

# FUSE workshop helps workers tap into potential of experienced workers

During these turbulent economic times, it would be understandable if the hiring of workers were not deemed a No. 1 priority by businesspeople.

But more than ever, businesses need good workers — to keep customers happy and operations running smoothly.

Good workers come from a wide range of backgrounds — and ages.

I encourage you to join me and other employers to learn more about an untapped segment of Sheridan's workforce: age 50-plus workers. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend the first FUSE workshop from 1 to 7 p.m. Thursday at the Sheridan Holiday Inn.

FUSE stands for Fully Utilizing Sheridan's Experience, and that's exactly what we'll be discussing.

There is a wealth of skills and experience in Sheridan. We have many recent retirees who possess a tremendous amount of knowledge and a desire to share it.

In 2005, AARP asked Wyoming businesses what they thought of their workers age 50 and older. Overwhelmingly the more than 2,000 businesses responding said their 50-plus workers were reliable, had a solid work ethic, could be counted on in a crisis, and had excellent customer service skills.

The following year, AARP asked its

members in Wyoming what they planned to do once they reached age 65, the traditional age of retirement. Eighty percent said they wanted or needed to work.

With declining retirement investment funds and increasing health care costs, that number would surely be higher today.

Several companies in Wyoming have already figured out how to make these numbers work for them. A supply company in Casper hired a group of retirees for an on-call delivery driver team, allowing them to expand their business into new regions of the state without significantly increasing their payroll.

The drivers place their names on the list when they want to work and remove their names when they are not available.

A company in Chugwater has a team of retired workers who sign up for shifts to either produce the company's product or to help with the shipping process. Workers say they feel valued, in control of their time, and they appreciate the extra cash that helps them pay for



## Center Stage

Carmen Rideout



their Medicare supplement and keeps them from dipping into their savings.

The companies say their "retired" workers are happy, productive and need little, if any, oversight. Plus, their presence has reduced the need to make

expensive investments in new packaging equipment.

Now, we're not trying to pit one age group against another, but why wouldn't you consider an older worker to fill your business needs?

Join us at the free FUSE workshop and learn more from the management experts from AARP, the University of Wyoming, Sheridan College, the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services, Society of Human Resource Managers and the Sheridan County Chamber of Commerce.

You'll also hear from businesses in Sheridan and throughout Wyoming that have tapped into the potential of skilled and experienced workers to grow themselves.

If you can't attend the whole work-

shop, you are welcome to drop by for part of it. A complete schedule is available when you register by calling the Sheridan Workforce Center at 672-9775.

Space is limited, so make sure you get a seat at the table. I hope to see you there!

*Carmen Rideout is executive director for the Sheridan Senior Center.*

*Center Stage is written by friends of the Senior Center for the Sheridan community. It is a collection of insights and stories related to living well at every age.*

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