



NEWS RELEASE

WYOMING DISTRICT OFFICE

Release Date: , 2005

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Release Number: 05-05

Internet Address: <http://www.sba.gov/wy>

The Wheatland Fire Equipment Company SBA Family-Owned Small Business of the Year 2005

Wheatland – The Wyoming District Office of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) has named Howard Cozad, Larry Cozad and Gary Cozad, owners and operators of The Wheatland Fire Equipment Company, SBA Family-Owned Small Business of the Year 2005. This award will be presented to them on May 19, 2005 at the

This award is given to individuals who own and operate or bear principal responsibility for operating a small business that demonstrates a substantiated history as an established business. Other evaluation criteria includes evidence of success as measured by sales and profits, growth in number of employees, demonstrate potential necessary for long-term business success and economic growth, and voluntary efforts to strengthen family-owned businesses within the community. The President of the United States recognizes contributions of the small business community to the American economy and society by proclamation each year.



Wheatland Fire Equipment (WFE) is a family owned business that started in the basement of Howard Cozad's home in 1983. Brothers Larry and Gary are both graduates of Wheatland High School. Larry was a career firefighter in Casper before joining the family business in 1992. After high school Gary went to the United States Naval Academy, earning a degree in Applied Science Management. He later graduated from CU with an M.B.A. and, in 1992 started the Colorado branch of WFE. In 1997 he was instrumental in consolidating WFE's operations to Wheatland and returned to help run the business from his hometown. Their recent purchase of property at 2020 South



St. in Wheatland gives WFE, who currently has 20 employees, the square footage it needs to meet the growing demands of their business, and will create a total of up to 14 new jobs. WFE's ability to complete this transaction was made possible by a loan through the Small Business Administration and has been helped in numerous ways by SBA and the Small Business Development Center.

Larry Cozad has taught vehicle crash rescue to the local fire department on a volunteer basis for the past several years. Gary has served on local boards. Howard retired as a 30 year volunteer from the local fire department. The bottom line is that while WFE encourages and supports

volunteerism, their personal contributions would not hold a candle to the benefits of employment of 32 people and the spin offs that provides to the community.

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