

Save Santa — move him here



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Pity Santa Claus. He must be a very lonely man.

Aside from his job's obvious requirement to work on Christmas

every year, he is forced to live at the North Pole to avoid paparazzi. It's

not exactly a swanky address and, worse, it's tough to have a neighborhood barbecue when you have no neighbors.

He could invite his flying reindeer, but they aren't super conversational and, though he's knee-deep in elves, try having a conversation with one. The reindeer are more fun to talk to.

Day in and day out, he and Mrs. Claus are all alone — for thousands of miles in any direction — making mail a lifeline to the rest of the world for them. Yet, when they get letters from us, all we do is ask for this or that. We never ask how he is doing. We never inquire about his hobbies or what he's reading lately. We just assume he's fine but I bet he's lonely and bored. "A bowl full of jelly" is just a cute way to defend poor dietary choices and a largely sedentary lifestyle. Moping around and eating cookies and milk all day are both signs of depression.

A growing number of people worldwide don't even believe he exists and, adding insult to injury, a gradually warming climate is melting the North Pole. Icebergs are getting smaller and smaller, and polar bears are forced to stay closer to land where food is scarce.

The endangered polar bear is cute enough to save — can we do no less for Santa?

Members of Congress would make themselves much more popular if they'd add Santa and his North Pole crew to the endangered species list. That's a very real concern. Politicians in this country are less popular than North Korean dictator Kim Jong Il and he's dead. I've seen North Koreans crying and, fake or not, no one is making wildly overdramatic emotional displays about Congress, unless burning effigies count.

Because we have ample proof that Congress can't be trusted to do the right thing, it's up to Wyoming to save Santa and his famous workshop. He'd definitely fit in here. After all, he's a rancher and knows the virtues of independence. He even has boots.

Wyoming has everything he needs. We have the nation's coldest snow and harshest winds, which are ideal for reindeer-powered take-offs and landings and keep the paparazzi to a bare minimum. We also have a very business-friendly environment. Low taxes, reasonably priced real estate, access to key infrastructure like airports, rails and highways make Wyoming a dream come true for St. Nick's back-end logistics.

Admittedly, Santa's gift-giving operation is technically not a business — it's a not-for-profit, really — but his yuletide philanthropy supports a healthy system of suppliers and distributors. This means thousands of jobs for Wyomingites. Our economy is pretty healthy right now but our seemingly endless natural

resources won't be around forever. Relocating Santa and his workshop to the Equality State is an opportunity for the Wyoming Business Council to start diversifying the state's economy, and getting us out of this boom-bust cycle we've known for a century.

Santa's workshop would also boost Wyoming tourism. Millions of kids from all over the world would beat feet to Wyoming to sit on Santa's lap — even in the offseason. This means reduced vacancy rates for the state's hotel industry, and the restaurant industry will also grow to meet the added demand.

By being closer to his customers — you and me — he'll shave minutes off his annual Christmas delivery. That may not sound like much, but his entire business depends on making millions of deliveries worldwide in the space of about 10 hours. Every minute counts.

And, best of all, Santa will be able to more easily participate in neighborhood block parties and barbecues.

He and Mrs. Clause will get an enriched quality of life out of it, and will be free of fears that he, his reindeer or his elfen friends will wake up treading water in the Arctic Circle.

When Wyoming's state legislature convenes in February, let us hope our elected officials embrace this obvious opportunity before other states with more sophisticated marketing efforts get wind of it.

Until then, keep this under your hat. It's an idea whose time has come and it's too simply too good to share.