

GOALS	CORRIDOR CHARACTERISTICS	
System Preservation	High plains	Interstate connection to South Dakota
Safety	Energy development and agricultural products contribute to truck traffic	
Economic Sustainability	Corridor connects smaller communities to regional centers	Economy anchored by agriculture and ranching
Public Transportation		

### PRIMARY INVESTMENT TYPE: SYSTEM PRESERVATION

The primary need for the corridor is to maintain the existing system in terms of roadway pavement conditions and deficient bridges. In specific spot locations throughout the corridor, passing lanes may need to be added to accommodate the combination of increasing truck traffic, commuter traffic, and recreational travel and to improve safety.



# CORRIDOR CHARACTERISTICS

## Corridor Description

State Significant Corridor (SSC) 15 is 273 miles long. It follows US 85 from Cheyenne to Newcastle. At Newcastle, the corridor continues both northwest to Moorcroft along US 16 and southeast for approximately 13 miles to the South Dakota border. SSC 15 passes through Laramie, Goshen, Niobrara, Weston, and Crook Counties along the eastern edge of Wyoming.

SSC 15 travels along the eastern high plains of Wyoming. As the corridor reaches Newcastle, it follows the southwestern edge of the Black Hills of South Dakota. At its north end, SSC 15 connects with SSC 13 at the small town of Moorcroft just west of Gillette on I-90. SSC 16 connects to SSC 15 near Torrington and shares the same designation (US 26) for approximately 10 miles. US 85 then connects to Interstate 25 (I-25) just north of Cheyenne. For much of its length, from Newcastle to Lusk, US 85 follows the historic Cheyenne – Deadwood Stage Route.

SSC 15 serves as a shortcut from Newcastle and areas of eastern South Dakota along Interstate 90 (I-90) to Cheyenne. The impending new highway facility upgrade on US 385, east of US 85 in South Dakota and Nebraska, is likely to draw north/south traffic from US 85. Thus, unlike other corridors, SSC 15 may carry less traffic and not more in the future.

Agriculture and ranching anchor the economy along Wyoming's eastern border. Mineral exploration and energy development occur in a boom-bust cycle typical of that industry. Rail lines going east/west carry Wyoming coal to the Midwest.

Wyoming Women's Center, Wyoming's correctional facility for women is located in Lusk, and a new medium security correctional facility, opened in 2010, is south of Lusk in Torrington.



## Environmental Context

US 85 heads east and north out of Cheyenne through the Hawk Springs Reservoir and Recreation Area. Hawk Springs State Recreation Area offers boating, waterskiing, picnicking and camping. In addition, the Hawk Springs reservoir has a blue heron rookery. The Division of State Parks and Historic Sites administers and maintains the Hawk Springs State Recreation Area, while the Wyoming Game & Fish agency regulates the recreational use of the water and stocks the reservoir with fish.

US 85 crosses the North Platte River in Torrington, right before

it flows into Nebraska. SSC 15 parallels the North Platte River to the northwest before turning north again where it parallels the historic Cheyenne-Deadwood Stage Route. Stagecoaches following the 300-mile Cheyenne-Deadwood Stage Road carried passengers from Cheyenne to the gold fields in the Black Hills of South Dakota. The rich cargo on the coaches became regular targets for thieves and highwaymen.

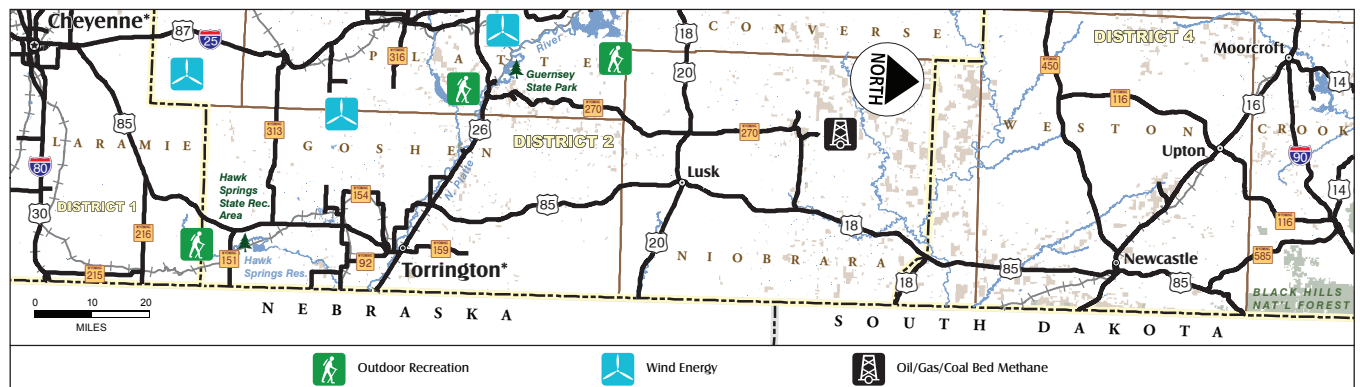
SSC 15 is routed along the southern edge of the Black Hills National Forest, as US 16 heads from Newcastle to Moorcroft.

### Corridor Interests:

- Visual Resources
- Cultural, Paleontological, and Historic Resources
- Recreation Management
- Travel Management
- Wildlife Connectivity, Habitat Fragmentation, & Fish Passage
- Wetlands
- Invasive Species
- Wild and Scenic Eligible River

Source: U.S. Forest Service

## ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT



The above map identifies issues and environmental constraints that form the basis for environmental review. Future projects in the corridor will take these and other issues under consideration prior to final design.

## Major Traffic Generators

- Wyoming Women's Center (correctional facility) – Lusk
- Hawk Springs Reservoir and Recreation Area – Hawk Springs
- Dispersed recreational travel – Black Hills National Forest; Thunder Basin National Grassland
- Coalbed Methane (CBM) operations – west of Newcastle

## Key Issues and Emerging Trends

- ➔ US 85 is subject to heavy loads associated with energy development in the area, as well as agricultural products equipment, and stock movement.
- ➔ Demand for US 85 as a shortcut connecting I-90 to I-25 is likely to be reduced when US 385, to the east in Nebraska and South Dakota, is improved.
- ➔ Roadways in eastern Wyoming are sparse, and US 85 fulfills an important function of connecting the smaller communities along the border with each other as well as the urban centers of Torrington and Cheyenne.
- ➔ Coalbed Methane (CBM) operations west of Newcastle could increase the use of heavy trucks on the corridor.



## Goals & Strategies

Goals for the corridor represent issues communicated by participants in the planning process. These goals lay groundwork for the development of a financially feasible multi-modal transportation plan designed to support the planning, engineering, construction, operation, and maintenance of the State's transportation system.

By identifying broad goals that are both visionary and practical, and that respond to the values of this region, the focus of future actions is readily identified. The goals are further defined with specific supporting strategies to attain each goal. Key goals and strategies are associated with preserving the existing system and supporting the agricultural economy.

GOALS	STRATEGIES
Preserve the existing transportation system	Bridge rehabilitation/replacement
	Surface treatment/overlays
Reduce fatalities, injuries, and property damage crash rates	Safety - general improvements
Support farm to market economic sustainability	Auxiliary lanes if warranted (passing, turn, accel/decel)
Improve public transportation opportunities	Local transit services/operations

## Primary Investment Type

**SYSTEM PRESERVATION** – The primary need for the corridor is to maintain the existing system in terms of roadway pavement conditions and deficient bridges. In specific spot locations throughout the corridor, passing lanes may need to be added to accommodate the combination of increasing truck traffic, commuter traffic, and recreational travel and to improve safety.

## Roadway Characteristics

The following maps identify conditions on the corridor with respect to surface condition, total traffic, truck traffic, safety, and bridges. The data represent the most recent available and are subject to change over time as projects are completed or other factors affect existing conditions. The system data play a big part in determining current operating characteristics, the type of need, and the extent of improvements necessary to achieve corridor goals.

### PAVEMENT SURFACE CONDITION



The pavement conditions vary along the 275 miles of SSC 15 from Cheyenne to Moorcroft. The pavement conditions for 66 percent of the route is rated good/excellent, 15 percent fair, and 19 percent poor. The poor conditions are located near Cheyenne, Lusk, and Newcastle. The good/excellent surface conditions are between Newcastle and Moorcroft, south of Newcastle, and north of Lusk.

### AVERAGE ANNUAL DAILY TRAFFIC (AADT)



Eighty-nine percent of SSC 15 has low volume or less than 2,500 vehicles per day (vpd). Medium traffic volumes between 2,500 and 5,000 AADT are found near the urban centers of Torrington and Cheyenne as well as near Lusk and Newcastle. One segment entering Torrington from the south has high AADT volumes, 5,000 to 10,000 vpd.



## AVERAGE ANNUAL DAILY TRUCK TRAFFIC (AADTT)



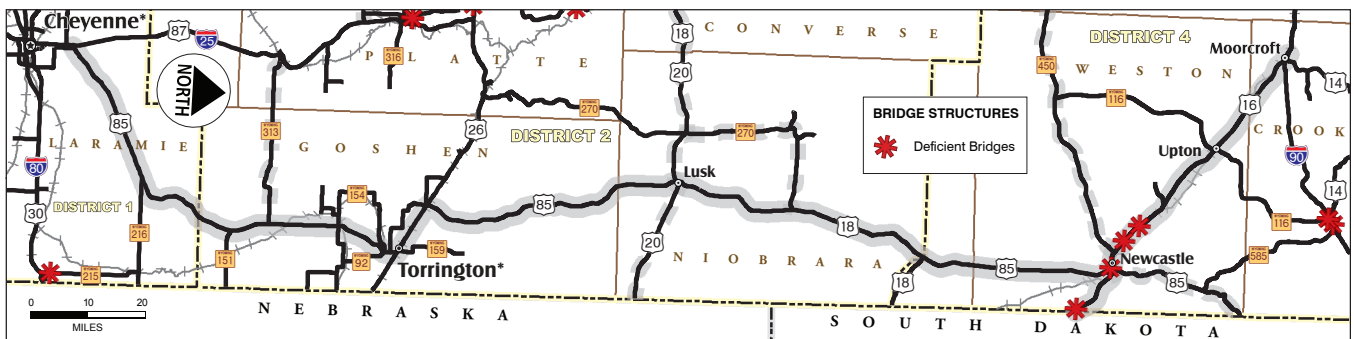
Most of the truck traffic along SSC 15 is low, averaging between 100 and 500 trucks per day. Four percent is rated as medium or between 500 and 1,000 AADTT. Truck traffic on this corridor may be seasonal and related to agricultural activities such as the sugar beet processing plant in Torrington.

## SAFETY INDEX



Seven percent of SSC 15 has a below average Safety Index grade of D. The below average areas include short segments in the Torrington and Lusk areas and the segment of US 85 north of Newcastle.

## DEFICIENT BRIDGES



There are four deficient bridges along US 16 near Newcastle. All deficient bridges visible in the map window are displayed, regardless of designation as SSC, Regional, or Local Routes.



# REGIONAL REFERENCE INFORMATION

## REGIONAL ROUTES

Five regional routes connect to SSC 15. South of Hawk Springs, WYO 313 connects SSC 15 to I-25.

US 20 intersects with SSC 15 at Lusk and continues east into South Dakota.

West of Lusk, US 20 intersects with WYO 270 and its northern segment ties into US 85.

From Newcastle, WYO 450 heads west to Wright.

From Newcastle, US 85 heads northeast to the eastern Wyoming border.

## URBAN AREAS

Two urban areas are associated with SSC 15: Cheyenne and Torrington each with populations greater than 5,000 people. Urban areas are discussed in detail in the Urban Corridors section later in the document.

## LOCAL ROUTES

LOCAL ROUTE	COUNTY	FROM	TO
US 18	Niobrara	US 85	Nebraska State Line
WYO 92	Goshen	US 85	Nebraska State Line
WYO 116	Weston	WYO 450	US 14 Bus./I 90 Bus./US 14
WYO 151	Goshen	US 85	Nebraska State Line
WYO 152	Goshen	CR 27	US 85
WYO 154	Goshen	US 85	WYO 152
WYO156	Goshen	US 85	US 85/26
WYO 158	Goshen	WYO 92	Nebraska State Line
WYO 159	Goshen	US 85/26	CR 18
WYO 161	Goshen	US 85	WYO 92
WYO 216	Laramie	US 85	Nebraska State Line
WYO 219	Laramie	US 85	WYO 212
WYO 270	Platte/ Niobrara	US 26	US 18/20
WYO 271	Niobrara	WYO 270	West Lance Creek
WYO 272	Niobrara	WYO 270	CR 14
WYO 273	Niobrara	US 18/20	North
WYO 451	Weston	Cowger Rd	US 16

Source: Official State Highway Map of Wyoming

## INTERMODAL FACILITIES

### Intercity Bus Routes

None

### Class 1 Railroads

The Union Pacific Railroad Company (UP) line runs along the corridor from about the intersection of WYO 151 northward toward Torrington and heads west. The BNSF Railway Company line runs parallel to US 26 west from the Nebraska Stateline northwest on toward Orin on SSC 12.

### Public Transportation Agencies

PROVIDER AGENCY NAME	LOCATION	TYPE OF SERVICE	SIZE OF FLEET	ANNUAL PASSENGER TRIPS FY08
City of Cheyenne Transit	Cheyenne	Fixed Route, Demand Response	27 Vehicles	289,623
Black Hills Stage Lines	Cheyenne	Private	N/A	N/A
Goshen County Senior Friendship Center	Torrington	Non-Profit - Demand Response	6 Vehicles	46,806
Diversified Services	Torrington	Non-Profit - Demand Response	13 Vehicles	35,832
Niobrara Senior Center	Lusk	Non-Profit - Demand Response	3 Vehicles	23,770
Western County Senior Services	Newcastle	Non-Profit - Demand Response	8 Vehicles	44,916
Crook County Senior Services	Moorcroft	Non-Profit - Demand Response	7 Vehicles	4,015

Source: WYDOT



## DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

SSC 15 travels through five counties: Crook, Goshen, Laramie, Niobrara, and Weston. The most populated county is Laramie, which contains Cheyenne, with a population of 87,542 people and a growth rate of 7.3 percent between 2000 and 2008. Niobrara is the least populated county, with a population of approximately 2,500 people and growth of 0.9 percent.

Crook County has a small population, approximately 6,500, but has seen growth of 9.7 percent between 2000 and 2008. Weston County, with just over 7,000 people, grew 5.7 percent. Goshen County, which contains Torrington, actually lost 3.7 percent of its population between 2000 and 2008, and has a population of approximately 12,000. The new medium security correctional facility in Torrington will undoubtedly add jobs and population to this city and Goshen County.

Education & Health endeavors account for the highest category of jobs for all five counties except Laramie and Weston. In Laramie, Education & Health, Public Administration, and Retail are the top three categories with Agriculture only accounting for 2 percent of the employment. In Weston County, Mining accounts for 17 percent of employment. Crook County also has significant mining employment, making the northern most counties along the eastern Wyoming border a center for energy and mining activities. See Appendix B for more details about employment by county.

POPULATION: 2000-2008					
COUNTY	CITY	2000	2008	% GROWTH	% STATE TOTAL (2008)
<b>Crook County</b>		5,887	6,457	9.7	1.2
	Hulett	408	471	15.4	
	Moorcroft	807	892	8.1	
	Pine Haven	222	380	71.2	
	Sundance	1,161	1,253	7.9	
<b>Goshen County</b>		12,538	12,072	-3.7	2.3
	Fort Laramie	243	228	-6.2	
	La Grange	332	326	-1.8	
	Lingle	510	484	-5.1	
	Torrington	5,776	5,514	-4.5	
	Yoder	169	159	-5.9	
<b>Laramie County</b>		81,607	87,542	7.3	16.4
	Albin	120	116	-3.3	
	Burns	285	314	10.2	
	Cheyenne	53,011	56,915	6.7	
	Pine Bluffs	1,153	1,155	0.2	
<b>Niobrara County</b>		2,407	2,428	0.9	0.5
	Lusk	1,447	1,479	2.2	
	Manville	101	100	-1.0	
	Van Tassell	18	18	0.0	
<b>Weston County</b>		6,644	7,022	5.7	1.3
	Newcastle	3,065	3,390	4.2	
	Upton	872	907	4.0	

Source: Population Division, US Census Bureau, July 1, 2009

## Airport Information

AIRPORT NAME (Associated City)	NPIAS ROLE & HUB TYPE <sup>1</sup>	NPIAS	WYDOT CLASSIFICATION (2008)	WYDOT CLASSIFICATION (FUTURE)	TOTAL AIRPORT OPERATIONS	BASED AIRCRAFT	TOTAL PASSENGERS (2006)
Lusk Municipal Airport	GA	NPIAS	Local	Local	7,030	2	N/A
Newcastle	GA	NPIAS	Intermediate	Intermediate	N/A	11	N/A
Torrington Municipal Airport	GA	NPIAS	Intermediate	Intermediate	4,431	27	N/A
Upton Municipal Airport (non-paved)	GA	NON-NPIAS	Local	Local	60	1	N/A

Notes: P - Primary Commercial Service, N - Non-hub Facility, GA - General Aviation

<sup>1</sup>NPIAS (National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems) Role and Hub Type are same for both existing (2007) and 5-year federal forecast

Source: WYDOT and FAA