

RESPONSE TO



CITY OF RAWLINS TOURISM ASSESSMENT



Created by Rawlins Tourism Committee
August 2012



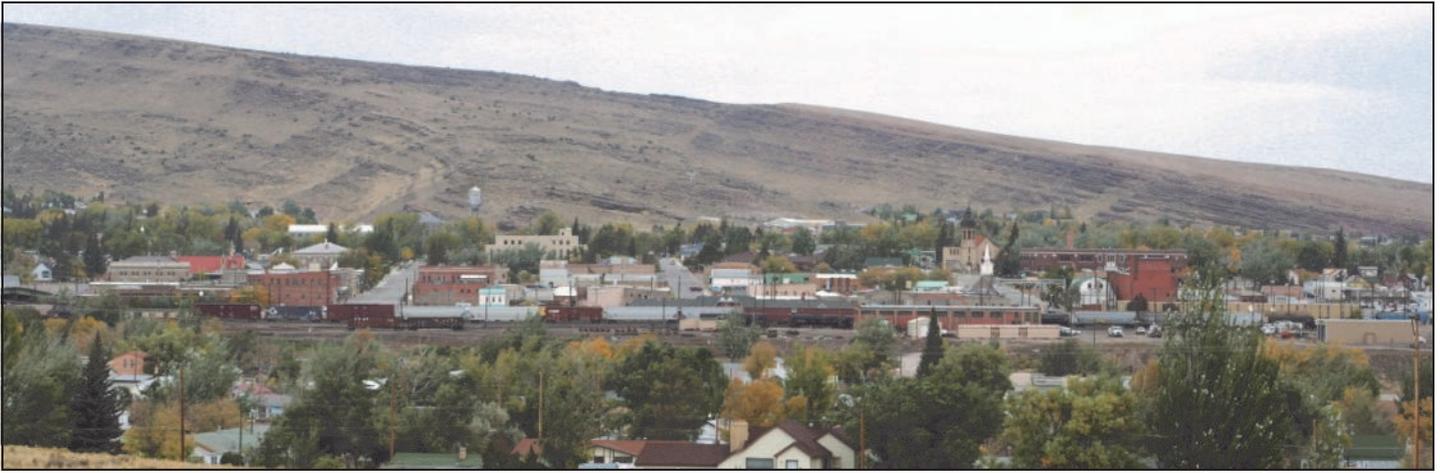


Photo by Jenita Calton

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INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

Rawlins Certified Tourism Community – Tier 1 Update

On February 2, 2010, the Rawlins City Council decided to pursue the certification as a Wyoming Certified Tourism Community. On May 19, 2011, the Wyoming Office of Tourism (WOT) accepted the City of Rawlins to the Tourism certification program and offered assistance to work directly with our community through the certification process. There are three tiers of certification offering differing levels of support and assistance from the WOT program according to the varied resources and needs of each individual community. These tiers include the following levels and are described in more detail by the attached materials:

- Aspiring Tourism Community - 1 yr.
- Affiliate Tourism Community – 2 yrs.
- Certified Tourism Community – 5 yrs.

To become an Aspiring Tourism Community, the following requirements must be met. The completed requirements have been marked with an X.

- X Complete a Lodging Survey
- X Complete Visitor Profile and Conversion Study
- Complete Visitor Intercept Study (optional)
- X Complete Destination Marketing Specialist / Wyoming Forever Friendly Training Programs – 20% Participation
- X Create Tourism Goals to address Tourism Assessment Recommendations

This report accomplishes the following:

- Updates progress on completion of Tier 1 “Aspiring Tourism Certification,
- Responds to issues identified in the October 19, 2012 Rawlins Tourism Assessment Report,
- Updates the Committee’s Response to issues identified in the Tourism Community Assessment report
- Updates Rawlins Tourism Goals, plans and progress toward them.



To get to this point, the following tasks have been completed:

Selection as Wyoming Tourism Assessment Community—On February 25, 2010 the City of Rawlins was selected to be the pilot community to conduct the first ever Wyoming Tourism Assessment that will serve as a pre-cursor to a Certified Tourism Community Program that was in the process of being developed by the State of Wyoming. This was as the result of a November 25, 2009 request for proposal released by the Wyoming Office of Tourism (WOT) for applicant communities to submit proposals to become the pilot community. The City of Rawlins responded to the request for proposals (RFP) on January 28, 2010 with a letter from the Mayor, a resolution passed by City Council and a full packet of information responding to the RFP. The application packet included a narrative of the City of Rawlins’ interest and support for conducting a community assessment including:

- Community support for the assessment,
- How the assessment will meet the need as outlined in previous community assessments of Rawlins performed by the Wyoming Rural Development Center,
- What resources would be committed to complete the tourism assessment,
- The local committee assembled to assist the state assessment team, and
- Letters of support from various organizations and businesses.

Resident Tourism Attitude Survey Completed – Prior to the Tourism Assessment, the local planning team was assigned the task of conducting a Resident Attitude Survey to gauge how residents and local businesses feel about the travel and tourism industry. Overall, the residents of Rawlins are supportive of

tourism in their community. Specific concerns about tourism include higher prices for goods and services, environmental impacts, crowded recreation areas and facilities closely followed by higher taxes. Specific goals for tourism development include employment opportunities, more viable and active local economy, and improvements in overall appearance of the community.

The Tourism Assessment Process – The Rawlins Tourism Assessment process was conducted on August 2-4, 2010. This involved a team of assessors qualified in the travel and tourism profession who visited the City of Rawlins and surrounding areas, toured the sites and attractions, conducted discovery sessions and compiled a report to the community with recommendations for the community.

The Tourism Assessment Report – The report was completed on October 19, 2010 and distributed for review, comments, questions and suggestions from the local team. A copy of the Rawlins Tourism Assessment Report is available at www.rawlinswy.org.

Tourism Assessment Local Unveiling— A public meeting unveiling the Community Tourism Assessment findings and recommendations was held in March 2012. Leslie Kedelty, the Industry Services Manager of the Wyoming Office of Tourism, who oversaw the Rawlins Tourism Assessment, was present to explain the findings of the report and answer questions. The community was also made aware of the report. The priorities identified in the Assessment and information about training and support available to the community helped set top priorities for the community to begin working on achieving tourism success. Projects and initiatives are already being pursued.



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The Carbon County Higher Education Center has trained a small cadre of customer service trainers and unleashed them on an unsuspecting world. To date we have done customer service trainings for Memorial Hospital of Carbon County, downtown Rawlins business owners, downtown Saratoga business owners, Carbon County School District #1, and others.

We have a component in the training that emphasizes sites that visitors might enjoy seeing in and around Carbon County.

Who doesn't want to see an historic old penitentiary? Native American ceremonial regalia? A frisky old building façade? The Rawlins uplift? Our trainers are prepared to gin up enthusiasm about these and other tourist attractions as a part of their training.



We have discovered that it is more difficult to gather together the "front line" labor force (service station attendants, hotel clerks, convenience store clerks, etc.) for customer training than we had anticipated. For one thing, there is a large turn-over in those jobs. For another, employers are not anxious to pay employees to take the training and employees are not anxious to take it when they are not on the clock.

We'll keep working at it and perhaps find the right formula. One approach we have discussed but not tried is to get several of the clerks and attendants together for a tour of the community with a special emphasis on the tourist attractions.

We have heard from a few of the convenience store attendants that they have not been in the museum since they were children, for example. Getting them into the museum now seems to be a good way to rekindle their interest in the history of the region so that they are comfortable passing that information along to tourists who stop for gas and a soft drink.

BRANDING

In January 2011, Rawlins DDA/Main Street, the City of Rawlins, Department of Recreation Services, Carbon County Museum, and the Wyoming Frontier Prison combined efforts to unify the marketing of Rawlins. They hired Arnett Muldrow from Greenville, South Carolina, a firm very familiar with rural Main Street communities, to work with all the agencies.

Arnett Muldrow worked with the steering committee on our goals for the project. Every agency was present for the initial meetings and then he met with them independently. Most agencies had their boards and/or staff present. Over the next few months, ideas went back and forth between all agencies. The outcome was well received. The committee agreed on city “colors” and “fonts” for the agencies. Arnett Muldrow created a new look and feel for the community of Rawlins by using the four colors

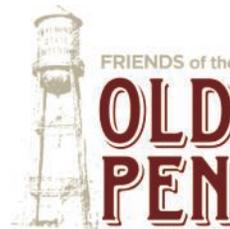
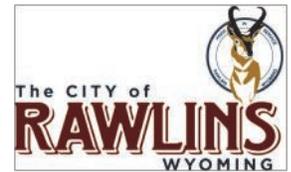
- Rawlins Red – Rawlins’ history of the colors is known throughout the United States,
- Historic Blue – a color already being used by the City of Rawlins,
- Sage Green – for all of our sagebrush
- Goldenrod Yellow – just a nice pop color

The fonts chosen were Horndon and Gotham. The City of Rawlins logo (antelope drawing given to the City by Paul Wawrzinicak) shall remain the same and now be accompanied by “City of Rawlins, Wyoming” written in the newly selected fonts.

Tag lines and ads were created for varying organizations; examples of this are to the right . In addition, Arnett Muldrow created a basic wayfinding program for the city.

The program was presented to City Council in June 2011 and they approved all modified logos. Almost all agencies have incorporated the changes into their marketing for 2011-2012 and give the community of Rawlins a unified look.

EXAMPLES:



WAYFINDING TEMPLATE:



CIVIC PRIDE

Since civic pride has been an area that Rawlins residents and organizations have known that we could improve on, a group of interested citizens has formed Rawlins Pride, a new committee to our community. Rawlins Pride is a group of interested organization and individuals whose goal is to create more pride within Rawlins residents for our community. Our mission statement is "People enhancing the image of our community — within our community — in order to promote pride that leads to economic and social opportunities."

We have been meeting for about a year and are an un-official collaboration. Our fiscal agent is the Rawlins Community Association for purposes of receiving donations and grants to further our purposes. We have no employees and no official board or membership. Currently, we have representatives from (in alphabetical order) the City of Rawlins, Carbon County Higher Education Center, Jackalope Printing, Oasis Church, Rawlins-Carbon County Chamber of Commerce, Rawlins Daily Times, Rawlins DDA/Main Street, Rawlins KOA, Wyoming Frontier Prison, and occasional other community members.

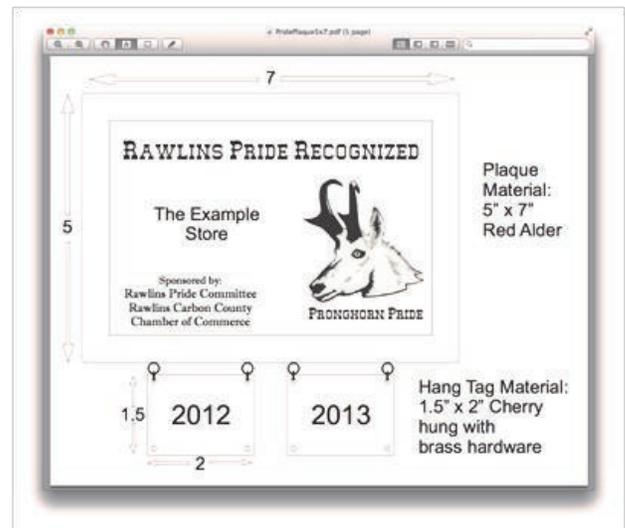
In our first year of existence, we have already achieved some projects of which we are proud.

- We have surveyed over 50 Rawlins residents about potential projects and ways Rawlins could improve, in order to choose projects which will best address the communities wants and needs.
- We have distributed Rawlins Pride rubber bracelets throughout the community, including Rawlins High School.

We, with significant assistance from the Rawlins Daily Times, started the Yard of the Week program last year, which recognizes those people who take care of their yard. It has also taken place this year.

We also have two new additional projects that we are actively working on.

- **Adopt-A-Street.** This is very similar to the Wyoming Highway Adoption program, but scaled down to city size. We have researched the best way to implement this in our community, and are in the process of finding the necessary partners to make it happen.
- **Rawlins Pride Recognized.** This is a program to recognize businesses on a quarterly basis in 3 categories: aesthetic appeal, customer service, and community involvement. There will be 12 prizes given out each year; businesses can be nominated by the public and the Rawlins Pride Committee will choose the winners. The awards will be given at major events throughout the year. Below is an example of the plaque they will be given with the hangtags for each time they win.



In regards to the specific suggestions from the Rawlins Tourism Assessment, improving our civic pride is being addressed in several ways:

- Adopt-A-Street: in development by Rawlins Pride Committee and City of Rawlins
- Clean-Up Day: Done annually for 4 years by the City of Rawlins
- Yard of the Week: Done for 2 Years by Rawlins Pride Committee, Rawlins Daily Times and True Value
- Gardening Classes: 5 week series in 2012 by the Carbon County Higher Education Center

- Design Guidelines: Educational guidelines for use throughout the community to encourage historically appropriate design
- Paint Program: Funding for all Rawlins businesses to pay for 40% of the paint for repainting commercial exteriors

There are also several ideas from the Tourism Assessment which we will be considering for the future:

- Entryway Beatification: Planned for 3-5 Years by the Tourism Committee
- Promotion of Rawlins as a Prison Town: Already being done in an informal manner, may be done more thoroughly in the future.

COLLABORATIONS/ PARTNERSHIPS IN RAWLINS AND CARBON COUNTY

Rawlins Community Garden: Wyoming Frontier Prison, Carbon County Higher Education Center, and University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service.

Tom O’Day presentation: Carbon County Higher Education Center, Carbon County Museum, and Wyoming Frontier Prison.

Great Divide Music Festival: Carbon County Higher Education Center, Rawlins Department of Recreation Services, Wyoming Frontier Prison, Carbon County School District #1 Recreation Board, and Carbon County Visitors’ Council.

Rawlins Pride: Rawlins Daily Times, City of Rawlins, Rawlins-Carbon County Chamber of Commerce, ERA Shepard, Bank of Commerce, Carbon County Library, Carbon County Higher Education Center, Rawlins DDA/Main Street, Rawlins KOA, Best Western Cotton tree Inn, and Wyoming Frontier Prison.



Interpretive Walking Path: Wyoming Office of Tourism, Carbon County Higher Education Center, Wyoming Frontier Prison, Carbon County Museum, City of Rawlins, BLM, Rawlins DDA/Main Street, and Carbon County Visitors’ Council.

Carbon County Council of Governments: Representatives from all Carbon County local governments, including Carbon County and all 10 municipalities meet six times a year

Wellness Challenge: Carbon County Higher Education Center, Carbon County Library, Rawlins Department of Recreation Services, Wyoming Frontier Prison, Rawlins Daily Times, and a community volunteer.

Rawlins Tourism Assessment: City of Rawlins, Daily Times, Rawlins DDA/Main Street, Carbon County Higher Education Center, Carbon County Visitors’ Council, Wyoming Frontier Prison, Carbon County Museum, Rawlins Department of Recreation Services, Rawlins-Carbon County Chamber of Commerce, Wyoming Office of Tourism, Carbon County Economic Development Corporation, Wyoming Business Council, and Rawlins Community Development.

Carbon County Museum Consortium: Wyoming Frontier Prison, Carbon County Museum, Saratoga Museum, Grand Encampment Museum, Little Snake River Museum, Mormon Handcart Visitors’ Center, Ft. Steele.

Smithsonian Traveling Exhibit “Key Ingredients”: Carbon County Higher Education Center, Carbon County Museum, Wyoming Frontier Prison, Rawlins DDA/Main Street and others.

COLLABORATIONS CONT.

County United: Carbon County Economic Development Corporation, Carbon County Higher Education Center, Rawlins Daily Times, Carbon County Library Systems, the town of Baggs, Carbon County Visitors' Council, Rawlins DDA/Main Street, Wyoming Business Council, Rawlins Department of Recreation Services, Wyoming Frontier Prison, Grand Encampment Museum, Saratoga Chamber of Commerce, Platte Valley Community Center, City of Rawlins, Carbon County Museum, and the town of Hanna.

SummerFest/Rawlins Jam: Rawlins DDA/Main Street, Rawlins-Carbon County Chamber of Commerce, Wyoming Frontier Prison, Rawlins Jam Committee, Rawlins Department of Recreation Services, Carbon County Museum, and Carbon County Higher Education Center.

Pen to Pen Fun Run: Rawlins Daily Times, Friends of the Old Pen, Wyoming Frontier Prison, Carbon County Museum, Rawlins Department of Recreation Services, Carbon County Visitors' Council, Old Pen Joint Powers Board, Rawlins DDA/Main Street, Bank of Commerce, Rawlins National Bank, Fremont Motors, Pepsi of Rawlins, Rawlins City Market, Michael's Big City Grill, and The Peppermill Bar and Grill

Write Now Carbon County: Carbon County School District # 1, Carbon County School District #2, Carbon County Higher Education Center, Carbon County Library Systems, and Rawlins Daily Times.

Quiz Bowl: Carbon County Higher Education Center, Rawlins Daily Times, Carbon County School District #1, and Carbon County School District #2.

Shop Carbon County.com: Rawlins Daily Times, the Rawlins-Carbon County Chamber of Commerce, the Platte Valley Chamber of Commerce, and Rawlins DDA/Main Street.

The Native American Symposium: The Carbon County Museum and Carbon County Higher Education Center.

Sage Brush Fun Run: Dr. Couch and family and the Rawlins Department of Recreation Services.

Community of Rawlins Garden Tour:

University of Wyoming Extension, Wyoming Frontier Prison, Rawlins Department of Recreation Services, the Carbon County Higher Education Center, and the Rawlins Community Garden.

Bicycle tour of Colorado: Bicycle Tour of Colorado, Carbon County Museum, Carbon County Higher Education Center, Carbon County Visitors' Council, City of Rawlins, Rawlins DDA/Main Street, Rawlins-Carbon County Chamber of Commerce, Rawlins Department of Recreation Services and Wyoming Frontier Prison.

Other City /County Collaborations include: City and County joint branding sessions, the Explore Carbon County portal website, Union Pacific Sesquicentennial, Tracks Across Wyoming, Wyoming Association of Municipalities, and County Commissioners' Association.



VISITOR SERVICES & RETAIL OPERATIONS

Most of the information contained in the retail operations and lack of visitor services is accurate. There is a lack of visitor service information and building a visitor center is being studied. Some feel it should be a stand-alone structure and others feel that it could become part of the new museum. Because of lack of funding for two or three different structures, it could make sense to combine it all in one building and would give people another reason to stop in Rawlins.

As far as hours of operations for the retailers, the Rawlins-Carbon County Chamber of Commerce and Rawlins DDA/ Main Street has been working with businesses concerning their hours of operations but have no control over retail business owner hours. During an event, they do ask merchants to extend their hours and get good cooperation.

The suggestion of a retail leakage study was cited in the report and the Rawlins DDA/ Main Street plan for the downtown has an extensive area that covered retail leakage in Rawlins. The Great Divide CEDS plan update that is currently being done for Sweetwater and Carbon County also has a section listing as a goal for Carbon County to do a retail leakage study. Also, the recently completed 7/30/12 draft of the Rawlins Economic Development plan updates the retail sales leakage study. A marketing report to research what businesses are needed and what could possibly locate in Rawlins is a good idea and the Carbon County Economic Development Corporation, Rawlins- Carbon County Chamber of Commerce and Rawlins DDA/Main Street could partner in this effort.

The Carbon County Higher Education Center as well as the Rawlins-Carbon County Chamber and Rawlins DDA/Main Street has offered many customer service training sessions and will continue to monitor what other types of training are needed for our area businesses. In case a business could not get attendees to the session, a possible idea is to make a CD or DVD of the session and offer it to the employer to show to their employees. This would also be a good idea for those businesses that have a high turnover and could be shown to new employees at any time.

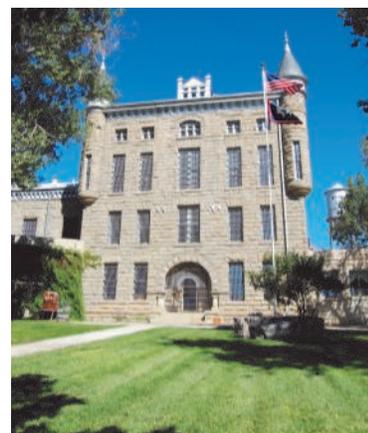
To address current business needs and wants, Rawlins DDA/Main Street has created the "Building Better Business" Program. The program brought *Disney Institute* in spring 2011 to Rawlins and continues with a new line-up of guest speakers for 2012. Building Better Businesses is a program that gives current business owners and employees tools to increase the retention and success of their businesses. In addition, Rawlins DDA/Main Street, the

Small Business Development Center and the Small Business Administration have teamed together to host monthly classes for start-up, expanding and existing businesses to address topics pertinent to business requests. The goals of both the programs are to provide information for businesses in Rawlins to succeed at their entrepreneur endeavors.

A Carbon County Familiarization Trip is worth developing. The Rawlins- Carbon County Chamber of Commerce has looked into this idea to offer a trip around the county to residents to personally see what there is to see and do in our own back yard. Other local agencies could partner with the Chamber to develop this further.

As far as some potential businesses ideas dealing with the section of bicyclists, there is some action being done in trying to work with the owners of the bike shop to see if they could extend hours certain times of the year or see if other merchants could service this market.

There are many ways to promote events in Rawlins and throughout the county. The Rawlins-Carbon County Chamber of Commerce, Rawlins DDA/ Main Street, the Rawlins Daily Times, County United , Carbon County Visitors' Council and Explore Carbon County website works with different event planners to help promote the various events. Table top tents or place mats that have a calendar of events listed on them to display at restaurants could also be used for promotion ideas. As far as way-finding signs in Rawlins, there is already a committee working on this.



OTHER GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Place Rawlins billboards in Lander, Casper, Muddy Gap, Laramie, Fort Collins, Cheyenne, Rock Springs & Wilson, CO:

Response: While we do agree that billboards can be an effective method of advertising, purchasing billboards is expensive and dependent upon availability. It will need to be determined who should and is able to finance billboards on behalf of Rawlins for purposes of enhancing tourism; as well as finding available billboards in the areas recommended in the assessment. We can't just go out and place billboards where and when we want.

Develop cultural heritage tourism:

Response: The local museums and the "Old Pen" all do a great job of marketing their cultural heritage. The CCVC has recently begun to help local hotels and other entities come together to develop packages. One of these proposed packages will be one including the Old Pen, Carbon County Museum and an overnight stay in Rawlins. The Rawlins DDA/Main Street historic mural tour is another example of cultural heritage being marketed for tourism.

Transcontinental Railroad Sesquicentennial:

Response: July 1, 2012, marks the 150 year anniversary of the **Pacific Railroad Act**. (The trans-continental railroad wasn't completed until 1869.) The Assessment report mentioned that the National Park Service would play a major role and that grant monies would be made available. We didn't receive any information about the National Park Service playing any role and there haven't been

announcements of any activities or celebrations that we have been made aware of, in the state. We don't see a local reception in Rawlins recognizing the Act as a "tourist" event.

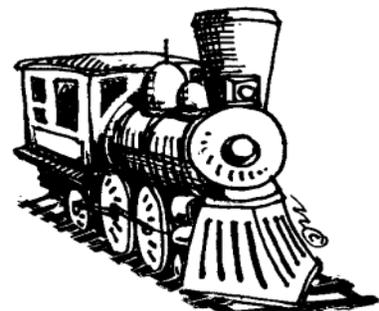
On the other hand, 2018 will mark the Sesquicentennial of the founding of Rawlins, and we feel that a multi-day celebration might draw people into the area to celebrate with us.

Snowed-In packages:

Response: The "snowed-in" packages have been discussed amongst the committee. There are many entities willing to participate; there are just some bugs that need to be worked out for the project to proceed. We are still discussing this project and will launch it as soon as it is viable, and it might just come down to some coupons and a game or something.

The major problem is that when the roads are closed, it means it's really bad out and we're asking our committee members to open their place of business or attraction in the night, in the cold, blinding wind and snow and the roads in town are bad as well.

In the meantime, a couple of the hotels have, on their own, gone above and beyond when people are snowed in. For example, the Hampton showed a movie in one of the meeting rooms and provided popcorn and cocoa to the families that were there during one road closure.



TOURISM COMMITTEE PROJECTS

Current/1 Year

Tourism Certification

- Destination Marketing Specialist – Completed 9/2011
- Lodging Survey – CCCV
- Visitors Profile and Conversion Study – CCVC

Marketing in the City

- 115 Things to Do List and Brochure – Tourism Committee
- Downtown Image Campaign – DDA/Main Street
- SummerFest and other events - DDA/Main Street
- Golf, Shooting and Other Tournaments - Rawlins Department of Recreation Services
- Pen to Pen Fun Run, Spooky Events including Friday the 13th and Haunted Halloween Night Tours– Wyoming Frontier Prison

- Rotating Exhibits, Trek - Museum
- Celebration of Wind & Customer Service Training - CCHEC
- Promote Local Pride - Rawlins Pride
- Shopcarboncounty.com – Daily Times, RCCC and DDA/Main Street

- Interpretive Walking Path from Rawlins Spring to the Uplift – Collaboration
- Musser Grant Funding
- Trails/Picnic Area
- Mineral Tours etc...

- Community Branding – Collaboration
- Way finding/Signage – DDA/Main Street, CCVC & City of Rawlins
- Hotel Kiosk – Chamber, Daily Times, DDA/Main Street & CCVC

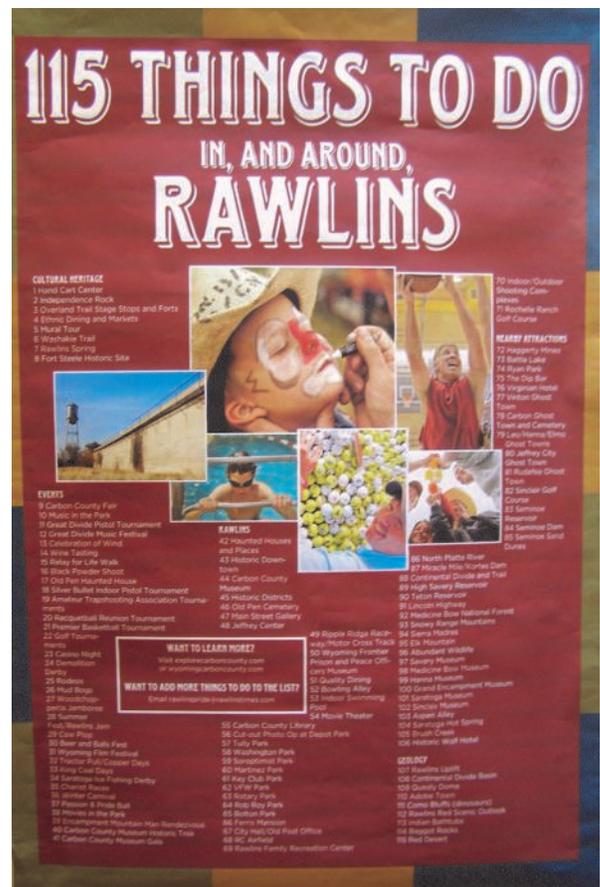
- Tourism Assessment Review - Aug. 2012
- Rawlins Pride Recognized Awards

3/5 Years

- Adopt a Street – Rawlins Pride
- Exercise Circuit on Walking Path – Recreation Services
- Downtown Walking Tour Brochure – DDA/Main Street, CC Museum & Wyoming Frontier Prison
- Dog & Horse Park - Collaboration
- Splash Park – DDA/Main Street & Recreation Services
- Fishing Derby
- Target Specific Advertising for Cross-Country Bikers & Continental Trail Hikers
- Sesquicentennial of UPRR

5+ Years

- Pronghorn Pride Interpretive Visitor Center
- New Museum
- Convention and Event Facility





RAWLINS TOURISM COMMITTEE MEMBERS

August 2012

Steve	Golnar	City Manager, City of Rawlins
Dave	Throgmorton	Director of Carbon County Higher Education Center
Pat	Robbins	Regional Director of Wyoming Business Council
Pam	Thayer	Executive Director of Rawlins DDA/Main Street
Lisa	Howell	Executive Director of Carbon County Visitor's Council
Cindy	Wallace	Executive Director of Carbon County Economic Development Corporation
Tina	Hill	Historic Site Director of Frontier Prison
Mira	Miller	Rawlins DDA/Main Street
Amy	Bach	Community Development Director, City of Rawlins
Chris	Waller	Recreation Services Director, City of Rawlins
Jerry	Raehal	Publisher of Rawlins Daily Times
Kelly	Bohanan	Interim Director of Carbon County Museum
Yvonne	Johnson	Executive Director of Rawlins-Carbon County Chamber of Commerce
Heather	Mortensen	Seminole Boat Club
Kristin	Phipps	Wyoming Office of Tourism
Alan	Dubberly	Wyoming Office of Tourism
Richard	Chenoweth	Pronghorn Pride