

# **Your Tax Dollars at Work:**

**A Guide to the Sublette County Budget**

**2015 - 2016**



A report from the Sublette Board of County Commissioners  
Pinedale, Wyoming

# FAST FACTS

## Sublette County Landmass

In square miles .....	4,886
Percentage public land (federal, state, local government).....	82.3
Percentage private land .....	17.7
Persons per square mile in Sublette County .....	2.1
Average persons per square mile in Wyoming.....	5.8

WYOMING ECONOMIC ANALYSIS DIVISION

## Miles of Roads in Sublette County

County Roads .....	472
Federal .....	364
State Highway .....	229
Local (towns).....	43
Other.....	41
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>1,148</b>

WYOMING ECONOMIC ANALYSIS DIVISION

## Energy Production and Income

- Sublette County's taxable valuation is 14 percent of the state's total valuation, second only to Campbell County's 23 percent. WYOMING DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE

- Sublette County was Wyoming's largest natural gas producer in 2014, followed by Sweetwater and Johnson counties. PETROLEUM ASSOCIATION OF WYOMING

- The oil and gas industry was responsible for 95.75 percent of the property assessed in Sublette County for taxation in Fiscal Year 2014. PETROLEUM ASSOCIATION OF WYOMING

- Sublette County contributed 13 percent of all taxes collected in the state in 2014, second only to Campbell County's 22 percent. WYOMING DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE

- At the end of 2013, Sublette County's Pinedale Anticline natural gas field was ranked sixth in the nation in proved reserves, and the Jonah field is ranked 8th in the nation. U.S. ENERGY INFORMATION ADMINISTRATION

## Sublette County's Population

2014 Sublette County Population Estimate .....10,057

### Age of Population

45-64	30.2%
25-44	27.7
Under 18	23.2
65 + over	11.4
18-24	7.5

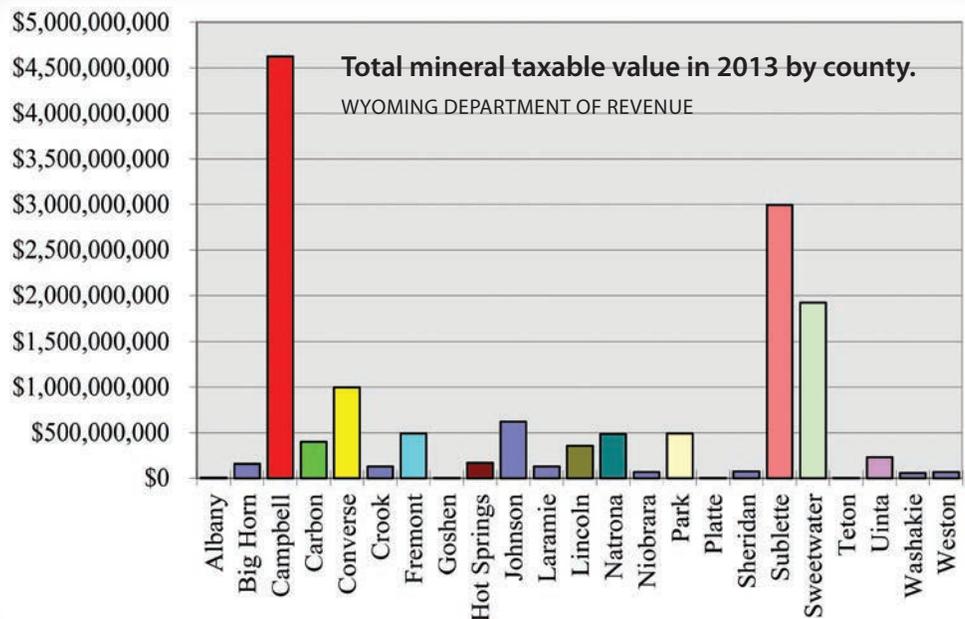
### Percentage of Population

- Median age in Sublette County: 38.8 years  
WYOMING ECONOMIC ANALYSIS DIVISION

## Homebuilding decline

Residential building permits issued in Sublette County in 2007.....263

Residential building permits issued in Sublette County in 2014.....27  
WYOMING ECONOMIC ANALYSIS DIVISION





Sublette County Commissioners and Clerk Mary Lankford meet with representatives of the road and bridge department to discuss the department's budget request.

## Budget Message from the Commission

### *Holding the Line on Spending*

To begin the Fiscal Year 2016 budget process, Sublette County Commissioners requested departments and organizations hold the line on their budget requests to the commission, defer expenditures when possible, and not seek additional funds over the previous year's level. The commission instituted mandatory reductions in most budgets over the last two years, and this year's county budget includes few increases. Some departments are restructuring staff to eliminate positions.

The commission continues to urge non-profit organizations to seek alternative funding, and to work on fundraising outside of the county budget process. Next year, not only will the commission refuse requests for increases in funding, but may be instituting further budget reductions.

Commission Chairman Andy Nelson explained, "We're settling in for the storm for next year."

#### *Further Reductions Anticipated*

Commission Vice Chairman Jim Latta explained that while Sublette County was producing about the same amount of natural gas as it did in 2008, the price for that gas had dropped by about half in that time, "and the trend doesn't suggest improvement anytime

soon" [see chart, page 2]. That could lead to further budget cuts in the next fiscal year.

"We would be remiss to ignore what appears to be a tremendous potential impact to the county's pocket-book," Latta said.

All three commissioners also pointed to the potential listing of the greater sage grouse as a federally protected species as a continued concern, with Commissioner Joel Bousman stating, "If that happens, we'll be a ghost town" because of the detrimental economic impact to traditional natural resource use in the county. Latta agreed, adding, "Sage grouse somewhat determine our fate." Nelson

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### 2016 budget compared to last year

- Operating budget is \$6 million less
- Cash carryover is \$10 million more.
- Estimated revenue is \$3 million more.
- Equipment reserve is \$1 million more.
- Depreciation reserve is \$21 million more.
- General fund budget is \$8 million more.

## BUDGET MESSAGE *continued from page 1*

took it a step further with, “The sage grouse becomes our spotted owl,” referring to the devastating impact to the economy in the northwestern United States with the federal listing of the northern spotted owl.

Fortunately, in a late September decision, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service concluded that the bird does not warrant protection because of conservation efforts already in place. Sublette County has been a historic stronghold for this species. Commissioner Joel Bousman noted that federal land managers could impose land-use restrictions that could prove equally problematic whether the bird is listed or not.

### *Reaching a Goal*

As the commission took action to finalize the budget, Chairman Nelson stated, “We have met our five-year goal for saving some money so that if we run into some dire economic straits we don’t have to panic, we don’t have to scramble. We can continue to function until we come up with a new game plan.”

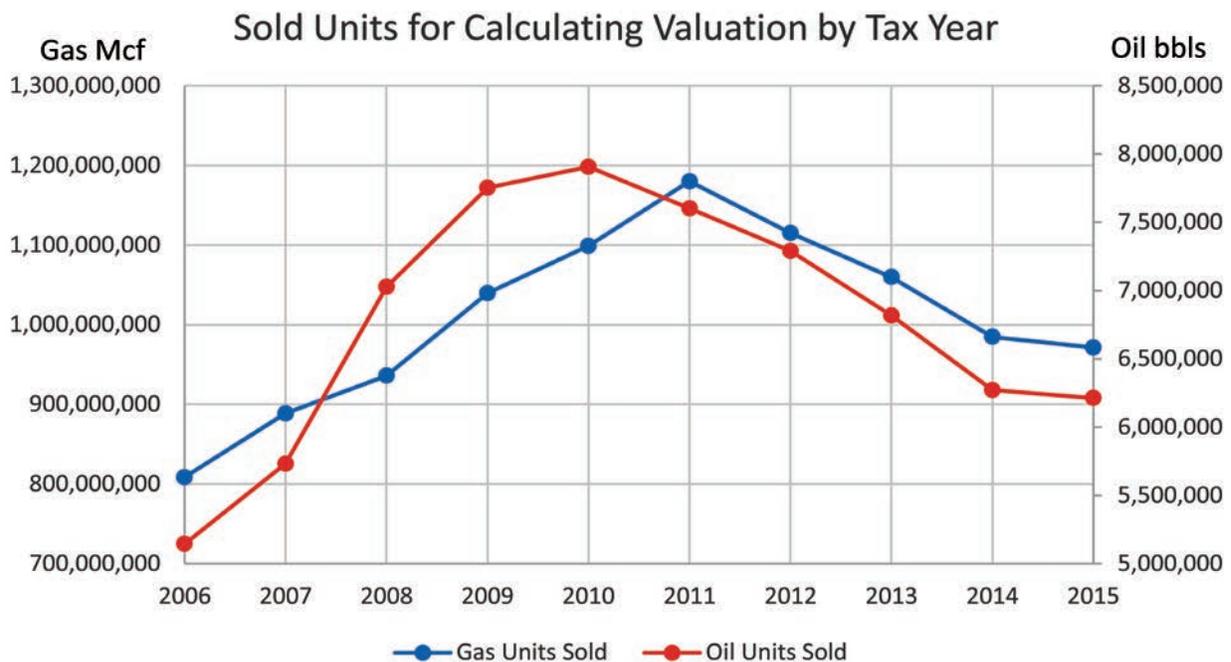
Commissioner Bousman said, “The problem is that we don’t know what’s coming. As a board, we felt it was

important to put money aside for the bad times while appropriately funding needed county services. We’ve been very fortunate.”

Vice Chairman Latta added, “I think we’ve done a responsible job for the taxpayers.”

### *Valuation Changes*

The commission has been diligent in setting aside money into reserve accounts each year, and this year the commission learned the value of its concern for unforeseen events when EnCana brought forth a valuation change. The change resulted in a reduction of the company’s valuation for taxation from 2010 to 2014, and the determination that the county has to refund a total of \$14 million to the company. Each tax district or entity in the county is responsible for a portion of the refund – from school and cemetery districts, to the county’s general fund and each entity that received a portion of the mill levy. The Sublette County Commission has approved a schedule of payments from the general fund over a six-year period, with more than \$500,000 scheduled for repayment in the new budget.



Sublette County is currently producing nearly the same amount of natural gas as in 2008, but the price for gas has dropped to half its previous price. Oil was priced at \$81.96 per barrel in 2008, but that price dropped to \$41.16 in 2015, while natural gas valued at \$5.99 in 2008 dropped to \$2.59 in 2015. SUBLETTE COUNTY ASSESSOR

## Designated Mill Funding

### FAIR

The fair budget totals \$703,000 and includes enough funding to host two fairs in order to provide for adequate cash flow during the budget year (since the fair is held at the start of the budget year). The fair board oversees this spending, providing for all events at the annual county fair, personnel and administration, and a reserve account. The fair board budgeted \$300,000 to host the county fair in 2015, and \$292,500 for the 2016 fair, with a total of \$85,500 for administration in the annual budget.

The fairgrounds budget totals \$657,171, and includes \$204,000 in staff salaries. Major spending categories include: \$40,500 for equipment in buildings; \$50,000 for building maintenance; \$160,000 for utilities and phone; \$15,000 for equipment; and \$15,500 for projects. Entertainment is budgeted \$10,000 and landscaping is allocated \$19,000. Gas and oil is budgeted \$12,000, and training and travel is allocated \$15,000. Supplies, repairs and trash removal are allocated a combined \$65,000. This budget also includes \$35,000 for purchase of a new vehicle, and \$10,000 into the new vehicle reserve.

### AIRPORT

Airport funding totals \$863,142. This provides necessary funding to operate the Big Piney-Marbleton airport (\$120,000), as well as \$270,000 in new funding to be added to the \$470,000 held in reserve for the Ralph Wenz Field outside of Pinedale. These reserve funds are released upon the commission's approval as part of a local match for major airport improvement projects.

### LIBRARY

The \$1.69 million library system budget includes \$1.28 million in new funding for library services in the Pinedale and Big Piney facilities. Much of the library budget involves fixed costs. With the downturn in the economy, the library system has experienced increased use, and circulation has also increased. There are an average of 450 visits to the Pinedale library each day, and 172 visits per day in Big Piney. The library system also provides circulation materials and support to the seasonal Bondurant library, which is operated by volunteers.

### MUSEUM

The county museum budget totals \$405,433. The Sublette County Museum Board supervises this budget, and allocates \$260,000 to the Sublette County Historical Society (which operates the Museum of the Mountain Man in Pinedale) as well as \$127,131

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## Budget by the Numbers: \$49 Million for Operations

While the grand total budget is \$225 million, it is important to note that amount includes:

- **Cash-carryover** (numerous departmental budgets were underspent, despite the imposed budget cuts);
- **Reserves** account for nearly \$146 million; and
- The **operating budget** is only \$49 million.

The Fiscal Year 2016 budget covers county income and expenditures from July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016. The budget is based on a taxation rate of 12 mills, and the county's assessed value is \$3.7 billion.

Most county departments and services are funded under a general fund allocation of 12 mills this year, but certain county services have a direct mill levy allocation that is provided at the discretion of the county commission. These departments all receive a portion of a mill: **Fair, Airports, Library, Museum, Recreation, and Fire.**

General Fund .....	\$49,126,711
Reserve accounts .....	\$165,005,094
EnCana Tax Refund .....	\$519,052
Fair, Airport, Library, Museum, etc. ....	\$10,450,125
<b>TOTAL REQUIREMENT: .....</b>	<b>\$225,100,982</b>

## MILL FUNDING *continued from page 3*

to help fund operations of the Green River Valley Museum.

In a separate general fund allocation, the county also provides \$34,600 in funding for the county's historic preservation board. Major projects this year include continued documentation of historic homesteads, and sponsorship of History Day events, relocation of a hay slide for display, and work on the Deadline Fire Lookout tower.

### RECREATION

The recreation budget totals \$1.1 million, including operations of the ice arena in Pinedale, plus \$300,000 in new funding for programs approved by the county recreation board. Rec Board funding supports a wide variety of recreational pursuits, from maintenance at ball fields and providing livestock for rodeos, to sprinklers for the golf course and Nordic trail grooming. The Sublette County Recreation Board supervises this budget.

The \$283,094 ice arena budget includes \$156,000 in salaries, \$15,000 for building maintenance, and \$5,000 for equipment and tools. The budget also includes \$75,000 for utilities, \$10,000 for equipment maintenance, \$10,000 for rink supplies, \$5,000 for training, and lesser amounts for miscellaneous items related to operating the arena.

### UNIFIED FIRE

In early 2015, all six volunteer fire companies in Sublette County were reorganized to form a new consolidated entity, Sublette County Unified Fire, under the leadership of Fire Chief/Warden Shad Cooper.

The former individual fire departments in Pinedale, Big Piney/Marbleton, Bondurant, Boulder, Daniel and Kendall Valley are now known as fire battalions and work together to provide fire protection in their respective communities.

Chief Shad Cooper stated, "The newly formed organization will greatly improve our efficiency, allow us to provide better customer service, and enhance the safety of our firefighters. It is important that we share resources and help each other out when an emergency occurs."

With the reorganization comes a new standardized budget controlled by the county commission.

Sublette County Unified Fire's total budget is \$2.4 million, with \$408,000 for personnel costs – from the fire warden's salary to fire fighter wages. The commission budgeted \$540,000 for apparatus purchase, \$483,000 for grant expenditures to replace radios, \$223,000 for equipment and supplies, \$139,000 for facilities maintenance, and \$128,000 for equipment maintenance. The balance of the budget covers a range of costs – from utilities and insurance, to training and wildland fire suppression costs.

### BUILDING PROJECTS

The commission has allocated funding for renovation or improvement to existing county facilities as follows:

#### **White Pine Communications Tower \$122,585**

*This is a carryover — only about \$5,000 is still owed on this project*

**Transfer Station Building \$60,000**

**Attorney's Office Remodel \$750,000**

**Golf Course \$9,987**

**Fairgrounds Expansion \$66,373**

**Senior Citizen Facilities \$100,000**

### COUNTY OPERATIONS

The commission has allocated \$6.2 million to cover the cost of FICA insurance and retirement, \$100,000 for financial administration, and \$36,000 for an annual audit.

Workmen's compensation and unemployment compensation are covered with an allocation totaling \$400,000.

County officers expenses are budgeted at \$55,000, while printing and publications are allocated \$95,000. Postage is estimated at \$30,000, and telephone service is allocated \$180,000.

## For the Future: Reserve accounts top \$165 million

### *How We Got Here: Reserve Accounts, Boom & Bust*

In 2001 Sublette County Assessor Janet L. Montgomery announced that Sublette County's assessed valuation was more than \$851 million, the highest in the county's history up until that time and nearly double the number from two years prior. That was the year the Sublette County Commission (consisting of Bill Cramer, Betty Fear and Gordon Johnston) approved a \$28 million county budget and with excess revenue set aside \$10 million in reserves. Clerk Mary Lankford said the purpose of the reserve accounts was to "start a funding mechanism to take care of maintenance and funding those services once we bust." As the commission voted to tax the full 12 mills it has the authority to levy, Commissioner Cramer said, "This is our future, but we have to make the decision today."

The next year, the budget grew to \$36.7 million, and the commission socked away nearly half that money in reserve accounts. Commissioners voiced their views that while the county was benefiting from mineral extraction revenues, it should capture that revenue and set it aside for more lean times. Each commissioner since that time adopted the same philosophy. The importance of those decisions is evident in the county budget today, as the county experiences a downturn in the mineral extraction industry, with declining tax revenues and workers being laid off and leaving the county for employment elsewhere.

#### **Current Reserves**

The current county budget includes \$165,005,359 in reserve accounts, split between cash (\$10 million); equipment (nearly \$10 million); and depreciation (nearly \$146 million). Reserve money is held in interest-earning accounts. In order to be spent, the budget must be amended to transfer the required funding from a reserve account to a spending account.

Commission Chairman Andy Nelson pointed to the growth of the county reserve accounts and noted, "This has been the work of various commissions – not just the three commissioners currently serving. A thank-you goes out to those previous commissions."

**Cash reserve: \$10 million.** This money provides for cash flow for county government operations.

**Equipment reserve: \$9.9 million.** Each year, money is set aside to pay for future equipment purchases.

**Depreciation reserve: \$145 million.** Since the county does not have the statutory authority to establish a trust fund or rainy day account for future county needs, money is earmarked and set aside in specific reserve accounts for use in the future.

#### **Depreciation Reserve Budget Accounts**

Building projects, equipment and maintenance	\$32.4 million
Ag & Fair (operations and capital)	14.7 million
Recreation (operations and capital)	11.7 million
Library (operations and capital)	12.2 million
Budget Reserve	12 million
Senior centers/facilities (operation and capital)	9.7 million
Road & bridge projects	7 million
Courthouse & maintenance	7 million
State/County road fund	6.1 million
Landfill (remediation, closure, reserve)	5.5 million
Museums	5.5 million
Airports	5 million
Human services	4.5 million
Communications & IT	3 million
Fire Halls	3 million
Tax Refunds	2 million
Resource monitoring	2 million
Emergency Revolving Loan	1 million
Rural Health Care District	274,071
Elections	200,000

## Property Taxation

All property tax is based on the assessed value of the property. Assessed value actually means taxable value, which is a percent of the fair market value.

Gross product of minerals and mine products is taxed at 100% of its fair market value; industrial property is taxed at 11.5%; and all other property (real and personal) is taxed at 9.5%.

The county assessor establishes taxable values for most properties within the county. Minerals are valued by the state for ad valorem and severance tax purposes. The values are allocated back to the counties for ad valorem purposes.

Property taxes are one of the primary sources of funds for local governments, counties, school districts, cities, towns and special agencies such as service and improvement districts. The federal government does not receive any revenue from your property tax.

Tax rates are set by the various political entities with the legal power to levy taxes. These governmental entities include counties; school districts; cities and towns; and special taxing districts, such as service and improvement districts, the Rural Health Care District, and cemetery districts.

Sublette County property owners have among the lowest average mill levies in the entire state, with its total of about 65 mills. The total mills levied in Sublette County include not only the 12 mills established by the county commission, but includes school funding, and special districts such as cemetery districts, rural health care, weed and pest, and service and improvement districts.

About 75 percent of the taxes you pay are allocated to the state's educational system. The tax is collected here at the local level, but the revenue is remitted to the state for redistribution. Another 20 percent funds county government; three-percent funds the Rural Health Care District; and the balance goes to other tax entities such as the weed and pest, cemetery, or improvement districts.

### TOP 10 TAXPAYERS IN SUBLETTE COUNTY

Company	Assessed Value	Percent
Ultra Resources, Inc.	\$864,046,960	23.06
QEP Energy Co.	483,627,430	12.91
Jonah Energy, LLC	384,400,239	10.26
EnCana Oil & Gas USA, Inc.	339,182,443	9.05
SWEPI LP	273,935,986	7.31
Linn Operating, Inc.	249,550,315	6.66
Exxon Mobil Corporation	225,921,924	6.03
Encore Energy Partners Oper. LLC	130,459,700	3.48
Wexpro Co.	103,836,424	2.77
EOG Resources, Inc.	60,252,563	1.61
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$3,115,213,984</b>	<b>83.16</b>

Cool fall temperatures signal the breeding season for mule deer.

### RESIDENTIAL TAX EXAMPLE

Since one mill is one-thousandth, that means that \$1 of taxes is generated for every \$1,000 of assessed value. Using 65 mills as the average mill levy in Sublette County, the tax amount for a \$100,000 home is determined as follows:

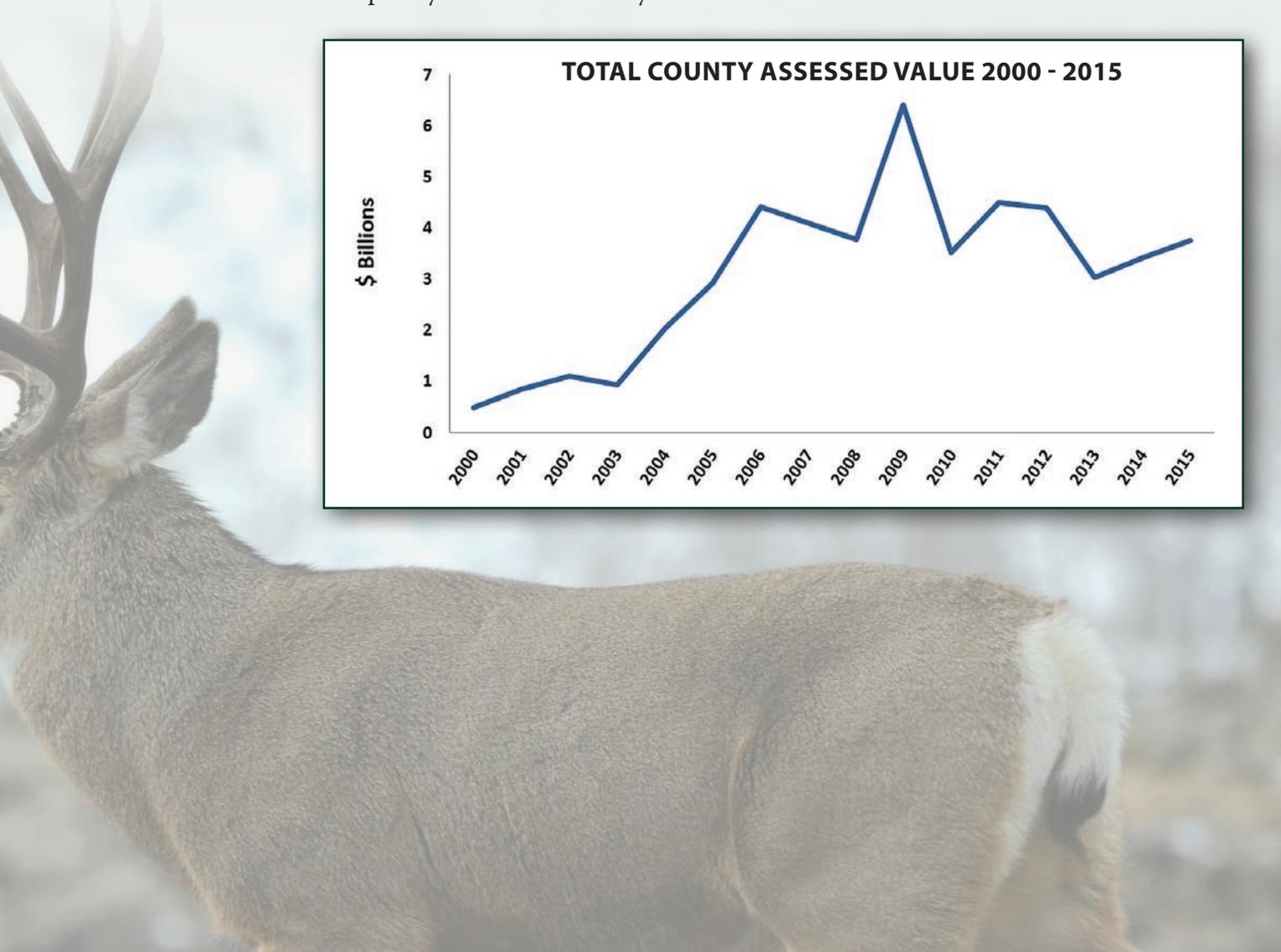
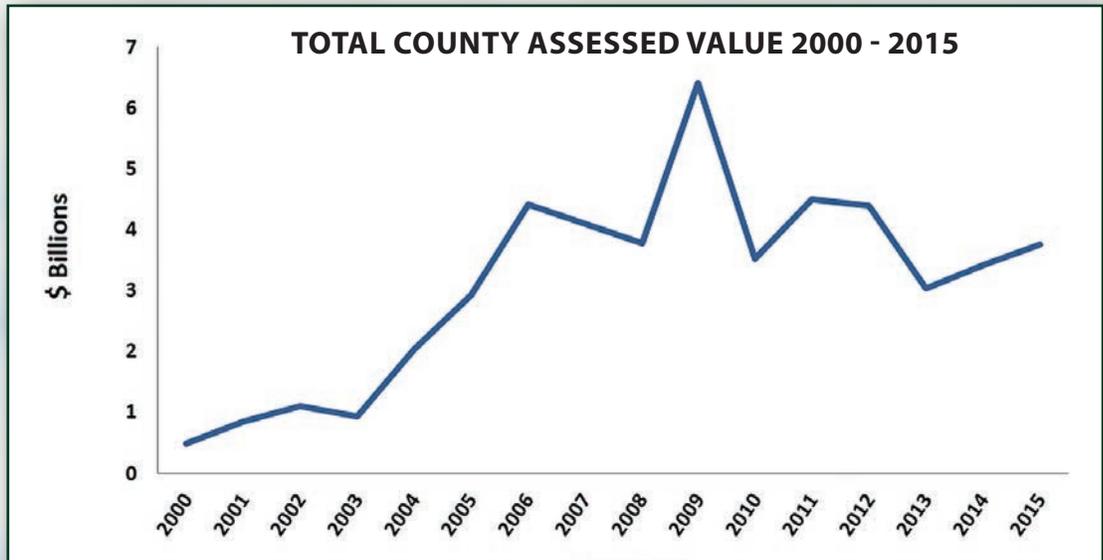
Fair market value:		\$100,000
Assessment rate (9.5%):	x	.095
Assessed value:	=	\$9,500
Mill levy (65 mills):	x	.065
Amount of tax due:	=	\$617.50

### FUTURE VALUATIONS

Sublette County Assessor Jeness Saxton notes that since more than 95 percent of property taxes in Sublette County are paid by mineral producers, her department watches mineral production and pricing closely. The current year's mineral valuation is based on mineral sales that occurred in the prior year. Saxton correctly

predicted that relatively high gas prices in early 2014 would result in a slightly higher county assessed valuation in 2015. But she cautioned, "with the steady decline in gas prices, we are anticipating a significant decrease in assessed valuation for tax year 2016."

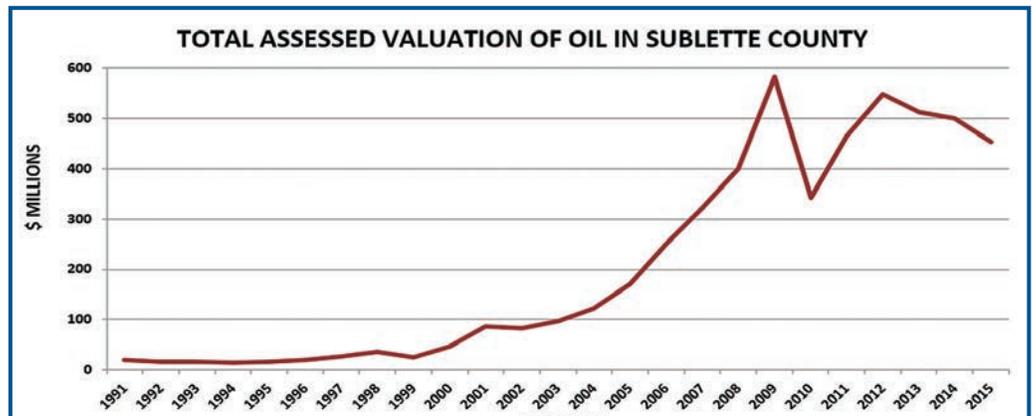
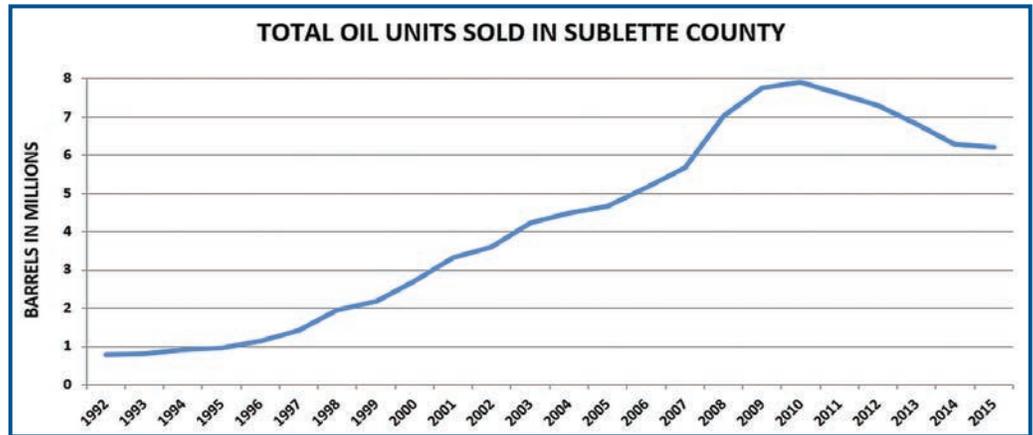
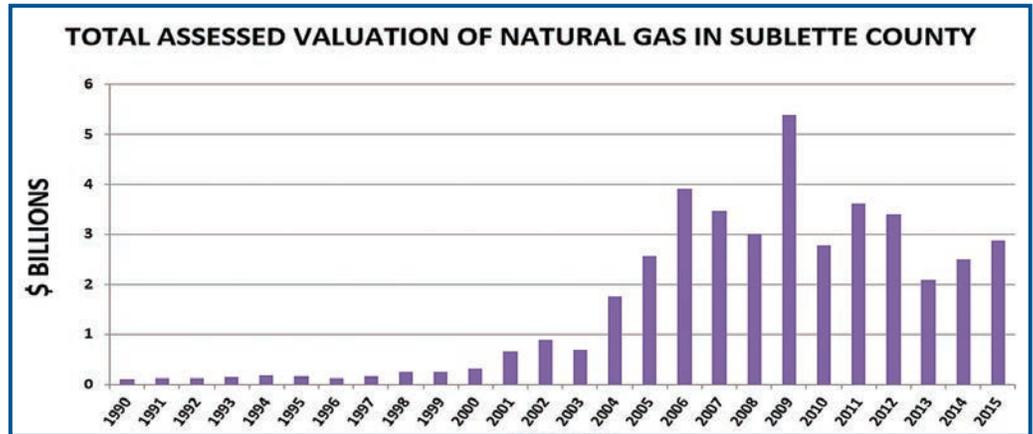
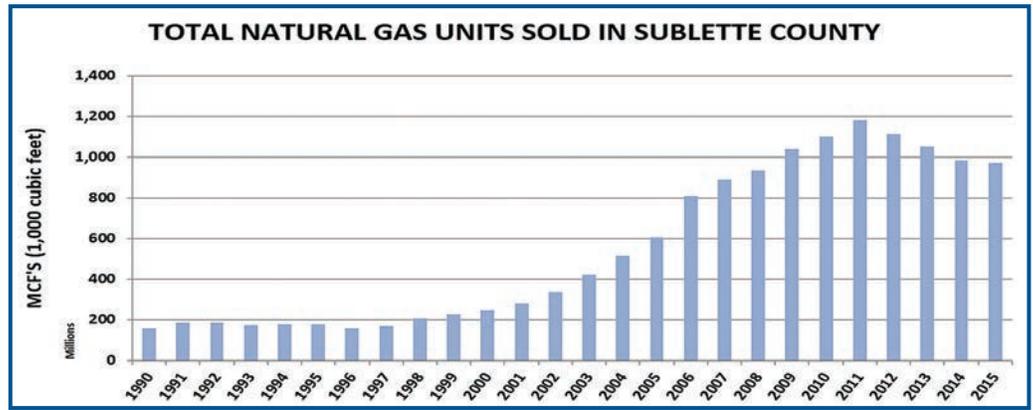
Property Class	Assessed Value	Percent
Mineral & Industry	\$3,398,073,769	96.05
Residential	100,968,154	2.70
Commercial	27,593,129	0.74
Agricultural	11,333,823	0.30
Utilities	8,173,453	0.22
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,746,142,328</b>	<b>100</b>



# Natural gas and oil production and valuation

These charts show oil and gas productivity and assessed valuation in Sublette County for each year since 1990.

SUBLETTE COUNTY ASSESSOR



## Elected Officials and Their Departments

Six county departments are operated by elected officials who work full time in those positions: Assessor, Attorney, Clerk, District Court Clerk, Sheriff, and Treasurer. Each elected official supervises their department and staff, with the board of county commissioners serving as the final authority over budget expenditures, which are paid through the county's general fund.

In addition to the full-time elected positions, the county coroner is a part-time elected position. The county commission also has its own budget, but has no specific department or staff.

### *Assessor*

Assessor Jeness Saxton's \$471,084 budget includes about \$378,000 for the salaries of Saxton and her five full-time employees, and \$68,000 for appraisal and audit services. The remainder of the budget is for lesser line items for vehicle expenses, office supplies, telephone, postal services and education and travel expenses.

The assessor's office has the statutory duty of locating, identifying, and valuing all taxable property in the county in accordance with state laws and guidelines.

### *Attorney*

Attorney Clayton Kainer's \$688,000 budget includes \$530,000 in personnel costs. Outside of personnel costs, the largest line item is \$67,000 for prosecution and defense, which covers costs associated with special prosecutors, witnesses, etc., in the event of major cases requiring expert or intense use of legal resources (such as murder trials or other complex cases).

The remainder of the attorney's budget covers costs associated with operations of the office, as well as more specialized items such as educational training, access to an online legal database, and allocations for the crime victims program.

The county attorney's office is moving into a building across Pine Street from the courthouse that was recently purchased by the county.

### *Clerk*

County Clerk Mary Lankford's \$337,356 budget includes \$320,000 for Lankford and her department's

four deputy clerks, \$12,000 for office supplies, \$3,000 for telephone expenses, and lesser amounts for office equipment and repair.

The clerk's office has a wide variety of duties and responsibilities, including serving as clerk to the county commission, chief elections officer, chief budget officer, county accounting and personnel officer, and maintaining motor vehicle records. The clerk's office also maintains records of land transactions, subdivisions, mineral leases, mining claims, marriage licenses, and liquor licenses.

### *District Court*

District Court Clerk Janet Montgomery's \$364,000 budget includes \$208,000 for the salaries of Montgomery and her two full-time employees. The public defender program is allocated \$90,000, child cases are granted \$10,500, and court-appointed attorneys are budgeted at \$13,000. Other line items include: \$10,000 for juror and witness fees; \$7,000 for state operations, including system upgrades to technology; and \$5,000 for the law library. The remaining line items cover general operations of the court clerk's office.

### *Treasurer*

Treasurer Roxanna Jensen's \$331,256 budget includes \$308,000 for Jensen's staff of three full-time deputies and one part-time position. The line item for postal services is \$16,000, with lesser amounts for office supplies and equipment, telephone and equipment repairs.

The treasurer's office is responsible for vehicle registrations, sales and property tax collections, and maintaining the books for our county government.

### *Commission*

The final budget includes \$226,500 to fund the activities of the three commissioners. A line item of \$99,900 funds commission salaries and attendance at special meetings, and \$75,000 is allocated for special attorneys, which are used in administrative hearings and legal proceedings involving assessments and taxation. The budget includes \$25,000 for consultants,

*Continued on the next page*

## ELECTED OFFICIALS *continued from page 9*

which the commission uses to respond to various federal issues with an impact on the county – from boreal toads to endangered species management. The remaining budget items cover costs associated with a reserve

### How Much Are County Elected Officials Paid?

The county commissioners establish salaries for county elected officials every four years, under the guidance of state statutes that establish salary caps for certain elected positions.

The salaries for county clerk, treasurer, assessor, district court clerk and sheriff are set at \$85,169. The county attorney is paid \$96,524, while the coroner (a part-time position) is paid \$32,291. Each county commissioner receives \$32,500 in salaries in the new budget.

Salaries for other county employees are set by salary schedules approved by the county commission.

account for a new vehicle, meals and mileage, and office supplies.

Each commissioner serves on a variety of boards and commissions, and participates in governmental partnerships at the local, state, and national level. Commissioner Joel Bousman was recently elected second vice president of the National Association of Counties Western Interstate Region (WIR). The commission budgeted \$10,000 for expenses associated with Bousman's role in WIR.

### Coroner

Coroner Curt Covill's \$80,191 departmental budget includes his salary of \$32,291 plus \$2,500 to pay his deputies for stand-by time. Autopsies are allocated \$20,000; \$8,000 for supplies; \$7,750 for a new vehicle reserve; and \$4,000 for county burials. The remainder of the budget includes vehicle expenses, telephone, training, and juror and witness fees.

The county coroner's duties include pronouncing death and the time of death, documenting the death scene and performing interviews to determine medical and social circumstances, removing and identifying the deceased, notifying the next of kin, and determining the need for autopsies, as well as other related matters.



Pronghorn does nurse their fawns in a hay meadow.

## CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS

- In 2013, Mining was largest employer in the Sublette County economy accounting for 21 percent of total employment. Following Mining was Construction and Local Government, both with more than 10 percent of total county employment. Local government includes school districts which are often one of the largest employers in many rural communities. These three largest employment sectors in the county's economy represent 45 percent of the total employment in the county. This compares to 30 percent for Wyoming's top three employment sectors and 29 percent for the U.S. top three employment sectors and illustrates the high concentration of employment in a few sectors of the county's economy.
- In 2013, the 5,614 producing oil and gas wells in Sublette County produced 6.3 million barrels of crude oil and 1.0 billion mcf of natural gas. This represented about 10 percent of total crude oil and 50 percent of total natural gas production in the state.
- In 2013, Dean Runyan Associates estimates that visitors spent \$42.8 million while in Sublette County.
- In 2012, there were 398 agricultural operations in Sublette County, managing 777,516 acres in the county. Included in this acreage is 92 percent of the private land in the county. Of the total land in agriculture, 82 percent is classified as grazing land, 16 percent as cropland, 2 percent as woodlands, and 1 percent as farmsteads and buildings. The average size of an agricultural operation was 1,954 acres.

### Change in Sublette County Employment by Sector, 2011-2013

BUREAU OF ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

Sector	2011	2013	Change 2011-2013	Percent of Change	Percent Change
Mining	2,153	1,571	-582	-62.6%	-27.0%
Accommodations & Food Service	500	432	-68	-7.3%	-13.6%
Retail Trade	568	509	-59	-6.3%	-10.4%
Transportation & Warehousing	410	366	-44	-4.7%	-10.7%
Management Services	307	265	-42	-4.5%	-13.7%
Other Services	308	285	-23	-2.5%	-7.5%
Construction	1,011	988	-23	-2.5%	-2.3%
Professional Services	375	354	-21	-2.3%	-5.6%
Health Care & Social Assistance	240	225	-15	-1.6%	-6.3%
Manufacturing	77	64	-13	-1.4%	-16.9%
Wholesale Trade	59	51	-8	-0.9%	-13.6%
Information	44	37	-7	-0.8%	-15.9%
Finance & Insurance	171	165	-6	-0.6%	-3.5%
Utilities	32	28	-4	-0.4%	-12.5%
Military	55	51	-4	-0.4%	-7.3%
State Government	92	88	-4	-0.4%	-4.3%
Local Government	850	846	-4	-0.4%	-0.5%
Forestry, Fishing, & Ag Support	121	118	-3	-0.3%	-2.5%
Agriculture	446	443	-3	-0.3%	-0.7%
Educational Services	32	30	-2	-0.2%	-6.3%
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	128	128	0	0.0%	0.0%
Federal - Civilian	127	127	0	0.0%	0.0%
Real Estate	400	405	5	0.5%	1.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,506</b>	<b>7,576</b>	<b>-930</b>	<b>-100.0%</b>	<b>-10.9%</b>

**After peaking in 2011, employment in Sublette County declined by 11 percent from 8,506 jobs in 2011 to 7,576 jobs in 2013.**

SUBLETTE  
COUNTY PROFILE:  
SOCIOECONOMICS,  
JULY 2015

## Sheriff's Office

Sheriff Stephen Haskell supervises five budgets that when combined total over \$8 million, as follows:

Law enforcement.....	\$4,051,067
Detention.....	\$2,374,364
Communication .....	\$850,900
Search & Rescue .....	\$672,726
Emergency Management.....	\$153,555
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$8,102,612</b>

The Sublette County Sheriff's Office staff includes all sworn officers, courtroom security, detention center personnel, emergency dispatchers, and clerical staff. The law-enforcement budget includes 33 sworn officers (one each for sheriff, undersheriff, captain and lieutenant; five sergeants; five detectives; and 19 deputies) and four clerical staff. Detention (jail and court security) includes 23 positions, and communications (dispatch center) includes 9 positions. Search and rescue includes one paid position, as does emergency management.

Sublette County is unique in that the sheriff's office serves not just the county, but also serves as metro law enforcement for the county's three incorporated towns – a nearly \$3 million service provided for annual charge of \$10 to the towns. All other counties in the state have metro police departments – with the exception of Sublette County. It is the commission's decision to provide metro law-enforcement coverage, as well as patrol within the borders of the National Forest system.

### Law Enforcement

This \$4 million budget includes \$2.7 million in salaries. The budget includes a variety of expenses for vehicles: \$350,000 for the purchase and equipping of eight new vehicles; \$150,000 in a new vehicle reserve; and \$300,000 for tires, gas, oil and maintenance. Other major budget items include \$39,000 in grant expenditures, \$36,700 for animal control, and \$11,000 for the drug dog program. Criminal investigation and investigative equipment total \$52,450, patrol equipment is allocated \$42,000, and training is allocated \$80,000 (including the cost of ammunition as well as specialized schools).



**Sheriff Stephen Haskell**

The budget includes about \$14,000 to provide patrol of U.S. Forest Service-administered properties, which is reimbursed by the federal agency. Publications and periodicals are budgeted at \$5,500; school resource supplies are allocated \$4,500; and utilities and telephone total \$102,200. Radio maintenance is allocated \$45,600, while DARE will be funded with \$4,000, and public services will receive \$8,000. Medical expenses are allocated \$7,000, and uniforms are budgeted at \$28,000. Office equipment, supplies, and other operational expenses balance out the remaining budget expenditures.

### Detention

The \$2.37 million detention budget includes \$1.8 million in salaries. Courtroom security is allocated \$238,674 from the detention budget. Prisoners' expenses include \$280,000 in prisoner board, \$75,000 in prisoner medical expenses, \$5,000 in juvenile board, and \$5,000 in prisoner transport. Training and uniforms are budgeted at \$31,000, while medical expenses for officers are allocated \$5,000. Jail maintenance and supplies are budgeted \$23,000.

The Title 25 program, which provides for emergency and involuntary hospitalizations of persons suffering from mental illness, is allocated \$75,000.

A new vehicle reserve and vehicle maintenance are allocated a total of \$15,000. Equipment is budgeted at \$25,750, and a variety of lesser amounts associated with operations of the jail are allocated the remainder of the budget balance.

### Communications

The \$850,900 communications budget includes \$584,000 in salaries, and \$14,000 for training and uniforms. Communications center maintenance is allocated \$185,000, radio maintenance is budgeted \$4,500,

equipment is allocated \$21,500, and the E-911 system is budgeted at \$30,400. The remaining line items in this budget are for lesser amounts and pertain to operations of the communications center.

### **Search & Rescue**

The search and rescue budget totals \$672,726, including \$66,651 for Administrator Kenna Tanner's salary. The seasonal contract for helicopter services is the single largest budget item, at \$382,875. The county is able to recover that cost through a federal program, with some state reimbursements, and through contract agreements with other agencies.

The budget includes \$5,000 for building repair and maintenance, \$68,000 for training, and \$28,000 for search operations. The budget includes \$16,000 for a new vehicle reserve, \$15,000 for an ATV/snowmobile reserve, and \$2,000 for a dive and swiftwater equipment reserve. Gas, oil and maintenance on vehicles are budgeted about \$23,000. Radios and phone are budgeted \$9,000. Utilities and office operations expenses

are budgeted at \$21,000, and mapping is budgeted \$1,500.

The budget includes a variety of equipment purchases for high angle, swift water and other technical rescues, totaling about \$22,000. Medical upgrades are allocated \$5,000, and team clothing and uniforms are budgeted \$4,000.

### **Emergency Management**

The emergency management budget totals \$153,555, of which about \$68,000 is for coordinator Jim Mitchell's salary.

Gas, oil and vehicle maintenance are allocated \$11,000, and \$20,000 is allocated for a new vehicle reserve. Emergency and hazardous materials equipment/supplies are allocated \$6,000. Office equipment, radio maintenance, and utilities are allocated \$5,000. Training is allocated \$4,000, and the Local Emergency Planning Committee program is allocated \$1,000. The commission also budgeted \$25,000 into a small equipment reserve, for this department.

## **Other Departments**

### **CLASS II ROADS**

The commission established this grant program to provide funding for improvements to private roads that are not classified as regular Class I county roads, allowing for upgrades to make the roads suitable for adoption into the Class I road system. The commission has allocated nearly \$500,000 for the program in this budget, allowing completion of approved projects, but the commission has expressed its intent to dissolve this program in the future.

### **COURTHOUSE & MAINTENANCE**

The \$3 million courthouse and maintenance department budget includes \$1.3 million to pay salaries for the janitorial and maintenance staff supervised by department head Andy O'Neal. This department of 22 staffers provides maintenance and janitorial services for most county-owned buildings, as well as snowplowing and landscaping for county facilities.

Other major line items include \$500,000 for governmental facilities, which funds security cameras and

card-swipe locks on doors, and other repairs and upgrades to county buildings.

Insurance on county facilities is budgeted \$525,000. Building maintenance and supplies are allocated \$225,000; equipment and tools total \$35,000; and utilities are allocated \$150,000. Janitorial supplies are budgeted \$40,000, while gas, oil, and vehicle maintenance are budgeted \$65,000. Training for maintenance department staff is allocated \$10,000.

The budget includes \$45,000 for improvements and maintenance on the 4-H barn located outside of Pinedale; \$100,000 for work on buildings used by the Sublette County Rural Health Care District; and \$10,000 for small property items.

### **ELECTIONS**

Since FY2015-2016 falls outside an election year, the election budget is down, allocated a total of \$23,600. The budget provides \$17,700 for maintenance of election equipment, and lesser amounts for

*Continued on the next page*

## OTHER DEPARTMENTS *continued from page 13*

ballots, election judges and assistants, in the event of a special election.

### GIS

The Geographic Information System department has an overall budget total of \$57,100, including a \$45,600 annual contract position held by Rich Greenwood, who maintains the GIS/map server system publicly available on the county website ([www.sublettewyo.com](http://www.sublettewyo.com)). The budget includes \$10,000 for consultation or projects, with the balance of the budget for office supplies and equipment.

### INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

At \$313,850, the IT budget is up substantially from last year, due to an anticipated expenditure of \$135,800 for equipment, including about \$91,000 in new servers and replacement or upgrades of about 10 computers throughout county government. IT administrator Mike Christie's salary is budgeted at \$87,550 and contract services are anticipated at \$80,000. The remaining budget items are for lesser amounts to operate the IT office located in the courthouse.

### HEALTH OFFICER & SANITARIAN

Alan Huston serves as the county sanitarian, while Dr. J. Thomas Johnston is the appointed official public health officer. The combined budget for these two programs is just over \$51,000, and that amount includes \$27,852 for the sanitarian salary (half-time), and \$15,600 for the health officer's salary. The remaining expenditures total less than \$8,000 and cover office and travel expenses.

Huston's job as sanitarian involves food safety and swimming pool inspections, and responding to environmental and public health emergencies.

Johnston's duties as health officer are under the direction and supervision of the Wyoming Department of Health, and involve investigation of communicable diseases, preventing the spread of disease, and promoting the health of the county's citizenry.

### PUBLIC HEALTH

The county health budget totals \$351,453, and covers the county's expenses associated with the public

health office, which operates in a partnership with the Wyoming Department of Health. The budget includes \$151,000 in personnel costs. Other major items include \$48,000 for vaccine purchases, \$73,000 for bioterrorism prevention, \$22,500 for an Ebola grant, and \$17,500 for the health fair. The budget includes \$12,500 for janitorial services, and about \$14,550 for office equipment, supplies and other expenses associated with operating the health office. The budget includes \$6,000 in mileage expenses, \$3,500 for educational training, \$1,000 for county employee services, and \$2,000 in advertising.

### SURVEYOR

The county surveyor position is an appointment made by the board of county commissioners, and is currently held by Skylar Wilson. The commission allocated \$15,000 for surveyor expenses as needed. The primary duties of the surveyor involve county roads (alignment, rights-of-way, surveying, mapping, legal documents, etc.), and boundary surveys of parcels the County intends to acquire or sell.

### TREATMENT COURT

The Treatment Court budget rings in at \$258,257, and includes \$50,857 for Coordinator Kathy Anderson's salary. Major budget items include \$115,000 for mental health/treatment, \$55,000 for drug testing, \$4,000 for indigent services/recovery, and \$10,000 for team training and travel. The budget includes \$10,000 to cover the costs associated with a magistrate overseeing treatment court. The remaining budget categories (totaling less than \$10,000) include office operational expenses, and costs for providing incentives and graduation for those involved in treatment court.

### PLANNING & ZONING

The Planning and Zoning (P&Z) department budget of \$119,000 was reduced from last year's level due to the elimination of the zoning administrator position. County Planning Director Bart Myer's salary is set at just under \$75,000, and his department's budget also includes \$15,600 for a part-time clerical staff position.

The remaining budget balance covers a variety of lesser items associated with operating the office and providing for plat reviews.

**ROAD & BRIDGE DEPARTMENT**

Superintendent John “Butch” Penton oversees a budget of \$18 million (down from last year’s allocation of \$20 million) with \$2 million of that amount paying the salaries of the employees of this department that works to maintain the estimated 500 miles of county roads in its inventory. The majority of this budget – \$10 million – is set aside for major road projects.

The purchase of heavy equipment (two graders, a loader, and two pickup trucks) is allocated \$1.5 million, while \$500,000 is allocated back to the heavy equipment reserve. Soil stabilizer is budgeted at \$800,000, materials at \$410,000, gravel at \$500,000, paving at \$500,000, and the crusher is allocated \$100,000. Signs and maintenance are anticipated at \$25,000, and equipment hire is allocated \$100,000.

Utilities, telephone and office operational expenses total about \$137,500, while safety is allocated \$10,000. Gas, oil, miscellaneous supplies, parts, repairs and tires have a combined budget total of \$1.42 million.

**WASTE MANAGEMENT**

Sublette County’s Waste Management program involves three separate budgets, with a combined total of \$1.2 million:

Waste Management .....	\$841,656
Transfer Station .....	\$355,893
Recycling.....	\$62,597
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$1,260,146</b>

The county has undergone several changes in its waste management program in recent years, including ending the contract allowing garbage from Teton County to be placed in the Marbleton Sanitary Landfill, and restructuring the department.

The waste management budget totals \$841,656, and that amount includes about \$365,000 in salaries. Other major budget categories include \$150,000 in expenses related to operations of the balefill and baler; \$40,000 in environmental bags for bales; \$14,000 for heavy equipment; and gas, oil, tires and repairs are

provided with an allocation of \$100,000. Engineering is budgeted \$20,000, and water monitoring is budgeted at \$50,000. Utilities are provided \$50,000; and equipment hire is estimated at \$15,000. The remaining items in this budget are for lesser amounts that provide for materials, supplies, and operations for this department.

The county waste management program includes the transfer station near Pinedale, which has a budget of \$355,893. More than 60 percent of this budget (\$230,000) covers the cost of the contract for hauling refuse to the Marbleton landfill. Other major spending categories include about \$103,000 for salaries; water monitoring at \$7,500; and \$1,000 for equipment hire. Repairs are allocated \$2,500, and all other remaining spending categories are for lesser amounts, with a combined total of \$12,500.

The recycling budget totals \$62,597, which includes about \$46,500 for wages, and \$2,500 for transportation of materials. Office expenses total about \$11,000, while gas, oil, and repairs are allocated \$2,750.

**Miscellaneous Expenditures**

The county budget includes \$12,000 for office rent for the county to provide space for the Public Defender’s office.

A budget item of \$33,000 reflects a grant for upkeep of the translators providing rural television in the county.

The commission also allocated a separate line item of nearly \$70,000 for fire suppression. This allocation has strict limitations on its use, and is primarily to pay for fire equipment from neighboring counties to be on stand-by in years when fire activity is high and local resources are already engaged.

Sublette County Visitor Center will receive \$53,552 for operating the visitor center located in Pinedale.

## Services for Children

The Sublette County Commission uses the general fund budget to support a variety of organizations that provide needed services to children in the county.

The **Children's Discovery Center** will receive \$97,000 in county funding. This non-profit early education facility provides quality, affordable early education and childcare with a focus on environment and community. The CDC serves 47 Pinedale families, offering programs for children ages two to five during the year, and a summer program for children ages two to ten. This is the only accredited preschool that is open in the summer in Pinedale.

The **Pinedale Preschool** will receive \$40,500 to support holistic early childhood educational programming for children aged two and a half to five years. This preschool provides services to 40-46 families, and provides a limited amount of needs-based tuition assistance. The Pinedale Preschool prides itself on its highly qualified teaching staff that is focused on providing students entering kindergarten in the fall with exposure to reading, math and science.

The **Children's Learning Center** is the only early childhood program serving both Big Piney and Pinedale. This educational non-profit agency will

receive \$256,500 to support its inclusive preschool programs that bring students from regular education together with students from special education. Last year, this program involved 115 students, including 79 with special needs. This organization offers free screening clinics, and provides early intervention and special education services at no charge to families, but does charge tuition for its half-day preschool, with a limited scholarship program.

The commission allocated \$120,000 for **scholarships** to high school seniors in the county to attend an institution of higher learning. The allocation provides \$4,000 for each of 30 students selected by the Sublette County Commission.

The budget includes \$52,505 for the **4-H After School Program**. The county has administered the program as part of a multi-agency effort, and with a change in personnel this budget year, the local Board of Cooperative Educational Services in Pinedale will now handle the program.

The **Van Vleck House** (a division of Teton Youth and Family Services located in Jackson) will receive \$45,000 from the Sublette County budget to provide prevention, early intervention, and treatment services to Sublette County youth (ages 10 to 18) in a group home and crisis shelter. In addition, the facility handles crisis placements from Sublette County.

The county will provide \$28,800 for mentoring services provided to Sublette County youth through **Big Brothers Big Sisters of Sublette County**. The goal of the program is to provide children facing adversity with strong and enduring, professionally supported one-to-one relationships that change their lives for the better, forever. The program provided services to 26 children last year.



A Sublette County Unified Fire truck gives children a ride during the annual catfish fry in Marbleton.

## Human Services Funding

The Sublette County Commission approved funding for a variety of human-services organizations, from those serving veterans or families, to traditional support for senior citizens.

The Big Piney-based **Community Food Closet** will receive \$3,500 in support of this program that provides supplemental food assistance to people in need.

The **Veteran's Services** program is allocated \$128,000 to serve veterans in the county. Sublette County partners with neighboring Lincoln and Sweetwater counties in providing veteran services programs.

The **Sexual Assault and Family Violence Task Force** will receive \$58,132, which includes both county support and pass-through state grant funding. SAFV provides a 24-hour crisis line, emergency shelter, emergency legal advocacy, peer counseling, victim advocacy, assistance with victim compensation, life skills training, emergency financial assistance, resources/reading materials, and prevention/awareness activities. Last year, SAFV served 72 individuals affected by domestic violence, sexual assault, and/or stalking.

The **Pregnancy Resource Center** will receive \$23,281 in pass-through funding from a state grant.

This program serves women and families who experience an unplanned pregnancy or difficulty during an unplanned pregnancy, or who are parenting young children.

The county budget supports senior citizens services through several budget allocations.

**Rendezvous Pointe** in Pinedale will receive \$178,000 in support of its services for senior citizens. The facility serves more than 10,000 meals a year, provides about 7,000 trips via its transit service, and its in-home program provides services for seniors living at home. The facility also offers activities and entertainment, and health and wellness programs.

**Southwest Sublette County Pioneers** in Marbleton will receive \$171,595 from the county to support a variety of services to seniors, including providing noon meals, home-delivered meals, transportation, monthly shopping trips, monthly discussions with local physicians, health screenings, lending closet and library exchange, among other services.

The **Sublette Center** will receive \$636,000 to assist in general support for operations of the retirement community, located in Pinedale.



Trumpeter swans navigate calm waters in Sublette County.

## Natural Resources

### COALITION OF GOVERNMENTS

The Sublette County Commission allocated \$30,000 to fund the Coalition of Governments, which allows county governments from throughout southwestern Wyoming to work together in dealing with federal land management issues and resource planning projects undertaken by state and federal agencies.

### EXTENSION SERVICE

The Extension Service program budget totals \$181,498, which includes about \$94,000 in salaries for staff, including the clerk, 4-H program associate, and part-time assistants. The budget includes \$31,000 for office rent, and office supplies, utilities, postage have a combined total of about \$15,000. The program expenses for 4-H are budgeted \$23,250, while travel expenses for both the ag educator and 4-H participants are tallied at \$7,500. The budget includes a new vehicle reserve of \$2,000, and vehicle expenses of \$3,000. Equipment repairs and the remaining lesser line items have a combined total of \$3,000.

The Extension Service provides reliable, research-based information in agriculture and natural resources, consumer and family economics, community and economic development, and 4-H youth development.

The Extension Service office will soon be moved into its new building adjacent to the community livestock barn located two miles east of Pinedale along U.S. Highway 191.

### CONSERVATION DISTRICT

The Conservation District will receive \$675,499 – the same amount as last year. The district is experiencing reduced income from other sources and had hoped to have the county fill in the projected funding gap. The commission expressed its support for the district's important work, but was adamant about not paying for more of the budget.

Important components of the district's activities include:

*Surface Water Quality program* – monitoring of 54 stations that are visited four or five times each year for sampling. In addition to monitoring physical and chemical parameters, the program also regularly surveys aquatic bugs at the stations located on streams

throughout the county, providing a comprehensive view of the quality of the county's waters.

*Pinedale Anticline Ground & Surface Water* – the district performs monitoring of ground and surface water resources in the Pinedale Anticline natural gas project area, and bills for this service on a cost-recovery basis. This program monitors industrial and stock water sources, as well as domestic water supplies within a mile of Pinedale Anticline gas wells.

*Range, Wildlife & Habitat* – provides rangeland monitoring data in support of public lands livestock grazing in the county, as well as health and trend data on the county's rangelands. This program also allows the district to partner with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service to develop conservation plans with landowners who volunteer to participate. The district is a working partner in the development of a market system, the Upper Green River Conservation Credit Exchange, which seeks to value and capitalize on the ecological services provided by a property, through habitat leasing and other conservation agreements. The district is also working toward the development of Candidate Conservation agreements for the protection of landowners and permittees in the event the greater sage grouse is listed as a protected species pursuant to the Endangered Species Act. These agreements between private landowners and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service attempt to provide greater certainty that if a species becomes listed despite their efforts, they will not be required to make significant additional changes in their activities on federal or non-federal lands.

### PREDATOR MANAGEMENT

The Sublette County Predator Management District is allocated \$40,000, the same amount as the prior year's budget. This program is supervised by a board consisting of cattle and sheep producers elected by livestock producers to represent their interests, as well as one member of the public appointed by the county commission. The board contracts with USDA Wildlife Services to provide coyote and raven control in the county.

### ANIMAL CONTROL

Happy Endings Animal Rescue will receive \$1,000 to help fund a spay-and-neuter program for stray pets.

## Income

While property taxes generate the majority of revenue to fund county government operations, the county also generates about \$15 million in other revenue – from federal and state grants, to income generated from user fees and special taxes.

The county budget predicts sales and use tax revenue at \$8 million, and sales tax penalties generate \$15,000. Sublette County's sales tax is one of the lowest in the state, at only four percent, which is the minimum possible amount under state law.

Special fuels fees will bring in \$1,275,000, and the gas tax is estimated to generate \$750,000 in revenue. Other taxes bring in about \$127,000.

The county invests its money in interest-earning accounts, which generate \$850,000 in income to the county budget annually.

The budget predicts that landfill fees will generate \$100,000 in the coming year, while recycling will bring in \$30,000, and the transfer station will generate \$60,000.

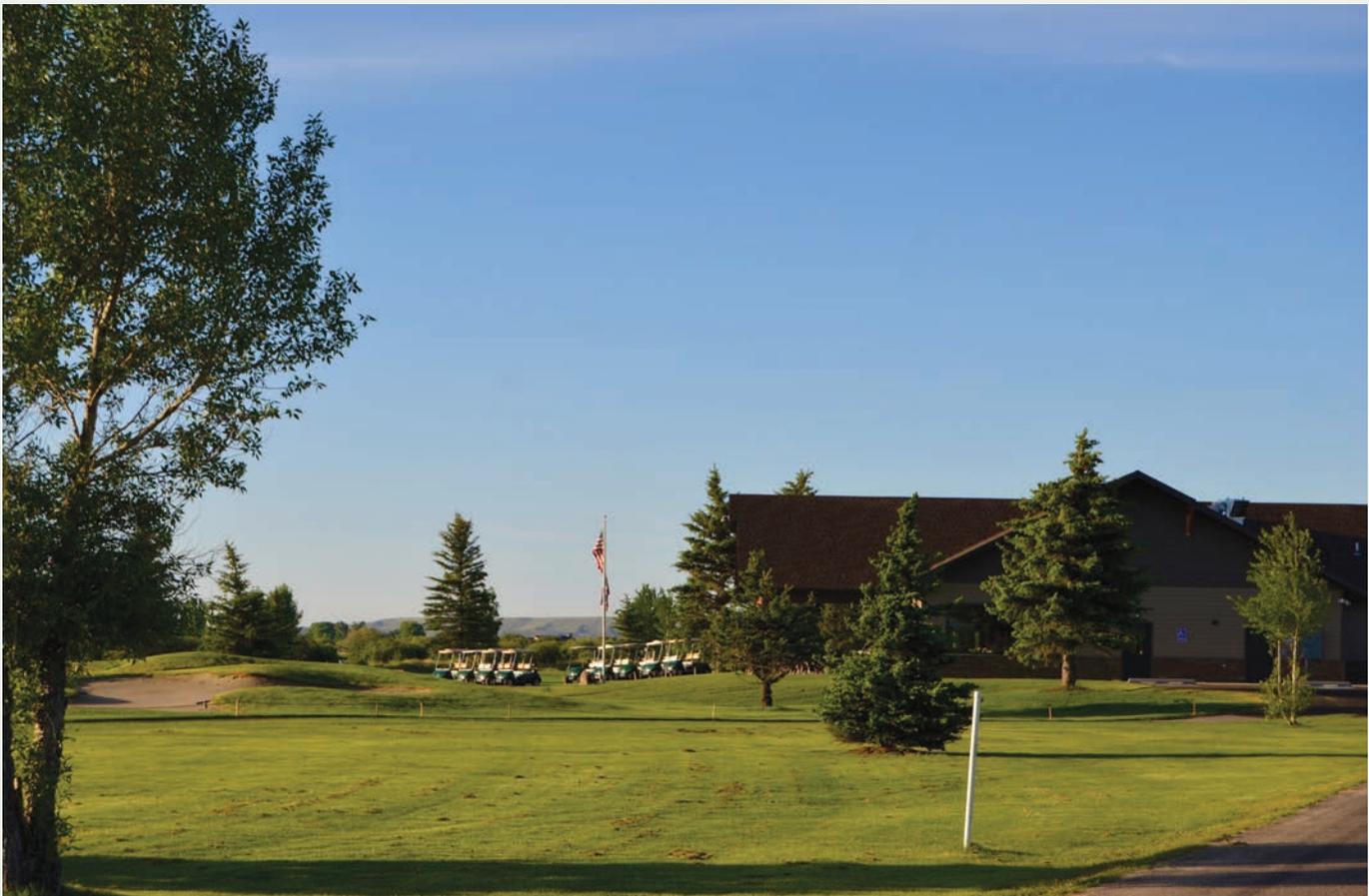
Motor vehicle fees will bring in \$725,000, while severance taxes are estimated at \$508,570, and federal forest reserve revenue is estimated at \$306,139.

The county budget calls for user fee revenues of about \$500,000. This includes fees for items such as marriage licenses, titles, and recording documents, fees for use of county facilities, court and sheriff fees, etc.

The state-county road fund generates \$500,000 while reimbursements from other programs (fuels and the E-911 system) provide an estimated \$80,000.

There are numerous other sources of income for the county, from grant programs and reimbursements from other governments that total more than \$1 million, to smaller revenue streams from varied sources such as special taxes and penalties.

For budget estimations, the county's revenue projections are almost always lower than the actual revenue generated during the year. This conservative budgeting process helps to ensure that the county doesn't experience a budget shortfall.



Rendezvous Meadows Golf Course in Pinedale now hosts a new clubhouse.

## Commitment to Transparency

The Sublette County Commission begins its annual budget discussions in May, holding special budget work sessions the first week of June, and adopts the final budget after a public hearing in July.

Each month after the first Commissioners' meeting, the Sublette County Clerk posts the previous month's Expenditures & Appropriations Reports for each department on the county website at [www.sublettewyo.com](http://www.sublettewyo.com). This feature can be found under

Departments/County Clerk/Accounting Office/Expenditures & Appropriations. In addition, all expenditures are detailed in the commission meeting minutes, which are on file in the Sublette County Clerk's office, as well as published in the legal notices section of the county newspaper of record. For more detailed information about the county's financial matters, please contact the Sublette County Clerk and Treasurer's offices.

### CONTACT THE SUBLETTE COUNTY COMMISSION

P.O. Box 250, Pinedale WY 82941 • 307-367-4372 • [www.sublettewyo.com](http://www.sublettewyo.com) • [info@sublettewyo.com](mailto:info@sublettewyo.com)

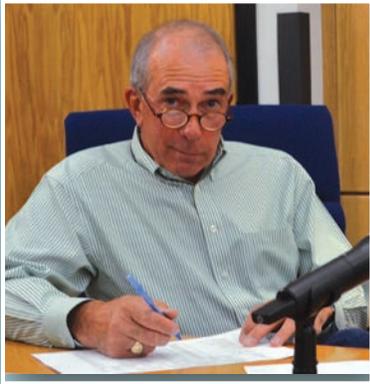
Commission meetings are generally held the first and third Tuesdays of the month, with some variation from month to month. Meetings begin at 9 a.m. in the commission meeting room of the courthouse in Pinedale. Commission meetings are open to the public. To schedule an appointment to appear on the commission's agenda, please contact Sublette County Clerk Mary Lankford at (307) 367-4372.



Natural gas development along the New Fork River.



**Commission Chairman  
Andy Nelson**  
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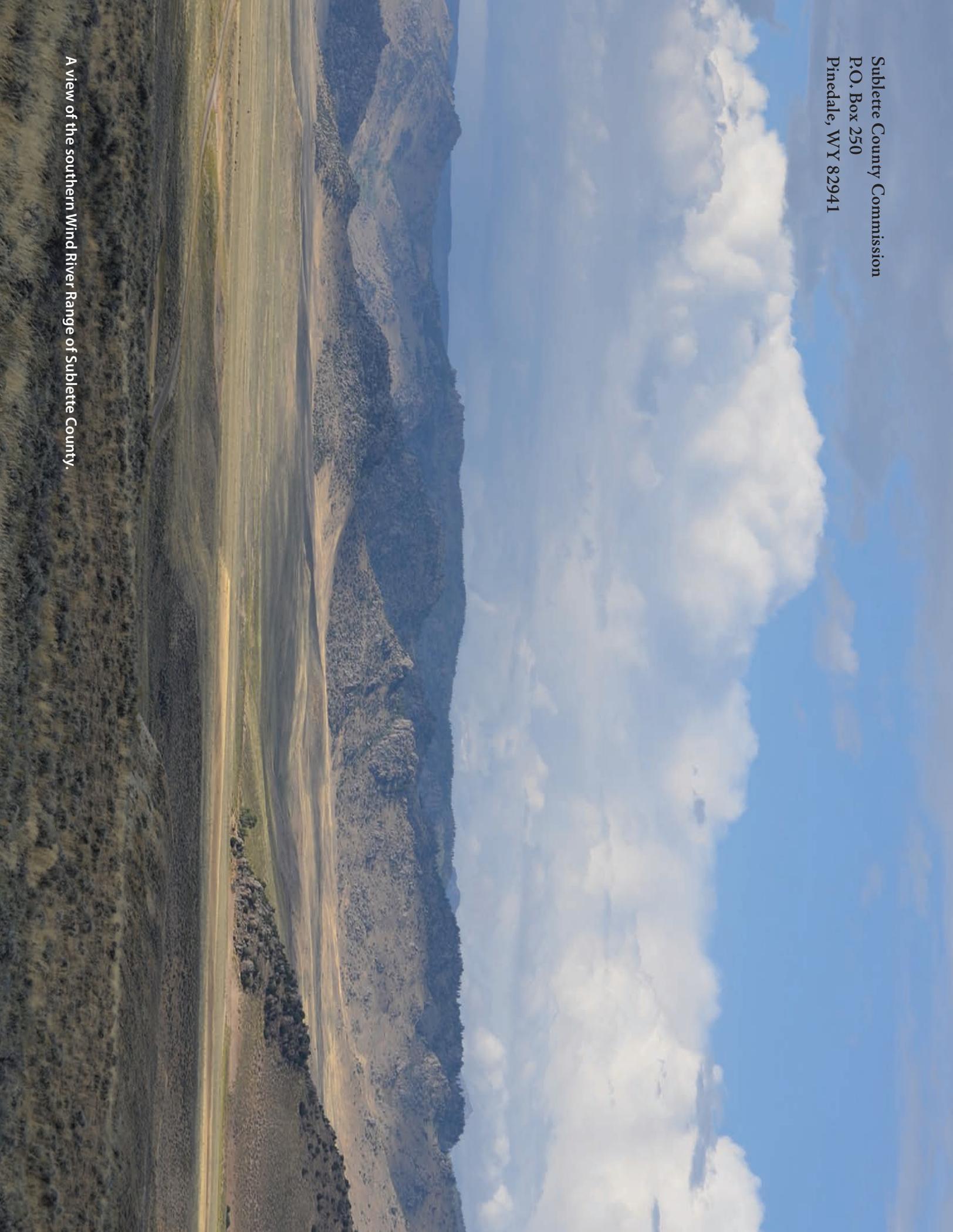
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Sublette County Commission  
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A view of the southern Wind River Range of Sublette County.