

2022 1st Quarter Issues Report for Wyoming Public Media

Issue: Politics

Topic: As real estate values continue to skyrocket in Jackson Hole, that means property taxes are rising as well. In many cases, that's making it more difficult for older folks on fixed incomes to continue to live in Teton County. Will Walkey reports on a proposed solution that would put tax revenues back into the pockets of longtime locals throughout Wyoming.

Time: 6 min

Date and Time: 1/21/22 at 3pm and 1/23/22 at noon.

Topic: Wyoming Congresswoman Liz Cheney has certainly been in the news lately. Her work on the Jan. 6 committee, verbal sparring with national and Wyoming Republicans, and her concern about President Biden put her in the headlines on a regular basis. She spoke with Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck.

Time: 15 min

Date and Time: 1/28/22 at 3pm and 1/30/22 at noon.

Topic: When the Wyoming legislature begins its work, most of the focus will be on the state budget and redistricting. Any other bills will have to get two-thirds of the body to support them before they can be considered. One bill that could get a look is a priority of the Wyoming Republican Party and others who are trying to keep people from winning a contested primary without over 50 percent of the vote. The bill is House Bill 74. The legislature's Joint Corporations Committee defeated a similar bill late last year and Hulett Representative Chip Neiman wants to try again. He joined Bob Beck to discuss the concept.

Time: 8 min

Date: 2/11/22 at 3pm and 2/13/22 at noon

Topic: Medicaid expansion has been a hot-button issue in Wyoming for years. Activists are pushing harder than ever to make Wyoming the next expansion state. And while expansion is popular among Wyoming residents, the state legislature has consistently opposed it. If it fails

this year, activists say they'll make their voice heard at the polls and make another push in 2023.

Time: 5 min

Date: 2/11/22 at 3pm and 2/13/22 at noon

Topic: The Wyoming Legislature is shifting into budget mode as it begins work on its \$2.8 billion budget. The budget is about \$200 million less than the one it approved two years ago, but it also benefits from the federal American Rescue Plan or ARPA money that state lawmakers have used to strategically replace some cuts and invest for the future.

Time: 5 min

Date: 2/11/22 at 3pm and 2/13/22 at noon

Topic: Anti-abortion bills have always come up in the Wyoming legislature, but recently a handful of measures requiring doctors that provide abortions to perform certain tasks have been adopted. So following the recent actions of other states, it was no surprise the legislature considered some stronger legislation this year and it could potentially send two bills to the governor this time around.

Time: 5 min

Date: 3/4/22 at 3pm and 3/6/22 at noon

Topic: Like everyone in Cheyenne, Governor Mark Gordon is busy keeping an eye on the Wyoming legislative session. However the governor granted us some time to discuss the session and some other things he's focused on. He speaks with Bob Beck.

Time: 15:40

Date: 3/4/22 at 3pm and 3/6/22 at noon

Topic: The Wyoming 2022 Legislative session got bogged down by a handful of social issues from addressing critical race theory to abortion and whether transgender women should be allowed to play on women's sports teams. But when it comes to the main focus of the session, which was the budget, generally lawmakers were happy. Bob Beck reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 3/11/22 at 3pm and 3/13/22 at noon

Topic: Governor Mark Gordon has signed two bills from this year's legislative session that are aimed to increase oversight and transparency of the [Wyoming Military Department](#), which oversees the National Guard. This came after Wyoming Public Media and Wyofile [reported](#) on complaints about the department mishandling reports of harassment and assault. Kamila Kudelska reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 3/25/22 at 3pm and 3/27/22 at noon

Issue: Health Care

Topic: Wyoming legislators recently punted on fixes to the state's system for an involuntary treatment called Title 25. That system allows police or mental health officials to detain someone they consider to be a danger to themselves or others, and make them undergo psychiatric treatment. For years the system has been plagued by ballooning costs, the lack of available treatment, and the proper facilities.

Time: 5 min

Date and Time: 1/7/22 at 3pm and 1/9/22 at noon.

Topic: In November, vaccines were approved and recommended for children between the ages of five and 11. While some parents and children eagerly took the vaccine as soon as it was available, others were more hesitant. Wyoming Public Radio's Jeff Victor reports that the childhood vaccination rate is far lower than the rate for adults. That fact could land more children in the hospital as omicron washes over Wyoming.

Time: 5 min

Date and Time: 1/21/22 at 3pm and 1/23/22 at noon.

Topic: Last week, the U.S. Supreme Court allowed the federal health care worker coronavirus vaccine mandate to go through. A lower court had put the mandate on pause in late November. Now any employee, volunteer, or contractor working at health care facilities receiving Medicaid or Medicare funding have to be fully vaccinated or provide an exemption by Feb. 28. Leading Age and Wyoming Hospital Association President Eric Boley told Wyoming Public Radio's Kamila Kudelska they expect to see staff shortages in hospitals and nursing homes border to border in the state.

Time: 8 min

Date and Time: 1/21/22 at 3pm and 1/23/22 at noon.

Topic: Deadly overdoses from the synthetic opioid fentanyl are a growing problem. The drug is useful for doctors, but now it's showing up all over. There are ways to test for it, but in some cases, that's illegal, too. Madelyn Beck explains.

Time: 5 min

Date and Time: 1/28/22 at 3pm and 1/30/22 at noon.

Topic: At one point earlier this month, Teton County had the highest COVID-19 case rate per capita in the country. Many other Western mountain towns were also at the forefront of the Omicron surge in our region, but hospitalizations and deaths have so far remained low in the resort communities. Will Walkey reports.

Time: 5 min

Date and Time: 1/28/22 at 3pm and 1/30/22 at noon.

Topic: In Wyoming, the major effects of COVID-19 took hold several months after the initial discovery and rise in cases in other parts of the country. And while the state's hospitals have ebbed and flowed with patients since then, the impact and demands on the healthcare infrastructure has differed from place to place. Wyoming Public Radio's Hugh Cook reports on the situation at smaller hospitals in Johnson and Weston counties.

Time: 4 min

Date and Time: 2/11/22 at 3pm and 2/13/22 at noon.

Topic: The Wind River Reservation is still mandating masks and other COVID protocols. This means basketball season looks a little different this year. Wyoming Public Radio's Taylar Stagner reports on how basketball teams are managing.

Time: 4 min

Date and Time: 2/11/22 at 3pm and 2/13/22 at noon.

Topic: This legislative session has a couple of bills focused on banning abortion in the state. The negative focus on abortion is causing confusion and in some cases leading to decreases of funding for preventive care. The type of care that could reduce the need for an abortion. Wyoming Public Radio's Kamila Kudelska has this story.

Time: 5 min

Date and Time: 3/4/22 at 3pm and 3/6/22 at noon.

Topic: COVID-19 numbers have dropped substantially, as have other things, such as hospitalizations due to the virus. Recently Governor Gordon ended the public health emergency. State Health Officer Doctor Alexia Harrist joined Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck to assess the situation and discuss the past couple of years.

Time: 9 min

Date and Time: 3/25/22 at 3pm and 3/27/22 at noon.

Issue: Social issues

Topic: For the past two years, South Dakota and Wyoming's National Guards have piloted a new sexual assault response training program. The Buddy Aid training program was developed by a Major of the South Dakota Army National Guard after she witnessed sexual violence in Afghanistan in 2013. Wyoming National Guard Master Sgt. Rebecca Motley brought the pilot program to the state's Army Guard in 2019. Motley told Wyoming Public Radio's Kamila Kudelska that her own experience made her realize the importance of this type of training.

Time: 10 min

Date and Time: 1/7/22 at 3pm and 1/9/22 at noon.

Topic: The war in Ukraine touches the University of Wyoming campus. Wyoming Public Radio's Jeff Victor spoke with a native of the country and others.

Time: 4 min

Date: 3/11/22 at 3pm and 3/13/22 at noon.

Topic: Wyoming is [number one in the country for suicide per capita](#), and advocates say those in mental health crisis have increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. The state legislature recently approved around \$2.5 million to establish a 24/7 suicide hotline access. Before August 2020, there was no in-state crisis call center or 24/7 suicide hotline access. Wyoming Public Radio's Taylor Stagner spoke with Andi Summerville, the Executive Director of the [Wyoming Association of Mental Health and Substance Abuse \(WAMHSAC\)](#), about the hotline.

Time: 8 min

Date and Time: 3/25/22 at 3pm and 3/27/22 at noon.

ISSUE: Land and agriculture

Topic: Private property rights are a major cornerstone to how Wyoming operates, but so is prioritizing a rural, quiet lifestyle – ultimately, the former won out in Sublette County. Back in December, county commissioners approved a rezoning request for a multi-billionaire to develop an exclusive guest ranch in the southernmost part of the Greater Yellowstone ecosystem.

Time: 5 min

Date and Time: 1/21/22 at 3pm and 1/23/22 at noon.

Topic: In the Colorado River basin, agriculture accounts for about 80% of all the water used. As the river's supply shrinks, and some farms start to make cutbacks, many are wondering if new technology can help with water conservation. Research suggests that it may not.

Time: 5 min

Date and Time: 1/21/22 at 3pm and 1/23/22 at noon.

Topic: National Ag Day is on March 22nd and in honor of that, we discussed how agriculture and landscapes benefit Wyoming. The Executive Director of the Wyoming Stock Growers Land Trust Jessica Crowder told Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck about their program and why it's important.

Time: 8 min

Date and Time: 3/11/22 at 3pm and 3/13/22 at noon.

Topic: Across the West, women are changing the ways land and livestock are managed. Ashley Ahearn saddled up to chronicle their big dreams – and daily challenges.

Time: 4 min

Date and Time: 3/25/22 at 3pm and 3/27/22 at noon.

Issue: Business

This past November, ten thousand individuals came together on the internet and bought 40 acres just outside of Clark. The reason they could do this is because of Wyoming's new law that allows decentralized autonomous organizations or DAO's to be incorporated as a Limited Liability Company. Wyoming Public Radio's Kamila Kudelska explains.

Time: 5 min

Date and Time: 1/21/22 at 3pm and 1/23/22 at noon.

Topic: Home to just 300 or so people, Meeteetse is nestled between the foot of the Absaroka Mountains and the Badlands. And for the past 18 years, the owner of Meeteetse Chocolatier Tim Kellogg has been making chocolates for the townspeople and tourists. Wyoming Public Radio's Kamila Kudelska visited the chocolatier to see how they fared during the pandemic.

Time: 5 min

Date and Time: 2/11/22 at 3pm and 2/13/22 at noon.

Issue: Native American

The Eastern Shoshone tribe has reached out to a national language preservation nonprofit to help build a dictionary. Wyoming Public Radio's Taylar Stagner has more about how the Shoshone language is being passed down to the younger generation.

Time: 5 min

Date and Time: 1/21/22 at 3pm and 1/23/22 at noon.

Topic: The Greater Yellowstone Coalition, a conservation group that focuses on maintaining the Yellowstone Ecosystem, now has an office in Fort Washakie. Their goal is to strengthen the tribal influence on conservation efforts in the Yellowstone area. Wyoming Public Radio's Taylar Stagner spoke with the head of the Wind River office Wes Martel about preserving treaty rights.

Time: 5 min

Date: 2/18/11 at 3pm and 2/20/22 at noon

Topic: The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that the U.S. added around five hundred thousand jobs in January. But for the first time they included monthly data on Indigenous unemployment. Wyoming Public Radio's Taylar Stagner reports while this is a step in the right direction, there is still a lot of work to do to better understand unemployment for Indigenous people.

Time: 6 min

Date: 3/4/22 at 3pm and 3/6/22 at noon

Topic: Yellowstone National Park turned 150 years old on March 1st. Park officials say they are taking this anniversary to work toward including more tribal perspectives and involvement within the park, Robyn Rofkar is the Assistant Director at the Eastern Shoshone Cultural Center in Fort Washakie told Wyoming Public Radio's Taylar Stagner about her many trips to the park over the years and what she would like to see changed to support more Indigenous visitation.

Time: 8 min

Date: 3/4/22 at 3pm and 3/6/22 at noon

Issue: Education

Topic: Governor Mark Gordon's Reimagining and Innovating the delivery of education advisory board is seeking input from the public via a survey and public meetings. RIDE, as the group is

also known as, was formed last year to determine what Wyomingites want from public education. Wyoming Public Radio's Kamila Kudelska chats with RIDE Chair John Masters about how the group is looking to take into account public concerns.

Time: 8 min

Date and Time: 1/28/22 at 3pm and 1/30/22 at noon.

Topic: The College of Arts and Sciences hired a new dean last June. Before Dean Camellia Moses Okpodu came to the University Wyoming (UW), she was the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Xavier University of Louisiana. She's trained as a plant physiologist. Due to restructuring, the UW College of Arts and Sciences is projected to become the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences. Wyoming Public Radio's Ivy Engel sat down with Dean Okpodu to talk about her deanship thus far and the future of the college.

Time: 8 min

Date: 2/11/22 at 3pm and 2/13/22 at noon

Topic: The University of Wyoming is launching a new School of Computing. While programs and degree tracks already exist for the technical and engineering side of the field, UW's new school will bring a new focus to the practical applications for computing. Jeff Victor speaks with the new Director Gabrielle Allen.

Time: 7 min

Date: 3/11/22 at 3pm and 3/13/22 at noon

Issue: Housing and communities

Topic: The 2020 census showed that several areas in the state saw population growth. Some of these communities were Cody, Jackson, Gillette, Casper, and Sheridan. One of the reasons is the popularity of remote work in the past two years. But these communities are struggling to supply enough housing for this new growth. Wyoming Public Radio's Hugh Cook focuses on how the population growth in Sheridan is impacting the community.

Time: 5 min

Date: 2/18/22 at 3pm and 2/20/22 at noon

Topic: Much like the rest of the country, property in Sublette County has skyrocketed...making it hard for people to afford to live there. But some residents say they don't think prices will come back down. [Data shows](#) that the median cost of a home in Sublette is about 25 percent more than the state as a whole. As Wyoming Public Radio's Caitlin Tan reports, local leaders are exploring affordable housing options – and looking to nearby Jackson to see what they're doing.

Time: 5 min

Date: 3/4/22 at 3pm and 3/6/22 at noon

Topic: Population declines and struggling small towns have been a part of the rural American landscape for many decades. Some have sought to reinvent themselves, capitalize on tourism, or attract potential residents by touting work, housing, and lifestyle benefits. Clearmont in Sheridan County is hoping that naming the highway through town as a historical byway could help increase traffic and tourism numbers. Wyoming Public Radio's Hugh Cook reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 3/25/22 at 3pm and 3/27/22 at noon

Issue: Wildlife

Some wildlife diseases can be so hazardous that they require a specialized lab to do research on them. The University of Wyoming is now home to a level three biosecurity lab that's outfitted with everything that's needed to research them. Wyoming Public Radio's Ivy Engel takes us on a tour.

Time: 5 min

Date and Time: 1/21/22 at 3pm and 1/23/22 at noon.

Topic: Wyoming's Bureau of Land Management recently wrapped up one of its largest wild horse roundups in the southwest part of the state, and while controversial, many who live in the area said it is necessary.

Time: 6 min

Date: 2/11/22 at 3pm and 2/13/22 at noon

Topic: Arts and Culture

Issue: During the pandemic, many in isolation have picked up new ways to occupy their time including learning how to create art. Wyoming Public Radio's Taylar Stagner talks with Lander Art Center Director Doug Spriggs about how the Fremont County art community is supporting new artists young and old.

Time: 8 min

Date and Time: 1/28/22 at 3pm and 1/30/22 at noon.

Topic: The Wyoming Cowboy Hall of Fame is taking nominations through the end of February. Wyoming Public Radio's Melodie Edwards sat down with Scotty Ratliff, a former legislator and a member of the Eastern Shoshone Tribe, to hear why he decided to start a list of Wyoming's most famous and skilled cowboys.

Time: 8 min

Date and Time: 2/11/22 at 3pm and 2/13/22 at noon.

Topic: A new theater project in Boulder, Colorado hopes to get communities to reach a consensus over divisive subjects through the power of music and the spoken word. "The Empathy Theater Project" is the brainchild of Laramie native Cordelia Zars. Wyoming Public Radio's Melodie Edwards starts by asking Zars how the idea came about.

Time: 8 min

Date and Time: 2/18/22 at 3pm and 2/20/22 at noon.

Topic: Doug Peacock is an American author and wildlife activist who's spent the majority of his life studying bears, primarily in the Montana and Wyoming areas. He recently published a book called "Was It Worth it? A Wilderness Warrior's Long Trail Home." Peacock spoke with Wyoming Public Radio's Caitlin Tan about the book.

Time: 8 min

Date and Time: 3/11/22 at 3pm and 3/13/22 at noon.

Topic: Last fall, the [Wyoming Singer-Songwriter Competition](#) in Ten Sleep awarded [Christian Wallowing Bull](#) first prize. This year, the Northern Arapaho musician has released a music video

of his single, "Machine," a collaboration with artist [Fiadh Vincent](#), and is working on a new album. Wyoming Public Radio's Taylor Stagner sat down with Wallowing Bull to talk about what inspires him.

Time: 8 min

Date and Time: 3/11/22 at 3pm and 3/13/22 at noon.