



WPA Bulletin



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Calendar of Events

MARCH 1

Legislature reconvenes
in-person

MARCH 14

Daylight Savings Time

MARCH 14-20

Sunshine week

APRIL 16

WPA Spring
Board Meeting

MAY 31

Memorial Day
Office Closed

Feb 3, 2022

WPA Annual Convention
Ramkota, Casper

WPA MONITORING LEGISLATIVE BILLS

Beginning January 19, the legislature had three days of virtual standing committee meetings to consider and take public testimony on assigned bills. Then on Wednesday, Jan. 27, Session convened virtually via Zoom for eight days to consider the moved bills.

Here is what the WPA has had their eye on:

SF32 – Water Permit Notice – modifying notice requirements related to water permits.

If the state engineer decides to cancel a permit due to default, the bill eliminated required notice by registered mail and changed it to other generally accepted mail delivery methods through the post office or by email. The bill then would eliminate notice in a newspaper of general circulation in the county for three consecutive weeks. The bill was assigned to appropriations and passed the senate committee. During committee of the whole (COW) first reading, Sen. Dave Kinskey (Johnson and Sheridan counties) successfully amended the bill to reinsert all stricken language pertaining to

notice in the newspaper. The amended bill passed COW second and third readings. On the House end, the bill retained the amendment, keeping notice in the newspaper and was signed into law on Feb. 9.

HB45 – Changes to water right notice requirements for hearings.

This bill added the following language to statute 41-3-114 (f):

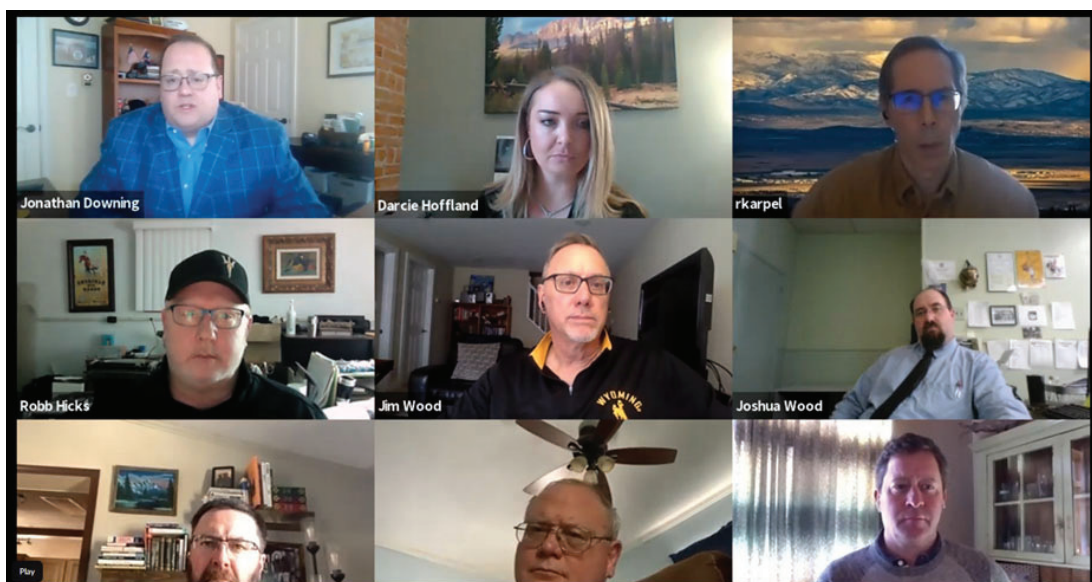
If the state engineer or the state board of control determines that at least twenty (20) owners of appropriations or owners or users of ditches or facilities require notice of the hearing, the state engineer or the state board of control, in lieu of requiring notice by certified mail with return receipt requested, may allow the petitioner to provide notice of the hearing by regular mail and publication. Notice by publication under this subsection shall be accomplished by publishing notice for two (2) consecutive weeks in a newspaper of general

See LEGISLATIVE BILLS page 11

SEE PUBLIC NOTICES
PRINTED IN ALL OF
WYOMING'S
NEWSPAPERS

Visit

wyopublicnotices.com



LEGISLATIVE ROUNDTABLE - The WPA's 2021 Annual Convention in January was held via Zoom this year due to COVID-19 concerns. Among those attending the virtual Legislative Roundtable, clockwise from top left, are WPA Lobbyist Jonathan Downing; WPA Executive Director Darcie Hoffland; Richard Karpel, executive director of the Public Notice Resource Center; and publishers Joshua Wood, Saratoga Sun; Kevin Olson, Jackson Hole News&Guide; Matt Adelman, Douglas Budget; Jeff Moberg, Sundance Times; Robb Hicks, Buffalo Bulletin and center, Jim Wood, Wyoming Newspapers, Inc.

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Cec Moats, Deputy Director

GOVERNMENT SEEKS LEGALS ONLINE ONLY



Darcie Hoffland
WPA Executive
Director

Since the inception of our organization in 1877, the Wyoming Press Association (WPA) has been dedicated to the development, progression and maintenance of Wyoming newspapers to uphold real journalism, to foster and advance the freedom of the press, and to be a leader on public policy efforts that promote transparency and openness in government.

Currently there is a bill - SF0017 - that would diminish government transparency, removing from newspapers public notice of meeting minutes and salaries of public employees of local governments, and requiring that the information be posted only on the government entity's website.

The WPA strongly opposes this legislation. We believe in notice in all formats, but know that newspapers provide a permanent, legal record that is vital to government integrity and accountability. It is essential that these notices be published by an organization that is separate from the government. As private sector, main street businesses, Wyoming newspapers have ably provided permanent access of public notices to our residents for over 130 years. Removing these public notices from an independent third party will only serve to pull the shades on open government.

By providing an independent check and a permanent, unhackable method for assuring notice of government actions and proceedings, we service both the public and government. We serve the public by giving them easy, affordable, one-stop access to government actions, proceedings, expenditures and reports. We serve government by providing them a permanent source for demonstrating proper notice, protecting against costly litigation. Printed notice cannot be hacked, and provides unassailable proof that a notice was published with the proper information and at the proper time.

City and county clerks should be concerned with the added expense and responsibility required by the proposed legislation. Verifying publication is difficult-to-impossible on the web - that's why the courts subject digital evidence to far greater scrutiny than evidence published in newspapers.

Cities and counties spend less than one-half of one percent of their annual operating budgets for all public notices in newspapers. If government agencies posted their notices only on their own websites, what would be the cost to verify they are published securely, correctly, ensuring they were not altered after the fact?

Recent data from the Pew Research Center found that only 13% of adult internet users visit a local, state or federal government website. In print or online, engaged Wyoming citizens read

See LEGALS ONLINE page 10



TOP WINNERS NAMED AT VIRTUAL CONVENTION

Newspapers in Casper, Powell and Wheatland were recognized as the best of the state last month during the virtual Wyoming Press Association Annual Convention.

The Casper Star-Tribune, Powell Tribune and Platte County Record-Times were all awarded the WPA's "general excellence" prize for 2020 during ceremonies held during the association's annual convention.

The Star-Tribune won the award recognizing excellence in all aspects of newspaper publishing for daily newspapers, the Powell Tribune won among large weekly newspapers (those with a circulation of more than 2,500) and the Record-Times was selected as the best among small weekly newspapers.

"We see it again and again — Wyoming newspapers are regularly selected as the best in the country in national competitions," said Rory Palm publisher of Cheyenne's Wyoming Tribune Eagle, who was elected the WPA's president during the convention. "So selecting top papers from among those winners is always a challenge for our judges."

Judging for the 2020 contest was handled by staffs at newspapers belonging to the Montana Newspaper Association.

In addition to general excellence, the Star-Tribune won top awards for typographic excellence, advertising excellence and editorial excellence.

Second place for general excellence went to the Wyoming Tribune Eagle, which also placed second for photographic excellence, advertising excellence and typographic excellence.

The Gillette News Record placed first for photographic excellence and second for editorial excellence.

Among large weekly newspapers, those with a circulation of 2,500 or more, the Powell Tribune placed first for general excellence and the Jackson Hole News&Guide placed second. The News&Guide claimed first place for photographic excellence, advertising excellence and typographic excellence and second for editorial excellence.

The Buffalo Bulletin won top honors for editorial excellence and the Cody Enterprise placed second for typographic excellence and photographic excellence and tied with the Douglas Budget for second place for advertising excellence.

In addition to its first place finish for general excellence among small weekly newspapers, the Platte County Record-Times placed second for editorial excellence, while the Saratoga Sun won top editorial excellence honors.

The Greybull Standard placed second for general excellence and first for photographic excellence, where it was followed by the Lovell Chronicle.

The Thermopolis Independent Record was named winner of typographic excellence honors for small weeklies, followed by the Newcastle News Letter Journal, which also placed second for advertising excellence.

The Guernsey Gazette claimed top advertising excellence honors.

Brad Boner, a photographer for the Jackson Hole News&Guide, was named the WPA Photographer of the Year and a photo taken by the Lovell Chronicle's Annette Moss was selected as the WPA Photo of the Year.

The virtual award ceremonies capped the association's 122nd annual convention, which was held via video conference this year because of concerns over the coronavirus.

A complete list of the major award-winners can be found on page seven. They can also be found on the WPA's website at www.wyopress.org, along with Pacemaker and Associate winners.



TOP PHOTO WINNER - Annette Moss claimed 2020 Photo of the Year with "Watching the ball." Moss works for the Lovell Chronicle, a small weekly.

2021 WPA COMMITTEES

Hall of Fame

Ken Smith (Chair)
UW Liaison Emeritus

Pat Schmidt
WPA Past-president

JT Malmberg
Cody Enterprise

Kevin Olson
Jackson Hole News&Guide

NNA

Robb Hicks (Chair)
Buffalo Bulletin

Matt Adelman
Douglas Budget

Legislative

Jim Wood (Chair)
Wyoming Newspapers, Inc.

Bob Bonnar
Newcastle News Letter Journal

Josh Wolfson
Casper Star-Tribune

Jeff Moberg
Sundance Times

Rory Palm
Adams Publishing Group

Kristen Czaban
The Sheridan Press

Marketing / Audience

Darcie Hoffland (Chair)
WPA Executive Director

Mark Tesoro
Uinta County Herald

Kevin Olson
Jackson Hole News&Guide

Rob Mortimore
Wyoming Newspapers, Inc.

Toby Bonner
Powell Tribune

Contest

Jim Angell (Chair)
Wyoming Newspaper Exchange

Jen Sieve-Hicks
Buffalo Bulletin

Brian Martin
Wyoming Tribune Eagle

Joshua Wood
Saratoga Sun

Milton Ontiveroz
UW/Associates Chair

Convention

Darcie Hoffland (Chair)

David Peck
Lovell Chronicle

Ken Smith, Rob Mortimore,
Joshua Wood, Kristen Czaban

Budget

Rory Palm (Chair),
Jen Sieve-Hicks, Jeff Moberg,
Kevin Olson



We have the power to
keep you informed

We take seriously our responsibility to provide safe, reliable and affordable electric service to customers. We're also committed to providing accurate and timely information to Wyoming communities, news media and others.

Reach us anytime at our News Media Hotline, **1-800-775-7950**. For customer service, call toll free at **1-888-221-7070** or visit **rockymountainpower.net**.

From left: Tiffany Erickson and Dave Eskelsen

DUES INVOICES SENT; 100% NNA MEMBERSHIP IN SECOND YEAR

Invoices for 2021 WPA membership dues were sent February 12. Besides the base membership dues, the total includes the scholarship fund, legislative action fund and legal defense fund, and NNA membership.

Membership dues are determined by square-inch advertising rates and circulation. The base dues allow the WPA to continue its mission of promoting and fostering the general welfare of the newspaper industry in Wyoming. It is the second year for 100% membership for the

National Newspaper Association (NNA). At the 2020 convention the WPA board of directors voted for all WPA members to be included in NNA. The WPA asks members to remit payment by March 31. According to WPA By-Laws, delinquent dues may be collected for the association through its business affiliate, the Wyoming Press Advertising Service, which places advertising with its members.

The statewide print network dividends also went out on the 12th for the fourth quarter of 2020. Under terms of the pro-

gram, participating newspapers share in 50 percent of the cash income for the 2x2/2x4 program and ten percent for WyCANs taken in from October to December, which is then divided among the 41 participating newspapers.

Thank you, member advertising departments, for selling the WPA statewide network ad programs, and for running the sold program ads in your newspapers.

Should you have questions regarding the dues invoice or dividend check you received, please contact the WPA office.

SUNSHINE WEEK, MARCH 14-20, SHINES LIGHT ON GOVERNMENT SECRECY

Get ready Wyoming Newspapers, Sunshine Week will be here before you know it!

To ensure transparency in government, Wyoming has Sunshine Laws requiring government transparency and accountability - a three-legged stool of open government essential to our democracy, including open meeting laws, freedom of informa-

tion or public record laws and public notice laws. Democracy depends on a knowledgeable citizenry whose access to a range of information enables them to hold their public officials accountable.

Sunshine Week is a national initiative spearheaded by the News Leaders Association and Reports Committee for Freedom of the Press with support from the James

L. Knight Foundation. It was founded in 2005, and its purpose is to provide the media (and the public) with the tools and resources necessary to ensure that government operations are open and transparent.

This year Sunshine Week will be March 14- 20, 2021. Keep your eyes on your email for an updated tool kit to help celebrate this year.



BETTER, TOGETHER.

Strong communities better us all.
We give of our time and resources to
help make this a place we can all be
proud to call home.

See how we're involved at
blackhillsenergy.com/serving.

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Black Hills Energy
Ready

PLEDGES TO WPA FOUNDATION IMPORTANT TO EDUCATION

Prior to the 2021 Annual General Membership Meeting, publishers were emailed a pledge form from the WPA Foundation, and it was sent out again recently.

The WPAF hopes that all members will consider pledging this year as last year's pledges were not redeemed, and it is mainly through member contributions that the foundation can pursue its mission of supporting and ensuring the highest degree of professionalism among journalists through journalism education. The WPAF has paid for the Pacemaker Awards displays and for speakers at the annual convention. Additionally, it has funded scholarships to both students and newspaper staff to the

WPA convention. The foundation board is continuing to look at ways to promote the education of the public regarding its right to know and the role the free press as well.

Pledges are taken as advertising value donations that are deducted from the 12-months of Department of Insurance PSAs payment in August. Should you have any questions regarding this please don't hesitate to reach out to the WPA office.

Thank you to the following papers that have already pledged their support:

Lovell Chronicle
Greybull Standard
Basin Republican-Rustler

Newcastle News Letter Journal
Torrington Telegram
Lingle Guide
Platte County Record-Times (Wheatland)
Lusk Herald
Guernsey Gazette
Jackson Hole News&Guide
Douglas Budget
Glenrock Independent
Northern Wyoming News (Worland)
Saratoga Sun
Pine Bluffs Post
Powell Tribune
Cody Enterprise
Green River Star
Thermopolis Independent Record



NNA Summit

March 8-19, 2021

Via ZOOM

Public Policy • Politics • Congressional Updates
Briefings • Relaxation • Socializing

Summit features NNA Foundation's New Country Editors Forum, live interviews with newsmakers

Learn from policy people, discuss issues with people like you — committed community newspaper journalists, editors and publishers. Join when you can. Leave when you must.

Topics and Events:

- Congress and Newspapers, TBA
- International Womens Day, March 8 — How Women are Leading Congress
- Constitution Day, March 11 — the anniversary of the Bill of Rights
- Meetings with your members of Congress — YOU organize, gather your fellow publishers and set up Zoom/conference calls with your delegations. NNA will provide the briefing materials.
- A special St. Patrick's Day Social Hour, March 17 — reconnect, enjoy a brew, relax
- And more to come

Register here: https://nna.formstack.com/forms/2021_nna_summit

TOP WINNERS ANNOUNCED AT VIRTUAL WPA CONVENTION

Following is a list of the top winners of the WPA contest.

The 2021 convention was held virtually due to COVID-19 concerns. However, seminars and award ceremonies went on as usual, albeit by Zoom.

DAILIES

General Excellence

1. Casper Star-Tribune
2. Wyoming Tribune Eagle

Editorial Excellence

1. Casper Star-Tribune
2. Gillette News Record

Photographic Excellence

1. Gillette News Record
2. Wyoming Tribune Eagle

Advertising Excellence

1. Casper Star-Tribune
2. Wyoming Tribune Eagle

Typographic Excellence

1. Casper Star-Tribune
2. Wyoming Tribune Eagle

LARGE WEEKLIES

General Excellence

1. Powell Tribune
2. Jackson Hole News&Guide

Editorial Excellence

1. Buffalo Bulletin
2. Jackson Hole News&Guide

Photographic Excellence

1. Jackson Hole News&Guide
2. Cody Enterprise

Advertising Excellence

1. Jackson Hole News&Guide
2. (Tie) Cody Enterprise
Douglas Budget

Typographic Excellence

1. Jackson Hole News&Guide
2. Cody Enterprise

SMALL WEEKLIES

General Excellence

1. Platte County Record-Times
2. Greybull Standard

Editorial Excellence

1. Saratoga Sun
2. Platte County Record-Times

Photographic Excellence

1. Greybull Standard
2. Lovell Chronicle

Advertising Excellence

1. Guernsey Gazette
2. Newcastle News Letter Journal

Typographic Excellence

1. Thermopolis Independent Record
2. Newcastle News Letter Journal

PHOTOGRAPHERS OF THE YEAR:

Dailies: Mike Moore, Gillette News Record

Large Weeklies: Brad Boner, Jackson Hole News&Guide

Small Weeklies: Andrew Towne, Torrington Telegram

WPA PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR:

Brad Boner, Jackson Hole News&Guide

VETERAN JOURNALIST OF THE YEAR:

Mark Davis, Powell Tribune

YOUNG JOURNALIST OF THE YEAR:

Camille Erickson, Casper Star-Tribune



AND THE WINNER IS... Because of COVID-19 concerns, the WPA Annual Convention in January was held virtually. Left: Powell Tribune staffers watch the awards ceremony via Zoom. From left, publisher Dave Bonner, Mark Davis and Kevin Killough. The Powell Tribune won general excellence in the large weekly division. Right: Publisher/Editor Joshua Wood hears that he has won the editorial leadership award. Son Jareth mimics his dad.

12 DESIGN TIPS FOR GETTING MORE EYES ON YOUR ADS



By John Foust
Raleigh, NC

Want to get more eyes on your ads? Let's take a quick look at some ad design tips:

1. Keep things simple and uncluttered.

The four basic elements of a print ad are (1) headline, (2) illustrative element, (3) body copy and (4) logo. When they are arranged in a way that is easy to follow – and when there are no unnecessary images – the ad is more likely to be noticed.

2. Use easy-to-read line breaks in headlines. A line break is where one line ends and the next line begins. Since readers naturally pause for a split second at the end of a line, the break should be placed to look visually correct -- and sound right

in the mind. Here are two headlines. The second one works better.

Save
big on ceiling
fans

Save big
on ceiling fans

3. Use a graphic hook. A dominant visual element stands out on the page or on the screen. If an ad features a number of illustrations or photos, make one considerably larger than the others. Don't hesitate to make the image so large that it bleeds off the edge.

4. Use white space. Like a room with furniture which is placed too close together, a crowded ad doesn't provide enough room to navigate. In addition to giving readers some walking room, white space can be a

powerful graphic hook.

5. Don't use distracting borders. It's what's inside the border that counts. The border shouldn't become an extra element.

6. Use all-caps sparingly. There are two times to use all upper-case characters: (1) in short words in a short headline or (2) in a proper name, like IBM, BMW or NHL.

7. Use readable fonts. Trendy styles can be difficult to read. It's best to stick with traditional fonts. Generally speaking, serif fonts are more legible in lengthy body copy and bolder sans serif fonts are fine for headlines.

8. Put the logo at the bottom right or bottom center. Resist the temptation to place the logo at the top. Because we read from top to bottom and from left to right, an ad's logical ending point – the spot for the logo – is at the bottom right or center.

9. Use relevant illustrations and photos. Pictures must be meaningful and should clarify the headline. The best illustrations show the advertised product in use or demonstrate a benefit.

10. Set body copy flush left. Ragged left text is nearly impossible to read, because readers are accustomed to starting each line at a consistent left margin. Justified copy blocks are problematic, as well, because they create wide spaces between some words.

11. Use color with restraint. Research shows that color helps ads stand out. But don't overdo it. Too much color creates clutter. You've probably seen ads that look like an accident in a crayon factory. That's no way to appeal to readers.

12. Stay away from reverses. It's not a good idea to use white images and words on a dark background. Readers are accustomed to dark print on a light background. Make it easy for them.

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John Foust has conducted training programs for thousands of newspaper advertising professionals. Many ad departments are using his training videos to save time and get quick results from in-house training. E-mail for information: john@johnfoust.com

National Newspaper Association Foundation

2021 Better Newspaper Editorial Contest & Better Newspaper Advertising Contest

Early Bird Incentive Deadline: Entries must be submitted online before 11:59 p.m. April 30, 2021

Deadline: Entries must be submitted online before 11:59 p.m. June 25, 2021

Each year, NNA honors the best in community journalism in the Better Newspaper Editorial Contest and the best in community newspaper advertising in the Better Newspaper Advertising Contest. The BNEC and BNAC, together, make up the association's Better Newspaper Contest.

For more information and to enter go to:

<https://www.newspapercontest.com/Contests/NationalNewspaperAssociationFoundation.aspx>

HAVING TROUBLE OR HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT RULES?

Email Kate at kate@nna.org

NEW WEBSITE PROMOTES LEGAL NOTICES IN NEWSPAPERS

Newspaper Association Managers, Inc., a consortium of North American trade associations representing the industry, has launched a website aimed at promoting legal notices in newspapers, USALegalNotice.com.

The archives are aggregated by state newspaper associations and can be searched by keyword or region. Any legal notice required by law to be published, including but not limited to foreclosures, public hearings, financial reports, ordinances, meeting minutes, salaries and other government activities can be searched

out on the site.

As the most trusted source of information in their communities, newspapers are committed to making the public aware of important civic matters that affect them. NAM's launch of USALegalNotice.com allows the industry to continue distributing public information to the largest possible audience.

The Wyoming Press Association's statewide notice site, <https://www.wyopublicnotices.com>, is among those linked to the new national site.

WPA ASSOCIATES' GROUP MEET BY ZOOM FOR ANNUAL MEETING

ATTENDEES

Sara DiRienzo, WY Game and Fish; Cody Beers, WYDOT; Christina George, Wyoming State Geological Survey; Milton Ontiveroz, Ron Podell, and Ali Grossman, UW; Kim Deti, WY Department of Health; Deb Sutton, Sweetwater Memorial/Public Health; Jeff Robertson, State Treasurer; Mike Howe, Black Hills Energy.

WPA UPDATE

Presented by Darcie Hoffman, Executive Director of WPA

Darcie updated the Associates Members on the WPA Executive Board. It was a good, but tough year. Staffing at WPA has been re-envisioned. Typically, there is a two-person staff at the office, and a part-time person to help with other tasks. Cec Moats is working remotely, and there is no part-time staff. The part-time position will remain unfilled.

The spring board meeting was held via Zoom. At the meeting we canceled the summer outing with the National Newspaper Association in Cody. In-person meetings were not worth the risk, which is why we cancelled the convention. The board determined two objectives for a virtual meeting: training and continued education and the awards ceremony.

Most of the year has been spent on legislative issues. SF 20 regarding public records and personnel files for high ranking officials is going to committee next week, brought by the Casper Star-Tribune. The WPA is continuing to work on the public notices bill SF17 and think it is going to be read in the March session.

The convention will be held in person for 2022. It will be in Casper at the Clarion or the Ramkota. Darcie is going to do a site tour before confirming.

Darcie thanked the associate membership for their support and participation! Thanks to Milton for helping to grow the associates side and continue to grow and benefit the membership.

Associates Discussion

Others from your shop who would find value in this conference are welcome to attend.

For this year's contest, entries were down. We had about 80 entries total; down 37. The prior year we had a record number of entries. Milton suggested that business has changed and budgets could have affected the submissions.

Deb suggested it is a matter of people doing more and time just getting away from you, especially as duties increase for many over the pandemic.

One idea is to keep a folder of potential submissions to prepare over the next year.

Join the subgroup if you are interested in getting more involved. Ali Grossman and Deb Sutton said they would be interested.

We are always looking toward bolstering the membership. The membership remains steady, but participation is lower. We are anticipating losing membership in 2021.

Milton said the professionals in our organization are putting out top-notch work. A slideshow will be on the WPA website

-- Minutes recorded by Sara DiRienzo, WY Game and Fish

A Great Big
THANK YOU TO OUR
SPONSORS

You helped
make the
2021 WPA
ANNUAL
CONVENTION
a success!!



Let's turn the answers on.



Your generosity and support for Wyoming newspapers makes a difference in our mission of maintaining and progressing quality journalism in our communities.

LEGALS ONLINE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

their community newspaper. In rural Wyoming the print readership of newspapers is approximately 70%. Some people in our state do not have the means or access to reliable internet, and many older folks that are not interested in getting their information online will be disenfranchised with the passage of SF17.

Moreover, because Wyoming newspapers believe in more notice and not less, they publish all legal notices printed in the paper for free on their news websites, which receive a range of tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands of page-views each month.

Additionally, the WPA has for many years paid for the creation and maintenance of an online, searchable archive where public notices appearing in all newspapers across the state can also be found for free at <http://wyopublicnotices.com>. Recently, the WPA invested in a redesign to make the site mobile-first, more user friendly and more secure.

But this isn't an argument about internet vs. print, it's about government control of public notices vs. an independent, third-party newspaper that ensures public

notices run in accordance with the law. Local government websites can be hard to navigate and aren't seen by many people because public officials aren't compelled by the free market to operate effective sites.

Newspapers are charged with carrying out a vital public service by publishing government notices, are paid for the value of the service they provide and remain the best way to reach a large percentage of the public about official matters. They contain the essential elements of accessibility, independence, verifiability and archivability.

If government agencies were required to place this information only on their own websites, it would be more difficult for taxpayers to stay informed about what is going on in their communities. Wyoming people would have to remember to dig for the information. We are concerned that the goal of our local governments is to ultimately make this information out-of-sight, out-of-mind.

Jerimiah Rieman, executive director of the Wyoming County Commissioners Association, said, "Our major concern is the disparity that somebody could pick up the morning newspaper (and) see a county em-

ployee's information, but everybody else you'd have to dig further and take extra steps or go to the county itself to request that data."

The WPA agrees with that statement – it isn't fair. There should be more public notice from other government entities on how taxpayer business is conducted. For example, Wyoming schools have the least requirement for public notice, and in the past decade, they are the only government entity whose spending has not decreased. They have the least public oversight, hence the least accountability to the taxpayer.

Hidden notice is no notice!

Taking a service already provided by a Wyoming Main Street business and moving it to the public sector, will not create true government efficiency, only more government control and bureaucracy.

Wyoming taxpayers should be concerned that wage rates, employees per capita and tax dollars per capita, will increase in the long run should meeting minutes and public employee salaries no longer be required to print as a public notice in their local newspapers.

Thrive in a connected world

Reach your audience anytime, anywhere with our integrated content, revenue, and engagement platform.



TN TownNews

Learn more at:
TownNews.com/Solutions

LEGISLATIVE BILLS CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

circulation in the county where the new point of diversion is located. The last date of publication shall occur not less than ten (10) days and not more than thirty (30) days prior to the hearing.

This bill was assigned to the Agriculture committee and easily passed committee with the new notice requirement. When it got to the House floor, Rep. Landon Brown (Laramie County) made an amendment to the bill to delete all new language including the notice in the newspaper. His amendment failed, and the bill passed COW with the newspaper public notice intact. The bill flew through the Senate side with the new notice language passing third reading 30-0, and Governor Gordon signed it into law on Feb. 9.

SF23 – Public meetings-executive sessions for security plans.

This is a bill related to an exemption on the open meetings law when discussing safety and security planning. The bill was originally brought up during the 2020 legislative session, and the WPA was genuinely concerned with the broad language that had been drafted. The bill was sent to WPA attorney Bruce Moats for his recommendation. Bruce narrowed the language to help ensure the exemption wouldn't be used outside its intention and the WPA presented it as an amendment during the session. It was adopted, garnering our support as it moved to the House. When it reached the House Corporation Committee, however, the motion to pass the bill failed. The language the WPA wrote for the bill remained in its draft form when the judiciary committee took it up during the interim. To be consistent, the WPA legislative committee did not oppose the bill. The Senate Judiciary committee worked the bill on Jan. 27 and recommended it do pass with a 5-0 vote. It is currently placed on Senate General File.

HB20 – Public Records – Personnel Files

This bill was on the agenda for committee work by Senate Judiciary the week of Jan. 19, but would not be heard because of time restraints. The committee will be able to work on it during the March in-person session. The bill clarifies the right of inspection for personnel files and opens them up to high-ranking state employees

including the president of the University of Wyoming and community colleges, and also directors of state agencies.

SF17 – Governmental publication requirements.

The bill removes public notice on meeting minutes and salaries for cities, counties and school districts and requires the information to be posted only on the government entity's website.

Senate Corporation took up the bill Feb. 4. Many newspaper publishers testified against the bill, along with the WPA staff and Chris Merrill from the Wyoming Equality State Policy Center. Testifying in favor of it were executive directors for the Wyoming County Commissioners Association and the Wyoming Association of Municipalities, who brought the bill during the interim. While a few Senators made comments to suggest the bill had a chance to be killed in committee, it passed 4-1 with Sen. Brian Boner (Converse and Platte Counties) the only one to come out strongly against it, citing his preference for transparency. The bill will likely go to the floor the first week in March.

HB103 – Shield Law.

This bill was just recently introduced and will go to the House Judiciary Committee when committee work resumes the week of Feb. 22. The bill is being sponsored by several legislators, with a few that have not generally sided with the WPA legislative objectives in the past, including Reps. Dan Zwonitzer and Landon Brown and Sen. Tara Nethercott (all Laramie County). The bill provides privilege for journalists who refuse to disclose information. The WPA supports the bill and will be relying on publishers and editors of newspapers to provide comment. It was brought by the Wyoming Broadcasters Association during 2020 session, but never made it out of committee. The House Judiciary has the bill on its agenda for Thursday, Feb. 25 at 1:30 p.m.

SF91 – Probate-discovered property publication requirements.

The bill relating to wills, estates and probate, states notices required to be published shall be charged at a rate not to ex-

ceed the amount charged by a newspaper to counties under W.S. 18-3-518(a), at the lowest rate for display advertising or at the open local display advertising rate, whichever is less.

In the Lovell Chronicle on June 18, 2020, Sen. Kost (bringer of the bill), was quoted as saying, "A lawyer told me he was having to give his clients a bill for \$3,600 to run a notice for four weeks. Those notices are required to run for those four weeks. That's getting out of hand. The legislation will limit newspapers to only charging what they would for other types of legal notices, such as meeting agendas or minutes, a charge the state already limits."

According to WPA Attorney Bruce Moats, there is no need for this bill as the statute (18-3-519) does not differentiate between government and private-party public notices. Both are governed by the statute limiting the charge. The bill has been referred to the Judiciary Committee.

The Session will reconvene March 1 after three days of committee work the week prior. Wednesday, March 3 is the last day for Senate Files to be submitted to LSO and Monday, March 8, will be the last day for House Bills.

PEOPLE AND OTHER STUFF

The **Laramie Boomerang** recently hired two new reporters.

Ariel Rivera-Bernath is originally from Pennsylvania. Beginning in 2015, she lived in Lander for five years before attending UW in Laramie to pursue a graduate degree. Her duties include covering Rawlins as well as Laramie.

Marissa Taylor spent the first five years of her life in Massachusetts and then was raised in Virginia and Maryland, where she met her husband. In 2013 they both decided to attend UW, where Marissa pursued her Bachelor's degree in English.