

WBR ARTICLE

Economic Forum in Casper

By Dennis E. Curran

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CASPER - As the national economic recession makes deeper inroads into Wyoming, The Wyoming Business Report has assembled an all-star team to focus on central Wyoming's economy in 2009.

The first Central Wyoming Economic Forecast is scheduled for Feb. 19 at the Best Western Ramkota Hotel in Casper. The compact, two-hour presentation is scheduled for 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Feb. 19, a Thursday.

It will be the Business Report's second economic forecast this year, and it comes as the national recession deepens and spreads into Wyoming. The forecast will focus especially on the diverse economy of Casper and Central Wyoming, where energy is important to the economy but so are transportation, manufacturing, health care, retail, services, agriculture and tourism.

The Central Wyoming Economic Forecast will be moderated by Dr. Brent Hathaway, dean of the University of Wyoming College of Business, who says these are the most interesting economic times in his lifetime.

"If there ever was a time to focus on our state economy, it is now," Hathaway said. "We are living in unprecedented times, with unprecedented challenges, accompanied by unprecedented opportunities."

The panel includes Mick McMurry, president of Nerd Gas Co. and one of Wyoming's leading gas developers; Robert Barnes, president and CEO of the Casper Area Economic Development Alliance (CAEDA); UW economist Rob Godby, chair of UW's Economics and Finance Department; Mark Zaback, president of Jonah Bank of Wyoming in Casper; and Buck McVeigh, administrator of the state's Economic Analysis Division.

Hathaway said he and the panel are looking forward to exploring the unique aspects of the Central Wyoming economy and the outlook for the coming year.

The forecast is presented by the Business Report. Sponsors are the UW College of Business, Wyoming Business Council, Manufacturing-Works, First Interstate Bank, Best Western Ramkota Hotel, KCWY-TV and Mountain States Lithographing.

Cost of the forecast is \$25 for individual seats, and sponsorships and corporate tables also are available. Online registration is available at www.wyomingbusiness

report.com (See events) or by calling the Wyoming Business Report's Casper office, 307-577-1111.

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