





# **DOWNTOWN** Rock Springs

## *2014 Annual Report*

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# DOWNTOWN Rock Springs


## **Who is the Rock Springs URA/Main Street?**

The Urban Renewal Agency (URA) was established in 2005 by the City of Rock Springs in order to revitalize, redevelop and conserve the slum and blighted areas of the Urban Renewal District. The Urban Renewal District encompasses the downtown central business district and the east entrance to the City of Rock Springs.

The URA is considered a department within the city and headed by a manager who also facilitates the Rock Springs Main Street program with the assistance of additional city staff. The agency depends on countless volunteer hours of service on four standing committees: Promotions, Design, Economic Restructuring and Organization.

Along with volunteers, the URA has partnered with the City of Rock Springs, the Downtown Merchants, Chamber of Commerce, Wyoming Business Council, Sweetwater School District Number 1, Community Fine Arts Center, Historical Museum Board, City Recreation Board, City of Rock Springs Parks and Recreation department, Library Board, Sweetwater Travel and Tourism, professional individuals, property owners and all appropriate stakeholders in the City of Rock Springs community. Every one of these partnerships plays a vital role in helping accomplish projects within the URA plan.

The City of Rock Springs Urban Renewal Agency has a responsibility to ensure that the Urban Renewal District is strengthened and that it remains a vital part of the community. Public consensus and involvement remains a key ingredient for the success of this implementation, and Rock Springs has demonstrated an excellent track record in volunteerism and community spirit. The URA will continue to carry out the renewal plan to improve the overall aesthetics and life of the Urban Renewal District area as well as the City of Rock Springs





## **Our Mission**

Fostering the economic and social vitality of downtown while preserving our heritage.

## **Our Vision**

Downtown will be an attractive, vibrant destination for residents and visitors.

## **The Four Point Approach**

Working within the Main Street Four Point Approach, we created and coordinate with the following volunteer driven committees:

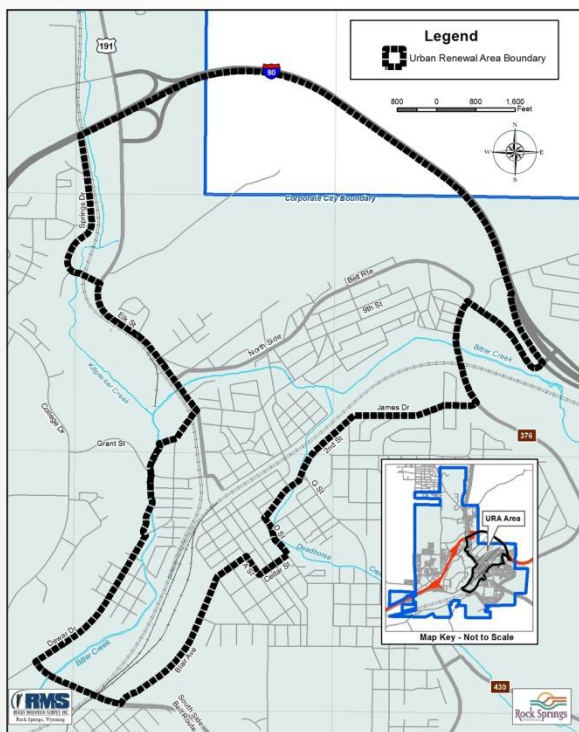
- Organization Committee - The Organization Committee is charged with bringing resources, both manpower and financial, into the program.
- Through fundraising initiatives, outreach, communication and events, the Organization Committee acts as the human resources arm of Main Street.
- Design Committee - The Design Committee works to make visual improvements to downtown through good design compatible with historic features. The Design Committee reviews all Façade Assistance and Paint Assistance Grant applications, making recommendations to the Main Street board for approval of funding.
- Economic Restructuring Committee – Our Economic Restructuring Committee is the newest to our line-up and helps existing businesses grow and expand, recruits new businesses into the district and revitalizes underutilized properties.
- Promotions Committee – The Promotions Committee is charged with enhancing the image and prospects of the downtown's unique social, economic and cultural character through special events and marketing campaigns.



## Our Services

We offer the following services, free of charge to any building or business owner in the Urban Renewal area

- Business coaching and advice
- Assist businesses in finding a location (to rent or purchase)
- Marketing Coaching
- Publicity through traditional and nontraditional marketing channels
- Assistance hosting a special event or promotion
- Façade Improvement Grants
- Paint Grants
- Rental Assistance Grants
- Website directory listing
- Historic Architecture Assistance Fund – Services of an Historic Architect
- Business Workshops and Seminars
- Advertisements for Buildings for Sale
- Advertisements for Job Openings
- Referrals to Wyoming Small Business Development Center, Wyoming Business Council and Wyoming Women's Business Council
- Events that Draw Shoppers Downtown
- A Point of Contact and Cheerleader for All of Downtown
- Projects that Improve the Look and Feel of the District



## Our Board of Directors

- Andrew K Varley, CPA,  
Board Chairman
- Stacy Jones, Vice-Chairman
- Brent Williams
- Gloria Hutton
- Cheryl Confer
- Kevin Harper
- Maria Mortensen
- Glennise Wendorf, City  
Council Liaison



## **Our Reinvestment Statistics**

- 18 renovations projects were completed Downtown in 2014 totaling over \$4 million
- 11 new businesses opened Downtown creating 14 full-time jobs and 8 part-time jobs
- Volunteers contributed over 2,500 hours, valued at more than \$56,000
- During 2014, Wyoming Main Street reported that for every dollar spent by the Rock Springs Main Street/URA, another \$3.60 was reinvested downtown by businesses, building owners, non-profits and the City of Rock Springs.

## **Our accomplishments in 2014:**

- Released a new Downtown Rock Springs logo
- Developed a new website for Downtown Rock Springs including a calendar of events, business directory, resource listing and inventory of available properties in the district
- Created an extensive downtown merchant database and landlord/owner database
- Implemented Volgistics software for volunteer management and scheduling
- Implemented a "Feature Friday" program on Facebook to highlight downtown businesses
- Received the quarterly "Awesome Main Street Program Award" for our Downtown Dan and Feature Friday promotions from Wyoming Main Street (January 2014)
- Hosted our first annual Kentucky Derby Party, netting nearly \$20,000 to continue our programs and projects
- Hosted our first annual Downtown Chocolate Stroll
- Published a monthly newsletter to keep downtown merchants and volunteers aware of our activities
- Started a "Volunteer of the Month" recognition and award program as well as a "Volunteer of Year" award and hosted a volunteer reception
- Completed the Bunning Park and 1st Security Bank feasibility studies
- Awarded the contract for the Bunning Freight Station building with work nearly completed
- Received a \$20,000 grant from the Wyoming Main Street program to make improvements to Bank Court
- Hosted a "Downtown Burger Challenge" during May to boost dining in Downtown Rock Springs. Over 125 participants completed the challenge.
- Partnered with the owners of the former Sweet Briar's building and CJ's Signs to cover the windows on the building and enhance the appearance of that area
- Rods and Rails Car Show topped 100 entries for the first time
- Sweetwater Blues and Brews received sponsor contributions of \$14,500 and grossed over \$40,000 with attendance topping 1,300
- Received recognition from the Wyoming Main Street program for Event of the Year (Downtown Burger Challenge) and Entrepreneur of the Year (Carlo Harryman and SweetwaterNOW)
- Conducted our Wyoming Main Street bi-annual review

- Involved high school students in our community via the first annual Tiger Town Bash
- Worked with the Rock Springs Community Connections program and Boys and Girls Club of Sweetwater County to instill a sense of volunteerism in our youth
- Held a strategic planning session to develop annual goals and projects
- Hosted a Small Business Saturday promotion on November 29, developing a newspaper insert to highlight downtown merchants. The insert involved 30 participating merchants and 20,000 pieces were printed and distributed throughout Sweetwater County
- Contributed \$55,000 to assist with the exterior restoration of the Freight Station building
- Awarded 9 grants to downtown merchants totaling just under \$29,000
- Implemented a Rental Assistance Program to help infuse Downtown's retail mix, based on the DDI report.
- Completed our first downtown mural on the "pink building" at the top of the underpass.
- Developed Christmas promotions designed to heighten downtown awareness and increase downtown sales. Promotions included:
  - o Santa Saturdays – Hosting Santa in the Historic Train Depot each Saturday between Thanksgiving and Christmas
  - o Singing in the Season – Mini-concerts hosted each Saturday between Thanksgiving and Christmas in Bank Court
  - o Carriage Rides downtown on November 29
  - o Mayor Tree Lighting moved to "Cannon Park"
  - o Hosted our first "A Holiday Affair" vendor and craft fair at the Community Center

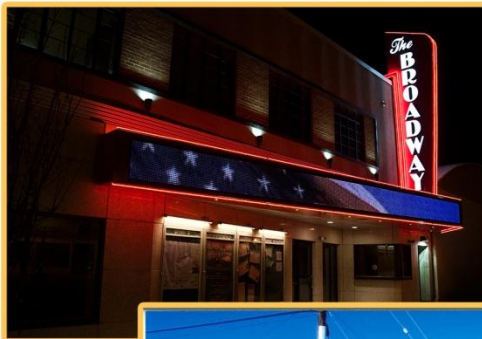


## Our Accomplishments: A 10-Year Overview

- Demolition and removal of Den's Petrified Critters
- Demolition and removal of the abandoned homes on McClelland Street
- Demolition and removal of the Get and Go Car Wash on Elk Street, now parking for Bunning Park
- Renovation of the Broadway Theater
- Receipt of grants for the Broadway Theater, Bunning Park, Freight Station and First Security Bank Building
- Establishment of a 501 (c)(3) to assist with downtown renovation projects – Rock Springs Renewal Fun



- Receipt of Historic Architectural Assistance Funds (HAAF) for:
  - o 1st Security Bank Building
  - o 556 S. Main Street - structural analysis and facade design
  - o National Bank, 518 S. Main Street - exterior assessment, design plan
  - o Security Bank, 502 S. Main Street - exterior assessment, design plan
  - o Freight Station
  - o The Plaza Hotel (structural evaluation, rehab recommendations)
  - o Facade design for 411, 413 and 421 Front St.
- Created brand awareness downtown through our
- Created a Façade Improvement and Paint Grant program to help private property owners make improvements to their buildings
- Maintain an office storefront that provides information about downtown to visitors, residents, property owners and merchants
- Created Design Guidelines to assist building owners in maintaining the historic character of their property
- Hosted a series of vibrant events that drew visitors and residents downtown
- Worked with our partners, the Chamber of Commerce, Tourism Board, WWCC, City of Rock Springs, Community Fine Arts Council, Sweetwater Library Board, School District #1, Wyoming Main Street, Wyoming Business Council, SBA, Wyoming Entrepreneur and many others to accomplish our goals
- Awarded 25 façade grants totaling \$112,896.37
- Assisted with the development of a downtown plan via Destination Development Inc (DDI)





## New and Expanded Businesses

A total of 14 new businesses and 2 expansions led to 14 full time jobs and 6 part-time jobs during 2014.

- AAA Insurance – professional services
- Elegance Salon – health and beauty
- Half Price Flooring – home improvement
- LR Computer Services – professional services
- Mind Matters Pilates – health and fitness
- Most Wanted Oilfield Services – professional services
- Mystix - retail
- Once Upon a Party – party venue
- Pretty in Pink Salon – health & beauty
- Prevention Management of Wyoming – professional services
- SweetwaterNOW.com – news/media
- Uinta Bank - banking
- Whatever Shack – retail
- Emree's – retail/health and beauty

## Expansions:

- Southwest Embroidery and Scrapbooking – expanded their offering and services
- Escape Day Spa – renovated facility and moved into larger space



## **Goals for 2015 include:**

1. Strengthen the Economic Restructuring (ER) Committee of the Main Street/URA program.
  - a. Increase and diversify membership of the ER committee by recruiting new members.
  - b. Develop an education program to understand the purpose of the ER committee and the roles of the members.
  - c. Partner with WY State Main Street program to develop an education program for committee members and business owners
2. Analyze effectiveness of the URA/MS events.
  - a. Determine if the event is beneficial and an effective use of resources.
  - b. Immediately following an event we'll review the effectiveness of the event by including chairs, board and staff in the discussion.
  - c. Develop event handbooks that lay out work plan, budget and roles and responsibilities
  - d. Survey the community and businesses as to the effectiveness of the event.
3. Diversity and increase the funding sources for the URA/MS
  - a. Increase funding for the URA/MS to be used for project work.
  - b. Determine a fundraising goal.
  - c. Develop a funding strategy which includes corporate contributions and fundraising events. The strategy should also include how money will be used. (i.e. new building; pedestrian underpass; Bunting Park project; 1st Security Bank; Ham Building)
  - d. Develop a new funding event (i.e. Art in the Park; Wine/Painting; theatre event)  
Board
4. Fix up vacant lots in downtown Rock Springs.
  - a. Beautification of downtown by fixing up vacant lots.
  - b. Identify lots in downtown and determine ownership.
  - c. Brainstorm ideas for fixing up lots.
5. Governance of organization
  - a. Board development and effectiveness
  - b. Board will be more involved in budget process.
  - c. Chair will assign committee liaisons or chairs.
  - d. Board to continue open communication with staff.
  - e. Board to evaluate façade' grant program and guidelines.
  - f. Continue to congratulate each other on successes and celebrate that success.
6. Understand and review Historical Zoning Regulations (long-term)
  - a. Determine how historical zoning regulations can be used to benefit downtown.
  - b. Plan a research trips to communities who are making it work
  - c. Determine the need for regulations.

## **Support for General Operations Provided By:**

- Wyoming Main Street
- Wyoming Business Council
- City of Rock Springs

### Special event partners and sponsors:

- Downtown Chocolate Lover's Stroll
  - o Once Upon a Party
  - o Sweet Sage
  - o Local Color
  - o Touch of Class
  - o High Desert Art Gallery
  - o Southwest Embroidery and Scrapbooking
  - o Daniels Jewelry
  - o Bike and Trike
  - o RS Historic Museum
  - o Community Fine Arts Center
  - o Dollar and More.
- Downtown Burger Challenge
  - o Bitter Creek Brewing
  - o Broadway Burger
  - o Coyote Creek Steakhouse
  - o Grub's
  - o Remedies
- Hats and Horses Kentucky Derby Party
  - o Plan 1 Architects
  - o Rocky Mountain Power
  - o RSNB Bank
  - o New Frontier Imaging
  - o 1st Bank
  - o Halliburton
  - o Rocky Mountain Casing Crews
  - o Landmark Design
  - o Coldwell Banker – Sweetwater Realty
  - o Western Archeological Services
  - o Infinity Power and Control
  - o JFC Engineers and Surveyors
  - o Sweetwater Cable TV
  - o City of Rock Springs





- Rods and Rails Car Show
  - o Wyo Radio
  - o Sweetwater Travel and Tourism
  - o City of Rock Springs
- Farmer's Market
- Summer Window Decorating Contest
  - o Rocket Miner
  - o SweetwaterNOW
  - o Wyo4News
  - o Wyo Radio
- Sweetwater Blues and Brews
  - o Rocky Mountain Bank
  - o Trona Valley Federal Credit Union
  - o Sweetwater Travel and Tourism Board
  - o City of Rock Springs
  - o Fremont Motors
  - o Community Fine Arts Center
- o BP
- o Rocky Mountain Service Bureau
- o Just Dance Studio
- o Homax Oil
- o Evergreen Electric
- o Aflac – Alexie Pitch
- o Pickin' Palace
- o Western Relief Services
- Pumpkin Patch
  - o Able Hands
- Halloween Stroll
  - o Rock Springs Historical Museum
- Toy Story Movie
  - o Vaughn's Plumbing and Heating
- Polar Express Movie
  - o Infinity Power and Controls



# Rock Springs

