

URA ANNUAL REPORT 2020





CHAIRWOMAN'S STATEMENT

Downtown Rock Springs is the “Home of Rock Springs Soul.” It exudes warmth and energy and that was more evident in 2020 than ever. Despite the pandemic, we saw the opening of 10 new businesses in Downtown. We also saw our existing businesses pivot and connect with customers and the community in new ways. We saw our community rally to support each other and accomplished some long-term goals including a grant for phase 1 work on the historic First Security Bank building. We were blessed to receive 10 grants throughout the year as well. This annual report will feature some of the highlights from 2020. Despite the challenges, we’re proud of our accomplishments. The year certainly had its challenges but we weathered the storm and are optimistic for a positive 2021.

MARIA MORTENSEN

*Rock Springs Main Street/URA
Chairwoman*

Rock Springs Main Street/URA Board of Directors

- Stacy Jones - Vice-Chairwoman
- Gloria Hutton - Treasurer
- Sue Lozier - Secretary
- Kevin Harper
- Mike Hulen
- Eric Phillips
- Rob Zotti - Council Liaison



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

\$169,025

Private Investment in
Downtown
Rock Springs



10

New Businesses
Opened in 2020



- Elevate Your Health Vibe
- Huckers
- J&M Autosport
- Modern Massage
- New York Life
- Rebel and Roots Boutique
- Save the Date Flower and Wedding Studio
- Society Insurance Network/Casey Kuckert Insurance
- Studio Designs Floral
- Zoobecks

One of our foremost goals is to expand the business base in Downtown Rock Springs and grow the retail mix. To that end, we introduced a new program in 2020 - Project Pop Up.

A Pop-Up Shop is a short-term retail store that offers new, unique, local or specialized products or services. Project Pop Up was designed to fill empty storefronts and prospect new, long-term businesses. It gave one entrepreneur an opportunity start a pop up for the holiday season with a minimal investment with the goal of long-term occupancy after program completion.

Our first recipient was Becca Smith with Rebel and Roots Boutique.

"Project Pop Up was and is a great opportunity for anyone wanting to start a new, small business especially if they're not sure about the process," Smith said.

"It was a blessing to have Project Pop Up. I don't know if I would have had the courage to start the small business without it," Smith added.



5.5

Net Full-Time
Jobs Created



COVID-RELATED INITIATIVES

Without a doubt, Covid changed the way everyone did business and has had lasting impacts. Much of our work was devoted to helping merchants navigate the mandates and funding opportunities. To that end, we launched several new initiatives to help:

- Curbside Challenge
- Gift card promotions
- Support local BINGO
- Personal shopping promotions
- Virtual SBA Loan application workshop with RSNB Bank
- Virtual Christmas shopping
- Surveys about retail, restaurants, events and entertainment
- COVID 19 Awareness certification for URA staff



PUBLIC ART

Furthering our Arts and Culture Transformation Strategy (and Rock Springs' presence on a state-wide level), the Wyoming Arts Alliance selected Rock Springs as one of three pilot communities for their professional development program. We kicked off the program in the spring of 2020.

We also completed several public art projects including:

- Raising funds to replicate the "Disarming" mural destroyed in the First Security Bank restoration. The replication will be placed in the spring of 2021.
- Working with Rocky Mountain Power, Dominion Energy and Greene's Welding, we installed the Peace I sculpture formerly located near the Chamber of Commerce. The sculpture was repainted and is now located at the corner of M and North Front Streets
- Launched a monthly art stroll - 2nd Saturdays
- A third round of new artwork was hung in the Art Underground Gallery, now showcasing 23 local art pieces
- Contracted with 3 local artists to dress up utility boxes around Downtown Rock Springs via our Creative Cover-ups program
- Developed a free mobile app for the Historic Walking Tour



*"This place
definitely tops the
list of random
places to find street
art."*

@mienlasa
(instagram)



GRANTS

- Wyoming Business Council Grant - 1st Security Bank
- State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) - 1st Security Bank
- Wyoming Main Street - Grow Wall
- National Main Street - National Park Service Main Street Façade Improvement Grant Program
- Wyoming Main Street - Placemaking Grant
- Wyoming Arts Council - Broadway Theater performances
- Endurance Fund Grant - Covid related funding
- Dominion Energy - Downtown Mural Project
- Wyoming Cultural Trust Fund - Brown Bag Concert Series
- Rocky Mountain Power Foundation - Broadway Theater performances



PROMOTIONS

Promotions position Downtown Rock Springs as the center of our community and the hub of economic activity, while creating a positive image that showcases Rock Springs' unique character.

One of our favorite promotions from 2020 was the Mayor's Downtown Challenge. Mayor Kaumo invited locals and visitors to take a pledge to support local businesses at least five times during the holiday season by purchasing gifts, dining, or participating in holiday events in Downtown Rock Springs.

We also hosted our traditional Restaurant Week, although it was delayed due to Covid.



We redesigned our website and created a website specifically for the Broadway Theater - BroadwayRS.com. The new website has a blog feature we've used extensively over the past year. In recognition of Pride Month, a special blog post was created to showcase our welcoming nature to members of the LGBTQ+ community.

Working with the Sweetwater County Master Gardeners, we installed a Grow Wall which features a vertical, hydroponic garden.

And finally we were once again accredited by the National Main Street Program.

The logo for Downtown Rock Springs features the word "DOWNTOWN" in white capital letters on a dark background, with "Rock Springs" in a large, stylized font below it.