

Issues List 4th Quarter 2015 – Wyoming Public Media

ISSUE: Coal

Topic: In Wyoming, as in other coal-dependent states, climate change is sometimes outright denied or more often, simply ignored. But its effect in Wyoming is unavoidable. Demand for coal is shrinking, as is the state's revenue from it. And so Wyoming is looking to work with other coal giants like China to figure out what to do with coal, aside from burn it. Inside Energy's Leigh Paterson reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 10-16-15 at 3pm and 10-18-15 at noon on WPR. 10-18-15 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: How much coal does a Wyoming coal miner mine? Quite a bit less than he used to, it turns out. Regulations have received most of the blame for coal's current dire straits but that's not the whole story: it's also getting more expensive to mine in the nation's largest coal producing state. Wyoming Public Radio's Stephanie Joyce reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 10-16-15 at 3pm and 10-18-15 at noon on WPR. 10-18-15 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Wyoming has started looking for new ways to use coal, beyond simply burning it for power. The state is also starting to look at new ways to use a coal byproduct that has become a serious liability: carbon dioxide. The recently announced, 20 million dollar Carbon X-Prize is intended to spur innovators to address that very problem. Wyoming Public Radio's Stephanie Joyce sat down with Paul Bunje of the X-Prize Foundation to learn more.

Time: 7 min

Date: 10-16-15 at 3pm and 10-18-15 at noon on WPR. 10-18-15 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: In south-central Montana, plans are underway to get more coal out of the ground and onto ships headed to Asia. The Crow Tribe of Montana and Cloud Peak Energy of Wyoming are partnering to develop a new coal mine on the reservation and to open a new export terminal in Washington's Puget Sound. Although coal prices are in decline and a protest movement is growing, the Crow are undeterred. For them, coal equals survival. Amy Martin visited the Crow reservation and has this report.

Time: 4 min

Date: 10-23-15 at 3pm and 10-25-15 at noon on WPR. 10-25-15 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: In Wyoming, over 170 thousand acres of land is currently dug up and built on for mining operations. Mine reclamation...filling those pits with dirt and then recreating the ecosystem that once was is expensive. Inside Energy has found that Wyoming has three billion dollars in outstanding mine clean up costs, over two billion of that isn't backed up with cash. And so, as the dramatic fall of the coal industry rapidly advances, Inside Energy's Leigh Paterson reports that the state is ground zero when it comes to the fate of our massive coal mine clean-up costs.

Time: 4 min

Date: 11-13-15 at 3pm and 11-15-15 at noon on WPR. 11-15-15 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: North Dakota doesn't produce anywhere near as much coal as Wyoming. But the state's coal industry still feeling the heat from the Clean Power Plan, which targets carbon dioxide emissions from power plants. Under the final version of the plan, North Dakota will have to cut its emissions more any other state except Montana. Both Wyoming and North Dakota are suing to stop the plan. Inside Energy's Emily Guerin reports.

Time: 4 min

Date: 11-20-15 at 3pm and 11-22-15 at noon on WPR. 11-22-15 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Today, nearly 40% of all coal produced in the U.S. comes from Wyoming. In order to access that coal, companies use huge machines to move dirt out of the way. That means a lot of land, over 170 thousand acres, is currently dug up by mining operations in the state. And reclaiming it- restoring it to what it once was- is expensive. As the health of the coal industry declines, the ability of coal companies to pay for future mine clean up is in question. Our Inside Energy reporter Leigh Paterson sat down with Todd Parfitt, the Director of the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality, to talk about coal mine reclamation.

Time: 7 min

Date: 12-4-15 at 3pm and 12-6-15 at noon on WPR. 12-6-15 at 9am on WPM.

Issue: Oil, Gas, and other energy issues.

Topic: Some of the best places in America to see the starry night sky also happen to be the best places to drill for oil. As oil development exploded in recent years, so has the amount of light pollution. Our Inside Energy reporter Emily Guerin has the story.

Time: 4 min

Date: 10-23-15 at 3pm and 10-25-15 at noon on WPR. 10-25-15 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Wyoming's congressional delegation is joining arms with most Republicans in Congress as the GOP tries to derail the global climate change talks in Paris at the end of the month. Matt Laslo reports on the battle raging in Washington that will be felt across Wyoming.

Time: 5 min

Date: 11-20-15 at 3pm and 11-22-15 at noon on WPR. 11-22-15 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: From the farm to our tables, there's an enormous amount of energy that goes into growing, transporting, processing and eventually preparing our food: up to a fifth of our nation's total energy use. Wyoming Public Radio's Energy and Natural Resources Reporter Stephanie Joyce reports the energy inputs into our food are often hidden.

Time: 5 min

Date: 11-20-15 at 3pm and 11-22-15 at noon on WPR. 11-22-15 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: This month, global leaders are gathered in Paris to make a plan to combat climate change. There is broad scientific consensus that climate change is real, serious and caused by humans. But political consensus in this country has been elusive and clouded by doubt. Over the years, climate denial arguments have changed, but as Wyoming Public Radio's Stephanie Joyce reports, the results stayed the same: blocking action on climate change.

Time: 5 min

Date: 12-4-15 at 3pm and 12-6-15 at noon on WPR. 12-6-15 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: It takes a lot of energy to produce the food we eat, but technologies are improving to give some of that energy back to us after we're finished with it. Dan Boyce tells us about the potential fuel we are literally flushing down our toilets.

Time: 5 min

Date: 12-11-15 at 3pm and 12-13-15 at noon on WPR. 12-13-15 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Wyoming has long considered itself a leader in carbon management... how to capture and store carbon. And with the world's attention focused on the climate talks in Paris, the question of how to keep carbon out of the atmosphere has never been more pertinent. Kipp Coddington is the new head of the University of Wyoming's Carbon Management Institute, and he sat down with Wyoming Public Radio's Stephanie Joyce to talk about the future of carbon storage technologies.

Time: 6 min

Date: 12-11-15 at 3pm and 12-13-15 at noon on WPR. 12-13-15 at 9am on WPM.

Topics: Carbon dioxide emissions have a pretty bad rap these days. The Paris Climate summit brought together delegations from all over the world in an effort to cut carbon emissions and avoid catastrophic global warming. But right now the dirtiest fuel - coal -- still supplies nearly 40% of the electricity in the U.S. and in even more in many developing countries. The good news is this gas isn't ALWAYS destructive. CO2 can actually be turned into a building block to make all sorts of products that we use every day. Our Inside Energy reporter Leigh Paterson has more on the furious race to capture carbon in the fight against climate change.

Time: 4 min

Date: 12-11-15 at 3pm and 12-13-15 at noon on WPR. 12-13-15 at 9am on WPM.

ISSUE: Natural Resources

Topic: The National Parks Service celebrates its Centennial next year. To mark the occasion, National Geographic Magazine is devoting its May 2016 issue solely to the country's first national park – Yellowstone. And not only is this issue focused on one place, all of the content has been written by just one author – a first for the publication. David Quammen is the writer and journalist who has been tasked with this feat. He tells Wyoming Public Radio's Caroline Ballard he got involved at the brainstorming stage, and thought he'd perhaps like to write one article for the issue.

Time: 6 min

Date: 10-16-15 at 3pm and 10-18-15 at noon on WPR. 10-18-15 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Wyoming's Red Desert for some should be left alone for its natural beauty. For others, it should be open to use for resources like energy and grazing. But those two different ways of seeing the desert can create conflicts for the BLM with how to manage it. As one of a two-part series on the Red Desert, Wyoming Public Radio's Melodie Edwards took a flight over the area to see how wild the place really is.

Time: 5 min

Date: 10-16-15 at 3pm and 10-18-15 at noon on WPR. 10-18-15 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: When you think of Wyoming landscape art, it's probably NOT of fracking sites or abandoned man camps. But two Laramie artists feel it's time to take a hard look at ALL of Wyoming's landscapes. For the second part of her series on the Red Desert, Wyoming Public Radio's Melodie Edwards camped out at a desert studio, somewhere north of Wamsutter.

Time: 4 min

Date: 10-23-15 at 3pm and 10-25-15 at noon on WPR. 10-25-15 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: If the entire Greenland ice cap were to melt, scientists predict sea levels would rise more than 20 feet. Climate change is speeding up melting of the ice sheet, but it's not clear by how much. The New York Times recently profiled one of the few research projects taking direct measurements to answer that question. One of the researchers is University of Wyoming graduate student Brandon Overstreet. He's a doctoral candidate in hydrology. Overstreet told Wyoming Public Radio's Stephanie Joyce that the purpose of the research is to figure out how much meltwater from the surface of the ice sheet is actually making its way to the ocean.

Time: 7 min

Date: 11-6-15 at 3pm and 11-8-15 at noon on WPR. 11-8-15 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: 25 years ago, there were more than half a million mule deer in Wyoming. Now that number's dropped to 360-thousand... and no one can quite figure out why. Many wildlife biologists say human development is, literally, getting in their way. Wyoming Public Radio's Melodie Edwards reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 11-20-15 at 3pm and 11-22-15 at noon on WPR. 11-22-15 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: The West has been struggling with drought for a decade and a half, putting a serious strain on states along the Colorado River. Wyoming is in a special position since the Green River

flowing from the Wind River Range is actually the main branch of the Colorado. And, as Wyoming Public Radio's Melodie Edwards reports, its one reason governor Mead wants to build 10 small reservoirs in the state in the next ten years to save water for Wyoming's use before it flows away to other states.

Time: 5 min

Date: 12-4-15 at 3pm and 12-6-15 at noon on WPR. 12-6-15 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Imagine buying a house but, when you go to move in, the whole family bickers about who should get which bedroom, how to arrange the furniture, whether to landscape or not. And since no one can decide, you just...let the house sit empty. That's kind of what happened back in the early 90's with 45 pieces of land around Wyoming designated as Wilderness Study Areas. The studying was complete 25 years ago, but since then, no one's been able to agree whether to officially make them wilderness, or let them be used for other purposes. Wyoming Public Radio's Melodie Edwards reports on a new strategy called the Wyoming Public Lands Initiative that's built on a novel concept...quit waiting for Congress to act and let the locals decide.

Time: 5 min

Date: 12-11-15 at 3pm and 12-13-15 at noon on WPR. 12-13-15 at 9am on WPM.

ISSUE: Health

Topic: To put it mildly, eliminating smoking from bars has been in tough in Casper. Since 2000 the Casper City Council has twice approved smoking bans, they were both overturned. Now the issue is up for another vote. The public has a chance to undo the council's support of smoking in bars in November. Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck says it's being framed as a battle of business rights versus health.

Time: 5 min

Date: 10-16-15 at 3pm and 10-18-15 at noon on WPR. 10-18-15 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: The Joint Revenue Committee will tackle a health bill next week. The committee will whether to raise the state tobacco tax. A dollar increase would raise 20 million dollars but the hope is that it will also curtail smoking. Jason Mincer is the government relations director for the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network. He told Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck that his organization is strongly in favor of increasing the tax.

Time: 5 min

Date: 11-13-15 at 3pm and 11-15-15 at noon on WPR. 11-15-15 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: November is Diabetes Awareness Month, and the percentage of Wyoming adults with diabetes has nearly doubled in the last 15 years. That's causing concern at the Wyoming Department of Health, where Chronic Disease Epidemiologist Joe Grandpre has been watching the situation unfold. Wyoming Public Radio's Caroline Ballard checked in with Grandpre to find out why diabetes is a growing problem.

Time: 5 min

Date: 11-13-15 at 3pm and 11-15-15 at noon on WPR. 11-15-15 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: It's been a bad year for concussions for the University of Wyoming football team. And everyone involved with Cowboy football admits that's a lot. With all of the attention paid to concussions these days, UW officials say they are looking closely at the situation. But as Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck reports...sometimes there is little you can do.

Time: 5 min

Date: 11-20-15 at 3pm and 11-22-15 at noon on WPR. 11-22-15 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Thursday night the U.S. Senate voted to repeal so-called Obamacare – no, don't tune out. We know Republicans have done that dozens of times, but this time is different, or so they say. This 'repeal' is expected to make it to President Obama's desk, and, as Matt Laslo reports from Washington, Wyoming's two senators both played a key role in the effort.

Time: 4 min

Date: 12-4-15 at 3pm and 12-6-15 at noon on WPR. 12-6-15 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Tuesday is an important date for those hoping to sign up for health insurance. Enrollment has been underway since November for those who purchase health care coverage through the federal marketplace via the website HealthCare.gov. Kevin Counihan oversees that effort and he joins us to explain why Tuesday is so important.

Time: 6 min

Date: 12-11-15 at 3pm and 12-13-15 at noon on WPR. 12-13-15 at 9am on WPM.

ISSUE: State Government

Topic: The Consensus Revenue Estimating group or CREG will release its much-anticipated revenue forecast on Tuesday. Wyoming's revenues are expected to drop 500 to 600 million dollars, which means legislators will have a lot less money to spend compared to the last budget. Bob Beck reports.

Time: 5 min

Date: 10-23-15 at 3pm and 10-25-15 at noon on WPR. 10-25-15 at 9 am on WPM.

Topic: State Representative Mike Madden and the joint revenue committee will be busy next week. With the recent revenue projections, the committee will need to see if there are new ways to pay for such things. One idea could even be a property tax. Madden who chairs the House Revenue Committee talks with Bob Beck.

Time: 7 min

Date: 11-13-15 at 3pm and 11-15-15 at noon on WPR. 11-15-15 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: With the Consensus Revenue estimating group saying that revenues are dropping, Governor Matt Mead announced his budget this week. While his budget reduces spending that will impact some, it does not feature the deep cuts some feared. The governor is proposing to balance the budget by borrowing from reserves initially and paying it back with future income.

Time: 10 min

Date: 12-4-15 at 3pm and 12-6-15 at noon on WPR. 12-6-15 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: The legislature's Joint Appropriations Committee has wrapped up its first week of budget hearings. The committee heard from the governor early in the week and has started reviewing agency budgets. The governor wants to eventually divert money going into the state's permanent mineral trust fund in an effort to keep the state budget where it is. Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck reports that lawmakers have mixed thoughts on that idea, but they are more concerned that the governor has not given more thought to a major budget threat.

Time: 5 min

Date: 12-11-15 at 3pm and 12-13-15 at noon on WPR. 12-13-15 at 9am on WPM.

ISSUE: Education

Topic: In one year, a new high school building will be open to students in Natrona County. The first day of class will debut a bold endeavor to transform secondary education in the school district that has been in the works for nearly a decade. It's a shift to 'academy-style learning,' where students' lesson plans and activities are designed around their career interests. As Wyoming Public Radio's Aaron Schrank reports, Natrona County educators are hustling to create a system that will bring results.

Time: 4 min

Date: 10-16-15 at 3pm and 10-18-15 at noon on WPR. 10-18-15 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: More than 1 percent of the public school students in Wyoming will not set foot in a classroom this year. They attend virtual schools that exist entirely on the web. As interest in online schools surges nationwide, state education officials are working to improve and expand this option for kids. In the first of a series of stories on virtual education in the Cowboy State, Wyoming Public Radio's Aaron Schrank looks at why some families choose this unconventional approach.

Time: 5 min

Date: 11-13-15 at 3pm and 11-15-15 at noon on WPR. 11-15-15 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: This week, the Legislature's Select Committee on School Finance Recalibration recommended that the state stick with the same school funding model it's been using for the past decade. That means school districts would get basically the same amount of money they have been getting. The move came after months of discussion—and consideration of another funding model, based on what consultants say it should cost to educate Wyoming's students. That model would have reduced funding by about \$50 million per year. Wyoming Public Radio's Aaron Schrank spoke with Senate President Phil Nicholas about why they landed where they did.

Time: 7 min

Date: 11-20-15 at 3pm and 11-22-15 at noon on WPR. 11-22-15 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Most parents of public school students in Wyoming can access all sorts of data on how their child's school is doing, but the public *cannot* see test scores or graduation rates for the state's two online learning providers. That lack of transparency is a problem that those providers—and education advocates around the state—would like to see fixed. In part two of

our series on virtual education, Wyoming Public Radio's Aaron Schrank explains why that problem exists in the first place.

Time: 5 min

Date: 12-4-15 at 3pm and 12-6-15 at noon on WPR. 12-6-15 at 9am on WPM

Topic: It took Congress eight years and countless hours of listening to angry teachers and parents, but No Child Left Behind is soon to be a thing of the past. Matt Laslo reports from Washington that Congress and the White House agreed to scrap the hated Bush-era law.

Time: 5 min

Date: 12-11-15 at 3pm and 12-13-15 at noon on WPR. 12-13-15 at 9am on WPM

Topic: President Obama signed that legislation—replacing 'No Child Left Behind'—this week. It's called the 'Every Student Succeeds Act.' In Wyoming, Superintendent of Public Instruction Jillian Balow is praising the federal education overhaul. She spoke with Wyoming Public Radio's Aaron Schrank about what the new law means for the state.

Time: 5 min

Date: 12-11-15 at 3pm and 12-13-15 at noon on WPR. 12-13-15 at 9am on WPM

Issue: Wildlife

Topic: Cody area lawmakers want the federal government to take Grizzly Bears off of the Endangered Species List. They say there are more bears than ever outside of Yellowstone, but others say the numbers don't matter. Penny Preston reports.

Time: 4 min

Date: 10-16-15 at 3pm and 10-18-15 at noon on WPR. 10-18-15 at 9am on WPM.

Issue: Business

Topic: The horse racing industry in Wyoming was hit with a huge financial blow a few weeks ago, when state officials voted to suspend operation of historical horse racing machines in the state. Those machines offer play similar to a slot machine, but the outcome is tied to a horse race from the past. The Wyoming legislature approved historical horse racing machines two years ago, but in late September the state Attorney General released a report saying the

machines' bonus rounds were illegal because they relied on chance, not skill. The machines could be closed for business for as long as four months while the vendor that sells them rewrites their software. As Wyoming Public Radio's Miles Bryan reports, that could place an unbearable strain on live horse racing in the state, which relies on income from the machines to survive.

Time: 5 min

Date: 10-16-15 at 3pm and 10-18-15 at noon on WPR. 10-18-15 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Across the country people have been ditching their cable boxes over the last couple of years. Many are choosing to rely mostly on on-demand streaming services like Hulu and Netflix instead. That's given the cable companies some jitters, but the rise of the "cord cutter" has been very good news for a different industry...the people who sell over-the-air TV antennas. Wyoming Public Radio's Miles Bryan has more.

Time: 4 min

Date: 10-23-15 at 3pm and 10-25-15 at noon on WPR. 10-25-15 at 9 am on WPM.

Topic: Torrington had been on an economic upswing. A few years back the state awarded it the medium security prison and the downtown has undergone a facelift with some new businesses. But in recent months two companies announced they are closing their doors. One is viewed as a minor setback while the other could change the face of the community. Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck explains.

Time: 4 min

Date: 11-6-15 at 3pm and 11-8-15 at noon on WPR. 11-8-15 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: Americans love the "guy in the garage" inventor story. But invention is only one step: successful inventors need to get legal protection, and that can be tough if you're working on your own. The average legal fees for just applying for a patent cost about seven thousand dollars. But now, that cost won't be such a barrier for some inventors. As Wyoming Public Radio's Miles Bryan reports, low-income Wyoming inventors can now get free help with their applications.

Time: 5 min

Date: 12-4-15 at 3pm and 12-6-15 at noon on WPR. 12-6-15 at 9am on WPM

Issue: Native American Issues

Topic: This year Wyoming's junior senator, John Barrasso, took the gavel as chairman of the Senate Indian Affairs Committee. Our Washington reporter Matt Laslo caught up with him and others to check up on the new role he's playing in Indian Country.

Time: 4 min

Date: 10-23-15 at 3pm and 10-25-15 at noon on WPR. 10-25-15 at 9 am on WPM.

Topic: Most people on the Wind River Reservation have seen Craig Ferris on the sidelines of the basketball court at Wyoming Indian High School. As head coach, he's led the Chiefs to four state championships. But most days, Ferris can be found driving around and knocking on doors—putting the full-court press on a major problem for reservation schools: attendance. Ferris works for Wyoming Indian Elementary. Wyoming Public Radio's Aaron Schrank spent a day on the job with him, and has this report.

Time: 4 min

Date: 10-23-15 at 3pm and 10-25-15 at noon on WPR. 10-25-15 at 9 am on WPM.

Topic: Back in September, six Native American high schoolers from the Wind River Reservation were detained by University of Wyoming police after a customer in the campus bookstore suspected one of the students of shoplifting. Administrators and parents at St. Stephens School quickly raised concerns that the students' rights had been violated. After weeks of back and forth, the incident and its' handling remains a point of tension between Wyoming's University and its Wind River Reservation. Aaron Schrank reports.

Time: 6 min

Date: 11-6-15 at 3pm and 11-8-15 at noon on WPR. 11-8-15 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: One of the most controversial figures in the history of the American West is Ogalala chief Red Cloud. To some a brilliant warrior and politician, to others, to blame for the Ogalala's loss of the Black Hills. Now, there's a new biography called *Red Cloud: Ogalala Legend*. Wyoming Public Radio's Melodie Edwards talked with research historian John McDermott about how the Ogalala ended up in Wyoming, and why giving up these lands meant the end of their way of life.

Time: 6 min

Date: 11-13-15 at 3pm and 11-15-15 at noon on WPR. 11-15-15 at 9am on WPM

Issue: Social Issues

Topic: World War 2 ended 70 years ago, and as more time passes, there are fewer and fewer people left who remember the events first hand. Sam Mihara is a survivor of the Heart Mountain Relocation Center, a Japanese Internment Camp located between Cody and Powell. He sat down with Wyoming Public Radio's Caroline to talk about why remembering the past is essential to our future as citizens and as a country.

Time: 6 min

Date: 10-23-15 at 3pm and 10-25-15 at noon on WPR. 10-25-15 at 9 am on WPM.

Topic: Drug and alcohol abuse is a huge problem in Wyoming. The DUI rate here is double the national average, and adults and children get arrested for drug crimes at a significantly higher rate than the rest of the country. Jail time is expensive, and experts say by itself doesn't do much to address substance abuse issues. So law enforcement in Sweetwater County is trying something different. They're offering offenders a powerful, but pricey, addiction treatment drug. Wyoming Public Radio's Miles Bryan went to Sweetwater County and has this report.

Time: 4 min

Date: 11-6-15 at 3pm and 11-8-15 at noon on WPR. 11-8-15 at 9am on WPM.

Topic: The news that African American football players at the University of Missouri threatened not to play a football game against Brigham Young reminded some Wyoming players of the time they got kicked off of their team prior to a game with BYU. In Wyoming lore, they are known as the Black 14. Wyoming Public Radio's Bob Beck reports that former 2 former Cowboys have been watching the story with interest.

Time: 5 min

Date: 11-13-15 at 3pm and 11-15-15 at noon on WPR. 11-15-15 at 9am on WPM