



POWDER RIVER BASIN

Resource Council

A grassroots conservation and family agriculture organization helping citizens to conserve and protect Wyoming's land, water, air, and other natural resources, essential to our quality of life today and for future generations





Wyoming Produces 12% of The Nation's Energy

- Wyoming is the largest coal and uranium producing state in the country and a top natural gas and oil producer and also provides substantial wind energy.
- Only 5 countries produce more energy than Wyoming – Saudi Arabia, Russia, Canada and Iran.









Wyoming the Energy Colony

“The energy companies are carving Wyoming up like a Halloween pumpkin and privatizing most of the benefits.” Randy Udall



The Gillette Syndrome

- **Gillette Syndrome** is a term used to describe the social disruption that can occur in a community due to rapid population growth. Such disruptions usually include increased crime, degraded mental health, weakened social and community bonds, abnormally high costs of living, and other social problems.
- The term is usually applied to boomtowns that are growing rapidly due to nearby natural resource extraction, such as coal mining or natural gas drilling.
- The term was coined by psychologist ElDean Kohrs in an attempt to describe the social impacts of rapid coal mining development on the boomtown of Gillette, Wyoming. (Wikipedia)

Police cope with growing crime from boom

March 2, 2006

“The number of reported crimes in Sweetwater County has increased from 2,499 in 2002 to 2,773 in 2004, an 11 percent increase, according to state crime statistics. Since Nov. 13, the new, \$12.5 million, 211-bed Sweetwater County jail in Rock Springs has booked 523 people. The jail just opened in October, and there's already talk of needing to expand it.”

CBM road to growth brings a price

Sheridan Press January 5th , 2007

“Sheridan County Commissioner Larry Durante spoke to The Sheridan Press about the lack of money available for county road maintenance.

The commissioner said companies are making billions off coal-bed methane development, while the county struggles to maintain its infrastructure.

"The problem is, our roads weren't built to support 120,000-pound vehicles. How do we maintain them so they're safe to travel on for both coal-bed methane companies and ordinary people without funds?" Durante asked in October.

Lofgren said that, of the approximately 525 miles of county roads, 250 miles have been, are, or will be affected by coal-bed methane activity.



Boom brings more drowsy drivers

Casper Star Tribune – August 20, 2007

Many of those workers are considered to be the riskiest kind of driver -- young men willing to take chances and reluctant to wear seat belts.

They're also bringing more alcohol and drugs onto the highways, and they gobble up hotel rooms, forcing sleepy travelers in some cases to stay behind the wheel.

“There definitely are a lot of guys who are pushing the envelope,” said Brian Bragonier, a Wyoming Highway Patrol trooper who was stationed near the heart of one of the state's busiest natural gas fields at Wamsutter.



County struggles with road dust

Star-Tribune energy reporter Wednesday, April 06, 2005

From a distance, the entire valley is under a long, dense haze. And when driving on the gravel Clarkelen Road, down the center of the haze, tractor-trailers rush past trailing thick plumes of dust that make it impossible to see oncoming traffic.

"It's a health issue, not only for people, but for crops, livestock and the wildlife," said Mildred Marquiss, who has lived with her husband on Clarkelen Road for 18 years.

Commissioners had set aside about \$5 million in the annual budget for the road and bridge department. However, the county has a limited number of trucks that can haul dust-controlling material from outside the county, Weakly said. Also, the county is scrambling for what seems to be a limited supply of roto-mill, or asphalt.



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“In 2001, my wife suffered severe asthma attacks on four different occasions from all the road dust associated with the development. Even with medication and the use of a Breathalyzer she nearly had to go to the hospital emergency ward to get help to breathe. We are finally licked. Our dream of living in our retirement home has been shattered.”

Ron Moss

Energy development changes town

Associated Press – December 27, 2004

BAGGS - But the influx of transient drilling industry workers has also brought a jump in crime.

"It's hard to get a family guy to work on an oil rig," said Mark Lapinskas, the town's police chief and one-man force. "They work hard. They play hard. The kind of people who come to work here are rough."

Calls for police service have almost doubled in the past year, Lapinskas said.

Governor backs aid for counties

Associated Press - Wednesday, November 16, 2005

“Right now, the state gets the revenue, and the local governments get the bill,” Freudenthal said. “The surge in natural gas production has strained some local budgets in Wyoming to the breaking point as towns and counties try to meet dramatically increased needs for infrastructure.”

Address local impacts faced by boom towns

Casper Star editorial – November 21, 2005

- “The Wyoming counties most heavily affected by rapid energy development should be thriving in the boom. And if not thriving, at least surviving.”
- “Yet the growth resulting in state government's record \$1.8 billion budget surplus is putting tremendous pressures on many communities where that activity is greatest.”
- “The robust pace of development means added pressure on municipal and county government, public safety, health care, affordable housing and sanitation services. It also means streets and sewers get more use than anyone ever expected, and city staff members from mayor to dogcatcher work longer hours.”

In a Red State Rolling in Green, a Relaxed Attitude



Source: NY
Times

10/5/08

“I make over \$100,000 a year,” bragged Eric Palmer, who works as a gas field operator... “I spend \$3,000 a weekend here,” he said. “I just love the company of beautiful women.”

“I find it odd that we are so for finding alternative sources of energy when this is where the money is,” said Meesa, a stripper in the club who came from Idaho and asked to be identified by only her stage name. She makes about \$500 a night. “The guys here are paid hand over fist for extremely hard labor,” she said, “and there is no where to spend it here but on us.”

Sexual predators flock to energy boom towns

Oil and gas attract more criminals than tourism or agriculture do.

Nature News February 19, 2010

“Oil and gas development has long drawn criticism for its environmental effects, which range from road-killed wildlife to unhealthy ozone levels. But a study published in Conservation Biology now shows that it has social effects, too. Focusing on just one aspect of lawlessness — sexual predation — the study has found that twice to three times as many sexual predators are flocking to the boom towns as to nearby tourist, ranching and farming communities.”

Boom hits Wyo court system

By PHIL WHITE Star-Tribune correspondent Monday, August 13, 2007

“The energy boom has brought with it major increases in criminal and juvenile court cases in some counties and is having enormous effects on the functioning of the courts, several judges and court officials say.”

“The judges all emphasized that the energy boom has brought a rapid influx of dysfunctional families which is also severely challenging the schools, the social service agencies, medical care facilities and law enforcement. Perry said the county jail in Gillette was designed to handle 109 inmates but regularly has more than 150.”

An Energy Boom does not Benefit Everyone

- “While rising energy-related commodities have increased the state’s treasury and led to low unemployment rates, they have also hurt citizens at the fuel pumps and cash registers.” - *Wyoming Inflation: Report: Rate high as 8.1 percent*, Sheridan Press, March 31, 2008, *citing Wyoming Economic Analysis Division report*
- “Those who do not work in the energy industries or who do not own shares of production see little of the additional income generated by the boom.” – Equality State Policy Center, *The State of Working Wyoming*, Feb. 2008

The Price of the Oil and Gas Industry

1. The inability to collect industry's fair share of taxes thereby over-burdening other citizens disproportionately.
2. The inability to allocate costs where they belong—to the industry that causes them. Costs such as transmission lines, pipelines, roads, surface damage, reduction in property values, and public services are allocated disproportionately to citizens rather than to industry.

3. Huge costs to the resources that sustain us all
– Water, soil and air. Replaced with air and water pollution, visual insult, noise pollution, loss of habitat and wildlife and eminent domain takings of private property.
4. Costs for increases in crime, domestic violence, drug use and other emergency and public safety problems.

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