



CAEDA's Robert Barnes Elected to WEDA Board

By Jennifer Scott, CAEDA

CAEDA's President and CEO Robert Barnes, Jr. was recently elected the President-Elect of the Wyoming Economic Development Association (WEDA). "WEDA is an organization growing in both leadership and vision," Robert said. "Economic development in Wyoming has a great deal of upside potential. I enjoy being part of this very energetic and professional team."

Robert will be serving with WEDA Board President Phil Christopherson of IDEA in Riverton and Secretary-Treasurer Leah Bruscano of Wyoming Business Council NW Region in Powell. The additional WEDA board members are Brad Sutherland of Green River Futures in Green River; Ruth Benson of the Campbell County Economic Development Corporation in Gillette; Craig Nelson of Rocky Mountain Power in Rock Springs; Lorraine Quarberg of the Thermopolis-Hot Spring Economic Development Company; Philippe Chino of Forward Sheridan; Linda Harris of the Northeast Wyoming Economic Development Coalition; Ben Avery of the Wyoming Business Council in Cheyenne; Jackie Bredthauer of the Niobrara Chamber of Commerce in Lusk; Bob Jensen of the Wyoming Business Council in Cheyenne; and Paula McCormick, WEDA Coordinator in Lander.

Formed in 1985 as a non-profit professional group, WEDA represents 200 economic development individual members and organizations. The association seeks to build a strong, diversified economy at both the local and state levels. WEDA promotes economic development through lobbying efforts, educational tools and public relations. They distribute a number of economic development publications including *The Toolbox* and *Success Stories*. WEDA also provides networking and training opportunities for its members through its conferences and professional development scholarships.

WEDA works directly with private businesses around the state, community economic development organizations such as CAEDA, chambers of commerce, government and the Wyoming Business Council. These partnerships focus on developing a strong economic infrastructure that includes workforce training, transportation, and housing, as well as business retention, expansion and recruitment.

Focusing heavily on public policy issues, WEDA acts a liaison between local and state economic development efforts. For the current legislative session, WEDA announced its support for several bills including:

- *The Wyoming Partnership Challenge Loan Program* proposed by the Wyoming Business Council.
- *Career and Technical Training Grants* and the *Wyoming Industry Partnership Act* proposed by the Department of Workforce Services.
- *HB 84: Industrial Park Incentive Program* providing tax reductions and exemptions as incentives for attracting community and economic development projects.
- *International Tourism/Trade Development – Emerging Markets* targeting economic opportunities with Asia.
- The Wyoming Business Council's *Workforce Housing Program* and *Wyoming Community Facilities Program*.



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These programs all support WEDA's mission to "provide leadership and support to foster economic development in Wyoming." To learn more about WEDA, its activities and publications, please visit www.wyomingeda.org.



CAEDA's Robert Barnes is now serving on the WEDA board of directors.