

## Lubricant for the Wheels of Progress

Scooped from what were then called "soap holes" that dotted the plains, bentonite served as a lubricant for the first wagon wheels to cross the State of Wyoming. In the 100 years that have followed, bentonite has served Wyoming in 100 ways and more.

At the turn of the century, bentonite was used to water proof roofs on the dwellings of the State's early settlers. When oil was discovered, bentonite was there again, acting as a necessary drilling agent, a role served best by western bentonite. And, as an export, Wyoming bentonite helped revolutionize the pelletization of northern Minnesota's low-grade iron ore.

Headquartered in Moorcroft, Black Hills Bentonite was organized in 1947 by Harry Thorson and A.C. Harding. Seventeen years later, the Moorcroft bentonite reserves were exhausted and the company was moved to Casper. Today, the firm employs 55 people, mines and ships bentonite to all parts of the United States and beyond. In so doing, Black Hills Bentonite contributes significantly to the economic well being of the County and the State. From grease for a turning wagon wheel to a highly specialized industrial product, bentonite has contributed so much to the development of Wyoming.

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