2015 ANNUAL REPORT

DOWNTOWN Rock Springs

2015 has been an eventful year for the Rock Springs Main Street/Urban Renewal Agency. Behind everything we do is the economic vitality of Downtown Rock Springs. To that end, Downtown witnessed the expansion of two businesses: Ella & Clark opened early in the year and then expanded to a larger space. Remedies Grill and Sweet Sage also both expanded. Remedies Grill added additional seating to accommodate a growing amount of diners while Sweet Sage consolidated their Hallmark operation from the White Mountain Mall into their Downtown store.

Downtown Rock Springs also saw the opening of fourteen new businesses in the district. They include:

- Sweetwater County Health and Human Services
- Gamble Law Office
- Ella & Clark
- Park Hotel Barber Shop
- Moneyhun Law Offices
- Paladium Motors
- KB's Place
- Color Works (former Total Exposure)
- Angel's Antiques
- High Alpine Archery
- The Tattoo Parlor
- Skin City Ink and Steel
- Mi Pueblito
- The Other Place club

In January we relocated into the newly restored Freight Station building. With the restoration of the Freight Station we were able **to offer more event space in Downtown Rock Springs. 2015 saw 32** events hosted in the building with attendance for the year topping 5,000. During 2015 we also hosted several record breaking events:

- The Downtown Chocolate Lovers' Stroll smashed previous records with over 150 attending the spring event, manyexperience some downtown stores for the first time.
- Rods and Rails saw a 33% increase in autos with 137 entries and 2,644 visitors to the event counted in first hour alone!
- Sweetwater Blues n' Brews netted nearly $20,000 in 2015 – funds that are used to continue our mission of assisting property owners and businesses in the Downtown district
- We also built on our Christmas promotions by offering visits with Santa every Saturday from Thanksgiving to Christmas along with free horse-drawn carriage rides around Downtown Rock Springs. Over 1,200 people took advantage of the carriage rides alone.

During 2015, the Rock Springs Main Street/URA also completed a variety of new projects in Downtown Rock Springs:

- Work in Bank Court (funding by a grant from the Wyoming Main Street Program) was completed with the installation of a raised pergola and furniture. The space was used for several mini-concerts during the Main Street Market and holidays. We'll be increasing programming in the area during the summer of 2016.
- Thirty new planters were purchased for Downtown, also using Wyoming Main Street funding. While the shipping of these was delayed well into the summer, they'll be installed in the spring of 2016.
- Three 'City Seat Benches' were created by located artists and scattered around Downtown Rock Springs. We hope to add three more in 2016.
- We invited a retail consultant to visit with local business owners for free one-on-one consultations. Twelve small businesses took advantage of the offer.
- The first annual Downtown First Awards were introduced. Winners included:
    - Outstanding Large Business (10+ employees) – Bitter Creek Brewing
    - Outstanding Small Business (fewer than 10 employees) – Pickin' Palace
    - Outstanding New Business/Merchant – Pretty in Pink Salon
    - Outstanding Nonprofit Organization – Broadway Bargains
    - Better Rock Springs Beautification Award – High Country Hearing Center
    - Outstanding Individual – Trina Brittan
    - Outstanding Volunteer – Alice Paul
- We introduced a new online feature called "We are Downtown." Written by volunteer Trina Dennis Brittain, each week we feature a downtown business along with some of their employees and customers.
- The "pink building" was painted by volunteers from Missouri
- We received a $20,000 grant from the Wyoming Main Street program to update the cargo doors along the south side of the Freight Station building. All of the southern openings were updated, insulated and restored to look like cargo doors. We will continue to look for funding to replicate the same concept on the north side of the building.
- During the fall of 2015 we hosted the Wyoming Main Street quarterly meeting and the WEDA (Wyoming Economic Development Association) fall meeting at the Broadway Theater.
- We introduced the Art Underground Gallery in the pedestrian underpass. Over 25 pieces of art are currently displayed in the gallery. Local artists donated over 250 hours of their time to create the pieces. The City street's department also repainted the underpass and installed new lighting. The Art Underground Gallery is designed to bring life, color and art to the pedestrian underpass while encouraging the community to get involved by adding creativity to our public spaces.
- Adopted our Vision 2020 plan - setting goals and objectives for the downtown area than can be accomplished by December 31, 2020.
- We worked with YESCO to update the Downtown gateway sign located at the top of the underpass with the new Downtown Rock Springs logo.
- A new art project was installed on the east end of the Freight Station building. The project features nearly five-foot tall letters cut from steel that spell out ROCK SPRINGS. Already the project has become a downtown icon and is featured in many senior, wedding and family portraits. Additionally, it helps dress up the area between the main parking area for Bunning Hall and the hall's main event entrance.
- The Broadway Theater hosted 67 public and private events during 2015 with total attendance topping 9,500.

Finally, part of our mission is providing grants to Downtown property and business owners. To date, we've granted seven grants totaling well over $10,000. Grants include:

- Actor's Mission – Façade Improvement and Paint Grant for their new location on South Main Street
- Euclid Street Apartments (615 Euclid) – Façade Improvement Grant
- Family Vision Center (544 Broadway) – Paint Grant
- Roosevelt Learning Center (440 Dewar Drive) – Paint Grant
- SweetwaterNOW (147 K Street) – Façade Improvement Grant for updated signage
- Local Color (513 Bridger) – Façade Improvement and Paint Grant
- Rushmore Furniture (19 K Street) – Façade Improvement Grant to remove their decaying awning

We also awarded our first Rental Assistance Grant to KB's Place, located at 455 North Front Street. The program aims to assist new ventures during the first months of operation with financial assistance. The Rental Assistance Program provides a new business owner with a grant based upon the monthly rent paid by the business. KB's Place is a great new boutique featuring men's and women's fashions as well as gifts and home décor.

2015 By the Numbers: Total Private Investment - $343,425
Total Public Investment - $2,453,984
21 New Full Time Jobs and 5 Part-Time Jobs created during 2015
1878 Volunteer hours contributed during 2015

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