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James Klessens - *CEO/President*  
Kelli Thornton - *Business Development Specialist*  
Jeanne Bryan - *Administrative Assistant*

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# Moving Cody FORWARD

VOLUME I ISSUE 2

MARCH - APRIL 2008

## **FORWARD CODY WYOMING, INC. WELCOMES - KELLI THORNTON BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST**

Forward Cody is pleased to introduce Kelli Thornton as our new Business Development Specialist. Kelli comes to us from Dallas, Texas where she was employed by the Texas Park and Wildlife Foundation.

Her professional profile is one of leadership and diverse experience in collaboration and communication. Obviously, these skill are crucial in understanding the needs and wants of local business and enable Forward Cody to take our economic development effort to the next level.

In her new position, Kelli will be working one on one with existing businesses to enable them to grow their company. Part of that job is to collect information on the types

of businesses operating in Cody so that a clear picture of our business climate can be established.

She has extensive experience in corporate communications and non-profit fiscal management. Her ability to foster and retain successful business relationships was emphasized by her former employer. In a letter from Dick Davis, Executive Director of Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation, he wrote, "Her unique combination of skills will prove very strategic in economic development".

Her focus on communications at Auburn University and the University of Georgia were critical in her selection. Forward Cody CEO James Klessens said, "We had a number of good candidates for the position, each with a specific set of skills. Kelli rose to the top because of her commu-

nications skills and professional demeanor. The community can expect great things from our Assisting Business in Cody Committee."



Both Kelli and her husband Gray are outdoor enthusiasts and looks forward to enjoying Wyoming's wide open spaces. They have been married just a few short weeks. The move to Cody begins a new chapter in both their lives. Gray has been named President of the Wild Sheep Foundation. He will start his new position in May.

### **Assisting Business in Cody Committee**



In the last newsletter, the concept of economic development as "building blocks" was discussed. Forward Cody's first efforts to grow existing business will be directed by the ABC, Assisting Business in Cody committee. This group is charged with providing direct technical assistance to existing

Cody businesses. This focused assistance will enhance the ability of these businesses to become more stable and profitable and potentially expand their businesses.

Committee Members include

- Andy Rose, *Manufacturing Works*
- Bruce Morse, *Small Business Development Center*
- Leah Bruscano, *Wyoming Business Council*

- Garrett Growney, *Shoshone First Bank*
- Lance Bower, *First National Bank*
- Mike Schumacher, *Pinnacle Bank*
- Bert Ward, *Big Horn Federal*

Businesses seeking assistance are encourage to contact Kelli Thornton , Business Development Specialist at Forward Cody, 587-3136.

*Promoting People, Jobs, and Progress*

**Looking Forward!**

Thoughts from your CEO

The past 60 or so days have certainly been a whirlwind! As I reflect over this very fast three months, I continue to marvel at the variety of people I've met with skills and talents unlike any I've encountered before.

In my Victory Celebration talk, I used the analogy of my job being a fisherman using a net whose strings are made up of the collective talents of the people of Cody. Well, I'm here to tell you, the fishing has been outstanding! What has made an impression is not just the talent pool, but the willingness to offer that talent.

I've also had a revelation which has stirred me in a way which, no matter what the future holds, will never leave me. A few weeks ago, I read the Enterprise article about the great gift the young Collins boy and his family provided to so many others. What struck me the most was the spirit in which it was offered. At a time when many families withdraw and begin questioning the turns in life, these people opened up their hearts and gave to others in need.

I spoke of this event with our good Senator, who politely informed me ... that is the Cody way. People give ... time, talent and treasure, without condition, without consideration of reciprocity and most times anonymously.

Someone once said, "We are rich only through what we give." If that is true, Cody is truly rich ... I'm very glad that I'm here!



# “Sprint or Marathon?”

Our first issue of *Moving Cody Forward*, described economic development as the strategic assembling of the key building blocks such as infrastructure, workforce and housing. That representation is used to help people to understand that Forward Cody does not plan to simply bring a company with 400 jobs to town and hence, meet our goal. While to many it may be surprising that people think this way, in our world of sound bytes, it's likely what they have heard! Frankly, it's good that people have heard this much ... the next challenge now is to understand an essential premise of any economic development program—this is a marathon, not a sprint. Good economic development is not so much about fast results as it is in developing momentum and choosing the right path.

Sure, we all want to see things happen quickly, but it's a sure bet that most

would agree that success isn't just doing **more** things, it's doing more of the **right** things.

In many ways, the communities that strategically build a solid foundation (there's those blocks again) for economic development are by far the most successful. They are successful in attracting growth, but more important, growth that fits with the **needs and wants** of the community.

Forward Cody has developed an aggressive plan to take a currently good foundation and strengthen it through projects in housing, infrastructure and workforce development. This activity will set the stage for growth in existing business, incubation of start up companies and the recruitment of new, compatible industry.

It's very interesting that a hundred years ago, the founder of this town, our own, Bill Cody was feverishly working to establish dairy and egg farms, an

irrigation system and a newspaper. Why? For one, to prove that the area was civilized, but more importantly, to create a diversified economy, one not dependent solely on the visitors.

The City of Cody would appear to have come full circle. The question becomes how many times have we replicated this same pattern of growth? As communities expand, more services are needed. Businesses then expand to meet that need, causing the community to grow even more.

The job of Forward Cody is to facilitate this growth and the change that comes with it. With good planning and foresight, we can choose the path Cody wishes and on that path ... actually win this marathon.



## Key Dates and Events :

### Housing Committee

“To begin planning attainable housing for the residents of Cody.”

**April 23rd**

**2:00 - 4:00 p.m.**

**City Hall**

**Anyone Welcome!**



### Forward Cody Board of Directors

**8:00—9:00 a.m**  
**BBHC Board Room**

**May 13th**

### Community Conversation About Housing

**May 8th 7:00 p.m.**

**City Hall and also on Bresnan Channel 16**

**Putting a New Spin on an Old Game**

***The Underlying Premise***

Many communities fail to recognize that their greatest export commodity is their children. When you stop and think of it, a large part of our adult life is dedicated to nurturing, guiding and educating our children. Our success in that endeavor is rewarded by them leaving the area and often the state, to chart their own life path. From a philosophical standpoint, we can appreciate the fact that the world needs the high quality kids which our families and local school system produces. From a personal standpoint, we become disconnected as a people and a community.

It is no secret that our communities invest heavily in the success of our children. Our tax base reflects this investment with over 60% of tax dollars dedicated to the operation of our local and state public education system. If we were in business, we'd question the return on investment and seek a new strategy to improve the bottom line.

Why our children choose to leave is perhaps the most critical question. Most of us can relate to youth's "shake the dust of this town" attitude which is a natural part of the maturation process. But as most of us have experienced, "elsewhere" isn't always better and we soon long for the familiarity of our hometown. So does the loss of our children stem from the desire to be elsewhere, or is it more the *lack of visible opportunity* for the development of a successful and rewarding career? Most people will readily agree that the perceived lack of opportunity is our biggest detraction.

Cody needs to change that perception on several levels. We know through media distribution statistics and personal anecdote that the people who have left here, by and large want to come home. Our key will be getting a message to these individuals that Cody is a good place to do business ... *business of nearly any type*. While it would not be realistic to bring everyone back, it is possible to create a new economy in the area around the skills and experiences of people who came from here. That's the premise of "Bring Em' Back Home."

Repatriation of former residents makes sense from a business standpoint for a number of reasons. People connected here do not need to be sold on the lifestyle, amenities or the community. They do not expect to be "bought" to bring businesses here. Rather, these folks will likely make concessions to get here. Our job will be to sell the business environment and afford these individuals and businesses access to programs and services to make that relocation easier.



**FAMILIES CREATE LASTING JOBS**

***What You'll See!***

"Bring Em' Back Home" relies on the most powerful communication tool on the planet ... family. Forward Cody could make calls to every CEO in the country and more than likely not receive a return call. That same CEO wouldn't dream of not returning a call to mom or grandma. It's that means of planting the seed, which will ultimately make this program successful.

By focusing on a key message and using a variety of media to distribute that message, we can begin the process of sowing the seeds. The message is simple:

***Why live where you work?***

***Why not work where you live?***

Starting in April, Forward Cody with the outstanding cooperation of the Cody Enterprise and the Big Horn Radio Network will begin a concerted public relations campaign to spread the message. Over the next few months you can look for newspaper articles on Bring Em' Back successes, tidbits on the radio including some very nice 15-30 second spot ads. Initial feedback has been very positive.

And by the way, do you know where your kids are? Could they be here too?

# Campaign Update

*As of January 31, 2008, the total funding pledged to Forward Cody Wyoming, Inc. is \$1,699,325!  
This is a spectacular achievement for the community and a credit to the faith of investors in this most worthwhile cause.*



**THANK YOU INVESTORS!!!!**

Additional paperwork has been initiated to establish a non-profit 501 (c) 3, which will allow the organization to accept charitable donations and seek funding from foundations. The full IRS designation is expected before the end of 2008.

Forward Cody will continue to seek additional investors during the 4 year implementation phase. Persons who would like additional information are invited to contact the office at 587-3136 or via e-mail at [jbryan@forwardcody.com](mailto:jbryan@forwardcody.com).

## HONOR ROLL OF INVESTORS

### **ADVANCE DIVISION (\$40,000 To \$300,000)**

Big Horn Radio Network  
Bresnan Communications  
Buffalo Bill Historical Center  
Corlene "Corky" Cathcart  
City of Cody  
Barron & Tami Collier

First National Bank & Trust  
Marathon Oil Company  
Nielson & Associates  
Northern WY Surgical Center  
Northwest College  
Park County

Pinnacle Bank  
Shoshone First Bank  
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### **LEADERSHIP DIVISION (\$10,000 To \$39,999)**

AmericInn  
Beartooth Inn of Cody  
Blair Hotels  
CertainTeed Gypsum, Inc.  
Energy West

Engineering Associates  
Four Bear Ranch  
Fremont Motor Company  
Groathouse Construction, Inc.  
Harris Haston & Carlene LeBous  
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### **PACESETTER DIVISION (\$1,000 TO \$9999)**

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Albert "Andy" Andrews  
Basin Mechanical  
Basin Vision Center  
Beartooth Harley Davidson  
Big Horn Federal Savings Bank  
Big Horn Print Gallery  
Blakeman Propane, Inc.  
Bormuth Law Associates  
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Cali Realty Capital, LLC  
Cassie's Supper Club  
Chamberlin Inn  
Cherry Creek Mortgage Co.  
Cody Enterprise  
Cody Lodging Company, LLC  
Hank Coe  
Comfort Food Radio

GDA Engineering  
Goodyear Printing  
Green Gables Inn  
Heart Mountain Chiropractic  
Jerico Fine Art Gallery  
Jerry Thiel & Sons Construction  
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The Donley Team Real Estate  
The Perkins Corporation  
The UPS Store  
Traces of Light  
United Country Western Real Estate  
US Bank  
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Wilder Enterprises  
WordsWorth  
Wyoming Business Council

### **SPECIAL DIVISION (To \$999)**

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