

Firearms Manufacturer To Relocate To Sheridan



[Kevin @ County 17](#) POSTED ON JANUARY 24, 2018



(Gillette, Wyo.) The big name behind "Project Enterprise" was finally announced last night at Black Tooth Brewing in Sheridan.

Firearms manufacturer Weatherby, Inc., is relocating its manufacturing operations and corporate headquarters from California to Sheridan, Wyoming.

The State Loan and Investment Board awarded the Sheridan Economic and Education Development Authority (SEEDA) Joint Powers board a \$12.6 million grant request, which was used to entice the business to locate here.

In order to keep the proposed relocation secret until official, SEEDA's application referred to the company under the pseudonym "Project Enterprise."

The move is expected to create 70- 90 jobs and more than \$5 million annually in payroll in the next five years.

Outdoor recreation is an economic driver in Wyoming, and manufacturing plays a vital role in any economy, according to Shawn Reese, chief executive officer of the Wyoming Business Council.

"So, to bring those two things together – an internationally-known manufacturer of outdoor equipment headquartered in Wyoming – it will pay dividends, not only to Sheridan and northeast Wyoming, but this is a project of which the entire state should be proud," Reese said.

Besides a generous public funding package, Wyoming wooed the renowned gunmaker with its expansive access to unrivaled big game hunting, low taxes, industry-friendly environment, and Sheridan College's workforce training program.

"We wanted a place where we could retain a great workforce, and where our employees could live an outdoor lifestyle," said Adam Weatherby, chief executive officer. "We wanted to move to a state where we can grow into our brand. Wyoming means new opportunities. We are not interested in maintaining; we are growing."

Governor Matt Mead and the Wyoming Business Council, the state's economic development agency, began recruiting Weatherby a year ago.

"Wyoming is a great place to do business and is excited to welcome Weatherby to Sheridan," Mead said. "For over 70 years, Weatherby has been an innovator in firearms design and manufacturing. The company will add to our manufacturing base and fit well with our diversification objectives.

"I thank the Wyoming Business Council, the Sheridan Economic and Education Development Authority, and all who helped bring Weatherby, Inc. to Wyoming."

Weatherby called Mead's enthusiastic support and accessibility a major asset for a company operating in a highly-regulated industry.

"From the get-go, when we met the governor, he said, 'Here's my number, shoot me a text any time,'" Weatherby said. "He responds to our needs quickly, and it shows a business like ours is important to Wyoming and that it's a big deal here."

Business Council staff took Weatherby officials on tours of potential sites for their facility around the state following the initial conversations.

Sheridan stood out to Weatherby executives because of its access to both the outdoors and a skilled workforce.

“There are a lot of great places in Wyoming, but Sheridan stood out as a New West community that’s progressive and growing, with a vibrant downtown in the shadow of the Bighorns and a mild climate,” Weatherby said. “Sheridan College, which is growing its manufacturing and machine tool program, was also a deciding factor.”

Sheridan College President Dr. Paul Young called Weatherby’s recruitment an example of the work it will take to diversify Wyoming’s economy.

“This is the direct result of years and years of visioning, planning and strategically investing in the things that matter for the future of our region,” Young said. “With the help of Whitney Benefits and others, we have been strengthening and growing our technical programs for this very reason, and we will continue to provide opportunities for students to learn valuable skills to secure a solid future.”

The Business Council worked with the SEEDA to develop the incentive package. The authority committed \$2,283,074 in local match funds, of which \$322,874 is cash. The other \$1,960,200 is in-kind match for Lot 1 in the Sheridan High-Tech Business Park. The joint powers board will use the money to build a 100,000 square-foot building in the Sheridan High-Tech Business Park. SEEDA will own the facility and lease it to Weatherby.

Weatherby will invest an estimated \$2 million in relocation expenses and cover all capital investment in the building and lot over the life of the 20-year lease, which is expected to be well over \$4 million.

Should Weatherby cease manufacturing operations after the relocation, the company will be required to payback SEEDA investment funds.