

FOUNDATIONS

Wyoming Library

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June marks third year of Wyoming Library Endowment Challenge

June 30 marked the end of the third year of five of the Wyoming Library Endowment Challenge. Libraries have two more years, until June 30, 2013, to receive gifts, pledges and transfers for the challenge money. Receipt of any pledge or transfer has to be completed no later than December 31, 2014.

So far, Wyoming library foundations have raised just over \$3.4 million and received nearly \$8.2 million in match and incentive funds from the state. But libraries are only about halfway to their goal and there is still nearly \$7 million in match funds to be had. What does this mean to your foundation? It means it may be time to kick fundraising up a notch to make sure that no money is left on the table when the Endowment Challenge ends.

Some libraries have been very successful so far with their fundraising – two are within \$25,000 of their goal. If you're looking for ideas on what you might try in your own county, get in touch with other libraries, or use some of the ideas from the article below.

The Wyoming Library Endowment Challenge status spreadsheet may be found at http://will.state.wy.us/statistics/WYlib_endowment_status.pdf.

A few fundraising ideas gathered from around the state

Susan Simpson, director of Albany County Library, compiled suggestions from Wyoming public libraries as to what fundraisers were working best in their counties. Here's a sampling:

- **Converse:** Face to face meetings always get the best response. Letter writing has done better than expected. A cookbook did well at Christmas.
- **Goshen:** Does well with three used book sales a year. A Taste and Buy Bake Sale was labor intensive but people enjoyed it – an \$8 cover charge allowed participants to sample goodies from volunteer bakers before purchasing baked goods. Events like these build the donor base that can be developed into annual donations and larger gifts.
- **Johnson:** Has an actually fundraising auction that has become a signature event in its community. The last two years, the Foundation has netted about \$15,000. Because the auction is well-established, preparing for it and carrying it out have become routine with the help of volunteers and staff and the process has been simplified over the years.
- **Laramie:** The fall Booklovers' Bash guest author dinner and silent auction has been growing -- this year attendance increased by more than 100 guests and the net was \$15,000. Lunch *for* the Library – a spring luncheon with a speaker – doesn't net enough to match the effort, but it is a good public relations event. Lunch *at* the Library – small,

catered lunches with individual donors has been extremely successful in terms of efforts vs. earnings – one recent one netted a \$10,000 gift.

- **Natrona:** For larger gifts, has relied on nurturing individual relationships with donors.
- **Washakie:** This fall, the local Democratic Party is hosting a non-partisan catered event with former Gov. Freudenthal speaking about growing up in the Big Horn Basin and his term as Governor. All ticket proceeds will go to the endowment. They've tried several other smaller fundraisers. Among them: Worland High School named them as the recipient of funds raised at a basketball game and the local Rotary Club has offered a challenge match of up to \$5,000. They have had better success getting donations from individuals than from businesses.
- **Weston:** Have had success in the past with a "Basket Auction" every other year, usually in May. Clubs and groups create theme baskets that are displayed at the library for two weeks to a month and then auctioned at a luncheon. Some of the baskets are quite creative—one year they even had a "Redneck Basket."

Another idea floated from Carbon County – if you have oddball items to sell, try eBay.

What works in your county will depend on your community. Events are often better for building a donor base – particularly when they are first started. When looking for larger gifts, nothing beats a board member who is passionate about the library directly asking a donor who is passionate about the library.

Wyoming Snapshot Day set for October 11

One day each year Wyoming libraries participate in Snapshot Day – an event where they collect patron stories and comments, photos, video and statistics to show how big an impact libraries have every single day. This year's Snapshot Day is set for Tuesday, Oct. 11.

Snapshot Day provides great materials for library advocacy and fundraising. It's one thing to know that 1,000 children participated in summer reading – it's a whole different experience to add what the children's parents and teachers say about how it helps their learning, or to see pictures of young children eagerly picking out books. Giving is an emotional experience, and stories stir those emotions.

Learn more about Snapshot Day at <http://wyomingsnapshot.weebly.com/>.

This **Wyoming Library Foundations** newsletter is sent to the Wyoming county library directors for distribution to their library foundation and library board members. Individuals interested in viewing this can bookmark <http://will.state.wy.us/slpub/foundations/index.html>. Comments on the content of this publication or contributions to share with other library foundation board members can be sent to Jamie Markus at jamie.markus@wyo.gov or Susan Mark at susan.mark@wyo.gov. *Please note: Inclusion of links to fund raising websites does not imply endorsement of their products or services.*