

2018 1st Quarter Issues Report for Wyoming Public Media

Issue: Politics

Topic: The debate over tax reform has finally come to an end. Congress has passed its bill and President Trump has signed it. But what's it all mean for western energy? Wyoming Public Radio's Cooper McKim helps deconstruct tax reform's impact on Wyoming.

Time: 5 min

Date: 1-5-18 at 3pm and 1-7-18 at 11am on WPR. 1-7-18 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Last year was a whirlwind for lawmakers in Washington, but gridlock reigned supreme and much of the GOP agenda was blocked. Washington Correspondent Matt Laslo caught up with Wyoming's lawmakers about what they're hoping to accomplish in 2018.

Time: 5 min

Date: 1-5-18 at 3pm and 1-7-18 at 11am on WPR. 1-7-18 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Secretary Ryan Zinke is trying to implement his vision for a slimmed down Interior Department, which is being opposed by Democrats. But Correspondent Matt Laslo reports from Washington that Wyoming lawmakers are mostly supportive of his efforts.

Time: 4 min

Date: 1-12-18 at 3pm and 1-14-18 at noon on WPR. 1-14-18 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Now that the government's lights are turned back on after last weekend's three-day shutdown, Wyoming's lawmakers are joining a growing chorus of Republicans calling for change to how Congress conducts its day to day business. Washington Correspondent Matt Laslo has the story from the nation's capital on the growing calls to overhaul the Senate's long-standing filibuster rule.

Time: 4 min

Date: 1-26-18 at 3pm and 1-28-18 at noon on WPR. 1-28-18 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Four years ago a judge ruled that Wyoming's drug laws only deal with plant forms of marijuana which means that people with large amounts of edible marijuana could not face

felony charges. Law enforcement agencies have asked the legislature to address the matter, but it's been a tough battle. As Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck reports neither side has been willing to budge.

Time: 5 min

Date: 1-26-18 at 3pm and 1-28-18 at noon on WPR. 1-28-18 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: This week, after months of discussion, a legislative committee defeated a number of tax increase measures. The Joint Revenue Committee was hoping to find money to pay for a revenue shortfall that some thought could reach a billion dollars. Then the revenue picture improved just enough that taxes could be avoided. Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck reports that the state still lacks enough revenue to pay for its budget.

Time: 4:30 min

Date: 2-2-18 at 3pm and 2-4-18 at noon on WPR. 2-4-18 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Wyoming lawmakers have mixed reactions to the sweeping federal budget proposal President Trump released this week.

Time: 4 min

Date: 2-16-18 at 3pm and 2-18-18 at noon on WPR. 2-18-18 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: The Wyoming Legislative session is coming to an end and Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck joined Morning Edition host Caroline Ballard to discuss the lawmakers' progress.

Time: 7 min

3-9-18 at 7:45 am on WPR.

Topic: Reports that President Trump's pick to head the CIA oversaw the enhanced interrogation methods used under the Bush administration has sparked a debate about their validity in Congress. Matt Laslo reports from Washington that Wyoming Congresswoman Liz Cheney is defending them even as critics say they amount to torture.

Time: 5 min

Date: 3-23-18 at 3pm and 3-25-18 at noon on WPR. 3-25-18 at 9am on WPM.

Issue: Energy

Topic: President Donald Trump has used the term “clean coal” a lot lately, often when talking about bringing back the coal industry. But what does he actually mean when he says clean coal? In truth, it can mean a lot of different things. Without it, the industry faces a long, slow decline. In some places that really depend on coal, this concept of clean coal is really looked at as a holy grail. Madelyn Beck explains.

Time: 20 min

Date: 1-5-18 at 3pm and 1-7-18 at 11am on WPR. 1-7-18 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: A coal company and an oil and gas company are stuck in legal limbo over *who* has superior rights on overlapping federal leases in the Powder River Basin. Wyoming Public Radio’s Cooper McKim speaks with Cheyenne oil and gas attorney Kris Koski, who is not involved in the case, to give deeper analysis about what the controversy and potential resolution means for Wyoming.

Time: 6 min

Date: 1-12-18 at 3pm and 1-14-18 at noon on WPR. 1-14-18 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Counties are losing out on funds owed to them every year. This is money that helps pay for road maintenance, police, and education among other services. That money is supposed to come from mineral companies... but the system intended to collect those taxes is complicated, slow, and makes it easy for companies to pay late or not at all. Wyoming Public Radio’s Cooper McKim reports.

Time: 4 min

Date: 1-26-18 at 3pm and 1-28-18 at noon on WPR. 1-28-18 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: In northern Converse County, a semi-truck is pulling onto a highway from a rig site. It's rocking back and forth as 49 mile an hour sustained winds blow west. Many other trucks are parked in the lot as well, carrying oil, gravel, water and rig supplies. All this oil and gas activity is happening on Jay Butler’s ranch.

Time: 5 min

Date: 2-16-18 at 3pm and 2-18-18 at noon on WPR. 2-18-18 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Energy is always an issue in Wyoming's legislature... but this year the conversation revolves around money. Thirteen bills arose related to energy, with only four still moving through the system. If passed, the bills would impact wind development, oil and gas producers, and more. Wyoming Public Radio's Cooper McKim reports.

Time: 4 min

Date: 3-2-18 at 3pm and 3-4-18 at noon on WPR. 3-4-18 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Legislative controversy... how coal companies are paying for reclamation... and regulations around disposing coal ash. These are a few of the issues those in energy were talking about this past week. Wyoming Public Radio's Cooper McKim helps break down what all of it means in a back and forth with Connie Wilbert, the head of the Sierra Club's Wyoming Chapter.

Time: 6 min

Date: 3-9-18 at 3pm and 3-11-18 at noon on WPR. 3-11-18 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Self-bonding is a way for coal companies to guarantee clean-up costs without putting any money down. It's been long criticized for its risk to taxpayers. Now, the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality has released proposed rules that would *limit* self-bonding. While some are happy to see changes in progress, Wyoming Public Radio's Cooper McKim reports others say it's too strict.

Time: 5 min

Date: 3-23-18 at 3pm and 3-25-18 at noon on WPR. 3-25-18 at 9am on WPM.

Issue: Native American issues

Topic: Starting in 2006 - the state granted permission to a couple of tribes to hunt on federal public lands near Yellowstone National Park. This was due to a treaty that was agreed upon in 1855 that includes tribes from the Pacific Northwest. The Yakama Nation is the first tribe from Washington state to join in on the hunt. Those tribal members drew tags and recently travelled to Yellowstone to exercise their right to hunt buffalo on public land for the first time. Wyoming Public Radio's Kamila Kudelska joined in.

Time: 4 min

Date: 1-5-18 at 3pm and 1-7-18 at 11am on WPR. 1-7-18 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: After years of going without one, the University of Wyoming has hired a new Native American Program Director. Right now, Native American enrollment at UW is at an all-time low and many tribal students say that's because the campus isn't as welcoming as it could be. Wyoming Public Radio's Melodie Edwards sat down with ReINETTE Tendore to hear her own personal story of struggle as a student at UW.

Time: 7 min

Date: 1-12-18 at 3pm and 1-14-18 at noon on WPR. 1-14-18 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: The University of Wyoming is working hard to increase out-of-state enrollment, but they've also turned their attention to a group in-state. UW President Laurie Nichols wants to address the declining enrollment of Native American students. To do that, she opened a Native American Center and hired a Native American program advisor to make the campus more welcoming. And it worked. But as Wyoming Public Radio's Melodie Edwards reports, now there isn't enough money to fund all the interested students applying.

Time: 5 min

Date: 1-26-18 at 3pm and 1-28-18 at noon on WPR. 1-28-18 at 9am on WPM.

Issue: Economy

Topic: Last year the governor set up the Economically Needed Diversity Options for Wyoming Council...better known as ENDOW. After a few months of touring the state and meetings, ENDOW has developed a list of recommendations to start setting the stage for diversifying the economy. Greg Hill is the Chairman of Endow and he explains why ENDOW is different from past economic development efforts.

Time: 10 min

Date: 1-12-18 at 3pm and 1-14-18 at noon on WPR. 1-14-18 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Later this month the Wyoming legislature will be asked to consider a bill that will hopefully stabilize Wyoming's Air Service. Senate Vice President Michael Von Flatern is the main sponsor and he joins me to explain the concept.

Time: 6 min

Date: 2-2-18 at 3pm and 2-4-18 at noon on WPR. 2-4-18 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Topic: You may have heard a little about [Blockchain](#), but if some people in Wyoming have their way, you will learn a lot about it. Because according to these experts, legislation that Wyoming lawmakers are considering this year could open the floodgates for Blockchain businesses.

Time: 5 min

Date: 2-16-18 at 3pm and 2-18-18 at noon on WPR. 2-18-18 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: What do you get when three ranchers, a school teacher, a real estate agent, and one community development coordinator walk into a bank? In Guernsey, Wyoming--a possible solution to the affordable housing problem that's plaguing the nation. Wyoming Public Radio's Maggie Mullen has more.

Time: 5 min

Date: 3-2-18 at 3pm and 3-4-18 at noon on WPR. 3-4-18 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: As a small rural state, Wyoming isn't a huge player in commercial air service but many want to change that. Currently a bill working its way through the legislature proposes a new subsidy program that could create more reliable air service. Wyoming Public Radio's Kamila Kudelska takes a look at what the new approach entails and what one community thinks about it.

Time: 5 min

Date: 3-2-18 at 3pm and 3-4-18 at noon on WPR. 3-4-18 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: While budget cutting and education may have been in the headlines, the Wyoming legislature did pass a number of economic development measures this legislative session. Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck speaks with Jerimiah Rieman who is the Governor's Director of Economic Diversification Strategy and Initiatives.

Time: 5 min

Date: 3-9-18 at 3pm and 3-11-18 at noon on WPR. 3-11-18 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Cheyenne's local government has been putting a lot of work behind its Fight the Blight campaign to address a number of abandoned houses and run-down buildings. But efforts to clean those places up have indicated another problem—a lack of affordable housing.

Time: 4 min

Date: 3-9-18 at 3pm and 3-11-18 at noon on WPR. 3-11-18 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: The Wyoming legislature spent roughly \$40 million on a variety of economic development initiatives aimed at creating jobs and diversifying the economy. Some left the session very excited about what they did while others were anxious. Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 3-23-18 at 3pm and 3-25-18 at noon on WPR. 3-25-18 at 9am on WPM.

Issue: Education

Topic: The "Forever GI Bill" -- one of the bipartisan triumphs of 2017 significantly changes education benefits for service members and veterans. It eliminates a requirement that veterans use their benefits within 15-years of active-duty service. But as Wyoming Public Radio's education reporter Tennessee Watson discovers, supporting veterans in higher education is more complicated than just giving them more time.

Time: 5 min

Date: 1-12-18 at 3pm and 1-14-18 at noon on WPR. 1-14-18 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: The University of Wyoming wants to increase its student body. To do that, the trustees are looking at attracting more out-of-state students by decreasing their tuition. But does that mean the university has exhausted efforts to get more students from Wyoming to enroll? Wyoming Public Radio's education reporter Tennessee Watson spoke with Rose Martinelli, senior director with Huron Consulting, who's been working with UW's administration to help the university grow

Time: 6 min

Date: 1-26-18 at 3pm and 1-28-18 at noon on WPR. 1-28-18 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: 10 months and \$800,000 later, the Select Committee on School Finance Recalibration has completed its in-depth look at how Wyoming finances education. Consultants told lawmakers the current school funding model *works*, but pointed out areas for improvement. And their upgrades came with a cost. But despite that recommendation to spend more, lawmakers are opting to spend less. Wyoming Public Radio's education reporter Tennessee Watson follows up.

Time: 5 min

Date: 2-2-18 at 3pm and 2-4-18 at noon on WPR. 2-4-18 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: As lawmakers are discussing whether to add computer science and computational thinking to the state educational curriculum, they are looking to Powell as an example. Powell is one of only five school districts teaching computer science. Wyoming Public Radio's Kamila Kudelska takes a deeper dive into how their curriculum has developed and persisted through the years.

Time: 5 min

Date: 2-2-18 at 3pm and 2-4-18 at noon on WPR. 2-4-18 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: In his State of the State address, Governor Matt Mead urged the legislature to find ways to stabilize education funding, which relies heavily on revenues from the energy industry. But attempts to diversify the tax base — to protect school finance from booms and busts — have gone nowhere.

Time: 5 min

Date: 2-16-18 at 3pm and 2-18-18 at noon on WPR. 2-18-18 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: When school shootings occur, the country collectively asks: what needs to happen to keep students safe? What does it take to identify students who are struggling and get them support? Wyoming Public Radio's education reporter Tennessee Watson sat down with University of Wyoming Professor of Counseling Mary Alice Bruce and graduate student Ken Hilton to talk about how school counselors fit into the conversation about safe schools.

Time: 5 min

Date: 3-2-18 at 3pm and 3-4-18 at noon on WPR. 3-4-18 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Education was a main topic of discussion during most of the legislative session. As the legislature comes to a close, K-12 education took a \$30 million cut and a couple of constitutional amendments that could have done further damage failed. Senate Education Chairman Hank Coe and Senate Minority Leader Chris Rothfuss join Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck to size up what happened.

Time: 8 min

Date: 3-9-18 at 3pm and 3-11-18 at noon on WPR. 3-11-18 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: In an effort to curb the rising costs of K-12 education, the state legislature voted to cap spending on special education and directed the Wyoming Department of Education to come up with efficiencies. While educators agree there's room for improvements, they say Wyoming's rural nature complicates things. Wyoming Public Radio's education reporter Tennessee Watson takes a look.

6 min

Date: 3-23-18 at 3pm and 3-25-18 at noon on WPR. 3-23-18 at 9am on WPM.

Issue: Wildlife

Topic: With grizzly bears off of the endangered species list, many scientists view grizzlies as a success story. But the question remains, how does the bear successfully return to a heavily populated environment? Wyoming Public Radio's Kamila Kudelska looks at the history of grizzly management to possibly learn some lessons for how to handle grizzlies in the future.

Time: 5 min

Date: 1-26-18 at 3pm and 1-28-18 at noon on WPR. 1-28-18 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Wyoming might have hundreds of wolves now, but in the early 1990's there were only a handful. So National Geographic commissioned a husband and wife filmmaking team to take a creative approach: they raised the pack from pups and lived in the wilds amongst them. Wyoming Public Radio's Melodie Edwards spoke with Jim and Jamie Dutcher about their new book, *The Wisdom of Wolves: Lessons From The Sawtooth Pack*, on what they learned from living for six years with the wolves.

Time: 6 min

Date: 2-16-18 at 3pm and 2-18-18 at noon on WPR. 2-18-18 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Wyoming and most of the Western landscape are part of big game animal migrations. Recently thanks to the research of scientists - including Arthur Middleton of the University of California, Berkeley, it has been found these corridors contain important stopover habitats where the animals rest and find food. So - if these routes are blocked it would stop these animals ability to recover after a winter season. Wyoming Public Radio's Kamila Kudelska has more.

Time: 6 min

Date: 3-2-18 at 3pm and 3-4-18 at noon on WPR. 3-4-18 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Since the beginning of this year, there have been four criminal acts at the Stephen's Creek Facility in Yellowstone National Park. This facility is the central hub for the management of the Yellowstone Park bison herd. Bison or buffalo once roamed the American plains in the millions but today about 4,200 exist. Wyoming Public Radio's Kamila Kudelska reports.

Time: 4:30 min

Date: 3-30-18 at 3pm on WPR.

Topic: Turns out winter for those little fawns wasn't so bad. The smaller herd size meant deer had more to eat last summer, so they got fat and healthy. But winter isn't the only thing that makes survival hard. Energy development also takes its toll. Wyoming Public Radio's Tennessee Watson met back up with research scientist Sam Dwinnell at spring captures to learn more.

Time: 5:30 min

Date: 3-30-18 at 3pm on WPR.

Issue: Social issues

Topic: Most states have laws, or pending legislation, requiring that public schools teach sexual violence prevention. That leaves Wyoming as one of the few states with absolutely nothing on

the books. But the Wyoming Sexual Violence Prevention Council is working to fill this gap by supporting a growing network of local projects. Among them is a program that works with student athletes. Wyoming Public Radio's education reporter Tennessee Watson interviewed Bob Vines -- the Washakie County Victim/Witness Coordinator -- to find out more.

Time: 6 min

Date: 1-5-18 at 3pm and 1-7-18 at 11am on WPR. 1-7-18 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Back in November, conservative radio talk show host Dennis Prager spoke to a packed audience at the University of Wyoming. Many students weren't enthusiastic for him to come, calling some of his talk racist and sexist. In fact, they argued university money shouldn't be used to pay for such controversial speakers. As Wyoming Public Radio's Melodie Edwards reports for her series "I Respectfully Disagree," that's when students decided to host a public debate over THAT question.

Time: 7 min

Date: 1-12-18 at 3pm and 1-14-18 at noon on WPR. 1-14-18 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Jennet Nedirmammedova is a senior at the University of Wyoming. invited me into Her apartment, a couple of blocks from campus. It, is cozy – a couple of rooms with paintings on every wall. She cooks was cooking pasta, and offers me some as we sit down at a wooden table edging her kitchen and the stairway. Nedirmammedova came to Wyoming from Turkmenistan to study environmental science, and she has since added a second major in religious studies, plus two minors. She also works two jobs.

Time: 6 min

Date: 2-16-18 at 3pm and 2-18-18 at noon on WPR. 2-18-18 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: This year the Wyoming legislature is dealing with a couple of pro-gun bills. So what else is new? It seems like lawmakers are discussing gun bills all the time, but supporters of the legislation say that's because there are still self-defense and safety issues that need to be resolved. Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 3-2-18 at 3pm and 3-4-18 at noon on WPR. 3-4-18 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Last fall, students walked out of class and gathered in protest of the University of Wyoming's handling of sexual assault. The 45 or so students delivered a letter to President Laurie Nichols explaining how the current practices made them feel frustrated, and unsafe. One of those students recently filed a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, asking the federal government to investigate UW and its Army ROTC program. Wyoming Public Radio's education reporter Tennessee Watson has more.

Time: 5 min

Date: 3-9-18 at 3pm and 3-11-18 at noon on WPR. 3-11-18 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: The country's debate over immigration is escalating, and now it's arrived in Wyoming. A private company wants to build an immigration detention center on the outskirts of Evanston on Wyoming's western border. This was met with great celebration by many local folks like Uinta County Commissioner Craig Welling. To him, it means jobs.

Time: 7 min

Date: 3-23-18 at 3pm and 3-25-18 at noon on WPR. 3-25-18 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: But lawmakers didn't spend all their time reining in spending. Advocates for victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence are celebrating some big wins after this year's legislative session. Wyoming Public Radio's Caroline Ballard spoke with Tara Muir, the public policy director for the Wyoming Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, who has been characterizing this session in two different ways.

Time: 6 min

Date: 3-23-18 at 3pm and 3-25-18 at noon on WPR. 3-25-18 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: This weekend, hundreds of thousands of teens are expected to march on D.C. and around the country calling for gun control. Today we're going to hear from two students in Montana and Wyoming who do NOT plan to march and are worried stricter gun control could change their way of life.

Time: 5 min

Date: 3-23-18 at 3pm and 3-25-18 at noon on WPR. 3-25-18 at 9am on WPM.

Issue: Environment

Topic: When you look at the Medicine Bow National Forest in southern Wyoming, you see patches of brown – casualties of bark beetles –bugs that kill trees. Even though it's been over five years since the epidemic peaked, the forest is still full of these dead trees. The Forest Service has created a proposal to help “clean up” up these areas more efficiently. But as Wyoming Public Radio's Alanna Elder reports, not everyone agrees on how to do that.

Time: 5 min

Date: 2-2-18 at 3pm and 2-4-18 at noon on WPR. 2-4-18 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Last year, Governor Matt Mead assembled a task force to figure out how Wyoming's bountiful outdoor recreation could boost the state's economy. One way the group identified was to create more access to open space right on the outskirts of towns so local businesses could benefit. As Wyoming Public Radio's Melodie Edwards reports, now the community of Laramie is working to do just that.

Time: 5 min

Date: 3-2-18 at 3pm and 3-4-18 at noon on WPR. 3-4-18 at 9am on WPM.

Issue: Health care

Topic: A study of seven rural states by the Bipartisan Policy Center found that there are challenges to health care delivery. One of the states it studied was Wyoming which has fewer doctors, higher workplace deaths...and problems with substance abuse. Heidi Schultz is the Rural Healthcare Program officer for the center. She tells me that the doctor shortage is a concern.

Time: 5 min

Date: 1-26-18 at 3pm and 1-28-18 at noon on WPR. 1-28-18 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Wyoming Governor Matt Mead was in Washington for the National Governors Association Meeting and the nations opioid crisis was a central focus. Washington Correspondent Matt Laslo caught up with him and has this story.

Time: 4 min

Date: 3-2-18 at 3pm and 3-4-18 at noon on WPR. 3-4-18 at 9am on WPM.

Issue: Rural

Topic: Ranchers across the west, on average, are nearing the age of retirement. But passing a ranch or farm down the familial line isn't as easy as simply writing it into a will. Poor planning can mean losing your property entirely... leaving huge tracts of rural land to development or corporate agriculture. Wyoming Public Radio's Cooper McKim reports what it means for ranchers to prepare their livelihoods for the next generation.

Time: 5 min

Date: 2-2-18 at 3pm and 2-4-18 at noon on WPR. 2-4-18 at 9am on WPM.

Issue: Arts and culture

Topic: Monday, nine members of the Cheyenne Capital Chorale will be performing the works of Sir Karl Jenkins at the famed Carnegie Hall in New York City. Wyoming Public Radio's Annie Osburn spoke with Chorale Board Member Barb Boyer about the uniqueness of the trip.

Time: 5 min

Date: 1-12-18 at 3pm and 1-14-18 at noon on WPR. 1-14-18 at 9am on WPM.