

Extension Connection

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Cooperative Extension Service employees recently got together in Laramie for extension's annual EPIC conference. EPIC stands for Extension Professional Improvement Conference.

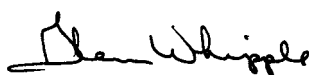
For the first time, our employees who work in the Cent\$ible Nutrition Program joined us in this conference. EPIC week is a busy one for me but one of the best of the year because I can so clearly see and feel the dynamism and synergy of the organization and the power of CES to provide education and assistance to the people of our state.

This was particularly so this year because the focus of the conference was organizational renewal and setting our course for the future. Much of the week was devoted to our state initiative teams planning their program directions for the next five years. Though these plans are only just in the formulation stage, we are looking ahead to create our place in the promising future of this great state.

Extension Connection is just a single snapshot of the great work of UW CES. I am particularly proud of this issue because of the picture it paints of service to Wyoming's agriculture, its families, and its communities. The community center in Worland is an example that is very exciting to me. We in CES have long recognized the value of learning centers to the development of communities and the enrichment of people's lives. Some communities have them, but many do not.

Several years ago, we set a goal to help communities across Wyoming develop learning centers to serve their residents. Our educators in Washakie County found a way to help the Worland community build their community center. A great story!

I hope you enjoy this issue of *Extension Connection*. If you have thoughts about the magazine or other aspects of UW CES, please e-mail me at glen@uwyo.edu, or call me at (307) 766-5124.



Glen Whipple

RightRisk™ helps producers explore risk-

*By Robert Waggener, Editor
Office of Communications and Technology*

Lingle agricultural producer Dan Ellis says he usually doesn't come out on top when it comes to money matters. But he did just that when playing the RightRisk™ cow-calf computer simulation during a beef symposium in Torrington.

Ellis and a symposium classmate, Eastern Wyoming College agriculture instructor Tim Walters, took an aggressive approach when making management decisions on their mock cattle ranch during the class taught by the University of Wyoming's Cooperative Extension Service.



Farm and Ranch Management Specialist John Hewlett teaches a RightRisk™ class in Worland.

"We bought the maximum number of cows we could and leased the most amount of grass we could to take care of the animals. We produced some of our own hay, but we had to buy some additional hay. As it turns out, we were lucky. Our approach worked," Ellis says.

"Calf prices stayed up, and we didn't have any major disasters. We ended up with the most money at the end of the class. We won the coffee mugs," he says, and then laughs.

When their RightRisk™ cow-calf scenario was plotted out over several years, taking into account such things as drought, hard winters, favorable springs, and varying cattle markets – the good and the bad – they still won the most "money."

"Luck would have it," he says, and laughs again.

Ellis knows this was only a simulation, but he stresses that what he learned is being applied to his family's corn, dry bean, pinto bean, alfalfa, and feeder calf operations.

"RightRisk™ is an interesting program set into a game format. It lets you play with a number of different scenarios. What you do today doesn't only affect what you do today; it affects you down the line. What's nice is you can play without risking for real," Ellis emphasizes.

This particular class was taught by Assistant Professor Chris Bastian and Farm and Ranch Management Specialist John Hewlett with the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics. Hewlett is a member of the regional RightRisk™ team, which teaches classes in Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, Montana, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

Hundreds of agricultural producers in Wyoming have taken RightRisk™ classes on running a cow-calf operation, and future classes will be offered on

making a difference

management strategies, plan for future

wheat farming, ranches that rely on public lands for part of their grazing operations, and other scenarios under development, including one on sheep. Several programs on livestock and crops will be offered around the state next year. The schedule will be released in the coming weeks.

Hewlett says RightRisk™ doesn't make decisions for agricultural producers, but instead it helps them explore risk-management strategies, build decision-making skills, and learn about their own personal beliefs when it comes to the management of their operations.

"Ranchers and farmers, even those in the same family, quickly discover they have different tolerance levels for risk when they play this game," Hewlett says.

Tom Page, who runs a cow-calf ranch and raises hay 20 miles northwest of Laramie, learned just that about his family when he took a RightRisk™ class last fall in Laramie. "My mom (Margaret) and wife (Barb) are conservative enough that Abe Lincoln's head is turned halfway around before they turn loose of a penny. I learned that I'm willing to take a little more risk."

Potentially conflicting philosophies are actually good in this case because they can provide checks and balances, Page says.

"Different real-life scenarios can be played out on paper to determine what amount of risk can be taken to hopefully turn the greatest profit. Mom is really good at the pencil, and we often mull things over. Occasionally, we argue things over," notes Page, who adds he now spends about 10 to 20 hours a month in his office going over different options.

Page wishes he would have played the RightRisk™ game before he sold cattle last summer through a video auction. "I think I could have gotten

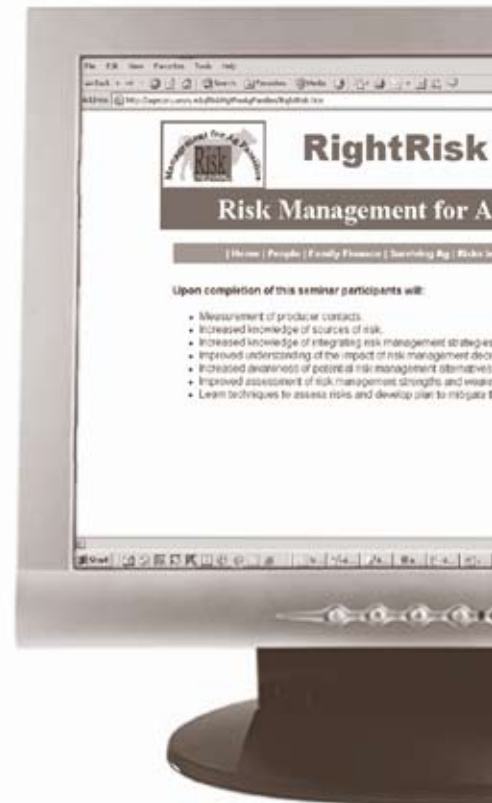
more money if we would have had a full truckload of steers. Instead, we sold a split load of steers and heifers to fill the truck. I learned that if I sold a full truck of steers then I could keep more replacement heifers and get into the bred heifer market. That is what I'm looking at right now."

He believes it will work for his ranch because of the amount of hay it typically produces in a year (1,200 to 1,500 tons on 340 acres).

"We could run 500 head on our ranch with the hay we grow, but that would mean summering the cattle elsewhere during the growing season. Would this be profitable? That's where the pencil and the scenarios come in. If you have to pay \$15 to \$18 per month summer pasture for each pair, would it pencil back to where you are making the profit?" Page asks. "If you put the cattle out there on the hay grounds, it really cuts down on the productivity of those grounds. We are finding it's cheaper to go with ground than to pasture my meadows. We did that this year, and it worked."

Page now raises 150 head of Black Angus, but under the computer simulation he could take on additional cattle during the fall and winter months and charge for the hay and labor.

Asked if he believes what he learned with RightRisk™ will help sustain the ranch, he replies, "I





sure hope so. When you go at ranching these days, you have to go at it with a pencil.”

Ellis says he attended last spring’s beef symposium and took the RightRisk™ class held in conjunction with the event in part to satisfy educational requirements of his real estate, cattle, and farm equipment loans through the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Farm Service Agency.

“The FSA wants to make sure we know how to keep track of our affairs,” says Ellis, who is glad he played RightRisk™. “In real life, it’s basic enterprise projections. When you sit down in the spring and plan your row crops, you try to project costs and income. You can project your costs pretty close, but income is a shot in the dark. That is out of your control.”

He continues, “I took some cows in on shares shortly after I played the game, which I used to help figure if I had enough summer grass and winter range to take on these shares. I figured it would work, and so far it has. But just like in the program, there are always lingering questions like ‘what if it goes dry?’

“I worked out the feed requirements for the cows and how much hay I would either have to buy or produce. Even under drought conditions, I thought I would be OK. We stocked a little light last spring just because it was dry, then it started raining in early May. The cattle look real good right now,” Ellis says. “There is no pressure to move them this fall other than to capture the market.”

Ellis says he will use what he learned from RightRisk™ to determine in part which row crops to plant on the four farms his family owns or rents and whether they should continue with all four operations.

“I need to do some enterprise analysis on which farms to keep. The profit margins on production agriculture, especially on the irrigated row crops, are very, very tight. Expenses are going up, but commodity prices are under pressure daily. Fuel has gone way up, and that in turn drives up many costs including fertilizer. Everything we buy is trucked in, and the shipping is being affected by the gas prices.”

Ellis adds, “Making decisions concerning our farming operations is going to be a continuous process. In general, farmers in this valley need to be doing a lot of hard figuring. Trying to figure out what the products will sell for in comparison to what it costs to produce them is tough, and that can be stressful on families.”

Hopefully, educational materials such as RightRisk™ will take some of that stress out of long-term decisions. “I would take another class if it is offered here. There is something to learn from anybody, and we in ag don’t do enough learning,” Ellis says.

The RightRisk™ Web site contains computer simulations that agricultural producers can play. The site is located at <http://www.rightrisk.org/>

Cent\$ible Nutrition Program battles hunger in Wyoming homes



*By Steven Miller, Senior Editor
Office of Communications and Technology*

Wyoming senior citizens on fixed incomes are now eating at the end of the month instead of going hungry.

Wyoming mothers no longer have to choose between themselves eating and not having enough food for their children, or not eating and their children having enough food.



Laramie County Cent\$ible Nutrition Educator Helen Gregorio, left, stresses the importance of menu planning with her participant. She shows how to use the new Dietary Guidelines for Americans along with MyPyramid to plan a balanced day's menu.

The Cooperative Extension Service Cent\$ible Nutrition Program (CNP) helps Food Stamp Program-eligible residents learn how to eat better for less and stretch their Food Stamp buying power. For the last reporting year that ended September 30, 19,583 adults were presented one-time CNP lessons, and more than 15,582 youths participated in after-school programs, summer camps, or in-class programs.

CNP received the national Leadership, Innovation and Nutrition Collaboration (LINC) Excellence in Practice award in September from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service.

Statistically, the program has saved an average of \$43.50 per month for clients and their families, an average of \$522 a year. Laramie County CNP Educator Karen Davis says some families have saved much more.

"We have documented proof of families spending \$600 a month before the program and \$400 a month after," she says. "They can buy more food with the Food Stamps they get or with the resources they have."

Program success stories are at www.uwyo.edu/centsible/9.html.

Poverty and hunger mangle in Wyoming, says Cindy Frederick, co-director of the CNP program with Mary Kay Wardlaw.

Through classes, in-home visits, and youth food nutrition education, the program enables families to boost Food Stamp power. "Maybe now the Food Stamps are covering all the food expenses, and they can use that \$40 for medication," says Frederick. "There are senior citizens who are choosing between eating and buying the medication they



*Campbell County
Cent\$ible Nutrition
Educator Lori Jones*

need. That \$40 to them is a lot of money.”

That proved true for a class of 18 senior citizens Davis taught for 18 weeks in Converse County. “Seniors are not our target audience – they only get a minimal amount of Food Stamp money,” she says. “They live on a fixed income, and

they told me they saved \$15 a month in Food Stamp money when they learned how to manage food better. That \$15 covered the last week of the month. Instead of not eating, they had food left over. It gave them such a feeling of empowerment and security. They have to live on \$500 a month. None of us could do that, but they are forced to do that.”

The damage caused when a tornado scraped the community of Wright literally off the Wyoming landscape was horrible, yet there was an ironic silver lining for some. Campbell County CNP Educator Lori Jones, who serves an average of 125 families a year, says the lives of her clients in Wright actually improved.

“The tornado raised their standard of living because whatever is brought in will be an improvement,” she says. “There are mothers trying to get by on \$6 to \$7 an hour. We work with those mothers to try to get them to feel like they are doing a good job of feeding their children.”

CNP’s origins began with the USDA’s Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) in 1968, and the Food Stamp Nutrition Program, which started in the mid-1980s. The Food Stamp Nutrition Education (FSNE) program was started in Wyoming in 1997 and is in every county of Wyoming and the Wind River Indian Reservation. CNP draws funds from both, with the majority from FSNE. The program also collaborates with the Wyoming Children and Families Initiative and also partners with Food Bank of the Rockies.

Former CES educator and Cent\$ible Nutrition Program director Linda Melcher wrote the original grant for the program. Melcher this summer accepted a position as nutritionist with the USDA’s Food and Nutrition Service at the regional office in Dallas.

CNP includes up to 15 lessons such as Being a Super Shopper, Supermarket Persuasion, Breads and Cereals: The Energy Connection, and Fruits and Vegetables: The Vitamin Connection. Participants took an average of 8.3 lessons last year. Classes can last from nine to 18 weeks. Educators also make home visits.

“Our mission is to help people learn how to eat better for less,” says Davis. “Within that, we want them to use safe food-handling techniques and how to manage their money better.”

Educators provide demonstrations and recipes out of the CNP cookbook and how to use food from the Food Bank of the Rockies. “It is not a cooking class but nutrition information,” she says.

Participants learn how to plan meals and menus and how to choose healthy foods. The country has undergone a cultural change, moving away from food preparation skills into a second generation which doesn’t know how to cook, say Wardlaw and Frederick.

“Because of their habits, they are not used to buying nutrient-dense foods that require them to do a lot of labor. They are used to convenience food,” adds Jones. “We try to help them see that if they spend their money on getting more bang for the buck, they save hunger and save money. Some didn’t know how



*Laramie County Cent\$ible Nutrition Educator
Shawntey Lorenz-Sandoval, right, discusses the new
MyPyramid with her participant. She emphasizes the
importance of a balanced diet, including daily exercise.*

to shop, menu plan, or how to cook.”

Jones focuses on menu planning and involving children in the process. “We teach them to cook with their children,” she notes. “We try to have the mothers see they are the gatekeepers for their family’s nutrition. The families will only be as strong as the mothers are.”

Ten percent of Wyoming’s 492,000 residents (2004 Census figure) – about 49,000 people – live in poverty.

About 115,000 of the state’s residents are youths ages 17 and younger. Of those, about 13 percent live in poverty, or about 15,000, according to information from the Economic Research Service of the USDA. “To me, that’s a scary thought,” comments Davis.

About 10 to 20 percent of the high school at-risk youths Davis works with say school lunch is their only meal.

In surveys of public school classes with as many as 20 students, three or four say lunch the day before was their last meal, she says. “I have kids in those classes who live in cars,” she adds.

“People think that doesn’t happen in Wyoming,” she notes. “Or ‘That doesn’t happen in small communities. That doesn’t happen in this country where we live in a land of plenty.’ But to those of us working in the trenches, teaching them what to eat and finding out when they ate their last meal, we see it on a daily basis. They don’t have anything to eat and don’t know what to eat.”

Campbell County is one of the wealthiest in Wyoming, yet poverty and hunger are entrenched there, says Jones. “There is a big disparity between the haves and have-nots,” she adds.

“We don’t have out-and-out slums in Wyoming, but we have two to three families living in one



Students in the Marty Moose program practice the Pyramid Balance with Laramie County Cent\$ible Nutrition Program Educator Karen Davis, showing how hard it is to withstand the Wyoming wind when your dietary pyramid is out of balance.

apartment or living in one home. It is not us hiding it as much as people in poverty have gotten pretty good at hiding it.”

It’s not all gloom and doom, says Davis. “There are nine of every 10 people who are not living in poverty,” she says.

She adds, “This has got to be the most rewarding job I’ve been in. When you give people a little bit of empowerment, it brings up their self-esteem. There is nothing like having a mom and dad who are a couple weeks into the program come back and say, ‘Guess what? We have three meals. We have breakfast now.’ You see the kids change, see the house picked up, the kids have had a bath and are eager to talk to you. To see them take care of themselves and their families, that is reward enough.”

On the Web: <http://www.uwyo.edu/centsible/index.html>

<http://www.uwyo.edu/UWces/>

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/Data/povertyrates/PovListpct.asp?Longname=Wyoming&ST=WY&SF=1A>

<http://factfinder.census.gov>

empowering



Meghan Haukass demonstrates that a smile is always a welcome attribute at a business.

*By Steven L. Miller, Senior Editor
Office of Communications and Technology*

Making sense of dollars and cents paid off for 8- through 12-year-olds at Creating Your Own Community Camps this summer.

These possible future Wyoming entrepreneurs were taught by Cooperative Extension Service (CES) how to begin a business, and they started, named, and grew their individual communities.

Camps of three half-days were offered in Evanston and Green River, and organizers planned to present similar information at Aspen Elementary School in Evanston this fall.

The camps made a connection not only with students but parents.

"I was pretty amazed by the responses of parents," says Dawn Sanchez, CES 4-H program associate in Uinta County. "On the last day, we had an open house and the parents came. The responses from them were absolutely wonderful."

So were responses from test scores. Sanchez and Jaime Hunolt, Uinta County extension educator, and intern Rachel Novakovich administered pre-

CES helps Wyoming

and post-tests. Results showed the camp boosted participant performance almost 30 percent.

Marsha Harris of Green River was hesitant to send her children to yet another summer youth camp. Most camps were long, time-consuming, and stressful. "I didn't want to overbook our kids," she says of Sarah, 11, and Julie, 9. "They came back the first day really excited. They were so excited every day that they'd watch the clock and were ready to go. It was all so positive."

Camps are meant to teach future adult Wyoming citizens how to build a community. There were 17 children at the first camp and 11 in the second. "This is the first time we have done this," says Hunolt, "and we were excited to get that many kids. We interacted well and had time to explain the concepts one by one."

Camp-goers were taught something new each day. "Every time you go, you do something new," says Sarah Harris. "I like doing that. I'd kind of like to start my own business someday."

Participants the first day learned various aspects of a community, built their own community, and voted on a community name and currency. Camp-goers in Evanston named their community Red Falls. Campers in Green River named their town, after a brief flirtation with Bikini Bottoms, Wind River. Each participant designed their own flag and money.

"The next day they had to come up with their own business plan," notes Hunolt. "They covered five parts of starting a business such as what will my business sell, at what location, the cost of a business, getting money to start, and advertising."

Campers had to make their product on the third day, set up their store, and offer products for sale.

Instructors had more than one overlying goal, says Sanchez. "The first day we wanted them to understand what makes up a community. Voting was a big part of it. We had them fill out a ballot as

community

self-achievement

youths learn to build a community



Duane Davison and Justin Lange are in the manufacturing stage of their product. Camp participants made products that were sold the last day of camp.

if they went to vote for a candidate.”

“I think they all knew about voting,” adds Hunolt. “But there was only one who had ever seen a ballot. His dad takes him with him when he votes.”

The campers learned about the infrastructure of a community, the jobs at each building in the community, and the five steps to starting a business. The students learned about the importance of location to a business.

“The last aspect was self-achievement,” says Sanchez. “We wanted to show how they could be successful.”

Campers had to find money to finance their business and were introduced to loans.

“I learned how to make a bank loan,” says Julie Harris. “I didn’t know you had to pay for interest AND the loan and for a business license. I made refrigerator magnets out of clothes pins and paper clips, and dragon flies out of popsicle sticks. I made a profit. There were only three people who made a profit.”

Names for money were unique. One boy named his “trout” and drew pictures of trout on the paper.

“We encouraged creativity,” says Hunolt. “We had them come up with their own bills and coins. I was amazed at their creativity. When it came to what they were going to make, every one of the kids came up with the greatest ideas. They included making dog and cat treats and lemonade stands, and two children went into partnership and made

wooden key holders, recipe books, hand bags, and cookies.”

The campers became engaged in the learning process, especially building their own community. “They would go home and tell their parents about their community,” says Hunolt.

Julie’s mother agreed. “My daughters really had fun and came home sharing what they learned and were ready to go the next day,” she says. “They came home talking about how each had to come up with their flag and vote. They could see it was a fair process. They had to work with other kids. The sense of community and democratic process made more sense to them. Yet, it wasn’t stressful.”

The campers also had a lot of identification and pride in their community and what they were doing in their community, says Hunolt.

“That’s something also indicative of adults who live in our state. People in Wyoming take pride in where they are living and where they are from.”



Members of the Green River camp were, front row, from left: Julia Harris, Savannah Knap, Amber Nelson, Ben Nathan, Ethan Morin, and Janae Young. Middle row: Sarah Harris, Aaron Nelson, Dustin Jones, Bethany Jones, Colleen Murphy, and Jaime Hunolt. Back: Nina Romero-Caron

cooperation

Extension helps provide impetus for dev

By Steven L. Miller, Senior Editor
Office of Communications and Technology

A new business comes into a community, a resident starts a group which visits those dying in nursing homes without close relatives, and someone becomes a member of the leadership team at their local high school.

Not events one will see on CNN, but they are actions that may not have occurred without the

Cooperative Extension Service starting the process with its leadership institutes.

"I can't preach enough about leadership," says Worland resident Jennifer Wetherbee.

"I was so full of myself. Boy! Did I come crashing down!" notes business owner Jake Fulkerson of Cody.

"Once we think we know it all, we only get stupid from there," adds banker Joe Sylvester of Greybull.

Each has their own story and direct results of people becoming involved in the leadership institutes and energizing action in their communities.

"Leadership institute graduates are impressive," says Rhonda Shipp, CES educator in Park, Big Horn, Washakie, and Hot Springs counties. The institutes are part of her extension educator program, and she is program coordinator. "They care deeply about the future of their communities and get involved at many levels. The bonds formed among classmates establish community networks, thus they have stronger working relationships capable of more effective accomplishments."

Wetherbee had been a team leader for her company for two years and had to write a letter to management saying why she should be the one picked to attend the leadership institute.

She was due to be laid off the day after the first leadership class, but a supervisor convinced the management team Wetherbee should be allowed to continue due to her strengths and abilities as a leader in the company.

"The leadership class and what it did for me was amazing," she says. "I learned about myself and others and how they tick. Why people are the way they are. I carry my notebook I took to class with me everywhere I go. It's like my bible. If I'm not feeling right about something, I'll pull out it out and read the notes I took in class."

The time commitment is not slight. Classes met all day once a month, and participants spent mornings in class and the afternoons in community-based experiences learning about their topic that day.

"I think what leadership has done for our community is allowing people, whether engaged in the community or those who like to sit back, to step



Rhonda Shipp



Jennifer Wetherbee, left, says the leadership seminars empower residents to step up and make themselves heard.

elopment through leadership institutes



Jake Fulkerson, far left, explains a leadership dimension to his group during the Park County Leadership Institute.

forward, step up, and make themselves known and heard. What they have to say can help,” emphasizes Wetherbee.

For example, one woman who has been a member of the community for years formed a group that spends time with those dying in nursing homes and who do not have close family members. “They sit with them and talk with them and spend time with them. I would never have guessed that she would have done something like that,” says Wetherbee. “She never came across as the kind of person who would do that. Because of the leadership class, she felt she could step up.”

Shipp says her work at the grassroots level is aimed at building human and social capacity in the Big Horn Basin.

“Leadership education is a venue for community development intended to increase the human infrastructure and social fabric by greater civic engagement, improved decision making, economic

development, and sustainable communities,” she says. “In other words, CES’s involvement helps build sustainable communities by increasing their knowledge and skills to deal with the challenges and issues of their future.”

Fulkerson had spent 20 years in banking and now owns an appraisal business. “I was constantly trying to hone my skills,” he says. “I heard so much about Rhonda Shipp. She did a mediation class which I attended. I decided I had to spend more time around that woman!”

Leadership in the public sector is different than in the private sector. As a manager in a bank, his employees’ incentive was to carry out what he liked them to do. As chairman of the Cody Development Council, motivating other board members is a little different.

“The skills I learned in the Park County Leadership Institute transfer to that. Of the people I got to know the past 12 months, I have four or five

sustainability

on the committee. We have that bond with them I don't have with others."

"Networking is critical."

Fulkerson has the same view as Sylvester on education. "I had extensive background in interpersonal selling and motivating others, but to think you no longer need those courses is arrogance," Fulkerson comments. "This program showed me how much I needed to learn."



Joe Sylvester said learning about other personalities and how people interpret information differently was a highlight of the Leadership Big Horn County sessions.

He saw its effect on one individual who became involved and whose efforts have touched many others.

"I knew one who had no contact with the public, who had a little leadership activities in the public but not much. I saw potential in her, and I talked to her about taking the class and she said she wanted to. We don't look for people who are already leaders in the community but rather who can we train?"

The results were terrific. She took charge in her own department making changes and became involved in the parent-teacher association. "Now, her kids are in high school and this woman is

becoming part of the leadership team for the high school, and the entire community benefits," Fulkerson says. "Would she have done this without Park County Leadership Institute? I doubt it. It gave her self-confidence to get more involved in the community. She's the homerun. We don't hit homeruns every day."

If there is a high enough batting average, people will take note. Fulkerson served on a panel to help extension personnel understand how the leadership institutes worked.

He hopes those who went through the institutes put their skills to work. Park County may attempt again to pass a one-cent sales tax, a proposal that has been defeated several times.

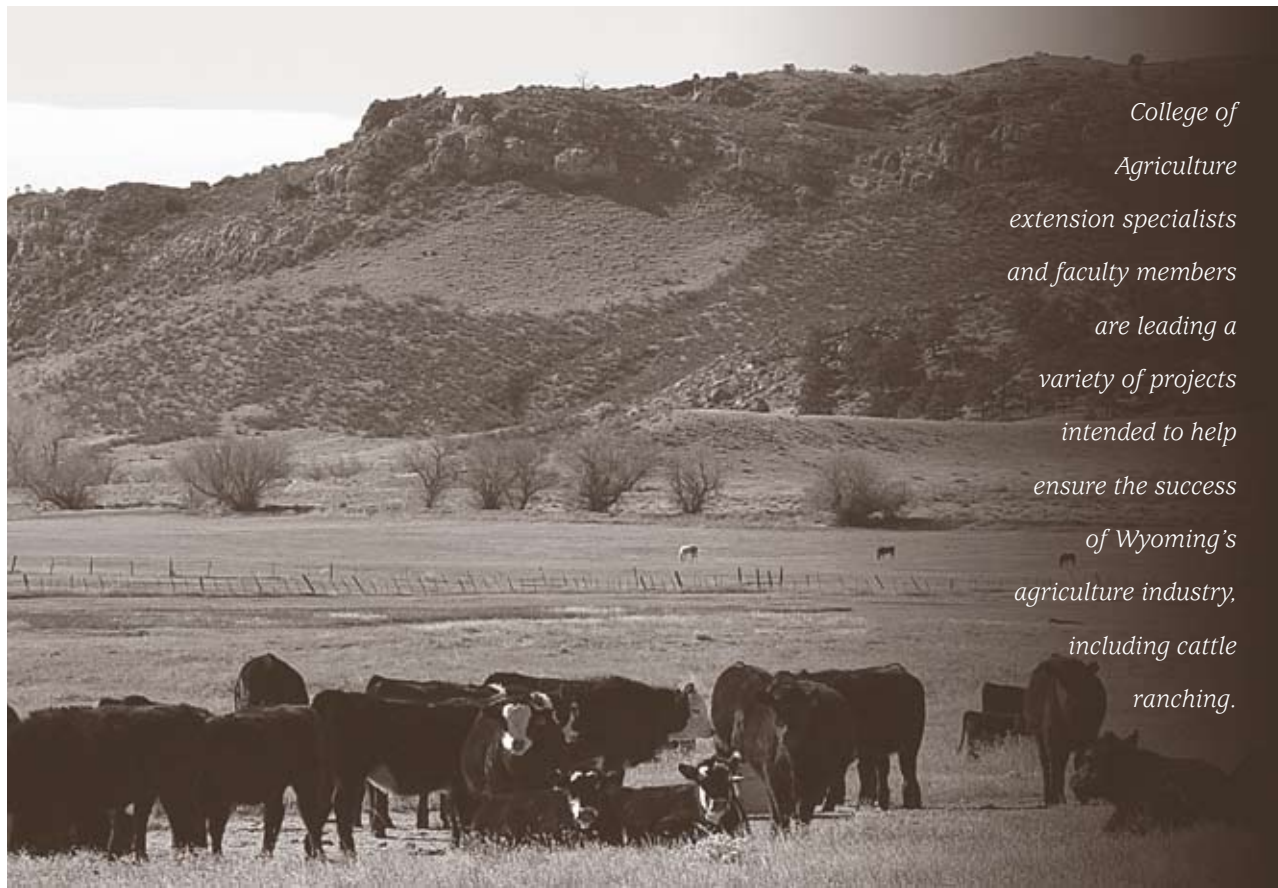
"If you don't have leaders in the community willing to step up and affect change, you are in trouble. The effect of leadership in a community goes far beyond an individual," Fulkerson notes. "This one-cent tax has to happen. It affects everybody's life in the community."

Sylvester credits the leadership institute for attracting and landing a call center in Greybull. About 15 to 30 jobs may be created.

Sylvester, chairman of the local economic development group and vice president of Big Horn Federal Savings Bank, says the training is a good tool. He thought the institute can help someone understand another's point of view and learning the formal structure in a community were highlights for him.

One session helps members understand their own personality and others "so you understand that when someone looks at something, everyone is not looking at it the same way based on their type of personality, fears, and backgrounds," he says.

"The second thing is that you need to get the blessing from a majority of people to get a project through," he says. He cited the new call center as an example. "We had to start at the bottom and work our way up to get approval with the governor giving final approval."



*College of
Agriculture
extension specialists
and faculty members
are leading a
variety of projects
intended to help
ensure the success
of Wyoming's
agriculture industry,
including cattle
ranching.*

CES, ag college ensuring success for Wyoming agriculture

*By Robert Waggener, Editor
Office of Communications and Technology*

Ensuring success for Wyoming agriculture means successfully reaching out to as many producers as possible with the latest information on risk management, crop insurance, alternative crops and livestock, and sustainable agriculture, according to extension specialists and College of Agriculture faculty members involved in a number of projects.

"People out there are facing a lot of challenges and risks. We try to provide them information to give them an edge over the competition," says John Hewlett, a farm and ranch management specialist with the Cooperative Extension Service.

Hewlett and members of the "Insuring Success for Wyoming Agriculture" team are using a variety

of approaches to reach as many producers as possible. Information is available at <http://agecon.uwyo.edu/InsuringSuccess/Default.htm>.

Among those benefiting from the programs is Tom Page, who raises cattle and alfalfa northwest of Laramie. "It's to the point now that if you're not doing everything right, you can't make a living at it. I am trying to educate myself more on what we need to be doing to make our small family ranch profitable and sustainable."

Several classes using the "Insuring Success for Wyoming Agriculture" name were offered across the state late last year and early this year to help crop and livestock producers like Page make decisions regarding insurance and risks. Hundreds of producers tested their knowledge and risk tolerance by using the RightRisk™ computer simulation.

opportunities

Additional programs are being developed, and they will be available in the coming months. (Please see story on page 2).

An interactive computer CD was mailed to 5,500 of the state's agricultural producers last spring. An updated version is under development and will be made available in coming weeks. The disks include information on risk management and insurance products available for crop and livestock production. A Web-based version was also released at the Insuring Success site.

Feedback from ag producers has been positive. "By and large, they said the first CD was beneficial in helping them to better understand the insurance products that are available," says Hewlett, who notes the CD scheduled to be mailed in late November is being updated to include changes in insurance products covering crops and livestock.

Newspaper articles and an insert titled "Barnyards to Backyards" appeared in several Wyoming publications in late 2004 and this year covering topics ranging from crop insurance to weed control. Those articles are available at the Insuring Success Web site.

Preliminary results are back from an in-depth survey conducted by the College of Agriculture in conjunction with the Wyoming Agricultural Statistics Service in Cheyenne, and Hewlett says the survey should help extension specialists and faculty members develop better educational programs and materials for producers.

Surveys were sent to 3,000 of the 6,050 cattle producers, and 1,192 responded. Though final numbers are still being processed, Hewlett notes, "We have a lot of small producers in the state. In some ways, I was even surprised by the numbers."

Preliminary estimates show that approximately 2,400 of the 6,050 producers raise less than 100 cattle, while 1,700 have between 100 to 300 head.



*Farm and Ranch
Management Specialist
John Hewlett*

These small operations account for nearly 70 percent of the state's cattle production, according to estimates.

In the past, Hewlett says, many agricultural education programs offered through CES were designed to help the larger operators make a living off their ranch or farm, generally those running more

than 300 head of cattle. Based on the survey, he says, more programs and materials will likely be developed to aid small producers.

"We have a responsibility to serve all ag producers, whether big or small, and all of the operations, whether new or old. To better serve them, we need to understand what they are trying to do," Hewlett emphasizes. "Many operators are diversifying to include several smaller enterprises, and we need to provide information to help those people make better decisions about available alternatives."

Other estimates follow: 750 producers raise between 300 to 500 cattle, 800 raise between 500 to 1,000 head, 240 raise between 1,000 to 1,500 head, 120 raise between 1,500 to 3,000 head, 25 raise between 3,000 to 5,000 head, and 15 raise more than 5,000 head.

Hewlett says the survey includes information on general ranch descriptions, production and marketing practices, and demographic information, and it should allow CES and the College of Agriculture to better analyze alternative ag production systems. The traditional cattle ranch in Wyoming is a cow-calf and hay operation. Among the alternatives are calving later in the season when grass is green, raising stockers (calves purchased in the spring and grazed through the fall), and carrying calves over as yearlings (generally 11 to 14 months old) or long yearlings (generally 15 to 19 months old).



"We plan to develop information on the alternative systems to help producers make more informed decisions. They can see the benefits and costs of the various alternatives and determine how each one would fit their situation," Hewlett says.

Other members of the survey team from the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics are Professor and Community Development Specialist Tex Taylor, Assistant Professor Siân Mooney, Assistant Research Scientist Tom Foulke, Assistant Professor Chris Bastian, and three graduate students.

"What I hope to gain out of the survey is a good picture of the cattle industry in Wyoming with details about operation sizes, production and marketing practices, drought-management practices, and demographics of the producers in the state," Bastian says.

"This should be helpful as we develop further research and education information for the producers. If you don't understand your target market, it's hard to develop educational material for them. This provides a foundation for that," he says.

The Wyoming Business Council provided support for the survey. "Their goal was to better understand cattle production and market practices in the state so they could better serve the needs of ranchers," Bastian notes.

Preliminary results are available on the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics home page at [http://www.uwyo.edu/AgEcon/](http://www.uwyo.edu/AgEcon/Default.HTM)

Default.HTM. Click on "Wyoming Livestock Producer Survey" under "What We Do – Programs." A final report is scheduled to be released in the coming months.

Relatedly, a team of UW and Colorado State University extension specialists

and faculty members are now reviewing data compiled from a survey of Wyoming ranchers to determine how cattle production can be sustained during multiple years of drought.

"The project is designed to figure out who our audience is, and what kind of programs would be useful to them to help get them through the next drought," says one of the researchers, Professor Michael Smith, a range management specialist in the Department of Renewable Resources.

Other investigators are Bastian, Mooney, Assistant Professor Steve Paisley, a beef cattle specialist in the animal science department, and Marshall Frasier and Wendy Umberger, faculty members with CSU's Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics in Fort Collins, Colorado.

Hewlett and Professor Randy Weigel, a human development specialist in the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences, are starting another project to better understand the state's smaller agriculture operations so information can be developed to help them.

Hewlett is involved in yet another project. He and other extension specialists and educators from the western United States are in the beginning stages of compiling information to assist producers involved in alternative enterprises such as running a bed and breakfast, raising organic beef, or producing horticultural crops. Programs will be offered next year in Wyoming including the tax implications of such enterprises and looking at the feasibility of enterprise alternatives.

A number of private and public grants on the state and federal level are funding the various UW and regional projects.



Range Management Specialist Mike Smith



Assistant Professor Chris Bastian



CES educators making sure board

*By Steven L. Miller, Senior Editor
Office of Communications and
Technology*

Cooperative Extension Service specialists are helping Wyoming citizens ensure board seats don't become hot seats for those wanting to serve.

More than 26 individuals on boards from Lincoln and Uinta counties recently gave up a Wyoming fall Saturday and drove long distances to a board development seminar in Evanston. They were looking for answers to at least some of their public service questions and learn the nuances of public service.

One attendee said her spouse commented it was "an awfully boring subject for a Saturday," but that spouse had, upon his own election, read all the Wyoming State Statutes and bought a copy of Robert's Rules of Order to prepare for his board seat responsibilities.



Participants launch into a discussion about serving on public boards during the board development workshop.

"This seminar was designed to be general," says Uinta County Extension Educator Jaime Hunolt, one of the presenters. "We invited anyone who had served on any board in any capacity – city officials, city council, mayors, appointed boards, and even non-profit boards."

City and county elected officials can benefit from training through the Wyoming Association of Municipalities (WAM) and the Wyoming Association of County Officials (WACO).

Those on other boards are left to learn on the job. "There are those who are volunteers and don't have WAM or WACO to back them up," says Mary Crosby, executive director of the Lincoln-Uinta Association of Governments. "There are people out there serving who want to do a good job and want to have the knowledge and information so they can do a good job."

That's something Hunolt says she's heard time and again. "Who is going to step up and fill that role? I think the seminar is a good start," she notes.

Not knowing how to conduct or participate in a public meeting is nothing new. Robert's Rules of Order sprang up in the 1870s from Henry Martyn Robert, who was asked to preside over a meeting. He did not know how and was so embarrassed he vowed never to attend another meeting until he learned about parliamentary procedure. He eventually wrote Robert's Rules of Order in 1876. On the Web: <http://www.robertsrules.com/history.html>

The workshop helps with issues board members will face, Hunolt says. "Even though the program is general, all have to know how to effectively run a meeting, from the assignment agendas to meeting rules."

Chris Aimone wore two hats at the meeting. She is a Uinta County Weed and Pest Control District supervisor but also voluntarily serves on the

development isn't bored development

Evanston Tree Board. She believes people recognize the need for the training.

"It hits on topics you end up dealing with, especially difficult people, the legal aspects, parliamentary procedure, and how to have a more efficient meeting," Aimone says. "Nobody wants to serve on a board that starts at 5 p.m. and goes to midnight. As a board member, if your board is not accomplishing things and is not orderly, it doesn't speak well of the organization. There are times when you have to have longer meetings, but if you are organized and set time restraints, I think more people would be more willing to serve."

Attendees were given specific tools to take home. Presenters included: CES Associate Director Duane Williams on how to run effective meetings; Lyman Town Attorney Dean Stout, who also has a practice in Evanston, advised on legal issues; Thelma Crook from the Lower Valley Energy in Star Valley spoke about Robert's Rules of Order; Hunolt spoke on dealing with constituents; and Teton County Extension Educator Mary Martin talked about "servant leadership."

"For some, this is the first opportunity to learn," says Hunolt, who adds she felt like a rookie during her own first board experience until matters moved to her area of expertise – accounting.

She presented on dealing with difficult people. "The approach I took is that people who are upset about a decision the board has made will either come to the next board meeting or corner that board person somewhere," she says.

She offered a four-step process for board members to deal with upset constituents and had them practice techniques such as letting the person vent, moving from emotion to solving the problem, and then dealing with the issue.

"I gave a brief overall view of negotiation techniques," she says. "That is something we could go into more in future sessions."



Uinta County Cooperative Extension Service Educator Jaime Hunolt surveys a participant at a September board development workshop in Evanston about the effectiveness of the seminar.

Surveys were taken, and Crosby said there were few negative comments. More than half wanted more training; some wanted to shorten some subjects.

"I would do two tracks," Crosby says. "One that would stick to basics and another that would offer more theory."

She noted older attendees favored lecture-style presentations, while younger participants favored sessions in which they could participate.

On the Web: <http://www.uwyo.edu/UWces/>
http://www.uwyo.edu/UWces/Uinta_main.asp

negotiation

Washakie County CES personnel called on one-cent tax issue

By Steven L. Miller, Senior Editor
Office of Communications and Technology

Additional taxes are about as popular among Wyoming citizens as the plague, but one Wyoming county passed a one-cent tax proposal to build a facility serving the needs of today and providing a platform for tomorrow.

Efforts by members of the Cooperative Extension Service in Washakie County helped focus the issue and educate the electorate.

Big Horn Basin Area Educator Jim Gill, Nutrition and Food Safety Educator Phyllis Lewis, 4-H Program Associate Amber Wallingford, and Cent\$ible Nutrition Educator Cindy Aguilar became involved in the education effort when the Washakie County commissioners put out a call for their help.

Gill said he thought through loud and clear whether he wanted to become involved in the political process as a government employee.

"This was a request through our commissioners to get involved in the planning committee," he notes. "All of us have lived in the community for a number of years and care about the opportunities that come our way – newer facilities and adequate funding to fit our goals and aspiration in education."

The timing seemed right. The Wyoming School Facilities Commission mandated a new middle school be built in Worland, which left the existing middle school ripe for renovation or the wrecking ball.

Some thought a renovated middle school would be perfect for a community center. But voters had knocked dead a one-cent sales tax proposal at least three times, said County Commissioner Bill Glanz.

"The times before we didn't have enough of the money addressed for specific use," he notes. "We waited a few years, and then the middle school was going to be torn down. That became an issue. The only way to save it was for government entities to acquire it. We couldn't afford it unless we passed a one-cent sales tax."

The CES office was running out of space and would be one of the groups housed in the new facility. County commissioners put out their request to the CES. Meanwhile, the group that had tried to pass the previous tax measures continued to meet after the vote defeat.

"They said they 'were not going to give up. This town is in trouble,' and they continued to go



Members of a committee dedicated to presenting information about and to the passage of the Washakie County One Percent Specific Purpose Tax visited the Worland Community Center Complex recently to thank voters for passage of the tax last year. Members of the committee, along with Cooperative Extension Service (CES) educators, include, from left, CES educators Amber Wallingford and Phyllis Leonard, Dr. Beach Graham, CES educator Jim Gill and Chuck Wilke of the committee, Community Center Complex Director Steve Hunt, LaVertha Gotier of the committee, Joint Powers Board Chairman Mike Greear and Cathy Tommerup from the committee. (Photos courtesy Bob Vines/Northern Wyoming Daily News)

upon to give their 2 cents



Jim Gill



Phyllis Lewis

door-to-door,” says state Rep. Debbie Hammons (D-Washakie County). “The messages of the first attempts were that the proposal was not specific enough. They narrowed the main focus to the creation of a community center.”

A community committee was formed of elected and appointed officials but also anyone interested in the community center and Ten Sleep projects. According to Gill, a couple of real movers and shakers involved included a previous committee member, Chuck Wilke of Worland, and a retired doctor, Beach Graham, who chaired the committee effort. “The mayor of Worland at the time, LaVertha Gotier, was a trooper for the initiative as well!” Gill says.

“We reorganized, gave presentations after we had cost estimates,” says Glanz. “We met twice a month for a year and gave an address anywhere we could – the Kiwanis, the Lions Club. We are a very conservative county. We are ag-minded. It was hard to get passed.”

Gill was always optimistic. “I had to laugh at one of the meetings,” says Hammons. “Jim Gill was so fired up; I thought he was at a 4-H auction, waving his hat, saying ‘we will get this done.’ I couldn’t help

but feel good that it was going to happen.”

Based on the previous attempts, the need was to focus the proposal and educate voters, Gill says.

“We’re a conservative group of people in Washakie County,” he notes. “People weren’t convinced how the money was going to be used. They weren’t convinced there was a need at that point.”

The proposal that came into focus was a one-cent tax proposal to raise \$5 million to pay for the new community center and new senior center in Worland, an expanded community center and senior center in Ten Sleep, a street and sewer and water project in Ten Sleep, and money for county-wide economic development.

Committee members then began their education campaign. Gill chaired the marketing and outreach committee and Lewis helped get word out to her constituents, the homemaker clubs, health organizations “and on and on,” says Gill.

“We had several meetings throughout the county, answering questions, trying to educate folks in what the money was spent for. Amber Wallingford helped as well. The 4-H Council helped market the process through 4-H.”

Lewis supported Gill for his forward-thinking. The CES meeting room is used by many organizations, including Northwest College in Powell. The room had 304 meetings in 2001, and in 2003 that same room had 283 meetings for video learning, Lewis says. “People could see a need for that. As people came in, they could see there wasn’t enough space, and they could see why there was a need to enlarge the video learning center.”

There was also inadequate space for the Cent\$ible Nutrition Program. “It’s hard to teach how to cook without a kitchen and stove,” says Lewis.

Aguilar says her program has been mobile, having cooking classes wherever a stove was





*State Representative
Debbie Hammons*

to the governor and those folks, you better be helping yourself before going down there for help.”

Rep. Hammons says Gill was a member of a core of people who contributed much time. “He was a leader,” she says. “If there were only two people left in the room, one would be Jim Gill. He was in it from the beginning, never discouraged and always positive.”

On the Web: <http://www.uwyo.edu/UWces/>
http://www.uwyo.edu/UWces/Washakie_main.asp
<http://www.washakiedevelopment.com/index.htm>

available, such as at the fairgrounds. “It will be nice to be all housed together,” she notes.

Open houses were held at the middle school offering information about what was going where and what would be part of the building.

“People came in with a growl’y attitude and then, when they knew how it would be spent, we knew it would go well. It gave the people buy-in,” says Lewis. “We had several different open houses at different days of the week and times of day.”

One thing became painfully clear as time passed, says Gill. “If Washakie County went to Cheyenne to garner support for a needed project, it was evident that,

Extension Connection

November 2005

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