

Legislative Outreach

Creating an effective grassroots legislation program

4 Musts to an Effective Legislative Program

- 1) Building the relationships
- 2) Know the legislative process
- 3) Know your issues
- 4) Follow through after the legislative process

Building the Relationships

- ✍ Know all about your legislators, including their professions, background, affiliations, families. Qwest and the Wyoming Trucking Association jointly publish an annual legislative directory which includes a photo and a brief biographical sketch of each legislator. The directory also includes telephone numbers for all House and Senate offices and committee rooms. Copies of the directory are available free of charge at the information desk in the Capitol rotunda.
- ✍ Know your legislators' political interests/philosophies
- ✍ Stay in contact and keep your officials informed ...Don't just call them in time of need
- ✍ Know your legislators' constituency (urban, rural, etc.)
- ✍ Know what positions your legislator holds (committees, leadership, etc.)

For a list of your legislators and their contact information, visit the Wyoming State Legislature website at <http://legisweb.state.wy.us/>.

Know the Legislative Process

- ✍ Know and understand the legislative process from start to finish
- ✍ Keep informed prior to and during the session
- ✍ When called upon to take action...know and understand your message and then follow through

Wyoming is one of the few remaining states having a true part-time citizen legislature. The Wyoming Legislature meets in general session in odd numbered years, beginning on the second Tuesday of January. The general session is limited to 40 legislative days, but generally lasts 38 days.

The Legislature meets in a budget session in even numbered years, beginning on the second Monday of February. A typical budget session lasts 20 legislative days. Except for the budget bill, any other bill requires a 2/3 vote of the House or Senate for introduction in a budget session.

Special sessions of the Legislature may be called at any time by the governor.

For a more complete guide to the legislative process, please visit the *Citizen's Guide to the Wyoming Legislature* at <http://legisweb.state.wy.us/leginfo/guide98.htm>. This comprehensive site includes information on the legislative process, committees, staff and bill drafting. You will also find answers to frequently asked questions such as "How do I get copies of the Bills,"

“When and Where do Committees Meet,” and “How do I contact my legislator from home to leave a message or to express my opinion on a bill?”

Know Your Issue

- ✍ Be recognized as a credible, reliable and readily available source of information. This is one of, if not the most important, element of a strong legislative program.
- ✍ Be personally convinced about the subject.
- ✍ If you are a credible and reliable source of information, your legislator will call upon you even if you haven't built the strong relationship.
- ✍ Never, ever, ever provide wrong or inaccurate information.
- ✍ If you don't know the answer to a question, say so and offer to get back with requested information. Never guess or provide questionable answers.
- ✍ It is nearly impossible to recover credibility after supplying misinformation.
- ✍ The information you provide will help the legislator meet their personal political goals.
- ✍ Share with the legislators any knowledge of opposition to your issue or legislation and why. Don't try to hide anything. The more informed they are the more effective they can be.
- ✍ Always be respectful and courteous to an elected official regardless of your feelings.
- ✍ Don't ever threaten or demand.

Tracking Legislation during the Session

The Wyoming Legislative website, <http://legisweb.state.wy.us>, provides Wyoming citizens with electronic access to legislative information. Legislative information available on the web site includes the current Wyoming State Statutes, the Wyoming State Constitution, House and Senate Standing Committee Lists, indexes and text of bills, calendars of committee meetings, text of amendments, information on bill status, and all roll call vote.

You can also listen to Real Audio broadcasts of House and Senate proceedings during the session. To listen to the session, you will need a current copy of the “Real Player” software, available at <http://www.real.com>.

Follow through after the Legislative Process

After legislation is adopted, typically the agency whose statute was modified will promulgate rules and regulations. These are promulgated pursuant to the Administrative Procedures Act which includes opportunity for public comment. This is the agency's interpretation and method for implementing the legislation. Those who supported and/or initiated the legislation will want to ensure accuracy and consistency in this process.