

2008 Annual Report



High Gas, Weak Dollar and Economics Affect Tourism

Even with the 2008 challenges of high gas prices, weak dollar and the economic downturn, we managed to have a decent tourism year. While some domestic travelers stayed home, all the work the Park County Travel Council and some of Cody's private sector did in international markets paid off. Three international marketplaces were attended by PCTC staff in 2008. All three venues were the busiest ever with a lot of interest in the United States and particularly the west. On any given day of the week, one could hear at least two different languages in the Cody Chamber's Visitor Center. Travel in the United States was a good value for Europeans.

In 2008 Yellowstone National Park recognized the 20th anniversary of the Yellowstone fires. Most of us who lived in Park County in 1988 will never forget the dark, smoky days and the sight of men and women in smudged yellow fire-retardant shirts eating at our restaurants or shopping in our stores. Unfortunately, the reality of fire was all too real on the North Fork this year with the Gun Barrel Fire.

Cody and Yellowstone National Park were seen for the first time to many members of the travel industry. The Park County Travel Council hosted a group of nine AAA lead travel councilors in September. We also hosted the staff from several of the state of Wyoming official welcome centers.

Two press tours took place, one in February and the other in June, not to mention at least a dozen travel writers on assignment researching Buffalo Bill's Cody/Yellowstone Country. Seeing this wonderful area through the eyes of a "first timer" is both exciting and rewarding. We have so much to offer our guests.

Television played a big role in getting the word out about Park County in 2008. A partnership with Bresnan Communications allowed the PCTC to have a 25-minute DVD loop play 24 hours, seven days a week on Channel 25 in Cody. The loop contained a destination video for Park County and short pieces on the Buffalo Bill Historical Center and Yellowstone National Park.

Samantha Brown is just as cute and perky in person as she is on TV! Sam and crew were in town to shoot a segment for the new show, "Passport to Great Weekends with Samantha Brown." Cody

enjoyed its second year of hosting the Dodge Xtreme Bulls event which was broadcast several times on ESPN, ESPN2 and ESPN Classic. This program wasn't just bull riding, it contained four short travel segments on Cody, Wyoming and Yellowstone Park.

After much discussion members of the Park County Travel Council decided to change our ad agency. Eight very qualified ad agencies presented their ideas to the PCTC and in August the con-



Lead trip councilors from AAA offices in the United States and Canada visited Cody and Yellowstone for the first time in September. The group was hosted by the Park County Travel Council and Xanterra Parks & Resorts of Yellowstone during the five-day familiarization tour.

tract was awarded. Changing ad agency meant changing our Buffalo Bill's Cody/Yellowstone Country vacation guide, ad creative and campaign strategies as well as familiarizing agency staff with Cody, Yellowstone, Powell and Meeteetse.

The Park County Travel Council has several ongoing partnerships with the Wyoming Division of Travel and Tourism, Xanterra Parks & Resorts, the Cody Chamber of Commerce and the Buffalo Bill Historical Center. The success of our destination marketing is largely due to these valuable partnerships.

PCTC Helps Communities Promote Themselves

The Park County Travel Council markets Park County in its entirety under the name of "Buffalo Bill's Cody/Yellowstone Country," which includes the communities of Powell, Meeteetse and East Yellowstone Valley.

In addition to this marketing, individual communities and non-profit organizations within Park County are granted funds to purchase their own advertising.

Awarded grants can only be used for advertising and promotion outside Park County. Most Chamber of Commerce grants include funding visitor/information centers.

Because Yellowstone National Park is not eligible for grant money, the park's collections

are used to enhance the grants awarded to each community and to fund the marketing plan. Usually, the PCTC helps fund from the marketing budget some sort of promotion for Yellowstone Park via Xanterra Parks & Resorts of Yellowstone. Our financial assistance was vital in the cooperative summer press and familiarization tours with Xanterra.

Without the PCTC paying for travel of participating writers, Xanterra would not have been able to host many writers, and we would not be able to tout Cody as the preferred gateway to Yellowstone. In 2008, the Yellowstone Association received \$15,000.00 from the PCTC to promote their "lodging and learning"

program as well as other seasonal programs.

Many Park County conventions, events and sport tournaments may not have taken place if it were not for the funding assistance from the Park County Travel Council. Such events were the Cody Youth Basketball Tournament, PHS Alumni All Class Reunion, High Country Rabbit & Cavy Show, Wyoming Junior Rodeo, Yellowstone Fire Soccer Tournament, Powell American Legion Wood Bat Tournament, Meeteetse Mountain Man Classic Challenge, Cody Rotary Racquetball, Friends of the Park County Library, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Stampede Parade, and Wyoming Drug Court convention assistance.

Park County Travel Council Administration and Budget

The role of the Park County Travel Council is to administer the 4% Park County lodging tax revenues with the exception of the 10% share returned to the Park County Treasurer. State statutes dictate the revenues be spent for tourism promotion only.

The Park County Travel Council is a Joint Powers Board comprised of ten volunteer board members. Four members are appointed by Park County Commissioners, two by the Cody City Council, two by the Powell City Council and one by the Meeteetse Town Council. A representative from the Wyoming Business Council's Tourism Board is also on the Travel Council.

Budgets created and approved are funded by the previous year's lodging tax revenue.

Claudia Wade, marketing director of the Park County Travel Council, is responsible for implementing a myriad of marketing strategies of Park County.

Wade is a member of the Cody Marketing Council and attends Powell Chamber and Meeteetse marketing meetings when invited. She assists in the selection of publications for advertising buys, coordinates visits and escorts travel writers and media representatives, assists in the development of display ads and brochures, coordinates all television promotions and features, represents Park County at trade and travel shows in the U.S. and Europe, acts in an advisory capacity regarding funding and administers all PCTC grants.

Lee Anne Ackerman, marketing assistant, tracks inquiry response and maintains extensive media files, data bases and the Park County Travel Council website, www.yellowstonecountry.org.

Lee Anne is also responsible for electronic newsletters, annual printing of the information insert for the Buffalo Bill's Cody/Yellowstone Country Vacation Guide, updating all PCTC printed brochures,

developing lodging packages, as well as coordinating the PCTC rack card distribution contracts for Park County non-profits.

Voters Renew 4% Lodging Tax

On Tuesday, November 4, 2008 Park County voters were asked to renew the countywide 4% Lodging Tax. The original 2% lodging tax was passed in 1986 and increased to 4% in 1997. Wyoming law doesn't allow city or county lodging tax to exceed 4% and revenue can only be used to promote tourism.

Over 76% of Park County voters voted "yes" to renew the lodging tax. Why?

- In 2007, 26% of sale taxes in Park County were paid by tourists.
- In 2007, tourists spent \$249 million in Park County, which generated \$8.1 million in local and state tax revenues.
- In 2007, Park County paid over \$68 million in tourism payroll income, second only to Teton County at \$185 million.
- Statewide, \$108 million in tax contributions were generated from tourists spending. Were it not for this tax relief, the average Wyoming household would have to have paid an additional \$527 in taxes to offset this revenue.
- Park County residents would have to have paid an additional \$750 in taxes if it were not for the travel-generated state and local tax receipts in 2007.

The renewal of the Lodging Tax will be on the 2010 election ballot.

All economic impact figures were taken from "The Impact of Travel on Wyoming's Economy," prepared by Dean Runyan Assoc. for Wyoming Travel and Tourism.

2008 Park County Visitor Statistics

	Year/Season End numbers	Change from 2007
Total Inquiries (not internet)	90,075	-6%
Buffalo Bill Historical Center	193,497	-8%
Cody Nite Rodeo	73,474	05%
Buffalo Bill Dam Visitor Center	62,865	-5.7%
Yellowstone National Park	3,954,202	-4.5%
East Entrance	377,869	3.7%
Northeast Entrance	179,149	-11.6%
YRA Enplanements	25,865	-3.5%
Cody Chamber Visitor Center	57,492	160%
Powell Chamber Visitor Center	175	-75%
Meeteetse Visitor Center	424	-19%

2008 Park County Travel Council

Rick Hoeninghausen,
Chairman
Park County Appointee

April Rodriguez
City of Powell Appointee

Sandy Newsome,
Vice Chairperson
City of Cody Appointee

Hamilton Bryan
Park County Appointee

Sherry Long, Treasurer
Town of Meeteetse Appointee

Josh Shorb
City of Powell Appointee

Kenny Gasch, Secretary
Park County Appointee

Scott Morrison
Park County Appointee

Glenn Ross
City of Cody Appointee

Ted Blair
State Tourism Board Representative

2008 Grants/Programs Funded by 2007 Lodging Tax Collections

CODY COLLECTED		\$799,785.87
Cody Country Chamber of Commerce		\$103,000.00
Visitor Center	\$52,580.00	
Block Marketing Grant	\$50,420.00	
Buffalo Bill Historical Center		\$50,257.00
Buffalo Bill Dam Visitor Center		\$8,500.00
Cody Stampede Board		\$13,100.00
Cody High Style		\$10,000.00
TOTAL CODY GRANTS		\$184,857.00
POWELL COLLECTED		\$47,410.76
Powell Valley Chamber of Commerce		\$47,500.00
Visitor Center	\$25,000.00	
Block Marketing Grant	\$22,500.00	
TOTAL POWELL GRANTS		\$47,500.00
MEETEETSE COLLECTED		\$288.04
Meeteetse Economic Development Alliance		\$23,500.00
Visitor Center	\$18,000.00	
Block Marketing Grant	\$5,500.00	
TOTAL MEETEETSE GRANTS		\$23,500.00
PARK COUNTY COLLECTED		\$119,322.66
East Yellowstone Valley Chamber of Commerce		\$51,000.00
Yellowstone Regional Airport		\$10,000.00
Park County Arts Council		\$4,000.00
Yellowstone Quake Hockey		\$2,500.00
TOTAL COUNTY GRANTS		\$67,500.00
YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK COLLECTED		\$399,000.00
(YNP Lodging in Park County Only)		
Yellowstone is not eligible for PCTC Grants		\$0.00
TOTAL GRANTS		\$323,357.00
UNIFIED MARKETING		\$880,387.86
ADMINISTRATION		\$137,285.00
TOTAL GRANTS & PROGRAMS		\$1,341,029.86

Communities, County Use Lodging Tax Dollars

Park County and its municipalities receive 10 percent of the Park County Lodging Tax collected. The collections are distributed by the Park County Treasurer at the same ratio they were collected.

In 2008, \$147,508.00 was returned to Park County for distribution to Powell, Cody, Meeteetse and Park County. There is no restriction on how these dollars can be spent.

The city of Powell received approximately \$5,600.00 that was earmarked for improvement to and marketing of the Commons facility and Plaza Diane.

The City of Cody received approximately \$84,015.00 that was set aside for special projects as needed. Funds were given to the Olive

Glenn Golf and Country Club, Riley Arena and Event Center, Sky-lighters, Stampede Parade Committee, Cody Stampede Board, Buffalo Bill Historical Center, Wild West Balloon Festival, and Cody/Yellowstone Air Service Organization as well as other entities and events.

Approximately \$68.00 was received by the town of Meeteetse. This was added to the town's general fund.

Park County is entitled to the portion of the funds that are collected outside Park County municipalities. These properties are guest and dude ranches and Yellowstone National Park lodging that is in Park County. In 2008 over \$57,924.00 was added to Park County's general fund and used at the discretion of the county commissioners.

Local Businesses Assist Park County Travel Council

The Park County Travel Council would not be able to implement as many marketing projects as we do without the continued support of local businesses. This support – donated lodging, meals and admission – allows the Travel Council to spend more on advertising, partnerships and transportation for travel writers and television crews. Members of the council understand that these donations cost businesses and truly appreciate their cooperation in marketing Buffalo

Bill's Cody/Yellowstone Country.

Special thanks to Xanterra Parks & Resorts, the Buffalo Bill Historical Center, Cody Trolley Tours, Cody Nite Rodeo, Dan Miller's Cowboy Music Revue, Old Trail Town, Blair Hotels, Cody Legacy Inn, Cody Cowboy Village, The Irma, Wyoming Rib & Chop House, Chamberlin Inn, The Cody, Beartooth Inn, Crossed Sabres Ranch and Cassie's, a few of our 2008 donors.

Working with Various Media Helps Promote Park County

The PCTC staff assists the Wyoming Division of Travel & Tourism and other state or regional organization in coordinating visits or providing information to journalists and television crews. Below are monthly highlights of published articles, press or familiarization tours and television coverage.

January

The January issue of "Mountain Living" contains a page of pictures of items in the Cody High Style exhibition. The "National Fire & Rescue" magazine, January/February issue, includes a feature entitled, "Firefighting Cowboys in Wyoming." The weekly insert of "American Profile" Tidbits section contained the history of the Buffalo Bill Dam.

February

The February/March issue of "American Cowboy" contains the Hot 101 Best Western Events of the Year. The Buffalo Bill Art Show and Sale is listed as one of the top art events. A new German publication, "Spirit of the West" contains a section on Cody.

Freelance writer Mark Bedor was in Cody participating in the Dude Ranchers Convention and was also researching articles about winter in Cody. Mark writes for "Cowboy & Indians" and "American Cowboy" magazines, as well as the "Big Sky Journal".

Four travel writers participated in the winter press tour. Activities for all participants included a tour of the Buffalo Bill Historical Center, the John Colter Symposium and Cody tour. Individuals had the opportunity to cross country ski, snow shoe and ice climb.

March

Mr. Jack Hubbell, Little Bighorn Productions was in Cody March 8-13 interviewing and filming locations for the documentary, "The Life and Times of Buffalo Bill Cody."

National Tour Association's (NTA) publication, "Courier" contains a Wyoming feature entitled, "Cowboy Up". Wyoming Events and Festivals listed in the feature include Cody's Stampede and Nite Rodeo, the Plains Indian Museum Powwow and Cody/Yellowstone Xtreme Bulls event.

The article, "Cody Country: Buffalo Bill's imprint on region still visible" was in the Sunday, March 23 edition of the "Fort Collins Coloradoan." Written by Mr. Bob Willis, a participant on the PCTC winter press tour.

April

Ms. Jan Aaron, also on our winter press tour, did a piece on her radio show in New York City about the Heart Mountain Relocation Camp. Her show was on-line at www.wbai.org.

May

The "all girl getaways" section of the April/May issue of "travel-girl"

magazine contains a page on Cody. The piece mentions the activities in the area and the facing page is a full-page Cody/Yellowstone Country ad. The June/July issue will also contain a full page ad.

The May issue of "True West" magazine contains several Cody articles of note. "Western Museums We Love," written by Johnny D. Boggs lists his top 10 favorites; number five is the Draer Museum of Natural History (complete with photo). "Was He a Hero?" written by Louis Warren is an 8-page article with many historic photographs of Buffalo Bill. Also in this same issue of "True West" is the article "They Stole Buffalo Bill's House," written by Scott Fisher.

The communications director of offices and councilors for AAA published a Cody piece provided by the PCTC in the e-newsletters to all 7,000 AAA offices/councilors.

The May 10 issue of the "Chicago Daily Herald" mentions the Irma Hotel along with the rodeo, Buffalo Bill Historical Center and Kirwin in the article, "Stay in a historic hotel when touring the Old West."

Financial Statement Year Ending 12/31/08

Cash in Bank 12/31/08	\$1,304,822.04
REVENUES:	
2008 LODGING TAX GROSS RECEIPTS	\$1,475,082.90
LESS REVENUES TO PARK CO/CITIES	\$147,508.29
NET 2008 LODGING TAX COLLECTIONS	\$1,327,574.61*
CO-OPS/REFUNDS	\$69,910.00
INTEREST RECEIVED	\$25,648.81
TOTAL REVENUE	\$1,423,133.42
EXPENSES:	
CODY, POWELL, MEETEETSE, EAST YELLOWSTONE SPECIFIC 2008	\$224,100.89
PARK COUNTY MARKETING PLAN 2008	\$809,561.48
ADMINISTRATION 2008	\$136,682.94
ATTRACTIONS 2008	\$84,211.00
SPECIAL EVENTS 2008	\$13,999.30
ADVERTISING CO-OPS	\$67,710.34
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$1,336,265.95**

* Reserved For 2009 Budget

** Funded from 2007 Lodging Tax Collections, Interest and Co-op Revenue

Working with Various Media

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A recent issue of "Sunset" magazine contains an article "Summer Trips – 30 Wow Vacations to Take Now." Jackson Hole, Yellowstone are featured with coverage of the Beartooth and Chief Joseph highways along with mentions of the BBHC, Cody Nite Rodeo and the Irma.

The May/June issue of "Mountain Living" magazine recognizes the Cody Stampede in the Best of the High Country – Best Mountain Rodeo. The website, "Where to Go Next.com" contains a two part feature "Buffalo Bill: Drama, Drive, Politics."

June

The Colorado edition of AAA's publication "EnCompass" contains a section Travel Tips and Trends which features "Buffalo Bill: the man with two graves?"

The Home/Travel Editor of "The Tennessean" is running a story in the Travel section that mentions the Dan Miller Cowboy Music Revue. This story is a result of the "USA Today" Cody feature that ran on May 23 in the Life section.

July

The July issue of "Travel & Leisure" contains "50 fabulous U.S. Travel Ideas" with tips and trips for every state. Trip suggestion number 13 was Wyoming, which features the Cody Stampede and the Cody Nite Rodeo.

The July issue of "Sunset" magazine features "Secrets of Summer – No. 11 suggests taking a hike in Yellowstone National Park."

The July issue of "True West" magazines contains two stories about the early days of Yellowstone National Park. "I will kidnap no more forever" tells of Chief Joseph kidnapping a family while they toured Yellowstone. "Trophy Hunting in Yellowstone" contains some wonderful photos of early day travelers in Yellowstone the article calls these "trophy images."

August

The August/September issue of "American Cowboy" contains a feature "Four Family Road Trips." One of the trips features a Yellowstone yellow bus and tours the Yellowstone region and ends in Cody.

Kate Pocock, a participant on our 2006 press tour, had an article published in the "Toronto Sun" on August 3. "Summer Safari in Yellowstone" is all about Kate's adventures in Yellowstone. Richard Carroll, another participant on our 2006 press tour, had an article published on www.sustainablestyles.com entitled, "Wild Bill Cody Country." Carroll wrote: "The endearing and long-lasting marriage of these two destinations (Cody & Yellowstone) offers the traveler the best of the West."

The Hideout Ranch/Cody segment of "Passports to Great Weekends with Samantha Brown" aired on the Travel Channel on Thursday, August 14 for the first time. There will be many reruns. Shown in the segment were the Cody Nite Rodeo, River Runners, and Cassies.

PCTC hosted seven outdoor writers in Cody for the Wyoming Outdoor Products Days, August 25-27. They will write about the Wyoming made products they tested while in Cody and their experience in Cody, Wyoming.

Barrett Productions was in Cody filming a

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television segment for "Trout Unlimited" on August 29 and 30.

September

Two journalists, Charlie Smith and Simon Owen, with the "United Kingdom Telegraph," were in Cody September 26 and 27. They toured the Buffalo Bill Historical Center. They wrote a piece on luxury lodging and guest ranches in Wyoming.

Work was done with the state of Montana and several Montana travel regions in offering motorcycle itineraries to writers who also ride. TypeRider is a new program that encourages motorcyclists to experience a destination by a prearranged itinerary and evaluate the lodging, meals, activities and rides and write an article for a new website www.type rider.com.

Nine AAA or CAA travel agents participated in the Cody/Yellowstone Yellow Bus fam, September 9-12. Several of the agents stayed an extra day and one agent arrived several days early. Feedback on the fam was excellent.

October

Two "American Profile" newspaper inserts contained information about Park County. In the October 5-11 "Did you Know..Tidbits," the Wyoming section contains a paragraph about Old Trail Town. The October 19-25 write up in the Wyoming section features the Charles J. Belden Museum in Meeteetse and the Pitchfork Ranch.

Ms. Angela Brown, a participant on our summer press tour, loaded all her Cody/Park County photos and information on www.about.com. This first phase included lodging properties, the next will be "Fun Things to Do in Cody" and then she will complete the Yellowstone National Park information.

Six travel agents from Voyageurs de Monde, France, were in Cody October 8 and 9. The group did site inspections and visited the Buffalo Bill Historical Center.

November

The article "North Fork Shoshone River, WY – Cody Country Cutthroats" appears in the November/December issue of "Northwest Fly Fishing" magazine.

Mark Bedor, a freelance writer hosted by the PCTC last winter, has written an article that is in the

November/December issue of "American Traveler". Mark's three-page ice climbing story features the frozen waterfalls of the Southfork. Mark Bedor also wrote a short ice climbing piece in the December issue of "Cowboys & Indians" magazine.

December

The December issue of Woodall's "Camping Life" magazine contains a two-page photo spread of Yellowstone National Park. Photographer Donna Ikenberry featured the American Bison and geysers.

Mark Bedor has written a piece on the Buffalo Bill Historical Center and how to access the website and order historic pictures. The piece is published in the January issue of "Cowboys and Indians" magazine. This is the third article that Mark has written as a result of his visit.

David Bailey, a participant on our winter press tour last February, has written an article for "Sky", the Delta in-flight magazine. The piece, "Old Man and the Ice" is a spin on Ernest Hemingway. The two page feature appears in the Long Weekend section of the publication.

Sharen Oriordan, a participant on our summer press tour, wrote a piece for the "Santa Barbara Independent" December 16 issue. "Visiting Yellowstone Park" contains Yellowstone information and its attractions but also mentions "Gateway Town: Cody, Wyoming" featuring Cody's main attractions and activities.



You may recognize this logo. In order for grantees to be reimbursed for their advertising expenses, it must appear on all printed ads, TV commercials and other promotional materials. This logo also appears in programs and at facilities that host sporting events which are funded in part by the Park County Travel Council.