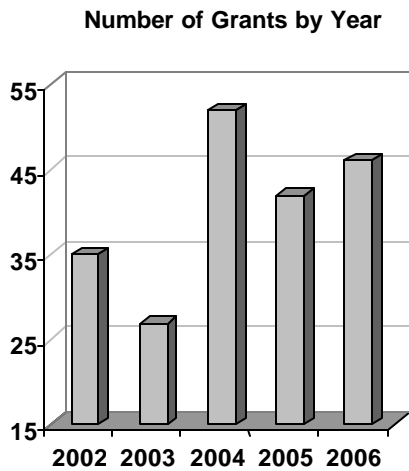
▪ March 2005	\$ 7.5 million
▪ July 2006	<u>\$15.0 million</u>
TOTAL	\$22.5 million
- The Regional Directors work with the communities to plan and develop projects; assist with program applications and project follow-up.

**Performance:**

- Number of Business Ready Community applications funded by year and amount.

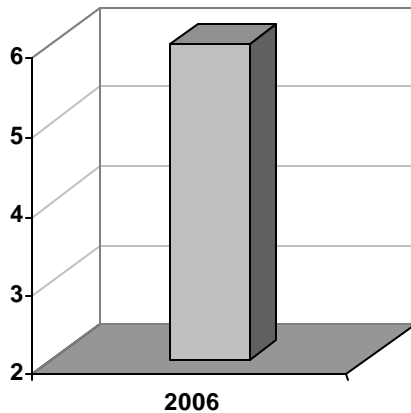


- Number of Community Development Block Grant applications funded by year and amount.

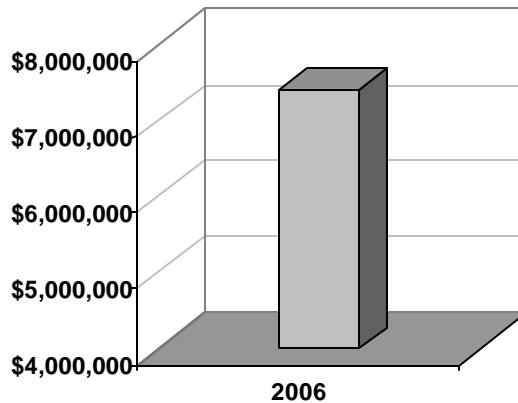


- Number of Community Facilities applications funded by year and amount.

Number of Grants by Year



Amount of Grants by Year



### Story Behind the Last Year of Performance:

Wyoming's prior attempts to grow its economy focused on underwriting high-risk ventures - a short-term plan that did not work. The current long-term plan is to invest state and federal dollars into cities, towns and counties to provide physical infrastructure that will assist expansion of existing Wyoming businesses and attract new businesses. Large, medium and small communities are building infrastructure to grow their economies.

- The first Business Ready Community grants were awarded in 2004. In the last three years there have been 73 grants totaling \$68,467,799.
- Community Development Block Grants, which are federal monies, are also used for economic and community development. In the last three years there have been 140 grants totaling \$12,234,374.
- The first Community Facilities grants were awarded in 2006. Six grants have been funded totaling \$7,432,741. Three grant applications were received for the June 2006 deadline. They are being reviewed and will be considered in fiscal year 2007.

### What has been Accomplished?

- Business Ready Community Grant & Loan Program:
  - Informational papers are being developed that will cover topics such as: developing the terms of a lease agreement; contingency agreements; Article 16, Section 6 "101"; and development agreements. Using these informational papers we will work with the communities to develop "lessons learned" so future applicants can learn from those who preceded them. (Within existing budget)
  - The program was funded at \$36.6 million for the 2005/06 biennium and \$46 million for the 2007/08 biennium. Projects are under construction, and in some cases completed. The projects are being monitored to determine performance relative to grant, regulatory and statutory requirements.
  - See [www.wyomingbusiness.org/community/brc\\_portfolio.aspx](http://www.wyomingbusiness.org/community/brc_portfolio.aspx) for a listing of the

many projects impacting communities in the state.

- Community Facilities Program:
  - The Community Facilities Program was created by the 2005 Legislature with \$7.5 million in funding for the biennium ending 6/30/06. An additional \$15 million was appropriated for the 2007/08 biennium.
  - The first six projects were awarded grants in February 2006 totaling \$7,432,742.
  - All project applications go through a defined due diligence and prioritization process before recommendations and awards are made. Staff will continue to refine this process to assess how projects will impact the communities they serve.
  - Staff will continue efforts to simplify the application process and follow up with strong grant administration oversight.
  - The Community Enhancement and Facility Needs Assessment Survey was submitted to the Legislature in August 2005. The survey found the highest community priorities for parks, recreation, landscaping and streetscape. High priorities also exist for amenities of community centers and cultural and historic facilities.
  - See [www.wyomingbusiness.org/community/cfp\\_portfolio.aspx](http://www.wyomingbusiness.org/community/cfp_portfolio.aspx) to see funded projects.
- Better Performance Measures:
  - Based on completion of projects and our ongoing monitoring of each project after grant award, we will add additional measures which reflect (1) additional capital investment added to the tax base that is the result of both the Community Development Block Grant and Business Ready Community programs and (2) the percentage of jobs projected in the application vs. actual jobs filled within these programs. Locally defined performance measures are being made part of both Community Facilities Program and Business Ready Community grant agreements and will be tracked. (Within existing budget.)

**Supplemental Budget Implications:**

None.

**Department/Division/Program: Business Assistance**

**Contribution to Wyoming Quality of Life:**

The Wyoming Business Council's role is to help build a diverse economy that provides a livable income and ensures wage equality with programs to grow and diversify the businesses and jobs in the state.

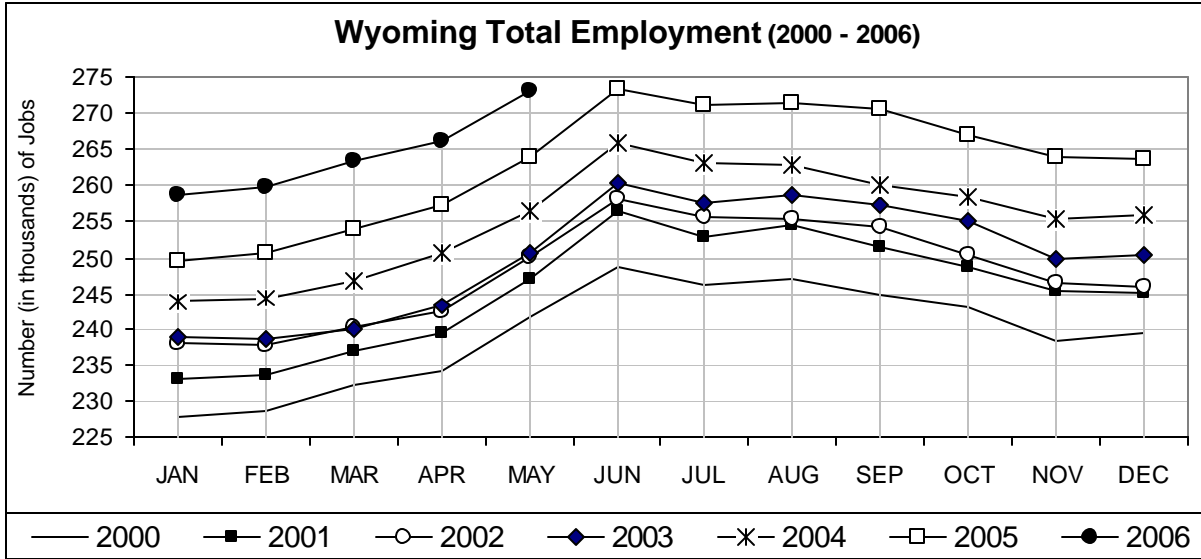
**Basic Facts:**

The Wyoming Business Council's biennium budget of \$10.9 million was allocated to help existing business and recruit new business to the state during this reporting period. The bulk of these expenditures were directed toward helping Wyoming businesses survive, expand and stay in the state. Divisions/programs that contribute to meeting those goals are:

- Regional Directors (6 people, \$1.6 million) directly work with businesses throughout the state to bring whatever "tool" is needed to help strengthen and retain the business.
- Business and Industry Division (10 people, \$7.8 million) has the expertise or contracts to provide general counseling, writing business plans, assistance in starting a business, business permitting, finding financial resources, human resources consulting, marketing assistance, product development, intellectual property assistance to include patents and royalties, manufacturing assistance, mentoring, networking, training, and assistance to participate in trade shows. The division contracts through the University of Wyoming, Office of Research and Economic Development for:
  - Wyoming Small Business Development Centers (17 people, \$1,390,000, which leverages \$229,260 University of Wyoming contribution and \$1,000,000 in federal money)
  - Manufacturing-Works (7 people, \$1,156,550 which leverages \$771,322 in federal money)
  - Government Resources Opportunity for Business (4 people, \$198,000 which leverages \$532,000 in federal money)
  - Wyoming Market Research Center (3 people, \$448,404)
  - Wyoming Research Products Center (1 person, \$199,759 which leverages \$218,340 University of Wyoming money)
  - Wyoming Small Business Innovation Research Program (2 people, \$490,000) to help citizens compete for federal research and development funding
- Agribusiness Division (6 people, \$1.5 million) provides marketing and business development assistance and leadership training to the agriculture industry. Through trade show participation and individual counseling, they provide assistance for farmers' markets, hay and forage marketing, livestock genetics, meat marketing and value-added foods. They operate the Wyoming First program to market Wyoming-made products and provide business assistance in agricultural diversification. The division publishes a quarterly newsletter and a farm and ranch directory, which is also available on-line.

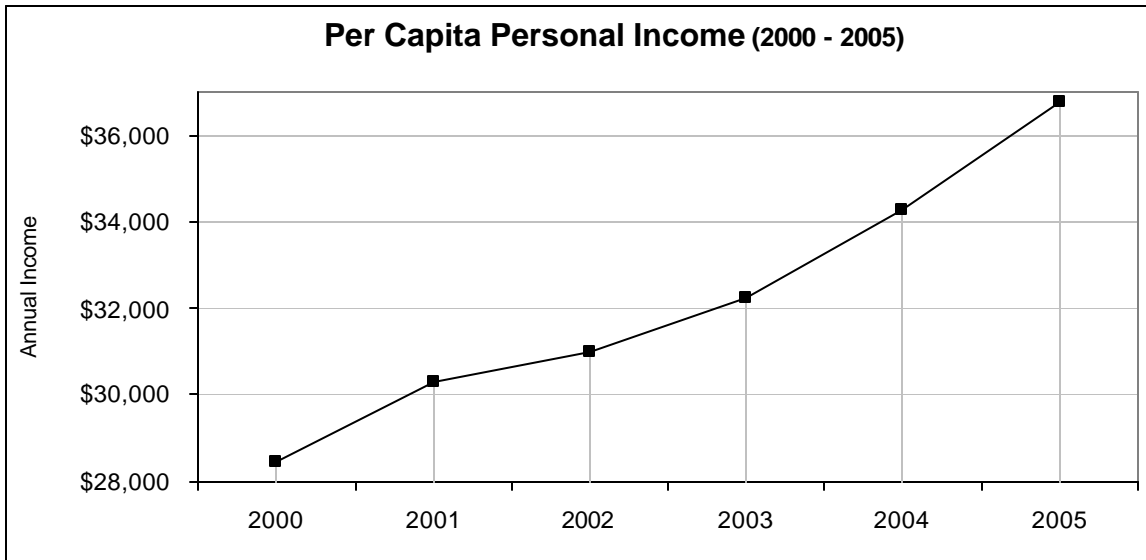
**Performance:**

- Graph of number of jobs in the last seven years:



Source: Wyoming Department of Employment, Research & Planning, CES Series

- Graph of per capita income



Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis

**Story Behind the Last Year of Performance:**

- Existing Wyoming Business Council programs are just now reaching maturity and beginning to show strong results. With experience, every program within the Business Council and contracted by the Wyoming Business Council through the University of

Wyoming have been able to improve the focus of their services to better serve the specific needs of local business.

- The infrastructure investments made through the Business Ready Community Grant Program have begun to demonstrate the results predicted. Because “shovel ready” sites now exist in the state, expansion and recruitment efforts have begun to produce more positive results as reflected in the graphs presented.
- A contract with CXO/U.S. European Enterprises has perhaps provided the most promising results within the reporting period. Through the contacts this firm has facilitated, the Council is working on developing projects throughout the state with major European companies that have great promise. In addition, they initiated a relationship between Wyoming and the National Center for Atmospheric Research that has resulted in the state becoming one of two final locations competing for a super computer site. Simply being in the final group being considered has garnered the state notice in the technology sector no amount of marketing could produce.
- The next step toward targeted diversification recruitment has been initiated due to this readiness. The Business and Industry Division has begun a quarterly direct mail campaign, in addition to its participation in regional and national site selection organizations, to over 550 decision makers in the development field. These mail-out pieces are designed to create new interest in the state and direct them to a new web page designed to serve them specifically. From this group the Business and Industry Division has begun to coordinate, with local economic development organizations throughout the state, short tours to familiarize these people with the state.
- Finally, the Wyoming Business Council is working in support of the University of Wyoming Business Technology Incubator project that should allow small high tech firms in the state to proceed through the early development stages and into profitable job creating businesses.

### **What has been Accomplished?**

- Specific successful projects the Wyoming Business Council has contributed to in this reporting period include:
  - The Wal-Mart Distribution Center recruited to Cheyenne
  - The CAPTEL call center recruited to Thermopolis
  - The Everett Graphics facility in Evanston
  - The BTI railcar repair facility in Shoshoni
  - The Brunton expansion in Riverton
  - The new Heartland Biocomposites company in Torrington
- Just as, or perhaps more important, are projects under development which offer outstanding opportunities to expand existing business in partnership with outside interests and diversify the state’s economy through recruitment efforts.
- To assist livestock producers strengthen their existing business by adding value to their livestock, the Wyoming Business Council launched the Wyoming Verified program. Since its inception in March, 35 ranches have participated in this voluntary program to verify the source and age of animals and enhance marketing opportunities.
- In addition, the Wyoming Business Council was instrumental in facilitating the formation of the Wyoming Farmers' Marketing Association. The number of local farmers' markets nearly doubled this past year, and Wyoming now has 23 organized markets.

**Supplemental Budget Implications:**

None.

**Department/Division/Program: Wyoming Travel & Tourism**

**Contribution to Wyoming Quality of Life:**

- Promote and facilitate increased travel to and within the state of Wyoming.
- A healthy tourism economy contributes to business sustainability and strengthens the industry's job and income generation capacity.

**Basic Facts:**

The Travel and Tourism Division has 19 full-time staff positions. Total appropriation for the biennium totaled \$17.5 million and included special, one-time initiatives as well as sales and marketing efforts in the following areas:

- Advertising, Web and Research
- Domestic Tourism Marketing
- Customer Service, Welcome Centers and Fulfillment
- International Tourism Marketing
- Media and Public Relations
- Film, Arts & Entertainment

**Primary Functions of this division:**

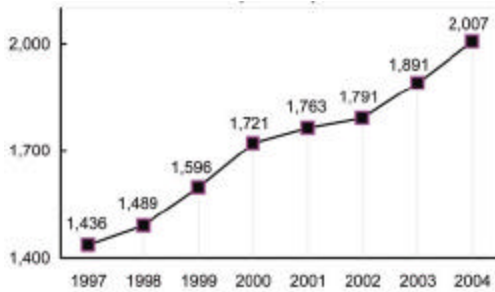
1. Increase the number of resident and non-resident travelers to our state
2. Increase travel-related sales and employment in Wyoming
3. Generate increased sales tax revenue from travel-related sectors

**Performance:**

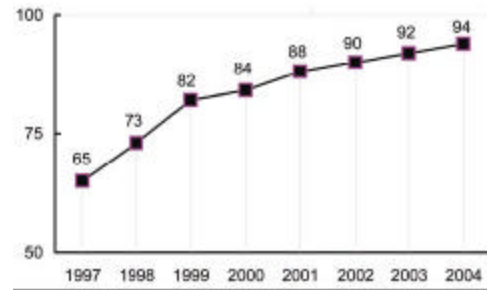
	<b>Overnight Visitors</b> (Millions)	<b>Travel- Generated Sales</b> (\$ Millions)	<b>Local &amp; State Taxes</b> (\$ Millions)	<b>Travel- Generated Employment (# Jobs)</b>	<b>Travel-Generated Earnings</b> (\$ Millions)
<b>1997</b>	3.9	1,436	65	26,540	380
<b>1998</b>	4.2	1,489	73	26,960	405
<b>1999</b>	4.6	1,596	82	27,520	428
<b>2000</b>	4.6	1,721	84	27,760	444
<b>2001</b>	7.0	1,763	88	27,590	459
<b>2002</b>	6.7	1,791	90	27,720	478
<b>2003</b>	6.8	1,891	92	28,060	500
<b>2004</b>	6.9	2,007	94	28,640	538

Source: Dean Runyan Associates, Wyoming Travel Impacts, 1997-2004. Longwoods International, Travel & Tourism in Wyoming, 1997-2004

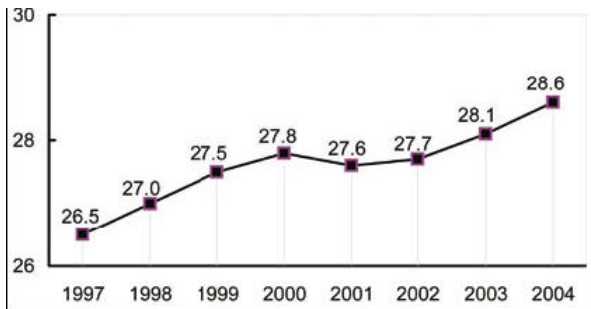
**Travel-Generated Sales:**



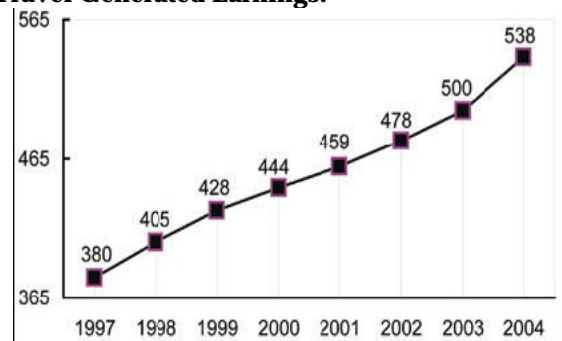
**Local and State Tax Collections:**



**Travel-Generated Employment:**



**Travel-Generated Earnings:**



Source: Dean Runyan Associates, Wyoming Travel Impacts, 1997-2004

**Story Behind the Last Year of Performance:**

Wyoming Travel and Tourism is the marketing division charged with bringing non-resident visitors to Wyoming by promoting our state as a vacation destination to both domestic and international audiences. By creating and implementing a fully integrated marketing campaign, the Travel & Tourism division adds strength to the Wyoming travel industry . . . an industry predominantly made up of small, independent businesses. Marketing strategies have been developed and deployed for more than 50 years and make a significant contribution to growth in Wyoming's economy.

In 2004, 6.9 million people stayed overnight in Wyoming. (Please note that the 2005 Wyoming Tourism Economic Impact Report will be available September 2006.) During their stay, those 6.9 million people generated over \$2.0 billion in direct travel-generated sales on such things as shopping, accommodations, gasoline and fuel, food, entertainment and recreation, just to name a few. Of the total travel-generated sales, approximately 79 percent came from non-resident spending. That means over \$1.5 billion new dollars were pumped into Wyoming's economy directly from the tourism industry in 2004 alone!

In turn, that \$2 billion in travel-generated sales produced \$94 million in local and state tax collections. Sales tax revenue from travel-related sectors accounts for 11.4 percent of Wyoming's

total state sales tax revenue and provides substantial tax relief for the citizens of Wyoming. Theoretically, if not for the contribution of the tourism industry, every Wyoming household would pay \$405 in additional taxes.

Tourism is a steady growth industry that benefits all of Wyoming. Travel spending has increased 4.9 percent per year since 1997 while local and state tax revenues contributed by tourism have increased 5.4 percent per year over the same 8-year period. Since 1997, the number of tourism generated jobs has remained relatively flat, yet earnings from tourism employment have grown at almost 5 times that rate, currently accounting for \$538 million in direct personal income. In 2004, travel-related employment accounted for 28,640 full and part-time jobs, representing 8.2 percent of Wyoming's overall employment.

It's true: the aggregate growth in Wyoming's tourism industry is a result of the combined efforts of both the public and private sector. Cooperative programs allow the division to leverage its budget and maximize resources. Marketing partnerships have been established with tourism entities in surrounding states and gateway communities, Wyoming-based lodging tax boards and other state and federal agencies to maintain Wyoming's position as a premier Rocky Mountain visitor destination.

However, it is important to note that Wyoming's tourism industry is subject to outside influences over which the division has no control. Natural catastrophes (fires) and global issues (terrorism; gas prices) can have a profound impact on people's ability and willingness to travel.

### **What has been Accomplished?**

In order to insure success and growth in our ability to attract visitors, both domestically and abroad, we must look at the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century through the eyes of our customers.

- How do we best position Wyoming to take full advantage of the tremendous **future tourism opportunities**?
- How do we sustain existing market share yet **capture emerging markets**?
- How do we stay abreast of **changing travel trends** and **outpace our competition**?

Over the next two years, the division proposes the following:

1. Expand research requirements on all levels
  - Invest in research to establish and measure economic data from neighboring states; establish performance benchmarks
  - Utilize the brand development index (bdi) to measure Wyoming's message penetration in the marketplace and determine market performance
  - Engage in data mining to gain additional knowledge about Wyoming travel consumers and to further communicate the Wyoming vacation experience
  - Investigate cost, and if feasible, include wave tracking studies, conversion studies and intercept studies
2. Enhance consistency and distribution of advertising message
  - Consolidate advertising contract services to be provided by one agency
  - Add major markets that present the greatest performance potential as identified by the brand development index (bdi)

- Leverage paid media buys for value-added enhancements, such as web links, cross promotional opportunities, etc.
  - Incorporate online advertising component to marketing mix
3. Enhance the planning tools to meet/exceed the expectations of today's consumer
    - Utilize database for e-marketing purposes (e-newsletters) and to build relationships with current customers
    - Hire web manager
    - Build expertise to incorporate "streaming video" travel feature vignettes to website
    - Utilizing research and tracking measures, expand consumer website – add niche sites to broaden appeal and capture potential growth markets
  4. Expand media relationships and product offerings
    - Research emerging lifestyle magazine section marketplace and seek contacts with six new editors in 2005-2006
    - Create high definition short stories/documentaries for distribution to national television networks
    - Utilize new high definition equipment to continue to provide broadcast ready video footage and finished products for distribution to media outlets
  5. Strengthen Wyoming's competitive position in the International marketplace
    - Expand the "Real America" brand by participating in additional projects with Rocky Mountain International (RMI)
    - Participate in sales and training missions; educate international tour operators about niche tourism product and unique visitor opportunities outside of the traditional visitor destinations
    - Develop an ad that can be used effectively in the international markets; continue to increase trade and consumer advertising in Germany and the United Kingdom markets
    - Utilize electronic mediums to allow further penetration of Wyoming's images to international media and travel trade
    - Work with existing research vendors and other stakeholders to identify and implement collection methods to measure international visitation; establish benchmarks
  6. Maximize return-on-investment from participation in travel trade and direct marketing programs
    - Respond to the changing demands of the group travel industry with innovative ways in which to package and present Wyoming product
    - Implement tracking system to measure effectiveness of consumer travel shows by gathering an e-list of consumers who sign up at these shows
    - Develop greater market presence at consumer travel shows by enhancing booth design and evaluating the current structure; show schedule, associated costs and return on investment
  7. Expand Wyoming film-friendly offerings
    - Develop a comprehensive Wyoming film incentive program including a promotional component with a Short Film contest
    - Utilize Reel-Scout database to increase number of digital images and location packages offered online and to track and measure usage
  8. Make Wyoming more visitor-friendly and easily accessible by providing interpretive travel information and quality service
    - Research and plan for the construction of state-of-the art Welcome Centers at major

gateways into Wyoming, i.e. I-90 & the South Dakota border, I-25 & Colorado border, I-80 & the Nebraska border

- Include audio CDs w/ Wyoming Highway Maps for interpretive component at designated roadside stops
- Continue to work with Wyoming Department of Transportation to add directional and interpretive signage and pullout improvements along Wyoming highways
- Establish customer service benchmarks and create annual customer service training program
- Continue In-State Tourism Marketing Education
- Support efforts of the Wyoming Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources to upgrade state-owned assets

**Accomplishments:**

1. Expand research requirements on all levels
  - Thru the Western State Tourism Policy Council, gathered economic data from 13 western states.
  - Conducted conversion analysis with consumers to measure propensity to travel and also to gain insight about Wyoming's travel consumers.
  - Engaged Focus Group feedback in Core Markets for selection of advertising concepts.
  - Conducted a request for proposal (RFP) to expand research results for 2006 and beyond including online pre and post advertising awareness, Gross State Product of Tourism and semi-annual economic impact projections.
2. Enhance consistency and distribution of advertising message
  - As a result of a request for proposal (RFP), consolidated all advertising efforts and selected Barnhart as the advertising agency for all mediums.
  - Developed the 2006 media plan based on 2005 Brand Development Index (bdi) results.
  - Achieved an overall added-value of 12 percent, representing approximately \$279,000 in added-value media placement.
  - Invested \$130,000 in an online media plan; purchased specific banners and content space on four travel related sites and engaged in search engine marketing. Monthly web traffic has increased over 500 percent compared to the same months in 2005. Year-to-date, total number of unique web sessions is up 595 percent.
3. Enhance the planning tools to meet/exceed the expectations of today's consumer
  - Developed and deployed the Wyoming Roundup E-zine to begin Electronic Customer Relationship Marketing (ECRM), resulting in a gross opening rate of 35 percent consistent with the industry average.
  - Currently interviewing candidates for Online Product Manager; selection process to be completed by August 1, 2006. However offer was extended.
  - Incorporated 22 short video vignettes into [www.wyomingtourism.org](http://www.wyomingtourism.org) when the new site was launched in August 2005; developed reserve of 20 video (travel/human interest) features for movement to the web as relevant events or opportunities dictate; provided video production assistance to the Park County Travel Council for their web pod cast feature. Added a fully integrated online version of the Wyoming Travelers Journal and Wyoming Cultural guide to the web site.
  - Implemented WebSideStory, a leading web analytic tool to provide detailed analysis of customer behavior for strategic direction on website expansion and development.

4. Expand media relationships and product offerings

- Secured Wyoming features in lifestyle magazine section whose primary focus is not travel:
  - Popular Mechanics magazine – David Dunbar. Togwotee Pass snowmobiling adventure tour story (March 2006)
  - Out magazine – Gay & lesbian publication. Feature story published after our provision of contact information. (Feb. 2006)
  - Flying Adventures – Publisher/pilot (Michael Higgins) hosted for fly fishing and touring story near Jackson (June 2006)
  - Motorhome magazine – Travel story on Devils Tower area for RVer's published June 2006. Hosted writer previous summer. Pitched in November 2004 at Travel Media Showcase in Tucson.
  - Preservation magazine. Writer Tricia Vita – hosted in July 2005 for statewide tour. Feature on historic trails published June 2006.
  - Persona magazine (American Express) – Hosted writer Gig Gwin for statewide tour in July 2005. First article (Jackson Lake Lodge) published in March 2006.
- Secured the following High Definition stories (edited pieces) for national broadcast:
  - Gold Buckle Network/Fall 2005 – Women's pro rodeo from the Wyoming State Fair
  - Tribute to Chris LeDoux – March 2006 – Great American Network (GAN)
  - Wild About Wyoming – music video (segments) Spring 2006, The Travel Channel
- Provided Wyoming high definition footage to the following outlets:
  - Discovery Channel
  - NBC News,
  - Sci Fi Channel
  - Good Morning America, ABC
  - The Amazing Race, CBS
  - World News Tonight, ABC
  - British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)

5. Strengthen Wyoming's competitive position in the International marketplace

- Participated in Rocky Mountain International's Scandinavian marketing project, in addition to regional itinerary development and consumer events in Sweden, and provided planning and support for a Danish television celebrity's travel film that promotes Wyoming as a world-class destination.
- Participated in sales and training missions in Sweden, Denmark and France; created a new Wyoming DVD and utilized it at presentations and during educational tours for international industry professionals; developed and distributed a 'What's New in Wyoming' flyer identifying and promoting unique and niche tourism product.
- Using the Teton (shadowbox) and the Tent/Teepee ad (Devils Tower), placed full-page, four-color ads in German and United Kingdom consumer publications, and the Devils Tower ad was also used in North American Journeys 'The Tour Operator' which was distributed to the worldwide travel trade at TIA's International Pow Wow in Orlando.
- International media and travel trade utilized email and websites to obtain Wyoming images for publication.
- Participated in a newly developed research program with North American Journeys which measures room nights booked by United States receptive tour operators.

6. Maximize return-on-investment from participation in travel trade and direct marketing programs
  - Developed a new group of itineraries including Eco-trips, Outlaws of the West, Tech Tours and itineraries for the more active 50+ demographic.
  - Began collecting registration cards at consumer shows; entered e-mail addresses for later contact with consumers; tallied number of cards collected at each show.
  - Implemented Wyoming branding program by having multiple booths featuring the Wyoming logo and displaying Wyoming banners.
7. Expand Wyoming film-friendly offerings
  - Rep. Rosie Berger is working on legislation to be introduced during the 2007 General Session for a rebate based incentive program that would make Wyoming more competitive by bringing the jobs, economic impact and tourism promotion that on-location filming contributes to a state.
  - By utilizing the web-based Reel-Scout database, we have increased the number of digital images by 1,700 and location packages by 121 offered through online mechanisms. Since its installation, we have distributed 45 packages representing 137 locations thru Reel-Scout.
8. Make Wyoming more visitor-friendly and easily accessible by providing interpretive travel information and quality service
  - During the 2006 Budget Session, received \$10 million appropriation for construction of a Welcome Center on I-90 near the Wyoming/South Dakota border. RFQ process is complete; beginning A&E Design and Planning phase; construction projected to begin July 2007.
  - Initial partner meetings with the Wyoming Department of Transportation and the Wyoming Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources have begun to include audio CDs with the 2007 Wyoming highway maps. A timeline has been developed; currently determining content and setting up CD production process.
  - In conjunction with the Wyoming Department of Transportation, obligated funds for the following:
    - 12 new turnout construction projects totaling \$1,013,820
    - 32 interpretative signage projects totaling \$127,650
    - 86 directional signage projects totaling \$337,580
    - 10 Highway Advisory Radio Systems (HARS) totaling \$500,000
  - Planned and produced the first ever training and media familiarization (FAM) tour for state-run Welcome Center personnel May 1-7, 2006 in Casper with travel to Wind River Country. Training included Customer Service, Basics of Interpretation, Destination Showcase, and Basic First Aid and Adult CPR.
  - Conducted a survey on current customer service programs offered throughout the State of Wyoming. The information will be used to determine the program development of a statewide customer service program.
  - Planned and produced the first ever Destination Showcase for frontline visitor center personnel at the 2006 Governor's Conference on Hospitality and Tourism for greater cross promotion of Wyoming destinations.
  - Active participant in the "Share Your Heritage" cultural tourism project coordinated by the Wind River Visitors Council.
  - In-state programs in development: professional certification program for front-line personnel, technical assistance program for local communities interested in tourism

*Business Council*

development, and brochure guideline for state-run welcome centers.

- Actively working with the Northern Arapaho and Eastern Shoshone Tribes in tribal tourism development opportunities.
- Continue to conduct community outreach, visited 21 communities in the past nine months.

**Supplemental Budget Implications:**

None.