



WYOMING PUBLIC MEDIA

General Manager's Newsletter | May 2026



Happy May!

Spring has finally arrived, and despite the lingering snow, we couldn't be more excited! This is the perfect moment to honor our graduates and embrace the joyful onset of vacation season. Let's cherish and make the most of every moment together!

The *Spring Fund Drive* was amazing – truly a “Wow!” moment! Each day, we not only met but exceeded our goals, all thanks to the incredible generosity of our donors. Their heartfelt stories about WPM's impact in their lives have truly inspired us. We're thrilled to welcome 97 new members who pledged for the first time! This tremendous support fuels our passion and commitment to making WPM more successful than ever. And for the record, the traditional *Cats vs Dogs* battle mercifully ended in a tie.

We have an honorary Doctor of Letters! UW will confer its highest award, the honorary doctoral degree, upon Bob Beck during UW commencement ceremonies Saturday, May 16th. We all remember Bob from his 34 years as News Director. WPM will honor Bob with an Open House Thursday, May 14th from 11:30 am to 1:30 p.m. Bob's an informal guy, so this is an informal event. Drop by, chat with Bob and the staff, visit our quaint facilities, and have a good time connecting with friends and colleagues. Don't miss out on this [opportunity to celebrate a remarkable individual!](#)

The first batch of 2025 journalism awards are in, and WPM reporters won six *Top of the Rockies Excellence in Journalism Awards* from the *Colorado Professional Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists*. Congratulations to Chris Clements, Jordan Uplinger, Caitlin Tan, and Melodie Edwards. *Cheyenne Roundup*, a state legislature podcast, coproduced with *WyoFile*, was also a winner. Read the details [here](#).

You can celebrate our news department at the *Black Tooth Pint Night*. Grab a beer and connect with WPM reporters and our listeners. During this event, \$1 of each pint purchased will be donated back to WPM. There will be live music from 4 - 6 p.m. by Justin Mistikawy from *Box of Rocks*. It's at the *Black Tooth Brewing Co.* in Laramie, 3 - 8 pm on Thursday, May 7th.

Our signal in Wheatland should improve with the addition of 107.5 FM. Though Wheatland receives signals from Laramie (91.9) and Douglas (91.7), they don't reach all areas as well. If you're in the area, give it a listen and let us know if you hear improvements. This should also improve the signal along the I-25 corridor.

Former *NPR* President and CEO Kevin Klose passed from complications of Alzheimer's disease. He was 85. Klose arrived at *NPR* in December 1998 as its sixth permanent president after a distinguished career as a national and foreign correspondent and a senior editor at the *Post*. He also served as the president of *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, the government-funded international broadcaster that serves audiences in Russia and 27 countries, largely in Eastern Europe, central Asia, and the Middle East. ([Visionary NPR leader Kevin Klose, who led network to new heights, has died, NPR](#))

Violence is a part of our current social and political fabric. But how to report it to avoid elevating the status of the violator and inspiring copycat incidents? ([*Poynter's Public Editor*](#))

Maryland passed a novel approach to funding local media. Several states follow suit. It's a bold idea – see what you think. ([*Maryland Legislature Passes the Nation's First State Advertising Set-Aside for Local Newsrooms - Rebuild Local News*](#))

This is an election year, and we're preparing for coverage of state and federal elections. May 13th is the deadline for *registered voters* to change party affiliation prior to the August primary. You can do this at your county clerk's office. This is a new 2024 bill passed by Wyoming's Legislature in 2023. However, Wyomingites who are *not registered to vote* will still be able to register and declare party affiliation up to the day of the primary election on August 18th.

One way to gauge a state's vitality is in how it serves its public through non-profits. Be it hunger or mental health initiatives, training opportunities, religious affiliated organizations, animal welfare groups, cultural activities and projects – they all bring us together and enrich our lives. This month *Community Minute* celebrates [*Science Kids*](#) – “We get kids outdoors, where great science learning happens”. *Community Minute* is a series that highlights the mission, reach, and impact of nonprofit and service organizations across Wyoming. Each episode gives listeners a brief but meaningful look at the people and programs helping our communities thrive. You can explore all of our *Community Minute* features [here](#).

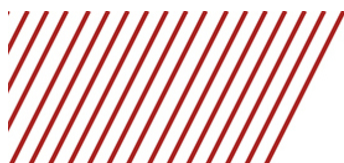
NPR has secured a remarkable \$113 million in two generous gifts. These funds will drive essential digital innovation, allowing NPR to better meet the evolving needs of the public while ensuring the longevity of the NPR network. While these contributions directly support NPR, they will also provide significant indirect benefits to the national network of stations by enhancing digital initiatives and strengthening overall sustainability. ([*NPR press release*](#))

Not to be outdone, WPM is proud to announce that we have received several generous gifts to enhance our future sustainability campaign. We have named it “*For the Next 60 Years*” to honor our remarkable 60 years of service and to prepare for the journey ahead. This past year, we were fortunate to receive two exceptional gifts that will significantly bolster WPM's future. Terry and Bev Roark's planned gift, made through the UW Foundation, is a major step towards ensuring our long-term success. As President of UW, Terry Roark transformed a local public radio station into the extensive statewide network we cherish today. Additionally, a substantial gift from a dedicated group of donors via the *Wyoming Community Foundation* aims to secure WPM's stability for years to come. These transformative contributions exemplify a deep commitment to the vital role of public media and the impact WPM has in Wyoming. Stay tuned for more updates on these gifts – they are invaluable as we face future challenges and strive to serve the citizens of Wyoming.

Over the past two years, we have faced many challenges together. The fact that we continue to broadcast and look towards the future speaks volumes about you, our dedicated listeners and supporters. It reflects our shared commitment to reliable journalism, meaningful information, and the rich celebration of culture. While trends come and go, and technology evolves rapidly, the stories we tell and the culture we share hold timeless value. Thank you for being an essential part of this journey with us.

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

Christina Kuzmych,
WPM General Manager



BEHIND THE SCENES



Matt Axton and Badmoon kicked off their tour on *Wyoming Sounds*

Matt Axton is a gifted Americana singer, songwriter, guitarist and band leader with a rich



family history in country and rock and roll. Matt talked with Grady Kirkpatrick about the Axton music legacy and played a set with his band Badmoon as they kicked off their western tour in Laramie. [Listen to the live broadcast.](#) April 8, 2026.



Wyoming Public Radio Northwest Reporters Stopped by Laramie for News Retreat

The Spring Membership Drive was the perfect opportunity to gather the news team for trainings, updates, and a chance to host during the week. On their way back, WPM's Western Wyoming Bureau went biking and climbing together! Pictured here in Lander: Hanna Merzbach, Hannah Habermann, and Caitlin Tan. April 16, 2026.



SOCIAL MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



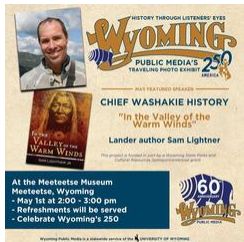
Wyoming Public Radio's Jordan Uplinger Offers Viewers a Glimpse into The Interim

"It's time for the legislative interim session, the downtime for Wyoming lawmakers to interact with community members, experts and members of the public looking to address issues in the state." View Jordan's [Instagram Reel.](#) April 21, 2026.



Wyoming Public Media Listeners and their Pets Stepped Up to the Plate

What's a Spring Drive without Pet Wednesday? Thanks, Wyoming pets, for your support. A special treat this year was a video collage of adoptable pets, including frisky Freya. [View other pet fans on WPM's Facebook page.](#) April 15, 2026.



Sam Lightner's Presentation at Meeteetse Museum Reception Drew a Crowd

The Wyoming Public Media Photo Exhibit's opening reception in Meeteetse featured a presentation by Sam Lightner about his book: "*In the Valley of the Warm Winds,*" which traces the life of Eastern Shoshone Chief Washakie. [View the presentation.](#) May 1 2026.



MUST LISTEN





HumaNature Season 17. We're back with A Very Cold Case

Our first episode follows adventurer Mark Synnott as he sets off into the Arctic Circle to attempt to solve a centuries old mystery. If you've never heard of the *Franklin Expedition*, it's a fascinating rabbit hole book. In 1875, Sir John Franklin sailed from England with 129 men in an attempt to find a way through the Northwest Passage. They disappeared without a trace and the mystery has endured for over a hundred years. Countless expeditions have been launched, and some evidence has been found, but ultimately nobody really knows what happened. Out May 13th. [Binge listen to 10 years of HumaNature](#), as *WPM celebrates 60 years on the air*.

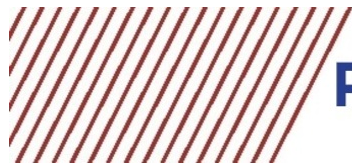


PHOTO OF THE MONTH



David Otto - A Wyoming Memory

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

About the Photo: The photo is of David Otto's wife's 1929 Model A Ford that belonged to her great uncle. When her mother passed away, she saw it in a photo and was able to track it down. She was able to return it to her family along with their 1924 Model TT truck, which she has worked to restore. This photo was taken with their ranch in the background.



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