

Sheridan

COUNTY, WYOMING, USA.



DIRECTOR'S FORECAST + UPDATES

I'm looking around to see if I can find where the summer went. It seemed as though we waited forever for the snow and rain to give us a break. Now we're looking at the downhill slope of the season. The good news is that the work this community has done in extending the season pays major dividends; there's plenty to look forward to in September, including Born in a Barn, the WYO Film Festival, the Wolf Creek Wrangle, Rooted in Wyoming's Farm to Table Auction & Dance, the 35th edition of Don King Days, and much more.

That's great news as we continue to see travel trends return to "normal" – or closer to what normal meant in pre-pandemic days. I've included an overview on travel metrics in my report that some of my fellow data nerds may find fascinating; you'll see that we have eased off the staggering 2022 travel volume, though average trip length remains strong. Also interesting is that the share of in state visitation has softened to 17.6% - this could be a sign that folks in Wyoming are now traveling further out of the region than they have in the last several years. I'm also always interested in share of trips by state metrics: comparing data across years is a solid way for us to gauge market changes and gives us insight into the effectiveness of regional advertising campaigns. Please let me know if you have any questions about this report or any other info.

A quick anecdote on last weekend; I overheard staff at the info center speaking with numerous visitors about all the events that were scheduled to take place and how exciting that always is for people from out of town. While one small event may not be the specific reason that someone comes out to Sheridan from Colorado or Texas or Washington, each event contributes to the whole of the experience. Story Days, Celebrate the Arts, polo, the airport open house, the sculpture tour at the Neltje Center, races at the Sheridan Speedway – these are all tools that we can use at Sheridan County Travel & Tourism to encourage visitors to stay longer and engage more deeply with the activities, attractions, and businesses of our community. I also know that it's hard work planning and executing events, so kudos to all the folks that give their time and energy to make them happen.

I've included my write-up on the potential return of passenger rail service for those that may have missed it. This is something I've had my eye on for the last several years and I'll keep the community informed as the exploratory process moves forward at the federal level.

I want to express my sympathy to the family and friends of Patrick Henderson, who passed away on Sunday. I worked with Patrick while he was a member of the City Council and when he served on the Travel & Tourism board. I have the utmost respect for the work he did while at Whitney Benefits, and for his unrelenting commitment to serving the people of Sheridan County.

In other somber news, two friends who have worked with us on numerous projects over the years are fighting significant health battles; Malik Grant is fighting gallbladder cancer. We can [support Malik by donating here](#). Rick Geisler was injured in a horseback accident on Monday: his friends and family are [posting updates here](#). Malik and Rick have helped us with work ranging from the songwriter festival to cowboy b-roll for our short films and are two men that exemplify Sheridan's community spirit. I encourage everyone to support them however they can.



Shawn Parker
Executive Director, Sheridan County Travel & Tourism
September 1, 2023

SEPTEMBER 2023 EVENTS SNAPSHOT

8/31 - 9/4	DevilStone Run
9/2	Landon's Farmers Market (September 2, 9, 16, 23, 30)
9/2 - 9/4	Hang Gliders Fly-In
9/3 - 9/4	35th Annual Don King Days
9/6	Black Tooth Brewery Bingo (September 6, 13, 20, 27)
9/6	Fun with Marinades at Verdello
9/7	Pam Tillis at The WYO Theater
9/8	Cirque Ma'Ceo at Sheridan County Fairgrounds
9/8	Tris Munsick and Innocents Live at Luminous
9/8 - 9/10	Flying Cowboys R/C Club 30th Fly-In
9/8 - 9/9	4th Annual Living History Cemetery Tours
9/9	Hot Summer Nights - car/truck/bike cruise
9/9	Jon Dell at Luminous
9/9	Sheridan College Bass Day
9/9	Wild West Wine Fest
9/9	SCLT In Bloom
9/9	Sheridan Wyoming Pride
9/10	Big Horn Lions Club Golf Tournament
9/12	Explore History @ The Hub: Historic Eatons' Ranch Tour
9/14	Kate Collyer Artist Talk & Closing - Sheridan College
9/15 - 9/17	Born in a Barn Creative Sale
9/16	Wolf Creek Wrangle at Eatons' Ranch
9/19	Explore History @ TRVCC: Historic Eatons' Ranch Tour
9/21	3rd Thursday Street Festival
9/21	Homecoming: Works by SC Alumni - Sheridan College
9/23	Jazz Band - Sheridan College
9/23	Rooted in Wyoming's 7th Annual Farm to Table Fundraiser
9/23	The Mane Event: 2023 Gravel Grinder Bike Ride
9/23	Fall Fest at Landon's Greenhouse
9/23	An Evening of Comedy with Glenn Raymond at The WYO Theater
9/27	Ucross 40th Anniversary Gala
9/28 - 10/1	WYO Film Festival
9/29 - 9/30	Full Moon Fort Nighttime Tours

INFO AND STATS

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

PLACEMENTS + CAMPAIGN DISTRIBUTION

Afar Media Fall Campaign Launch
Travel Taste & Tour – Fall Feature Story
DataFy - Digital Fall Campaign
Cowboy Lifestyle Magazine - Fall Campaign
Elevation Outdoors - Fall Campaign
Gillette News Record - Fall Guide
Madden Media - Fall Digital Campaign
Great American West Guide
Wyoming Public Radio - Rotating Ads
Ongoing Social (Facebook; Instagram; YouTube)
Ongoing Digital (Retargeting; Prospecting; etc)

HOTEL OCCUPANCY SNAPSHOT: 2023

MONTH	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL
2023	31.6	34.4	37.2	40.6
2022	29.3	34.6	35.4	43.7
% +/-	7.6	-0.6	5.0	-7.1
MONTH	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST
2023	57.3	72.0	72.0	
2022	56.7	66.9	68.0	
% +/-	0.9	7.6	5.8	
MONTH	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
2023				
2022				
% +/-				

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

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.

2. KEEP HOURS CURRENT

Hours/Open Now is the most frequently searched information about a business and the most likely information to be incorrect. Keep your regular business hours, holiday hours and other special open/close times up to date.

3. ADD CATEGORIES, AMENITIES & MENUS

The more information your listing includes about your products and services, the more likely your business will match the search queries of potential customers.

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.

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 maximize its online exposure.

- Need assistance claiming your business on Google, Tripadvisor, Yelp or Apple Maps?
- Have a question on how to make the most of these platforms?
- Struggling with a roadblock?

Book an Office Hours session with Miles — it is FREE for Travel Wyoming Partners.



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2023-2024 MAIN STREET RECONSTRUCTION

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.

2023-2024 MAIN STREET RECONSTRUCTION



SHERIDAN MAIN STREET PROJECT UPDATE

AS OF AUGUST 24

- Main Street from Dow to Alger is Open.
- Main Street from Alger to Loucks is Closed.
- Due to the construction associated with the Cady Building, East Alger remains closed to through traffic. West Alger is Open.
- Pedestrians please be mindful of heavy truck traffic as you cross Main Street.
- Watch for pedestrian detours at intersections as we upgrade and pave them.
- Watch your step as you window shop.
- The project is on schedule to complete Main Street to Loucks by October 31.

Follow Main Street Project at
<https://www.sheridanwy.gov> or
follow us on

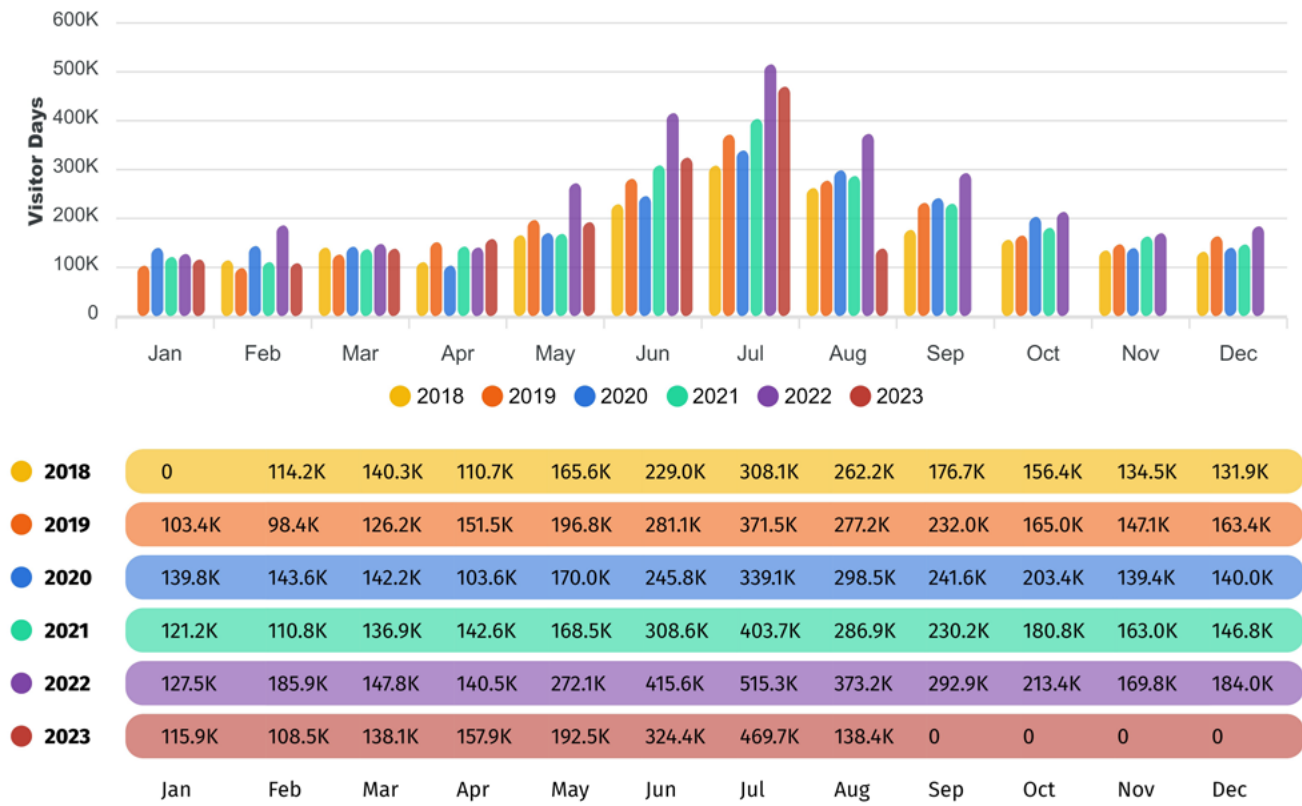


NEXT PUBLIC MEETING
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 30TH | 1:30 PM
306 N. MAIN ST
OR CONTACT LAURA AT 674-2356

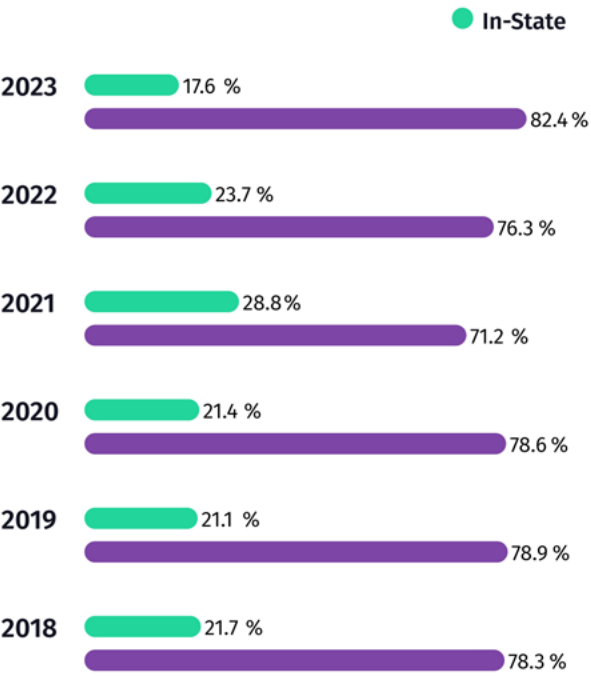
DATA AND INSIGHTS

Profil includes out-of-state visitors and in-state visitors coming from 50+ miles

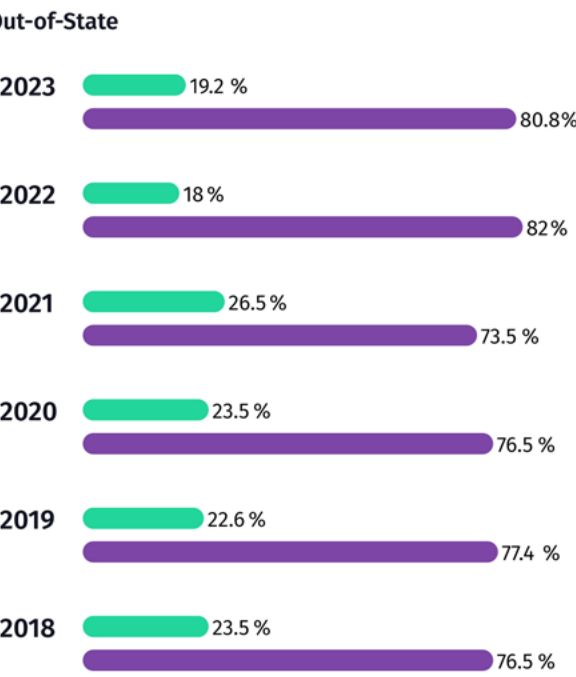
Monthly Volume by Visitor Days



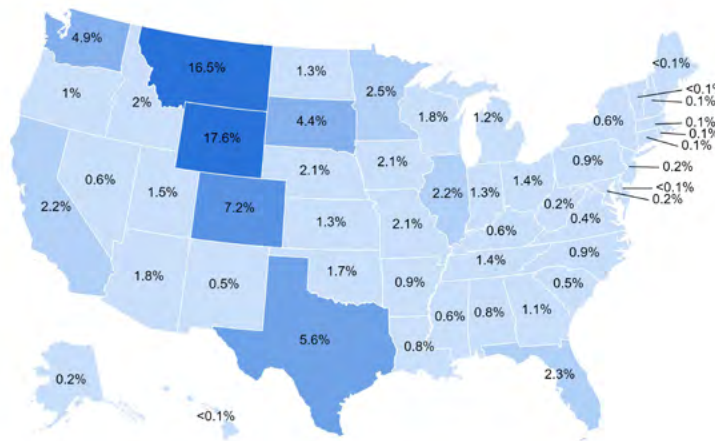
Trips



Visitor Days

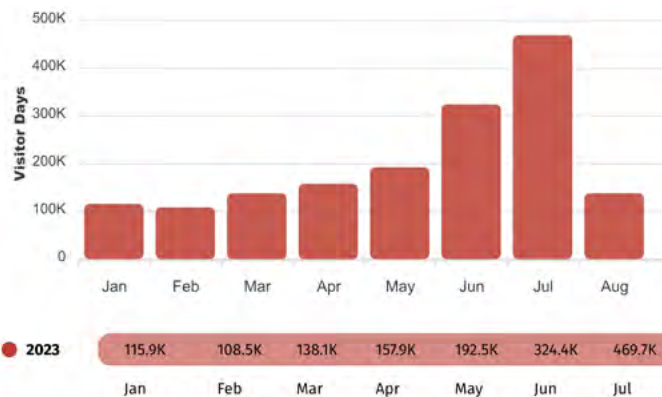
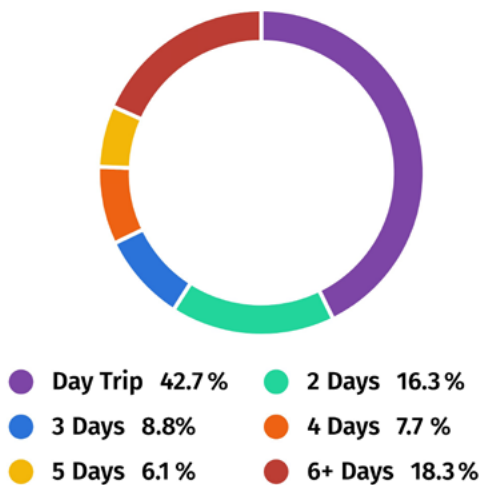


Share of Trips by State



RANGE: January 1, 2023 - August 12, 2023

Visitor Days by Length of Stay



Top DMAs

DMA	Trips
Denver	115,876
Billings	101,470
Casper-Riverton	55,902
Rapid City	42,383
Salt Lake City	20,963
Cheyenne-Scottsbluff	20,380
Seattle-Tacoma	19,976
Spokane	18,412
Minneapolis-St. Paul	14,616
Butte-Bozeman	14,005
Dallas-Ft. Worth	12,617

IN CONSIDERATION OF WYOMING PASSENGER RAIL OPTIONS

The Press' Joseph Beaudet wrote an article earlier this week about the potential return of passenger rail service to Sheridan County. This is something that I've been tracking for several years now, and I want to share a bit more information about the process and the reason that Sheridan County Travel & Tourism is supportive of these exploratory efforts.

A bit of background: The Federal Railroad Administration, alongside groups like All Aboard Northwest and the Greater Northwest Passenger Rail Coalition, is considering major expansions to the nation's rail network. There is potential for linkages that would connect Billings with Cheyenne and Denver that tether our region to the broader system. Sheridan is in consideration for a station. The first and most obvious reason that this makes sense for our community is our geography; we are reasonably isolated here in Sheridan County, which can make long-distance travel a struggle. It's August now, and it's not difficult to jump in your car and drive to Denver or Billings – if you don't mind paying \$4 a gallon for gas. However, winter sure changes things. Safe, affordable rail service for trips to Denver or Billings (and beyond) would be a boon to winter travel for our entire region. We have great air service now, but our flights are often at capacity, and due to ongoing pilot shortages for all major carriers there is little chance of adding additional flights in the near term. This is to say nothing of the cost of flight tickets; an expanded rural rail network would make a positive impact on rural transportation immediately.

It's also important to note that our support for these exploratory efforts does not mean that we are ready to commit public funds to any project at any level of local Wyoming government. Infrastructure projects cost a lot of money – that's no secret. Air service, the highway network, and the current rail system are all frequently subsidized with federal, state, and local funds. (In a way, our federal tax dollars are already paying for a passenger rail system that doesn't run through Wyoming). Yet it's important to consider the overall social and economic impact of these services. For example, one of the reasons I worked so hard with the State and the great folks of the Critical Air Service team to restore local air service to Sheridan County was that air service contributes more than \$24 million to our local economy each year. Would rail service meet or exceed that impact? Would the benefits outweigh the cost? Potentially – and this is exactly why it's important to keep Sheridan County at the table as a possible hub for this expanded rail network; the positive impacts could be immense. All Aboard Northwest suggests that the long-distance services that they are advocating for bring 8-10 times the rate of return on taxpayer equity. All Aboard is advocating for long-distance services that are paid for through the Federal Amtrak Congressional Appropriations, not “state-supported” services that would have to be paid for by state and local communities.

The Rail Passengers Association and Transportation for America worked with the Trent Lott Center of the University of Southern Mississippi to quantify the economic impacts of passenger rail services. They recently completed an analysis for a proposed North Coast Hiawatha route that would run via Billings and southern Montana. While using conservative methodology, they found the route would bring \$271 million to the overall economy. Another interesting example comes from Meridian, MS: Meridian invested \$7.5 Million in an Amtrak/intermodal station that played a crucial role in encouraging over \$200 million of development in the area around the station in the last 20 years. Meridian is home to only 40,000 residents – not many more than we have here in Sheridan County. If passenger rail services and their stations truly are catalysts for positive economic growth, we owe it to our community to at least explore potential opportunities.

Shawn Parker | Executive Director
Zane Garstad | Board President
SHERIDAN COUNTY TRAVEL & TOURISM
1517 E. 5th St. | Sheridan, WY 82801
Phone 307-673-7120
sheridanwyoming.org



LETTER OF SUPPORT

In Consideration of Wyoming Passenger Rail Options

SHERIDAN, WY | August 8, 2023:

PREPARED FOR:
US Department of Transportation
Federal Railroad Administration
Deputy Administrator Amit Bose

Dear Deputy Administrator Bose,

I am writing to express Sheridan County Travel & Tourism's support for major investment in rail transportation infrastructure in our region. Much of rural America is underserved by long-distance intercity passenger rail options, including portions of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Utah, Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota. Investments in rail service have the potential to positively impact the economic and social wellbeing of rural America while providing enhanced connectivity for the national long-distance passenger rail system, thereby making the overall system more robust and resilient.

We are aware of the great strides made by the FRA in planning alongside groups like All Aboard Northwest and the Greater Northwest Passenger Rail Coalition, and we know, according to conceptual enhanced network plans under consideration, that there is potential for linkages that would connect Billings, Montana with Cheyenne, Wyoming. While the project recognizes the former Pioneer Route along the Southern Tier, we do not believe that the two routes being considered between Cheyenne and Billings are mutually exclusive; each route serves a unique travel corridor with unique demands, and it is our belief that both routes should be considered for development. There are many examples of paired routings successfully serving rural communities in the US, and we believe that these two routes running in tandem through Wyoming would be viewed as a major success by the FRA. Furthermore, the pandemic has dramatically altered the needs of rural communities; in Sheridan County alone, flights between Sheridan County Airport and Denver International Airport run at over 90% capacity with little chance of additional flight options on the horizon (the ongoing nation-wide pilot shortage is well documented), forcing thousands of other business and leisure travelers to drive long distances, often in adverse Wyoming weather conditions. This is to say nothing of the high cost of flight tickets; an expanded rural rail network would make a positive impact on rural transportation immediately.

It is time to strengthen our local, state, and national economies with better mobility. Fast, frequent, and affordable trains create strong social, family, and business ties by making travel easy and productive. Trains give people a safe way to move around at a low cost—and with a small carbon footprint. Trains create a more enjoyable and prosperous life by supporting walkable and more financially viable cities and towns. The routes to be considered should link and serve in-common communities, large and small, across states comprising the Greater Northwest Region. We believe that such services will be transformative, and will provide major economic, environmental, and equity benefits to our community. Passenger rail service would be a boon to Sheridan County, as well as much of the Great State of Wyoming – it was, of course, the railroad that brought prosperity to many of our communities over 100 years ago. As we continue to grow, reliable, affordable transportation remains top of mind as an important service for business, recreation, and tourism.

Restoration of passenger rail service in southern Montana, northern Wyoming, and neighboring states will bring transformational, once in a lifetime opportunity for economic development across the region. Rail service will connect more communities to educational and economic opportunities, essential healthcare services, and recreational and tourism activities that are currently not accessible to everyone either via air travel or personal vehicle use. Additionally, passenger rail supports environmental goals to reduce emissions, potentially reducing the number of individual vehicles on the road. Perhaps most importantly, especially in the winter months, rail travel provides significant safety benefits, allowing citizens to travel to work, access essential services, and connect to family and friends without having to drive in hazardous conditions.

Sincerely,

Shawn Parker
Executive Director, Sheridan County Travel & Tourism

SHERIDAN COUNTY TRAVEL & TOURISM BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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Secretary + Treasurer: Elaine Stephens, Dayton Mercantile | P.J. Treide, Bighorn Design | Anna Switzer, Clear Creek Stop | Jim Schellinger, Sheridan Media
Tariq Khan, Redpath Investments | Karen Schumacher, The Best Western Sheridan Center | Tod Windsor, The Brinton Museum

IMAGES FROM AUGUST

I had a blast taking photographs at a bunch of different events in August. I got out to the Sheridan County Fair and the Sheridan County Rodeo. I wandered through the Museum at the Bighorns and a few shops across the community. I took my sons to see races at the Sheridan Speedway. I had amazing meals at the Wagon Box, Pad Thai Restaurant, and Los Tacos. I spent some time shooting on the mountain in between visits to Burgess Junction, and we wandered the Farmers Market and 3rd Thursday as we always do.

Our team works extremely hard to keep both our photo and video archive up to date. This creative content important for us as we build ads, campaigns, and marketing programs, and is also useful for the partner businesses and organizations that we cover.

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 **19,000 images**; 99% of these images were taken by me over the last eight 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 1,801,202 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](#).

