

Wyoming Business Council Sample Business Ready Community (BRC) Projects

Actual vs. potential/estimated returns

Project Title: Phoslock Environmental Technologies

- Applicant: Casper-Natrona County Economic Development JPB
- Agent of the Applicant: Advance Casper
- Type: Business Committed
- Committed Business: Phoslock Environmental Technologies
- SLIB Approved: 4/6/2023
- Grant Amount: \$600,000
- Loan Amount: \$0
- Cash Match: \$453,010
- Other Contribution: \$0
- Est. Total Cost: \$1,050,000

More Information: The local Joint Powers Board (JPB) applied for this project so it could purchase a building for Phoslock to lease in an effort to recruit them to Casper. After approval and the purchase of the building was completed, Phoslock ran into financial challenges and could no longer move the business to Wyoming. Those challenges stemmed from their manufacturing facility in China which they were wanting to move away from and pressure that was placed on them from that move. The building was still a publicly owned asset, and the JPB found a local business looking to expand and needing a space that this newly purchased building could fulfill. American RotoMolding A.R.M. moved in and proceeded with their expansion plans, currently leasing the building from the JPB.

Estimated/Potential Benefits: BRC funds will recapture 25% of the grant amount (\$150,000) once the property is sold, and the community will recapture \$88,000 in lease payments over five years and \$900,000 upon facility sale.

- 25 jobs to be created at \$29.29/hour
- \$5,000,000 CAPEX
- ROI: - \$1,109,762 annual impact (direct + indirect)

Actual Benefits: The JPB will report on this project until 2030, with the first report due May 2026. To date, this project has enabled a local Casper Start-Up Challenge winner to manufacture their product, which has produced three new jobs for that company. They are bringing oil and gas industry manufacturing back to Natrona County and have invested an additional \$300,000 into building improvements. Those improvements include electrical, gas lines, office space, fire alarm systems, and a new garage door.

Project Title: Bar Nunn Community Center and Town Hall

- Applicant: Town of Bar Nunn
- Agent of the Applicant: N/A
- Type: Community Project
- Committed Business: N/A
- SLIB Approved: 2/2/2023
- Grant Amount: \$500,000
- Loan Amount: \$0
- Cash Match: \$62,225
- Other Contribution: \$7,603,778
- Est. Total Cost: \$8,103,778

More Information: While the Bar Nunn Community Center was ultimately approved by the State Loan and Investment Board (SLIB), the WBC board did not recommend the project. The WBC board recognized the value of the center to residents; however, the decision was based on the WBC's core mission: driving measurable economic growth. Because the project lacked a direct link to job creation or increased wages, the board determined it fell outside the specific scope of the state's economic development strategy.

Estimated/Potential Benefits: The community center will provide flexible gathering space with a kitchen for community events, various youth programs, and a space for recreation. The recreation portion of the building will include a large gymnasium, walking track and viewing area, and a weight/cardio room. At that time, there were no indoor recreation spaces in the town.

Bar Nunn identified the need for a community/recreational center in both a 2008 and 2018 community plan. The town diligently saved and prepared for this project since it was first identified and contributed over \$7 million in matching funds. The town also worked with outside groups to offer various youth and after-school programs. Additionally, the town plans to host many of its future events in the new facility. Bar Nunn anticipates the following:

- Five youth programs by 2028
- Four community events each year (currently held at the Fire Hall)
- 10 space rentals each year
- Raise \$100,000 through sponsorships of events and programs

Actual Benefits: Not yet fully realized; reporting required through 2031. Construction is complete, and the town will implement membership fees for the fitness room and after-hours access to the gymnasium by May 31, 2026. The town is also considering hiring four new positions (two janitorial staff members, a part-time administrative assistant, and an IT Specialist). Depending on need, those positions may be created and filled by June 30, 2026.

Project Title: Meeteetse JPB Rec District Community Center

- Applicant: Meeteetse Community Facilities Joint Powers Board
- Agent of the Applicant: N/A
- Type: Community Project
- Committed Business: N/A
- SLIB Approved: 2/2/2023
- Grant Amount: \$750,000
- Loan Amount: \$0
- Cash Match: \$195,965
- Other Contribution: \$356,750
- Est. Total Cost: \$1,302,750

More Information: The WBC did not recommend the Meeteetse Community Center due to a lack of evidence that the facility would drive measurable economic growth. Additionally, the project's financial plan raised concerns regarding long-term operations and maintenance. While the WBC board found the project did not meet the agency's specific economic development criteria, the project was subsequently approved by the State Loan and Investment Board (SLIB).

Estimated/Potential Benefits: Estimated benefits were primarily a ripple effect of subsequent community impact spurred by this development, which are difficult to quantify.

Actual Benefits: Since 2021, the Meeteetse Community Center has served as a strategic catalyst for downtown revitalization, sparking new home construction and infilling vacant housing. The project has directly facilitated four new business starts – including the Meeteetse Meat Company in a formerly vacant storefront – and established a downtown business incubator. Beyond retail growth, the project launched critical "human infrastructure" through toddler childcare services and supported the expansion of Gottsche Rehab & Wellness.

The project's success has leveraged \$60,000 in additional private investment for Phase 3 expansion from partners like Black Hills Energy and the Baker Foundation. Current operational highlights include:

- **Economic Impact:** \$35,724 in membership revenue and a hub for tourism-stimulating events.
- **Community Vitality:** 128 active memberships and 78 youth served through sports, daycare, and after-school programs.
- **Civic Utility:** A primary venue for regional elections, public hearings, and community health screenings.

Project Title: Sinclair Historic Theatre Facade

- Applicant: Town of Sinclair
- Agent of the Applicant: N/A
- Type: Community Project
- Committed Business: N/A
- SLIB Approved: 6/2/2022
- Grant Amount: \$240,000
- Loan Amount: \$0
- Cash Match: \$0
- Other Contribution: \$60,000
- Est. Total Cost: \$300,000

More Information: The restoration of the Sinclair/Parco Historic Theatre began with a 2016 WBC-funded feasibility study, which successfully catalyzed years of local fundraising and interior rehabilitation. This specific grant served as the critical "final mile" investment, providing the remaining capital necessary to finish the historic exterior after other resources were exhausted. Strategically positioned along the I-80 corridor, the completed theater now functions as a regional anchor for tourism and commerce, fulfilling a long-term plan to transform this 1924 landmark into a sustainable driver of economic activity for the Lincoln Highway area.

Estimated/Potential Benefits: This project offered high fiscal leverage (local-to-state funds ratio), with the BRC investment representing only 11% of the total project cost. By bridging the final funding gap, the state advanced the Wyoming Economic Development Strategy to "Foster a culture of regional connectedness among communities," through the cultivation of a regional arts ecosystem along the I-80 corridor. This investment strengthened connectivity between neighboring communities and empowered local leaders to sustainably develop Sinclair's unique historic assets as a driver for long-term economic growth.

Actual Benefits: The Sinclair Historic Theatre serves as a versatile regional hub for movies, concerts, and comedy shows, maintaining strong attendance and offering a unique venue for private events like weddings. This revitalization effort works in tandem with the town's new park amphitheater, which hosts community-wide events like Sinclair Days to drive local engagement. Reporting on the project's continued impact and facility utilization will remain active through 2027.

Project Title: Sheridan High Tech Park Phase II Study

- Applicant: Sheridan Economic & Educational Development Authority JPB
- Agent of the Applicant: N/A
- Type: BRC Planning
- Committed Business: N/A
- SLIB Approved: 4/7/2022
- Grant Amount: \$20,000
- Loan Amount: \$0
- Cash Match: \$4,865
- Other Contribution: \$0
- Est. Total Cost: \$26,500

More Information: This planning grant was designed to identify the optimal location for a new business park, building on the success of the city's existing high-tech park currently home to Weatherby, Kennon Products, and Vacutech. Based on the high occupancy and proven track record of the original park in driving light manufacturing jobs, the WBC board recommended funding this study to determine the most strategic site for expanding the region's industrial capacity.

Estimated/Potential Benefits: Sheridan Economic & Educational Development Authority (SEEDA) requested the planning grant to evaluate three to four potential sites for a continuation of the High-Tech Park concept. The first phase of the Sheridan High-Tech Park has been one of the community's most successful economic development efforts. The 43.5-acre park currently contains three businesses that employ approximately 300 residents in light manufacturing and R&D occupations.

Actual Benefits: A site next to the High-Tech Park (Phase I) was selected. A BRC grant for the construction of the High-Tech Park Phase II (\$4,426,000) was applied for, approved in 2024, and is currently under construction.

Project Title: Maven Headquarters Grant/Loan

- Applicant: City of Lander
- Agent of the Applicant: Lander Economic Development Association (LEDA)
- Type: Business Committed
- Committed Business: Maven Optics
- SLIB Approved: 4/8/2021
- Grant Amount: \$3,000,000
- Loan Amount: \$3,000,000
- Cash Match: \$286,741
- Other Contribution: \$1,200,000
- Est. Total Cost: \$6,871,167

More Information: Maven was a business retention and expansion (BRE) project that was already headquartered in Lander, established in 2013 by partners Brendon Weaver, Cade Maestas, and Mike Lilygren.

Estimated/Potential Benefits: This project was estimated to create 23 jobs at an average wage of \$33.04 per hour, generating a total annual economic impact of \$1,380,569. Maven contributed \$633,933 in cash and in-kind matches, with an additional anticipated capital expenditure of \$400,000 to \$800,000 in equipment. Following loan repayment, the project structure ensures long-term sustainability for state and local funds: \$752,531 (25% of net revenue) will be returned to the state BRC fund, while the remaining \$2,257,592 will be recaptured by the local economic development entity to reinvest in future regional projects. ROI = \$1,380,569 annual economic impact (direct + indirect).

Actual Benefits: At the end of 2024, Maven had created 23 jobs at a median wage of approximately \$28/hour. This early data shows that they are ahead of schedule on number of employees hired and on track with wages to hit that estimated goal by the end of 2027. Reporting is required through 2027.

Project Title: Red Grade Trails Project

- Applicant: Sheridan County
- Agent of the Applicant: N/A
- Type: Community Project
- Committed Business: N/A
- SLIB Approved: 10/1/2020
- Grant Amount: \$500,000
- Loan Amount: \$0
- Cash Match: \$103,051
- Other Contribution: \$0
- Est. Total Cost: \$600,000

More Information: This project originated from direct feedback from local businesses in Sheridan's emerging light manufacturing cluster regarding the challenges of recruiting and retaining young talent. Industry leaders identified a lack of outdoor amenities as a primary barrier to workforce growth, leading the WBC to support the Red Grade Trails as a strategic solution for talent attraction. Since its inception, the trail system has successfully expanded, serving as a key quality-of-life asset that strengthens the recruitment efforts of the region's expanding manufacturing sector.

Estimated/Potential Benefits: This project aligns well with the WBC strategy by adding value to Wyoming's core industries of tourism and outdoor recreation, leveraging them to attract workforce. Many businesses in the area commented that their employees are attracted to living and working in the community partly because of the outdoor recreation amenities available.

Actual Benefits: As of 2024, 11 miles of trails have been developed, three parking lots created with 35 additional parking spaces to allow ease of access to the area. They have tracked 21,069 additional trail users, 18.5 volunteer hours, and raised \$122,000 in additional private investment which has helped create one new job at \$15/hour. Reporting will continue through 2027.

Project Title: Kennon High Tech Business Park Project Grant/Loan

- Applicant: Sheridan Economic & Educational Development Authority JPB
- Agent of the Applicant: N/A
- Type: Business Committed
- Committed Business: Kennon Products
- SLIB Approved: 1/17/2019
- Grant Amount: \$2,850,000
- Loan Amount: \$1,510,761
- Cash Match: \$14,772
- Other Contribution: \$4,117,800
- Est. Total Cost: \$6,967,800

More Information: SEEDA was awarded a \$2,850,000 Business Committed grant and a \$1,510,761 BRC loan for the construction of a manufacturing facility, offices and parking lot on approximately four acres in the Sheridan High Tech Gateway Subdivision. The new facility allowed Kennon Products, Inc. to expand and increase its capacity to deliver new products to clients and take advantage of emerging opportunities.

Estimated/Potential Benefits: This project was projected to create 39 full-time jobs at a median wage of \$27.46 per hour, featuring comprehensive benefit packages and participation in the company's Employee Stock Ownership Program (ESOP). The expansion, supported by over \$1.3 million in private capital expenditures for equipment and fixtures, significantly increased the company's capacity to compete for national contracts. Rigorous fiscal analysis via the RPASS report confirmed the project's strong ROI, yielding a Net Present Value of \$14,762,948, an Internal Rate of Return (IRR) of 21%, and a rapid payback period of 6.43 years.

Actual Benefits: As of the final report at the end of 2024, Kennon continues to thrive in its facility with 64 full-time employees – a 28% increase since 2018 – plus several active vacancies. As an employee-owned company, Kennon remains a cornerstone of the Sheridan community and a primary example of successful local business expansion, with private capital expenditures exceeding \$1.5 million. The company contributes to statewide economic resiliency by competing in national markets and leveraging the federal SBIR program for advanced research and development, while the CEO frequently hosts tours for state leadership to showcase the impact of advanced manufacturing in Wyoming.

Project Title: Project Enterprise – Corporate Headquarters and Manufacturing Relocation

- Applicant: Sheridan Economic & Educational Development Authority JPB
- Agent of the Applicant: N/A
- Type: Business Committed
- Committed Business: Weatherby, Inc.
- SLIB Approved: 1/18/2018
- Grant Amount: \$12,586,572
- Loan Amount: \$0
- Cash Match: \$322,874
- Other Contribution: 1,960,200 Land Match
- Est. Total Cost: \$14,875,164

More Information: The relocation of Weatherby's headquarters and manufacturing to Sheridan was the culmination of a decades-long relationship-building effort by the Wyoming Business Council. While the company first considered Wyoming in the 1990s, consistent engagement at the annual SHOT Show – an event the WBC has attended for nearly 30 years – eventually prompted Weatherby to reach out in 2016 to begin their exit from California. Over the following two years, the WBC led a competitive attraction effort against Idaho, coordinating community proposals, hosting Governor-led meetings, and facilitating site visits that ultimately secured Sheridan as the preferred location. This successful recruitment was officially announced at the 2018 SHOT Show, marking a significant victory for Wyoming's advanced manufacturing sector.

Estimated/Potential Benefits: This project was projected to relocate 20 jobs to Wyoming and create an additional 50 to 70 new positions, supporting an annual payroll exceeding \$5,000,000. Supported by over \$4,000,000 in private capital expenditure (half in moving expenses), a 20-year economic impact analysis estimated the project would generate \$680 million in total industrial output (GDP increase) and over \$7.4 million in additional state and local tax revenue. Beyond direct fiscal returns, the expansion was expected to drive \$164 million in total supported payroll and \$124 million in household spending, while necessitating over 127,000 square feet of additional office space and contributing to community growth through increased population and K-12 enrollment.

Actual Benefits: Since relocating to Wyoming, Weatherby has created 128 new jobs at an average wage of \$22.18 per hour, significantly exceeding original employment projections. The company contributed \$2,000,000 at the onset of the project in moving expenses. Additionally, during the reporting period, the company demonstrated its long-term commitment to the state through \$1.1 million in private capital investment for new manufacturing equipment and an additional \$75,000 dedicated to facility maintenance and repairs.

Project Title: David Street Station Phase IV (Casper Downtown Public Plaza) Project

- Applicant: Casper-Natrona Co Economic Development JPB
- Agent of the Applicant: Casper Downtown Development Authority
- Type: Community Project
- Committed Business: N/A
- SLIB Approved: 4/6/2017
- Grant Amount: \$500,000
- Loan Amount: \$0
- Cash Match: \$565,000
- Other Contribution: \$0
- Est. Total Cost: \$1,065,000

More Information: Years after its completion, David Street Station has proven to be a transformative investment for downtown Casper, serving as a primary catalyst for regional economic growth and high-density development. The surge in year-round foot traffic has made the surrounding area a premier location for private investment, sparking the adaptive reuse of historic buildings into thriving breweries, coffee shops, and retail spaces. In conjunction with BRC-funded infrastructure improvements in Midwest, the project has unlocked significant real estate expansion, including new townhomes, a \$40 million multi-family residential complex, and a planned full-service hotel, effectively turning a former vacant space into a vibrant urban core.

Estimated/Potential Benefits: This project was designed as a multi-phase revitalization effort to bridge Casper's downtown core with the Old Yellowstone District, transforming a former blighted site into a premier year-round gathering space capable of hosting over 200 annual events. Spanning from property acquisition and demolition in Phase I to the final construction of a permanent anchor building in Phase IV, the project has served as a powerful economic engine, already sparking nearly \$30 million in private investment. This surge in capital has fueled extensive renovations of historic assets – including the Petroleum Building, The Lyric, and various downtown eateries – while creating a vibrant hub that attracts businesses and supports up to 20 part-time event staff.

Actual Benefits:

- \$50 million in private investment toward this project over the years
- Supporting approximately 25 businesses are in downtown Casper
- Total Visitors/Year: 450,000
- Events/Year: 200
- Increase in Sales Tax: \$5,000,000
- Jobs Created: 1 job at \$19.23/hour

Project Title: HIVIZ Shooting Solutions Phase 2

- Applicant: City of Laramie
- Agent of the Applicant: Laramie Chamber Business Alliance (LCBA)
- Type: Business Committed
- Committed Business: HIVIZ Shooting Solutions
- SLIB Approved: 1/19/2017
- Grant Amount: \$3,000,000
- Loan Amount: \$0
- Cash Match: \$331,519
- Other Contribution: \$0
- Est. Total Cost: \$3,331,519

More Information: After Phase I was approved in 2013, HIVIZ experienced more rapid growth than initially projected, quickly exceeding the capacity of its original facility. The building, completed in 2015, was supported by a \$2.4 million BRC grant and a \$519,477 BRC loan, but the company's accelerated expansion necessitated further planning for increased industrial space.

Estimated/Potential Benefits: The first phase of the HIVIZ project proposed creating 20 new positions. As of the 2016 annual project report, the company had already created 42 jobs. Company officials estimated an additional 50 jobs to be created by 2018 and 36 more jobs by 2020 for a total of 128 positions at HIVIZ. They also anticipated purchasing approximately \$4 million in equipment over five years.

Actual Benefits: Since 2023, HIVIZ has sustained 49 total employees with a competitive median salary range of \$43,253 to \$86,637 while maintaining an average annual equipment investment of approximately \$1 million. The company's focus on R&D yielded four new patents and two trademarks in 2024, signaling a projected surge in production and the planned expansion of their product development and innovation department. To support this growth, HIVIZ has engaged specialized consultants to oversee the addition of several new technical positions, further cementing their role as a leader in regional advanced manufacturing.

Project Title: High-Tech Business Park

- Applicant: City of Sheridan
- Agent of the Applicant: N/A
- Type: Community Readiness
- Committed Business: None
- SLIB Approved: 6/17/2010
- Grant Amount: \$2,589,913
- Loan Amount: \$0
- Cash Match: \$0
- Other Contribution: \$1,537,111
- Est. Total Cost: \$4,127,024

More Information: The selection of Sheridan for the Weatherby relocation was the direct result of proactive long-term planning, as this business park was approved and fully prepared eight years prior to the recruitment win. This readiness ensured that once the anchor tenant was secured, development within the park accelerated rapidly, transforming the site into a hub for high-tech industry. The success of this "ready-to-recruit" strategy has now led to the development of a second high-tech park, replicating the model of advance preparation to drive future economic expansion.

Estimated/Potential Benefits: This project provided larger sites for high-tech business development which could accommodate buildings between 35,000-60,000 square feet. In 2008, a strategy for revitalization of the North Main area of Sheridan was developed with one of the goals being business park creation. A 2010 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)-funded conceptual plan for the high-tech park found the proposed location to be most viable.

Actual Benefits: The Sheridan High-Tech Park has proven to be a powerhouse for regional growth, successfully attracting anchor tenants like Vacutech, Kennon, and Weatherby following its development. As of 2025, the park supports 433 high-value jobs and has leveraged more than \$7.3 million in additional private investment. This concentration of industry leaders demonstrates the high return on investment for pre-permitted, "ready-to-recruit" business parks in driving long-term employment and capital infusion into Wyoming communities.

Project Title: Microsoft Expansion MDCCR Project

- Applicant: Laramie County
- Agent of the Applicant: N/A
- Type: Managed Data Center Cost Reduction (MDCCR)
- Committed Business: Microsoft
- SLIB Approved: 6/17/2010
- Grant Amount: \$2,250,000
- Loan Amount: \$0
- Cash Match: \$68,638,781
- Other Contribution: \$0
- Est. Total Cost: \$71,138,781

More Information: Laramie County received a \$2.25 million Managed Data Center Cost Reduction (MDCCR) grant for the expansion of Microsoft's Laramie County facilities. In 2012, Laramie County received an additional \$5 million MDCCR grant and a \$5 million Governor's Data Center Recruitment grant to facilitate the successful recruitment of Microsoft Corporation. The Governor's Data Center Recruitment grant funds are applied to infrastructure to make the site "shovel ready" for Microsoft Corporation inclusive of soil testing, site preparation and grading, access road, water and sewer work, and fiber installation. The expansion includes the development of additional facilities adjacent to the first phase of development. The project includes the development of an 117,000 square-foot site that will house a series of data pods.

This second project includes the construction of a \$66.5 million expansion adjacent to their current facility and will create an additional nine positions. The total investment of all components of the initial project and this proposed expansion will be a minimum of \$178.5 million with annual server upgrade purchases of at least \$4 million.

This component of the BRC program provides reduction of the utility costs for electrical and/or broadband for the recruitment and growth of managed data centers of sufficient redundancy.

Estimated/Potential Benefits: The total request for this project was \$2,250,000 with a total match for the project of \$68,638,781. Minimum total payroll totals \$2,138,781 over three years, and minimum capital investment by Microsoft will be \$66.5 million over the first three years. The \$66.5 million in capital investment to build out the 117,000 square foot facility does not include the \$2 million anticipated annual server upgrades that will take place. Grant funds will be disbursed quarterly as the performance measures of payroll and capital expenditures are met by the business over a three-year period.

Actual Benefits: As of 2018, Microsoft has employed between 55 to 65 employees, with a private investment of \$68,638,781.