

BRIDGER VALLEY PIONEER

S E R V I N G H I S T O R I C B R I D G E R V A L L E Y S I N C E 1 9 7 7



Uinta County Undersheriff Trevor Rasmussen and Sheriff Andy Kopp recently met with the newspaper to discuss Kopp's Jan. 13 letter to state legislators at the beginning of the general session regarding his concerns about a lack of funding and support to address mentally ill inmates in overcrowded county detention centers. "Jails are now becoming mental health facilities," Rasmussen said. "Our overall objective is streamlining treatment and establishing a more efficient system. Let's bring everyone to the table and hash it out," Kopp said. (UINTA COUNTY HERALD/Amanda Manchester)

Sheriff wants \$765K from state Kopp enrolls 15 sheriffs to ask legislature to change how mentally ill are housed

By Amanda Manchester
Herald Reporter

EVANSTON — "I don't answer to the state; I answer to the people of Uinta County. If I see an unpaid bill of \$700,000, I'm going to go after it," Uinta County Sheriff Andy Kopp recently told the *Herald*.

On Monday, Jan. 13, Kopp sent a letter to several Wyoming legislators on the first day of this year's general session.

"I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the current state of mental health support in Wyoming's county detention centers, particularly for individuals awaiting transport to the Wyoming State Hospital (WSH)," Kopp's letter began.

"Counties must be reimbursed for the De-

partment's (Wyoming Department of Health) failure to take custody of individuals as ordered. Currently, this hardship falls on county detention centers, which receive no resources or support from the state despite bearing the financial and logistical burdens," the letter continues.

The email was sent to 78 legislators representing 16 of Wyoming's 23 counties — Albany, Big Horn, Carbon, Converse, Goshen, Hot Springs, Laramie, Lincoln, Niobrara, Park, Platte, Sublette, Teton, Uinta, Washakie and Weston — whose sheriffs co-signed Kopp's letter.

According to Kopp, two Uinta County deputies attending in his stead at a sheriff's meeting in December 2023 were verbally told by Wyoming Department of Health (WDH) Director Stefan

See **SHERIFF**, page A5

Heartbreak in Lander



Mountain View's Race Carr makes an aggressive move to the basket during Friday's 58-56 loss to Lander on the road. The Buffalos have a chance to get back in the win column this Friday when they host Pinedale at the Buffalo Dome. (PIONEER PHOTO/Charly Porter)

Natrium 'advanced nuclear' power plant wins Wyoming permit

Bill Gates-owned TerraPower's project near Kemmerer still awaits approval from the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission

By Dustin Bleizeffer
WyoFile.com

The Wyoming Industrial Siting Council has granted a construction permit to TerraPower for its Natrium nuclear power plant near Kemmerer — a milestone achievement both in Wyoming and nationwide for commercial-scale "advanced nuclear" energy, the company says.

"This is the first state permit ever awarded to a commercial-scale advanced nuclear project and is a testament to the groundbreaking work of our TerraPower team," TerraPower President and CEO Chris Levesque said in a prepared statement recently.

The permit allows for construction of all non-nuclear portions of the Kemmerer Power Station Unit 1 plant. TerraPower has a permit



Wyoming Gov. Mark Gordon, TerraPower founder Bill Gates and TerraPower President and CEO Chris Levesque prepare to move some dirt during the company's groundbreaking ceremony last week in Kemmerer. (KEMMERER GAZETTE/Ryan Jones)

application pending before the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission for all of the nuclear-related facilities. "That application was submit-

ted in March 2024 and is on track for approval in December 2026," according to a TerraPower press statement. "The unique Natrium

design enables the company to start non-nuclear construction onsite during the NRC review."

The state's review included an analysis of environmental and socioeconomic impacts related to the facility, as well as potential avoidance measures such as noise limits and nighttime-light restrictions to minimize negative impacts on birds and skirting cultural resources when possible, according to the state and TerraPower's 1,459-page permit application. The Industrial Siting Council — a gubernatorial-appointed panel connected to the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality — now has 45 days to draw up its approval order and issue the permit.

"The regulatory process to bring new nuclear plants to fruition is robust, and our team has been

working relentlessly to successfully maneuver through a compli-

See **NATRIUM**, page A2



WEATHER



Sunny. High 27F.
Winds WNW at 15 to 25 mph. Higher wind gusts possible.
Night: Low 11F.

For complete details, see page A2.



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Gordon: Wyoming energy poised for 'rebound' after weathering Biden policies



Wyoming Gov. Mark Gordon speaks to legislators from the Senate and House during a joint session of the 68th Wyoming Legislature on Wednesday in the House chamber. (WYOMING TRIBUNE EAGLE/Michael Smith)

Wyoming's governor struck an amicable tone on energy policies in his State of the State address, despite a split with the Freedom Caucus on low-carbon energy policies

By Dustin Bleizeffer
WyoFile.com

Wyoming's fossil fuel industries "have weathered the worst" under four years of the Biden administration, and now they are poised to rebound under President-elect Donald Trump, Gov. Mark Gordon said during his State of the State address on Wednesday.

"It will take time to un-ring the Biden bell," Gordon said, addressing the 68th Wy-

oming Legislature and guests at the Capitol in Cheyenne. "But one thing is sure, [the nation is] moving from an administration that demonized and obstructed fossil fuels to one that recognizes them as essential to our way of life, economy and national defense.

"He supports what Wyoming is doing," Gordon continued, recalling his recent conversation with Trump in Florida. "The president

See **GORDON**, page A5

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Around the Valley/News

WEATHER

Wednesday: Sunny. High 27F. Winds WNW at 15 to 25 mph. Higher wind gusts possible.

Wednesday Night: Mostly clear skies. Low 11F. Winds W at 10 to 15 mph.

Thursday: Generally sunny despite a few afternoon clouds. High 32F. Winds W at 10 to 20 mph.

Thursday Night: A few clouds. Low 23F. Winds WSW at 10 to 20 mph.

Friday: Partly cloudy skies in the morning will give way to cloudy skies during the afternoon. High 38F. Winds W at 15 to 25 mph.

Friday Night: Mostly cloudy skies with late-night snow showers. Low 16F. NW winds shifting to ENE at 10 to 15 mph. Chance of snow 40%. Snow accumulations less than one inch.

Saturday: Increasingly windy with intermittent snow showers, especially early. High 19F. Winds ENE at 20 to 30 mph. Chance of snow 40%. Snowfall around one inch.

Saturday Night: Mostly cloudy. Low around 5F. Winds ENE at 10 to 20 mph.

Sunday: Sunshine and clouds mixed. High 18F. Winds NE at 10 to 15 mph.

Sunday Night: Partly cloudy. Low 3F. Winds W at 5 to 10 mph.

Monday: Sunshine and clouds mixed. High 23F. Winds WNW at 5 to 10 mph.

Monday Night: Clear skies. Low 6F. Winds WSW at 5 to 10 mph.

Tuesday: A mainly sunny sky. High 28F. Winds WNW at 5 to 10 mph.

Tuesday Night: Clear skies. Low near 10F. Winds WSW at 5 to 10 mph.

NEWS NOTES

Mountain View Library

The Mountain View Library hosts Story Time on Wednesdays at 11 a.m

For this week, on Wednesday, Jan. 22, it's all about silly rabbits! "Let's Make Rabbits" will be read, and participants will craft scrapbook rabbits to take home.

What kind of books do rabbits like to read? Stories with happy endings.

On Wednesday, Jan. 29, 'tis the season for mittens at Story Time so the book will be "The Mitten." Participants will make a busting mitten, full of critters, to go along with the story and then will craft a cute mitten to take home! If you want, you can bring your own mittens to show everyone!

News Notes info

E-mail to bglathar@bridgervalleypioneer.com, or bring it by our office at 317 Gradshaw Sreet #2, in Lyman

NATRIUM, continued from page A1

cated, multi-jurisdictional environment to bring the first Natrium plant to market," Levesque said.

TerraPower began construction on a stand-alone but related facility — a liquid sodium testing center — in June, marking the occasion with a groundbreaking ceremony that included some 300 guests and company founder, Microsoft billionaire Bill Gates. The phased nature of construction for the larger project will cycle in workers with different construction and engineering skills, peaking at about 1,600 workers in 2028, according to TerraPower.

The plant is slated to begin generating electricity in 2030.

Natrium project

TerraPower selected the Kemmerer location in the fall of 2021 after analyzing a handful of other potential

locations in Wyoming to co-locate the facility next to a coal-fired power plant slated for retirement. The idea, according to the company, was to utilize existing infrastructure associated with coal plants, including tapping the local workforce. The company chose a site near the Naughton natural gas and coal-fired power plant just outside the towns of Kemmerer and Diamondville in Lincoln County.

One of three coal-burning units at the Naughton plant was converted to natural gas a few years ago. The remaining two coal units will be converted to natural gas in 2026, according to majority owner PacifiCorp. TerraPower has partnered with the U.S. Department of Energy, which is expected to contribute about \$2 billion of the \$4 billion effort, to develop the project, according to



Microsoft billionaire and TerraPower founder Bill Gates speaks during a groundbreaking for the Natrium nuclear power plant outside Kemmerer. (KEMMERER Gazette/Ryan Jones)

the company.

PacifiCorp, which operates as Rocky Mountain Power in Wyoming, has tentatively agreed to consider taking over Natrium operations and plug the power plant into its six-state elec-

trical service territory.

Natrium is an "advanced" nuclear reactor design that will use liquid sodium for cooling. The plant will generate a consistent 345 megawatts of power — enough energy to power about 250,000

homes — with a capability of ramping up to 500 megawatts for short periods of time, according to TerraPower. The reactor will use high-assay, low-enriched uranium (HALEU) fuel.

The company originally

proposed an in-service date of 2028, but had to push the start date back to 2030 due to global events. In 2022, following the invasion of Ukraine, TerraPower cut ties with the Russian state-owned Tenex — the only facility in the world at the time with the capacity to supply commercial volumes of HALEU.

TerraPower has worked to secure initial HALEU supplies with companies in U.S.-ally nations, while the Department of Energy is working to support a domestic production and supply chain for HALEU.

If successful, the company plans to deploy dozens of Natrium plants across the globe, including several more in Wyoming, TerraPower officials say.

Wyofile is an independent nonprofit news organization focused on Wyoming people, places and policy.



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BREAKING NEWS

The Bridger Valley Pioneer will change to a Wednesday publication effective January 8th.

**New print deadlines:
Advertising/legals
Thursdays at noon.
beginning
Thursday, January 2.**

**New office hours are
Wednesday
9 am to 3 pm
& Friday
9 am to 1 pm
effective immediately.**

Call the now combined Pioneer/Herald office
with any questions at 307-789-6560.



BRIDGER VALLEY PIONEER

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Opinions

Did someone say ‘dead inventory?’

By Danny Tyree

“It’s the goin’ thing!”

That’s the phrase my late mother merrily exclaimed every time she got the opportunity to inform me of some quasi-trend she had discovered via “Good Morning America” or a similar program.

Alas, I am waist-deep in merchandise that is definitely not the goin’ thing.

In my role as an inventory control clerk, I’ve just received a lengthy email list of “dead inventory” (in our case, products that have not sold at all in two years or more), replacing any daydreams of a tropical vacation with thoughts of being stranded on the Island of Misfit Toys.

As you probably realize, dead inventory is anathema for retailers because it ties up funds, occupies space that could be used for a product with a faster rotation and — let’s face it — sets a bad example for employees who move even more slowly.

When cometh dead inventory? It can be a combination of overly optimistic purchasing decisions, inept marketing, bad reviews or societal shifts. (I just read that the once-thriving bourbon industry is in decline, at least partly because of dire medical warnings and competition from new nonalcoholic beverages. And the fear of triggering people to type phrases like “whence cometh.”)

Dead inventory can sneak up on stores if they’re juggling thousands of items or wrestling with endless HR issues. Or if someone in the organization is infected with the attitude that makes homeowners maintain drawers full of orphaned electrical cables. (“I hate to mark down these deck chairs designed for the Titanic. They might need them someday!”)

(On a positive note, dead inventory can be one of the major unifying forces in our troubled nation. You know the expression “One woman’s trash is another woman’s treasure”? Imagine those two women linking arms and giggling, “What made those losers think they needed 250 gross of turnip spice lipstick?”)

Slick-talking vendor reps have saddled

many a businessperson with products they didn’t remotely need. One wonders how these hucksters sleep at night. (Probably atop a mound of “Re-elect President Bernie in 2020” throw pillows that an even slicker-talking rep stuck THEM with.)

Employees seeing their raises and bonuses devoured by sedentary inventory find themselves asking two pertinent questions: “Who is the complete idiot who ordered all this junk?” followed by “Yikes! And will that unfairly maligned visionary let me carry my belongings out of my office without an armed escort?”

Finding rhyme or reason in unsellable items can be maddening. Even if you have an essential



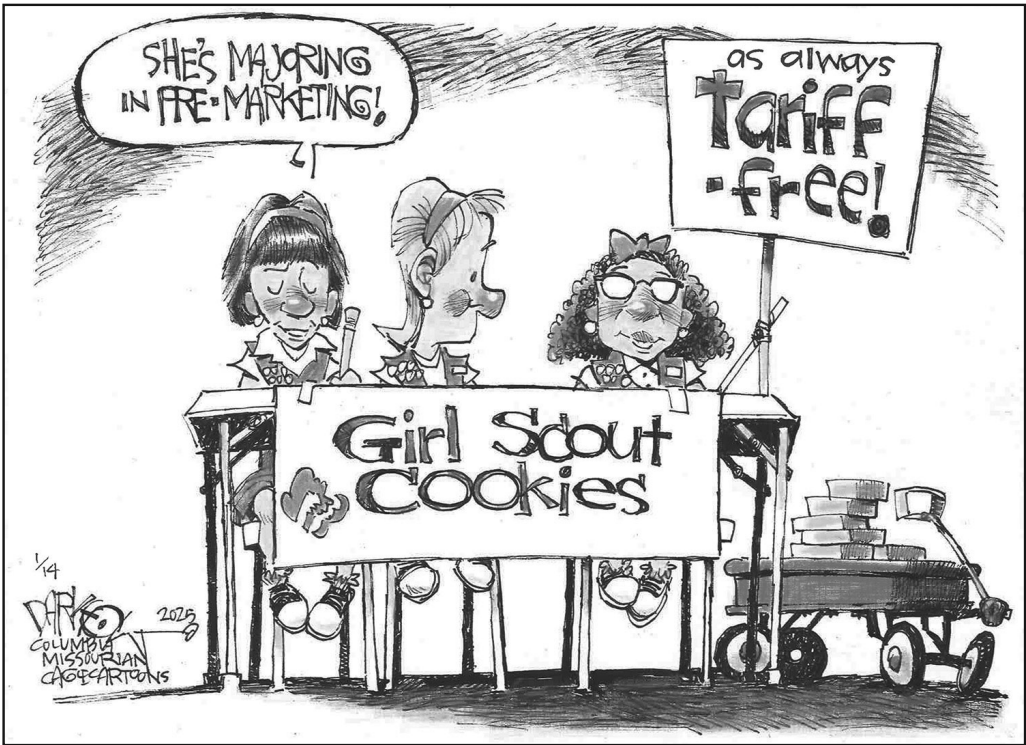
product at a competitive price with a flawless advertising campaign, the fickle public may greet it with a thunderous round of “Meh.”

One entrepreneur decided to get to the bottom of this behavior and learned that 37 percent of the time, John Q. Public’s explanation is “I held off buying because I thought my Aunt Bernice might get me one for my birthday and then I remembered I don’t have an Aunt Bernice, so your guess is as good as mine.”

Retailers may eventually do something drastic, like bribing “Good Morning America” meteorologist Ginger Zee.

(“The National Weather Service calls for at least six snowflakes to fall in the Southeast, so be sure to hit the stores for bread, milk, toilet paper and metric free-range puke purple thingamajigs.”)

Danny Tyree welcomes email responses at tyreetyrades@aol.com and visits to his Facebook fan page “Tyree’s Tyrades.”



Freedom Caucus blocks bills that save money, improve services

By Lindsay Simineo
WYBHA Executive Director

The Wyoming Behavioral Health Alliance is deeply frustrated by last week’s actions by the Freedom Caucus-led House Judiciary Committee, which rejected two of its bills aimed at improving mental health services, saving taxpayer dollars, and streamlining government functions.

HB0048 — Department of family services-confidentiality amendments — sought to modernize confidentiality laws, allowing state agencies to communicate more effectively, erasing duplicative services for families, saving Wyoming thousands of dollars, and providing better care.

HB0049 — Treatment court-amendments — would have allowed judges to oversee the mental health treatment of certain offenders by diverting them from overcrowded jails and decreasing repeated offenses. This would have

also saved Wyoming several thousand dollars in unneeded inpatient stays.

Both bills were designed to improve mental health services, while saving taxpayer dollars and streamlining government.

These committee bills received months of thorough research, and there was clear evidence of their benefits. However, Rep. Marlene Brady (R- Green River), Rep. Laurie Bratten (R-Sheridan), Rep. Tom Kelly (R-Sheridan), Rep. Jayme Lien (R-Casper), and Rep. Joe Webb (R-Lyman) — all staunch members of the Freedom Caucus — voted them down.

The baseless reasoning of “insufficient



research” and “high costs” is insulting to Wyoming families who needed these services and robs the Wyoming taxpayers of the cost savings they could have received in a better streamlined government.

Their votes against these two commonsense solutions are not about protecting Wyoming — they are about prioritizing a national agenda. This committee had the opportunity to help Wyoming save money and better serve its people, but it has instead left taxpayers to pick up the tab.

As long as the Wyoming Freedom Caucus continues to prioritize caucus affiliation over the best interests of Wyoming, it will continue to force the state into incurring expenses that many have worked towards avoiding.

WYBHA’s mission is to promote statewide mental health policy through expertise, education, advocacy, and voter education. For more information visit <https://www.wybha.org/>.

Now is the time for Wyoming to expand education savings accounts

By Marta Mossburg
WyoFile.com

Since the COVID pandemic, the number of homeschooling families has jumped nationally and state-wide, as many who were forced into it realized the benefits of being able to tailor curriculum to an individual child’s needs, gain a flexible schedule, protect children from bullying and instill one’s family values.

We were one of those families, and for the past four years my husband and I have homeschooled our three children with a classical curriculum focused ultimately on building virtuous human beings with the critical thinking skills to excel academically and life skills to be productive members of society. It’s come at considerable time and effort, particularly on my part as I am the primary teacher. I’ve relearned Latin and how to diagram sentences, read countless books, struggled with formal logic and learned to outsource math to an online program for all of our sanity. It costs us about \$1,750 per year per child and saves state taxpayers almost \$50,000 yearly, as per child spending in Wyoming is about \$16,650 per student. When our kids complete their schooling, we will save Wyoming taxpayers a whopping \$316,350.

Statewide, homeschoolers and private school families have saved state and federal taxpayers about \$707 million over the past decade, according to a report by the Mountain States Policy Center. It only seems fair that those of us not using the tax dollars we pay into the system should receive at least a partial return on our investment during the

years our children are learning at home.

Last year state legislators moved to make that a reality by passing a law allowing education savings accounts. ESAs, as they are known, give parents money to offset the cost of homeschooling, private school, tutoring and school supplies, among other expenses. Gov. Mark Gordon restricted the law by sharply narrowing its eligibility to families earning 150% of the federal poverty line, which is \$48,000 for a family of four. Those who meet that qualification can apply for \$6,000 per child aged 4 through 12th grade.

Gordon line-item vetoed parts of the legislation he worried violated the Wyoming Constitution, which prohibits giving money to individuals “except for the necessary support for the poor.” He also took issue with the bill allowing parents to use the money on religious institutions. And in a March letter to Secretary of State Chuck Gray he said, “I am particularly concerned about the potential impact on students enrolled in ESA programs when funding may need to be directed to cover shortfalls in public schools during economic downturns.”

First, parents should have the right to decide what is an appropriate education. ESAs are funded by taxpayers, not government, and should be seen as giving parents more freedom to make the best education decisions for their children, not as a handout.

Second, the U.S. Supreme Court decided the governor’s second



question in 2022. In its landmark Carson v. Makin decision, the court held that Maine’s “nonsectarian” requirement for otherwise available tuition aid violated the free exercise clause of the First Amendment. In other words, if the state is going to provide money for parents to choose a non-religious school, it also needs to provide it to parents who would rather choose a religious school.

Third, Wyoming, like every state, will not just have to deal with economic booms and busts like in prior years, but big changes in demographics as the birth rate has declined 17% since 2007 in the United States. K-12 public school enrollment has dropped 3.2% in the state over the past 10 years, and further declines will require tough decisions about closing and combining schools in coming years.

Having a robust ESA program will make it easier for parents to navigate those imminent changes and find the best options for their children.

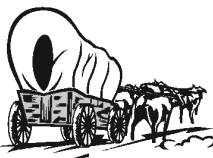
Wyoming legislators should move to make ESAs universal this year as in Arizona, where more than 75,000 students in that state have taken advantage of the opportunity since it was enacted in 2022 while simultaneously saving the state money. What’s not to love about giving parents more liberty to make wise decisions for their children while being fiscally responsible?

Marta Mossburg lives in Riverton, Wyoming. She is a research fellow at Mountain States Policy Center, an independent research organization based in Idaho, Montana, Washington and Wyoming. Online at mountainstatespolicy.org.

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LETTERS POLICY

The Bridger Valley Pioneer welcomes letters to the editor. The use of any material is at the discretion of the editor—whether submitted on paper or electronically—must include the name and address of the author and a valid contact phone number. Letters addressing a business dispute, attacking a private individual or containing libelous or obscene statements will not be published. Preference is given to letters of 300 words or less from local residents about local topics. Writers are limited to two letters per month. Letters related to political campaigns will not be published the week prior to an election. The opinions published on this page do not necessarily reflect the views of this newspaper, its publisher or advertisers. Deadline for letter submissions is 2:30 p.m. Tuesday.

CONTACT US

We enjoy hearing from our readers and advertisers. We hope this guide makes it easier for you to contact us.

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PUBLICATION DEADLINES

Noon, Thursday

News articles and photos; press releases; letters to the editor; thank-you notes; obituaries and death notices; birth, wedding, missionary announcements; sports statistics and results; any other similar items

E-mail to editor@
bridgervalleypioneer.com

3:30 p.m., Wednesday
Public/Legal notices

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Noon, Thursday

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Noon, Thursday

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OBITUARY

Jerry Everitt Henderson
Aug. 13, 1950 — Dec. 13, 2024

****In Loving Memory
of Jerry Everitt Henderson****
It is with heavy hearts that we announce the peaceful passing of Jerry Everitt Henderson, a beloved father, grandfather, brother, and uncle, who departed this world at the age of 74, surrounded by family, on December 13, 2024.

Born in Provo, Utah on August 13, 1950, to Zachariah F. Henderson and Sarah Freshwater Henderson, Jerry’s life was marked by a remarkable journey. He uniquely came into this world on the 13th, only to leave on a day he cherished most—Friday the 13th. As the fifth of six siblings, he cherished deep connections with his family, particularly his brother Zeek and sister Sally, as well as his dear sisters, each of whom held a special place in his heart.

From a young age, Jerry exhibited a natural curiosity and unparalleled talent for understanding how things worked, often delighting in the art of taking things apart and reassembling them. This passion stayed with him throughout his life, shaping him into a skilled mechanic.

Jerry’s life was enriched by the love and companionship he found in Melinda Cumings, which blossomed from friendship into a profound love that welcomed their daughter, Anna, into the world. Although their paths diverged, their bond remained strong. Later in life, he met Tisa Davis, and together they welcomed another daughter, Marissa, who brought even more joy to their family. While their romantic journey did not last, they too retained a lasting friendship.

Family was the cornerstone of Jerry’s existence. His world revolved around his two daughters and his adored grandchildren, Amberlyn and Raidyn. He took immense pride in their accomplishments and showered them with love, support, and encouragement, often expressing how proud he was of his family.

Jerry’s enduring friendship with Terry “Catfish” King blossomed early in their childhood, their lives intertwined



by shared adventures and escapades on their beloved Harleys, with Sturgis, South Dakota standing out as a memorable highlight.

Throughout his career, Jerry worked in various mechanical roles. He honed his skills collaborating with his brother Zeek, then finding his way to Wyoming, where he spent numerous years working in the trona mines. Eventually, he established his own mechanic business in Fort Bridger before transitioning to operate from his home garage. His tenure at Nix Construction Company transcended beyond employment; it fostered a familial bond with Gary, Tanya, and Jace Nix, who held a significant place in his heart.

Known for his enormous heart, Jerry was always ready to lend a helping hand, offer sage life advice, and extend a listening ear to those in need. His laughter was infectious, his stories captivating, and his ability to forge deep connections with friends and family made every moment spent with him a treasured memory.

Jerry is survived by his loving children, Anna (Rick) and Marissa (Jeremy), and his cherished grandchildren, Amberlyn and Raidyn. He is also survived by his brother, Zeek, and sister-in-law, Sharon Henderson, along with his brothers-in-law, Dave Jolley and Donnie Chadwick, as well as numerous nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his father, Zachariah F. Henderson, his mother, Sarah Freshwater Henderson, his sisters Barbara Chadwick, Judy Harris, Linda Jolley, and Sally Marshall, as well as his first love, Melinda Cumings Horton, and his childhood best friends, Terry “Catfish” King and Sam Conover.

A celebration of Jerry’s life was on January 6, 2025, at 1:00 PM at Crandall Funeral Home, you can view services at www.crandallfh.com.

His spirit will live on in the memories shared and the love left behind.

Elk tests positive for chronic wasting disease on Pinedale-area feedground

By Billy Arnold
Jackson Hole News&Guide
Via Wyoming News Exchange

JACKSON — For the first time, an elk has tested positive for chronic wasting disease on a western Wyoming wapiti feedground, areas that wildlife biologists have long seen as a risk for disease transmission.

The elk that tested positive was an adult cow found dead on the Scab Creek Feedground near Pinedale at the end of December, according to the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, which reported the detection Wednesday. Game and Fish personnel investigated the carcass and removed it at the end of December, officials said.

Scab Creek is part of Hunt Area 98, which is home to the 2,000-animal Pinedale Elk Herd and stretches west from the Fontenelle Reservoir to the foothills of the Wind River Range. Chronic wasting disease has been detected in the hunt area before but never on a feedground — near Pinedale or anywhere else in the state.

The finding is significant because feedgrounds are at the core of the debate about how to manage chronic wasting



Elk hunker down after being fed in March 2024 on the National Elk Refuge, which is administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Chronic wasting disease has been detected for the first time on a separate feedground near Pinedale. (JACKSON HOLE DAILY/Kathryn Ziesig)

disease, a 100% fatal neurological condition that has been spreading through western Wyoming’s ungulates — deer, elk and moose — since the late 1980s. The disease can be spread in many ways, including through direct animal-to-animal contact and environmental contamination.

Feedgrounds increase the risk of both by causing elk, which are herd animals and naturally group together, to gather in unnaturally tight quarters. When wapiti are close together, it’s easier for them to come into contact with one another’s saliva and bodily fluids, which can carry the disease-causing agents known as prions. When elk return to the same area winter after winter, like a feedground, those prions

can infiltrate the soil and plants and survive for up to 16 years, creating a vector for spreading chronic wasting disease that can last decades.

The detection comes as the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, which operates upwards of 20 feedgrounds in western Wyoming, and the National Elk Refuge are both reevaluating the future of feeding.

After developing a statewide plan for managing elk feedgrounds, the state is now moving toward reevaluating how it manages feedgrounds in the Jackson and Pinedale area.

The Scab Creek Feedground will be included in that review. But any changes to feeding are not expected for months, if not years.

While environmental and some hunting advocacy groups have called for closing feedgrounds as a way to prevent the spread of chronic wasting disease and elk population declines in the long term, Wyoming’s outfitting and ranching lobby has promised to fight feedground closures, concerned about elk dying in the near term and elk leaving feedgrounds to dine on ranchers’ hay. Closing any state-run feedground will require approval from Gov. Mark Gordon.

Scientists estimate that when chronic wasting disease prevalence reaches between 7% and 13%, elk populations will decline. Prevalence in western Wyoming elk is thought to be less than 1%.

Senior Citizens
Menu

Wednesday, January 22

Oven Fried Chicken, Baked Potato, Winter Squash, WW Roll, Mandarin Oranges

Thursday, January 23

Bratwurst & Sauerkraut, WW Bun, Harvard Beets, Fruited & Jello

Friday, January 24

Best Salmon, Tartar Sauce, Creamed Peas, Tossed Salad, WW Roll, Peach Crisp

Monday, January 27

Hot Turkey Sandwich, Mashed Potatoes, Brussel Sprouts, WW Bread,

Cinnamon Pears

Tuesday, January 28

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Call the Pioneer news desk at:

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Praise & Worship

Bridger Valley Baptist Church
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787-3402
Pastor Aaron Green
Sunday School..... 9:45 a.m.
Morning Worship..... 10:50 a.m.
Evening Service..... 6 p.m.
Mid-Week Service.....Wed., 7 p.m.

St. Helen’s Catholic Church
Mission & Center, Fort Bridger
782-6190
Sunday Mass11 a.m.
CCD Classes (grades K-12)....10 a.m.
Holy Day Mass.....5:30 p.m. on the night prior to Holy Day

First Presbyterian Church
3rd & Pine, Mountain View
782-6711
Sunday School.....10:15 a.m.
Worship 11:30 a.m.
Fellowship 12:30 a.m.
Communion & Fellowship Hour
First Sunday of each month

Heart of the Valley Baptist Church (Southern Baptist)
280 7th Street, Mountain View
782-7522
Pastor Joe Reynolds, 782-6616
Youth Pastor Butch Hansen - 307-840-0967
Sunday School..... 9:30 a.m.
Morning Worship.....11 a.m.
Evening Worship.....6 p.m.
Bible StudyWed., 6 p.m.
Youth Event.....Wed., 6 p.m.

Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church
Missouri Synod
306 County Road 224, Fort Bridger
782-6802
Pastor Daniel Mulholland
Sunday School.....9 a.m.
Fellowship & Refreshments.10 a.m.
Worship 10:30 a.m.

Bridger Assembly of God
2705 Highway 414, Mountain View
786-2303
Pastor Nichole Heidt
Services 1:30-2:30pm

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
Chapels in Urie, Mountain View, and Lyman
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MVF Gateway Church
87 Meadow Street, Urie
786-2067
Pastor Karl Schnackenberg
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Evanston Youth Club

News

SHERIFF, continued from page A1

Johansson to “stop sending the bills; we aren’t paying.”

Undersheriff Trevor Rasmussen said that the state owes Uinta County an outstanding bill of \$765,346.96, a figure accruing since 2022.

“Our goal here is to push for legislation to have the WDH pay a daily housing fee for those who have been ordered to the WSH. We also bill them for medications,” Kopp said in a follow-up interview with the *Herald*. “Our overall objective is streamlining treatment and establishing a more efficient system. Let’s bring everyone to the table and hash it out.”

“They’re not doing anything at the state level,” Rasmussen said. “It all falls on the county. These costs are interfering with our county budgets.”

Uinta County Treasurer Terry Brimhall did not respond to requests for comment by press time.

Kopp and Rasmussen contend that the lack of state funding and support isn’t merely a fiscal concern, but it creates ethical and employee morale issues as well.

“This is draining on personnel,” Rasmussen said. “We don’t have the resources or training to get them the depth of help — we are not a psychiatric facility. Jails are now becoming mental health facilities.”

Two inmates at the Uinta County Jail recently nearly starved themselves to death this past November and December, Rasmussen said, due to hunger strikes related to refusal of psychiatric medication.

“Mental illness drove their medical illness,” he said.

Jail deputies are not allowed to force inmates to take prescribed, on-hand medications and the inmates wouldn’t eat because they thought their food was tampered with.

“One of them was 2-3 hours from death,” Rasmussen said.

Kopp said deputies escorted one of the inmates to the emergency room at Evanston Regional Hospital (ERH), where they were immediately Life-Flighted to Salt Lake City for intervention.

“We had to get them out of our facility because they were dying,” Kopp said.

“This is a custody issue,” Rasmussen added. “They’re deteriorating in our facility because they’re not getting the professional help they need.”

Sen. Wendy Schuler (SD-15) of Evanston told the *Herald* last week, “[I] was not aware of the delay in getting folks into the WSH who need services. I plan to meet with the [WDH] sometime this week to see what types of solutions we can come up with... I have some ideas I would like to float... We



A courtyard is pictured at the Wyoming State Hospital last winter. (UINTA COUNTY HERALD/Bryon Glathar)

will see what we can do to help our county sheriff’s office.”

State officials say they’re not allowed to reimburse jails for holding inmates who are waiting for evaluation or treatment at the State Hospital.

“This is about Title 7, which involves individuals who are accused of or charged with crimes,” WHD Public Information Officer Kim Deti said. Title 7, Deti said, outlines that the WSH is responsible for evaluating competency of those facing criminal charges on behalf of the judicial system.

“It’s important to know under Title 7, the WDH has no authority, ability, program or funding to pay for housing individuals who are waiting for admission to the WSH. Under Title 7, we simply can’t pay the detention centers,” she told the *Herald*.

Deti further explained that the limited number of beds available at the WSH, 104, directly affects the timeliness for all adult psychiatric services while acknowledging that the demand of such services has increased significantly in recent years due to a rise in judicial orders explicitly requiring mental health intervention.

“Approximately 25% of the beds are

dedicated to criminal justice services,” she said. “Our capacity at any point in time is also affected by staffing availability and sometimes by the nature and needs of the patients themselves.”

“Unfortunately, there is no quick fix ... but it’s more than a reimbursement issue and that’s why we are looking at improvement to the system overall,” Deti said.

“We are committed to partnering with law enforcement and the judicial branch to try relieving some of the pressure. In fact, we have been working with stakeholders on steps to improve the situation and are grateful for those partnerships,” Deti said.

She cited new pilot programs in Campbell County focusing on jail diversion treatment as well as a new jail-based telepsych program, currently test-launched in a few counties.

“We have hopes of expanding these types of efforts in more locations over time,” she said.

On Wednesday, Jan. 15, two days after Kopp emailed his letter of grievance, five freshmen legislators on the House Judiciary Committee — including newly-elected, former longtime law enforcement officer

Rep. Joe Webb (HD-19) of Lyman — killed House Bill 49 (HB-49).

The proposal, which was supported by the Wyoming Association of Sheriffs and Chiefs of Police (WASCOP), was an amendment to the court-supervised treatment program which would have allowed diversion of certain offenders, namely illicit substance users, from overcrowded incarceration units to mental health treatment facilities.

Wyoming Behavioral Health Alliance Executive Director Lindsay Simineo — who said her mission is to promote statewide mental health policy through expertise, education, advocacy and voter education — released a formal statement following the failure of the bill, stating that, in addition to potentially decreasing repeat offenses and streamlining government, “this would have also saved Wyoming several thousand dollars in unneeded inpatient stays.”

Kopp declined to comment on the now-stricken HB 49, but did tell the *Herald* that his office “received information [that other] legislation is in the works; however, no other information is available at this time.”

GORDON, continued from page A1

told me, ‘Anything you need, Mark.’ That’s something we have not heard for four years. And I told the president, ‘Mr. President, Wyoming stands ready to drill, to mine, to shovel and to get this country back on track.’”

Lawmakers responded with a celebratory round of applause, and while unified on this point, the Legislature hasn’t always embraced Gordon’s energy policies.

The Republican governor, now in the second year of his second four-year term, expressed confidence that Wyoming lawmakers will continue to support an “all-of-the-above” approach to energy policies throughout the legislative session that began on Tuesday. There may be a few challenges from far-right lawmakers, however, when it comes to Gordon’s rationale behind policy strategies for supporting fossil fuels.

Cracks in Legislature-Gordon energy alliance

Though both blame the Biden administration and an entrenched federal bureaucracy for stunting Wyoming’s coal, oil and natural gas industries, the Freedom Caucus takes issue with Gordon’s embrace of low-carbon technologies and especially state government support of greenhouse-gas-reducing efforts as necessary to support fossil fuels.

“His actions speak louder than his words,” Sen. Cheri Steinmetz (R-Torrington) told WyoFile responding to Gordon’s State of the State energy message. “It’s time to get Wyoming energy policy back on track.”

The rub is over carbon dioxide and the fossil fuel industry’s role in contributing to the climate crises. The divide between the otherwise aligned policymakers is evident in

Senate File 92, “Make carbon dioxide great again-no net zero, sponsored by Steinmetz, a Senate ally of the House Wyoming Freedom Caucus.

“Carbon dioxide is a foundational nutrient necessary for all life on earth,” the measure states. “Plants need carbon dioxide along with sunlight, water and nutrients to prosper. The more carbon dioxide available for this, the better life can flourish.”

Further, the bill proposes: “The state of Wyoming shall not pursue any targets or measures that support the reduction or elimination of carbon dioxide, including any ‘net-zero’ targets.”

Though Gordon has not commented on SF 92 directly, he has frequently declared that Wyoming must address climate concerns related to fossil fuels as a pragmatic strategy to keep those Wyoming commodities in the nation’s energy mix. After all, as a large energy exporter, the state relies on buyers and markets outside of Wyoming’s policymaking purview — whether Wyomingites agree with them or not, he has expressed.

Until recently, Wyoming lawmakers worked hand-in-hand with Gordon backing a shared vision and strategy for supporting lower-carbon fossil fuel initiatives in the spirit of a pragmatic necessity. Since 2019, the year Gordon became governor, the Legislature has considered at least 14 bills to impose and refine mandates to force carbon capture, use and sequestration at coal-fired power plants in Wyoming. Seven of the bills have become law.

But SF 92 would repeal those mandates, threatening cooperation from major coal plant operators in the state now in the process of analyzing CCUS retrofits. The measure,

if passed, may also threaten Wyoming’s primacy over a federal permitting process for carbon dioxide sequestration — another major goal of Gordon’s previously supported by lawmakers.

Freedom Caucus members Rep. Christopher Knapp (R-Gillette) and Rep. Scott Heiner (R-Green River) co-authored a three-page policy document titled “Wyoming’s Common Sense Energy Policy.” Though it declares Wyoming leaders must “maximize fossil fuel production” and “allow for alternative energy,” it diverges from Gordon’s approach to lower-carbon initiatives.

“The state must divide two issues; Reinjection and infrastructure versus volunteer carbon sequestration at the powerplant level,” according to the document. “Wyoming will not mandate carbon sequestration or carbon capture for non-beneficial use.”

The rift between Gordon and the Freedom Caucus also came up last year when Steinmetz helped lead an attempt to defund the “energy matching funds” program of tens of millions of dollars. The program, under Gordon’s purview, supports public-private energy initiatives, including some grant recipients that propose low-carbon energy strategies that some Freedom Caucus members consider antithetical to what should be a hard-line stance against acknowledging fossil fuels’ contribution to the climate crisis.

Last year’s defunding effort failed, but the issue may come back up during the winter

session.

Gordon’s litigation strategy

Gordon noted that, under his direction, Wyoming has launched dozens of lawsuits challenging federal climate, wildlife and land-use policies, which include the Environmental Protection Agency’s coal pollution rules, the Bureau of Land Management’s sage grouse management amendments, its “methane rule,” conservation rule and a proposal to end federal coal leasing in the Powder River Basin.

“All major [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency] rules designed to shut down coal-fired plants are being litigated,” Gordon said. “Now is the time to finish those efforts.”

In the past, lawmakers helped enable such executive branch efforts by establishing a “coal litigation fund,” which is nearly tapped. Gordon on Wednesday noted that he’s asking lawmakers to rename the account the Natural Resources Litigation Fund, and backfill it with a \$3.5 million appropriation. He’s also asking lawmakers to support funding for two additional attorneys at the Wyoming Attorney General’s Office to help carry out his litigation efforts.

“There will always be some differences between the legislative and executive branches — that’s natural,” Gordon said. “Here in Wyoming, I know we can work together.”

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Manage stress so it doesn't manage you

By Joyce Meyer

Today it seems as if everyone is under stress. It's become a normal part of our everyday lives. As long as we keep that stress at a reasonable limit, there's no problem. But when we allow it to exceed that limit, trouble begins.

For example, a chair is built to sit on. It's designed and constructed to bear a certain amount of weight. If used properly, it should last a very long time. But if it's overloaded beyond its capacity, it begins to wear out prematurely and eventually break down completely under the strain.

In the same way, you and I were designed and created to bear a certain amount of physical, mental and emotional strain day after day. However, problems arise when we allow ourselves to be weighed down by more stress than we're capable of supporting.

A word we don't hear much about today is prudence. The Merriam-Webster definition says prudence means: "skill and good judgment in the use of resources." In the Bible, being prudent means to be a good steward or managers of the gifts God has given us to use.

Those gifts include time, energy, strength, and health — even material possessions. They include our bodies, as well as our minds and spirits.

Proverbs 14:8 (NIV) says, "The wisdom of the prudent is to give thought to their ways, but the folly of fools is deception." We all need to "give thought to [our] ways" and know our limits — we need to know how much we can handle. We need to be able to recognize when we're reaching "full capacity" or "overload."

Instead of pushing ourselves into overload to please others or satisfy our own desires of reaching personal goals, we need to listen to and obey what God's telling us to do. We must follow his wisdom if we really want to enjoy the peaceful,

joyful life He has planned for us.

Stress can be caused by just about anything. Stressors can be big or little things. In addition, what causes you stress may not bother someone else. And what bothers you today may not bother you tomorrow.

For example, let's say you're at the grocery store and the high prices create a stressor for you. Then the process of paying for your groceries (especially if money is tight) stresses you out. On top of that, the checker in your lane runs out of change and has to shut down temporarily.

So you switch to a new lane and learn that five of your items don't have a price on them. The checker has to call for a price check on each one while you wait, and the line behind you grows. These small, seemingly innocent circumstances pile up until you feel like you're going to explode from the pressure.

Nobody can remove all the big and little things that cause stress in our lives. That's why we must be prudent in identifying the stressors that affect us most and learn how to respond to them correctly. We must recognize our limits and learn to say no to ourselves and others.

Stressors, not managed properly, can mount up one by one, bringing us to our breaking point, but with God's help, we can learn how to manage or reduce their effects on us. We can't control all of our circumstances, but we can adjust our attitude and not let them pressure us.

It seems the very atmosphere of the world today is charged with stress and pressure. But the good news is, we don't have



to operate in the world's system — reacting like people in the world who have no hope or peace in their lives. The world responds to difficulties by becoming upset and stressed, but our attitude and approach should be entirely different.

You know, you can completely turn a situation around just by choosing the right attitude and approach when you're in a challenging situation. Instead of stressing out and tensing up, take a moment to pray for God to help you, just like the Bible says in Philippians 4:6 (NIV): "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."

Take a deep breath, calm down, and focus on getting his perspective on the situation.

In the midst of your daily life, you'll have many opportunities to be stressed. But you can refuse to allow your circumstances to dictate how you're going to feel if you will remember to ask God to help you. The truth is you may not be able to control the situation, but you can control how you respond to it.

When you know you're going to face a stressful situation, take an offensive approach and decide beforehand what your attitude will be. Then the door will be opened for God to supernaturally help you to calm down and cheer up!

For more on this topic, order Joyce's four-part teaching resource *Calm, Cool and Collected*. You can also contact us to receive our free magazine, *Enjoying Everyday Life*, by calling (800) 727-9673 or visiting www.joycemeyer.org.

Joyce Meyer is a New York Times bestselling author and founder of Joyce Meyer Ministries, Inc. She has authored more than 150 books, including *BATTLEFIELD OF THE MIND* and *OVERCOMING EVERY PROBLEM* (FaithWords). She hosts the *Enjoying Everyday Life* program, which is broadcast to millions in over 110 languages. For more information, visit www.joycemeyer.org.

Health Department: Norovirus on a roll – wash your hands so it doesn't snowball!

From the Wyoming Department of Health

Norovirus, a familiar and repeat offender, is responsible for many recently increased reports of illnesses in Wyoming, according to the Wyoming Department of Health (WDH).

WDH notes an increase in outbreaks due to norovirus that began in mid-December. Wastewater testing has confirmed elevated levels of circulating norovirus in communities.

People who are sick with norovirus may experience nausea, vomiting, watery diarrhea, stomach cramps, fatigue and, sometimes, dehydration. Other viruses and illnesses caused by bacteria contamination such as E. coli can cause similar symptoms, but norovirus is most common.

Many people with norovirus will describe it as the "stomach flu" or "food poisoning." In reality, norovirus is spread when people eat contaminated food or touch contaminated surfaces, or through close contact with someone already sick.

Matt Peterson, WDH surveillance epidemiologist, said contamination is frequently not obvious. "A kitchen or restroom may look clean, but we're often talking about ex-

tremely tiny amounts of poop or vomit. We can't always see what can unfortunately make us very sick," he said.

"When people get ill this way, they most often blame the last thing they ate," Peterson said. "However, illness can hit quickly between 12 to 48 hours after a person has been exposed."

"Symptoms usually last from one to three days without causing long-term problems, but when they lead to dehydration, it becomes a serious situation," Peterson said.

People who become severely ill may need to call or visit a medical professional. Infants, young children, immune-compromised persons, and persons unable to care for themselves, such as the disabled or elderly, are at higher risk for dehydration and may need hospitalization.

"Norovirus illnesses can be prevented," Peterson said. "It sounds too obvious or simple, but good hand washing and cleaning practices are critical. It's also important to know people can still be contagious and spread the virus for a few days after they no longer have symptoms."

"With school and other activities back in full swing after

the holidays, it may be a tough norovirus season if people are not proactive about prevention strategies," said Peterson.

Recommended steps to help prevent illness include:

- Frequently wash hands with warm water and soap, especially after using the restroom or changing diapers, and before eating or preparing food.
- If ill, stay home from work and school, especially if employed in food-handling, healthcare or child care.
- Ill persons should take extra care to avoid spreading the virus by minimizing contact with other persons while ill and practicing good hygiene.
- Immediately remove and wash contaminated clothing or linens after an episode of illness (use hot water and soap).
- Flush or discard any vomit and/or poop in the toilet and keep the surrounding area clean.
- Thoroughly clean and disinfect contaminated surfaces immediately after an episode of vomiting or diarrhea with a solution of 1 cup household bleach per 1 gallon of water and letting the solution sit for one minute. Always follow manufacturers' safety precaution

INSURANCE

2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

As we reflect on the past year, we are proud to highlight the significant achievements of the State Insurance Department in 2024. This year has been marked by wildfires in Wyoming and across the country; legislative changes regarding Prior Authorization and continued excellence in consumer assistance. The office has worked tirelessly to ensure that the Wyoming citizens have fair, transparent and accessible insurance information.

The Wyoming Department of Insurance (DOI) regulates insurance companies, multiple employer welfare arrangements, risk retentions and purchasing groups, motor clubs, service contract providers, preneed funeral homes, agents, brokers adjusters, consultants, pharmacy benefit managers and third party administrator. We also approve policy filings, investigate consumer complaints, monitor financial conditions and solvency of insurance companies and collect premium and surplus lines taxes. The DOI does not regulate insurance rates for most types of insurance.

The statutes that govern insurance in the state of Wyoming can be found in Title 26-Insurance Code. The statutes can be accessed by visiting <https://www.wyoleg.gov/StateStatutes/StatutesConstitution> and clicking on the link for Wyoming Statutes Annotated. The rules for the agency can be found at the Secretary of State's website <https://rules.wyo.gov/> Department of Insurance (044).

2024 Highlights:

During the 2024 legislative session, the DOI monitored four bills regarding insurance. They were HB0014 Prior Authorization Regulations; HB0015-

Health Insurance-reimbursement of overpayments; SF0005-Organ transplant recipient protections; SF0100-Payment of Insurance Claims. You can view the bills and the changes that were made by visiting the legislative Service Office website and select 2024 bills.

In preparation for the 2025 legislative session, the agency proposed two bills to the Joint Corporations, Elections & Political Subdivisions Committee. The first bill was a simple "clean up" bill with minor corrections and updates to Title 26. The second bill, was an NAIC Accreditation bill with updates to Chapter 44, the Holding Company System per the 2021 model law updates. Both bills passed the Joint Corporations Committee this summer and will be committee bills this upcoming session. The 2025 legislative session begins January 14, 2025 and we expect to follow several bills during the general session.

The DOI also did extensive outreach during 2024. Public service announcements were published each month in statewide papers and on the DOI LinkedIn page. Some of the topics in 2024 were Marketplace and Medicare open enrollment, Health Insurance 101, Mental Health Awareness Month and Wildfires. The agency also did several presentations, provided various articles and information for state agencies and interested parties, and interviews with the New York Times and Cowboy State Daily.

In 2024, the agency collected over \$25,632,397 in premium tax. The fiscal section also reviewed approximately twenty-one new company expansion applications for insurers to become licensed to write business in Wyoming.



The agency was also busy with licensing applications and form reviews. Our three licensing personnel issued 42,852 licenses, renewed 66,252 licenses and manually processed 5,186 applications. The Rate and Form filing section reviewed 1,726 Life & Health filings and 2,108 Property & Casualty filings. Staffing remained consistent with five personnel.

The legal section was busy with public records request and docket filings. In 2024, the legal section finalized one regulation, Chapter 72-Prior Authorization. They processed seventy-six (76) public records requests and opened seventy-five (75) docket files. They also collected \$40,631.00 in fines. The agency also has a very responsive complaint section. This section handles a variety of complaints to include improper denial

of claims; delays in claim handling; cancellation or termination of an insurance policy or misrepresentation of policy. In 2024, the section handled 1,880 consumer complaints or inquiries in addition to many phone calls and emails.

The Department also added one new position. Thanks to an appropriation from the legislature the Department was able to hire a Health Program Manager to handle complaints and inquiries regarding Pharmacy Benefit Managers. This individual will develop a PBM regulation program, respond to PBM complaints, and follow legislation regarding PBMs.

As we head into 2025, our goals remain clear: to enforce insurance laws and regulations, assist consumers with complaints and encourage a healthy insurance marketplace.



Western Wyoming REAL ESTATE Connection

A mortgage financing company with a heart

By Kayne Pyatt
Uinta County Herald

EVANSTON — Tara Rees has made a 30-year career out of helping people achieve their dream of owning their own home. Rees is a loan officer with Fairway Independent Mortgage Corporation and, in June of 2024, she opened an office in Evanston located at 22 Reay St., in an industrial park off of Highway 150.

Prior to setting up her office in Evanston, Tara commuted to help clients in Evanston from an office in South Ogden. Rees helps clients, who are referred to her by real estate agents and by former clients, go through every step of the loan process — from application to closing and beyond. She works to find great rates and loan options for clients.

“Every loan has a name; every name has a family; every family has a story, and every story matters,” Rees said. “A lot of the application process is online and I can facilitate that. I think it is important to have face-to-face interaction to build trust with my clients.”

Rees’ background includes attending Stevens-Henager College in Utah; working as a loan officer in a bank; and then working for Fairway and getting her state license and branch manager status. She said she has worked in every part of the



FINANCING, *see next page*
 Fairway Independent Mortgage loan officer Tara Rees works in her new office at 22 Reay St., in Evanston. (HERALD PHOTO/Kayne Pyatt)

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REAL ESTATE *Connection*

FINANCING/

from previous page

process of loan applications and she thinks that gives her special insight into the process that benefits her clients.

“I love the Fairway Corporation because they are more than a mortgage company; they truly care about people,” Rees said. “In 2024, Fairway won an award for best in customer service. We also have a lot of specialty programs; one is called Fairway Cares that focuses on helping others.”

Fairway Cares is a charitable arm of the company — fully funded by Fairway and its employees through their monthly donations. Care packages and financial grants are made available to those that Fairway Teammates have a relationship with; for those facing critical illness, loss of a loved one or sustained physical trauma. The goal of the company is to offer love, courage, strength and hope through carefully prepared care packages to help those facing difficult situations.

In December of 2024 alone, the Fairway Cares team gave 144 care packages, seven financial grants and provided 149 volunteer hours. For the entire year of 2024, the Fairway team approved 180 financial grants and provided 1,963 care packages and gave a total of 1,180 volunteer hours. To date, the lifetime impact of the Fairway team has been through 2,021 approved financial grants and 13,175 care packages provided.

The American Warrior Initiative is a nonprofit underwritten by Fairway that focuses on helping servicemen and -women. They offer



Tara Rees, loan officer for Fairway Independent Mortgage Corporation, said she loves helping people secure a loan for a home. (HERALD PHOTO/Kayne Pyatt)

a “boot camp” for real estate agents and mortgage professionals to receive continuing education credits while they are trained and equipped to handle home purchases for active duty and former military clients.

The real estate agents

and mortgage professionals can also volunteer to organize fundraising events and 100% of the donations go directly to veterans. The initiative provides grants for veterans to buy homes, start a business or provides service dogs. To date, they

have given 388 service dogs to service men and women.

“I am hoping we can do one of the fundraising events in Evanston this year,” Rees said. “I truly believe in giving back to the community you live in. It builds trust with the people you serve

and they can see what the company truly stands for.”

Fairway Independent Mortgage was founded in 1996 by CEO Steve Jacobson. His philosophy is summed up in his statements on the company’s website. “At Fairway, we foster an

environment that promotes community and culture from every level by encouraging employees to volunteer and help their local communities,” Jacobson said. “Loans are what we do, not who we are. Our mission is to help and serve people.”



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*A down payment is required if the borrower does not have full VA entitlement or when the loan amount exceeds the VA county limits. VA loans subject to individual VA Entitlement amounts and eligibility, qualifying factors such as income and credit guidelines, and property limits. **USDA Guaranteed Rural Housing loans subject to USDA-specific requirements and applicable state income and property limits. Copyright©2024 Fairway Independent Mortgage Corporation. NMLS#2289, 4750 S. Biltmore Lane, Madison, WI 53718, 1-866-912-4800. Fairway is not affiliated with any government agencies. All rights reserved. This is not an offer to enter into an agreement. Not all customers will qualify. Information, rates and programs are subject to change without notice. All products are subject to credit and property approval. Other restrictions and limitations may apply. Equal Housing Opportunity. Licensed Nevada Mortgage Lender.



REAL ESTATE *Connection*

Snow Thrower Safety Tips: Keep Best Practices in Mind This Winter

Clearing snow and ice from driveways, sidewalks and parking lots is no small job. You rely on your outdoor power equipment to do the heavy lifting, and it's important to keep safety in mind. The Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI) reminds home and business owners to use snow throwers, often referred to as snow blowers, safely and offers tips to help.

"Weather today is unpredictable. You need to have your snow thrower serviced and ready to power up," says OPEI President and CEO Kris Kiser. "Review your owner's manual so you can use your equipment safely." Kiser says preparation is key and that home and business owners should consider the following:

Review the owner's manual. Check the owner's manual for safe handling procedures. If the manual cannot be found, look it up online, and store a copy on your computer so it's available to reference in the future. Review how to operate controls. Be able to shut off equipment quickly.

Check equipment. The

snow thrower should be powered off when being checked over. Adjust any cables and check the auger.

Charge batteries. Locate the batteries for your snow thrower and charge them fully before it snows.


Purchase fuel. Be sure to use the correct fuel recommended by the equipment's manufacturer. For most gasoline-powered snow throwers, that is E10 or less. Often fuel stations are closed after a storm so buy gasoline in advance of storms. Fuel that is more than 30 days old can phase separate and cause operating problems. For more information on fueling properly see www.opei.org/programs/ethanolwarning

Store and use fuel properly. Place gasoline in a proper fuel container and label it with the date purchased and the ethanol content. Store fuel safely and out of the reach of children. Fill the fuel tank outside before starting the engine and while the engine is cold. Never add fuel to a running or hot engine.

Clear the area. Snow **TIPS,** see next page



Courtesy photo



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TIPS/ *from previous page*

can sometimes hide objects. Doormats, hoses, balls, toys, boards, wires, and other debris should be removed from areas you intend to clear. When run over by a snow thrower, these objects may harm the machine or people.

Dress for winter weather. Locate safety gear now, and place it in an accessible closet or location. Wear safety glasses, gloves and footwear that can handle cold and slippery surfaces when operating the snow thrower.

KEY SAFETY TIP: Never put your hands inside the auger or chute. Use a clean out tool to unclog snow or debris from the snow thrower. Your hands should never go inside the auger or chute.

Turn OFF the snow thrower if you need to clear a clog. If you need to remove debris or unclog snow, always turn off the snow thrower. Wait for all moving parts to come to a complete stop before clearing any clogs or debris.

Operate in visible conditions. Never operate the snow thrower without good visibility or light.

Aim with care. Never throw snow toward people or cars. Keep children or pets inside and away from your snow thrower when it is operating.

Use extreme caution on slopes and hills. Use caution when changing

directions on slopes. Do not attempt to clear steep slopes.

Know where the cord is. If using an electric powered snow thrower, be aware of where the power cord is at all times. Avoid tripping.

About OPEI

OPEI is an international trade association representing manufacturers and suppliers of power equipment, small engines, battery power systems, portable generators, utility and personal transport vehicles, and golf cars. OPEI is the advocacy voice of the industry, and a recognized Standards Development Organization for the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and active internationally through the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) in the development of safety and performance standards. OPEI owns Equip Exposition, the international landscape, outdoor living and equipment exposition, and administers the TurfMutt Foundation, which directs the environmental education program, TurfMutt. OPEI-Canada represents members on a host of issues, including recycling, emissions and other regulatory developments across the Canadian provinces.



Metro photo

***Beware of land fraud!
Land sale scam!
If you own property,
you need to read this!***

***How to protect your property rights when
selling or buying vacant land or a home.***

- Always obtain a title insurance policy from a title insurance company based in Wyoming.
- Be diligent when communicating by email. An email address can be modified to appear different than it is. A phone call to the title company, real estate office or another trusted person could save a lot of problems in your transaction.
- If your mailing address changes, notify the County Assessor's Office.
- If it sounds too good to be true, it might be!

***There are a lot of bad guys out there trying
to steal your money or your property.***

**Additional information can be obtained at:
<https://www.homeclosing101.org/>**



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***How to determine if the
time is right to downsize***

The phrase “bigger is better” has endured for quite some time. Though it may be impossible to pinpoint precisely who coined the phrase, its lesson that larger things tend to be more valuable than smaller alternatives is applicable in numerous situations. But no adage is applicable to every situation, and in some instances people may find that bigger is not better.

Downsizing is an approach many individuals consider after turning 50. Parents who are empty nesters and others nearing retirement may wonder if the time is right to downsize from their current homes. Though that's a strategy millions of people have adopted over time, the decision is not always so simple. Individuals over 50 who are trying to determine if downsizing is right for them can consider a host of factors before making a decision.

• **Monthly housing expenses:** Before downsizing their homes, individuals should determine just how much they're currently spending on housing. Individuals who have fixed rate mortgages likely know the amount of their monthly mortgage payment, but what about maintenance? Home maintenance expenses fluctuate, but a careful examination of the previous 12 months' expenditures can give homeowners an idea of just how much they're spending to maintain their properties. The number may be eye-opening, as Thumbtack's “Home Care Price Index” released in the third quarter of 2024 revealed that the average annual cost to maintain a single family home reached an all-time high of \$10,433. If such expenses are preventing homeowners from building their retirement nest eggs, then it might be

time to seek alternative housing.

• **Real estate prices:** Real estate prices have skyrocketed in recent years, which can be both good and bad for current homeowners considering downsizing. Many people who downsize look to move from a single-family home into a condominium, where maintenance tasks are typically handled by a homeowners' association (HOA). Such communities typically charge HOA fees, which can be minimal or considerable. In addition, the price of condominiums has risen in recent years, with the lender New American Funding reporting in early 2024 that the median sale price of a condo reached \$341,000. So homeowners who want to downsize their homes may end up taking most of the profit from selling their current properties and reinvesting it in a costly condo. Some may deem that worthwhile, while others may find the cost savings of downsizing in the current market are negligible.

• **Emotional attachment:** Downsizing may be considered with cost savings in mind, but it's important to consider your emotional attachment to your current home. Many homeowners over 50 raised their families in their current homes, and letting go of a property where so many memories were made can be difficult. Homeowners who are not prepared to move on from properties that are meaningful to them and their families can consider additional ways to downsize their financial obligations.

Downsizing is something many homeowners over 50 consider. Any decision regarding downsizing is best made after considering a range of variables.

Did you know?

Home renovations are wildly popular, and that popularity can be traced to a number of factors. Some homeowners renovate their homes with their own comfort in mind, while others do so to improve the resale value of the property. For those in the latter group, a recognition of renovations that yield the highest return on investment may help them decide which projects to pursue. According to the housing market research and analytics firm Zonda Media, a garage door replacement offered the highest return on investment in the American real estate market in 2024, earning a whopping 194 percent return on homeowners' initial investment. An entry door replacement with steel door offered the second best ROI at 188 percent of homeowners' initial investment, while replacing siding with stone veneer was third on the list with an average ROI of 153 percent.


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Pioneer Sports



Mountain View's Addison Hickey scored 14 points and grabbed five rebounds in Friday's 48-40 loss at Lander. The Lady Buffs are now 8-3 on the season, 1-1 in 3A Southwest conference play. 1(PIONEER PHOTO/Chary Porter)



The Mountain View girls' hoops team talks strategy during a timeout Friday at Lander. The Lady Buffs lost to the Lady Tigers 48-40 to fall to 8-3 on the season. (PIONEER PHOTO/Chary Porter)

Lady Buffs fall to Lander on the road, 48-40



Mountain View's McKayla Lym drives baseline past a Lander defender during Friday's 48-40 loss to the Lady Tigers in Lander. (PIONEER PHOTO/Chary Porter)

Covolo records double-double, Hickey nets 14 in loss

By Don Cogger
Pioneer Sports Editor

Despite solid offensive performances from the always-formidable one-two punch of McKinlee Covolo and Addison Hickey, the Mountain View High School girls' hoops team was unable to shake off a slow start, losing on the road Friday at Lander, 48-40.

The Lady Buffalos (8-3, 1-1 in 3A Southwest) trailed by 10 after a quarter and couldn't quite close the gap, despite Covolo recording a double-double with 12 points and 14 boards, and Hickey adding 14 points.

"It was a tough go right from the start," said MVHS head coach Jessica Moretti. "We allowed Lander 18 points in the first quarter, and only answered back six. This was the outcome of too many turnovers in the first quarter."

Lander extended their lead to 13 by the break at 26-13. The two teams played the third quarter even at 12-12, and the Lady Tigers still led by 13 heading into the final frame, 38-25.

Mountain View chipped into the lead, but it was too little, too late, as Lander was able to hold on for the 48-40 win.

"We need to continue to work on taking better care of the ball, and valuing every possession," Moretti said. "Throughout the game, we allowed Lander to have too many 3-point opportunities, and they capitalized on eight of them. We had great defense in the paint, but struggled to put extended pressure on the perimeter. We did match defensive boards, and won the offensive boards."

Addison Hickey led the Lady Buffs in scoring with 14 points — to go along with five rebounds and four steals — while McKinlee Covolo recorded a double-double, with

See **LADY BUFFS**, page A12



Mountain View's McKinlee Covolo recorded a double-double during Friday's 48-40 loss at Lander, scoring 12 points and grabbing 14 rebounds. (PIONEER PHOTO/Chary Porter)

Lyman boys' swim second at Pinedale Invitational



Eagle swimmer Mason Aimone — seen here at the Evanston Invitational earlier this month — finished second in both the 200 IM and the 100 breaststroke at the Pinedale Invitational over the weekend, swimming 4A state-qualifying times in both events. (PIONEER PHOTO/Don Cogger)

Busskohl wins two events Friday; Aimone, Bentley strong Saturday

By Don Cogger
Pioneer Sports Editor

The Lyman High School boys' swim team traveled to Pinedale over the weekend for the Pinedale Invitational, finishing second at both Friday's pre-invitational meet and Saturday's Pinedale Invitational.

Branson Busskohl led the charge at Friday's pre-invitational, winning both the 200 meter freestyle (2:14.19) and 400 meter freestyle (5:01.90). Busskohl also swam legs in the 200 and 400 meter freestyle relays, placing second in both.

Other notable finishes in Friday's pre-invite included Mason Aimone, who finished second in the 100 meter freestyle (59.26) and fourth in the 50 meter freestyle (26.43); Trey Buckner, who finished third in the 100 meter backstroke (1:14.63) and the 200 meter freestyle (2:18.33); Evan Bentley, who finished fourth in the 200 meter in-

dividual medley (2:38.67) and the 100 meter freestyle (1:00.94); Odin Eyre, who finished second in the 400 meter freestyle (5:02.83); Stone Hooten, who finished fourth in the 200 freestyle (2:33.78) and Reese Osborne, who finished fourth in the 100 meter backstroke.

In the relay events, the 200 meter medley relay team of Myles Taylor, Mason Aimone, Evan Bentley and Trey Buckner finished second (2:02.92), while Trey Buckner, Mason Aimone, Branson Busskohl and Odin Eyre placed second in the 200 meter freestyle relay (1:48.98).

The 400 meter freestyle relay team of Odin Eyre, Evan Bentley, Branson Busskohl and Porter Swenson finished second (4:11.77).

In Saturday's Pinedale Invitational, Buffalo took the top spot as a team with 444 points, followed by the Eagles with 337 points. Evan-

See **SWIM**, page A12

Sports



Mountain View's Charlee Porter goes up for a shot between a pair of Lander defenders during the Lady Buffs' 48-40 loss to the Lady Tigers Friday in Lander. (PIONEER PHOTO/Chary Porter)

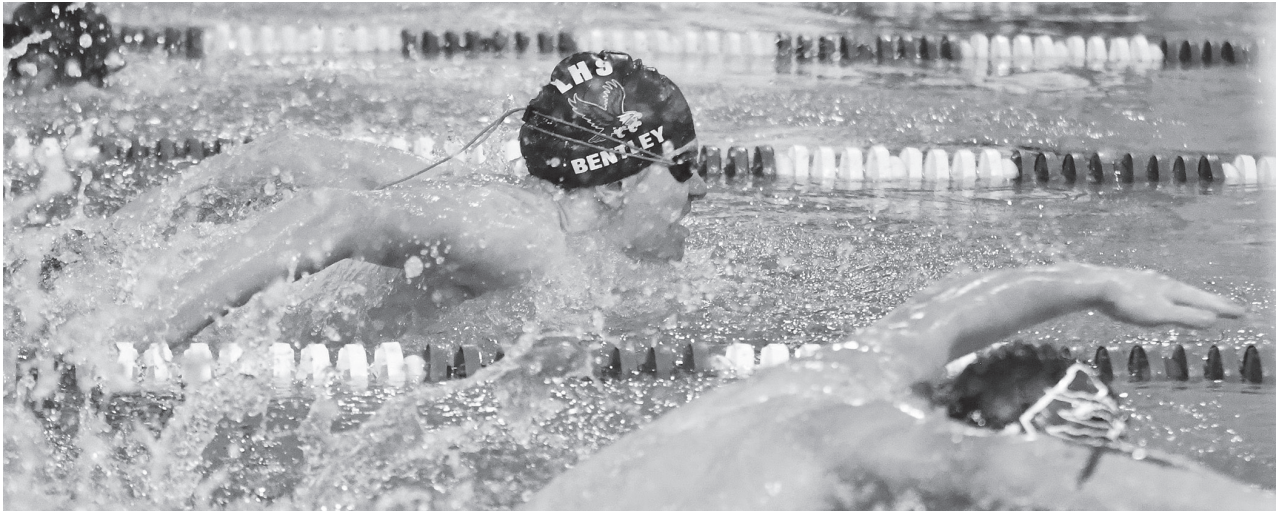
LADY EAGLES, continued from page A11

12 points and 14 rebounds. Charlee Porter finished with four points, three rebounds, three assists and three steals, while Kodi Allred and Abby Wells each sank a 3-pointer for their only scores of the game. Lillie Hickey and McKayla Lym closed out the scoring with two points apiece.

Turnovers proved to be the Lady Buffalos' undoing, with 25 in the contest.

Mountain View will continue conference play Friday when they welcome Pinedale to the Buffalo Dome. The Lady Wranglers are currently ranked No.1 in 3A.

"This week, it doesn't get any easier in the quality of the team as we host Pinedale, who is currently ranked the #1 team in the state," Moretti said. "Our practice focuses will continue to be on fundamentals of valuing possessions through ball handling, passing and decision-making in simulated, game-like situations."



Eagle swimmer Evan Bentley — seen here at the Evanston Invitational earlier this month — finished second in both the 100 butterfly and the 100 backstroke at the Pinedale Invitational over the weekend, swimming 4A state-qualifying times in both events. (PIONEER PHOTO/Don Cogger)

SWIM, continued from page A11

ston was third with 253, while Sublette County was fourth with 160. Kemmerer rounded out the field, with 135.

Despite not having a first-place finish, Lyman finished second in seven out of 12 events, including all three relays.

The list of second-place finishers included Mason Aimone in both the 200 individual medley (2:14.24) and the 100 breaststroke (1:09.15); both times were 4A State Qualifying marks. Evan Bentley also swam a pair of second-place finishes in the 100 butterfly (57.77) and the 100 backstroke (1:01.14), both 4A State Qualifying marks.

Other notable finishes included Odin Eyre in the 200 freestyle (4th, 2:04.42, 3A QT), Branson Busskohl in the 100 freestyle (3rd, 53.06, 4A QT) and Reese Osborne in the 500 freestyle (3rd, 5:57.90, 3A QT).

In the relay events, the 200 meter medley relay team of Myles Taylor, Mason Aimone, Evan Bentley and Trey Buckner finished second (1:50.70), while Mason Aimone, Branson Busskohl, Odin Eyre, Stone Hooten placed second in the 200 meter freestyle relay (1:39.29).

The 400 meter freestyle relay team of Trey Buckner, Branson Busskohl, Odin Eyre and Evan Bentley finished second (3:37.24).

Pinedale Pre-Invite Team Scores

1. Buffalo 438, 2. Lyman 347, 3. Evanston 242, 4. Sublette County 161, 5. Kemmerer 129

200 Meter Medley Relay

2. Myles Taylor, Mason Aimone, Evan Bentley, Trey Buckner 2:02.92

200 Meter Freestyle

1. Branson Busskohl 2:14.19, 3.

Trey Buckner 2:18.33, 4. Stone Hooten 2:33.78, 5. Carter Robison 2:34.20, 12. Briggs McCreath 2:54.65

200 Meter IM

4. Evan Bentley 2:38.67, 5. Odin Eyre 2:48.32, 11. Torrin Olguin 3:09.16

50 Meter Freestyle

4. Mason Aimone 26.43, 6. Reese Osborne 28.50, 10. Myles Taylor 29.22, 12. Porter Swensen 29.35, 16. Brix Hooten 30.94, 22. Emmitt Walker 33.57

100 Meter Butterfly

7. Stone Hooten 1:16.03

100 Meter Freestyle

2. Mason Aimone 59.26, 4. Evan Bentley 1:00.94, 6. Carter Robison 1:08.89, 12. Torrin Olguin 1:18.97

400 Meter Freestyle

1. Branson Busskohl 5:01.90, 2. Odin Eyre 5:02.83, 7. Brix Hooten 5:54.66

200 Meter Freestyle Relay

2. Trey Buckner, Mason Aimone, Branson Busskohl, Odin Eyre 1:48.98, 6. Reese Osborne, Porter Swensen, Stone Hooten, Brix Hooten 1:59.33

100 Meter Backstroke

3. Trey Buckner 1:14.63, 4. Reese Osborne 1:16.35, 10. Briggs McCreath 1:28.75

100 Meter Breaststroke

7. Myles Taylor 1:24.69, 9. Porter Swensen 1:26.88

400 Meter Freestyle Relay

2. Odin Eyre, Evan Bentley, Branson Busskohl, Porter Swenson 4:11.77, 8. Briggs McCreath, Torrin Olguin, Carter Robison, Emmitt Walker 5:10.56

Pinedale Invitational Team Scores

1. Buffalo 444, 2. Lyman 337, 3. Evanston 253, 4. Sublette County 160, 5. Kemmerer 135

200 Medley Relay

2. Myles Taylor, Mason Aimone,

Evan Bentley, Trey Buckner 1:50.70

200 Freestyle

4. Odin Eyre 2:04.42, 5. Reese Osborne 2:08.43, 11. Emmitt Walker 2:32.78, 13. Briggs McCreath 2:34.74, 15. Torrin Olguin 2:37.68

200 IM

2. Mason Aimone 2:14.24, 5. Porter Swensen 2:26.28, 7. Brix Hooten 2:38.78

50 Freestyle

4. Branson Busskohl 24.30, 6. Stone Hooten 25.43, 12. Carter Robison 27.98

100 Butterfly

2. Evan Bentley 57.77, 11. Brix Hooten 1:19.70, 13. Emmitt Walker 1:24.84

100 Freestyle

3. Branson Busskohl 53.06, 4. Trey Buckner 53.16, 5. Odin Eyre 56.23, 6. Porter Swensen 57.70

500 Freestyle

3. Reese Osborne 5:57.90, 4. Myles Taylor 6:03.46, 5. Stone Hooten 6:29.83, 8. Carter Robison 6:51.15

200 Freestyle Relay

2. Mason Aimone, Branson Busskohl, Odin Eyre, Stone Hooten 1:39.29, 5. Brix Hooten, Porter Swensen, Carter Robison, Reese Osborne 1:48.58

100 Backstroke

2. Evan Bentley 1:01.14, 4. Myles Taylor 1:05.65, 14. Torrin Olguin 1:20.82

100 Breaststroke

2. Mason Aimone 1:09.15, 8. Briggs McCreath 1:28.85

400 Freestyle Relay

2. Trey Buckner, Branson Busskohl, Odin Eyre, Evan Bentley 3:37.24, 6. Stone Hooten, Brix Hooten, Myles Taylor, Reese Osborne 4:04.23, 8. Porter Swensen, Emmitt Walker, Torrin Olguin, Briggs McCreath 4:32.69

GO BUFFS!

What are your parents' names? Kohl and Veronica Callister

What do you like most about school? Extracurricular activities like Art, Band, and sports

What is one thing you would change about the world? Give everyone the power of sympathy without having to go through the exact same thing.

Basically, unconditional kindness.

Who inspires you the most? My adoptive mom/sister Veronica

What is your favorite food? Smothered salmon with rice-a-roni and buttery green beans

Where would you most like to go on vacation? Japan! The food is so healthy!

If you could change your name, what would you call yourself?

I would give myself a middle name (Lila Hernandez Callister)

Have you ever had a wardrobe malfunction in public? No

What would you buy if you won \$1,000? Half of the things in my Amazon cart

If you were paid to do homework, would you do more homework? Yes

If the sky could rain ice cream, what flavor would you like it to rain? moose tracks

"Thank you, and I love you."

MOUNTAIN VIEW

Lila Callister


Lila is one of the hardest working I've known. She won't stop until she's done. I've seen her push herself just for the day in the week. When there's more to do, she'll be the first to volunteer. She's got it in the tank to make it for the state and she's also a hard worker.



Q&A with

Lila Callister

Grade 11



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News

Where to dispose of piles of old wind turbine blades? Coal mines

Wyoming says it has plenty of space for disposal at world's largest coal mines

By Dustin Bleizeffer
WyoFile.com

Wind farm operators in Wyoming and across the nation can now bury decommissioned wind turbine blades and other materials at surface coal mines in the state — a solution

of mutual benefit to both industries, and especially local landfills, state officials say. The federal Office of Surface Mining and Reclamation and Enforcement on Monday issued a final rule approving “the repurposing of inert, decommissioned wind turbine blades and towers” at surface coal mines in the state. The rule helps address an ongoing concern that turbine blades — which are frequently replaced with new ones — take up too much space at local landfills. While those landfills typically earn fees to take on the materials, many worry the scores

of wind fins and discarded towers might prematurely push landfills to their limits. A single blade would block two-way traffic if deposited on a street in downtown Casper. “Repurposing these blades and towers as backfill as part of a reclamation plan was a novel answer for both the coal industry that needed backfill to accelerate final reclamation and for the wind industry that needed disposal answers,” former Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality Land Quality Division Administrator Kyle Wendtland, who led the state’s rulemaking effort before moving

on to the Wyoming Energy Authority, said in a prepared statement. Simply put, surface coal mines in Wyoming have much bigger holes to fill than the average municipal landfill. A typical coal mine in the southern Powder River Basin, for example, digs hundreds of feet down before it reaches coal, and those coal seams can be 50 feet thick. With the coal removed, there are big holes to fill and plenty of room for non-toxic materials, rule

See **TURBINES**, page A14

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Legals

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF UINTA, STATE OF WYOMING Docket No. 2025-CV-0000003
In the Matter of the Estate of:)
Melanie J. Taylor,)
Deceased.)

NOTICE OF PROBATE OF ESTATE
TO ALL PERSONS INTERESTED IN SAID ESTATE:
You are hereby notified that on the 7th day of January, 2025 the Estate of Melanie J. Taylor, was admitted to probate by the above-named Court, and that Tara Hook and Taylor Halford were appointed Co-Administrators thereof. Notice is further given that all persons indebted to said decedent or to said estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned at the offices of Long Reimer Winegar LLP, 724 Front Street, Suite 200, PO Box 1040, Evanston, WY 82931. Creditors having claims against said decedent or the estate are required to file them in duplicate with the necessary vouchers, in the office of the Clerk of said Court, on or before three months after the date of the first publication of this notice, and if such claims are not so filed, unless otherwise allowed or paid, they will be forever barred. Tara Hook and Taylor Halford PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES
PUBLISHED: Jan. 15, 22, 29, 2025 25005

PUBLIC NOTICE
Attention Past Students Who Attended Uinta County School District Four from 2002 to present:
This notice is to inform you of a recent security incident with PowerSchool, our student information system provider. Recently, we received an email from PowerSchool that stated they had experienced a data breach that affected their systems worldwide. PowerSchool confirmed it suffered a cybersecurity incident that allowed a threat actor to steal the personal information of students from school districts using its PowerSchool SIS platform. PowerSchool has confirmed that the stolen data primarily contains contact details such as student name, date of birth, guardian, address, phone number, emergency contact, etc. It did not include any financial, academic, or behavioral records. No social security numbers (SSNs) were part of this data as Uinta 4 does not record student SSNs in PowerSchool. PowerSchool has enacted their security protocols to contain the breach and has since taken significant steps to secure their systems, including password resets and enhanced security measures. As a district we are committed to maintaining the highest standards of data protection. While we have a number of systems in place to protect student data, this breach was out of our control. However, PowerSchool has assured us that the breach is contained, and there is no evidence of ongoing unauthorized activity. We will be staying vigilant and reviewing any related accounts for unusual activity as a precaution. We are working closely with the State of Wyoming Cyber Assistant Response Effort (CARE) as well as the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) through this breach. PowerSchool will release additional information to affected districts worldwide, and we will share updates with you as soon as we receive them. We do encourage you to monitor your information and credit. You may also want to consider placing a free credit freeze. To place a freeze, contact the major credit bureaus at the phone numbers listed below. A freeze remains in place until you ask the credit bureau to temporarily lift or remove it. Equifax: 1-800-685-1111 Experian: 1-888-397-3742 TransUnion: 1-888-909-8872 If you have additional questions, please email us at powerschoolbreach@uinta4.com.
PUBLISHED: Jan. 22, 2025 25007

Legals

PUBLIC NOTICE

Attention Past Employees of Uinta County School District 4 from 2002 to present:
This notice is to inform you of a recent security incident with PowerSchool, our student information system provider. Recently, we received an email from PowerSchool that stated they had experienced a data breach that affected their systems worldwide. PowerSchool confirmed it suffered a cybersecurity incident that allowed a threat actor to steal the personal information of staff from school districts using its PowerSchool SIS platform. PowerSchool has confirmed that the stolen data primarily contains contact details such as staff names, staff emails, addresses, phone numbers, and social security numbers. PowerSchool has enacted their security protocols to contain the breach and has since taken significant steps to secure their systems, including password resets and enhanced security measures. As a district we are committed to maintaining the highest standards of data protection. While we have a number of systems in place to protect student data, this breach was out of our control. However, PowerSchool has assured us that the breach is contained, and there is no evidence of ongoing unauthorized activity. We will be staying vigilant and reviewing any related accounts for unusual activity as a precaution. We are working closely with the State of Wyoming Cyber Assistant Response Effort (CARE) as well as the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) through this breach. PowerSchool will release additional information to affected districts worldwide, and we will share updates with you as soon as we receive them. We do encourage you to monitor your information and credit. You may also want to consider placing a free credit freeze. To place a freeze, contact the major credit bureaus at the phone numbers listed below. A freeze remains in place until you ask the credit bureau to temporarily lift or remove it. Equifax: 1-800-685-1111 Experian: 1-888-397-3742 TransUnion: 1-888-909-8872 If you have additional questions, please email us at powerschoolbreach@uinta4.com.
PUBLISHED: Jan. 22, 2025 25008

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

The Uinta County Library-Evanston is requesting price proposals for the removal and replacement of the ceiling tile in the library. The project consists of the removal of the existing panels, converting some areas from 4x4 to 2x2 and the installation of white 2x2 Cheyenne Acoustic Panels or approved equal. The library has some panels available. The contractor will be responsible for measuring and quantifying the square footage for the project. Contractors are welcome to schedule a time to visit the site for measurements if needed outside of the pre-proposal visit. Contact Todd Hurd with Forsgren Associates at 307-679-1462 Cell or 307-789-6735 office or Jeff Breininger at 307-799-5513 Cell. The timeline is as follows:
· Mandatory Pre-proposal Meeting February 4th, 2025, 9:00 a.m. at 701 Main Street, Evanston WY 82930
· Proposals Due February 20th, 2025
DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTALS
The deadline for submittals is 4:00 pm Mountain Standard Time on February 20, 2025. Any submittal received after the deadline will be returned to the sender unopened. Please submit four (4) copies of the Proposal in a sealed envelope and time stamped by the clerk's office. Attn. Jeff Breininger Clerk's office 225 9th Street Evanston, WY 82930 (307) 799-5513
PUBLISHED: Jan. 22, 29, 2025 25010

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF UINTA, STATE OF WYOMING Docket No. 2025-CV-0000002
In the Matter of the Estate of:)
Ronald L. Robbins,)
Deceased.)

NOTICE OF PROBATE OF ESTATE
TO ALL PERSONS INTERESTED IN SAID ESTATE:
You are hereby notified that on the 7th day of January, 2025, the Last Will and Testament of Ronald L. Robbins was admitted to probate by the above-named Court, and that Ronald Lee Robbins Jr. was appointed Personal Representative thereof. Any action to set aside the Will shall be filed in the Court within three months from the date of the first publication of this notice, or thereafter be forever barred. Notice is further given that all persons indebted to said decedent or to said estate are requested to make immediate payment to Long Reimer Winegar LLP, 724 Front Street, Suite 200, Evanston, Wyoming, 82930. Creditors having claims against said decedent or the estate are required to file them in duplicate with the necessary vouchers, in the office of the Clerk of said Court, on or before three months after the date of the first publication of this notice, and if such claims are not so filed, unless otherwise allowed or paid, they will be forever barred. Ronald Lee Robbins Jr. PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE
PUBLISHED: Jan. 15, 22, 29, 2025 25004

PUBLICATION OF WARRANTS

Pursuant to Chapter 3, Section 21-3-110(a)(ii) of Wyoming Education Code, following are warrants over \$500.00 issued by Uinta County School District No. Four, Mountain View, Wyoming, for the month of January 2025:
115519 ACE RECYCLING & DISPOSAL, \$2,058.65; 115487 AMAZON CAPITAL SERVICES, \$4,432.89; 7502 AMAZON CAPITAL SERVICES, \$658.55; 115476 BENEDICT TRADING CO, \$4,129.56; 115506 BENEDICTS ACE HARDWARE, \$649.93; 115509 BRADSHAW'S HOME AND GLASS LLC, \$3,952.32; 115483 BRIDGER VALLEY ELECTRIC ASSOC, \$16,038.43; 115502 BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY, \$1,076.25; 115543 BROWN, CAMI MARIE, \$3,600.00; 115491 BRYSON SALES & SERVICE INC, \$3,804.01; 115532 BUG OFF PEST CONTROL, \$675.00; 7504 CAPITAL ONE, \$582.22; 115529 COAST TO COAST COMPUTER PRODUCTS, INC, \$4,304.85; 115520 COVOLO AUTO FARM SERVICE, \$2,749.35; 115514 CUMMINS SALES AND SERVICE, \$4,431.42; 115485 DELL MARKETING L.P., \$847.82; 115500 DISABILITY: IN UINTA COUNTY, \$1,200.00; 109473 ENBRIDGE GAS, \$13,109.69; 115510 FB MCFADDEN WHOLESALE COMPANY, \$1,703.30; 109472 FIRST BANKCARD, \$5,127.46; 7506 FIRST BANKCARD, \$1,903.47; 7507 GAME ONE, \$3,704.78; 115484 GAME ONE, \$1,777.15; 115546 GREEN CANYON HIGH SCHOOL, \$500.00; 115539 IVE LEAGUE LEARNING RESOURCES, INC, \$4,000.00; 7508 JOHNSON FRUIT LLC, \$7,334.85; 7509 JORDAN BURY, \$1,125.00; 115541 JOROCO, \$4,050.00; 115503 JOSTENS, \$744.78; 115475 KENWORTH SALES, \$2,802.56; 115507 LA MONICA'S RESTAURANT EQUIP SERVICE CO, \$2,777.93; 115527 LES SCHWAB TIRES, \$6,220.62; 115508 LEWIS BUS GROUP, \$4,677.24; 115515 MEADOW GOLD DAIRIES SLC, \$1,679.45; 1480 MORGAN PAVEMENT, INC, \$24,141.89; 1481 MORGAN PAVEMENT, INC, \$7,470.00; 115526 NICHOLAS & COMPANY, \$10,108.88; 115501 OFFICE SHOP INC., \$586.73; 115478 PETTY CASH/ACTIVITY DIRECTOR, \$5,010.00; 115504 PHILLIPS LAW, LLC, \$3,375.00; 7513 PRINTED WORD, THE, \$1,969.00; 115490 REGION V BOCES, \$14,136.48; 60179 RUDY, BONNIE L., \$5,850.00; 7514 SILVER STITCH EMBROIDERY LLC, \$1,782.00; 115498 SUMMIT FIRE & SECURITY, \$720.30; 115493 THE STORE, \$5,560.58; 115480 TOWN OF MOUNTAIN VIEW, \$5,530.85; 115518 UNITED TELEPHONE COMPANY, \$1,289.37; 115521 UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO, \$500.00; 115542 UNIVERSITY OF WY, \$1,000.00; 115486 UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY, \$500.00; 7515 WESTAR PRINTING, \$544.00; 115479 WESTERN WY COMMUNITY COLLEGE, \$1,000.00; 115522 WESTERN WY COMMUNITY COLLEGE, \$35,687.50; 115482 WEX BANK, \$685.96; 115494 WYO HS ACTIVITIES ASSN, \$1,849.00. I, Charlotte Black, Treasurer, Uinta County School District #4, Mountain View, Wyoming, do hereby certify the foregoing to be correct. /s/ Charlotte Black Uinta County School District #4 Mountain View, Wyoming
PUBLISHED: Jan. 22, 2025 25009

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News



Borne on two flatbed rail cars each, wind turbine blades pass through the historic coal mining town of Rock Springs in March, 2019. (WYOFILE/Andrew Graham)

PARCEL, continued from page A13

proponents say. The mining region is home to the biggest earth-moving industries in the world when it comes to digging and refilling holes — a prime opportunity to dispose of industrial waste such as wind turbine blades.

The coal mines are already permitted to bury some of their own inert industrial waste on-site, and they can take on more, according to state and federal regulators. When a tornado struck the nearby mining town of Wright in 2005, mines won quick approval from state regulators to bury debris from the devastation.

“Options to dispose of blades and towers are limited,” Wyoming DEQ Solid and Hazardous Waste Division Administrator Suzanne Engels, said in a prepared statement. “Landfilling the retired blades and towers is unsustainable due to land limitations that are needed for communities’ waste.”

Stockpiling decommissioned blades, as a proposed alternative by some in the industry,

“is an eyesore and problematic for the environment,” Engels added.

Burying wind blades and other permitted wind energy materials can benefit coal mines by helping to speed up the reclamation process of backfilling pits, Wendtland said. Mines are also allowed to charge a fee, with 25% of the receipts sent to the state. There are no parameters around what coal mines might charge for disposal, he added.

“Not only can we handle Wyoming’s waste stream off of wind, we can handle a national level waste stream off of wind and do it responsibly,” Wendtland said.

The Office of Surface Mining and Reclamation and Enforcement, which has federal oversight of surface coal mine reclamation, worked closely with Wyoming DEQ to develop the updated rule. The action was spurred by a Wyoming law passed in 2020 — House Bill 129, “Reclamation of surface coal mines-turbine blades.” The federal

agency noted that it asked for public comment regarding the rule change and did not receive any.

The wind energy industry, in recent years, has taken steps to address its waste issue by moving away from certain composite materials that are costly to recycle, according to the American Clean Power Association, a renewable industry trade group. Today, about 90% of wind blades in the U.S. are recyclable, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

The waste issue is still on the minds of lawmakers in Wyoming, however.

House Bill 89, “Wind turbine blades-on-site disposal required,” sponsored by Rep. J.R. Riggins (R-Casper), would require “disposal of decommissioned wind turbine blades and towers on the site where the wind turbines operated.” The measure, however, would still allow for disposal at surface coal mines, Riggins told WyoFile.

Though he was unsure of whether federal

approval for burial at Wyoming coal mines would come to fruition when drafting HB 89, Riggins said he wanted to ensure that wind energy developers have a disposal plan that doesn’t burden municipal landfills in the state — even if that burden falls on the private property owners who lease to wind energy developers. The landfill that serves Casper received international attention for storing hundreds of wind turbines.

Wind energy companies primarily target privately owned lands to avoid myriad federal permitting reviews.

“I’m putting the burden on the site owners and on the operating companies,” Riggins said. “That was the purpose of it. And I know they won’t like it. So give me a better plan ... without Wyoming taxpayers bearing any of that burden.”

WyoFile is an independent nonprofit news organization focused on Wyoming people, places and policy.



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The Memorial Hospital Foundation operates the Waldner House in Rock Springs; a cozy, like-home house about a mile from Memorial Hospital of Sweetwater County. Waldner House provides complimentary lodging for patients as they receive services at MHSC and its Speciaty Clinics. For more information, visit www.mhscfoundation.com

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