

Wind River Country is part of International Scenic Byway Marketing Program

Wind River Country is now part of a National Scenic Byways grant program from the Federal Highways Administration along with four western states and two Canadian provinces. The Wind River Visitors Council has partnered with this tourism marketing program, called “Top 10 Scenic Drives of the Northern Rockies,” which is an international scenic byway marketing effort. The Wind River Visitors Council has incorporated the Top 10 Scenic Drives promotion into our 2010/2011 Tourism Marketing Plan as an excellent value for our lodging tax dollars.

This means that Wind River Country’s Top 10 Drive, the “Circle the Continental Divide Driving Tour” is being promoted by a \$500,000 federal highway scenic byway grant. This driving tour includes all Fremont County communities, the Centennial Scenic Byway over Togwotee Pass, the Wind River Canyon Scenic Byway, and the Oregon Trail.

The international marketing program links to four All-American Roads, 32 State and National Scenic Byways, four connecting National Historic Trails, and 19 adjacent National Parks, Forests, Monuments & Recreation Areas. Most of the Top 10 Scenic Drives are on public lands, including national parks, national forests, national recreation areas, wild and scenic rivers, and other federal, provincial and state reserves that are protecting and promoting the region’s natural and cultural heritage.

A cornerstone of the project’s marketing strategy is the website, <http://www.drivethetop10.com> that offers travelers a convenient way to research and plan Rocky Mountain adventures combining search engine optimization, pay-per-click marketing, and social media engagement through Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/top10scenic.drives>. It is demand-driven and based on the tastes and preferences of targeted travelers, particularly in off-peak seasons backed by state, provincial, and national tourism research. There is also an excellent brochure being distributed around the country.

Wyoming has three drives on the tours: Wind River Country’s Circle the Continental Divide Driving Tour, the Beartooth All-American Road, and the Yellowstone-Grand Teton Loop. The other seven tours featured are Montana’s Scenic Loop, Oregon’s Hells Canyon All-American Road, Idaho’s Salmon River-Sawtooth Scenic Byways and Northwest Passage

Scenic Byway. The two Canadian tours also included are the British Columbia Hot Springs Circle and International Selkirk Loop All--American Roads, and the Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park Loop in Alberta.

What this means to Fremont County businesses is that nearly 600 partners and suppliers are helping to market our Circle the Continental Divide Driving Tour. This should support our local economy by building and extending off-peak and shoulder seasons, driving bookings and website traffic to communities on our driving tour, and increasing visitor spending and length of stays at our businesses and communities.