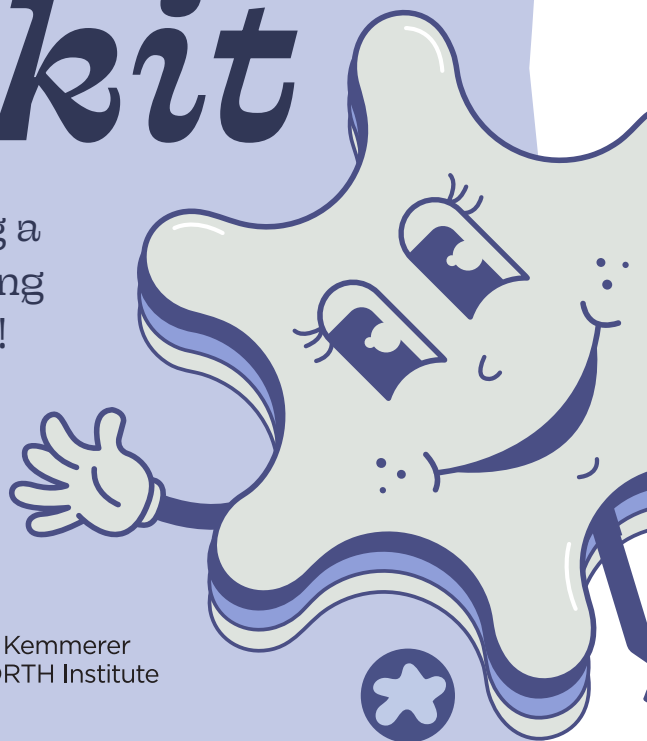


The **Winter** **Fest** *Toolkit*

A resource for planning a
community festival using
your people and places!



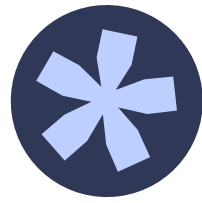
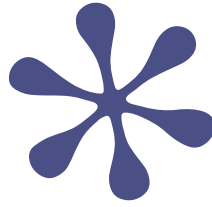
LARAMIE
PUBLIC
ART
COALITION



UW

Jay Kemmerer
WORTH Institute

HELLO!



This is a toolkit, guide and resource for groups interested in hosting events, particularly festivals, for their communities. In February of 2025, a team of researchers and community members hosted the inaugural Winterfest in Laramie, Wyoming. This was an effort to not only entertain locals and visitors alike with some late-winter activities, but also boost the local economy as the local Albany County Tourism Board identified February as an economic, recreation and tourism 'opportunity season'.

Winterfest was an evolving event, and we wish for others to benefit from our experience, especially in willingness to be pliable. The initial plan for the festival was to host a more traditional winter festival: think snow-packed streets with a recreation area winding through downtown Laramie. The weakening snowfall forecast, however, hinted that we should set our sights on other activities that would make more environmental sense. Ultimately, we dug deep to highlight and activate the extraordinary, existing features of our community, which we think is the secret sauce to hosting a local festival with a big impact.

Laramie Winterfest was made possible and successful with seed funding provided by the University of Wyoming's Jay Kemmerer WORTH Institute and the leadership of Theresa LeValley (Winterfest project manager), Laura McDermitt (Laramie Public Art Coalition), and University of Wyoming researchers Curt Davidson (Haub School of ENR), Molly Walters (Graduate Student, Communication & Journalism) and Kayla Clark (Communication & Journalism and Haub School of ENR) as well as the support of many others.

xoxo,
Flakey

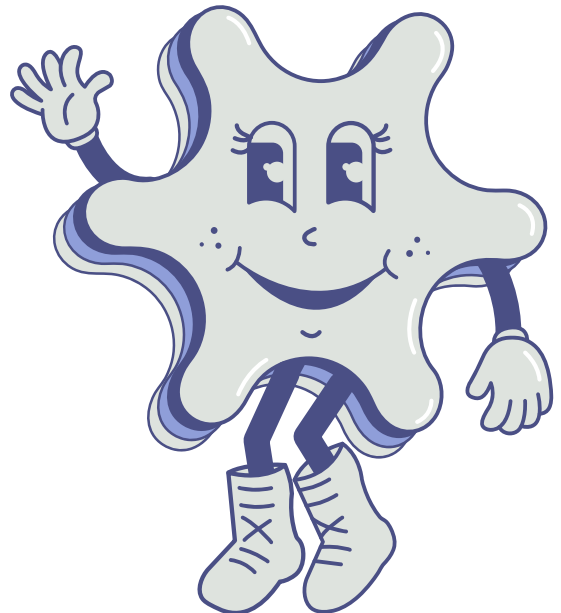
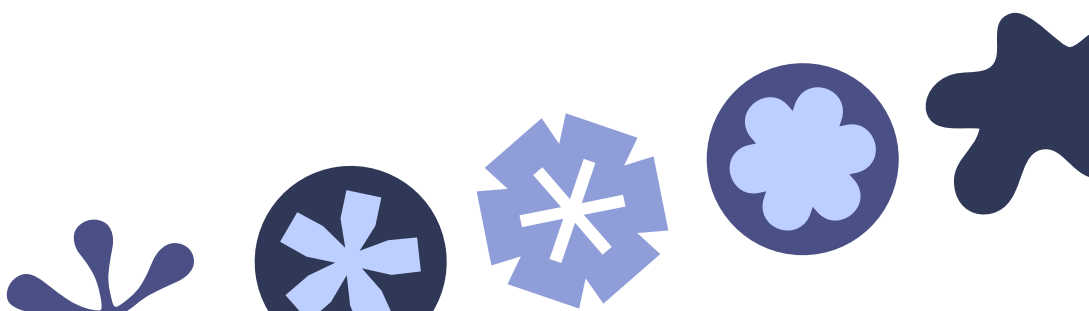
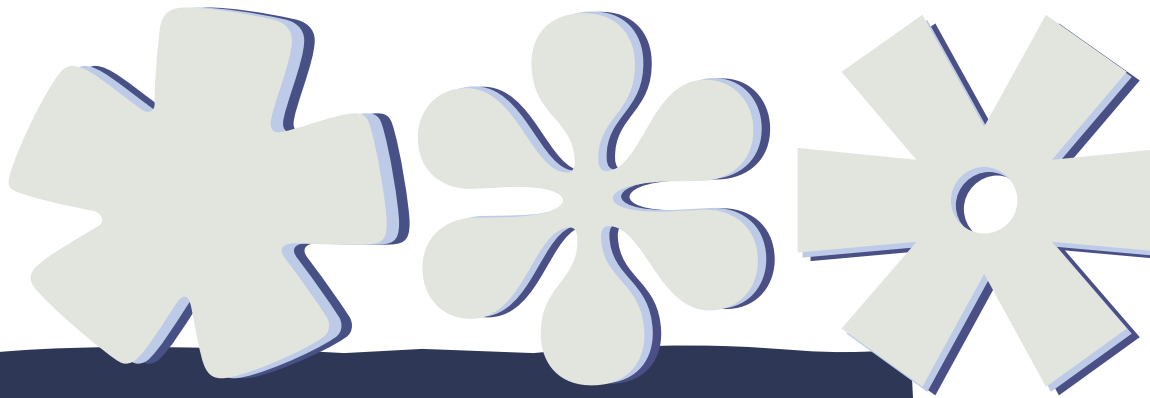




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Festival Model & Purpose

Build a modest, repeatable winter weekend around assets your town or community already has, from arts to small businesses and outdoor spaces. Spread activities (and costs) across existing venues, highlighting important areas while making it easy for residents and visitors to participate.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Local first. Organize neighborhood artists, student groups, clubs, and merchants, point participants toward local storefronts.

Distributed footprint. Activate multiple spaces in a downtown area, or similar gathering point. Encourage non-retail businesses to host or collaborate through a pop-up in their storefront. Spread foot traffic and create opportunities for discovery!

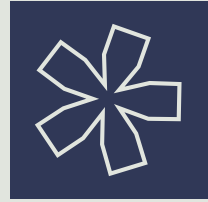
Keep costs low. Favor workshops, scavenger hunts, and outdoor activities over expensive headliners. Explore musical acts touring near your location and suggest a stop.

Shared delivery. The more people at the table, the larger the audience. Split organization responsibilities between key parties such as directly-impacted businesses, recreation clubs, city office, tourism boards, etc.

Low barriers. Keep core programming free or low-cost. Add optional paid micro-experiences where needed.

Learn and adjust. Collect simple counts and quick surveys, then use them to refine year two.

Partnership & Funding Model



To ensure everyone is in the loop, but no organizers are overwhelmed, start with a small core team to coordinate major decisions while many partners deliver individually-focused pieces. Early in the process, name roles. Confirm who owns permits, programming, venues, volunteers, and communications.

LOCAL KEY PARTNERS

- Arts Organizations
- City/Parks & Recreation
- Community Colleges/Universities
- Nonprofits
- Clubs and Organizations
- Visitor/Tourism Bureau
- Local media
- Main Street/Downtown Organizations
- Small businesses

CORE TEAM

- Operations
- Programming
- City Liaison
- Sponsorships
- Volunteer Coordinator
- Marketing + Communication
- Safety/Accessibility

Seed Funding: For the inaugural year, Winterfest was supported substantially with funds from the university of Wyoming's Jay Kemmerer WORTH Institute.

Micro-Grants: To support participating businesses, organizations and artists, 14 microgrants of ~\$250 were awarded through a simple application process. These micro-grants offset costs associated with Winterfest (workshop supplies, literature, signage, etc.).

Tourism Marketing: An additional grant was awarded from the Albany County Tourism Board/Visit Laramie for printed and digital marketing which was deployed in Albany county and the surrounding areas within easy driving distance for a weekend visit.

In-Kind: Several local hotels blocked and subsidized rooms to accommodate guests traveling for Winterfest. Student teams from the University of Wyoming created and deployed social posts using the public-facing digital resources. Organizations donated in exchange for sponsorship and signage throughout the festival.

Community Base: In the inaugural year, more than 20 businesses/organizations hosted workshops, activities, specials or sales to activate the community, bringing attendees downtown, then fanning them out to explore outdoor recreation spaces around Laramie.

Workforce Development: 15 University of Wyoming undergraduates logged ~450 hours across event production, survey research, and social media. 1 graduate student led the surveying and headcounts, offering pre-event education to undergraduate peers, day-of coordination, and post-event data processing and organization.

Permits, Compliance, & Insurance

Involve city partners early. Share a draft site map, confirm ADA routes, and ask about notice and barricade timelines. Early clarity on tents/heaters, food service, alcohol, and insurance avoids last-minute work, and permits may need to be pulled at least 2 weeks prior to the event.

COMMON ITEMS

- Special-event permit
- Street/sidewalk/park use
- Noise/sound
- Tent/heating
- Temporary food service
- Alcohol/catering
- Insurance naming the city as additional insured
- Neighborhood/business notices for extended closures
- ADA access plan

ORGANIZER CHECKLIST

- **Event overview:**
 - Dates/hours
 - Peak headcount by zone
 - Planned locations and events
- **Site map(s):**
 - Closures
 - ADA routes
 - Emergency lanes
 - Heaters
 - Power
 - Toilets
 - Waste
- **Traffic & parking:**
 - Deliveries
 - Load-in/out windows
 - Barricades
 - “No Parking” posting timeline

- **Safety:**
 - EMS contact
 - First-aid hubs
 - Weather protocol
 - De-icing
 - Extinguishers
- **Accessibility:**
 - Viewing areas
 - Quiet/warm room
 - Large-print schedules
- **Waste & cleanup:**
 - Smaller bins
 - Larger collection area
 - Recycling
 - Sustainable trash bags
- **Insurance:**
 - Print and display certificates
 - Cover necessary additional insureds
- **Notice proof to neighbors/businesses:**
 - Advanced notice of closure
 - Opportunities to participate
 - Event organizer contact



General Timeline

Use this as a guide for moving from general interest to pointed activation. The general timeline can be organized into 3 rollouts: core team and City (1), key players (2) and public (3). If you're early, invest in partnerships and signage to advertise and spread the word, attracting more participation.

6–9 months out: Confirm dates, confirm city requirements, pre-book venues, recruit key partners.

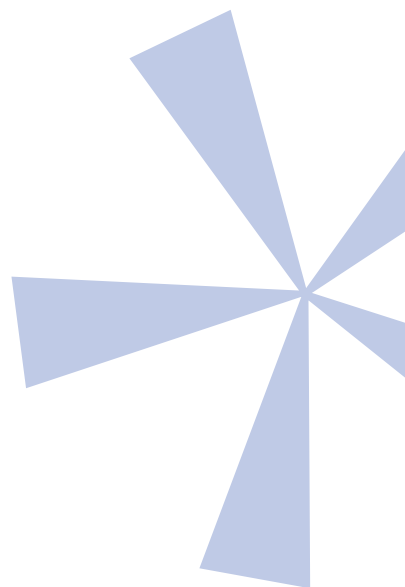
3–5 months out: Finalize program slate, draft site map, ADA plan, sponsor deck, open vendor/volunteer interest.

6–8 weeks out: Submit permits, notify neighbors/businesses, confirm rentals (tent, heaters, power, barricades, staging).

2–4 weeks out: Confirm COIs and permits, proof maps and schedules, staff trainings, daily social roll-out.

Festival week: Weather and plowing checks, post “No Parking” notifications and signage, stage barricades, zone-captain walk-through.

Post-event (1–2 weeks): Vendor and volunteer surveys, sponsor report, City debrief, publish highlight reel, set year-two dates.



Day-of Runbook

Participants should be able to find activities quickly and reach a warm space within a minute's walk.

Morning: Weather check, plowing/sanding, power and heater tests, signage, staged vendor load-in.

Guest experience: Welcome kiosk or signage, pocket schedules, high-contrast and accurately-sized wayfinding, posted warm-space hours, sensory-friendly window.

Safety & inclusion: First-aid hubs, lost-child protocol, ADA route inspection, heat breaks for staff and volunteers.

Downtown commerce: Stamp-card or QR crawl, time waves before/after tent headliners to relieve pinch points.

Close-out: Trash sweep, barricade staging, vendor load-out, heater cooldown, public spaces reset.





Sponsorship

The goal is simple: cover warmth, safety, and free programming while giving partners clear, useful visibility. Lead with what sponsors care about: audience, local impact, and easy delivery. Then make it straightforward to say yes.

VALUE TO SPONSORS

Example: Reach families, students, and winter recreationists during a quiet retail period.

Align with a specific civic outcome: more people downtown in February.

Credible results to report: unique participants, average time spent at festival, planned spending, etc.

Build a sponsorship tier structure. Keep the menu short and predictable; reserve naming for one or two anchors.

Title: (\$5k–\$10k) “Winterfest presented by [Name]” or Main Tent presented by [Name], top logo lockup on stage/map/web, short stage thank-you, option to underwrite a free workshop line or warming station, up to 10 staff/volunteer slots.

Major: (\$2.5k) Secondary logo on map/web, onsite booth/table or activation (see menu on next page), 6 staff/volunteer slots, two social spotlights.

Community: (\$500–\$1k) Logo on map/web, one social mention, option to adopt a workshop hour or provide hot-drink vouchers.

In-kind. Credit for heat, lighting, printing, coffee/cocoa, shuttle, or equipment.

Activation menu: (choose 1–2) Branded warming station or cocoa cart, photo backdrop, “Find Flakey” prize underwriter, merchant-stamp prizes, volunteer check-in hospitality, quiet/warm room support, gear-demo hour, shuttle stop sponsorship.

Specify what will be delivered in exchange for sponsorship of all levels. Clear logo placement rules, approval deadlines, onsite signage, stage mentions, a dated MOU, a one-page post-event report with counts, photos, and quotes.

TIMELINE FOR ASKS

- **120 days prior:** outreach with one-pager + deck
- **90 days prior:** confirm tier/MOU
- **60 days prior:** collect logos and activation needs
- **14 days prior:** run-of-show and signage proof
- **14 days post:** deliver sponsor report.

LARAMIE Winter Fest

sponsorship opportunities

Sponsorships can be made to Laramie Public Art Coalition, a 501c3 non-profit organization

learn more &
sponsor here:



\$150

wayfinder

Name or business logo will be prominently featured on:

Wayfinding signage at festival entry points.

Website and social media accounts.

\$250

basecamp

Name or business logo will be prominently featured on:

Main activity tent, the central point of the festival.

Website and social media accounts.

\$750

crystal

Name or business logo will be prominently featured on:

A custom engraved ice sculpture located at the festival.

Wayfinding signage at festival entry points.

Website and social media accounts.

\$1,000

ember

Name or business logo will be prominently featured on:

A custom engraved ice sculpture located at the festival.

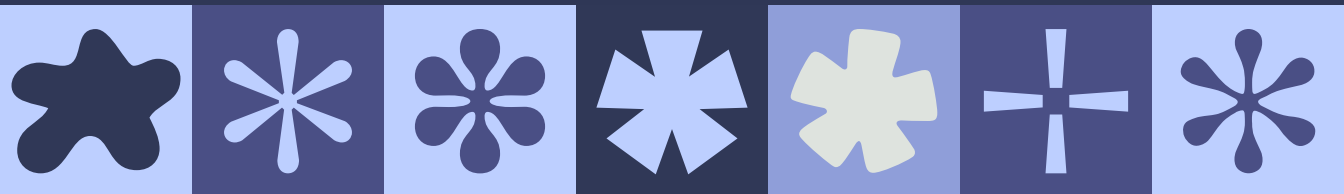
Main activity tent.

Wayfinding signage at festival entry points.

Website and social media accounts.

Wish to contribute in other ways? We welcome additional activities (host a hot cocoa hut!) or volunteers for the festival.

laramiewinterfest.com laramiewinterfestival@gmail.com



Volunteers & Staffing

Aim for short shifts, clear roles, and a simple check-in. Student leaders or core team can run zones, local clubs can adopt an activity. Thank people visibly.

Roles (examples): Information desk or greeters, runners, tent crew, workshop hosts, safety, trailhead/ice monitors, load-in/out, comms rover.

Shifts: 2–3 hours, pair new volunteers with zone captains, QR check-in, group text for ops.

Training: One-page quick-reference, ADA and de-escalation basics, weather/hypothermia cues, call tree.

Perks: Hot-drink vouchers, merch, thank-you event, reference letters for student leads.

Communications Kit

Use plain language to speak to a wide age-range and high-contrast visuals that work in evening and low light. Consider a trendier visual aesthetic to reflect the excitement of the event that still feels authentic to the event and locale. A mascot can be playful and engaging! Create written and visual assets to be shared with the community and easily customized in accessible and free programs such as Canva (visual) or a website hub (written).

VISUAL ASSETS

- Logo/wordmark in horizontal and vertical formats
- Mascot
- Pattern library
- Color palette
- Photos for free use
- Poster and schedule
- Instagram grid/reels kit
- Volunteer and merchant flyers
- Wayfinding signs

MESSAGING GUIDE

Purpose & angle: Name the “why now” (mid-winter lift), “who it’s for” (families, students, visitors), and what’s free.

Include every time: Dates/times/locations, cost or “free”, accessibility notes (warm spaces, ADA routes), weather backup, website/QR.

Tone & language: Plain, specific, local verbs (make, skate, listen, warm up). Avoid jargon and superlatives.

Calls to action: Attend an event, bring a friend, volunteer, host a micro-activation, support a downtown business.

Accessibility: High contrast between layered colors, keep type within ADA-approved sizes, opt for shorter captions, always add alt text to images.

CHANNEL TIPS

Press note: 80–120 words, one quote from a community partner, media kit link, contact name + email/phone.

Volunteer ask: Shift length, role options, perks, signup link.

Merchant invite: List 10–20-minute in-store options (demo, tasting, make-and-take), map inclusion, RSVP deadline, contact.

TIMELINE FOR BASIC COMMUNICATION DISTRIBUTION

- **90 days prior:** Announce dates
- **30 days prior:** Publish schedule
- **14 days prior:** Daily spotlights + sponsor highlights
- **7 days prior:** Merchant features
- **1 day prior:** “How to go” post
- **1 day post:** Thanks & photos.

COMMUNICATIONS SNAPSHOT: WINTERFEST

We created a freely-accessible resource of graphic assets and banding toolkit for the Laramie community use to help advertise and spread the word of Winterfest. This allowed businesses, organizations and artists to customize social media posts, flyers and advertisements to be uniquely theirs while remaining visually associated with Winterfest. The assets, as well as a user-friendly guideline, were available in multiple formats, but primarily through Canva for public access.



blizzard
white

#FFFFFF



bright
sky

#BFCCEA



dusty
ice

#91EDD3



alpen
glo

#4B5080



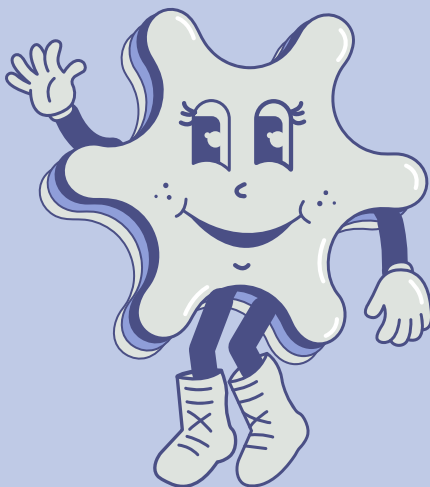
night
ski

#323754



frosty
gray

#DCE2DD



LARAMIE
Winter Fest

LARAMIE
Winter
Fest

PIE
pie

Sway
Variable

Measurement & Reporting

Keep note of festival happenings and metrics with short intercept surveys, simple counts by zone, and a quick merchant check-in. Pair the numbers with a few strong photos and two or three quotes for a sponsor-ready recap.

Core metrics: Gather hourly headcounts of participants (by zone), average dwell time, hotel nights, out-of-area visitors, self-reported business sales lift, volunteer hours, web/social reach.

Survey toolkit: 6–8 intercept questions (QR + paper fallback) + optional email capture. Tag each response with zone, time block, weather, etc.

COMMUNICATIONS SNAPSHOT: WINTERFEST

Our teams of surveyors asked attendees the following questions on-site:

“Are you a visitor?”

“If so, where from?”



“Are you more likely to visit Laramie because of Winterfest?”

“How much money do you plan to spend at Winterfest?”

“Do you have any suggestions for next year?”

“How long do you plan to stay at Winterfest?”

“Did you have plans to visit, or did Winterfest bring you downtown?”



“What activities do you plan to participate in?”

Case Study:
LARAMIE
Winter
Fest

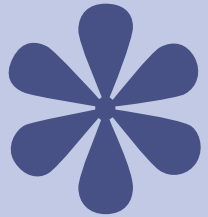
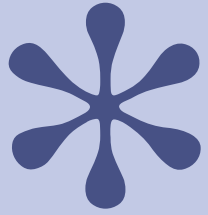
Overview: A two-day, downtown-centered festival built from local assets: family workshops, public art, live music, food trucks, and county-wide recreation tie-ins.

Lead & support: Laramie Public Art (lead), UW WORTH Initiative (seed), Albany County Tourism Board, local hotels, UW student communications teams and 20+ participating businesses/organizations.

Community & partners: ~1,200 residents and visitors, 40 participating downtown businesses; 4 municipal agencies; 26 arts-and-recreation organizations.

PROGRAM FOOTPRINT

- Family workshops (4 unique sessions, ~6 hours total)
- Live ice sculpting, Dan Toro mural, Dave Greber light installation
- Train Depot artist market (14 makers), Holistic Healing Fair
- "Find Flakey" scavenger hunt
- Seed party
- Book signing & raffle
- Yoga & sauna
- Felting & charcuterie
- "Calming Collage + Coffee"
- Western-AF music collaboration (9 acts) in heated tent
- Three food trucks next to the tent (all sold out)
- Recreation links:
 - Pole Mountain Shuffle
 - Free ice skating
 - Snowy Range alpine race
 - Snow Dawg Fat-bike race
 - Full-moon XC ski/snowshoe



1,173

Estimated unique participants

12

Multi-night stays booked under the Winterfest hotel block.

135

Had no prior plans to visit downtown that day.

40

Planned to spend \$100+.

13

OTHER STATISTICS

Average dwell: ~2.5 hours.

Visitor origin: 35 out-of-county, 20 out-of-state, 29 "more likely" to visit again.

Planned spending (counts):

- \$1–20: 54
- \$21–50: 110
- \$51–100: 56
- \$100+: 40.

Spending concentration: of 206 who reported spending, 96 planned to spend \$50.

Activities most engaged (shares):

- Live music: 60%
- Live ice sculpting: 40%
- Food & drink: 75%
- Shopping: 25%
- Outdoor recreation: 45%
- Art market: 17.5%
- Other: 5%.
- (Based on 277 intercept surveys)



WHAT WORKED

Micro-grants: Small awards enabled timely pop-ups and broadened participation.

Open-source comms: Graphics kit + Canva support kept messaging consistent and usable by businesses.

Distributed programming: Multiple sites spread crowds, weather risk, and economic benefit.

County-wide tie-ins: Recreation at Happy Jack and Snowy Range linked town and trailheads.

Hotel collaboration: Room blocks/subsidies supported artists and out-of-town acts.

Small-business response: Owners proposed specials and cross-promotions; many reported strong foot traffic and sales.

LESSONS TO ITERATE

Wayfinding & warmth: Add "You are here / Next up" boards; improve heater placement; offer a quiet/warm room.

Merchant integration: Pre-script 10–20-minute in-store demos/tastings; expand stamp-card/QR crawl.

Data ops: QR intercepts + optional email capture; hourly counts at each site.

Snow operations & variability: Coordinate equipment/labor to move and maintain snow; keep a dry-winter program set.



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