

By Dennis E. Curran

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## Cheyenne LEADS celebrates its success

More than 400 Cheyenne LEADS members and supporters turned out to celebrate the Cheyenne/Laramie County economic development corporation's success over the past two years.

LEADS President Randy Bruns said LEADS has had its "best run ever" over the past two years, while keynote speaker Arty Allen said he is using Cheyenne and Laramie County as a positive example to economic development groups across the country.

"This is a celebration," Allen said at the LEADS annual meeting and dinner Friday night. "Congratulations to you."

Bruns said LEADS has attracted 14 new companies to Cheyenne over the past two years, including six last year and two already this year. When the eight newest companies are up and running, they will add 340 high-paying jobs to the community, he said.

"All in all, it has been a very good year," Bruns said. "But none of this happened by accident or serendipity. Twenty-five years ago, the business community of this town said we have to do something" and formed LEADS.

Looking ahead in 2011, "we're looking forward to a very good year," he said.

Bruns also lauded Granite Peak Development's new Swan Ranch Industrial Rail Park as a non-LEADS-owned facility that brings Cheyenne a business site with rail access for the first time. "This facility is going to be a driver of Laramie County's economy for years to come."

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Allen is senior vice president of National Community Development Services Inc., the national economic development consultant that helped Cheyenne LEADS launch its successful Progress and Prosperity campaigns. The two campaigns raised \$2.6 million in private funds for economic development infrastructure, including the new North Range Business Park.

One of the anchor tenants of that business park is the Wal-Mart food distribution center, which will have a payroll of \$216 million over the next 10 years, Allen noted.

The North Range Business Park also will be home to the NCAR-Wyoming Super Computing Center, which will bring "enormous" intangible benefits to Wyoming, Allen said.

"The day NCAR announced it was going to Cheyenne, Wyoming, was the day the world noticed," he said.

The impact of LEADS is \$147 million a year in annual payroll, he said. Still, Allen warned LEADS members not to rest on their laurels.

"Be careful," he said. "Just because it's working today doesn't mean it will work tomorrow. Don't be complacent."