

Connection

Summer 1999

UW CES: Creating a human services information system for rural Wyoming

by Leanne Whitman
UW CES Uinta County Chair
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WIND Operations Director

Angel flights fly sick kids and their parents to medical services, but how does a person find one? A local farmer has just been paralyzed in an accident; where can his family find information on assistive technology? Connect Wyoming, an information database created by the people of Wyoming for the people of Wyoming, has the answers.

Wyoming creates an interesting human service challenge because there is no ma-

yor metropolitan area within the state, and the population centers are geographically isolated. The sparse population makes human services economically difficult to provide, and publicly supported services are limited. Individuals who need human services often have a hard time knowing about and connecting with the appropriate services.

A crisis can be eased with information. Many times, however, the only human service access available is a local phone book. Wyoming residents are forced to guess which agency provides what service and hope that service is listed in their local directories. The hassle of finding information can make any situation seem more desperate. Recent technology, however, has broadened the scope of coordinating care and distributing information.

HOW IT BEGAN
 The Connect Wyoming project was initiated by the

Gov. Jim Geringer kicks off Connect Wyoming at the UW CES Laramie County office. CES personnel organized the ribbon "connecting" ceremony to raise awareness for the 28 public-access computers available in every Wyoming county and on the Wind River Indian Reservation. Each computer contains the Connect Wyoming information database.



Wyoming Institute for Disabilities (WIND) to help people with disabilities find necessary services. The initial goal soon broadened to help anyone in need find human services information. WIND received a start-up grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce Telecommunications and Information Infrastructure Assistance Program. The grant funded the program and purchased 28 public-access computers and laser printers for University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service (UW CES) county offices in exchange for program support.

When Mary Martin, UW CES Teton County educator, met WIND Operations Director El Belish, the Teton County Planned Approach to Community Health (PATCH) team had just completed a county-wide health care directory. As with most print directories, it was rapidly out of date, expensive to reproduce, and had a limited circulation. Belish proposed moving the information to a shared database where it could be continually updated and made widely available on

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From field to food

The Wind River Indian Reservation Community Garden Project



Lavern Brown, member of the Northern Arapaho tribe, prepares to plant onions in the Wind River Community Garden.

by Milt Green
*UW CES Wind River
Reservation County Chair*

Three years ago, Lavern Brown dedicated seven acres of land outside of Ethete to the Arapaho community and designated it as “a place where people could learn to grow vegetables.” Working closely with CES educators Kathy Vann and Milt Green, Brown and an advisory committee came together to plan the first Wind River Indian Reservation Community Garden.

Since 1996, the project has grown. Although the acreage remains the same, more community members and local organizations have become involved. The three original sponsoring organizations have turned into six. The Arapaho tribe awarded project leaders a \$26,000 grant from a proposal written by Northern Arapaho tribe member Irene

Houser, and the Healthy Communities Healthy Youth Initiative contributed \$2,000.

One-half of the community garden is used by families who don't have a garden space of their own, and the other half is for community food production. Food from the garden is donated to community service organizations for distribution throughout the reservation.

Green and Vann offer planting demonstrations in the spring prior to the official planting days. After the crop is ready for harvest, they provide programming on

“Statewide and regionally, we've had a lot of support.”

– Milt Green

food preservation that focuses mainly on food safety and proper canning techniques.

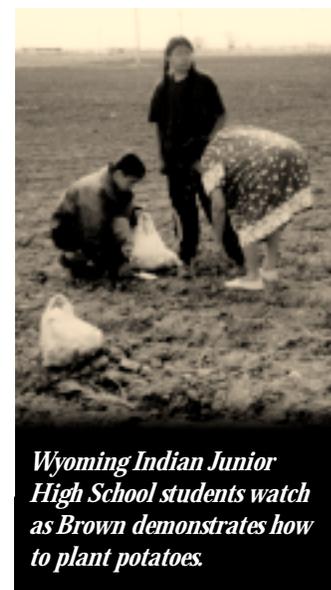
For the past two years, the Wyoming Indian Junior High School has participated in the planting process. In addition to learning about their role in the community, young people receive hands-on experience in horticulture and biology. A long-term project goal is to provide a place where youth groups can gather to learn the importance of community pride through experience. The value of building a sense of civic pride and responsibility in young people is considered to be a strong community asset, and the Wyoming Healthy Communities Healthy Youth Initiative provides the project resources to support these goals.

“Donors to the project have been remarkable,” Green said. “Statewide and regionally, we've had a lot of support. For example, Jobe Mantuso, the founder of a philanthropic organization in Glenwood, Utah, secured a tractor for our project, and he's also donating a number of bedding plants to the reservation.”

Green also acknowledges the many volunteer groups who have labored long hours on the project. “Most recently, we had a youth group from Minnesota that volun-

teered to help build our three-sided storage and work shed. A crew from Indian Health Services also put in many hours on the shed and garden.”

This year, Green hopes to add a greenhouse to the garden periphery. It will be used this fall and next spring as a teaching facility for all reservation schools. His plans don't stop there, however. He's also anticipating the first annual Farmer's Market at Ethete. “It should be exciting,” he said. “The plans are to make the open market a place where local residents can purchase high-quality produce and a social gathering spot for the local community. Vegetables, as well as crafts and other Indian-made products, will be for sale. We're hoping to tap into a potentially active tourist market.” ❁



Wyoming Indian Junior High School students watch as Brown demonstrates how to plant potatoes.

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the Internet. From there, the project has grown.

WORKING TOGETHER

Currently, computers are set up in ADA accessible locations throughout every Wyoming county and on the Wind River Indian Reservation. Getting to this point has been a challenge for the Connect Wyoming team. Many Wyoming communities are like islands with independent phone companies and local Internet service providers. Major national Internet providers, such as America Online, have no local access number throughout most of this state. But WIND, UW CES, and volunteer personnel have conquered the hurdles, and all information has been entered into the database. Connect Wyoming programs include:

- Free public Internet access
- Pathways Plus: an annotated electronic directory of all Wyoming human service providers
- Wyoming Village: an interactive on-line community that links people in similar situations, decreasing feelings of isolation
- The Clearing House: a listing of national human service Internet sites
- A human services conference calendar

For more information, visit the Connect Wyoming Web site at <http://wind.uwoyo.edu/connect.htm>. ☼

CES offers a financial fitness program to help families control their futures

by Gail Gordon
Department of Family and Consumer Sciences Family Economics Specialist

This fall, CES family and consumer sciences educators are offering a new financial resource management program to Wyoming residents. The state coordinator of the program is Gail Gordon, family economics specialist in the College of Agriculture's Department of Family and Consumer Sciences.

An educational outreach effort, Money 2000 and Beyond™ helps Wyoming families increase their net worth through improved saving and spending habits. This personalized program measures changed financial behavior over time, providing educational support so that families can take better control of their finances, increase their savings, and build economic stability. Families set their own financial goals, while CES educators teach participants successful behavioral changes that lead to good money management practices.

"So many people can benefit from Money 2000," Gordon said. "For example, a coworker recently came to my office with a request for financial advice. She told me she constantly struggles to make each paycheck extend

to the end of the month, while at the same time resisting the urge to purchase books and clothes from the Internet using her credit cards. She and her husband have several cards with large balances and no savings plan. This person said to me, 'I want to respect what my husband and I earn, but I also don't want to be a Scrooge McDuck. I want to be sensible about things and not drift along writing checks, using credit cards, and relying on the idea that it will work out somehow.'"

Many families in Wyoming and throughout the nation are in a similar situation, existing from paycheck to paycheck. Nationwide, personal savings hit a 60-year low in 1998. Personal bankruptcies hit an all-time high of 1.3 million in 1997, which more than tripled the number of bankruptcies recorded in the early 1980s. In a state such as Wyoming, the declining rate of personal savings is cause for great concern. Wyoming households with credit balances carry an average outstanding credit card balance of \$2,865 and have an average of 5.3 credit cards. Many Wyoming ranching and agricultural families don't have a monthly paycheck; they depend on one primary paycheck each year. High personal bank-



ruptcy rates, increased credit card use, and declining savings rates have critical economic implications for Wyoming communities and families.

Money 2000 and Beyond™ is part of a national CES initiative developed in 1996 by Rutgers Cooperative Extension and launched by Cornell Cooperative Extension as a national campaign in 1997. The Wyoming program will be introduced statewide in October 1999 and will continue until the end of 2005. While program offerings will vary by county, most will include educational workshops, home-study courses, quarterly newsletters and other printed material, computerized debt reduction analyses, and one-on-one peer education. ☼



WBCIA feedlot steers wait for testing.

CES and WBCIA work together on bull and feedlot test programs

by Doug Hixon
*Department of Animal Science
Beef Cattle Specialist*

Nearly 15 years ago, CES and the Wyoming Beef Cattle Improvement Association (WBCIA), an affiliate of the Beef Improvement Federation, formed a partnership that has flourished over the years. Through a combined effort, these organizations:

- Maintain and improve the accuracy and efficiency of beef cattle production by systematic breeding, selection, and management, with emphasis placed on traits of economic importance
- Encourage education, research, and development relative to beef cattle improvement
- Cooperate with other associations for the promotion of beef cattle improvement and the beef industry

- Foster the development of marketing schemes based on genetic merit

The Feedlot Test and Carcass Evaluation Program was the first program developed by the WBCIA. During 1998-99, approximately 320 head of steers and heifers consigned by 29 Wyoming and Colorado producers were fed at Double S Livestock and Feeders near Wheatland. As in the past, producers received gain and carcass data, plus an economic assessment to help determine if genetic adjustments should be made in breeding programs or if the test results should become a viable marketing alternative. The information generated from this program allows producers to see how their management decisions and genetic input affect the consumer's final beef product.

The WBCIA bull testing program has significantly
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Sweetwater County fosters hope

by Gary Grubb
*UW CES Sweetwater County
Chair*

and Russell Hulet
Sweetwater County 4-H Leader

Last spring, Project Hope, a Green River 4-H club, asked the City Council for help and the city responded.

4-Hers in Sweetwater County had a problem. Unless their families owned property in the county, there really was no place for them to house and care for their animal projects. The city of Green River is land-locked, surrounded by BLM land. Some kids kept their projects in the rural community of Jamestown, but that was a 10-mile trip each day just to feed and water the animals.

With convenience and safety in mind, Project Hope group members went to the city and asked for a piece of land, a place for 4-H kids to raise their animal projects. The City Council agreed to lease them one acre of land, adjacent to the municipal horse corrals, to house sheep, hogs, beef, rabbits, and poultry within the city limits.

The 4-Hers and their sponsors immediately created a business plan and elected a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. The non-profit project is managed by senior members (ages 15 to 18), and junior members work with advertising, fund raising, correspondence, and up-keep. All operations are overseen by

adult volunteer leaders, but club members pay the bills.

The 4-H group received a Metropolitan Life National 4-H Foundation Young Entrepreneurs Grant for \$1,500 and took a loan for \$16,000 to begin construction. Several local contractors donated their time, equipment, and materials, while community businesses actively supported the group's fund-raisers. The Mad Goat Fund-Raiser, which may become an annual event, was most successful. Local businesses raised money to get the pigmy goat *out* of their offices! Project Hope received nearly \$2,300 in profit.

The livestock barn is complete and occupied, and the sheep barn is nearly finished. The ribbon cutting ceremony took place in May, with approximately 35 Wyoming dignitaries and local residents offering congratulations to the youth entrepreneurs. Currently, 17 4-Hers are leasing space for their animals. Overall, there are 20 hog pens, 3 dual-purpose beef and sheep pens, and 1 small chicken coop.

Watch for Project Hope fund-raisers at upcoming events. Group members will be selling concessions at Flaming Gorge Days and hosting a "car bash." Project Hope also will be sponsoring the Carson Barnes 5-Ring Circus at the Sweetwater County Events Complex September 16, 1999. ☘

Ultrasound technology: A valuable tool for Wyoming producers

by Wayne Tatman
UW CES Goshen County Chair
and Tammy Jensen
*UW CES Niobrara County
Educator*

The application and use of ultrasound technology in the beef cattle industry has become an issue for debate. Ultrasound equipment accurately measures and predicts fat depth and projected carcass merit of weaned calves. It can be an effective tool for producers, feeders, and packers who aim to consistently produce a high-quality prod-

uct that provides a favorable eating experience each time for the consumer.

Ultrasound technology has come a long way since 1958 when researchers at Cornell University began using it as a new technique for carcass evaluation. Since then, several ultrasound systems have been developed in the United States. Each of these systems predicts carcass characteristics with acceptable accuracy.

Because the application of ultrasound technology has been a somewhat controversial and misunderstood issue

by skeptics in the beef industry, it surfaced as a major focus of the Goshen and Niobrara Counties' annual Rancher Production Day program in the fall of 1997. John Boehms, animal science representative for Classic Ultrasound Equipment, and Alvin Ruiz, from Wyoming Cattle Services - Yoder, demonstrated ultrasound technologies by scanning several different ages, types, and classes of cattle. More than 80 cattle producers, feed dealers, veterinarians, and CES personnel witnessed carcass data collection on the animals. Fat

thickness, ribeye area, and an estimate of intramuscular fat (marbling) measurements were taken at chute-side. Boehms discussed using ultrasound data in marketing feeder cattle and selecting breeding livestock with superior carcass traits. Other presentation topics included beef quality assurance, injection sites and dose responses, and a taste panel evaluation with shear test results of processed and fabricated meats to determine tenderness. However, despite the various topics, after-dinner conversations centered around how the com-

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COUNTY NOTES

WASHAKIE COUNTY CES IS ON THE MOVE THIS SUMMER SEASON!

Family and consumer sciences educator Phyllis Lewis is working with Debbie Popp, Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program coordinator, to initiate a Cent\$ible Nutrition Program in the county. It has been well received by 23 professionals from various agencies, including Washakie Memorial Hospital, Public Health, DFS, and Head Start. Lewis is coordinating similar efforts in Hot Springs and Big Horn Counties as well.

Teamwork was key to Lewis' successful clean up day project, *Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle*. She initiated the project with the help of the Washakie Conservation Dis-

trict, Weed and Pest, and other coordinating agencies. Folks with hard to dispose of items, such as household pesticides, motor oil, old paint, and batteries, were given an opportunity to get rid of their environmental hazards.

John Despain, 4-H Extension educator, has had an active summer with clubs, especially 4-H Junior Leaders. The Washakie County Junior Leaders recently completed a fund-raising activity with the Worland Municipal Golf Course. More than 25 4-Hers scraped, sanded, and repainted 30 signs and disbursed them throughout the course. Money from the project sent 10 delegates to the statewide Junior Leader Conference in Laramie. Despain's junior leaders

also helped a community care facility for the elderly learn about raised-bed gardening. Residents will have the opportunity to raise their own plants with the new garden, and they are refurbishing fence in the area, too.

Jim Gill, county chair, has helped put together a group of supporters in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce called the Big Horn Basin Ag Ambassadors. The group, comprising bankers, equipment dealers, agricultural processors, and people with various ag interests and backgrounds, was instrumental in putting on Wyoming Extension's Technologically and Strategically Informative AG Days in Worland last February. More than 140

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The 1999 EPIC honorees are, clockwise from left, Suzy Pelican, the Newer Employee Recognition Award; Tom Whitson, the Jim DeBree Excellence in Cooperative Extension Award; Debbie Matteri, the Diversity Enhancement Award; and team members Ron Cunningham, Tammie Jensen, Wayne Tatman, and Jim Gill, the Creative Excellence Award.

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farmers, ranchers, and industry representatives came together for two days. Gill also coordinated the *Salute to Agriculture* program with local radio station KWOR/KKLX to promote National Ag Day. Governor Jim Geringer, UW College of Agriculture Dean Steve Horn, Senator Craig

Thomas, Wyoming Stock Growers President Nels Smith, and other ag dignitaries were interviewed by hosts Gill and Del Tinsley, publisher of the *Wyoming Livestock Roundup*. This broadcast reached approximately 70,000 listeners throughout the Big Horn Basin. ❁

Ultrasound

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mercial and purebred producers can incorporate ultrasound into their heifer development and retained ownership programs.

As is the case with most situations, the key to a successful ultrasound program is a good technician. Many technicians are certified by the Beef Improvement Federation (BIF), and some breed associations now require technicians to pass a certification course before submitting data to the respective breed associations for inclusion in carcass EPD development.

When considering the use of ultrasound in a cattle operation, it is important to realize it is only a management tool. Ultrasound is not 100 percent accurate, but it can be used to sort cattle that have been managed similarly. With potential profits in the cattle business marginal at best, this tool could be used to increase profitability and/or improve the genetic base for carcass merit in a herd. If a producer used ultrasound to project when cattle should be marketed, he or she could feasibly save money by reducing the number of days on feed. At a cost of \$3 to \$5 per head for feedlot situations and \$10 to \$15 per head for purebred applications, the investment could be profitable. ❁

Park county health coalition participates in asset building initiative

by Rhonda Shipp
UW CES Park County Chair

Today, most adults are genuinely concerned about kids, and this is especially true for members of the Park County Health Coalition.

The Park County Health Coalition was formed in 1993 after health was identified as a major issue in a county-wide needs assessment. The group is made up of 23 representatives from various organizations and agencies throughout Park County, including CES, educational institutions, hospitals, health professionals, law enforcement officials, and the judicial system.

The coalition is referred to as the PATCH (Planned Approach to Community Health) group. In 1998, members researched health data for Park County and conducted a community health opinion survey. When the leading causes of death by age were compared with risk factor data and survey results, one risk factor stood out repeatedly—alcohol. This factor is the single greatest contributor to preventable death, disability, and crime.

This was especially true in the younger age groups. The 1997 Youth Risk Behavior Survey sampled over 1,000 Park County students

in the 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th grades. The results found:

- Alcohol was the most used substance.
- Eighty-five percent of 10th and 12th graders in Cody were experimenters or regular users, 80 percent in Powell, and 96 percent in Meeteetse.
- The largest increase in use was between 6th and 10th grades.
- Over 55 percent of students had at least five drinks within a two-hour period at least once in the past month.

The most encouraging news was that more than 600 of these students said the greatest influence against substance use was *parental rules and remarks*. As students got older, their friends influenced them more, but parents still had the greatest influence. Therefore, the coalition chose parents as the target audience.

The coalition spent several months looking at alcohol and substance abuse reduction programs throughout the United States. One program stood out because of its positive approach toward reducing negative behaviors. It was called Healthy Communities Healthy Youth, an initiative on asset building. The Search Institute identified assets that youth needed to grow into happy, healthy adults. Their research found

that when young people had many assets in their lives, risky behaviors like alcohol, tobacco, and drugs were greatly reduced.

The PATCH group chose the asset building approach to reduce alcohol use in Park County over the next five to seven years. The first step was creating awareness. Coalition members spent time speaking to service groups, school personnel, and businesses. With this program, magnets with asset messages were distributed to participants. To date, group members have reached over 1,000 people.

A second project was to provide “message slides” to the local movie theaters. Students created asset building messages that were developed into professional slides. These are shown before every movie, and there are enough slides for 12 months. More than 8,000 people per month view these slides.

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The coalition’s major effort is a kickoff of the Healthy Communities Healthy Youth Initiative in Park County called “The First Gathering.” It will be held October 19 in Cody and October 20 in Powell. The idea of a carnival originated from area students, and it quickly expanded into 40 booths, each featuring one of the 40 assets. The highlight of these events will be guest speaker, Clay Roberts, who will talk about creating healthy communities through asset building.

Since 1993, the Park County Health Coalition has received almost \$44,000 in grants from the State Department of Health, Wyoming Health Resources Network, and Wyoming Community Coalition for Health Education. Recently, the coalition teamed up with the Park County Youth Commission and received a \$15,000 grant to hire a project coordinator to help initiate asset building in Park County. Local matching funds of \$7,500 came from school districts number 1, 6, and 16, the Park County Child Protection Team, and Shoshone First Bank.

Rhonda Shipp, Park County chair, serves as facilitator and coordinator for the Park County Health Coalition. ❁

WBCIA

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impacted the industry as well. Three years ago, the bull test moved from Worland to the new Pingetzer Bull Test Facility near Shoshoni. Operated by Robert and Paige Pingetzer with assistance from Robert's parents, George and Velma, this state-of-the-art facility has helped approximately 70 producers assess more than 300 beef bulls annually.

The Pingetzers allow producers from a five-state area to evaluate their breeding programs, while the tested bulls serve as a potential source of predictable genetics for many

Wyoming producers. The top 70 percent of each breed comparison group qualifies for the annual test sale.

CES educators assist with data collection in both programs. Collected data offers excellent educational opportunities for CES personnel to work with their county clientele. Data generated by the test shows how producers can effectively add pounds and value to calves produced in their herds. From that point of reference, educators can discuss and evaluate other aspects of management such as nutrition, financial and production record systems, and marketing. ❁

CES hosts Aussie exchange



On a rural student exchange visit sponsored by Campbell County CES, students from Queensland, Australia, listen to Ron Delaney, head of the College of Agriculture Department of Plant Sciences, as he describes the function of the plant pathology lab. The Australian high school seniors spent three weeks with host families in northern Wyoming, touring ranches, national parks, and historical sites in Wyoming, South Dakota, and Montana.

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