



# Connections

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE WYOMING COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

FALL - WINTER 2005

## EnCana Commits \$750,000 For Education

EnCana Oil & Gas (USA), Inc. provided a \$250,000 lead gift and pledged another \$500,000 to the Wyoming Community Foundation for the Wyoming Agriculture in the Classroom Endowment Fund. Wyoming Agriculture in the Classroom (WAIC) provides in and out-of-classroom, hands-on, educational programs to increase the awareness and understanding of agriculture and natural resources among educators and students.

EnCana provided this gift as part of their belief that every student in Wyoming deserves the opportunity to explore the value of natural resources and agriculture.

WAIC and the WYCF will be conducting a fund-raising campaign to match EnCana's lead gift donation, and over the next couple of years, will solicit donations from producers and partners of agriculture with the goal of raising \$1.5 million to support the endowment.

"On behalf of the board of Wyoming Agriculture in the Classroom, we are very excited and have a deep gratitude for this gift from EnCana," said Dennis Sun, board chair of WAIC. "This guarantees the future of Wyoming Agriculture in the Classroom."

Through a partnership with the Wyoming State Department of Agriculture, WAIC is delivering this knowledge through National Resource Discovery Tool Chests. The goal is to have the tool chests available in every Wyoming county. The tool chests are filled with natural resource education materials,

such as field books, videos, age-appropriate lesson plans, games, CDs, water quality testing kits and other learning kits. All Tool Chest materials provide high-quality activities that integrate Science, Math, Social Studies, Art, English, and Geography.

"I think the learning opportunities the tool chests provide students in Wyoming are effective and fun," said Cally McKee, EnCana regulatory analyst and a WAIC board member. "Kids have a great time when they experiment with the kits in the tool chest, whether it's testing soil, labeling crops or identifying rubber animal tracks."

The goals of WAIC are to assist teachers and students in developing an awareness and appreciation of agriculture in local communities to serve as a resource for assisting educators and community members in creating hands-on educational programs, and to promote a wider understanding of the values and contributions of agriculture and natural resources.

"Agriculture and natural resources are the foundation of our society, the food we eat, the clothes we wear, the energy that heats our homes, fuels our cars - many of our traditions and values," said EnCana Vice President John Schopp. "We are pleased to support an organization that develops an awareness of all natural resources and uses science-based techniques to teach resource stewardship."

WYOMING COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

*Gathering, growing and granting charitable funds to benefit Wyoming communities.*

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## WYCF Board Update

Long-time board members Bart Rea, Mary Garman, and Chuck Smith retired from the board this past September. With a combined service of 30 years, their leadership and guidance will be missed.

During the Annual Board Meeting in September, three new board members were elected. Linda Bryce, from Casper, is the Wyoming Women's Foundation Board Chair. Rick Lawton, from Jackson, is Director of Operations for Jorgensen Associates, PC. Kent A. Richins, from Worland, is the City Attorney.



*Pictured left to right: Bart Rea served 9 years on the board; Mary Garman, 9 years; and Chuck Smith, 12 years.*

## WyWF Announces New Executive Director



The Wyoming Women's Foundation (WyWF) is pleased to announce that Laurel Parker West is the new WyWF Executive Director. Laurel holds a Ph.D. in political science from Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia where she focused her research efforts on state-level child care policy. Through her many years as a researcher and practitioner of social policy, Laurel has worked in the fields of rural and urban welfare reform, community development, housing and homelessness, child poverty, transportation, economic development, criminal justice, program evaluation, and non-profit capacity-building. Laurel took over the leadership of the Wyoming Women's Foundation in November.

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Tad T. Daly, Chairman  
Russell Zimmer, Vice - Chairman  
Jim Moses, Treasurer  
Lollie Benz Plank, Secretary

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

William Ankeny, Jr.	Charles G. Kepler	Governor Dave Freudenthal,
Budd Betts	Rick Lawton	Ex-Officio
Linda Bryce	Carol R. McKinley	
Randall L. Dancliff	Martha Ptasnik	
Diane Harrop	Kent A. Richins	
Arne O. Jorgensen	Susan Samuelson	
David Kathka	Sandra Wallop	

### FOUNDATION STAFF

George H. Gault, President  
Samin Dadelahi, Program Officer  
Jenny Gallent, Office Manager  
Jonnie Jenkins, Director of Finance & Administration  
Jody Shields, Communications Officer  
Press Stephens, Development Director  
Laurel Parker West, WyWF Executive Director

Wyoming Community Foundation  
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307-455-2656 (Dubois office)

# President's Report

**George H. Gault**



A number of factors are converging to emphasize the Foundation's efforts to achieve a self sustaining budget. A challenge grant from the McMurry Foundation late last year initiated a process of self examination that included a review of our budget and a more stringent definition of our operating expenses, a more diligent effort to control expenses, and the development of a financial stabilization initiative.

The Wyoming Community Foundation has three main sources of revenue for operations: management fees; interest earnings from our administrative endowment; and the annual operating campaign in which we receive contributions from the board, private foundations and friends across the state.

The goal of the three-year financial stabilization initiative, which was launched at the beginning of this year, is to reduce the amount we need to raise in operating dollars each year to no more than 10% of the budget, and ultimately, be able to concentrate solely on asset development and growing the Foundation.

One of the key components of the initiative is to increase the Administrative Endowment Fund. Interest from the fund currently provides 19% of our operating budget. The staff and board have implemented a campaign to double the endowment within three years.

At the Annual WYCF Board Meeting in September, Bart Rea, WYCF retiring board member, kicked off Phase 1 of the Campaign by challenging his fellow board members to raise \$100,000 by December 31st of this year. Every dollar raised by the WYCF board for the Administrative Endowment Fund, up to \$100,000, will be matched dollar for dollar by Bart. By December 31st, our goal is to increase the Administrative Endowment Fund by \$200,000. Our sincerest thanks to Bart Rea for this generous contribution and for the inspiration he has extended to each board member. Phase 2 of the campaign will begin January 1st.

As mentioned in the Spring 2005 Newsletter, we implemented a 10K Partners Program in order to free up time and resources for the Administrative Endowment Campaign. We are continuing to ask individuals, corporations and foundations to pledge

\$10,000 per year for three years to the operating fund as "bridge financing," which allows us to focus on the Administrative Endowment Campaign.

The third component of the financial stabilization initiative is fund development. We continue to devote considerable time and effort working with current and new donors to increase current funds and establish new ones. In June, we announced the launch of two new funds - the Upper Green River Sustainable Communities Endowment Fund and the Tom Thorne Sage Grouse Conservation Fund. The two funds were created by an initial gift of \$1 million in each fund from Shell Exploration & Production Company.

In addition, we are working on meeting a third phase of the Kresge Foundation challenge. We have committed to raise \$200,000 for unrestricted grant-making by the end of this year; that will be matched by Kresge with \$100,000 that can be used by the Community Foundation for technology and marketing.

In August, I selected an outside consultant to undertake an organizational assessment of the Foundation. The assessment provided a number of suggestions about how to improve our systems and focus our efforts on asset development. Those increased assets, in turn, give us greater capability to respond to the changing needs of communities through grants to nonprofits that are making a difference in locales where they operate.

Following the assessment, the Board met in October to initiate a strategic planning process that focuses the participation of individual board members and encourages the role of affiliates in building philanthropy throughout the state.

All of this means exciting and challenging times at the Community Foundation. We have almost doubled our assets in the last five years, from approximately \$25 million to almost \$48 million currently. The growth has placed understandable strains on the organization and staff.

The core mission of the WYCF is to serve as the statewide philanthropic leader in gathering, growing and granting charitable resources as an investment in Wyoming people and communities. If we are to fulfill our mission, we will need to grow the organization and staff apace with our increased assets. We believe that the Wyoming Community Foundation is the only statewide nonprofit organization that has the capabilities to meet many of the challenges currently faced by the state.

# Kresge Offers A New Match For Discretionary Funds

## Press Stephens, Development Director



When Kurt Zunker, Laramie County Drug Court (LCDC) Coordinator, applied for funding from the Wyoming Community Foundation (WYCF), he had no idea how much competition there would be for the kind of grant he was requesting. Funding for his plan to have the Drug Court team participate in intensive and extensive training out of state would need to come from the WYCF's unrestricted funds. And there were many other grant applications in that hopper.

We receive many proposals which don't fall into the rather narrow parameters established by the majority of our restricted funds. In 2004, 50 percent of submitted applications were direct appeals for unrestricted funds.

WYCF has six discretionary (unrestricted) funds which total nearly \$3.5 million in assets. Together, those funds provide about \$175,000 annually for grants, and in 2004, only represented 11.5% of total grant-making. As we continue to see increasing demands on unrestricted funds to meet the needs of nonprofits around the state, like the Laramie County Drug Court, we look for ways to interest donors in either making significant contributions to one of our existing discretionary funds, or establishing a new discretionary fund of their own.

In May of this year, The Kresge Foundation decided to continue, generously, its support of WYCF. Pleased with the success of WYCF's participation in the recent "Kresge Challenge to Raise Community Capital," and aware of the great need, nation-wide, for more unrestricted grant making, Kresge has challenged WYCF, along with five other community foundations in the nation, to raise \$200,000 in new funds to fulfill their respective plans for increasing discretionary grant making. Upon completing this new challenge, Kresge will gift WYCF \$100,000 for technological advances in the WYCF office - a gift that is sorely needed.

Kurt Zunker's Laramie County Drug Court was awarded its grant and necessary training was delivered to his team. "Training out of state has

allowed our team, all criminal justice professionals, to think from a different perspective-to improve our program," he said. Then he told me a story. A young man and his girlfriend from Cheyenne, let's call them Mike and Sara, were arrested for possession of illegal drugs with intent to deliver. When brought to Laramie County Drug Court, both were heavily into the cycle of methamphetamine addiction. They stayed actively enrolled in the program for fourteen months.

Mike and Sara have now graduated from the program and married. Sara is in college and Mike has started his own house painting business. Their newborn baby is one of five drug-free babies born to program parents. "If not for the program," says Kurt, "those babies would not have been born drug-free. Furthermore, since the program's inception, \$30,000 in restitution has come back from participants to their victims, \$11,000 has come back

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to treatment, and 450 community service hours have been performed. We are now keeping people like Mike and Sara sober, and our program is nationally recognized. We are grateful to the Wyoming Community Foundation for funding."

In our effort to increase contributions to discretionary funds and meet the new Kresge challenge, we are appealing to donors to consider the importance

and value of being able to award grants where the need is greatest.

Laurie and Tom Saylak of Scarsdale, New York, and Jackson, Wyoming give every year to their discretionary fund. "Since we only have a few weeks in Wyoming each year, we make our donation to the Wyoming Community Foundation for discretionary grant making," said Laurie in October of this year. "We are confident the Board and staff will know better than we would where the money is needed most. We read the WYCF Annual Report every year, and know how carefully WYCF accounts for every dollar." The Saylak's have contributed to their discretionary fund this year, and Kresge Foundation will provide a match to their contribution.

# Young women learn power of choices

By Kelly Milner, Wyoming Tribune-Eagle

CHEYENNE - About 90 young Latina women heard Saturday about the power of choices from women who have made some poor ones. Three women from the Wyoming Women's Center, a prison in Lusk, offered their stories in hopes of steering those youth from fifth to 12th grades in a different direction. The panel discussion was part of this weekend's Wyoming Latina Youth Conference held at Laramie County Community College.

In its fourth year, the conference theme is and has always been, "The Power of Choice." "I commend you all for being here today," said Velma Reilly, who is serving a 20-50 year sentence for a variety of crimes including attempted murder. "That's a good choice, a healthy choice you all are making."

Cheyenne resident Ann Redman helped found the conference after she and several other women attended a conference for Latinas in California. "We want to change the statistics for Hispanics," Redman said, mentioning the high rates of suicide, teen pregnancy, substance abuse and domestic violence for Hispanics.

All three women prisoners talked about the importance of family, faith and getting an education. "I liked to learn, but I have to admit I was too lazy to work for it," Reilly said of her school days before she dropped out. "You've got to work for what you want." Doing nothing in school or the community is leaving yourself open to destruction, she said.

Former Cheyenne resident Anna Fernandez is serving three-and-a-half to eight years in prison for drug charges. "This is the result of all the choices I've made in my life," Fernandez said. When the man in her life left her and her children, Fernandez had little education to fall back on, so she began dealing drugs to provide for her family. Then she started to use the cocaine she was selling.

Melissa Mendoza is serving two to five years for drug use and forging checks, though she had been drinking and forging checks since she was 11. "I was doing it to please someone else," Mendoza said. "I let a man get in the way of my beliefs and run my life; today, I know that will not happen again."

Reilly encouraged the women to learn about themselves and become strong, before they become too involved with another. "It's too easy to be

dragged down by another person if you aren't strong yourself," Reilly said.

Cheyenne resident Brittany Jackson, 16, has come every year to the conference. "This gives us better knowledge of what women in our culture have gone through," she said. Jackson said she's working to make the good choice of staying in school and continuing her education.

Briana Lewark, 15 and DeAnne Fresquez, 15, have been friends since kindergarten and the two serve as teen advisors for the conference. They help decide the topics for workshops and in some cases speak on panels during the event. The two said Saturday's panel was their favorite part of the conference because it was a chance to hear from people who are speaking from experience about the outcome of successive bad choices.

Lewark said she was on, what she calls the bad track, in junior high, but Fresquez confronted her with her choices and got her involved in the Latina Youth Conference. "I still continue to make mistakes, but I learn from them." Lewark said. "It helps give you the motivation to want an education and to do well for yourself."

Redman said attendance was lower this year than prior years where about 120 girls attended. That's due in part to conflicts with school events and at least one community's inability to get transportation to Cheyenne. But Redman said numbers are not what matters. "If we can change the life of one girl, she will change her family, her school, her community and eventually the state of Wyoming," Redman said.

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**The Wyoming Latina Conference has received a grant from the Wyoming Community Foundation for the past three years.**

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# Hurricane Katrina Tax Relief Act

## Tax relief act not limited to hurricane relief efforts

On September 23, 2005, President George W. Bush signed the Hurricane Katrina Tax Relief Act of 2005. While the tax relief act focuses on providing assistance and tax relief for victims of Hurricane Katrina, it also contains incentives for giving that supports charitable organizations - including community foundations.

The Act suspends limits on individual and corporate tax deductions for cash contributions made to charities between August 28, 2005 and December 31, 2005. Generally, individuals are limited to deducting 50 percent of adjusted gross income for donations of cash to charity; under the new provisions, contributions of cash made between August 28 and December 31, 2005 may be deducted up to 100 percent. These contributions may be for any charitable purpose and are not limited to donations for Hurricane Katrina relief.

"Our goal is to encourage charitable giving outside of Katrina relief, to prevent the rest of the nation's charities from seeing a downturn in giving as they did after September 11," said one of the act's authors, Sen. Charles Grassley, Iowa, in a San Francisco Chronicle article.

Donations to community foundations' field-of-interest funds, designated beneficiary funds, unrestricted funds or any tax-exempt public charity qualify for the tax break.

Field-of-interest funds are an effective way to support the issues donors care about most while benefiting from the new tax relief act. These kinds of funds support a specific issue and/or geographic area and are a convenient way to focus on an area of interest or a particular community.

Donations to designated beneficiary funds are a great way to support the long-term financial stability of the many nonprofit groups that have established these kinds of funds at the Wyoming Community Foundation.

Contributions to unrestricted funds allow the Foundation the most flexibility to respond to changing community needs today and in the future. Contributions to these funds are particularly beneficial this year, as they will be matched by the Kresge Foundation as part of our Kresge Phase III campaign to raise discretionary grant funds. Press Stephens, WYCF Development Director addresses this topic in his article on page 4 of this newsletter.

The temporary suspension of the limitations will not apply to gifts made to donor-advised funds at a community foundation or other entity, to supporting organizations, or, under most circumstances, to private family foundations.

While this bill is not the same as the proposed Charitable IRA Rollover, it may make it attractive for people with considerable assets in IRAs or other qualified retirement plans to use these as charitable contributions. Individuals considering this option should be at least 59½, should have sufficient other resources to take care of their retirement needs, and should be informed about the potential tax consequences. Individuals who own savings bonds, commercial annuity policies, or other assets that would generate income tax if liquidated may want to consider taking advantage of this unusual window of opportunity.

Taxpayers who make IRA or other retirement plan withdrawals or liquidate other assets to make a gift will increase their incomes in the amount of the withdrawal. While they can deduct the entire amount on their federal income tax return, there may still be a tax cost associated with the gift that donors should be aware of.

Taxpayers typically start losing a percentage of their itemized deductions when their adjusted gross incomes hit \$149,950. A retirement plan withdrawal, or other liquidation, may trigger that phase-out or make it worse, potentially costing these donors about 1% or 2% tax of the IRA withdrawals or liquidation amount to make the gift. That's not much, but individuals should be aware of this possibility so they can make informed decisions.

For corporations, the charitable contribution limitation is suspended during August 28, 2005 to December 31, 2005 timeframe, but only contributions made to relief efforts for Hurricane Katrina are eligible for the enhanced incentive.

The WYCF encourages donors to consult with their professional advisor about how these changes may apply to their individual situation.

*This information is being provided for informational purposes only. In compliance with IRS rules, WYCF advises people to seek their own legal and tax advice in connection with gift and planning matters. This communication, including any attachment, is not intended or written to be used, and cannot be used for the purpose of avoiding tax-related penalties.*

## Upper Green River Funds Distributing Grants This Year

In June of this year, the Wyoming Community Foundation (WYCF) announced the launch of two new funds - the Upper Green River Sustainable Communities Endowment Fund and the Tom Thorne Sage Grouse Conservation Fund - as multi-million dollar efforts uniquely positioned to help manage community and wildlife impacts of gas development.

The two funds were created by an initial gift of \$1 million in each from Shell Exploration & Production Company.



In the months following the announcement, an advisory committee was formed for the Upper Green River (UGR) Sustainable Communities Endowment Fund. The UGR Advisory Committee will award the first round of grants by the end of this year. Shell has graciously contributed an additional \$25,000 for this first round of grants as the endowment fund will not produce funding for grants until 2006.

The UGR Fund supports entities that strengthen community viability and promote collaborative efforts to enhance the quality of life for Sublette County, Wyoming residents. Nonprofit organizations with a 501(c)3 designation or otherwise tax-exempt agencies that operate in the areas of Pinedale, Marbleton, Big Piney, Daniel or Boulder were eligible to apply by the November 1st deadline.

Members of the UGR Advisory Committee include: Prill Mecham, Chair; Carolyn Bing, Vice Chair; Ana Cuprill, Secretary; Bob Beiermann;

Becky Gregory; Nancy Guio; Dayle Read Hudson; April Lippincott; Deena McMullen; Victor McMurry; Mark Mickelson; Nylla Kunard; Martha Ptasnik; Ineke Schwartz; Phil Smith; and Nancy Penton Smith.



The Tom Thorne Sage Grouse Conservation Fund is named for Dr. Tom Thorne who was long dedicated to research that included sage grouse, their habitats and strategies for protecting them and enhancing their habitat. Dr. Thorne and his wife, Beth Williams, were killed in a car accident in December 2004. This fund is a realization of Dr. Thorne's vision for a partnership between producers and wildlife interests in support of long-term conservation initiatives.

The \$1 million gift is intended to be spent in the next five years to realize an immediate benefit to the conservation of sage-grouse in the Upper Green River Basin. Distribution of the fund is guided by a donor advisory committee, which was established this past September. The committee, comprised of wildlife experts, government agency, community, environmental and landowner representatives, has identified ongoing project for possible funding and will distribute \$10,000 in grants by the end of the year.

Following the first of the year, the TSG Advisory Committee will formally establish the funding process and determine goals and objectives.

Members of the TSGF Advisory Committee are Steve Belinda, Chair; Rollie Sparrowe, Vice Chair; Aimee Davison, Secretary; Cris Paravicini; Charles Price; Dan Stroud; and Mike Winland.

The Wyoming Women's Foundation recently launched their new website: [www.wywf.org](http://www.wywf.org)

Wyoming Community Foundation's next competitive grant cycle deadline is March 1, 2006. For more information and an application, visit our website at [www.wycf.org](http://www.wycf.org) or call 307-721-8300 or 1-866-708-7878.

The next scholarship deadline is February 1, 2006. For a complete list of scholarships available and the application forms, visit our website at [www.wycf.org](http://www.wycf.org).

The 5th Biennial Wyoming Philanthropy Days Conference will be held June 14th, 15th and 16th in Evanston, Wyoming. See the back cover of this newsletter for more information.

# ALL ABOARD



**Evanston, Wyoming  
Historic Depot Square  
June 15 and 16, 2006**

Pre-session workshops will begin on June 14th, more information to be announced soon.

## **5th Biennial Wyoming Philanthropy Days**

**Attention:**  
Non-Profit Board and Staff Members  
Community Leaders  
Volunteers  
Private Foundations  
Corporate Foundations

The Wyoming Philanthropy Days Conference Schedule and registration information will be mailed in March. For more information call 307-721-8300 or e-mail [jody@wycf.org](mailto:jody@wycf.org).

**New this year - On-line Registration and Payment!**

**Join Your Colleagues for Networking,  
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