North East Wyoming
Regional Marketing and Tourism Development Plan

October 2002

Prepared for the
North East Wyoming Tourism Coalition
(representing Campbell, Crook and Weston Counties)
Gillette, Wyoming
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Acknowledgements

In preparing this report we gathered information from a wide variety of travel and tourism attractions, marketing organizations, local businesses, state and federal agencies. Among organizations involved in this effort were the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, Wyoming Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Wyoming State Office of Travel and Tourism, South Dakota Department of Tourism, Black Hills, Badlands, & Lakes Association, Gillette Convention and Visitors Bureau, Newcastle Chamber of Commerce, Devils Tower KOA, Cam-plex, as well as many other individuals, businesses, and organizations.

We want to especially thank the members of North East Wyoming Tourism Coalition who provided invaluable suggestions and advice throughout this project. Without their support and assistance, this project would not have been possible. They are:

Erin Alspach, North East Wyoming Economic and Development Coalition
Ruth Benson, Director of Gillette Convention and Visitors Bureau
Matt Driskell, Devils Tower KOA
Ted Ertman, Weston County Commissioner
Barb Jeffres, Mayor of Moorcroft
Mary Kelley, Wyoming Events
Jeanette Mathis, Crook County Promotion Board
Deb Norlin, Accidental Oil Company
Nancy Rumney, Newcastle Chamber of Commerce
Dave Spencer, Wyoming Business Council
Lee Wittler, Gillette City Council

Finally, special thanks are due to Laurie Green, Director of the Travel and Tourism Division of the Wyoming Business Council, for her public support of this project.
Executive Summary

In December 2001, the North East Wyoming Tourism Coalition (NEWTC) formed to develop a Regional Marketing and Tourism Development Plan for the NE Wyoming Region, a region that includes Campbell, Crook and Weston counties. Utilizing existing resources while creating cost-effective tools to promote the region, the NEWTC's goal is to partner with state and local stakeholders to promote the region as a visitor destination. The NE Wyoming Regional Marketing and Tourism Development Plan is intended to serve as the framework necessary to guide the future planning efforts of the NEWTC. The Plan includes national and regional travel trends, visitor profiles for travelers to Wyoming and South Dakota, a visitors' perspective for each state, an overview of the NE Wyoming visitor product, and descriptions of the primary marketing organizations that promote travel and tourism to the Region. Key findings, market and product development recommendations include the following:

Overview of Key Findings

- Potential travelers to the NE Wyoming Region are increasingly using the Internet to make travel plans and to purchase travel-related goods and services.

- Lodging occupancy trends, highway traffic patterns, and visitation data from major attractions in the NE Wyoming Region show visitor activity driven by a peak period of leisure travel during the summer months.

- Visitor origin data from selected visitor information locations, accommodations, and attractions in NE Wyoming Region show a blend of visitors to Wyoming and South Dakota travel to and through the Region.

- The NE Wyoming Region offers visitors a wide range of unique and diverse experiences many of which complement and coordinate with the primary factors identified by visitors as strengths of Wyoming and South Dakota as a destination.

- A number of travel marketing organizations jointly promote visitor destinations and attractions located within the NE Wyoming Region and portions of western South Dakota, most notably the Black Hills.
Overview of Key Marketing Recommendations

- Promote the NE Wyoming Region as a unique, high quality visitor destination that offers visitors many opportunities, including Devils Tower, the Black Hills, energy production, wildlife viewing, paleontology, cultural and historic sites, and recreational trails.

- Enhance joint marketing efforts with the Wyoming State Office of Travel and Tourism to promote the region in its marketing efforts, as well as to work with South Dakota Tourism to promote the region.

- Create a membership program for the coalition that assists and complements the marketing effort of the region for advertising and group tour/travel writer hostings, and expand partnerships with tourism-related businesses and marketing organizations in the region.

- Establish and vigorously promote a single NE Wyoming Region website that effectively links with the state and all travel-related sites in the region.

- Develop a theme and logo that encompasses the quality and diversity of the NE Wyoming visitor product and utilize the theme and logo in all marketing efforts.

- Develop a single, cost-effective marketing piece to promote the Region as well as a press kit that promotes the Regional Marketing and Tourism Development Plan and the newly-formed NEWTC.

- Conduct a familiarization trip annually for information center staff, front line employees and interested residents to increase cross-sell efforts, and participate in Wyoming Tourism's hospitality training program.

- Increase shoulder and winter visitor appeal by offering more special events and cultural programs that appeal to weekend visitors, and by cross-selling the seasons.

- Develop an integrated strategy to promote heritage tourism.

- Generate popular support for the Regional Marketing and Tourism Development Plan in the region.

- Develop an advertising campaign to target group tour operators in targeted markets.

- Develop an annual calendar of events brochure for the region.

- Develop interpretive presentations that highlight the stories of the region.
Overview of Key Product Development Recommendations

- In association with the proposed Vore Buffalo Jump Education and Research Center, promote development of a year-round Welcome Center that effectively greets and cross sells visitors entering Wyoming from South Dakota.

- Support plans for downtown development and community enhancement projects that will enhance travel and tourism to the region.

- Improve the appearance of signage in the region and assure that highway signs function to the best possible advantage.

- Develop the potential of “Old Town” and its sod house.

- Encourage the development of ATV and hiking trails in the region.
1. Introduction

In June 2002, the North East Wyoming Tourism Coalition (NEWTC) was established to help promote travel and tourism to the North East Wyoming Region (representing Campbell, Crook, and Weston counties). The eleven-member NEWTC serves as an advisory committee that consists of members representing the travel industry throughout the Region (see Appendix A for membership list). This Regional Marketing and Tourism Development Plan provides current, reliable information to help identify target markets, describe the visitor product in the NE Wyoming Region, and recommend appropriate marketing strategies for the NEWTC.

This Regional Marketing and Tourism Development Plan was sponsored by Crook County and jointly funded through a Community Development Block Grant from the Wyoming Business Council, Weston County Travel Commission, Powder River Energy Corp., Crook County Promotion Board, and the Gillette CVB. The North East Wyoming Economic Development Coalition (NEWEDC) administered the grant and provided support and assistance for this project.

Purpose of the Regional Marketing and Tourism Development Plan

The primary purpose of this project was to develop the information necessary to guide and support the NEWTC's planning and marketing efforts over the next five years. It is not intended to be a detailed work plan to accomplish specific programs (i.e., marketing, attractions development, visitor centers or other programs). Rather, it is intended to be a framework to set a course of action by the NEWTC. The NEWTC and staff, within the framework of the Master Plan will then develop an annual program of work during the next five years. As part of this effort, it is important that the NEWTC communicate with a broad range of stakeholders, including lodging operators, restaurants, and other tourism-related businesses, managers of recreation, chambers of commerce, community leaders and interested citizens.

Project Scope and Objectives

The primary purpose of this project is to develop the information necessary to guide and support a comprehensive marketing and planning effort for the North East Wyoming Tourism Coalition. The report presents current, reliable information, helps identify target markets, and recommends priorities for product development and marketing.
Specific objectives include:

- Describe overall market and pertinent trends
- Identify key market segments for promotion and product development programs
- Identify opportunities for cooperative efforts for marketing and other visitor industry development
- Recommend marketing program priorities and strategies

Report Contents

Following this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 provides an overview of national travel trends, as well as national trends regarding information used for trip planning. Chapter 3 provides a regional visitor industry overview. Chapter 4 provides statewide visitor profiles for travelers to Wyoming and South Dakota. Chapter 5 presents a visitors' perspective of statewide visitor products, including specific survey results. Chapter 6 provides an overview of the primary visitor product within the NE Wyoming Region, with an integrated view of the Region. Chapter 7 describes regional trip planning information and advertising. Finally, Chapter 8 describes product development and marketing strategies for the NEWTC. Included, as well, is a discussion of support for the Regional Marketing and Tourism Development Plan and criteria for success.
2. Travel and Tourism Market Trends

Introduction

This section describes overall factors and trends that influence the travel market. It is important to understand these factors and trends, and how they relate to visitor-industry planning and marketing objectives. Primary factors and trends included in this discussion are:

- Population and growth trends
- Demographics
- Disposable income
- Travel trends
- Internet Use trends

Each of these factors is useful for purposes of discussing travel demand, and the ways by which the NE Wyoming Region can orient its marketing and development strategies to better serve potential visitors. Organizations involved in planning, facility/program development, and marketing should keep all of these segments in mind.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Market Segment</th>
<th>Primary Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Geographic Categories</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local</td>
<td>Households within the immediate area, requiring no more than an hour of travel time. Most likely to be repeat visitors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>Households within a few hours' drive of the area. Day trips are possible for this group. Many will combine activities such as shopping, outdoor recreation, visiting a museum and dining out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out-of-State/Foreign</td>
<td>Travelers from out of the region, some of whom are visiting the U.S. from a foreign country.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Interest/Demographic Categories**

Families  
Families enjoy both long vacations and short weekend trips; however short weekend trips have been growing more rapidly. Primarily middle-aged households with children; although, some family travel includes grandchildren and other children, as well. Strong interests in education and hands-on experience.
Weekend Travelers

Individuals and households visiting the area either overnight or for the day. Often looking for informative and interesting attractions. Most demand will be during the spring, summer and fall months. This is the best source of revenue on a per-visitor basis.

Mature Travelers

One of the most important demographic trends affecting the travel industry is the increase in the number of travelers age 55 or older as the huge baby boom generation begins to enter their “mature” years. According to Travel Industry Associates The Mature Traveler (55+), 2000 Edition, about three-quarters of all mature travel is for leisure. Shopping is the favorite activity on mature trips. Other preferred trip activities include visiting historical places or museums, attending cultural events or festivals, gambling, and outdoor activities. Interestingly, group tours are twice as popular on day trips as on overnight trips.

Foreign Travelers

Generally during the summer months. Many are Canadians; other foreign travelers are from European counties and Japan.

Adventure Travel

Adventure travel by Americans is growing. According to Travel Industry Associates Adventure Travel Report, half of all U.S. adults took an adventure vacation trip between 1992 and 1997. These travelers are interested in specific outdoor recreation activities such as mountain biking, rock climbing, hunting, and horseback riding as well as more “soft” adventure activities, including wildlife viewing, bird watching, and sailing. Most of the reported adventure travelers actually tend to participate more in “soft” adventure activities.

Festivals and Special Events

Festivals and special events have become an increasingly important component of travel and tourism, and include planned activities and entertainment for participants such as community festivals, fairs and expositions, parades, rodeos, arts and crafts fairs, folk, and ethnic festivals.

Cultural and Heritage Tourism

Many travelers will plan a trip or add extra time to a trip because of a cultural, arts, heritage or historic activity, or event. In particular, travelers enjoy visiting a historic site such as a building, battlefield, or historic community. Museums are also popular with travelers. Other cultural activities travelers enjoy include live theater, art galleries, heritage or ethnic festivals, and music concerts. Most group tour operators offer historic or heritage tours.
Rural Tourism: Travel to small towns and rural areas appeals to many Americans because of its unique charm, in addition to the wide variety of activities and history. By far, the most popular reason overall for traveling to a small town or rural area is to visit friends and relatives. Baby-boomer travelers seem to find rural travel especially appealing, as this age group is more likely than younger or older travelers to visit small towns for reasons other than visiting friends and family—such as visiting historical sites or attending a festival or fair.

Combined Business and Leisure Travel: Travelers sometimes extend business trips to include leisure activities and provide a good market for destinations adjacent to areas with business activity. Business trips are also more likely to include spouses and children than in the past (although most do not).

National and International Travel Trends

A number of trends currently evident in the U.S. will affect the travel market. Overall, many of these trends are very favorable to the NE Wyoming Region, although they influence the type of attractions that will be most appealing (see Appendix C for early impact of September 11th on 2001 travel plans).

Demographics

American population is aging: The primary growth is currently in the 55 or older age range. These are more likely to be empty nesters at this point; relatively few are retired yet. The retired population will increase significantly after 2010.

More dual-earner households: With more than one worker it is more difficult to schedule travel, which often means shorter trips, more frequently. Shorter trips tend to be more single-purposed—focused on one or a few activities.

Increasing incomes for some Americans: Incomes of professional, educated households have been increasing, producing a segment of the population with adequate resources for travel and recreation. However, much of the population is sharing in this income growth only to limited degree, and will continue to travel on a more limited basis and be very value-oriented.

Educated population: The American population is becoming increasingly educated, with nearly a quarter of American adults currently holding a bachelor or advanced degree. Educated travelers are particularly interested in information-rich displays and programs.
**Travel Trends**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shorter vacations, more frequently</strong></td>
<td>North American households are more likely to take long weekend and other relatively short trips; the incidence of extended, multi-destination long-distance travel is decreasing. More vacations are close to home, 2-4 days, within 150 miles, often on weekends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Children travel more often with parents or relatives</strong></td>
<td>More travel includes children, and accordingly, is more oriented to educational and recreational experiences. Children also require higher service levels (more bathrooms, child-oriented food service), and are generally not associated with “night life.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Seasonality</strong></td>
<td>The preferred leisure travel season is April through October. Family travel, in particular, is oriented to summer months. Spring and Fall travel is popular among empty nesters, with fewer crowds and more available travel specials. Meetings/convention travel is more oriented to Spring and Fall.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meetings, Conventions, and Expositions</strong></td>
<td>Destinations that host meetings, conventions, and expositions (includes trade shows) tend to benefit from the impact of travel spending through more extended lengths of stay (approximately 3 nights). Destination areas with good commercial air service are necessary to draw from a large geographic area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organized Group Travel</strong></td>
<td>Organized group travel – by motorcoach, cruise ship or using air transportation – is increasing and is related to the aging of the North American population and increasing incomes here and abroad. Much of this travel is during Summer and is very value-oriented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Educational Experience</strong></td>
<td>More travelers are focused on educational experiences, (particularly if children are involved), such as visits to natural or historic sites, interpretive facilities and programs, and activities oriented to wildlife and natural resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Membership Programs</strong></td>
<td>Travel associated with membership programs is increasing: RV clubs, senior citizen organizations, membership reward programs (e.g., frequent fliers). Family reunions are also a popular reason for travel.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Internet Use Among Travelers

Over the past several years, Internet and electronic commerce have caused dramatic change in the way travel information and services are delivered to consumers. This section of the report presents an overview of Internet-use for travel planning. The information contained in this section is based on a Travel Industry Association of America (TIA) interviews conducted as part of the TIA Travel Survey, a quarterly telephone survey among a representative sample of U.S. adults.

The majority of U.S. residents who travel (68%) currently use the Internet, reflecting a rapid rise in the incidence of Internet use among travelers since 1996. This online traveler segment has grown 126 percent over the last five years to a market size of 95 million U.S. residents in 2001.

Figure 2-1
Internet Use Among U.S. Travelers
(Among 139.2 Million Past-year Travelers)

Source: Travel Industry Association of America
Portion of Travel Planning done Online

Learning about sources of information travelers use frequently is important in designing an effective marketing strategy. Since a significant number of visitors who travel to and through the NE Wyoming Region may live a great distance from the Region, communicating with them in their market's traditional media – like magazines and newspapers – can become expensive, particularly when there are several important markets. Among online travel planners, 56 percent do at least half of their travel planning online. Three in ten (29%) do all or most of their planning online. About 44 percent of online travelers do less than half of their travel planning on the Internet.

Figure 2-2
Portion of Travel Planning Done Through the Internet
(Among 64.5 Million Online Travelers Who Used the Internet to Make Travel Plans)

Source: Travel Industry Association of America

The vast majority (90%) of online planners claim to use a number of other sources for travel information; the most popular being friends, family or co-workers, and/or airline, hotel, or rental car companies (62%). Other preferred sources of information include: travel agents (53%); travel guides, books, or magazines (49%); newspapers (28%); and city, state, or county tourism offices (20%).
Types of Travel Planning Done Online

For trips they have planned on the Internet, online travel planners do a variety of planning activities. They most often search for maps or driving directions (74%), not surprising since the majority of trips taken in the U.S. are by auto. Searches for airfares/schedules (69%) and places to stay (67%) are also widely used in online travel planning.

Over half (53%) of online travel planners search for things to do at the destination. Searching for dining/entertainment options (45%) and local event calendars (43%) are popular, as well. In addition, about one-third (34%) of online travel planners claim they have searched for destinations to visit.
Figure 2-4
Types of Travel Planning Done Online for Trips in Past Year
(Among 64.5 million Online Travelers Who Used the Internet to Make Travel Plans)

Searched for:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maps/Driving Directions</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Airfares/Schedules</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Places to Stay</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Things to Do</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dining/Entertainment</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Events</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rental Cars</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel Packages</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Places to Go</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Travel Industry Association of America

Many online travel planners use more than one travel website to plan their trips. Search engine sites are used most often by online travel planners (69%), followed by company websites such as those for airlines, lodging, and rental car companies (67%), and online travel agency sites such as Microsoft Expedia, Travelocity or Priceline (63%). Destination websites are also popular with online travel planners (63%). Other popular types of sites used for travel planning include: special interest sites such as business, financial, cooking, wine or skiing sites (23%); travel guide sites such as Fodor’s, Frommer’s or Lonely Planet (17%); newspapers or magazine websites (12%); and community websites (7%).

Figure 2-5
Types of Internet Sites Used for Travel Planning
(Among 64.5 million Online Travelers Who Used the Internet to Make Travel Plans)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Search Engine Sites</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company Sites</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Agency Sites</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destination Sites</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Interest Sites</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel Guide Sites</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper/Magazine Sites</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Sites</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Travel Industry Association of America
3. NE Wyoming Region Travel Industry

Lodging, Business Activity and Sales

The travel industry in NE Wyoming has been growing for the past several years. Lodging tax for the counties and jurisdictions, available from the Wyoming Department of Revenue, provides a direct measure of lodging sales in the travel industry. Taxable lodging sales consist largely of hotel, motel, bed & breakfast and resort room rentals, and are directly related to other sales to travelers such as food service, recreation, and retail purchases. As shown in Table 3-1, taxable room sales for the Region grew from $9.9 million to $14.5 million between 1997 to 2001, an average annual growth rate of nearly 8% per year. It is important to note that a large portion of the growth occurred in Campbell County (i.e., City of Gillette) where business-related travel associated with coal mining and coal-bed methane production increased during this time period. In addition, new development projects spurred the demand for short-term lodging to accommodate additional construction workers from outside the area. Overall, the City of Gillette in Campbell County receives the bulk of room sales and the associated tax receipts within the NE Wyoming Region.

| Table 3-1 |
| Room Sales, NE Wyoming Region |
| 1997-2001 |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Room Sales ($000)</th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>1998</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campbell County (City of Gillette)</td>
<td>7,280</td>
<td>8,388</td>
<td>9,484</td>
<td>9,916</td>
<td>11,402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crook County</td>
<td>1,481</td>
<td>1,713</td>
<td>1,863</td>
<td>1,960</td>
<td>1,884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weston County</td>
<td>1,168</td>
<td>1,196</td>
<td>1,145</td>
<td>1,215</td>
<td>1,262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9,929</td>
<td>11,296</td>
<td>12,493</td>
<td>13,091</td>
<td>14,547</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Dean Runyan Associates

As depicted in Figure 3-1 on the following page, it is interesting to compare Gillette's seasonal trend in lodging activity with the city of Jackson, Wyoming – one of the most popular destination areas in the state. The city of Jackson provides a good example of a location where the demand for lodging is driven primarily by the seasonal pattern of leisure travelers. Compared to lodging establishments located in Jackson, those located in the city of Gillette recently experienced significantly higher occupancy rates during the spring and fall seasons – times of the year when fewer visitors travel through the state. Although this data does suggest that business-related travel serves as an important...
segment of the Region’s visitor industry, the year-round visitor pattern and, in particular the period of peak lodging occupancy, is largely driven by the seasonal pattern of leisure travelers.

Figure 3-1
Average Monthly Occupancy for Lodging Establishments
Jun 01 – May 02

![Graph showing average monthly occupancy for lodging establishments from June 2001 to May 2002.]

Source: Rocky Mountain Lodging Report

Travel Spending

Spending by visitors traveling to and through the NE Wyoming Region has been growing steadily for the past several years. Visitor spending includes all purchases made by travelers during their trip, including lodging, eating and drinking, recreation, retail sales, and ground transportation (i.e., auto rental and purchases of gasoline), as well as applicable local and state taxes paid by the traveler at the point of sale. Between 1997-2001, visitor spending in NE Wyoming has grown at a steady pace, from $77 million to nearly $101 million (combined estimates for Campbell, Crook, and Weston counties combined made by Dean Runyan Associates for the Wyoming Business Council State Office of Travel and Tourism). (See Figure 3-2 on the following page.)

Visitors to the NE Wyoming Region spend the night in a variety of accommodations, including hotels, motels, bed & breakfast establishments, guest ranches, campgrounds, vacation homes, and in the homes of friends and relatives. Travel spending, reported by type of accommodation where visitors spent the night, shows the relative contribution of each traveler type to total travel impacts. Visitors who stayed overnight in commercial lodging establishments (hotels, motels, guest ranches, and bed & breakfasts) spent approximately $49 million during 2001 – nearly half of all travel spending in the Region. Visitors who stayed in public and private campgrounds spent about $21 million, or 18 percent of travel spending in the Region.
It is also important to note that visitors who stayed overnight in private homes of friends and relatives and/or vacation homes, as well as day travelers passing through, made significant travel expenditures in the Region.

**Figure 3-2**

*NE Wyoming Region Travel Spending 1997-2001*

*Source: Dean Runyan Associates*

**Figure 3-3**

*NE Wyoming Region Travel Spending by Type of Accommodation, 2001 ($ Millions)*

*Source: Dean Runyan Associates*
Travel-Generated Employment

During 2001, visitor spending in the NE Wyoming Region directly supported over 1,800 jobs (represents full- and part-time, as well as seasonal positions) with earnings of $23.1 million (includes wage and salary disbursements, earned benefits, and proprietor income). The majority of these jobs were in service-related businesses and organizations, such as restaurants, lodging establishments, and recreation – which includes outdoor recreation, entertainment, and cultural events. Travel spending generated the greatest number of jobs in eating & drinking, recreation, and accommodations.

![Figure 3-4](image_url)

**NE Wyoming Region Travel-Generated Employment 2001 ($ Millions)**

- **Eating, Drinking**: 617
- **Recreation**: 523
- **Accommodations**: 380
- **Ground Transport**: 150
- **Retail Sales**: 130
- **Food Stores**: 42
- **Air Transportation**: 26

Source: Dean Runyan Associates

Local and State Tax Revenues Generated by Travel Spending

Tax receipts generated from travel spending in the NE Wyoming Region totaled $4.8 million in 2001. More than half were attributable to the state sales tax (local share 28%). Receipts on this tax generated by travel spending on lodging, food, recreation, and other goods and services amounted to nearly $2.6 million. Receipts from the state fuel tax on gasoline purchases generated nearly $1.2 million. Local sales tax receipts ($774,000) and local option lodging taxes ($280,000) are very important sources of tax revenue for the local counties and jurisdictions in the Region. (See Figure 3-5 on the following page.)
Highway Traffic

Highway travel data in NE Wyoming along Interstate 90 provides a gauge of overall travel in the Region. The Wyoming Department of Transportation maintains two permanent counters on I-90 in the NE Wyoming Region: the first in Gillette (east urban limits) and the second just east of Beulah near the Wyoming–South Dakota state line. Average daily traffic counts (ADT) provide a measure of overall traffic volume, and represent the total number of vehicles passing both directions on a typical day. ADT includes travelers who visit or pass through the area, as well as travel by local residents and truck traffic.

Highway traffic has grown steadily.

As shown in Figure 3-6, on the following page, the average daily traffic measured at both locations along Interstate 90 has increased steadily since 1992.

Highway traffic is very seasonal.

Highway traffic in this area is quite seasonal, indicating that a substantial volume of visitors passes through the Region. Since most visitors to the Region tend to travel during in the summer months, the difference between the winter lows and summer highs can provide an indication of the additional volume of traffic attributable to visitors traveling to or through the Region. Figure 3-7, on the following page, depicts the seasonality of travelers to this area by breaking down traffic volume for the year. The prime period of travel on this section of I-90 is concentrated during June through September. During the month of August, the average daily traffic for I-90 east of Gillette (about 9,000 vehicles per day) was more than double that of January (about 4,000 vehicles per day). Although lower in terms of overall volume, the I-90 traffic east of Beulah near the Wyoming–South Dakota state line shows a nearly identical seasonal trend.
Figure 3-6
**Average Daily Traffic Interstate 90 by Month**

![Graph showing average daily traffic for Interstate 90 from 1992 to 2001.](image)

Source: Wyoming Department of Transportation

Figure 3-7
**Average Daily Traffic Interstate 90 2000**

![Graph showing average daily traffic for Interstate 90 in 2000.](image)

Source: Wyoming Department of Transportation
National/State Park and Monument Visitation

In the states of Wyoming and South Dakota, two of the top visitor attractions — Yellowstone National Park and Mount Rushmore National Monument — show a similar pattern of seasonal visitation during the summer months. This visitation data provides evidence of a highly seasonal pattern of travel to each of these states.

Figure 3-8
Yellowstone National Park and Mount Rushmore National Memorial
Recreation Visits by Month, 2001

![Bar chart showing recreation visits by month for Yellowstone National Park and Mount Rushmore National Monument, 2001.](chart1)

Source: National Park Service

A similar seasonal pattern of visitation is shown for both Devils Tower National Monument and Keyhole State Park, two popular destinations within the NE Wyoming Region.

Figure 3-9
Devils Tower National Monument and Keyhole State Park
Recreation Visits by Month, 2001

![Bar chart showing recreation visits by month for Devils Tower National Monument and Keyhole State Park, 2001.](chart2)

Source: National Park Service and Wyoming Division of State Parks & Historic Sites
**Visitor Volume Estimates**

National Park Service estimates of recreation visits can provide a useful proxy to compare the magnitude of difference between visitor volume to the NE Wyoming Region (represented by Devils Tower National Monument) as compared to visitor volume to the western South Dakota portion of the Black Hills (represented by Mount Rushmore National Memorial). As shown in Figure 3-10, Devils Tower receives roughly 20 percent of the recreation visitor day volume of Mount Rushmore located just 130 miles away. A survey of visitors to Mount Rushmore would help to provide an indication of the proportion of Mount Rushmore visitors who pass through the NE Wyoming Region traveling onto Yellowstone National Park or other destinations in Wyoming.

![Figure 3-10](image)

**Visitors to the NE Wyoming Region travel from a large number of markets, primarily from the U.S. – and particularly from Western, Midwestern, and Great Plains states. This assessment of visitor origin data for the Region is based on data obtained from a number of visitor locations, including Devils Tower KOA, Gillette CVB, Rockpile Museum, and Newcastle Chamber of Commerce. (See figures 3-11 to 3-14 on the following pages.) Overall, the data show a number of key visitor markets in states that lie to the east – in particular Minnesota, Illinois, South Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Michigan. Other key visitor markets, located to the west and south, include the states of California, Colorado, Washington, and Texas.**

A majority of visitors who stayed overnight at Devils Tower KOA – a campground located near the entrance to Devils Tower National Monument – stayed just one night,
an indication that many travel through the Region as part of an extended touring trip that includes multiple destinations. As shown in Figure 3-11, many visitors drove long distances from home to reach the campground.

Figure 3-11
Visitor Origin Devils Tower KOA
2000-2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Dakota</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Devils Tower KOA
Note: Data excludes Wyoming residents

Figure 3-12
Gillette CVB Visitor Origin, 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nebraska</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Gillette CVB
Note: Data excludes Wyoming residents
Figure 3-13
Rockpile Museum Visitor Origin, 2000-2001

Source: Rockpile Museum
Note: Data excludes Wyoming residents

Figure 3-14
Newcastle Chamber of Commerce Visitor Origin, 2000-2002

Source: Newcastle Chamber of Commerce
Note: Data excludes Wyoming residents
Visitors to the Black Hills Region of South Dakota travel from many of the same key states as those who travel to the NE Wyoming Region. South Dakota residents represent nearly 10 percent of visitors to the Black Hills Region.

**Figure 3-15**
**Black Hills Region, South Dakota**
**Visitor Origin, 2001**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Dakota</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nebraska</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: South Dakota Department of Tourism Study, 2001

**Hunting in NE Wyoming Region**

Particularly during the fall months, the NE Wyoming Region serves as a popular hunting area for big game such as deer, antelope, and elk, as well as a variety of small game and several species of upland game bird. As shown in Figure 3-16, hunts for mule and white-tailed deer accounted for nearly two-thirds of all hunting days in NE Wyoming. Hunting seasons and bag limits vary by species, and are managed through the Wyoming Game and Fish Department.
Hunting Days in NE Wyoming Region by Species, 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mule Deer</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White-Tailed Deer</td>
<td>25.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antelope</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharp-Tailed Grouse</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elk</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cottontail Rabbit</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sage Grouse</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grey Partridge</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chukar</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mourning Dove</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squirrel</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruffed Grouse</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Dean Runyan Associates & Wyoming Game and Fish Department

Hunting in NE Wyoming is a popular recreation activity for Wyoming residents as well as visitors (i.e., non-residents). Big game hunting by non-residents accounted for nearly half (45%) of all hunter days in the region. Big game hunting licenses are issued by a lottery system, and non-resident hunters must apply well in advance of the hunting season. Licenses are limited, and frequently, demand exceeds supply.

Hunting Days in NE Wyoming Region, 2000

- Upland Game: 19%
- Big Game - Wyoming Resident: 36%
- Big Game - Nonresident: 45%

Source: Dean Runyan Associates & Wyoming Game and Fish Department

Note: Big game species includes antelope, elk, mule deer, and white-tailed deer. Upland game includes chukar, cottontail rabbit, gray partridge, mourning dove, ruffed grouse, sage grouse, sharp-tailed grouse, and squirrel.
Non-Resident Hunter Day Trip-Related Expenditures

The trip-related spending associated with NE Wyoming Region non-resident hunter days provides an indication of the contribution to travel spending made by hunters who travel to the Region from other states. A Wyoming 1997 hunting trip-related expenditure study conducted by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) estimated average daily expenditures (per hunter per day) for non-resident hunters of antelope ($161), deer ($131), and elk ($159). The average daily expenditure estimates include purchases made on a broad range of goods and services while on a hunting trip, such as lodging, eating- and drinking-out, groceries, transportation expenses, outfitter and guide services, campground fees, meat processing, taxidermy, and minor equipment. Based on the WGFD average daily expenditures and total hunter day estimates, non-resident big game hunters to the NE Wyoming Region spent approximately $5.5 million dollars, which represents about 5.5% of the total travel spending for the NE Wyoming Region during 2001 (see Table 3-2 on the following page).

Table 3-2
Non-Resident Hunter Days and Trip-Related Spending
NE Wyoming Region, 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hunter Type</th>
<th>Hunter Days (non-resident)</th>
<th>Ave. Daily Spending</th>
<th>Trip-related Spending</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antelope</td>
<td>9,024</td>
<td>$161</td>
<td>$1,452,864</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deer</td>
<td>30,177</td>
<td>$131</td>
<td>$3,953,187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elk</td>
<td>651</td>
<td>$159</td>
<td>$103,509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$5,509,560</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Wyoming Game and Fish Department & Dean Runyan Associates
4. Statewide Visitor Profiles

Introduction

This section presents statewide profiles of travelers to Wyoming and South Dakota, describing significant factors that may influence decisions regarding product development and marketing. The overall purpose of these statewide visitor profiles is to better understand the current travel patterns and characteristics of travelers to and through the NE Wyoming Region. Each statewide visitor profile is based on American Travel Survey data collected by the Bureau of Transportation Statistics from a large sample of travelers throughout the United States. In comparing the findings, it is important to consider how the visitor profiles for each state may differ, and how each statewide market can enhance opportunities to effectively develop visitor product and market the NE Wyoming Region.

It is important to note that a variety of NE Wyoming organizations and businesses have established partnerships with South Dakota businesses and organizations to promote visitors to the Black Hills. Informal interviews with NE Wyoming business owners and visitor industry representatives revealed that most visitors who travel to and through NE Wyoming also visit the Black Hills, Badlands, and Lakes Region of South Dakota. It is also evident that a profile representing all visitors to Wyoming would most appropriately reflect the predominance of visitors to both Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks, two of the most popular destinations in the state. Although I-90 serves as a transportation corridor for travel through Wyoming, many Wyoming visitors – particularly those from states to the west and the south – can reach these popular destinations without travel to or through the NE Wyoming Region.

Visitor characteristics discussed in this section include the following:

- Visitor origin
- Trip purpose
- Length of trip
- Travel distance
- Season of travel
- Type of overnight accommodation
Visitor Origin

The majority of U.S. visitors to Wyoming traveled from other states in the Rocky Mountains.

Nearly one-half of U.S. visitors to Wyoming are from the states of Colorado and Utah. A notable portion of visitors to Wyoming traveled from a number of other states in the Rocky Mountains as well as the Great Plains, including Montana, Idaho, South Dakota, and Nebraska.

Figure 4-1
Origin of Visitors to Wyoming

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>23.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utah</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montana</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idaho</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Dakota</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nebraska</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Mexico</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, U.S. Department of Transportation

The majority of U.S. visitors to South Dakota traveled from six states in the Midwest and Great Plains.

Nearly 7 in 10 U.S. visitors to South Dakota traveled from the following six states: Minnesota, Nebraska, Iowa, Wisconsin, Illinois, and North Dakota. (See Figure 4-2 on the following page.)
Purpose of Travel

While a majority of visitors to Wyoming and South Dakota traveled for pleasure, visitors to South Dakota were more likely to visit friends and relatives.

Travel for pleasure and leisure including visits with friends and relatives was the primary trip purpose for about 7 in 10 visitors to both Wyoming and South Dakota. However, it is notable that visitors to South Dakota were more likely to travel to visit friends and relatives, slightly more than one-third of all travelers to the state.
Length of Trip

*Wyoming visitors took longer overnight trips and more day trips compared to South Dakota visitors.*

Wyoming visitors were more likely to travel for 4 nights or longer, representing about 4 in 10 trips. More than half (51%) of trips to South Dakota were between 1 and 3 nights.

![Figure 4-4: Trip Length of Stay](chart)

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, U.S. Department of Transportation

Season of Travel

*Summer was the primary season of travel for visitors to Wyoming and South Dakota.*

About 4 in 10 visitors to Wyoming and South Dakota traveled during the summer months of July through September. Travel during the spring months (April - June) was the next most popular season, with about one-quarter of visitors traveling during this time period. Visitors to Wyoming were more likely to travel during the winter months (January – March), while visits to South Dakota were more common during the fall months (October – December) – a popular time of year to visit with friends and relatives. (See Figure 4-5 on the following page.)
Type of Overnight Accommodation

Travelers to South Dakota were much more likely to stay overnight in a private home of a friend or relative, while travelers to Wyoming were much more likely to stay overnight in campgrounds and vacation homes.
5. Visitor Perception and Image

Introduction

Travelers often associate certain perceptions and images with regard to a particular state, region, or destination area. In establishing a coordinated plan to develop visitor product and market the NE Wyoming Region, it is useful to consider commonly-held perceptions and images. This section presents an overview of visitor image, focusing on the most notable strengths for Wyoming and South Dakota. It is important to note that a portion of the NE Wyoming Region lies within the Black Hills, Badlands and Lakes Region, as defined by the South Dakota Department of Tourism.

The findings presented in this section are based on the South Dakota 2001 Tourism Study prepared for the South Dakota Department of Tourism. These findings are based on data collected through telephone interviews from a sample of 1,500 travelers who visited one or more of the following states during 2001: Wyoming, Montana, South Dakota, North Dakota, and Nebraska.

Main Purpose of Trip

Among survey respondents, about one-third reported sightseeing was the main purpose of vacation/pleasure trips to the survey region (i.e., Wyoming, Montana, South Dakota, North Dakota, and Nebraska). A visit with friends and relatives was a primary trip purpose for 16 percent of respondents. In addition, 9 percent reported personal/family as the primary purpose of travel. Other notable types of pleasure trips include hunting/fishing/boating (7%), camping (6%), and skiing/snowmobiling (2%).

Figure 5-1
Main Purpose of Most Recent Vacation/Pleasure Trip to Survey Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sightseeing</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit friends/family</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal/family</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunting/fishing/boating</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camping</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passing through</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business/conference</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleasure/relaxation</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skiing/snowmobiling</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gambling</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (golf, biking, etc.)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: South Dakota Department of Tourism Study, 2001

Note: Survey region includes Wyoming, Montana, South Dakota, North Dakota, and Nebraska.
Top Rated Attractions

Survey respondents were asked to name the top three attractions that they visited on recent trips to any of the survey states. Respondents ranked Mount Rushmore National Memorial highest (29%), followed by Yellowstone National Park (20%), Black Hills National Forest (13%), and Badlands National Park (9%).

Figure 5-2
Top Attractions in Survey Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attraction</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mount Rushmore NM</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellowstone NP</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Hills NF</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Badlands NP</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glacier NP</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Teton NP</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crazy Horse Mem.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackson Hole, Wy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Custer SP</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devils Tower NM</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: South Dakota Department of Tourism Study, 2001

Note: Survey region includes states of Wyoming, Montana, South Dakota, North Dakota, and Nebraska.

With regard to a variety of factors important to choosing a vacation destination, respondents were asked to identify the “most liked” among the five survey states. The findings suggest that each state may represent a fairly distinct visitor product and market potential.

Wyoming’s Primary Strengths

Among factors identified as important to choosing a vacation destination, visitors rated Wyoming strong in the following areas:

- Western Adventure
- Outdoor Adventure
- Wildlife Viewing
- Camping
- Winter Sports
- Scenic Beauty and Sightseeing
- National Parks, State Parks and Monuments
Western Adventure Activities

Wyoming ranked first among survey states for Western Adventure Activities with more than half of all respondents rating Wyoming as best in this area, compared to 25 percent for Montana and 14 percent for South Dakota. Western adventure activities would generally include activities associated with guest or dude ranches, which typically offer horseback adventures sometimes combined with hunting, outdoor barbeques, as well as other activities.

Figure 5-3
Traveler Ratings of Survey States
Best Western Adventure Activities, 2001

Wildlife Viewing

Visitors ranked Wyoming highest for Wildlife Viewing, with more than 40 percent of respondents rating Wyoming the best. Respondents also gave Montana high ratings for wildlife viewing, while South Dakota was rated comparatively lower – just 13 percent of respondents rated South Dakota best in this category. (See Figure 5-4 on the following page.)
Camping

Visitors rated Wyoming highest for *Best Camping* among survey states, with 36 percent selecting Wyoming as the state that offers the best camping opportunities. Montana was rated nearly as high, while South Dakota was rated comparatively lower in this category.
Hunting

Visitors rated Montana and Wyoming nearly equal for Best Hunting opportunities. South Dakota, along with the other survey states, was comparatively rated much lower in this area.

Figure 5-6
Traveler Ratings of Survey States
Best Hunting, 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Montana</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyoming</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Dakota</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Dakota</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nebraska</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: South Dakota Department of Tourism Study, 2001
Note: Data excludes respondents with no opinion.

Winter Sports

Visitors rated Wyoming strongest for Best Facilities for Winter Sports, with nearly 40 percent rating Wyoming the best in this category. Montana also showed a similar high rating, while the other survey states were comparatively rated much lower.

Figure 5-7
Traveler Ratings of Survey States
Best Facilities for Winter Sports, 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wyoming</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montana</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Dakota</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Dakota</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nebraska</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: South Dakota Department of Tourism Study, 2001
Note: Data excludes respondents with no opinion.
Scenic Beauty and Sightseeing

Visitors rated the states of Wyoming and Montana equally impressive for Best Scenic Beauty and Sightseeing, while South Dakota and the other states were ranked significantly lower. It is important to note that viewing scenery and sightseeing was a trip activity reported more than any other activity by travelers.

Figure 5-8
Traveler Ratings of Survey States
Best Scenic Viewing and Sightseeing, 2001

South Dakota’s Primary Strengths

Among factors identified as important to choosing a vacation destination, visitors rated South Dakota strong in the following areas:

- Historic Sites and Attractions
- Native American History and Culture
- Children’s Attractions
- Private Attractions
- National Parks, State Parks and Monuments

Native American History and Culture

Visitors rated South Dakota as the state with the Best Native American History & Culture by a wide margin among other survey states. Well over half of respondents identified South Dakota as the state with the best Native American tourism resources, compared to 15 percent or less for Wyoming and each of the other survey states. (See Figure 5-9 on the following page.)
Traveler Ratings of Survey States
Best Native American History & Culture, 2001

South Dakota 56
Wyoming 15
North Dakota 13
Montana 9
Nebraska 6

Source: South Dakota Department of Tourism Study, 2001
Note: Data excludes respondents with no opinion.

Historical and Cultural Sites and Events
As was the case with Native American tourism resources, visitors ranked South Dakota number one as the state with the Most Interesting Historical and Cultural Sites and Events, with more than one-half of respondents choosing South Dakota. These visitor ratings provide strong support that historical and cultural tourism resources function as a primary tourism asset for South Dakota.

Traveler Ratings of Survey States
Most Interesting Historical and Cultural Sites & Events, 2001

South Dakota 51
Wyoming 19
Montana 12
North Dakota 9
Nebraska 9

Source: South Dakota Department of Tourism Study, 2001
Note: Data excludes respondents with no opinion.
Children’s Attractions and Facilities

Among those visitors who rated the Best Children’s Attractions and Facilities, South Dakota was ranked highest, or about 46 percent of those that had an opinion (31 percent had no opinion indicating that this is not important issue for some). Other survey states did not show any particular strength in this category; although Wyoming ranked second highest with 21 percent of respondents selecting this state as best.

![Figure 5-11](#)

**Traveler Ratings of Survey States**  
**Best Children’s Attractions & Facilities, 2001**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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</thead>
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<td>South Dakota</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyoming</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montana</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Dakota</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: South Dakota Department of Tourism Study, 2001
Note: Data excludes respondents with no opinion.

Private Attractions

South Dakota was ranked highest for private attractions by slightly more than one-third of respondents. Some examples of the popular private attractions in South Dakota include a wildlife park, a presidential wax museum, and a prehistoric dinosaur museum. (See Figure 5-12 on the following page.)
Figure 5-12
Traveler Ratings of Survey States
Best Private Attractions, 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>South Dakota</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Nebraska</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Dakota</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: South Dakota Department of Tourism Study, 2001
Note: Data excludes respondents with no opinion.
6. NE Wyoming Region Visitor Product

Introduction
The NE Wyoming Region offers visitors an area rich in local history and cultural heritage, as well as extensive opportunities for wildlife viewing, outdoor recreation, and agricultural/energy production tourism. Bordering the Region to the east, are the famed Black Hills with rugged rock formations, meadows, pine forests, canyons and gulches. Devils Tower, the nation's first national monument, looms prominently over the Belle Fourche River where the pine forests of the Black Hills merge with the grasslands of the Great Plains – a vast landscape where plains Indians once pursued enormous herds of bison. The Region is home to abundant wildlife populations of pronghorn antelope, bison, elk, and deer, as well as over 200 species of birds, including a variety of hawks and eagles.

Establishing a basic understanding of the tourism product is an important step that sets the stage for a discussion of opportunities to develop new product and market the NE Wyoming Region. This section provides a focus on the primary visitor attractions located within each of the counties in the NE Wyoming Region (i.e., Campbell, Crook and Weston counties). Although the focus for this study is on the NE Wyoming Region, it is important to recognize that from a travelers' perspective the destination area is often visited in conjunction with the Black Hills and Badlands area in South Dakota (see Figure 6-1 on the following page). The conclusion of this section presents an integrated view of the NE Wyoming Region's tourism product in order to help facilitate more collaborative regional development and marketing efforts.

While this section intends to describe the primary tourism product for the NE Wyoming Region, it does not intend to list or describe every specific attraction and facility or identify every possible visitor activity. More extensive listings of accommodations, adventure tours, and events can be found in the Wyoming Vacation Directory produced by the Travel & Tourism Division of the Wyoming Business Council or from their website at www.wyomingtourism.org, as well as a variety of other websites (see list on page 59).
Campbell County

Primary Visitor Attractions:

- Concerts, Theater, and Dance Productions
- Rodeos, Fairs, and Livestock Events
- Golf
- Trade Shows
- Educational Group Tours (energy production and working ranches)
- Scenic Drive Loops
- City Parks (swimming complex and waterslide)
- Rockpile Museum
- Einstein’s Adventurarium (children’s science center)
- Group RV Rallies

City of Gillette

Founded in 1891 during the construction of the railroad, the city of Gillette offers a full-range of lodging facilities and restaurants, art galleries, antique shops, and a variety of other retail shops and services for travelers. With convenient exits from I-90, Gillette serves as an ideal “base camp” to explore interesting sites and day-trips in the NE Wyoming Region. Inside the city, visitors can attend a Powder River Symphony Orchestra concert, explore a unique science center for children and adults, and enjoy one of the city’s five public parks, including a swimming complex with a 385-foot long waterslide. Gillette is the largest town in, and serves as the county seat of, Campbell County.

Energy Production Tours

Often referred to as the “Energy Capital of the United States”, the area now known as Campbell County was once covered by an immense inland sea and extensive peat bogs that have become enormous reserves of coal, oil, and natural gas. Campbell County offers visitors a first-hand opportunity to view the most modern, energy-efficient, and environmentally sensitive coal production in the world. Visitors can tour Eagle Butte and Black Thunder, two of the largest coal mines in the nation, and watch as coal is extracted with electric shovels and draglines and shipped by rail to power plants. Tours will show visitors examples of how mined areas are restored to the benefit of livestock and wildlife, using the latest environmental practices.

A trip to Wyodak Power Plant, one of the largest air-cooled energy production plants in North America, offers visitors the opportunity to learn more about the modern day process of power generation. Visitors can learn how the energy locked inside coal becomes electricity and is sold to distant markets. This complex computer-controlled
process includes coal storage and burning, ash removal, control of sulfur dioxide and
nitrous oxide emissions, water treatment and turbine generation.

**Mackey Ranch**

Now in the fifth generation of family operation, visitors can enjoy a comfortable wagon
ride tour through a 16,000-acre working cattle ranch. Guests will view an original
Wyoming homestead cabin, and learn first-hand how a modern day family incorporates
a cattle operation, farming, big game hunting, and rodeo into a ranching business.
Tours offer opportunities to view genuine Longhorn and Red Angus cows, as well as
Wyoming wildlife. Father-son national champion team ropers will demonstrate some of
the day-to-day ranching activities, along with a team roping demonstration. Tours also
feature a choice of breakfast and lunch menus served in unique rock barn, often
accompanied by local cowboy entertainment.

**Durham Buffalo Ranch**

The Durham Buffalo Ranch provides visitors with the opportunity to view one of the
world's largest and oldest bison ranches (operated by the Flocchini family since the mid-
1960s). Visitors to the ranch will learn about this majestic North American mammal that
once sustained the Plains Indian people for many generations. Visitors will learn how
the Durham Ranch manages it resources "holistically," maintaining a large herd of
grazing animals while improving the rangelands on which they live. The ranch tour
generally provides visitors with close-up views and opportunities to photograph portions
of the bison herd in its native habitat. In addition, group tours can include a lunch or
dinner that offers ranch-raised bison steak and burgers.

**Cam-plex Multi-Event Facilities**

This multi-event facility is ideally suited to host events varying from conferences and
conventions, to theatre and dance, trade shows, livestock shows and rodeos. Cam-plex
features a fine arts theatre, a convention/exhibit hall, two multi-purpose pavilions, a
racetrack, rodeo grounds, over 1,800 R.V. spaces, and a 21-acre park and picnic area.
Cam-plex presents a variety of entertainment, recreation, and leisure time activities
including opera, ballet, off-Broadway musicals and top-name entertainers. During the
second weekend of February, the Winter Western includes a rodeo, trade show and a
variety of other exciting activities. Cam-plex is currently considering requests from
community groups regarding the feasibility of several preliminary concepts for
additional venues – each of which could appeal to visitors – including a science and
space center, and a motor sports park. Cam-plex has also applied for a grant to conduct
an economic impact analysis to consider alternatives related to adding additional
facilities and development of a private hotel along with a conference center.
Campbell County Rockpile Museum

A visit to the Campbell County Rockpile Museum promises a true look at life in both the Old and New West. Known for its artifacts of cowboys, Native Americans, soldiers, and homesteaders, museum visitors can view collections of rifles, quilts, kerosene lamps, Native American tools, and other memorabilia. Upon request, the museum staff can present a 20-minute slide show on the history of Gillette, and can arrange custom presentations.

Einstein’s Adventurarium

Through joint cooperation, Campbell County business community, citizens, and the Campbell County School District have created a wonderful variety of interactive exhibits for children of all ages and adults. Einstein’s Adventurarium provides a unique hands-on science center with interactive areas that include: Life and Earth Science exhibits (including live animals); Forms of Energy; Light and Sound; Prehistoric life and variety of fossils and fossil replicas; a Bubble Room; a Shadow Room, and a life-size pterodactyl replica.

Golf

Visitors will find opportunities to play golf at three public courses:

- Bell Nob Golf Course
- Gillette Golf Club
- Haycreek Golf Club.

Crook County

Primary Visitor Attractions:

- Devils Tower National Monument
- Vore Buffalo Jump
- Historic Trails
- Keyhole State Park
- Guest Ranches and Retreats
- Golf

Sundance

Sundance lies at the foot of Sundance Mountain in the Black Hills National Forest. Swimming, fishing, and golf are all available within the city. In the winter, Sundance becomes a snowmobile destination for riders who have access to over 375 miles of groomed and marked trails. Sundance plays host to the annual Crook County Fair, which includes many fun-filled special events such as a Sheep Dog Trial, Family Fun.

Hulett

Nine miles north of Devils Tower National Monument, the town of Hulett lies along the banks of the Belle Fourche River, surrounded by red cliffs and forests. Hulett has several annual events, including a rodeo in June and motorcycle rally days in August. The winter offers snowmobiling and cross-country skiing, with groomed trails in the Bearlodge Mountains of the Black Hills National Forest. During November, the area around Hulett is a popular sportsman’s paradise because of the abundance and quality of whitetail and mule deer, wild turkey, and antelope.

Moorcroft

Located on the banks of the Belle Fourche River, the town of Moorcroft once served as the nation’s largest shipping point for cattle and sheep along the Old Texas Trail. Moorcroft is close to Keyhole State Park (see description below) and Pine Haven Golf Course. The Old Texas Trail Museum offers visitors an opportunity to learn about the history of Moorcroft and this historic trail. The town also hosts two key special events: Jubilee Day held the 2nd Saturday in July, and a Parade, Barbecue, and Fun Days Rodeo, held the 3rd weekend in June.

In March 2000, Moorcroft citizens undertook an initiative to create a community development plan with a community vision for the town in 2020. In order to support tourism development, the community plans to capitalize on its location at the intersection of rail, interstate and state highways routes, as well as its proximity to Keyhole State Park, Devils Tower National Monument, and the Black Hills. Development will focus on the historical theme of the Texas Trail, Cheyenne to Deadwood Trail, the railroad, and nearby archeological resources. In conjunction with this effort, community wishes to attract core retail and service businesses, as well as new businesses from outside the area.

As part of the community development plan, Moorcroft is currently working with consultants to assist in the creation of a downtown beautification program that would include enhancements to the Texas Trail Museum, as it has the potential to become a central part of Moorcroft’s tourism strategy. Main Street improvements and historic street lighting were completed in 1996, and provide a base level of improvements for the community. In addition, the community is developing bike paths in partnership with the Wyoming Department of Transportation.

Devils Tower National Monument

Often remembered for the award-winning 1978 movie, “Close Encounters of the Third Kind,” the spectacular rock formation known as Devils Tower and the surrounding
landscape attract visitors from around the world. Devils Tower National Monument offers visitors a variety of self-guided trails with close-up views of the Tower, as well as the forest and wildlife around the base. Visitors can often observe busy, playful prairie dogs in their “town” in the grasslands below the Tower. During the summer months, rangers present talks on the natural and cultural history of the area and offer guided tours along the 1.3-mile Tower Trail. A junior ranger program is also available for children, and evening programs are offered at the Devils Tower Amphitheater. A self-serve campground and picnic area is located in the Monument.

Known as one of the premier rock climbing areas in North America, many climbers journey to the Monument to test their skills on vertical rock walls of Devils Tower. To help visitors understand the techniques and equipment used in climbing at Devils Tower, rock-climbing demonstrations are held at the climbing kiosk at the Visitor Center. Since Devils Tower remains a sacred site of worship to Native American tribes in the area, a key element of climbing management is a voluntary closure to climbing during the month of June.

Keyhole State Park

With easy access off I-90 between the communities of Sundance and Moorcroft, Keyhole State Park offers opportunities for swimming, sunbathing, hiking, boating, water-skiing, bird watching, and fishing. The Park centers on the reservoir, which provides approximately 15,000 acres of water recreation opportunity. Keyhole State Park offers some of the best fishing in Wyoming for walleye, catfish, small mouth bass, and northern pike. During the summer months, visitors have the opportunity to view over 200 species of birds, including the White Pelican, Osprey, and Bald Eagles. Visitor facilities include nine campgrounds overlooking the lake, providing more than 170 sites with tables and grills, a privately-run marina that has gasoline, fishing supplies, groceries, propane, and showers, and a newly remodeled motel.

Vore Buffalo Jump

Located directly off I-90 near the town of Sundance, the Vore Buffalo Jump is a deep natural “sink hole” where, over a three hundred year period, Native American groups stampeded buffalo over the rim as a means to procure their primary food source, as well as many other materials used in their cultures. Scientists estimate that up to 20,000 bison were trapped and harvested at this one location by at least eight different tribes. The bison bones and the many stone artifacts abandoned at the site were buried quickly, but gently, with thin layers of sediment. As a result, bones and artifacts, which would decompose or erode away under normal conditions, are still intact at the Vore Site.

In 1989, the Vore family formally donated the Vore Buffalo Jump site to the University of Wyoming, with the stipulation the University would complete a permanent education and research center at the site, and open it to the public. To assist in this effort, the University helped create The Vore Buffalo Jump Foundation, a non-profit corporation. After a decade of planning, the Foundation seeks to protect and make the Vore site
accessible to the general public by developing a world-class interpretive center. The proposed center would enable visitors to observe on-going excavation and laboratory analysis at very close range. Successful development of this project near the Wyoming-South Dakota state line would be an important addition to the visitor product of the Region as well as the State of Wyoming.

**Crook County Museum and Art Gallery**

Housed in the lower level of the Crook County public courthouse, the Crook County Museum and Art Gallery offers visitors an opportunity to view exhibits of Native American artifacts, cowboy memorabilia, and pioneer collections dating from 1875. Visitors can also view the original courthouse furniture – complete with life-size mannequins of the Sundance Kid trail; a Vore Buffalo Jump diorama and display; a Custer Trail diorama showing the route taken by Custer through Crook County and the Black Hills; as well as Crook County photographs, brands, and local artifacts.

**Historic Trails**

Two well-maintained non-motorized-use trail systems – Carson Draw and Sundance Trail – offer visitors the opportunity to explore the distinct beauty of a unique part of the Black Hills known as Bearlodge Mountains. During the late 1800’s and early 1900’s, these trail systems were used by homesteaders, miners, and ranchers who sought water sources — making them an integral part of the area’s history. Today, outdoor enthusiasts can hike, mountain bike, and ride horseback on 54 miles of trails, which pass through rugged canyons and rise out onto scenic ridge tops. Trail access is provided by trailheads conveniently located along roads. From some of the ridge tops, visitors can observe such sites as the Custer Expedition Route, Devils Tower, and the Twin Missouri Buttes. During the winter months, cross country skiers have become major users of the trails, which feature smooth, fast, and fairly steep descents, as well as tranquil level stretches. Nearly seven miles of trail are regularly groomed as weather permits.

**Dude and Guest Ranches**

A number of guest ranches offer visitors opportunities for a wide variety of outdoor recreation and western adventure activities, including horseback riding, hunting, hiking, mountain biking, fishing, hunting, and participation in ranching activities. A selection of ranches includes:

- Diamond L Guest Ranch
- Wyoming Ranch Retreat
- Tumbling T. Guest Ranch
- 7W Guest Ranch
- Ranch A
Devils Tower Golf

Situated on the red bluffs overlooking the Belle Fourche River Valley in the western Black Hills, Devils Tower Golf offers guests a scenic and enjoyable golf course. The front nine holes meander through a scenic Ponderosa pine forest, and are always kept in immaculate condition. The back nine is under construction with signature architect Dick Phelps. A new clubhouse features a full service restaurant, bar, and fully-stocked pro shop.

Weston County

Primary Visitor Attractions:

- Black Hills
- Historic Sites and Buildings
- Dinosaur Graveyards
- Thunder Basin National Grassland
- Scenic Loop Tours
- Livestock Events and Rodeos
- Golf

Newcastle

Known as the “Western Gateway to the Black Hills”, two U.S. highways route through Newcastle providing east-west and north-south linkages with scenic and historic interest to visitors: 1) U.S. Highway 16, connects Newcastle with the Black Hills to the east, and with Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks, as well as the Big Horn and Shoshone National Forests to the west. 2) U.S. Highway 85, the Can Am Highway running from Canada to Texas, follows the route of the old Deadwood-Cheyenne Stage Coach line. In addition, State Highway 450 runs southwest from Newcastle through the heart of the Thunder Basin National Grasslands and the Thunder Basin coalfields.

Two buildings in Newcastle are listed on the National Register of Historic Places: the Newcastle Main Post Office and the Wyoming Army National Guard Cavalry Stable (Anna B. Miller Museum). The Weston County Courthouse has also been nominated for the Register. Existing mature trees and well-cared-for lawns at the county courthouse, library, and post office add charm and character to the buildings. Railroad Park allows visitors to watch the many coal trains making their way from the coal mines of eastern Wyoming to points in the eastern United States. Newcastle’s historic Old Mill Inn Restaurant, built in 1913 by the Wyoming Farming & Livestock Co., offers visitors a unique dining experience. The dining and office area is constructed from native sandstone quarried east of Newcastle. Hand-chiseled marks are visible in the stones, which were cut to shape.
The recently completed (August, 2000) Revitalization for Downtown Newcastle Master Plan recognizes the importance of tourism by recommending a variety of design solutions that will enhance the appeal of Newcastle’s historic downtown area as a visitor attraction including: additional parking, comfortable and inviting outdoor spaces, historic building restoration, and business expansion.

**Anna Miller Museum and Jenny Stockade Cabin**

Located in an historic National Guard cavalry barn built in the 1930’s, the Anna Miller Museum houses many interesting artifacts, including Cambria mining camp displays, period rooms, a country store and early day doctor’s office, Indian artifacts, and a fossil collection of dinosaurs which includes a skull cap and sections of Tyrannosaurus Rex, as well as other dinosaurs that once roamed the area. On the grounds of the museum, visitors can view Jenny Stockade Cabin, which once served as a supply stop during the Black Hills gold rush and a stage station along the Cheyenne-Deadwood Trail. The oldest existing building in the Black Hills, the Jenny Stockade Cabin was visited by Wild Bill Hickok, Calamity Jane, and Wyatt Earp, among others, who stopped en route to Deadwood, South Dakota. The Green Mountain School, a one-room, typical rural schoolhouse, is another part of the museum complex. The school, established in the 1890’s north of Newcastle, was used by area settlers for school, community gatherings, and as a polling place until 1929. The school contains a wood burning stove, school desks, bell, blackboards, and many other period articles.

The Anna Miller Museum has received a grant to complete an architectural conceptual plan for the refurbishing and expansion of the Weston County Museum District facilities, including a plan to expand the Anna Miller Museum, relocate Upton’s Red Onion Museum, and refurbish indoor space in the Cavalry Barn. The firm of Dubbe-Moulder Architects, PC was hired in May, 2002 to complete the plan.

**Flying V Cambria Inn**

To the north of Newcastle lie the historic remains of Cambria, a former company mining town originally populated with immigrants from 23 nations. The mining company built the Inn as a resort for, and a memorial to, the Cambria miners. It was completed in 1928 — only months before the mine closed. Originally known as the Cambria Park and Casino, its construction of native sandstone from the Hogback was overseen by a master mason the company brought over from Germany. It had two swimming pools — one saltwater, and one fresh — with gravel bottoms. The stone entrance to the wooden bathhouse is now on the National Register of Historic Places. In 1931, the mining company leased out the park and casino, and the brothers who leased it renamed it after their livestock brand, the Flying V Cambria Inn. Today, it serves as a restaurant and bed & breakfast.
Upton

Known to residents as “The Best Town on Earth” Upton offers visitors a restful retreat from travel. A city park located on Highway 116 boasts tall Ponderosa Pines with a children’s playground and walking path. For golfers in the group, Upton has a beautiful nine-hole golf course, which has a creek that winds its way between the greens. Every summer on the third Saturday of July, residents host Upton Fun Days, as past residents and alumni from all over come back for a celebration with old friends and relatives. The event features a parade, games, kids’ rodeo, and a barbeque.

Located in downtown Upton, the Red Onion Museum presents the history of Upton and Weston County. Permanent exhibits include photographs, artwork, and artifacts of Upton and the Weston County area.

Historic “Old Town”

Located just west of Upton along Highway 16, visitors can learn about the historic town where many early settlers drove their livestock with the promise of the railroad that could carry coal, sheep, and cattle to market. Begun in 1995, the restoration project relocated cabins and other structures essential to the late 1800’s and early 1900’s. These cabins and structures were later moved to the original site of Upton, then known as Iron Town, and restored to preserve an important era of local heritage. The buildings include a replica of a common sod shanty, built by Upton High School students.

Rodeos and Livestock Events

During the summer months, Weston County Fairgrounds hosts several different rodeos and other types of western competitions, including horse shows. Visitors can experience authentic western culture, and meet cowboys and cowgirls who travel from all over Wyoming and other western states to compete for cash prizes. Other events include livestock shows, western crafts, stock dog trails, greased pig chases and other entertaining races and games – some of which visitors may participate in. Each Memorial Day weekend, Newcastle also plays host to the All Girls Rodeo attracting some of the most skilled cowgirls in the west.

Accidental Oil Company

Visitors to the Accidental Oil Company can learn the story of Al Smith who used only a pick, shovel, and a few sticks of dynamite to confound experts and strike oil at the shallow depth of 24 feet. A guided tour leads visitors down a 120-foot ramp to a viewing room at the bottom of the 24-foot well where, through the use of ultraviolet lighting, they can view the oil oozing from cracks in the 100 million-year-old rock. Visitors can also view historical drilling equipment at the site, including a well with hand pump, antique pump jacks, a steam-powered drilling rig, and an 1880 oil derrick,
which stands on a hill above the oil well. Located inside a 10,000-barrel oil storage tank, a unique gift shop offers an assortment of jewelry, collectibles, gourmet foods, and souvenirs.

**Paleo Park**

Paleo Park offers visitors a unique opportunity to dig for fossils along the scenic western edge of Black Hills. Numerous dinosaurs have already been discovered on the ranch. Visitors can have a full day of classroom instruction or just visit the field. In the classroom, visitors can learn how to map, draw scales, identify bones, techniques for excavation, and field safety. For the curious, a dinosaur trackway shows a variety of tracks, along with skin impressions, bird tracks, raindrop imprints, and trail drags. Paleo Park also features a restaurant, which offers authentic ranch cuisine, and a new nine-hole golf course.

**Outdoor Recreation Trails**

In August of 2000, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) designated a Stateline Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) in response to the increased use of public lands that lie along the western slope of the Black Hills at the Wyoming-South Dakota Stateline. Several proposed hiking, nature, and mountain bike trails are being considered in the plan, as well as new trailheads and interpretive signing. Most of the trails would also be suitable for cross-country skiing and horseback riding, and would connect to an existing trail system located in the Black Hills National Forest. Other potential improvements for a 3.5 mile multi-use trail, which winds through ponderosa pine, aspen and mountain shrub vegetation, include additional interpretation signing, an informational kiosk, and approximately one mile of additional trail to take in scenic view point. An SRMA management plan is scheduled to be completed during 2002.

**Whoopup Canyon**

Managed by the BLM, Whoopup Canyon, an area near Newcastle, contains an extensive record of Paleo-Indian petroglyphs that occur on the sheer sandstone walls of the canyon. In an effort to protect these ancient stone wall drawings, a 1,400-acre area was designated as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). Currently, public visitation to the area is limited to research by special permit, traditional religious use by Native Americans, and supervised tours guided by BLM personal. Because public access to the area will continue to be limited to a small number of guided tours, an ACEC management plan (currently in progress) will recommend development for an “off-site” interpretive center where the public can view examples of petroglyphs and learn about the culture of Native Americans that once inhabited the area. The BLM does not expect to complete the ACEC management plan until sometime in 2004, and negotiations to provide limited access across some private lands also need to be finalized.
Thunder Basin National Grassland

One of 20 publicly owned National Grasslands managed to conserve the natural resources of grass, water, and wildlife habitat, Thunder Basin National Grassland offers visitors many diverse recreational opportunities such as mountain biking, hiking, hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, bird watching, sightseeing, camping, and picnicking. Roads through the Grassland range from paved state highways and graveled county roads to two-track primitive roads suitable only for four-wheel drive vehicles. A variety of cultural sites can be found ranging from large prehistoric encampments to the remains of historic homesteads. There are no constructed or improved campgrounds on the Grassland, but camping is permitted on the lands managed by the Forest Service or the BLM. During migrations and summer breeding, nearly 200 species of birds nest in the Grasslands, including species of eagles, hawks, and owls. Big-game species are also found including antelope, mule and white-tailed deer, elk and mountain lion.

Mallo Camp & Resort

Surrounded by majestic pine in a canyon along the banks of Beaver Creek in the Black Hills, Mallo Camp & Resort includes a motel, lodge, thirteen cabins, and two shower houses. Mallo Motel features 16 rooms with private baths plus two completely furnished commercial/family-style kitchens and lobby areas that are often used for meetings, corporate retreats, and family reunions. Mallo Lodge has a fully-equipped commercial kitchen, a large open area with a fireplace for dining or meetings, two large classrooms and several dormitory-style rooms and bathrooms. The lodge can accommodate groups of up to 250 people, and is used for school science camps, sports camps, church groups, conferences, and family reunions. It is generally booked a year or two in advance.

Mallo Camp has 160 acres of outdoor space that includes camping sites for groups or individuals, volleyball and basketball courts, and horseshoe pits. Two stocked fishing ponds – one exclusively for those under age 14 – offer excellent trout fishing. During the winter months, Mallo Camp provides an ideal location for winter sports enthusiasts. The camp sits next to a cross-country ski area developed through the cooperation of private landowners, Weston County, and the US Forest Service, and it serves as a base camp providing easy access to hunting areas and the Black Hills Snowmobile Trail System with 350 miles of groomed trails. In February, Mallo hosts Weston County’s Winter Festival, featuring horse drawn sleds, snowmobile races, and a host of other winter activities.

Scenic/Historic Loop Tours

The 50-mile Beaver Creek loop tour offers visitors the opportunity to explore diverse and beautiful country with 26 marked sites of historic, scenic or other interest. Visitors can learn the history of Cambria, an historic mining town. Each site has an area where
drivers may pull vehicles off the road. The scenic drive offers visitors the opportunity to see plenty of wildlife and learn local history along the way. The tour begins at the Anna Miller Museum.

The Prairie-to-Pines Loop Tour begins in Upton, where sagebrush and cactus sprawl out over the Thunder Basin National Grasslands to the south. The tour route leads north and east on Highway 116. Tales of earlier days and colorful characters echo through the hills and prairie grasses.

Western South Dakota

Although this report does not provide a detailed assessment of the visitor product located western South Dakota, it is important to note that the area offers visitors a vast array of opportunities for education, fun, and scenic adventure. Among these are opportunities to visit a number of the Nation’s popular parks and historic monuments including Mount Rushmore National Memorial, Custer State Park, Wind Cave National Park, Jewel Cave National Monument, and Crazy Horse Memorial. Both Crook and Weston counties share the Black Hills and their eastern boundaries with South Dakota. Most significantly, many of the visitors to the area travel to and through communities located in both states. For example, the Sturgis Rally & Races (located in Sturgis, South Dakota) draws thousands of visitors to and through NE Wyoming Region, particularly the towns of Sundance, Hulett, and Newcastle.

Overview of NE Wyoming Region

The NE Wyoming Region offers visitors a wide range of unique and diverse experiences. The challenge is to better understand the tourism product from the visitors’ perspective—in terms of coordinated regional products and the synergy among the different types of product. The following overview summarizes the key strengths of the NE Wyoming visitor product from a regional perspective in terms of specific interests and themes. The section identifies specific themes and interests as examples of opportunities to coordinate and package the entire NE Wyoming Region visitor product.

Cultural Tourism Products, Festivals, & Events

The NE Wyoming Region has a wide variety of cultural tourism product venues and events. An arts and dance theatre at Cam-plex offers opera, ballet, off-Broadway musicals, and top-name entertainers. Numerous rodeos, horse shows, and livestock events are held throughout the Region, with some the largest events held at the following venues: Cam-plex, Weston County Fairgrounds, and Crook County Fairgrounds. Most of the communities in NE Wyoming Region host fairs, events, and festivals of long and successful standing including Upton Fun Days, Jubilee Day, and a Parade, Barbecue, and Fun Days Rodeo, held in Moorcroft. The NE Wyoming Region also functions as a visitor product in conjunction with some festivals and events held outside the Region, particularly the Sturgis Rally, which attracts many visitors to Hulett, Newcastle, and Sundance.
Outdoor Recreation & Adventure Travel Activities

As discussed previously, adventure travel and outdoor recreation activities have become increasingly important to U.S. travelers, and were also noted as particularly important for travelers to Wyoming. Key natural areas that distinguish the NE Wyoming Region as a visitor destination for outdoor recreation and adventure travel include: Devils Tower National Monument, the Black Hills, Keyhole State Park, and Thunder Basin National Grasslands. The Region also hosts a wide variety of dude and guest ranches, city parks as well as public golf clubs. Outdoor recreational opportunities in Region include:

- Camping
- Hiking
- Fishing
- Hunting
- Boating
- Golf
- Horseback Riding
- Mountain Biking
- Rock Climbing (Devils Tower NM)
- Swim Center with Waterslide
- Cross Country Skiing
- Snowmobiling

Heritage Tourism Product

The NE Wyoming region has a significant heritage tourism base, and offers viable opportunities for the Region to build on the strong historical roots of homesteaders, miners, and ranchers. The NE Wyoming Region features a number of sites and buildings, a number of which are listed on the National Historical Register including:

- Flying V Cambria Inn
- Old Mill Inn Restaurant
- Wyoming Army National Guard Calvary Stable (Anna Miller Museum)
- Newcastle’s Main Post Office
- Weston County Courthouse
- Ranch A Historic Lodge
- Historic Old Town (west of Upton)
- Accidental Oil Well
A number of historical museums, with staff and volunteers dedicated to preserving the areas rich heritage provide strong support for heritage tourism in the Region. Museums and historical organizations include:

- Rockpile Museum
- Anna Miller Museum
- Red Onion Museum
- Crook County Museum and Art Gallery
- Texas Trail Museum

In addition, established loop tours in the Region offer visitors an opportunity to view sites and buildings of historical or local interest.

**Special Interest and Themes**

The NE Wyoming Region visitor product can also support a wide range of unique special interests and themes that can help to coordinate a more fully integrated regional product, which include the following:

**Ranching/Agriculture**

- Mackey Ranch
- Durham Buffalo Ranch
- Historic ranches/ homesteads
- Texas Trail Museum
- Dude and Guest Ranches

**Paleontology/Geology**

- Vore Buffalo Jump
- Paleo Park
- Whoop Up Canyon
- Story of Sue (dinosaur fossil)

**Energy Production**

- Black Thunder Coal Mine
- Accidental Oil Company
- RAG Coal West
- Railroad Park (Newcastle)
- Wyodak Power Plant
- Cam-plex Energy Center
Sacred Places
- Devils Tower National Monument
- Mackey Ranch
- Historic Cemeteries
- Black Hills
- Vore Buffalo Jump
- Whoopup Canyon

Sightseeing and Wildlife Viewing
- Scenic Loop Tours
- Thunder Basin National Grasslands
- Durham Buffalo Ranch
- Black Hills National Forest
- Star Gazing
7. Travel Marketing and Trip Planning Information

The following section describes the primary marketing organizations that promote travel and tourism associated with the NE Wyoming Region as well as the Black Hills portion of South Dakota. Organizations include state tourism offices for Wyoming and South Dakota, convention and visitor bureaus, local chambers of commerce as well as private travel promotion organizations that may promote individual lodging properties or specific types of packaged travel opportunities (e.g., dude and guest ranches) offered in the Region. For list of organization contacts and key staff see Appendix B.

Visitor Promotion Organizations

- North East Wyoming EDC (www.newedc.net)
- Gillette Convention & Visitors Bureau (www.visitgillette.net)
- Sundance Area Chamber of Commerce (www.sundancewyoming.com)
- Pine Haven Chamber of Commerce (www.pinehaven.1wyo.net)
- Hulett Chamber of Commerce (www.hulett.org/chamber)
- Newcastle Chamber of Commerce (http://newcastle.1wyo.net)
- Weston County Travel Commission (www.wctravel.1wyo.net)
- Black Hills, Badlands & Lakes Association (www.blackhillsbadlands.com)
- South Dakota Tourism (www.travelsd.com and www.toursdakota.com)
- Black Hills Central Reservation (www.blackhills.vacations.com)

Wyoming State Office of Travel and Tourism

The Wyoming State Office of Travel and Tourism is responsible for promoting the state of Wyoming to visitor markets. A staff of 18 people manages information centers, group tour and international travel promotion, travel writers, advertising distribution and all the other activities involved in a state effort. The state office produces a web site, a group tour manual, a vacation guide, two directories (winter and summer), a cultural guide, a meetings and conference booklet, and a quick reference guide. In addition, a state map is produced cooperatively with Wyoming Department of Transportation, of which 500,000 are distributed annually. The Wyoming State Office of Travel and Tourism’s marketing budget for FY 2003 is $5.9 million.
The State Office of Travel and Tourism operates five visitor centers throughout the state. The center located in Sundance is staffed Mid-May through October with counselors trained in selling the local area, as well as the entire state.

The Wyoming State Office promotes northeastern Wyoming to all visitor markets, including group, international and domestic. The region is featured in a Northern Wyoming Tour that includes Devils Tower National Monument and Gillette. The tour is a three-day itinerary beginning on Interstate 90 in the Black Hills National Forest, staying on I-90 to Gillette, Sheridan, Cody, with options for Meteetse to Thermopolis and back to the Big Horns and Buffalo.

Over the last two years, Devils Tower National Monument has been featured in several publications:

- on the Wyoming State Office of Travel and Tourism website (www.wyomingtourism.org)
- on a poster for sale by the Tourism office
- and to tour groups via National Tour Association (NTA) and American Bus Association (ABA) annual conventions, as well as the publication of the new group tour planner.

In prior years, the Wyoming State Office of Travel and Tourism promoted the state with a focus on six tourism regions. Generally these regions were organized along Wyoming’s major travel thoroughfares, which are also historic travel routes through the state. For example, Devils Tower -Buffalo Bill Country followed Interstate 90 through northern Wyoming connecting with either US 14 or US 16, which both take scenic routes over the Big Horn Mountain and on to Yellowstone National Park. Currently, with the exception of the promotion of group tours, tourism regions are no longer used by the state. The state’s new group tour planner divides the state into regions around its cities and attractions to help group tour companies to incorporate Wyoming into their planning process.

To leverage more advertising space and work with communities and attractions, Wyoming Tourism offers cooperative advertising opportunities with Meredith publications. To help smaller communities take advantage of these efforts, Wyoming Tourism will be offering more cooperative opportunities for small communities next year.

In 2001, 192,025 telephone and written inquiries were fulfilled with a packet of information that includes the accommodations directory, a vacation guide and a state
highway map. While inquiries are down this year, business is up, which is attributed to an increase in web site visits.

Wyoming Tourism contracts with several organizations for international marketing to Japan, Australia, Canada and European countries. One such cooperative organization is Rocky Mountain International, which contracts with state tourism offices to represent them in a joint marketing effort targeting European markets for states of South Dakota, Wyoming, Montana and Idaho. Each state contributes funding to the program, which then promotes the states to group tour companies and travel press in Europe and Asia. Wyoming receives a significant amount of coverage and visitation internationally, and Devils Tower National Monument is included in the organization’s efforts to promote Wyoming and South Dakota.

**Gillette Convention & Visitors Bureau**

The Gillette Convention & Visitors Bureau takes the lead in tourism promotion in Gillette and works closely with tourism-related businesses in the entire county. Capturing visitors off the interstate, event marketing and corporate travel are focus areas for the CVB’s marketing efforts. The Gillette CVB is funded by a 2% lodging tax currently applied in the city of Gillette, although a pending initiative could make the tax county-wide. Its Board is composed of five members: four appointed by the City and one by the Chamber of Commerce.

With two full-time employees, including the director and receptionist, the Gillette CVB operates a visitor center in Gillette that houses year-round travel information, as well as fall hunting information provided by Wyoming Game & Fish and the BLM. In addition, the CVB maintains a web site and produces several informational brochures, including a vacation guide, rack cards, coal mining, hunting guide, shopping directory, and a loop tour piece. All CVB brochures are displayed at the visitor center, and the vacation guide piece is distributed across Wyoming (except Jackson) and in the Black Hills. The distribution contract calls for weekly rack updates for six months and one time per month for the rest of the year. The Gillette CVB is a partner in the Devils Tower Tourism Association, contributing $5,000 every two years for one panel in a brochure that features Campbell and Crook counties.

**Devils Tower Tourism Association**

The Devils Tower Tourism Association formed about 20 years ago to promote the area around Devils Tower National Monument, and produces one of the most comprehensive brochures for the NE Wyoming Region. Its 35 members include lodging, convenience stores, banks, motels, bed and breakfasts and chambers/cvbs. The association produces 250,000 brochures annually which are distributed in Colorado, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Montana. The brochure, which focuses exclusively on jurisdictions in the NE Wyoming Region, features Crook County, Sundance, Pine Haven,
Moorcroft, Hulett and Gillette. The association also has billboards in South Dakota and Wyoming. As a member of Black Hills, Badlands and Lakes, the association advertises in the South Dakota Vacation Guide each year. The group also advertised in Group Tour Magazine in April and August 2001, again in conjunction with Black Hills, Badlands and Lakes. Some of the tour companies that include Devils Tower National Monument in their itinerary include Globus, Best of the West, and Western Leisure. Currently, the association has no paid staff.

**Newcastle Chamber of Commerce**

The Newcastle Chamber has 171 members and 12 board members with one paid director, and operates a visitor center year-round with a volunteer staff of 14. Its tourism committee works closely with the Westin County Travel Commission (WCTC). The Newcastle Chamber operates a web site, and utilizes partnerships and joint-marketing programs to create its visitor related promotions. The chamber has a new one-page glossy brochure, which is jointly sponsored by Westin County Tourism Commission, Black Hills Power and Light, and First Interstate Bank. The Chamber printed 40,000 copies of the brochure that will be distributed in South Dakota, Wyoming, Nebraska, and Montana. The chamber markets jointly with WCTC for ads in the Wyoming vacation guide, as well as billboard advertising in South Dakota. The chamber received 4,000 inquiries last year, resulting in approximately 1,000 packets sent out for relocation, hunting, and visitors.

**Sundance Chamber of Commerce**

The Sundance Chamber is housed in the county extension office where files are kept and telephone calls are answered, paid for by city funds. The chamber sends out information on hunting, snowmobiling and visitor activities. Events in Sundance include two motorcycle rally-related activities: a picnic and a burn-out.

**Pine Haven Chamber of Commerce**

Six board members serve on the Pine Haven Chamber of Commerce, which has 47 members. The chamber advertises in Gillette and Moorcroft for its July 4 celebration, and has a web site, but has no real marketing budget.

**Upton Chamber of Commerce**

The Upton Chamber has 75 members, including businesses and individuals. The chamber is an all-volunteer organization that meets monthly. Marketing efforts include
a loop tour brochure, an Upton brochure, and a web site. Events include Fun Days Celebration the third weekend of July, and a Fall Festival held in early September.

Crook County Travel Commission

The Crook County Travel Commission is responsible for the lodging tax revenues in Crook County. The Commission is comprised of six members from Alladin, Devils Tower KOA Campground, Key Hole, Sundance, Hulett, and Moorcroft. The budget is $38,000 for 2003, most of which is spent for marketing, with a small amount allocated for administration. Most of the marketing efforts are directed toward the Devils Tower Tourism Association for brochures and billboards. In prior years, the commission has advertised via cable TV in local lodging establishments.

Weston County Travel Commission

The Weston County Travel Commission has six board members - two each representing Newcastle, Upton, and Weston County. The WCTC’s 2002-2003 budget totals $26,000, of which 56% goes into billboards and other advertising, and nearly 18% goes to support the Newcastle Area Chamber of Commerce. An additional 9% goes to the Upton Chamber of Commerce, 13% is spent in support of various community projects promoting tourism, and the remaining 4% funds administrative costs. There is no paid staff. While the WCTC is required to meet not less than once every three months, they typically meet monthly except for summer. The sole source of revenue for the WCTC is the lodging tax collected in Weston County.

Hulett Chamber of Commerce

The Hulett Chamber handles the promotion of Hulett to both the relocation and the visitor markets. The all-volunteer organization includes 35 members, and is a member of the Devils Tower Tourism Association. While the chamber does not have a brochure, it does offer a web site, as well as billboards located in Montana and South Dakota. Visitor information is available at City Hall, as there is no visitor center. Hulett’s events include Motorcycle Rally week, Duck Derby and a two-day rodeo in June. About 60,000 bikers visit Hulett during the rally each year.

Big Horn Coalition

The Big Horn Coalition represents Big Horn, Sheridan, Johnson, and Washakie counties in Wyoming. The coalition has both a tourism and economic development focus, and is governed by a 16-member board. Cities and counties both contribute to the coalition. The coalition creates and distributes a Big Horn Country Map, a promotional video and a coffee table book promoting the Big Horns. In addition, the coalition has had its own web site since 1994.
State of South Dakota, Department of Tourism

The South Dakota Department of Tourism is responsible for promoting South Dakota to visitor markets. Its staff manages information centers, group tour and international travel and rural tourism promotion, the state film commission, travel writers, literature distribution/inquiry fulfillment and all the other activities involved in a state effort. The state office produces a web site, a group tour manual, a vacation guide, and a state map, as well as niche pieces on cultural, rural areas, film, etc. The state office operates visitor centers on both Interstates 90 and 29.

South Dakota promotes Mt. Rushmore National Memorial and the Blacks Hills, Badlands, and Lakes Region – including Devils Tower National Monument – in its overall marketing effort, targeting domestic and international, group, AAA, and travel writers.

Devils Tower National Monument is promoted as one of five national parks and monuments in a cluster of national parks within a one-hour drive of Rapid City. South Dakota creates a vacation guide that promotes the entire state by tourism association. Members of Black Hills, Badlands and Lakes (BHB&L) that advertise in the guide include Devils Tower Golf, Devils Tower KOA, Devils Tower Trading Post, and Newcastle. Members of BHB&L that are listed in their vacation guide are also included in the South Dakota vacation guide under the Black Hills of Wyoming section.

South Dakota Tourism also promotes Devils Tower National Monument in its Black Hills to Yellowstone tour, and includes it under the Major Attractions section in its group tour planner. (Wyoming Tourism includes Devils Tower National Monument in its Major Attractions section, and in its Northern Wyoming Tour, as discussed above.) South Dakota's group tour planner also includes Devils Tower National Monument – Buffalo Bill Country, which includes Sundance and Vore Buffalo Jump, as well as loop tours based out of Sundance, Moorcroft, Newcastle, and Gillette.

Historically, Wyoming and South Dakota have worked together jointly as well as within the Old West Trail organization (a former marketing cooperative organization), to promote travel to both states in markets east of South Dakota, particularly within the Chicago market. Additional cooperative efforts have included billboard advertising and newspaper inserts in Chicago. South Dakota and Wyoming have also worked jointly with several other states to co-operatively promote European markets, as described above.

Black Hills, Badlands & Lakes Association

Black Hills, Badlands & Lakes Association (BHB&L) is a private, non-profit corporation dedicated to promoting tourism in western South Dakota and Wyoming's Black Hills. Over 60 percent of BHB&L's budget goes to marketing: big print advertising campaigns
for the Black Hills and Badlands, travel shows, motor coach and group tour sales, and a website.

With a staff of 9 full-time employees and up to 10 part-time employees in the summer season, BHB&L is a major creator of Black Hills travel publications including: South Dakota Vacation Guide, Exploring the Black Hills and Badlands (summer/autumn magazine), Romancing the Snow (winter magazine), Dining in the Black Hills and Badlands. BHB&L also operates the Black Hills Visitor Information Center on I-90 east of Rapid City. The organization’s membership consists of more than 170 businesses in western South Dakota, as well as nine NE Wyoming Region businesses in Sundance, Newcastle, and Hulett.

Packaged Travel Tour companies

A variety of packaged tours, including skiing, ranch vacations and fly-drive trips are offered by packaged tour companies. Visitors looking for western ranch vacations can go to a variety of websites to search for and identify trips they want in locations around the world. Gorp Travel's (www.gorptravel.com) listings include Diamond L Guest Ranch, a guest ranch located near Hulett in the NE Wyoming Region. Another site, www.guestranches.com, lists a number of dude and guest ranches in Wyoming.

Black Hills Central Reservations is a local package company patterned after similar companies in Jackson, WY, and Breckenridge, CO. It focuses on the Black Hills Region only, offering packages that include air tickets, car rentals, lodging, campsite reservations, attractions, adventure packages, special events, and gaming coupons. Black Hills Central Reservations serves members in the cities of Custer, Hill City, Rapid City, Spearfish, Hot Springs, Lead, Deadwood, Sturgis, Wall, and Black Hawk.

Big Horn Mountain Resorts, owned by the McCotter Group of Avon, CO, owns and operates resorts at Meadowlark Lake, Deer Haven, Ski Lodge and Willow Park. All are located approximately half-way between the cities of Buffalo and Worland off of Highway 16. The parent group also owns resorts in Europe and Australia, and uses three different websites to promote their facilities in Wyoming. One of these sites, www.travel-to-wyoming.com, provides local area information including city profiles, history, local attractions, museums, events, recreation, activities, lodging, and maps for several Wyoming cities – Gillette among them. In addition, the site features sections on state-wide opportunities for property rental and home purchases, employment, winter and summer sports, fishing and hunting, and wedding/honeymoon packages, as well as the details of their resort travel packages. The two other sites, www.thebighorn.com and www.wyoming-resorts.com, more directly promote the resorts and available travel packages.
8. Marketing and Product Development Strategies

Introduction
Effective marketing and product development strategies are key to growth for the tourism industry in the North East Wyoming Region. In partnership with state and local stakeholders, the NEWTC seeks to promote the NE Wyoming Region as a visitor destination, utilizing existing resources, while creating new cost effective tools that promote activities, attractions, and events. The recommendations presented in this section offer specific strategies to direct and focus the NEWTC’s marketing and product development and efforts to enhance the travel and tourism industry for the Region.

Overview of Key Findings
- Potential travelers to the NE Wyoming Region are increasingly using the Internet to make travel plans and to purchase travel-related goods and services.
- Lodging occupancy trends, highway traffic patterns, and visitation data from major attractions in the NE Wyoming Region show visitor activity driven by a peak period of leisure travel during the summer months.
- Visitor origin data from selected visitor information locations, accommodations, and attractions in the NE Wyoming Region show a blend of visitors to Wyoming and South Dakota travel to and through the Region.
- The NE Wyoming Region offers visitors a wide range of unique and diverse experiences many of which complement and coordinate with the primary factors identified by visitors as strengths of Wyoming and South Dakota as a destination.
- A number of travel marketing organizations jointly promote visitor destinations and attractions located within the NE Wyoming Region and portions of western South Dakota, most notably the Black Hills.

Planning Goals and Recommendations
The recent formation of the coalition provides an opportunity to motivate residents, organizations, and businesses in the Region to work together to share information, pool resources, advertise jointly, and promote the entire Region as a destination from the visitors’ perspective. The NEWTC will serve to foster cooperation among the stakeholders to accomplish the following goals:
- Present the NE Wyoming Region as a destination in a unified form that is consistent with the consumer’s perception.
- Create a “critical mass” of funding that would allow greater reach and frequency of consumer marketing.
• Provide potential visitors with all the planning information they need to make informed decisions about where to go and what to see in the NE Wyoming Region.

The recommendations that follow offer specific product development and marketing strategies and, where identified, include specific action items to help guide the initial NEWTC efforts to implement these strategies. The recommendations described below are organized in order of the magnitude of their potential to enhance the visitor market of the Region. Future planning efforts will require, within the context of identified staff and budget resources, that the NEWTC develop an annual work program and set specific priorities and objectives to achieve results over the next five years. The recommendations presented in this report are intended to serve as the framework necessary to develop an effective action plan for the NEWTC.

Recommendations
Primary Recommendation

Promote the NE Wyoming Region as a unique, high quality visitor destination.

From a visitor’s perspective, regional coordination of products is very important. A primary asset of the NE Wyoming Region’s visitor product is its connection and association with the Black Hills, including proximity to many popular national parks and monuments. In particular, Devils Tower National Monument serves as symbol for the Region, and as a valuable connection with other popular parks and attractions in the Black Hills, including Mount Rushmore National Memorial, Custer State Park, and Crazy Horse Memorial.

The NE Wyoming Region offers visitors numerous opportunities to view vast awe-inspiring scenery, along with widespread and diverse populations of wildlife. Scenic beauty, sightseeing and wildlife – noted as primary strengths among visitors to Wyoming – are very important advantages for the NE Wyoming Region, and should be central elements in positioning the Region as a visitor destination. The prolific and highly visible population of pronghorn antelope, the historic abundance of bison herds, and a large visible Bison herd at the Durham Buffalo Ranch offer two majestic and charismatic symbols of western wildlife to help support the image of the Region as a visitor destination.

Additionally, the NE Wyoming Region can help to tell America’s energy production story, as well as offer visitors an important glimpse of the culture and history of the American west. The NE Wyoming Region supplies a significant portion of America’s energy and produces some of the cleanest coal in the world. Travel trends show North American travelers are becoming increasingly educated and interested in information-rich displays, programs, and activities. The Region offers visitors unique opportunities
to observe and learn about the most technologically advanced and environmentally friendly coal production in the nation, visit one of the largest air-cooled energy plants in North America, and visit a world-famous hand-dug oil well.

Overall, the greatest potential opportunity to enhance the NE Region’s image as a visitor destination and to increase travel and tourism to the area is associated with the development and promotion of a world-class visitor education and research center at the Vore Buffalo Jump. The site’s location on I-90, just west of the Wyoming-South Dakota border, provides an ideal location to develop a world-class visitor education and research center, in order to explore various aspects of Native American history and culture in connection with the bison herds that once roamed the area. Noted by visitors as a primary strength for South Dakota, Native American history and culture and—in particular, the role of the American Bison in helping to sustain these cultures—offers a tremendous opportunity to enhance and enrich the visitor destination shared between the NE Wyoming Region and western South Dakota. With its unique education theme, the proposed Vore Buffalo Jump Education and Research Center would contribute to the entire State of Wyoming by providing a “visitor gateway” to welcome visitors to Wyoming as well as provide a stronger, more marketable image to increase visitation to the NE Wyoming Region.

Primary Recommendation

Enhance joint marketing efforts with the Wyoming State Office of Travel and Tourism.

The Wyoming State Office of Travel and Tourism is key to assisting NEWTC promote the Region as a destination. NEWTC has product that appeals to key market segments such as mature travelers, families, rural tourism, cultural and heritage tourism, and outdoor and adventure travel. Targeting each of these specific markets is a very expensive process. The best way for NEWTC to effectively reach each of these along with other market segments that are interested in travel to the Region is by leveraging partnerships with the Wyoming State Office of Travel and Tourism.

Wyoming Tourism offers co-operative advertising programs where the cost of advertising is shared to leverage greater impact for the cost. For example, the State offers a co-op that targets Meredith publications, which in turn target many of the travel segments that want to see Wyoming. NEWTC should consider the possibility of advertising as an area in the State of Wyoming’s Meredith co-op. However, that co-op is expensive for a new organization. The state is in the process of developing new, less expensive co-ops, which the coalition should consider as a possibility once detailed information on the programs becomes available.

The NEWTC should also work jointly with the Wyoming State Office of Travel and Tourism to develop travel itineraries for the Region. Itineraries should include one-day options, overnight options, and should be themed (e.g., major attractions, historic, paleontology, wildlife/scenic, golf). The NEWTC should work jointly with the Wyoming
State Office of Travel and Tourism on promoting the new coalition tourism through inclusion in its group tour planner, as well as to travel writers and AAA tour operators.

Cooperation with visitor promotion organizations in South Dakota is an essential and key element to promote the NE Wyoming Region as a visitor destination—particularly in association with Devils Tower National Monument, Wyoming's Black Hills, and the Vore Buffalo Jump. The NEWTC should help facilitate such an effort by working directly with the Wyoming State Office of Travel and Tourism to maintain and enhance joint promotion with organizations that promote western South Dakota.

Currently, the South Dakota Department of Tourism and the Black Hills, Badlands & Lakes Association promotes Devils Tower National Monument, Wyoming's Black Hills, and some specific NE Wyoming Region communities such as Sundance, Newcastle, and Hulett. The Wyoming State Office of Travel and Tourism currently advertises in the Black Hills, Badland & Lakes vacation guide. In addition, some lodging establishments in the NE Wyoming Region have formed business partnerships with those in western South Dakota.

Successful promotion of the NE Wyoming Region as a visitor destination will require even more intensive and organized coordination, and collaboration among visitor promotion organizations and visitor-serving businesses. In particular, a targeted effort between Wyoming State Office of Travel and Tourism and South Dakota Department of Tourism to promote the NE Wyoming Region in conjunction with western South Dakota could help spur additional cooperation to the mutual benefit of both states.

**Action Items:**

- Identify NE Wyoming Region attractions to include in Wyoming Tourism Directory.
- Meet with the Wyoming State Office of Travel and Tourism to begin strategizing on creating the destination image desired by the NEWTC.
- Develop the itineraries, map, themes and the image that supports a destination marketing effort, as well as the remaining recommendations that assist in destination marketing efforts.

**Recommendation**

Create a membership program for the coalition that assists and complements the marketing efforts of the Region.

NEWTC's success will depend in part on growing the organization so that more people and organizations are involved in the effort to grow tourism. Membership programs exist in chambers, CVBs and larger tourism associations such as Black Hills, Badlands and Lakes. A grassroots effort of this type is a critical component of the marketing
program, as it creates a venue for communication, sharing goals and working together to promote the attractions and sites in each of the Region’s three counties.

Coalition members need to have a buy-in for, and awareness of, the marketing efforts needed to increase visitation to the region. Buy-in can mean membership at various levels, as well as awareness that leads to direct financial or in-kind support for writer hostings, events, training, cross-selling, etc.

The coalition needs to determine who its members are and what membership means. Varying levels of dues may mean varying levels of opportunity to participate in familiarization trips (“fams”) and advertising efforts. Criteria also needs to be created that will allow for decisions on who is included in itineraries, fam trips, web site linkages, photos in materials, etc.

**Action Items:**

- Create a membership prospect list and establish a dues structure that meets the needs of the marketing effort.
- Establish criteria for inclusion in fams, itineraries, etc., such as consistent hours of operation, membership, fam sponsorship, etc.

**Recommendation**

*Establish and vigorously promote a single NE Wyoming Region website.*

Today’s travelers use the Internet to plan trips, and a quality site is necessary to compete effectively in the market place. A quality NE Wyoming Region website is necessary to reach the broad-based segment of the visitor market that uses the Internet for regional trip planning. Locally, the website can be promoted via travel brochures, billboards, magazines, newspapers, and radio. Advertising could potentially reach more distant audiences via banner placement on high volume travel websites such as Travelocity and Expedia. All web sites that are actively promoting county or local areas within the Region should be linked to this web site as well. Excellent photos of the entire Region should be highlighted on the web site.

**Action Items:**

- Identify web sites coalition members like best to determine effective models for designers.
- Identify person or organization to create cost effective web site with links to coalition members, partners, etc.
Recommendation

Develop a theme and logo that encompasses the quality and diversity of the NE Wyoming visitor product.

Given the diversity of the Region’s visitor product, a theme and logo will need to represent the many different visitor experiences. A theme such as “Experience the Energy!” could allow for the energy component, as well as the energy of events and attractions to be combined into one piece. Another theme could be oriented around the historical elements, combining the geologic significance of area with more recent human history.

Photos of rodeos, camping, fishing, ranch activities, etc., could be incorporated into an ad or brochure with the theme to show the diversity and quality of visitor experiences available in the Region. A visitor-targeted marketing logo for NE Wyoming Region should also be developed and incorporated into all regional marketing efforts. The logo should be created with standards for usage, dictated by the NEWTC.

Action Items:

- Form a marketing subcommittee to develop plan for theme/logo development and implementation.
- Identify additional themes by reviewing existing themes used by visitor destinations or by working with marketing agency.
- Use the theme on every printed item possible, including letterhead, brochures, signs, t-shirts, etc.

Recommendation

Work jointly with Wyoming State Office of Travel and Tourism on Internet marketing of tour loops.

Wyoming Tourism is developing a new map overlay for its web site, and the itineraries developed for the three counties should be given to the state office as soon as possible for inclusion in the site. The NEWTC should work with the Wyoming State Office of Travel and Tourism to be included in its mapping system to showcase the new tours.

Action Items:

- Contact Wyoming Tourism officials in fall 2002 to inquire about web site changes
- Offer state officials newly developed itineraries for the web site as soon as possible
Recommendation

Develop a single marketing piece to promote the Region to visitors.

Visitors need information gathered in one place to help them easily understand what an area offers. The ease of this marketing approach becomes more difficult as the size increases, and as local residents take the attractions, activities and events for granted. Packaging those attractions, activities and events into a meaningful piece will showcase the Region in a way that appeals to today’s visitors. The major draw of the package should be the Region’s most notable attraction, Devils Tower National Monument.

Attractions, activities and events in the Region should be identified and packaged into a single piece that will become the basis of promotion to the visitor and travel trade markets. An inexpensive way of showcasing the package could be a point of display plastic holder with a brochure rack to hold the piece visitors would take. One major aspect of this promotion will be the fact that all of these great attractions are only so far from the interstate or Hwy 16 or Hwy 85, etc., with the goal to show how close everything is to the location of the traveler. To leverage an existing marketing piece and keep expenses low, the Northeast Wyoming brochure produced by the Devils Tower Tourism Association could well serve as this piece with some adjustments and additions made to represent the entire NE Wyoming Region.

Action Items:

- Attractions, activities and events in the Region should be identified for the single piece, or changes simply should be made to the Devils Tower brochure.
- Photos and copy should be identified/created for the piece, and a graphic artist/marketing agency should be identified to create the piece.

Recommendation

Develop a comprehensive marketing information packet “press kit” that touts the Regional Marketing and Tourism Development Plan and the newly-formed NEWTC.

The marketing information packet would include a summary of the Regional Marketing and Tourism Development Plan, key visitor trends, new attractions in the area, suggested group tours and travel itineraries, as well as photographs of key attractions in the Region. The packet would also include itineraries specifically for the group tour, adventure travel, and travel by private automobile (i.e., AAA, FIT) travel markets.

The press kit should be given to the Wyoming State Office of Travel and Tourism for their distribution to the travel press. Additionally, the press kit could be given to media in South Dakota, Minnesota, and Nebraska, as well as other target markets. The press kit could also be given to media on a blitz of the city that would include any group tour operators and AAA offices.

NORTH EAST WYOMING TOURISM COALITION
Action Item:

- Materials for the press kit should be created by a professional writer/designer and packaged for distribution in a folder to state officials and regional media.

Recommendation

Develop a NE Wyoming Region “fam” trip to familiarize visitor information center personnel, front line employees, and interested residents.

Getting everyone to talk about all of the attractions is a way of planting the seed in the visitor’s mind that if not this time, then NEXT time, they will surely like to see all the great attractions in this area. A “fam” trip would increase the level of knowledge of and enthusiasm for all the various attractions of the Region, and would increase opportunities for inter-regional cross selling. The first “fam” trip would take participants to a selection of primary visitor attractions in the Region. Each year, less well-known locations would be added to help build further knowledge of the Region. Local chambers/restaurant/hotels could host a group, and in exchange, would be given the opportunity to showcase a specific area or attraction. The fam, packaged as above, could also be offered to tour operators.

Action Items:

- Develop criteria for fams, an appropriate schedule for a fam of this nature, and the transportation, food and other arrangements, getting sponsorships where possible from members.
- Model coalition fam after Gillette CVB fam conducted in May 2002.
- Invite WY Tourism and information center on the fam.

Recommendation

Participate in a hospitality training program offered through the Wyoming State Office of Travel and Tourism.

Frontline employees of retail businesses, lodging properties, restaurants, and attractions all represent tourism in NE Wyoming. The NEWTC should tap into the state of Wyoming’s hospitality training program, with the NE Wyoming Region’s theme incorporated into the training. Part of the training would include an overview of the Region’s visitor product, presented in a fun, motivational style, to educate the frontline service force on tourism opportunities in the Region. The goal of hospitality training is to increase the length of stay by visitors, and to do this, all service industry personnel need to have the skills and desire to interact with guests and be able to answer the question, “What’s there to do around here?,” as well as pro-actively find out what visitors like to do and where they can find those activities in the Region. Additionally, fun items like buttons and tent cards could support the point of purchase display of the “top ten” list for the Region.
Action Items:

- Contact Wyoming Tourism for training program information for 2003.
- Ask each community to identify their priority for answering the question, “What’s there to do around here?” for inclusion in the training program.

Recommendation

Increase visitor appeal during the spring and fall.

Increased visitation during the spring and fall will help lodging properties and other businesses in the Region. Specific approaches could include enhanced offerings of special events, artistic and other performances that appeal to weekend visitors, educational activities for families such as ranch and mining tours, and promotion of each season in terms of its unique character. The wildlife viewing opportunities and natural amenities of the Region can provide a unique and valuable backdrop for more cultural attractions, consistent with weather and accessibility during these seasons.

To the extent that the NE Wyoming Region can generate additional leisure travelers who spend one or more nights at lodging establishments in the area – particularly during the shoulder seasons – it would help to reduce the potential impact of a slowdown in business-related travel impacts associated with external economic and market conditions.

The NEWTC could assist in attracting more motor coach and group tour business – particularly during the shoulder seasons (late fall and early spring) – with specific seasonal promotions. Snowmobile promotion should be included in summer promotions to cross-sell seasons. The Region’s web site should link to the state’s snowmobile web site, as well winter promotion within the Black Hills, Badlands, and Lakes Region.

Action Items:

- Cross-sell seasons by offering other seasons’ info to visitors.
- Identify opportunities to enhance special events that draw visitors during the shoulder seasons.
- Train all front-line staff to be able to sell shoulder and winter season activities.
- Develop specific fall tours to showcase fall in the Region.

Recommendation

Expand partnerships with tourism-related businesses and marketing organizations in the Region.
All tourism-related businesses and organizations should be added to a database and encouraged to join the coalition. Joining should mean a commitment to work together to increase the level of tourism and visitor spending in the Region. Partners should be listed on the web site, and in any press releases announcing the new coalition. Partnership levels can be at one level in the beginning, and may tier into two levels when sponsorship spending is added to the mix. Communication with the partners will be critical to keeping them involved and focused on the goals of the organization.

Action Items:

- Determine partnership levels, keeping in mind membership levels.
- Create database of all tourism-related businesses, as well as those who benefit from visitor spending
- Promote partnerships via mailing, presentations and media to all prospects in three counties.

Recommendation

Develop an integrated regional strategy to promote heritage tourism.

The NE Wyoming Region contains a wide variety of sites and properties tied to a number of significant historical persons and events; however, the “heritage product” is not well promoted, and is geographically scattered throughout the Region. A marketing plan that includes heritage resources could be developed to assess the existing condition, capital and operational requirements, as well as relative tourism value of each of the products and how they interrelate. This could be accomplished with participation from museum staff, historical societies, and interested citizens in conjunction with the NEWTC. A coordinated strategy could intertwine the heritage product by creating region-wide heritage tours, serving both organized motor coach tours and private driving tours. As a first step in such an effort, heritage resources should be evaluated to assess existing condition and relative tourism value of each of the products and how they interrelate.

NEWTC should also explore opportunities to promote specific historical attractions through organizations outside the Region. For example, the Texas Trail Museum could be showcased in the new Trails Visitor Center opening in Casper, and linked to other trail web sites and cattle sites across the region/nation. Additionally, information on this museum could be targeted to cattle-related publications and the Cattle Baron’s Bed and Breakfast near Sheridan, as well as other B&Bs in the region. Other state parks and sites, such as Ft. Laramie, could also be contacted for cross selling possibilities.

Action Items:

- Identify subcommittee of coalition members who manage museums and other historical properties to work on this plan.
• Evaluate heritage resources for sustainability factors related to additional visitation pressure

Recommendation

Sponsor a photo contest to get good, inexpensive artwork for marketing efforts.

The coalition should sponsor a summer photo contest to gather quality photos at little cost for the upcoming marketing efforts. The contest could be for non-professionals and professionals alike, with categories such as:

- Scenery
- Activities
- Events
- Attractions
- People

Action Items:

- Identify goals and rewards for contest
- Create rules and guidelines to accommodate professional and amateur interests alike
- Promote via web site, press releases and targeted mailing to photographers

Recommendation

Generate popular support in the Region for the Regional Marketing and Tourism Development Plan.

Success of tourism in the NE Wyoming Region will require a hospitable attitude from the community. Residents and local interest groups will be prepared to lend their support to the plan once they understand how expansion of tourism might benefit the Region. Stakeholders—those who care most about the benefits of increased revenue in the three counties—should be identified and their support should be sought. Stakeholders include local, state and federal elected officials and their staff, as well as other people who influence decision-making and have a wide or at least important circle of influence.

A power point presentation/slide show promoting the coalition “on the road” would be a great and inexpensive public relations component for the coalition. The presentation could explain the importance of the visitor market, the reason the coalition is trying to grow the market, and what the coalition is selling, i.e., the great attractions, scenic beauty, events, activities, etc., of the Region. This presentation could be made to stakeholders, service clubs, school groups, faculty, corporations, etc. The purpose
would be to garner support and possible partnerships for the coalition. Additionally, service clubs in the Black Hills, Casper, Cheyenne and Sheridan would be great targets for this presentation.

Additionally, a series of public meetings on the Master Plan should be held that allow input from a wide variety of residents in the Region.

**Action Items:**

- Identify person with power point/slide show skills to create presentation
- Create message from press kit materials (key points/why program was created/etc.)
- Create schedule of presentations designed to reach every service club in the three county area in first six months
- Organize a series of public workshops and broad discussion of the Regional Marketing and Tourism Development Plan. Prepare for this process with a summary document that highlights recommendations and likely benefits of the collaborative approach to tourism marketing and development. Enlist local media in the process.

**Recommendation**

*Create audio travel tapes to lengthen visitors’ stay and increase knowledge of all the area offers*

A key part of getting visitors to stay longer and see more is to get them to know more about the area. Visitors come with many questions on simple things, as well as a desire to hear the stories of the area. Travel tapes could be created that would do just that. Fun, interpretive stories of the past, information about how the area was settled, what grows here, how coal is mined, etc., could all be told on audio cassettes using great voices to tell those stories. The tapes could be self-paying or sponsored.

**Action Items:**

- Contact South Dakota Tourism to determine cost, process, timeline and contacts for developing program.
- Identify appropriate music, stories, etc., for inclusion in program script.
- Ask for proposals from writers/marketing agencies.

**Recommendation**

*Utilize TV cable programming to cross-sell entire Region.*
Local access cable affords opportunities to create an information channel for promoting local attractions. The channel could be promoted in all hotel rooms in the Region. An inexpensive means of creating this programming could be working with high school or college video classes.

Action Items:

- Contact South Dakota Tourism for information on how it created its cable access program.
- Ask for proposals from video professionals.

Recommendation

*Develop an advertising campaign to target group tour operators in targeted market areas.*

The NEWTC could assist in attracting more motor coach and group tour business – particularly during the shoulder seasons (late fall and early spring) – when occupancy rates are lower for lodging establishments. Through the exploration of current group tour promotion in NE Wyoming, the NEWTC will gather information and should consider a co-op with attractions and properties to promote to this market. Itineraries, as identified in an earlier recommendation, would also help the state promote in this area.

NEWTC could develop a trade show booth to use for group tour industry sponsorships and trade shows. National Tour Association (NTA) sponsorships allow a region or destination to capture the attention of hundreds of tour operators in a creative and innovative way. NTA offers an annual tour operator spring meeting and an annual convention.

Action Items:

- Identify the most cost-effective way of reaching desired targets.
- Create an advertising and promotion plan, as well as a budget for the targeted group tour industry.
- Identify partners for cooperative advertising efforts.

Recommendation

*Develop an annual calendar of events brochure for the NE Wyoming Region.*

The Calendar of Events brochures will be a complete listing of annual events, and will include dates and contact information. The brochure will encourage and drive the visitor to the Region’s website for current up-to-date listings of event information and details. Distribution of the Calendar of Events brochures will be to visitor information centers, museums, restaurants, and Chambers of Commerce throughout the Region.
addition, all events in the Region need to be identified and incorporated into the state of Wyoming’s promotional efforts.

A simple, but key low-cost strategy is to leverage more from existing events held in the Region. Particularly with large events, communities where these events are held have an opportunity to cross-sell the rest of the NE Wyoming Region.

**Action Items:**
- Identify a “keeper of the calendar” to create and maintain a coalition calendar
- Utilize the calendar as a promotional tool on the web, with front-line employees and in other high-traffic tourism areas
- Utilize the calendar as a training tool for hospitality training each spring

**Recommendation**

*Develop interpretive presentations that highlight the stories of the Region.*

Storytelling is a rich American tradition, and one that visitors love. Interpretive presentations could be offered in campgrounds as an “event” in the summer, and would be seen as a “value-added” component for visitors.

**Action Items:**
- Meet with state park and private campground owners to determine willingness to expand/create an interpretation area for campers.
- Create interpretive stories in conjunction with the effort to create audio tape scripts.

**Recommendation**

*Support the NEWTC with a paid staff.*

Strategic and tactical decisions by the NEWTC will require follow-up; the preparation of alternatives, and the execution of their decision will require full time assistance. A staff of no more than two should be hired: a program coordinator and an administrative assistant. Program overhead should be kept under 20% of the total budget. Staff will be involved in advertising sales, as well as any activities related to directing the advertisement placement, public relations, inquiry management, and brochure fulfillment.
Action Items:

- Establish NEWTC work plan and target budget.
- Coordinate staff resources through municipal contributions, private sector advertising fees, and in-kind services.

Product Development

Recommendation

Develop a year-round Welcome Center to greet visitors entering Wyoming from South Dakota.

The visitor center in Sundance serves as a gateway to Wyoming, and should provide motorists arriving to the State with a warm welcome that educates and informs every visitor crossing the border from South Dakota to Wyoming. The current facility, which is now owned by the Department of Transportation and is staffed by the Wyoming State Office of Travel and Tourism, is difficult to find and is very small. Access is poor, and the facility sits on the south side of the interstate. If the purpose of the visitor center is to welcome visitors from the east, the facility is not ideally located. For traffic coming from South Dakota, access to a facility on the same side of the interstate would be much more effective, would be more consistent with the ease of access visitors experience in South Dakota, and would simply make the facility easier to reach.

In the short-term, the facility should be upgraded to meet the standards set by visitor centers elsewhere in Wyoming, and should also be able to compete effectively with the centers in western South Dakota. History, attractions and information of the Region should be highlighted, as well as information about the entire state.

While the need for improvement is immediate, the long-term effort should be to pursue options to house a new visitor center in conjunction with plans to develop the Vore Buffalo Jump Education and Research Center. The NEWTC should pursue options for funding initial infrastructure development through the Wyoming Department of Transportation. Plans to construct a new visitor center could potentially serve as a catalyst to obtain the funding necessary for infrastructure development at the site, leading to further support for the Center from donors and private foundations.

Action Items:

- Develop a visitor center enhancement program, in consultation with resource persons known for establishing and directing successful visitor information centers.
- Solidify and document coalition support for Vore Buffalo Jump through letters of support, proclamations by public officials, etc.
• Request board position to the recently formed Vore Buffalo Jump Foundation to represent the NE Wyoming Tourism Coalition.
• Support efforts to secure funding for a comprehensive Vore Buffalo Jump Education and Research Center Master Plan.

Recommendation

Support established or proposed plans for downtown redevelopment, community enhancement, or other projects that will likely enhance travel and tourism to the Region.

A number of communities in the NE Wyoming Region have proposed plans for downtown redevelopment and projects that will encourage and support additional tourism. Realization of these projects will enhance the Region’s downtown areas, and will stimulate economic development to the benefit of visitors and residents alike. The NEWTC could help to facilitate the development of these plans by building common ground with community stakeholders, and ensuring promotional support to encourage travelers to visit these downtown areas and attractions. The NEWTC should encourage and support the following projects:

- Revitalization for Downtown Newcastle Master Plan (completed Aug. 2000)
- Weston County Museum District Redevelopment Plan (currently in progress)
- Moorcroft Community Development Plan (currently in progress)
- Proposed Cam-plex Science and Space Center (under consideration)

Action Items:

• Become more familiar with each plan through a series of discussions organized in each community and periodically review development of each plan.
• Submit written statement of support and offer oral support at public meetings.
• For each plan, establish community representatives to provide detailed plan updates and progress reports to the NEWTC.

Recommendation

Recruit and help to establish a local service/community organization(s) to improve the appearance of the intersection Highway 16 truck route and the Highway 16 business route (Summit Ave.)

At present, the intersection of the Highway 16 truck route and the Highway 16 business route (Summit Ave.) is in very poor condition and needs clean-up and landscaping. This intersection is important because, at this juncture, visitors must decide whether they will go through downtown Newcastle or bypass the community altogether. Working with the Newcastle Main Street Association, NEWTC should recruit a local service or
community organization(s) to work with the owner of the vacant gas station at this important intersection to find a visually appealing use for the property.

**Action Item:**

- Meet with representative of Newcastle Main Street Association to discuss economic development and opportunities to work with current landowner.

**Recommendation**

*Assure that highway signs function to the best possible advantage.*

Highway signs are important for guiding visitors to locations where additional attraction and activity information is available for the Region. These signs are particularly important to first-time visitors who may stop in the area as part of a longer trip. Annual visitor surveys conducted by the Gillette CVB indicate nearly half (48%) of all visitors report highway road signs as the reason for a visitor's decision to stop at the Gillette CVB. Attention should be paid to road signs and visitor information signs, plus signs designating the nature and location of significant attractions – such as outdoor recreation, historic sites, and downtown locations. To the extent possible, the signage design should be used consistently throughout the NE Wyoming Region so as to become a recognizable feature of the area.

**Action Items:**

- Conduct a region-wide evaluation of all visitor-related signage.
- Establish priorities to add new signage.
- Identify potential opportunities to re-locate and/or design current signage.

**Recommendation**

*Develop the potential of “Old Town” and the unique sod house.*

Supporters of the Old Town development in Upton should find ways to offer consistent hours, and to increase security, interpretation and signage, so as to leverage the potential Old Town offers the area. Consistent hours are important for promotion, and may be made possible by developing a volunteer base of seniors who would stay at the site for intervals during the summer. The presence of an RV could also prevent vandalism. Interpretation of life in that era, via storytelling, brochures, audio tapes, etc., would greatly enhance the visitors’ experience.

There are few sod houses in the Midwest or West today, and yet many have ancestors who homesteaded in one. The sod house offers a unique marketing angle for the entire Region.
**Action Items:**

- Find volunteer help in the senior market for staff. Consider offering free camping to seniors, similar to campground hosts, to increase an on-site presence for the attraction, and to allow for consistent hours of operation.
- Create interpretation for the sod house, and consider the possibility of postcards or brochures for the attraction so visitors can take something away from the site.

**Recommendation**

*Encourage and support additional development of recreation trails.*

Multi-use trails in the Black Hills – specifically the Mickelson Trail – have increased 10 – 20% per year in collection fees over the past several years. The impact in communities along the trail has been very positive by hikers and bikers staying in locations near that trail.

New trail development would help complement the tourism products currently offered in the Region. New trails could be developed that would appeal directly to a family-oriented market. Currently, Wyoming State Trail officials are beginning the development of approximately 130 miles of off-road vehicle trails in the Sundance area, and are also looking in the area for existing logging roads for trail development. The Sundance area could also support the development of mountain biking trails (in conjunction with the U.S. Forest Service). Mountain biking is a very popular outdoor activity, and new trails offer excellent public relations opportunities in regional press and trade magazines.

Efforts are also underway to open hiking on a limited basis into Whoop-Up Canyon. Hiking in Whoop-Up Canyon would appeal to markets that are important to this Region, including market segments that enjoy outdoor recreation, paleontology, and cultural and rural tourism.

**Action Items:**

- NEWTC should contact the land management agencies related to ATV trail development, including Wyoming State Trails Program and the Spearfish Forest Service, to learn about the existing efforts, trail planning goals, and to offer support and determine ways they can support the effort. NEWTC should also ask the State Trails Coordinator, Forest Service and BLM about plans and possibilities for other trail development in the Region.
- NEWTC should contact the BLM officials in charge of Whoop-Up Canyon trail development and offer support for that project.
- Once trail development occurs, NEWTC should incorporate promotion of new trails in its marketing and training efforts to increase awareness of new trails.
Support for the Regional Marketing and Tourism Development Plan

Public awareness of the Regional Marketing and Tourism Development Plan and advocacy for its goals will encourage support from business owners, elected officials, and residents of the Region. The NEWTC should seek to find and capitalize on opportunities to explain and advocate the recommendations made in this plan. Specific actions could include the following:

- Work closely with the local media in Campbell, Crook and Weston counties, providing good quality press releases and other information that facilitate coverage of planning goals and implementation.
- Distribute copies of the Regional Marketing and Tourism Development Plan to state and local elected and agency officials, including a cover letter explaining the importance of this effort for all of the communities, residents, and businesses in the Region.
- Place update articles in newsletters or other publications that are distributed by each county or localities within the Region.
- Designate a spokesperson to represent the Plan, and take any opportunities available to provide current information on goals and process to the public.
- Encourage local residents and businesses to promote destinations and businesses throughout the Region.
- Develop a program to evaluate progress and success. This is essential in helping to build confidence in the value of the NEWTC.
- Achieve commitment from the private sector to support the Regional Marketing and Tourism Development Plan and promote the NE Wyoming Region as a destination.

Criteria for Success

The following criteria, if achieved, will improve implementation of the Regional Marketing and Tourism Development Plan.

- Citizens of the Region, particularly public and private sector groups actively engaged in visitor promotion, agree to sell and cross-sell the Region.
- Private sector travel-related businesses believe that a more general promotion of the Region will benefit them at least as much as spending a similar amount on proprietary advertising.
- Local marketing organizations believe that directing potential visitors to a single regional website is at least as beneficial as their individual effort to direct consumers only to local area websites.
• The NE Wyoming Region website addresses both the needs of the travel planner as well as the local communities in terms of access, content, presentation, and quality.
Appendix A
NEWTC Board Member List

Barb Jeffres
 Dave Spencer  Dspencer@wysbc.com
 Wyoming Business Council

Deb Norlin  Debran@trib.com
 Erin Alspach  Ena@vcn.com
 Jeanette Mathis  Gambono@vcn.com
 Lee Wittler  Wittler@vcn.com

Mary Kelley  Wyomingevents@intrq.com
 Matt Driskell  Dtkoa@trib.com
 Nancy Rumney  Nacoc@trib.com
 Newcastle Chamber of Commerce

Ruth Benson  Gillettecvb@wyoming.com
 Gillette CVB

Ted Ertman
 Weston County Commissioner
 Val Brandenburg
## Appendix B

### Wyoming State Office of Travel and Tourism Officials (as of 2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Laurie Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information centers/inquiry fulfillment/customerservice training</td>
<td>Sherry Hughes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel writers</td>
<td>Chuck Coon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic group tour</td>
<td>John Logan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-op advertising programs</td>
<td>Anita Withers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural tourism/film/arts and entertainment</td>
<td>Michelle Phelan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International programs</td>
<td>Reta Greene-Bellardo</td>
</tr>
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### South Dakota Department of Tourism Officials (as of 2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet Secretary</td>
<td>Patty Van Gerpen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Centers/AAA</td>
<td>René Vallery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Tourism</td>
<td>Cindy Tryon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Relations</td>
<td>Michele Ganschow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group tour/international</td>
<td>Maureen Droz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film Office Manager</td>
<td>Chris Hull</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Chambers of Commerce/Convention & Visitor’s Bureaus/County Travel Commissions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commission</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crook County Travel Commission</td>
<td>Matt Driskell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gillette Convention &amp; Visitors Bureau</td>
<td>Ruth Benson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hulett Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>Teri Johnson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>Nancy Rumney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pine Haven Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>Thelma Brandenburg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sundance Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>Jeanette &amp; Mike Mathis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upton Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>Lisa LaVasseur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weston County Travel Commission</td>
<td>Deb Norlin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Tourism Associations & Contacts (as of 2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Association</th>
<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Devils Tower Tourism Association</td>
<td>Matt Driskell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Horn Coalition</td>
<td>Nadeen Gross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Hills, Badlands and Lakes Association</td>
<td>Bill Honerkamp, President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Hills Central Reservations</td>
<td>Susan Edwards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyoming State Trails Program Coordinator</td>
<td>Kim Raap, Trails</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US Forest Service Bearlodge Ranger District</td>
<td>Steve Kozel, District Ranger</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Appendix C
Early Impact of September 11th on 2001 Travel Plans

The 2001 Longwoods’ National Visitor Study questionnaire asked about the impact of September 11th on travel plans between September 11th and the end of 2001. The National Visitor study was conducted in early 2002 among a representative sample of American adults who had taken an overnight trip in 2001.

Observations included:

- Most travelers who had been planning a trip for the end of the year took it despite the events of September 11th. Any changes to the originally intended means of transportation were made for both safety and timing/scheduling reasons.
- Among the minority 11% of the travelers who did cancel or postpone a trip, trips by air were the most likely to have been affected.
- Travelers expected to shy away for the foreseeable future from longer distance and foreign destination travel more than any other types.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Base: Total Overnight Trip Travelers in 2001</th>
<th>100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before the terrorist attacks on September 11th, were you planning to take any overnight trips during the period from September 11th to December 31st, 2001?</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had planned a trip(s) and took the planned trip(s)</td>
<td>47% 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• But changed planned means of transportation</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• But changed planned destination(s)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• But changed both planned means of transportation and destination(s)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Changed neither means of transportation nor destination(s)</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changed Means of Transportation</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• For safety reasons</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• For timing/scheduling reasons</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• For other reasons</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cancelled or postponed planned trip(s)</td>
<td>11% 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• That had been planned by air</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• That had been planned by Car/Truck/Van/RV</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• That had been planned by other means of transportation</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table continues ...
For the foreseeable future, do you expect to travel less to destinations in each of the following regions because of the events of September 11th?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Northeast</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The South</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Mid-West</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Plains States</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Rocky Mountain States</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Coast States</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Destinations</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the foreseeable future, do you expect to travel less to destinations from the following distances from home because of the events of September 11th?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance from Home</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 500 miles</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500 to 1,000 miles</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 1,000 miles</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>