

PLATTE COUNTY  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Helping Business Ideas Become Reality  
Our Local Economic Newsletter

**FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS A SUCCESS DESPITE THE WINTRY WEATHER**

For over three months leading up to the Festival of Lights and Parade of Lights, a group of dedicated community leaders met at Wells Fargo Bank to plan for a festival that would piggyback on the Parade of Lights to give the residents of Wheatland a bigger, more festive and less commercial way to celebrate the beginning of the Christmas season.

Wheatland has been fortunate to have Linda Bye as the coordinator of the Parade of Lights for many years, and she has done an excellent job of getting businesses and organizations to participate in this midwinter occasion when the weather doesn't always cooperate.

This year it was suggested that the festival could be expanded by lighting up the facades of the downtown businesses to provide a spectacular Christmas lighting festival unlike anything ever seen before in Wheatland. With the help of Wheatland High School volunteers, Youth Challenge volunteers from Camp Guernsey, and a huge effort on the part of the downtown merchants, the 4-block business area at the intersection of Gilchrist Avenue and 9th Street was transformed into what one resident referred to as "Something out of a children's fairytale."

Missouri Basin Power Project donated the money to the Platte County Courthouse for new lighting, the Town of Wheatland provided lights and other decorations to Justin Herdt to decorate the Downtown Pocket Park, and Wells Fargo installed a sound system to provide music to the downtown shoppers.

Businesses had been working on this lighting project since before Thanksgiving, keeping things "under cover" until the night of Friday, December 4. At 5:30 that evening, floats were assembled at the Wheatland Co-op, and at 6:00 they began the trip up South Street and along 9th Street to the intersection on Gilchrist where Derek Barton described each float as it came by. Santa then did a countdown which was broadcast on KYCN/KZEW radio, and at "Zero!" the Christmas lights all over the historic (See p. 6)



One of the many decorated flower pots in downtown Wheatland

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## So Long, 2009...Let's Work For Better in 2010

2009 hasn't been a year to necessarily celebrate when it comes to the economy of Platte County and Wyoming. We've seen businesses that have been here for many years shut their doors. "For Sale" signs are almost as plentiful as campaign signs during an election year. The downtowns of our communities have buildings that have been sitting empty for months. The unemployment rate in Platte County, though about average for the state for Wyoming and much better than the nation's, has hovered at around 6% for much of the year and hit 7% in November.

That's not the kind of news any of us would wish for. However, there are three really bright spots on the radar that we all need to consider. The first is that sales tax collection is only down slightly from a year ago. That's good because it's an indicator that people are buying locally and supporting our local businesses. It's also telling us that the optional 1% sales tax is also doing well. So our community projects like the new outdoor swimming pool in Guernsey and the remodeling of the fire hall in Wheatland are being paid off quickly.

Secondly, in tough times people really start being creative about ways to make money. Platte County Economic Development recently hosted two workshops in Wheatland to encourage entrepreneurs with new ideas to get started in their own businesses. We know that many established companies got started during periods of economic recession, and it is our aim to help locals with sound business ideas to get started, no matter what the economy might throw at us.

The third reason to be upbeat is that there (See p. 7)



## Board of Directors

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Thane Ashenurst  
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Dan Brecht, Executive Director  
Cindy Shaffer, Executive Assistant

### **Mission Statement**

*Platte County Economic Development Corporation promotes and facilitates business and industry endeavors for current and future generations*



## *In the Spotlight* Drube Supply



Shoppers are lined up at both registers, clerks are assisting customers looking for that special gift, and today both Marley and Macie, the dachshunds belonging to the Ashenhurst family, are watching with obvious interest as I enter through the automatic sliding doors at the front entrance to Drube Supply at 609 16th Street in Wheatland. Immediately I am greeted by one of the clerks, and then I notice a friend whom I haven't seen in a few weeks, and we exchange greetings and discuss the

weather. It's not uncommon to see at least two of the Ashenhursts in the store at any time because this is truly a family owned and operated business. Thane and Keri want the store to be a family business, and many of life's important lessons have been taught to their three children, Oliver, Slater, and Chloe, in this very building. Today, Oliver is at the check stand and Thane is waiting on customers. Angie Goddard and Lee Johnson, two of the additional employees, are stocking shelves and waiting on

customers. It seems to always be busy, and the store is usually bustling with activity.

Today I am here to interview Thane and to pick up a pound of my favorite coffee. It looks like Christmas both inside and outside the store with lights and Christmas gifts and even a table full of cookies...it's their Second Annual Cookie Contest, and it's drawing a lot of interest from the customers.

Thane and I go to his office, and in just 45 minutes I learn a great deal about the business from Thane. He and Keri purchased the business from his brother, Lance, in 1991. Back then the store was a welding and machine shop. They manufactured the legendary Drube stackers, metal beds and shelving for prisons in Colorado, as well as custom products for the local trade.

When the number of travel days got to be more than they liked, the Ashenhursts sold the machinery and welding business and turned the front 3,000 square feet of the building into a hardware store, while still doing some welding in the back. A year later, in 2003, (See p. 7)



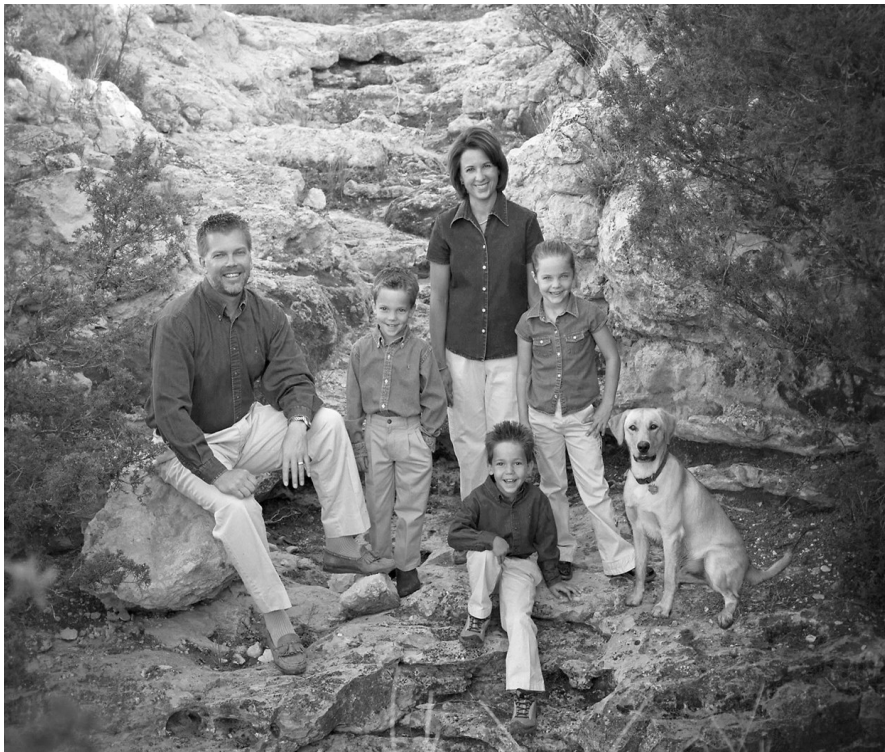
## An Interview With Alan Madsen... Businessman, Family Man, and Tireless Community Volunteer

You know the instant you strike up a conversation with Alan Madsen that you're talking with a person who is upbeat, energetic, and very much "on top" of what's going on in the community and beyond. I recently spent part of a morning chatting with Alan to learn more about him and his vision for Wheatland and Platte County.

Alan was born in Laramie, and he moved with his family to Wheatland in 1975 when he was in the 7th Grade. His parents, Bob and Theresa, had just bought the Hested's store, changed the name to Ben Franklin, and set about making the store a premier retail business in Wheatland and Platte County. Alan spent a lot of time at the store learning about retail business and customer service.

After graduating from Wheatland High School, Alan attended Eastern Wyoming Community College and the University of Wyoming before going to work for Century 21 the RITE Agency in Wheatland.

After three years in the real estate business, Alan picked up roots and moved to Lincoln, Nebraska where he worked for Nortel, a large telecommunica-



tion company headquartered in Canada. He held a variety of positions with Nortel, and quickly moved up the corporate ladder.

In 2003, Alan and his wife, Stephani, decided to move their family to Wheatland after they had done some serious research into starting the business they run today...Premier Title. They purchased the building that they are in today at 900 8th Street that same year, and they have been doing title work steadily ever since.

Alan and Stephani have three children. Connor and Alise are both twelve, and their youngest, Haydn, is eleven. All three attend schools in Wheatland, and the entire family keeps busy with a variety of activities outside of school and work. The kids are active in 4-H, participate

in a variety of sports, and also enjoy spending time with Mom and Dad hunting, fishing, and other outdoor activities.

In addition to his business Alan is involved in a myriad of activities and organizations. He stays involved with his kids' sports through coaching which takes a lot of his time, but it's time that he can be with his children.

Alan is also on the Wheatland Town Council. There have been tough decisions to make as the council

has to deal with a shrinking budget due to the recession, and Alan sees an even tighter budget for next year. But that hasn't kept him from developing a vision of what Wheatland can be. He wants the Town of Wheatland to work to rejuvenate the downtown and become more active in projects that will help the entire town. "Much of this has to be done in small steps, but we can find our niche as other communities have done," he adds, He has traveled a great deal the last 15 years, and he pays attention to what's going on elsewhere as far as economic development goes. Making our community look more attractive, promoting and expanding sports events and tournaments are all things he believes a community can and should promote. (P. 6)

## Novelution Wind Develops Plans for Platte County's First Wind Generation Project Near Chugwater

Novelution Wind...the name is as intriguing as the prospects of Platte County seeing its very first wind turbines erected..and that is exactly what Novelution Wind is proposing to do this coming summer near Chugwater.

Tom Laviolette, President of Novelution Wind, LLC, is an energetic person, who believes strongly in the value of wind as a viable energy source for the nation and the perfect industry for Platte County. He is so dedicated to making his company work in Wyoming that he has set up shop here. Novelution Wind opened the first such office in Platte County in the new business building in Chugwater, hired a Chugwater native as their Office Manager, and has made Chugwater their home office.

Tom and his company have also joined the American Wind Energy Association (AWEA), the national organization representing and promoting wind energy domestically and internationally.

Novelution Wind has a fairly ambitious project scheduled for Platte County. The first phase of their project will involve putting up 116 General Electric 1.5 megawatt turbines east of Chugwater along Highway 313. Installing that many turbines requires a considerable amount of manpower and machinery. Tom predicts that during the construction of phase one a minimum of 35 and a maximum workforce of 380 would be needed. That spike in the workforce would happen sometime during the second quarter of 2010.

In the future Novelution Wind has a second and third phase proposed as well. 370 additional 1.5 megawatt wind turbines would be installed in phase two, adding an additional 555 megawatts of power, and in phase three 314 of the G. E. turbines would add another 471 megawatts of power to the wind portfolio of their company. Dates for the second and third phases of the project have not been announced and are contingent on transmission of the electricity out of Platte County.

While it sounds like a very ambitious program it is important to note that Tom has a very strong commitment to doing everything in accordance with Wyoming statutes and to cause the least amount of impact to the Chugwater area while also working hard to provide jobs to local residents and to do business in the local area whenever possible. The company is presently working on the Industrial Siting Permit with the State of Wyoming. As part of that process, Novelution Wind has held Open House meetings in both Chugwater and Wheatland. Environmental studies to determine the impact of such a project on wildlife, wetlands and areas of historical significance are underway as well.

Although Tom is presently out of the office most of the time as he works to complete the Industrial Siting Permit, LaCynda Fortik, the Office Manager, is there to greet walk-in (See p. 6)



*1.5 Megawatt General Electric wind turbines*

**NOVELUTION WIND (CONT.)**

customers, answer the phones and take care of the other office work you might expect from a wind company getting ready to begin a major building project. Novelution Wind, LLC also has a website that gives you information about their company although I'm sure more information will be coming as the project continues to take shape. Meanwhile, the folks at Novelution are going to be busy completing permits and meeting deadlines. And for those of you who didn't make either of the open houses in December, they have plans for a public meeting sometime in January. Time and location for that meeting will be announced at a later date, but it will certainly be a meeting anyone interested in the future of wind generation and transmission in southeast Wyoming will want to attend.

In the meantime, if you have questions or comments, the Novelution office is in the Chugwater Business Building located at 215 First Street in downtown Chugwater. Their phone number is 307.422,3346 or you can email them at info@novelutionwind.com.

**ALAN MADSEN (CONT'D.)**

It seems to me that our community is in capable hands with Alan on the Wheatland Town Council, and his hard work and progressive vision for Platte County Economic Development Corporation will help us to continue on the positive path we are taking to promote Platte County as a good place to live, work and do business.

**ANNUAL MEETING & BANQUET HELD IN OCTOBER**

The Platte County Economic Development Corporation held its annual meeting and banquet for the fiscal year 2008/2009 at Vimbo's Dusty Boots on October 22, 2009. The meeting was well attended with over 40 members and guests in attendance.

Board elections were held during this event resulting in Alan Madsen being re-elected for the 3-year term and Linda Virant being elected to finish a three year term vacated earlier.

This year's special guest speaker was Joan Evans, director of the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services. Ms. Evans gave the group an overview of how the national economy is effecting jobs and job services in the state of Wyoming. She also discussed how Platte County ranks in terms of unemployment. In addition she had some encouraging words on the economy of Wyoming and where the state ranks nationally.

**PCED BOARD HOLDS ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

The Platte County Economic Development Corporation Board of Directors held their Executive Board Officers election at the November Board Meeting. The Executive Board Officers for 2008-2009 will remain the same for 2009-2010, with Jeff Brown as Chairman, Mona Sherard as Vice-Chairperson, Chuck Ruwart as Treasurer and Jennifer Windmeier as Secretary. The next meeting will be January 20th.

**LIGHTS FESTIVAL (CONT.)**

downtown district came on simultaneously to the delight of the hundreds of spectators.

Holiday revelers then gathered at the pocket park where Santa listened to the young ones describe in detail the items on their Christmas wish list. First State Bank employees were also there with homemade cookies, hot chocolate and hot apple cider to pass out to the pedestrians while members of Project Safe took photographs of the tots sitting on Santa's lap.

Just around the corner on the second floor of the Masonic Temple, the Mason's hosted a well-attended chili and pie supper to raise money for scholarships.

Despite the frigid, "breezy" weather, there was a great turnout to see the lights of the floats and the buildings and to be a part of a very special event marking the beginning of the Christmas season.

Hats off to the many volunteers, downtown merchants and building owners, and parade participants who made this festival possible.



*One of many decorated downtown businesses*

## Calendar of Events for Jan., Feb. & March

### JANUARY

- 1 **New Year**
- 4 Chugwater Council Meeting
- 4 PCSD 2 resumes school
- 5 Platte County Commissioners
- 5 PCSD 1 resumes school
- 5 Guernsey Council Meeting
- 6 Glendo Council Meeting
- 7 Wheatland P&Z Meeting
- 11 PCSD 2 board meeting
- 11 Wheatland Council Meeting
- 13 Hartville Council Meeting
- 13 Platte County P&Z Meeting
- 15 **New Moon**
- 18 PCSD 1 board meeting
- 18 **Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**
- 18 Wyoming Equality Day
- 19 Platte County Commissioners
- 19 Guernsey Council Meeting
- 18 Wyoming Equality Day
- 20 PCED Board Meeting
- 18 S.E. Wyo. RC&D Board Mtng.
- 23 PCCC Casino Night
- 30 **Full Moon**

### FEBRUARY

- 1 Chugwater Council Meeting
- 2 Platte County Commissioners
- 2 Guernsey Council Meeting
- 3 Glendo Council Meeting
- 4 Wheatland P&Z Meeting
- 8 PCSD 2 Board Meeting
- 8 Wheatland Council Meeting
- 10 Hartville Council Meeting
- 10 Platte County P&Z Meeting
- 12 **President Lincoln's Birthday**
- 12 PCSD 1 no school
- 14 **Valentine's Day**
- 14 **New Moon**
- 15 PCSD 1 board meeting
- 15 PCSD 1 no school
- 16 **President's Day**
- 16 Platte County Commissioners
- 16 Guernsey Council Meeting
- 17 PCED Board Meeting
- 17 **Ash Wednesday**

- 22 **Pres. Washington's Birthday**
- 28 **Full Moon**

### MARCH

- 1 Chugwater Council Meeting
- 2 Platte County Commissioners
- 2 Guernsey Council Meeting
- 4 Wheatland P&Z Meeting
- 3 Glendo Council Meeting
- 8 PCSD 2 Board Meeting
- 8 Wheatland Council Meeting
- 8-26 PAWS testing
- 10 Hartville Council Meeting
- 10 Platte County P&Z Meeting
- 15 PCSD 1 board meeting
- 15 **New Moon**
- 16 Platte County Commissioners
- 16 Guernsey Council Meeting
- 17 PCED Board Meeting
- 17 **St. Patrick's Day**
- 26 PCSD 1 early release
- 28 **Palm Sunday**
- 29—April 2 PCSD 1 spring break
- 30 **Passover**
- 30 **Full Moon**

### APRIL

- 2 PCSD 2 Easter Break Begins
- 2 **Good Friday**
- 4 **Easter Sunday**

### SO LONG 2009 (CONT'D.)

is some light at the end of the tunnel economically for Platte County. The representatives of the American Renewable Energy Associates (AREA) hope to have their plans for a waste-to-energy power plant ready by January of 2010 and believe they can begin construction of their facility west of Guernsey soon after. In addition, Novelution Wind, LLC, is proposing to

build a wind farm east of Chugwater. Additional jobs for Platte County residents would be created. Let's hope these and other projects come to fruition in 2010. Happy New Year!

### DRUBE SUPPLY (CONT'D.)

to be exact, the Ashenhursts transitioned totally into hardware and later expanded into paint, agriculture and pet products, and house wares. Thane explains that the store changed from being "a man's world" to a store that caters equally to men and women. He also emphasizes that they are a "hard" hardware store, offering the supplies needed to get things fixed and people back to work.

In November of 2007 Thane and Keri finished the south addition, using materials they purchased in North Dakota.

Thane and Keri have a great work ethic, and they have instilled that in their children. Thane believes that employees who know how to work are one of Wyoming's greatest assets. "Platte County is full of great people and a willing work force. Wyoming people know how to work, and that's what will get us through these hard times."

As I leave with my coffee and a cookie, Thane stresses that he is very optimistic about the future, and I know that with brilliant, energetic people like Thane & Keri we are in great hands here in Platte County.

*Helping Business Ideas Become Reality*

P.O. Box 988 · 1560 Johnston · Wheatland, WY 82201  
Phone: 307.322.4232 · Fax: 307.322.1629

## 2009-2010 Membership

### *Our People Make the Difference*

Amazing Monogramming  
BlueWire  
Bob Ruwart Motors  
Dan Brecht  
Britz, William (Dr.)  
Brown Company  
Burns Insurance  
Century 21 Rite Agency  
Crile Carvey Consulting  
Dance Wyoming  
Double S Livestock  
Dr. David Halsey Optometry  
Drube Supply  
First American Title  
First State Bank  
Geringer Group  
Gorman Funeral Homes, Inc.  
H & H Concrete Construction  
Integrity Cabinets & Millwork  
Laramie Peak Motors  
Laramie Peak Realty

Lynda Lenz, State Farm Agent  
Mader, Tschacher, Peterson & Co.  
McBayer Insurance Company  
Mike's Printing & Office Supply  
Norb Olind Construction  
Notch Peak Ranch  
Noyce's Friendly Shop  
Peak Wellness Center  
Platte County Chamber of Commerce  
Platte County Commissioners  
Platte County Hospital District  
Platte County Memorial Hospital  
Platte County Record Times  
Platte County School District #1  
Platte Valley Bank  
Premier Title Company  
Quilt Rustler  
Qwest  
Reichardt, Stacey  
Seidel Construction

Shepard Farms  
Sherard Realty  
Sherard, Sherard & Johnson  
Smith Broadcasting  
Source Gas  
Stoll Brothers, LLC  
TDS Trash Service  
Tom Bramlet Farmer's Union Ins.  
Tillman Tacos LLC/dba Taco Johns  
Turf Master LLC  
Weaver, Cathy (CPA)  
Weaver, Doug (Attorney)  
Wells Fargo Bank  
Wheatland Coop Association  
Wheatland Golf Club  
Wheatland REA  
Wheatland, Town of  
Wheatland Workforce Center  
Wilhelm, Jeff  
Wyoming Business Council  
Wyoming Pure Natural Beef, LLC

#### Ex Officio Members

Colonel Joe Dunn, Camp Guernsey      Claudia Teeters, Camp Guernsey  
Anja Bendel, High Plains Economic Development District  
Bruce Heimback Guernsey Community Development

***Welcome New Members of PCED for October through December, 2009!!*** as follows:

Crile Carvey Consulting      Guernsey Community Development  
High Plains Economic Development

***Thanks to Missouri Basin Power Project for their generous donation toward our community work!***



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