

Board of Trustees Update: May 2026

SER's Mission: To advance energy-driven economic development for Wyoming

SER Administration:

- **Executive Director Search:** The Executive Director search is ongoing and proceeding as planned.

SER Academics:

- **Rocky Mountain Land and Resource Management Conference:** SER, co-hosted with the College of Agriculture, Life Sciences and Natural Resources, hosted a record-setting conference on April 15, welcoming more than 220 attendees. Mark Gordon delivered the keynote address and spent time engaging with students over lunch.

SER Outreach:

- **Distinguished Speaker Series:** Successfully concluded the spring series, bringing leading voices in energy to campus and engaging students, faculty, and stakeholders.
- **K-12 Engagement:** Partnered with the Science Initiative to deliver multiple STEM Roadshows across Wyoming, reaching K–12 students with hands-on energy education. SER will continue this momentum through upcoming STEMology activities on campus, including hosting interactive events.

SER Research: SER's research program supports a broad portfolio of Wyoming-focused initiatives designed to generate long-term state revenue, strengthen industry partnerships, and train students with expertise critical to Wyoming's energy future. The program engages faculty, staff, and students across the university and within SER's Centers of Excellence.

Center for Economic Geology Research (CEGR)

- On April 14, the Department of Energy (DOE) issued a series of notification emails indicating that carbon management projects previously paused under the Portfolio Review Process are being "retained." While the next steps in the process remain unclear, this development represents a positive outcome for the projects involved.

Center for Carbon Capture and Conversion (CCCC)

- **Coal Refinery Demonstration:** Commissioning and startup are scheduled to begin in July 2026, with delivery of the pyrolyzer expected on April 28, which is a major milestone toward operational readiness.
- **REE & Critical Minerals Initiative:** Exploration of rare earth element (REE) and critical mineral (CM) extraction and separation is accelerating, driven by increased industry interest in unlocking additional value from coal resources. CCCC is actively partnering with industry to advance development of a pilot-scale REE/CM recovery facility.

Energy Engagement Leadership and Careers Program (Energy ELC):

Critical Minerals Leadership Academy (CMLA): The School of Energy Resources is preparing to host the second annual CMLA in Fall 2026. Supported by the U.S. Department of Energy, the program will convene early-career professionals and graduate students from across the country to build a national leadership network and showcase Wyoming's role in critical minerals research and development.

- **Social License Study:** The Energy ELC continued work on the third iteration of the Social License for Wyoming's Energy Future Study. The survey instrument is finalized and has been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). The finalized survey is currently being formatted for distribution by the Wyoming Survey and Analysis Center (WySAC).

Hydrogen Energy Research Center (H2ERC)

- **Geological Hydrogen:** In collaboration with the Bureau of Economic Geology, the ARPA-E-funded project is finalizing results and preparing the final technical report. Key finding: iron-bearing Wyoming formations not currently economic for mining show strong potential for in situ hydrogen generation. Core-flood experiments indicate samples with high reduced iron content (~14%) can generate significant hydrogen without added catalysts.
- **Industry collaboration:** The collaborative project with Hestia is setting up a new series of experiments in the lab using Wyoming organically-rich shale samples to understand Hydrogen generation pathways.