

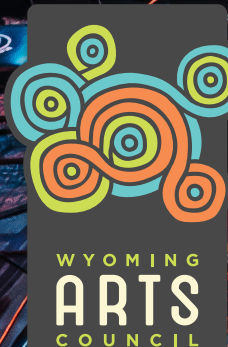
W Y O M I N G ARTSCAPES

WYOMING ARTS COUNCIL NEWS • SUMMER 2024

COVER STORY

Building Community Through Music: Edge Fest & KWHS Rodstock

PAGE 6





Governor's Arts Awards

2024 NOMINATION WINDOW
AUG 23 TO OCT 25

Established in 1982, the Governor's Arts Awards recognize excellence in the arts and outstanding service to the arts in Wyoming. The Governor's Arts Awards honor organizations, individual artists, benefactors and contributors, advocates, and/or educators who demonstrate a significant contribution to the arts in Wyoming through long-term dedication and service, and statewide community engagement.

Additional information can be found on our website or by contacting Mandy Connelley at mandy.connelley@wyo.gov or (307) 214-2701

wyoarts.state.wy.us/gaa/



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The Wyoming Arts Council provides leadership and invests resources to champion, sustain, and cultivate community through the arts.

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MAGAZINE

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wyomingartscouncil.org

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ON THE COVER: KWHS Rodstock
Photo by Eliška Karasová

ON THE BACK COVER: Save the Date
42nd Governor's Arts Awards



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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S COLUMN



Rachel Clifton

After many of Wyoming's typical spring snow and thaw cycles, I think it is safe to say that summer has arrived! This issue of Artscapes offers a snapshot of some of the arts and culture events happening across the state this summer, many of

which take advantage of our great outdoors. We're thrilled to continue our partnership with State Parks to present two Plein Air in the Parks events, and the Artist in Residence program for a second year. We're also shifting some of our programming and working with new collaborators, like the Underground Music Showcase (UMS) in Denver. We are continuing to use our strategic plan to assess programs, identify partnership opportunities, and guide the grants and services the Arts Council offers. UMS is a great example of working with a regional organization to provide outreach and professional development that strengthens the arts in our state.

This issue of Artscapes weaves a continuous thread on Wyoming's creative economy and the role the arts play in building community. The creative economy, while defined in various ways, serves as a framework for examining and discussing the impact of the arts and culture sector in both local and state economies. While financial impacts are a factor in this conversation, we will also look deeper into more intangible factors, such as community vitality, wellness, and the social impacts of the arts. The article on page 10 from the Wyoming

Arts Alliance serves as an insightful primer about Wyoming's creative economy, offering examples of how we can use information and data to talk with decision-makers, tell our stories, and strengthen our distinctive communities.

As research and data collection about the creative economy continues on the statewide and national levels, we see a door opening for us to have collective discussions about what we want the future of the arts to be in Wyoming. I am excited to continue building on this momentum and to have these constructive conversations.

This spring and summer mean statewide travel for me as I meet with new board members, grantees, and longtime colleagues. I have enjoyed the thoughtful and honest dialogue I've had thus far with many of you, and I am looking forward to hearing more about the challenges and opportunities in different communities. Your feedback and ideas are invaluable to us, and I invite you to reach out to me, or anyone on the Arts Council staff, to share your ideas, frustrations, or goals. We are here as a resource and to work alongside you to build a sustainable arts ecosystem in Wyoming.

Enjoy the summer months in our beautiful state!

Best,

Rachel Clifton, Executive Director
Wyoming Arts Council



Summer has finally arrived and folks are eager to kick off their travels! The musical talent of the Cowboy State provides the perfect soundtrack for any adventure across Wyoming's beautiful landscape. The Summer Road Trip Playlist is an annual release hosted on Spotify and promoted at high tourism areas across the state, such as at State Parks, Historic Sites and Trails, Wyoming visitor centers, museums, and festivals. This year's playlist includes a collection of songs by Wyoming artists and, through a partnership with Wyoming Humanities, includes podcasts created by Wyoming producers.

You can find the Road Trip Playlist on Spotify by searching '2024 Wyoming Road Trip Playlist' or by following the QR Code below. We hope you enjoy it!

The Summer Road Trip Playlist is an annual part of the Arts Council's Wyoming Independent Music Initiative (WIMI), working to build a robust music scene in Wyoming. This year's playlist was juried by Pat Lokken, a concert promoter, sound engineer, and DJ from Bozeman, MT and Emy diGrappa, a marketing professional for over 25 years and produces many Wyoming Humanities programs in the Center for the Arts in Jackson Hole.



SCAN HERE TO LISTEN

FIVE WYOMING MUSIC AMBASSADORS TO PERFORM AT THE UNDERGROUND MUSIC SHOWCASE



The Wyoming Arts Council is launching a new partnership with the Underground Music Showcase (UMS). The Wyoming Arts Council will bring 5 Music Ambassadors to perform at the festival, which will take place July 26-28 in Denver, Colorado. Included in each band's participation is access to UMS's Impact Days, which are two days focused on providing professional development opportunities for the participating artists, and two opportunities to perform over the course of the festival.

The five participating Music Ambassadors include:

- Missy Jo (Jackson)
- SGRNY (Laramie)
- Christian Wallowing Bull (Lander)
- It Gets Worse (Laramie)
- Shotgun Shogun (Laramie)

As part of the Wyoming Independent Music Initiative (WIMI), this collaboration is aimed at assisting artists in performing and touring beyond state borders, thereby expanding their audiences and outreach.

The Underground Music Showcase (UMS) is Denver's largest and most beloved music festival and is set to take over Broadway for its 24th annual event. Featuring three outdoor stages and an additional 13 indoor stages, the festival offers a total of over 200 shows. UMS showcases a diverse range of musical genres across various venues, providing a vibrant and dynamic experience for attendees.



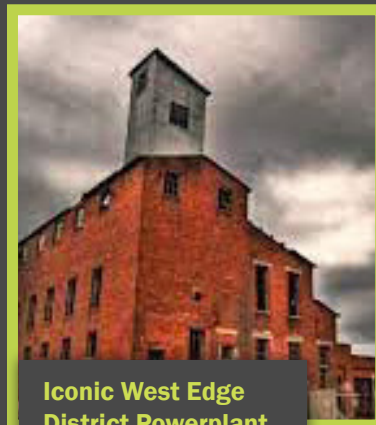
TEN YEARS OF MUSIC AT EDGE FEST BOOSTS CHEYENNE'S DOWNTOWN

By Susan Mark, Photos provided by Edge Fest

Cheyenne's Edge Fest, Wyoming's largest free music festival, has featured nationally and internationally known artists. With world-class productions and crowds in the thousands, it has invigorated both the local music scene and a downtown neighborhood that struggled to rebound from its industrial past.

Edge Fest will hold its 10th and final performance on August 24, 2024, but its impact will be felt long after the stage is taken down. The event has grown to draw 4,000-6,000 people each year, with top-tier performers, food trucks, and local merchants.

When Dave Teubner, owner and CEO of Warehouse 21, created Edge Fest in 2014 to bring people together through music, the event had neither a name nor any grand vision of what it would become. Teubner just wanted to highlight a historic building and the city's plan to redevelop the downtown West Edge neighborhood, where the business he founded was located.



Iconic West Edge District Powerplant

In 2014, much of the West Edge was prone to flooding and dotted with abandoned industrial and commercial buildings. Yet, it held promise in its historic brick architecture and ties to Cheyenne's railroad



Lauren Ruth Ward On Stage, 2023

and commercial past. Funding that included an EPA Brownfields Program grant and voter approval of a 6th penny tax dedicated to stormwater and drainage allowed the City of Cheyenne to plan for a revitalized, vibrant urban district.

The music venue for what was to become Edge Fest was the historic Dinneen Building. Now home to a thriving restaurant and other businesses, it was still in the middle of repurposing and renovation. In fact, it still needed some sheetrock. A crowd of more than 100 gathered for an evening of acoustic music with Tyler Stinson, a Lander-born singer/songwriter from Portland, Oregon. "I've always felt like music has this opportunity to bring people together and find commonality without the spoken word," Teubner said. "So we married some interests together. We wanted to shine a light on the Dinneen Building, and we wanted to shine a light on the plan that was being visioned and the beauty of this architecture and just the love of downtown Cheyenne."

K. Flay Headlining, 2019



The second year, Edge Fest got its name and a new location in the street in front of the Asher Building. Food trucks and vendors were added, and the city held a community input session on the West Edge redevelopment.

"Edge Fest in its first year outdoors started to include food as an art form, photography as an art form, and also local merchants as an art form," Teubner said.

"ONE OF THE THINGS WE'RE MOST PROUD OF IS THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IMPACT BACK TO THESE FOOD ARTISTS AND MERCHANT ARTISTS."

In 2016, the party moved to the Civic Commons parking lot. That same year, the Big Eight Foundation was formed as a nonprofit for Edge Fest and, ultimately, to support other arts initiatives in Cheyenne.

In 2018, after two years at the old City Center Parking lot, Edge Fest moved to the street in front of the Old Cheyenne Elevator while work commenced to transform the lot into a multi-functioning Civic Commons. They shifted strategy, went big, and booked Bishop Briggs as their headliner, with Wildermis as the opener. Briggs was a known name, an up-and-coming star who had just released



COIN, 2016

her debut album, Church of Scars. The crowd ballooned from about 500 to 2,000, many from out of town.

"She was big enough, so we pooled our money a little bit more. She was a national act that people knew, and for the first time, we blew up," Teubner said. "Bishop Briggs put us on the map."

A major draw for many was that the festival was completely free to attend, allowing people to spend money on food, merchandise, restaurants and hotels. "Some of our favorite stories are about families engaging around music and the arts without a price point for it," Teubner said. "Families have told us that they could have never afforded to attend together this level of artist."



Bishop Briggs, 2018

He noted, "We're bringing world-class artists that are even global phenomena into the city, and we think that's really important to infuse. We pride ourselves on trying to capture some of these artists that are about to explode, and we've been very, very successful."

While the festival might be free, the funds needed to put it on are substantial. Along with Warehouse

Billy Raffoul, 2019



21's considerable contributions, Edge Fest has depended on corporate, non-profit, and government sponsors, including the Wyoming Arts Council, which granted nearly \$25,000 from fiscal year 19-23.

Mike Morris, president of the Arts Cheyenne board, said Edge Fest raised the bar for the music scene. "It truly felt like a cultural event unlike anything I'd ever attended in Cheyenne before," he said. "At the time, it felt very novel that you had a very cutting edge artist not in the country genre."

With Edge Fest, people were coming to Cheyenne from Colorado

for their entertainment, rather than the other way around, or from farther afield -- they've even had visitors from Germany and Australia. Morris sees a distinct tie to the redevelopment of the area, which now boasts restaurants, breweries, and other businesses.

"I think a huge part of that was Edge Fest bringing the vision to life and making people buy into it," Morris said.

"I'VE NOTICED A SIGNIFICANT CORRELATION BETWEEN ARTS PROGRAMMING DRIVING FOOT TRAFFIC, CULTIVATING AN AESTHETIC THAT MAKES PEOPLE BELIEVE IN AREAS."

He notes that downtown Cheyenne often now has more live music and even a dedicated music venue at the Lincoln Theater that has sold out its 1200-seat capacity a number of times.

"You saw Edge Fest as sort of a torch bearer that really raised the bar into the stratosphere for what was possible," Morris said. "What Dave and his



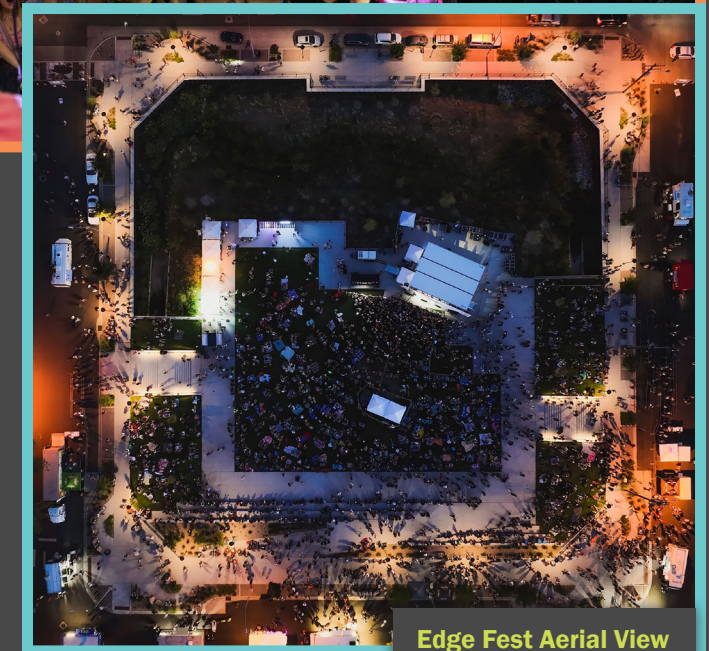
Tai Verdes, 2021

team have done is beyond remarkable. They've really changed the cultural fabric in the city in a 10-year span, and that can't be overstated."

Jason Sanchez, City of Cheyenne Director of Community Recreation & Events, has worked closely with Edge Fest over the years on the nuts and bolts, coordinating meetings with city departments involved with security, traffic, and other practical matters. "Over the years, we've witnessed a surge in creativity, diversity, and vibrancy within our local music community, and

Edge Fest has played a significant role," he said. "Edge Fest has been a source of joy, connection, and inspiration for countless music lovers in our community."

For his part, Teubner is excited about the still-underwraps lineup they're assembling for 2024, which will be announced in June. While Edge Fest may end, Teubner has no plans to stop. "I have a lot of ideas, a lot of ideas, no shortage of ideas," he said. "I think our Big Eight Foundation board will regroup and talk



Edge Fest Aerial View

about how we want to contribute to the arts industry and the economic development of this area. We're not done influencing both of those."

He added, "I just feel an overwhelming gratitude to our sponsors and our volunteers." He looks forward to "just celebrating together 10 years of beauty and connection and food trucks and community and [how] the West Edge has changed."

[Learn more at www.EdgeFest.com.](http://www.EdgeFest.com)



Edge Fest Crowd

REVEALING OUR DATA & TELLING OUR STORIES

Thoughts from WyAA's Ongoing Research and Development in Wyoming's Creative Economy

By Andrew Schneider, WyAA Executive Director

For more than 40 years, WyAA (Wyoming Arts Alliance) has diligently collaborated with members and allies to enhance Wyoming's arts and culture landscape. Now, as recent research indicates promising room for growth in the state's creative economy post-COVID, we aim to shed light on research and development initiatives driving Wyoming's creative and cultural vitality. It includes podcasts created by Wyoming producers.

Let's start by defining the creative economy. In 2001, John Howkins published "The Creative Economy," outlining key creative activities: advertising, architecture, art, crafts, design, fashion, film, music, performing arts, publishing, research and development, software, toys and games, television and radio, and video games (Howkins 2001, pp. 88–117). While subsequent economists have broadened this definition to include any workers using creativity or insight in their roles, Howkins's description remains pertinent, highlighting activities rooted in individual creativity and talent that generate wealth and jobs through intellectual property (Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), Task Force Report and Mapping Document 1998). Essentially, the "creative economy" encompasses how creativity influences an economy's size, growth, and dynamics.

WyAA utilizes several data providers, focusing on two groups within Wyoming's creative economy: 'core industries' - producing creative goods and 'supporting industries' - employing creative skill sets. Quantitative data demonstrates arts and culture workers' broader economic impact, including audience numbers, economic contributions, and educational outcomes. Notably, the impacts we measure aren't solely monetary—although economic data is frequently the evidence that reveals impact.

When discussing impact, consider these key statistics: According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis 2022 Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account (ACPSA), arts and culture supported 11,876 jobs in Wyoming—equivalent to 4.1% of state employment, or 1 in 25 jobs. ACPSA also contributed 4.3% to state compensation and added \$1.3 billion in value. Moreover, cultural tourists tend to stay longer and spend 36% more than other travelers (Mandala Research, Travel Industry Association of America, CVI).

Yet, data alone doesn't convey impact effectively. To demonstrate the broader significance of publicly funded work, data must translate into stories illustrating personal and community-level transformations from artistic endeavors. When crafting public narratives, WyAA encourages our members, research partners, and program participants to share three key stories: the 'story of me' (your background and involvement), the 'story of us' (shared community values, experiences, challenges, and aspirations), and the 'story of now' (focusing on urgent community choices to achieve desired outcomes).

For instance, drawing from the data we shared above, consider this narrative: Publicly funded arts enrich culture, engage communities, and preserve freedom of creative expression for all of Wyoming's hardworking communities. Wyoming's creative economy holds substantial growth potential through public investments, driving private sector involvement across multiple industries. Thus, cultivating culturally vibrant communities with active arts sectors represents an honest path to enhancing business recruitment and employee retention across all workforce sectors.

EMBRACING ART, BUILDING COMMUNITY:

The Pinedale High School Mural Project

By Amara Fehring - Community Development and Arts Learning Specialist



At Pinedale High School, a transformative project revamped the aesthetics of the school's library and redefined how the school community embraces and interacts with art.

The inspiration for a large-scale mural emerged from conversations between Katie Facklam, a Pinedale High School Art Teacher, and Tim Ruland, Executive Director of the Pinedale Fine Arts Council (PFAC). The project aimed to revitalize the clinical-feeling walls of the library—a hub for student activity—into a canvas that celebrates local identity and fosters communal pride.

To create the mural, Facklam wanted to work with a professional mural artist. The selection of Kika Macfarlane, a former Jackson artist, was a pivotal decision steered by PFAC's commitment to bring in regional artists to work with Pinedale students. Macfarlane's engagement ensured the mural would resonate with the aesthetic

and emotional tenor necessary for such a community-centric project.

The mural was designed to be a sanctuary within the school walls, serving as a calming, inspiring presence to promote a sense of comfort and belonging. By depicting serene landscapes and beloved local scenes, the mural invites students to find solace and inspiration within its colors and shapes.

Central to the project's ethos was student involvement. Students were deeply engaged, contributing designs and ideas that reflected their personal connections to the Pinedale area. After collecting student sketches, Macfarlane adapted these ideas into her distinctive, playful artistic style. With the help of some advanced art students, Macfarlane traced the design onto the walls in the library and guided the students on where to paint each color. This approach preserved the originality of the students' visions and made it accessible for all students to participate in the painting process, regardless of their artistic skill level.

The project's impact extended beyond the classroom. Students learned about collaborative efforts, large-scale artistic production, and community engagement from Macfarlane, who generously shared her expertise. This interaction enriched the students' educational experience and gave them insights into the professional art world.

Since its completion, the mural has become a noticeable part of the cultural fabric of Pinedale High School and its broader community. It stands as a testament to the power of art to unify and inspire and as a constant reminder of the community's shared values and interconnectedness.

RODSTOCK: THE ART OF BUILDING COMMUNITY AT KELLY WALSH HIGH SCHOOL



By Amara Fehring - Community Development and Arts Learning Specialist, Photos by Eliška Karasová

At Kelly Walsh High School (KW) in Casper, a unique event known as Rodstock has blossomed into a beacon of community spirit among students, teachers, and administrators. Rodstock is more than a talent show or a concert; it's a day of jubilation, acceptance, and unity, where the entire school comes together to proudly display the diverse talents and passions that make up the Kelly Walsh community.

"While Rodstock is an exceptional display of the talent of students, staff, and community, this event is all about highlighting one of our four pillars of excellence, acceptance," said Mike Britt, Principal of Kelly Walsh. "Every act is cheered on, supported, and appreciated for the courage and talent of performers who take the stage."

The journey of Rodstock began with Rod Mahaffey, a language arts teacher and KW graduate, bring-

ing his guitar to class one day. The spark ignited by his music led to a tradition transcending classroom walls, eventually involving multiple classrooms and a move to the auditorium. Since then, Rodstock has become a professional-grade production. The festival showcases over 100 acts throughout the day, with a team of dozens of teachers and students on the production team running lights, sound, TV production, and managing the stage.

Besides being a full-blown music festival, it strengthens the school community by bridging the gap between students and teachers. Students get to showcase their often-unseen talents in singing, dancing, playing instruments, or other creative acts. At the same time, teachers step out from their usual classroom roles to share their hidden passions and skills, like a business teacher who sings beautifully or a language arts teacher who was once a profes-



sional touring guitarist. Rodstock allows everyone to see each other in a new light, recognizing shared interests beyond academics. It transforms the traditional educational environment, making it a more open and collaborative space.

"RODSTOCK IS ABOUT SEEING PEOPLE IN A DIFFERENT LIGHT,"

said Marc Fleming, social studies teacher and Rodstock producer. "Teachers seeing kids in a different light, kids seeing teachers in a different light, and kids seeing kids in a different light."



Many people have a ton of talent that they don't showcase in their math or science classrooms. Rodstock is an opportunity to create relationships that otherwise wouldn't be possible."

From the perspective of Czech Republic foreign exchange student and professional photographer Eliška Karasová, Rodstock was an unforgettable experience that showed her what a supportive community looks like. Through her camera lens, Karasová captured the festival's camaraderie, atmosphere, sparks, and unique spirit.

"These images are a demonstration of how students and teachers follow their dreams hand in hand, encourage each other, and are not afraid to face challenges together," said Karasová. "One of the unforgettable experiences for me was when everyone in the audience started shining their flashlights on their phones and swaying to the rhythm, showing their support an unexpected singer. The whole atmosphere was incredibly magical. It's a powerful example of how a strong and united community can achieve great things together and never stop believing in their ability and potential."

Rodstock exceeds its label as a music festival; it embodies a profound showcase of the transformative power of the arts, bridging gaps and fostering unity and acceptance within a school community. Kelly Walsh has set a compelling example of how integrating creativity into academia can significantly enrich the educational environment and establish a dynamic standard for embracing the arts in education.

FISCAL YEAR 2025 COMMUNITY SUPPORT GRANT RECIPIENTS

THE WYOMING ARTS COUNCIL IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE 121 ORGANIZATIONS RECEIVING A TOTAL OF \$966,164.00 IN GRANT FUNDING FROM THE FISCAL YEAR 2025 COMMUNITY SUPPORT GRANT PROGRAM.

Who was eligible?

The Community Support Grant is a competitive grant program open to 501(c)(3) organizations or government agencies, including tribal governments, universities or community colleges, and school districts. The grant offers operating and/or project support for qualified organizations that provide services to their community through the arts. Applicants may also apply for funding for arts learning activities.

What is their project timeline?

Grant funding was available for programs and services that take place between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025. An organization was eligible to receive up to \$10,000 in operating and/or project support and up to \$5,000 in arts learning support for a total of up to \$15,000 in grant funding.

How were awardees selected?

Grant applications are reviewed by a panel of community members and partners in the arts. This year's panelists were: Andrew Schneider (Director of Operations - Wyoming Arts Alliance), Amanda Flosbach (Executive Director - Teton Music School), Ami Vincent (Director of Bookmarked Literary Festival), Aubrey Edwards (Board Member for Laramie Public Art Coalition), Bailey Patterson (Instructor of Communication and Public Speaking at LCCC), Barbara McNab (Curator of Exhibitions - The Brinton Museum), Mandie Hines (Community organizer for the literary arts), Dr. Mark Bergman (Director of Strings and Orchestral Studies-Sheridan College), Philip Moline (Ticketing Manager at Target

Center), Stacy Crimmins (President - Platte Valley Arts Council), Taylar Stagner (Arts community member), Dr. Tiger Robison (Assistant Professor, Elementary and Early Childhood Music Education - University of Wyoming). The panelists' recommendations are sent to the Wyoming Arts Council Board for approval.

Use this list to find the organizations in your community and check out the programs and projects happening near you.

Who are the 121 recipients?

- 307 Dance Academy
- Action Resources International
- Advocacy for Visual Arts, Inc.
- Albany County Theatre Outreach
- Ark Regional Services, Inc.
- Art Association of Jackson Hole
- Art Link Wyoming
- Art pARTners
- Artcore, Inc.
- Arts Cheyenne
- Arts in Action
- ASK After School for Kids
- Basin City Arts Center
- Big Horn County Library System
- BigHorn Bluegrass Camp
- Bodylines Dance Theatre, Inc.
- Bookmarked Literary Arts Festival
- Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Wyoming
- Boys and Girls Club of Cheyenne, Wyoming, Inc.
- By Western Hands
- Canyon Concert Ballet
- Casper Artist's Guild, Inc.
- Casper Children's Theatre, Inc.
- Casper College/Music Department

- Cathedral Voices Chamber Choir
- Central Wyoming College Foundation
- Cheyenne All-City Children's Chorus
- Cheyenne Chamber Singers
- Cheyenne Children's Museum
- Cheyenne Frontier Days Old West Museum
- Cheyenne Harmony Chorus
- Cheyenne Little Theatre Players
- Cheyenne Symphony Orchestra
- Cheyenne Youth Symphony
- Children's Discovery Center
- City of Rawlins / Downtown Development Authority / Main Street
- Cody Country Art League
- Community Center for the Arts
- Creek Side Performing Arts
- Dancers' Workshop of Jackson Hole
- Donkey Creek Festival
- Evanston Youth Club for Boys & Girls
- Friends of PAC
- Gillette Chamber Music Society
- Goshen County Library
- Grand Encampment Cowboy Gathering Outfit
- Grand Teton Music Festival, Inc.
- Horse Warriors
- Jackson Hole Book Festival
- Jackson Hole Community Radio, Incorporated
- Jackson Hole Public Art
- Jackson Hole Writers
- Jentel Foundation
- Lander Art Center
- Lander Performing Arts
- Lander Presents
- Laramie Plains Civic Center, Inc.
- Laramie Public Art Coalition
- Lobban Street Music
- Maker Space 307
- Mercer Family Resource Center
- Montana State University
- Music Land
- National Museum of Wildlife Art of the United States
- Nicolaysen Art Museum
- Northwest College
- Nowoodstock
- Off Square Theatre Company
- Opera Wyoming
- Park County Art Council
- Pinedale Fine Arts Council, Inc.
- Pinedale Theatre Company
- Platte Valley Arts Council, Inc.
- Plaza Diane Community Center For The Arts
- Relative Theatrics
- Riot Act Inc.
- Riverton Senior Citizens Center, Inc.
- Rock Springs Renewal Fund, Inc.
- Rocky Mountain Dance Theatre
- Salt River Arts Society
- Science Loves Art, Inc.
- Sheridan Artists' Guild Et al.
- Skyline Singers
- Southeast Wyoming Concert Series
- St. John's Episcopal Church, Jackson
- Stage III Inc
- Studio Theatre at CCPA
- Sweetwater Music Keys
- Teton Music School
- Teton Raptor Center
- The Brinton Museum
- The Hyart Re-Development Corporation
- The Jackson Hole Chorale
- The Science Zone Inc.
- The Star Valley Arts Council
- Theatre of the Poor
- Town of Sinclair
- Trinkle Brass Works, Inc.
- Ucross Foundation
- United Way of Albany County - Community Impact Cooperative
- University of Wyoming / Art Museum
- University of Wyoming / Buchanan Center for the Performing Arts Special Events
- University of Wyoming / Department of Theatre and Dance
- University of Wyoming / Wyoming Pathways from Prison
- University of Wyoming/ Music Department
- Vista 360, Inc.
- Washakie Museum
- Wind River Community Alliance
- Wind River Valley Artists' Guild
- WYO Theater, Inc.
- Wyoming All State Marching Band
- Wyoming Baroque
- Wyoming Fiddlers' Association District #4
- Wyoming Secondary Art Educators Association, Inc.
- Wyoming Shakespeare Festival Company
- Wyoming SHEEP Foundation
- Wyoming Symphony Orchestra, Inc.
- Wyoming Women's Business Center, Inc.
- Wyoming Writers, Inc.
- Wyopoets
- Young Musicians, Inc

FOSTERING ARTISTIC EXPRESSION AMONG WYOMING'S AGING POPULATION

By Josh Chrysler - Folklorist and Health & Wellness Specialist

Recently, the Wyoming Arts Council has been involved in developing and supporting Creative Aging programming across Wyoming. The impetus behind this effort is that by developing arts education opportunities for Wyoming's older adults, we help build healthier individuals and communities. Older adults across Wyoming have been learning new artistic skills in everything from dance to printmaking, and from woodworking to improv. One of our primary partners in this effort has been the Wyoming State Library. Together, we have worked to introduce Creative Aging programs to libraries across the state, and also to community arts centers, senior centers, museums, and other community gathering places.

Wyoming is not alone in this; it is part of a larger movement across the country. For example, we are participating in an initiative, Advancing Creative Aging in the Western States, led by Lifetime Arts. Some readers may already be familiar with Lifetime Arts as the arts service organization that we have partnered with to provide training to Wyoming teaching artists, librarians, and arts administrators in leading Creative Aging programming. The Advancing Creative Aging in the Western States initiative is an effort to build capacity to maintain Creative Aging efforts, not just in Wyoming, but with similar programming across the broader region, including Montana, Idaho, Utah, and Nevada.

ADVANCING CREATIVE AGING IN WYOMING

As part of the Advancing Creative Aging in the Western States initiative, the Arts Council is working with Lifetime Arts and the Wyoming State Library to produce Advancing Creative Aging in Wyoming, a state-level convening focused on strengthening partnership and expanding access to Creative Aging programs for older adults in Wyoming. This event will be held in Cheyenne on June 6th. The gathering will bring together stakeholders in this work, including the Wyoming Arts Council, Wyoming State Library, Lifetime Arts, the Wyoming Department of Health's Aging Division, Wyoming AARP, the Wyoming Center on Aging, and the Governor's Office. We will share the programming model we are using, hear from librarians and teaching artists who have already implemented programs in their own communities, and have discussions on how this programming can contribute to the larger efforts to support Wyoming's older adults.



CREATIVE AGING VIDEOS



If you want to get a better sense of what Creative Aging programs look like as they are implemented across Wyoming, check out our Wyoming Arts Council YouTube channel. There are several short videos documenting the work being done. For example, recent videos highlight the woodworking class organized by the Campbell County Public Library in partnership with Gillette College's Area 59 makerspace; Barrie Lynne Bryant's class on printing on hand-gilded paper held at the Washakie Museum & Cultural Center in Worland; and Hilary Camino teaching harmonica at St John's Health Sage Living in Jackson.



For additional information, please contact Josh Chrysler at 307.256.2010 or Joshua.Chrysler@wyo.gov.

GRANT OPPORTUNITY



The round of Creative Aging Project Grants will open for applications on May 28th, with an application deadline of July 10th. Grants will be awarded to non-profit organizations and/or individual teaching artists in order to develop and implement anywhere between one and four separate 8-week creative aging programs by June 30, 2025. This activity is made possible by a grant provided by the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies in partnership with E.A. Michelson Philanthropy.



2024 CREATIVE WRITING AWARD WINNERS

Pattie Layser Greater Yellowstone Creative Writing & Journalism Fellowship • Frank Nelson Doubleday Memorial Writing Award • Neltje Blanchan Memorial Writing Award



2024 Pattie Layser Greater Yellowstone Creative Writing & Journalism Fellow

Todd Burritt of Livingston, Mont. is the recipient of the Wyoming Arts Council's 2024 Pattie Layser Greater Yellowstone Creative Writing & Journalism Fellowship for his submission, "Fantastic Adversary."

Before settling down, Todd Burritt worked in five different wilderness areas across the Greater Yellowstone. Now he's a full-time dad and part-time everything else. The author of "Outside Ourselves: Landscape and Meaning in the Greater Yellowstone," his writing also appears in Voices of Yellowstone's Capstone, The Artist's Field Guide to Yellowstone, and on mountainjournal.com.

Over the next year, Burritt will create or complete a relevant publishable or produced work and have the opportunity for a housing residency in the greater Yellowstone region.

Honorable Mentions were given to Anne Marie Wells of Warrenton, Va., Nicholas Mott of Livingston, Mont., and Kevin Grange of Jackson, Wyo. The jurors this year were Bebe Crouse and Kelsey Sather.

The Pattie Layser Greater Yellowstone Creative Writing & Journalism Fellowship is made possible through generous funding from The Pattie and Earle Layser Memorial Fund. This annual fellowship is awarded to a creative writer (poetry, fiction,

nonfiction), or those in the field of journalism (writer, photojournalist, videographer, documentary filmmaker, online or print media) who demonstrate serious inquiry and dedication to the Greater Yellowstone region through their work.



2024 Frank Nelson Doubleday Memorial Writing Award Winner

Cady Favazzo received the Frank Nelson Doubleday Memorial Writing Award for the entry, "Even Parts I Promised Myself." This award is given for the best poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, or script written by a woman writer. Honorable mentions were awarded to Reatha Thomas Oakley of Gillette and Callie Plaxco of Laramie.

Favazzo is a poet and teacher from Rock Springs, Wyoming. She earned her MFA from the University of Idaho. Her recent work can be found published in "Nimrod," "Cimarron Review," "Phoebe" and elsewhere.



2024 Neltje Blanchan Memorial Writing Award Winner

Callie Plaxco won the Neltje Blanchan Writing Award for the entry, "I Gather in the Tree Tops to Sing and Stare Wildly at the Dark Sky." The award is given annually for the best poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, or script informed by a relationship with the natural world. Renee Meador of Sheridan and William Owens of Lander received honorable mentions. As her grandmother once said, Callie Plaxco flew the coop when she left South Carolina to journey west to the University of Wyoming for her MFA in Creative Writing. Still in Wyoming, Callie lives with her husband, two small boys, and two big dogs. She works as a Youth Services Specialist at the Albany County Public Library where she enjoys reading to young children and getting lost in the shelves of picture books. Her chapbook, "Dear Person" is available at Dancing Girl Press and individual poems have appeared in "Carve Magazine," "Tinderbox," "Gingerbread House," and "Sugar House Review."

The Frank Nelson Doubleday Memorial Writing Award and the Neltje Blanchan Writing Award are made possible through the generosity of a private donor and are administered by the Wyoming Arts Council.

Both awards are designed to bring attention to writers in Wyoming who have not yet received wide recognition for their work, and to support emerging writers at crucial times in their careers. The juror for this year was Karen Auvinen.

2024 WYOMING CHAMPION: ELORA NATION



By Ismael Dominguez - Programs Specialist

In February, Poetry Out Loud judges selected Elora Nation as the state champion of Wyoming for the second year in a row. Following this incredible win, Nation traveled to Washington, D.C. in May to represent the Equality State in the nation's capital to compete with 55 other high school students from across the country for the National Champion title.

The premise of the competition is for students to memorize and recite a selection of poetry from three categories. During their performance, competitors are judged on a variety of categories from their interpretation of the piece to their recitation accuracy.

"I was more nervous to return to State Finals because I feared I had lost whatever it was that had brought me victory the previous year. Once the date for Nationals had been set, I was determined to fix one of my biggest mistakes from last year: to perform fully developed poems." Nation went on to say, "I stepped onto the plane the previous May



Elora Nation Competing

with a nagging feeling that my recitation was missing something, and this time around, I would not rest until I was completely at ease with my performance. Everybody in my region was insanely amazing. Witnessing how my peers brought every poem to life (even ones that I had found deathly dull on paper) was extraordinary and inspired everybody not only to perform at a higher caliber but to create as well."

POETRY OUT LOUD WYOMING



From left to right, Craig Mitchell (POL Chaperone), Elora Nation (WY POL State Champion), Chris Thomas (Region 3 Coordinator), Ismael Dominguez (WAC), Amara Fehring (WAC)

Poetry Out Loud not only seeks to educate students about a deeper appreciation for poetry, but to carry confidence when speaking publicly while engaging with a community of peers.

"POETRY OUT LOUD TAUGHT ME HOW TO BE VULNERABLE IN FRONT OF PEOPLE..."

"I've been a peer presenter within Natrona County schools since I was a freshman and was satisfied with my ability to talk to a crowd until last year. Joining this competition made me realize that performing art is vastly different from presenting facts, and learning how to bring a raw and authentic presence to the stage was quite a challenge for me. Learning to trust myself and the process built up a bravery within me that I didn't know I could have. Furthermore, this program

has shown me how to define, study, and appreciate poetry in all its wonderful forms," said Nation.

Although Nation did not advance to the final round, her recitation was powerful and embodied the growth that came from being a two-times state champion and allowed her to stand out amongst the nineteen other students from her region.

In 2025, Poetry Out Loud will commemorate the twentieth year of the program. Teachers, schools, and individual students are invited to register for the upcoming season of Poetry Out Loud.

More information about the program, visit WyomingArtsCouncil.org or PoetryOutLoud.org.

FISCAL YEAR 2025 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT / CAREER ADVANCEMENT AND ARTS ACCESS PROJECT GRANTS NOW OPEN

Beginning May 16, 2024 organizations that did not receive a Fiscal Year 2025 Community Support Grant are eligible to receive up to two Arts Council grants in the other grant programs for different programs or events, depending on the criteria for each specific grant.

The Arts Access Project Grant application is open for projects taking place between July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025. This grant is designed to provide arts project funding for organizations that meet any of the following four criteria: (1) projects increasing arts access for, or primarily serving, people with disabilities, (2) arts projects led by and/or primarily serving BIPOC communities (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color), (3) projects involving folk & traditional arts and artists, (4) organizations in rural communities with a population of less than 3000.

An organization is eligible to receive up to \$1000 with no match requirement.

The Professional Development/Career Advancement Grant application is open for projects taking place between July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025. This grant is specifically designed to help grow the capacity of organizations and individuals that work in, and support the arts. An individual or organization is eligible to receive up to \$1000 with no match requirement. Individuals are only eligible to receive this grant every other fiscal year. Applicants are encouraged to apply early. The Arts Access Project

More information about these grants can be found at www.wyomingartscouncil.org under the "Grants" tab.



MEET OUR NEW PROGRAMS SPECIALIST

As a life-long Wyomingite, Ismael Dominguez has spent his life engaging with various communities across the state, all in the name of art and connection. He has stepped into the Wyoming Arts Council as the Programs Specialist with years of experience participating in and fostering the arts community of Wyoming.

As an alumnus of Northwest College and the University of Wyoming, Ismael brings a rich background of technical and historical art expertise into this position. From his previous career as a librarian, he provides extensive project management skills, partnership development, and an unwavering dedication to serving the community.

Ismael will be coordinating several of the Wyoming Arts Council's programs, such as Plein Air in the Parks, Art in Public Buildings, and Poetry Out Loud. Providing community access to the arts is one of Ismael's driving passions because the literary, performance, and visual arts offer representation and connection for the disparate audiences across Wyoming.

Ismael dedicates much of his free time to creating artwork in his studio, but can also be found outdoors enjoying the neverending vistas around Laramie.

MEET OUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS



*Ashlea Espinal,
Cody, WY*

Dr. Ashlea Espinal has an extensive and varied background related to the arts, academically, professionally, and personally. Currently, she is the Assistant Curator of the Whitney Western Art Museum at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West in Cody. She joined the Whitney in

November 2021. Before that, Ashlea completed a MA in Art and Museum Studies at Georgetown University in 2010, and her doctorate in Native American Art History at the University of Oklahoma in 2019. She served as an art history adjunct instructor from 2019 to 2020 for both the University of Oklahoma and Bacone College. She has also held numerous internships at museums throughout the country, including the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art and the Denver Art Museum.

The arts (in the many ways that the arts can be defined) have been a part of Ashlea's life since she was a child, whether it was through personal artistic practice, academic study, or her current profession. In fourth grade, she won a speech contest at her elementary school with a speech about how she wanted to be an artist when she grew up. Although Ashlea is not a practicing artist, her career as an art historian and curator allows her to work with something she loves.



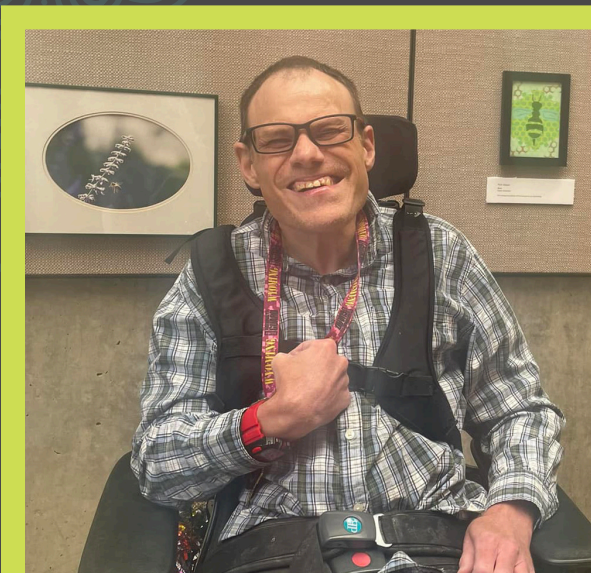
*Valerie Innella Maers,
Casper, WY*

Dr. Valerie Innella Maers teaches art history and museum studies in the Visual Arts Department of Casper College. At Casper College, her service includes membership on several committees including directing the Humanities Festival Committee and the Art

Committee. She also curates the Casper College Foundation Fine Art Collection and campus art galleries. In the community, she serves on the Wyoming Symphony, Werner Wildlife Museum, and Museum of Casper Boards. She volunteers for ART321 and The Nicolaysen Art Museum. Her publications and lectures reflect her research in the area of visual literacy in museums, academic and museum partnerships, and pedagogy.

Dr. Maers holds a B.A. and M.A. in Art History and a Ph.D. in Art Education and has also been fortunate to teach study abroad courses for the University of Wyoming, such as the Georgian Art and Architecture seminar in Edinburgh and London in summer 2023. In 2023, she was the recipient of the Garth Shanklin Leadership Award at Casper College.

ART IS EVERYWHERE



Pictured clockwise from top: Amara Fehring from the WAC leads a discussion with some of the student musicians from Kelly Walsh High School in Casper; The Horse Barn Theater during LAP Touchstone Laramie Biennial 2023 from Laramie Artists Project; Artist with Ark Regional Services participating in the Bee Jubilee at the Berry Biodiversity Center at the University of Wyoming.

Pictured clockwise from top left: Helios Trio performs at the Headwaters Conference Center in Dubois; Wyoming Poet Laureate, Barbara Smith visited and read her original poetry for the State of Wyoming Legislature on the floor in February; Tom Lucas and Shawn Ware during the Horn Spoon Making workshop at Arapaho Ranch Field Station; Dancers at the 307 Dance Academy.



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SAVE THE DATE

42nd Governor's Arts Awards

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Established in 1982, the Governor's Arts Awards recognize excellence in the arts and outstanding service to the arts in Wyoming. Join us in Cheyenne in February to honor outstanding individuals and organizations who have made significant contributions to the arts community across the state. From painters to musicians, dancers to arts advocates, this event recognizes the diverse talents and visions that enrich our cultural landscape.