

WORD document attached titled: Fremont County Tourism Impact final.doc

Photo attached titled: WRVC Web_09-200.jpg

Note: Higher resolution image available upon request.

Photo Caption: *The Wind River Visitors Council markets its website to attract vacation inquiries from around the world, and to support our tourism economy.*

Photo Credit: Wyoming's Wind River Country

Fremont County Contributes Millions to State Tourism Economy



In honor of National Tourism Week, May 9-17, the Wind River Visitors Council, (Fremont County's Lodging Tax board), is providing economic information on county tourism. Tourism is Wyoming's second largest industry after energy. According to Wyoming Travel and Tourism, it's a \$2.87 billion industry that supported 30,540 jobs statewide in 2008. Without the revenue generated by tourists, each household in

Wyoming would have to pay an additional \$527 in taxes to maintain the equivalent in current state and local tax revenues.

Tourism in Fremont County has been growing rapidly since the late 1990s. In 1997, Fremont County was receiving \$66 million in spending from leisure travelers. In 2007, travelers spent \$122.5 million in Fremont County, which shows traveler spending has almost doubled in the past decade. Overall, Fremont County ranked 8th out of 23 counties in total travel spending dollars in Wyoming.

The total travel-generated sales tax distributed to Fremont County in 2007 was \$2.3 million, which is almost 8% of Fremont County's total state sales tax distribution. In 2007, our tourism industry in Fremont County employed 1500 jobs directly related to travel and hospitality, and these employees earned \$37 million dollars in wages that flowed into our county's economy.

Lander:

According to Scott Goetz, Executive Director, Lander Area Chamber of Commerce, "Over the last 10 years, tourism has steadily grown in Lander and has become one of the most important factors in economic development in this community. The retail segment has continued to expand providing more options not only for tourists but also for residents. The lodging industry has continued to develop and by February, 2010, the Holiday Inn Express will provide much needed additional lodging space and lodging tax

dollars for continued tourism development. The new Lander Pioneer Museum and the Museum of the American West have created cultural options for our visitors, as have the development of great annual events like the Fremont Toyota Lander Brew Festival that attracted 1000 out of town visitors, and the Heart of the West Invitational Art Show and Sale that brings in artists and patrons from throughout the Western U.S.”

Dubois:

June Bonasara, Director, Dubois Main Street, Inc., said, “Dubois welcomes cultural heritage travelers to experience and share our history, wildlife and authentic western culture. Whether it’s staying at a guest ranch, attending a rodeo, participating in a pack trip, shopping in the towns’ shops and galleries, dining in our restaurants and cafés, soaking up the local history ranging from the ancient indigenous peoples, settlers and wildlife to homesteaders, outlaws and Scandinavian tie hacks, we offer a multitude of top-notch travel options. All this in a town of less than 1000 residents.”

Bonasera continued, “With articles and websites calling us An Authentic Western Town, Where the Old West Lives On, and one of the 20 Best Places to Live in the West, that speaks strongly about our appeal as a Destination Community. With the perfect combination of proximity to Yellowstone, culture, and cowboy history, Dubois is unique. We pride ourselves on our hospitality and encourage travelers to come and linger...as one of our residents likes to say, ‘Dubois is as beautiful a place as there is on earth.’ ”

According to Norma Williamson, Director, Dubois Museum/Wind River Historical Center, "Tourism is what Dubois is all about these days, and those of us who have increased our advertising budget and advertised cooperatively with other businesses have seen a dramatic growth in business despite high gas prices. Since 2003, the Dubois Museum has more than tripled our advertising budget and we have seen our visitor numbers increase from 3,000 in 2003 to over 10,000 in 2008. Our visitors stay in local motels, eat in local restaurants, and spend money in local businesses. When we thrive, they thrive.”

Riverton:

Jim Davis, Executive Director, Riverton Chamber of Commerce, commented, “Even with the economic slow down, the number of requests for vacation packets at the Riverton Chamber of Commerce from people who wish to visit the Riverton area has continued to increase daily. Since the first of the year, the Chamber has sent out nearly 200 visitation packets and the number increases daily. Almost a third of these requests asked for both vacation and relocation guides. It seems that the requests are from people that live closer and don't have as far to travel. People are still planning vacations and wanting to visit Wind River Country, but just not going to travel as far.”

Wind River Indian Reservation:

In a Wyoming Travel and Tourism survey of the most popular destinations and marketable trips in Wyoming, the Wind River Indian Reservation received 5% identification, which ranks the highest of all Fremont County destinations surveyed. Tourism infrastructure is being created on the Reservation through casinos, private

tourism businesses, and tribally supported organizations like the Northern Arapaho Tourism and Information Committee, and the Eastern Shoshone Tribal Cultural Center. A recent Wind River Business Conference focused a day of workshops and speakers on growing the Reservation economy through tourism development.

Wind River Visitors Council:

Statewide, the popularity of scenic drives, wildlife viewing and backpacking are ranked high by visitors. Fremont County is well represented in what tourists like to do including visiting a state or national park, scenic drives, wildlife watching, hiking or backpacking, or visiting Native American sites. These activities ranked in the top 20% for Fremont County.

Paula McCormick, Marketing Director for the Wind River Visitors Council, stated, "Fremont County's overall economy is very dependent on tourism. And, we as residents would not have nearly as many amenities like good restaurants and well-maintained state parks if it weren't for the economic support of the tourism industry. The Wind River Visitors Council continues to see increases in requests for information, and more visitors to our website. While the economy may be suffering, we are still part of many people's dream vacation, and we continue to see travelers who are passionate about their trip to Wyoming's Wind River Country." For a complete economic impact report, visit www.wyomingbusiness.org. To learn more about what Wind River Country has to offer, or to request a vacation packet, please visit us at <http://www.wind-river.org>

-end-