

# Cheyenne **LEADS**

Celebrating 40 Years!



**Cheyenne LEADS History**  
Through the Eyes of the Board Chairmen

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Mike was not a native of Cheyenne or even Wyoming, but his unwavering support of the community and its people had likely convinced many otherwise. He moved to Cheyenne from Iowa in 1983 and quickly became involved in local organizations. One of his first endeavors was serving on the board of the Industrial Development Association of Cheyenne (IDAC), the city's first economic development organization.

Although IDAC held accurate views on economic development, its organizational shortcomings soon became apparent, and it was clear that the group was becoming ineffective and in need of change. After about a year on the board, Mike recalled that John Rogers, then Chairman of the IDAC Board, announced that many members supported reorganization. The group determined they needed a fresh start with new bylaws, new leadership, and a new strategic plan.

The reorganization of IDAC soon evolved into the creation of a completely new organization dedicated to high-quality economic development in Cheyenne. The group researched best practices by examining successful entities such as PEDCO in Pueblo, Colorado. Their many hours of research and deliberation resulted in a plan to build a member-funded organization supported by a full-time, professional staff. Mike believed this reorganization was crucial to the community and became a strong advocate for the effort, unaware that his commitment would eventually place him at the helm.

The first meeting of the new organization's Board of Directors took place in 1986, during which Mike was named Chairman. He was tasked with assembling the organization, drafting its bylaws, and establishing funding sources. **After much planning, the entity was initially referred to as the Laramie County Economic Association for Development Strategies (LEADS) before becoming incorporated as the Cheyenne-Laramie County Corporation for Economic Development, eventually shortened to Cheyenne LEADS.**

Early in his term as Chairman, Mike determined that significant funding was essential to properly launch the organization. Together with board members Jim Helzer, Larry Seitz, Jerry Loghry, Roger Brainard, John Rogers, Mick Powers, and Doug Reeves, he focused on raising membership dollars from local businesses and individuals. Economic development efforts were temporarily set aside while they concentrated on securing the financial foundation necessary for success.

**The board members dedicated countless evenings to visiting local businesses and community leaders over dinner, discussing Cheyenne's future and asking for three-year membership commitments. By the end of Mike's term, their efforts had generated \$250,000 in annual dues for LEADS.**

While Mike focused on establishing and funding the organization, subsequent board chairs built on that foundation. In 1988, Chairman Jim Helzer concentrated on marketing, creating an award-winning promotional package for prospective businesses and writing LEADS' first marketing plan. In 1989, Chairman Mick Powers oversaw the purchase and initial development of the Cheyenne Business Parkway, LEADS' first business park. By the close of 1989, the founders felt that LEADS had matured into a fully functional economic development organization.

At the same time, Mike balanced his role as LEADS' volunteer Chairman with his career as a full-time partner at McGladrey & Pullen, which eventually became McGee, Hearne, & Paiz. He and his partners remained deeply

committed to community involvement, believing that their professional success was tied to Cheyenne's economic growth.

**Mike often said, "LEADS brought in new businesses that didn't necessarily use us as their accountants, but they improved the economy. That improvement brought other companies that became our clients or strengthened existing ones that expanded their business with us. Since LEADS' inception in 1986, McGee, Hearne, & Paiz doubled its number of employees. We became the largest CPA firm in Wyoming, and we owe much of that to Cheyenne and to LEADS."**

After leaving the LEADS Board, Mike believed the organization had far exceeded his expectations. From its inception, the board had recognized Cheyenne's strength as a transportation hub at the crossroads of I-25 and I-80, a prediction validated by companies such as Sierra Trading Post, Lowe's Distribution, and Wal-Mart Distribution choosing Cheyenne. Likewise, the city's telecommunications infrastructure made it a natural fit for call centers, confirmed by Safeguard's arrival in 1992 and subsequent smaller call center operations.

Mike also served as Co-Chairman and President of Progress & Prosperity II, the first and largest contributor to the new North Range Business Park. His leadership and vision helped lay the foundation for LEADS' long-term success, shaping Cheyenne's economic development for decades to come.



## 1988 - Jim Helzer - taken from the 20 year history book

The second year of Cheyenne LEADS was much like the first, and with the change of the Board Chairman, the original focus continued as well. Jim Helzer of Uniconver Corporation was elected Chairman in 1988.

When the 20-year look back took place in 2005, Jim spoke of the many different people within the community who had helped organize the first meeting of LEADS and gave special recognition to the Mayor at the time, Don Erickson, and to Dick O’Gara, the first Chairman of the LEADS planning committee. Jim had not been part of IDAC (the first economic development organization in Cheyenne), but he remembered it as being ineffective and problematic, which



were the reasons that prompted the Mayor of Cheyenne to start calling on local business leaders for help.

Mayor Erickson had called on Jim, then President of Uniconver Corporation, and asked him to be on a committee that was being formed to build a new economic development organization. Jim commented, “What do you say to the Mayor when he calls you? Of course I said yes.” Erickson called multiple other local, influential businessmen to serve on the committee and appointed Dick O’Gara as the committee chairman.

Once the committee was organized and the mission was set to create a new economic development organization, the group began gathering information and reviewing the problems that had been faced by IDAC. The committee explored other successful economic development groups, among them PEDCO (the Pueblo, Colorado economic development organization), because of their recruiting successes and funding structure.

The committee soon concluded that the key problem for any economic development organization was sustainable funding, which was one thing that IDAC had struggled with as well. They started meeting often, and after five or six months, the group had a plan and a new organization they called Cheyenne LEADS. The committee elected Mike McGee as the first Chairman of the LEADS Board of Directors because he was such a unifier and was well-liked in the community. Jim commented, “I think it is easy to say that we can attribute much of the success of LEADS to Mike.”

The committee realized they wanted community support and participation based on a business’s full-time equivalent employee count. Jim felt very strongly about this part of the new organization and knew that if they stuck by their

ideals, they would be laying a strong foundation for the future. They knew significant and sustained funding was critical and set out with a plan to contact the largest employers in the community to commit to funding economic development in Cheyenne and Laramie County.

**The LEADS founders used many of their personal hours to carry the new LEADS message to local service clubs and groups, and most importantly, to meet with local business leaders, asking them to commit to three years of LEADS membership, which ultimately evolved into a rolling commitment.**

Along with the businesses that made membership commitments to LEADS, the City of Cheyenne and Laramie County also signed contracts with Cheyenne LEADS. “We were all pleased with the response. If you go out with a plan and strong concepts, you will get solid commitments,” added Jim.

In just a few months, LEADS had enough money to hire a professional staff, rent an office, and become a separate free-standing community organization. When LEADS was launched, Jim and his company, Unicover, developed the Cheyenne LEADS logo and brand image, as well as many of the printed materials used in the office. Jim and Unicover also helped develop a comprehensive recruitment packet with videotapes produced by a regional firm, a community booklet, and information brochures that were sent via specially designed FedEx packages to site selectors and prospective companies.

In 1988, Jim became the second Cheyenne LEADS Board Chairman and shortly thereafter served on the committee (with GeorgeAnn Harding and Phil Shaffer) that interviewed candidates and **recommended hiring Jack Crews as the LEADS President.** The LEADS organization continued to learn about economic development and how to market the community. As Chairman, Jim checked in with Jack on a weekly basis, learning more and more about economic development as they went. The board continued to work on increasing membership numbers, making it possible to keep LEADS viable into the future. Jim laughed when recalling those days, saying that his wife commented that she saw less of him in 1988 than any other year since they had been married.

Jim’s involvement with LEADS may have been inevitable. He was born and raised in Cheyenne and, after graduating from Yale University in 1968, returned to Cheyenne to start Unicover Corporation and become its president. Unicover was a manufacturer and marketer of collectibles and a provider of marketing, manufacturing, and distribution services to governments and private businesses worldwide. Jim and the employees of Unicover supported the Cheyenne community through their corporate presence and individual involvement in such community organizations as Rotary, the Chamber of Commerce, and LCCC advisory groups.

When looking back, Jim felt that “LEADS accomplishments speak for themselves.” He added that LEADS had done a lot for the community and that the real contribution was not just in attracting companies like Lowe’s and Wal-Mart to expand here, but in successfully creating a sustained effort that helped convince people that economic development was something to be done professionally and over the long term. Jim added, “LEADS has adapted, networked well with other agencies, and set a standard for economic development in the state.”

## 1989 - J. Michael "Mick" Powers - taken from the 20 year history book



J. Michael "Mick" Powers, of Powers Products Company, was one of the founding directors of LEADS and became Chairman in 1989.

Mick had always been passionate about economic development within Wyoming, his native state. He became involved in the organization of LEADS to provide Cheyenne with a vehicle to focus on these issues. During this period, Wyoming's economic outlook was grim, Colorado was booming, and it was critical for Cheyenne to be able to compete and bring new business and employment opportunities to the city and state. Mick had served on the IDAC Board of Directors at the time, along with many of the other LEADS founders, and they realized IDAC was not meeting this need.

Mick brought multiple strengths to the LEADS table; but during his Chairmanship, his focus was on land acquisition and development. Mick, other board members, and staff spent time in Pueblo, Colorado learning much from PEDCO's effective programs.

At the time, Pueblo was the hot spot for manufacturing and distribution expansions in Colorado. PEDCO had land and infrastructure in place to help attract future industry. They were targeting companies that LEADS felt could be good prospects for Cheyenne as well. The group realized LEADS would have to have similar infrastructure in place if it was going to be competitive.

Mick and Jack Crews, the President of LEADS, began identifying available sites in Cheyenne for a future business park. Rocky Mountain Industrial Park, which was in foreclosure by the Bank of Boston, seemed the right place for this purpose. After a conversation with a site selector from Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., in which they agreed the land was a "gold mine," Mick took the idea to the Board of Directors of LEADS, and they began searching for the necessary funding to purchase the park.

Public Service Company of Colorado was the parent company of Cheyenne Light, Fuel and Power at the time. Mick served on the Board of Directors of this company and worked closely with its Chief Executive Officer, Del Hock, and Phil Shaffer, the President of Cheyenne Light, Fuel and Power. Mick took his idea to them in hopes they would be able to purchase the property and hold it until LEADS could raise the funds to purchase it from them.

Phil became very involved with this project, and with his help, they convinced Del Hock that this was an important investment for the economic future of Cheyenne. They explained that this land would provide the necessary sites to attract the companies that would help Cheyenne grow, giving LEADS more members and the community a bright future. **Public Service Company of Colorado provided the one million dollars to purchase the 1,200-acre site, holding it for LEADS to purchase from them.** Now LEADS' work truly began!

### **The creation of the Cheyenne Business Parkway**

As soon as the land was acquired by Cheyenne Light, Fuel and Power, Jack Crews began raising funds and grants for LEADS to purchase the land and construct the infrastructure within it. After multiple calls and paperwork, Crews was able to raise enough money and obtain financing to purchase 914 acres of the 1,200. Cheyenne Light, Fuel and Power subsequently sold the remainder to private investors. This purchase by LEADS was possible through a down payment of \$63,000 that was donated by 25 local businesses and a HUD Loan. The land was annexed into the city so that Cheyenne Light, Fuel and Power would be the utility provider for this project and so city water

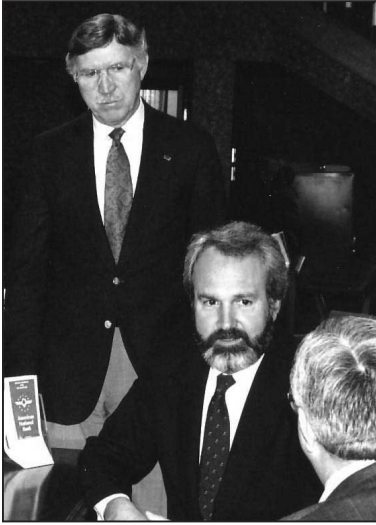
and sewer would be available to the companies locating there. Crews also was able to receive a \$663,000 federal grant and city “overage” funding for the first phase of infrastructure within the park.

**Sierra Trading Post** was the first business to locate in the new park, with EchoStar, Quark Distribution, and Rex Stores Distribution following. The park soon became the one known today as the Cheyenne Business Parkway, LEADS’ first business park and one of the key resources for the young economic development organization.

Mick was instrumental in shaping Cheyenne LEADS into what it became by identifying and facilitating the purchase of its first business park, but he also had multiple other endeavors outside of being LEADS Chairman of the Board of Directors. He was running the family business, Powers Products Company, and Powers Masonry Supply, which had been started in 1940. Powers Masonry Supply was sold in 2003, and Powers Products Company, which sold commercial building materials in both Wyoming and Colorado, was still owned and operated by members of the Powers family.

Mick was impressed with the many successes that Cheyenne LEADS achieved throughout its 20-year history. He was encouraged by the purchase of LEADS’ second business park, the North Range Business Park, and what it had already brought to the community. Powers Products Company and Mick remained proud members of Cheyenne LEADS and strong supporters of the Cheyenne community.

## 1990 & 1991- Phil Schaffer - taken from the 20 year history book



Continuing the celebration of 20 years of LEADS' history brought us to the early nineties when big hair and even bigger ideas were the standard in Cheyenne. The development of the Cheyenne Business Parkway was in the works, and LEADS needed someone as Chairman who would be able to assist in the final purchase, build infrastructure, and develop all the other aspects of a business park. That person was Phil Schaffer of Cheyenne Light, Fuel & Power.

Phil Schaffer laughed as he discussed how he became Chairman of the Board in 1990 and then again in 1991. "Chairmen were basically picked by whoever blinked first," joked Phil as he tried to remember how he came to be the fourth Chairman. Phil joined the LEADS board knowing that it was the best way to help the Cheyenne community. He had not expected to become Chairman, especially for two consecutive years, but he recognized how he and Cheyenne Light, Fuel & Power were key players in the largest LEADS project of the time, the Cheyenne Business Parkway.

"It was an exciting time," commented Phil about his time as LEADS' Chairman. In 1990, LEADS was just getting started on the first business park, and the excitement was non-stop. Phil was not only enthusiastic about the Business Park, but he also knew that Cheyenne and Laramie County had much to offer expanding and relocating businesses. He said that compared to the rest of the state, Cheyenne was "refreshing" because of Cheyenne LEADS and what they were doing for the future of the community.

One of the main roles that Phil's company, Cheyenne Light, Fuel & Power, played was in the purchase of the property that became the Cheyenne Business Parkway. At the time, LEADS had very little money and even fewer assets. Only with Cheyenne Light, Fuel & Power's assistance were they able to initially purchase the property. Phil did not want to take credit for the park, though. "Mick Powers was the visionary for the park and knew that Cheyenne needed it to attract companies," commented Phil. Phil and Mick had gone to Pueblo, Colorado, quite often before Phil's Chairmanship to discuss business parks and learn what it took to get a park up and running.

Phil and Mick worked with the full board to get the ball rolling on the park. With some innovative thinking and strategy, the board finally approved the purchase of the east property. This was only the beginning of the work on the Cheyenne Business Parkway. Grants and loan requests were submitted, construction was planned, and thousands of other details had to be handled. Looking back at his two years as Chairman, Phil mentioned that his two greatest accomplishments were getting the Business Park started and hiring Jack Crews who, in the end, handled all the paperwork. "Jack was a good choice for President. He did a lot for LEADS and was instrumental in getting the Cheyenne Business Parkway where it is today," commented Phil.

**While at LEADS, Phil had one goal: to get the organization to establish itself as an ongoing enterprise that would be able to sustain itself for multiple decades.** This was how Phil had helped run Cheyenne Light, Fuel & Power and every other business he was involved with. He saw LEADS as a company that could do great things for the community. He also wanted to see people and organizations within the community commit to the organization. Phil felt that all these things had been accomplished, and by the time of the 20-year celebration, LEADS was moving even further than he had imagined with the addition of its second business park, the North Range Business Park.

Toward the middle of the nineties, Phil left the LEADS board, confident from what he had seen and taken part in that it was in good hands. He knew that it had become the sustainable business he had wanted it to be. He recognized that the business park was well on its way to accommodating multiple companies that would improve the Cheyenne economy and knew that Jack Crews was the best president for the organization's future.

## 1992 - John Nigh - taken from the 20 year history book



Taken from the 1992 Annual Report, written by Jack Crews, CEO and John Nigh, Chairman.

Organizations and communities cannot totally measure success in economic development within specific time frames or by any particular event. Rather, success is identified through an evolution, years in the building ... building community support and positive attitudes ... building resources to support business creation and expansion ... building an effective organization to energize the entire process.

During the past twelve months, we have recognized that this process is coming to fruition. The indicators of progress are clearly identifiable. They represent "text book" examples of what success in economic development really looks and feels like.

The major league "home-run", of course, was the relocation of the national corporate headquarters of community. Additionally, LEADS staff and Board members personally made record numbers of direct sales calls on new business prospects in the United States and Canada.

Your organization now enters its sixth year, clearly, a point-in-time to assess the natural evolutionary process of the organization and of the community. The Executive Committee of your Board of Directors dedicated considerable time and effort to make that assessment. The result --an updated and expanded strategic action plan to lift LEADS to its next level of maturity and action. While not losing sight of LEADS' fundamental purpose, "to attract new businesses and employers, and to provide for the retention and expansion of existing businesses," the new strategic plan directs attention to the need to develop regional thinking in building networks and coalitions of communities, organizations and businesses.

We respectfully submit that your organization continues to be prudently managed in a sound, fiscal manner. We are creating broader participation in charting the course of your organization through the utilization of ad-hoc committees and direct solicitation of input from you, our "shareholders". We acknowledge, with deep appreciation, your constructive participation and your continuing, and growing, financial and moral support. A New York Stock Exchange company, SafeCard Service, Inc. In September, SafeCard successfully completed their move from Fort Lauderdale, Florida, to Cheyenne, Wyoming. In spite of the stress and disruptions associated with any relocation, the company announced record revenues and significant growth in business activities. Certainly good news for the company and equally important for the creation of 425 new jobs in our community. Even before the company completed its transition efforts, it began expanding its work force and continues to authorize new job positions to meet the growing demand for SafeCard' s services.

A second impressive "hit" occurred with the relocation of Sierra Trading Post from Reno, Nevada, to the Cheyenne Business Parkway. The construction of a 30,000 square foot building in LEADS' business/industrial park marked the accomplishment of a major organizational goal in 1992 for LEADS; i.e., "develop at least one new, "model" business in the Parkway." Like SafeCard, Sierra Trading Post experiences record revenues and sales growth well beyond expectations, thus increasing job growth to 80 employees.

Five other companies established their presence here during the year. Two located in Pine Bluffs, one in Cheyenne, and two found the advantages of the small business incubator in the Enterprise Center at LCCC.

The process continues as more companies than ever ask about our community's business environment and accept LEADS' invitations to visit the

## 1993 - Cindy Pomeroy - taken from the 20 year history book



Cindy Pomeroy became the first woman to chair the LEADS Board of Directors, assuming that position in 1993, a year focused on building and refining the organization.

At the time, Cindy was the President and General Manager of First American Title Insurance Agency of Laramie County. She had wanted to be part of the economic development effort in Cheyenne ever since moving from Kemmerer in 1984. To contribute to the development of Cheyenne. She viewed membership in LEADS as a great opportunity to network within the community and believed the potential for growth in Laramie County was significant.

Cindy had moved up the ranks on the LEADS Board, serving as Treasurer before becoming Chair in 1993. At that time, Jack Crews was the LEADS President, Gunder Haag was Vice President, and Jackie Martin was the Communication Director. Prior to that time, the Board had included two other women members.

Both the Board and staff were very busy, and it was an exciting period for the organization. Cindy recalled a great deal of communication within the community, particularly among various community organizations. This communication was essential for LEADS' growth and for ensuring that the community understood what LEADS could do to help drive economic development.

**“Increasing membership and public awareness were my main accomplishments while Chair,” Cindy recalled.** The public awareness campaign, which marked the first time LEADS used the media to advertise, helped increase membership and secured the grants needed for infrastructure development within the Cheyenne Business Parkway. “Jack worked really hard, along with the other board members, in getting the grants approved and the construction started,” Cindy commented.

Cindy and her husband were long-time supporters of Cheyenne LEADS and remained proud to be part of the organization. When Cindy joined LEADS, she saw it becoming a driving force in economic development and workforce recruitment in Laramie County. By the time of the 20-year celebration, she said the organization had more than met her expectations. The development of the North Range Business Park was, to her, another clear sign of LEADS' vitality. Looking ahead, she believed LEADS would continue to face new obstacles and challenges, particularly the need to diversify the economy with more high-tech and manufacturing positions. Cindy also believed that workforce development and growth were critical elements that needed to be addressed.

Workforce development was an area Cindy knew well. In 2003, Governor Freudenthal asked her to serve as the Director of the Department of Employment. Cindy remembered thinking it over carefully before deciding it would be a good next step in her life and career. In that role, she oversaw five divisions and 330 employees.

Cindy was happy with the choices she had made in her career and the opportunities she had been given. “Cheyenne has been very good to me, and I thought this was a chance to give back some of what has been given to me—both to the citizens of Cheyenne and to the state of Wyoming,” Cindy commented. She felt that serving as a director of a government agency provided her with a deeper understanding of governmental policies and procedures. “I think everyone should be involved in some way in government. It is both rewarding and challenging,” she added. Cindy felt that it had been a good time for her to get involved because her boss, Governor Freudenthal, was a great leader who gave his directors significant autonomy in running their agencies. Moreover, he supported Cheyenne LEADS and Wyoming's growth statewide—just as Cindy had always done.

## 1994 - Rick Kaysen - taken from the 20 year history book



Rick Kaysen of Cheyenne Light, Fuel & Power, was named chairman two years after he began serving on the Cheyenne LEADS Board. He became the longest-serving board member at that time, completing 14 consecutive years of service. For someone who had been on the LEADS Board as long as Rick had, the years could have started to blend together, but not for Rick as he recalled his role with LEADS.

Cheyenne Light, Fuel & Power had been a member and partner in LEADS since its inception in 1986. Cheyenne Light, Fuel & Power had served the electrical and gas needs of Cheyenne and Laramie County since 1882, becoming an integral part of the community. When LEADS began to take shape as an organization, Cheyenne Light recognized that LEADS would become an important force for the future of the community and understood the importance of the two organizations working together.

As soon as Rick became the Vice President and General Manager in 1992, he began attending the LEADS Board meetings as the company's representative. He felt it was important to fill the seat because, then as now, he saw the LEADS Board as an opportunity to stay informed about what was happening both at LEADS and within the community. Rick added that, on a personal level, he enjoyed being on the LEADS Board because "if I could help with the prospect selecting Cheyenne in any way, that was important. I felt I was able to play a part in assisting the businesses that looked at Cheyenne while learning more about the Cheyenne community."

After serving as Vice Chair in 1993, Rick became Chair of the LEADS Board in 1994. At that time, LEADS was still in its developmental stage; it had realized a success or two but was still exploring strategies and methods. LEADS had begun targeting specific types of businesses and industries. The Board and staff took multiple trips to Southern California and Canada to recruit new businesses through trade shows and personal meetings. "The recruiting trips were mainly tests to decide if it was better to go seek out the companies at their current locations or to invite them to visit Cheyenne," commented Rick. These trips were very limited, like many of LEADS' early projects, due to its small budget.

In 1994, Rick worked through the LEADS budget and focused on recruiting while also maintaining relationships with businesses that had already relocated. "At the time, LEADS was still working closely with Sierra Trading Post, which had come two years earlier. This was one thing LEADS was really good at, even then, and still is today, continuing to build relationships with the businesses that relocate or expand here," Rick stated. Not only were they building relationships, but they were also working to gain new ones. **Throughout 1993 and 1994, the LEADS Board worked with EchoStar Communications to get them to expand into the Cheyenne Business Parkway.** "EchoStar was a great project for me to be part of, both as LEADS Chairman and as Cheyenne Light, Fuel & Power's Vice President. I was able to build the relationship with the prospect for both entities, bringing continuity to the whole process," Rick commented.

**"All of the recruiting efforts of LEADS showed the importance of the partnership between the City, County, LEADS, and its members to economic development," stated Rick. Those partnerships were also important in convincing companies to expand here. "Strengthening those relationships was key in economic development then and remains key today.** I was proud to have been one of the individuals on the LEADS Board and one of the community members who helped fortify that bond throughout the years," remarked Rick.

When Rick joined the LEADS Board, LEADS' goal was to be at the forefront of economic development. It was not easy, particularly in those early years, but thanks to the diligent work of the people dedicated to LEADS' success, including Rick, LEADS earned acceptance within the community it served.

The community came to understand that LEADS helped bring in good quality jobs by recruiting companies that would be good corporate citizens and valuable parts of the community. These companies invested in the community as well as their own businesses. This change in perception was also evident through the Progress & Prosperity I and II campaigns, which Rick became involved with after his Chairmanship at LEADS. "It was important to be Co-Chairman of the Progress & Prosperity I campaign, not only for the community and LEADS but also for me personally," commented Rick.

Rick continued to serve on the LEADS Board and on various board committees. He felt it was important that he, as Vice President of Cheyenne Light, Fuel & Power, personally fill the company's seat on the LEADS Board. "I stayed on the LEADS Board throughout the years and intended to continue to do so in order to ensure that the partnership between LEADS and Cheyenne Light, Fuel & Power remained strong. I felt this was very important to the community and to both organizations," Rick said.

The future of LEADS and Cheyenne Light, Fuel & Power looked bright, thanks in large part to Rick Kaysen and his commitment to both organizations. Even though Cheyenne Light, Fuel & Power underwent many changes in ownership, its foundation remained strong. At the time, Cheyenne Light was owned by Black Hills Corporation, which was committed to the communities it served and their economic development growth. Rick concluded by saying, "Cheyenne Light had been with LEADS since day one, and I saw no reason why the partnership would not continue with positive progress into the future."



## 1995 - Dr. Charles "Chuck" Bohlen - taken from the 20 year history book



Dr. Charles "Chuck" Bohlen, President of Laramie County Community College (LCCC), served as Chairman of the LEADS Board. The year 1995 was marked by membership retention and business recruitment.

Chuck was no stranger to community colleges. In 1979, he worked at a community college in Jamestown, New York, where he first learned about economic development and its role within a community. He then moved to Toledo Technical Community College, where he realized that community colleges needed to be involved in economic development to help bring good jobs to their graduating students. In 1992, Chuck was hired by LCCC as its president. At the time, as it did later, LCCC held an automatic seat on the LEADS Board by virtue of the level of dues the college paid.

Chuck recalled, "In July of 1992 I jumped into the LEADS Board and rolled up my sleeves." He became Vice Chairman of the LEADS Board in 1994 and then moved up to Chairman the following year. "I was a firm believer in the LEADS organization and agreed with its mission of providing economic worth for the citizens within the community. **LEADS and LCCC worked together throughout the years to help many in the community achieve a slice of the American Dream. That was what it was all about," Chuck stated.**

He remembered 1995 as a busy year for LEADS' staff and board. "It had been a long time since we had an announcement on a new company coming in, so we were worried about losing members and not being able to proceed," Chuck recalled. At the time, Cheyenne was not on the "site selection map." It had not been ranked in any national publications, there was no workforce data available, and the board was becoming frustrated.

Even with the frustration of not attracting companies to expand or relocate to Cheyenne, the LEADS Board continued progressing. They worked on securing the HUD loan for the Cheyenne Business Parkway land and tackled other state-level issues. Phase I infrastructure was completed on the park, and Phases II and III were underway. Statewide issues also posed challenges, such as Amendment 4, which left a bad taste in people's mouths by virtually eliminating state support for economic development.

**Much of the doubt about LEADS' ability to recruit businesses was dispelled when EchoStar Communications moved its uplink center to the Cheyenne Business Parkway in 1995.** This, like Sierra Trading Post in 1992, marked the beginning of a new era of economic development in the area. EchoStar's success resulted from the 1995 board's ability to assist the company in its expansion and from the groundwork laid by previous boards in attracting them to consider Cheyenne.

Chuck remembered, "We were on our own. There was no true state assistance for economic development. State support could be important, but LEADS realized then why it needed to stand alone, the Cheyenne community had to be able to do economic development independently."

This was also when Chuck realized how critical the business parks were to LEADS and to the community's economic

development efforts. After his term as Chairman, he became Chairman of the LEADS Land Committee and felt he accomplished even more in that role than during his chairmanship. The work done by the Land Committee, with the support of LEADS staff, helped drive Cheyenne's growth to the booming levels it reached in later years.

Chuck was proud to have been part of LEADS throughout its ups and downs. LEADS was not always as prosperous, but by the time of his retirement, Chuck viewed it as a major player in economic development and one of the best organizations of its kind in the region. He was excited to see the city and county become significant partners in economic development. "Even though there were rough times throughout the 14 years I served on the board, I never saw a lag in vitality," he commented. Still, Chuck acknowledged there was more work ahead: "We need one more park with heavy industrial and rail access," he said, "to make it possible for LEADS to offer properties to expanding businesses already here and to those relocating."

Chuck retired from LCCC and from his other community roles at the end of June 2006. He hoped his successor would find as much excitement and value in serving on the LEADS Board as he had. When he first arrived at LCCC, he felt it was vital to integrate the college into the community. He did not want there to be a divide between "town and gown." To change that, Chuck encouraged his employees to volunteer and sponsor community activities, offered free courses to the public, and fostered community involvement, including LCCC's significant role in LEADS.

One of LCCC's newer divisions, the Rocky Mountain Industrial Training Center, was designed to assist economic development by serving existing companies and attracting new ones to the region. Chuck felt that LCCC had successfully woven itself into the community but recognized there was still work to be done. He concluded, "I believed that economic and family successes came through education, and I was very proud of what LCCC accomplished during the 14 years I was here."

## 1996 - Keith Richardson - taken from the 20 year history book



The history of Cheyenne LEADS continues into 1996 with Keith Richardson, Owner and CEO of Sierra Trading Post, serving as Board Chairman. Keith becomes Chairman four years after Sierra Trading Post moves its operations to Cheyenne, becoming the first occupant in Cheyenne LEADS' Cheyenne Business Parkway.

Because of LEADS' assistance and support during Sierra Trading Post's move to Cheyenne, Keith believes it is his and his company's responsibility to join LEADS as a Business Member. He feels they owe it to the community to be an active part of Cheyenne's growth plan for the future. Keith remembers Jack Crews, LEADS President at the time, being a key part of both Sierra Trading Post's decision to move to Cheyenne and his own decision to become Chair of the 1996 LEADS Board.

"Jack saw potential in Sierra Trading Post," Keith recalls. Sierra Trading Post has been in business for six years before moving its headquarters from Reno, Nevada, to Cheyenne. **At the time, cash is short, but along with Jack, Cheyenne LEADS, and Amendment 4, the**

**financing comes together, making it possible for Sierra Trading Post to expand to Wyoming.** "Amendment 4 is criticized, but it is instrumental in getting us where we are today," Keith states. "We are the last company to receive an Amendment 4 loan from the State of Wyoming."

One key reason Keith remembers Sierra Trading Post wanting to move its headquarters to Cheyenne "is the spirit of the community and state. **On our first visit to Cheyenne, Jack takes us to the Capitol, and we meet with Governor Sullivan and Secretary of State Kathy Karpan.** In contrast, the Governor in Nevada could not have cared less if Sierra Trading Post succeeded or failed. We knew this was a community we wanted to be part of."

As soon as Sierra Trading Post moves to Cheyenne in 1992, it becomes a major contributor to Cheyenne LEADS and automatically gains a seat on the Board. In 1996, Jack asks Keith to serve as Chairman of the Board, and Keith accepts. Sierra Trading Post is the first and only occupant in the park until 1995, when EchoStar Communications brings its uplink center to Cheyenne. "That is when the Cheyenne Business Parkway really takes off," Keith comments.

During his term as Chairman, Keith works with multiple companies looking to expand or relocate to Cheyenne, even though none officially move in 1996. Lubrizol, Quark Distribution, and Rex Stores Distribution all move into the Cheyenne Business Parkway in 1997, and VAE Nortrak establishes itself on Pacific Avenue that same year. These four major companies relocating in 1997 demonstrate how busy Keith and his 1996 Board are during that time.

Keith remembers that Cheyenne LEADS has strong community involvement and support while he is Chairman of the Board, as it continues to today. He comments that LEADS is built on a solid base by its founders in 1986. He is impressed that, because of that foundation, Cheyenne LEADS continues to speak for the community and its vision of future growth, helping Cheyenne and Laramie County expand even further.

Keith and his wife, Bobbi, both remain actively involved in Sierra Trading Post and are committed to keeping it a

family-owned business. They continue to support Cheyenne LEADS and appoint their Chief Financial Officer and Executive Vice President, Gary Imig, to represent Sierra Trading Post on the Board. Keith also breeds German Shorthair Pointers and runs them in field trials. One of his favorite pastimes, when he finds the time, is fly fishing in Cody, where Sierra Trading Post operates a retail store and call center.

This year (2005) is monumental for both organizations, as Sierra Trading Post also celebrates its 20th anniversary. Having started in Reno, Nevada, with only one employee—Keith Richardson—Sierra Trading Post has grown from a 30,000-square-foot headquarters in Cheyenne employing 60 people to several buildings totaling 500,000 square feet, including a state-of-the-art distribution center. They employ over 800 people and have plans to expand their Cheyenne retail store to 30,000 square feet, far larger than the original 5,000 square feet in 1992.

## 1997 - Jim Hearne - taken from the 20 year history book



In 1997, LEADS continued to bring in new companies and helped drive Laramie County's growth. As LEADS reflected on its 20 years of history, the narrative highlighted a prosperous year of growth led in part by the Chairman of the LEADS Board at the time, Jim Hearne.

Jim Hearne served on the LEADS Board as the representative for McGladrey & Pullen, the accounting firm he worked for at the time. He had served on the LEADS Board since 1995 and held the Vice Chair position in 1996. McGladrey & Pullen had been members of LEADS since its inception, when Michl McGee represented the company. Jim understood the importance of economic development in Laramie County. **Born and raised in Wyoming, he knew that growth kept the community vibrant and provided opportunities for the future and for its children.** "Cheyenne wouldn't go far without it," Jim commented. Given his views on economic development and the direction LEADS was heading, he accepted a position on the LEADS Board as his company's representative.

Looking back at his time as Chair, Jim recalled, "Things in Cheyenne changed quite a bit between the start of LEADS and 1997. At first, it was a struggle. Bringing people together for growth took a lot of time and energy. Around 1997, the consensus for growth started to improve. As LEADS began to show results with a proactive approach, the community became more interested in further development." As time progressed, so did the community. Individuals and businesses alike became more committed to growth and economic development in Laramie County.

He provided leadership as many significant accomplishments unfolded. **VAE Nortrak held its grand opening in 1997** after years of work by LEADS staff and the board. In the same year, **Quark Distribution, Rex Distribution, and KABO (now Emerald Foam Control) expanded to the Cheyenne Business Parkway. Additionally, EchoStar doubled the size of its building and launched a third satellite.** The Cheyenne Business Parkway was rapidly developing. LEADS had just completed paving Progress Circle and was working on a drainage study for the park.

"The companies coming in were due in large part to the work of the staff during 1997 and prior years. I don't like to take credit for those accomplishments," stated Jim. "As Chairman, I was more involved with organizing LEADS to ensure that the staff remained productive and committed." Jim and his 1997 Board developed a Uniform Staff Performance Appraisal to establish clear objectives for evaluating staff performance. They also designed a comprehensive compensation plan that included base salaries for each position and incentives for staff. "Staff retention was important to me. We looked at retirement plans and implemented a Simple IRA plan to provide incentives and retention for the staff and organization," Jim commented. The 1997 staff included Jack Crews, Diane Kaysen, and Greg Palmquist.

**During 1997, Cheyenne LEADS also organized the first Progress & Prosperity Campaign, The Next Dimension.** Jack Crews, then President of LEADS, engaged NCDS, a company that first assessed the community to determine the campaign's viability and was later contracted to execute it. NCDS conducted roughly 80 interviews with local businesses and ultimately helped **raise \$1.7 million**, surpassing the \$1.3 million goal. This funding supported the Cheyenne Business Parkway, workforce development in Laramie County, and community visioning initiatives.

"In 1997, we also visited and worked with many companies, including one that didn't come to Cheyenne for

another eight years—Wal-Mart,” Jim mentioned. He emphasized that economic development was not an overnight process. **“Companies often approach local economic development groups, work with them, leave for a while, and then resurface years later. Sometimes bringing over 500 jobs to a community. This is how economic development works. Building those relationships with a company can pay off years later, but those results would never happen without the groundwork laid earlier.”**

When Jim became a member and later Board Chairman, he knew that LEADS had a good start and would continue its success. He later affirmed that LEADS had established itself as a premier economic development group and said he was proud to have been part of that. “Other organizations are looking at LEADS for ways to improve their communities and economic development groups. That is an impressive feat; it has helped put Cheyenne on the map and brought great successes throughout its 20-year history,” stated Jim.

Jim was born and raised in Wyoming, attended the University of Wyoming, and began working for a national CPA firm in Cheyenne in 1972. During his time as LEADS Board Chairman, Jim worked for McGladrey & Pullen, a regional firm at the time. In 2000, Jim and his partners spun off as McGee, Hearne & Paiz, which soon became the premier CPA and consulting firm in southeast Wyoming.

McGee, Hearne & Paiz remained strong supporters of LEADS and other community organizations. “We feel the community has given MHP a lot, so we try to return the favor by donating both time and money to community organizations,” Jim stated. He believed LEADS was one of the most important entities in Cheyenne but also contributed to other major organizations. Jim served as a Cheyenne Frontier Days Past Contestants and General Chairman, Cheyenne Area Convention & Visitors Bureau Past-Chairman, Wyoming Travel Commission Past-Chairman, Cheyenne Frontier Days Art Show Committee Chairman, and Chairman of the Wyoming Board of CPA’s. To close, Jim said, “LEADS is a great organization and continues to do a great job creating jobs and attracting businesses—doing exactly what it was designed to do.”

## 1998 - Bob Peck - taken from the 20 year history book



People likely did not consider Florida to be a hot market for companies wanting to relocate or expand to Wyoming, but in 1992 that perception changed. That was the year **SafeCard expanded to Cheyenne, bringing 375 positions and relocating 55 families from Florida**, including Bob Peck and his family. Cheyenne LEADS and its president, Jack Crews, worked tirelessly with SafeCard to bring the company to the area, helping them remodel an old K-Mart building into a call center, relocate families, and complete what was then the largest economic development project ever seen in Cheyenne. The history of LEADS continued with Bob Peck, SafeCard's Vice President of Operations at the time, who became LEADS Board Chairman in 1998.

In 1992, once SafeCard had opened its Cheyenne location, the company joined LEADS as a \$10,000 member, which gave them a seat on the LEADS Board of Directors. The company felt it was important to contribute significantly to LEADS because of the organization's assistance during its expansion. The first representative on the LEADS Board was W.M. Stalcup, followed by Rich Interdonato, and then Bob Peck as the third representative. Bob served as Vice Chair in 1997 and was then asked to serve as Chair in 1998, which he accepted.

Bob stated, "If I can't be an active part of a board, I don't want to be there." This was how Bob felt about Cheyenne as well. The city provided multiple opportunities to get involved, and LEADS was one of the best. SafeCard also encouraged its employees to participate in the community. Bob enjoyed serving on the LEADS Board and was impressed with both the organization and the strong foundation on which it was built.

By 1998, LEADS had established relationships with state, county, and city governments, which proved vital to the organization. These relationships helped shorten permitting times for expanding or relocating businesses by ensuring all decision-makers were involved early in the process. **"LEADS was finally starting to reap the benefits of its first 12 years of work,"** Bob commented. Economic development in Cheyenne was truly taking off.

The 1998 Board worked on several projects, including filling the Cheyenne Business Parkway by subdividing parcels for smaller companies. They recognized that multiple smaller companies could benefit Cheyenne just as much as one large company. The board had learned over the years that smaller companies were often more likely to expand or relocate than larger ones. **VAE Nortrak had expanded to Cheyenne the previous year, which helped attract Truss Craft in 1998 and several more companies in 1999.** "This is how it works," Bob explained. "Large companies like SafeCard and VAE Nortrak come in, hire people, and then smaller companies follow, expanding in Cheyenne, companies like Sierra Trading Post, Truss Craft, and many others."

While serving as Chairman of the LEADS Board, Bob continued in his role as Vice President of Operations at SafeCard of Cheyenne. He remained in that position throughout his career and later oversaw several other call centers across the country. As Chairman of the 1998 LEADS Board, Bob identified three major accomplishments: implementing a compensation plan to help retain LEADS' employees, initiating the vision for a second business park, and recognizing the importance of focusing on smaller, expanding companies that placed less strain on local resources but provided long-term benefits to the community.

"When I first started as a LEADS Board member, I expected LEADS to be more successful each year, but quickly realized that isn't how economic development works—each year is different," Bob remarked. He added that he came to understand, after years of board service, that economic development success should be measured in

five-year increments. He emphasized that assessing job numbers and wages over such periods was the best way to evaluate success. “Looking at the Cheyenne community’s trend line, we can see LEADS is a success. But we all need to remember that it didn’t come easy—a number of people worked hard for this success,” Bob stated.

In 2004, SafeCard (by then known as Trilegiant) closed its Cheyenne location, which resulted in significant job losses, including Bob’s. “I could have moved to another location, but my family and I liked living in Cheyenne and didn’t want to move again. We had grown to love the community and its people,” Bob recalled. Shortly after Trilegiant’s closure, Bob began working for the State of Wyoming as the Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Health. Even though he was no longer in a position to represent a \$10,000 LEADS member company, he and his wife remained individual members.

One of its primary responsibilities was administering state Medicaid payments, which nearly doubled in the six years prior. The department worked on reducing this burden on the state, supported in part by LEADS, the Wyoming Business Council, and other economic development groups statewide. When companies moved into the state with above-poverty-level wages and benefit packages, more people left Medicaid, easing the state’s healthcare burden. Most of those served by the Department of Health were children whose parents could not afford healthcare. Bob stated, **“The state benefits greatly from economic development. The duties of economic development groups are partly public service, but it is ultimately more beneficial to have them in the private sector.”**



*"I came to realize that economic development success should be measured in five-year increments. The trend line—tracking both the number of jobs and the wages of those jobs—shows whether the program is truly succeeding. Looking at Cheyenne’s trend line, we can see LEADS is a success. But we must remember, it didn’t come easy; many people worked hard to achieve it."*

– Bob Peck, 1998 LEADS Board Chairman

## 1999 - Tom Stuckey - taken from the 20 year history book



As people began worrying about Y2K and other problems associated with the new millennium, LEADS kept driving economic development in Laramie County. Not only did economic development in the community continue, but it was in full force, bringing in five new companies that year. The best way to see what was happening then was to hear it from someone who was involved at the time and who remained involved afterward: the 1999 Board Chairman, Tom Stuckey of Wells Fargo Bank.

Tom had not been in Cheyenne as long as many of the other LEADS Chairmen, but he had been engaged in his new community since the day he arrived in 1992. When Tom came to Cheyenne as the new Wells Fargo Bank Community Bank President, he sought out community organizations he could join. At the time, Wells Fargo was a member of LEADS but did not have an automatic seat on the Board. That didn't stop Tom from getting involved; in 1995, he was elected to a three-year term. After two years of serving on the LEADS Board, Tom realized how important the organization was to the community. In 1997, he signed Wells Fargo up as a \$10,000 member and had represented the company on the Board ever since. "I felt LEADS had a great mission and was a great organization. I wanted to be involved with the leadership of the organization because I found I had a real passion for it," commented Tom.

After becoming a large contributing member in 1997 and working on the formulation of the Progress & Prosperity I Campaign, Tom became Co-Chair of the campaign alongside Rick Kaysen. After the P&P campaign wrapped up in 1998, Jack Crews, the Cheyenne LEADS President, asked Tom to serve as the Board Chairman for 1999. Tom accepted.

With the completion of the P&P campaign, LEADS had more resources to work with, and they put them to good use. **"Our main focus was on building our spec building and completing the infrastructure in the Cheyenne Business Parkway,"** recalled Tom. LEADS' emphasis on building in 1999 also helped attract the companies it brought in that year. **With the completion of the spec building, named the Cheyenne Technical Center, Cheyenne welcomed Frito Lay, Motion Industries, The Denver Post, Yellow Freight, and Showtime.**

LEADS continued working with numerous prospect companies and announced that **Great Lakes Airlines, Collins Products, and Heli-Support were expanding or relocating to Cheyenne. VAE Nortrak announced expansion plans at its Cheyenne plant, while Lowe's and Grobet USA appeared on the prospect report, though the board didn't know their names at the time.** Alongside the continued growth of the Cheyenne Business Parkway and businesses around Cheyenne, the Board and staff began exploring additional land for a second business park. "Jack Crews put together a very detailed report of land that was available for business park development for the Board to review," Tom said. "At the time, the current North Range Business Park land wasn't available and was not included in that 1999 report."

1999 was a busy year for LEADS and its Chairman. "LEADS was fairly successful but had not yet risen to preeminence," stated Tom. He credited much of what LEADS accomplished in 1999 to the P&P contributors. Within four years, the first campaign helped create 1,138 positions and added around \$27.6 million in annual payroll, more than double its goals. With those resources, LEADS was able to complete all the necessary infrastructure in the Cheyenne Business Parkway. **With help from its Front Range partners, the spec building was 80% leased within the first few months of completion, and multiple companies relocated or expanded to the area.**

"LEADS exceeded all rational expectations in a short amount of time," Tom commented. This became apparent

in 1999 when delegations from Boise, Idaho, and Casper, Wyoming, visited to study LEADS' organization and the Cheyenne Business Parkway. This marked the beginning of other communities and economic development organizations looking to LEADS as a leading example in the region.

Tom had come to Cheyenne from Montana, where he served as Senior Regional Credit Officer. He had been in banking for 39 years and continued to enjoy his work. Wells Fargo was the fourth largest bank in the country, and Tom was the "go-to guy" for Cheyenne. He maintained his title and continued representing Wells Fargo in numerous community organizations. Tom wanted Cheyenne to be successful, just as he did Wells Fargo and its customers. To help ensure that success, he served on the UMC Foundation Board, the Cheyenne Symphony Board, and as Board Treasurer of the Cheyenne Frontier Days Old West Museum. Tom was also a member of Rotary, where he read to a kindergarten class during the school year, and he served on the Board of the Wyoming Taxpayers Association.

Tom remained an important part of the LEADS Board. He chaired the LEADS By-Laws Committee and, two years prior, had spent considerable time reviewing and recommending revisions to the 20-year-old by-laws. The committee reconvened as needed, and Tom was always ready to take on that role again. He also served on the LEADS Land Committee and enjoyed the role because it focused on Cheyenne's future. **"I like to say, 'A rising tide lifts all boats.' This is what I feel LEADS does for Cheyenne. If we improve the economy, everyone benefits. This is the main reason I stayed passionately involved in LEADS," Tom concluded.**



Stan Foss, President of Community First National Bank (later Bank of the West), joined the LEADS Board in 1997 as the bank's representative. He had always been enthusiastic about economic development and was ready to actively participate on the Board. Stan stated, "I have always said, if you are standing still, you will go backwards." This mindset embodied what LEADS was, and continued to be, about. Stan believed that he and his organization needed to continue providing economic wealth to the community they served. He enjoyed his involvement in the Leadership Committee, so when it was his turn to assume the role of Board Chairman, he accepted without hesitation.

During Stan's chairmanship, one company was announced as relocating to Cheyenne: Grobet USA. **Grobet USA arrived in Cheyenne in 2000 and later expanded their facility in the Cheyenne Business Parkway in 2002.** Like all economic development work, however, the LEADS Board was involved in several other ongoing projects. The

following year, five new companies made announcements, reflecting the hard work Stan and his Board had done to ensure those companies brought their jobs to Cheyenne.

In 2000, **LEADS was working closely with Lowe's Companies, which ultimately announced the construction of a \$60 million regional distribution center** in the Cheyenne Business Parkway, expected to initially hire 425 employees. This became one of the largest economic development projects in the history of Cheyenne LEADS. "It was great to see such a large economic development project come to be and to know that I had some small part of that," commented Stan.

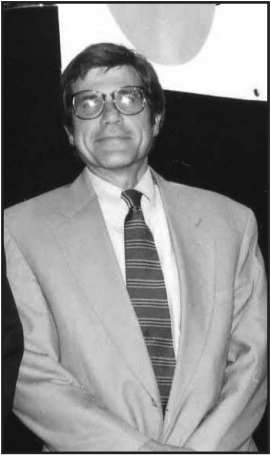
During his year as Chairman, Stan and his Board also investigated potential locations for a second business park. With the possibility of Lowe's building a distribution center with the largest footprint of any building in Wyoming, they knew additional land would soon be needed. As it turned out, this investigation continued over several years until LEADS purchased the land that later became the North Range Business Park west of Cheyenne.

Stan remarked, "This is economic development—an ongoing process. A project that the Board and staff started working on two years ago could go on for three more years or come together all at once." Stan understood the nature of economic development and strongly believed in LEADS' mission. "The Board was there to support the professional staff and keep the community informed," he said. "This helped keep the community positive about economic development and growth while also helping to keep the ball rolling."

Looking ahead from his perspective five years after his chairmanship ended, Stan said that LEADS had definitely met his expectations. When LEADS began, it was designed to create additional jobs for both the City of Cheyenne and Laramie County. Stan believed this goal had been accomplished and would continue to be achieved well into the future. "**Cheyenne and Laramie County will continue to grow due to the accomplishments of LEADS,**" commented Stan. He added that when a community attracts a national company like Lowe's, it encourages additional investment: "Other companies look at that expansion and think to themselves, 'If Cheyenne is good enough for Lowe's, then it will be great for us.' This is how community growth works."

In retirement, Stan split his time between Watertown, South Dakota in the summer and Mesa, Arizona in the winter. Though he was no longer directly involved with Cheyenne LEADS, he remained excited to hear about the continued success of both LEADS and the community's economic development efforts.

## 2001 - Paul Howard - taken from the 20 year history book



Paul Howard of RBC Dain Rauscher and his company had been proud supporters of LEADS since its inception, but he finally assumed the role of Chairman 15 years later.

Paul was elected to the LEADS Board of Directors in 1997 and, after a by-law change in 2000, advanced from Vice Chair to Chairman in 2001. Paul commented that he felt being part of the LEADS Board was very worthwhile and exciting, especially in the early 2000s when things were really beginning to gain momentum.

There was no denying that 2001 marked a period of major progress. The Progress & Prosperity I Campaign was nearing completion, and five companies announced expansions or relocations to Cheyenne. Change was in the air as well, with Jack Crews announcing his retirement. The first five-year Progress & Prosperity Campaign concluded in 2001, raising over \$1.7 million for economic development infrastructure, workforce training, and quality of life projects in Laramie County. **That same year, Aspen Media, Heli-Support, Lowe's Distribution, Mountain Regional Services Inc., and Van Diest all announced plans to either expand or relocate to Cheyenne.** "These expansions were huge—things we never thought would happen were starting to," Paul remarked.

Alongside these successes, the 2001 Board was faced with a challenge unlike any it had encountered before: Jack Crews, who had served as LEADS President since its inception, announced his retirement. The Board put in countless hours making tough decisions as they launched a three-month search for a new President. They seriously considered four candidates, but ultimately chose someone already within the organization: Randy Bruns, LEADS' Vice President at the time.

**"This was one of our biggest accomplishments in 2001—promoting Randy to President,"** Paul said. "Many would think it was the Lowe's announcement, but we worked extremely hard to find the best candidate to carry on the mission and goals of the organization. We found that in Randy, and he has proven throughout the years that we made the right decision."

Paul reflected on the companies that were announced during his chairmanship and the lasting impact they had on the local economy. He did not take credit for their success, however, noting, "I was fortunate to be Chairman when Lowe's came to fruition, but there were years of work put into that project before the announcement." He added that these expansions brought numerous new jobs to the area and drove up wages in Laramie County, proving that LEADS was delivering effective economic development for the community.

If those accomplishments were not enough to keep the 2001 Board busy, they also continued the search for a second business park. The Board debated whether a second park should be purchased, where it should be located, and which land would be suitable. Their efforts throughout 2001 ultimately laid the groundwork for the acquisition and development of the North Range Business Park.

Paul continued as the Branch Director of RBC Dain Rauscher in Cheyenne, the oldest and largest full-service securities firm in Wyoming, which had been in Cheyenne since 1962. The firm grew to employ 11 financial consultants and evolved from a stock brokerage to a full-scale wealth management company. Paul and RBC Dain Rauscher remained proud members of LEADS. Paul remarked, **"I don't understand why every business in the area is not a member of LEADS. If companies are looking for customers, they need to be LEADS members."**



The year 2002 brought significant change for the LEADS organization, overseen by Board Chairman Mike Ceballos of Qwest Corporation.

Qwest Corporation and Mike had been strong supporters of LEADS since its inception. They believed that economic development was vital for the state. Mike personally became involved with the LEADS Board because he wanted to gain a deeper understanding of economic development within Laramie County. When he joined the Board, and throughout his service, Mike recognized that economic development was controversial and that some people and organizations preferred minimal growth. "I was impressed with how LEADS learned to balance that controversy," commented Mike.

When Qwest joined LEADS, it did so at the \$10,000 member level, which provided a seat on the Board. At that time, it was expected that every \$10,000 member representative would eventually serve a term as Chairman. By 2002, it was Mike's turn.

2002 was a transition year for LEADS. While the 2001 Board had made the difficult decision of selecting a new President, the 2002 Board was responsible for guiding the organization through the transition from Jack Crews to Randy Bruns. "The decision in late 2001 was very difficult," stated Mike. "There were many questions that had to be answered because in a small organization like LEADS, the President has a huge impact on everything." Fortunately, the transition from Jack's retirement to Randy taking the President's position went smoothly. Alongside this leadership change, the Board decided to adjust its structure.

Some members of the community and other LEADS members felt that the large contributors held too much control of the organization, so Mike and his Board implemented a by-law change. **This adjustment allowed elected board members to remain on the board beyond the three-year term limit if they were in the leadership cycle. This helped rotate the Chairmanship between \$10,000 members and elected board members.** "This really helped the organization become more diverse and brought in new ideas and new ways of doing things," said Mike.

Structural changes continued throughout the year. LEADS revamped its communication approach with supporters, the city, county, members, and the broader community. **The goal was to be more transparent about LEADS' daily activities while protecting the confidentiality of its business prospects.** Mike noted that this balance had been achieved over the past several years without jeopardizing any projects. Additionally, the Board introduced a committee structure that created more specialized committees to support the full Board. "This was a touchy subject," Mike admitted. "LEADS is designed to have a Board that supports the work of a professional staff. We worried about becoming too involved and starting to micro-manage the staff. I feel we succeeded in avoiding that line, and we still do today."

Mike, who had served on the Board as long as he had been with Qwest, wanted to help reshape the structure of LEADS to sustain its growth. He emphasized the importance of ensuring that the community continued to support LEADS and economic development, largely through improved communication. "LEADS kept becoming more open with everyone, and this was critical to its success," Mike stated. He noted that LEADS was increasingly flexible and capable, in part because of a stronger community that supported innovative approaches to economic development. One of the greatest strengths Mike saw in Cheyenne LEADS was its focus on job creation within the state and its efforts to help other communities benefit from economic development as well.

Mike concluded by saying, **"One of the largest problems in Wyoming, both past and present, is diversification. Organizations like LEADS are helping solve that problem and continue to grow the state."**

Rex Lewis came to Cheyenne in 1989 when his company, Puma Steel, decided to relocate here. The decision was assisted by Cheyenne LEADS but ultimately made by Rex and Vickie, Rex's wife and business partner. After setting up their business here, Puma Steel became business members of Cheyenne LEADS. "We believed in Cheyenne, its business atmosphere and supportive community and we wanted to be able to share our success story of moving our business here," Rex commented. After eight years of being a LEADS member, Rex was elected onto the Board of Directors. Rex enjoyed being part of the LEADS Board and within a year he started the leadership progression as Secretary, becoming Chairman in 2003.

In 2003, Rex and the LEADS Board were concentrating on getting a second business park in place. "This is how economic development works," says Rex, "things like the second business park or an 850,000 square foot Wal-Mart food distribution center do not work themselves out overnight." Once Lowe's expanded into the first business park (the Cheyenne Business Parkway) the LEADS Board and Staff knew that there would not be room for another similar sized operation in the space remaining. When a large food distributor (Wal-Mart) appeared on the scene, it became apparent that the second park would be needed sooner rather than later.



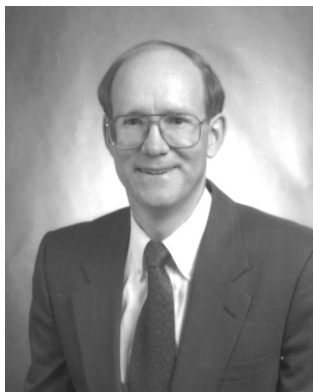
The work on the second business park continued throughout 2003, but that wasn't all that Rex and his Board helped accomplish. That same year, five companies were recruited to the area with some involvement from LEADS: **Airlite Bedding, Crete Carrier Corporation, Data Corp, Limelight Technologies and MHC Kenworth.** "The business recruiting accomplishments of that year were thanks in large part to the continuity of LEADS and its Board," stated Rex.

The continuity that evolved from the preceding chairmen to Rex made it possible for him to accomplish a lot more during his chairmanship. **"All of the successes in economic development must come from years of work that not just one person does, but the work that a group of people are able to do over multiple chairmanships,"** commented Rex. **"That was my accomplishment, being part of that continuity and being able to assist in the Long Range Planning to help maintain that LEADS continuity."**

As for LEADS future and the future of economic development in Cheyenne and Laramie County, Rex commented that, "great successes are on the horizon." He feels that the future is bright because, just like the past 20 years, Cheyenne LEADS has a great product, the Cheyenne and Laramie County community. "The business environment here is exceptional. But also LEADS has a great foundation that will continue to be great as each chairman and board adds to it each year," Rex stated. "It has met my expectations as an organization and at reaching its goals. I had and will continue to have high expectations for LEADS."

Today Rex continues to be in contact with the business leaders in the community that he met during his time on the LEADS Board. "We discuss our expectations for LEADS and growth in general; I guess we're the cheerleaders for LEADS."

Puma Steel is a regional steel fabricator that has done projects from the east coast to the west coast. Puma Steel's largest project last year was the Denver News Agency building in Denver that will house the Rocky Mountain News and the Denver Post offices. Right now Puma Steel is working on an expansion to Concourse B at the Denver International Airport and a project at the University of Arizona.



Holland & Hart has been a long time business member of Cheyenne LEADS, since 1989. Larry actually recalls Holland & Hart becoming members, "we were members before the Cheyenne Business Parkway, just as that project was coming to fruition." It wasn't until 1999 that Larry was elected to the LEADS Board, but he was excited and saw many projects on the horizon. "I was thrilled to be part of such an extraordinarily talented Board of Directors," commented Larry, "and was impressed with the quality and depth of the board and the economic development projects that took place during my 5 years on the LEADS Board."

For most of the time that Larry, they were busy working with a large food distribution center that kept resurfacing over the years. "We didn't know who the company was until we thought that the project had gone to Pueblo, Colorado," Larry stated. He recalled that Randy Bruns worked very hard to get that company here. "Finally at the end of my chairmanship, **I got to help announce at the LEADS Annual Banquet that Wal-Mart would be building a food distribution center in our new west business park**-- what an end to a great year," commented Larry. That great year wasn't just about the Wal-Mart project coming together either, there was much more going on.

As the 2004 Board worked with Wal-Mart and the purchase of its second business park, the North Range Business Park, a lot was still happening throughout Cheyenne. **College America opened its Cheyenne campus and Midwest Snow Equipment and Vestibular Technologies** also settled in Cheyenne with some assistance from LEADS. In the Cheyenne Business Parkway, **JELD-WEN window manufacturing purchased land and began construction** on its new and greatly expanded facility.

Those were the "easier" of the projects that year. **The purchase of the second business park** was the most memorable for Larry, "I was most proud of the LEADS organization on that project. The organization had to take a large financial risk to acquire that land without the agreement from Wal-Mart in place and they did it. **We took on the central job of being the economic development risk taker for the community, which is the role of LEADS.**" LEADS was set up as a private entity for just that type of situation. Without the red tape and political issues that many public economic development entities have to deal with on a day-to-day basis, LEADS was able to purchase the land, knowing that with that land, even if Wal-Mart didn't come, another similar company would want that land in place. Plus, if the land wasn't in place Wal-Mart very likely would have gone somewhere else where the land was ready for them.



As Larry looks to the future of LEADS he sees opportunity. "LEADS has always and will continue to look for opportunities for Cheyenne and Laramie County. Throughout its history it has positioned itself for opportunities and is ready to take advantage of those as they come along," stated Larry. He says that LEADS consistently has met his expectations. He contributes that to how well the organization is lead and to the organization's foresight.

Starting January 1, 2007 Larry will be the Managing Partner of Holland & Hart and says, "the skills that I learned while being on the LEADS Board helped me achieve my future active partner position."

Even though Larry will begin to spend more time in Denver as the new Managing Partner of Holland & Hart, he will continue to live in, and support, Cheyenne. He is a member of the Cheyenne Rotary and the Greater Cheyenne Chamber of Commerce, where he was Chairman of that Board in 1999. He is also on the Cheyenne Symphony Board of Directors.

## 2005 - Scott Walker - taken from the 20 year history book



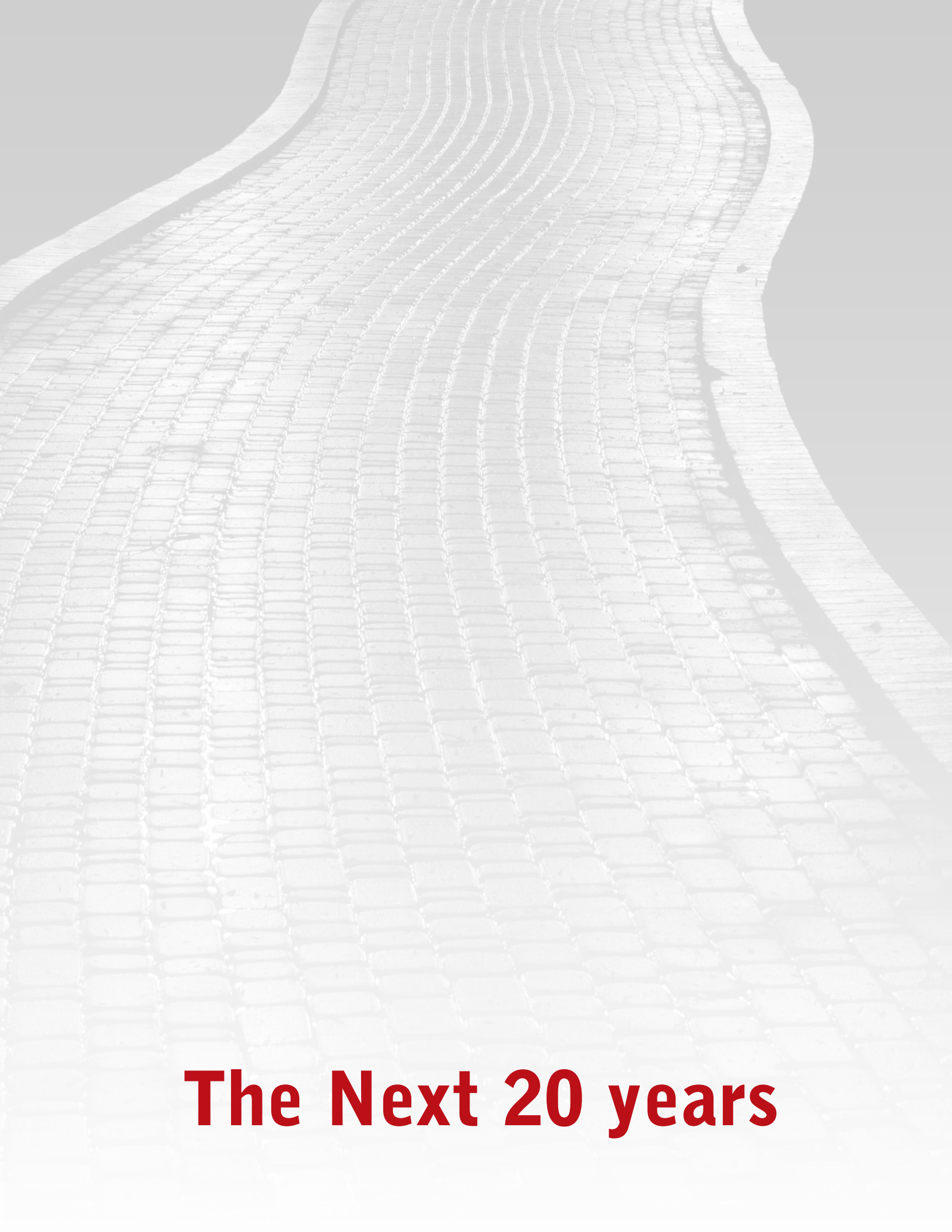
As we wrapped up our 20-year celebration at Cheyenne LEADS, we arrive at our most recent past chairman, Scott Walker. Scott, of the Wyoming Tribune-Eagle, recounted the events of 2005, the year he served as LEADS Board Chairman. Though 2005 did not seem that long ago, it was an eventful year for LEADS and for the entire community of Cheyenne and Laramie County.

The Wyoming Tribune-Eagle had been a member of LEADS since its founding. Scott commented, "Our position within the community was to promote growth, and since LEADS was the major catalyst, we wanted to be part of it." Scott personally was a strong supporter of growth and understood that the Wyoming Tribune-Eagle's involvement aligned with its goals as a company. With that perspective, when Stan Foss, the Chairman of the 2000 LEADS Board, asked Scott if he would be willing to serve on the board, Scott gladly accepted the nomination and was soon elected.

After serving on the Board for two years, Scott and the Wyoming Tribune-Eagle decided to become \$10,000 members of LEADS, securing the company a non-elected seat on the Board. The following year, Scott was asked by Rex Lewis to serve as Secretary of the Board, and he accepted. Scott became Vice Chair in 2004 when Trilegiant closed its doors and its representative resigned from the position. He was elected Chair in 2005 during a year filled with economic development milestones.

While Scott served as Vice Chair on the LEADS Board, **LEADS purchased its second business park west of Cheyenne, the North Range Business Park.** On the night Scott took over as Chairman, at the 2005 Annual Banquet, Wal-Mart announced its plans to expand with a food distribution center in the new park. In 2005, Scott and his Board focused on building out the infrastructure, plotting the land for future businesses, and assisting Wal-Mart in starting construction. By year's end, after a busy stretch of groundbreaking and construction activity, LEADS was finalizing the financials on the new park and actively negotiating with additional companies. At that time, LEADS was in discussions with nanoMaterials Discovery Corporation, which ultimately announced its plans in March 2006, and had begun conversations with the National Center for Atmospheric Research, a project still in development at that point.

Like many past chairmen, Scott felt "fortunate" to lead during such a dynamic year for LEADS. He said, "I felt fortunate to be in the middle of everything that was happening and really enjoyed being the MC at the North Range Business Park groundbreaking." Through the continuity of the Leadership Committee, Scott was able to participate in the purchase, groundbreaking, and final details of the new business park over several years. "This committee, along with the exceptional staff, helped produce the economic development successes the area saw because those key people were able to follow projects from start to finish, whether it was a six-month process or a five-year project," Scott reflected.



**The Next 20 years**

## 2006 - Mona Pearl



In 2006, Cheyenne LEADS was fortunate to have Mona Pearl, Executive Vice President and Chief Operations Officer of Western States Learning Corporation (later known as Align), serve as Chairwoman of the Board.

That year, Cheyenne LEADS celebrated its 20th anniversary by continuing the work it had done for the previous years: professionally pursuing new jobs to diversify the Laramie County economy, facilitating economic development activities at many levels locally, and building the contacts and resources that set the stage for future successes.

As both a board member and Chairwoman, Pearl believed her role in these efforts was to support the capable staff of Cheyenne LEADS by seeking board members' opinions and ideas while ensuring the board stayed "nose in, and fingers out." For Pearl, that meant engaging with staff as needed and supporting them when asked.

Pearl described her year as an "in-between" year, a period between the completion of the North Range Business Park and the point when the Cheyenne Business Parkway was mature enough to be maintained while staff focused on making it available to new and expanding local businesses.

Pearl recalled one morning when she and Randy Bruns drove out to an open field, now home to the Walmart Distribution Center, NCAR, and Microsoft in what became the North Range Business Park. They sat in the car, listening to birds and watching wildlife, while discussing the cost of economic development in terms of lost open space, reflecting on what the Vita Ranch had meant to Cheyenne, and considering how good stewardship required carefully weighing jobs and economic growth against preserving the community's beauty and small-town character.

In 2006, LEADS received a communication from a contact in Colorado indicating that the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) in Boulder was in the midst of a site selection process for a "peta-scale" supercomputer center. A significant amount of high-level staff time was devoted to this project, which quickly evolved into a major collaboration involving the University of Wyoming, the Governor's office, the Wyoming Business Council, Cheyenne Light, Fuel & Power, and Cheyenne LEADS. **In early 2007, NCAR announced it would partner with the University of Wyoming to build the supercomputer facility west of Cheyenne.** This project proved transformational—not just for the University of Wyoming, but also for the state, the city of Cheyenne, and LEADS itself. The facility would be located in the North Range Business Park alongside the newly announced Walmart Distribution Center.

During Pearl's chairmanship, there were many conversations about demystifying board discussions and explaining to members and the community that board members were not receiving "insider information."

There was also a focus on increasing the representation of women on the board. Scott Walker, who chaired the board in 2005, had recruited Pearl by diplomatically explaining that "LEADS needed more women in leadership." In recognition of Pearl's term as Chairwoman, the traditional "Chairman's" commemorative plaque was revised to reflect the title "Chairwoman." Pearl later returned to the board in 2015 to serve another three-year term.

## 2007 - Bob Strasheim



LEADS staff worked with 58 distinct new prospects during the year, in addition to those carried over from prior years. Three of these were existing local companies that we assisted with expansion or retention efforts. The majority of the new prospects were in manufacturing (28) and data centers (13), with three in distribution and warehousing, and four in research. The remaining prospects were spread across a variety of other sectors. Notably, two of these prospects involved potential relocations of corporate headquarters to Cheyenne, which would have been significant wins for the community if secured. LEADS also hosted eight carefully orchestrated site visits for companies actively considering Cheyenne as a location.

Two new companies committed to coming to Cheyenne in 2007: Allstate Insurance and NCAR. Allstate announced plans to bring 250 new jobs and began hiring in September. By the end of the year, they had already hired just over 200 employees and were fully operational. Hiring was expected to continue into the first quarter

of 2008, and Allstate reported excellent success in finding qualified local employees.

Of course, **the announcement of the NCAR supercomputing center early in 2007 was a major highlight.** NCAR anticipated 45 new jobs directly tied to the center, although most were not expected to materialize until 2011. Additional University of Wyoming employment in the Cheyenne area was also anticipated as a direct result of the project, though those numbers had yet to be determined. While much of the NCAR project was not visible to the public during the year, significant work was underway behind the scenes. Even before the National Science Foundation granted final funding approval, the partnership between NCAR and UW was in full motion, and we anticipated that NCAR would move forward with final design and engineering in 2008.

LEADS also worked closely with three existing Cheyenne companies in 2007 to retain or expand local jobs. **VAE Nortrak announced an expansion** with the construction of a new concrete tie plant, expected to create 50 to 60 new jobs over 18 months. LEADS supported Nortrak through the final stages of negotiations, ultimately helping secure Cheyenne as the site over competing locations in Chicago and Pueblo. By year's end, the facility was nearing completion, additional employees had been hired, and limited production had already begun.

**Unicover Corporation, a legacy Cheyenne company, also benefited from LEADS' assistance.** Working in partnership with the State of Wyoming and the owners of the Jonah Financial Center, LEADS helped identify solutions that saved 30 jobs immediately. By year-end, Unicover had grown to more than 100 employees and anticipated adding another 50 in 2008. Bresnan Communications likewise expanded its corporate functions in Cheyenne in 2007, initially adding 30 new jobs with potential to double that number. LEADS had worked intermittently with Bresnan for five years on this project, and while the company ultimately required only minimal support from us to complete its expansion, their success represented an important gain for the community.

**Progress & Prosperity continued to be a major donor to LEADS, providing significant grants to support the acquisition and development of the North Range Business Park.** In 2007, the organization advanced its committed payments to LEADS thanks to strong pledge receipts. This allowed LEADS to pay down short-term debt incurred to finance the business park infrastructure ahead of schedule. By the end of the year, all but one infrastructure loan had been repaid, substantially reducing the organization's interest burden.

## 2008 - Matt Pope



Maybe no year confirmed the purpose and vision of Cheyenne LEADS and reflected the outcome of decades of work by community founders and supporters more than 2008. Within the backdrop of the financial crisis, Laramie County avoided much of the deeper economic damage from the global meltdown. LEADS and its partner organization in Laramie County continued to work on diversifying and strengthening the local economy and although there is no way to know what we would have looked like without the impacts of LEADS efforts, certainly a more diversified economy and employment base supported our outcome.

With the uncertainty of a national economy finding a new direction, there were no major announcements, and the number of new prospects slowed. LEADS did secure commitments from two high-tech companies, including a German robotics firm and a New Jersey-based chip manufacturer, both planning operations in 2009.

These achievements are particularly notable given the tightening of credit markets, corporate downsizing, and investment hesitancy that defined the 2008 crisis. There was also little visible progress during the year on the NCAR supercomputer that was announced in early 2007 as that project worked through a protracted process in Washington DC. However, there was a lot of activity behind the scenes among the partner organizations, including the University of Wyoming, NCAR and Cheyenne LEADS, moving the project toward its ultimate completion. Securing NCAR marked a transition point for our economic development, opening the door to further diversification by adding successful high-tech recruitment to our portfolio of successes. Looking back, this was a big moment for LEADS. 2008 ended on a high note as we had indication from two other high-tech companies that they had selected Cheyenne. Finally, the board approved joining the Chamber's Wrangler program to support economic development lobbying efforts in Washington.

It is worth noting the events that defined the economic environment in 2008, The board and membership stayed focused and on our mission as the following events were taking place.

- March 16, 2008: Bear Stearns collapses and is sold to JPMorgan Chase with Federal Reserve backing, an early sign of systemic instability.
- September 15, 2008: Lehman Brothers files for bankruptcy, triggering global panic and marking the symbolic start of the financial crisis.
- September 16, 2008: The U.S. government bails out AIG with an \$85 billion loan to prevent its collapse.
- October 3, 2008: Congress passes the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act, creating the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) — a \$700 billion bailout fund.
- October 10, 2008: The Dow Jones Industrial Average drops 679 points, capping its worst week ever with a 1,874-point loss.
- December 2008: The U.S. officially enters recession, with unemployment rising and credit markets freezing.

For everything that occurred in 2008, it marked the beginning of what would be a successful multi-year effort to shift recruiting toward high tech. LEADS economic development efforts remained effective and forward-looking, even during national economic crises. By maintaining fiscal discipline, and continuing to leverage site visits, LEADS positioned Cheyenne for growth in a post-crisis economy.

## 2009 - Georgiana Stewart



Georgiana was the President of First American Title Company of Laramie County. Stewart had previously served as the President of Meals on Wheels, the Wyoming Land Title Association and served on the board for Goodwill Industries and United Way of Laramie County. Under Stewart's Chairmanship Cheyenne LEADS remained financially strong with an increasing net worth.

LEADS entered 2009 with an approved operations budget that was projected to draw on retained earnings. However, we were able to end 2009 positive to the budget. This was accomplished with budget discipline and on the strength of the one-time contribution membership appeal.

Cheyenne LEADS ended 2009 with a \$1.9 Million improvement to our balance sheet. This was primarily due to a \$1.5 Million BRC grant awarded to purchase space in the NDC/Arundel building and to a bookkeeping recapture of an expired business incentive liability.

In 2009 LEADS staff worked with 40 distinct new prospects in 2009 - keeping them busy working with 13 manufacturing companies, 4 data centers and 3 energy related companies, to name a few.

During 2009, seven companies that LEADS was working with committed to relocate or expand to Cheyenne. This represented a record number of successes for LEADS in any one year. Several of these were rather small projects. However, several of the large ones would not have chosen Cheyenne with out LEADS' efforts.

**The seven companies that committed include Cameco Headquarters, a significant but unannounced data center, the GE/UW High Plains Gasification Research Center, Mountain States Materials, Mid-Western Pipe and Color Design.** In total, these projects represent a capital investment of over \$152 million and a conservatively projected employment of 114 jobs. Significantly, the Mid-Western project was also the trigger for the initiation of the Swan Rail Industrial Development. That project, funded largely by the developer, contributed additional capital construction to the local economy.

LEADS membership numbers remained steady at 303 members but saw a net decline in due amounts, a trend that the board expected to continue. Significantly, just 5% of members represented 52% of dues income. The rule of 80/20 definitely applied to LEADS membership – 20% of members contributed just over 80% of Cheyenne LEADS' annual dues.

LEADS was facing an unprecedented threat to its future ability to develop and maintain business parks for job creation. In 2009, LEADS paid just \$7,000 in property taxes. In 2009, with about 20% more property, the property tax burden had grown to \$79,000. And recent rulings by the State Board of Equalization put LEADS at risk of taxes in the neighborhood of \$200,000 by 2011. Because LEADS uses its property for job creation rather than revenue creation, that level of carrying cost is unsustainable and would necessitate significant changes to LEADS business model and operations over the coming years.

## 2010 - Steve Lovas



I had the honor of serving as Chairman of the LEADS board for the 2010-2011 year. I was the Regional President for US Bank at the time. US Bank has been a member of LEADS from the beginning. In 2007 I brought the bank in at the \$10,000 level and joined the board of directors. It was obvious to me that LEADS was doing amazing things for Cheyenne and Laramie County, and I wanted US Bank to play a leadership role in supporting those efforts.

Serving on the LEADS board has always been considered an honor! It is a board where you serve with many of the top business leaders in Laramie County. It also makes you proud knowing that you are part of an organization that is the "gold standard" for economic development organizations in Wyoming and is highly respected throughout the country!

In 2010 the United States was still struggling as a result of the great recession which officially ended in June 2009. A lot of businesses, including LEADS members, were negatively impacted by the recession. Some of us were still a little nervous about the recession and we of course didn't know how long it would take to dig out of the deep hole the financial markets had been thrown in! I remember the Executive Team having discussions about the possibility of losing some members because of the tough times. Thankfully, that never really happened. Real estate values throughout much of the country had dropped significantly and while Laramie County was not immune to lower values, we were not hit quite as hard. It would have been easy for LEADS to sit back and wait for the markets to come around. Instead, the board, under the direction of Randy Bruns, made the decision to look to the future and capitalize on the opportunities that existed. **LEADS staff hosted 19 specific visits to Cheyenne by prospects.** We ended the year with six new prospects committing to locate to Laramie County!

Early in 2010 LEADS worked with the legislature to address taxation of property held for economic development. This resulted in some relief on property taxes which was critical to the long-term financial viability of not only LEADS, but all economic development organizations statewide. Planning and development work to redesign the North Range Business Park was completed in 2010 and bids were let for the next phase of infrastructure.

One of the highlights of 2010 was the **NCAR-Wyoming Supercomputing Center which broke ground June 3, 2010 in the North Range Business Park.** The work to land this project started long before 2010 and took a partnership between many organizations to make it happen: NCAR; University of Wyoming; State of Wyoming; Wyoming Business Council; Cheyenne Light Fuel and Power; UCAR; the National Science Foundation and of course LEADS! This project was a great example of how LEADS is able to pull multiple entities together to make something happen.

In July of 2010 American Airlines, through its subsidiary American Eagle started air service between Cheyenne and Dallas/Ft Worth. LEADS worked with the Cheyenne Regional Airport; The Greater Cheyenne Chamber of Commerce; Visit Cheyenne; and the Greater Cheyenne Foundation working with the WYDOT Aeronautics Division to bring this new air service to Laramie County.

I am proud to have played a small part in such a wonderful organization. I learned a great deal during my time on the board and consider it an honor to have served as Chairman. I retired from US Bank in 2015 but my wife Cheryl and I continue to live in Cheyenne. I am also proud to say that both of our kids and their families have made Cheyenne their home.

## 2011 - Jim Murphy



James "Murph" Murphy was born and raised in the small farming and ranching town of Powell, Wyoming, along the northwestern edge of the Big Horn Basin. He graduated from Montana Tech in the rough and tumble town of Butte, Montana with a degree in Environmental Engineering; returning to Wyoming (Cheyenne) in 1983 to begin his professional career. During his entire career, Murph specialized in complex mine land reclamation projects, managing large multi-disciplinary teams of engineers, scientists and natural resource professionals.

Following a five and a half year stint of employment with the State of Wyoming, Murph went to work for AVI Engineering in 1989. Some of Murph's earliest memories from his first couple years with AVI were fellow employees working on various aspects of infrastructure improvements at the LEADS Cheyenne Business Parkway. He remembers thinking back then about rumors (which were only rumors) as to why Cheyenne did not get the Budweiser Brewery; which eventually was located north of Fort Collins, CO, and that something like what LEADS was attempting could certainly make Cheyenne much more competitive in business recruiting. How right he was.

Murph became a partner at AVI in 1991. Founded in 1979, AVI has been, and is dedicated to serving the needs of industrial, private, and governmental clients.

AVI was one of the very early local businesses to join LEADS and help further their mission; so when Murph joined the ownership group at AVI in 1991, he immediately began engaging in LEADS sponsored activities. From those early years, Murph had thoughts of serving a larger part in the LEADS organization through a role on the Board of Directors. Seventeen years later he was elected to the Board in 2008, and was nominated to Board Leadership in 2009; completing his Leadership service in April 2013 as Immediate Past Chair.

Looking back at his year as Board Chair from April 2011 to March 2012, Murph recalls a number of specific LEADS accomplishments that stand out. These include:

- After many years of waiting and wondering, NCAR Super Computer construction in the North Range Business Park was finally completed.
- With LEADS help, the Swan Rail Park continued to expand with many new companies announcing plans to build in the Park, and many additional infrastructure projects guaranteeing the continued expansion of the Park.
- **The announcement that Microsoft would construct a large "cloud" data center in the LEADS North Range Business Park.**
- Celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the LEADS organization. Murph enjoyed a humorous exchange of storytelling with Governor Matt Mead who was the guest speaker for the LEADS Annual Meeting during its 25th Anniversary year.

One item of disappointment for Murph during his term as Board Chair was the decision by GE not to move forward with the clean coal research facility they had previously planned to construct in conjunction with the University of Wyoming in the Cheyenne Business Parkway.

Murph will always remember the dedication of LEADS staff in working diligently to continue the organization's mission for the betterment of Cheyenne, Laramie County and the entire State of Wyoming. Additionally, the engagement and willingness of all Board Leadership that Murph served with to volunteer their time and expertise; along with their camaraderie, will be something he will not forget.

## 2012 - Leigh West



“What an exciting time to be part of the LEADS team,” said Leigh West, Chairman of the Board in 2012, reflecting on the culmination of years of work. The community’s growing interest in diversifying and strengthening local businesses marked a pivotal moment. In 2012, Cheyenne reached a tipping point in attracting high-technology companies—an essential component of both development strategies and the future of the region.

In April 2012, Microsoft announced its decision to locate a data center in the North Range Business Park. This milestone was achieved through a concerted effort by the LEADS team. In the highly competitive field of economic development, the team successfully evaluated the project’s criteria and assembled the package necessary to secure the deal. Looking back, the continued expansion of Microsoft’s operations clearly represents a key step in the community’s economic growth. NCAR’s earlier commitment to Cheyenne served as an important stepping stone and, as anticipated, other high-tech companies began to recognize the opportunities and advantages our community offers.

In October 2012, the NCAR Wyoming Supercomputer Center (NWSC) officially opened, with local and national dignitaries in attendance. NWSC continues to fulfill its mission of providing advanced supercomputing capabilities to researchers across the country. This achievement marked the culmination of an effort that began with Cheyenne LEADS in March 2006.

Green House Data was another exciting development in 2012. Its expansion in the Cheyenne Business Parkway added yet another high-tech partner contributing to the community’s growth and development.

LEADS has also built strong partnerships with private developers throughout the community. The addition of rail-served industrial development in Swan Ranch Industrial Park created valuable manufacturing sites. Expanding manufacturing remains a major focus for LEADS and is critical to the continued diversification of our economy.

It was an honor and a pleasure to serve on the LEADS Board.

## 2013 - Mark Stege



2013 was another successful year of transformational growth for Cheyenne LEADS. Mark Stege, Vice President of Cheyenne Light, Fuel & Power (now Vice President of Customer Service at Black Hills Energy), joined the LEADS Board in 2007. He progressed through leadership roles beginning as Secretary and ultimately serving as Chairman in 2013.

Cheyenne Light has been involved with LEADS since its inception, demonstrating a strong commitment to community growth and long-term investment. In 1988, the company purchased 1,000 acres of land east of Cheyenne—later developed into the Cheyenne Business Parkway in 1990. When Mark assumed the role of Chairman in 2013, the organization experienced another highly active year of economic development and expansion.

Microsoft completed construction of Phase I of its first Wyoming-based data center—initiated in 2012—and broke ground on Phase II of its multi-million-dollar, state-of-the-art facility in the North Range Business Park west of Cheyenne. Green House Data, a cloud hosting and colocation provider, also announced the expansion of its Cheyenne facility in the Cheyenne Business Parkway.

Searing Industries began construction of its manufacturing facility in the Swan Ranch Industrial Park and became operational later in 2013. That same year, construction began on the Microsoft Data Plant at the Dry Creek Water Reclamation Center. This innovative project served as a test bed to study the feasibility of powering a small-scale data center, or “data pack,” using electricity generated from biogas—a byproduct of water reclamation. Additionally, Magpul Industries announced the relocation of its manufacturing operations from Colorado to Cheyenne.

Reflecting on his tenure, Stege shared, “Serving as Chairman of LEADS was truly an honor. I became keenly aware that today’s successes are the result of the hard work, bold vision, and risk-taking of dedicated Cheyenne community leaders more than 30 years ago. Without their foresight and commitment, LEADS would not be recognized as the premier economic development organization in the Rocky Mountain West. The future is so bright, I have to wear shades!”

## 2014 - Dixie Roberts



When Dixie Roberts joined the Cheyenne LEADS Board in 2010, she was impressed by how much the organization had evolved since her first exposure in 1997, when she served as an ex-officio member representing the Cheyenne Chamber of Commerce as Chairman.

At that time, the Chamber of Commerce and LEADS were working with a consultant to determine whether a capital campaign to build infrastructure in the Business Park would be supported by the business community and ultimately succeed. The rest is history. The Progress and Prosperity Campaign proved successful, with the business community contributing \$5.9 million through two campaigns to purchase the Cheyenne Business Park east of Cheyenne and later the North Range Business Park to the west. This generous support positioned LEADS for many future successes by creating shovel ready opportunities for business relocation.

One of the most memorable introductions to LEADS in 2010 was a tour of its business parks and the economic development opportunities throughout Laramie County. The several hour tour included visits to LEADS owned parks as well as Swan Ranch Business Park and Niobrara Business Park. The opportunities and successes were striking. Seeing these shovel ready sites firsthand provided a much deeper understanding of the resources Randy Bruns and his staff offered in support of economic development in the community.

The impact on the community was significant. LEADS had worked with 80 diverse companies across distribution, manufacturing, and data sectors. Total capital investment reached \$810 million and continued to grow. The resulting tax revenue included \$19 million in property tax since 2000, \$14 million in sales and use tax from 2008 through 2013, and \$1.1 million in sales tax on electricity.

By 2014, the Board and staff were energized by the belief that economic development in Laramie County was on the verge of even greater progress, and that LEADS was well positioned to continue serving as a catalyst for growth. The Board approved funding for a multi page newspaper insert to tell the LEADS story, share its history, celebrate its successes, and most importantly recognize those who made it possible. This effort combined stories and data, illustrated with graphs and charts. Cheyenne LEADS continued to evolve with a strong vision for the future, solid financial support from the business community, and a willingness to take thoughtful risks.

The Board also recognized the importance of amenities in the North Range Business Park and committed to enhancing those in the Cheyenne Business Park. Working with BHA engineers and planners, LEADS hosted an open house for park occupants to present the project plan and timeline for these improvements. This included a vision to preserve an important wetland area, enhance wildlife habitat, improve water quality, and elevate overall aesthetics through a partnership with the Laramie County Conservation District. In 2014, bids were awarded for the construction of two large lighted signs identifying the Cheyenne Business Parkway, along with wayfinding signage. Discussions also began regarding the feasibility of a trail system for employees within the park. The Conservation District was especially interested in demonstrating how environmental preservation could successfully coexist with industrial development. This effort continued, leading to the announcement of a Natural Park in 2019.

Dr. Joe Schaffer led the committee overseeing the Workforce Study conducted by Avalanche. The study confirmed many existing insights while also identifying new opportunities to better share and apply the information for improved community outcomes. Avalanche presented a summary of its findings at the Annual Banquet.

The Board also devoted significant time to preparing for Randy Bruns' future retirement. A committee led by Dr. Joe Schaffer and Greg Dyekman conducted a comprehensive review of the bylaws to ensure continued

efficiency and accountability. This work extended into Ken Dugas' chairmanship, where it received approval from the membership in 2016. The Board also reviewed current investments to ensure they were properly protected.

**Economic development activity in 2014 was especially strong, highlighted by the ribbon cutting for the Microsoft data plant and data center completion, a 35,000 square foot expansion of Green House Data, and the completion of the Cheyenne Light, Fuel and Power Prairie Generating Station.** Overall, it was a year filled with significant business activity and continued momentum.

Roberts reflected, "The opportunity to work closely with staff, dedicated Board members, County Commissioners, elected officials, the Mayor, and so many others who are passionate about Laramie County and the success of the community was both humbling and exciting." She witnessed changes in staff, Board leadership, and elected officials, yet the dedication and commitment never wavered. She remains confident that LEADS has the tools needed to be self sufficient and successful in driving economic development and creating more jobs for the citizens of Laramie County.its history, celebrate its successes, and most importantly recognize those who made it possible. This effort combined stories and data, illustrated with graphs and charts. Cheyenne LEADS continued to evolve with a strong vision for the future, solid financial support from the business community, and a willingness to take thoughtful risks.

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## 2015 - Ken Dugas



As Cheyenne LEADS replays its history through the eyes of its past Chairmen, I am happy to assist with a recap of the 2015-16 year, when I served as the Chairman.

MHP LLP's roots in Cheyenne go back to the mid 1930s. Since then, the firm's owners and employees have supported economic development in Cheyenne and Laramie County. MHP has been a member of Cheyenne LEADS from its inception, with many of its partners serving as members of the LEADS Board of Directors, including serving in board leadership.

During my year as Chairman, LEADS grew in size and capacity to further implement its successful strategy which has developed and matured over the previous 30 years. It evolved with a strong vision for future growth, strong financial commitments from the business community and a willingness to take risk. This evolution has created a winning combination of job creation, business diversification and strengthening the economic and tax base.

At this time in our history, our community had put its money where its beliefs were. Businesses and individuals had contributed over \$7.4 million in membership dues and an additional \$2.2 million from the City of Cheyenne and Laramie County from contracts for service over the past 30 years. The business community had contributed an additional \$5.9 million in two campaigns towards purchasing our two business parks and other community development projects.

Membership in Cheyenne LEADS continued to be an investment in our future, and that investment needed to continue. I intentionally increased the organization's membership efforts during my year as Chairman. I asked all to encourage friends, neighbors, vendors, colleagues and business partners to invest in economic development by becoming a Cheyenne LEADS member. I encouraged the expansion of the organizations profiles on social media, including LinkedIn and Facebook.

I was honored to serve as Chairman the year that LEADs collaborated with Sierra Trading Post and Magpul to continue the expansion of both operations. **Magpul's employment grew to 270 and Sierra Trading Post nearly doubled the size of its warehouse and distribution facility in Cheyenne.**

**Brewista began operations in Cheyenne** as the first step towards on-shoring its manufacturing capacity. We've also expanded the manufacturing capacity locally with the addition of an injection molding firm.

The continued expansion of Microsoft had progressed at a frenetic pace, far exceeding our initial expectation. We are very pleased to continue to work with Microsoft personnel and fully expect the Microsoft facility to double in size in the next few years.

The "ReVision" project to restructure the Cheyenne Business Parkway was well underway. The new signage and other improvements were impressive. There was wonderful wetland space that would remain open and be preserved to enhance wildlife habitat, water quality and overall aesthetics. This was facilitated through a partnership with the Laramie County Conservation District. We designed and began to install a trail system to be utilized by those working in the park as well as the community at large. The Cheyenne LEADS business parks have been critical in providing shovel ready opportunities for companies relocating or expanding, and we wanted them to be a good home to the employees working in them.

Cheyenne LEADS supported Wyoming Malting project which was underway in Pine Bluffs. The following year, Wyoming Malting would be operational, producing malt for the craft beer and distilling industries.

Today, I continue to be amazed at continued successes and progress of Cheyenne LEADS. Like many of the past chairman I am fortunate to have served on the LEADS Board of Directors and its' leadership.

## 2016 - David Johnson



As we reflect on the history of LEADS, each year offers moments worth celebrating. These include major manufacturing companies choosing to relocate, targeted industries launching in Laramie County, entrepreneurs turning ideas into reality, and the organization serving as a catalyst for improving quality of life in the community. There are also times when the strength of an organization is revealed through adversity. One such period occurred during the tenure of Board Chairman David Johnson in 2016 and 2017.

David joined the LEADS Board in May 2011 after becoming CenturyLink's Operations Manager for Wyoming and was elected to the Leadership Committee in 2013. He brought more than 25 years of industry experience back to Wyoming, where he began his career with Mountain Bell in the 1980s. The companies that now make up CenturyLink have been part of the LEADS story since its inception in 1986. "I am proud and excited to represent CenturyLink and the evolving technology industries on the Board of Cheyenne LEADS," Johnson said. The communications and technology sector has played a vital role in the growth of both LEADS and Laramie County. Companies such as Microsoft, Green House Data, EchoStar, NCAR, Sierra Trading Post, and others benefit from Laramie County's unique position along numerous nationwide fiber optic routes and its strong fiber infrastructure.

One of the most significant moments of both adversity and triumph during Johnson's tenure was CEO Randy Bruns' battle with cancer. His leadership and influence in economic development across the state made this a challenging time for the organization. Randy's strength, determination, and perseverance ultimately allowed him to overcome this challenge and return to his critical role. During his absence, the LEADS staff - Anja Bendel, Karen Gastenau, Derrek Jerred and Rachelle Zimmerman - demonstrated remarkable resilience and focus, continuing to advance the mission without interruption. As Johnson noted, "Leadership and the Board are truly supportive of the staff, and they are trusted to make good decisions during Randy's absence."

During this time, a strategic plan was developed to align the organization around key priorities, including business retention and expansion, quality of life, support for a vibrant downtown, and workforce and educational attainment. Johnson sees many of these priorities reflected in today's Forward Greater Cheyenne plan.

This period also brought several notable accomplishments. LEADS supported the land purchase and groundbreaking of Wyoming Malting and completed the purchase of the Lincolnway property, which Johnson described as "a catalyst for downtown development." The Downtown Core group was established with LEADS support, focusing on initiatives to Light It, Clean It, Build It, and Support It. Quality of life projects stemming from this effort included the 17th Street lighting project, Depot Plaza lighting, the Depot Plaza ice rink, and the creation of the Depot Splash Pad. As Johnson stated, "A vibrant downtown is key to economic growth. Site selectors and companies considering relocation to Cheyenne view a vibrant downtown as a strong indicator of a community's overall health."

LEADS also continued investing in its business parks during this time. A memorandum of understanding with the Laramie County Conservation District established a plan for recreation and educational use of the wetlands area in the Cheyenne Business Parkway. A revision plan for the park was developed to enhance signage, highlight property entrances, and better showcase the park to travelers along Interstate 80. Johnson noted, "The two LEADS owned business parks are an asset far beyond their value. They demonstrate to prospective businesses that Cheyenne is committed to economic development. I am very proud to be associated with this outstanding organization."

The continued success of LEADS is a direct result of the consistent support and commitment of this exceptional community.

## 2017 - Joe Schaffer



For more than 30 years, Cheyenne LEADS has epitomized how successful economic development should be done in Wyoming, and arguably across the Rocky Mountain West. One exceptional aspect of how LEADS operates is the architecture of the Board's leadership succession, allowing individuals to serve five years in various officer roles including the chairperson of the Board. I came to Cheyenne in 2012, having the honor of being selected as Laramie County Community College's (LCCC's) ninth president. LCCC had a long history of supporting and working with LEADS, and I knew that if given the opportunity, I wanted to continue that tradition. In the spring of 2014 I was fortunate to enter the leadership succession path with LEADS, becoming chairman in May of 2017.

As I consider my time as chairman of the board, I find I reflect instead on the entirety of my time in leadership with the organization. In many ways, this time could best be described as setting the foundation for LEADS' next 30 years. For example, in 2014 LCCC and LEADS partnered to conduct a comprehensive Workforce study guided by a task force I was fortunate to co-chair. In 2015, I was able to work with a committee of Board members and leadership tasked with reviewing and updating LEADS' by-laws. In 2017 and 2018 these opportunities continued.

Early in 2017 the Board reaffirmed its commitment to performance excellence and continuous improvement, by establishing a new policy and procedure on performance management. This process ensures a disciplined commitment to evaluating the performance of the organization, of the Board, its Leadership Committee, and the LEADS CEO and setting goals for improvement. Later in my term, the Board began the process of reexamining and reaffirming the LEADS Mission, Vision, and Values. An updated Mission, and new Vision and Value statements were later approved in the summer of 2018 by the Board. This new mission, vision, and values framework has helped reconnect the organization to its core purpose while also focusing it on the future.

This year LEADS also was a driver in helping shape the future of our community. Cheyenne LEADS became an integral partner in the Forward Greater Cheyenne initiative. Cheyenne LEADS, along with the Chamber, LCCC, DDA, Visit Cheyenne, and the City and County launched a collaborative economic and community development planning effort. This work culminated in a community-wide plan that has established goals for our entire community and has engaged new, promising leaders while identifying the roles of various organizations, including LEADS, in helping us continue to grow and prosper.

Also, in 2017, Cheyenne LEADS worked with the City of Cheyenne and the Children's Museum of Cheyenne to acquire both properties that comprise "the hole" at 206 and 208 West Lincolnway. The ownership of these properties was complex and tied up with several title restrictions. LEADS was uniquely positioned to work through these issues, obtain clear title to both properties and re-plot the two properties into one so that it can be constructively used without further title complications.

With the help of the Cheyenne-Laramie County Economic Development Joint Powers Board, LEADS contracted for a turnout and 1,670 track-feet of new rail to be built to serve two of our properties in the Swan. That construction began late in the year and will be completed in early 2018.

This foundational work took significant time and effort, however that didn't mean LEADS stopped doing economic development. During 2017 LEADS staff worked with numerous prospects interested in a location in Cheyenne and Laramie county resulting in 18 site visits to the community. LEADS helped Microsoft begin its next phase of expansion in the North Range Business Park (NRBP), and this expansion ultimately doubled their footprint in the community. As 2017 drew to a close, LEADS entered into a lease with a Colorado-based manufacturer for LEADS' manufacturing spec building in the Swan Ranch Business Park.

Business Retention and Expansion, or BRE, efforts also ramped up with 16 comprehensive BRE visits in 2017. In one case, LEADS engaged a local business that was in the midst of an expansion decision that could have resulted in them leaving Cheyenne. Ultimately the company committed to remaining and expanding in Cheyenne, something that would not have happened without the efforts of LEADS.

Being part of Cheyenne LEADS, especially having the opportunity to serve five years in the leadership succession, has truly been an honor. The work is hard, but meaningful. We should feel fortunate to stand on the shoulders of the giants that built a foundation leading to years of success, and we should be excited for helping set the foundation for the future. I know I am.



The 2019-2020 administrative year was focused on the future. My term began with a board retreat facilitated by Joe Schaffer to **update the mission, vision and values of the organization**. The Board enthusiastically reaffirmed the primary purposes for LEADS' work--to create primary jobs for the community and to encourage capital investment. The Board defined its vision and values in a way that showed enthusiasm and positivity about Cheyenne's and Laramie County's future and LEADS' impact on it.

A second effort ultimately dominated the rest of the administrative year, gobbling up massive time and effort by leadership and professional staff. The Forward Greater Cheyenne study and consulting work resulted in the creation of an Organizational Analysis Committee ("OAC") made up of representatives of Cheyenne LEADS, the Cheyenne Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Development Authority and Visit Cheyenne. This committee endeavored to determine how these organizations, all involved in economic development in one way or another, could best work together and accomplish more for the community. Initial discussions about merger of organizations and centralization of resources quickly yielded to efforts designed to enhance communication and positive working relationships among the various organizations as well as political bodies also involved in economic development activities.

The Implementation Committee of Forward Greater Cheyenne rolled out eight areas of focus based on data obtained during the study process. The OAC helped create a legal framework for the Forward Greater Cheyenne Association, a diverse, thirty-six member board designed to facilitate partnerships and community decision-making to accomplish the eight implementation goals for the community. While the Forward Greater Cheyenne Association Board began to meet, progress began slowly due to the newness of the concepts and some of the relationships. Nevertheless, the idea of community leaders meeting to implement community goals in a coordinated fashion holds great promise. The CEO Committee of the Forward Greater Cheyenne Association began meeting to clarify which economic development functions each performed, revealing less overlap than initially feared. CEO Committee meetings continue to be an important part of the success of the Forward Greater Cheyenne Association.

Meanwhile, the month to month work of the Board continued smoothly. LEADS Board members participated in two significant ad hoc committees, one to create an organizational giving policy to enable LEADS to deal with future requests for funding from other organizations, and a succession planning committee to prepare for the future need to replace Randy Bruns as CEO when he eventually retired. Both committees performed well and their proposals were adopted by the Board. These forward looking efforts have turned out to be very valuable.

Cheyenne LEADS conducted its annual performance evaluation of itself as an organization and of its professional and board leadership. The evaluation highlighted a need for significantly more board training, so staff presentations soon began as part of board meetings to help board members feel more comfortable with the matters dealt with by staff on a daily basis in the economic development world. A board tour of the business parks was also planned.

I cannot express clearly enough my gratitude for the work of the professional staff of Cheyenne LEADS during my term as President, a year which was not always comfortable and which challenged the very fundamentals of the community's approaches to economic development. The staff worked very hard to deal professionally and effectively with the many prospects committed to, or at least looked at Cheyenne during the year. Successes were celebrated and disappointments analyzed with an eye toward future improvement. Political obstacles were

confronted and solutions worked out.

Likewise, the Leadership Committee of Cheyenne LEADS spent more hours than is typical and confronted issues, both new and old, that were critical to the organization's current and future success. Robust involvement in the Forward Greater Cheyenne processes was necessary and fully accomplished. The Board worked hard, made wise decisions and affirmatively sought to become more knowledgeable and involved as a policy board for Cheyenne LEADS

Others will write in the future about the ultimate success of many of the efforts that occupied the time and attention of Cheyenne LEADS in 2019-2020. The year's work is already having a positive effect on the future.



Written in Jan 2020.

Nearly 35 years after the founding of Cheyenne LEADS, we entered into a pivotal period of transition and rebirth, both for our organization and the growing community we have all worked so hard to make a better place to raise a family and start a business. We approached this era with great excitement as Cheyenne LEADS has earned good will and positive momentum under the leadership of Randy Bruns, who will retire as our CEO on April 1, 2020.

We will all extend our thanks and best wishes to Randy as he approaches a well-deserved retirement. His tenure with LEADS spanned three decades, and since being named CEO in 2002, Randy helped our organization and the community immeasurably. In an effort to carry out a positive and orderly transition, an experienced committee is conducting a search for Randy's successor. We are

confident we will select a CEO who will continue to encourage financial growth and investment in the Cheyenne and Laramie County.

Our mission and core values remain the bedrock of Cheyenne LEADS. Over the next decade, we will continue our focus on achieving the Big Goal of celebrating the 10,000th primary job created since our founding while ascending past the \$5 billion plateau of new tax revenues and capital investments.

We also see the long-term value of a multi-faceted economy, and so LEADS is concentrating its efforts on the following:

- Pursuing higher-value manufacturing operations the direct and indirect employment opportunities that naturally stem from such operations.
- Diversifying our community's transportation, logistics and energy sectors.
- Seeking higher-value data and information service operations which would bring good-paying, high-skill jobs to the region.
- Supporting short-term job growth and long-term diversification in professional, financial and corporate services via economic development and infrastructure preparation and enhancement.

In December of 2019, LEADS identified four objectives essential to the success of our mission, and under the guidance of our new CEO, we will continue to move these objectives closer to the finish line. Crossing that finish line will require a true team effort and we extend our thanks and gratitude to our more 300 corporate and individual members, who share our commitment to economic development in this region.

Those four objectives are:

- 1.Enacting proactive measures aimed at business retention and expansion
- 2.Building innovating and attractive incentive programs
- 3.Strengthening the involvement of our engaged membership and growing our base of organizational support
- 4.Making a concerted, sustained effort through strategic outreach, marketing and communication to ensure these objectives and our overall mission and well known and clearly understood.

As I write this in January 2020, we have a lot of hard work ahead of us to translate our goals into reality, yet LEADS has a proven track record of delivering results that have benefited all of Cheyenne. We look forward to working with our new leader to write a new chapter of success for our organization and, more importantly, this community.



After graduating from UW, I, like many others, had to begin my career outside Wyoming. As I crossed the state line with everything I owned in the back of a friend's pickup truck, I made a promise to myself that I would return to my beloved state as soon as I could. My return coincided with Progress and Prosperity II. Excited to support economic and job growth, I donated a very small sum but a donation nonetheless, and joined LEADS. Like many before me, my involvement in LEADS was driven by respect and admiration for some of the organization's early visionaries. I bought into the "long game" vision and the focus on attracting "new" money and primary employers to our county.

That vision and focus remain today and certainly guided the organization while I served on the Leadership Committee. It is difficult for me to unblur what happened during my year as chairman from what happened during the other years I served on the Leadership committee. Most likely because we all gelled very well, and it seems like one instance in time rather than two.

Among my memories are these:

- Constantly being subject to Non-Disclosure Agreements - This is a vivid memory for two reasons. 1) Project Cosmo was huge during that era, and everybody in town wanted information. 2) It underscores how important abiding by these agreements is for the success of LEADS.
- Data Centers – No secret now that Cheyenne is a favored location for data centers. LEADS staff and board members worked very hard during my tenure to successfully recruit some big ones! In parallel with those recruiting efforts, there was a concerted educational effort to inform the public about data centers and their positive economic impact on Cheyenne and Wyoming.
- Eagle Claw – I have been a fisherman since I could walk. My first tackle box was given to me, supplied with Eagle Claw bait holder hooks. As chairman, I was privileged to tour their Denver manufacturing plant and learn more about their plans for expansion into Wyoming. Those plans coming to fruition bring me great pride.
- ROI – Supporters of LEADS, as well as other stakeholders throughout the state, need to understand how economic development organizations benefit our economy and our communities. In partnership with the University of Wyoming, LEADS published a Return On Investment study during my term that clearly showed a positive return.
- Retention and Recruitment – The lifeblood of LEADS is its members. During my years of service, both staff and board members played a role in recruiting and retaining members. Selling the "long game" is a little more nuanced than some sales, but it is worth the time.
- Immediate Past Chairman – Rather than put the old chairman out to pasture immediately, LEADS keeps them around for a year. This helps maintain consistency and fosters knowledge transfer within the Leadership Committee. It also afforded me the honor of accepting, on behalf of the whole organization, WEDA's award for Economic Development Advocate of the Year. The award sat proudly buckled into my passenger seat all the way back from Sheridan!

In closing, I am proud to say that the young man made good on his promise to return to Wyoming. I am also proud to say that LEADS continues to make good on its promise to grow our local economy.

## 2021 - Lori Schoene



Rewind to 1993, I remember attending the Cheyenne Leads Annual Meeting & Banquet in the main, and only ballroom at Little America, for those who can remember that and listening to Cindy Pomeroy, then Chair of the organization, as she shared the results from that year. I don't remember everything she said, but I do remember thinking to myself, one day I hope I can follow in Cindy's footsteps.

Fast forward to 2017, when I was asked to join the Cheyenne Leads - Board Leadership Group, I never could have guessed what an adventure I was signing up for. By the time I took the reigns in May of 2020, Leads had just welcomed our new Chief Executive Office, Betsey Hales who had been on staff for barely a month and our entire community, state and nation were shut down due to the global pandemic. Who could have known that I would never Chair a meeting in person until it was time to hand the gavel off in May of 2021.

Thanks to the excellent Leads staff and Betsey's energy and focus the organization did not miss a beat. In May, the staff held a retreat to work on a Strategic Plan, the results of which were shared with the board in July and included four pages of tasks along with a plan for implementation to support goal achievement, including asking UW to complete a report measuring our ROI and impact on the Cheyenne/Laramie County Communities.

It was a year to re-engineer several reporting tools to assist the board in providing direction and decision making:

- Business Retention and Engagement (BRE) was an important focus throughout the year, supported by a new BRE Dashboard report shared with the board at each monthly meeting.
- The Board was introduced to a "Marketing Dashboard" to provide analytics on all our marketing efforts, including website visits, social media hits and digital advertising.
- A "Prospect Dashboard" was introduced in November, allowing the board a thorough overview of activity. Even with the pandemic, Leads worked with 50 new prospects in 2020.
- A "Strategic Plan implementation Dashboard" was presented in December, with an expectation that the Board would be updated quarterly with the progress.

EY was retained to complete a workforce study for Leads. The information was used to complete actions within the strategic plan and to market Laramie County and Cheyenne.

In late October, we were finally able to host a well-deserved retirement celebration for long time CEO, Randy Bruns.

Throughout the year, the Membership committee focused on a re-work of the dues structure gaining formal approval in November.

Late in 2020 an exciting new project – the Bison Business Park was gaining momentum as agreements with the property owner were finalized.

It was my honor to serve as the Board Chair in 2020. The year, while unprecedented in many ways, allowed for growth in the organization, including reporting tools, a focus on external marketing to prospects and reporting to stakeholders. Thanks to the staff and the rest of the Cheyenne Leads Board.

## 2022 - Robin Roling



It is hard to believe that we are celebrating 40 years as an organization. So much has been accomplished in this relatively short period of time. We are so fortunate for the foresight and stewardship of those who have gone before us.

I am honored to have been LEADS Chair for 2022-23. Organizationally, we continued our focus on Strategic Priorities, enhanced for 2022-2025. The four priorities included:

- #1: Aggressive and Targeted Business Attraction and Development Initiative with a Focus on Emerging and High-demand Sectors, Family-owned Business, and Supply Chain
- #2: A Competitive and Cost-effective Business Development Incentive Program with the Greatest Return on Investment
- #3: LEADS is a Driving Force in Launching a Regional Talent Attraction Initiative
- #4: Cheyenne LEADS Long-term Sustainability Strategy

We strategically sold land parcels to attract new business into our area and assisted Project Cosmo (now known as Meta!). In addition, we partnered with Freehouse Capital to make an equity investment in the former MRC Global building in the Cheyenne Business Parkway. This investment created a future revenue stream for LEADS without the challenges of serving as a landlord. We also advanced efforts on the previously discussed Commercial Owners Associations in our business parks, ensuring they are positioned to be self-sustaining into the future.

With an eye toward LEADS sustainability, we also initiated a small investment in Breakthrough 307. Not only did this allow us to better understand the potential for new revenue streams, but it also allowed us to support entrepreneurship and start-ups within our state.

These activities, together with other key initiatives, led to the Cheyenne LEADS Board of Directors being recognized as the Wyoming Economic Development Association's Economic Development Advocate of the Year.

As the impact of COVID began to recede, interest rate increases started in November 2022. While companies grew more cautious in their expansion and/or relocation plans, our LEADS team continued to market Laramie County. Betsey Hale, LEADS CEO, and our LEADS staff actively participated in speaking engagements, trade shows, and further strengthened relationships throughout the state.

In summary, the Cheyenne LEADS Board and staff continued to do a wonderful job of prioritizing goals and positioning us for future success. We are blessed to be part of 40 years, building on the wisdom, courage, and passion that others have contributed to LEADS. Thank you!

## 2023 - Keith Zabka



I began my tenure on the Board of Directors in 2018. It was, and continues to be, an exciting time for Cheyenne LEADS, as well as for the City of Cheyenne and Laramie County. Under the direction of CEO Betsy Hale, LEADS has made significant strides. As Betsy has often said, economic development is a marathon, not a sprint. It was a privilege to serve as Board Chair beginning in May 2023 during such a dynamic period.

During my tenure, I made two trips to California to meet with the Searing Industries team and tour their manufacturing plant. The time spent there was enjoyable, educational, and highly productive. Leadership also devoted considerable time to important initiatives, including budgets, the Hynds Building and The Hole, housing studies, a sports complex feasibility study, gambling studies, and evaluating Chinese bitcoin mining operations and their proximity to F.E. Warren Air Force Base. In addition, staff worked diligently to bring site selectors to Cheyenne Frontier Days. And yes, the Hynds Building and The Hole required significant attention. Leadership also made key decisions, including initiating an investment policy, determining how to invest land sale proceeds, and establishing a long term financial sustainability policy.

Many new ideas and business prospects became reality during this time. Even through a challenging period for Betsy, the staff stepped up, and I could not be more proud of the entire team. They work seamlessly together and consistently achieve the goals they set. It has been a true honor to work alongside Betsy and Rachelle Zimmerman. Keeping up with the two of them was no small task.

The team continued to grow stronger with several key hires. In December, Betsy hired Melissa Lightfoot as Operations Manager. In January, Rachelle brought on Rebecca Sanchez, a Wyoming native, as Marketing Manager. In February, Daunte Rushton joined in the newly created role of Director of Real Estate and Property Management, where he has assisted in finalizing the Commercial Owners Associations and worked with the City on common area landscape plans across all business parks.

My year as Chair was fast paced, with constant progress and new developments. That momentum has not slowed. LEADS continues to see Microsoft expand in Cheyenne. Project Cosmo contractors have mobilized, and construction is beginning. The High Plains Business Park will soon be filled with construction activity, followed by the addition of many permanent employees. LEADS has also partnered with Freehouse Capital on the Campstool property, creating both strong returns and opportunities for companies to locate quickly. Cheyenne is fortunate to have a LEADS team that works tirelessly to recruit businesses to the area.

I strongly believe that attracting new businesses is essential to keeping our young people in southeast Wyoming. Laramie County will benefit greatly from the continued growth and investment in our local economy.

In closing, I could not have asked for a better group to work with during my time as Chair. They provided the guidance and information needed in every situation and are committed to thorough preparation to ensure success. I look forward to watching LEADS continue to drive the prosperity of this great city.



Since 1986, the LEADS Board of Directors and the LEADS staff have truly embodied what “hard work” is all about.

This year, like any year, had successes to be celebrated and challenges to be overcome. An early challenge was a serious health issue faced by our CEO, Betsey Hale. But never fear, because of earlier planning by the Board and Betsey, LEADS’ succession plan was seamlessly activated. Rachelle Zimmerman stepped into a temporary CEO role while Betsey was out for several months on medical leave to aid in her full recovery. Our economic development efforts continued uninterrupted with the successful efforts of the staff through Rachelle, Duante, Melissa and Rebecca.

Serving on the LEADS Board, one quickly learns that economic development is a long game. Working over several years with the city, county and state, LEADS was thrilled to officially welcome Meta, known as Project Cosmo, to Cheyenne during this past year on their 750,000 square foot facility in the High Plains Business Park and LEADS continues to assist them with our project management services.

Our founding leaders recognized the importance of having shovel-ready land available to attract businesses and help businesses expand. Thanks to that foresight, LEADS was able to sell several parcels of land helping Microsoft increase their investment in Cheyenne as well as bringing another data center to the area.

Another major initiative of LEADS came out of the Board’s strategic planning retreat where priorities were developed for 2025-2027. They include:

Priority 1: Aggressive and Targeted Business Attraction

Priority 2: Development of a robust Business Retention and Expansion program to support existing businesses

Priority 3: Support Workforce Development, Talent Retention, and Talent Attraction efforts

Priority 4: Strengthen the Cheyenne LEADS Asset Management Strategy to ensure future economic development efforts are funded for the long term

The Board and staff were able to quickly begin working on Priority #4 with the assistance of a newly hired fractional CFO. His expertise has helped the Board refine its investment strategy and policies to best set up LEADS for a steady source of continued funding. This year’s land sales helped focus those strategic efforts. All the economic work completed this year and in past years, sets LEADS up for its most important work yet to come.

The efforts of LEADS and the Board can best be summed up by a quote from Stephen Covey – “Your most important work is always ahead of you, never behind you.” – Stephen Covey.

I look forward to witnessing even more of those positive outcomes!

## 2025 - Rich Bolkovatz



It has been an honor to serve as Chairman of Cheyenne LEADS during our 40th year. Reflecting on this milestone gives you a deep appreciation for the individuals who had the vision to start this organization and the dedication it took to build it into what it is today.

Throughout the year, the Board remained focused on the long view. We understand that the decisions we make today will shape Cheyenne's future for decades to come. It also becomes clear very quickly that this work is truly a team effort. Strong partnerships with the City, County, State, and—most importantly—our members have been central to LEADS' success. Over time, those partnerships have helped create places like the Cheyenne Business Parkway, North Range, Bison Business Park, and High Plains. These are more than business parks; they represent jobs, investment, and meaningful growth for our community.

As a Board, we also spent time considering what comes next. With that in mind, we've been intentional about bringing the next generation into leadership, including sons and daughters of past members. That continuity matters—it honors our history while welcoming new ideas, fresh perspectives, and long-term sustainability. Looking ahead, the opportunities before us are exciting. The launch of Progress and Prosperity 3: The Next Frontier positions LEADS to continue building on a strong foundation. I'm also particularly excited about the potential of the Hitching Post District and what thoughtful development there could mean for Cheyenne's future. I want to sincerely thank the LEADS staff for their dedication and day-to-day leadership. Their work keeps the organization moving forward. I also appreciate the Board, our investors, and our partners for their continued commitment and support.

It's been a great year to be part of Cheyenne LEADS. I'm proud of what we've accomplished together, and I'm confident the organization is well-positioned for what lies ahead.

# Jack Crews

CEO 1987 thru 2001



The early 80's in the Cheyenne community was an era of stale economic activity. There was little or no growth in employment nor new capital investment being made. To confront these discouraging economic problems, a small group of ambitious, visionary community leaders met to formulate an aggressive business recruitment strategy.

The early consensus of that group was to organize a new, independent business corporation that would be fleet-of-foot, aggressive and imaginative in developing and implementing bold, new strategies to energize the local economy.

Developing broadly-based community membership support evidenced by actual financial buy-in was critical in launching a new corporation known as Cheyenne LEADS. Strong support was validated by the generous membership financial contributions with the pledge to honor their three-year membership commitment. Additional critical funding was raised in subsequent years from a million-dollar grant solicited from the U.S. Economic Development Agency, however, dubbed as "Progress and Prosperity", the premiere monetary development was a professionally managed community fund drive that garnered approximately \$1.8 million dollars.

From the beginning, LEADS clearly recognized that it was essential to create a business park with utilities, interior streets, and access to the Interstate. All of that required "Big bucks and Time". The value of this effort was clearly validated at the end of three years when Sierra Trading Post committed to relocate from Nevada to own the first site in the Cheyenne Business Parkway.

The rest of the story lies in the subsequent stellar success of LEADS. Wide-spread new, well-paying jobs have been created and continue to increase regularly. Multi-billion-dollar investments are on-going. Housing construction is dynamic. The Cheyenne Business Parkway cannot be recognized from the raw, native pastures when LEADS began their project.

While it's been forty years in the making, join me in taking a good, long look at this Cheyenne community. The vision, goals and objectives of that original Board of Directors came to fruition.

As a native son of this truly impressive community, I am humbled, yet proud, to have had the opportunity to contribute to the start-up of LEADS, and, we had the distinct advantage of having my wife, Tuda, involved as a supportive, contributing partner in LEADS activities.

The stars seemed to align for me in 1987; I left a career in banking and had a deep commitment to the community that I so love. I had the benefit of several years of involvement in the political realm and in diverse activities in the community. It was time for me to pay back for all that I had been given.

I thought my LEADS involvement would be short-term, and just to help get started. Not only did we get started, we hit some home runs! Fourteen years later in 2001, I retired from the most rewarding experience of my life.



# Randy Bruns

Vice President of LEADS 1999, CEO 2002 thru 2020



As Cheyenne LEADS celebrates 40 years since its founding, I think it is appropriate for the Cheyenne and Laramie County community to take a few moments to recognize the accomplishments of that organization. It also is an opportunity to reflect on some of the dynamics behind Cheyenne LEADS' success.

Above all else, Cheyenne LEADS is the organizational embodiment of this community's intentions to pursue economic development and expand opportunities for its citizens.

In the depths of a regional economic depression, business and community leaders came together to acknowledge that past efforts were not working and something new and more comprehensive must be tried. After researching other communities' efforts and assessing local resources and constraints, a private, nonprofit corporation was formed to have a paid professional staff and to focus single-mindedly on economic development. Cheyenne LEADS was born.

Although I doubt the founders, or subsequent boards, thought of LEADS in these terms, but from the outset, Cheyenne LEADS has been, and still is, a "learning organization." The founders looked at what worked and what didn't in other communities and adapted that to local needs and resources. They then transitioned from being the implementors to serving as a corporate board of directors providing oversight and developing resources for a professional staff that was hired and tasked with implementation.

Every project that LEADS has been involved with has provided additional opportunity for learning. What worked? Why? What didn't work, what was lacking? Those lessons are incorporated into the development of additional resources and methodologies. That has, among other things, helped LEADS to adjust to an increasingly rapidly changing marketing and information environment and to increasingly sophisticated public and corporate requirements.

Central to LEADS' success is the fact that it is a private, not-for-profit corporation but with a clear community economic development mandate. As a private entity it can take risks that public entities cannot, and that for-profit businesses will not, but often those risks are necessary for successful development. During the complex effort to create a second business park and to secure a specific major food distribution center, LEADS had to take a huge financial risk. After difficult discussions, the LEADS board voted to proceed with full understanding of that risk. Ultimately the Walmart grocery distribution center was secured, and the North Range Business Park was created. The development of that park created a resource for the next level of recruitment, most notably NCAR, then Microsoft.

While economic development can appear random and coincidental, it rarely is. Rather, it is the result of "in the trenches" work and thoughtful, often very long term, planning and focused effort. Even as the NRBP was under development, an effort was underway to understand state and area strengths and resources. It was apparent that Wyoming was generating a lot more electricity than it was consuming within the state. Along with the Wyoming Business Council, LEADS looked at ways to "value add" Wyoming's power resource locally. That led to thinking about the new technologies that were creating increased need for data and then looking at data centers as "factories" that consumed electricity to produce that data. These data factories also required access to substantial long-haul fiber optic pathways. Mostly unseen, but hugely significant, Laramie County had, and has, amazing long-haul fiber. Thus began a conscious effort to understand, then attract, this growing industrial

sector. This wasn't entirely new to LEADS. Echo Star was an early recruit to the Cheyenne Business Parkway and was expanding its data capabilities, as was Green House Data, also in the CBP. Then came the 3 plus year NCAR effort, followed by the first, but far from last, Microsoft data center. That economic development initiative, with its roots extending back over a quarter of a century, continues to deliver results almost unimaginable when it was first conceived.

I was hired as Vice President of LEADS more than a decade after its founding and I had the good fortune to work with Jack Crews for just over two years before his retirement. Those two years were pivotal as Jack readily shared the lessons learned and the successes and deficiencies of LEADS first decade. For nearly twenty years thereafter, I had the privilege to head the organization that was chartered to deliver effective and rational economic development for the citizens of Laramie County. I am proud of our accomplishments over those two decades. And it is with satisfaction and excitement that I watch the continued growth of resources, potential, and substantial economic development delivery as the current LEADS team, headed by Betsey Hale, begins its 5th decade of service to Cheyenne, Laramie County, and the State of Wyoming.

As mayors and councils and commissioners and governors and business leaders change in four—and eight-year cycles, the throughline for local economic development has been Cheyenne LEADS, notably with only three executive officers at the helm in forty years. Hats off to the founders, to the community and business leaders who believe in and support economic development, and to 40 years of superior service by the Cheyenne LEADS Board of Directors.



# Betsey Hale

CEO April 13, 2020 through present



After reading Jack and Randy's letters, I realized I am still in the trenches. They have the benefit of looking back and I am tasked with keeping it all going. As I write this, we are working on a development agreement to relocate the Professional Rodeo Cowboy Association Hall of Fame and Museum as well as the Headquarters of the association.

Your LEADS Team member, Rachele Zimmerman, Director of Business Recruitment and Retention, is busy working with 23 active prospects and there are 4 existing employer projects in the queue. Rachele is leading the search for a new Marketing Manager as Rebecca Sanchez will be heading to Louisiana in May. Rachele has also been busy visiting existing employers, meeting with economic development partners and attending economic development training.

A new position LEADS created in 2022 was the Director of Real Estate and Property Management. This role has taken on responsibility for oversight of LEADS owned and managed business parks and coordinating the Commercial Owners Associations. Daunte Rushton holds this position and in addition to management of the parks he manages construction projects that LEADS works on for companies such as Microsoft and Meta. Melissa Lightfoot, Operations

Manager, assists Daunte in this work and she oversees LEADS' day to day financials and operations. LEADS continues the tradition of having a high functioning and results oriented team.

In 2025 the LEADS Board hired a Fractional CFO. This position was required as we started selling land at market rate prices. Land sales from 2020-2024 totaled over \$32 million. This nest egg has been wisely invested and will be a new tool in LEADS economic development toolbox. Some of the funds will be used to help build a third LEADS-owned park called the Hitching Post District. The PRCA project will be the cornerstone resident in the new park. What we envision today is a 415-acre mixed use development that will feature a hotel and convention center, indoor arena, restaurants and retail that compliment the PRCA and celebrate and honor the rich history of the Hitching Post Hotel and Convention Center that was sadly demised in 2022.

LEADS is an organization rooted in tradition and bootstrapping. This tradition continues today as we will launch Progress and Prosperity 3: The Next Frontier. The \$5 million campaign will support the development of infrastructure in the Hitching Post District and provide funding for large capital projects in downtown Cheyenne along with community development. If history repeats itself, we will raise more than \$5 million and continue to leverage financial resources from the City, County and State to continue to attract jobs and capital investment to grow our tax base and continue the LEADS tradition of the taking the long-term view to make economic progress happen.

One important piece of work we started in 2021 is a return on investment study. The 2020 LEADS Board wanted to see if using land as an incentive really worked. Well, the 2025 results are in and for every dollar that was spent on the land in CBP and NRBP as well as the cost of infrastructure, \$8.10 comes back to Wyoming on an annual basis. We are including the three-year comparison with my letter as I want to ensure future generations know the power of people coming together to dream, work hard and share their talent and treasure to achieve great things in their community. All the Best for the next 40 years.

# The Impacts of Supporting Economic Development

## Laramie County, Wyoming



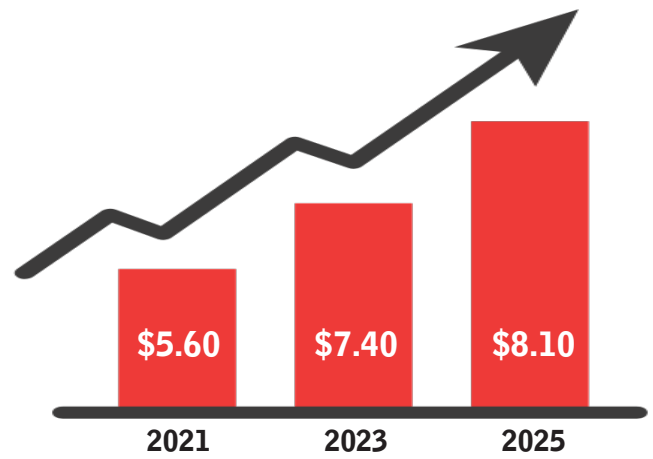
College of Business  
Center for Business  
and Economic Analysis



Cheyenne LEADS, a nonprofit located in Laramie County, offers free and discounted land as an economic development incentive to facilitate job creation, spur economic growth, and expand the local tax base.

### Return-On-Investment (ROI)

>> For every \$1 provided as a land incentive, Laramie County and the State of Wyoming received a net gain of \$5.60 in 2021, \$7.40 in 2023, and \$8.10 in 2025 in the form of fiscal revenue.



### 2025 Annual Economic Impacts | \$236M Total Value Added

1,971 Direct jobs	1,411 Indirect & Induced jobs
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- >> 3,382 Total Supported Jobs
- >> \$152M Total Labor Income

### 2023 Annual Economic Impacts | \$228M Total Value Added

1,951 Direct jobs	1,222 Indirect & Induced jobs
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- >> 3,173 Total Supported Jobs
- >> \$144M Total Labor Income

### 2021 Annual Economic Impacts | \$213M Total Value Added

1,788 Direct jobs	1,828 Indirect & Induced jobs
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- >> 3,616 Total Supported Jobs
- >> \$124M Total Labor Income

These results are based on applied research projects prepared in 2021, 2023, and 2025 for Cheyenne LEADS by the Center for Business and Economic Analysis (CBEA) at the University of Wyoming. To account for companies locating in Cheyenne regardless of the incentive, only a portion of the benefit (fiscal revenue) was assigned to the cost (incentive). This portion was determined based on company and project attributes, since the economic development literature shows that certain characteristics (e.g., operations in multiple locations) increase the likelihood that an incentive will impact business investment decisions. For more information, contact [cbea@uwyo.edu](mailto:cbea@uwyo.edu).

## Past Cheyenne LEADS Board Members 1986 - April 2026

Includes Appointed, Elected and Ex-officio. If you know of a missing board member please let us know.

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Alexander, Kim	Dugger, Vicki	Holmes, Buck	McCraken, Mike
Amick, Melissa	Dyekman, Greg	Holyfield, Kaley	McGee, Michl
Anderson, Bruce	Edwards, Bill	Hostetter, John	McGill, Drew
Applegate, James	Elahi, Irfan	Howard, Paul	McIntosh, John
Ashworth, Renee	Eldred, David	Hruby, Dixie	McKen, Dustin
Atwell, Larry	Ellis, Affie	Humphrey, Diane	McSchooler, Jeff
Bader, Stan	Ellis, Dennis	Imig, Gary	Mecca, Sue
Barth, Tim	Emerich, Fred	Interdonato, Rich	Mecca, Sue
Bass, Tom	Emmons, Brad	Jensen, Bob	Meier, Scott
Bellotti, Paul	Engelhart, Ron	Jo Gilbert, Dema Jo	Mickey, Chris
Bentley, Aaron	Erickson, Don	Joannides, Tim	Miller, David
Bill, Scribner	Finch, Doug	Johnson, David	Morrow, Phil
Birleffi, Lynn	Fitzpatrick, Ryan	Jr., W.M. Stalcup	Murphy, Jim "Murph"
Bloom, Charles	Ford, Randy	Jung, Jared	Murphy, Randy
Bohlen, Charles	Fornstrom, Justin	Jung, Mathias	Murray, Ed
Bohlen, Chuck	Foss, Stan	Kailey, Ron	Nelson, A. Bryant
Bolkovatz, Rich	Freadenthal, Steve	Kane, Tom	Nelson, Ann
Bonds, Barbara	Gates, Jon	Karsten, Margo	Newton, Stephen
Boomgaarden, Lynne	Georges, Ed	Kaysen, Rick	Nigh, John
Bowers, James	Graham, Brad	Keizer, Sharon	Oliver, Gary
Bradshaw, Tim	Graham, Rob	Ketcham, Jeff	Olson, Jerry
Bravo, Domenic	Griffith, Noel	Knudson, Jack	Orr, Marian
Bresson, Chuck	Gross, Brian	Koehler, Bob	Ortiz, Manuel
Brimmer Kunz, April	Gross, John	Kramer, Brandon	Ottoes, Jim
Brown, Chad	Gross, John	Kranz, Ken	Paintner, Kevin
Bruns, Randy	Hallingbye, Stig	Lance, Ryan	Paiz, Joe
Bryant, Brian	Hammon, Darrel	Lance, Ryan	Palm, Rory
Burgess, Matt	Hanefeld, Dave	Lewis, Rex	Pando, Leo
Burke, Kevin	Harding, George Ann	Lewis, Vickie	Panico, Paul
Burkett, Kevin	Hardy, Christofer	Lindly, Daniel	Pappenheim, Bob
Byrnes, Jack	Harker, Jim	Loghry, Jerry J	Parsons, Mark
Cassidy, Teri	Haring, Dave	Lopez, Ronnie	Pearl, Mona
Cauley, Dennis	Harmon, Bob	Lousberg, Sister Mary	Pearl, Mona
Ceballos, Mike	Harms, Charles	Lovas, Steve	Peck, Bob
Clay, John	Harris, Kevin	Lovett, Brian	Peterson, Del
Collins, Patrick	Hearne, Jim	Lovett, Kim	Pierantoni, Justin
Covello, Tony	Heithoff, Brian	Madigan, Patrick	Pietsch, Jon
Cowley, Scott	Helzer, Jim	Malm, Gunner	Plummer, Gary
Creel, Jim	Hendon, Darci	Malm, Jody	Pomeroy, Cindy
Crilly, Tim	Hickey, Paul	Malm, Kirsten	Pope, David
Cruz, Dominick	Higgins, Pat	Marquardt, John	Pope, Jeff
Dancliff, Randy	Hill, Brian	Marquette, Sandy	Pope, Matt
Davies, Tim	Hinderman, Scott	Marrou, Brandy	Powers, J. Michael
Dick, Christian	Hirsig, Tom	Marschner, Janet	Powis, Shaun
Dowling, Mike	Hoflund, Selina	Marwick, Rob	Preiss, Jack
Dugas, Ken	Hollingshead, Don		Pritzel, Loren L

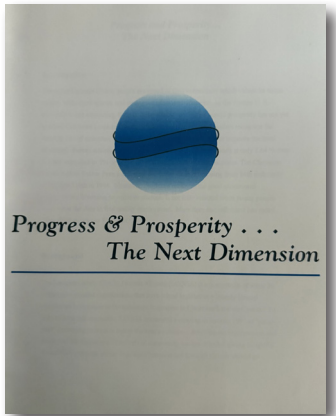
Radomicki, Sharon  
Ray, Mike  
Reeves, Doug  
Renee, Swisher  
Richardson, Keith  
Rinne, Trey  
Roberts, Dixie  
Robertson, Jeff  
Rogers, Catherine  
Roling, Robin  
Rookstool, Bryon  
Routh, Jared  
Routh, Jered  
Rudloff, Darren  
Ruppert, Mark  
Ryerson, Carey  
Sample, Rolinda  
Sarne, Luke  
Schaeffer, Gary  
Schaffer, Joe  
Scherr, Julie

Schoene, Lori  
Schroll, John  
Scribner, William  
Seitz, Larry  
Shaffer, Phil  
Shaffer, Phil  
Shenefield, Jason  
Shippy, Larry D  
Siebert, Jeff  
Sims, Barry  
Simsik, Balint  
Sisneros, Rachael  
Sloan-Cathcart, Connie  
Smith, Leo  
Smith, Paul  
Spiker, Jack  
Stalcup, Jan  
Steenbergen, Dale  
Stege, Mark  
Steil, John  
Steph, Teubner

Stephenson, Joe  
Stewart, Georgiana  
Strasheim, Bob  
Strickland, Dale  
Stuckey, Tom  
Surbrugg, Sandra  
Surdam, Amy  
Sutherland, Kim  
Swisher, Renee  
Tebo, Maureen  
Tetlow, Chris  
Teubner, Stephanie  
Thomas, Matt  
Thompson, Troy  
Thomson, Bill  
Torvik, Stan  
Tupper, Heather  
Van Horn, Phil Van  
Van Patton, Sam Van  
Voeller, Jim  
Walker, Scott

Weatherly, Gord  
Weber, Christine  
Welte, Shirley  
West, Leigh  
White, Diane  
Wickman, Gary  
Wiederspahn, Annaliese  
Wigington, Yvonne  
Willets, Bob  
Williams, Mike  
Winegar, Natalie  
Winington, Yvonne  
Wolfe, Larry  
Womack, Bob  
Woodard, Rhonda  
Woodhouse, Gay  
Yount, Nicole  
Zaback, Mark  
Zabka, Keith  
Zimmerman, Scott





### **Progress & Prosperity I - The Next Dimension**

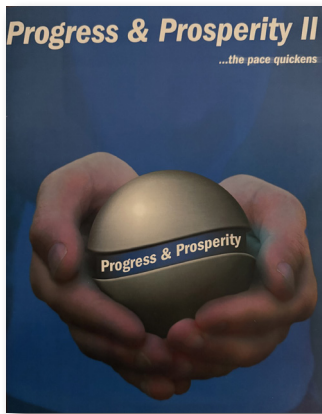
1998-2001: Donation Years 4-year campaign

**Funds raised - \$1,642,385**

Smallest Pledge: \$25

Largest Pledge: \$140,000

Average Pledge: \$2,195



### **Progress & Prosperity II - The Pace Quickens**

2004-2008: Donation Years 5-year campaign

**Funds raised: \$3,919,842**

Smallest Pledge: \$20

Largest Pledge: \$500,000

Average Pledge: \$14,358

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### **Progress & Prosperity 3 - The Next Frontier**

2026 - 2030

Goal: \$5,000,000

