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Campbell, Crook and Weston Counties launch Next Gen Sector Partnership

A new strategy for public-private partnerships in Wyoming took a big step forward last week with the launch of a Next Generation Sector Partnership in Campbell, Crook and Weston counties. Finance and insurance industry leaders from various companies met in Gillette and Upton to choose priorities they feel will best foster growth in the financial industry. Public-sector representatives sat around the perimeter of the room, with strict instructions to only watch and listen, for now.

The Next Gen strategy aims to position industry professionals as the leaders in economic growth, with the public sector (such as economic developers, educators and workforce professionals) following their lead. It's a reversal from how such partnerships tend to operate, with the public sector frequently directing industries toward their own vision of the future. And it asks companies to do something they wouldn't normally do: sit down with their competitors to discuss mutually beneficial progress.

In previous Next Gen workshops, participants from the public sector as well as various private sectors divided the state into several regions and chose an industry in each region to focus on first. In making that decision, participants considered multiple factors, including the need and potential for growth within the sectors. Participants then brainstormed specific people and companies from the chosen sectors that should be invited to participate in the partnership meetings.

The finance and insurance sectors were chosen for Campbell, Crook and Weston counties as a starting point, and last week's meeting was the official launch of that partnership. The ultimate goal is for such Next Gen partnerships to develop in several sectors within each region.

During the meeting, the finance and insurance industry reps landed on three priority categories:

- **Local talent pipeline:** This priority focuses on the need for filling the local talent pipeline for the finance and insurance industry, from attracting local youth to preparing more mid-tier professionals. The goal is to produce a deeper, qualified local talent pool for the industry, including helping more of our local graduates to stay local or return to the region.
- **Community Education:** This priority focuses on the need to educate current and future customers on the importance and benefits of the industry's products and services. Community (i.e., customer) education would improve the financial literacy and knowledge among local youth, adult residents, and public and

private sector leaders, resulting in both more financially sound decision-making and use of local finance and insurance services.

- Promote and Build Regional Assets: This priority is focused on both promoting and building the region's assets to attract and retain talented people (including past residents who might return) and growth companies in diverse industries.

At the end of the workshops, participants were asked to volunteer to champion one or more of these opportunities by participating in a conference call and an additional meeting, likely in October.

Each of the three categories had multiple volunteers for champions.



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