

The Barnyards and Backyards community



Tony Hoch

By Tony Hoch, magazine coordinator

Welcome to the Spring *Barnyards & Backyards*. I just heard a legislator say there are 89 municipalities in Wyoming, and my subscription list shows we are now going out to 92 different-named post offices in the state! To recycle a cliché, our rural landowners in Wyoming comprise a small community with very long streets, and we are honored to serve this community.

We introduce in this issue our second property improvement project. This property near Casper is high and dry with very sandy soils and a susceptibility to wind erosion – and a whole different set of challenges compared to our featured property near Wheatland with its irrigated meadows. Getting rangeland grasses to grow will be challenging, particularly on sand and with livestock, but our team is up to the challenge!

We are also very pleased to report the University of Wyoming School of Energy Resources is now a cosponsor of this magazine. Given that our energy efficiency and alternative energy workshops have been so popular and we have received positive feedback from energy-related articles, this seems like a natural fit. Check out the article on home geothermal systems in this issue and look for more energy-related articles for homeowners in future issues.

We continue our emphasis on growing food in high and dry Wyoming with stories about a community gardening project in Newcastle and an extended family in Afton that takes the community garden concept a step further with a major agriculture operation.

Other topics of broad interest to our magazine community are the ins and outs of conservation easements, leasing private lands for grazing, and growing trees and shrubs in tough soil conditions. For the technologically savvy, we also have fun using a GPS (Global Positioning System) unit to calibrate sprayers for herbicides or fertilizers.

We hope you benefit from our stories and help keep the ideas coming. Best wishes for a happy and productive warm season – on the range or in the hills of rural Wyoming.