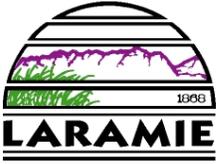


CITY OF LARAMIE COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MAY 4, 2021

	<p>Agenda Item: RESOLUTION</p> <p>Title: RESOLUTION 2021-31, SUPPORTING THE NOMINATION FOR THE 2021 WAM COMMUNITY HERO AWARD</p>
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Recommended Council MOTION: I move to pass Resolution 2021-31, approving the nomination of WyoTech for the 2021 WAM Community Hero Award, and authorize the Mayor and Clerk to sign.

Administrative or Policy Goal:

For City of Laramie City Council to nominate WyoTech for the 2021 WAM Community Hero Award.

Background:

While Laramie is home to the University of Wyoming, it also provides diverse educational opportunities, including the nationally accredited training program at WyoTech. WyoTech is a technical college providing instruction in the automotive, collision, and diesel industries and has served the Albany County community since 1966. Since then, most especially in just the past four years, WyoTech has experienced some major challenges. In November 2017, Zenith, then owners of WyoTech and a number of colleges branded Altierus, announced they would reduce their total number of campuses from 56 to three, with Laramie’s campus eventually closing entirely. This announcement resulted in the winding down of campus operations that included over 400 students and 120 staff positions, which had a very detrimental effect on the local economy.

Officials from local government, WyoTech, LCCC, and UW immediately begin discussing ways to "save" WyoTech. Local officials partnered with state officials, including Former Wyoming Governor Matt Mead, and the Wyoming Legislature and, through a public-private partnership, the school was able to continue operating in Laramie. With a \$5 million loan managed through the WY Business Council, the school was back in business in 2018 with a meager 11 students and 7 employees. Since then, WyoTech has experienced exponential growth and continued to expand. By March 2020, the campus had increased to 240 students and 80 employees. Enrollment is currently at an impressive 440 students and 125 employees, both full- and part-time, with enrollment projected to top 600 by fall 2021. Currently, their on-campus dormitories house 350 students, which will expand to 400 residents this summer and up to 500 in fall 2021. The economic impact of WyoTech is significant to Laramie’s local economy with extensive financial and cultural benefits. The "new" WyoTech has continued its tradition of supporting and investing in its host community through purposeful patronage of the local businesses and student volunteerism. Students are encouraged to volunteer throughout the community, and can also earn extra credit points for doing so.

WyoTech’s growth is not simply seen in its enrollment numbers, but also revealed in its physical footprint. The campus is currently adding on 5,000 sq. ft, equivalent to three classrooms, and is also in the process of planning for a 90,000 sq. ft addition to house their specialty classes, which will help accommodate a total anticipated student population of 700+ within the next year. Planned enhancements to the current curriculum include a new light duty diesel program in July 2021 where students will become skilled in repair of late model diesel pick-ups. A partnership with John Deere is being explored to build an agricultural technology program. Students enrolled in this

institute receive 8 hours and 20 minutes of instruction per day, five days a week over a nine month program. Core class offerings include automotive, diesel, and collision & refinishing technologies. Each student can also select electives, including street rod, chassis fabrication, high performance power trains, advanced diesel, and trim & upholstery. One other elective, of special note, is the applied service management course which earns students an associate's degree in just nine months.

WyoTech President Jim Mathis shared how the need for trained technicians is great across the country and approximately 85% of WyoTech graduates are employed within ninety days of graduating, "There are at least 10 jobs for every one student—the opportunities are out there." In fact, Jim and Director of Operations Kyle Morris note that graduates are trained extensively and are readily hired for entry-level technician positions that pay between \$18-\$27 per hour. WyoTech's goal is simple in that they want to provide a "top-notch, concentrated training program that prepares students for the growing demand for technicians in the automotive and diesel industry."

It is with this impressive comeback story and their immense support of the Laramie community that the City of Laramie enthusiastically nominates WyoTech as a recipient of the 2021 WAM Community Hero Award.

Legal/Statutory Authority:

BUDGET/FISCAL INFORMATION:

Responsible Staff: Janine Jordan, City Manager

Attachments: Resolution 2021-31