

SUMMARY

Roundtable Proceedings

September 22 -24, 1985

UCROSS FOUNDATION

"Tourism, Recreation and
Travel in Wyoming"

With Grateful Acknowledgement

To Martha Thomas
for the many hours volunteered
to record, review and assimilate
these Roundtable proceedings

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ROUNDTABLE

on

TOURISM, RECREATION, AND TRAVEL IN WYOMING

September 22 - 24, 1985

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WHAT ARE THE ASSETS OF WYOMING WHICH GIVE PROMISE TO TOURISM, TRANSPORTATION AND RECREATION WITHIN THE STATE?

The assets of Wyoming include:

natural resources and a four-season climate which fosters out-of-doors year-round recreational opportunities:
mountains and foothills which provide
downhill and cross-country skiing
snowmobiling
hiking
mountain climbing
horseback riding;
streams, rivers, and lakes which provide
fishing
canoeing, boating, white-water rafting
water skiing and wind surfing;
grasslands which support wildlife and provide
big game and bird hunting opportunities;
wilderness areas which provide
camping and hiking, and
pristine, "hands on" experiences;
natural scenic beauty, enhanced by open spaces and clean air,
which includes
two national parks: Yellowstone and the Grand Tetons,

two national monuments: Devil's Tower and Fossil
Butte,

two national recreational areas: Big Born Canyon and
Flaming Gorge,

one national historic site: Fort Laramie, and
many national forests;

ancient geological formations and archeological sites which
provide opportunities for study in land and rock formations
and artifacts.

- a rich historical Western heritage that includes:
 - historical personalities, events, sites and trail associated with
the native American culture and
the development of the West by white settlers;
 - a Western life style which includes the images generally
associated with cattlemen, cowboys, Indians, farmers and
sheepmen, because Wyoming's life style was authentically
formed by these influences.

These factors contribute greatly to the development of cultural advantages such
as:

- the Buffalo-Cody Museum,
- Cheyenne Frontier Days,
- the Grand Teton Art Festival,
- Indian Pow-wows,
- Mountain Rendezvous,
- County and State fairs, rodeos, and museums, and
- Western art and sculpture.

Other assets include:

- an in-place transportation system of interstate and state highways and railroads,
- opportunities for the development of the mining industry and working ranches into tourist sight-seeing attractions,
- a friendly populace,
- convention centers, such as the Casper Events Center and the Campbell County Campiex, and
- a responsive state government.

WHAT SPECIFIC NEEDS/PLANS/GOALS WHICH, WITH CREATIVE AND CO-OPERATIVE LEADERSHIP, MIGHT ENHANCE TOURISM, TRANSPORTATION OR RECREATION FOR WYOMING?

There exists

- a need to have a central co-ordinating mechanism (perhaps the Wyoming Travel Commission) that could provide strategically placed information centers equipped with cassettes, electronic media ("touch and go"), and audio-visual materials which present available tourist opportunities in Wyoming;
provide packaged tours and a central reservation service;
provide brochures which plot a historic tour of Wyoming and maps which are accurate and all-inclusive of Wyoming cities;
support national TV and radio promotional programs.
- the need for a major attraction in Wyoming such as a Heritage Center, a Smithsonian of the West and/or an Indian Hall of Fame.
- a need to develop experience-based vacations through a short-line railroad trip, through access and directions to historical sites such as
Bole-in-the-Wall,
Indian Wars,
Wagon Trails,
Teapot Dome, and
Signature Rock.

through historical re-enactments or outdoor pageants at
historical sites and state parks, and
funded by
co-operative efforts between the public and private sector,
and/or
inter-agency co-operation.

This action could provide a quality experience for Wyoming
visitors.

a need for market research to prioritize and target tourist markets.

This calls for consideration to be given to
what Wyoming people want their state to become,
how to maintain and protect the pristine natural resources during
a developmental growth of businesses in Wyoming, and
the exploration of international markets.

a need for state-wide hospitality training regarding guests needs
through curriculum opportunities in high schools, community
colleges, and the University of Wyoming and/or
through a mobile unit which travels throughout the state.

Assurance needs to be given to Wyoming residents that tourists
represent no threat to their quality of life, for they are
not a permanent element of the state.

a need to provide consumer oriented signing along the roadways of
Wyoming (Interstate and state highways).

Other concerns, needs and goals discussed but briefly seated were:

- promotion of vacations for Wyoming residents
_____ such as photographic safaris
or a country music festival,
- development of alternative attractions to Yellowstone and the Grand
Tetons, such as the
non-consumptive use of wildlife
the development of other regional historical or geologic sites,
co-ordination of our tourist efforts with neighboring states,
making entry into the state a pleasurable experience, and
improvement in the air transportation system.

LIST THREE TO FIVE SPECIFIC FOCUSED PLANS OF ACTION WHICH CAN MAKE A POSITIVE, CONSTRUCTIVE DIFFERENCE IN THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TOURISM, TRANSPORTATION, OR RECREATION FOR WYOMING.

Some specific ideas for the development of effective tourism are:

- the promotion of wildlife attractions throughout the state.
- the formation of informational attractions and exhibits about historical personalities.
- the further development of seasonal entertainment, especially family oriented.
- the establishment of state informational centers and the development of effective marketing systems for what is already available.
- the redirection of financial resources back to tourism.
- focusing Travel Commission publicity on key themes of Wyoming tourism.
- the placement of informational computer video screens at key points in state.
- the provision of "pleasant entry" stops at entries into the state.
the provision of a co-ordinating agency for community tourism inventory to feed into.
- the implementation of a campaign to promote Wyoming at home.
- the establishment of state-wide highway signing which might take the form of a "Traveler's Information System" through audio markers.
- the renovation and/or upgrading of ports of entry as visitor centers.
the development of state historical and/or scenic trail/lodging systems, especially Centennial Trails (a capital intensive idea).

- the development of one to four day passenger loop railway systems to provide "hands on" experiences (a capital intensive idea),
- the development of a major attraction in Wyoming, such as "the world's largest water slide/flume" (from Powder River Pass to Buffalo!)
- the development of a comprehensive educational program for tourism at the high school, community college and University level.
- the development of an Intrastate Tour Guide - " Tailored Tours of the Wyoming Experience" - from which a menu of wildlife/scenic/historical attractions could be selected.
- the development of a means of packaging these tours tailored to the Intrastate attractions and the tourists specific interests.
- the development of a mechanism/network for promoting (selling) these tailored tours (e.g., "You've seen the Northwest quarter of Wyoming - now, it's time to start on the other three!")

HOSPITALITY BUSINESS TRAINING

Goal: To develop, adopt, and implement within the Wyoming educational system a program that would provide training for Wyoming residents in hospitality, business, and the various auxiliary services that accompany Wyoming tourism and lifestyle.

The purpose of this private/public, self-help action would be to prepare Wyoming-raised, Wyoming trained employees for an expanded tourism industry.

Formal schooling could consist of

- a major in hotel/restaurant management with a minor in Wyoming heritage at the University level.
- an associate degree at the community college level, in hospitality business training with multi-disciplinary studies in such subjects as history, horse management, and bookkeeping, to equip the graduate for specialized aspects of Wyoming tourism.
- a multi-faceted course offering, during the last quarter of each of the last three years in high school, in courtesy training, local history, and money management. This program could utilize local resource people from the private sector.

Other methods for educating the general populace might consist of extension-type educational resources such as

- Chambers of Commerce which provide training in local history and attractions.

a traveling mobil unit provided by each community college and/or the University of Wyoming Department of Education which provides audio-visual teaching and informational materials for adults.

programs and workshops in hospitality techniques to be given by concerned facilitating entities such as the Ucross Foundation.

Leaders in this effort would be:

Chambers of Commerce and tourism associations in concert with state-sponsored encouragement from the Governor and legislators.

Participants:

Proponents:

existing groups interested in expanding Wyoming tourism such as Wyoming Travel Commission in co-operation with the Community College Commission Wyoming Hotel/Motel Association local tourism industry leaders Universitl of Wyoming Wyoming Department of Education local school districts.

Opponents:

"no growth" people

teachers and others whose jobs might be threatened by budget

trade-offs

local school superintendents and others reluctant to

accommodate Wyoming's changing needs.

Neutrals:

students

general public

non-tourist-oriented industries.

Initial notification/organization:

A private sector, or grass-roots leadership to work, if possible,

through the Wyoming Tourism Policy Committee to research:

what courses are currently available that could be adopted;

what appropriate additions in curriculum might be made;

what schools could best undertake them, and

perhaps start a pilot program in one county.

Wyoming Tourism Policy Committee would then present the findings

to the:

Wyoming Education Association,

Wyoming Department of Education,

University of Wyoming, and

the Community College System.

WHEN:

- After the Wyoming Futures, Conference on October 19th in Casper, using the SRI Report to focus attention on this need.

HOW:

- the Wyoming Department of Education would develop guide lines for curriculum changes and additions.
- Chambers of Commerce would develop their own individual teaching programs.
- the Governor and legislators would lend initial verbal support to the process.

The process might be conceived as follows:

- The Wyoming Tourism Policy Complittee could develop a presentation based upon the SRI Report to convince the Wyoming Department of Education of the wisdom of the policy and curriculum changes.
- The Wyoming Tourism Policy Committee could host a Roundtable at the Ucross Foundation for participants from the Department of Education, the Wyoming Education Association, the University of Wyoming and the Community Colleges to design an educational program which would enhance Wyoming tourism.

Time frame:

- January, 1986, form study groups to define the curriculum.
- September, 1986, begin the courses of study on the high school level.
- Approximately a three year period for the Community Colleges to develop a complete multi-disciplinary program for a Commerce and Industry Department/Degree with input from the Agriculture Department.
- Approximately a four to five year period for the University of Wyoming to develop a School of Hospitality Management which would offer a B.A. degree to complement the state's tourism requirements.

Assistance and enhancement:

- The Governor and legislators could set the tone for a state-wide community effort.
- Assistance from the private sector through teacher participation and endowments.
- Legislative assistance from the public budget. However, rather than additions to the curriculum, perhaps a restructuring or emphasis on existing inter-disciplinary programs would suffice.

Hindrances:

- secondary- and university-level political budget trade-offs.

Anticipated results:

- This suggested educational programming is a timely reflection of Wyoming's needs.
- It presents an opportunity to produce trained Wyoming people for Wyoming jobs in an expanding industry.
- A positive, donstructive attitude is needed for its success.

PLEASANT ENTRY CENTERS

GOAL: To develop pleasant entry centers which encourage visitors to take advantage of more opportunities while traveling in Wyoming.

A slogan which captures this idea is:

"LOCALIZED, PERSONALIZED, ADVERTISING!"

A mandatory stop for people entering Wyoming is a desirable ingredient of this goal.

COMMENTS: A resource for information in analyzing the economic problems and regional trends of the North American Continent from Mexico to Alaska is a book entitled The Nine Nations of North America by Joel Gaurreau.

Mr. Gaurreau does not solve any problems; he only points out what they are, and it seems that the Wyoming Futures Project begins to answer the questions raised in that book.

Joel Gaurreau, as a Washington Post editor, began to notice several regional trends as he gathered his correspondence from all over North America over a period of fifteen years. For instance, the part of North America in which Wyoming is located he labeled as "the Empty Corridor", and, later, as Mr Gaurreau did more detailed research, was renamed the "the National Sacrifice Area". These labels indicate that though Wyoming has vast resources, it does not have the population base and therefore the political force to control its own economic destiny. Decisions about this "Empty Rocky Mountain Corridor" are

made elsewhere in major capitals such as Los Angeles, San Francisco and Chicago. They are not made in Wyoming! The Wyoming Futures Project seems to be addressing that issue by attempting to provide a process to begin to make policies rather than adhere to policies made in other places.

Leaders in this effort would be

- from the public sector
the Wyoming Travel Commission
- from the private sector
the Wyoming Tourism Policy Commission, composed of
representatives from each of
the state Travel Commissions and representatives from
the various tourism industries in the state.

Participants:

- Proponents:
local Chambers of Commerce
tourist industries
Wyoming Recreational Commission
museums and archives
Game and Fish Commission
Centennial Committee
Wyoming Highway Commission
State Planning Co-ordinator.

- Opponents:
 - other organizations or groups who would be competing for the same public funds
 - the "common people": those people who have misconceptions of the project or are not a part of the decision-making process (e.g., Keith Goodenough's letter to the Casper Star-Tribune, September 22, 1985)

Initial notification/organization:

- the Wyoming Policy Council
- the Wyoming Travel Commission

WHEN:

- In the Spring of 1986, after the legislature has met.

WHERE:

- At the Wyoming Tourism Policy Council and the Wyoming Travel Commission meetings in the Spring.

Steps in the process include:

- A lobbying of the appropriate councils, commissions and legislators.
- Legislation
- Planning of the project including architectural designs and cost analysis.
- Construction
- Staffing and stocking (literature)

Time frame:

- Between now and 1987:
The lobbying process which would involve input into the General Session of the Legislature which meets in odd years; therefore, the 1987 Session is the logical place to begin.
- In January, 1988:
Acquire funding for the project during the budget planning session.
- Between Spring, 1988, and Spring, 1989:
Precise planning and construction.
- In the Summer and Fall of 1989:
Staffing and stocking (literature) of Centers.
- 1990:
The grand opening of the Centers for the Centennial Celebration.

The positive enhancement of this project can take place if the following occurs:

- involvement from the grass-roots level which includes active committees formed from private tourism industries, and
- constant lobbying of the private sector.

Hindrances will include all of the special interest groups who are competing for the same state funds.

Alliance and neutralization would be sought through the Wyoming Tourism Policy Council.

There are alternatives to this mandatory entry stop, but, perhaps they would not be as effective. One such alternative is the placement of visitor centers at major points of interest, with parking and maps which locate the points of interest then provide corresponding numbered pamphlets.

To "kick off" this program, it will be necessary to attend the October 8th meeting of the Wyoming Tourism Policy Council.

COMMENTS: This plan presents a feasibility problem because the federal law does not permit the detaining of a citizen unless there is some threat to public welfare, health or safety. Otherwise, it is a violation of basic human rights. In Wyoming, even traffic surveys must be placed off the main highways. California can do this as a public health protection because of its fruit production.

One key to the success of this plan is the attractiveness of the entry stop. Perhaps facilities for eating, restrooms, a sanitary dump station or a camping area will entice people to stop.

The success or failure of this program does not rest on whether it requires a mandatory stop. It's important to remember that, if all of the old techniques would work, this meeting would not be in progress. It is important to keep an open mind and to challenge anything that keeps the goal from being reached even if it is a federal law.

Perhaps a gift packet could also be used as an incentive for stopping at a center.

QUESTION: Are you planning to use the present centers?

Can they be adopted and used?

Are they on the right side of the road?

COMMENTS: It should be noted that some projects of this nature are in progress now:

- Funds have been appropriated, architectural plans have been completed and construction is to begin soon on the new Evanston Travel Information Center.
- The funding for the Travel Information Center at Beulah has been appropriated, and it is in the architectural phase now.
- Remodeling of the centers at Cheyenne, Sheridan and Jackson has been implemented to meet the needs of travelers and the tourist industry.
- The Joint Interim Travel, Recreation, Wildlife Committee of the Legislature has asked for creative ideas which will meet the staffing, informational, and service needs of these centers. Perhaps an idea such as this and others could be presented to them.

AUDIO VISUAL MARKETING

GOAL: To implement the use of audio and/or visual cassettes to market Wyoming tourist assets and attractions and to inform people about Wyoming.

COMMENTS: This is not limited to in-state use, but may be used for regional, national and international markets also. The field of technology is such that tapes of various lengths can be produced inexpensively to emphasize the archeology, history, trails, recreational opportunities, or scenic areas of the state. High quality, professional tapes are necessary.

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Leaders in this effort should include

- the Travel Commission
- Chambers of Commerce
- Wyoming Tourism Policy Committee
- the Legislature
- recreational, archives, and wildlife people.

Logical participants and proponents of this idea would consist of:

Tourism related industries	Wyoming Historical Society
Community leaders (city and county)	Heritage Society
Wyoming Hotel/Motel Association	Recreation Committee
Liquor dealers	Wyoming's Bankers' Association
Restaurant Association	Chambers of Commerce
Wyoming Outfitters Association	Economic Development Committee

Opposition might come from:

- no growth" advocates
- the inter-budgetary process which would place other ideas is a higher priority position
- those who think a bed tax should fund a project of this type.

Those who would be neutral participants are:

- the legislature
- Wyoming Travel, Recreation and Wildlife Committee.

COMMENTS: Two active groups receptive to specific ideas for implementation are the Joint Interim Wildlife, Travel and Recreational Committee and the Tourism Policy Commission.

The suggested steps for progression to the goal are:

- to conduct a feasibility study of costs through the Wyoming Travel Commission staff;
(Perhaps the Wyoming Travel Commission could respond to this before the Futures Meeting on October 19 in Casper and present something concrete there. Or, perhaps this project could be handled by the Commission within its already allotted budget.)
- to present the idea to the legislature and
- to solicit appropriate legislative action;
- to develop programs within the Travel Commission;
- to select the production staff and
- to distribute the programs to appropriate markets.

The time and place to begin this project is now.

The time frame is six to eighteen months to put in place, but, hopefully, by the Summer, 1986.

Resources might come from a bed tax or a special industry self-help tax.

Hindrances to the process are seen as:

- claims on limited funds supervised by the legislature,
- those opposed to the bed tax or other industry tax and in-fighting among communities about the content of films.

To dispel these hindrances the following appeals might be used:

- an appeal to professionalism among various tourist industries and communities,
- recognition that nationally identifiable elements must be used to attract people to the state and
- the realization that limitations are set by capital resources and an impossibility to meet every need.

This project can be successful because it is cost effective and relatively low capital is required.

QUESTION: When is the Travel Commission meeting?

October 4th, in Alpine.

Couldn't an organization such as the Historical Society undertake this project?

Then the success of the project wouldn't rely completely on legislative funding!

COMMENTS: Much video work of this nature has already been completed, especially in Teton County. Therefore, this material could be made available through editing of existing video cassette materials.

It would be necessary to co-ordinate information on the cassettes with the place of entry into the state.

INTRASTATE TOURS

GOAL: To develop an intra-state tour guide from which a menu of wildlife/scenic/historical/attractions could be selected. A suggested title might be "Tailored Tours for a Wyoming Experience".

- To develop a means of packaging these tours tailored to the specific interests of the tourists, and
- To develop a network for selling these tailored tours.

COMMENT: One main purpose of this guide would be to provide a method by which prospective tourists could select a variety of Wyoming experiences.

Regional tours seem to naturally complement this idea.

The market for the tours would be international as well as national.

The leaders in this area would be

- the members of the Travel Commission and their staff members because this might simply be a redirection of ideas the Travel Commission is already considering,
- local Chambers and
- initially, representatives from this particular Roundtable group to assure accurate conveyance of this idea.

Participants and proponents of this idea would be those people directly involved such as

- the Recreation Committee
- Game and Fish
- travel agencies
- airlines
- bus companies.

There would be no formal opposition in the initial stages. Some would emerge later on from

- provincialistic attitudes.

Those who represent no predictable bias are:

- the Wyoming Travel Commission
- the legislature
- the business sector.

The first step is to sell the Wyoming Travel Commission on the idea by October 15th.

The time frame and step-by-step process would be as follows:

- The first year:

Planning

Begin funding effort

Gathering information from individual areas

Develop a brochure - 8 1/2" x 11" multi-page color teaser that

identifies the regions to be selected for the tours and what they have to offer.

- The second year:
Finish first year projects
Begin the packaging of the tours
Devise one central networking mechanism for promotion (selling)
of these tailored regional tours. One "central number"
which could begin the arrangements for the tourist.

To be able to appreciate Wyoming, it needs to be seen through the trained senses of people who have experienced Wyoming by living here.

Those who can enhance this process are:

- the travel industry professionals
- tourism-related businesses
- state agencies.

A positive attitude toward the packaged tours can be assured with legislative support.

Keeping the information updated on all levels will be the challenge to the project's continued success.

COMMENT: There needs to be a rating system which classifies a level and quality of experience for the tourist. This is necessary because of national competition among states. Even though Wyoming competes with states who have more money to spend on tourism, she must compete on a quality level and do it more efficiently, more effectively and with fewer dollars.

This project can be successfully sold because of the potential economic benefits to Wyoming, but better marketing, better project development and better selling techniques are needed.

A compromise would not be desirable. However, if this project cannot be addressed at once and in its entirety, perhaps it can at least be developed in stages.

This idea could best be "kicked off" by a neutral ad hoc committee composed of representatives from various groups of the tourist industry, whose expertise would be invaluable in implementing this plan.

QUESTION: Where are the "hottest" markets for attracting people to Wyoming?

Do markets change with the seasons?

COMMENT: New experiences need to be created to insure a return of visitors who initially come to Wyoming to see Yellowstone or Devil's Tower.

People want to experience the "real" Wyoming.

Marketing Wyoming attractions in new national areas might bring new tourists.

THE CENTENNIAL LIMITED

GOAL:——To create a major international destination in Wyoming, other than the parks, that would be functional and enjoyable beyond the summer months.

COMMENT: It is not the precise location, nature or function of such an attraction that is important, but that the concept is a worthy consideration.

Therefore:

- One of the "empty corridors" of our state is the Big Horn Basin which lends itself to the specific experience of a train ride from Billings to Riverton.

This private enterprise adventure would complement the following:

- "Wyoming's Educated Tourist Leaders": a part of their education will be a train trip,
- "Entry Center" which can refer people to this attraction,
- the use of audio-cassettes advertising
- the "tailored tours" for out-of-state marketing.

The positive aspects of this plan include:

- the opportunity to incorporate Western culture into the train by organizing each car around a Western theme, to introduce visitors to Wyoming products from cheese to beer, and

for mountain hiking and climbing with the convenience of transportation to and from the area.

- the provision of a major attraction north of Interstate 80 and east of the major parks, and of a gateway and "piggy back" service for autos and recreational vehicles into the heartlands of Wyoming through the Riverton destination.
- the uniqueness of fulfilling the nostalgic longing captured in such words as, "My kids didn't have an opportunity to ride on a train". of the features of the Big Born Basin such as Thermopolis Hot Springs, the Big Born Recreational area and examples of desert and oil settlements.
- the utilization of Billings tourists and local populace, of local experts in various subject areas of interest as train guides, and of the world's largest locomotive, now located in Cheyenne and
- the rejuvenation of local depots with restaurants and boutiques along the route.

The challenges of this project include:

- the fact that this area is located in a barren part of Wyoming
- the project requires capital and people resources to be successful but is far from population centers

- the train may run longer than the hundred days of summer (but how much longer?)
- the project requires a long range commitment of capital and represents a risky investment
- it might be hard to find anyone interested in this adventure
- who would own it? private enterprise or the state?
- where could the crews or rolling stock be acquired?

Perhaps the leadership would come from a "railroad buff" who had clout with one of the railroad companies and would take this as a challenge to his personal interest.

Another frustration is the impossibility of making a "loop" line anywhere within the state.

Despite the challenges, this is a fascinating and interesting idea.

COMMENT: The Northwest Area Foundation is perhaps one resource for acquisition of rolling stock.

There is a need to talk with "railroad buffs" enough to find out how to make it a classy operation worthy of a fare which would support its operation.

The idea is appealing because it is a creative project which could be developed in the private sector without governmental monies for support which is what Wyoming's economy needs.

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September 22-24, 1985

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