



Southeast Wyoming Welcome Center, Rest Area and Division Of Tourism Offices

Our Mission

To promote and facilitate increased travel to and within the state of Wyoming. Fueling market demand drives a healthy tourism economy, contributing to business sustainability and strengthening the industry's job and earnings capacity.

Marketing Objective

Interstate highways are the most traveled places in the state, and these gateways shape visitors' impressions of Wyoming's image and identity. The addition of a SE Wyoming Welcome Center has the potential to greatly impact the economic return of Wyoming's tourism industry. By making our state more visitor-friendly and easily accessible, visitors can be influenced to add to their travel plans, thus extending their length of stay and further contributing to destination spending at the local level. By providing quality travel information and having it readily available to the traveling public, Wyoming Travel & Tourism can directly benefit the economic opportunities of Wyoming's travel-related businesses.

Welcome Centers play an integral role in tourism marketing. It is proven that visitors who stop at Welcome Centers spend more and stay longer. Based on studies conducted in Michigan, 63% of visitors who stopped at Welcome Centers actually changed their behavior as a result of information received. In similar studies conducted in Rhode Island, research concludes that the welcome center generates approximately \$35 in new tourism expenditures for every dollar of operating budget. Drawing parallels on those conclusions, *visitation at Wyoming Welcome Centers can influence visitors to change their travel plans and increase their expenditures.*

Prime Location

According to a national article in the Journal of Travel Research 2003; 41; 272, studies found that the key attributes for Welcome Centers were ease of access into the center, ease of access back onto the interstate, and distance from the interstate. Currently, the existing facility serving as the SE Wyoming Welcome Center meets none of these requirements. It is located on the southbound side of I-25 and is not visible to traffic entering Wyoming. It is now crowded by commercial development and has limited access due to severe traffic congestion as a result of high truck and trailer traffic volumes at the I-25 and College Drive interchange.

Possible Credits

Sale of Current Facility – The current facility is owned by the State of Wyoming, Dept. of Transportation (DOT). In 2007, the property has been appraised by DOT Land Acquisition Program for a value of \$4,500,000 (today we've adjusted downwards by 30% to account for changes in the economy and land values). When sold, DOT will credit all proceeds to the construction and expenses association with the construction of the new facility.

Federal Highway Administration Funds – Along with DOT, Wyoming Travel & Tourism will request an appropriation of Federal Highway Administration Funds dedicated to roadside enhancements. Early discussions with US Senators Enzi and Barrasso began in Sept. 2007, and have continued to include Congresswoman Lummis. Dependant on a new Federal Highway Authorization, these funds could range anywhere from \$500,000 to \$5,000,000.

The Request

The above led to the funding request for a new Southeast Wyoming Welcome Center. Clear Creek Land Company and Swan Ranch, LLC have signed deeds of warranty to the State of Wyoming, Department of Transportation for approximately 27 acres for the purpose of constructing a Wyoming Welcome Center. The property is located on the east side of I-25, mile marker 4.9 and will be accessible from the scheduled Speer Road interchange. **As part of the phased development, Wyoming Travel & Tourism is requesting \$15,103,000.** This includes an estimated \$12,750,000 in site and construction costs.

Site Basics to Include (based on Level I and Level II parameters):

- 30 acres
- 50 visitor parking spaces; 30 employee parking spaces; 30 RV parking spaces
- Paved roadways, street lighting, enhanced landscaping, trails and interpretive signs
- Multiple use – rest areas; emergency truck parking

Welcome Center, Rest Area, Storage and Site Costs - \$9,711,703

- 5,000 sf Welcome Center finished ground level
- 5,000 sf Welcome Center unfinished basement level
- 2,000 sf Rest Area Facilities finished ground level
- 2,000 sf Rest Area Facilities mechanical basement level

Tourism Office, Storage and Site Costs - \$3,038,297

- 8,000 sf Offices finished ground level (5,000 sq ft at current site)
- 8,000 sf Offices unfinished basement level (adding the offices reduces the Welcome Center basement to 1,500 sf instead of 5,000 sf) *(no storage space at the current facility)*

Other Capital Expenses - \$2,353,000

- Interpretive design and exhibits
- Furnishings/Work Stations/Equipment
- IT Transfer
- Commercial Mover – Office and Outdoor Statues

Combined Total Costs - \$15,103,000

	Scenario I Tourism Division moves to new offices with the Welcome Center	Scenario II Tourism Division remains at existing facility	Scenario III Tourism Division moves within capital complex
One-Time Expenditure:			
Construction costs to build Welcome Center	\$9,711,703	\$9,711,703	\$9,711,703
Plus construction costs to build Tourism Offices	\$3,038,297	-0-	-0-
Other Capital Expenses	<u>\$2,353,000</u>	<u>\$2,353,000</u>	<u>\$2,353,000</u>
Total Construction Costs	<u>\$15,103,000</u>	<u>\$12,064,703</u>	<u>\$12,064,703</u>
Credit proceeds from the sale of the existing facility	(\$3,150,000)	-0-	(\$3,150,000)
Total One-Time Investment	<u>\$11,953,000</u>	<u>\$12,064,703</u>	<u>\$8,914,703</u>
Additional Ongoing Annual Expenditures:			
Annual O&M at new facility	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000
Annual O&M at existing facility	(\$150,000)	\$150,000	(\$150,000)
Annual lease for office space (\$20/sq ft)	-0-	-0-	\$160,000
Total Additional Annual O&M Expenditures	\$150,000	\$450,000	\$310,000
Additional staffing (1 FT and 1 PT) salaries	-0-	\$53,200	\$53,200
Employer Paid Benefits	-0-	<u>\$32,761</u>	<u>\$32,761</u>
Total Additional Annual Staffing Expense	-0-	\$85,961	\$85,961
Total Ongoing Annual Expenses	<u>\$150,000</u>	<u>\$535,961</u>	<u>\$395,961</u>

**Based on the results of Level I and Level II Planning,
the following budget estimates have been developed for this project:**

Budget Request	Amount Requested (Approved)	Purpose	Date Funds Available
July 2007	\$57,000	Level I Planning	7-2007
Budget Session 2008	\$652,486	Site Prep/Earthwork	7-1-08
General Session 2009	\$1,448,735	Level III Design	4-1-09

Budget Session 2010	\$15,103,000	Site Development and Building Construction	4-1-10
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