



Economic Development Board Lends Support to “Proud to Host the Best”

The Economic Development Joint Powers Board (EDJPB) recently approved an allocation of \$90,000 to the “Proud to Host the Best” campaign. “Proud to Host the Best” is a community effort to keep Wyoming’s high school athletic tournaments in Casper. “I was thrilled when Mark Pepper (EDJPB Chair) confirmed that the Economic Development Joint Powers Board had agreed to contribute \$90,000 to the Proud to Host the Best Committee,” said Aaron McCreight, CEO of the Casper Area Convention & Visitors Bureau. “The Convention & Visitors Bureau is excited to have the Economic Development Joint Powers Board as a partner throughout this process.”

Each year high school volleyball, wrestling, basketball and track & field culminating events bring millions of dollars to Casper businesses. In light of this economic significance, the EDJPB voted to contribute to the Proud to Host the Best Committee at the December 10, 2009 meeting. “As an economic development entity charged with generating and or protecting jobs and tax base, this investment clearly meets our charge,” said Mark Pepper, Chairman of the EDJPB. “These events generate an immediate \$4.5 million infusion into the area economy as well as exposing all the area has to offer for potential return visits. To me it was a no brainer.”

The Proud to Host the Best Committee will present their bid in February to the Wyoming High School Activities Association to renew its host city contract. The deciding panel is made of up 16 members from throughout the state, with each high school level (1A through 4A) having four representatives. With a wide variety of sporting facilities, lodging, dining, and recreational opportunities, Casper is a natural choice for hosting the events. However other cities, including Laramie and Gillette, are vying for the opportunity to bring the tournaments to their area. “The City of Casper will face serious challengers when the tournaments go to the bid process in February,” McCreight said.

The Convention and Visitors Bureau promotes the Casper area and its mission is to enhance the economic base of Natrona County through tourism. Its primary objective is to encourage more and longer visitor stays through marketing programs aimed at the convention, meeting and special events markets, as wells as individual visitors.

The EDJPB was established to promote economic development in Natrona County and has a primary interest in job creation and attraction, growth of a skilled workforce, and local economic expansion and diversification. The EDJPB works directly with the Casper Area Economic Development Alliance (CAEDA) to achieve these goals. It is made of up two representatives from the City of Casper, Natrona County and one appointed citizen from the business community. Currently Mark Pepper (Chair), Stefanie Boster (Casper City Council), Kate Sarosy (Casper City Council), Matt Keating (Natrona County Commission) and Terry Wingerter (Natrona County Commission) serve on the EDJPB.

Basketball is just one of many high school sports that “Proud to Host the Best” hopes to keep in Casper.



CASPER AREA ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE, INC.

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Photo courtesy of the Casper Area Convention & Visitors Bureau.