

**Agency 066**  
**Wyoming Office of Tourism Annual Report**  
**FY13**

**General Information**

Agency name:

Wyoming Office of Tourism

Director's name and official title:

Diane Shober, Executive Director

Agency Contact person:

Diane Shober

Agency Contact phone:

307-777-7777; 307-777-2808 (Director's direct line)

Mailing address:

5611 High Plains Road  
Cheyenne, WY 82007

Web address (URL):

[www.wyomingtourism.org](http://www.wyomingtourism.org) (consumer site)

[www.wyomingofficeoftourism.gov](http://www.wyomingofficeoftourism.gov) (industry sites)

[www.wyomingfilm.org](http://www.wyomingfilm.org) (film office site)

Other Locations (Street addresses not required):

None

Statutory References:

W.S. 9-12-1001 through 1002 Wyoming Tourism Board

W.S. 9-12-402 through 406 Film and Video Promotion

Clients Served:

Vacationing Public; Travel Trade; Wyoming Tourism-Related Businesses and Services; Film Production  
Trade Professionals and Organizations.

Budget Information (Expenditures for FY13):

\$14,250,166

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**Name of Department/Division/Program:** Wyoming Office of Tourism

**Report Period:** FY13 (July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013)

**Wyoming Quality of Life Result:**

- Wyoming values the unique aspects of its western heritage, providing residents and visitors expanding access to cultural, historical and recreational experiences.
- Wyoming has a diverse economy that provides a livable income and ensures wage equality.

**Contribution to Wyoming Quality of Life:**

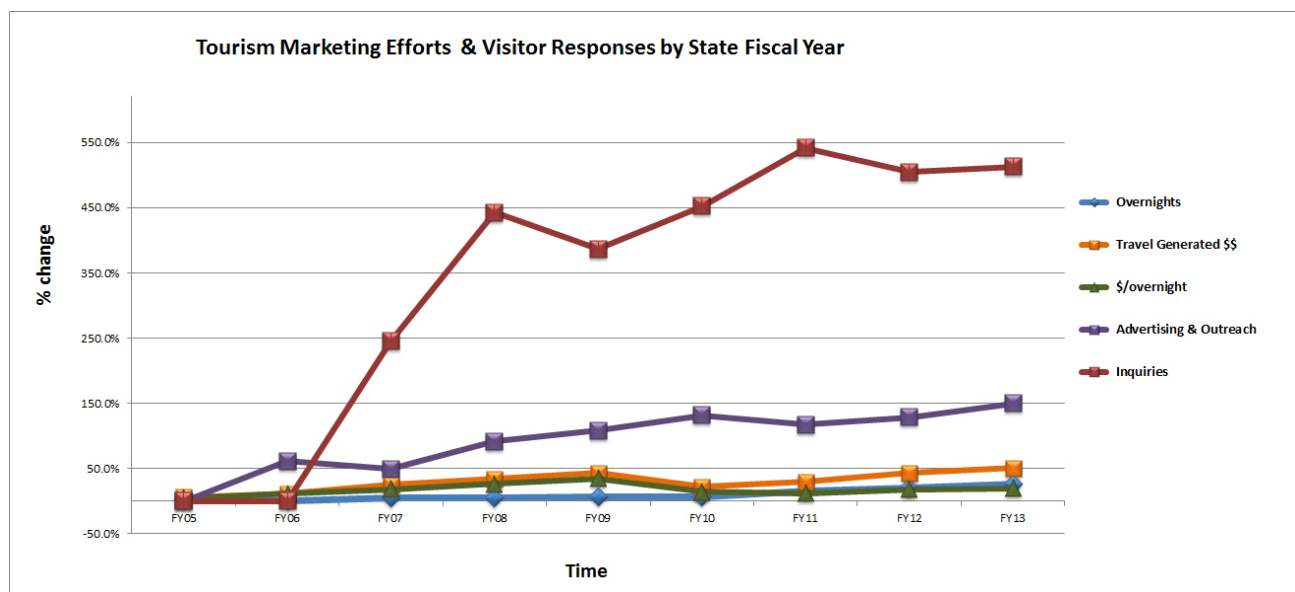
Wyoming Office of Tourism supports these goals by promoting and facilitating increased travel to and within the state of Wyoming. A healthy tourism economy contributes to business sustainability and strengthens the industry's job and income generation capacity.

**Basic Facts:**

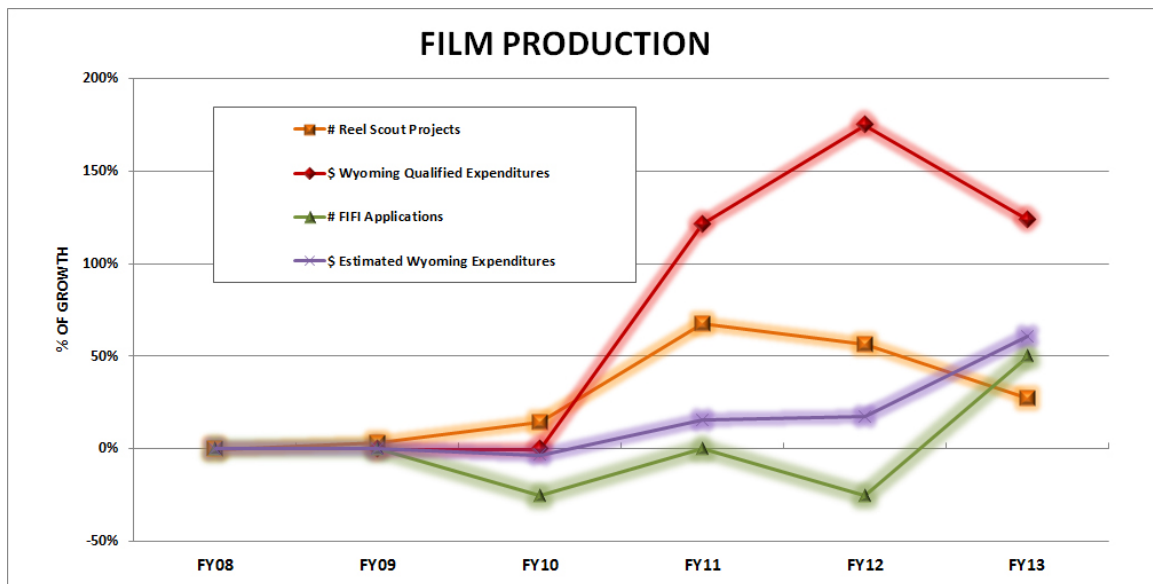
Wyoming Office of Tourism has 26 full-time and part-time staff positions and operates with a biennium budget of \$27,769,263. The funding sources for the budget are 100% general funds. Programs include sales and marketing efforts in the following areas:

- Brand Management
- Global Sales and Services
- Strategic Partnerships
- Business Operations

**Performance:**



(Note: All data reflects calendar year 2012 with the exception of Marketing and Outreach which reflects FY13)



### Story behind the last year of performance:

Wyoming Office of Tourism (WOT) provides a unique value to Wyoming as the only statewide organization dedicated to growing Wyoming's tourism economy. Through a series of programs, WOT fulfills its mission to promote and facilitate increased travel to and within the state of Wyoming. By working with strategic partners and stakeholders, WOT will sustain the vision for the destination that *Wyoming is the only true west experience*.

The local tourism industry relies on WOT to create an umbrella marketing campaign, promoting Wyoming as an ideal vacation destination and positioning Wyoming against competitive brands as the destination of choice.

First and foremost, WOT must assure that visitors have Wyoming at the top of their mindset when considering a vacation destination. The marketplace is competitive and it is critical that the Wyoming brand stands out above the clutter of other rival destinations as well numerous entertainment options.

Effective advertising and outreach efforts create brand awareness. And once consumers are brand aware, they are twice as likely to visit as non-aware consumers. Once deployed, potential visitors respond to marketing campaigns and are driven to explore Wyoming vacation planning information through a variety of response platforms such as the website, mobile and tablet sites, social media outlets, internet search engines, digital downloads of publications (inquiries). As WOT's advertising and outreach efforts increase, so has the volume of inquiries as a result of those efforts. An increase in inquiries is a direct result of increased awareness which is a result of increased and consistent messaging in the marketplace. While advertising and outreach resources have increased by 100% from FY04 to FY12, during that same time inquiries have grown by 513%. The increase in advertising and outreach allows the Wyoming message to reach substantially more consumers, resulting in increased awareness and thus increased interest in a Wyoming vacation.

Just like awareness about a destination leads to inquiries, in turn, inquiries about a destination lead to actual visits. Since 2004, Wyoming has enjoyed a 20% increase in the number of overnight visitors, which result in direct travel-generated sales on such things as shopping, accommodations, gasoline and fuel, food, entertainment and recreation, just to name a few. Despite fluctuations in a national economy during the past decade, visitor spending and associated sales tax collections from travel-generated spending have grown by 51% from FY04 to FY12. Increasing the number of visitors and/or extending their length of stay are both growth factors in a healthy, sustainable tourism economy.

By creating and implementing a fully integrated marketing campaign, WOT builds business potential for Wyoming constituents who operate tourism-related businesses and services, adding strength to the Wyoming travel industry . . . an industry predominantly made up of small, independent businesses. By developing robust strategic partnerships with industry stakeholders and regional or national partners, WOT can leverage the collective resources to continue to elevate the awareness of the brand and further drive Wyoming's tourism economy. The eight year trend analysis indicates that it's working.

As the only statewide organization dedicated to growing Wyoming's tourism economy, WOT plays a major role in influencing travelers before, during and after their trip to Wyoming.

It is important to note that Wyoming's tourism industry is subject to outside influences over which the division has no control. Natural catastrophes (fires; floods) and global issues (terrorism; housing market; presidential elections; gas prices) can impact people's ability and willingness to travel.

The purpose of the Wyoming Film Office is to promote Wyoming locations as settings for film production. When production companies film in Wyoming, they contribute to the economic vitality of that local community and to the state as a whole. Production companies purchase goods and services from local businesses, including everything from accommodations, food and beverage, hardware and lumber supplies, equipment rental and more. They also employ local crews ranging from just a few to hundreds. Film production also contributes significantly to Wyoming's tourism economy by enhancing the public visibility through television, DVD and motion picture distribution.

The Wyoming Film Industry Financial Incentive (FIFI) program was developed to provide the entertainment industry a financial incentive and make Wyoming more competitive in bringing the jobs, economic impact and tourism promotion that on-location filming contributes to a state. FIFI legislation was passed by Wyoming's 57<sup>th</sup> Legislature and enacted into law in February 2007.

Through marketing and promotion efforts, awareness about location opportunities, the incentive program and the increased number of qualified work force has expanded interest in filming in Wyoming. Film Office inquiries are fulfilled through an online packaging system called "Reel Scout." The software combines a comprehensive contact management system, digital photography library and a local crew database to better showcase Wyoming's production resources. By utilizing the web-based Reel-Scout database, the Film Office can increase the number of digital images and location packages offered to production companies. The system allows the Film Office to track requests from production companies including the status of projects, locations scouted and city or county statistics to measure usage. From FY08 to FY12, the number of Reel Scout location packages distributed has increased by 27%.

In FY09, the FIFI program began to show concrete production activity so it serves as the performance benchmark for FIFI activity including the number of applications as well as total economic value of productions while filming in Wyoming. Since the inception of the program, 19 FIFI projects have been approved, representing over \$5.6 million in Wyoming expenditures for the purchase of in-state goods and services associated with film production.

#### **What has been accomplished:**

1. Expand research requirements on all levels:
  - With the "Roam Free" campaign is in its third year WOT has continued to measure consumer awareness of Wyoming advertisements in key markets. Achieved a 65% awareness level in Chicago, up from 63% in 2012.
  - The Roam Free campaign operated with better efficiency in 2013. Core market cost to reach an aware household dropped from \$.50 to \$.48 in 2013.

- Provided \$18,939 in co-op research dollars to five industry organizations:
    - Casper Convention and Visitor Bureau – Lodging Study
    - Park County Travel Council – Destination Assessment
    - Sweetwater County – Conversion Study and Lodging Study
    - Worland/Ten Sleep – Market Research
    - Cheyenne Frontier Days – Web Focus Group
  - Engaged in Organizational Excellence Assessment review, including Strategic Clarity, Operational Planning, Process Improvement and Organizational Restructuring.
  - Integrated consumer testing on all website enhancements to assure quality and ease of functionality.
  - Added a comprehensive analytics dashboard for monthly reporting of all metrics; accessible and uploaded by all strategic partners and vendors.
2. Enhance consistency and distribution of advertising message:
- All partners have been involved with pre-campaign architecture of the Social, Web, PR, Email Marketing, Printed and TV components. Collaboration of this has created more streamline campaigns utilizing less time.
  - Due to a 4% decrease in the advertising budget the number of aware households declined by 6% across markets.
  - Achieved 20.4% added-value to the media buy, representing approximately \$1,015,000 in no cost media placement.
  - Continued an in-season, summer TV campaign “Road Trip Wyoming” in regional markets (Denver, Salt Lake City, Pocatello, Idaho Falls, Bozeman, Butte, Billings, Rapid City, Boise).
  - Participation in the advertising co-op program included 188 co-op advertisers spending \$800,161:
    - Search Engine Marketing co-op – 12 advertisers - \$39,160
    - Spring/Summer newspaper co-op – 39 advertisers - \$164,515
    - *Official Wyoming Travelers Journal* (OTJ) – 80 advertisers - \$425,203
    - Branded Fulfillment Envelope – 12 advertisers - \$30,373
    - Official Wyoming Tourism Website – 35 advertisers - \$124,170
    - Roundup E-newsletter – 10 advertisers - \$16,740
  - Continued integrated social media strategy across channels and messaging into the overall campaign strategy. Results included the following:
    - Facebook - 62,053 (307% increase)
    - Twitter - 8,853 (41% increase)
    - YouTube - 91,513 Views (.1% increase)
    - Flickr - 102 members (14% increase); 5179 items (35% increase)
    - Roundup Blog – 65,587 views (179% increase)
3. Enhance the planning tools to meet/exceed the expectations of the today’s consumer:
- User sessions on the WOT desktop site grew by 8% in FY13. User sessions on the WOT mobile site grew by 891% over FY 12.
  - Business referrals from the WOT site to Wyoming industry partner sites increased by 3% in FY 13 over FY 12.
  - Digital downloads of the Official Travelers Journal by 43% while printed requested grew by 7%.
  - Added the following enhancements to the digital platforms:
    - Interactive Map
    - Mega drop down promo titles
    - Business administrative map enhancements
    - Search Engine Optimization (SEO) enhancements, keywords and descriptions
    - Google site search – enhancements
    - Consolidated forms – E-news signup and OTJ order forms

- Business Partner Leads Program – enhancement added to thank you pages when ordering an OTJ and sign up for the E-newsletter
- Implemented Radion 6 – analytics tool for social media and public relations
- Established an Instagram account for WOT
- Established a Google Plus account for WOT
- Social Media audit – created a partnership with Convince and Convert, (Jay Baer)

4. Expand media relationships and product offerings:

- Improved and increased A-List media contacts from 277 to 513 through one-on-one appointments and a press reception in New York; appointments at International Pow Wow (IPW); pitched national media on the “Yellowstone or Bust” campaign; and conducted press trips.
- Used social media outlets to engage travel writers and provided pitches to them via Pitch Engine.
- Implemented a ProxyServer multi-media database that hosts Beta and HD footage as well as high resolution images available for download by the media.
- Partnered with the tourism industry to host 60 travel writers providing opportunity to experience and write about Wyoming first hand.
- Conducted sales calls and hosted a reception in New York to promote Wyoming story ideas and nurture media relationships with major outlets and travel writers in those markets.
- Enhanced the online press room to make it easy for travel writers to obtain story ideas.

5. Strengthen Wyoming’s competitive position in the International marketplace:

- Participated in training in southern England, November 8, 2012, training nine staff members.
- Completed a sales mission in Paris and Toulouse, France, March 10-15, 2013. During 19 appointments, conducted staff trainings and/or product manager meetings, as requested by the clients. Each sales appointment was added to our database as a lead and 23 staff members were trained. Trainings and product meetings covered Wyoming tourism product currently being offered by tour operators, as well as introductions to lesser known or new product in Wyoming. New product was discussed included new flights into the state and nearby gateway cities; public transportation to and from Yellowstone National Park; hotel and destination awards and recognition for achievements; tours, adventures and packages, including Yellowstone National Park tours; environmentally friendly lodging and practices; and cowboy and Native American entertainment venues. Ranches of all types and price points, as well as historic hotels located throughout the state, were covered in addition to itinerary planning.
- Hosted 27 international Familiarization (FAM) tours incorporating lesser known routes when possible. Some of these routes included: Aladdin, Big Piney, Bondurant, Buffalo, Casper, Cheyenne, Clearmont, Cody, Devils Tower, Grand Teton National Park, Hulett, Jackson, Lander, Laramie, Moran, Ranchester, Rock Springs, Sheridan, Teton Village and Yellowstone National Park. These FAMs consisted of 78 participants from nine different countries, including international receptive tour operators with offices in the USA.
- Sponsored regional booths and participated in three trade and consumer shows in Europe: TTG Incontri in Rimini, Italy, October 18-20, 2012; World Travel Market (WTM) in London, England, November 5-8, 2012; and International Tourism Bourse (ITB) in Berlin, Germany, March 6-10, 2013. TTG produced 26 leads, WTM produced 46 leads, and ITB produced 42 leads. Promotional materials numbering in the thousands were distributed at all three shows.
- In the U.S., attended Active America China, May 26-29, 2013 and utilized an interpreter to meet, in-language, with 20 Chinese tour operators and U.S. based receptive operators who are responsible for most of the outbound Chinese travel to the U.S. Provided tour operators with a Chinese language four-color brochure promoting Wyoming as a premier destination, along with three itineraries in Chinese that featured Wyoming and an in-language Wyoming one-sheet. Other U.S. based international shows

attended include North America Journeys (NAJ) Summit West, February 12-15, 2013, Los Angeles, California area; Go West Summit, January 28-31, 2013, Fort Worth, Texas, Rocky Mountain International (RMI) Roundup, April 9-12, Boise, Idaho; and IPW (International Pow Wow) June 7-13, 2013, Las Vegas, Nevada where meetings with tour operators and receptive tour operators were conducted. Leads from these shows totaled 171.

- Updated and improved the regional in-language website in Italy. Continued to provide regional websites in French, German and English that are focused on international travelers interested in our region of the U.S.
- Participated in Discover America Australian Expos, February 10-22, 2013. Conducted presentations in Perth, Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne with 200, 550, 200, and 320 travel agents in attendance respectively. Sponsored travel media luncheon (100 media), attended a Business-to-Business (B2B) Event (18 reps from 18 major tour operators) and performed staff trainings to 13 staff in Sydney. Incorporated New Zealand in this mission where WOT participated in the Discover America Committee B2B and Media event and Visit USA (VUSA) Auckland Expo, which attracted over 250 travel agents. Generated 63 solid industry leads overall in Australia and New Zealand.
- Participated in the 2013 Scandinavian Mission and Trade Shows focused on Norway and Finland, January 10-20, 2013. WOT conducted meetings with Icelandair to discuss partnership options containing the new, direct flights into Denver from Reykjavik, Iceland. Lead two staff trainings for seven sales consultants with USA Spezialisten. Hosted a RMI/Wyoming media/trade gathering where Wyoming product was discussed with the 25 attendees. Conducted 23 one-on-one B2B appointments arranged by Discover America Norway. Setup and participated in a booth at Reisleiv, a large consumer show to raise awareness of Wyoming product and drive consumers to trade selling Wyoming vacations. Conducted a sales training in Bergen, Norway largest tour operator offering Wyoming product, Nordmann Reiser and presented to over 220 of their top clients. Trained staff at two Helsinki based tour operator offices and participated in the Discover America Committee Finland B2B where 53 tour operators were hosted for one-on-one meetings. Setup and participated in a booth at MATKA, Finland's largest trade/consumer show. Over 7,900 travel trade and 76,000 consumers attended the show.
- Continued responding to travel industry requests from India, Taiwan (ROC) and China (PRC), as well as other emerging Asian markets. In addition to the Chinese leads listed above, met with 18 Chinese, three Indian and four Taiwanese tour operators at international shows and conferences at Go West Summit, IPW, ITB, and WTM. The numbers are incorporated into the leads for those specific shows.
- Followed the French Mission with a VIP dinner attended by 26 people, most of whom were top trade, media, and airline representatives in France. Hosted an industry reception at ITB that was attended by 45 guests whom were travel trade and media, primarily from the German speaking markets, as well as some representatives from the western region of the U.S.
- Worked with 680 travel professionals and 655 general consumers during 52 seminars and 55 sales calls conducted in the U.S. and Japan, utilizing Fieldstar International, WOT's Japanese marketing representative. A total of six promotional missions were held in the following locations: Los Angeles (2), Japan (2), New York, and Las Vegas (2).
- Participated in two receptions, Discover America in Tokyo and IPW in Las Vegas and reached 83 travel professionals.
- Provided in-language marketing and promotional meetings with Japanese travel professionals at five trade shows in Japan and the U.S. Japanese Association of Travel Agents (JATA) /Travel Showcase, Go West Summit, Tabi Festival in Nagoya, Kanku Travel Show and America Town Festival in Kyushu.
- Provided in-language Conducted three FAM tours including a U.S. based Japanese TV station.
- Participated in a Japanese language guide, West Magazine, which is used as a promotional piece in Japan and in Japanese communities in the U.S. Contributed to and distributed in Europe and at international

shows in the U.S., the Real America Guide, regional promotional magazine that is published in English, German, French and Italian.

- Continued supplying a Wyoming photo CD for worldwide distribution to the travel industry for promotional use.
- Increased Wyoming's presence at IPW by purchasing a four-sided, lobby tower (each side 4'w x 10'h) promotional advertisement. Sponsored five Wyoming logo floor decals designating the Wyoming section of the trade show and participated in a regional effort to showcase our marketing partnership with RMI by providing non-standard aisle carpeting to set our area apart from others attending the show. Purchased a hanging banner featuring WOT's logo, which was successful at directing buyers to the Wyoming section of the convention hall. Organized a cohesive look for the Wyoming delegation, including coordinated furniture and carpeting and hosted a Friends of Wyoming reception for 150 clients, in-market representatives and Wyoming suppliers.

6. Maximize Return on Investment (ROI) from participation in travel trade and direct marketing programs:

- Participated in the American Bus Association's (ABA) Annual Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina, January 5-8, 2013. The show produced 24 leads. Seven Wyoming tourism businesses were represented at this Convention.
- Invited to participate by one of the top Tour Operators in Wyoming and attended Travel Alliance Partners (TAP) trade show for the second year in a row and collected 29 strong leads.
- Nominated seven Wyoming events for the ABA's Top 100 Events in 2014. The Cody Stampede was selected for inclusion in the Top 100 Events for 2014.
- Created six new itineraries with Domestic Motorcoach Operators from direct requests and assisted four operators that were adjusting routes or adding tourism product. FAM trips were coordinated and arranged for three Domestic Tour Operators that were developing routings for their motorcoach groups.
- Published advertising in group tour publications, NTA Courier and Pacific Northwest Meeting Planners Guide.
- Promoted Wyoming as a vacation destination to the American Automobile Association (AAA). In total, 159 AAA and Canadian Automobile Association (CAA) travel professionals in Texas, Kentucky, Ohio, Kansas, West Virginia and Ontario, Canada were educated about Wyoming tourism products.
- Funded the multiyear recruitment plan for attracting RV and Motorcycle Rallies to Wyoming. Approved funding for CAMPLEX to attend five rallies/events: Balloon Fiesta, Albuquerque, New Mexico; Daytona International Speedway Rally, Daytona, Florida; FMCA, Indianapolis, Indiana; Quartzsite RV Show, Quartzsite, Arizona; River Run, Laughlin, Nevada.

7. Expand Wyoming film-friendly offerings:

- Marketed Wyoming and the Film Industry Financial Incentive (FIFI) program at the Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI). Locations trade show in Los Angeles, California and hosted a Montana/Wyoming sponsored reception for Los Angeles based industry contacts.
- Leveraged the success of the *Longmire* television series by running a *Longmire* themed sweepstakes promotion in conjunction with the Season Two premier. *Longmire* debuted as A&E's number one original-series premiere of all time with 4.1 million total viewers.
- Hosted a southwest and southeast FAM tour for film professionals that included locations such as the Red Desert, Flaming Gorge and the Frontier Prison.
- Sponsored the Jackson Hole Symposium, the Cheyenne-24 Shoot-Out and the Cheyenne International Film Festival. Participated at the 15<sup>th</sup> annual Wyoming High School Short Film Festival in Casper and sponsored a speaker luncheon.



- Promoted the sixth annual Wyoming Short Film contest to attract independent filmmakers with Wyoming storyline projects. Received 48 qualified submissions, which are up 14% from 42 entries last year. The winning film was posted on the WOT and Film Office websites along with Film Office social media video channels.
- Purchased advertising in trade publications and online targeting producers that could utilize the film incentive program and indie filmmakers for short film contest submissions.
- Utilized social media platforms for the Film Office to promote Wyoming production information and opportunities to in-state film crew and also to market the Wyoming Short Film Contest. Facebook likes are up 85% from 489 at the end of FY12 to 903 in FY13.
- Updated Reel-Scout location photography database to increase overall location count to 881, a 10% growth in images from 2012.
- Appointed Jeremy Nielsen, Central Wyoming College (CWC) Film Professor, to the FIFI review committee for purposes of connecting CWC film production students with productions in Wyoming as potential local crew hires.
- Reel-Scout project inquiries dropped slightly this year but FIFI applications doubled from three in FY12 to six in FY13, which is a 100% increase.
- Film Industry Financial Incentive (FIFI) program approved six projects in FY13 totaling an estimated \$2,306,000 in Wyoming expenditures.

8. Make Wyoming more visitor-friendly and easily accessible by providing interpretive travel information and providing quality service:

- Grand Opening for the Southeast Wyoming Welcome Center (SEWWC) occurred October 12, 2012. The new interpretive exhibits provide travelers ideas for a broad array of places to see and things to do throughout Wyoming. The grounds provide nearly a mile of walking path and offer a fenced pet area. The facility benefits from several sustainable features including energy generation from both solar and wind systems, a ground source heat system and rammed earth walls. The building also houses the Wyoming Office of Tourism (WOT) staff.
- Sixteen new travel related brochures were approved for distribution in state operated Welcome Centers.
- A Visitor Services Plan was developed with the assistance of a fifteen member task force. The statewide group represented various community sizes, regions and included representatives from both local and state agencies. The Plan provides a mission and direction for the Visitor Services Department. The document includes an assessment of current programs along with recommendations for future programs.
- A Destination Marketing Specialist testing program was integrated into a completely online environment. This allowed 24 people from across Wyoming to take the test with 21 of them passing in the following specialist levels: five Outrider; fourteen Wrangler; and two Trail Boss.
- The following visitation numbers were reported at state Welcome Centers for FY12 and FY 13:

<b>Welcome Center</b>	<b>FY 12</b>	<b>FY 13</b>
Southeast Wyoming Welcome Center (Cheyenne)	73,413	98,880
Sheridan Welcome Center	90,045	106,873
Summit Welcome Center	97,389	111,106
Northeast Wyoming Welcome Center (Beulah)	67,263	77,838

- The eighth annual customer service training and FAM tour was held May 9-13, 2013. This Training takes welcome center staff from state run facilities through customer service, sexual harassment, extreme weather condition action, supervisor training, social media training and Destination Marketing Specialist testing. New in 2013, partners were offered scholarships to all Chambers of Commerce (COC), Convention and Visitor Bureaus (CVBs) and Lodging Tax Boards (LTB's) in addition to the Bear River

State Park. Four entities received scholarships and attended the training: Bear River State Park, Jackson Hole COC, Campbell County CVB and Albany County Tourism.

- Consumer Shows continue to engage prospective visitors in two of the adjacent markets: Denver, Colorado and Salt Lake City, Utah. The following community partners cooperatively participated in shows and expressed a desire to continue engagements in addition to expanded market opportunities in the future:
  - Denver International Sportsmen's Expo: Carbon County Visitor Council, Albany County Tourism Board, Sweetwater County Travel and Tourism, Jackson Hole COC and Wyoming Game and Fish.
  - Salt Lake International Sportsmen's Expo: Carbon County Visitor Council, Sweetwater County Travel and Tourism, Pinedale Travel and Tourism, Evanston Chamber of Commerce, Jackson Hole COC and Wyoming Game and Fish.
- Sheridan Welcome Center has hosted the popular summer speaker series "Lemonade in the Shade" since 2009. In addition to the speaker, guests enjoy an outside refreshment station with state map and *Journal* distribution. Travelers and the local community attended seven events in 2012:
  - June 6 Wyoming Game and Fish – Wyoming Wildlife
  - June 13 Sheridan County Museum – Wyoming Wildlife
  - June 20 USFS Wilderness in the Big Horns
  - June 27 Buffalo Bill Riding Again!
  - July 11 Joe LaForge, Native American Storyteller and Dancer
  - July 18 Story Wyoming Fish Hatchery
  - July 25 Sheridan County Museum – Mining in Sheridan County
- The third annual National Travel and Tourism Week kicked off with a special open house at the Northeast Wyoming Welcome Center (NEWWC) on May 2, 2013. This event included a dedication and memorial to long-time tourism supporter, Matt Driskill. Events continued throughout the week in the communities of Laramie, Pinedale, Torrington, Sheridan, Riverton and a special "Yellowstone Opening" event with Governor Mead and the signing of the Governor's proclamation on May 10, 2013.
- The SEWWC hosted an open house during National Travel and Tourism Week. The event was held Saturday, May 4, 2013 and included displays from the First Silent Cavalry and the Oak Spokes Antique Car Club. In coordination with the Wyoming Arts Council, the "Wind Code" sculptor by artist Stan Dolega was dedicated during the open house with Milward Simpson, Director, Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources and Diane Shober, Executive Director, Wyoming Office of Tourism presenting.
- The third annual REACH (Rare and Exceptional Achievements in Customer service and Hospitality) awards ceremony was a highlight of National Travel and Tourism week. The event was co-hosted with the Wind River Council at the Wind River Resort and Casino. Four statewide awards were given in the categories of: Customer Service Employee of the Year; Customer Service Organization of the Year; Industry Partner of the Year; and Destination/Attraction of the Year. Entertainment was provided by the North Bear Singers and the Northern Arapaho Dance Experience. The event was held May 7, 2013
- WOT and Albany County Tourism co-hosted an afternoon reception in celebration of the Lincoln Highway 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. The event was held on June 28, 2013 at the Summit Welcome Center. The Lincoln Highway Association drove a tour of between 65-70 cars from California. This tour then met the west bound group in Nebraska for the annual convention.
- In partnership with the Wyoming Rural Development Council, WOT completed four tourism assessments for the communities of Lusk, Wheatland, Kaycee and Story. Conducting a tourism assessment is the first requirement of the Certified Tourism Community Program.
- A total of \$79,578.43 was awarded during a special round of funding for the FY13 Sign Grant program. Funded projects include:
  - A total of five Interpretive sign projects totaling \$32,905.00
  - A total of three Wayfinding sign projects totaling \$46,673.43
- WOT continues to work extensively with both the Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapahoe in efforts to develop tribal tourism. WOT has partnered with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to develop

an interpretive plan for the Wind River Reservation and immediate surrounding areas. A total of 26 public meetings and interviews have been conducted by WOT and SHPO staff to help solicit content and feedback for the project.

- WOT staff continues to engage in partnerships and collaborative efforts with other state and federal agencies. A member of the industry services department continues to serve on the State Monuments and Markers Advisory Committee (SHPO); the Tribal Monuments and Markers Committee (SHPO); the Scenic Byways Committee, (Wyoming Department of Transportation [WYDOT]); the Greater Yellowstone Geotourism Council, and the REACT Committee which is comprised of representatives from the following agencies that have interests and responsibilities for delivering recreation services and information to the public: Wyoming Game and Fish Commission, Wyoming Office of State Lands and Investments, Wyoming Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources, Wyoming Department of Transportation, Wyoming Office of Tourism, Wyoming Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Interior Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Department of Interior National Park Service, U.S. Department of Interior Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service.
- The Industry and Visitor Services Staff conducted outreach by visiting the following communities: Evanston, Rock Springs, Green River, Rawlins, Riverton, Laramie, Casper, Sheridan, Newcastle, Lusk, Wheatland, Kaycee, Story, Fort Washakie, Ethete, Thermopolis, Jackson, and Lander.

