



## *Recreation as Economic Development?*

The Cody 2020 survey results surprised a lot of people with the announcement of “Promote Recreation”. More than a few people have commented on the validity of that statement. But should we really be surprised?

Two things are clear in Forward Cody’s reading of the results. First, support for outdoor recreation is not strictly for the young. Over 48% of survey respondents were ages 55 and older! Throw in the 45 to 54 age group and the percentage grows to 83%!

Second, the people of Cody truly love the outdoors. The strong statements about open space, preserving the environment and protecting our quality of life speak strongly to our sense of place. Cody is extremely fortunate to have such a broad range of recreational opportunities. Few places can boast both the diversity and quality of these experiences.

So how is developing and promoting recreation an economic development tool? It works in two ways. Cody certainly understands the flow of business through retail and service based businesses which is tourism. As Americans seek less sedentary types of vacations, why wouldn’t a



### **Kayaking for economic development.**

person go where you can do it all? Carefully packaged, recreation provides a means to broaden our season and upgrade the quality of our visitor. More and better visitors are the rising tide that lifts all ships. We all gain!

Great recreation is also an excellent recruitment tool for workforce and for businesses. The very features we take for granted can provide a great incentive for people to move and stay in Cody. Companies are made up of people who spend two thirds of the day not working. What people do outside of work is becoming as important as what they do at work! Our recreation is a great tool for diversifying our economy, let’s use it!

So is developing recreation economic development? It is without a doubt. The 2020 survey simply provides evidence of what most of you already knew.



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