

# News briefs from around Wyoming

## Unemployment falls as people leave work force

CHEYENNE (WNE) — The Research and Planning Section of the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services reported Monday that the state’s seasonally adjusted unemployment rate dropped from 4.5% in September to 4.1% in October.

The recent decreases in Wyoming’s seasonally adjusted unemployment rate have been largely the result of unemployed individuals leaving the labor force. From October 2020 to October 2021, the number of unemployed people in Wyoming decreased by an estimated 3,955 individuals. Estimates suggest that just over one-third of those people (1,331 individuals) had found jobs and gone to work, while nearly two-thirds (2,624 individuals) had stopped looking for work and dropped out of the labor force.

From September to October, unemployment rates fell in most counties. The largest decreases occurred in Niobrara (down from 2.4% to 1.9%), Sublette (down from 3.4% to 3.0%), Natrona (down from 3.7% to 3.3%), Hot Springs (down from 2.4% to 2.0%) and Campbell (down from 3.3% to 2.9%) counties. From October 2020 to October 2021, jobless rates decreased in every county. Unemployment rates were unusually high in October 2020 because of the pandemic. The largest decreases were seen in Natrona (down from 6.6% to 3.3%), Converse (down from 5.5% to 2.5%), Campbell (down from 5.9% to 2.9%) and Sweetwater (down from 5.4% to 3.1%) counties.

Natrona County had the highest unemployment rate in October at 3.3%.

## Man who tried to burn down house twice sentenced

DOUGLAS (WNE) — A Douglas man found guilty of first degree arson for twice trying to burn down another man’s house has been sentenced to 8-12 years in prison, but District Judge Scott Peasley then used the state’s split sentencing statute to suspend the prison term and instead send Sebastian M. Esquibel, 30, to 10 months in

the county jail followed by three years probation.

In October, a jury found Esquibel guilty of one felony count of first degree arson. He had been charged with two counts of arson and faced up to 20 years in prison on each count from two incidents a day apart in mid-February 2020. Both incidents occurred at the same South 5th Street home in Douglas, and the Douglas police affidavit states Esquibel admitted to having been “intimately involved with the victim.”

According to police, someone had thrown a brick through a front window of the home and powered a flammable accelerant onto the house and lit it. The fire scorched the house.

The following day, someone broke out another window and poured accelerant into the home but cut themselves and left blood at the scene. The DNA in the blood matched Esquibel’s.

Peasley, in his sentencing order, gave Esquibel credit of 150 days in jail for time served and ordered intensive supervised probation with additional conditions and fines, restitution and assessments totaling \$2,463.

## Man accused of shoplifting from store he crashed into

RIVERTON (WNE)—A man who was banned from Walmart in Riverton after crashing a stolen car into the building nine years ago now is being charged with burglary from the same business.

Donovan James Shakespeare, 27, now faces one felony burglary charge from Oct. 17, punishable by up to 10 years in prison and \$10,000 in fines; one misdemeanor theft charge dating back to March 15, punishable by no more than six months and \$750 in fines; and two separate counts of criminal trespass, each punishable by up to six months in jail and \$750 in fines.

According to court documents, on Oct. 17 at about 2:11 p.m., Riverton Police Department officer Kingston Cole responded to reports of shoplifting at Walmart. A security employee had escorted Donovan Shakespeare and Charnele Jenkins to his office, along with two children believed to be theirs — a 4-year-old and a 7-year-old.

The employee said he’d seen Jenkins and

Shakespeare stuffing household items into their pants, then trying to “walk out the door” with additional items in their cart without paying. The employee said he stopped them and escorted him to his office without incident.

Jenkins also had been banned from the store. Charging documents for Jenkins were not available to The Ranger as of press time.

When Cole asked the suspects if they’d stolen the merchandise, both said they had participated in the act, according to court documents. RPD Dispatch informed Cole that both had active and confirmed arrest warrants from prior thefts at Walmart.

## After arrest in Shoshoni, murder suspect to be returned to Mississippi

RIVERTON (WNE) — A murder suspect arrested in Shoshoni was eager Wednesday morning to get back to Mississippi.

Kingduron Baku Pyles, 19, of Columbus, Mississippi, appeared under the newly appointed Lander Circuit Court Judge Jefferson Coombs on Wednesday to face an extradition order that would send him back to the state where his alleged victim was found deceased.

According to a report in the Columbus (Miss.) Dispatch, officers found Shad Reese, 23, on Nov. 1, shot dead in the front seat of a vehicle. One shell casing was found on scene.

The Fremont County Sheriff’s Office is now responsible for arranging Pyles’ transport back to Mississippi.

Pyles was apprehended outside a motel in Shoshoni on Saturday, when Shoshoni Police Department Chief Chris Konija was summoned to an alleged battery in which Pyles was reported to have attacked a man and smashed his cell phone. The reported victim of the attack told Konija that Pyles was on the run for murder from Mississippi, which the chief confirmed through social media.

“Next thing you know, the guy’s running,” Konija later told The Ranger.

Following a brief pursuit, the man was detained and confirmed to be Pyles.

Konija is following up with Mississippi law

enforcement to ascertain whether Pyles had any murder evidence with or near him at the time of his arrest. Konija said there was no firearm discovered, nor was Pyles seen with one at any time. Pyles had been in Shoshoni for about six days working as a manual laborer.

## Gunwerks sues Forward Cody

CODY (WNE) — A civil lawsuit was filed in Park County District Court Monday by local firearms manufacturer Gunwerks, alleging Forward Cody failed to follow through on a contractual agreement to provide the kind of facility they had agreed upon.

Gunwerks accuses Forward Cody of breach of contract and breach of the covenant of good and fair dealing. No amount of monetary relief has been specified at this time.

The 43,396-square-foot building, located at 201 Blackburn Ave., does exist and serves Gunwerks today, but not to the quality and specifications CEO Aaron Davidson said he expected when he entered into the contract with Forward Cody and the State of Wyoming.

James Klessens, CEO of Forward Cody, had no comment on the lawsuit when reached by phone on Wednesday morning and said it was the first time he had been informed about its existence.

Davidson said the company has upheld its end of the bargain, investing \$750,000 of its own funds in the facility and employing 75 people.

Under the agreement, Forward Cody was in charge of retaining and hiring the appropriate design and construction professionals for the project, and executing all related contracts to Gunwerks’ desire.

Davidson said his company has followed through on the promise of employment, in addition to supporting the tax base and buying equipment for the facility.

Davidson said there are “millions of dollars” of shortcomings in the building’s construction, “riddled with defects and errors,” according to the court filing. He said specifically, there are major issues with the sheetrock, concrete, metal siding and the site’s lack of the necessary design to drain water properly.

# Public notices

Hot Springs Conservation District’s 2022-2026 Long Range Plan is available for review and comments. It is available on the online at [hotspringsconservation.com](http://hotspringsconservation.com) and in the office at 601 Broadway, Suite A. District office hours are Monday through Wednesday, 9 a.m. - noon.

Pub. Oct. 28 - Dec. 4, 2021 No. 9062

STATE OF ) IN THE  
WYOMING ) DISTRICT COURT  
) ss.

COUNTY OF ) FIFTH JUDICIAL  
HOT SPRINGS ) DISTRICT  
  
Probate No. P21-19

IN THE MATTER OF )  
THE ESTATE OF )  
)  
JO ANN PORTLOCK, )  
)  
Deceased. )

## NOTICE OF PROBATE

TO ALL PERSONS INTERESTED IN SAID ESTATE:

You are hereby notified that on the 18th day of October, 2021, the Last Will and Testament of decedent was admitted to probate by the above-named court, and that JO LINN NISHI was appointed Personal Representative thereof. Any action to set aside the Will shall be filed in the Court within three months from the date of the first publication of this notice, or thereafter be forever barred.

Notice is further given that all persons indebted to the decedent or to decedent’s estate are requested to make immediate payment to the Estate of Jo Ann Portlock, c/o Williams Law Office, 339 Arapahoe Street, Thermopolis, Wyoming 82443, Thermopolis, Wyoming 82443.

Creditors having claims against the decedent or the estate are required to file them in duplicate with the necessary vouchers, in the Office of the Clerk of said Court, on or before three months after the date of the first publication of this notice, and if such claims are not so filed, unless otherwise allowed or paid, they will be forever barred.

DATED this 1st day of November, 2021.

Jo Linn Nishi  
Personal Representative

Pub. Nov. 18, 25 & Dec. 2, 2021 No. 9093

STATE OF ) IN THE  
WYOMING ) DISTRICT COURT  
) ss.

COUNTY OF ) FIFTH JUDICIAL  
HOT SPRINGS ) DISTRICT  
  
Probate No. P21-24

IN THE MATTER OF )

THE ESTATE OF )  
)  
RALPH LEE ALLEN, )  
also known as )  
RALPH L. ALLEN, )  
)  
Deceased. )

## NOTICE OF PROBATE

TO ALL PERSONS INTERESTED IN SAID ESTATE:

You are hereby notified that on the 5th day of November, 2021, the Last Will and Testament of decedent was admitted to probate by the above-named court, and that REBECCA JANE COKER was appointed Personal Representative thereof. Any action to set aside the Will shall be filed in the Court within three months from the date of the first publication of this notice, or thereafter be forever barred.

Notice is further given that all persons indebted to the decedent or to decedent’s estate are requested to make immediate payment to the Estate of Ralph Lee Allen, c/o Williams Law Office, 339 Arapahoe Street, Thermopolis, Wyoming 82443.

Creditors having claims against the decedent or the estate are required to file them in duplicate with the necessary vouchers, in the Office of the Clerk of said Court, on or before three months after the date of the first publication of this notice, and if such claims are not so filed, unless otherwise allowed or paid, they will be forever barred.

DATED this 9th day of November, 2021.

Rebecca Jane Coker  
Personal Representative

Pub. Nov. 18, 25 & Dec. 2, 2021 No. 9091

## Airport Master Plan Meeting Public Notice

The Hot Springs County Airport (HSG) is in the process of completing their Airport Master Plan. The fourth public meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 7th, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. at the Hot Springs County Annex Meeting Room, 117 N. 4th Street in Thermopolis. The meeting will include presentation of the draft narrative report and Airport Layout Plan (ALP) drawings. The documents will also be available on the T-O Engineers’ website at <https://www.to-engineers.com/> by clicking on “Project Portal” and selecting “Hot Springs County Airport Master Plan.” A 30-day public comment period will follow to allow for submission of additional public comments. At the conclusion of the public comment period on January 6th, 2022, the documents will be considered substantially complete and submitted to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and WYDOT Aeronautics for review. To submit comments, please attend the public meeting or contact Jared Wingo at T-O Engineers at 509.319.2580 or [jwingo@to-engineers.com](mailto:jwingo@to-engineers.com).

Pub. Nov. 25 & Dec. 2, 2021 No. 9094

Public Hearing on the Owl Creek Irrigation District System Improvement 2022 project

When: Friday, December 10, 2021 at 11:00 am  
Where: Hot Springs County Library 344 Arapahoe St. Thermopolis, WY 82443

The Wyoming Water Development Commission will hold a public hearing to receive comments on the above listed project. The Commission will also be seeking information as to whether the proposed project functions and services can be served by any person, association or corporation engaged in private enterprise.

Representatives of the Water Development Commission, the project engineering team, and the project sponsor will be present to explain the proposed project and to record comments.

For further information contact:  
Wyoming Water Development Office  
6920 Yellowtail Road  
Cheyenne, WY 82002  
(307) 777-7626

Pub. Nov. 25 & Dec. 2, 2021 No. 9095

## Warrants List

The following list of warrants approved November 16, 2021, by HOT SPRINGS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT is hereby published as required by the Wyoming Education Code of 2005, as amended, Chapter 3, Section 21-3-110 (a)(ii).

HOT SPRINGS CO CPR	
CHAPTER	\$540.00
LINDA UMBDENSTOCK	\$650.00
POSTAGE BY PHONE/PURCHASE	
POWER	\$662.64
WYOMING LEGACY MEATS	
BEEF	\$730.28
KIA MOTORS FINANCE	\$746.05
COPENHAVER/KATH/KITCHEN &	\$759.00
COWBOY SUPPLY HOUSE	\$776.25
SYSCO MONTANA - ACTIVITIES	\$835.14
SHIRTS & MORE	\$906.00
WEX BANK	\$955.62
GARY BRINK, INC.	\$976.90
WORLD’S FINEST CHOCOLATE, INC	\$995.00
COMPETITIVE TIMING LLC	\$1,178.79
WYOMING DEPT OF WORKFORCE SERVICES	\$1,439.55
SENIOR CLASS PARENTS	\$1,535.97
ARETE DESIGN GROUP LLC	\$1,700.00
CORTNEY O’CONNOR	\$1,975.00
LRP PUBLICATIONS, INC	\$2,058.00
FREMONT BEVERAGES, INC.	\$2,071.00
WYOMING ASSOC OF SCHOOL ADMIN	\$2,139.18
SCHOLASTIC MAGAZINES	\$2,340.71
THE BOMB PHOTOGRAPHY	\$2,484.00
SIGNS OF SUTHERLAND	\$2,504.51
LONG BUILDING TECHNOLOGIES INC	\$2,627.48
THE OFFICE SHOP	\$2,921.94

PETERBUILT OF WYOMING WYOMING HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES	\$2,946.31
RYTE REHABILITATION	\$3,549.00
JAMIE ASAY	\$3,757.85
CY TRAILER SALES	\$4,749.36
THERMOPOLIS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE	\$5,800.00
LIBERTY FUNDRAISING	\$6,300.00
SAMSARA INC	\$7,023.06
TOWN OF THERMOPOLIS	\$7,176.00
SYSCO MONTANA - HS	\$7,248.10
SYSCO MONTANA - MS	\$7,248.10
SYSCO MONTANA - RWE	\$9,729.24
WYOMING GAS COMPANY	\$9,733.48
JADECO, INC.	\$10,459.26
RUDIS	\$10,870.18
EATON SALES & SERVICE	\$12,393.00
ROCKY MOUNTAIN POWER REGION V BOARD OF COOP.	\$17,267.00
ED.	\$17,370.75
HOMAX OIL SALES, INC	\$20,639.06
NORTHWEST WYOMING BOCES	\$32,828.00
BANK OF MONTREAL	\$34,761.50
TOTAL	\$39,991.25
	\$98,890.38
	\$399,991.79

Pub. Dec. 2, 2021 No. 1000

## Notice

The Hot Springs County Board of Commissioners is asking Hot Springs County Residents to apply to serve on the following Hot Springs County Boards and Committee:

Fair Board,	One Member
Five (5) year term	
Predatory Animal Control Board,	One Sportsman Member*
Three (3) year term	
Natural Resources Planning Committee,	One Member
Three (3) year term	

All of the above positions begin in January 2022

\* Sportsmen and hunter representatives for the Predatory Animal Control Board shall be bona fide residents of the district not engaged in raising sheep, goats or cattle and shall hold or have held either a valid Wyoming fishing or hunting license or a Wyoming wildlife damage management stamp within the preceding twelve (12) month period.

Residents of Hot Springs County interested in applying to serve on a Board or position should submit their County Board Questionnaire (available on the County website’s home page [www.hscounty.com](http://www.hscounty.com) or at the County Clerk’s Office) to the Hot Springs County Clerk’s Office no later than 2:00 p.m. December 15, 2022. Applications will be considered and appointments made at the Hot Springs County Commissioners Meeting December 21, 2021.

Becky Kersten  
Hot Springs County Clerk

Pub. Dec. 2 & 9, 2021 No. 1001