

Proposal Summary:

Shell Exploration and Production Company and its fellow Western Wyoming Workforce Solutions Group partners in industry, education, and local government are applying for \$5,000 for *The Wyoming Career Ladder Education Initiative*. The initiative aims to educate junior and high school students, parents, and teachers through a number of hands-on school presentations and informational materials about the rewarding, long-term, and well-paying careers available in Wyoming to high school graduates.

Never before has the State of Wyoming had so many well-paying and long-term careers available to its graduates, and yet many of Wyoming's youth and their parents remain unaware or misinformed of the rewarding opportunities available here at home. Many parents, teachers, and students harbor misconceived notions that careers in the energy industries are un-skilled or short-term in nature, when in fact many career opportunities are indeed long-term and stable in nature and offer professional, skilled, and technologically-advanced work environments that can easily exceed the pay and prestige of jobs located out of state.

Moreover, teachers in Western Wyoming have noticed a trend of students dropping out of high school to take immediate advantage the relatively low-paying, short-term and un-skilled jobs that are available, when the short investment of a high school degree and additional vocational workforce training would reap the unparalleled benefits and opportunities for advancement of a skilled and long-term career.

Besides providing Wyoming graduates with life-long careers, the initiative will help to lessen the severe workforce shortages and employee retention problems faced in the local communities by filling many of the jobs with local residents already accustomed to Wyoming's unique culture and climate.

The Wyoming Career Ladder Education Initiative will be composed of two main components:

1. A "speakers bureau" of employed industry professionals that will visit local school districts and educate students as to the nature of their careers and the careers available here at home. These professionals will emphasize the value of a high school diploma and vocational training, and include "hands-on" demonstrations, including samples of extracted energy resources, and the skilled and professional technologies used in the field when possible.
2. Educational materials aimed at parents, teachers, and administrators that describe some of the high-paying and long-term jobs available, and dispel many of the common myths associated with work in the energy industries. These materials will include brochures, "one-sheets", and promotional "trinkets" that are associated with energy industries.

The Partners:

All of the school districts in Western Wyoming have agreed to partner with us in this initiative. These school districts include: Sublette 1&9, Teton, Lincoln 1&2, Uinta 1&2, and Sweetwater 1&2. Specifically, these partners include each school's administration and the associated Parent Teacher Associations.

In addition, the chambers of commerce in Rock Springs, Green River, Pinedale, Kemmerer, and Evanston have recognized the value of a local of and skilled workforce and have agreed to partner with us in this endeavor.

The economic development boards of South Lincoln County, Sweetwater, Uinta and the Sublette Community Partnership have also agreed to partner in this endeavor.

Western Wyoming Community College is also partnering to provide faculty and staff from the respective education areas to discuss the educational requirements and opportunities that exist for the long-term and short-term jobs currently available. The faculty will travel to the classroom presentations and parent-teacher conference events to give information, student success examples, and to display some of the respective equipment used in training and daily job activities.

Industry Partners: The list of companies that have agreed to partner with us continues to grow as the project moves forward. All of these companies have agreed to provide the professional employees needed to visit the local schools and to help with the creation of educational materials. The larger companies that agreed to participate include natural gas companies such as Shell, EnCana, Ultra, and Halliburton, along with other extraction companies such as Black Butte Coal, Rock Mountain Power, FMC, and OCI and well as companies in other industries including General Chemical, and Solvay Chemicals. Please keep in mind that this list of partners continues to grow and many more partners will continue to be added!

Role of the Partners

The role of the school districts will largely consist of hosting the "speaker's bureau" of industry professionals and helping to disseminate to parents and teachers the educational materials regarding opportunities available in local Wyoming industries.

The role of the chambers of commerce and the economic development boards will be to assist in organizing the speakers bureau among the many school districts, as well as aid in the creation of the educational materials by providing not only the needed information and local contacts, but also provide materials and graphic design capabilities (when available) to aid in the creation, printing, and distributing of the education materials.

The role of the industry partners will be to provide the employees who will comprise the "speaker's bureau", as well as aid in the creation of the educational materials by providing the needed information on the great careers available locally, as well as help with printing and design whenever possible. Each of the partners has agreed to visit a school district *at least twice* within the next year and has also agreed to provide travel expenses for their employees to do so.

The Western Wyoming Workforce Solutions Group

The workforce related issues to be addressed

The workforce related issues that will be addressed by this initiative are myriad, however they can be summarized within the following categories:

Workforce Shortages:

The initiative will aim to lessen the severe workforce shortages currently faced across many industries within the state by educating local students and their parents and teachers to the long-term and professional career opportunities available locally. Many parents and students are unaware or misinformed of the jobs available locally and choose to seek work requiring a liberal arts degree and/or out-of-state employment. Providing employers from across many industries with locally-raised and skilled employees will lessen the current workforce shortages currently faced in the state.

Employee Recruitment, Retention, and Turnover:

As many employers know first hand, recruiting out-of-state employees to move to Wyoming can prove difficult, due to Wyoming's unique climate, culture, and rural character. Recruiting local high school graduates that are already acclimated to Wyoming's unique attributes and already reside locally will increase recruitment and lower the problems currently faced regarding employee retention and turnover.

The innovative solution:

Our solution involves a unique partnership among school districts, companies across many industries, and local economic development leaders to educate and inform students about the skilled, professional, long-term, and well-paying jobs available locally *before they enter the workforce*. This proposal is innovative because by utilizing this unique partnership between educators and employers, we will be able to reach young adults while they are in an unparalleled position to easily make the life and career changes necessary to take advantage of these opportunities. Instead of focusing on reeducating and retraining working adults, or trying to attract out-of-state workers unfamiliar with Wyoming's unique climate and culture, we will tap into an already local and malleable future labor pool. When compared to the expensive nature of retraining and relocation programs, this relatively inexpensive initiative will offer an investment to help solve Wyoming's workforce challenges.

How it will work:

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The "speakers bureau" and the educational materials will be organized and implemented by the partners of the Western Wyoming Workforce Solutions Group, with the roles as described above.

The number of workers affected and the measure of performance:

This initiative will literally affect thousands of future workers. Our initiative will directly reach thousands of children, as well as their parents, and educators will pass down this information for generations to come. Hopefully hundreds of these future workers will choose to take advantage of the long-term and well-paying skilled careers available locally in Wyoming.

Short term measures of performance will include the numbers of locally employed speakers who have visited the schools, as well as the number of schools visited, the number of students who have been reached, as well as the number of parents and educators that have received the educational material regarding the careers available locally in Wyoming. *An acceptable level of performance will include at least more than one speaker talking with every junior high and high school class within every school district within Western Wyoming.* An acceptable level of educational materials will be dependent on printing costs, however anything less than at least some level of materials distributed to every school district will not meet our measure of performance.

Long term measures of performance will not be as easy to determine, but would include a reduction in high-school drop out rates, an increase in vocational education and training, and an increase in skilled and long-term careers filled by local residents.

Timeline for implementation:

Some of the aspects of the initiative do not require additional funds and have begun to be implemented already. Specifically, the scheduling of speakers at local schools is already underway.

If the funding request contained within were to be granted, the publication of materials and the organization of additional speakers would commence immediately. In order to meet the objectives of more than one speaker speaking at each school district by May of 2008, multiple speakers will have to be scheduled each month starting immediately.

In terms of the creation of educational materials and brochures, the "in-house" creation of brochures, flyers and etc would begin immediately, the ordering of the "trinkets" would begin immediately, and distribution among the school districts would be aimed for the fall parent-teacher conferences.

Future plans:

Due to the relatively modest amount of funding required for this project, it is envisioned that the "speakers bureau", once organized, could easily continue for a number of following years, provided that the school districts and the industry partners continue to be affiliated with the initiative. In addition, the number of local employers across the whole plethora of industries that are experiencing workforce shortages is immense, and the number and type of potential speakers can continue to grow and change.

Proposal: Part II
Detailed Budget

ITEM DESCRIPTION	GRANT REQUEST	LEVERAGED \$
Mileage associated with the "Speakers Bureau". Government mileage rates are \$0.445 per mile, with an average of 200 miles for each speaker trip, (minimum) 2 speakers for each of the (minimum) 10 industry partners.		At Least \$2,000.00
Speaker's labor cost – (minimum of) 20 Speakers at an Average of 8hrs of travel and speaking time per speaker– @ \$20 per Hour		At Least \$3,200.00
Meeting locations for speaker with equipment, hand-outs and refreshments; \$75 for location and equipment; \$50 for refreshments and hand-outs (copies)		\$1,250.00
Brochure Printing – estimate based on 10,000 copies; 8 ½ x 11, 2 sided, full color, folded	\$1,142.00	
Brochure, Flyer, and Hand-out Design. To be done "in-house" among economic development associations, chambers of commerce, and industry partners. Flyer and Hand-out printing to be done in house as well.		\$4,000.00
The Manufacture of promotional items such as "Trinkets", pencils, key chains etc.	\$3,858.00	
Partners prepare 3 pdf files for distribution; print copies		\$250.00
TOTALS	\$5,000.00	At Least \$10,700.00