

WYOMING PUBLIC MEDIA ISSUES REPORT 1ST QUARTER 2020

ISSUE: POLITICS

TOPIC: Two Wyoming lawmakers are playing key roles in the impeachment saga slowly unfolding in Washington. Correspondent Matt Laslo has the details from the nation's capital.

TIME: 4 MIN

DATE: 1/10/20 AT 3PM AND 1/12/20 AT NOON

TOPIC: Loss of revenue is a major topic of conversation as lawmakers prepare for the upcoming budget session. But things have been looking bright in a few counties. Wyoming Public Radio's Catherine Wheeler reports on how one county has been trying to capitalize on some remarkable growth in the past year.

TIME: 5 MIN

DATE: 1/17/20 AT 3PM AND 1/19/20 AT NOON

TOPIC: Congresswoman Liz Cheney is seen as a rising star in the GOP, so some in the party were surprised to see her opt to stay in the House and not run for the state's open Senate seat. Correspondent Matt Laslo has the story from Washington on what some of her colleagues are saying about her.

TIME: 5 MIN

DATE: 1/31/20 AT 3PM AND 2/2/20 AT NOON

TOPIC: When you think about moving to a different state the local housing market and the cost of living are probably high on your agenda. But for some conservatives living in blue states, it's also about finding redder pastures. As the Mountain West News Bureau's Maggie Mullen reports, one real estate company has turned that into a business model.

TIME: 5 MIN

DATE: 1/31/20 AT 3PM AND 2/2/20 AT NOON

TOPIC: The Wyoming legislature has been meeting for a couple of weeks now and it seems very similar to past sessions. There's not going to be tax increases, there's a lot of talk about budget cutting, but hardly any real cuts are happening. This despite the fact that revenue projections are dire. Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck reports that while some want change, change takes time.

TIME: 5 MIN

DATE: 2/21/20 AT 3PM AND 2/23/20 AT NOON

TOPIC: Wyoming is looking to buy over a million acres of land across the southern part of the state. The deal hopes to diversify the state's investments, open previously inaccessible lands, and bring in new revenue for communities. But counties that HOLD the land wonder what downsides could come along side those positives. Wyoming Public Radio's Cooper McKim reports.

TIME: 5 MIN

DATE: 2/21/20 AT 3PM AND 2/23/20 AT NOON

TOPIC: The Wyoming legislature wrapped up its work this week with concerns about the future. A downturn in oil prices and worries about a drop in investment income has lawmakers thinking that they may need to make some difficult decisions in the not too distant future. As Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck reports that two topics education and taxes could be discussed quite a bit in coming months.

TIME: 5 MIN

DATE: 3/13/20 AT 3PM AND 3/15/20 AT NOON

TOPIC: The 2018 elections saw a record number of Indigenous women running for office and winning. One of those women was Wyoming's own Andi Clifford -- who represents much of the Wind River Reservation in the state house of representatives. Wyoming Public Radio's Savannah Maher spent a day with her during the session.

TIME: 6 MIN

DATE: 3-13-20 AT 3PM AND 3-15-20 AT NOON

TOPIC: At the start of the year the U.S. economy was soaring, but now most everything has come to a government mandated halt which is rippling across the economy... which has been a shock for most lawmakers, including Wyoming Senator John Barrasso. Matt Laslo reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 3/27/20 at 3pm and 3/29/20 at noon.

ISSUE: ENERGY

TOPIC: In 2017 close to 40 percent of all fatalities and around a third of injuries at surface mines across the country involved mobile equipment. That's according to the Mine Safety and Health Administration or MSHA. A big component for potential mobile equipment accidents is blind spots. So, a safety instructor at Gillette College is using virtual reality to train new and experienced miners to recognize the limits of their perspective. Wyoming Public Radio's Catherine Wheeler has more.

TIME: 5 MIN

DATE: 1/10/20 AT 3PM AND 1/12/20 AT NOON

TOPIC: A new wind development is coming to Albany County. It's the latest in a flurry of new wind projects underway in southeast Wyoming... a trend that's set to continue. But this development is facing pushback with up to 151 turbines proposed to be built near a community of rural homeowners. Wyoming Public Radio's Cooper McKim reports.

TIME: 5 MIN

DATE: 1/17/20 AT 3PM AND 1/19/20 AT NOON

TOPIC: The coal capital of the U.S. is taking a harder look at diversifying its economy. The city of Gillette is being forced to adjust to a world with less demand for its resource. Wyoming Public Radio's Cooper McKim reports a former coal capital could help provide wisdom.

TIME: 5 MIN

DATE: 1/31/20 AT 3PM AND 2/2/20 AT NOON

TOPIC: Fracking and horizontal drilling helped revolutionize the oil and gas industry over the past decade. But recently, that speedy growth has *cost* energy producers... pushing prices too low and now scaring off investors, causing bankruptcies to ravage the industry. Wyoming Public Radio's Cooper McKim reports Wyoming companies and the state itself may be particularly vulnerable.

TIME: 5 MIN

DATE: 2/7/20 AT 3PM AND 2/9/20 AT NOON

TOPIC: In this year's legislative budget session, the percentage of bills related to coal increased by over 300 percent compared to last year. Over the past year, discussion centered around bills focused on better preparing for coal bankruptcies... helping miners workers and recouping taxes from companies, but the majority of legislation *now* focuses simply on bolstering the industry. Wyoming Public Radio's Cooper McKim reports legislators are now looking to the resource for financial survival.

TIME: 5 MIN

DATE: 2/21/20 AT 3PM AND 2/23/20 AT NOON

TOPIC: Preserving coal production has been the hot topic this past legislative session. But as the industry fades, some are hoping to diversify. Another energy source is banging at the door for consideration: renewables. The fast growing industry has legislators grappling with how to properly regulate it and receive more tax revenue from it. Wyoming Public Radio's Cooper McKim reports most efforts fell short.

TIME: 5 MIN

DATE: 3/13/20 AT 3PM AND 3/15/20 AT NOON

ISSUE: NATIVE AMERICAN ISSUES

TOPIC: Across our state and around the country, schools are looking for ways to help female students succeed in the male-dominated fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. But at Wyoming Indian High School, girls are taking that initiative on their own. Wyoming Public Radio's Savannah Maher has more.

TIME: 5 MIN

DATE: 1/10/20 AT 3PM AND 1/12/20 AT NOON

TOPIC: Every year at Gathering of Nations Powwow in New Mexico, Dozens of young Indigenous women compete for the title of [Miss Indian World](#). This year, Northern Arapaho citizen and University of Wyoming senior Christie Wildcat was among the contestants. But the

powwow and the pageant were cancelled to help slow the spread of the coronavirus.

TIME: 6 min

DATE: 3/27/20 at 3pm and 3/29/20 at noon

ISSUE: HEALTH

TOPIC: The Wyoming Legislature will be addressing a number of issues surrounding health care when it convenes next week. One will be Medicaid expansion and another is the return of an effort to give optometrists the ability to perform certain eye surgeries. Some believe that should be left up to Ophthalmologists who specialize in such things. Doctor David Wheeler is the President of the Wyoming Medical Society joins us to explain why he doesn't like that bill.

TIME: 6 MIN

DATE: 2/7/20 AT 3PM AND 2/9/20 AT NOON

TOPIC: The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs is tweaking its treatment options in an effort to be more holistic. Wyoming Public Radio's Catherine Wheeler says a program at the Sheridan VA is making space for practices that come from traditions from regional Native American tribes.

TIME: 5 MIN

DATE: 2/21/20 AT 3PM AND 2/23/20 AT NOON

TOPIC: The official recommendation for people who might have COVID-19 — the coronavirus you've been hearing about — is to stay home. But that's easier said than done for many in the state. Wyoming Public Radio's Jeff Victor reports the lack of paid sick leave could make a coronavirus outbreak spread farther and faster.

TIME: 5 MIN

DATE: 3/13/20 AT 3PM AND 3/15/20 NOON

TOPIC: It's been a busy week for confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the state with many wondering why the testing has been limited. This issue is limited numbers of test kits. State Department of Health Spokeswoman Kim Deti says medical providers are deciding which patients to test and prioritizing those at highest risk. She speaks with Bob Beck.

TIME: 6 min

DATE: 3.20/20 at 3pm and 3/22/20 at noon.

TOPIC: Fremont County currently has the highest number of known COVID-19 cases in Wyoming - nine out of 20 that have been confirmed in our state by Friday. Eight of Fremont County's cases are residents or staff members at Lander's Showboat Retirement Center, and state health officials say the ninth case is directly related to that cluster.

Wyoming Public Radio's Savannah Maher has been reporting from Lander. She talked with Bob Beck about news that one of those Lander patients was initially denied testing, and how the city and county are responding to the pandemic.

TIME: 6 min

DATE: 3.20/20 at 3pm and 3/22/20 at noon.

TOPIC: As people follow recommendations to stay home in the face of the coronavirus pandemic, some folks are left totally alone. That can be disruptive to mental health—especially in a state with one of the leading suicide rates. Wyoming Public Radio's Erin Jones reports.

TIME: 6 min

DATE: 3/20/20 at 3pm and 3/22/20 at noon

TOPIC: With COVID-19 showing up in Wyoming, we thought we would speak to a couple of University of Wyoming students from China who were in their country around the time the outbreak occurred. Naina Rao says they already experienced many things people in the United States are going through now.

TIME: 4 min

DATE: 3/20/20 at 3pm and 3/22/20 at noon.

TOPIC: As the coronavirus continues to spread throughout the United States, we hear a lot about the [shortage of Intensive Care Unit \(ICU\) beds](#). But there's another critical shortage, especially in rural areas, of health care providers.

Time: 5 min

DATE: 3/27/20 at 3pm and 3/29/20 at noon.

TOPIC: With six cases of COVID-19 now confirmed on the Wind River Reservation, the Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho Tribes have enacted some of the strictest measures in Wyoming to slow the spread. The tribes have jointly directed their citizens to remain in their homes except for emergencies, stay far away from elders and avoid gathering in groups of more than 10. But for many tribal households, those directives contradict one another.

TIME: 6 min

DATE: 3/27/20 at 3pm and 3/29/20 at noon.

ISSUE: EDUCATION

Vocational classes that teach high school students trade skills like business and construction are common in our state. And one school is taking its vocational skills to the next level. Wyoming Public Radio's Kamila Kudelska reports Lovell High School is now in the tiny house business.

TIME: 6 MIN

DATE: 2/7/20 AT 3PM AND 2/9/20 AT NOON

TOPIC: The Wyoming Legislature will be undertaking what is called a recalibration of its school funding system. It's a process where lawmakers look at what they require of educators and if they are paying enough for education. But for the first time since it was developed, the committee will study what is in Wyoming's basket of goods. Those are the skills and content

areas students are required to learn such as math and science. Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck reports that while some are excited about possible tweaks others are wary.

TIME: 5 MIN

DATE: 2/28/20 AT 3PM AND 3/1/20 AT NOON

TOPIC: On Friday, Governor Mark Gordon and Superintendent of Public Instruction Jillian Balow extended a recommendation for all Wyoming schools to shut down until at least [April 17](#) in hopes of slowing the spread of coronavirus. Some schools have been on Spring Break and the closures just felt like an extra-long vacation...at first. But lots of parents were left wondering whether they were now responsible to homeschool. Melodie Edwards reports.

TIME: 5min

DATE: 3/27/20 at 3pm and 3/29/20 at noon

TOPIC: Top state officials are requiring Wyoming schools stay closed through April 17. State Superintendent Jillian Balow and the Wyoming Department of Education have been working with districts across the state to help figure how schools will work for all students if closures persist. Wyoming Public Radio's Catherine Wheeler spoke with Balow first about how statewide exams have been canceled for this year.

TIME: 6 min

DATE: 3/27/20 at 3pm and 3/29/20 at noon.

ISSUE: WILDLIFE

TOPIC: On January 12th, 1995, the first truck loaded with grey wolves from Canada arrived in Yellowstone National Park. The reintroduction occurred after intense debate and serious scrutiny. The wolves reintroduction occurred nearly a century after park rangers helped exterminate the last wolves in Yellowstone. Wyoming Public Radio's Jeff Victor has more.

TIME: 5 MIN

DATE: 1/10/20 AT 3PM AND 1/12/20 AT NOON

TOPIC: When wolves were reintroduced, livestock producers, outfitters and other people who live near the park waited to see what would happen. Wyoming Public Radio's Kamila Kudelska reports on one group that hasn't been too happy about the reintroduction: livestock producers.

TIME: 5 MIN

DATE: 1/10/20 AT 3PM AND 1/12/20 AT NOON

TOPIC: At the end of 2019 - the bureau of land management leased out more than 37 thousand acres of land in northern park county for potential oil and gas drilling. Wyoming Public Radio's Kamila Kudelska reports some are alarmed about the recent spike in land available for oil and gas and what that means for the areas unique wildlife.

TIME: 5 MIN

DATE; 2/21/20 AT 3PM AND 2/23/20 AT NOON

TOPIC: There are estimated 6,000 big game animals killed by vehicle collisions each year in the state. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department and groups have been trying to find ways to reduce that number for years. Wyoming Public Radio's Catherine Wheeler spoke with Game and Fish's Deputy Director Angi Bruce to talk about the department's new initiative and what it means for animals and drivers in the state.

TIME: 7 MIN

DATE: 2/21/20 AT 3PM AND 2/23/20 AND NOON

ISSUE: ENVIRONMENT

TOPIC: A lot of the water that Wyomingites drink comes from the same source: the Casper Aquifer. In many areas, the aquifer is deep underground. Though in some areas where the water source surfaces, it can be a source of major controversy.

TIME: 5 MIN

DATE: 1/31/20 AT 3PM AND 2/2/20 AT NOON

TOPIC: A recent incident of a dog dying after getting caught in a snare has some Fremont County residents changing their dog-walking habits and calling for increased restrictions on trapping. Wyoming Public Radio's Savannah Maher reports.

TIME: 5 MIN

DATE: 1/31/20 AT 3PM AND 2/2/20 AT NOON

ISSUE: RECREATION

TOPIC: This winter season is the first time since 2004 that the Antelope Butte Mountain Recreation Area is fully open. The effort to reopen the ski area located in the Bighorn mountains took two communities separated by a mountain range over the last decade. Wyoming Public Radio's Kamila Kudelska has the story.

TIME: 5 MIN

DATE: 1/31/20 AT 3PM AND 2/2/20 AT NOON

TOPIC: Every year, thousands of American and international tourists pass through Cody as they leave or enter Yellowstone National Park. The summer tourism season officially starts May 1, when the park's east gate opens. That's usually a busy time, but things might be different this year.

TIME: 5 min

DATE: 3/27/20 at 3pm and 3/29/20 at noon

ISSUE: BUSINESS

TOPIC: Recently a Laramie man was chosen as the new CEO of the Wyoming Business Council. Josh Dorrell has a long history in private business and he's also taught business at the University of Wyoming. Governor Gordon and others have called for a revamping of the business council and Dorrell has already started retooling their goals. He tells me a little about his history.

TIME: 10 MIN

DATE: 2/21/20 AT 3PM AND 2/23/20 AT NOON.

TOPIC: Governor Mark Gordon recently announced that Wyoming is looking to make a major new investment... buying a million acres of land across southern Wyoming and through surrounding states.

Wyoming Public Radio's Cooper McKim speaks with former Governor David Freudenthal about the magnitude of unknowns, the risk of the purchase, and prudence of it in what's been a difficult financial period for Wyoming.

TIME: 10 MIN

DATE: 2/21/20 AT 3PM AND 2/23/20 AT NOON.

TOPIC: The 2020 Self-Sufficiency Standard for Wyoming recently came out. It's a study that takes into account all kinds of factors for working families, like how many adults are in your household, the number of children, or which county you live in. And then it works like a calculator to determine the amount of income required to meet basic needs at a minimally adequate level. The idea is to provide this information to all kinds of decision makers, from lawmakers to non-profits, to businesses that want to set up shop in the state, and need to know just how much to pay their workers. Wyoming Public Radio's Maggie Mullen sat down with Rebekah Smith and Alex Shannon from the Wyoming Women's Foundation to talk about the findings.

TIME: 8 MIN

DATE: 2/28/20 AT 3PM AND 3/1/20 AT NOON

TOPIC: The director of the Powell economic partnership is stepping down after six years at the helm. Christine Bekes [bek-ish] was the first full time director of the economic partnership and oversaw Powell's growing presence in the state. Wyoming Public Radio's Kamila Kudelska sat down with Bekes to reflect on her time in the position. Bekes said having a community development strategic plan completed just before she started made her understand what the community valued right from the beginning.

TIME: 8 MIN

DATE: 2/28/20 AT 3PM AND 3/1/20 AT NOON

TOPIC: Winter in Wyoming typically means a slowdown of visitors and tourism. But with the pressure of the state's dropping revenue, some communities are looking for ways to stabilize. Wyoming Public Radio's Catherine Wheeler reports that one city realized how a new winter event isn't only fun but helps to boost the economy.

TIME: 6 MIN

DATE: 2/28/20 AT 3PM AND 3/1/20 AT NOON

TOPIC: Governor Mark Gordon has appointed the other four top elected officials in the state to explore some challenges facing Wyoming and try and find solutions.

One interesting committee chaired by State Auditor Kristi Racines is looking at the business and financial sector as Wyoming faces a devastating down. Bob Beck begins the interview by noting that many small business people are scared.

TIME: 7 MIN

DATE: 3/27/20 at 3pm and 3/29/20 at noon.

ISSUE: SOCIAL ISSUES

One of the difficult things for children who are placed in group homes is how to manage when they leave that setting. It used to be that when those 18-year old's left the group home they would essentially have to fend for themselves. In Laramie, Cathedral Home for Children has a program that tries to help young people navigate the so-called real world. Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck has the story about the program and how one young man has benefitted from it.

TIME: 5 MIN

DATE: 1/31/20 AT 3PM AND 2/2/20 AT NOON