



## White Pine Chamber of Commerce

636 Aultman St. Ely, NV. 89301

Phone: 775-289-8877

Email: [WPCC@WhitePineChamber.com](mailto:WPCC@WhitePineChamber.com)

Serving White Pine County for Over One Hundred Years

### Downtown Ely Visitor Center

#### PROPOSAL:

The White Pine Chamber of Commerce is requesting dedicated and sustainable funding from the City of Ely, through the Transient Lodging Taxes (Room Tax) collected from the City of Ely. This plan is solely for the purposes of operating a Downtown Ely Visitor Center within the White Pine Chamber of Commerce office.

Funding through the City of Ely shall only be utilized to employ two (2) part time employees, or one (1) full time employee, to occupy the designated office in the White Pine Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center, Monday through Friday, 9:00 am -5:00 pm.

A separate bank account set up only for the purposes of payroll for part-time Downtown Ely Visitor Center employees will be open to audit by the City at anytime.

**No Transient Lodging Tax may be used to compensate the Chamber of Commerce Chief Executive Officer or any Board of Trustee of the White Pine Chamber of Commerce.**

#### HISTORY:

This 501C6 non-profit, established in downtown Ely in 1921, is designed to support local businesses and organizations in their efforts to enhance services, improve profitability, and maximize the leveraging of assets to yield sustainable growth. We have been White Pine County's business partner for 104 years, and we are stronger than ever.

For the past four and a half years, the Chamber of Commerce has been functioning as a Downtown Ely Visitor Center, with an employee to interface and engage the local community and out-of-area-visitors, assisting in the effective dissemination of information on areas of interest, historic features, and events. This service was made possible through a cooperative agreement with White Pine Tourism and Recreation, providing salaries to part time employees.

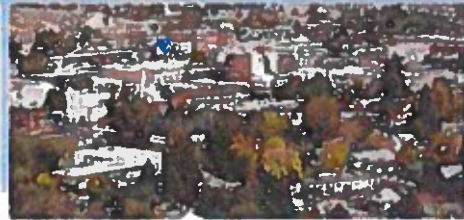
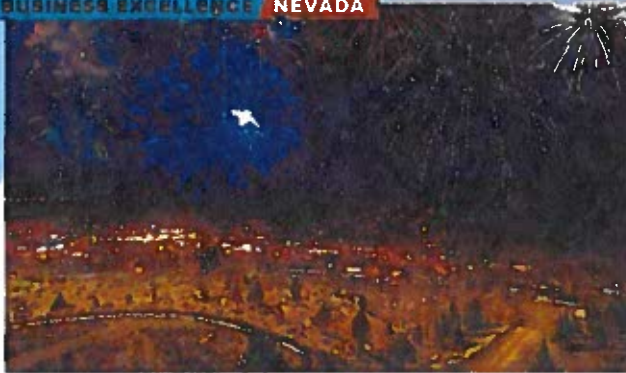
Previously a seven day a week service to the community, on October 2023, the White Pine Tourism & Recreation Board voted to not renew that contract. This service is still vitally necessary, as our office is a primary location heavily trafficked for this purpose.

The White Pine Chamber has created a strong economic climate in the Eastern Nevada Region in which businesses might increase profit margins while expanding their services and employment opportunities. As the only local PRO-Business advocacy organization, marketing Ely, White Pine County and its townships, as well as Eastern Nevada as a business development region, we are here to strengthen this thriving and diverse environment already rich with history and culture. We meet the needs of new and existing businesses.

The City of Ely has maintained a Membership in the White Pine Chamber of Commerce since 2019. We are here to help support you, our member. The White Pine Chamber of Commerce sees the value in maintaining this established service, as our building was modified to incorporate the amenity and be utilized for this purpose. Our goal is to continue providing out-of-area-tourists and locals with a centralized main street location that is known as a primary source of reliable information.

## AS SEEN IN *Forbes, Fortune & Entrepreneur*

BUSINESS EXCELLENCE NEVADA



# Untapped Golden Opportunities in the Silver State

The White Pine Chamber of Commerce champions businesses development in the high desert of Eastern Nevada.

**E**conomic engines of the United States run on the grit and determination of small businesses. Chambers of Commerce keep those financial machines well oiled by providing the connective services businesses need to thrive.

This rings true in the Battle Born State, where the White Pine Chamber of Commerce (WPCC) is leading a new era of economic growth in one of the most remote areas of the country. Representing small and medium sized businesses across a diverse array of industries, this 104 year old Chamber is continuing long-lasting legacies by finding ways of expanding efforts to strengthen this vastly rural region of the state. "Our goal is to facilitate and support economic diversification and growth while ensuring that the fabric of this community remains whole," says CEO Shadrach Robertson.

### Ely's Economic Power

White Pine County, with its wild landscapes rife with abundant hunting, storied histories of Indigenous Americans, and a tight knit community, is driven forward through its connection to the land and its resources. The county seat, Ely, is the sixth oldest city in Nevada, and home to a famous National Historic Landmark, the Nevada Northern Railway.

Even while sitting at the crossroads of three major highways, maintaining a thriving, hyperlocal economy here isn't easy. Ely and White Pine County have seen the boom and bust cycles of mining, yet with strategic coordinated efforts of the city, county, and Chamber, the full gamut of local businesses endured the global shut down of the COVID 19 pandemic with zero closures.



Shadrach Robertson, CEO

Shadrach, who is also First Gentleman to Ely's Mayor, Nathan Robertson, co-owns and operates the only laundromat in their city of 5,000 people. They understand the critical role a Chamber plays in the local economy. So when WPCC's former CEO retired just over one year ago, Shadrach welcomed the board's invitation to apply for the position. His credentials spoke for themselves: He'd held myriad positions—volunteer firefighter, journalist, beloved middle school teacher—and director or trustee on multiple boards of local organizations.

One of Shadrach's first initiatives as Chamber CEO was hosting a small business resource exposition, bringing together 27 local, state, and federal organizations. Many business owners left the expo empowered by the connections they'd made—like one Lund cattle rancher who found the funding she needed to expand her business and launch a farm-to-table restaurant. When he isn't shepherding the city's redevelopment fund towards small businesses, he is working with green energy companies drawn to White Pine County's unique geographical location. Shadrach says, "We help these new corporations step gently into the community so they can invest locally while respecting the county's culture, history, and environment."

Under Shadrach's leadership, WPCC also became a founding member of the Silver State Chambers of Commerce, uniting chambers across Nevada, to create a stronger lobbying voice for businesses at the legislative level. For Shadrach, these and many other efforts of the White Pine Chamber of Commerce are all in service to his fellow citizens.

"My neighbors are honest, friendly, and welcoming," Shadrach says. "The beauty of this community is not just its landscapes, but the people who inhabit it."



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**April, 25, 2024      City of Ely - City Council Report**

Good Evening, Mr. Mayor and Ely City Council,

Thank you for allowing the time for The White Pine Chamber of Commerce's monthly report for April 2024. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Nevada had the second highest unemployment rate in the nation for the month of February 2024. However, Nevada leads the nation with the largest over-the-year percentage increase in employment growth. As a state, unemployment claims are decreasing each month and trending downward. Nationally, market trends and economic indicators project 2024 will continue to be a strong economic performance year.

The latest Nevada Labor Market report, as of March 31st, White Pine County has only 39 continuing unemployment insurance claims, down from an initial 182 filed in this same month of 2020. White Pine continues to lead the state with the lowest unemployment rates, at 3.5%. Since last year the area has increased in 103 jobs or 2.3% growth.

On a local level, the White Pine Chamber is happy to announce we have partnered with Bradley's Bestway Grocery, in McGill. We are helping cover the costs of Bradley's raffling off a one minute Supermarket Swee, .as this Chamber member raises awareness and funds for the Multiple Sclerosis Foundation. Tickets are available at Bradley's from May 1st through the 31st, drawing the winning tickets and the sweep follow in the first week of June.

Additionally, I'd like to formally invite all of you to this year's planned Small Business Resource Forum, set for October 16th of this year. The WPCC, with the Lt. Governor's Office of Small Business Advocacy, will incorporate elected leaders on the local, state, and congressional levels, in order to have direct and engaging conversations about issues and opportunities associated with maintaining sustainable small businesses that contribute to strong economic growth. Last year's resource expo, that the city sponsored, had 27 organizations in attendance, offering tremendous benefit to business owners, non-profit leaders, and entrepreneurs.

The chamber continues to support our members. Over the months of March and April, I and our Member services Manager have met with 50 of our members in face-to-face collaboration meetings. The Chamber also saw an increase in out-of-the-area- visitor traffic as the month has progressed we directly served 111 travelers so far in April.

Lastly, in your back up documentation you will see a one sheet, an article that will be appearing in Forbes, Fortune and Entrepreneur Magazines. This will provide the city of Ely and White Pine County some positive press over the next two years, as this article is shared over 300 of Forbes' affiliate news websites and outlets.



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### **Downtown Ely Visitor Center Plan**

#### **OVERVIEW:**

- Local visitor's centers are co-located within local chambers of commerce in most communities in the State of Nevada.
- These visitor's centers are funded by transient lodging tax and not the local chambers of Commerce.
- The high traffic, main street visibility, and the long-established tendency for visitors to stop at the WP Chamber of Commerce for local information was the reason an official visitor center was established at the Chamber office about 5 years ago.
- Since the withdrawal of support of that visitor center in December of last year, the WP Chamber of Commerce has continued to operating a visitor center as staffing and funding has allowed. This has included partnering with AARP to provide funding for wages for a part time employee to staff said visitor center.
- WP Chamber of Commerce is seeking funding from the City of Ely to be able to hire additional people specifically to staff the visitor center. The goal being to eventually secure enough funding to enable the visitor center return to being open and available to the traveling public 7 days a week.
- The funding being requested will not be used for the operation of the WP Chamber of Commerce or to pay the salary of any Chamber executive. Funding will only be used to pay for staff to operate a visitor center.
- Whether or not a supported visitor center is located at the WP Chamber of Commerce, visitors to our community will continue to stop at the Chamber for local information. Funding support staff to interface with out of area visitors allows the Chamber to continue its primary mission of supporting the member businesses contributing to the city and county's enhanced quality of life.