

Gift from Whitney Benefits leverages grant from State Loan and Investment Board

CHEYENNE – The State Loan and Investment Board (SLIB) funded 10 Business Ready Community Grants totaling \$16,127,287 during their meeting June 21, 2007 in Cheyenne.

Recommendations on 13 Business Ready Community Grants brought before SLIB were made by the Business Council's Board of Directors during their meeting in Jackson on May 30, 2007. By statute, those recommendations were forwarded to SLIB for a final decision. SLIB is made up of the Governor, the Secretary of State, the State Treasurer, the State Auditor and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Among the grant requests approved by SLIB was a \$1,500,000 Business Committed grant to the city of Sheridan to construct a portion of a new 11,500 square foot early childhood education center to be operated the Sheridan Quality Child Care Initiative.

SHERIDAN - Members of the Sheridan Economic and Education Development Joint Powers Board, the Sheridan Quality Childcare Initiative, Inc., and Sheridan College gathered on July 22, 2008 at 356 Brundage Lane to host a groundbreaking ceremony for the Hand in Hand Early Childhood Education Center.

Sheridan College Vice President of Enrollment Services Dr. Mark Englert said the center is the result of an exciting collaboration between the Whitney Benefits, City of Sheridan, Sheridan College and Sheridan County School District 2, with the purpose of creating a state-of-the-art early childhood education center. Whitney Benefits donated land valued at \$426,500. The land provides an excellent location and the value of the land provided the entire match required for the initial \$1,500,000 grant and a second application for an additional \$1,500,000.

“Over the last several years countless individuals have been involved in working collaboratively to realize the vision of positively influencing and enhancing our capacity to provide child care in the community while strengthening our commitment to providing early childhood education,” Englert said. “This groundbreaking symbolizes the culmination of a lot of hard work by a host of very dedicated individuals and also marks the beginning of the construction phase of the facility that will soon occupy the space.”

The facility which will be owned by the Sheridan Economic and Education Development Joint Powers Board was designed by Armstrong Design of Sheridan and KWN Construction also of Sheridan will handle the construction. The facility is expected to be completed in May of 2009.

“This facility and the early childhood education program are specifically designed to address the lack of capacity in child care services as one of the major economic development issues facing our community that Forward Sheridan identified. The intent is to add child care services to the community, create jobs, and also provide education and training for current and emergent professionals,” Englert said.

Sources: Wyoming Business Council website <http://www.wyomingbusiness.org> and NWCCD website: <http://www.sheridan.edu>