

Know the facts about the Fremont County Tourism Lodging Tax

Fremont County voters have renewed our Lodging Tax by a large margin for 20 years. If the tax is not renewed at 4% it goes to zero, which means there is no county tourism budget for any tourism promotion.

WHO PAYS THE FREMONT COUNTY LODGING TAX? Our Overnight Visitors Pays the Lodging Tax - we don't. Only travelers pay the lodging tax on overnight stays at motels, campgrounds/RV parks, guest cabins, dude ranches and bed & breakfasts in Fremont County. If a visitor stays in a property for more than 30 days in a row, they don't pay a lodging tax. If a Fremont County resident stays in a Fremont County accommodation for less than 30 days, they do pay a lodging tax. When you stay in another county, you are subject to that county's lodging tax to fund their county's tourism promotion.

DOES TOURISM PROVIDE US LOCAL TAX RELIEF? Yes, travelers pay Wyoming sales and gas taxes, as well as lodging tax. Sales/use taxes provide for our schools, roads, and other government services. In fact, without the revenue generated by tourists, each household in Fremont County would have to pay an additional \$280 in taxes to maintain the equivalent in current state and local tax revenues. In 2009, travelers to Fremont County paid \$1 million in local tax receipts, and \$3.2 million in state tax receipts. These are taxes that our county residents didn't have to pay to keep the same government services!

IS IT A NEW TAX? No. The lodging tax has been at 2% and has been renewed every 4 years since 1990. The Lodging Tax is a local control tax. County citizens have chosen to implement the tax for 20 years, and the Wind River Visitors Council board (appointed by the County Commissioners) decides how to spend it. In today's tough market, it makes sense have a lodging tax at 4% to be more competitive with our neighboring counties already charging the full 4%, which is the most that can be assessed by state law. Counties currently charging 4% lodging tax include Hot Springs, Park, Albany, Goshen, Laramie, Sheridan, Washakie, Weston, and the cities of Kemmerer and Cheyenne.

HOW DO WE BENEFIT? Tourism in Fremont County is Everybody's Business! In 2009, travelers spent \$118.7 million in Fremont County. The benefits of tourism in Fremont County go far beyond local motels, guest and dude ranches, outfitters, retail stores, restaurants, gas stations, grocery stores, the Riverton Airport, car rentals and real estate agents. It filters down through every community and affects all of us. It's truly everybody's business. Tourism creates jobs and directly supported 1,580 tourism-related jobs in Fremont County last year while paying local employees \$41 million in wages. For every \$1.00 spent on marketing to the tourist, they spend \$13.00 while they are here. What a great return on investment that we didn't pay!

HOW IS THE LODGING TAX SPENT? The Money is spent on Local Tourism Promotion and Supporting Community Events. Last year the Wind River Visitors Council received \$280,000 in lodging tax funds.

- 73% was spent on Wind River Country Tourism Promotion such as brochures, vacation packets, a website, advertising and press relations to reach a world-wide traveling audience.

- 25% was given back to Riverton, Lander, Dubois and Shoshoni to support local events.

- 2% was spent on accounting and administrative costs.

WHERE DID TRAVELERS SPEND THEIR \$118.7 MILLION IN FREMONT COUNTY?

#1 Gasoline & Rental Cars - \$30.5 million

#2 Restaurants - \$24 million

#3 Arts, Recreation, & Museums - \$19.9 million

#4 Shopping - \$17.5 million

#5 Lodging - \$16.1 million

#6 Grocery & Food stores - \$ 8.4 million

#7 Air Travel - \$.8 million

#8 Misc. other - \$1.5 million

*Sources: WY Travel & Tourism and Wind River Visitors Council research & SMARI Conversion Survey
Wind River Visitors Council, info@mccormickmarketing.com www.wind-river.org 332-5546*