SHERIDAN COUNTY TRAVEL & TOURISM

LOCAL INDUSTRY UPDATE JULY 2023

COUNTY, WYOMING, USA.



The Bighorn Mountains from the Powder Horn

### **DIRECTOR'S FORECAST + UPDATES**

Summer seems to have officially begun now that it hasn't rained for two straight days. With that, I'll be brief with my introductory comments this month - we all know there's plenty going on locally in July!

The excessive rain has forced the Forest Service to close roads and trails all over the mountain - I've provided an update further on. And yet despite the rain and unseasonable temperatures, our visitor numbers remain strong - especially when compared against the rest of our region. I met with a number of regional tourism directors last week and many mentioned how their numbers are down compared to 2022; I'm happy to say that we are still seeing increases over last summer, which should help continue to generate revenue for businesses across the community and help those faced with Main Street construction on their doorstep. Regarding Main Street construction; I have a few tips and insights later that may help anyone looking to generate more visitor and/or local traffic.

Speaking of traffic: we are seeing great numbers of people through the doors at the Burgess Junction Visitor Center. We're thrilled that we've been able to provide this resource to the community, especially this year - we're answering plenty of questions each day regarding road and trail closures and conditions, etc. We've recently decided to open our doors on Sunday as well, so we are now open 7 days a week, 8am - 4pm.

More great news on our James Jackson/Craft is King documentary project; we've now secured a pair of substantial grants - one each from the Wyoming Arts Council and Wyoming Humanities - that will help us bring this incredinle story to life.

A shout-out to The Brinton Museum and Tanya Moon for assisting us with a tour operator from Denmark earlier in the month! We are welcoming more tour operators and sellers from Europe than ever before, with two additional groups scheduled to come out later this summer. We've worked hard the last two years to be back in the international market ahead of most other regions and we're starting to see much of that work pay dividends.

Finally, a nod to all the event organizers who persevered through rough weather in June to put on one incredible event after the next - the Bighorn Trail Run, the Dead Swede, Ucross Founders Day, Clearmont Day, Hoop Jam, Cowgirl Cadillacs, and dozens of other great events took place despite all the rain, and from what I can gather most were a complete success. These big events set the tone for our entire summer season and generate an enormous amount of enthusiasm, good press coverage, and positive energy for Sheridan County.

I hope everyone has a safe and happy 4th of July, and that you're all ready for another epic Rodeo Week!

Parker Executive Director, Sheridan County Travel & Tourism July 1, 2023

7/1 - 7/22	Rock Art in Wyoming Exhibit - Fulmer Public Library
7/1	An Evening with El Wencho in Sheridan - Black Tooth
7/1	Landon's Farmer's Market (July 1, 8, 15, 22, 29)
7/1	Karz Rod Run - VA Medical Center
7/2	Big Horn Equestrian Center Polo -Powder Horn Realty Inc.
7/2	Big Horn Equestrian Center - Big Horn Polo Cup
7/4	4th of July Celebrations in Ranchester
7/4	Pot Lot and Fireworks Show- Leiter Bar
7/4	Concerts in the Park - Kendrick Park (July 4, 11, 18, 25)
7/5	Black Tooth Brewery Bingo (July 5, 12, 19, 26)
7/6	WYO Rodeo Royalty Horsemanship Competition
7/7	The Dugan Irby Band - Black Tooth
7/7	WYO Rodeo Royalty Stage Competition, Queen's Social, Sile
7/7	Big Horn Equestrian Center Polo - Friday Night Lights (July
7/8	The Dugan Irby Band - LeDoux Saloon (July 8, 9)
7/8	The Brinton Museum Summer Concert featuring Town Mou
7/8	Montana Shakespeare in the Park: Measure for Measure - Ke
7/8	Untapped Homebrew Festival
7/8	Flying H Polo - Cloud Peak Cup
7/9	WISSOTA Street Stock Special Bike Races - Sheridan Speedv
7/9	Big Horn Equestrian Center Polo - BGM Productions Troph
7/9	Big Horn Equestrian Center Polo - Perry Trailer Sales Cup
7/11	SCLT Explore History: History on the Soldier Ridge Trail A
7/11	RODEO WEEK: PRCA and WPRA Slack (July 11, 12, 13, 14
7/11	RODEO WEEK: WYO Rodeo Boot Kick Off
7/12	RODEO WEEK: WYO Rodeo Carnival (July 12, 13, 14, 15)
7/12	SHERIDAN WYO RODEO: Family Night
7/12	Community Pint Night: Black Tooth
7/12	Cowboy Cache Western Market - Ramada Plaza (July 12, 13,
7/13	SHERIDAN WYO RODEO: Pink Night
7/13	WYO Jam - The Warehouse Gastropub (July 13, 14, 15)
7/13	Spurs and Shots Street Dance - The Mint Bar (July 13, 14, 15
7/14	RODEO WEEK: Boy Scout Pancake Breakfast
7/14	RODEO WEEK: Sneakers & Spurs 5k / 1k
7/14	WYO Rodeo Main Street Parade "Bold Stripes, Bright Stars &
7/14	RODEO WEEK: Kiwanis Duck Races
7/14	RODEO WEEK: Kiwanis Duck Races RODEO WEEK: Carnival
7/14	SHERIDAN WYO RODEO: Patriot Night
7/15	SHERIDAN WYO RODEO - FINAL NIGHT OF PERFORM
7/15	Flying H Polo - Skeeter Johnson Memorial Cup
7/16	Big Horn Equestrian Center Polo - Eatons' Ranch Cup, WYC
7/19	Verdello Culinary Events (July 19, 22, 26, 29)
7/20	Bozeman Trail Field Trip Guided by Buck Damone
7/20	3rd Thursday Street Festival
7/22	Flying H Polo - Oliver Wallop Cup
7/23	Big Horn Equestrian Center Polo - C&K Equipment Shane V
7/23	Big Horn Equestrian Center Polo - BHEC Bucky King Memo
7/23	Sheridan Speedway - High Plains Late Model Series
7/25	SCLT Explore History: History on the Soldier Ridge Trail A
7/26	Summer Evening at the Mansion - Kendrick Mansion
7/28	Summer Swing Jazz Concert - Sheridan College
7/28	Dayton Days (July 28, 29, 30, 31)
7/28	Sheridan County Fair (July 28, 29, 30)
7/29	Flying H Polo - Moncrieffe Cup
7/29	6th Annual Tournament of Knights & Queen's Dinner
7/30	Big Horn Equestrian Center Polo - Paul Nicholson Juniors N
7/30	Flying H Polo - Goose Creek Cup
7/30	Sheridan Speedway - ASCS Spring Cars
7/30	Big Horn Equestrian Center Polo - Malcolm Wallop Trophy

### **JULY 2023 EVENTS SNAPSHOT**

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Γ OF PERFORMANCES anch Cup, WYO Rodeo Cup

ipment Shane Winkler Memorial ucky King Memorial el Series er Ridge Trail A Walking Tour Mansion ege

n's Dinner nolson Juniors NYTS Game

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

The community calendar continues to grow, with new additions each week. Remember to send Jodi at the Chamber your details at info@sheridanwyomingchamber.org so that the Community Calendar stays up to date.

My staff continues to work through updating listings and event details on our own website, but make sure to let us know if you see something that needs to be edited at sheridanwyoming.org

### SHERIDAN COUNTY TRAVEL & TOURISM MEDIA LIBRARY

We maintain a robust content library that includes photographs, video, logos, ads, and more. Our library, archived on flickr, includes more than 18,000 images; 99% of these images were taken by me over the last seven years, and are available for community partners to use for non-commercial, promotional purposes.

Please send us a request if you would like to use our content; depending on current campaign deployments, some material may not be available for use. However, if these images are of your business and were shot as part of a campaign or a refresh, you are certainly welcome to use them for any other purpose you see fit.

Our library is a powerful promotional tool in its own right: as of today, images in our Flickr archive have been viewed 1,714,503 times since being launched in 2018. This large library of photo and video is also used, on occasion, by national media outlets seeking content to supplement stories, articles, and more.

#### To access our photo library, click here. To access our video library, click here.

#### MONTHLY MEDIA COVERAGE

### 10 Free Things to do in Sheridan, WY - C.R.A.F.T.

Here Are 10 Great Mountain Towns In Wyoming - KGAB AM 650 50 Over the Top Treats (Glazed N' Confused) - Food Network Magazine



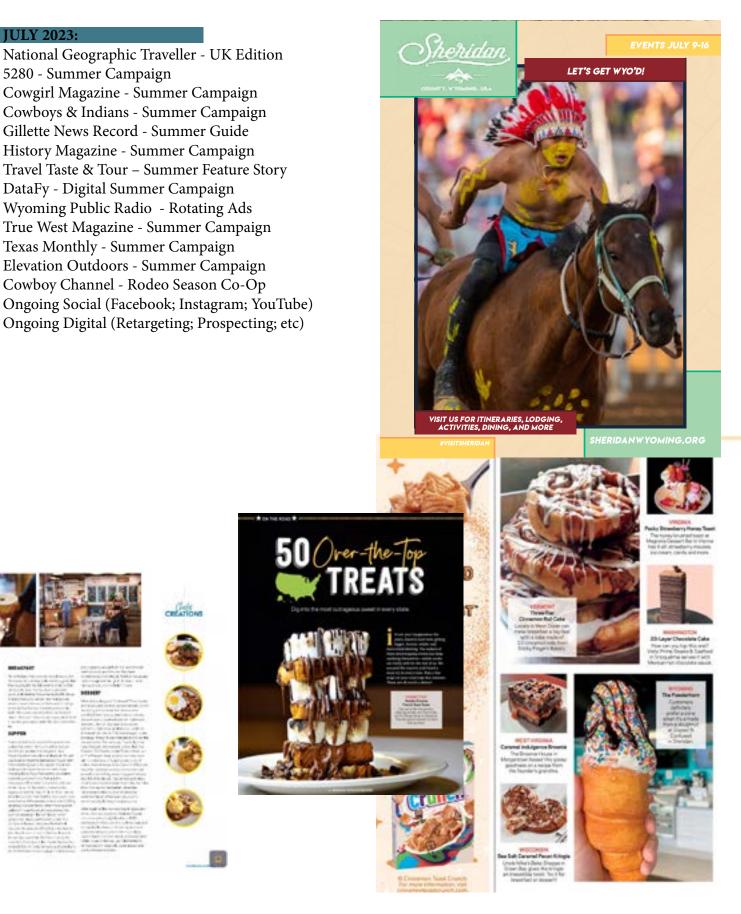


**JULY 2023:** 

5280 - Summer Campaign







### PLACEMENTS + CAMPAIGN DISTRIBUTION

### SHERIDAN CO. DESTINATION OPTIMIZATION EDUCATION SESSION



Thank to everyone who was able to join us for the Destination Optimization Education Session on May 16. For those who could not join, you can find the recording of the presentation here.

Passcode: SheridanTraining!123

If you'd like any further info, let me know. We have a deck Miles Partnership prepared that I can share, and their team is always happy to assist with anything our partners might need.

### LEVEL UP YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE

The first impression your business makes online to a potential customer is likely not your website — it is your business profile on Google or other major consumer travel-planning platforms such as Tripadvisor. Yelp or Apple Maps. Travel Wyoming is helping our partners maximize their exposure and conversion on these platforms by providing upskilling programs and one-on-one support for your team.

### FIVE FUNDAMENTALS OF A SUCCESSFUL ONLINE BUSINESS PROFILE

2. KEEP HOURS CURRENT

Hours/Open Now is the most

about a business and the most

open/close times up to date.

frequently searched information

likely information to be incorrect.

#### 1. CLAIM YOUR BUSINESS

Each of the major platforms offers tools to help you manage and maintain your content. But first, you have to claim your listing and follow their verification process to establish ownership.

#### 4. POST NEW PHOTOS REGULARLY

Don't set and forget your photo gallery. Adding 4 to 5 new photos every month can create a 30% increase in your business' visibility.

#### Keep your regular business hours, business will match the search holiday hours and other special queries of potential customers.

3. ADD CATEGORIES.

includes about your products and services, the more likely your

**AMENITIES & MENUS** 

The more information your listing

#### 5. RESPOND TO CUSTOMERS

Businesses who respond to customer reviews — positive or negative — have an 80 percent higher conversion rate than those who do not.

#### NEED HELP? GET FREE SUPPORT!

The specialists at Miles Partnership are available to help your business moximize its online exposure

Need assistance claiming your business on Google. Triadvisor. Ye
Have a question on how to make the most of these platforms?

Struggling with a roadblock? look an Office Hours session with Miles — it is FREE for Travel Wyoming Partners.





We are thrilled to have the Burgess Junction Visitor Center back up and running again! For those who don't know, this beautiful facility was built by the Forest Service in 1995 but closed its doors from 2012 – 2016 because of reductions in the Forest Service budget. It was operated for one season in 2017 by the Forest Service and staffed briefly by Arrowhead Lodge in 2019 before returning to its unoccupied state again.

We hope that by partnering with the Forest Service we've found a long-term solution for keeping this asset open to the public for years to come. The center is an incredible asset to our community; it is a place where locals and visitors alike can come for information on local businesses, activities, and attractions. It is a tool that we can use to encourage travelers to stay longer in Sheridan County, and the entire Bighorn Mountain region. And simply, it is a fantastic public asset - a place where people can come and experience a bit of the wild right in their own backyard.

We hope to serve 100,000+ visitors this season. We have plenty to share with our guests, including maps, guides, brochures, and other travel resources. Snack and drinks. And Sheridan/Burgess merchandise that the sales of which will offset our operating costs for the season.

Hours of Operation: 8am - 4pm, 7 days a week.

Open Memorial Day Weekend through September (weather permitting).

## **BURGESS JUNCTION VISITOR CENTER**



### City, WYDOT explain project, answer questions from downtown business owners By Kristen Czaban | kristen.czaban@thesheridanpress.com | Oct 13, 2022 | The Sheridan Press

**SHERIDAN** — The Wyoming Department of Transportation discussed final plans for its seven-sequence Main Street resurfacing and utility upgrade project Wednesday during a public meeting, allowing downtown business owners to ask questions and voice concerns.

Department officials said the project will go to bid later this year with construction beginning in April 2023. The project is expected to extend through two full construction seasons — from April through October in 2023 then restarting in the spring of 2024 and wrapping up in June of that year. The resurfacing and utility upgrade project is a joint venture between WYDOT and the city of Sheridan. The project will comprise seven sequences with each sequence involving work on no more than three blocks at a time. According to officials, working on three blocks at a time allows the contractors to work continually, which maximizes the construction teams' efficiency and increases the speed at which the project is completed. The construction project will start north of the Little Goose Creek Bridge and extend south for half a mile through the intersection of Main, Coffeen and Burkitt streets.

The length of closure for each of the seven sequences will vary, with the north sections of the street expected to take the most amount of time. Subsequent phases will move south, with the seventh and final sequence closing Main Street from Loucks Street to Burkitt and Coffeen streets, with sections of Works, Burkitt and Coffeen streets closed as well.

Pedestrian access to storefronts will be maintained at all times throughout the length of the project, WYDOT Resident Engineer Jake Whisonant said, and construction work is expected to begin at 7 a.m. and end at 7 p.m. every day. WYDOT will remove existing concrete pavement; install new concrete pavement; update existing Americans with Disabilities Act ramps and crossings that do not meet ADA guidelines; upgrade traffic signal infrastructure; and replace select sections of sidewalk, curb and gutter in need of repair, Whisonant said.

Meanwhile, the city will replace the existing cast iron waterline from 1970, replace the existing 14-inch vitrified clay pipe sewer main and address any needed repairs to the existing storm drain system, city Public Works Director Hanns Mercer said.

Scott Taylor, District 4 engineer with WYDOT, said he realized the project would cause some stress on those living and working on Main Street, but he said his team is doing its best to accelerate the process and minimize harmful impacts to businesses. Business owners who attended the Wednesday meeting asked questions regarding parking, timing for utility shut-offs and deliveries from large trucks. Taylor said the weekly meetings set to take place throughout the project will help keep business owners informed of when shut-offs will need to occur, alternative areas for parking and how best to direct shipments to the downtown area.

"We can't account for everything," Sheridan City Administrator Stu McRae said. "As we go down the road we'll be as agile as possible as things come up. We'll be good listeners and have actions to follow as we try to meet the majority of concerns. "We're very sensitive to the issues our businesses on Main Street will face," he said.

Once the project begins, update meetings will be held weekly in the ERA Carroll Real Estate space. Additional public meetings are also expected to take place after a contractor is awarded the bid for the project.

# DETOURS PARKING Early July to Late October Mid June to **Mid September** CLOSING 7/5

As of: June 28

HTTPS://WWW.SHERIDANWY.GOV/NEWS/WHAT\_S\_NEW/2023\_MAIN\_STREET\_UPGRADE\_PROJECT



### 2023-2024 MAIN STREET RECONSTRUCTION

**CLOSURES** 

Main Street from Dow to Alger and West Dow Street from Brooks to Main Street remains CLOSED.

• East Dow Street at Gould Street is open to business access only. Dow Street is scheduled to open by July 10th.

• MAIN STREET FROM ALGER TO GRINNELL IS SCHEDULED TO **CLOSE ON JULY 5TH.** 

 ALGER STREET WILL BE CLOSED TO THRU TRAFFIC **STARTING 7/5.** 

Dow Street traffic is being detoured to 1st Street. All other detours remain the same - watch for signs.

### Main Street employees are encouraged to park off Main Street to allow for customer access to businesses.

• Public Parking is available throughout downtown: Brooks and Smith Streets/Gould and Brundage Streets. Look for signs.



WEEKLY PUBLIC MEETING | WED | 1:30 | 306 N. MAIN ST

SHERIDAN\_MAIN\_STREET\_PROJECT



### **2023-2024 MARKETING CONSIDERATIONS**

A few thoughts for businesses or organizations looking to do a bit of extra advertising during construction. I know that some of this will sound like industry jargon - it is, don't worry - but if there's anything you're interested in learning more about, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Remember to go after the low-hanging fruit first; keep my office, the Chamber, and DSA up-todate on news and events. Review the Community Calendar. Check that your listings across all local websites are correct. Refine your advertising campaigns with your local partners, like Sheridan Media, Big Horn Mtn Radio, and The Sheridan Press. And PLEASE... make sure your Google listing is up-to-date!

### **DIGITAL OUTREACH**

Many people think that digital advertising is simply posting to Facebook or other social media channels, but it is actually far more involved. There are many powerful digital tools out there that can help you reach a highly targeted audience very affordably; I'll outline a few.

### **GOOGLE VIDEO**

Reach key target audiences through guaranteed views on the world's second-largest web domain and expand partners' awareness. You can take any clips you have into your Google Ads dashboard and deliver them basically anywhere on the web.

### **GOOGLE PROSPECTING**

Google uses a machine-learning model to determine the optimal combination of assets for each ad slot based on predictions built from site performance history. This is incredibly easy to do if you're not doing it already; a few hours learning how to deliver ads through Google Prospecting could yield amazing results if you target customers coming into our region. All you need to do is geo-target gateway communities, and even Sheridan itself. » Responsive ad creation + standard banner ads are easy to create and deploy.

### **GEOFENCING**

Geofencing capabilities can continue to drive local awareness once visitors are in the state. It's both a great way to move people once they're in the state and a way to connect to past visitors who have been to a specific place or event. Again, there are ways to do many of these things directly from your Google Ads dashboard. This gives you complete control and flexibility to change your campaigns as the Main Street Construction areas move. If you're not comfortable taking this on or it seems confusing, there are plenty of media companies in town that can help.

### RETARGETING

Consider a Google re-targeting campaign. If you don't have a Google Ads acount, get one - it's free to get signed up and learn more about all the tools that Google offers. For a few hundred dollars a week it's possible to draw a circle around Sheridan and deliver ads to pretty much every phone that performs a search on Sheridan as it relates to your business.

### **META (FACEBOOK & INSTAGRAM) PROSPECTING & REMARKETING**

Leverage Meta prospecting to build awareness in key target markets and drive relevant traffic directly to partner sites. » You can do this directly through the Meta ads campaign portal. Utilize Meta Remarketing as a way to connect with those consumers who are already aware of Wyoming and drive them further down the funnel. Our photo archive includes thousands of images of local businesses that we use to do this.

#### SEO CONSIDERATIONS

If you're not actively managing your SEO, that's something you need to take a look at. Search engine optimization (SEO) is the foundation of every website and should be the foundation of every good marketing plan. SEO is often undervalued and misinterpreted simply as a suggestions tool to move pages slightly higher in search results. In reality, it is a treasure trove of data and information that can help website owners keep track of their own site and provide key insights into competitors' performance. Before you spend money driving paid media to your website, ensuring that you have a good handle on your SEO efforts is critical. A few things to consider when looking at Search Engine Optimization:

Is your website showing up on Google? Do you serve high-quality content to users? Is content fast and easy to access on all devices? Is your website secure?

#### **CONNECTED TV**

Promote your branded video message to give potential visitors a full-screen ad experience during TV app activity or streaming. Advertising on TV platforms is still typically cost prohibitive for small businesses, but for major events or activities it can be a worthy addition to a marketing mix.

### DESTINATION OPTIMIZATION EDUCATION SESSION

On May 16th I ran this education session in partnership with the state. My team put many hours into this beforehand by updating more than 200 visitor-facing local businesses across multiple channels, including our website, the Wyoming Office of Tourism website, and more. I included info on that session, including the recording, earlier in my update, and I've shared a few slides across the next few pages to illustrate how powerful simple changes to Google listings can be (and would be happy to share the entire deck upon request). Here's a cool example; since updating Sheridan Bicycle Co's website in mid-May, that site has been viewed over 2,500 times.

Plenty of ideas to chew on here. Each of these is a component of our own campaign activations all year long both nationally and internationally, but there's no reason local businesses can't utilize them on a smaller scale to drive big results.

### miles

"The chart above excludes the three listings in the "other" category as it includes such a wide variety of listings.

## **RESULTS OVERVIEW**



This photo of Sheridan, WY is the top photo by number of views

**Total Photo Contributions: 67** 

Total Photo Views: 102,485

Our goal is to help your organization position local businesses and points of interest to be both complete and compelling within Google products.

- Visit Sheridan is a Level 4 Local Guide.
- 173 businesses and attractions were matched to a GBP.
- 60 missing data points were addressed during the Activation & . Optimization stage. We have re-run the audit to compare data.
- 11% increase in complete listings observed, making the market 80% complete, up from 71%.
- There was no change in the percentage of verified listings, but . verification of listings within the market was at 76%, which is above the standard for comparable destinations.

# VIBRANCY



To amplify vibrancy for businesses and attractions within the market. Miles asked for up to 75 photos.

You submitted 73 photos and were able to contribute 67 images on your behalf.

Your most popular image has gained over 40K views since mid-May.



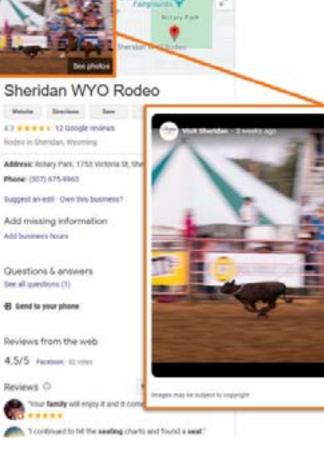
RESULTS BY CATEGORY							
CATEGORY	# AUDITED	% INCOMPLETE (Original Audit)	% INCOMPLETE (Audit Re-run)	% UNVERIFIED (Original Audit)	% UNVERIFIED (Audit Re-run)		
DINING	73	29% (21)	24% (17) ↓	19% (14)	19% (14)		
LODGING	34	15% (5)	12% (4) ↓	38% (13)	38% (13)		
STORES	33	33% (11)	21%(7)	15% (5)	18% (6) †		
POIs	18	56% (10)	33% (6) \downarrow	50% (9)	39% (7)↓		
ATTRACTIONS	12	25% (3)	8%(1)	8%(1)	8% (1)		

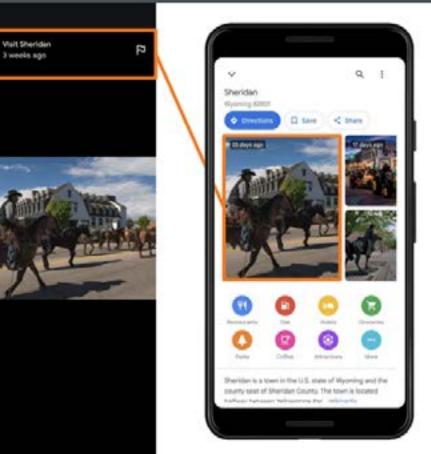
There was an improvement to listing completeness in every category above.

You may have noticed that the percentage of unverified listings slightly increased. There was no degradation in the original listings we audited. The increase is due to a new listing, Modern Merchant, that isn't verified yet.

"The chart above excludes the three listings in the "other" category as it includes such a wide variety of listings.

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### ABOUT CONTENT

Can my photos replace the listing cover image? Yes; yes they can.

- Even if the business is verified the cover can be replaced by Google
- Images with high views, ٠ even if they are dated can surface as a cover photo
- Continue contributing content to enhance listings

### **TOUCHING BASE WITH NEW BUSINESSES**

One of the things that I love about working in a small community is the opportunity to get to know the owners of small businesses across our industry. When a new business opens its doors, I try to touch base as soon as I can so that I can get in to experience what's being offered – whether it's a hotel, restaurant, shop, gallery, boutique, or outfitter – so that my office can then incorporate this information into our marketing and promotional channels.

I don't always get to do this as quickly as I would like to – Sheridan County continues to grow at a steady clip – but I do my best to get out to make sure that our local businesses know that we're here as a resource, as advocates, and as partners.

I always make sure to pack my camera with me, too.

I treat every first visit to a new spot the way I would were I covering it for a magazine; I look at it from a journalist's perspective, and I do my best to shoot photographs that reflect the owner's intent and vision for the space. This typically results in great content that my office can use and gives our partners a jumpstart on media that they might not have otherwise had.

Since 2015 I've uploaded more than 18,000 images to our photography archive; since 2016 our Film and Digital Production Coordinator, Max Brown, has produced hundreds of pieces of creative for our film archive. This content is used by my team in all our advertising and promotional work; it's used by local businesses and communities partners, as I mentioned; and it's frequently used by national and international outlets when looking for images to supplement stories. Our archive is a powerful promo tool in its own right, and we are exceptionally proud of the fact that we have built it up on our own.

I had the chance to visit Sheridan's newest restaurant, Olive, about two weeks ago. Great atmosphere, great crew, fantastic Italian cuisine – Olive looks like it's going to be a great addition to the community's culinary scene. Last week I took my family to dinner at the reimagined Wagon Box Restaurant and Library - we were all blown away with the food, the charm of the space, and the friendly staff. Not a bad reason at all to take a few photos. Naturally, we took a few photos on some of Story's beautiful trails while wandering about.

Of course, we're always looking for what's new with our old friends as well - just today I took some photos at the Farmhouse Patio at the Big Horn Y for a magazine article, and in the last month I've had the chance to shoot at Powder River Pizza, La Herradura, Java Moon, the Warehouse Gastropub, and a few other great places. We're always on the lookout for interesting things that are happening in Sheridan County's culinary scene - that's how we helped land the recent Food Network Magazine feature, and last year's From Scratch - so keep us up to date!

