

RESOLUTION # 170801-19

**RESOLUTION PROCLAIMING THE 150<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF  
LARAMIE COUNTY**

**WHEREAS**, the Laramie County Commissioners wish to recognize that in 2017, Laramie County, as a political and civic entity will have been in existence for 150 years; and

**WHEREAS**, in the past 150 years, Laramie County has expanded, developed and prospered; and

**WHEREAS** while the excitement, dynamism and prosperity of the past 150 years simply sets the stage for an even brighter future, the Board recognizes a need to provide a summary of Laramie County's past.

**THEREFORE, BE IT KNOWN THAT:**

In 1803, a large section of Wyoming became United States territory as part of the Louisiana Purchase. Wyoming means, "At or on the great plain" originating in Pennsylvania and is attributed to the Delaware Indians.

Laramie County was one of five counties established by the Dakota Legislature in 1867. It covered the east side of the territory from the northern border to the southern border.

Laramie County residents were part of the Wyoming Territory and desired to establish their own government. On September 27, 1867 a Provisional Commission was established by a mass meeting. The first county officials were elected October 8, 1867. At the same election votes were cast to select a permanent county seat. Cheyenne won after receiving 1,645 votes; Fort Sanders only received 439 votes.

The Transcontinental Railroad was pushing across the nation, after crossing Nebraska it entered Wyoming reaching Cheyenne in 1867.

As population in Wyoming increased, the area of the County was decreased in 1890, to the area that now covers Platte, Goshen and Laramie Counties. By 1923, all twenty-three of the current counties were established in their current size. Laramie County encompasses approximately 2,660 square miles of rolling plains in the eastern portion of the county to rising foothills of the southern Laramie Mountain Range to the west.

Later that year, December 24, 1867, the Dakota Territorial Legislature incorporated Cheyenne, which has often been called the "Magic City of the Plains." On July 25, 1868, the territory of Wyoming was officially organized.

The Cheyenne to Deadwood Stage route into the Dakota Territory was established as a freight and passenger line transporting supplies and anxious treasure hunters to the Black Hills gold mines near Deadwood, South Dakota. The 300 mile trip took three days traveling day and night with change stations every 15 miles along the way. These stations supplied fresh teams of horses along the route. Cheyenne became the banking center for the gold field because it was the nearest rail center. By 1887, the stagecoach and freight lines had served their usefulness as its services were being provided by independent freighters and the railroads.

Cattle enjoyed open range grazing in Laramie County from 1875 to 1887. The high arid grasslands of the area were found to be suitable for raising cattle and sheep. The Laramie County Stock Association was formed in 1873. It was better known as the Wyoming Stock Growers' Association which is what it was renamed in 1879. The Stock Grower's Association has played a pivotal role in the history, not only of Laramie County, but of the entire State. The Wyoming Stock Growers' Association located its' headquarters in Cheyenne. During this time period to 1883, Cheyenne had the distinction of being the wealthiest town per capita in the United States.

Large ranches at the time were developed by combining several homestead claims and sections were often purchased from the railroad to protect water sources. John Iliff was the first to graze cattle in the county, providing beef for the Union Pacific Railroad. Cattle ranching took a severe hit from Mother Nature after a severe drought the summer of 1886, followed by a harsh, cold, snowy winter. Livestock losses by the spring of 1887 were estimated to be 50 to 75 percent.

Two of the original ranches located within the current boundaries of Laramie County are still in operation today; Warren Livestock Company and Wyoming Hereford Ranch. Other large acreages were broken up into smaller acreages, often sold to neighbors or ranch hands, which allowed for improved ranching practices to develop. Many Laramie County families can trace their roots back to those early cattle barons and their ranch hands.

The decreasing prominence of the large cattle ranches brought about an increase in dry land farming. The Homestead Act of 1862 had enabled many to acquire land for farming; this increase continued into the mid 1880's. The Golden Prairie District, north of Burns and southwest of Albin saw much of the early growth. This area was largely homesteaded by families of German and Scandinavian decent. Claimants only needed to file claim on 160 acres, live on the property five years, and cultivate 40 of the 160 acres during that time. It wasn't unusual for family members to file on adjoining claims to increase their land holdings. Many of the original homesteads remain under the ownership of families tracing back to those early settlers in the 1970's. Irrigation began to play an increasingly

larger part in agriculture in Laramie County when it was highly encouraged by state government at that time.

People came to Laramie County from all walks of life. They were farmers, tradesmen, entrepreneurs, men who would become known as the cattle barons and the workmen on the railroad. The cattle barons arrived from the eastern United States and Europe. Everyone had one goal in common; they were looking for opportunities to own land, become rich or richer, practice their trades or open new businesses; in short they came to fulfill their dreams or start new lives. Thus, the relationship between Laramie County and the railroad would take root, a relationship that continues to this day, 150 years later.

Transportation has been key to Laramie County's development throughout its history. The Texas Trail which went through current day Pine Bluffs, was the closest shipping point, and remained active until 1900. Farmers enjoyed the ability to ship their grain by rail to markets across the country.

The communities of Hillsdale, Carpenter, Egbert, Burns, Albin and Pine Bluffs dot the landscape of eastern portion of the county. Hillsdale was named for a Union Pacific railroad surveyor, Lathrop Hills, who was killed and scalped for his red hair by the Indians on June 11, 1867.

Carpenter was named after J. R. Carpenter of Des Moines, Iowa. He was a Federal Land Company agent who promoted land sales in the area.

Egbert, which is on the mainline of the Union Pacific railroad was an important shipping point for cattle and sheep in the days of the cattle barons. In addition to their large stockyard, in 1910 they also had a good depot, telegraph, and telephone service.

Burns was surveyed and laid out in 1907 by the Federal Land and Securities Company. Four out of five families' settling in and around Burns were of German decent. To honor this lineage the original name of the town was Luther after their Lutheran religion. The Union Pacific Railroad called the community Burns after a man named Burns who was killed there. On February 10, 1910 the post office officially changed the name of the town to Burns.

Originally the land around Albin was used as open range and was thought to be good only for cattle grazing. Gradually dry land farming was tried as more and more settlers moved in and homesteaded. Today the land is considered prime farm land with both dry land and irrigated farm ground in the area. In 1905 the Albin Post Office was established on the Gus Anderson homestead. It was quite common for post offices to be located in homes that were central to an area. In the spring of 1928, Albin Land and Cattle Company formed for the purpose of starting a new town and in October 1930, Albin was incorporated.

Today Pine Bluffs is the largest of these early communities. The post office was established in 1869 when the town was originally called Rock Ranch. The community has had several name changes since. Rock Ranch was renamed Pine Bluff because of the stunted pines growing on the nearby bluffs. In 1894 the name was changed to Pinebluff and in 1923 the name was changed yet again to the current name of Pine Bluffs. The first branch of "the Nation's first county library" in Cheyenne was established in Pine Bluffs in 1923.

Today we call our military connection, F. E. Warren Air Force Base. From its earliest days it was Camp Carlin, until Cheyenne was named the division point for the Union Pacific Railroad when it became known as Fort Russell, named after David A. Russell, a brigadier general of the Civil War. The troops were assigned to protect the railroad construction crews as they laid the track westward through the Rocky Mountains and for emigrants as they crossed into hostile territory further west.

Overtime, the focus turned to that of national security and the base became an integral part of the Cheyenne/Laramie County Community. On January 1, 1930 the name changed to Fort Francis E. Warren, after a man who served as the first Mayor of Cheyenne, as Territorial Treasurer and Governor, State Governor and U.S. Senator. In 1947, Fort Warren was commissioned as an Air Force Base and became the nation's first nuclear missile base controlling an area of 12,600 square miles. Atlas, Minuteman I, II and III's, and Peacekeeper nuclear missiles have been deployed throughout southeastern Wyoming, western Nebraska and northern Colorado ever since. It is known as the nation's largest nuclear arsenal.

One room country schools dotted the landscape across Laramie County in its early years. Settlers placed great importance on education. Many of the buildings remain standing to this day. Through several acts of consolidation there are only two school districts remaining in the county and students are bused to school instead of walking or perhaps riding horseback to school each day. Laramie County School District #1 serves western Laramie County, Cheyenne and the central portion of the County. Laramie County School District #2 is located in eastern Laramie County with schools in the communities of Burns, Carpenter, Pine Bluffs and Albin.

In 1968, Laramie County voters made an additional commitment to education by establishing Laramie County Community College. This provides continuing access to higher education for the residents of Laramie County in particular, but has students from across the nation and around the world in attendance today.

The Archer Field Station was organized in 1912. It was formed by the Wyoming Board of Commissioners with the U.S Department of Agriculture, specializing in dry land farming research, highland grain growing, livestock experiments and collection of

weather data. The location of the Field Station was chosen in part due to its limited average rainfall of 11.97 inches per year and the average length of growing season with 127 frost-free days per year. The site was originally a rail station, named after William Archer, who was attacked by Indians while surveying for the Union Pacific Railroad in 1867. He escaped but was wounded in the attack. Control of the Field Station's 880 acres was transferred to the University Of Wyoming Board Of Trustees in 1923. By 1950 federal support for the station ceased. The now 1100 acre "farm" became one of six agricultural substations operated by the University Of Wyoming College Of Agriculture.

In 2004, the Archer Field Station was purchased by the Laramie County Commissioners for the development of a multi-functional campus for the residents to use and enjoy year round. It is also intended to become the permanent home of the Laramie County Fair, the oldest and largest County Fair in the State of Wyoming. Several of the Archer Field Station's original buildings are still present on the grounds and are being preserved and repurposed for use by the fair and the community. The current acreage is 880 acres. A portion of the property has been developed for governmental use, with plans to develop a business park and various recreational opportunities in the future.

The grand days of the Cowboy continue to live on in the "Daddy of 'em All", Cheyenne Frontier Days. The suggestion to have such a local celebration came from Colonel E. A. Slack, the owner and editor of the Cheyenne Daily Sun. With other businessmen making up the committee, the first organized rodeo was on September 23, 1897. The second year the event grew to two days and included a parade. The yearly celebration was changed to the last full week in July after the third annual Frontier Days drew a deficit which was caused by an early cold spell that year. Today the "Daddy of 'em All", is the world's largest outdoor rodeo celebration and includes some of the same events from the early days plus top country-western entertainment, professional bull riding competition, CINCH rodeo, free pancake breakfasts, a carnival, parades, Indian dancers and much more. The event draws thousands of tourists from across the country and around the world.

In an effort to even out the "Boom and Bust" cycle of Wyoming's economy, Laramie County Business Leaders organized an Economic Development Task Force in late 1985. In 1986 Cheyenne LEADS, Cheyenne-Laramie County Corporation for Economic Development was formed. Since its inception, more than 80 companies have been recruited and 6000 jobs have been created. These companies have an annual payroll of \$170 million, with over \$1 billion in capital investments. Two business parks have been developed; Cheyenne Business Park and North Range Business Park encompassing a total of 1,640 acres. Some of the businesses that are located within the parks are Sierra Trading Post, Green House Data Center, Magpul, Lowe's Distribution Center, Wal-Mart Distribution Center, the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) supercomputing center, Microsoft Data Center and more. A recent business addition is Wyoming Malting Company located in Pine Bluffs, Wyoming.

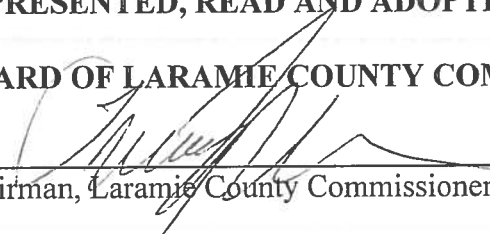
Oil and natural gas production has increased dramatically since 2012, largely because of hydraulic fracturing or "fracking". With increased oil and gas production comes change in the County landscape. New wells are drilled several thousand feet deep into the Niobrara and Codell formations, then are drilled up to two miles horizontally and fracked, freeing oil to be pumped to the surface. Oil and natural gas pipeline construction is also occurring, moving the oil and gas to Holly Frontier Refinery, a local refinery and other distribution hubs.

**NOW, THEREFORE, LET THE PAST BE A PROLOGUE FOR AN ENERGETIC AND SUCCESSFUL FUTURE FOR LARAMIE COUNTY:**

**IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED**, by the Laramie County Commissioners that Laramie County be recognized as having existed and location and background for the success and dreams of its population for 150 years.

**PRESENTED, READ AND ADOPTED** this 1<sup>st</sup> day of August, 2017.

**BOARD OF LARAMIE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

  
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Chairman, Laramie County Commissioners

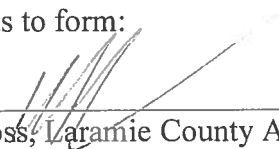
8.2.17  
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Date

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Debra Lee, Laramie County Clerk

8-2-17  
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Date

Approved as to form:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mark T. Voss, Laramie County Attorney

7/21/17  
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Date