

# WLRA

Wyoming Lodging & Restaurant Association  
P.O. Box 1003 • Cheyenne WY 82003-1003

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# Wyoming

FALL 2006 • VOL. 18, NO. 3

# HOSPITALITYNEWS

A Publication of the Wyoming Lodging & Restaurant Association

## Upcoming WLRA events:

- **Legislative Reception: January 30, 2007 in Cheyenne**
- **Wyoming ProStart® Student Invitational: March 6 & 7, 2007 in Sheridan**
- **Governor's Hospitality & Tourism Conference: April 16 -17, 2007 in Casper**
- **National ProStart® Student Invitational: April 20-22, 2007 in Charlotte, North Carolina**
- **National Restaurant Show: May 19-22, 2007 in Chicago, Illinois**

# Welcome New Members!

WLRA is administered by  
Wyoming Associations & Government Affairs Network.  
Lynn Birelffi, President  
Mike Moser, Government Affairs  
Marti Henrickson, Membership Director  
tel: 307. 634-8816  
fax: 307. 632-0249  
www.wlra.org

America's Best Value Inn, Cody  
America's Best Value Inn, Rawlins  
AmeriCoach, Cheyenne  
C B & Potts, Cheyenne  
Ceiltech, Colorado  
Central Wyoming College, Jackson  
Comfort Inn, Evanston  
Comfort Inn, Laramie  
Days Inn, Laramie  
Days Inn, Worland  
Denver Mattress, Colorado  
First Street Bakers, Casper  
Gordon Signs, Cheyenne  
Half Moon Lake Resort, Pinedale  
Homewood Suites by Hilton, Jackson  
Oasis Motel, Meeteetsee  
Ol' Wyoming Motel, Riverton  
Old Chicago Pizza, Cheyenne  
Powder River Transportation, Gillette  
Pumpnick's, Thermopolis  
Pronghorn Family Restaurant, Cheyenne  
Shilo Inn, Evansville  
Staples Business Advantage, Massachusetts  
Super 8 Motel, Thermopolis  
Sunrise Basic Training, Michigan  
Urgent Care Now, Casper  
Williams Scotsman, Casper  
Wingate Inn, Rock Springs  
Yesco, Utah



Paul Fisherkeller elected President of WLRA Board of Directors.

## WLRA Elects New Officers, Directors

Paul Fisherkeller, President and CEO of Taco John's International, Inc. leads the slate of new WLRA officers elected at the annual meeting last month in Cody.

Fisherkeller was elected President of WLRA. Joining him on the Executive Committee are Chair Karen Moody of The Mill Inn in Sheridan, President-Elect Bruce Grosbety of the Snake River Lodge and Spa in Teton Village, Vice President Mark Demple of The Holiday Inn in Sheridan, Treasurer Debbie Disney of The Plains Hotel in Cheyenne and Secretary Lynn Birelffi of Cheyenne.

New Board members for the association are: Chris Brown, Outback Steakhouse, Cheyenne  
Gail Burkis, Wendy's in Casper and Rawlins  
Judi Colling, Hotel Higgins in Glenrock  
Sarah Kalbach, Tomahawk Motor Lodge, Riverton  
Ken Patel, Comfort Inn, Laramie  
Jim Promo, The Rusty Parrot Lodge, Jackson  
Todd Scheuerman, Comfort Inn, Worland  
Jennifer Yeend, Days Inn, Rock Springs  
David Yoder, Mangy Moose, Teton Village

They join the following on the WLRA Board:

James Blair, Cody  
Ted Blair, Cody  
Doug Campbell, Saratoga  
John Eastman, Jackson  
Kevin Ellison, Littleton  
Christine Hill, Casper  
Jim McCaleb, Yellowstone  
Mary Mills, Thermopolis  
Joe Oleinik, Gillette  
Gunter Orband, Douglas  
Jim Osterfoss, Cheyenne  
Dave Rader, Rawlins  
John Rutter, Moran  
Matt Wallop, Sheridan

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National Affiliates:



## Exceptional Service Saves the..... Phone!

Losing a cell phone isn't always a disaster. If it's on, you can call yourself and -- hopefully -- hear the phone ringing.

But losing the small part in the back that covers the battery is another story. That's what happened to a WLRA member attending the 2006 Hospitality & Tourism Fall Summit last month at Blair Hotels' Holiday Inn in Cody.

The loss wasn't discovered until the Summit was over.

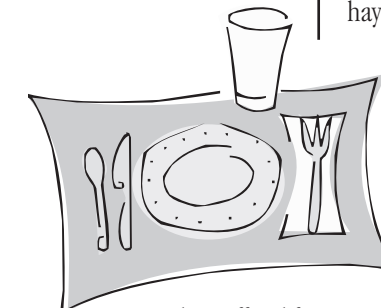
When it was reported to Executive Housekeeper Rhonda Riehl, she asked her team to check all of the hotel's meeting rooms thoroughly.

They didn't find the tiny piece of plastic and notified WLRA Membership Director

Marti Henrickson, who was in touch with the member. "I was getting ready to call and tell him that he'd need to get a new cell phone when I got the news," she said..

It seems Tim Elliott, a member of the hotel's set-up staff, doesn't give up easily. After searching the meeting rooms and hotel trash, Elliott decided to check the dumpsters and found that tiny piece of plastic.

"What incredible service," Henrickson said. "It was a 21st century version of the needle in the haystack but Tim found it!"



### The Incredible Shrinking Lunch Hour

continues to get smaller and busier. A May survey of 1000 office workers conducted by KFC found the following: More than 50% of respondents take 30 minutes or less at lunchtime. More than 60% consider the lunch "hour" to be the biggest

myth in office life. 58% of Americans eat lunch at their desks while continuing to work. More than half multitask during lunch-eating, running errands, shopping online and checking e-mail at the same time.

### Lodging Exhibit Opens

Wyoming's lodging industry is the subject of a new traveling exhibit on display at the Wyoming State Museum through January 6, 2007. The exhibit "A Room for the Night" examines the evolution of Wyoming motel architecture from the early days of the 20th Century. Text and historic black and white and color photographs demonstrate the changing needs and interests of Wyoming communities with the roadside lodging industry. The exhibit is available for use by other Wyoming venues after that date and can be augmented with local material and objects. It consists of 31 two-dimensional panels (11" x 14") with photographs and text. For information on borrowing the exhibit, contact Manny Vigil at 307-777-7025.

2006-2007

# WLRA Member's <sup>only</sup> Benefits

**Following is a summary of benefits available to WLRA members in good standing. For detailed information or questions, contact information is provided.**

## Group Insurance, Rx Discount

**WLRA Group Health Insurance** - Powerful new employee benefit programs: 6 major medical, 3 dental and 2 limited medical benefit plans.

- Voluntary benefits including life and vision insurance.
- Covered employees do not need to be on the same plan.
- Easy, on-line administration.

Denise O'Malley: (307)265-0885, denise@covenantgroupinc.com

## **Rx PRESCRIPTION & DRUG DISCOUNT CARD**

- Discounts averaging 10-35% on all drugs at participating pharmacies
- Available to members' employees whether they have insurance or not
- Cost to employers is only 19 cents per employee card!

Marti Henrickson: (307)634-8816 x14, marti@wlra.org

## Education, Training & Certification

### **American Hotel & Lodging Association Educational Institute**

- 10% discount on all materials.
- Customized training programs from inception through completion.
- Nationally-recognized Professional certification; through the "Unlimited Training Library." You may certify as many employees as you choose with one annual fee.

Marti Henrickson: (307)634-8816 x14, marti@wlra.org

### **National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation**

- 15% discount on all training materials.
- Scholarships available for students pursuing a career in the industry.
- Source of engaged young workers through the ProStart® program.
- The Nation's #1 food safety & sanitation certification program, ServeSafe®
- Resources available to answer restaurant questions.

Marti Henrickson: (307)634-8816 x14, marti@wlra.org

### **SUNRISE BASIC TRAINING** materials available in English & Spanish.

- Hospitality training programs with savings of 15% on DVDs & CDs.
- Basic training lodging series used by over 5000 motels nationwide.
- Sunrise basic training food service series now available.

Cheryl Armstrong: (866)309-1069, info@sunrisebasictraining.com

## Employee Recruitment

**HCAREERS.COM** - The leading on-line job board for the lodging, hospitality, restaurant & foodservice industries.

- 10% discount on job postings

HCareers: 1-800-832-3738, or [www.wlra.org](http://www.wlra.org) to link to HCareers site.

## Office & Business Supplies

**STAPLES BUSINESS ADVANTAGE** Access to 30,000+ products, easy on-line ordering, dedicated account manager.

- Save 60% on 4,000 items & 20%-40% on varied other items.
- Free next day delivery on orders of \$35.00 or more.

Joe Yanco: (603) 881-7014, joe.yanco@staples.com

**WINE DOGGY BAGS** - Wyoming law requires a take-home bag for patrons who want to remove unfinished wine from restaurants. These transparent, single-use, tamper proof bags meet the law's specifications. Research shows you'll sell more bottled wine if the law is discussed with your patrons. *Robert Beck: 800-401-9014, rbeck@winedoggybag.com*

## Property Ambiance

### **BACKGROUND MUSIC INC. / MUZAK**

- Free Muzak installation. *Contact Fred Cowser: (307) 638-8263, backgroundmusic@bresnan.net or [www.muzak.com](http://www.muzak.com)*

**BMI** (offered to members in good standing of WLRA):

- 12 % discount on annual music fees as reflected in the current BMI Music Licensing Agreement for Eating and Drinking establishments.
- Additional 10 % discount for early payment.

Marti Henrickson: (307)634-8816 x14, marti@wlra.org

## Credit Card Processing & Payroll Services

**HEARTLAND PAYMENT SYSTEMS** - Specialized credit card processing and payroll services designed specifically for the unique needs of WLRA members & to increase overall profitability. Programs include full disclosure on credit card processing fees, business security programs to protect sensitive information and technology to increase productivity.

Tim Glasser: (307) 638-8316, tim.glasser@e-bps.com

## Research Resources

**ROCKY MOUNTAIN LODGING REPORT** A monthly report on lodging occupancy & average room rates produced by an independent accountant. Valuable information provided in cooperation with WLRA since the 1960s. *Rocky Mountain Lodging Report, (303)840-1666, Fax: (303)840-0158*

**SMITH TRAVEL RESEARCH** Provides Bench marketing data to the hotel industry. Every chain-affiliated hotel in the country provides data on rooms available, rooms sold and room revenue on a weekly and monthly basis. Smith Travel reports on geographic areas such as state markets and, most important, self-selected competitive sets.

Contact Duane Vinson: (615)824-8664, duane@smithtravelresearch.com or [www.wlra.org](http://www.wlra.org) to link to Smith Travel Research site.

*Before Every Major Election WLRA invites candidates to speak, meet and address the industry specific issues facing our membership. At WLRA's Hospitality & Tourism Fall Summit October 9th in Cody, several State & Federal candidates showed up to do just that. If you missed this event in Cody, come to Cheyenne January 30, 2007 for WLRA Legislative Reception!*



*Above: Wyoming House Speaker Pro Tempore, Rep. Colin Simpson (R-Cody) shared stories from his days as a young worker in the hospitality industry.*

*Pictured Right: U.S. Senator Craig Thomas (R-WY) visits with WLRA board member John Eastman (Inn On The Creek-Jackson) after delivering a speech at the Fall Summit.*

*Pictured below: Democratic Governor Dave Freudenthal and his opponent Republican Ray Hunkins watch Renny MacKay (Wyoming Public Radio) flip a coin to determine order of the debate sponsored by WLRA, WTIC, WSLA and WRMA. This was the first debate held between the two gubernatorial candidates and was aired statewide on Wyoming Public Radio.*



*Pictured Below: Incumbent U.S. Representative Barbara Cubin (R-WY) and her Democratic challenger Gary Trauner addressing the gathering at the Wyoming Hospitality and Tourism Fall Summit held in Cody, WY on October 9th.*



# Emergency Preparedness Critical

From hurricanes, to pandemics (think avian flu) to terrorist activity, the list of disasters which could impact a restaurant or hotel is long and getting longer. But experts are quick to point out that a worst-case scenario isn't required to damage a business. Think about power failure, transit strikes or winter storms. How quickly you get back to business-limiting losses and potential injuries-after any event depends on preparation.

While it's important to identify regional risks (visit [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)), local hazards and universal threats such as contagious disease, disaster preparedness experts agree that many common principles apply.

"You'd go crazy if you tried to think of every possible event, said Jim Kerr, Director of Emergency Management and Business Continuity at New York University. Speaking to American Express in their Restaurant Merchants "Briefing," Kerr said "Whether it's avian flu or a hurricane, it's business interruption."

Bill Raisch, executive director of the International Center for Enterprise Preparedness, agrees and promotes an "all hazards" approach. "Start with a core plan, then tweak it for the nuances of hurricane, fire, etc." He looks at small and medium sized businesses as three-legged stools: people, property and processes/operations. Each needs to be considered:

**People:** plan how to get staff and customers out of harm's way, remaining onsite or evacuating. If you expect employees to be of value, you must look at them as people with families, not just job titles. They need to know what they need to do, with the idea that once it's done, they go home to their families.

**Property:** understand exactly what your insurance covers and what it doesn't (assets and business interruption) before you need it. Work through possible scenarios, look for gaps and identify what records you'll need for claims.

**Processes/Operations:** Have a plan to operate without basic services like water, phone and power and a "crash kit" with everything you'll need to keep your business going, from another location if necessary. Think insurance policies, lists of key contacts and phone numbers, leases, vendor contracts, financial statements, payroll and employee records. And experts agree it's important to understand the capability of your suppliers, suggesting you only do business with suppliers who have contingency plans you can vet. Some operators suggest keeping 10% of your business with alternative suppliers to establish credit and maintain relationships "just in case." A critical-and often overlooked-part of a plan is communi-

cation and practice. Periodic drills will help you see where holes may be and incorporating hypotheticals in shift meetings can help keep staff informed.

Cinda Culton, Sales and Marketing Director for the Grand Teton Lodge Company, agrees and recommends developing and practicing your plan with someone from every area of your operation. "Don't just involve your managers," she told a full house at the Governor's Hospitality and Tourism Conference. "You'll be missing some key people."

A key Culton recommendation is taking stock of your organization's "inventory." This includes more than first aid kits, blankets and candles. It includes people, their interests, their language skills and skill sets. If you know, for example, that people on the housekeeping staff are fluent in other languages or that a couple of maintenance workers are also certified paramedics, you can call upon them. Waiting until you have a crisis to find out "if anyone speaks that language" or if anyone knows CPR won't be much help.

Culton advises including competitors and association members in your resource inventory because "in a crisis, they can usually be counted on to help." She also emphasized planning for the media. It's the way to limit the impact of rumors and protect your image. Have one location for them and a schedule for briefings. It's often advisable to have an off-site location for briefings. If, for example, you've had a fire, you don't want the visuals at the briefing to emphasize the damage. Experts agree that only one person, who can deliver factual statements in a calm and forthcoming manner, should be designated as your media spokesman. And make sure all employees know who that is. If no one in your organization has experience dealing with the media, Culton suggests you consider specialized training.

A popular form of crisis preparation training is a table top exercise where a hypothetical crisis is presented and participants take time to assess the situation and answer three key questions: what information do they need, where will they get it and once they have it, what will they do with it. Table top exercises work best with a table for each department so employees can see what specific role they will play in an emergency.

Once you have a core plan in place and have communicated it and practiced it, you can start tweaking for special situations, like an avian flu pandemic. Help with disaster planning is available at [www.ready.gov/business](http://www.ready.gov/business), the AHLA, NRA, Centers for Disease Control and local health and emergency management agencies.

# Lodging Survey Highlights Show Increase in Technology

More than 9300 properties -- representing roughly one-fifth of all existing hotels in the United States -- participated in the 2006 Lodging Survey conducted by the American Hotel & Lodging Association Educational Foundation (AHLAEF) and Smith Travel Research. The Lodging Survey is conducted approximately every two years with funding from AHLAEF as a service to the industry. Among major findings of the 2006 survey:

- 99% of hotels have cable or satellite TV in the room, up from 69% in 1990.
- Pay-per-view movies are offered at 54% of all properties, up from 42% in 2004.
- 82% of hotels offer closed caption TV.
- 86% of all hotels now offer voice mail, up from 72% in 2004. 100% of hotels in luxury chains offer this amenity.
- Free outgoing local phone calls are becoming more common place, offered by 76%. Luxury (22%) and upper scale (15%) hotels are the least likely to offer this service.
- 89% of responding properties now offer high-speed Internet, up from 50% in 2004.
- Wireless Internet access is the fastest growing in-room amenity. 82% now offer this service, more than double the 2004 rate of 35%.
- Newspapers are delivered free to 83% hotels in this year's survey, (was 63% in 2004).
- Security cameras are used in the lobby of 68% of all respondents.
- Printed safety material is available in 92% hotels; safety videos are offered at only 3%.
- 69% of respondents indicated they upgraded bedding in rooms over the past year.
- Branded bathroom amenities were surveyed for the first time in 2006. 85% of respondents provide branded products in bathrooms.
- Electronic locks are found in 93% of properties, up from 62% in 1998.
- 95% of hotels have a property web site, up from 88% in 2004.
- Nearly all hotels (98%) now obtain bookings through the Internet, (89% in 2004).
- 95% of luxury hotels, 31% of economy properties have a multilingual staff.
- 50% of responding properties allow pets and 46% have an additional charge for pets.

For complete results or further information on the 2006 Lodging survey, contact the AH&LA Information Center at (888) 743-8515 or visit their web site at [www.ahla.com/products\\_info\\_center.asp](http://www.ahla.com/products_info_center.asp).

## STATEWIDE SMALL BUSINESS FINANCING PROGRAMS

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# ADA Changes Looming

Since the Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Act of 1990 was signed into law, the hospitality industry has stepped up to the plate, updating properties and making countless improvements to meet the needs of the disabled travelers.

But complying with the ADA can be complicated according to Marlene Colucci of the American Hotel and Lodging Association (AHLA). Writing in the September issue of Lodging Magazine, Colucci said "From questions related to retrofitting existing facilities to planning for future properties, the answers are often complex and lead to litigation. And while hoteliers are getting their arms around the current set of regulations, more changes may be coming down the road."

As a civil rights law, the ADA seeks to ensure the individual rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution by prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability. The practical effect, according to Colucci, is that of a building code, but with no authority available to approve plans and changes.

It's a big issue: the U.S. Census Bureau reports that about 18% of the population, some 51.2 million Americans, have some level of disability. About 32.5 million of them have a severe disability and 2.7 million use a wheelchair. And a 2002 study by the Chicago-based Open Door organization, showed American disabled travelers spend \$13.6 billion annually on travel.

The federal government is in the process of considering changes to the ADA Accessibility Guidelines issued by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ). These are the standards to which a lodging property is determined to be in compliance with the ADA. They apply to new

...continued next page

### Uniform System of Accounts for the Lodging Industry, Tenth Revised Edition

The latest addition to the hospitality industry's most widely used accounting standard, this new edition provides a comprehensive guide to the financial reporting and analysis of the lodging industry. It includes the latest changes to the industry's accounting standards and provides a comprehensive guide to the financial reporting and analysis of the lodging industry.

**AHLA Member - (44) 95**  
**Price - \$24.95**

**FOR SPECIAL DISCOUNTS ON THIS AND OTHER LA PRODUCTS, CONTACT US AT 1-800-743-8515 OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT [www.ahla.org](http://www.ahla.org)**

### Annual Report on the Global Hospitality Industry

Discover the latest trends in the global hospitality industry. This report provides a comprehensive overview of the industry's performance, including key statistics and analysis. It is a must-read for anyone in the industry.

**AHLA Member - (44) 95**  
**Price - \$24.95**

**FOR SPECIAL DISCOUNTS ON THIS AND OTHER LA PRODUCTS, CONTACT US AT 1-800-743-8515 OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT [www.ahla.org](http://www.ahla.org)**

## ADA Changes Looming

...continued from page 3

and existing facilities, goods and services.

Comments filed by AH&LA last year focus on statistical and economic arguments to the DOJ that the existing guidelines provide for an over-supply of accessible guestrooms. For example, while the Census Department indicates 1.2% of the population 15 years and older uses a wheelchair, current regulations require 2.6% to 7.7% of rooms (depending on property size) be accessible.

In addition, AH&LA research shows that less than 1% of lodging reservations are requests for wheelchair-accessible rooms. AH&LA also expressed concerns that a proposed change in making altered guestrooms accessible is a back-door attempt to increase the percentage of accessible guestrooms. The association has urged DOJ to clarify confusing interpretations related to the dispersion of guestrooms throughout a hotel and alterations of existing guestrooms.

Colucci said it may be years before these issues are resolved but pledged that AH&LA will take the lead to ensure that the lodging industry's concerns are heard and addressed.

## If You Play, You Pay: Music Licensing Update

If you have music playing in your business, whether live or recorded, you may need to be licensed by at least one of the Performing Rights Organizations (PROs).

PROs were created as a clearinghouse between the creators and owners of copyrighted music and the people who want to publicly perform or play this music. Most songwriters, composers, lyricists and music publishers join one of these PROs and the organization collects and distributes fees on their behalf. Because it would be virtually impossible for restaurant and lodging operators to negotiate separate licenses with the copyright owners, blanket agreements with these companies allow operators to play music from the companies' repertoires.

The three PROs are ASCAP, BMI and SESAC. Each organization represents different songwriters, composers, music publishers and copyright holders. So a license with ASCAP doesn't give authorization to play music in BMI's or SESAC's repertory. All three have searchable databases on the Internet that include the songs in their repertoires: visit [www.ascap.com](http://www.ascap.com); [www.bmi.com](http://www.bmi.com) and [www.sesac.com](http://www.sesac.com).

Fines for ignoring the licensing requirements can be much higher than the cost of the licenses. Infringers of copyright law are subject to a civil suit in federal court with damages ranging as high as \$100,000 for each song played without proper authorization.

The law applies to live music as well. It states that the owner of the establishment where music is being played-live or by a DJ-is responsible for obtaining the required authorization. Paying a band or a DJ doesn't mean you have satisfied that requirement.

New forms of music from Sirius and XM Satellite are licensed by PROs. As long as they are used for background music only and your contract is a commercial account, then your music may be covered. But if your establishment charges admission, has dancing or plays additional music such as CDs, DJs, live music or karaoke then you must have a license.

Music played from iPods or MP3 players are considered another form of recorded music and also require a license. And the cost you pay when you purchase a CD only covers the right for you to listen to it privately. When you play records, tapes or CDs in public, it becomes a "public performance." The copyright owners have exclusive rights to public performances and, again, a license is required.

There are some exemptions passed in 1999. Restaurants no larger than 3,750 square feet (including kitchen, storage areas, bathrooms etc. but excluding the parking lot) don't have to pay royalty fees for playing radio and television music only. Restaurants over 3,750 feet may be exempt from fees if they have four or fewer televisions (no more than one per room, screen size of 55 inches or smaller) and six or fewer speakers (no more than four per room).

For more information on whether you need to be licensed, contact the PROs: ASCAP (1-800-910-7247); BMI (1-888-492-6264 or 1-800-925-8451); SESAC (1-800-826-9996).



## Web Sites Essential for Wyoming Restaurants

Enter "Cheyenne Restaurants" in the popular Google search engine and you'll get more than two

million results. Look a little closer and you'll find that the top three restaurants listed have more than geography in common. All three web sites were designed and are hosted by Wyoming NetWork.com, a WLRA Allied Member.

Company president Dave Lerner said search engine placement is one reason it's important to have an expert design your web site. "When you've done this as many times as we have, you learn how to get your clients a good listing on the top search engines like Google," he said.

Lerner's company has been designing and hosting websites for clients across the country since 1998. They include a variety of businesses, community organizations and political campaigns. But from the beginning a key focus for the company has been restaurants.

"They're fun to do," Lerner said, "and they're perfect clients for us since we love eating out, but we also understand that a good web site is critically important for the success of a restaurant today."

He explained that it's not just travelers who use the internet to decide where to eat.

"Locals of all ages are using the internet to get news, sports, movie and restaurant information," he said. "They want to know where you're located, what your hours are, what's on your menu, if you have any specials and what the 'personality' of the restaurant is."

Reflecting the unique personality of restaurant clients is a specialty of Wyoming NetWork. Properly done, a web site design can tell a prospective customer instantly what the restaurant is like: upscale, casual, family-oriented, and more. The key is working closely with the owner in developing the design.

Wyoming NetWork also works closely with the operator on the domain name. "It has to be easy to spell and easy to remember," Lerner said. "And it has to be available."

Once the client's domain name is registered, the Wyoming NetWork team discusses search engines to help the operator understand the way the home page is written and how that can influence search engine listings. The next step is working with the client to determine what potential customers want to see. This may include a map, menu, hours and special events. Wyoming NetWork offers several options for maps, depending on the restaurant's location, and has actually created custom maps for many

clients. After these decisions are made, Wyoming NetWork builds the site, prepares it for search engines and posts it. And that's only the beginning.

"We watch the sites carefully and prepare a monthly summary report for the owner that includes things like the number of visits to the site and the pages they have visited," Lerner said, explaining that information about which menu-lunch or dinner-visitors are looking at, and whether they're checking on catering or banquet facilities is important information for restaurateurs.

The Wyoming NetWork team also monitors site engines carefully and can tweak "their" sites if necessary to increase traffic. Their shared goal is hundreds of visits a month.

And while this information and more is available on a special section of the web site, the summaries are printed and mailed to ensure that clients who don't have the time or inclination to check their computers

get the information. Sites can be updated within 24 hours, with a call or an e-mail from the restaurateur. That's a big advantage web sites have over more traditional advertising like publishing menus in the phone book, where they stay, without change, for at least a year.

Putting your menu on a community web site is better than that, but still doesn't have the impact of your own site. With your own site, you can update frequently, monitor traffic in detail and

even add special promotions, like coupons, to boost sales and measure the conversion of web site visits to actual customers.

Because the internet is still a relatively new form of advertising, many business owners believe it's too expensive and either put off getting on the internet or "shop" for a student or family friend with some computer savvy to develop their sites.

Those are both big mistakes according to the experts, including Lerner. "If you're not on, potential customers are going to find your competition," he said. "And if you're on but your site isn't well-designed, isn't user friendly and doesn't get you a good search engine listing, you're wasting not only your money but a great opportunity."

Wyoming NetWork helps clients save money and, because they work with so many restaurants across the country, they know what works. The cost for registering the domain name and designing the site is "around \$250" and the monthly hosting fee is \$30, which includes updating, monitoring and providing monthly traffic summaries.

For information on Wyoming Network, contact Lerner by phone at (307) 772-4466 or by e-mail at [DLerner@WyomingNetwork.com](mailto:DLerner@WyomingNetwork.com).

***"If you're going to  
spend money on  
advertising, spend it  
where it works."***

Dave Lerner, President

**WyomingNETWORK.com**



## Salt Content Looming

While trans fats have been a top health concern for U.S. restaurants in the past year, sodium is moving toward center stage and is set to be the next hot topic. In its November 21 issue, Nation's Restaurant News reported that sodium content is moving onto the radars of more restaurant operators, including chains like KFC and Burger King. Experts suggest that restaurants should try to reduce salt gradually to avoid shocking their customers' taste buds and try substituting with other flavors, such as spices and herbs.