

**DRAFT**  
**FY 2017 Visit Cheyenne Business Plan**  
*July 4, 2016*

**Mission of Visit Cheyenne**

Visit Cheyenne provides leadership in developing, promoting, and protecting the Cheyenne area travel industry. Visit Cheyenne strives to attract visitors to the Cheyenne area by capitalizing on Cheyenne's legendary history and image, thereby increasing visitor spending in the county.

**Vision Statement**

The Cheyenne area provides an authentic, friendly, and quality visitor experience for leisure and business travelers alike. The Cheyenne area is seen as a quality destination with its own unique attributes, not just as a convenient stop-over for visitors to other attractions in the region. The Cheyenne travel industry is busy year-round and is recognized as a major economic force in Laramie County.

**Area Strengths (items we can influence)**

- \* Cheyenne has a very strong western brand. People throughout the world know of the City and envision cowboys, rodeos, railroads, and bison when thinking of Cheyenne. *The brand is strongest among people older than 35 years old. The image of the west is not as strong among younger demographics who respond better to the outdoor recreational amenities of the area.*
- \* The Cheyenne area has a number of western activities that visitors expect - Cheyenne Frontier Days, gunslingers, melodrama, rodeos, bison, horseback rides, cowboy dinner show, carriage rides, train depot, western art, and western museums. *Several of Cheyenne's big boots have been refurbished as part of Visit Cheyenne's recent partnership with the City of Cheyenne and Arts Cheyenne.*
- \* Cheyenne has a number of train attractions, such as the Depot, Depot museum, Big Boy engines, Engine 1242, French Merci train, and Ames monument. UP's acquisition of a Big Boy to be renovated in the Steam Shop has generated significant publicity. *However much of Union Pacific's artifacts are not accessible to the public, other than during Cheyenne Depot Days celebration. U.P. did allow two trolley tours to the Steam Shop in the Spring of 2016.*
- \* *Cheyenne's 150<sup>th</sup> birthday is in 2017 which may be a major opportunity for City publicity and special railroad events. In addition, the solar eclipse in August 2017 will be a big opportunity.*
- \* *Visit Cheyenne has developed or supported several new events in the past year – Cheyenne Restaurant Week, Food Truck Rallies on the Plaza, Winter Festival, Comic Con.*
- \* The Cheyenne Depot is quite active as a visitor destination. Visit Cheyenne's lobby Visitor Center is more inviting and attractive with the new information desk, information kiosks, and photo kiosk.
- \* Cheyenne is a regional shopping hub. Shopping is quite popular for WY conventioners.

- \* The Cheyenne Street Railway Trolley is a solid visitor attraction during the summer months, a quaint transportation option for conventions, and a visible ad for Visit Cheyenne to the community. *Adding a 4<sup>th</sup> trolley has allowed us to book more charters and offer more specialty tours.*
- \* The Cheyenne area has various facilities available for meetings - CFD Exhibition Center, Cheyenne Ice & Events Center, Atlas Theater, Civic Center, Kiwanis Community House, Terry Bison Ranch, Nagle Warren Mansion, Laramie County Community College, Little America, Radisson, and the Plains Hotel. *Next year, the Botanic Gardens will be a great new meeting facility.*
- \* WYDOT and the City of Cheyenne have completed road beautification of the West Lincolnway entrance into Cheyenne and are working on new trackside landscaping. Visit Cheyenne and its economic development partners have also worked toward the painting the BNSF bridge.
- \* Visit Cheyenne operates a system of 8 cell phone audio tours (7 for museums, 1 big boot art tour). Visit Cheyenne helped several area museums take the next step by creating new mobile websites that incorporate video, audio, and more suitable for mobile devices.
- \* Visit Cheyenne has a 501 c3 organization --DISCOVER CHEYENNE-- established to pursue educational and infrastructure grants with the City of Cheyenne and other groups.
- \* Laramie County is served by year-round State Visitor Centers in Pine Bluffs and Cheyenne, and a seasonal center at the I80 Summit. *Visit Cheyenne staffs the Pine Bluffs Center and improved the center this year with a restructured staff and new furniture, fixtures, and decorated doors.*
- \* Visit Cheyenne has a strong social marketing effort with a presence on Twitter, Facebook, Youtube, Pinterest, Instagram, and Flickr.
- \* Visit Cheyenne offers aggressive convention services: Live the Legend receptions, a branded registration desk, phone charging stations, responsive convention website, photo kiosk, and online convention registration. Wyoming and front range meeting planners are finally recognizing the value of these services and are requesting Visit Cheyenne assistance more frequently.
- \* Cheyenne has a new arts organization called Arts Cheyenne to foster more arts activities and participation. Visit Cheyenne was instrumental in pushing for this merger.
- \* Visit Cheyenne worked with the City to develop a Wayfinding Plan consisting of recommended signage throughout the community. *Visit Cheyenne has raised \$40,000 in commitments from CFD and the DDA for implementation of the sign program in FY 17 with the City.*
- \* Visit Cheyenne has purchased 6 phone charging stations for use by major conventions and events in the community. These are stationed at various convention hotels and meeting sites, and provide great visibility as reminders about hosting events in Laramie County.
- \* Visit Cheyenne has helped create new evening event options for conventions and leisure groups as recommended by Randall Travel Marketing: Old West Museum Frontier Nights, Freedom's Edge

Tasting Party, *Atlas Theater Mini-Melodrama*, etc. *New programs at the Botanic Gardens and Accomplice Brewery are in the works.*

- \* *Cheyenne's Destination NEXT process revealed that Cheyenne has above-average community support from the broader business community and public.*

### **Area Weaknesses (things we can influence)**

- \* *The area has seen a significant reduction in business travel over the past year, resulting in lower room demand. This is especially pronounced during the winter.*
- \* Despite Cheyenne's proximity to Denver and the Front Range, most Colorado residents do not know about Cheyenne's amenities beyond Cheyenne Frontier Days.
- \* The Cheyenne area lacks major year-round attractions capable for holding visitors for more than a few hours. Many of Cheyenne's attractions operate only during the summer months.
- \* Cheyenne's major hotels and meeting spaces are not located in close proximity to one another, requiring added transportation and logistics. Cheyenne does not have a private bus company that can help provide group transportation.
- \* Laramie County lacks hotels that are certified as "green" properties.
- \* All Cheyenne is not united behind a "brand" for Cheyenne (economic development organizations, elected officials, civic organizations). This lack of unity makes it difficult to create and maintain branded, authentic community infrastructure (private and public).
- \* Cheyenne lacks extensive sports facilities and a unified effort to develop these amenities.
- \* Cheyenne is not very attractive on main entranceways into the community or along the interstates.
- \* Many area residents think that the visitor industry lasts only the 10 days of Frontier Days. *Many locals are not aware of local attractions and events, especially millennials.*
- \* Cheyenne has limited air travel capacity with Great Lakes Aviation, whose dependability has suffered significantly recently. Randall Travel Marketing identified this as a major impediment for regional conventions.
- \* Because of security concerns, Visit Cheyenne and visitors are unable to access Warren Air Force Base and its attractions.
- \* In the past few years, Cheyenne Frontier Days has been targeted by animal rights groups regarding its treatment of rodeo animals.
- \* Visit Cheyenne's older 3 trolleys are becoming quite expensive to repair.

- \* Federal budget cuts are drastically reducing all government travel and meetings.
- \* *Cheyenne's Destination NEXT process revealed the following needs for the community:*
  - 1) *Iconic attractions and events*
  - 2) *Downtown redevelopment*
  - 3) *Convention Center and headquarter hotel capacity*
  - 4) *Branding*
  - 5) *Wayfinding*

*A full summary of the Destination Next results is at the end of this SWOT analysis.*

### **Opportunities (items out of our control)**

- \* The National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) opened the world's largest supercomputer in Cheyenne in 2012. The center has a visitor center at its location in the West Business Park along I-80 west of town. Other new business travel generators include the new Swan Ranch development on south I25 and the Niobrara oil play.
- \* *Two new lodging properties (Staybridge, Fairfield) opened during the summer of 2016, with potentially 2 more breaking ground later in 2016.*
- \* The use of mobile devices to access the internet is booming, as are various types of social media. These trends are opening new channels of two-way communication with customers.
- \* Cheyenne is located on the northern tip of the vibrant and populous Colorado Front Range. Cheyenne is only 95 miles from Denver.
- \* Cheyenne is at the intersection of two very busy interstate highways – I80 and I25.
- \* Because of Cheyenne's location between major attractions (Yellowstone, Rocky Mountain National Park, Mt. Rushmore, Black Hills) and our interstates, many travelers come through Cheyenne on their trips in our region.
- \* Cheyenne is home to Warren Air Force Base with its visitor attractions and military heritage. The base supports a vast network of veterans and family members who once were housed at the base.

### **Threats (items out of our control)**

- \* *Short-term rentals (like Air BnB) are becoming a growing issue throughout the United States and Laramie County.*
- \* With the exception of the Colorado Front Range, the Cheyenne area is relatively far from major population centers. Cheyenne is not centrally located in Wyoming which is important to some statewide associations and groups for their meetings.

- \* Because of Wyoming’s low population, there is limited Wyoming participation in regional associations, making it difficult for some associations to hold their multi-state meetings in the state.
- \* Severe weather can hinder travel to the Cheyenne area, particularly during the winter months. Often, the external perception of this problem is greater than the actual problem.

DESTINATION NEXT STUDY RESULTS

In November 2015, Visit Cheyenne organized a major tourism industry survey and workshop called *Destination Next* that allowed Cheyenne to compare its tourism industry with cities worldwide.

Here are the “key takeaways” about our tourism industry from this self-analysis.

*Cheyenne is Outperforming slightly on Community Support, but Underperforming on Destination Strength. There is a high degree of consensus in perceptions among all stakeholder groups about the industry.*

*Most Significant Issues to Address*

*Destination Strength*

*Iconic Attractions & Events  
Downtown Development  
Conv. Center & Headquarter  
Hotel Capacity  
Brand  
Wayfinding  
Wifi access  
International Readiness  
Air Service*

*Community Support*

*Hospitality Culture  
Customer Service  
Workforce*

Here are the recommendations from the Summit participants, which were broken into 6 work groups.

*What are the 3 most important issues which must be addressed in Cheyenne and Laramie County in the next 3 years?*

- 5 groups -- Downtown Development / Revitalization
- 4 groups -- Product Development – Attractions / Events
- 3 groups -- Brand Building

*What is the most important action Visit Cheyenne should take in the next year?*

- 4 groups -- Develop a tourism master plan

## Visit Cheyenne Strategic Issues 2012 -2016

**At a November 2011 retreat**, the Visit Cheyenne Board prepared the following 6 broad strategic issues (in **BOLD**) that are necessary to significantly improve the Laramie County hospitality industry. Visit Cheyenne translated the issues into action items in subsequent years (*italics*).

The Board held a **November 2013 retreat** and reaffirmed the 6 strategic issues as vital goals. The Board discussed the issues at length and developed several new action items to be included in future Visit Cheyenne business and marketing plans (underlined).

### 2011 Visit Cheyenne **Strategic Goals (bold)**, Visit Cheyenne Actions 2012-16 (*italics*), and Possible Future Activities (underlined)

#### **1. Create a strong Hospitality Network of business, community, government, and board leaders to facilitate all Visit Cheyenne marketing and development efforts.**

*Visit Cheyenne has broadened its Board of Director recruitment to business leaders beyond the traditional tourism industry. For the past 2 vacancies, we reached out to 18 community leaders, including those in real estate, higher education, banking, auto sales, and restaurants to gauge interest in participation. In the end, the County Commissioners appointed Lisa Murphy, VP at LCCC, Barry Sims, retired from Taco John's, and Wendy Volk, # 1 Properties to the Board. The local accounting firm (MH&P) uses Visit Cheyenne videos in their recruitment efforts.*

*Visit Cheyenne has opened its educational training sessions and Business After Hours events to a broader variety of community and business partners instead of just the hospitality industry.*

*Visit Cheyenne is working with Cheyenne LEADS and several businesses to discuss and improve working opportunities for young professionals in Laramie County. This effort is exposing Visit Cheyenne activities and materials to local professionals who previously had not used them.*

*Visit Cheyenne has continued to work closely with the Cheyenne Area Museum Directors Association on such projects as new museum mobile websites. We helped facilitate the merger of two competing arts organizations into a single, stronger entity (Arts Cheyenne).*

*Visit Cheyenne has held an annual lunch meeting between Cheyenne City Council members and Visit Cheyenne board members the past few years during the Governor's Tourism Conference.*

*Cheyenne's Destination NEXT process revealed the need for more community outreach to millennials. As a result, Visit Cheyenne is marketing local events and attractions more to local residents, both with social media and paid advertising. In addition, Visit Cheyenne has broadened its hospitality networking events to the broader community, including community leaders, elected officials, and young professionals.*

*Visit Cheyenne worked with its economic development partners to create a Downtown Core Action Plan of tangible and doable projects to improve downtown. Visit Cheyenne and partners have garnered support for the plan from a number of community groups and are making progress on the action items.*

*Visit Cheyenne has broadened its community*

Restore occasional lunch meetings of the GMs of Cheyenne's 3 convention hotels.

Young People Strategy -- Develop ways to reach young people – both potential visitors and area residents using new technologies, meet-up resources, etc. Build upon the LEADs young professionals program. Use tools such as meetup.com for Lodging After Hours events, festivals and events, Arts Cheyenne activities, etc.

Consider a “How to Communicate with Young People” marketing seminar for the industry.

## **2. Work to protect and develop the Cheyenne Brand.**

### **A. Educate business / community / government leaders on the Cheyenne brand**

*Visit Cheyenne provides presentation to a variety of community groups, such as the Kiwanis Club, Rotary Club, Lions Club, Leadership Cheyenne, and others about the Cheyenne brand and local tourism industry.*

*Visit Cheyenne has held an annual lunch meeting between local elected officials and Visit Cheyenne board members for the past few years during the Governor's Tourism Conference.*

*Visit Cheyenne highlighted research information about the Cheyenne brand in the 2012 Visit Cheyenne Annual Report.*

### **B. Add new tourism products that match our brand.**

*Visit Cheyenne helped arrange live musicians performing at the Winter Farmer's Market in the Depot.*

*Visit Cheyenne is working with the Cheyenne Depot to develop trolley tours to the UP Steam Shop to see the work being done on the new Big Boy and other steam engines. In early 2016, this work led to two such tours, and Visit Cheyenne will continue to work with U.P. to try to develop a regular schedule of such tours.*

*Worked with volunteers and the Hampton Inn to renovate the historic Atlas Theater lobby.*

*Created sponsorship program to support small attractions, such as the horse-drawn carriages, Rattlesnake Jake performances, and the Old-fashioned Melodrama. Developed a new wild west trolley script that increases the “immersion” of visitors into the western experience.*

*Working with the City of Cheyenne and Arts Cheyenne, Visit Cheyenne repainted and refurbished 11 of Cheyenne's Big Boots that are displayed on public lands. Visit Cheyenne also assisted in providing bases to several bronze art pieces in the downtown area.*

*Visit Cheyenne is heavily promoting outdoor recreational opportunities in the areas west of Cheyenne through travel writer visits and greater advertising / social media support.*

Explore all ideas: Artisans in downtown buildings. A Western artisan coop? WY products store.

Work on developing biking and other recreational opportunities for the outdoor recreational areas between Cheyenne and Laramie. Support efforts at Belvoir Ranch.

### **3. Increase winter and weekend lodging occupancy**

#### **A. Create weekend promotions and activities**

*Created Christmas Shop and Stay promotions that Visit Cheyenne promoted via social media, PR, and radio and web advertising.*

*Revised Visit Cheyenne Marketing Grant rules to give added weight to winter weekend events.*

*Created an Integrated Winter Weekend Promotion campaign that highlights activity-filled winter weekends and special hotel rates/packages.*

*Played instrumental role in the development, promotion, and packaging of the New Year's Eve Ball Drop celebration. Continue to play a leadership role.*

*Sponsor local hockey team and winter hockey tournaments.*

*Supporting downtown ice rink development for winter months as part of the Downtown Core Action Plan. Hoping to use this planning infrastructure to expand more events.*

*Added event development to Visit Cheyenne staff member duties. Expanded New Year's Eve Ball Drop to include family activities. Support WY State Parks' Ice Festival. Created successful Cheyenne Restaurant Week.*

Skating rink at Depot Plaza. Train excursions between Denver and Cheyenne.

#### **B. Target the attraction of winter conventions / meetings**

*Worked with area organizations and businesses to develop new turn-key evening events that can take place during the winter for convention and motorcoach groups: Wyoming State Museum "Night at the Museum", Old West Museum "Frontier Nights", Freedom's Edge Brewpub, Shake It Up Art Activities, Mini-Melodrama at the Atlas Theater, etc.*

*Marketing turn-key events to all potential meeting planners to make winter months more attractive.*

*Hosting meeting planner FAM tours with Helms Briscoe representatives and other planners. Pursuing strong face-to-face networking opportunities in front range and beyond.*

*Developed new Meetings Express program that provides incentives to Laramie County residents to work with us to attract meetings from organizations in which they are affiliated.*

*Periodically meeting with convention hotels on all these services and turn-key events.*

Air Service is quite a challenge. Is it possible for special Great Lakes rates and Green Ride rates for major conventions? Schedule a meeting between VC, Little America and Great Lakes Aviation.

Do a "road-show" to convention hotels highlighting Visit Cheyenne's evening turn-key group events.



#### **4. Raise the bar of professionalism in local hospitality industry by offering industry training to the hospitality industry (3-4 sessions/year).**

*Trainings sessions provided in past few years: ADA Hotel Rules, Green Business Practices guidelines, Hotel Safety, Motorcoach Industry Trends, Social Media Bootcamp, How to Promote Your Event.*

Create a compilation of existing workforce training programs and resources (food service, hospitality, etc.) from a variety of sources (LCCC, Pro-Start, UW, etc.). Package the compilation and promote to the industry. a "road-show" to convention hotels highlighting Visit Cheyenne's evening turn-key group events.

#### **5. Update / improve the entire Depot and Depot Visitor Center experience for visitors**

*2 Depot Lobby electronic kiosks that provide directions, as well as depot and Cheyenne info.*

*New visitor center booth that is more visible, ADA compliant, and inviting to visitors.*

*Photo Kiosk that allows visitors to take their Cheyenne-themed photo and instantly share it with friends and family via social media.*

*Installed 3 Downtown Pedestrian Kiosks that include maps and directions, in conjunction with the DDA and City of Cheyenne.*

*Continue to promote the Cheyenne Wayfinding Plan, which is slated for 2017 implementation.*

*Worked with economic development partners to push the W. Lincolnway landscaping and beautification plan which is funded, but temporarily on hold.*

*Developed new "Welcome to Historic Downtown" over-the-road banners on W. Lincolnway.*

*Attempted -- Painting the BNSF railroad bridge as a gateway to downtown. Unsuccessful for now.*

*Sponsored new "Rattlesnake Jake" performances in the Depot Plaza.*

*Completed the Southwest Drive Train Quiet Zone with UP, WYDOT, and City of Cheyenne.*

*Visit Cheyenne worked with its economic development partners to create a Downtown Core Action Plan of tangible and doable projects to improve downtown. Visit Cheyenne and partners have garnered support for the plan from a number of community groups and are making progress on the action items.*

#### **6. Continue strategic investments to keep Visit Cheyenne on the cutting edge**

*2012 Convention Services Enhancements: Branded registration booth, Mobile hotspot.*

*2013 New Social Media Photo Kiosk. Branded phone charging station.*

*2013 Updated Office Space in Depot.*

*2013 Social Media Audit of Visit Cheyenne efforts. Development of new Social Media Plan.*

*2013 Focus group and online survey about website usage.*

*2015 Visitor Image study completed.*

**FY 2017 Visit Cheyenne Goals and Strategies**  
(Updates in *Italics*)

**Major Tactics**

1. Events Development / Promotion – Invest in developing and growing Laramie County festivals, events, and attractions to create a year-round tourism industry.

- \* Hold our “How to Promote Your Event” training session again. Perhaps offer an advanced version.
- \* Organize another Restaurant Week and build/support other events that have the potential to attract visitors as appropriate. Work with City and partners on City’s 150 birthday celebration.
- \* Work closely with marketing and sponsorship grant winners as appropriate to help ensure that they are successful.
- \* Work closely with the City of Cheyenne on the new lodging tax sharing projects – Cheyenne’s Wayfinding Sign system. Examine the partnership for consideration of doing it again in FY18.
- \* Work with the Depot, Union Pacific, and other parties to grow the area’s train product while the Big Boy excitement is at its peak. Explore trolley tours of the steam shop, a steam shop film, etc.
- \* Consider installation of an informational sign at the Merci Train, similar to Big Boy sign.

2. Downtown Re-Development – Work aggressively with economic development partners, developers, businesses, and the City of Cheyenne to redevelop downtown.

- \* Continue development of the Downtown Core plan. Expand and/or modify the plan as necessary. Lobby the City of Cheyenne for progress and report results to the broader community.
- \* Support our economic development partners in work on the Hynds Building project.
- \* Work on downtown beautification projects as appropriate (within staffing/budget limits).

3. Visit Cheyenne / Community Planning – Update Visit Cheyenne and local tourism plans.

- \* Update Visit Cheyenne’s Strategic Plan with the Board of Directors.
- \* Consider broader tourism community planning efforts, perhaps using the infrastructure established with economic development partners for downtown.

4. Local Promotion – Do more promotion within Laramie County and the immediate surrounding area so area residents are aware of local events and attractions.

- \* Use social media to promote local events. Explore using the Cheyenne Social Club page more, as well as other local influencers who are pushing local information (Cheyenne Happenings, Shortgo, local elected officials, etc.)
- \* Use local paid advertising for Visit Cheyenne events so locals know of events and Visit Cheyenne’s role in them.

5. Meeting Sales / Convention Services -- Build on success and aggressively pursue new business.

\* Continue selling aggressively, using our convention services, existing client base, and Meetings Express program.

\* Continue FAM tours and face-to-face meetings to increase Cheyenne's recognition.

**Industry Indicators**

	<u>FY 17(bdgt)</u>	<u>FY 16(bdgt)</u>	<u>FY 15 (actual)</u>
Laramie Cnty lodging tax collections	\$1,732,948	\$1,707,338	\$1,932,468

**Visit Cheyenne Programs**

	<u>FY 17(bdgt)</u>	<u>FY 16(est)</u>	<u>FY 15 (actual)</u>
Visit Cheyenne Total Budget (exp) (assumes \$23,000 carryover for FY 17)	\$1,755,948	\$1,891,000	\$1,684,656

**1. Marketing (Leisure Travel)**

	<u>FY 17(bdgt)</u>	<u>FY 16(est)</u>	<u>FY 15 (actual)</u>
Marketing	\$774,458	\$805,000	\$766,358

All Markets

- \* Promote the CHEYENNE brand – rodeo, railroad, western heritage, outdoor adventure -- in advertising and fulfillment pieces.
- \* Advertise in print, tv, online, direct mail, and radio in targeted ways to reach destination and stop-over visitors. Develop co-ops where it makes sense for partners to participate with us.
- \* Produce segmented TV, online, and print ads and target them via ad placements. Consider adding more Online Travel Agency advertising. Use the consumer messaging research completed during the summer of 2015 to create the ads.
- \* *Aggressively use Visit Cheyenne's new website, using the latest website and mobile trends.*
- \* Promote the packaging capabilities of Visit Cheyenne's new online booking engine.
- \* Working with Visit Cheyenne's PR agency, continue to develop and implement up-to-date social media strategies. Add social channels as appropriate. Analyze the results and fine-tune efforts.
- \* Develop training sessions on social media and maintaining online reputations for hospitality industry partners. Consider doing so in informal monthly lunches to try to reach more people.

- \* Continue work on Visit Cheyenne's comprehensive marketing and PR program for winter traffic. Use flash sales, targeted e-mail efforts, online and radio advertising, social media, billboards, etc. to promote and sell packages including hotel rooms, events and attractions.
- \* Continue targeted e-mail marketing with Visit Cheyenne's growing email lists.
- \* *Update consumer research on Cheyenne and its advertising.*
- \* Produce and distribute a major Visitor Guide for use as a fulfillment piece and for brochure racks throughout Wyoming. Develop niche brochures as appropriate.
- \* *Consider creating a home page on Cheyenne.org for FE Warren Air Force base families. Interact with spouse clubs on base to educate about attractions and events in Laramie County.*

#### Destination Visitors

- \* Work with Cheyenne Frontier Days to extend visitors stays in Cheyenne around CFD. Work to place conventions in the meeting prior to and after Frontier Days.
- \* Work with Cheyenne Depot Days and Union Pacific to promote and develop the Depot Days weekend as a new major event for the area.

#### In Transit Visitors

- \* Continue marketing partnerships with Yellowstone Journal and Rocky Mountain National Park to entice travelers to stop in Cheyenne on their Park vacations. Use a customized Yellowstone brochure. Place ads in “on the road” coupon books to encourage people to stop in Laramie County.
- \* Use database marketing aggressively (direct mail and e-mail). Use both to encourage in-transit visitors and destination visitors. Monitor results and costs, and refine efforts.
- \* Market Cheyenne where appropriate as a stop-over to other major events like Sturgis.
- \* Market Cheyenne to our existing visitors to extend the visitors’ length of stay. Provide this information at hotels, restaurants, and other retail businesses and attractions.
- \* Renew and strengthen multiple Cheyenne billboards around the region. Use our 4 small billboards in Fort Collins and Greeley to promote our marketing grant winner events (when appropriate) and our winter event campaign.

#### Regional Visitors and Local Residents

- \* Support local events through marketing and sponsorship grants to attract regional business to the Cheyenne area, especially for off-season and “Cheyenne” branded events. Provide direct marketing and promotional assistance to marketing grant winners.
- \* Create, develop, and promote new festivals and events as appropriate with partners.
- \* Administer a sponsorship program that provides support to worthy area events / attractions.

- \* Market Cheyenne events and activities *in Cheyenne* and the surrounding area using social media and paid advertising. *Make sure local residents know about local events and activities. Promote the 2017 solar eclipse that will attract visitors to WY.*
- \* Provide marketing funds to Cheyenne, Pine Bluffs, Albin, and Burns for their local events.

International

- \* Maintain marketing / sales efforts aimed at the international market. Continue partnerships with Rocky Mountain International, the WY Office of Tourism, and Brand USA.

**2. Packaged Travel**

	<b><u>FY 17(bdgt)</u></b>	<b><u>FY 16(est)</u></b>	<b><u>FY 15 (actual)</u></b>
Packaged Travel	\$61,634	\$80,000	\$81,836

- \* Market the Cheyenne area to travel intermediaries selling group tours and fly-drive itineraries by attending trade shows and respond to trade leads (developed by Visit Cheyenne and other partners) to develop more packaged travel to the Cheyenne area.
- \* Share packaged travel leads in a timely manner with Cheyenne area hospitality providers so they can close the sale.
- \* Continue partnerships with Rocky Mountain International, Rocky Mountain National Park, Yellowstone Journal, and the WY Office of Tourism.
- \* Keep foreign language promotional materials up-to-date for international markets.
- \* Promote Cheyenne through both the National Tour Association and the American Bus Association.
- \* Provide new information on products and itinerary possibilities in the Cheyenne area to tour operators and receptive operators through direct mail and other means.
- \* Host fam visits to area for travel intermediaries and tour operators as appropriate.

**3. Meetings and Conventions**

	<b><u>FY 17(bdgt)</u></b>	<b><u>FY 16(est)</u></b>	<b><u>FY 15 (actual)</u></b>
Meetings and Conventions	\$277,480	\$262,000	\$225,862
Convention Services	\$104,876	\$120,000	\$131,198

- \* Target and pursue meeting prospects with Cheyenne's major hotel properties and off-site facilities. Targets: Be more aggressive in finding regional, multi-property business; Off-season business; Wyoming meetings/events with a local government tie (scholastic competitions, WAM, etc.).

- \* Target business sectors that have a strong tie to Cheyenne, where Visit Cheyenne can partner with Cheyenne LEADs to attract conventions or training sessions. Ex: Data Centers.
- \* Offer a new Meeting Fam Assistance program to convention hotels where Visit Cheyenne augments the trips of planners to each of our 3 convention hotels.
- \* Sponsor meeting planner FAM tours for planners from the region.
- \* Continue to build on Cheyenne convention services to make a Cheyenne convention truly a memorable experience. Monitor usage and ways to improve new online registration services, mobile websites, welcome receptions, phone charging stations, micro-websites, and perhaps other targeted incentive such as enhanced wifi for meeting attendees. Analyze our policies and procedures as demand has greatly increased.
- \* Enhance our Live the Legend reception to make it a more Cheyenne-branded event: Photo Kiosk improvements with new backdrops and share-ability incentives such as photo contests. Investigate a mechanical bull for use.
- \* Foster close relations with Cheyenne's 3 convention properties. Hold quarterly lunches or meetings with property's GMs to brainstorm and coordinate new meeting sales/servicing strategies. Meet also with the staffs of 3 properties to personally demonstrate and explain our services.
- \* Continue to work with partners to develop more turn-key group event options like the Old West Museum's "Cheyenne Nights" event and others.
- \* Promote the Meetings Express program into the local business community as a way to gather new meeting leads, develop new local partners and create awareness for Visit Cheyenne. Take advantage of group meetings and luncheons, while also trying to host an event quarterly to promote the program. Continue to test and fine-tune the needed incentives to encourage participation.
- \* Use cutting-edge technology to improve convention bids. Use our meeting services videos (including Cvent) in bids and direct e-mails. Attempt targeted social media advertising for meetings.
- \* Attend convention and meetings trade shows to generate new meeting prospects. (MPI, Affordable Meetings, etc.) and increase Cheyenne's visibility among planners. Carefully monitor the Return on Investment on these shows to determine if they are producing business.
- \* Develop and use attractive e-mails with conventioners to encourage them to attend meetings in Cheyenne. Continue developing micro-sites on [www.cheyenne.org](http://www.cheyenne.org) for the attendees of certain meetings as appropriate.
- \* Advertise the area as a meeting location in appropriate online and printed media. Monitor and fine-tune efforts.
- \* Organize sales blitzes to other cities to promote Cheyenne's meeting options as appropriate.
- \* Work with others to develop sporting and other events during the winter months that bring competitors/parents to Cheyenne. Investigate a partnership with Laramie to attract sporting events to Laramie's facilities and Cheyenne's hotel rooms.

**4. Public Relations / Film**

	<u>FY 17(bdgt)</u>	<u>FY 16(est)</u>	<u>FY 15 (actual)</u>
Public Relations / Film	\$134,774	\$158,000	\$98,061

- \* Keep Visit Cheyenne’s online media center up-to-date and ready for media access.
- \* Continue to develop an integrated social media strategy across social media channels.
- \* Provide hospitality awareness training to the area’s frontline hospitality workers through complimentary trolley tours.
- \* *Consider development of an "Experience Cheyenne" film -- a branded, exciting Cheyenne film for use by Visit Cheyenne, hoteliers, etc. to allow visitors to experience Cheyenne even in the winter months, in a hotel conference room. Consider a "Experience the Steam Shop" film to allow visitors to see what goes on with Cheyenne's steam fleet even if they can't physically go to the facility.*
- \* Aggressively pursue free publicity in local and regional media to inform residents of the depot visitor center, area events, activities of Visit Cheyenne, and the economic impact of travel.
- \* Maintain a county-wide Calendar of Events and add events to the WY Office of Tourism website.
- \* Respond to film prospects from state sources, web page leads, and other sources.
- \* Host an annual lunch with Cheyenne council members and County Commissioners at the Tourism Governor’s Conference to maintain close ties and discuss local tourism issues.
- \* Hold *Experience Cheyenne* events for area hospitality partners.
- \* Communicate the benefits of the travel industry and Visit Cheyenne to the public and media.
- \* *Promote Cheyenne events and activities in Cheyenne in social media and paid advertising. Make sure local residents know about local events and activities.*
- \* Host media members on FAM tours to provide in-person experiences that can lead to media coverage.
- \* Develop and distribute an Annual Report to present Visit Cheyenne activities to the public and to local stakeholders.

**5. Visitor Services & Development**

	<u>FY 17(bdgt)</u>	<u>FY 16(est)</u>	<u>FY 15 (actual)</u>
Visitor Services	\$254,530	\$350,000	\$230,286
Trolley (expenses)	\$82,730	\$225,000	\$73,169

- \* *Update Visit Cheyenne’s Strategic Plan with the Board of Directors.*
- \* *Consider broader tourism community planning efforts, perhaps using the infrastructure established with economic development partners for downtown.*

- \* *Monitor and participate in Special Purpose Tax discussions regarding upcoming projects. Take public positions of support for those projects which may further Visit Cheyenne's mission*
- \* *Continue work with economic development partners on the Downtown Core Action Plan. Amend and adjust the plan as appropriate to create a tangible difference to downtown.*
- \* *Revise and update the cell phone audio tour and mobile website infrastructure with local museums.*
- \* Continue the leasing of parking spaces in the Parking Garage for use by visitors.
- \* Keep Depot Visitor Center and Pine Bluffs Info Center open year-round. Provide visitor information, coupons and counseling at the centers with the goal of increasing visitor stays in the county.
- \* Operate the Trolley as a premier attraction for both visitors and Cheyenne residents. *Work to gain access to the Steam Shop for more monthly trolley tours.*
- \* Use the Trolley as a public relations mechanism for Visit Cheyenne, offering transportation for City and County VIPs, visiting dignitaries, conventioners, and bus tour guests.
- \* Consider installation of an informational sign at the Merci Train, similar to the one Visit Cheyenne placed at Big Boy.
- \* Hold our "How to Promote Your Event" training session again. Perhaps offer an advanced version.
- \* *Hold another Restaurant Week and create other events that have the potential to attract visitors.*
  - \* *Ice Festival*
  - \* *New Year's Eve Ball Drop*
  - \* *Food Truck Rally*
  - \* *Cheyenne 150<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party*
- \* Work with City of Cheyenne on new lodging tax sharing projects – the Wayfinding Sign system.
- \* Work with BNSF and partners to paint the BNSF bridge over W. Lincolnway as a nice entryway into the community. Continue working with the City, Kiwanis Club, and economic development partners to ensure that the W. Lincolnway beautification project continues to develop.
- \* Raise awareness of the homeless person problem in downtown with local elected officials.
- \* Work with businesses or other entities to create new visitor products or services where appropriate. Help with the planning for such needed visitor products and infrastructure.
- \* Continue using Discover Cheyenne as a vehicle to develop educational and tourism programs, infrastructure, and groups.
- \* Work to extend the summer travel season from the beginning of May to the end of September by using Visit Cheyenne resources (trolley, carriages, visitor center) and by encouraging others to stretch the season as well.
- \* Participate in and support (where appropriate) efforts to develop new travel and tourism products in Laramie County. These groups include:
 

Greater Cheyenne Chamber of Commerce	Downtown Development Authority
Cheyenne LEADs	
Economic Development Joint Powers Board	Cheyenne Frontier Days



- \* Raise non-tax funds for Discover Cheyenne that can be used for development without lodging tax restrictions. Possibilities include a sponsorship program that provides substantial visibility to partners, off-season coop marketing efforts, etc.

**7. Administration**

	<u>FY 17(bdgt)</u>	<u>FY 16(est)</u>	<u>FY 15 (actual)</u>
Budget	\$148,197	\$132,000	\$151,054

- \* Benchmark national salary/benefits trends both nationally and within the Western United States. Strive to maintain competitiveness when staff performance warrants it.
- \* Maintain investment sweep account to earn more interest on deposited funds.
- \* Follow established Visit Cheyenne budgeting, expenditure, and bidding policies.
- \* Stay up-to-date with computer and communications technology.
- \* Add to budget reserves as necessary at the end of the fiscal year, per Visit Cheyenne’s reserve policy.