

# Expanding Your Pie: Partnering with Private Foundations, Government and Individual Philanthropists to Cook Up Plenty Rural Endowment

**Friday, January 31 - 8:15 – 10:00 a.m.**

## Session Leader

**Sidney Armstrong**

Consultant; Former Executive Director, Montana Community Foundation

## Peer Leaders/Storytellers

**Diane Harrop:** Board Member, Wyoming Community Foundation

**Michael Chamberlain:** Chief Development and Operating Officer, New Mexico Community Foundation

**Christine Delpert:** Executive Director, Greater Rustenburg Community Foundation (South Africa)

## Wyoming Community Foundation: *EXPANDING YOUR PIE* Story

By Diane Harrop, Board Member

### **Just the Facts Ma'am (or, what we thought we knew for sure when we saddled up):**

- *Endowment* is a foreign language in Wyoming
- Our organization had reached a nice plateau, but hadn't yet scaled mountains
- We needed to throw caution to the winds and seek outside help

### **Along comes *The Kresge Foundation's Challenge to Raise Community Capital* – we're off to the races:**

- An opportunity to increase our unrestricted endowment by \$2 Million
- Increase Agency Endowments by \$8 Million

### **The best story is not the destination, but the wild ride that gets you there:**

- Kresge's application process itself was like having an experienced trailboss as a guide
- A Wyoming version of *Strategic Opportunism* is born – and legitimized
- We're getting to know all of Wyoming like we know our own back 40 acres
- "I'm from the Wyoming Community Foundation, and I'm here to help you" is not just wishful thinking anymore
- Both board and staff members gain experience and expertise
- Now 21 additional Wyoming nonprofits are also making the case for the value of endowed philanthropy in Wyoming

### **What we took with us or found along the way:**

- Financial resources – we gained money for salaries and unrestricted grantmaking
- Our existing network of board members and friends allowed us to raise the initial \$1 million quickly
- Technical resources – All software was replaced and/or updated to ensure accuracy and ability to track growing databases and increasing amounts of information
- Human assets – Added a staff position and enhanced skills of existing staff while also using board members and other volunteers in more (and more sophisticated) ways than ever before
- We created a more formal way to inventory and assess the strengths of other Wyoming nonprofits
- Personal connections were invaluable in helping us identify potential nonprofit partners for Phase II of the challenge
- Word-of-mouth advertising
- Our own Philanthropy Days event provided the perfect forum for introducing and explaining the Kresge Challenge to Wyoming
- Kresge provided us with both formal and informal expertise
- A firm belief that you can't fatten a steer by weighing it

**Lessons from the Trail:**

- It's harder to learn how to sail during The Perfect Storm
- It's Gestalt, stupid! The whole *is* greater than the sum of its parts
- If you PLAN it, you can DO it! (But always leave room for serendipity)
- Don't forget to invite board members along for the ride