

# LEADS

MAY 2008

THE CHEYENNE-LARAMIE COUNTY CORPORATION FOR  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



**report**

## Membership Can Mean A Lot More for Your Community

LEADS' members sometimes question what more they can do for economic development. Yes they pay their dues annually to support the work that LEADS does, but why aren't their volunteer opportunities? How can members help more?

It has been the case from LEADS' inception, and an important factor in LEADS' success, that the work of LEADS is done by paid economic development professionals rather than by volunteers. But it has been found that members can be key in helping recruit new businesses to the area. This doesn't mean that members are out cold calling companies or showing them the business market in Cheyenne, but they are giving LEADS a "heads-up" to companies they know about that would be a good fit for the area.

Mark Casey of Progress Circle, LLC was the member that contacted LEADS two years ago with information about the National Center for Atmospheric Research's search for a site for a new super computer center. LEADS was not aware of the project at that time, but LEADS, like Casey knew that it would be a perfect fit in Cheyenne. With that one email from Casey, LEADS was on the phone to NCAR, the University of Wyoming, the Wyoming Business Council and the Governor's office. The ball started rolling and after a year of economic development work by LEADS, NCAR announced they had chosen Cheyenne as the location for their new super computing center. During the announcement it was not mentioned that Casey had been the member that tipped off the project to LEADS, but it was information from a member that started the ball rolling on the NCAR project.

Along with NCAR two other companies located in Colorado have looked north due to recommendations from a member. One of those companies was a telecom company that didn't end up expanding. But they took a serious look at Cheyenne because they had been working with Liquid Cognition here in Cheyenne and were impressed with the opportunities here. Even though this company didn't end up expanding to Cheyenne, they continue to work with Liquid Cognition and



## We Have Done Terrific Things for Ourselves...One Penny at a Time

Cheyenne LEADS typically works with 80 to 120 new business prospects each year. At any one time we usually have 40 to 50 “active” prospects on our list. That is a lot of

initial conversations with business people outside of our community about our community. And at some point in almost every one of those “conversations” the question is asked in one way or another, “so, what is the business climate like in Cheyenne?” Many of the people asking that question have asked it of other economic development professionals all over this country. They rather expect some pat, and usually superficial, version of “it is great!” We don’t give them that. Instead we almost always tell them about three things: about how LEADS is funded; about both Progress & Prosperity campaigns, and; about the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Penny Optional Tax.



LEADS is unique in Wyoming – and nationally to a large extent – in that the bulk of our funding comes from the private sector. Area businesses and individuals write checks to LEADS every year to keep the organizational functioning. In addition, LEADS has contracts with the City of Cheyenne and with Laramie County to provide Economic Development Services to both levels of local government. The fact that local business is the largest contributor to the ongoing funding of economic development is a powerful testimony to “the business climate” here. And the power of that story is further enhanced by the fact that both the city and county see economic development as an important role for local government.

The Progress & Prosperity story is also reinforcement of that message. In two capital fund raising campaigns, local businesses, individuals and local government together committed right at \$5.6 Million to fund economic development infrastructure and training and limited “quality of life” projects. The business community has written checks to build important economic development tools for further business recruitment and job development. This speaks volumes to outsiders about the kind of community we are – and aspire to be.

The other “story” that really resonates with outsiders is the story of the optional sales tax and how it is employed in Laramie County. In 1977 the citizens of Laramie County voted to impose upon themselves an additional 1% sales tax – often referred to as the 5<sup>th</sup> penny tax -- as provided for by state statute. This first

## Welcome to the Newest Additions

Spring has finally sprung in Laramie County and like every year it has brought with it a change to the LEADS Board. With the three elected board members going off the Board in March, three new members jumped into their positions. Scott W. Meier was elected from LEADS Member Hathaway & Kunz, P.C., Jim Murphy was elected from LEADS Member AVI Engineering and Connie Sloan-Cathcart came onto the Board from LEADS Member United Way. “Each new board member will bring individual as well as valuable assets to the organization,” stated Randy Bruns, Chief Executive Officer of Cheyenne LEADS.

Scott W. Meier is a partner with the law firm of Hathaway & Kunz, P.C., emphasizing business law and estate planning. He is also has an active Certified Public Accountant certificate.

Scott is a native to Wyoming, growing up in Lander, graduating from the University of Wyoming with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Accounting in 1982 and a Juris Doctorate in 1996. He is a past director of the Greater Cheyenne Chamber of Commerce, the Cheyenne Frontier Days Old West Museum, the Cheyenne Depot Museum, the Rotary Club of Cheyenne and the Wyoming State Bar Foundation.

Scott and his wife, Kathy, have three sons, Michael, Patrick and Philip.

Jim Murphy, better known as Murph, is past president and a senior partner with AVI Engineers. Murph’s areas of expertise include urban stormwater planning, mine reclamation design, livestock waste management, and municipal water system planning. For 25 years he has specialized in management of complex projects involving large multi-disciplinary teams of engineers, scientists and natural resource professionals.

Murph is a Wyoming native; and other than the four years he spent at the Montana College of Mineral Science and Technology earning his bachelor’s degree in Environmental Engineering, he has resided in Wyoming. Murph has been with AVI for 19 years, including 17 years as a partner of the Firm. Murph has taught short courses on mine reclamation design and construction stormwater control on both a local and national level.

Murph is an Associate Member of the American Society of Civil Engineers, member of the Wyoming Engineering Society, past member of the Wyoming Public Works Specification Committee, and past member of the Montana Tech Alumni Advisory Committee. He has been Project Manager for two projects that received the U.S. Department of the Interior’s, “National



*Scott W. Meier, Hathaway & Kunz, P.C.*



*Jim Murphy, AVI Engineering*

## “Referrals” *(continued from Page 1)*

Cheyenne is now on their “radar screen”. Not only that, but they have probably mentioned the Cheyenne area to other businesses they work with which could easily lead to other companies looking to Wyoming for expansion.

Less than a month ago Jack Stadel of Stadel Construction called and said that a company he was working with in Colorado was having difficulties expanding due to the building permitting process. He had told them to call Cheyenne LEADS to see what was available in Wyoming for their expanding company. No more than two days later the company called and is currently an active prospect and LEADS is working with them to explore how their expansion needs can be met here in Wyoming.

It is amazing what the LEADS members can do for economic development beyond paying their dues. LEADS members are the businesses in Cheyenne that know and understand why they are doing business here. That resonates better with other businesses than LEADS telling others why business is better here. Referrals are what LEADS members can do for economic development in their community. ■



## “Board” *(continued from Page 3)*



*Connie Sloan-Cathcart, United Way of Laramie County*

Mine Land Reclamation Project of the Year Award”.

Murph’s hobbies include pheasant hunting at Ring-Neck Ranch, duck hunting on the North Platte, and traveling with his wife Lisa.

Connie Sloan-Cathcart has been with United Way of Laramie County for nine years now, one year as Marketing Director and eight years as Executive Director. She has been a volunteer for United Way since 1993. Connie served as the Director for Special Friends of Cheyenne from 1993-1998. She has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration from Slippery Rock State University in Pennsylvania. Connie has lived in Laramie County for 24 years.

As a member of the Cheyenne Kiwanis Club, Connie has served as a Board member and as a Kiwanis Foundation Board member. She is an appointee to the Cheyenne Transit Advisory Committee. She is a founding board member of the Wyoming Association of Nonprofit Organizations and is Chair of the Board this year. She is a member of the Whole Foods Buying Club, the local food co-op.

Her husband is Pete and they have a little piece of the prairie near Carpenter. Their place is an ongoing experiment in sustainable living. Connie’s hobbies include gardening and folk art that recycles old items into beautiful useful pieces. ■

# One of the Best

A nationally renowned scientist is why many came and the steak and lobster and venue helped top off the event. If you missed the 2008 Cheyenne LEADS Annual Membership Banquet and Meeting you missed out. This year's event was proclaimed by many attendees as "the best yet".

"The venue was key to the success of the banquet this year," stated Erica Stoeckley, Director of Marketing and Communication for Cheyenne LEADS. "The newly remodeled Little America facility is not only beautiful and luxurious but it also made the event flow better. And there were only glowing comments about the excellent meal and service."

Little America served steak and lobster while the LEADS meeting got underway. LEADS Board Chair Bob Strasheim welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming. He exclusively welcomed the guests in attendance from the University of Wyoming, the Wyoming Governor's office and the National Center for Atmospheric Research and thanked them all for attending as LEADS' honorary guests. Matt Pope Board Vice Chair reported on the nominating committee and introduced the nominees for Board Members: Scott Meier, Jim Murphy and Connie Sloan-Cathcart. Stuckey moved the nominations be closed and the slate be accepted by acclamation. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously by the attending members. With the business part of the event out of the way, Randy Bruns, CEO of Cheyenne LEADS introduced Dr. Timothy Killeen Director of the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR).

Dr. Killeen was recently promoted to an Assistant Director position at the National Science Foundation and discussion of where the Cheyenne project stands would conflict with the decision process that is currently taking place at the national level. Dr. Killeen could, however, describe NCAR and what the organization does and what it is working on and discovering on a daily basis. Dr. Killeen illustrated NCAR's strengths in geosciences, social sciences, education, and information/computer sciences and how these areas of research help uncover how the earth works as a system, as well as the human relationship with this system. Dr. Killeen presented different computer models that gave a glimpse into the world of research super computing, explaining how all the work that NCAR does helps improve the study of geosciences throughout the world.

As Dr. Killeen wrapped up to a standing ovation so did the grand event. Strasheim thanked everyone for attending and wished them all well. As people stood up and began exiting the event the cheerful hum from the room proved in itself that the evening had been a success. ■



## “6th Penny” *(continued from Page 2)*

tax went to meet shortfalls in various public services budgets – primarily roads and streets, police and fire protection -- in the county and in local municipalities. Since 1977, through additional votes of the people, we have kept this tax in place. Over the years we have also used, to great advantage, the Capital Facilities Tax – often referred to as the 6<sup>th</sup> penny tax. With these revenue sources we have upgraded our roads and streets, we have funded increased planning, public safety, jails, fire fighting equipment, patrol cars and equipment, water systems, parks and recreation amenities, greenways and a world-class County Library. We have done terrific things for ourselves to upgrade our quality of life one penny at a time -- and we have created a great story of vision and optimism.



In a few weeks we all again have a choice to make. The “Specific Purpose Sales and Use Tax” is on the ballot in four propositions. Each of the four propositions is an opportunity for citizens to weigh in on the quality of the communities that make up Laramie County. And from my perspective, the choices we make this year will not only have an impact on health and safety, recreation and transportation, they will have an impact on available workforce and the future of our communities as viable “communities of choice” for our children and grandchildren.

For a century or more the mantra of this state has been to “keep our kids here.” Usually that phrase is tied to some complaint about good jobs and employment opportunities. For the past several years our state has had one of the lowest unemployment rates in the nation and employers have had to scramble for employees or learn to cope with open positions. The state has also invested heavily in education. And still we have watched a steady out-migration of our youth. Now demographics are catching up with employers nation-wide. Today there are more opportunities within the state than ever before. But our well educated young people also have unprecedented opportunities to go anywhere they want to go nationally. This trend will continue. The issue is increasingly less about job availability and more about life-style opportunities. In the past people moved to the jobs. Now the talent makes life-style choices and the jobs move to the talent. The decisions we make to invest in our communities will have a lot to do with the decisions the workforce will make about staying here -- or coming here. Four of those “invest” decisions are on the ballot May 6<sup>th</sup>.

The stories of LEADS’ funding and Progress & Prosperity will continue to be strong statements about the attitude of the business community here. Even more importantly, the next chapter in the 6<sup>th</sup> Penny Tax story will speak volumes about the attitude and vision of the citizens of this county. I hope that will continue to be a story of optimism and progress. ■



# WELCOME

New Members

## RICKARDS, LONG & RULON, LLP

Contact: Rob Dickerson,  
Partner

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Cheyenne, WY 82003

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Email: rdickerson@rlrcpas.com

Business Member

The vision of Rickards, Long & Rulon, LLP is to be known as a regional leader in providing accounting and consulting services. Creating trusted relationships with our clients; we will guide them with innovative solutions and a proactive approach, to help them attain financial success. Our team members are the most valuable resource of the firm. We take pride in the integrity of the firm, the challenge of the work, the commitment of teamwork and the opportunities provided for personal fulfillment.

## THARP PROPERTIES LTD

Contact: Keith Tharp,  
Manager

939 Creighton Street  
Cheyenne, WY 82009

(307) 638-2547

(307) 631-8255 Cell

(307) 632-7056 Fax

Email: ktharp1955@msn.com

Business Member

Real estate development and commercial property investments. Leasing of retail, office and warehouse space.

## WLC ENGINEERING, SURVEYING AND PLANNING

Contact: Brad Miskimins,  
Grants Administrator

P.O. Box 20571  
Cheyenne, WY 82003

(307) 772-9303

(307) 772-9350 Fax

Email: bmiskimins@wlcwyo.com

Website: wlcwyo.com

Business Member

WLC is a sixty person civil and geotechnical engineering, planning and land surveying firm serving the public and private sectors, individuals and governments since 1948 from our offices in Casper, Gillette, Cheyenne and Pinedale, Wyoming. The firm prides itself on our experience, integrity and client-first philosophy.

## GREEN HOUSE DATA

Contact: Shawn Mills, President;  
Cortney Thompson, VP Data Center Operations;  
Thomas Burns, VP Business Development

304 Progress Circle, Suite B  
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(866) 995-3282

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Email: smills@greenhousedata.com

Website: www.greenhousedata.com

Business Member

Green House Data is Wyoming's first high-density data center and hosted computing facility. The company offers the region's lowest cost, high-availability colocation and managed hosting services. They offer managed servers, managed email and data backup storage solutions. The company's green operations deliver a zero carbon footprint facility that is approximately ten percent less expensive than its competitors.

**LEADS BOARD****CHAIR**

Matt Pope, First Interstate Bank

**VICE CHAIR**

Georgiana Stewart, First American Title Co.

**SECRETARY**

Dr. Darrel Hammon, Laramie County Community College

**TREASURER**

Steve Lovas, US Bank

**PAST CHAIR**

Bob Strasheim, Mechanical Systems, Inc.

**DIRECTORS**

Bank of the West

Brian Bryant, Palomino Industries

Mike Ceballos, Qwest Corporation

Bill Edwards, Individual

Stig Hallingbye, American National Bank

Gary Imig, Sierra Trading Post

Jeff McSchooler, EchoStar Communications

Scott Meier, Hathaway &amp; Kunz, P.C.

Jim Murphy, AVI Engineering, Inc.

Joe Paiz, McGee, Hearne &amp; Paiz, LLP

Connie Sloan-Cathcart, United Way of Laramie County

Jan Stalcup, Individual

Mark Stege, Cheyenne Light, Fuel &amp; 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

Rhonda Woodard, Woodard &amp; White, P.C.

**EX OFFICIO**

David Eldred, Joint Powers Board

John Gross, Eastern Laramie County

David Haring, Cheyenne Airport Board

Jeff Ketcham, Laramie County Commissioner

Dale Steenberg, Cheyenne Chamber of Commerce

Jack Spiker, Mayor of Cheyenne

**LEADS STAFF**

Randy Bruns, CEO

Scott Sutherland, Director of Business Development

Erica Stoeckley, Director of Marketing &amp; Communications

Karen Gastineau, Office Manager

**SAVE THE DATE****19TH ANNUAL INVITATIONAL GOLF TOURNAMENT****Tuesday, August 12****Cheyenne Country Club****12:00 p.m. Buffet Luncheon****1:00 p.m. Shotgun Start****6:00 p.m. Dinner****Invite a non-member to play on your team. If they join LEADS as a Business member -****Your game is on us!****Call today to reserve a team or for more information  
638-6000****Cheyenne LEADS**

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