



Jackson Hole Chamber of Commerce Advocates for Local Businesses at Governor's Conference on Tourism

The Jackson Hole Chamber of Commerce, alongside valued members and partners in the community, recently returned from Cheyenne, where they actively participated in the Governor's Conference on Tourism from January 25th to 29th. The delegation took this opportunity not only to engage in discussions about the future of Wyoming's tourism industry but also to meet with key Legislative officials to discuss priorities for the upcoming budget cycle.

During these meetings, Chamber representatives met with Governor Mark Gordon, Superintendent Megan Degenfelder, Auditor Kristi Racines, Treasurer Curt Meier, and Secretary Chuck Gray to advocate for policies that support the continued growth of Wyoming's economy. The Chamber remains committed to championing the interests of local businesses and ensuring that the needs of the Jackson Hole community are well-represented at the state level.

Key Topics Discussed:

1. Kelly Parcel: Recognizing a Successful Effort

The Chamber extended gratitude to state leadership for their efforts in securing the Kelly Parcel deal. This long-standing issue required collaboration at multiple levels, and the successful resolution marks a win for both conservation and responsible land use planning in Teton County.

2. Lodging Tax: Protecting a Vital Economic Resource

One of the Chamber's primary advocacy points was urging legislators to maintain the current lodging tax formula. The lodging tax plays a crucial role in funding tourism-related initiatives and supporting Wyoming's most consistently growing economic sector. Any changes to this formula could disrupt funding that directly benefits the state's Wyoming Office of Tourism, local businesses, and communities reliant on tourism revenue.

3. Wyoming Business Council Grants: Keeping Businesses Thriving

The Chamber emphasized the importance of continuing grant programs and additional resources through the Wyoming Business Council. In the current economic climate, ensuring that small and medium-sized businesses have access to financial assistance is imperative. These grants allow businesses to adapt, grow, and remain competitive in an evolving marketplace.

4. Corporate Incentives Investment Discussion

A significant point of discussion was the state's corporate incentive programs. The Chamber proposed that businesses receiving state-sponsored incentives to operate in Wyoming should be required to make an annual local investment as a condition for maintaining those incentives. This recommendation aligns with efforts to strengthen local economies, create jobs, and ensure that economic benefits extend to Wyoming communities rather than just corporations.

5. Supplemental Budget: Ensuring Financial Preparedness

The Chamber strongly urged legislators to pass the supplemental budget, emphasizing the critical need for financial foresight. With economic uncertainties and potential emergencies on the horizon, having an emergency fund in place is essential. The Chamber cited California's current financial challenges as a cautionary example of what could happen if states fail to secure necessary budgetary approvals in a timely manner. While recognizing that some legislators have specific concerns, the Chamber encouraged a swift resolution to avoid delays that could prove costly to the state.

6. Opposition to Harmful Legislative Bills

Lastly, the Chamber voiced opposition to proposed legislative bills that could negatively impact businesses by introducing unfunded mandates and excessive red tape. Overregulation can stifle economic growth, discourage business expansion, and place unnecessary financial burdens on both existing businesses and those looking to establish themselves in Wyoming. The Chamber urged legislators to prioritize policies that foster a pro-business climate, encourage entrepreneurship, and maintain Wyoming's reputation as a business-friendly state.

A Continued Commitment to Advocacy

The Jackson Hole Chamber of Commerce remains dedicated to advocating for policies that strengthen local businesses, promote economic sustainability, and enhance the overall well-being of the Jackson Hole community. Engaging with state leaders on these pressing issues ensures that the voices of business owners and residents are heard, and that Wyoming continues to be a place where businesses can thrive.

As these legislative discussions continue, the Chamber encourages community members and business owners to stay informed, engage with policymakers, and support advocacy efforts that shape the future of Jackson Hole and Wyoming as a whole.

For more information on the Chamber's advocacy efforts or to get involved, please visit www.jacksonholechamber.com.