



# Downtown Cheyenne Staff Report

January 2021

Report By: Amber Ash, Haylee Chenchar, and Holly Scheer

## DDA INITIATIVES

**Banking RFP** – The committee interviewed the 2 finalists (Jonah Bank and ANB Bank) on January 5<sup>th</sup> and January 6<sup>th</sup>. After considering all the information, the recommendation of the committee is to move our banking to Jonah Bank. This was a really difficult choice as all 5 applicants are integral to our downtown fabric. However, we feel that Jonah Bank's suite of services best meet the banking needs of the DDA.

**DDA District Expansion** – Pete Laybourn contacted me with his proposal to expand the district to include Black Hills Energy and reinstate the TIF that existed until 2017. I am working with the City on that proposal now. Interestingly, the original boundary would have included that area. We also need to expand to include the northern most block of the Reed Avenue Rail Corridor. This expansion would address both simultaneously.

**WY/Art Coalition** – This event would result in 11 murals being painted in the brick-filled or plywood spaces in the alley on the Plains Hotel and 1612 Central Avenue Buildings. The budget for this project is \$3700 plus insurance and promotion. The proposal is included in your board packet. While we've received approval from the Wyoming Arts Council to utilize the grant for this project, the artists have decided to look for a different funder for the project. One of the requirements I asked for was a release so that we could include the artwork on our website, render it for a coloring page, etc. They declined. I've reached out for further conversation on this but they haven't responded.

**CARES Act Funding** – We still haven't received our grant funds. I sent Robin an email this morning to see if the City had received them yet. If not, I'll follow up with SLIB.

**History Under Foot** – Holly spent several hours at State Archives combing through the historical records to verify the information. Long story short, Suzy with State Archives states that much of what we had is unsubstantiated and what is substantiated is boring and not worth pursuing. I'm unsure how to move this project forward at this stage. If we can't substantiate it, we run the risk of putting inaccurate information in the sidewalks. Example:

*Calamity Jane visited the office of the Cheyenne Daily Leader to protest the article they'd written about her. The city editor looked up to see a scowling woman "clad in a cavalry uniform, with a bull-whip in her hand, a leer in her eye and gin in her breath." She cracked her whip on the ceiling and asked to see "the fighting editor." The city editor denied being the editor and left to find "the fighting editor."*

*Suzi: The Leader published a most likely fictionalized, or at the very least sensationalized, account of her visit to their office on July 7, 1877 where she demanded her appearance in Cheyenne be noted in the paper. There is probably a kernel of truth to the story, like that she stopped by the office to say hi, but it may have gone very differently than how it appeared in the paper.*

**Christmas Decoration Removal** – Black Hills sent 4 trucks to help remove the Christmas lights on 17<sup>th</sup>. Holly, Greg, and I assisted with this. Thanks to Black Hills, all of the lights were down in under 2 hours. Anthony, Breck, and I picked up all of the decorations fabricated by Rocking V Metalworks. They are being stored in Anthony's business's basement. Greg is in the process of replacing all the Christmas banners with the winter ones. He's hoping to have that completed this week. The wind has broken several banner arms.

**#WyoWednesday** – This month's campaign focused on New Year's Resolutions. It was a great opportunity to highlight businesses we haven't previously highlighted on our Facebook page including CrossFit Cheyenne, Gentle Touch Dental,

WYOMusic, and Avenues Physical Therapy. Phoenix Books & Music, The Prairie Pantry, and The Omelet House were also highlighted. The combined reach for this single day was 27,375.

**Staff Parking** – Since XESI moved its offices to Carlson to make room for Instant Attraction, 3 spaces became available in the alley adjacent to the DDA office. They spaces are \$25 each for a total of \$75. We have cancelled our parking permits with the City (\$135 for 3) and secured these 3 spaces. Not only will we now have adjacent parking but we will save \$60 per month for a total of \$720 per year. We did have to pay for parking signs to be fabricated. Holly worked with Trophy Creative and these came in this week.

**Culligan Contract** – The Culligan contract finally ended and Holly has cancelled it. We evaluated this contract back in May while looking for ways to save funds; however, it cost us more to buy the contract out than to let it run its term. This will save the DDA approximately \$11.66 to \$25.15 per month (bill varied based on number of water bottles used).

**DDA Sign** – Glen, Bruce, and I met to discuss the board’s decision not to proceed with construction of the sign. Based on the board’s consensus to limit the sign to \$10,000 or less, Glen is going to redesign the sign. Breck is currently in the process of obtaining bids from other contractors on the original design. I anticipate bringing this back to the board in February.

**Mayor’s Youth Council Initiative** - Haylee is working with the Mayor's Youth Council on a scavenger hunt downtown. Haylee also provided them with a list of businesses to contact for donations or to be a site for the scavenger hunt. This event is tentatively planned for March.

**Audit** – MHP presented the audit to City Council during a work session on January 13<sup>th</sup>. The DDA is discretely presented in the audit. This means that the DDA is a component unit of the City and within the report, DDA is shown in a separate column than the rest of the City. Some component units are “blended” which means that their financial information will not be in a separate column and will be reported within the City’s numbers. There were no audit findings associated with the DDA.

**History Over Head Banners**– We obtained a photo of Chief Byrd from State Archives and sent that to Shawndae. He’s still waiting for 2 more items from us. We were unable to find a photo (even from State Archives) for one of the historical figures. Holly found some information on Lola West as part of History Under Foot research that we can sub in and use.

**PayPal Account and Residential/Commercial Industrial Leases/For Sale Listing** –This issue remains outstanding. We haven’t had a lot of time to wrestle with it this month.

**Historic Preservation 101**– As a Main Street Certified Downtown, the DDA needs to have the staff and interested Board members attend HP101. We are working with SHPO and Main Street on scheduling this. Our goal is to make this available to the community in addition to the board and staff.

**Social Media/Website Spreadsheet**– We now have a record of the social media posts over the last fiscal year for the DDA. A copy of this is included in your board packet. A tally of the last column shows that we’ve mentioned, highlighted, or otherwise promoted businesses in one capacity or another 1,604 times.

**Creation of the 2021 DDA Social Media Guidelines Page** – Haylee has put together a Social Media Guidelines page which I’m currently reviewing so that we can distribute it. The DDA Social Media Guidelines are meant to provide clarity as to what the DDA can and cannot help with. The overall goal of the DDA's social media channels is to strike a balance between highlighting our downtown district while providing valuable content to our followers that will promote the mission of attracting our community to visit and support our downtown district.

**Social Media Analytics** - We are now #3 on the pages to watch. (When we began tracking this information, we were at #7). Now that we have passed the Chamber of Commerce account, the DDA page is now the leading economic development page for Cheyenne and Laramie County. Additionally, compared to the #1 page to watch (Downtown Rock

Springs), we triple their weekly growth rate and have 13x the engagement rate on a post-by-post basis (on average, we have about 2300 engagements with each of our posts compared to their average of 174 engagements per post).

**Pages to Watch** Create Post

Compare the performance of your Page and posts with similar Pages on Facebook.

Add Pages Reactions, Comments & Shares i

Page	Total Page Likes	From Last Week	Posts This Week	Engagement This Week
<b>1</b>  <b>Downtown Rock Springs</b>	11.3K <div style="width: 80%; background-color: #A9A9A9; height: 10px; display: inline-block;"></div>	▲ 0.2%	46	8K <div style="width: 70%; background-color: #C0392B; height: 10px; display: inline-block;"></div>
<b>2</b>  <b>Downtown Laramie Wyo...</b>	8.9K <div style="width: 75%; background-color: #A9A9A9; height: 10px; display: inline-block;"></div>	0%	5	842 <div style="width: 5%; background-color: #C0392B; height: 10px; display: inline-block;"></div>
<b>YOU</b> <b>3</b>  <b>Downtown Cheyenne</b>	7.5K <div style="width: 60%; background-color: #A9A9A9; height: 10px; display: inline-block;"></div>	▲ 0.6%	3	6.9K <div style="width: 90%; background-color: #C0392B; height: 10px; display: inline-block;"></div>
Keep up with the Pages you watch.		<span style="background-color: #0070C0; color: white; padding: 5px 15px; border-radius: 3px;">Get More Likes</span>		
<b>4</b>  <b>Greater Cheyenne Cha...</b>	6K <div style="width: 50%; background-color: #A9A9A9; height: 10px; display: inline-block;"></div>	▲ 0.2%	4	1.5K <div style="width: 25%; background-color: #C0392B; height: 10px; display: inline-block;"></div>
<b>5</b>  <b>Downtown Development...</b>	3.7K <div style="width: 30%; background-color: #A9A9A9; height: 10px; display: inline-block;"></div>	▼ 0.1%	0	0 <div style="width: 0%; background-color: #C0392B; height: 10px; display: inline-block;"></div>
<b>6</b>  <b>Main Street Douglas</b>	1.4K <div style="width: 15%; background-color: #A9A9A9; height: 10px; display: inline-block;"></div>	0%	1	0 <div style="width: 0%; background-color: #C0392B; height: 10px; display: inline-block;"></div>

**Creation of the 2021 DDA Event Timeline** - We have created a digital 2021 Calendar outlining all of the notable downtown community events as well as the general month-by-month timeline of when we plan to introduce our initiatives, events and other projects to the community. This calendar also includes all relevant deadlines. A copy is included in your board packet.

**Downtown Businesses Social Media Channels** - Haylee has begun a spreadsheet to track what social media channels each downtown business has. She is also able to cross check what social pages the Downtown Cheyenne channels are already following and following the ones that are not yet included. To date, we have identified 79 business accounts the DDA was not currently following on Instagram alone.

**2021 Visitor's Guide** - Haylee has started planning the 2021 Downtown Visitor's Guide. This project is expected to be completed by the end of April with an anticipated Mid-May release.

**Website Upgrades** - Haylee has been working on gathering information for a CIG/FIP Highlight of past DDA funded projects to include on our website. This project has an anticipated completion date of Mid-April.

**BUSINESSES OPENING/EXPANDING/CLOSING**

**Opened:** Alexis Drake (Expansion January 2021), the Louise Event Venue (JazMinn's Events & Décor) (1/15/21), Grandpa's Pizza (new ownership) (1/13/21), Adoration with AG Photography (Hynds Building) (1/13/21), Offer Cheyenne (12/20)

**Coming:** Ninja Playground (unknown), The Gathering (2/21), Ike's Bar and Grill (2021), Annex Gaming Café (2021)

**Still Looking to Expand/Currently Expanding:** Prairie House Home Goods (January 2021)

**Potential Business:** Potential Restaurant (Del Jimenez), Venezuelan Restaurant

**Closing/Closed:**

**Net Business Openings (since July 1st):** 14

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

**Reed Rail Corridor Project** – The Reed Avenue Rail Corridor Steering Committee met on December 4, 2020, to discuss Urban Use Overlay Zoning District Regulations; specifically, parking requirements, setbacks, pedestrian zones, bicycle parking, and industrial uses. A work session is planned for the Planning Commission in January and City Council in February. If all goes according to plan, it will be introduced in March and adopted in May of 2021.

**Lincolnway Placemaking Plan** – This is the project I would like to see advanced by the City for downtown on the next 6<sup>th</sup> Penny ballot. I've asked Tom Mason to update the costs since the plan was originally completed in 2015 (adopted January 2016). There is a 3 lane and 5 lane proposal. My preference is the 3 lane as it will substantially constrict and slow down traffic. It will also expand sidewalks (7') and pedestrian corridors and add bicycle lanes. Conversations indicate that with minor modifications we could go from parallel parking to diagonal parking.

**Artspace** – Brendan, Betsey, and I had a Zoom meeting with Wendy and Naomi from ArtSpace on December 1<sup>st</sup> to review a rough sketch of the layout and talk about financing mechanisms. Artspace will take this information to start putting together the pro-forma. We anticipate receiving the pro-forma by the first week in January.

**REV Development Hotel Development** – Last contact was June 18, 2020. Objective is to have shovels in the ground next spring. Project will need PACE and TIF to move forward.

**Project Phoenix** – On hold pending outcome of Phoenix 2.0.

**Project Phoenix 2.0** – We've had no communication from this project since June 18<sup>th</sup>. I've spoken with the building owner and a letter of intent was submitted. Conversations with the building owner and his agent indicate due diligence runs through March 31<sup>st</sup>. The original objective was to have shovels in the ground by early Spring so it will be interesting to see if that progresses.

**Project Onyx** – We received their proposal on September 28<sup>th</sup> and have provided them with feedback. The proposal hinges on \$3 million in utility upgrades (expanded power capacity) and the acquisition of the building. I don't anticipate this proposal moving forward as it stands now.

**Project Chupacabra** – This is a local, organic project that has enormous potential. We're working with them to shore up financing and accelerate development. This mixed-use proposal will have industrial, retail, and residential components.

**Residential Development** – Goodyear Building is considering adding apartments/condos above the existing building. Project Chupacabra has a residential component. Westby Edge will develop townhomes. Bell Building is progressing and will have substantial residential impacts. The Plains is offering extended stay rooms.

## MAIN STREET UPDATES

I submitted our June report on October 21<sup>st</sup> so we are current. Our September report has not been submitted and is late. I've been up to my eyeballs in reports and audits and I'm just behind.

## FIP/CIG Programs

At this point, no further FIP applications will be accepted until City funding is restored or the DDA becomes more financially stable. They have been removed from the website.

***2019 Outstanding FIP projects:***

- Pursuant to the award letter, FIP applicants have one year to complete their projects which was May 31, 2020.
- The platform for masonry work on the Mendocino has been set up. We anticipate that work will begin as the weather allows.
- On the Goodyear Building, we are still waiting for the parklet to be finished for final payout. The lot was occupied by a hail dent repair company and is now vacant.

***2020 FIP projects:***

OTEL Building – Work has begun to replace the windows. Edwards Construction has had the interior windows since 9/28. Ongoing work and hunting season has delayed the start. Greg repaired and readied the plaster on the windows jambs and prime painted them. Five-R Construction awaits re delivery of the windows for the 3rd and 4th levels.

***Outstanding CIG Projects:***

- Curb and gutter were completed at 1920 Thomes. We have not received an invoice for this project yet.
- The tree for the Bell Building is still outstanding.
- Trophy Creative was awarded a \$5,000 grant in November of 2020 for new signage.

***Potential CIG Projects:***

- Ikes Bar and Grill – 122 W. 6<sup>th</sup> Street (old Casa de Trujillo restaurant), outdoor dining patio
- Instant Attraction Women’s Boutique – Applied and then withdrew to look for more cost-effective options.
- Hawthorn Tree – 112 E. 17<sup>th</sup> Street, exterior signage
- JazMinn’s Events & Décor – 110 E. 17<sup>th</sup> Street (old Reformation Dance studio), new sign face or potentially a new sign
- 309-311 W. 18<sup>th</sup> Street – New Awnings, Parking Lot Resurfacing, Landscaping