

2017 1st Quarter issues report for Wyoming Public Media

Issue: Wyoming politics

Topic: The Wyoming legislative session is underway and 24 new legislators enjoyed their first week in office. With such high turnover it wouldn't be a surprise if some veteran lawmakers weren't just a bit leery having so many freshmen joining the ranks, but House Majority Leader David Miller said it's a good time for new ideas.

Time: 4 min

Date: 1-13-17 at 3pm & 1-15-17 at noon on WPR. 1-15-17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: It's been nearly three decades since a Cheney has represented Wyoming in Congress, but voters sent Liz Cheney to the nation's capital to follow in her dad's footsteps in the U.S. House of Representatives. Congressional correspondent Matt Laslo has the story from Washington.

Time: 4 min

Date: 1-20-17 at 3pm and 1-22-17 at noon on WPR. 1-22-17 at 9 am on WPM.

Topic: As part of NPR's A Nation Engaged series, we set out to hear what Jackson residents are hoping to see from the new Trump Administration. Rebecca Huntington brings us these voices.

Time: 3 min

Date: 1-20-17 at 3pm and 1-22-17 at noon on WPR. 1-22-17 at 9 am on WPM.

Topic: State Representatives Marti Halverson and Cathy Connolly are unlikely allies. Halverson has been a supporter of religious rights bills in the past...while Connolly is the state's only openly gay lawmaker. But there's one thing they do agree on...the need for an in-depth study of Wyoming's gender wage gap which reports say is the worst in the nation. As part of our new series called, "I Respectfully Disagree," I sat down with both of them to hear how they came to co-sponsor a bill. Representative Connolly explained she knew she had to do something when yet another report came out proclaiming Wyoming as the worst gender wage gap in the U.S.

Time: 8 min

Date: 2-10-17 at 3pm and 2-12-17 at noon on WPR. 2-12-17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Wyoming's junior senator, John Barrasso, is now chairman of the committee tasked with crafting President Donald Trump's call for a massive infrastructure proposal. Trump wants to rebuild roads, bridges, railways and airports across the country. This could be good news for a lot of Wyoming drivers, but Correspondent Matt Laslo reports that Barrasso is being pulled in a thousand different directions.

Time 5 min

Date: 2-10-17 at 3pm and 2-12-17 at noon on WPR. 2-12-17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: A bill to allow individuals with concealed carry permits to carry guns on the University of Wyoming's campus and community colleges was defeated this week by the State Senate. Those in support of the legislation say it would have made campuses safer, while those opposed to it worried about potential dangers. In this piece reported by Maggie Mullen, Wyoming Public Radio's Caroline Ballard revisits the pros and cons surrounding the bill.

Time: 5 min

Date: 2-24-17 at 3pm and 2-26-17 at noon on WPR.

Topic: The Wyoming legislative session is wrapping up today and Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck joins Caroline Ballard to discuss this year's work.

Time: 6 min

Date: 3-3-17 at 3pm and 3-5-17 at noon on WPR.

Topic: Early in the Wyoming legislative session, we heard from some new lawmakers about what they were expecting. With the legislature ending its 40-day session, Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck caught up with some of the freshmen and found that they have a healthy respect for the process, but leave with some disappointments.

Time: 5 min

Date: 3-3-17 at 3pm and 3-5-17 at noon on WPR.

Topic: After a historic downturn in revenue, the Wyoming legislature has started this year's session with a number of concerns. They still have a \$150 million shortfall in revenue to fund their current budget and K-12 education funding has a \$400 million deficit and they have no money for school construction. Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck reports that while legislative committees have been focused on other issues, there will soon come a point where lawmakers need to figure out how to move forward.

Time: 5 min

Date: 1-20-17 at 3pm and 1-22-17 at noon on WPR. 1-22-17 at 9 am on WPM.

Topic: K-12 education in Wyoming is facing immediate cuts on the state level. And President Trump's federal budget proposes cuts to education too. There's even talk in Washington of dismantling the U.S. Department of Education. This got Wyoming Public Radio's education reporter Tennessee Watson wondering how University of Wyoming education students were feeling about their future in teaching.

Time: 5 min

Date: 3/24/17 at 3pm and 3/26/17 at noon on WPR . 3/26/17 at 9am on WPM.

Issue: Energy issues

Topic: The coal industry's breathing a sigh of relief with Donald Trump about to enter the White House. He campaigned on an energy platform that would strip away Obama Administration regulations on the fossil fuel industry. Chief among them, the Clean Power Plan. It would require states to make huge cuts in carbon emissions - Colorado, Wyoming and North Dakota all sued to stop the plan. Inside Energy's Amy Sisk reports from North Dakota where opposition was especially fierce.

Time: 5 min

Date: 1-13-17 at 3pm & 1-15-17 at noon on WPR. 1-15-17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: From cabinet picks to environmental regulations, there has been a lot of energy news in the first few weeks of the Trump Administration. Inside Energy reporter Leigh Paterson joined Wyoming Public Radio's Caroline Ballard from Denver to talk about some of the changes happening in Washington and how they could affect the West.

Time: 7 min

Date: 2-3-17 at 3pm and 2-5-17 at noon on WPR. 2-5-17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: A group of conservative thinkers who are concerned about climate change are proposing an approach that they hope will encourage companies to look to reduce carbon pollution. It's a market based solution called a climate fee and dividend. It charges a fee on industry for the amount of carbon burned and gives a dividend to consumers to help them pay for rising energy costs, which means the fee would eventually get returned to the companies. The plan is to move money around to reduce emissions and not hurt the economy. The Citizens climate lobby is pushing the proposal. A number of chapters are being developed in Wyoming and Wesley Frain is from the Cheyenne chapter. He tells Bob Beck it should be revenue neutral.

Time: 5 min

Date: 2-24-17 at 3pm and 2-16-17 at noon on WPR. 2-16-17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Wyoming lawmakers are pushing to repeal an Obama-era rule that would limit methane emissions on federal lands, but they're hitting a snag and this time it's coming from their fellow Republicans. Correspondent Matt Laslo has the story from Washington.

Time: 4 min

Date: 3-24-17 at 3pm and 3-26-17 at noon on WPR. 3-26-17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Wyoming's congressional delegation is thrilled with the executive order President Trump signed to unwind President Obama's climate change initiatives. Correspondent Matt Laslo has the story from Washington on how some in their party aren't happy with the effort to roll back America's role in combating global warming.

Time: 4 min

Date: 3-31-17 at 3pm

Topic: Coal country was celebrating this week when President Trump lifted a coal moratorium signed into law by the Obama Administration 14 months ago. But now the question is whether coal companies will even decide to expand their production in states like Wyoming. Melodie Edwards reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 3-31-17 at 3pm

Issue: Education

Topic: Wyoming is facing big questions about how to sustain the current education funding model, and that may cause uncertainty for educators entering the workforce. Almost half of Wyoming teachers graduate from the University of Wyoming, and a new partnership with the Daniels Fund will shed light on how well the College of Education prepares those teachers. Wyoming Public Radio's Tennessee Watson spoke with Rebecca Watts, the executive director of The Trustees Education Initiative, about what this partnership means for learning in Wyoming.

Time: 7 min

Date: 1-13-17 at 3pm & 1-15-17 at noon on WPR. 1-15-17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: This week the Wyoming Supreme Court unveiled its much anticipated Judicial Learning Center. It features a movie, interactive exhibits, including an area where visitors can be the judge in a case. Retired Supreme Court Justice Marilyn Kite says the idea came from the Colorado legislature that developed a way for citizens to better understand the rule of law. After getting legislative and private money to develop the center even Kite is surprised with what they came up with.

Time: 6 min

Date: 1-13-17 at 3pm & 1-15-17 at noon on WPR. 1-15-17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: There's a bill before the legislature that would help improve virtual learning in Wyoming schools, especially in rural areas where hiring teachers in specialized fields can be hard. Districts across the state are already experimenting with online courses, but the Department of Education wants to bring this opportunity to all students. Wyoming Public Radio's education reporter Tennessee Watson went to Rock Springs to visit a school that's blazing ahead.

Time: 4 min

Date: 1-20-17 at 3pm and 1-22-17 at noon on WPR. 1-22-17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Wyoming's revenue downturn has forced lawmakers to take a look at cutting a lot of money from education. K-12 education has a \$400 million shortfall. Speaker of the House Steve Harshman joins Bob Beck to discuss the problem and how they plan to fix it.

Time: 10 min

Date: 1-20-17 at 3pm and 1-22-17 at noon on WPR. 1-22-17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Out-of-school suspension is increasingly seen as a contributing factor to poor academic outcomes. Students get sent home and get behind in their school work, and some never catch up. In response, schools across the nation, including several in Wyoming, have created alternatives. One of them is the Albany County Expelled and Suspended Program, mostly commonly referred to as ACES. Tennessee Watson reports.

Time: 5 min

2-3-17 at 3pm and 2-5-17 at noon on WPR. 2-5-17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: A downturn in the energy economy has caused a crisis in Wyoming education funding. K-12 funding is projected to see a \$400 million shortfall at the end of the current two year budget cycle. That deficit will grow if lawmakers can't find a way to address the shortfall. Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck reports that the House and Senate are taking different approaches towards solving the problem.

Time: 5 min

Date: 2-10-17 at 3pm and 2-12-17 at noon on WPR. 2-12-17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: The state's budget deficit has forced the University of Wyoming to reduce spending. Dr. Anne Alexander, Associate Vice President for Undergraduate Education, says at this point every possible thing that's "discretionary" has been cut. But there are folks on campus who think energy conservation should have a more prominent role in cost saving measures. Wyoming Public Radio education reporter Tennessee Watson spoke with Meghann Cranford, Student chair of the Sustainability Coalition, about the effort.

Time: 7 min

Date: 2-10-17 at 3pm and 2-12-17 at noon on WPR. 2-12-17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: The Wyoming State Board of Education was born 100 years ago during the 1917 Legislative Session. Wyoming Public Radio's education reporter Tennessee Watson invited Pete Gosar to reflect on the history of the board, and his final months as board chair. Appointees only get to serve one term, and Gosar says that's part of what makes the State Board of Education an effective institution.

Time: 5 min

Date: 2-10-17 at 3pm and 2-12-17 at noon on WPR. 2-12-17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: This school year, for the first time, Wyoming kids are learning about climate change using science standards adopted by the State Board of Education. But as Wyoming Public Radio's Melodie Edwards reports, it's been a bumpy ride to get those standards passed.

Time: 5 min

Date: 2-24-17 at 3pm and 2-26-17 at noon on WPR. 2-26-17 at 9 am on WPM.

Topic: During the last legislative Session, Wyoming educators asked the legislature to use reserves to cover the deficit, but instead they stuck them with a \$34 million funding reduction. Wyoming Public Radio's education reporter, Tennessee Watson, went out to see how three neighboring districts are dealing.

Time: 5 min

Date: 3-31-17 at 3pm.

Issue: Health Care

Topic: Wyoming's two senators are set to play a key role in the Republican effort to repeal and replace Obamacare. Senate Republicans, led by Senator Mike Enzi took their first steps towards repealing the Affordable Care Act in a late night session.

Time: 5 min

Date: 1-13-17 at 3pm & 1-15-17 at noon on WPR. 1-15-17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: The Republican Party hates so-called Obamacare, but when it comes to replacing the bill the party is divided over how to change the health care system. Matt Laslo reports from Washington.

Time: 5 min

Date: 2-24-17 at 3pm and 2-26-17 at noon on WPR. 2-16-17 at 9 am on WPM.

Topic: Despite some recent setbacks, Congress will eventually move to either replace or make serious changes to the affordable care act. Wyoming's congressional delegation says that should help reduce insurance premiums in the state, but that may not be the case. Wyoming saw a growth in those who have insurance under the affordable care act and current congressional fixes could do more harm than good.

Time: 4 min

Date: 3-24-17 at 3pm and 3-26-17 at noon on WPR. 3-26-17 at 9am on WPM.

Issue: Native American Issues

Topic: Over the past few months, we've been looking at the housing crisis on the Wind River Indian Reservation. The shortage of homes there—and the lack of funding to build more--has led to overcrowding and homelessness. Many Native Americans are often forced to find rentals in border communities off the reservation. Even there they still struggle to find places to live because of racial discrimination.

Time: 5 min

Date: 1-13-17 at 3pm and 1-15-17 at noon on WPR. 1-15-17 at 9am on WPM

Topic: On Monday, January 16 at 9 p.m., Wyoming PBS will air a new documentary set in Wyoming called "What Was Ours," directed by Mat Hames. It's about three Native Americans on the Wind River Indian Reservation and their relationship to artifacts and ceremonial objects and how hard it can be to keep such things within the tribe. Wyoming Public Radio's Melodie Edwards spoke with two people who appear in the film, Northern Arapaho members Jordan Dresser and former Powwow Princess Mikala Sunrhodes.

Time: 6 min

Date: 1-13-17 at 3pm and 1-15-17 at noon on WPR. 1-15-17 at 9am on WPM

Topic: As one of his first actions, President Trump signed an executive order granting his approval for the completion of the Dakota Access Pipeline. Then, on January 31, the Army Corp of Engineers announced they'd grant the final permit. The next day, about 100 protesters clashed with Morton County Police. 23-year-old Northern Arapaho member Micah Lott from Wyoming was among them and told Wyoming Public Radio's Melodie Edwards the story of his arrest.

Time: 6 min

Date: 2-10-17 at 3pm and 2-12-17 at noon on WPR. 2-12-17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: When University of Wyoming President Laurie Nichols was hired, Wyoming's Native American community was glad to see she had a strong record of advocating for tribal students. This month, Nichols made a visit to Wind River Reservation to visit schools and talk to the business councils about several new initiatives to recruit kids there to attend UW. James Trospen works for the High Plains American Indian Research Institute on campus and is collaborating with Nichols to make some of those dreams a reality. Melodie Edwards sat down with Trospen.

Time: 6 min

Date: 3-24-17 at 3pm and 3-26-17 at noon on WPR. 3-26-17 at 9 am on WPM.

Issue: Environment and Natural resources

Topic: In 2015, the town of Pinedale turned off its sodium silicate water treatment--a type of corrosion control that helps prevent lead contamination from old plumbing. The next year, dangerous levels of lead were found in one residence and at the town's high school. As Wyoming Public Radio's Maggie Mullen reported, the treatment has been turned back on, but residents want to know why it was shut off in the first place.

Time: 5 min

Date: 1-20-17 at 3pm and 1/22/17 at noon on WPR. 1/22/17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: A bill drafted for the legislature proposed to revise Wyoming's constitution to allow the state to take over management of federal lands. The idea was intensely controversial and was killed on Friday. But as Wyoming Public Radio's Melodie Edwards reports, a couple of weeks ago, some legislators sat down with the Wyoming Wildlife Federation to come up with the alternative to public land transfers to led to the bill's demise.

Time: 5 min

Date: 1-20-17 at 3pm and 1/22/17 at noon on WPR. 1/22/17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: This week Congress unleashed an assault on Obama-era regulations – and Wyoming lawmakers played a big role in the effort. Congressional Correspondent Matt Laslo has the story from Washington on the new effort that's angering the environmental community.

Time: 4 min

Date: 1-20-17 at 3pm and 1/22/17 at noon on WPR. 1/22/17 at 9am on WPM

Topic: Climate change is revealing Wyoming artifacts hidden by ice for 10,000 years. Scientists are flocking to the melting snow and ice fields...and the world is watching. Penny Preston reports from Cody.

Time: 4 min

Date: 2-3-17 at 3pm and 2-5-17 at noon on WPR. 2-5-17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: There aren't many critters crazy enough to live year round on mountaintops. So any that DO live there have got to be tough. Like the American pika, an adorable little round-eared—and noisy—animal that lives in the rocks at the highest elevations. But are pikas tough enough to survive a warming planet? Wyoming Public Radio's Melodie Edwards talked with University of Wyoming researcher Embere Hall who's trying answer that question.

Time: 5 min

Date: 2-3-17 at 3pm and 2-5-17 at noon on WPR. 2-5-17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Now that Wyoming's Science Standards are encouraging kids to make up their own minds about climate change, a group of Laramie middle schoolers tackled the issue of the environmental impacts of energy development in Wyoming. We handed off the microphone to young reporters Zeren Homer and Sam Alexander.

Time: 5 min

Date: 2-24-17 at 3pm and 2-26-17 at noon on WPR. 2-26-17 at 9 am on WPM.

Topic: Moose numbers are down across Wyoming. Now, a woman who lives in what used to be known as moose country is asking Wyoming's Game and Fish Department to stop hunting near her Wood River home near Meeteetse. Penny Preston reports a hunter who has been waiting for decades to hunt moose there disagrees. And, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department is caught in the middle.

Time: 4 min

Date: 3-24-17 at 3pm and 3-26-17 at noon on WPR. 3-26-17 at 9 am on WPM.

Issue: Arts and Culture

Topic: As the University of Wyoming begins another semester, a new line-up of cultural programming at the school is on the horizon. Janelle Fletcher is the director of Fine Arts Outreach and Cultural Programs at the University of Wyoming. She sat down with Caroline Ballard to talk about what Spring 2017 has in store for students and the public.

Time: 6 min

Date: 1-20-17 at 3pm and 1/22/17 at noon on WPR. 1/22/17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Adam Duncan Harris is the curator of art and research at the National Museum of Wildlife Art, and is a recipient of one of the 2017 Governor's Art Awards. He sat down with Wyoming Public Radio's Caroline Ballard to talk about his approach to managing the collection and the award. He says he didn't get the news that he won quite in the way he expected.

Time: 6 min

Date: 2-10-17 at 3pm and 2-12-17 at noon on WPR. 2-12-17 at 9am on WPM.

Issue: Social Issues

Topic: After President Donald Trump was inaugurated, marches and protests were held in cities around the world – and in six communities around Wyoming, including Cheyenne, Casper, Rock Springs, Cody, Lander, and Pinedale. Thousands of Wyomingites came out for the marches, and now, many of them are asking themselves “what comes next?” Wyoming Public Radio's Caroline Ballard reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 2-3-17 at 3pm and 2-5-17 at noon on WPR. 2-5-17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: The University of Wyoming MLK Days of Dialogue wrap up this weekend. The event's keynote speaker was Franchesca Ramsey, a comedian, actress, and activist who hosts the MTV News web series Decoded, which talks about race, pop culture, and other quote “uncomfortable things.” She joined me to discuss how she has carved out her own role in the entertainment and activist communities.

Time: 6 min

Date: 2-3-17 at 3pm and 2-5-17 at noon on WPR. 2-5-17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: 44 of the University of Wyoming's students come from the seven different countries included in President Donald Trump's travel suspension. The executive order is now in the midst of what will likely be a long, legal battle. Until the situation gets resolved, University President Laurie Nichols has discouraged the impacted students from traveling outside the U.S. As Wyoming Public Radio's Maggie Mullen reports, if it sticks many of the students are now left with limited options and hard choices.

Time: 5 min

Date: 2-10-17 at 3pm and 2-12-17 at noon on WPR. 2-12-17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: A new book compiles government photos of Japanese-Americans in World War II incarceration camps...including Heart Mountain in Wyoming. For the first time, some of the people in the photos have been interviewed. Those interviews are included in *Un-American: The Incarceration of Japanese Americans During World War II*. As co-author Richard Cahan tells Wyoming Public Radio's Erin Jones, camp conditions were poor.

Time: 5 min

Date: 2-10-17 at 3pm and 2-12-17 at noon on WPR. 2-12-17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: President Donald Trump campaigned on a promise to enact stricter immigration policies, and the topic of reform has remained a common thread under the new administration. University of Wyoming College of Law Professor Noah Novogrodsky is leading a team of law students conducting an economic impact study of the contributions immigrant workers make to Teton County. Novogrodsky told Wyoming Public Radio's Maggie Mullen, the intent of the study is to uncover details that are otherwise lost in census data in order to encourage evidence-based debate and policy.

Time: 5 min

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

Topic: Across the United States, mobile and manufactured home owners are without the same access to the American Dream as their neighbors with site-built homes. That's because mobile homes are often classified as personal property, like a car or a boat. And converting them to real property -- like a house -- can be complicated. As a result, mainstream mortgages are out of reach. But as Wyoming Public Radio's Tennessee Watson reports, in Wyoming one feisty homeowner decided to take action.

Time: 5 min

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

Topic: Last year, after intense debate, the city of Cheyenne adopted an anti-discrimination resolution to protect members of the LGBT community and in this legislative session, lawmakers have tried and failed to pass state laws on both sides of the issue. In the midst of all that, though, an unlikely friendship sprouted up. As part of her series, “I Respectfully Disagree,” Wyoming Public Radio’s Melodie Edwards sat down with the legislative liaison for Cheyenne’s Holy Trinity Church, Deacon Mike Lehman, and Wyoming Equality Communications Director Sara Burlingame.

Time: 5 min

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

Topic: Like many federal programs across the country, Meals on Wheels is facing possible cuts as part of President Donald Trump’s proposed budget. The program’s Wyoming partners have already experienced cuts at the state level due to the energy downturn, and it’s hard to know when the federal budget will be decided on. In the meantime, many homebound seniors and Wyomingites with disabilities that depend on the program are concerned about the future of their care.

Time: 4 min

Date: 3-24-17 at 3pm and 3-26-17 at noon on WPR. 3-26-17 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: In the last year, over 30 women have approached the Casper City Council to express their frustration with how the Casper Police Department dealt with their sexual assault cases. The women allege that their cases were either mishandled or neglected by law enforcement. Wyoming Public Radio’s Maggie Mullen reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 3-31-17 at 3 pm.

Issue: Ag issues

Topic: Wyoming’s sheep industry relies on foreign labor from the Department of Labor’s H2-A visa program, which applies to agricultural jobs. When that agency raised wage requirements for sheepherders in 2015, ranchers complained that the rule change could put them out of business. But worker’s advocates argued that the new regulations were not enough. Wyoming

Public Radio's Alanna Elder met with a rancher and a shepherd near Kemmerer just after the latest round of raises went into effect.

Time: 4 min

Date: 2-24-17 at 3pm and 2-26-17 at noon on WPR. 2-26-17 at 9 am on WPM.

Issue: Recreation

Topic: A winter storm this week brought even more snow to the Tetons. And the Jackson Hole Mountain Resort closed Tuesday because of high winds and avalanche danger. Every year Wyoming sees multiple fatalities from avalanches. All you need is the wrong combination of terrain, snow and weather, and there could be a problem. Wyoming Public Radio's education reporter Tennessee Watson dropped in on a class studying how to stay safe in avalanche country.

Time: 5 min

Date: 2-24-17 at 3pm and 2-26-17 at noon on WPR. 2-26-17 at 9 am on WPM.

Topic: This week the legislature gave final approval to a bill that will take general fund money away from the Wyoming Game and Fish Department and require them to make up the difference through fee increases. It's just one of a few issues Director Scott Talbott is finding challenging these days. He sat down with me to explain that it's critical that the fees do not lead to a net loss.

Time: 5 min

Date: 3-3-17 at 3pm and 3-5-17 at noon on WPR.