

2013

Riding for the Brand

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There are some things you take to heart, and more importantly, take to heart and act on. The Cowboy Code of Ethics says "Ride for the Brand."



City of Cheyenne Building Official Bruce Wilson (left), ICC Board Member and Deputy Building Official City of Gillette, Wyo., Jim Brown (center) meet with Cheyenne Mayor Richard Kaysen, who is the ICC 2012 Elected Official of the Year, to discuss how important it is for his staff to be involved at the state and national levels with the ICC and fully recognized the value it brings to their citizens.

Coming off the heels of five days in Chicago attending an ICC Board meeting and getting

back home on a Sunday afternoon, I find myself planning the coming week. Back in the office on Monday; get to work no later than 6 a.m. Tuesday morning leave by 11 a.m. for a meeting in Cheyenne scheduled for the next day. Hmm... what have I missed?

I'm more than prepared to discuss a new \$35 million skilled nursing facility with the state health department and the design team. I then think back to last week's Board meeting where I was not directly challenged but had a discussion that personally hit home. Monday morning mail comes in and there is a copy of a letter from Wyoming Governor Matt Mead. Excellent, I have been waiting for this. I open it and it was not what I was expecting and I wondered how in the heck did I get on this distribution list? The letter was about building energy codes. The wheels start turning and I picked up the phone and before I knew it I had a meeting with the Governor's policy advisor on energy as Governor Mead was not available. 300 miles to Cheyenne, I can make that by 4 p.m. Tuesday. The wheels start turning more and faster which for those of you who know me well can be a frightening experience!

Here's where a matter of the heart turns into action. I start calling code officials along the travel route to arrange meetings with them and their Mayors, Administrators, and other decision makers knowing that all of this is last minute and the chances are slim to make it happen. The topics for discussion will be to thank all decision makers for allowing their employees to participate in the ICC Wyoming Chapter and the ICC, and encourage new code officials to hook on. Also want to talk about the important role we play in safeguarding our citizens, and the value that participation brings back to every jurisdiction regardless of size or population, just to name a few. We always talk about raising the profile of the Code Official and I found myself asking what have I really done about it? Well tighten up your back chinch partner 'cause here we go!

Wyoming Governor Matt Mead (left) and ICC Board Member and Deputy Building Official City of Gillette, Wyo., Jim Brown talk about the energy code, the Wyoming Chapter and other built environment issues. What struck me the most, Brown said, was as we parted the Governor said "keep up the good and important work." It was genuine and valued.

So even with the last minute calls here is the lineup: 600 miles and six meetings in a day and a half. Piece of cake! Tuesday, I leave Gillette at 11 in the morning and meet with the policy advisor in Cheyenne at 4 in the afternoon. I was joined by my good friend Bruce Wilson who is the Building Official for the City of Cheyenne. Bruce also invited me to bunk at his place saving me the cost of a hotel for the night and gave us the opportunity to sit on his back porch that evening and solve all the world's problems!

Wednesday morning: I took a chance and stopped by capital building at 7:30. Will wonders never cease, Governor Mead is free for a short visit and a picture. You just gotta love Wyoming! I had a great visit with him and if you ever have the pleasure of meeting him you will know in the first minute that this guy is the real deal. In our short time together we talked the energy code, the Wyoming Chapter and other issues. What struck me the most was as we parted we shook hands and he said, "keep up the good and important work." It was genuine and valued.



Off to the next meeting with Bruce Wilson (again) to meet with Cheyenne Mayor Richard Kaysen scheduled for 9 a.m. You may recall that Mayor Kaysen was honored by the ICC as the 2012 Elected Official of the Year. It sure didn't take me long to realize why. The Mayor beat me to the punch and expressed how important it is for his staff to be involved at the state and national levels with the ICC and fully recognized the value it brings to their citizens. He also went to the end of the room and to my surprise and pleasure

reached to a place of honor in the center of a shelf and pulled down the ICC award for me to see. Mayor Kaysen is very proud and honored to have been given this award. Bottom line, this gentleman gets it. Please notice in the picture background the poster for Cheyenne Frontier Days—the greatest week of rodeo in the world. This is important as my visit coincided with the opening day and Mayor Kaysen still took the time to visit.

Off to the 10 a.m. meeting on the new skilled nursing facility. I'm sure that many of you can guess how that went. "Intellectual" code geeks in action??? Meeting over at 12:30 p.m. **with 130 miles to drive to get to Douglas for a 2:30 meeting.**

ICC Board Member and Deputy Building Official City of Gillette, Wyo., Jim Brown (left) visits with Gillette City Administrator Carter Napier. "There is great value and benefit for our employees to participate at the state, national and international levels; the City of Gillette supports and encourages this."

I get into the City of Douglas (The Home of the Jackalope) just in time to meet with Building Official Steve McBride and City Administrator Tony Tolstedt. The main topic again was the important role of the code official and participation with the ICC and the value it brings. We also swapped some good "war" stories about life in general and found common ground at every turn. I had reached out to Steve in the past and he has been able to make it to a couple of WCBO educational seminars. Understanding that Steve is relatively new to the code official world I'm hoping that he will get involved and was asked by the City Administrator toward the end of the visit "is this something that you would like to be involved in?" Ah... thanks Tony! Perhaps mission accomplished?

On to the **Town of Wright** to visit with my good friend and **Building Official Lyle Murdock.** Seventy-six miles and meeting at 4:30, I can make that easy. Driving out of Douglas with the Medicine Bow in the rear view mirror and the Thunder Basin National Grasslands in front of me, Willie Nelson on the radio, burger in hand and the hammer down... Life is good!

My visit with Lyle was laced with discussions about the events of the day, the upcoming ICC Annual Business Meeting, **the future of the Wyoming Conference of Building Officials, succession planning, and raising the profile of Code Officials with our state representatives.**

I'm finally on my way home with only another 60 miles to the ranch. It's now route 59 North, George Strait on the radio and hammer down on the power stroke diesel again with my last visit behind me. Reflecting on the events of the past day and a half as I pass by the seemingly endless fence posts, mule deer and antelope, I hope that I made some small difference along the way.

ICC Board Member and Deputy Building Official City of Gillette, Wyo., Jim Brown (left) Douglas City Administrator Tony Tolstedt (center) and Douglas Building Official Steve McBride talk about the important role of the code official and participation with the ICC and the value it brings.



But wait a minute, what about my jurisdiction you might ask? Good question and I'm glad you asked. **So I went up to the third floor to visit with our City Administrator Carter Napier for his point of view on the state chapter and ICC participation.** Now you really didn't think I was going to leave this out did you?

Here are Carter's views on

participation with the ICC and the Wyoming Chapter and other organization outside of the City of Gillette. "There is great value and benefit for our employees to participate at the state, national and international levels; the City of Gillette supports and encourages this. Through their volunteer work outside of our **routine spheres of influence**, our employees bring back a much broader view of the world, enhanced leadership skills, and networking contacts that keeps Gillette on the cutting edge of information and technology. The bottom line is: we invest in our employees in efforts like this and the returns are well worth it."

So to wrap this article up here are some of some of the things I reaffirmed and learned: Ride for the Brand, Take Pride in Your Work and Act on the Heart. The message that you bring is welcome and needs to be spread, and most importantly you do not need to be an ICC Board member to do this. I would challenge you the next time you travel to take the time to visit with other code officials and their decision makers about the good work that we all do to safeguard our families, friends and neighbors. I think that you will be surprised what you can accomplish. Happy Trails!