



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on January 25, 2018

## High-end Gun Maker Quits California, Announces Move to Wyoming

Adam Weatherby, grandson of the founder of Weatherby, Inc. and president of the high-end custom rifle and shotgun maker currently located in Paso Robles, California, made a big announcement on Tuesday in Las Vegas — the company is moving its operations to Wyoming:

We wanted a place where we could retain a great workforce, and where our employees could live an outdoor lifestyle.

We wanted to move to a state where we can grow into our brand. Wyoming means new opportunities.



Wyoming also means that it isn't in California, where Weatherby has operated for the last 45 years. The company builds custom high-end highly accurate rifles and specialty ammunition for those rifles. It also builds highly regarded shotguns and, starting in 2019, it will start building them all in Sheridan, Wyoming. It will employ between 70 and 90 employees with an annual payroll of around \$5 million. It's small potatoes for California, but a big win for Sheridan (population 17,444) and another indication of how the Golden State is driving out companies such as Weatherby with its high taxes and increasingly tyrannical anti-gun attitudes and regulations.

In its 2017 *Ranking the States by Fiscal Condition*, the Mercatus Center shows why: Based on short- and long-term debt and other key fiscal obligations such as underfunded public pension and healthcare plans, California ranks near the bottom at 43rd out of the 50 states. Wyoming ranks fifth.

In the 10th edition of *Rich States, Poor States* from the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) — based on variables such as personal and corporate income tax rates, property tax and sales tax burdens, debt service as a share of the state government's total revenues, the number of public employees per 10,000 taxpayers, and whether the state is a right-to-work state or not — California ranks 47th out of 50, while Wyoming comes in seventh.

Weatherby joins Magpul Industries, which pulled out of increasingly anti-gun Colorado in 2013 and moved its factories to Cheyenne. It joins other gun makers exiting high-tax anti-gun states, such as gun maker Beretta, which left Maryland for Tennessee in 2016; Remington Arms, which moved from New York to Alabama in 2014; and Colt and Sturm Ruger, which moved to Texas and North Carolina respectively.

Wyoming, according to the state's governor, Matt Mead, is determined to be known not just as a gun-friendly state, but as the most gun-friendly state in the union: "In Wyoming we don't just want to be known as a firearm state, we want to be known as *the* firearm state."

Mead put Wyoming taxpayers' money where his mouth is. A week before Weatherby's announcement, the Wyoming State Loan and Investment Board approved a \$12.5 million grant to a Sheridan economic



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development group to build Weatherby's new home. It will lease the building to Weatherby for 20 years with an option for the company to buy it when the lease expires. The lease payments will, over those 20 years, cover the cost of the building, while Sheridan and its environs (there are 30,000 people living near and around the town) will enjoy the economic boost. The company itself will ante up \$2 million on its own to make the transition, which is expected to be completed by 2019.

In exchange for the favorable climate in Paso Robles, employees of the company will have to deal with winters in northern Wyoming when temperatures dip into the low teens in December and January. But that is likely to be more than made up by Wyoming's freedom to open carry and no personal or corporate income tax and very low sales tax. According to Sperling's Best Places, the cost of living in Paso Robles is 44 percent higher than in Sheridan.

Although Weatherby is a very small company, its move to Wyoming sends a very big message: People and capital inevitably move to where they are treated the best. Barring a miraculous change of heart among California's socialist and anti-gun politicians, people and capital will continue to move out of California to states such as Wyoming, where both are treated better.

Image: Screenshot from [Weatherby home page](#)

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