

2017 2nd Quarter Issues Report for Wyoming Public Media

Issue 1: Energy

Topic: A lot happened in the world of coal mining in the last week or so. The biggest coal company in the U.S.—Peabody Energy—emerged from bankruptcy...AND the Interior Secretary lifted an Obama-era ban on new coal leases. But what does it all mean for Wyoming's coal future? To figure it out, Wyoming Public Radio's Melodie Edwards sat down with Rob Godby, director at the Center for Energy Economics and Public Policy at the University of Wyoming.

Time: 8 min

Date: 4/7/17 at 3pm and 4/9/17 at noon on WPR. 4/9/17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: The fracking boom has ushered in cheap natural gas prices nationwide. Now, nearly 40 states have adopted or are looking at new legislation to expand natural gas service to rural America. That's where most of the 12 million homes are located, that still rely on propane. Inside Energy's Amy Sisk reports from a remote North Dakota town looking to make the switch.

Time: 4 min

Date: 4/7/17 at 3pm and 4/9/17 at noon on WPR. 4/9/17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Is the energy industry stifling free speech in Wyoming? That's the question University of Wyoming Professor Dr. Jeff Lockwood explores in a new book called *Behind the Carbon Curtain*. He says the industry suppresses critical artwork, research, and school curriculums. Wyoming Public Radio's Cooper McKim reports on the line between censorship and business-as-usual.

Time: 7 min

Date: 5/12/17 at 3pm and 5/14/17 at noon on WPR. 5/14/17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Wyoming coal companies are out of bankruptcy and rehiring. President Trump's promise to put coal miners back to work appears to have come true in northeastern Wyoming where nearly 300 mining jobs have returned, bringing residents home and boosting local morale. Still, there's a lot of uncertainty for the state and the coal industry overall. Inside Energy's Madelyn Beck reports from Gillette at the heart of Wyoming's Powder River Basin coal country.

Time: 4 min

Date: 6/9/17 at 3 pm and 6/11/17 at noon on WPR. 6/11/17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: The U.S. is getting less and less electricity from coal, but in Wyoming, a new coal mine COULD be opening up. The company behind it has a plan to use the coal, not for electricity, but to turn it into products. Wyoming Public Radio's Cooper McKim reports on the proposed Brook Mine project.

Time: 4 min

Date: 6/30/17 at 3pm and 7/1/17 at noon on WPR. 7/1/17 at 9am on WPM.

Issue 2: Education

Topic: Earlier this month, legislators met to take another look at the school funding model and possibly change it. That's called recalibration. But changing school funding is a tricky business because politics is a big variable in the spending equation.

Time: 5 min

Date: 4/14/17 at 3pm and 4/16/17 at noon on WPR. 4/16/17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: While the legislature and the school system continue to work on the state's \$400 million deficit, Wyoming Public Radio's education reporter, Tennessee Watson, sat down with Brian Farmer from the Wyoming School Boards Association. Farmer says local school boards offer a critical perspective on spending and educational outcomes, because it's a conversation they are constantly having on the local level.

Time: 7 min

Date: 4/14/17 at 3pm and 4/16/17 at noon on WPR. 4/16/17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: At the May meeting of the Board of Trustees, President Laurie Nichols announced that 37 University of Wyoming staff members would lose their jobs to meet budget cuts. Wyoming Public Radio's education reporter Tennessee Watson, says folks are worried about how the state's only public university is holding up.

Time: 5 min

Date: 5/17/17 at 3pm and 5/19/17 at noon on WPR. 5/19/17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: President Trump's budget proposal calls for the elimination of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, which would save \$1.2 billion. But across the

country, this program is a primary source of support for after-school and summer programs that serve students in low-income communities. There are over 50 programs in Wyoming that would be affected. Wyoming Public Radio's Education Reporter Tennessee Watson spoke with Linda Barton, director of the Wyoming Afterschool Alliance about why summer camp matters.

Time: 5 min

Date: 5/26/17 at 3pm and 5/28/17 at noon on WPR. 5/28/17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: A K-12 school in northeastern Wyoming is preparing to reopen this fall. The Midwest School closed down a year ago due to a leak from an abandoned gas well. A new ventilation system has been installed and the first round of air sampling tests show encouraging results. Wyoming Public Radio's Cooper McKim reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 5/26/17 at 3pm and 5/28/17 at noon on WPR. 5/28/17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: In 2015, No Child Left Behind was replaced by the Every Student Succeeds Act. Known as ESSA, it gives states more authority over K thru 12 education than they've had in nearly two decades. Now that the two year transition period is over, ESSA will take effect this fall. Wyoming Public Radio's education reporter Tennessee Watson, takes a look at how Wyoming's plan is taking shape.

Time: 5 min

Date: 6/9/17 at 3pm and 6/11/17 at noon on WPR. 6/11/17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: On the Wind River Reservation, students are learning how to use futuristic tools to stretch the bounds of what's possible in the classroom. Rebecca Huntington has more.

Time: 5 min

Date: 6/16/17 at 3pm and 6/18/17 at noon on WPR. 6/18/17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: What do parents think about Wyoming's K thru 12 education system? At a time when the state is adopting new guidelines laid out by the federal Every Student

Succeeds Act, and policymakers are considering major funding shortfalls, Sheila McGuire, president of the Wyoming Parent Teacher Association, spoke with Wyoming Public Radio's Tennessee Watson, about why the parent voice is so critical.

Time: 5 min

Date: 6/16/17 at 3pm and 6/18/17 at noon on WPR. 6/18/17 at 9am on WPM.

Issue 3: Legislative and politics

Topic: It's been a little over a month since the Wyoming legislative session ended and today Governor Matt Mead joins us to reflect on the session among other things. Many left the legislative session with bad feelings, but Mead told WPR's Bob Beck that he was pleased with what lawmakers did for economic development. Among other things the legislature supported his Endow plan for diversifying the economy.

Time: 10 min

Date: 4/7/17 at 3pm and 4/9/17 at noon on WPR. 4/9/17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Wyoming is facing a budget deficit mostly due to revenue shortfalls from energy companies and a loss in sales tax revenue. Lawmakers are starting to realize that they may need to raise money through taxes or fee increases. But while education funding has the attention of lawmakers, local government—specifically cities and towns—fear that they are being left out of the revenue conversation, and without more money communities will struggle to provide services.

Time: 5 min

Date: 5/26/17 at 3pm and 5/28/17 at noon on WPR. 5/28/17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: President Trump unveiled his budget this week and it's being met with mixed reactions from Wyoming lawmakers. The president is proposing massive cuts to safety net programs like Medicaid and Meals on Wheels in order to pay for a defense buildup. He also wants to slash the Environmental Protection Agency's budget by thirty percent, while also cutting the Interior Department's budget by eleven percent, which critics say would cripple National Park funding.

Time: 5 min

Date: 5/26/17 at 3pm and 5/28/17 at noon on WPR. 5/28/17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: You may have missed it but President Donald Trump dubbed last week Infrastructure Week. So we had our congressional correspondent Matt Laslo check in

with our lawmakers in Washington to see how the effort is going to pass Trump's hoped for one trillion dollar infrastructure bill. Here's his report.

Time: 5 min

Date: 6/16/17 at 3pm and 6/18/17 at noon on WPR. 6/18/17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Wyoming's two U.S. Senators have been at the center of their party's effort to overhaul the nation's health care system, and they're still optimistic they can pass a bill when they return to Washington after their July Fourth recess. Some have been critical of their work. Correspondent Matt Laslo reports that they are convinced that they will pass a bill that will improve the current health care law.

Time: 4 min

Date: 6/30/17 at 3pm and 7/1/17 at noon on WPR. 7/1/17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Recently, Teton County asked voters to weigh in on several projects that would have been funded through the local sales tax. Out of ten proposals, they approved six. But all three of the projects linked to the Southern Teton Area Rapid Transit System, or START, failed at the ballot box. As Wyoming Public Radio's Alanna Elder reports, the county is wondering how the bus system can serve people better and become more popular.

Time: 5 min

Date: 6/30/17 at 3pm and 7/1/17 at noon on WPR. 7/1/17 at 9am on WPM

Issue 4: Environment

Topic: Over the last school year, UW Lab School students have been participating in something called "Project Citizen," a nation-wide initiative that promotes democratic engagement. The school had three groups working on different projects all having to do with waste. Now, one of those projects is helping Laramie restaurants go green. Wyoming Public Radio's Caroline Ballard reports.

Time: 6 min

Date: 5/26/17 at 3pm and 5/28/17 at noon on WPR. 5/28/17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: The Endangered Species Act is threatened. Or at least facing significant reform. Momentum in Congress and in western states is building to make changes to the

landmark regulation that protects threatened animal and plant species and their habitats. Wyoming Public Radio's Cooper McKim reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 6/9/17 at 3pm and 6/11/17 at noon on WPR. 6/11/17 at 9am on WPM.

Issue: For years now, Fremont County in central Wyoming has been swamped with high waters that have damaged homes and highways every summer. In 2011, the National Guard was even called in to help. But this year was different, even though rivers rose higher than ever before. Wyoming Public Radio's Melodie Edwards sat down with Fremont County Emergency Management Coordinator Kathi Metzler and Information Officer Tammy Showerer to find out what everybody did right this time.

Time: 5 min

Date: 6/16/17 at 3pm and 6/18/17 at noon on WPR. 6/18/17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Wyoming is considering new ways to manage its invasive species. Weeds like cheat grass and toadflax can replace valuable forage area and sage brush, hurting species that rely on them... in fact, non-native species are considered the second greatest threat to biodiversity. Though Wyoming does invest heavily in controlling it, experts find it isn't enough. Wyoming Public Radio's Cooper McKim reports both state and federal agencies are working to find more effective strategies.

Time: 4 min

Date: 6/16/17 at 3pm and 6/18/17 at noon on WPR. 6/18/17 at 9am on WPM.

Issue 5: Business

Topic: Uber has been operating in the state for just over a month now. Their launch followed Governor Matt Mead's signing of a bill to legally authorize ride-sharing companies in Wyoming. However, while some consumers have been taking advantage of the service, others are less excited.

Time: 4 min

Date: 4/14/17 at 3pm and 4/16/17 at noon on WPR. 4/16/17 at 9 am on WPM.

Topic: A historic gateway to Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks is making a comeback this summer after a fire devastated its downtown business district in December of 2014, burning down four buildings. Correspondent Leslie Stratmoen has

more.

Time: 4 min

Date: 6/9/17 at 3pm and 6/11/17 at noon on WPR. 6/11/17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: University of Wyoming Vice President of Research and Economic Development Bill Gern is stepping down soon. Gern is credited with pushing to increase the amount of research dollars UW receives as well as working with outside groups to improve economic development in the state. He sat down with Bob Beck to discuss those efforts.

Time: 8 min

Date: 6/30/17 at 3pm and 7/1/17 at noon on WPR. 7/1/17 at 9am on WPM.

Issue 6: Health

Topic: Wyoming's cases of sexually transmitted diseases have been increasing in recent years and a recent update shows that, despite efforts of health care providers, it's still a concern. Courtney Smith is the Communicable Disease Program Manager for the Wyoming Department of Health. She tells Bob Beck that they have one key area of concern.

Time: 5 min

Date: 4/14/17 at 3pm and 4/16/17 at noon on WPR. 4/16/17 at 9 am on WPM.

Topic: Wyoming Congresswoman Liz Cheney helped her party pass a historic bill to unwind Obamacare this week, but its chances of passage in the Senate remain far from certain. Matt Laslo has the story from Washington.

Time: 5 min

Date: 5-5-17 at 3pm 5-7-17 at noon on WPR. 5-7-17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Following the presidential election, family planning centers in Wyoming experienced a sharp increase in women seeking long-term contraceptives. Recently, that's begun to slow down. Now, concern from the centers is about around funding and healthcare access.

Time: 5 min

Date: 5/26/17 at 3pm and 5/28/17 at noon on WPR. 5/28/17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Jackson, Wyoming is all about extremes. Folks from across the country flock to the mountain town to summit peaks, to ski fresh powder and to party. Athletes are revered for going over the edge, whereas those who fall into addiction are not. But what if the underlying cause of an avalanche death and a drug overdose are one in the same? *The Mindstrength Project* is taking advantage of that connection. Tennessee Watson reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 5/26/17 at 3pm and 5/28/17 at noon on WPR. 5/28/17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Several years ago Cheyenne residents Bob and Jill Jensen went looking for a service dog to assist Jill with her multiple sclerosis. Their search took them to Kansas City where they acquired their animal. The couple then wondered about developing a training facility for various types of service dogs in Cheyenne, which is unique in this region. Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck reports that happened five years ago and the program is thriving.

Time: 4 min

Date: 6/9/17 at 3pm and 6/11/17 at noon on WPR. 6/11/17 at 9am on WPM

Topic: In order to manage a \$2 million funding cut, the Wyoming Department of Health is scaling back its suicide prevention efforts in counties around the state. Scaling back may be an understatement since all of the suicide prevention specialists will lose their jobs on July 1st. Wyoming Public Radio's Alanna Elder says community prevention officials are concerned about the future.

Time: 4 min

Date: 6/16/17 at 3pm and 6/18/17 at noon on WPR. 6/18/17 at 9am on WPM.

Issue 7: Women's Issues.

Topic: Over the last several months, there have been growing concerns about the Casper Police Department. First, female residents said their sexual assault cases were mishandled. Then, a third party survey revealed low morale amongst police officers and potential leadership problems. Now, Casper awaits the results of multiple investigations.

Time: 5 min

Date: 5-5-17 at 3pm 5-7-17 at noon on WPR. 5-7-17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Native women are ten times more likely to be murdered than the national average, according to a Department of Justice report. Wyoming Public Radio's Melodie Edwards spoke with Carmen O'Leary, director of the Native Women's Society of the Great Plains, about her group's efforts to stop the violence.

Time: 7 min

Date: 5-5-17 at 3pm 5-7-17 at noon on WPR. 5-7-17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: When it comes to sexual assault in the U.S., the majority of victims will not make a report, and Wyoming is not much different than the rest of the country. As Wyoming Public Radio's Maggie Mullen reports, investigating and prosecuting alleged sexual assaults is complicated.

Time: 5 min

Date: 6/16/17 at 3pm and 6/18/17 at noon. 6/18/17 at 9am.

Issue 8: Social Issues

Topic: Wyoming Senator Anthony Bouchard has gotten his share of media attention over the last month for a tense exchange with three University of Wyoming students and a professor. It was over a project about how African-American males are perceived as dangerous. Since then Senator Bouchard has publicly critiqued the University for its perceived liberal slant and pervasive anti-gun agenda. Wyoming Public Radio's education reporter, Tennessee Watson, reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 5-5-17 at 3pm 5-7-17 at noon on WPR. 5-7-17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Throughout the month of June, the National Park Service asks visitors to refrain from climbing Devils Tower to respect American Indian ceremonies. However, the closure is voluntary and the number of climbers in June has been steadily rising in recent years. Wyoming Public Radio's Maggie Mullen has more.

Time: 5 min

Date: 6/30/17 at 3pm and 7/1/17 at noon on WPR. 7/1/17 at 9am on WPM.

Issue 9: Wildlife

Topic: Wyoming is taking over wolf management, again. A federal appeals court has entered its final order upholding Wyoming's wolf management plan. So, the state will pick up where it left off five years ago, and wolves outside a protected area can be shot on site. Penny Preston reports.

Time: 4 min

Date: 5-5-17 at 3pm 5-7-17 at noon on WPR. 5-7-17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Wyoming may be in the middle of an energy bust, but there's one industry that's quietly booming...the shed antler business. More and more people are discovering how lucrative picking up deer and elk antlers can be. But that's led to more out of season poaching of antlers and even accidents. Hundreds of people lined up for the season's opening day May 1st and Wyoming Public Radio's Melodie Edwards was there.

Time: 4 min

Date: 5-12-17 at 3pm 5-14-17 at noon on WPR. 5-14-17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: For nine years now, the Draper Museum in Cody has been studying golden eagles and what they mean for the dwindling sagebrush ecosystem where they live. That study will end next year so Wyoming Public Radio's Melodie Edwards joined researchers on a trip to band eaglets and find out what all this research is revealing about this iconic species.

Time: 5 min

Date: 6/9/17 at 3pm and 6/11/17 at noon on WPR. 6/11/17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Last year, a mysterious collection of stuffed birds was found at the Laramie high school. The discovery was perplexing at the time, but as Willow Belden reports, it ended up being a goldmine for scientists at the University of Wyoming.

Time: 5 min

Date: 6/9/17 at 3pm and 6/11/17 at noon on WPR. 6/11/17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Grizzly bears may be taken off the Endangered Species list soon. And, hunts are part of Wyoming's bear management plans. Those planned hunts are drawing fire from tribes, the Sierra Club, and comments from Yellowstone National Park. Penny Preston reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 6/16/17 at 3pm and 6/18/17 at noon on WPR. 6/18/17 at 9am on WPM

Issue 10: Arts and Culture

Topic: The controversial play “What Would Crazyhorse Do?” recently made its national debut in Laramie, of all places. Playwright and Lakota member Larissa Fasthorse says the script is her most widely read but no theater have actually performed it... until now. As Wyoming Public Radio's Melodie Edwards reports, that had a lot to do with the play's subject matter... racial purity.

Time: 6 min

Date: 4/7/17 at 3pm and 4/9/17 at noon on WPR. 4/9/17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: As the University of Wyoming faces steep budget cuts, the university community is revisiting which programs are core to the land grant mission. To a lot of people, it feels like the humanities are at odds with the sciences, and both of them are at odds with applied disciplines. But one English professor has taken a look at the history of the land grant university, and found that none of that is quite true. Wyoming Public Radio's Erin Jones reports.

Time: 6 min

Date: 5-5-17 at 3pm 5-7-17 at noon on WPR. 5-7-17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: The era of the mountain man was brief—the high point of the Rocky Mountain beaver fur trade was between 1820 and 1840. But the period still holds fascination today. Clay Landry has written extensively on the subject. He'll be speaking on non-fiction writing at next month's Wyoming Writers Conference. As Landry told Wyoming Public Radio's Micah Schweizer, he recently served as a historical advisor for the film “The Revenant.” The movie tells the story of Hugh Glass, who was left for dead after being mauled by a grizzly bear...and who then hunted down his former companions in revenge. Landry's job on the set was to get the actors into the mindset of a 19th century fur trapper.

Time: 6 min

Date: 5-5-17 at 3pm 5-7-17 at noon on WPR. 5-7-17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Earlier this month, those involved with arts organizations in the state were able

to exhale after a proposal to zero out funding for the National Endowment for the Arts, Humanities, and similar organizations this year was averted. The proposal was part of President Trump's budget. But as Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck reports the organizations will remain worried as the issue may come up again as early as this fall.

Time: 5 min

Date: 5/12/17 at 3pm and 5/14/17 at noon. 5/14/17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Not only would federal funding cuts hurt the arts...but President Trump's first budget proposal also called for totally zeroing out federal funding for the humanities, which could disproportionately hurt rural states like Wyoming. Correspondent Matt Laslo reports that such cuts could have a tough time getting support from Wyoming's Senators.

Time: 5 min

Date: 5/12/17 at 3pm and 5/14/17 at noon. 5/14/17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: A new art exhibition at the University of Wyoming explores and expands what it means to live in and love the American West. *TOPOPHILIA: A loving reconfiguration of the Mythology of our American West Through Studio Practices and Collaborative Projects* was created by the founders of the Wyoming Art Party, a Laramie-based group of artists that aims to connect the community through art. Caroline Ballard sat down with them to find out more about their latest work.

Time: 5 min

Date: 6/9/17 at 3pm and 6/11/17 at noon on WPR. 6/11/17 at 9am.

Topic: A Wyoming woman who set out to become an actress is coming home this summer for her 10-year high school reunion. And unlike most of her classmates, she is bringing a movie crew to start production on a feature film in which she is playing the lead. Correspondent Leslie Stratmoen has more.

Time: 4 min

Date: 6/30/17 at 3pm at 7/1/17 at noon on WPR. 7/1/17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: For almost 20 years the Wyoming based punk rock band Teenage Bottlerocket has grown in popularity. Formed by Laramie natives Ray and Brandon Carlisle, and later joined by Kody Templeman and Miguel Chen, the band gained an international following. In fact, a group of Japanese musicians has recorded a tribute album to honor

the band and one of their songs even appeared on an NBA broadcast this season. The band is set to release a new album and a couple of extra songs this month, Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck spoke with lead singers Ray Carlisle and Kody Templeman to discuss the album and the band's legacy.

Time: 5 min

Date: 6/30/17 at 3pm at 7/1/17 at noon on WPR. 7/1/17 at 9am on WPM.

Issue 11: Eclipse

Topic: Wyoming is scrambling to prepare for the August 21st total solar eclipse which could attract so many people here that it'll double the state's population. But one thing many people may not be prepared for is what to watch for in a total solar eclipse. Wyoming Public Radio's Melodie Edwards sat down with University of Wyoming astronomer Mike Pierce to get some tips. Pierce says this eclipse is known as the Great American solar eclipse because the shadow of it will race at almost 2,000 miles an hour across the entire U.S. from Oregon to South Carolina.

Time: 6 min

Date: 5/26/17 at 3pm and 5/28/17 at noon on WPR. 5/28/17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Many communities and hotels in Wyoming are preparing for a busy few days surrounding the August eclipse. State Parks Administrator Dominic Bravo says that it should be very busy in parks along the eclipse.

Time: 6 min

Date: 5/26/17 at 3pm and 5/28/17 at noon on WPR. 5/28/17 at 9am on WPM.

Issue 12: Agriculture

Topic: Vertical Harvest is finishing up its first year of operation. The hydroponic, or soil-less, greenhouse is located in downtown Jackson, and not only provides locally grown produce, but also employs 15 people with intellectual and physical disabilities. There to document the experiment in food production and innovative employment was filmmaker Jennifer Tennican. Tennican joined Wyoming Public Radio's Caroline Ballard near the end of principal filming for her documentary "Hearts of Glass," and says she was drawn to the project because of Vertical Harvest's unique community.

Time: 6 min

Date: 5-5-17 at 3pm and 5-7-17 at noon on WPR. 5-7-17 at 9am on WPM.