

# Wyoming ranked 48th in corruptibility

By Matthew Manguso

**PINEDALE** – The Center for Public Integrity (CPI) released the findings of its State Integrity Investigation last month, ranking which states' governments had the greatest potential for corruption. Wyoming ranked 48th in the nation, and received an "F" in state government accountability.

According to the CPI's website, voters assert integrity is the most important quality a public official can have, more important than even a candidate's opinions on issues.

"But leaders in many states fall short of citizens' expectations," the website read.

Public officials, however, have failed when it comes to integrity.

"In Massachusetts, the last three house speakers were convicted on corruption," the website stated. "In Illinois, four of the last nine governors have gone to prison."

Spending \$1.5 million, the CPI analyzed each state's laws to find which states had laws

in place to "deter corruption and promote accountability and openness."

A group of "experienced journalists," hailing from all 50 states and working for such notable publications as the *New York Times* and the *Chicago Tribune* were jurors on the project. Bill McCarthy, editor of the *Cowboy State Free Press* and former statehouse reporter for the *Wyoming Tribune Eagle*, represented Wyoming.

Each state received a letter grade in 14 categories. Categories included access of information, executive accountability, civil service management, lobbying disclosure and ethics enforcement.

Wyoming received an F in nine of the 14 categories, including judicial accountability, political financing and state pension fund management. In internal auditing and procurement, the state received a C- and a D- in legislative accountability. For redistricting and budget

process, the Equality State earned an A.

In his report, McCarthy cited Wyoming's "Forever West" attitude, which suggests a distrust of government and the desire for individual privacy. The public notoriety associated with serving in office also prevents many citizens from putting their names on the ballot. Those who do run, McCarthy added, generally expect the privacy given to private citizens.

"Consequently, Wyoming income disclosure laws for elected officials, judges and lobbyists are weak or nonexistent," McCarthy wrote. "Other benchmarks of transparency and openness don't fare much better. And so the Cowboy State gets a grade of F ... ranking it 48th among the states."

South Dakota and Georgia took the 49th and 50th spots, respectively. New Jersey, Connecticut, Washington, California and Nebraska were the top five least corruptible states.

Many of the states at the bottom of the list are western states with low populations and vast stretches of open land, where, the website said, libertarianism roots and small-town ideals have preceded the need for legislative restrictions. But open spaces do not necessarily mean open records.

McCarthy noted the taxpayer-funded Wyoming Association of Municipalities, which has been lobbying to prevent designating e-mails, even when sent or received by members of city councils, school boards and other elected officials, as public records.

"Wyoming's cultural commitments to individualism and small government run by citizens and not professional politicians are intended to maximize freedom," McCarthy wrote. "Adherence to those lofty ideals, however, may be putting the state at risk." ■

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## LETTERS: Sharing your thoughts on commissioners, deer, water, health and more

*Continued from 6A*

waiting for a handout. Deer that don't migrate are thin and don't winter well. The deer that are migrating and eating sagebrush look healthy.

The Sublette Center is one of the places that has taken a beating. Every shrub has been eaten until there is nothing left; it is barren. The deer will never get back to their natural migration if you continue to feed them apples and grain in small amounts.

It is not against the law to feed the deer in this county; under the circumstances, I feel it should be.

*Annette Werebelow, Pinedale*

### A stinking trailer park

My husband and I live in a trailer park outside of Big Piney. Our water is unfit for human or canine consumption; my dogs will not drink the water, which means neither will I. The roads are never maintained, i.e. potholes, large rocks and trash everywhere. Our lot rent is to include water, sewer and trash disposal. On Monday, we received our new contract. We now have to supply our own trash service, no problem, but, now I have maggots coming into my house thru my bathroom drains – I wondered why I had flies all winter, no matter how many I killed – which means that the sewer isn't being maintained either. The amount of sediment in the water destroys water lines, water heaters, toilets and washing machines. And the lot rent is going up.

The last time we had a lot rent increase, the water was out for three weeks in January of 2009.

My husband and I have water delivered to our home every two weeks at a cost of \$160.00 or more per month; trash service is \$57.00 every quarter; and now my lot rent is going from \$450.00 to \$500.00.

With that increase, we were also informed that no vehicle maintenance is to be performed in the park, no cutting or splitting of firewood in the park and we have to stack the firewood at least 10 feet from our home and shed. I have a small yard due to the fact that my house (the only house out of four houses at the end of each road) has an access road around it. This means that I have no room for eight cords of wood that I use to stay warm in the winter in Wyoming. And the week before the new contracts came out, my plans for a new porch and a six-by-six-foot greenhouse were approved, so I can stack one row of firewood and I have to have all kindling I might need for the entire winter split and stacked with the one row of firewood.

Is there any person in Wyoming that can know ahead of time how much kindling they will need for the entire winter?

There are two auto shops on this side of

the county. One is always booked weeks ahead of time, and the other, well, lets just say, we won't use them again. So, now we have to change oil, add fluids and change tires twice a year... where?

The contract keeps mentioning common areas. The only common area I have ever seen (lived here for four years), is the two roads... but expenses on maintaining the common areas, water and sewer are the reasons given for the rent increase. Guess I'm just stupid. . . can't understand why we need to pay more and get even less than we do now.

It's not the ride, it's the journey that makes you feel all creamy inside.

Extremely irritated in Sublette County,

*Dave and Melissa Bowman, Big Piney*

### Pneumonia: Sixth leading cause of death

After having my left lung cut to drain the fluids to keep from suffocating, and the lung collapsing after that, I wondered if I would make it for the ambulance ride from Jackson to Idaho Falls, Idaho.

I looked at my beautiful wife, Ana, as I was placed into the ambulance and thought of my children, Adrian, 13, and Crystal, 22.

Ana spoke to me just before leaving and said, "Don't walk toward the light."

Drifting in and out of consciousness, I remembered what had brought me to this point.

About three weeks earlier, I was working out in the gas fields near Pinedale, when I felt an abdominal pain that I felt was simply nothing more than gas. Painful as it was, it had left me before the end of the day, so I thought nothing of it.

Two weeks later, I was enjoying my days off and snowmobiling in the Wind River Mountains. Despite getting stuck several times and being a little winded, I felt great. Two more days had gone by and we had a good friend over for dinner. I had no clue of the mounting danger occurring within my body. By 10 p.m. that same night, the abdominal pains had returned. Within 14 hours, I would hardly be able to stand and would be taken to the clinic in Pinedale.

At the clinic, I was diagnosed with pneumonia. I was given antibiotics, placed on oxygen and sent home. Within the next 24 hours, I was back at the clinic; this time to be transported to Jackson as mine appeared to be a more serious case, and the antibiotics did not appear to be working.

I was only about 24 hours in Jackson before being transported to Idaho Falls.

I was placed in the ICU in Idaho Falls. Later, they would perform surgery on my left

lung and place more chest tubes to drain the fluids from my lung. I was hospitalized for about two weeks.

Unknown to me at that time was that pneumonia is the sixth leading cause of death in the United States. More than 60,000 Americans die from pneumonia each year. Up until 1936 and the introduction of antibiotics, pneumonia was the No. 1 leading cause of death.

Pneumonia is caused by bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites, and it infects one or both lungs and comes with a variety of symptoms. The most common symptoms of pneumonia are chills and fever, shortness of breath and cough. Muscle aches and loss of appetite are

also common. Treatment involves antibiotics and fever-reducing medications. Diagnosis is usually confirmed by blood tests and a chest X-ray.

Obviously, mine was a severe case in which I almost died.

Moral to the story: If you suspect pneumonia, don't wait; get to the clinic.

Throughout this ordeal, I would like to express my gratitude for the love and support that has been shown to me by my family, friends and those with whom I work. And, to a greater extent, the communities in which we live and are a part of.

*Michael Edison, Pinedale*

## Animal Adoption



This week we are once again featuring this 1-year-old female German Shepherd / Hound mix. This little girl was rescued from an abusive home and needs someone that will show her lots of love and good times. She probably needs to have all of her shots and has not been spayed at this time. There is financial help available for spaying through the LOBO Foundation and the cost of the vaccination is not very much. She is very friendly and gets along well with humans and other animals.

**This lovely lady can be adopted by calling the Town of Pinedale - 307-367-3892.**

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