



Safe Routes to School in Action

Thermopolis, Wyoming

Background

Mayor Billy Malloy doesn't pass up an opportunity to improve community and safety in Thermopolis, a small town in Wyoming with a population of approximately 3,200. At a local township association meeting in 2007, WY DOT presented information about Safe Routes to School and potential funding opportunities. Mayor Malloy recognized that Thermopolis could benefit from sidewalk improvement projects and a pedestrian education program that would increase safety for children already walking to school. He returned to his office where his team immediately got to work. With the support of the school district, school board, parents, and township officials, Thermopolis successfully applied for SRTS funding in March 2007 and in the summer of 2007 received \$160,000 from WY DOT.

Details

Thermopolis Middle School is located on 14th Street and home to approximately 240 students in 5th through 8th grade. Ten years ago the school was located in a sparsely developed area of town but Thermopolis has experienced tremendous growth. Today 90% of students live within one mile of school and 50% of students live within a half mile of school. As this area of town grew, a need developed for sidewalks and crosswalks to increase pedestrian safety.

The first Safe Routes to School project, completed in the summer of 2008, supported infrastructure improvement, constructing 8 blocks of sidewalks and 2 additional crosswalks along 14th Street. Although there has been no formal evaluation of the program, school officials and teachers report, "There has probably been a 30-40% increase in pedestrian traffic along 14th Street." Thermopolis Middle School complemented infrastructure improvements with a week long pedestrian education program hosted by teachers and local officials at the fire hall, also located on 14th Street.

What's Next

Thermopolis applied for WY DOT funding again this past winter (2008-2009) and has been awarded an additional \$200,000. The community is excited to complete sidewalks on the other side of 14th Street and add one additional crossing. Construction is expected to be completed by the summer of 2010, giving Thermopolis the opportunity to begin focusing on other community improvement projects including the completion of the Bighorn River Walking path.

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