

# Greybull's economy has gone flat

By ROBERT C. GIBSON  
Gazette Cody Bureau

GREYBULL, Wyo. — Greybull workers learned last week that Big Horn County is suffering the second highest unemployment rate in Wyoming — a rate that parallels the nation's near-record unemployment statistics.

State and industry officials say they see no end to the economic slump in southern Big Horn County. Merchants along Greybull Avenue are tightening their belts and preparing for something less than a merry Christmas.

Greybull has two major industries

— a pair of bentonite processing plants and the Burlington Northern railroad. Both have severely cutback on their work forces this year. If the national economy does not pick up, industry officials believe they may hand out more pink slips before the end of the year.

Ironically, Greybull can trace most of its economic problems directly to the oil industry, which has been credited with shielding the rest of the state from the nation's current economic recession.

Wyoming bentonite is used primarily as drilling mud in oil wells, with much of it going from the mills to oil fields throughout the nation via

freight train.

Frank Hinckley, manager of the Dresser Minerals bentonite plant at Greybull, believes the present oil glut and the high cost of interest on money to drill oil wells has put a stop to most drilling. When the oil companies do not drill holes in the ground, he said, he does not sell bentonite.

Dresser has laid off about a fourth of its 160 workers and now runs only three of its four packers two shifts per day, five days per week. During better times, all of the packers ran around the clock.

Down the Bighorn River half a dozen miles, Wyo-Ben's stucco mill also has cut its production drastically

in recent months and laid off a number of its workers.

David Auer of Billings, executive vice president of Wyo-Ben, said he did not know how many people were laid off or how much production was cut — but the decreases were substantial.

He also blamed decreased sales on slow times for the oil drilling industry. In Oklahoma, Texas and Louisiana, where much of his product is shipped, oil drilling has come to a virtual standstill, he said.

As economic conditions make it more profitable to drill for oil, Auer

(More on Greybull, Page 4D)

## 1982-10-10 \_ Greybull's Economy Suffers

Clipped By:



seabix1

Sat, May 2, 2020