

2013 3rd quarter issues report for Wyoming Public Media

Issue: State government

Topic: The Wyoming Game and Fish Commission approved nearly five million dollars in budget cuts that were necessary after the legislature failed to approved an increase in game and fish license fees. The department is funded 80 percent by license fees and was already dealing with a deficit when the fee hikes were voted down. But lawmakers wanted the Game and Fish Department to be more efficient. Bob Beck reports

Time: 5 min

Date: 7-12-13 at 3pm and 7-14-13 at noon on WPR. 7-14-13 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Wyoming Public Radio's Irina Zhorov caught up with Governor Matt Mead to check in about some big changes in the state in the coming months. Her first question was about the Environmental Protection Agency's report on contaminated water in Pavillion and the state's takeover of the study. Though the entities involved in the study have previously expressed skepticism over the EPA's findings, Governor Mead says he has no doubts that the state's study will be unbiased.

Time: 10 min

Date: 7-19-13 at 3pm and 7-21-13 at noon on WPR. 7-21-13 at 9am on WPM

Topic: Wyoming is not a big tax state, so it might not be much of surprise to learn that Wyoming's Beer Taxes are the lowest in the country. Beer is taxed two cents a gallon and according to the Tax Foundation that amounts to a penny a six pack for a consumer. There have been several efforts to raise the tax in recent years, but those proposals are typically dead on arrival. Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 8-30-13 at 3pm and 9-1-13 at noon on WPR. 9-1-13 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Last week we ran a story concerning proposed cuts in the Developmental Disability waiver program. The belief is that there are some in the program getting more money than they need. Advocacy groups and those in the program worry that cuts could actually take money away from those who need services. Senator Charles Scott is the Chairman of the Senate Labor, Health and Social Services Committee. He joins Bob Beck to explain the legislature's position on the issue.

Time: 8 min

Date: 9-20-13 at 3pm and 9-22-13 at noon. 9-22-13 at 9am.

Issue: Social Issues

Topic: Governor Matt Mead is hoping to create a ten-year plan to address homelessness in Wyoming. As a first step in the process, the Department of Family Services has appointed a homelessness coordinator. Brenda Lyttle says her first task will be to identify what services are already available to homeless individuals in different communities in Wyoming. Willow Belden has more.

Time: 7 min

Date: 7-12-13 at 3pm and 7-14-13 at noon on WPR. 7-14-13 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: This month, the University of Wyoming will host a field course where students will explore the geographic, historical and religious significances of Heart Mountain in northern Wyoming. Mary Keller, is a historian of religions and a lecturer at U-W. She spoke with Wyoming Public Radio's Rebecca Martinez about what makes Heart Mountain so special.

Time: 7 min

Date: 7-12-13 at 3pm and 7-14-13 at noon on WPR. 7-14-13 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: During World War II, thousands of Japanese Americans were incarcerated at the Heart Mountain Relocation Center, near Cody. Heart Mountain was one of 10 internment camps across the U.S. There is now a museum on the site, and each year, the Heart Mountain Foundation hosts a pilgrimage. Wyoming Public Radio's Willow Belden sat down with several former internees and produced this piece.

Time: 10 min

Date: 8-2-13 at 3pm and 8-4-13 at noon on WPR. 8-4-13 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: September is suicide prevention awareness month. Wyoming consistently has one of the highest rates of suicide in the nation, and the state is working hard to change that. One of the *reasons* that suicide prevention efforts are so important is because of what suicide does to the family and friends of the victim. Wyoming Public Radio's Willow Belden reports that the grief survivors go through can be much more acute than other types of grief.

Time: 5 min

9-20-13 at 3pm and 9-22-13 at noon. 9-22-13 at 9am.

Issue: Energy

Topic: A facility is slated to be built in the town of Fort Laramie that would load oil onto rail cars. Assuming the project gets the necessary permits from the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality, it's expected to be completed by the end of the year. Transporting oil by train is becoming increasingly popular, and experts say this facility and others like it will help the energy industry thrive. But local residents fear that a new industrial site could bring problems to their community. Wyoming Public Radio's Willow Belden reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 7-12-13 at 3pm and 7-14-13 at noon on WPR. 7-14-13 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: More than 50 years ago residents of Rock Springs were shocked to learn that many of their houses, schools, and churches were in danger. The coal mines built underneath the town were beginning to collapse due to neglect and some environmental factors. It's called subsidence and it's happening in older mining towns all over the West. Amanda Le Claire has more on how the city has been dealing with the problem both then and now.

Time: 5 min

Date: 7-12-13 at 3pm and 7-14-13 at noon on WPR. 7-14-13 at 9am on WPM

Topic: Julianne Couch is the author of *Traveling the Power Line*, a book about the many energy sources we tap into for our power needs – from oil and gas, to wind, to solar and uranium. Couch teaches at the University of Wyoming and has also written *Jukeboxes and Jackalopes: A Wyoming Bar Journey* and *Waking Up Western: Collected Essays*. She now lives in Iowa but stopped by the studio to talk to Wyoming Public Radio's Irina Zhorov about her book.

Time: 7 min

Date: 7-12-13 at 3pm and 7-14-13 at noon on WPR. 7-14-13 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Trona mining is a widely forgotten part of the state's extraction industries. But in Sweetwater County, it's a big deal. Just west of Green River, there's a hidden labyrinth of tunnels far below I-80. And the industry is a major part of the county's economy. But some worry that environmental issues could be a major burden for trona mining. Amanda Le Claire has more.

Time: 5 min

Date: 8-2-13 at 3pm and 8-4-13 at noon on WPR. 8-4-13 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: The Bureau of Land Management is responsible for coal on federal lands. That coal makes up about 40 percent of total coal production in the U.S. Of the 314 existing federal coal leases, nearly a quarter of the leases are in Wyoming's Powder River Basin. Companies acquire these leases by bidding on the right to mine the federal coal. It has generated a lot of income, which the federal government splits with states. But not everyone thinks the program is working as it should and that the government might be losing out on money.

Time: 5 min

Date: 8-23-13 at 3pm and 8-25-13 at noon on WPR. 8-25-13 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Wyoming has been producing oil for more than a hundred years, which means the state has a lot of mature oil fields -- fields that stopped producing a long time ago. Since its founding in 2004, the Enhanced Oil Recovery Institute has been working to get those fields back into production using innovative techniques for recovering the oil. Now, the Institute has new equipment that it hopes will improve its existing capabilities, and encourage more investment in the approach.

Time: 5 min

8-30-13 at 3pm and 9-1-13 at noon on WPR. 9-1-13 at 9am on WPM.

Issue: Business

Topic: Rancher and former saddle bronc rider, Tim Kellogg of Meeteetse, began selling homemade chocolates on weekends to bankroll his rodeo passion in 2004. Known by many as the "Meeteetse Chocolatier," Kellogg now runs a shop on the little town's main street seven days a week. Rebecca Martinez interviewed him and produced this piece.

Time: 4 min

Date: 7-12-13 at 3pm and 7-14-13 at noon on WPR. 7-14-13 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Today, the long awaited ground breaking for the 41 million dollar Wind River Job Corps took place. It's the first Job Corps for Wyoming which is the only state without such a facility. Sandy Barton of the Fremont County Board of Cooperative Education Services or BOCES spearheaded the effort from the start. She told Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck that it will have a major impact on Fremont County and the state.

Time: 5 min

Date: 8-9-13 at 3pm and 8-11-13 at noon on WPR. 8-11-13 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: It has never been easy to start a small business or to keep it going. Acquiring startup money is always one of the challenges. In Wyoming, officials say they want to develop more businesses, but unless you are a technology company, it can be difficult to find the necessary support. Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 8-23-13 at 3pm and 8-25-13 at noon on WPR. 8-25-13 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: A new group is convinced that, with a little coaching, Jackson Hole can become the Silicon Valley of the Rockies. They're convinced that within the state the investors exist to help grow more startup businesses. But what's lacking is a venue for investors and entrepreneurs to meet. The possible solution is known as Pitch Day.

Time: 5 min

Date: 8-23-13 at 3pm and 8-25-13 at noon on WPR. 8-25-13 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Now, for the latest edition in our occasional series, Upstarts, we'll hear from a stay-at-home mom who launched a multimedia publishing company from her kitchen table in Laramie. Kati Hime is the owner and editor of three high-quality magazines that focus on life in and across the Cowboy State. Wyoming Public Radio's Rebecca Martinez reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 8-23-13 at 3pm and 8-25-13 at noon on WPR. 8-25-13 at 9am on WPM.

Issues: Politics

Topic: This week Wyoming's senior senator, Mike Enzi, was surprised to learn he'll be facing off against Liz Cheney in what's expected to be one of the most heated Republican primaries in the nation. Matt Laslo reports from Washington that right now, the Republican Party is wrapping its arms around Enzi.

Time: 5 min

Date: 7-19-13 at 3pm and 7-21-13 at noon on WPR. 7-21-13 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: With Congress in recess for the month President Obama is preparing to continue pressuring Republicans to work with him on job creation. Matt Laslo reports from Washington that Wyoming's congressional delegation says that while his speeches rev up his base he still isn't trying to work with the GOP.

Time: 4 min

Date: 8-9-13 at 3pm and 8-11-13 at noon on WPR. 8-11-13 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: In September a Congressional subcommittee will hold a hearing in Casper as Congress takes another crack at reforming the Endangered Species Act. Wyoming Congresswoman Cynthia Lummis has for years been supportive of reforming the ESA. While she is quick to acknowledge that it has been a good law, Lummis is frustrated that once something gets on the endangered species list it rarely comes off. She joins Bob Beck to discuss this.

Time: 7 min

Date: 8-23-13 at noon and 8-25-13 at 11 am on WPR. 8-25-13 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: President Obama's call to postpone a vote on a military strike in Syria is being lauded by Wyoming lawmakers. Matt Laslo reports from Washington that while the administration is leaving a military option on the table as it pursues diplomacy, officials can't expect much support from the Wyoming delegation.

Time: 4 min

Date: 9-13-13 at 3pm and 9-15-13 at noon on WPR. 9-15-13 at 9am on WPM.

Issue: Health Care

Topic: Thanks to the Affordable Care Act, a number of things are changing concerning Medicaid in Wyoming. Jan Stahl is the eligibility and operations administrator for the Wyoming Department of Health. Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck spoke with Stahl, who says the changes will take place January first.

Time: 6 min

Date: 7-19-13 at 3pm and 7-21-13 at noon on WPR. 7-21-13 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Two years ago the Wyoming legislature asked the Wyoming Department of health to look into the high costs of Medicaid services in the state. The legislature wanted them to find ways to reduce those costs and see if there were also ways to reform Wyoming's Developmental Disability waiver program, which costs the state 151 million dollars a year. The most popular waiver provides funding for home and community based services that can keep a child with disabilities from being institutionalized. The Department is looking into the possibility of reducing funding for some people and using that savings to reduce a waiting list for others who also need services. It's generated quite a firestorm as Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 9-13-13 at 3pm and 9-15-13 at noon on WPR. 9-15-13 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Roughly a quarter of Teton County residents are living without health insurance. It's the worst rate of health coverage in the state. Beginning in October, those uninsured residents will have a new opportunity to get health insurance through a federally-operated exchange, or marketplace. Wyoming Public Radio's Rebecca Huntington has more.

Time: 5 min

Date: 9-13-13 at 3pm and 9-15-13 at noon on WPR. 9-15-13 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: In this time of job insecurity *and* a changing medical landscape, the University of Wyoming's School of Pharmacy Education is graduating dozens of doctoral students who – for the most part – can count on a securing a good-paying job once they get their degree, if not before. Wyoming Public Radio's Rebecca Martinez reports.

Time: 4 min

Date: 9-20-13 at 3pm and 9-22-13 at noon. 9-22-13 at 9am.

Topic: National AARP President Rob Romasco is in the state this week for some activities with the Wyoming Chapter of the organization. He tells Bob Beck that Social Security and Medicare remain important issues.

Time: 7 min

Date: 9-20-13 at 3pm and 9-22-13 at noon. 9-22-13 at 9am.

Issue: Education

Topic: Unless you are new to the state or have lived under a rock, you are aware that the state legislature passed a law that changed the powers of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and placed a Director in charge of Education. Now lawmakers are investing a report that suggests possible wrong doing by Superintendent Cindy Hill...charges she denies. It might lead people to worry about education in the state. But lawmakers want you to know that they continue to try and make change for the better. Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck has the story.

Time: 5 min

Date: 7-19-13 at 3pm and 7-21-13 at noon on WPR. 7-21-13 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Last month, Bob Sternberg took over as the new president of the University of Wyoming. In recent weeks, has explained that he wants UW to attempt to be an inclusive University that doesn't focus on things like a student's ACT scores, and rather looks more at the whole package. President Sternberg tells Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck that it's more important to make sure students are properly prepared for higher education, and their future is much more important than test scores.

Time: 8 min

Date: 8-9-13 at 3pm and 8-11-13 at noon on WPR. 8-11-13 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Roughly three years ago, two women undertook an effort to take a group of middle school girls in Jackson under their wing with the goal of helping them get into college. The effort is called College Bound Latinas and the program has had some early success. But a recent interaction with a University of Wyoming Professor is taking the girls even further as Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 8-9-13 at 3pm and 8-11-13 at noon on WPR. 8-11-13 at 9am on WPM

Topic: Wyoming's newly appointed Director of Education Rich Crandall is busy getting acquainted with Wyoming's Education system. Crandall began his new duties August first. He was heavily involved in education as a politician in Arizona and he's now running the Wyoming Department of Education and working with legislators to implement education policy in the state. Lawmakers voted to remove those powers from State Superintendent of Public Instruction Cindy Hill. Crandall is focused on what he calls best practices or the best ways to improve education. We begin by discussing Wyoming's efforts to improve accountability in education. He speaks with Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck.

Time: 8 min

8-23-13 at 3pm and 8-25-13 at noon on WPR. 8-25-13 at 9am on WPM.

Issue: Agriculture and ranching

Topic: The grazing land of Wyoming is currently filled with young calves out to pasture. Calving season lasts through the spring and early summer in Wyoming and once the calves are born ranchers have to brand them to identify which ranch they belong to. Wyoming Public Radio's Irina Zhorov attended a branding and found that in the 21st Century, some ranchers are happily keeping up old, social customs during their brandings.

Time: 5 min

Date: 7-19-13 at 3pm and 7-21-13 at noon on WPR. 7-21-13 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Real estate brokers across Wyoming and the west have been seeing more and more people buying ranches for investment purposes. In many cases, that's changing the way the ranches function and affecting the communities around them. Wyoming Public Radio's Willow Belden reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 9-13-13 at 3pm and 9-15-13 at noon on WPR. 9-15-13 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Many Wyoming ranches are being purchased by out-of-state residents. Many of these ranches are up for sale in the first place because older ranchers don't have heirs who want -- or know how to -- run a ranch full-time. Or the kids can't agree on what to do with the family ranch after their parents pass away. So ranching advocacy groups are trying to come up with ways to help manage non-traditional succession plans. Jim Magagna of the Wyoming Stock Grower's Association tells Wyoming Public Radio's Rebecca that it's important to find ways to help farmers get their money's-worth for their land while keeping it in production.

Time: 7 min.

Date: 9-13-13 at 3pm and 9-15-13 at noon on WPR. 9-15-13 at 9am on WPM.

Issue: Environment

Topic: Saw mills are re-opening in Wyoming and Colorado after a decade of being shuttered. They're harvesting and processing trees that have been killed by beetle infestation. Still, many are suitable for lumber. Wyoming Public Radio's Rebecca Martinez reports that this uptick in the timber business is helping with forest fire management.

Time: 5 min

Date: 8-2-13 at 3pm and 8-4-13 at noon on WPR. 8-4-13 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: One of the main things that threatens sage grouse is human development and fragmentation of their habitat. But another big worry is West Nile Virus. The disease is carried by mosquitoes, and researchers are now testing a new method for keeping mosquitoes in check. Wyoming Public Radio's Willow Belden spoke with Brad Fedy, who's leading the project. He says West Nile Virus is a major concern for sage grouse.

Time: 5 min

Date: 8-2-13 at 3pm and 8-4-13 at noon on WPR. 8-4-13 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: John Davis is a conservationist and co-founder of the Wildlands Network conservation organization. He's currently on a 5,000 mile international route from Mexico, through the Western US, and up to Canada, mostly on foot. He's working with various environmental groups as he makes his way across North America. The idea is to promote an international, continuous area where wildlife can move freely. Wyoming Public Radio's Irina Zhorov caught up with Davis as he made his way across the Red Desert.

Time: 5 min

Date: 8-2-13 at 3pm and 8-4-13 at noon on WPR. 8-4-13 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Laramie residents have been noticing more rabbits than usual in town this year. Some experts say it's because there are fewer predators, but others aren't so sure. Wyoming Public Radio's Chelsea Biondolillo reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 8-2-13 at 3pm and 8-4-13 at noon on WPR. 8-4-13 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Science has long been something we look to for answers. But when it comes to policy making, science can't always provide the clear solutions lawmakers and the public want. That has to do with how science works and the politics that sometimes infiltrate. Two issues in Wyoming demonstrate uncannily well the shortcomings of science when it comes to decision making in the environmental sphere. Irina Zhorov reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 8-9-13 at 3pm and 8-11-13 at noon on WPR. 8-11-13 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Each year, millions of dollars are spent controlling invasive species in Wyoming. Just about every agency you can think of is involved – from local weed and pest districts, to the Department of Game and Fish, and even the Bureau of Land Management. Many people see their efforts as an important way to protect Wyoming's diversity. But others worry that removing invasives could sometimes do more harm than good. Wyoming Public Radio's Willow Belden reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 8-9-13 at 3pm and 8-11-13 at noon on WPR. 8-11-13 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: We recently reported that an oil and gas company operating in Wyoming was fined by the federal Office of Natural Resource Revenue for not submitting production reports. Turns out, the company has a history of poor behavior in the state, fiscally and environmentally. Although Pure Petroleum's gross neglect of its responsibilities is somewhat of an exception, it does point to big flaws in the oil and gas industry's reclamation system.

Time: 5 min

Date: 8-30-13 at 3pm and 9-1-13 at 9am on WPR and 9-1-13 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Science can be fascinating, even to non-scientists. But when experts use a lot of industry jargon to explain their research, it can be hard to understand. Now that funding for research is harder to come by, scientists need to do more to win over the public's hearts and minds to back their work. The National Science Foundation will be hosting a workshop at the University of Wyoming to help scientists, engineers and other academics to communicate with the rest of us about their research.

Time: 4 min

Date: 8-30-13 at 3pm and 9-1-13 at 9am on WPR and 9-1-13 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: The U-S Fish and Wildlife Service wants Grizzly Bears taken off the Endangered Species list, but the agency's effort has been blunted by the courts. Matt Laslo reports from Washington on the battle over Wyoming's Grizzlies.

Time: 4 min

Date: 9-20-13 at 3pm and 9-22-13 at noon on WPR. 9-22-13 at 9am on WPM.