

Issues List 2nd Quarter 2015 – Wyoming Public Media

Issue: Education

Topic: One way to tell how schools are doing with computer science is to look at how many students take the Advancement Placement exam for the subject. And, in the entire state of Wyoming, over the past four years, just one student took the AP computer science exam. Aaron Schrank reports on why few students are engaged in computer science and what it means for the state.

Time: 4 min

Date: 4-10-15 at 3pm and 4-12-15 at noon on WPR. 4-12-15 at 9am on WPM

Topic: Staying globally competitive by teaching future generations of workers how to innovate is a national concern. At Jackson Hole High School, a new program is teaching students the skills they will need to be innovators by assigning them real problems to solve. Rebecca Huntington reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 4-17-15 at 3pm and 4-19-15 at noon on WPR. 4-19-15 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Fort Washakie High School is a small, struggling school on the Wind River Indian Reservation. The students there have been pushing towards one major goal: graduation. And, today, as part of our series on the school, we'll hear some of those students cross the finish line. Aaron Schrank reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 5-29-15 at 3pm and 5-31-15 at noon on WPR. 5-31-9am on WPM.

Topic: The University of Wyoming school year recently came to a close and we asked UW President Dick McGinity to stop by and tell us about the state of the University. McGinity discusses stability, hiring, tuition, and enrollment in a wide-ranging interview with Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck

Time: 8 min

Date: 5-29-15 at 3pm and 5-31-15 at noon on WPR. 5-31-9am on WPM.

Topic: The four-year graduation rate for students on the Wind River Indian Reservation hovers around 50 percent, compared to 80 percent in the rest of Wyoming. In this hour-long forum, Wyoming Public Radio's education reporter Aaron Schrank explores the many factors—from historical trauma to family poverty—that contribute to below average education outcomes for Native American students.

He spoke with a panel of students and educators on the reservation about the dropout prevention programs that currently operate in the community—and how reservation schools can improve to better meet the needs of students.

Time: 50 minutes

Date: 6-12-15 at 3pm and 6-14-15 at noon on WPR. 6-14-15 at 9am on WPM

Topic: In the small town of Pinedale, people have a lot of opinions about sage grouse. That's because Pinedale just happens to sit in the middle of some of the best sage grouse habitat in the state. It's also in the middle of some of the best oil and gas fields in the country. So when a Pinedale math teacher joined forces with a sage grouse conservation project, it started a community conversation.

Time: 5 min

Date: 6-19-15 at 3pm and 6-21-15 at noon on WPR. 6-21-15 at 9 am on WPM.

Topic: Not so long ago, schools for Native Americans punished kids for speaking their languages or practicing their traditions. Today—in response to that history—schools on Wyoming's Wind River Reservation try to integrate Native culture into everyday learning.

Time: 5 min

Date: 6-19-15 at 3pm and 6-21-15 at noon on WPR. 6-21-15 at 9 am on WPM.

Issue: Energy

Topic: The “war on coal” is a catchphrase typically used by industry-backers to rally against the Obama administration, but in his new book, "Coal Wars," author Richard Martin, comes at the issue from the other side. In addition to being an author, Martin works for Navigant Research, one of the world's leading clean energy consulting firms, and as he explained in an interview with Wyoming Public Radio's Stephanie Joyce, while he see coal's decline as inevitable, the book is his attempt to understand what that means for people in coal country.

Time: 7 min

Date: 4-10-15 at 3pm and 4-12-15 at noon on WPR. 4-12-15 at 9am on WPM

Topic: Over two decades ago, Wyoming surpassed Kentucky as the country's number one coal producing state and has kept that title ever since. The steady and sharp increase in demand for the state's comparably cleaner coal wasn't due to obvious factors, like market forces or labor costs. It was brought on largely by federal environmental regulations. And now a series of new regulations are changing the industry even more.... Leigh Paterson reports.

Time: 4 min

Date: 4-17-15 at 3pm and 4-19-15 at noon on WPR. 4-19-15 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Over the last few years, Wyoming's African American population has grown faster than in any other state. According to Wenlin Liu, Principal Economist with the state's [Economic Analysis Division](#), the shift in Wyoming and North Dakota particularly, is largely due to the [oil boom](#) of the past few years which created oilfield jobs as well as a need for more people to work in related industries like restaurants and hotels. Leigh Patterson reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 5-1-15 at 3pm and 5-3-15 at noon on WPR. 5-3-15 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: The super bowl of energy conferences, called CERAWeek, wrapped up in Houston on Friday. Industry executives, analysts, and policy makers were all there to talk about the current state of the industry and where it's headed. Panels and keynote speakers talked about everything from natural gas, to coal, to of course, oil prices. Leigh Paterson is a Wyoming-based reporter for Inside Energy joins us to discuss key issues surrounding Wyoming.

Time: 6 min

Date: 5-1-15 at 3pm and 5-3-15 at noon on WPR. 5-3-15 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: The energy futures of Wyoming and California are becoming increasingly intertwined. Late last month, California Governor Jerry Brown announced that he's speeding up the state's transition to renewable energy, with a goal of reducing emissions 40 percent by 2030. Just days later, a major transmission project to carry Wyoming wind power to California received its final environmental review.

Lloyd Drain is director of the Wyoming Infrastructure Authority, which promotes the development of energy infrastructure that benefits the state and he joined Wyoming Public Radio's energy reporter, Stephanie Joyce, to talk about the implications of these recent developments.

Time: 6 min

Date: 5-8-15 at 3pm and 5-10-15 at noon on WPR. 5-10-15 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: The Obama administration has released the first part of its Quadrennial Energy Review. Matt Laslo has the story from Washington on the report that says it's time to modernize the nation's energy infrastructure. It has Wyoming politicians talking.

Time: 4 min

Date: 5-8-15 at 3pm and 5-10-15 at noon on WPR. 5-10-15 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: The Environmental Protection Agency is putting the finishing touches on its Clean Power Plan to reduce carbon emissions, but warnings against it are getting louder. Many who deal in the energy sector- grid operators, lawmakers, and especially the coal industry- are piling on to the idea that transitioning away from coal to renewables and natural gas will destabilize our power grid. In the latest installment on our series Blackout, Reinventing the grid, Inside Energy's Leigh Paterson reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 6-5-15 at 3pm and 6-7-15 at noon on WPR. 6-7-15 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Across the nation -- and even in Wyoming -- power companies are adding more renewable energy to their systems. That creates new challenges for the electric grid... challenges that this country is just beginning to grapple with. In Denmark, the transition is happening more quickly - by 2030 the country's power system is supposed to be 100 percent renewable. Stephanie Joyce reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 6-19-15 at 3pm and 6-21-15 at noon on WPR. 6-21-15 at 9 am on WPM.

Issue: Health Care

Topic: Despite a heavy push by hospitals and businesses the Wyoming legislature once again voted down Medicaid Expansion this year. Bob Beck reports that the Legislature's Joint Health and Labor committee will spend the next several months trying to find a Wyoming solution to these issues without federal dollars.

Time: 5 min

Date: 4-10-15 at 3pm and 4-12-15 at noon on WPR. 4-12-15 at 9am on WPM

Topic: This year, while Wyoming lawmakers were voting down Medicaid Expansion in the state, they also approved a Medicaid Waiver for the state's two tribes, potentially pumping some \$16 million of aid into the reservation's health system. The health crisis on the Wind River Reservation is now at critical levels, but tripling the amount that the tribe's receive for health care could help. Melodie Edwards reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 5-8-15 at 3pm and 5-10-15 at noon on WPR. 5-10-15 at 9am on WPM

Topic: In Wyoming, prescription drug overdoses have more than tripled in the last 15 years. In response, states have cracked down on doctors who over-prescribe and patients who go from doctor to doctor seeking the same prescription. But there's one place in the hospital where it's been harder to stop pill seeking patients: the Emergency Room. Wyoming Public Radio's Miles Bryan reports.

Time: 4 min

Date: Date: 5-8-15 at 3pm and 5-10-15 at noon on WPR. 5-10-15 at 9am on WPM

Topic: If you want to give your doctor a headache, just say the words "electronic medical records." Hospitals across the country have been putting in electronic record systems over the past few years to comply with new federal regulations. They're supposed to be an upgrade, but using these systems feels more like Windows 95 than an iphone. At the Cheyenne Regional Medical Center here in Wyoming that's helped fuel the return of a very old profession: the scribe. Miles Bryan reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 6-5-15 at 3pm and 6-7-15 at noon on WPR. 6-7-15 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Earlier this year when the legislature voted down Medicaid expansion, lawmakers realized that some hospitals were struggling to make up for the fact that some people cannot afford to pay their medical bills. So after a lot of discussion, they provided roughly three million dollars to be spread among the smaller rural hospitals. But some thought that was not enough, so two legislative committees are looking into what else can be done to help. Bob Beck reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 6-19-15 at 3pm and 6-21-15 at noon on WPR. 6-21-15 at 9 am on WPM.

Topic: Pharmacists are currently not recognized as health care providers and despite their obvious knowledge of medications, they are not currently allowed to help people manage their medication. There are two bills in Congress that could change that. Tom Menighan is the CEO of the American Pharmacists Association and he says this would help those in rural areas. He speaks with Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck.

Time: 6 min

Date: 6-19-15 at 3pm and 6-21-15 at noon on WPR. 6-21-15 at 9 am on WPM.

Issue: Social Issues

Topic: Wyoming ACLU abruptly closes and it leaves many without a voice. Miles Bryan reports.

Time: 4 min

Date: 4-10-15 at 3pm and 4-12-15 at noon on WPR. 4-12-15 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: The University of Wyoming campus is rattled. Two first-year students there died by suicide in a span of just 8 days. Wyoming has had the highest suicide rate in the country in recent years. Aaron Schrank reports on how UW is trying to address the issue.

Time: 4 min

Date: 4-17-15 at 3pm and 4-19-15 at noon on WPR. 4-19-15 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Next week award winning author Andrew Solomon will speak at the University of Wyoming about his book "Far From the Tree" where he presents stories from parents who have raised children in a variety of circumstances. Some are gay, some have schizophrenia, some are dwarfs, some have autism, others are profound. Solomon interviewed these parents and others about the challenges of raising these children and how love prevails. He tells Bob Beck that diversity unites us all. Solomon says writing the book also helped him become a better parent.

Time: 10 min

Date: 4-17-15 at 3pm and 4-19-15 at noon on WPR. 4-19-15 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: April is sexual assault awareness month, and here in Wyoming a new law now offers stricter protections for victims. Becca Fisher is the Executive Director of Laramie's SAFE project

– a crisis center for victims of domestic abuse and sexual assault. She talked with Wyoming Public Radio’s Caroline Ballard about the progress and challenges still facing sexual assault awareness in the state.

Time: 7 min

Date: 4-17-15 at 3pm and 4-19-15 at noon on WPR. 4-19-15 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: A decade ago a federal law created a national sex offender registry, and required each state to update it regularly. Most people associate those registries with adults, but the “Adam Walsh Act” also mandated the creation of registries for children found guilty of sex crimes. Recently the practice of putting minors on sex offender registries has come under scrutiny. Here in Wyoming, state officials are debating whether to change the system. But as Wyoming Public Radio’s Miles Bryan reports, *there aren’t easy answers*.

Time: 5 min

Time: 5-29-15 at 3pm and 5-31-15 at noon on WPR. 5-31-15 at 9am on WPM.

Issue: Natural Resources and wildlife

Topic: In the last 15 years, there’s been a timber boom. That’s thanks to the mountain pine beetle, a tiny ravenous bug that’s now chomped its way through over 40 million acres of forest in the U.S., moving north into Canada, expanding its reach as the climate warms. To clean up all that dead wood, forest managers have turned to the timber industry, leading to a surge in jobs and enterprise. But now, the bugs have almost eaten themselves out of food. Melodie Edwards reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 4-10-15 at 3pm and 4-12-15 at noon on WPR. 4-12-15 at 9am on WPM

Topic: Secretary of Interior Sally Jewel came to Cheyenne to announce a massive plan to conserve Sage Grouse habitat in several western states. Wyoming started its own conservation efforts in 2007 and Jewel says it is a model state. The question is whether the federal efforts can keep the Sage Grouse from being placed on the endangered species list. Bob Beck reports.

Time: 5 min

Time: 5-29-15 at 3pm and 5-31-15 at noon on WPR. 5-31-15 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: In 1988 much of Yellowstone National Park was engulfed in flames. At the time a young employee and budding photographer named Jeff Henry was asked to take photos of the fire. Over 25 years later Henry has written a book about the fires that includes numerous photographs that he took on the front lines. The book is called *The Year Yellowstone Burned: a 25 Year Perspective*. Henry speaks with Bob Beck.

Time: 6 min

Date: 6-5-15 at 3pm and 6-7-15 at noon on WPR. 6-7-15 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: The forests of Yellowstone may become few and far between. That's according to the new study *The Coming Climate: Ecological Impacts of Climate Change On Teton County*, commissioned by the Chartour Institute. Corinna Riginos is a research ecologist and co-authored the report. She speaks with Wyoming Public Radio's Caroline Ballard.

Time: 8 min

Date: 6-19-15 at 3pm and 6-21-15 at noon on WPR. 6-21-15 at 9 am on WPM.

Topic: Protestors say the BLM office in Montana is trying to wipe out the state's last herd of wild horses. That herd lives in the Pryor Mountains in Montana and Wyoming. The group marched into the Billings Field office recently, demanding the agency abandon plans to round up horses and use birth control on the mares. Penny Preston reports.

Time: 4 min

Date: 6-19-15 at 3pm and 6-21-15 at noon on WPR. 6-21-15 at 9 am on WPM.

ISSUE: Politics and Government

Topic: The new Chairman of the Wyoming Republican Party is Matt Micheli. Micheli is the son of former state gubernatorial candidate and legislator Ron Micheli. He takes over the job following some infighting within the party that included concerns over legislative action surrounding former State Superintendent of Public Instruction Cindy Hill. He speaks with Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck.

Time: 5 min

Date: 4-17-15 at 3pm and 4-19-15 at noon on WPR. 4-19-15 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Wyoming's two U.S. senators are getting behind a new effort to give Governors more power over the EPA. The reason is simple. It's no secret the EPA has its sights set on the nation's traditional energy sector. In 2012, 39% of the nation's carbon emissions came from either coal, oil or natural gas fired power plants. Matt Laslo reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 5-29-15 at 3pm and 5-31-15 at noon on WPR. 5-31-9am on WPM.

Topic: Pine beetles and drought is leaving Wyoming and other states more susceptible to wildfires than at any point in recent memory, yet the federal fire policy doesn't seem to be keeping up with the new climate. Wyoming lawmakers are trying to solve the problem. Matt Laslo reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 6-19-15 at 3pm and 6-21-15 at noon on WPR. 6-21-15 at 9 am on WPM.

Issue: Highway Safety

Topic: When you live in Wyoming you get to know what the back of a truck looks like. Most of the time you probably only notice them when they're blocking the passing line on the highway, but in the last few weeks commercial trucks have been making headlines. They were a factor in two major pileups in Southeast Wyoming that caused scores of injuries and left two people dead. Trucking related accidents are going up across the country. Miles Bryan looks at how the industry is trying to make things safer.

Time: 5 min

Date: 5-1-15 at 3pm and 5-3-15 at noon on WPR. 5-3-15 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Highway crashes on Wyoming Interstates are a common occurrence, but the back to back multiple vehicle crashes last month even got the attention of locals. It led to the latest discussion about traffic safety and whether more could be done. But experts say that highway safety, especially when it comes to interstate 80 has been on the minds of state Transportation officials for some time. Bob Beck reports.

Time: 6 min

Date: 5-1-15 at 3pm and 5-3-15 at noon on WPR. 5-3-15 at 9am on WPM.

Issue: Agriculture

Topic: Wyoming lawmakers may not have agreed on much this legislative session but there is one issue they did vote together on: de-regulating the state's locally produced foods. The new Food Freedom Act now allows consumers to buy processed produce, poultry, eggs and unpasteurized milk direct from the cook or farmer, something that was illegal just a few months ago. And it's that last item—raw milk—that's generated lots of discussion. Melodie Edwards reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 4-17-15 at 3pm and 4-19-15 at noon on WPR. 4-19-15 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Last Monday saw the close of the public comment period concerning a proposed rule put forth by the U.S. Department of Labor that could cause serious harm to Wyoming's sheep industry. Currently, most sheep herders in Wyoming are foreign and hold what are called H-2A visas. Under those visas, they are required to be paid \$750-dollars a month and be provided room and board. Bob Beck reports.

Time: 5pm

Date: 6-5-15 at 3pm and 6-7-15 at noon on WPR. 6-7-15 at 9am on WPM

Issue: Jobs and the economy

Topic: Life after high school looks a bit different for every Wyoming graduate. Some are set on college or a career. Others are more worried about making money this summer. In an effort to prepare students who are less interested in academic options, one high school started a program that trains some seniors to be commercial truckers. Wyoming Public Radio's Aaron Schrank reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 5-8-15 at 3pm and 5-10-15 at noon on WPR. 5-10-15 at 9am on WPM

Topic: Summer is finally here, and many of us are gearing up for a sun-soaked vacation. This year Cowboy Staters will visit national parks or maybe take a road trip to ocean beaches... and some will spend their vacation at one of the state's ski resorts. As Wyoming Public Radio's Miles Bryan reports, many of Wyoming's ski resorts are trying to become year-round businesses.

Time: 4 min

Date: 6-19-15 at 3pm and 6-21-15 at noon on WPR. 6-21-15 at 9 am on WPM.

Issue: Elderly issues

Topic: These days, most rural communities in the U.S. are elderly communities. 15 percent of Wyoming's population is over 65 and a high percentage of them live on ranches and in small towns. But with younger generations leaving the ranch for more urban jobs, there are few staying behind to take care of their elders. They could move to nursing homes, but many of Wyoming's seniors are often insistent--they want to stay home. Melodie Edwards reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 6-5-15 at 3pm and 6-7-15 at noon on WPR. 6-7-15 at 9am on WPM.