



BUSINESS/OPERATIONAL PLAN

April, 2016 UPDATE

Three cities in Northeast Wyoming, Buffalo, Gillette, and Sheridan, have joined together to develop and implement a collaborative regional economic development marketing strategy that is intended to be economically beneficial to all communities in Northeast Wyoming pursuing business development growth opportunities. The cities collectively are referred to as the "Northeast Wyoming Region."

MISSION

The mission of the regional partnership is to develop, market, and position the Northeast Wyoming Region as a competitive place to do business and generate new business investments that will diversify the economy of the region.

STRATEGIC BUSINESS FOCUS

To achieve its mission, the Northeast Wyoming Growth Alliance (NEW Growth Alliance) will focus on three core business areas:

- **Branding, positioning and marketing Northeast Wyoming in a unified manner to generate interest in business investments**, including new business locations, existing business expansions, and start-ups.
- **Product (the Northeast Wyoming region) development through public policy advocacy and "missed opportunity analysis" to enhance the competitiveness and appeal of the Region as a business location product** to targeted business segments.
- **Investor/stakeholder relations and accountability to sustain regional collaboration, cooperation, and trust.**

STRATEGIC GOAL

To create a positive business development image of the Northeast Wyoming Region and increase business expansion growth opportunities that will diversify the economy of the Region.

STRATEGIC BUSINESS OBJECTIVES

- To utilize and leverage economic development financial and human resources **to achieve efficiencies and increase results.**
- To brand, position and aggressively market the economic region's location assets, strengths and resources as "one product" **to gain a competitive edge and increase deal flow into the region.**
- To provide site location services to clients through a streamlined approach, **delivering high quality, client-driven services, maximizing the conversion ratios of leads to prospects to new locations, expansions and start-ups.**
- To **positively influence public policy and investment decisions impacting the competitiveness of the economic region**, e.g. business climate, infrastructure, site development.
- To operate in a manner that builds trust among NEW Growth Alliance Partners and regional stakeholders **to effectively implement and sustain a long-term regional economic development marketing strategy.**

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- **ORGANIZE ... Establish a professional client-driven regional economic development marketing organization.** The Alliance will pursue the following approach in developing and formalizing the NEW Growth Alliance to achieve the above strategic goal and business objectives:
 - **Begin operations as a Regional Partnership with a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) serving as the Operating Agreement (see MOU in the following section).** The MOU between partners will detail parameters on decision-making, funding and operations. The partners will evaluate issues related to sustainability, accountability and financial issues in initial management discussions

related to this potential structure and begin organizational planning for a permanent corporate organizational structure, as follows:

- **Begin steps to form a 501 c 6 Non-Profit Corporation.** The partnering organizations will determine the initial representation on the governing board in a manner reflecting a consensus of the founding partners. Key ongoing issues relate to funding and accountability to regional partners.
- Establish **staffing and/or partner responsibilities** to support organizational activities.
- **FOCUS ... The Alliance will implement a brand-building marketing-sales plan with clearly defined goal(s) and objectives ... and including:**
 - Product “features and benefits”
 - Target audiences—internal and external
 - Brand/position-driven messaging and theme line
 - Strategies and tactics ... including marketing-sales communications tools to support the regional marketing-sales plan and an integrated, multiple channel approach to creating a positive identity for the region ... attracting new businesses ... retaining/growing existing businesses ... and stimulating entrepreneurial development
 - Measurements of success ... “Northeast Wyoming Region Economic Development Scorecard”
 - Develop and implement annual sales plan in accordance with the strategic marketing-sales plan with clearly defined sales objectives for each tactic.
- **INNOVATE ... Lead the development and implementation of a regional continuous product development/improvement plan of action and public policy agenda focused on strengthening the regional product’s competitiveness and appeal to targeted businesses. Focus the plan on foundation factors for growth and development:**

- Access to a skilled and adaptable workforce
- Access to research/development and technology resources
- Access to financial resources ... incentives/venture capital
- Physical infrastructure (advanced with the capacity to accommodate growth and development) ... transportation, telecommunications, energy, sites/buildings
- Supportive business climate including balanced regulatory and tax environment
- Quality of living amenities ... to retain and attract workers

Develop a local product assessment tool to identify community/county product growth capacity strengths/weaknesses/barriers ... aligned with the regional strategy and based on local strategic growth objectives.

4 MANAGE ... Establish client handling and communications protocols ... Define operating and client handling/communications protocols and the roles and responsibilities of the partnering organizations in a Memorandum of Understanding. Develop a client relationship management (CRM) system to effectively monitor the marketing-sales pipeline and track the conversion of leads to sales.

- The Alliance will assign responsibility for management of the system to the region's "First point of contact", as determined by the Alliance governing structure ... and the Alliance's point of contact will work closely with each local (Buffalo, Gillette, and Sheridan) "first point of contact" and will have marketing-sales accountability for reporting marketing-sales results.
 - Issue regular progress reports to partnering organizations ... utilize reports to evaluate "what's working" and "what's not working" ... analyze "missed opportunities" ... and determine refinements needed to the marketing-sales approach to maximize return on investment.

TRANSPARENT and ACCOUNTABLE ... Conduct open and transparent communications and maintain the highest levels of accountability to the partners, investors and stakeholders ... while supporting and protecting the confidentiality of business location clients.

- Present the NEW Growth Alliance quarterly and annual "return on

investment” reports detailing accomplishments, results/progress toward goals and objectives to investors/stakeholders.

- Promote and celebrate progress and successes as a team with local partners and the Northeast Wyoming (NEW) Growth Alliance.

REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP START-UP MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Partners

Key items for inclusion in the MOU:

- The signatories on the MOU will be the cities of Gillette, Sheridan and Buffalo. The Community College will be offered an opportunity to participate as a signatory at an investment level to be determined ;
- A Management Council (Council) will be established to operate the Growth Alliance. Each NEW Growth Alliance City will designate the lead economic development staff person to serve on the Council. The Council will present regular reports to the Leadership Council (Mayors and designees, plus College executive, if applicable) ;
- Additional areas/cities interested in participating with the NEW Growth Alliance will be offered a “contract for services”. The details and amount of the contract will be determined by the Management Council;
- The initial duties of the Management Council will be as follows:
- Establish ‘funding ’ formula to support estimated operations budget (see below for proposed year 1 funding request) and “contract for services” template;
- Establish fiscal procedures and execute the action items in the marketing plan and manage the Growth Alliance budget;
- Evaluate administrative support options and enter into contract to secure services. Secure additional specialized support services to carry out marketing strategy;
- Establish accountability measures/measures of success to be used in reporting to Leadership Council (see below for possible measures);

- Methodology and investment requirement for other cities, towns, counties and other entities to join NEW Growth Alliance:
 - The three founding cities will always constitute the governing and ruling body
 - Each new member must have an economic development professional available that can serve on the Management Council.
- Identify and implement steps leading to the formation of a 501c6 non-profit corporation that will become the permanent organizational structure for the NEW Growth Alliance.
 - **Proposed Funding/Budget Requests for NEW Growth Alliance-Year 1**
 - \$75,000 –City of Gillette
 - \$75,000 –City of Sheridan
 - \$50,000 –City of Buffalo
 - \$ TBD – Northern Wyoming Community College District

CLIENT LEAD HANDLING PROTOCOLS

Local First Point of Contact ... the Growth Alliance Central Point of Contact

The local “first point of contact” will be the designated economic development person for each community(the Management Council representative) and will be accountable to their respective local governing structure and will coordinate responses to leads/prospects/projects in accordance with the client’s needs and parameters and facilitate the “sale ... closing the deal.”

The Growth Alliance’s designated central point of contact (CPC) will be accountable to the Management Council (through a contract for services with the Alliance) and will be responsible for the handling of business development leads/prospects generated from regional marketing-sales initiatives and referrals from other sources ... in accordance with the client handling protocols. The central point of contact will be responsible for maintaining the regional client management relationship (CRM) system and providing regular reports to the management team.

Client Lead Handling Process

The following describes the proposed process of how "inquiries", "leads", and "prospects" will be handled as they come into the Growth Alliance.

1. Business "inquiry" is received by the Alliance's "Central Point of Contact (CPC)," and the inquiry will be handled as follows.
 - A. If not potential "lead" (see definition below), inquiry is handled by CPC.
 - If potential, "lead," inquiry is upgraded to that level.
 - All partners are notified of inquiry and status by CPC.
2. "Lead" is identified.
 - A. Lead is entered into client tracking system (CRM) by CPC.
 - B. E-mail is sent to all local FPC's by Alliance CPC with information on client's information needs. (Leads are coded to maintain client confidentiality.)
 - C. Consider password-protected section of Alliance website that will include client information.
 - D. A customized response from the whole Alliance is prepared and sent by the CPC.
 - E. Lead is continually tracked and monitored by the CPC.
 - F. Updates are provided to local partners on a regular basis.
3. "Prospect/Project" is identified.
 - A. "Lead" is upgraded. New "prospect" is entered into the client tracking system.
 - B. E-mail is sent by Alliance CPC to Locals FPC's with prospect criteria.
 - C. Each local partner is responsible for sending response to Alliance's CPC. The CPC will compile information and send to prospect.
4. "Primary Site Identification and Site Visits"
 - A. Client identifies specific communities for further analysis/site visit.
 - B. The local economic development FPC will "sell" their location" and negotiate with the client to "close the deal."
5. "Location/Expansion" . . . "A Regional Win!"

- A. Prospect commits to a specific location in the region.
- B. E-mail sent to all regional partners announcing the regional "win."
- C. Debriefing is held with the location and the finalists.
- D. Public announcement is made with all the Alliance communities invited to attend to celebrate the regional win.
- E. Ongoing follow-up on commitments.

Definitions

Inquiry: A business request for general information on the region.

Lead: A business request for general information and an indication that a project(location/expansion) is under consideration—specific criteria has not yet been developed.

Prospect/Project: A business request for specific information on the region, e.g. Building/site, etc. related to a specific project for which the region is being considered.

EXISTING BUSINESS INQUIRY

If an existing regional business contacts another community within the region, the following protocol will be followed:

3. The community contacted will immediately notify the Alliance CPC of the inquiry.
4. The community contacted will inform the company of the Alliance's protocol in regards to handling of inquiries from existing business within the region and seek their approval to notify the community in which the company is currently located.
5. If the company agrees, the CPC would then contact the community in which the business is located to notify them the existing business is exploring location/expansion opportunities.
6. If the business does not agree to allow the community in which the company is currently located to be contacted, the community contacted and the CPC will consult on appropriate action to be taken.

The goal will be to **first** keep the business within the community in which the company is currently located, **second** is to keep the business in the NEW Region and **third** is to keep the business within the State of Wyoming.

Possible Accountability/Success Measures

- **Increased sales activity**
 - Number and quality of leads/prospects
 - One-on-one meetings with decision-makers/consultants
 - Number of projects
 - Number of site visits
- **Decrease in number of “missed opportunities” (region unable to meet the client’s location parameters) ... as a direct result of an improved/enhanced product**
- **Increased sales**
 - New locations, existing business expansions and start-ups
 - Capital investment and jobs (created and retained)
- **Enhanced growth and vitality of regional economy**
 - Firm, employment and wage growth
 - Population growth
- **Diversity of economic base**