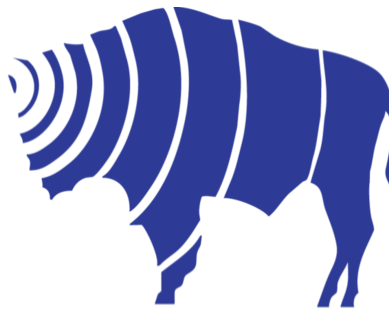




WYOMING PUBLIC MEDIA

General Manager's Newsletter | July 2026



July is here, and this year is especially meaningful. As the nation begins celebrating its 250th anniversary, we have an opportunity to reflect on Wyoming's unique place in that history and the stories that have shaped our state and nation. Let's celebrate!

What a difference three days makes! Our Summer Mini Drive wrapped up in just three days—and thanks to you, we soared past our \$100,000 goal. This short drive helps us reach listeners who may have missed an earlier opportunity to give, who spend only the summer in Wyoming, or simply decided that public radio was a cause worth supporting. And yes, *Pet Wednesday* returned in full furry force. In the epic Cats vs. Dogs battle, the felines emerged victorious, thanks in no small part to a clowder of 11 barn cats who emerged to secure the win. A certain dog-loving Dr. Robert from *Wyoming Sounds* questioned their credentials, but the judges remained unmoved. To all the furry, feathered, scaly, and even buzzy creatures who inspired donations—and to everyone who pledged on behalf of their favorite shelters—thank you. If this drive proved anything, it's that Wyoming is a wonderfully diverse state. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise.

And in the spirit of giving, *WyoGives* returns on July 15. Every day, nonprofits across Wyoming strengthen our communities, support our neighbors, preserve our culture, protect our landscapes, and keep citizens informed. *WyoGives* is a powerful reminder of what can happen when people come together to invest in the places and organizations they care about most. For many listeners, *WyoGives* has become their favorite way to support the news, music, stories, and conversations that connect Wyoming's communities. This year, we'll once again offer special giving challenges that will help stretch donations even further. *WyoGives* is about people. It's about neighbors helping neighbors. It's about investing in a stronger, more informed, and more connected Wyoming. On July 15, we hope you'll join thousands of Wyomingites in supporting the organizations that make our state such a remarkable place to live.

We celebrate the life of *NPR* journalist Elizabeth Arnold, who recently passed away at age 66. Listeners knew her voice from coverage of national politics and stories from around the world. As part of a generation of reporters who came to *NPR* in the 1990s, she helped define the network's distinctive style of journalism—thoughtful, curious, and deeply human. Her reporting informed millions of listeners and helped shape public radio as we know it today. Her legacy lives on in the stories she told and the journalists she inspired.

[\(Remembering NPR's Elizabeth Arnold | NPR\)](#)

We welcome a new voice to WPM. Teal Davis joins us from Lander as our new environment journalist through a partnership between *Report for America* and *High Country News*. You'll hear Teal's reporting on Wyoming Public Radio and find her stories on both our website and in *High Country News*. [Teal's](#) position is supported through a *Report for America* grant—one example of how Wyoming Public Media is adapting to a more challenging funding environment while continuing to strengthen our journalism. By combining grant support with the generosity of listeners like you, we are able to sustain robust, independent reporting that serves communities across Wyoming and beyond.

We missed one! Congratulations to WPM's *Mountain West News Bureau* journalist, Hanna Merzbach, who recently received a *Regional Edward R. Murrow Award* for her reporting on AI Data Centers and concerns over energy and water. As a founding member of the *Mountain West News Bureau*, Wyoming Public Media helps bring regional stories to national audiences.

Ouch! That hurt! Many of you heard veteran reporter Nina Totenberg announce the retirement of Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito on *Morning Edition*, only to find out that no, he wasn't retiring. The story was quickly retracted and the mistake immediately acknowledged. Nina's apology heard on *All Things Considered* that evening, followed by an explanation of how the mistake happened, was a testament to journalistic integrity. When you mess up, own up to it! ([*NPR retracts story about Alito retirement* \ NPR](#)) ([*'I am so, so sorry': NPR reporter explains SCOTUS retirement error* | CNN](#))

Elections, elections, and more elections! While *NPR* covers the national races, WPM focuses on statewide offices, working with the *League of Women Voters*, *WyoFile*, *Wyoming PBS*, and other partners. We have a packed schedule of candidate forums and debates this summer and fall—too many to list here! Visit our candidate forum hub: *Wyoming Candidate Forums*. At the time of this writing, WPM plans to broadcast these debates live on Wyoming Public Radio and stream them online at wyomingpublicmedia.org. An informed electorate is a stronger electorate—so tune in, get informed, and don't forget to vote in the August primary and November general election.

America's Minutes has joined our roster of programs commemorating America's 250th anniversary. Produced by *KFCB Radio* in Cheyenne, the series features 90-second stories about the Revolution, the Founding, and Wyoming's place in the American story. Nathaniel Trelease, chairman of the *Cheyenne and Laramie County 250 Commission*, states that the project aims to “inspire learning, encourage acts of citizenship and celebrate.” You can hear *America's Minutes* throughout the week on Wyoming Public Radio, or listen online at [*America's Minutes Stories of America 250*](#).

[Celebrate Independence Day with Wyoming Public Radio!](#) Program Director Grady Kirkpatrick has assembled a special lineup of Independence Day programming, featuring everything from stirring patriotic music to thoughtful conversations on our nation's history and ideals. A Wyoming favorite returns with *Patriotic Pops Live* from the *Grand Teton Music Festival*, alongside other programs that inform, inspire, and entertain throughout the holiday.

Cheyenne Frontier Days Meets Wyoming Sounds. Another Wyoming favorite is just around the corner. On July 22nd, Grady Kirkpatrick will host *Wyoming Sounds* live from *Cheyenne Frontier Days—the Daddy of 'Em All*. Join him in person or tune in from wherever you are. Whether by radio or digital stream, you won't want to miss this special *Wyoming Sounds* road show.

This month, Wyoming Public Media's *Community Minute* program is featuring two Wyoming affiliates of *Habitat for Humanity*: [*Habitat for Humanity of Laramie County*](#) and [*Habitat for Humanity of the Greater Teton Area*](#). Through their shared mission of building safe, affordable housing, each organization is making a lasting impact in the communities they serve. You can listen to both *Community Minute* features—and explore others from nonprofit and service organizations across the state—at wyomingpublicmedia.org/community-minute.

On June 30, Ed Seidel concluded his service as President of the University of Wyoming after leading the institution through a period of significant change and challenge. During his tenure, he helped guide UW through the COVID-19 pandemic and budget pressures while advancing student success, strengthening community engagement, and expanding partnerships across Wyoming and beyond. We thank President Seidel for his dedication to the university and his many contributions to the state. On July 1, Shane Reeves began his tenure as UW's 29th president. “In the weeks ahead, my priority is simply to listen and learn,” he said. As President Reeves visits communities around Wyoming, we encourage listeners and supporters to share their connection to Wyoming Public Media and the important role public media plays in informing, educating, and connecting Wyoming's citizens and communities. ([*A Message from the President: Honored to Serve* | University of Wyoming](#))

How time flies! It seems like we just welcomed a new year, and now we're already halfway through. Through it

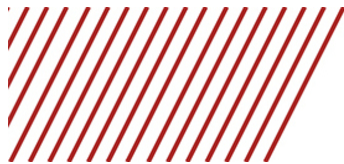
all, we have remained focused on keeping public media strong in Wyoming.

Over the past 18 months, we have faced both federal and state funding challenges and emerged stronger because of the extraordinary support of listeners like you. Your loyalty, generosity, and belief in our mission were the secret ingredients in that success. We never take that support for granted. As we move forward, our responsibility is clear: to continue earning your trust by providing the journalism, music, cultural programming, and community connections that Wyoming depends upon. We are deeply grateful for your confidence in Wyoming Public Media, and we remain committed to living up to your expectations every day.

Happy 4th of July!

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or comments at ckuzmych@uwyo.edu.

Christina Kuzmych,
WPM General Manager



BEHIND THE SCENES



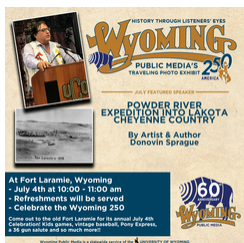
Wyoming Public Media Welcomes News Intern, Ellis Lurilli-Hough

Hailing from Melrose, MA, Ellis Lurilli-Hough is a student at Connecticut College with a passion for journalism. He served as the Opinions Editor at his school newspaper. A double major in Civic Literacy and Philosophy, he enjoys reporting on politics, education, environment, and local events. [View Ellis' stories...](#) and [Watch Ellis' Reel.](#)



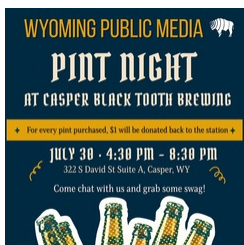
Wyoming Sounds aired Summer Soundcheck Music Series Live from Pinedale

Pinedale band *The Dangling Chains* opened for western, honky tonk band *Jenny Don't & the Spurs* from Portland. Grady Kirkpatrick hosted the event in collaboration with *Pinedale Fine Arts* and Tim Ruland. Big thanks to sound engineer Ben Slater for getting music on the air following a hefty lightning, rain and hail storm. *June 27, 2026.*



WPM Photo Exhibit Reception & Presentation by Author Donovan Sprague

Stop by Fort Laramie on July 4th to view Wyoming Public Media's Wyoming 250 Photo Contest Exhibit. The opening reception features a presentation by Donovan Sprague, a Wyoming author and historian. [More information here.](#) *July 4, 2026.*



Wyoming Public Radio Community Pint Night at Casper's Black Tooth Brewing

Connect with Wyoming Public Media journalists and your fellow WPR fans, while supporting the station you love. Plus, during this event, \$1 of each pint purchased will be donated back to WPR. Stop by Casper's Black Tooth Brewing from 4:30-8:30 pm. *July 30, 2026.*

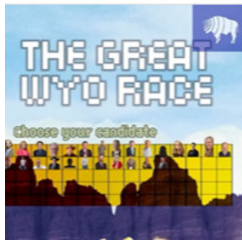


SOCIAL MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Wyoming Public Media's Jordan Uplinger Offers Primary Election Series

Primary Preview: 2026 is also a big year for the balance of power in the Wyoming Legislature. In the last election, a group of hardline conservatives called the Wyoming



Freedom Caucus won a majority of seats in the state House. Here's Jordan Uplinger's breakdown of which races may tip the scale.

[View the reel.](#) June 5, 2026.

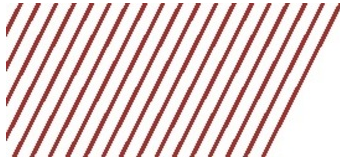
Wyoming
Candidate
Forum

THE PRIMARY IS COMING ON AUG. 18! DO YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE GOING TO VOTE FOR? IF YOU WANT TO GET TO KNOW THE FEDERAL AND STATEWIDE CANDIDATES ON YOUR BALLOT BETTER, YOU'RE IN LUCK.

Click here for details on candidate forums in July!

LWV

WyoFile



BEYOND WYOMING



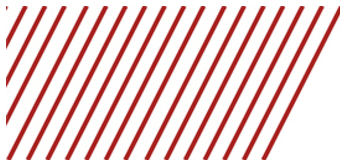
Nuclear reactor that could help humans live on the moon takes first 'critical' step

A story by Hanna Merzbach about a nuclear reactor in an Idaho lab aired nationally on *NPR*.

[View the story.](#) June 5, 2026.

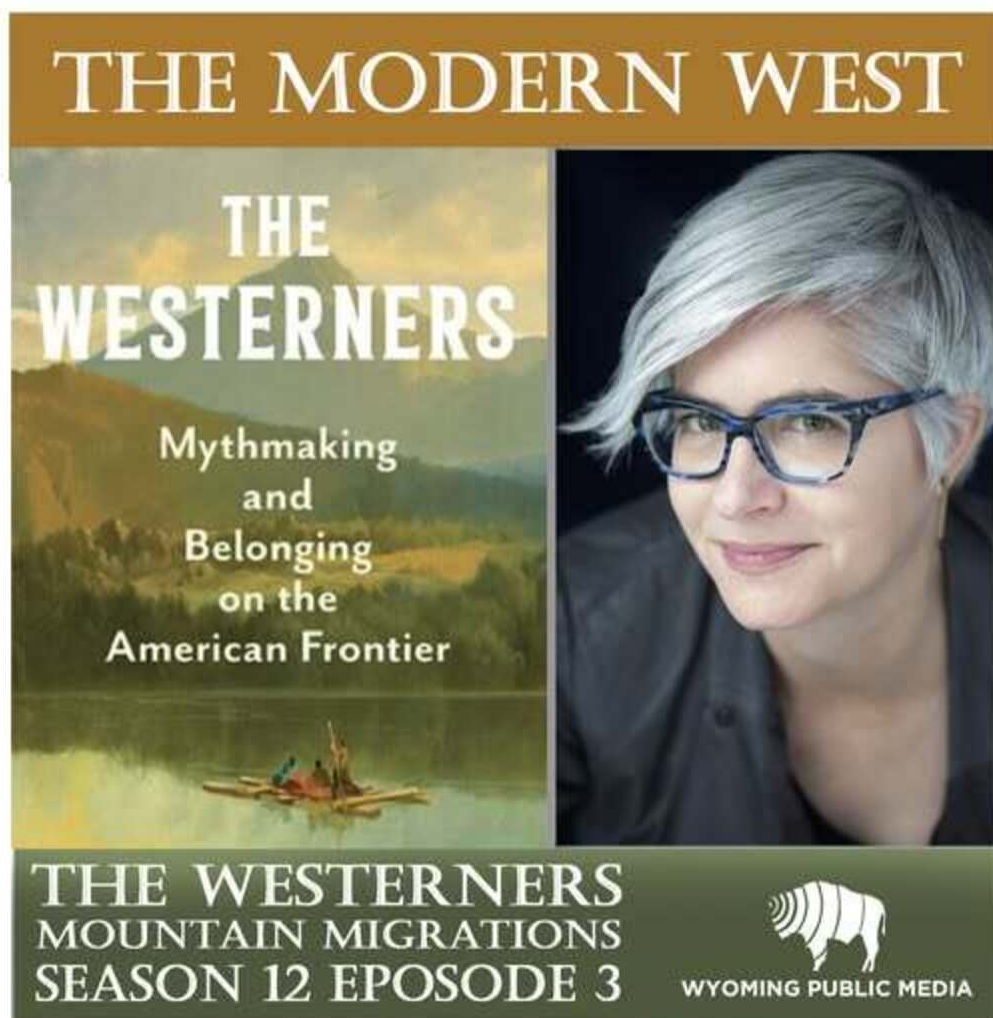
How Trump's \$700M investment in coal could impact Mountain West states

A story by Hanna Merzbach about the President's coal policy aired on *NPR*. [View the story.](#) June 4, 2026.



MUST LISTEN





The Modern West - The Westerners

WPM journalist and podcast host, Melodie Edwards, chats with author Megan Kate Nelson about her new book. "*The Westerners: Mythmaking and Belonging on the American Frontier*" weaves together the stories of 7 historical characters as they crisscross the American West in the 1800s. [Listen to the podcast.](#)

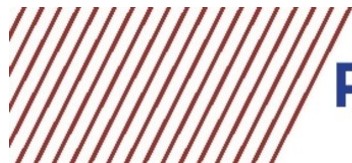


PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Chad Coppess - Sacred eagle wings surround sacred tower of stone

One of the Winners of the [2025 WPM Photo Contest](#)

Ojibwe dancer/artist Michelle Reed jumped at the chance to do a photo shoot at the sacred Mato Tipila, or Devils Tower. The gracefulness of her eagle wings and movement instantly made Chad think of the many birds he's seen circling the tower each time he visits there.



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