



ANNUAL REPORT



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OUR MISSION:

TO ENHANCE THE ECONOMY OF SWEETWATER COUNTY BY ATTRACTING AND RETAINING VISITORS.

The lodging tax was originally approved by Sweetwater County voters in 1991 at 2%. Sweetwater County voters approved increasing the lodging tax to 3% in 2014 and 4% in 2018 with over 80% support.

BOARD MEMBERS & STAFF

FRONT ROW

LINDA McGOVERN
Board Member

BRIDGET RENTERIA
Board Chair

JENISSA MEREDITH
Executive Director

ANGELICA WOOD
Board Member

STACY COLVIN
Board Secretary

BACK ROW

MARK LYON
Board Vice-Chair

ERIKA LEE-KOSHAR
Board Member

KIM STRID
Board Member

DEVON BRUBAKER
Board Treasurer

GREG BAILEY
Board Member

CHEZNEY GOGGIO
Marketing Assistant

NOT PICTURED

JANET HARTFORD
Board Member

DOMINIC WOLF
Board Member

LUCY DIGGINS-WOLD
Tour Guide

GRACE BANKS
Visitor Assistant

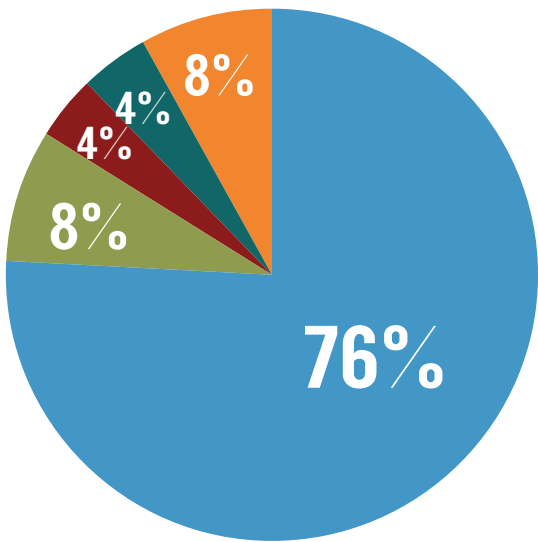


LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION.

In April 2020, Sweetwater County Travel and Tourism relocated their office to 1641 Elk Street and opened the "Explore Rock Springs and Green River, WY Visitor Center." Elk Street (Hwy 191) is the perfect location to offer information and encourage travelers to spend more time in Rock Springs and Green River as they travel to and from Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks.



BUDGET BREAKDOWN



-  **MARKETING PLAN**
-  **EVENT GRANTS**
-  **CHAMBER BLOCK GRANTS**
-  **SEC BLOCK GRANT**
-  **ADMINISTRATION**

LODGING TAX COLLECTION

FISCAL YEAR	TOTAL	% CHANGE
2014-15*	\$701,395	12%
2015-16	\$961,006	37%
2016-17	\$851,170	-11%
2017-18	\$889,207	4%
2018-19**	\$1,009,161	13%
2019-20	\$1,062,309	<1%

* 9 months @ 2%, 3 months @ 3% ** 9 months @ 3%, 3 months @ 4%

BLOCK GRANTS



Chamber
Operational Costs and Staffing



Operational Costs and Staffing



Out-Of-County Marketing and Event Recruitment

EVENT GRANTS

Any organization holding an event resulting in overnight stays at a Sweetwater County lodging property is eligible for T&T advertising and marketing or sponsorship funding. Grant hearings are held in March, June, September and December.

THE TRAVEL & TOURISM BOARD COMMITTED FUNDING TO THE FOLLOWING 2019 & 2020 EVENTS:



2019

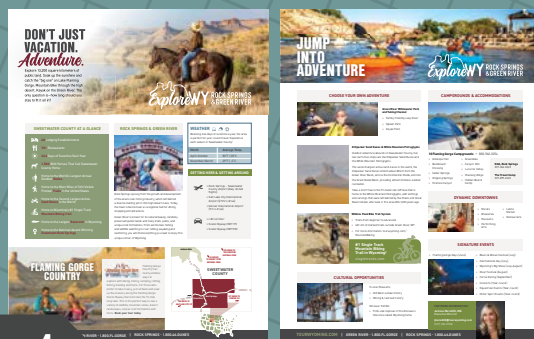
- THE RIVER FESTIVAL
- OVERLAND STAGE STAMPEDE RODEO
- SWEETWATER SPEEDWAY DIRT TRACK RACING
- HAMCON 2018 AMATEUR RADIO CONVENTION
- RACE ON THE ROCK TRIATHLON
- SWEETWATER HIGH SCHOOL AND JUNIOR HIGH RODEO
- SWEETWATER CLASSIC AQHA & OPEN SHOW
- FLAMING GORGE DAYS
- WYOMING HIGH SCHOOL FINALS RODEO
- RED DESERT ROUNDUP
- RUN THE RED TRAIL RACE
- BLUES N' BREWS
- ART ON THE GREEN
- GREEN RIVER KNIGHTS INVITATIONAL
- SW WY REGIONAL AIRPORT OPERATORS CONFERENCE
- GREEN RIVER GRAPPLERS WRESTLING CAMP
- THE ROCK CHALLENGE SOCCER TOURNAMENT
- FLAMING GORGE CLASSIC BASKETBALL
- THOMAN INVITATIONAL WRESTLING
- CO-ED TOUGH TURKEY VOLLEYBALL TOURNAMENT
- 2018 RURAL FIRE ASSOCIATION & FIRE CHIEFS CONFERENCE
- BUD CUP HOCKEY TOURNAMENT
- OVERLAND STAGE STAMPEDE RODEO
- SWAT/SHIVER IN THE RIVER
- QUILTING ON THE GREEN
- LINCOLN HIGHWAY ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE
- WIND & MUD HOCKEY TOURNAMENT
- DROP IN HOCKEY TOURNAMENT

2020

- SWCO 4H: THE HAIRY HORSE SHOW
- WWCC: 2020 WY STATE SPELLING BEE
- CITY OF GR: ART ON THE GREEN
- SWEETWATER COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL & JUNIOR HIGH RODEO
- SW WY EQUINE: SWEETWATER CLASSIC AQHA & OPEN SHOW
- ACTORS' MISSION: LONGMIRE: AN EVENING WITH CRAIG JOHNSON
- WYOMING STOCK GROWERS: WY CATTLE INDUSTRY CONVENTION
- QUILT WYOMING 2020
- RIVER FESTIVAL
- SWEETWATER BLUES & BREWS
- FLAMING GORGE CLASSIC BASKETBALL
- THOMAN INVITATIONAL WRESTLING
- ROCK SPRINGS AVENGERS
- ROCK CHALLENGE SOCCER TOURNAMENT
- ROCK SPRINGS CIVIC CENTER: DECEMBER DUNK BASKETBALL
- OVERLAND STAGE STAMPEDE RODEO
- UNITED SOUTHWEST AQUATICS: SHIVER IN THE RIVER SWIM MEET
- AMATEUR HOCKEY: 35TH ANNUAL BUD CUP HOCKEY

Many 2020 events were canceled or rescheduled due to COVID-19.

EVENT & INTERNATIONAL TOUR RECRUITMENT



Since 2010, SWCTT has worked with several local partners to successfully recruit numerous events, which have brought thousands of visitors to the area. These events include the 2013 & 2014 State Boys and Girls High School Soccer Tournaments, as well as the WY State High School Speech and Debate Tournament 2012-14, 2017 and 2020. **SWCTT recently recruited the 2022 & 2023 State 3A & 4A Boys and Girls Soccer Tournaments, which will generate a significant economic impact for Sweetwater County.**

COMMITTEES & BOARDS

JENISSA MEREDITH EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR INVOLVEMENT

WYOMING TRAVEL INDUSTRY COALITION BOARD MEMBER

SWEETWATER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COALITION ADVISORY BOARD SUPPORT MEMBER

SWEETWATER COUNTY EVENT RECRUITMENT COMMITTEE CHAIR

SWEETWATER COUNTY LODGING ASSOCIATION CHAIR

ROCK SPRINGS BEAUTIFICATION COMMITTEE CHAIR

FLAMING GORGE PROMOTIONS COMMITTEE VICE-CHAIR

DESTINATIONNEXT & STRATEGIC TOURISM PLAN

SWCTT partnered with the Wyoming Office of Tourism and Young Strategies to create a 5-year strategic plan. This plan will better position Sweetwater County for future growth as a travel destination by identifying opportunities and strategies for growth, from a development lens, as well as the exploration of regional and multi-county opportunities.

DestinationNEXT is a self-assessment online survey, that was taken by 50-75 travel industry leaders and local stakeholders in Sweetwater County, to identify destination strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, aimed at identifying future development opportunities. Young Strategies presented the survey results at a dedicated planning session.

The Strategic Plan provides multi-year destination guidance for the SWCTT board and community leaders.

- Continue to Build the Brand
- Develop Tourism Products and Experiences
- Support the Development and Retention of Quality Hospitality Workforce
- Advocate for Travel Industry Issues
- Align Strategic Planning Efforts with Local Partners



R.E.A.C.H. AWARDS RARE AND EXCEPTIONAL ACHIEVEMENT FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE IN HOSPITALITY



The Sweetwater County Travel & Tourism Board recognizes outstanding customer service in the local lodging industry through the R.E.A.C.H. Awards Program. The importance of these efforts warrant consistent recognition. The R.E.A.C.H. awards luncheon is conducted each quarter of the year because these employees are truly the backbone of the Sweetwater County Tourism industry.



The Sweetwater County Tourism Ambassador program is a multi-faceted program that serves to increase tourism by inspiring front-line employees and volunteers to turn every visitor encounter into a positive experience. When visitors have a positive experience, they are more likely to return in the future and also share their experience with others. Everyone benefits - the visitors, the industry, the local economy, and most importantly, the front-line worker.

FOR EMPLOYERS

The Sweetwater County Tourism Ambassador program teaches hospitality professionals and volunteers best practices and ensures they understand their role in boosting tourism in the area. The program helps staff increase their knowledge of the county and enhances their confidence in providing answers and resources to a variety of visitor questions. CTA provides an opportunity for certified employees and volunteers to meet and collaborate with their peers, share experiences, learn from one another, and work to create a positive visitor experience.

FOR EMPLOYEES & VOLUNTEERS

What separates the Sweetwater County Tourism Ambassador Program from other training programs is that it's a certification, not just training. Employees and volunteers who complete the program receive a credential and accompanying initials that can be used behind that person's name to denote their commitment to their profession e.g., John Doe, CTA. The CTA logo may also be used on your website, business card/communications with approval.

PROGRAM CURRICULUM

MODULE 1: The Power of Tourism
 MODULE 2: Discovering Sweetwater County
 MODULE 3: Knowing, Finding, and Using Resources
 MODULE 4: Exceeding Customer Expectations
 The curriculum is delivered through reading assignments and in-class participation.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Every certification program requires successful completion of the core curriculum. The following recaps the requirements to earn the CTA designation:

- Complete required reading and learning assignments. Reading material is sent out 2 weeks prior to the class date.
- Attend a 4-hour interactive classroom session.
- Complete an open book exam at the end of the session.

Upon successful completion, participants will earn a CTA designation and receive a CTA certificate and lapel pin. An annual renewal process of certification is also necessary to maintain your certification.

PROGRAM BENEFITS

- Build valuable skills
- Career advancement
- Networking opportunities
- Receive frequent tourism updates on events, etc.
- Provides meaningful credential

COST/RENEWAL

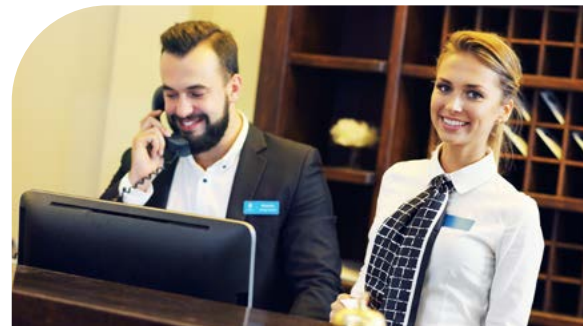
There is a one-time, non-refundable, non-transferable application fee of \$39 and an annual renewal fee of \$19 per person. In addition to the renewal fee, CTAs must log 50 CTA points throughout the year, earned through a variety of activities.

Tourism is an Economic Engine in Sweetwater County. Front line employees, and residents that interact with visitors and potential residents, help support and ensure the success of the local economy as a whole. Visitors and potential residents who have a positive experience in the area are more likely to stay longer, return for another trip, and tell family and friends about the area.

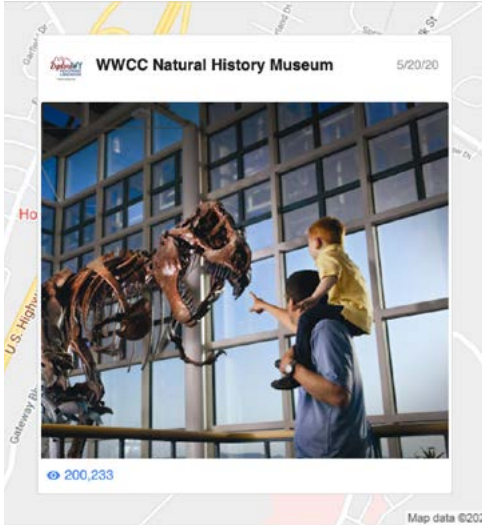
With the CTA program we hope to give front line employees the tools and resources they need to be ambassadors for the great community in which we live and work.

CLASS SCHEDULE/ENROLLMENT

For a class schedule and online enrollment, go to www.ctanetwork.com. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us at admin@tourwyoing.com or call (307) 382-2538.



BOARD PROJECTS



**Hi Explore Rock Springs & Green River,
200,000 views on your photo!**

Thanks for adding this photo to Google Maps—it is helping others make decisions about the things worth doing and places worth seeing. Keep it up!

[See your photos](#)

GOOGLE DMO PROGRAM

SWCTTB had great success this year joining the Google DMO Partnership Program. The program is designed to provide tools and tactics to improve the completeness, quality and accuracy of destination content across Google Maps, Destination Travel Guides and more.

As part of the program, Sweetwater County Travel and Tourism made 206 contributions to Google to update and improve content available to Google users. One-Hundred forty-four photos were uploaded, and 48 edits were made to businesses listings. The photos uploaded have had over 800,000 views and those numbers continue to grow.

They continue to monitor Google to make sure information is accurate and up to date. Sweetwater County Travel and Tourism is also considered a "My Business Provider," which allows them to provide businesses with verification codes to verify their businesses and update information quickly.



ROAD TRIPPIN'

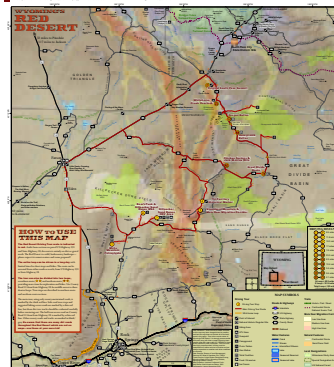
SWCTTB partnered with KUTV Channel 2 News from Salt Lake City, Utah to feature the new Explore Rock Springs & Green River, WY Visitor Center and businesses in downtown Rock Springs.



FLAMING GORGE SCENIC BYWAY

SWCTT has worked to promote the Flaming Gorge Scenic Byway for decades and recently submitted an application to the Federal Highway Administration to designate the byway as an All-American Road as part of the National Scenic Byway program.

This designation would open up opportunities for funding to build out turn outs, interpretive signage and amenities along the byway. The status of the application is TBA.



RED DESERT MAP

SWCTT sponsored the development of a Map of the Red Desert.

MEDIA, MARKETING & PUBLIC RELATIONS SUMMARY

TRADITIONAL ADVERTISING

Print/Billboard/Direct Fulfillment/Broadcast

- 2020 Wyoming Travel Journal
- Wyoming Office of Tourism Direct Mail Fulfillment
- That's WY – Spring integrated insert campaign (newspaper / online / emails)
- Casper Star-Tribune – Roam Wyoming Staycation
- Utah Life Magazine
- 5280 Magazine (Colorado)
- Elevation Outdoor (Denver/ Front Range)
- In state Radio (Big Horn Radio network, Cowboy State News Network, TownSquare network)
- Wyoming Press Association (40 newspapers throughout WY)
- Billboards: US 191 (1.1 miles north of MM 3 WS) and I-80 E .6 miles East of Rock Springs Hwy 371

ONLINE ADVERTISING

- WyomingTourism.org banners, listings, deals, and calendar
- WyomingTourism.org emails (featured partner) and custom emails
- WyomingTourism.org online video page and custom content page
- WyomingTourism.org Road Trips paid social
- MyYellowstonePark.com – banners, custom emails, lead generation
- Brand USA/WOT Coop New Enhanced City Page on www.VisittheUSA in 7 languages
- Uber Media (programmatically) – mobile banners / geo-fencing
- Salt Lake City Weekly eNewsletter and banners
- Utah City Weekly – eNewsletters, custom emails and banners
- Elevation Outdoor – eNewsletters, custom emails and homepage banner
- Boulder Daily Camera (Colorado) – custom emails
- Cowboy State Daily banner ads
- Connected TV
- Google PPC
- Facebook / Instagram / Facebook Boosts – ads, custom audiences, retargeting, videos
- YouTube

The Sweetwater County Travel & Tourism Board recently received two awards for their new website at TourWyoming.com. Travel Weekly and the Web Marketing Association both recognized the site for outstanding quality.

TRAVEL GUIDE FULFILLMENT

- 16,928 total leads fulfilled by the travel guide in 2020
- 16,021 Email Leads
- 1,747 Digital Travel Guide Views (up 273% from 2019)
- 1,939 Travel Guide Orders from TourWyoming.com (up 26% from 2019)

DATABASE MANAGEMENT & NEWSLETTER

- In December 2019, the database was cleansed by removing inactive users.
- 54,190 Subscribers
- Average monthly email open rate is 20% and 9.5% click through rate

WEBSITE MANAGEMENT (JAN. - DEC. 2020)

- 132,379 Website Users (down 16% from 2019)
- 156,479 Website Sessions (down 20% from 2019)
- 272,784 Website Pageviews (down 20% from 2019)
- With the assistance from the CARES Funding, the website visits rebounded at the end of the year. (July – Dec. 2020)
- Website Users increased 21% from 2019
- Website Sessions increased 14% from 2019
- Website Pageviews increased 9% from 2019

SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION

- In 2020, we created 10 new pages of content and optimized three existing articles. New content included a range of topics from socially distant activities to tourism partner information. Additional itineraries and attraction pages were created based on keyword opportunities. Local insights allowed us to optimize content such as the fishing and ice fishing activities pages. ExploreWY.com website visitors from organic search totaled 38,027.

NEW CONTENT

- Socially Distant Activities
- Adobe Town
- Wildlife Viewing
- 5 Tips for Adventuring Responsibly
- 7 Reasons to Exit at Rock Springs & Green River
- Flaming Gorge Tour
- Tourism Partner Information
- Meeting Planners
- History of Green River
- Guide to Family Fun

OPTIMIZED CONTENT

- Fishing
- Ice Fishing
- 5 Safety Tips for Winter Road Tripping

SEARCH ENGINE MARKETING (JAN. - DEC. 2020)

- Travel guide orders increased 56% YoY (773 vs 497). While the conversion rate for travel guides increased 105% (2.94% vs 1.43%).
- Total goal completions (travel guide orders, e-newsletter signups, contact us and survival guide requests) increased 46% YoY (863 vs 593). While the overall conversion rate increased 92% YoY (3.28% vs 1.71%).
- Videos produced 428,359 views at a 25% view rate and a \$.01 cost per view.

PAID SOCIAL (JAN. - DEC. 2020)

- Total Impressions = 3,570,409
- Clicks = 25,710
- Click-Through-Rate = 0.72%
- E-News Sign ups = 206
- Visitor Guide Requests = 293



COVID-19 ADVERTISING: CARES ACT DMO RELIEF FUNDS

Here in Sweetwater County, we'll be ready to welcome you back when the time is right. And now more than ever, the well-being of locals, visitors and wildlife are a top priority. When you're ready to explore again, remember to travel responsibly so we can all enjoy the epic adventures and wild beauty only found in Rock Springs and Green River. In the meantime, discover vivid imagery, videos and virtual tours of Southwest Wyoming to inspire your future getaways.



2020 TRAVEL GUIDE



TRADITIONAL CAMPAIGN



Road tripping to Wyoming's National Parks is more than a generational American. Your experience. It's about hitting "reset". Escaping into a backdrop of pure nature, discovering extraordinary panoramas, and exploring western history at its finest. Clinging through the wilderness just won't do. Don't just Vacation. Explore.



SWEETWATER COUNTY TRAVEL IMPACTS 2007-2019

	2007	2010	2013	2015	2017	2018	2019	AVG. ANNUAL CHANGE 2007-2018
TOTAL DIRECT TRAVEL SPENDING (\$MILLION)								
Destination Spending	131.0	111.9	147.9	132.9	132.4	132.6	123.3	0.1%
Other Travel*	18.8	20.7	31.1	24.4	24.7	28.8	27.9	3.3%
Total	149.9	132.6	179.0	157.3	157.1	161.5	160.1	0.6%
VISITOR SPENDING BY TYPE OF TRAVELER ACCOMMODATION (\$MILLION)								
Hotel, Motel	86.5	67.2	90.6	82.7	81.4	80.6	80.0	-0.6%
Campground	7.6	7.7	11.1	8.6	9.7	9.7	9.9	2.3%
Private Home	15.4	17.5	21.2	19.4	19.1	19.9	19.9	2.2%
Vacation Home	1.2	1.3	1.6	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.9%
Day Travel	20.3	18.1	23.4	20.8	20.7	20.9	20.9	0.2%
Total	131.0	111.9	147.9	132.9	132.4	132.6	132.3	0.1%
VISITOR SPENDING BY COMMODITY PURCHASED (\$MILLION)								
Accommodations	39.0	27.6	35.8	35.3	34.5	32.9	33.1	-1.4%
Food Service	26.6	24.4	31.4	30.0	31.2	31.4	33.2	1.6%
Food Stores	7.5	6.8	8.7	8.2	8.0	7.8	7.9	0.4%
Local Tran. & Gas	20.5	20.4	32.1	23.3	23.0	25.4	24.0	1.3%
Arts, Ent. & Rec.	17.7	14.9	18.3	16.6	16.7	16.4	16.4	-0.6%
Retail Sales	19.7	17.3	20.9	18.9	18.3	18.0	17.9	-0.8%
Visitor Air Tran.	0.0	0.5	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.0%
Total	131.0	111.9	147.9	132.9	132.4	132.6	132.3	0.1%
INDUSTRY EARNINGS GENERATED BY TRAVEL SPENDING (\$MILLION)								
Accom. & Food Serv.	25.5	20.3	20.7	20.0	20.6	20.8	20.5	-1.8%
Arts, Ent. & Rec.	7.6	6.3	7.2	7.9	6.9	6.6	8.5	0.9%
Retail**	3.9	3.6	4.1	4.0	3.8	3.8	3.9	-0.2%
Ground Tran.	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.3%
Other Travel*	1.5	1.7	1.8	1.8	1.9	1.9	2.1	2.6%
Total	39.3	32.7	34.7	34.6	34.0	34.0	35.6	-0.8%
INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT GENERATED BY TRAVEL SPENDING (JOBS)								
Accom. & Food Serv.	1,170	870	840	800	780	780	760	-3.6%
Arts, Ent. & Rec.	550	410	450	480	420	390	450	-1.7%
Retail**	210	180	200	190	180	170	170	-1.8%
Ground Tran.	30	30	30	30	30	30	20	-1.5%
Other Travel*	50	60	60	60	60	60	60	1.5%
Total	2,010	1,540	1,580	1,560	1,470	1,430	1,460	-2.6%
TAX RECEIPTS GENERATED BY TRAVEL SPENDING (\$MILLION)								
Local Tax Receipts	3.0	2.4	3.0	3.2	3.1	2.7	2.8	-0.7%
State Tax Receipts	3.7	3.5	5.3	5.8	5.7	5.8	5.8	3.8%
Total	6.7	5.9	8.3	8.9	8.9	8.5	8.5	2.1%

TOTAL DIRECT TRAVEL SPENDING IN SWEETWATER COUNTY IN 2019 WAS \$160.1 MILLION, OR MORE THAN \$438,630 PER DAY.

Details may not add to total due to rounding. *Other Travel includes ground transportation and air travel impacts for travel to other Wyoming visitor destinations and travel arrangement services. ** Retail includes gasoline. Federal tax receipts not included.

Dean Runyan Report: An annual research study which shows the economic impact of the travel industry on the Wyoming economy. The Wyoming Office of Tourism invests over \$200,000 in research each year to provide a foundation for making strategic and tactical decisions about all marketing efforts.

