

Issues List 2nd Quarter 2016 - Wyoming Public Media

Issue: Economy

Topic: Last week, the country's two biggest coal mines each laid off roughly 15 percent of their workers... about 500 people. The layoffs come on the heels of a number of major coal bankruptcies and are the latest sign the industry is in rough shape... But as Wyoming Public Radio's Stephanie Joyce reports, things are likely going to get worse for coal before they get better.

Time: 5 min

Date: 4/8/16 at 3pm and 4/10/16 at noon on WPR. 4/10/16 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Wyoming's powerful coal industry is starting to feel the full force of the market's decline. Three of the state's four largest producers are now in bankruptcy. Last month, two of the country's largest coal mines- both in Wyoming's Powder River Basin- laid off 15% of their workers. And that's on top of hard times in both oil and gas. As the state's energy booms go bust, Wyoming is facing the colossal task of having to replace some- or live with less- of its main economic drivers. Inside Energy's Leigh Paterson reports from Gillette, Wyoming's coal capital.

Time: 5 min

Date: 4/22/15 at 3pm and 4/24/16 at noon on WPR. 4/24/16 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Wyoming's revenue picture is dire. Thanks to declining energy and sales tax revenue Governor Mead has already started cutting nearly 300 million dollars from the two-year budget that was approved by the legislature in March.

Time: 4 min

Date: 5/20/16 at 3pm and 5/22/16 at noon on WPR. 5/22/16 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: The poorest among us pay more than they can afford for their utility bills and energy assistance programs struggle to meet the demand. Wyoming decided to drop its funding for the program. Dan Boyce reports.

Time: 4 min

Date: 5/20/16 at 3pm and 5/22/16 at noon on WPR. 5/22/16 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Earlier this year, on a conference call with investors, Cloud Peak CEO Colin Marshall shocked those tuned in with a frank admission. He said that coal will no longer provide -- quote -- “baseload power.” Stephanie Joyce explains why that admission was so shocking.

Time: 4 min

Date: 6/10/16 at 3pm and 6/12/16 at noon on WPR. 6/12/16 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Wyoming is facing difficult economic times. Last year, the state lost 6,500 jobs, mostly in oil and gas, and things haven't much better this year. State government is making major reductions and even Wyoming Medical Center in Casper cut 58 positions. Wyoming Public Radio's Maggie Mullen reports that right now is a tough time for University of Wyoming's graduates to enter the job force, particularly if they want to stay in the state.

Time: 4 min

Date: 6/17/16 at 3pm and 6/19/16 at noon on WPR. 6/19/16 at 9am on WPM.

Issue: Education

Topic: There's a lot going on at Wyoming's 7 community colleges. Tuition hikes, a new funding formula, and a budget crunch. The colleges are also poised to play a big role in the state's economic recovery. Wyoming lost more than 2 percent of its jobs last year. And just last week, nearly 500 coal workers were laid off in the Powder River Basin.

Jim Rose is the executive director of the Wyoming Community College Commission. Wyoming Public Radio's Aaron Schrank sat down with Dr. Rose—and started by asking how community colleges will help retrain workers amid the downturn.

Time: 7 min

Date: 4/8/16 at 3pm and 4/10/16 at noon on WPR. 4/10/16 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Thanks to a recent energy boom, Wyoming ranks among the top K-12 spenders per-student. But as oil and gas prices drop, and coal companies declare bankruptcy, the Cowboy State's school funding future is in jeopardy. Wyoming Public Radio's Aaron Schrank reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 5/6/16 at 3pm and 5/8/16 at noon on WPR. 5/8/16 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Last month, a guest speaker was invited to promote abstinence until marriage in Teton County classrooms, but it was called off after some parents complained. Then, others objected to the *cancellation*. Weeks later, the community is urging its school board to clarify what's appropriate. As Wyoming Public Radio's Aaron Schrank reports, the episode shows just how controversial sex education can be—especially in a state without clear standards for how to teach it.

Time: 5 min

Date: 5/13/16 at 3pm and 5/15/16 at noon on WPR. 5/15/16 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: How to get women interested in computer science is a question many universities are still grappling with. The University of Wyoming is doing pretty well in that area. Around 20 percent of its 283 computer science students are women – slightly higher than the national average. But, at least according to one Freshman, one thing that could make the field even more appealing to women, is creating an environment where it's ok to admit what you don't know. Wyoming Public Radio's Caroline Ballard reports.

Time: 4 min

Date: 5/13/16 at 3pm and 5/15/16 at noon on WPR. 5/15/16 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: The Albany County school board is taking action to become the first in the state to pass a policy to protect transgender students. Now amid national attention the school board is dragging its feet. Wyoming Public Radio's Aaron Schrank says a transgender student is now running for the school board to salvage that policy.

Time: 5 min

Date: 5/20/16 at 3pm and 5/22/16 at noon on WPR. 5/22/16 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Data released this week by the U.S. Department of Education shows that Wyoming schools refer students to law enforcement at rates twice the national average. That's as, in the wake high-profile tragedies, more schools hire armed police officers to patrol their hallways. As Wyoming Public Radio's Aaron Schrank reports, these student run-ins with the law have unintended consequences.

Time: 5 min

Date: 6/10/16 at 3pm and 6/12/16 at noon on WPR. 6/12/16 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: As more schools make safety and security a priority, School Resource Officers—or SROs—have become the fastest growing job in law enforcement. External threats are rare—and most research suggests that putting cops in schools actually has a negative impact on education. But proponents say, the good officers do for schools and communities can't always be measured. Wyoming Public Radio's Aaron Schrank spent a day with some SROs and has this report.

Time: 5 min

Date: 6/17/16 at 3pm and 6/19/16 at noon on WPR. 6/17/16 at 9am on WPM.

Issue: Energy

Topic: The largest coal producer in Wyoming declared bankruptcy this week. Companies like Arch Coal, and Alpha Natural Resources have done so as well over the past year, but this filing is particularly symbolic of the industry's struggles, because of the company's size. Peabody Energy is the largest privately-owned coal company in the world. Our Inside Energy reporter Leigh Paterson joins me here in the studio.

Time: 5 min

Date: 4/15/16 at 3pm and 4/17/16 at noon on WPR. 4/17/16 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: A North Dakota museum has temporarily closed a Smithsonian exhibit on renewable energy and sustainability after receiving complaints from the fossil fuel industry. As Inside Energy's Emily Guerin reports, the controversy is reminiscent of what happened at University of Wyoming in 2012, when the school removed a climate change themed-sculpture after protests from the coal industry.

Time: 4 min

Date: 4/15/16 at 3pm and 4/17/16 at noon on WPR. 4/17/16 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Picture the wind turbine technician, a worker with a hard hat and climbing harness perched atop a tall white tower, making sure those power-generating blades are spinning just right. That job, maintaining wind turbines--that's the fastest growing profession in the country right now. Inside Energy reporter Dan Boyce puts that in context.

Time: 4 min

Date: 4/24/16 at 3pm and 4/26/16 at noon on WPR. 4/26 /16 at 9am on WPM

Topic: America's coal industry is hurting. Bad. Thousands of workers have been laid off and a majority of the country's major coal companies have filed for bankruptcy. Coal production is at 30-year low. To understand just how stark that dropoff is, Inside Energy's Jordan Wirfs-Brock tries an experiment.

Time: 3 min

Date: 5/6/16 at 3pm and 5/8/16 at noon on WPR. 5/8/16 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Prices for coal, oil, and gas are all way down. Global concern over climate change is growing. We're adding more renewables into the mix. The way we produce and consume energy is changing. So there are some big decisions to be made on the future of energy in the U.S. Today we're bringing you a special segment about the politics and policy of energy.

Time: 5 min

Date: 5/6/16 at 3pm and 5/8/16 at noon on WPR. 5/8/16 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Some of the world's biggest data companies—Google, Microsoft and Facebook—have joined a new coalition that is pushing for easier access to renewable energy. Through that push, they are trying to change the nation's energy landscape— even in states that haven't fully embraced that change. For Inside Energy, Wyoming Public Radio's Stephanie Joyce reports.

Time: 4 min

Date: 6/10/16 at 3pm and 6/12/16 at noon on WPR. 6/12/16 at 9am on WPM.

Issue: Parks and outdoors

Last month, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced they were moving forward with de-listing Yellowstone area grizzly bears from the Endangered Species List. The news raised the hackles of many wildlife advocates.

It's not the first time grizzlies have made headlines though, and not even the second time. Just read the classic children's book *Wahb: The Biography of a Grizzly*, written way back in 1900 by

Ernest Thompson Seton. President Roosevelt once called Seton a “nature faker” for attributing human feelings to wild animals.

Two Wyoming authors edited a new version of the book, Jeremy Johnston and Charles Preston, both curators at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West in Cody. Wyoming Public Radio's Melodie Edwards talked to Preston about how the novel got grizzlies right as well as how it sometimes missed its mark.

Time: 7 min

Date: 4/8/16 at 3pm and 4/10/16 at noon on WPR. 4/10/16 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Earlier this month, a federal court in Montana sided with wildlife advocates, saying the U.S. Fish and Wildlife needs to do more to protect wolverines from climate change. Recently, Wyoming Public Radio's Melodie Edwards took a snowmobile ride into Wyoming's wolverine country to find out how the species is doing here.

Time: 4 min

Date: 4/15/16 at 3pm and 4/17/16 at noon on WPR. 4/17/16 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Wyoming's Game and Fish Department and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are planning a historic venture this summer. They hope to bring black-footed ferrets back to Meeteetse, where they were found 35 years ago when the species was thought to be extinct.

Time: 4 min

Date: 4/15/16 at 3pm and 4/17/16 at noon on WPR. 4/17/16 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: To mark the National Parks Service Centennial this year, National Geographic Magazine is devoting its entire May issue to the country's first national park – Yellowstone. Charlie Hamilton James is one of the photographers whose work will be featured in the issue. His niche is aquatic wildlife photography – animals like cutthroat trout, beavers, and otters. James is from the UK and relocated to Jackson for a year to shoot these pictures in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. He told Wyoming Public Radio's Caroline Ballard that while he was here he took his family on some classic western road trips.

Time: 6 min

Date: 4/24/16 at 3pm and 4/26/16 at noon on WPR. 4/26/16 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Lately, it seems like seed libraries are sprouting up all over Wyoming. At least four public libraries that usually lend books will soon lend seeds too. You plant them at home, grow them, and when they produce seeds of their own, you return *those* seeds to the library for the next guy. As Wyoming Public Radio's Melodie Edwards reports, Wyoming's seed library boom comes as some states have been cracking down on them.

Time: 5 min

Date: 5/6/16 at 3pm and 5/8/16 at noon on WPR. 5/8/16 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: This week federal officials said that a dry spring has them concerned that there could be a serious summer fire season in the western United States. Of course, few of us in Wyoming understand what a dry spring looks like. Bill Crapser is Wyoming's state forester. He spoke with Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck.

Time: 5 min

Date: 5/20/16 at 3pm and 5/22/16 at noon on WPR. 5/22/16 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Everywhere you look on the McNeil elk feed ground west of Bondurant, you see the bones and hides of dead elk. Rancher Steve Robertson says many are left behind from wolf kills. He tells of seeing elk chased by wolves here just this last winter. Melodie Edwards reports that has led to discussions of getting rid of feed grounds.

Time: 5 min

Date: 5/20/16 at 3pm and 5/22/16 at noon on WPR. 5/22/16 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: An Oregon man is killed when he slips into a hot springs hundreds of yard off the boardwalk in Norris Geyser Basin. A Canadian tourist is fined \$735 for picking up a bison calf that had to be euthanized. Another group of Canadians faces criminal charges for filming themselves walking on Grand Prismatic Spring. Two visitors have died already this summer season, but the risky behavior continues. Penny Preston reports.

Time: 4 min

Date: 6/10/16 at 3pm and 6/12/16 at noon on WPR. 6/12/16 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: The Buford Ranch pond is barely more than a puddle on the Laramie plains, but it happens to be critical habitat for the Wyoming toad. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service released over 900 of these endangered toads earlier this month. Some say the Wyoming toad is the most endangered amphibian in North America. Wyoming Public Radio's Melodie Edwards reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 6/17/16 at 3pm and 6/19/16 at noon on WPR. 6/19/16 at 9am on WPM.

Issue: Health

Topic: Many homes or apartments in Wyoming are contaminated by methamphetamine and if you move into one of those places, you may not know it. It can lead to health problems and be expensive to clean up. Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck reports that Wyoming is one of the few states that does not require disclosure of a meth-contaminated home.

Time: 5 min

Date: 4/15/16 at 3pm and 4/17/16 at noon on WPR. 4/17/16 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Due to a massive drop in projected revenues, the Governor is trying to cut spending for the next two-year budget cycle by eight percent. He said he is trying to cut spending levels back to where they were ten years ago. The University of Wyoming has already started working on a cut of near 40 million dollars and the largest cut will likely come from the Wyoming Department of Health. Tom Forslund is the Director of the Department and Bob Beck met with him in Cheyenne to discuss what that kind of cut means.

Time: 8 min

Date: 5/20/16 at 3pm and 5/22/16 at noon on WPR. 5/22/16 at 9am on WPM.

Issue: Politics

Topic: The U.S. Senate put its partisan tendencies aside this week and passed a sweeping bill aimed at modernizing the U.S. energy sector. Matt Laslo reports from Washington the bill includes provisions that could help the state's ailing energy industry.

Time: 5 min

Date: 4/22/16 at 3pm and 4/24/16 at noon on WPR. 4/24/16 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: In coming weeks we will speak with candidates for the U.S. House of Representatives about a variety of issues and provide stories about topics of interest. We begin our series with Republican Liz Cheney. Cheney is the daughter of former Vice President Dick Cheney who also was Wyoming's congressman. Ms. Cheney has been an attorney, she's worked in the U.S. State Department where she worked on U.S. policy in the Middle East. She also was a Fox news contributor and co-authored a book with her father. Today we talk about energy issues, specifically coal.

Time: 10 min

Date: 4/22/16 at 3pm and 4/24/16 at noon on WPR. 4/24/16 at 9am on WPM

Topic: When senators return to Washington on Monday they'll resume work on an Energy and Water spending bill which is important to Wyoming but has been stalled over a foreign policy dispute. But Matt Laslo reports from Washington that Wyoming lawmakers are hoping it marks a new day for handling spending bills in a timely fashion, though at least one hurdle remains.

Time: 5 min

Date: 5/6/16 at 3pm and 5/8/16 at noon on WPR. 5/8/16 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: State Representative Tim Stubson is the third-ranking member of the Wyoming House of Representatives and a member of the legislature's Joint Appropriations Committee. His next move is to try and replace U.S. Representative Cynthia Lummis and become Wyoming's next Congressman. Stubson is also a Casper attorney. He joins us to discuss a couple of key issues starting with the declining coal market.

Time: 10 min

Date: 5/6/16 at 3pm and 5/8/16 at noon on WPR. 5/8/16 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Donald Trump wasn't the first choice of Wyoming's congressional delegation, but now that he's the presumed Republican nominee, they're all embracing him in their own way. Matt Laslo reports from Washington on the debate in the GOP over their party's controversial standard bearer.

Time: 5 min

Date: 5/13/16 at 3pm and 5/15/16 at noon on WPR. 5/15/16 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: State Senator Leland Christensen is among the Republican candidates hoping to replace Congressman Cynthia Lummis in the U.S. House of Representatives. Lummis announced late last year that she would not seek re-election and it led to a surge of interest in her seat. Christensen has an extensive political background as both a Teton County Commissioner and a State Senator. Currently, he chairs the Senate Judiciary Committee. He served as a law enforcement officer for 20 years and in the military for 15 years. Like many of the candidates, he told me he thinks the Obama administration has hurt Wyoming through regulations, especially the energy industry.

Time: 10 min

Date: 5/13/16 at 3pm and 5/15/16 at noon on WPR. 5/15/16 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Wyoming Democratic U.S. House Candidate Ryan Greene is a Rock Springs native who brings an interesting background to the race. Greene works in the energy industry. Greene is one of two candidates seeking the Democratic nomination to become Wyoming's next congressman. He says he got into the race to help the energy industry recover and to create jobs. Greene tells Bob Beck that you do that diversifying both within and outside the energy industry.

Time: 10 min

Date: 6/10/16 at 3pm and 6/12/16 at noon on WPR. 6/12/16 at 9am on WPM

Topic: Wyoming Democratic U.S. House Candidate Ryan Greene is a Rock Springs native who brings an interesting background to the race. Greene works in the energy industry. Greene is one of two candidates seeking the Democratic nomination to become Wyoming's next congressman.

He says he got into the race to help the energy industry recover and to create jobs. Greene tells Bob Beck that you do that diversifying both within and outside the energy industry.

Time: 10 min

Date: 6/10/16 at 3pm and 6/12/16 at noon on WPR. 6/12/16 at 9am on WPM

Topic: In the wake of the tragic slayings in Orlando last weekend, gun-control unexpectedly dominated Congress this week. Matt Laslo reports from Washington on why Wyoming lawmakers think the debate is misguided.

Time: 5 min

Date: 6/17/16 at 3pm and 6/19/16 at noon on WPR. 6/19/16 at 9am on WPM

Topic: While many Wyoming voters are paying attention to the U.S. House race, the state's legislative races will be among the most competitive in the nation. Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 6/17/16 at 3pm and 6/19/16 at noon on WPR. 6/19/16 at 9am on WPM

Issue: Native American Issues

Topic: Last year at a Riverton detox center, a white city parks worker shot two Northern Arapahoe men, killing one. Tribal leadership lobbied for the killer to be charged with a hate crime and pointed to a trend in *widespread* bigotry against Native Americans in the town. Riverton's Police Department decided to take a new approach: hiring someone who could investigate discrimination. As Wyoming Public Radio's Aaron Schrank reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 4/8/16 at 3pm and 4/10/16 at noon on WPR. 4/10/16 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Next month, Laurie Nichols will take over as President of the University of Wyoming. She says one of her priorities is building deeper relationships with the tribes on the Wind River Reservation. As Wyoming Public Radio's Aaron Schrank reports, many hope new leadership means UW will do a better job enrolling, supporting and graduating Native American students.

Time: 5 min

Date: 4/15/16 at 3pm and 4/17/16 at noon on WPR. 4/17/16 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: April is sexual assault awareness month...a good time to talk with the editor of a new book being handed out for free to Native women around the country called *What To Do When You're Raped*. Comanche member Charon Esetoyer is the director of the Native American Women's Health Education Resource Center. Melodie Edwards talked to her about how the book offers straight talk to Native girls and women.

Time: 5 min

Date: 4/24/16 at 3pm and 4/26/16 at noon on WPR. 4/26/16 at 9am on WPM.

Issue: Business

Topic: The Panama Papers data leak revealed that millionaires and others may be hiding assets in shell companies around the world. Wyoming's secretary of state says 24 of the businesses mentioned in the Papers are registered here. Bob Beck reports on how that state's tax laws make it a tax haven.

Time: 4 min

Date: 4/8/16 at 3pm and 4/10/16 at noon on WPR. 4/10/16 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Environmentalists, lawmakers, coal miners, and advocates of all types gathered to have their say at a public meeting this week, in Casper, Wyo, hosted by the Department of the Interior (DOI). Like most discussions of the future of coal, the debate was passionate and polarize

Time: 4 min

Date: 5/20/16 at 3pm and 5/22/16 at noon on WPR. 5/22/16 at 9am on WPM.