LEADS recently hit a new milestone, a promising and positive milestone! Last month three prospects were announced as committed to the LEADS Board of Directors. This is the first time in LEADS’ history that this many companies were announced within one month’s time. Having three companies commit to either relocating or expanding to Cheyenne is a significant economic development feat at any point, but especially so in the current economy.

These projects are also nothing to sneeze at, one is the moving of a corporate headquarters, the other will be bringing 35-50 manufacturing jobs and the third is a company that is expanding its current operations to include 15 more high-tech positions in a $35 million datacenter. At this point, only one has been announced publicly while the other two are not ready to make a public announcement because of how the change will effect their current employees or operations.

Cameco announced mid-October that they would be moving their U.S. Corporate headquarters from Denver to Cheyenne. The Canadian-based company is one of the world’s largest uranium producers. Cameco owns and operates the Smith Ranch-Highland in-situ uranium mine near Glenrock, the only operating uranium mine in Wyoming. It also owns and operates the Crow Butte in-situ uranium mine near Crawford, Neb. The company currently employs 165 people in Wyoming and 69 in Nebraska.

The other two committed companies are still in the process of making the announcement internally so we are unable to disclose their names and much information about them, but they are great additions to the community. We’ll keep you posted as those two progress and there is more we are able to discuss.
An Eye Into Economic Development: Empty Space

Over the years I have come to realize there are some profound differences between the Economic Development reality and the realities of the private commercial sector. This is no where more apparent than the very differing views of “available property.”

For virtually all property owners, developers and realtors, an abundance of empty “available” properties is a huge negative in the community – whether that is empty office space, warehouse or manufacturing buildings or vacant developed land. Empty and available properties are a “drag on the market.” One measure of the economic vitality of a given market, for example, is the “vacancy rate.” Too large a vacancy rate is a bad thing. It depresses market prices and signals that a sector is “over built” or worse, is in decline.

With this frame of reference, it is little wonder then that many decision makers and opinion leaders in our communities view an empty spec building in a business park or even the un-built lots in that business park, as a “failure.”

Of course, from an economic development perspective, nothing could be further from the truth. For economic developers generally – and certainly for LEADS -- available space is market potential: it is our primary job-creation tool; it is what we have to “sell!” A filled and functioning building or a fully built-out business park is USELESS for economic development. Yes, once filled it is contributing jobs, payroll and taxes into the community so it is fulfilling its ultimate role. But that means it is ancient history: it is a done deal; it’s over; finished; complete; yesterday’s news. More to the point, it is no longer available to create more jobs or to further diversify the economy. For an economic developer it is a depleted resource.

However from LEADS perspective that empty manufacturing plant or warehouse; that empty office space; that “shovel ready” piece of dirt: those “available” properties are valuable tools that are working every day for future job creation. How can this be? It is quite simple
Web, Events, Marketing...an update

Cheyenne LEADS has gotten a make-over, well it’s website has anyway. If you haven’t seen the changes go to www.cheyenneleads.org and check it out. The new site allows for easier access to key information for prospects, members and the community. It also is more esthetically pleasing with new photos of businesses and industry in Cheyenne. Please feel free to browse the site and send any comments to Erica at ericas@cheyenneleads.org.

Planning for the 2010 Annual Membership Banquet and Meeting is well underway. Mark your calendars for March 12, 2010 at Little America. This year the guest speaker will be David Dodd. David A. Dodd, CEcD is President of DADCO Consulting Services, a leading international consulting firm specializing in creating economic opportunity for communities, states, and countries. David has been recognized as a leader in collaborative-based economic development. He is a Certified Economic Developer, and has completed Economic Development Institute (EDI) at The University of Oklahoma, the only internationally-accredited economic development educational program. David will bring his expertise to present information about Economic Development in Cheyenne and Laramie County. This will be an event you won’t want to miss. Look for your invitation in the mail sometime late February or early March!

Erica Stoeckley, Director of Marketing and Communications, and her family welcomed their second little boy, Tyson Daniel, into the world on October 26, 2009. All are doing well and starting December 28, 2009 she will be back in the office full-time. It will be just in time to start all the projects for 2010.
really. As economic developers we work hard every day to get the Cheyenne community on the radar screens of potential businesses. The goal is to get that business, or a site selector representing that business, to engage in a discussion about doing business here in Laramie County. That discussion almost always starts with a “do you have” question: “Do you have 20,000 sq ft with 2 dock doors?” “Do you have five acres with robust electrical power and immediate access to the interstate?” And so on. If the answer is “well no, but we could build it…” or “well no, but we know a parcel that could be developed…” there will never be a second question. The conversation is over and the prospect is already talking with an economic development agency in another town. So much for all of our marketing effort and expense – it just went down the tubes because there wasn’t really anything to “sell,” or at least not what the prospect needed.

In the commercial world, the need to fill the building or build on the developed parcel is driven, in large part, by the need to recover up-front costs and eliminate or cover carrying costs. That is real. And that is the difference between success and financial ruin. So of course empty space equates to failure.

Not so in the economic development world. For starters, most economic developers use OPM financing – other people’s money. Of necessity the major portion of funding for a non profit is comprised of donations, grants and/or public funds. In Cheyenne the basic foundation of that has been the two Progress and Prosperity campaigns. That also has been the genius of the Business Ready Communities grant program in Wyoming. The BRC program has enabled communities all across Wyoming to develop resources – buildings and shovel-ready land – to attract new jobs. Grants also substantially reduce or eliminate carrying costs associated with financing and ROI demands. The properties can then be offered, not for so many dollars per square foot or per acre, but rather for a certain number of jobs per acre. More importantly, with low carrying costs these properties can remain “available” and working day in and day out as “attractors” for the respective communities. They allow the conversation to continue when the answer to the “do you have?” question is an honest “yes!” And surprisingly, many of those conversations end, not with a sale or lease of the available property, but with the prospect actually finding other alternatives elsewhere in our community. That is a true win/win because it keeps the “available” property in inventory and working for the next set of jobs.

Here is the problem. In many communities across the state the folks that are often the
ones who make decisions about future funding for economic development properties are doing so based on the realities of their commercial environment. When these “available” properties are seen as failures, that funding and community approval dries up and an incredibly effective tool is removed from the Wyoming economic developer’s tool chest.

The two world views are not mutually exclusive. But economic development decisions should not be based solely on commercial paradigms any more than commercial decisions should be based on job creation standards. No commercial developer is going to forego covering investment and carrying costs simply to create jobs – nor should they. By the same token, economic developers must be able to make a case that an “empty” property is a working asset. Fortunately for Cheyenne, the business and political leadership largely understand this subtle but important distinction.

And one final note. This all breaks down when the real costs to create and maintain “available” property begin to soar. Remove grants and donated financing and the equation changes because now income (not jobs) must be secured to pay off capital costs. Or levy substantial taxes on that empty property and, again, the carrying costs rise to the point where the economic development group must recover costs and create income – not jobs. They are forced to, in effect, turn into commercial developers. Unfortunately, that is happening in Laramie County. LEADS’ carrying costs on its shovel-ready but vacant land are approaching unsustainable levels precisely because of the property taxes that LEADS is required to pay on that “empty” property.

These are two very different purposes and perspectives to property development. If economic developers are truly expected to create new jobs and payroll for their communities they, and their communities, must understand the subtle but profound differences in the worlds in which they operate. Everyone must understand that for job creation, an empty building or vacant land can be the most productive asset the economic development group can have.
These prospects show that growth is continuing to happen in Cheyenne and Laramie County regardless of the economy. Reaching milestones like this also demonstrate how economic development works; it can take a couple years to have any announcements and they can all come to fruition at once! LEADS is pleased that those years of work with these three companies have paid off and helped them decide on Cheyenne for their new or expansion locations.
MIDAS AUTO SERVICE & TIRES

Contact: Nick and Brook Dodgson, Owners; Brad Whitman, Shop Manager
2423 East Lincolnway
Cheyenne, WY 82001
(307) 638-8928
(307) 632-3955 Fax
Email: brad@wyobrit.com
Website: www.midascheyenne.com
Business Member

We are a full service auto repair shop; your one stop auto repair facility for repairs, factory scheduled maintenance and even tires.

CAPITOL COMMUNICATIONS, INC.

Contact: Tom A. Herdt, President
1716 O’Neil Avenue
Cheyenne, WY 82001
(307) 635-9295
(307) 635-3664 Fax
Email: therdt@cciwy.com
Website: www.cciwy.com
Business Member

Capitol Communications is a Cheyenne based telecommunications contractor providing commercial telephone, data networking, and structured cabling solutions in Southeast Wyoming. We bring advanced technology and best in class systems and products to enable our clients to communicate more efficiently and economically with their customers. Let us focus on your technology so that you and your employees can focus on your business.

CHEYENNE FAMILY YMCA

Contact: Phil McGovern, CEO; Kathleen Gillgannon, VP Membership & Program; Margaret Dowling, Development & Marketing Director; Terri Curry, Business Director
1426 E. Lincolnway
Cheyenne, WY 82001
(307) 634-YMCA (9622)
(307) 635-5063 Fax
Email: pmcgovern@cheyenneymca.org
Website: www.cheyenneymca.org
Non-Profit Member

The YMCA provides services to youth, adults, families, and seniors through programs that develop healthy spirits, minds, and bodies, putting Christian principles into practice to build strong kids, strong families, strong communities. The Cheyenne Family YMCA offers Child Care, Pre-School, After School Care, Youth Sports, Fitness Classes, Aquatics and Outreach Programs.

SAMPSON CONSTRUCTION CO., INC.

Contact: Thad Lienemann, Regional Director
1213 West Allison
Cheyenne, WY 82007
(307) 426-4050
(307) 426-4051 Fax
Email: thad.lienemann@sampson-construction.com
Website: www.sampson-construction.com
Business Member

Sampson Construction was founded in 1952 by Evelyn and Morris Sampson. Sampson Construction is a design/builder, construction manager, and general contractor for commercial projects. The Wyoming office, located in Cheyenne, employs 35 full-time professionals. It also has the ability to utilize the remaining 355 employees located on other projects in the Midwest as valuable client resources. Current Wyoming projects include the South High School in Cheyenne, the Army Aviation Support Facility in Cheyenne, the University of Wyoming War Memorial Stadium Renovation in Laramie, the Campbell County Memorial Hospital Parking Structure and Building Expansion in Gillette, and Lincoln Square in Torrington. Sampson Construction is dedicated to constructing quality buildings for a fair price with integrity.
LEADS BOARD

CHAIR
Georgiana Stewart, First American Title Co.

VICE CHAIR
Steve Lovas, US Bank

SECRETARY
Jim Murphy, AVI Engineering, Inc.

TREASURER
Dr. Darrel Hammon, Laramie County Community College

PAST CHAIR
Matt Pope, First Interstate Bank

DIRECTORS
Tom Bass, American National Bank
Mike Ceballos, Qwest Corporation
Bill Edwards, Individual
Ron Engelhart, Bank of the West
Randy Ford, Brewer Miller Financial
Gary Imig, Sierra Trading Post
Jeff McSchoeller, EchoStar Communications
Scott Meier, Hathaway & Kunz, P.C.
Joe Paiz, McGee, Hearne & Paiz, LLP
Catherine Rogers, Rogers and Rogers, P.C.
Barry Sims, Taco John’s International
Connie Sloan-Cathcart, United Way of Laramie County
Jan Stalcup, Individual
Mark Stege, Cheyenne Light, Fuel & Power
Tom Stuckey, Wells Fargo Bank Wyoming, NA
Stephanie Teubner, Warren Federal Credit Union
Scott Walker, Wyoming Tribune-Eagle
Leigh West, Cheyenne Regional Medical Center
Bob Womack, Spradley Barr Motors

EX OFFICIO
John Gross, Eastern Laramie County
David Haring, Cheyenne Airport Board
Jeff Ketcham, Laramie County Commissioner
Rick Kayser, Mayor of Cheyenne
Mona Pearl, Joint Powers Board
Dale Steenbergen, Cheyenne Chamber of Commerce

LEADS STAFF
Randy Bruns, CEO
Scott Sutherland, Vice President
Erica Stoeckley, Director of Marketing & Communications
Karen Gastineau, Office Manager

Send us your email address!!

LEADS is now on Facebook and will be sending out e-newsletters in addition to the hard-copy so we need your updated information.

Please call 638-6000 or email ericas@cheyenneleads.org with your most current email address and be sure to become a Fan on Facebook!