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University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service

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From the director...

Dear reader,

I am delighted at the new and innovative extension programs featured in this issue of *Extension Connection*. The

community development partnership highlighted in the article about our new educator, Lisa Colson, and her efforts in Wamsutter is a work in progress because there really aren't any models for the energy industry, county government, university, and town government partnership her accomplishments represent. Though unusual, it is another example of Wyoming folks working together to bring about change and progress.

Growth is bringing many challenges to other communities in western Wyoming. Mary Martin's work to organize a cost-of-growth workshop for community decision makers is another example of extension reaching out to help communities solve problems.

Jeremy Green's military 4-H program is an example of a creative and ambitious youth development educator seeing an opportunity to adapt the traditional 4-H program to serve a new group of youths and parents at the F.E. Warren Air Force Base who really need the support. We are hopeful a partnership of interested funders will follow Jeremy's efforts so the programs for these deserving youths can be maintained and grow.

Last summer, we invited a review team to come to Wyoming and have a look at the University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service (UW CES). We were hopeful the review could provide suggestions and ideas as to how UW CES could serve more effectively. The week-long review was in April. The review team, anchored by a team leader from the U.S Department of Agriculture, included extension educators, specialists, and administrators from Alaska, Montana, North Dakota, and Wisconsin, and a Wyoming citizen and client. The review went well, and I am confident their work will help us become better. I will report their recommendations in the next issue of *Extension Connection*.

I hope you enjoy this issue of *Extension Connection*. If you have suggestions how UW CES can better serve, please e-mail me at glen@uwyo.edu or call (307) 766-5124.

Sincerely,



Glen Whipple
Associate dean and director, UW CES



Glen Whipple





Lisa Colson began community development efforts in Wamsutter last November.

Hopes high for educator's efforts in Wamsutter

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

There has been more than one classic novel set in Wyoming in which someone coming to town changes everything.

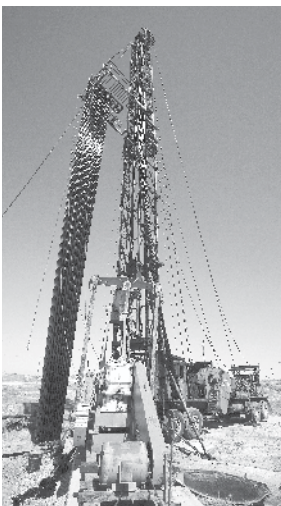
Lisa Colson would probably be embarrassed to compare her cross-country trek from Missouri to Wamsutter with fictional characters like “The Virginian” or “Shane,” but many hope her community development efforts in this energy-rich and infrastructure-poor town may be just as exciting.

Brown hair framing her face and highlighting blue-green eyes, personable and confident, Colson is responsible for marshalling forces to transform this here-and-there, now-and-then town into a bona fide community – replete with houses and a majority of year-round residents.

This is the birth of a community, says Colson, who likes the challenge. “I like to implement, be creative,” she says. “I like the satisfaction of completing projects, and there is a lot for me to accomplish. I don’t like to be stagnant. This is a lot of fun.”

Mobile homes and fifth-wheel trailers south of Interstate 80 make this south-central Wyoming village of 1,000 about 40 miles west of Rawlins bulge at sagebrush seams. An average day sees thousands of trucks and other vehicles roll off the sleek ribbon of interstate to mix with rigs and vehicles going to oil and gas fields.

Someone has scribbled a “1” after “68” on the town’s population white placard on the street going south into the community, pointing out at least some formal recognition of its dramatic population rise. The town expanded from 260



"I like the satisfaction of completing projects, and there is a lot for me to accomplish. This is a lot of fun."

"This partnership represents a new, unique, and exciting venture for all parties involved. The public and private sectors are stepping up to work together to foster civic involvement that will guide positive community change in Wamsutter."

—Duane Williams
CES associate director

to about 1,000 in four years, and the population is expected to balloon to 6,000 in the next 10 years. At about 6:45 a.m., more than 700 vehicles head bumper-to-bumper south over the overpass after workers receive assignments for the day to corporate or industry field offices or gas fields surrounding the town. At noon, workers file in and out quickly to eat at the M and P Cafe and Truck Stop or the Broadway Cafe, when open.

Colson and her 6-year-old half girly-girl, half tom-boy daughter, Emma Jane, or Em, arrived last November. Hired by the University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service (UW CES), she holds a position that is a collaborative partnership between UW CES, Sweetwater County, and Anadarko Petroleum Corporation, BP America, Devon Energy Corporation,

Hyland Enterprises Inc., and Love's Travel Shop.

Colson's charge is assisting the mayor and town council in managing development projects. She says her work has been nonstop: there are water and sewer lines to get installed, getting ground broke for a housing development, taking the pulse of the medical needs in the community, and enticing businesses to locate to Wamsutter.

"In order for the town to become a community or 'family friendly,' we are focusing on several goals at once: infrastructure, housing development, and commercial development," she notes. "Wamsutter desperately needs houses. We also know people living in Wamsutter need basic amenities such as access to a grocery store, restaurants, a bank, and recreation facilities."

The mayor acknowledges her efforts. "Lisa has worked very hard to become a part of the community," notes Rich Freudenberg. "She is doing a great job for the town. We are very fortunate to have her here."

The principal at Desert Elementary, Freudenberg adds, "If you want me to grade her performance, she is somewhere between an A and an A+."

You could say she is a transfer student. Colson spent the last seven years working for the Green Hills Regional Planning Commission in Trenton, Missouri, as a developer and research and development specialist. She was a contract employee for 72 rural communities and 11 county commissions. Living about a quarter-mile from where she was born, she began looking at job opportunities such as in Bellingham, Washington, and Durham, North Carolina, and she wondered how she would adapt to living in a metro area.

Then she heard about Wamsutter.

"This is more me," says Colson. "I would have several ongoing projects for many different communities (in Missouri). I had the desire to work with one community long-term, make more of an impact, and gain a sense of accomplishment. I could see how much potential is here."

Boom and bust cycles have blown through Wamsutter for decades, but this time the boom may be sustained. BP has committed a \$2.2 billion investment in the area's gasfields that includes drilling 2,000 wells in the next 15 years. The company just recently moved into its \$12 million, 47,000-square foot facility north of the interstate.



Town residents still simmer over a newspaper article a few years ago that pointed out the town's worst side and a major news network's piece quoting one oil worker who said the town was hell on earth.

The news items galvanized community improvement efforts. The articles caught the attention of Governor Dave Freudenthal's office, which began leveraging efforts to help the energy-focused area. Representatives from his office contacted UW CES to see if it could help community development efforts, says Glen Whipple, associate dean in the UW College of Agriculture and director of the CES.

Duane Williams, associate director of the CES, says, "While the needs are clear and very pressing, this partnership represents a new, unique, and exciting venture for all parties involved. The public and private sectors are stepping up to work together to foster civic involvement that will guide positive community change in Wamsutter."

Freudenberg says Colson's position is key to Wamsutter becoming a sustainable community. "We are fortunate to find someone that knowledgeable, who is such a hard worker, an excellent person, and is so much help with grants,"



he says. "She is so crucial to our success."

Colson sees this as a pivotal time for progress, describing the town as balancing on a precipice. "If nothing had been done, in a couple years people would have gotten tired of trying to make something happen," she says. "It's been pretty exciting. It's been literally nonstop."

Town fathers have given her a hefty to-do list, and she credits former Mayor Bill Hippe for an excellent job of setting priorities and getting improvements rolling. A grant helped drill another water well, and the town is receiving part of a 1-cent capital facilities tax to improve water and sewer infrastructure. Water capacity will be increased, and the industrial park will be connected to the water main.

A 43-acre housing site is planned west of town. The development will encircle an already-established recreation park with baseball and tennis facilities.

Housing is critical. Freudenberg saw enrollment climb at Desert Elementary from 45 three years ago to 82 now. Three students enrolled the day he was interviewed. He says he has a vested interest in the town's development: If the town becomes sustainable, the school becomes sustainable.

Vance Hixon, a 28-year employee of BP and a 28-year resident of Wamsutter, believes the conditions are ripe for sustainability. "The culture has changed," says the deputy operations manager for BP. "I don't see the same boom and bust mentality seen in the past. I am seeing a more mature work force. That excites me."

Bill Fultz, wells project field superintendent for BP, also has noticed a change. "There is a group of people that spent a lot of years struggling to get by," he says. "Now, there is a handoff to a younger generation."

The oil and gas field work creates a decided maleness about Wamsutter. Colson first felt that when she arrived at the Rock Springs airport. She was the only woman there.

"I was informed shortly after moving here that the man-to-woman ratio is 10:1.

As a single woman, I didn't know whether to be excited or scared," says Colson, and laughs. The Missouri farm girl with an older and younger brother says she has always been one of the guys and, working in a career managing contractors, isn't easily intimidated.

Since she had been job searching over the past year, she had prepared Em for the possibility of a move. "She made the transition surprisingly well," says Colson. Like most little girls, says her mother, Em is an animal lover. "I lured her to Wamsutter by telling her about the antelope that roam around the town and the wild horses in the area."

Em is also participating in cheerleading/dance/tumbling lessons once a week at the school (home of the Coyotes) where she is a kindergartener. "She loves to ride her bike and is a great swimmer," says Colson. "Like her mother, she is half girly-girl, half tomboy, so one minute she'll want to play Barbies and the next may be covered head to toe in mud."

An avid reader, Colson recreates by walking, jogging, or riding bikes with Em. Colson majored in geography and minored in geology, and Wamsutter kisses the heart of the Red Desert. "I'm also a rock hound, and I can't wait to get out in the desert this summer," she says. ☞

Jennifer Jacobsen, Teton County's bilingual Cent\$ible Nutrition Program coordinator, front left, teaches Spanish-speaking residents how to compare Nutrition Facts labels on a variety of foods, including Oreo cookies and Teddy Grahams.



Bilingual CES educator Jennifer Jacobsen one

By Robert Waggener,
Editor
Office of Communications
and Technology



Extension Educator
Jennifer Jacobsen

*Ayudando a las familias
comer mejor por menos*
reads the title of a University
of Wyoming Cooperative
Extension Service (UW
CES) Cent\$ible Nutrition
cookbook.

In English, that means
*Helping families eat better for
less.*

That's one of the many
things Jennifer Jacobsen is
doing in Teton County to
help low-income residents,
including Hispanic people
working in the service
industries.

Described as "cool" and
"fabulous" by colleagues and
collaborators, Jacobsen has

been the county's bilingual
UW CES Cent\$ible Nutrition
Program (CNP) coordinator
since 2003.

Much of her work – both
paid and volunteer – is
with a large population of
Hispanic residents working
in Jackson's restaurants and
hotels and in the landscape
service and construction
industries.

They generally make
low incomes (housekeep-
ers start at \$7 per hour
while construction laborers
make about \$13) compared
to the area's high cost of
living. According to the
Wyoming Department

of Administration and
Information, Teton County's
cost of living index is about
32-percent higher than the
state average. The typical
apartment rents for \$1,024
in Jackson, while the state
average is \$567.

"These days, many
of the service workers
in Jackson are Spanish-
speaking individuals," says
Jacobsen, who is using her
second language to help
them live and eat better in
a mostly English-speaking
community.

That work takes her into
classrooms, supermarkets,
and medical offices, where

Jennifer's work takes her into classrooms, supermarkets, and medical offices, where she does everything from translating English into Spanish and vice versa for doctors, nurses, and the low-income patients to helping families plan nutritious meals on limited budgets.

she does everything from translating English into Spanish and vice versa for doctors, nurses, and the low-income patients to helping families plan nutritious meals on limited budgets.

"These opportunities help me feel connected to the population I'm serving on a daily basis through the CNP," says Jacobsen, who grew up in Lander and

Teton County, says Jacobsen has the right combination of education, people skills, and personality to bring great success to her job.

"Jennifer has the ability to handle difficult discussions, disagreements, and misunderstandings in a manner that creates trusting and effective working relationships," Martin says.

That's critical when

'fabulosa' person

earned a degree in dietetics in 1999 from the College of Saint Benedict/St. John's University in St. Joseph, Minnesota.

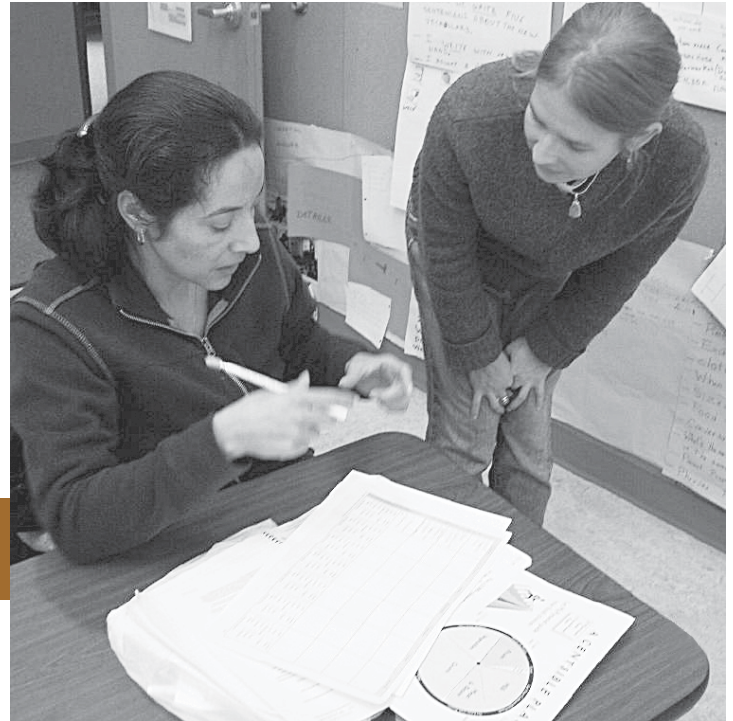
She became fluent in Spanish while teaching students during a two-year stint with the Peace Corps in the Central American country of Guatemala. She now spends much of her vacation time in Central and South America, providing translation services during medical missions and other projects. In April, she was in Ecuador with Habitat for Humanity.

Mary Martin, UW CES community development education coordinator for

looking at some of the responsibilities Jacobsen has taken on. For example, she's one of about 10 volunteer translators at the Teton Free Clinic, which provides medical care for uninsured patients who live or work in Teton County.

Each Tuesday night, the volunteers help Spanish-speaking patients get through the paperwork process to determine if they qualify for services provided by Teton Free Clinic or other programs such as state-assisted Medicaid.

If the patients are admitted to the Teton Free Clinic, Jacobsen and the other



Listening intently, Jennifer Jacobsen, right, shares information with one of the students in her Cent\$ible Nutrition Program (CNP) class in Teton County for Spanish-speaking residents and workers. Jacobsen has translated many of the University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service CNP curriculum materials into Spanish. The materials are now being utilized across the state.

volunteers accompany them throughout their medical checks.

"The translators are critical; we couldn't function without them," says Amy Adams, executive director of the Teton Free Clinic, which opened about three years ago after receiving seed money from a donor. Adams said the program was the brainchild of a retired

surgeon who was concerned that approximately 40 percent of Jackson residents and workers were either not adequately insured or who had no health insurance.

About 20 to 30 patients are seen by nurses and physicians each Tuesday, and the translators bridge the communication gap, Adams emphasizes.

“Jennifer has brought a lot to the table,” she says. “Most of the Hispanic population in Jackson has come from the same region in Mexico, and she has a good handle on the cultural differences.”

If the medical team diagnoses a patient with early signs of diabetes or other nutrition-related disorders, for example, Jacobsen works with the patient and family members to help them develop better eating habits. That starts in the classroom, proceeds to the grocery store, and ends in the kitchen.

“Jennifer is very compassionate and shows a lot of empathy toward the patients, and she also works very well with our staff,” Adams says. “She’s always eager to help and, when she does help, her work is awesome.”

Adams adds, “Jennifer is fabulous.”

Jacobsen, one of two UW employees receiving UW “off-campus awards” this year for outstanding work, has partnered with the Teton Literacy Program, teaching nutrition classes in conjunction with the program’s mission to provide tutoring, literacy education, and other resources to help individuals and families.

“This has greatly benefited both programs (CNP and Teton Literacy Program) as we often see the same clientele who have limited time availability for extra classes and activities,” Jacobsen says. “This has created a win-win situation for CNP, Teton Literacy Program, and the clientele. Both programs have seen a boost in enrollment with the combined classes.”

Mary Kay Wardlaw, state CNP director for UW CES, says many of the low-income residents in and around Jackson are working two to three jobs to survive, and a large number of them are commuting from miles away.

This means Jacobsen must schedule classes and shopping trips to meet the needs of her clients – not her typical 8 to 5 workday.

“She has to be very flexible and persistent to work around their needs,” Wardlaw says.

Jacobsen serves on the board of the Jackson Cupboard, the area’s food bank housed in St. John’s Episcopal Church. Once a month, she volunteers at the cupboard by distributing food, providing education on proper nutrition, and helping the people in need fill out required paperwork.

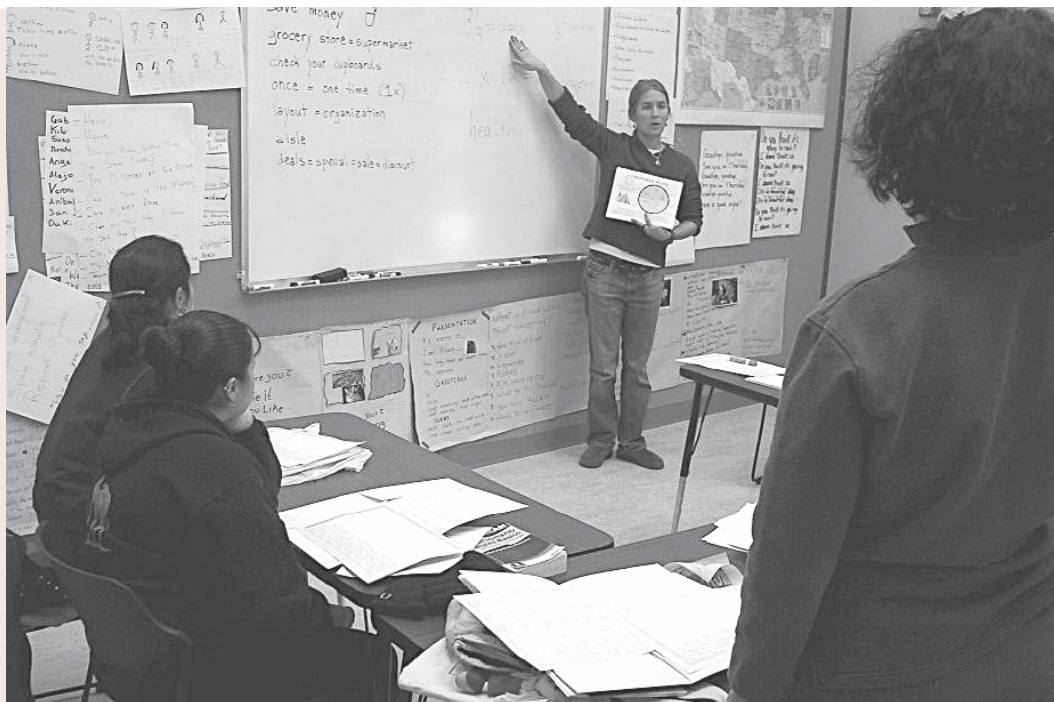
She has been involved in translating the majority of the state CNP lesson plans, newsletters, and children’s curriculums into Spanish, and she proofed the cookbook *Ayudando a las familias comer mejor por menos* with the assistance of Cindy Aguilar, CNP coordinator for Hot Springs and Washakie counties. The book has cooking and healthy eating tips and includes recipes in both English and Spanish.

“Jennifer is a collaborative educator with her learners and fellow educators,” Wardlaw says. “She also has a great relationship with the folks involved with other organizations and agencies in the Teton County area.”

Wardlaw pauses, and then she smiles.

“Jennifer is one very cool person.” 🍌

Going over basic words such as “grocery store,” “supermarket,” “sale,” and “special,” Jennifer Jacobsen helps Spanish-speaking residents of and around Teton County learn how to eat better for less. Many of the Hispanic people work in service-related jobs and make low incomes in an area with a very high cost of living.





Mike Smith says 'live' presentations, such as in pastures for range classes, seem to be best.

Some issues remain same but information delivery hasn't

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

Delivering presentations at various meetings or at seminars year after year could become stale, but what and how material is delivered seems to change with the times and technology.

Seeing John Hewlett, extension farm and ranch management specialist, in person can be a surprise – he's usually on the road or waiting in airports. Most times communication is via e-mail.

He says issues brought to his attention related to agricultural economics don't change much over the years. "Folks are generally looking for ways to improve the returns they earn from their farm and ranch enterprise activities," he says.

How Hewlett, who started with the University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service (UW CES) in 1987, delivers his information has changed.

"Many years ago, we organized longer meetings, even over multiple days," he notes. "Today, folks don't have time for that type of classroom-like presentation. As a result, we often offer programs to create awareness about an issue or about information we have assembled."

He rarely speaks to an audience without mentioning the 14 or so Web sites he's authored as a way to distribute information beyond the face-to-face time in a seminar.

"We also try to develop presentations that better hold the interest of the audience via technology," he notes.

Mike Smith, range management specialist, believes live exercises, such as having participants in a pasture as part of range education, are some of the best presentations given. He fields questions about federal grazing regulations and standards and how to achieve those standards, low-stress livestock handling, sustainable ranching, and late calving seasons.

He has been an extension specialist nearly 29 years. Questions about how to solve grazing management problems have not changed but both practices and teaching techniques have evolved to better meet today's realities. One fairly reliable measure of success is that requests for educational assistance keep coming, he says.

When presenting off the range and in a room, the shift from transparencies to PowerPoint has been good, Smith says, "now that they usually work. Early on, they did not half the time."

Getting more questions on an issue is a simple way to know what is being delivered is needed. "Late calving is a great example," he says, "as there are always so many reasons a producer thinks he cannot do it even though he knows it would be



Cole Ehmke works to incorporate a local expert in his estate planning presentations.

“We have developed on-line courses, which can accommodate an individual’s schedule.” – John Hewlett

more convenient in many respects. Producers will point to (problems) having to get to a forest allotment with small calves, not wanting to breed cattle on a public allotment, and the difficulty of breeding cattle later on a public allotment.”

Questionnaires let him know if he’s missed the mark. “I gave a talk at WESTI (Wyoming Extension’s Strategically and Technologically Informative) Ag Days about range animal diets, habitat use, and factors that allow you to determine whether there would be a potential for competition,” he says. “To paraphrase one response to me, ‘Mike always spends most of his time on scientific details and five minutes on the good stuff’ – meaning I think he wanted a yes or no on competition. Of course, that is not an answer because it all depends....”

Each of Cole Ehmke’s presentations on estate planning is a little different. Ehmke, a personal financial management specialist, will usually incorporate a local estate planning expert. “Personal relationships and presentations with local experts help the audience move closer to developing a plan,” he notes.

The material in each of Ehmke’s sessions is usually the same, but he empha-

sizes something different each time as he becomes familiar with the audience. “For instance, in my estate planning, I present a process for planning an estate transfer so it accomplishes the goals of both the senior and junior generations, as well as those on and off the ranch. Sometimes it will be clear from the questions that information on running a family meeting is important, so I’ll provide some insight on that topic.”

Attendance has been averaging 14 at his presentations. But occasionally there will be times when few show. If so, then he says the advertising probably wasn’t directed correctly. “We

didn’t demonstrate the applicability in the advertising or, of course, we didn’t respond to the need. Perhaps we didn’t understand it,” he says.

Estate planning is a concern because many older farmers and ranchers have not addressed the issue and are confused about it, he notes.

“Estate planning and personal finance planning in general is weak. Schools don’t much teach it to the young anymore,” says Ehmke, “and my work with new venture management is always tricky for those who like to do things traditionally, which is most of the people in agriculture. New people to

agriculture like the heritage but aren’t as tied to it.”

Ehmke also uses the Wyoming Education Network and now WebEx, although he says person-to-person is still best.

Hewlett puts his information on Web sites so it’s available 24/7. “This often results in e-mail questions rather than phone calls, making it easier to respond by pointing out or sending back information,” he says.

He says portable computers have allowed making presentations more interesting and allow him to be more responsive to the needs of the audience.

“Using simulations and other tools on a portable computer lab has enabled us to train on how such tools can be helpful to folks managing their own business,” he says. “We have also developed on-line courses, which can accommodate an individual’s schedule while also providing for real time interaction through chats or WebEx-type technologies.”

His clients’ most pressing concern is making sound management decisions. “These issues were important in the past and will be into the future for the simple reason the dynamic mix of alternative technologies, changing markets, and new opportunities make success a moving target,” says Hewlett. ☺



John Hewlett puts information on Web sites so information is available to clients at any time.



More than 10,000 attended the March 3 4-H carnival in Laramie County Community College's multipurpose building. The annual carnival enables clubs to make operating money for the year. More than 500 4-Hers helped with the event.

4-H becoming active at F.E. Warren, with National Guard

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

Seems a 4-H/youth educator in Laramie County offering 4-H programs to youths at F.E. Warren Air Force Base and to children of Wyoming National Guard (WYNG) parents went through a basic training of sorts and exited with a different perspective on 4-H.

Jeremy Green initiated efforts to build the 4-H program on the base and with the WYNG in the spring of 2006. Through establishing a club and by developing relationships, he's had an epiphany.

"It opened my eyes to a whole different perspective to what 4-H is and what it can do for youth," says Green, who began with the University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service (UW CES) in 2005. "This side of 4-H is not about raising animals and taking them to fair – not at all.

It's given me a completely different perspective at how powerful the 4-H program can be for youths."

Green says parents like the idea of having their children in a program like 4-H. When parents move from base to base or are deployed overseas, the 4-H program provides a sense of continuity and positive experiences to their children. Young people can stay involved in a program with other youths who have the same interests.

The 4-H military program has existed for several years, but there have been increased efforts to initiate programs due to the nation's military involvement overseas.

"With the current situation in Iraq and the number of troops deployed around the world, it has taken on a new meaning," notes Green.

The program may have far-reaching effects. There is a potential for up to 200 new 4-H members on

the base and up to 1,200 4-H-age children who have parents in the WYNG across the state.

The 4-H educator in Laramie County is the state military liaison with 4-H, and the responsibility can be shouldered if the educator chooses.

Green chose. "I saw the opportunity there," he says.

He notes the opportunity for 4-H to help youths cope with the stress of moving from base to base or when their mothers or fathers are deployed overseas. "I think it's something we need to provide to youths if we can," says Green. "I saw it as such a great program, and I jumped headlong into it."

Robin Gorsuch, WYNG Child and Youth Program coordinator, is responsible for seeing that the emotional, social, and academic needs of every Wyoming Air and Army National Guard child from birth to 18 years of age are met.

"I need a lot of partners and support from organizations that can be in touch with these youths where they live," says Gorsuch. "4-H is an obvious first choice."

"Providing activities and connections with other children and teens in their local communities is one of the most important ways 4-H can serve these youth," she says. "Since WYNG families live in virtually every community in Wyoming, it is imperative to have activities, adult mentors, and peers where they live."

Green began F.E. Warren involvement efforts at the base community center and recruited 39 club members. Youth center leaders were provided new leader training and material about how to recruit and promote 4-H.

"We have put youths in non-traditional 4-H projects," he says, "and focus on specific areas four to six weeks at a time. That lets youths experience a project and build skills, then move on to projects like photography, cake decorating, or leather crafts."

Animal projects are limited because of what the base allows. The base is interested in building a dog park, says Green. "Now that the weather is breaking, we will start an extensive dog 4-H program. We saw that as an opportunity to get that up and running in a couple of months."

There are also social projects. More than 125

4-Hers from the base and Albany, Carbon, Goshen, and Laramie counties participated in a lock-in at the base to help build excitement about 4-H.

The National Guard has also had activities. "An important way 4-H can serve these youths is by providing many great experiences for them," says Gorsuch, "all the way from public speaking to leadership to learning about special projects through hands-on activities. All of these opportunities exist at the local, state, and national level. Guard youth even get the chance to travel through 4-H involvement."

Fifty "Hero Packs" filled with 4-H memorabilia, mugs, stuffed animals, cameras, pens, paper – fun 4-H materials including information about the program – were dispersed to WYNG youths across Wyoming whose parents were deployed overseas. The pack also included a book

about separation from a parent (*The Kissing Hand* by Audrey Penn) and a puppet about the main character – Chester Raccoon.

"We had a lot of fun assembling 50 Hero Packs and getting them sent to children who had a parent deployed with the WYNG," says Gorsuch. "We were able to mail a backpack to every family who had someone deployed with one of our units."

Kim Moye sat down right away with her family to read the story and play with the raccoon puppet.

"It's precious," says Moye, wife of a WYNG soldier. "My son has switched over his pack to use for school. He wears the wristband almost every day. These things mean a lot to a second grader. He doesn't say much about missing his daddy, but I know he does. His big sister is enjoying the camera. Thanks for thinking of us, and pass on our

gratitude to whomever is part of caring for the kids at home."

One of the WYNG Youth Council members, Pedro Rampolla, and Air National Guard Wing Family Program Director Denise Rampolla, assisted with boxing and mailing the packs.

Parental support for Green's efforts has been high. "It was surprising how many of them grew up doing 4-H themselves," says Green, "but never gave much thought to their own kids because they were in the military moving around. They've been very receptive and very happy to see this 4-H effort. Also, many who didn't know anything about 4-H look at this as a great opportunity to plug their kids into something to create a positive experience and memories for their children as they move – and give their kids something to do if the parents are shipped overseas."

The military 4-H effort has had another effect – increasing Green's workload. Laramie County already has the most 4-Hers in the state – more than 600. Green has applied for – with UW CES blessing – a grant to add another 4-H position. He may know the decision by mid-summer.

"I'd rather be looking at a 'good' problem of too many kids as opposed to not wanting it at all," notes Green. 🐾



More than 125 youths were in a lock-in at F.E. Warren Air Force Base in February. 4-Hers from four counties and the base participated.

G&F landowner honoree works closely with UW CES

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

One of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department's (G&F) Landowners of the Year worked closely with the University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service (UW CES) to improve habitat on the family's Johnson County ranch.

The Jean and Larry Vignaroli ranch 18 miles northeast of Buffalo on Clear Creek was one of seven ranches honored statewide in 2006 by the G&F. Any landowner or land manager is eligible, but only one award is given in each of the department's seven regions per year.

Criteria for the award include supporting wildlife, improving wildlife habitat, and providing hunting and fishing opportunities.

According to the G&F, Jean and Larry Vignaroli cooperated with the UW CES to test different grass varieties as forage and ground cover for wildlife. Leading the study was Blaine Horn, an area

educator for Johnson and Sheridan counties.

Horn has been conducting cool-season grass variety trials on the Vignaroli ranch and other ranches in Johnson and Sheridan counties since 2003. More recently, he studied the affects of fertilizer on cool-season grasses. Follow-up findings are in the April 2005, May 2006, March 2007, and April 2007 *Land & Livestock* newsletters at http://ces.uwyo.edu/County_Info/Johnson/Newsletters/Johnson_Newsletters_main.htm.

"Jean and Larry have been great to work with. They are interested in finding ways to improve their ranch and improve natural resources," Horn says. "They continue to want to learn."

According to the G&F, the Vignaroli ranch also worked closely with the G&F, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Lake DeSmet Conservation District, Sheridan/Johnson County Chapter of Pheasants Forever, and Johnson County Weed and



Extension Educator
Blaine Horn

Pest Control District to improve habitat for wildlife.

Work included planting shelterbelts and food plots, controlling noxious weeds, improving wetlands, enhancing an abandoned oxbow near Clear Creek, installing habitat structures for trout, and the reclamation of uplands disturbed by energy development and livestock grazing.

"The results have been phenomenal," says Bert Jellison, a G&F habitat biologist in Sheridan. For example, bottomlands along Clear Creek were fenced in 2000 to control livestock grazing, and the amount of forage and cover dramatically increased. 🌿



By Steven L. Miller,
Senior Editor
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and Technology

Kent Connelly's view from Kemmerer north to the far reaches of northern Lincoln County provides hair-raising growth issues to wrestle.

The Lincoln County Board of County Commissioners chairman's panorama in almost any direction isn't much different. If not the picturesque Star Valley drawing new residents, the booming energy industry to the south seemingly scrunches other towns against the western border of Wyoming. Sublette and Teton counties are undergoing stronger growing pains.

"How do you keep up with all the services?" he asks. "It's growing at such a fast pace the tax base has not caught up to finance it."

He expects more than 400 new homes per year in

Extension organizes cost-of-

the rural areas of his county. Add another 600 per year in the nine towns in the county and it's a microcosm of what the western side of Wyoming faces.

"It's growing so fast we're not really collecting enough taxes to do it," notes Connelly. "Without the planning process well in front of it, you can't provide the accommodations, the emergency services, the libraries."

Lincoln County last year had 200 new housing starts in rural Star Valley, 15 in rural southern parts of the county, and 45 in the town of Star Valley Ranch, and the remaining towns had eight for a total of about 270, said John Woodward, planning director for the county.

The crunch along the west is caused not just by growth in counties. Affluent Jackson has created its own area of influence, says Mary Martin, University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service (UW CES) educator for Lincoln, Sublette, and Teton counties.

The Wyoming Teton County commissioners had budgeted for training for planning boards and thought

UW CES should be asked to put the board training together, says Martin.

"Since the topic is relevant throughout the counties I'm assigned to, they suggested I open it up to the counties and communities I'm working with so it could help all the planning boards. Jan Livingston, our county administrator, had met Carson Bise at a National Association of County Governments conference and recognized the value his expertise could provide to our planning board and staff."

Bise is vice president of TischlerBise, a fiscal, economic, and planning consulting firm in Bethesda, Maryland, with a branch office in Pasadena, California. He presented at the March 21 workshop.

The response to the day was terrific, says Martin.

Representatives attended from Lincoln, Sublette, Uinta, and Teton counties in Wyoming and Teton County in Idaho, plus from the towns of Jackson, Kemmerer, Alpine, Pinedale, Afton, and Cokeville in Wyoming and Victor and Driggs in Idaho.

"It was awesome at the workshop," says Martin, who

growth workshop to help stressed western counties

has been conducting board development workshops in her area.

She's got a finger on the pulse of board demands. Many board members are volunteers who get a steep learning curve once in office. "Someone volunteers to be on a board and all of a sudden you need to know about the mission you volunteered to do for the community," she says. "Planning is a critical need. The whole planning issue flag was raised up the pole for me in Sublette County. I was loudly being told our boards need training and help with planning."

While the Sublette County Leadership Steering Committee was developing the first of its board workshops, the mayor of Pinedale pointed out that 15 local boards had vacancies and no applicants.

"I was facilitating community meetings between residents of Marbleton and Big Piney looking at their need for a recreation facility," says Martin, "and during that process participants asked if there was help for them from UW CES to take advantage of this growth cycle to plan for a bright



Mary Martin, left, discusses information from a cost-of-growth workshop in Alpine.

future for their town. 'Can't we plan for streets and gutters and sidewalks?' they asked. They saw the county planner was overwhelmed with all the county issues and wanted their small community's issues to be addressed."

Woodward says some impacts of growth aren't problems at all. "For the first time, there have been opportunities for young people to remain or to return and work where they grew up," he says. "There is an increased number of consumer choices. Landowners have more opportunities to realize a retirement with the sale of their land."

On the other hand, he

notes, "As our rural spaces are occupied by urban refugees, public service expectations are ever increasing. Petitions for new and better county roads are common. Challenges to solve landfill problems are mounting. The issue of water quality gets more attention."

Presenting at the workshop in addition to Bise were James Radda, deputy county attorney for Teton County Wyoming, and Associate Professor Roger Coupal, head of the UW Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics, and Professor David "Tex" Taylor, extension specialist in the department.

"I think my gut feeling is people appreciated the

opportunity to visit about mutual concerns," says Martin. "We get pretty cubby holed in our geographic nests. It gave our neighbors an opportunity to visit about common problems and how we deal with growth. Nothing against growth, but how do we do the job ahead of us the best way possible?"

Participants learned about the costs of growth beyond housing – maintaining streets, sewers, gutters, police and fire protection, and schools, and the people needed to provide those services. They then looked at ways to generate revenue and other fees some communities are using. Actual development plans from Vermont, Kansas, and Virginia were dissected and discussed

The workshop gave community leaders an opportunity to network, says Woodward. "During the monthly grind of development application deliberations, there is not always a chance to evaluate the planning documents in the context of the bigger picture. Planning and zoning hearings are filled with allegations by the developers that the



Carson Bise, vice president of TischlerBise, a consulting firm in Maryland and California, presented fiscal impact analysis information. Bise is on the board of directors of the National Impact Fee Roundtable.

regulations are too harsh as well as claims of neighbors that they are much too lax.”

Growth issues have residents on either side of the Wyoming-Idaho border targeted.

House prices in Jackson are forcing the working class to find other places to live. “The working class can’t afford Jackson, probably haven’t been able to for the last 10 to 12 years,” says Martin. “Jackson displaced Victor, Idaho, which displaced Driggs, Idaho. The more affordable homes are getting farther and farther away.”

Teton County, Idaho, slapped a moratorium on development, says Martin. “That community and tax structure is on a freight train to bankruptcy,” she says. “They don’t have a tax structure in place.”

Second homes are being built in Star Valley for people recreating in the summer and winter, drawn by low taxes and easy access to areas like Jackson Hole.

In the south, Lincoln County tried a moratorium, but all it did was drive up prices of existing properties, says Connelly.

The pace of development has not slowed, says Woodward, but land parcels have slimmed from 4.6 acres per lot to 1.2 acres.

Says Woodward, “Each community needs to find the degree of regulatory comfort that best fits. Jackson regulations would not be received well in Cokeville. When comprehensive planning is done with public participation and buy-in, it becomes possible to find local equilibrium.”

The problems aren’t going away. Connelly sees major energy companies investing hundreds of millions of dollars in the area and knows they will be there for the long haul.

He says 40 percent of the workforce in Lincoln County commutes from out of county. His hometown of Kemmerer, population 3,200, is surrounded by a work force of 5,000. Restaurants and hotels can’t keep help because of the high wages in the oilfields. A cafe in La Barge closed seven times last year due to help leaving, says Connelly. Waitresses making \$20 an hour at the cafe were still leaving for higher-paying oilfield jobs. 🐾

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