



# STATE OF THE COUNTY 2007-2008

A report from the  
Sublette Board of County Commissioners

SUBLETTE COUNTY, WYOMING





## SUBLETTE COUNTY BY THE NUMBERS

- Sublette County's 7,359 residents comprise only 1.4 percent of the state's population, yet the county's \$4.4 billion assessed valuation accounts for 21 percent of the entire state's valuation – that's a larger percentage than any other county in the state.
- According to the Wyoming Department of Revenue, Sublette County contributes more taxes to the state than any other county in the state. For 2006, that was more than 19 percent of all taxes paid into state coffers.
- Although all taxes levied in Sublette County total about 59 mills, the county actually has the lowest total levy in the state. Statewide, the average mill levy is about 63 mills and ranges from Sublette County's low of 59 to nearly 74 mills in Big Horn County.
- Sublette County's population grew at a rate of 24 percent from 2000 to 2006, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. That's 1,439 new residents.
- Home sale prices continued to increase in 2006. The average sales price of a home in Pinedale was \$264,200, while in the rural north portion of the county, the average sales price was \$326,683, and the sales price in the rural south portion of the county was \$194,141.
- The number of new homes in the county increased significantly with 207 new homes added in 2006. Of this total, 160 of the new homes were in the rural north portion of the county. The overall number of new housing units countywide increased 231.
- The oil and gas industry continues to be the major property taxpayer in the county, representing over 97 percent of the county's total valuation. County Assessor Janet L. Montgomery reports that the majority of that amount is production, however, this year even the well field equipment and pipelines have greater value than all of the residential properties.
- According to the Wyoming Department of Revenue, the grand total of K-12 education levies in the entire state equaled \$943,933,369. Sublette County's share of that was \$193,732,507 – that means that Sublette County generates 20 percent of the levy for the entire state's education program. No other county contributes more, although Campbell County is a close second.
- Under the school funding formula, Sublette County Schools received about \$7 million of the state's education funding.

# STATE OF THE COUNTY 2007

## A report from the Sublette Board of County Commissioners

### County continues growth, changes

**I**t seems like it was just a few years ago when Sublette County consisted of a few small cow towns scattered throughout its nearly 5,000-square mile expanse, extracting just enough mineral resources from the ground to keep its government afloat. Major expenditures went to fund services that individuals couldn't undertake themselves – fire protection, law enforcement, and road maintenance.

How quickly things can change. Natural gas and oil development in the Big Piney and LaBarge region has taken place for many years, making this region a mainstay of mineral production in the county. In addition, since the mid-1990s, the county has experienced a major natural gas development boom with its Jonah and Pinedale Anticline gas fields, now two of the largest gas fields (in terms of proven reserves) in the nation.

Sublette County is the state's top-ranked county for natural gas production, and is third in the state for crude oil production.

With the county assessed valuation of just over \$4 billion, 93 percent of that amount comes from minerals.

With increased mineral production comes an increase in the workforce – both residents and non-residents. The increased population results in an increased demand for services – both those basic items such as fire protection, law enforcement and road maintenance, as well as other services, ranging from applications for building permits, to purchasing of license plates. County government has a responsibility to meet the demands for service from its citizens, thus governmental staffing levels have increased across the board in recent years.

For example, the county clerk's office recently had four deputies providing service to members of the public arriving at the counter for service, but now seven employees scurry to try to keep up with the workload. The volume of work continues to increase. It was just a few years ago when the clerk's office would process 150 vehicle titles a month. This

fall, that number rose to 615 titles in one month. All departments in county government can share similar stories of the increased workload that accompanies growth in the county. In order to find applicants for the needed staffing levels, the county boosted its employee salary levels to make county government pay more competitive with packages offered by the private sector.

The increased population and activity in the county has brought new issues and concerns to the surface, and the county commission has sought to address those as they arise. For example, the combination of public concerns about dust control and increased industrial traffic resulted in an aggressive road program funded by the commission – encompassing public and private roads.

The commission responded to the need for more information about impacts on the community in several different ways – from forming community working groups and partnerships with industry, to commissioning research projects.

*Continued on page 2*

### TOP 12 TAXPAYERS IN SUBLINTE COUNTY

Company	Total Assessed Value
EnCana Oil & Gas	\$1,367,086,943
Ultra Resources	526,496,082
Shell Rocky Mountain	428,723,784
BP America	371,907,932
Exxon Mobil & ExxonMobil	270,782,761
Questar	267,971,364
EOG	139,057,935
Wexpro	106,022,691
Lance	80,105,842
Southern California Power	65,198,710
Chevron USA	52,315,427
TEPPCO	36,850,084
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$3,712,519,555</b>

SOURCE: SUBLINTE COUNTY ASSESSOR

## **STATE OF THE COUNTY *Continued from page 1***

Sublette County and its communities are facing serious challenges in reacting to demand for services due to rapid growth. County government officials need the best data possible in order to predict growth needs and timelines as a means to plan for infrastructure and service provided by local government. To aid in the effort, the commission has contracted with a firm (recommended by the governor's office) to help the county determine the socio-economic impact related to intensive energy development. The county needs this information for a variety of reasons, including educating state lawmakers as to why the portion of the federal mineral severance tax returned to the state for impacted communities does in fact need to be returned to the impacted communities and not

retained in the State General Fund. The commission also wants to put our county in a position to accurately discuss socio-economic impacts with the energy operators. Also, having a better description of socio-economics will be a help in future planning efforts for the county and communities.

Additional revenues into the county coffers has also enabled the county to help its incorporated towns that are also experiencing the impacts – from supplying law enforcement services to kicking in funds for infrastructure improvements.

This State of the County 2007 examines the county budget and serves as your guide to learning how the board of commissioners works to serve as responsible stewards of our county's resources.

### **Message from the Chair**

This is our first report of its kind to the citizens and interested parties of Sublette County. I hope that it is informative and that you will be able to better understand what is happening at the county government level here in Sublette County.

Geographically we are large in size: almost comparable to the state of Connecticut. But our population as of the most recent estimate is a mere 7,359. Like many of you, I have seen many changes over the 35 years that I have lived in Sublette County and my 13 years on the County Commission. But we still do not have a traffic light! And we still have a viable (but struggling as always) and productive agriculture sector that contributes immensely, in more ways than some of us realize or admit, to the way of life that we all enjoy. In addition, without this agriculture sector the wildlife asset that we have would suffer greatly.

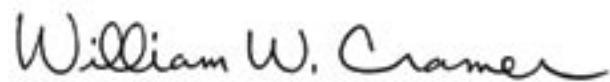
We are truly blessed to have the natural gas resource that is here in Sublette County. The county commission is working constantly and closely with the federal agencies and the natural gas industry to do everything in its power to represent your interests and those of Sublette County. We have been able to accomplish a lot

with the funding provided by this resource, but I also acknowledge the fact that this has not happened without consequences and impacts on our daily lives.

I commend the elected officials and employees of Sublette County who efficiently and effectively discharge their duties on behalf of all of us. And I also wish to acknowledge and thank all in the county who volunteer their time and money to all the boards and commissions that contribute so much to our everyday health, safety and welfare.

We are a lucky and blessed bunch of people here in Sublette County and I wish everyone the very best now and always. Please feel free to contact any of your county commissioners or elected officials after reading this report.

Thank you all and happy reading.



Bill Cramer, Chairman  
Sublette County Commission

## County impacts lives every day

Each of the three Sublette County Commissioners has his own favorite programs and projects, but work together to see that county government operates smoothly and responds to the needs of the public. The range of topics the commission addresses seems limitless.

Commissioner Joel Bousman has a keen interest in tucking money away for the future, but knows there are statutory limitations in doing so. Since the county can't establish "trust funds" to accommodate needs in the future, the commission takes a different tack – that of putting money into earmarked reserve accounts. Before the money can be spent, it must be transferred into an expenditure account that correlates to the reserve account.

"What we're trying to do is exhibit some fiscal responsibility by establishing these accounts for operations and maintenance, and for future projects that we're in the process of building and approving because we have the money," Bousman said. Allocating the money to specific projects and purposes at this time, while the revenue stream is strong, provides a positive current for the possible time in the future when revenues decrease.

Commissioner John Linn is proud of the county's work in being proactive about energy development impacts, such as commissioning a socio-economic report for use in federal land planning, as well as taking other actions (including joining with other counties and conservation districts to get the most effective use of expert legal and consultant advise) to influence federal decision-making.

Linn says, "Sublette County is a focal point in the nation's energy picture and many other controversial issues and we either play a proactive role or lose our ability to determine our own destiny. We're coming up with some ways to get money back to the people." For instance, assisting mosquito abatement districts with mosquito spraying and the towns with law enforcement obligations. Helping the towns deal with impacts and needs for infrastructure by supporting and funding a joint powers agreement with the towns is another recent commission accomplishment.

Another of Linn's personal favorites is the new computerized mapping system available to everyone via the Internet. Log on to [www.sublettewyo.com](http://www.sublettewyo.com) and check it out, Linn recommends.

"You can go in there and click on a property and bring up all the roads, fences, aerial photography, see who all the landowners and the neighbors are," he said. "I would like to see it expanded and further improved."

Commission Chairman Bill Cramer has been steadfast in his determination to find a way to help subdivision residents improve their private road systems, helping to create a new program that is believed to be the first of its kind in the state. Cramer's priorities include finding more ways to get money back to the taxpayers, and he continues to be a vocal supporter of property tax relief for homeowners. Although the commission's efforts have resulted in legislation introduced for consideration, state lawmakers have yet to adopt measures advocated by the commission.

Each of your commissioners is dedicated to exhibiting responsibility to the county's taxpayers and in keeping an eye turned toward the future for our great county.



**County Commissioners Joel Bousman, John Linn and Bill Cramer confer at a meeting.**

## Here's the scoop on your taxes

The county assessor has the task of assessing the value of all taxable property in Sublette County. The county commission sets the mill levy, up to a maximum of 12 mills, and the county treasurer's office sends out the taxation notices.

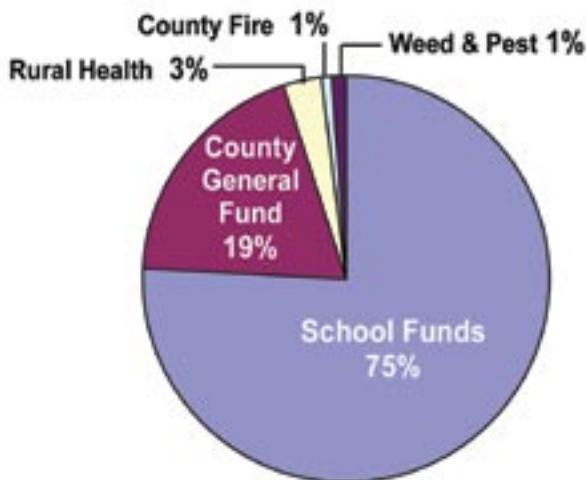
The Sublette County Commission has set the mill levy at the full 12 mills allowed by law. A mill is \$1 of revenue for every \$1,000 of assessed valuation. With minerals accounting for 93 percent of the county's valuation, the commission's decision to tax at the full 12-mill rate allows the county to capture this abundant revenue stream while the industry is experiencing a substantial boom. Minerals are taxed at a rate of 100 percent of fair market value, but are taxed only once at extraction. In contrast, residential property is taxed at 9.5 percent of fair market value, but is taxed every year.

The property tax rate for residential, commercial and agricultural properties is 9.5 percent; 11.5 percent for industrial property; and minerals are taxed at 100 percent.

Although the county taxes 12 mills for county government, your property tax notice includes tax rates ranging from 59 to 67 mills, depending upon where your property is located in the county. There are a variety of special tax districts in the county that impose additional taxation upon property owners in those districts. These special tax districts range from cemetery districts to road improvement districts in areas where property owners vote to approve these taxes on themselves.

But the majority of taxation on your tax notice

**Property Tax Revenue Distribution**



is for school funding: 44 mills of your tax burden pays for the state's educational system. So although the tax is collected at the local level, the revenue is remitted to the state.

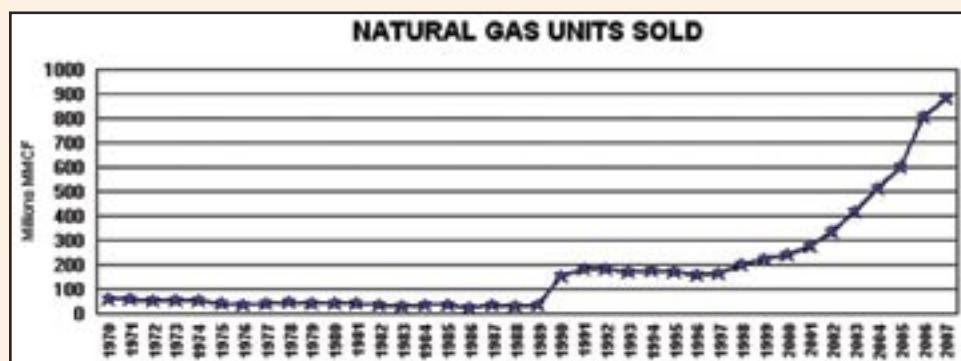
### Residential taxation example:

A residence with a market value of \$200,000 is taxed at 9.5 percent, resulting in an assessed value of \$19,000 ( $\$200,000 \times .095 = \$19,000$ ). This assessed value is then multiplied by the appropriate mill levy to generate property tax dollars. It's according to where in the county the home is located as to what the total tax bill would be, so here's a comparison between School District No. 1 (Rural Pinedale area) and No. 9 (Rural Big Piney area).

<b>VALUATION BY PROPERTY TYPE</b>		
<b>Property Class</b>	<b>Assessed Value</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Minerals	3,792,898,647	92.83
Industrial	144,817,853	3.54
Residential	98,233,929	2.4
Commercial	24,603,585	.60
Agricultural	21,371,947	.52
Utilities	3,772,761	.09
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,085,698,722</b>	<b>100</b>

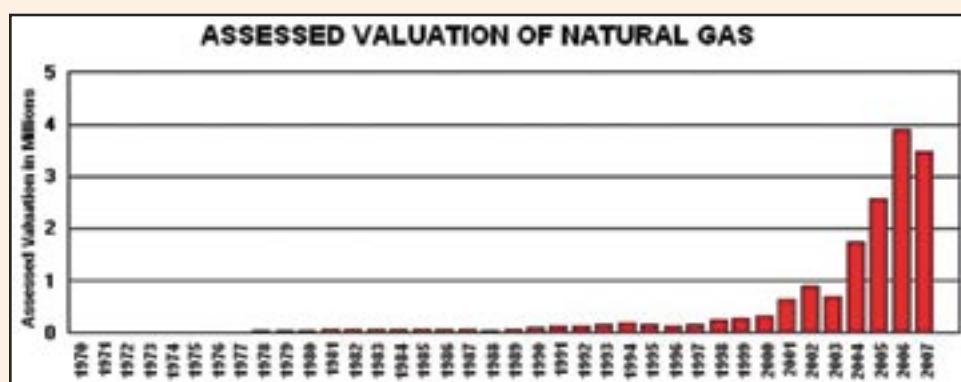
	<b>No. 1</b>	<b>No. 9</b>
School funds	\$845.50	\$837.90
Rural Health	38.00	38.00
Weed & Pest	10.79	10.79
Cemetery	2.00	15.47
County 12 mills	228.00	228.00
<b>Total due:</b>	<b>\$1,124.29</b>	<b>\$1,130.16</b>

## NATURAL GAS AND OIL PRODUCTION AND VALUATION

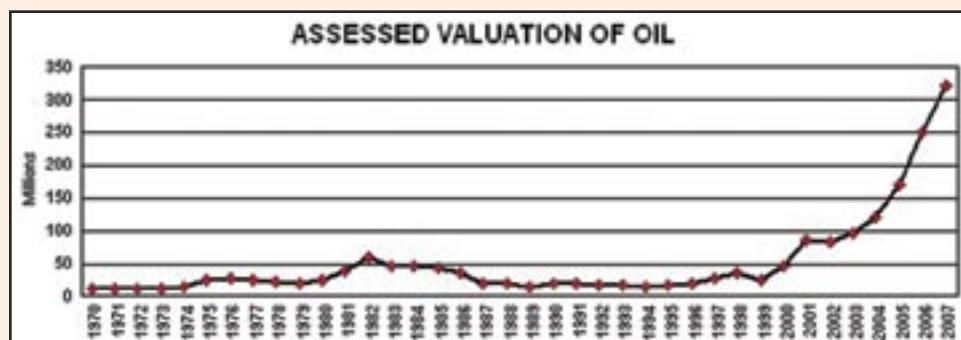
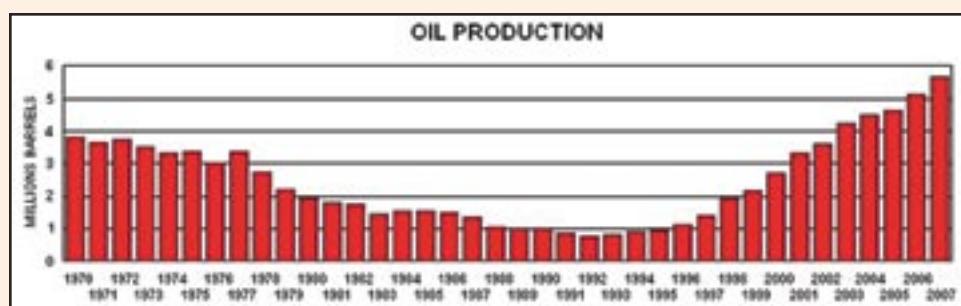


The charts on this page show oil and gas productivity and assessed valuation from 1970 to 2007.

The valuation of natural gas could increase in the future as new pipelines become available to transport the product to new markets such as the eastern states. The spot price for natural gas at the Opal Hub was \$3.08/mcf in August 2007. That's substantially lower than the price at Louisiana's Henry Hub, which rang in at \$6.22/mcf.



Much of the gas produced in Sublette County goes to the lower priced market through the Opal Hub. As new pipelines come on line and current supplier contracts expire, our gas may be able to get to the higher-priced markets.



SOURCE: SUBLLETTE COUNTY ASSESSOR

# County Budget

## \$124 million budget based on 12-mill levy

The county budget is based on a taxation rate of 12 mills. This year, one mill totals more than \$4 million. While the grand total budget is \$124 million, it should be noted that \$50 million of that amount is tucked away into reserve accounts.

The county's Fiscal Year 2008 budget encompasses the time period from July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008.

Many county departments and services are funded under a general fund allocation of about 10.5 mills this year, but certain county services have a direct mill levy application as well. These other departments all receive a portion of a mill, and include the fair, airports, library, museum, recreation and fire. The county budget includes total expenditures for all these departments, and includes cash carry-over and income from other sources.

Here's how the Fiscal Year 2007/2008 budget numbers break down:

Fund	Final budget	Mill
General fund	115,181,151	10.5274
Fair	915,200	.1228
Airport	1,212,395	.1208
Library	1,124,405	.2335
Museum	423,830	.0770
Recreation	1,811,257	.1736
Fire	4,003,323	.7449
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$124,671,561</b>	<b>12 mills</b>

### Fair

The Sublette County Fair Board's budget encompasses .1228 mills. The board's overall budget total of \$915,200 includes \$648,450 for putting on the fair and paying personnel during the year, and \$180,000 for operating the ag center, and \$86,750 from the previous fiscal year expenses for the ag center.

### Airport

Between the Big Piney and Pinedale airports, the mill levy totals .1208, for final budgets of \$1,212,395 in county funding.

The Sublette County Commission agreed to kick in \$65,000 for the Big Piney-Marbleton Airport Board's budget, with about \$19,000 for operations and \$46,000 for capital construction projects. The county and the towns of Big Piney and Marbleton participate in a joint powers agreement for operations of the airport, which is located just outside of Marbleton. The airport board is involved in several capital projects, including putting in a new computerized fuel system, paving, apron rehabilitation, and hangar construction.

The board is also purchasing a plow truck and front-end loader.

The new hangar construction project will cost an estimated \$2.9 million, which the commission has agreed to pay, although the board is attempting to acquire grant funding.

The Pinedale Airport Board's budget expenditures total about \$6.6 million, with much of this amount in the form of capital projects for which the board is receiving grant funding. County money is allocated with \$100,000 for operations, \$355,000 to reserve accounts, and \$715,000 as a local match to construct the new access taxiway for future hangar development. The Town of Pinedale operates the airport on its own, with a subsidy from the county.

### Library

The Sublette County Library Board's .2335 mills helps provide for a budget total of \$1,124,405. This includes the costs of administration, library materials, operations, and a cash reserve fund of \$250,000. In addition to this amount, the county commission has also established a reserve fund for the county libraries, totaling \$2.5 million, to pay



**Sublette County Library, Pinedale.**



**Sublette County Library, Big Piney branch.**



**County commissioners hear details of the Pinedale Library addition project.**

for operations and capital needs in the future. The library board reports that use of both county libraries in Big Piney and Pinedale continues to increase, with more library cards issued, more meetings and events hosted, and more items checked out.

Currently under construction is an 8,000-square-feet addition to the Pinedale Library. A larger new meeting room is planned, while the existing large meeting room will become the children's library, and the existing children's section will become available for the teen library. A courtyard between the two building wings with a new public entrance is also part of the design.

## Museum

The Sublette County Museum Board's mill levy of .0770 helps to fund the board's \$423,830 budget. Included in this allocation is \$249,00 for the Museum of the Mountain Man and \$142,380 for the Green River Valley Museum to fund its operations,

maintenance and personnel costs, as well as \$45,000 in exhibits. The GRVM board plans to move and refurbish the original Big Piney town hall, among other action items. Funds from the county to the MMM covers most aspects of the museum's operating costs. MMM also allocated funding to pay for a financial



**Museum of the Mountain Man, Pinedale.**



**Green River Valley Museum, Big Piney.** PINEDALE ONLINE PHOTO



**Pinedale Fire Hall.** PINEDALE ONLINE PHOTO



**Big Piney/Marbleton Fire Hall.** PINEDALE ONLINE PHOTO

audit and to provide \$75,000 for several publications. The MMM also hopes to relocate the Bronx schoolhouse to the museum's grounds and will install a new elevator as well.

The county museum board also included about \$33,000 in its budget to fund the placement of historic signs and other board operational items.

## Recreation

The Sublette County Recreation Board's mill levy of .1736 helps to fund the board's \$1.8 million budget. This board funds a variety of projects and activities, from establishing and constructing pedestrian pathways and creation of a rifle and pistol range, to improvements at ballfields, operations for the ice arena, and ski trail grooming, if it's recreation, it's in their budget. The commission has used a historic half-mill limit to spending on recreation.

## Fire

Sublette County Fire Fighters Association's overall budget is just over \$4 million, with .7449 mills. The association is receiving \$2.4 million for its next fiscal year, in addition to the establishment of a \$1.5 million reserve account in case it is needed to fight fires on private lands over budgeted amounts. The budgeted amounts include establishment of a Kendall Valley fire department, in addition to existing departments in Big Piney/Marbleton, Bondurant, Daniel, Boulder and Pinedale. The allocation helps to pay for training, fire suppression and operations. The association's capital expenditures include dry hydrants, a mobile air station and a county training center.

# General Fund

## General fund appropriations account for about \$65 million of the county budget.

### CLERK

The county clerk's budget totals \$387,922, with the majority of this amount (\$360,000) paying for staffing. Lesser amounts fund office costs such as telephones and supplies. County Clerk Mary Lankford has six deputy clerks working in the office to meet increased demand for services.

### TREASURER

The county treasurer's office budget totals \$343,094, with \$331,394 allocated for salaries and lesser amounts for office needs. Treasurer Roxanna Jensen oversees five deputies in her office.

### ASSESSOR

The county assessor's budget of \$493,826 includes \$422,826 in personnel costs. Assessor Janet L. Montgomery's budget this year reflects an increase of two new employees to

*Continued on page 10*



**Left to right: County Assessor Janet L. Montgomery, Treasurer Roxanna Jensen, Clerk of Court Marilyn Jensen, and County Clerk Mary Lankford on the Courthouse steps.**

SUBLETTE EXAMINER PHOTO

### Commission tackles wolves, feedgrounds, federal land issues

The county commission has its own budget expenses that are anticipated to total \$305,350. Included in this amount is \$84,750 in salaries for the three commissioners (\$26,250 each, plus \$200 each for special meetings); \$10,000 in meals, travel and mileage; \$500 in office supplies; and \$10,000 in reserves to purchase a new vehicle. There are two \$100,000 budget items, one for special attorneys and the other for consultants.

Through these accounts, the commission takes on a number of high-priority items that don't fall into other departments. It's through these accounts that the commission:

- hired consultants to represent the county's interest in federal land planning processes;
- hired attorneys to represent the county in wolf, grizzly bear and elk feedground litigation;
- commissioned its own socio-economic impact report for the county for use in federal land planning;
- joined the Wyoming Conservation Alliance, a network created to keep apprised of, and be involved in, federal and state rulemaking that could have impacts at the local level;
- commissioned a housing analysis for the county; and
- retains a private law firm to handle mineral taxation litigation issues for the county, as well as other special attorney needs.

## GENERAL FUND APPROPRIATIONS *From page 9*

work with oil and gas assessments. This budget total accounts for seven employees, in addition to Montgomery. The budget also allocates \$35,000 for appraisal and audit of industrial properties.

### COUNTY OFFICER SALARIES

Although the county commission sets the pay scale for most employees, some salaries are set according to state statute. In compliance with state statute, the commission set the annual salary for the county clerk, treasurer, assessor, sheriff, and clerk of district court at \$70,000 for the period from July 2007 to January 2008, at which time it will increase to \$75,000.

### ATTORNEY



**County Attorney  
Ralph Boynton.**

The county attorney's office budget rings in at \$939,339, which includes \$80,000 salary for county attorney Ralph Boynton, and more than \$623,000 in salary costs for four deputy attorneys, six secretaries and an investigator. Additional budget line items include \$85,000 for prosecutions (expert witness fees, travel, etc), \$52,000 for crime victims program, \$20,000 for educational training, and lesser amounts for special software, online legal sources, books, mileage and office supplies. To house the growing county attorney's staff, the commission purchased a two-story house across the street from the county justice building.

### DISTRICT COURT

The clerk of district court budget totals \$361,627, with Clerk Marilyn Jensen overseeing two deputies for a total personnel cost of \$185,627. The budget includes \$110,000 for the public defender program; \$10,000 in juror and witness fees;



**Sublette County Justice Building, Pinedale.**

\$15,000 in guardian ad litem; \$12,000 to maintain the law library; \$6,000 in court-appointed attorney costs; and lesser budget items for office needs.

### RECYCLING

The county funds two recycling programs for a cost of \$357,718. In the future, the commission may consider consolidating recycling operations to the Marbleton landfill to be more effective in all facets of the operation.

The Pinedale-based program is Sublette Citizens for Recycling, with a budget allocation of \$248,718, to help fund its operations, purchase a skid steer, install heating in the shop and purchase computer equipment.

Tri-Town Recycling, which encompasses the southern portion of the county, has a budget



**Pinedale Recycling Center on North Bridger Avenue.**

allocation of \$109,000 to fund operations and to purchase six trailers and install a remote-controlled garage door.

### GIS

The county maintains a geographic information systems budget of \$87,600, with \$45,600 in salary, \$40,000 in consultation/projects and lesser amounts for office supplies and office needs. The GIS system work is contracted out to a private firm, Greenwood Mapping.

### ENGINEER

The general fund budget includes \$30,000 for county surveyor Paul Scherbel, to pay for surveying and platting as needed.

### COURTHOUSE/MAINTENANCE

The county courthouse and maintenance department \$2.175 million budget has four major cost categories: \$570,000 in salaries; \$300,000 in maintenance buildings and equipment; \$500,000

for the maintenance shop project; and \$400,000 in government facilities (paying for maintenance contracts for elevators, telephone and environmental systems).

This budget includes other big items such as \$125,000 for utilities, \$210,000 for insurance, janitorial supplies of \$25,000, \$20,000 in equipment and tools, and lesser line items for operational needs.



Superintendent Andy O'Neal oversees ten janitors and four maintenance people. This department is responsible for a wide range of county-owned buildings, from the courthouse complex to the offices at the county shop, Rendezvous Pointe and the Big Piney Sheriff's annex, as well as helping out with certain maintenance work at other facilities in the county, such as the ice arena in Pinedale.

### P&Z

The Planning and Zoning office budget totals \$235,833, which funds a planner, zoning administrator, and secretary, for a personnel cost total of \$162,983. In addition to regular office supply items, the budget includes provisions for purchase of a new vehicle (\$30,000); plat reviews costing \$18,000; and education and travel costs of \$7,500.

### CORONER

County coroner Donald Schooley's budget totals \$64,850, which pays his salary of \$26,250, as well as items such as autopsies (\$12,000); supplies (\$8,000); new vehicle reserve of \$7,750; county burial fees of \$4,000; standby time for deputies (\$2,500) and vehicle expenses (\$3,000) along with a few lesser items.



**County Coroner  
Don Schooley.**

SUBLETTE EXAMINER  
PHOTO

### PUBLIC HEALTH

The public health department's budget totals \$203,536. The county's balance to the state is \$47,567 (which pays for a public health nurse), while the secretarial salary is \$52,219. Major budget items include \$30,000 for vaccines, \$32,000 for bio-terrorism, \$15,000 for health fair, with lesser line items for office operational needs.

This year, the Rural Health Care District is funding an additional public health nurse position. Although these positions are normally funded in cooperation with the state, the increase in population and activity in the county has brought additional pressure to the public health nursing department, so the health care district stepped up to fund a new position to help meet the demand.

*Continued on page 12*

## **GEN'L FUND APPROPRIATIONS From page 11**

### **HEALTH OFFICER AND SANITARIAN**

The county health officer and sanitarian departments' budget totals \$77,887. This includes salaries for Sanitarian Keith Raney at \$61,462 and for Health Officer Dr. Tom Johnston at \$5,700, as well as funds for a short-term intern for \$3,050.

### **CLASS II ROADS**

The Class II roads program is a new creation of the Sublette County Commission, believed to be the first of its kind in the state. It provides a funding source for improvement projects to roads in the county, such as heavily used subdivision roads. These Class II roads have their own standards and no money is spent until they become public roads and are accepted by the county. With an initial budget of \$1,580,000, most of the money (\$1.5 million) is designated as grant funding for eligible road projects. The remainder of the budget is for administrative costs and \$75,000 to pay consultants (engineers) as needed.

### **TRANSFER STATION**

The transfer station, which serves as a hub for collecting garbage in the Pinedale area to be transported to the Marbleton landfill, has a budget of \$231,700. That amount includes the cost of the contract to operate the facility (\$91,200); engineering and re-design fees of \$80,000; and the cost to install three-phase power to the facility (\$53,000).

### **WASTE MANAGEMENT**

The \$1.3 million waste management budget encompasses costs associated with the county's sanitary landfill near Marbleton. Personnel costs provide for a superintendent, secretary and four laborers, costing about \$344,000 annually. The budget includes allocations of \$50,000 for engineering fees; \$40,000 for utilities; \$30,000 for

gas and oil; \$25,000 for repairs; \$5,000 for tires; \$30,000 for water monitoring; and \$60,000 for the building/bale facility. The county also plans to spend \$15,000 on equipment hire and \$50,000 to chip seal the existing asphalt and access road to the landfill.

The allocation of \$464,000 for heavy equipment allows the county to purchase a new compactor and D6 dozer. The county also allocated \$205,000 for remediation efforts for old wells and landfills.

Landfill department records indicate that in one year, the county disposed of 46,115 tons of refuse. In a deal with Teton County, 30,510 tons from that county were disposed of in the Marbleton landfill, costing Teton County \$18.50 per ton under the contract price. Refuse coming from the Pinedale trash transfer station accounted for another 4,295 tons, while the remainder of the garbage entering the Marbleton landfill was 11,310 tons, for which the county charged \$5 per ton to county citizens.

Sublette County is currently negotiating a new contract with Teton County, and is also participating in a state-mandated study with Lincoln, Teton and Uinta counties to explore the feasibility of regionalized waste disposal and consolidation of landfills.

### **FAIRGROUNDS**

The county has a full-time fairgrounds manager in charge of general operations of the fairgrounds located near Marbleton. The budget for this department is \$331,000, which includes personnel costs for the manager as well as part-time laborers in the amount of \$92,000. The other major budget item this year is \$80,000 for projects ranging from raising and leveling the shop foundation, to adding water barriers to the beef wash area. Some landscaping and installation of sprinkler systems, sod and fence are included in the budget as well.

### **EXTENSION SERVICE**

Work by the county extension service takes place through an agreement with the University of

Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service and the county, with the county allocating \$128,800 to this program. The county funds a full-time clerk position and her replacement while on leave, as well as funds half of a 4-H program position. Personnel costs paid by the county total about \$72,500. The county also rents space to house the extension office, and pays for office utilities and other needs. The county also funds items to support the 4-H program and youth education, and pays for staff travel expenses.

### EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

This department's budget rings in at \$168,712, with most of that amount to fund the two full-time coordinator positions, costing about \$113,000. The department's major workload is to serve as the local homeland security agency and to respond to emergency situations such as hazardous material spills or situations involving our booming energy industry. Lesser items in the budget are for support materials and \$22,500 for two haz-mat trailers equipped with haz-mat response materials. Coordinator Bob Hanson plans to put together a Citizens Emergency Response Team to assist law enforcement or search and rescue efforts as needed.

### DRUG COURT

The drug court program in Sublette County is a success story, so much that it has been expanded to help both adults and juveniles. The purpose of the program is to offer participants the opportunity to obtain treatment that promotes a lifestyle of recovery, reducing repeat offenders. It focuses on rehabilitation.

The juvenile drug court budget totals \$66,000, with \$50,000 of this amount allocated to mental health and treatment and \$10,000 for team travel and training.

The adult drug court budget totals \$182,930, including \$45,000 for the full-time coordinator salary. Drug testing and supplies are covered in a \$40,000 line item, and mental health counseling and treatment receives \$70,000. Drug team travel and training are provided with \$17,000. Indigent services are allocated \$5,000; while drug court incentives and graduation are both covered with \$1,000 allocations.



Sublette County is host to the recently completed visitor's center, located in downtown Pinedale.



**The County Road and Bridge shop near Pinedale.**

## County road and bridge

When you're talking big equipment, you're talking big numbers, with the budget for the county road department ringing in at nearly \$31 million. Taking care of more than 500 miles of county roads, this department has the largest budget of any department in the county.

Working to keep county roads free from snow in winter and undertaking massive projects as the weather clears, the county road crew stays busy, with Road Superintendent Butch Penton overseeing the department and his 23 employees. Personnel costs for administration, laborers and mechanics total just over \$1.5 million.

The budget provides \$750,000 into an equipment reserve account for the future, in addition to \$2 million for anticipated purchases of a screener, roller, two road graders, three pickup trucks, a sweeper, a tank truck, rental of a scraper, a conveyor belt, a three-axle trailer, snow blower, and a loader.

The budget provides \$400,000 for gravel and \$300,000 for a crusher.

One million was allocated for property purchase so the county can acquire more of its own gravel pits, and an additional \$1.5 million was allocated under a building construction line item to provide a sand shed for asphalt at the new county shop near Pinedale.

The commission allocated \$750,000 for equipment hire; \$400,000 for material purchase; \$400,000 for soil stabilizer (eg., mag water); \$800,000 for gas and oil for equipment; \$145,000 for parts and repairs; \$50,000 for tires; and \$35,000 for miscellaneous supplies.

Other allocations include \$75,000 for utilities and \$12,000 for radio maintenance.

Paving projects will receive \$350,000 in funding, while other major county road projects are allocated \$20 million, to include work on:

- 23-134 Big Piney Calpet
- 23-123 Pinedale South (Mesa Road)
- 23 111 Middle Piney
- 23-141 Mickelson Lane
- 23-112 Daniel Merna
- 23-190 Industrial Site
- 23-145 Noble Lane

The county budgeted \$300,000 for the LaBarge Creek Road project, in which Lincoln County performs maintenance and improvements to the portion of the road located in Sublette County, including numerous culvert replacements, for which Sublette County then reimburses.



**Sublette County jail.**

## Sheriff's office

The Sublette County Sheriff's Office oversees three budgets: law enforcement, communications, and detention.

In 2001, the SCSO had 34 employees, which rose to 73 by 2006. Back in 2001, the SCSO had 6,175 calls for service, but by 2006, the number had risen to 8,348.

The detention budget totals \$2.4 million to fund jail operations, of which \$1.5 million funds five staffers for administration and 18 deputies to man the jail. The new county jail has a capacity of 50 inmates, and has numerous guards and other personnel on duty around the clock.

Other personnel expenses include training and uniform costs of about \$30,000. The cost to board adult prisoners is \$250,000 annually, while the boarding of juveniles is another \$30,000.

The county pays \$12,500 for medical needs of detention officers, such as employment physicals and blood work. Medical needs for prisoners is provided in an allocation of \$70,000.

Jail maintenance, supplies, utilities and equipment repair total nearly \$75,000.

The budget includes \$400,000 for construction.

The \$592,966 communications budget includes \$381,416 for seven communication officers' sala-

ries, with another \$17,000 for training, uniforms and medical provisions. The largest remaining budget items are \$74,700 for communications center maintenance and repair; and \$82,000 for equipment, including a reverse 911 system. The budget includes \$25,000 for the 911 system as well.

The \$3.8 million law enforcement budget includes \$2.6 million in salaries for the sheriff, undersheriff, lieutenant, chief detective, five sergeants, 25 deputies, five secretaries and a resource officer. Uniform, training and medical expenses total about \$119,000.

Big budget items include; \$234,000 for patrol equipment; \$32,500 for criminal investigations; \$35,000 for office equipment (mainly to replace 18 computers); \$19,000 for investigation equipment; and \$42,000 for canine animal control.

The budget includes \$250,000 in reserve for new vehicles, while tires, maintenance and gas and oil for the SCSO fleet total \$180,000.



**Sheriff Bardy Bardin.**

SUBLETTE EXAMINER PHOTO



**Sublette County Courthouse in  
Pinedale.** PINEDALE ONLINE PHOTO

## Search and Rescue

Search and Rescue was recently made an independent entity by the commission. To fund the new department, the commission adopted a budget of \$338,281.

Darrin Davison is the full-time administrator for S&R, with the department now housed in the old ambulance barn in Pinedale. Salary and office costs total less than \$75,000, with the remainder of the budget encompassing equipping volunteers for their efforts.

From cell phones, radios and pagers, to high-angle equipment, dive and swiftwater gear, medical upgrades, mapping and all-terrain vehicle purchases, equipment needs rang in at more than \$130,000.

The budget also includes \$28,000 for search operations; \$38,550 for training; \$20,000 for gas and oil; and \$19,500 for building repair and maintenance. The county is participating with neighboring counties with water, land and search management operations to create regional teams for more effective use of equipment, manpower and expertise.

## Other General Account Projects

Other general accounts total \$16.8 million in the current budget. This overall budget includes items ranging from financial administration costs (\$100,000), workman's compensation and unemployment (\$160,000) postage (\$35,000) and health insurance and other benefit costs for county employees (totaling some \$3.1 million).

Printing and publication of public notices and other materials costs the county about \$75,000 per year.

Through this "other general accounts" line item, the county commission funds a variety of special projects:

### Support for special boards

- Joint Powers Water Board \$4,000 to maintain the group to look at water storage projects.
- Historic survey grant \$40,000 for signs/easements and history projects.
- Conservation district \$332,826 for water quality sampling and soil survey work.
- PAWG Socio-Economic Working Group \$70,000 pays for full-time position and support.
- Sublette Community Partnership \$30,000 to help address socio-economic impacts to communities.
- Coalition of Governments and Lincoln Uinta Association of Governments \$40,000, putting forth a united front for local government in federal decision-making.
- Mosquito control \$80,000 helps to pay for mosquito spraying.
- Predator control board \$10,000 contribution for raven control.
- Tri-Town \$38,706 contract to support planning efforts for three incorporated towns.

### Support for activities

- Rural television will receive \$26,000 to install new transmitters.
- Ag center \$10,000
- Ice arena \$10,000
- Golf course expansion \$37,455 for design and planning.
- Big Piney Recreation Center \$78,800 for design and planning efforts.
- Library materials grant \$86,600 for new materials.
- Arts center \$44,000 for design and survey for potential arts center.

*Continued on page 18*

## Building construction or renovation projects

**Marbleton airport hangar:** \$3.1 million building, with construction soon to get underway.

**Rendezvous Pointe garage:** \$500,000 building just completed.

**Search and Rescue:** \$25,000 for renovations to former Pinedale ambulance barn, which now houses S&R program.

**SAFV building:** \$500,000 will fund a new SAFV house and office. A portion will come from grant funding.

**Pinedale Library addition:** \$3 million, construction in progress.

**Sand Draw Rescue Center:** \$1.4 million facility now completed. This building project, located near the junction of Highways 189 and 351, was a cooperative venture, with four major industrial operators – EnCana Oil and Gas (USA), Ultra Petroleum, Shell Rocky Mountain and BP joining Sublette County Commissioners in construction of the building, and the county Rural Health Care District agreeing to provide the staff for the facility.

**Pinedale Medical Clinic:** \$5.1 million, just completed.

**Marbleton/Big Piney Clinic:** \$500,000 for design and geotech work.

**Marbleton ambulance barn:** \$40,000 for design work.



New Pinedale ambulance facility.



Pinedale Medical Clinic. PINEDALE ONLINE PHOTO



Pinedale Library addition. PINEDALE ONLINE PHOTO



Sand Draw Rescue Center. PINEDALE ONLINE PHOTO



**Rendezvous Pointe Senior Center, Pinedale.**



**Southwest Sublette County Pioneers Senior Center in Marbleton.**

## OTHER PROJECTS *Continued from page 16*

### Support for human service programs

- Sublette Center (via RHCD) \$600,000 for general support for center.
- Senior citizens – Big Piney \$132,860
- Senior citizens – Pinedale \$116,700
- Senior citizen facilities \$500,000 (Marbleton land purchase)
- Veteran services \$16,800. In addition, the county rents office space in the Summit Building in Pinedale for this office to provide service to the county's 800 veterans.
- Sexual Assault and Family Violence \$43,819 for program support
- Southwest counseling \$25,000
- Pinedale Preschool \$75,000
- Child Care Coalition \$56,700
- The Learning Center \$225,000
- Discovery Center \$60,000
- Scholarships \$10,000
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters \$29,000
- McKenzie Meningitis Foundation \$7,500

## RESERVES

County governments are prohibited from developing "trust funds" with public money, but the Sublette County Commission has worked to put money aside for the future needs of the county by creating "reserve" accounts.

The current county budget includes \$50 million in reserve accounts. Five million is retained in cash reserves in order to operate county government throughout the year.

Another \$3.7 million is placed into an equipment reserve, with \$41.5 million in depreciation reserve accounts. The depreciation reserve accounts

are varied in purpose, from more than \$5 million in the recreation account to pay for the projects such as the proposed recreation center near Big Piney and golf course expansion at Pinedale, to \$9.5 million in "human services" funding. The commission set aside \$3 million in reserves for construction of a new hangar at the Marbleton airport, and tucked away \$3 million to help fund projects for incorporated towns in the county. Other items covered by the reserves include building projects and maintenance, landfill, road projects, senior center operations and facilities, county fair, museums, library and airport projects.

## SPECIAL DISTRICTS

Just as some county-wide districts are created by state statute, in other cases, property owners within the boundaries of special districts held elections to create the special districts. Here's a rundown of those districts using tax assessments to fund activities. It should be noted that the only role the county serves here is to collect tax money, which is then transferred into accounts held by the special districts.

### Health

The Sublette County Rural Health Care District taxes up to two mills and operates under an \$18 million budget. The current budget includes two-mills totaling about \$8.2 million for partial funding, with cash carry-over, interest and revenues making up the balance.

The RHCD budget allocates expenditures as follows:

Ambulance operations	\$1.7 million
Clinic operations	\$5.6 million
Administration	\$3.9 million
Capital outlay	\$3.8 million
Capital reserves	\$2.7 million

### Weed & Pest

The Sublette County Weed and Pest District budget includes .570 mills to cover its total of \$4 million. The board holds \$1 million in reserves, and plans to spend \$2.5 million on various items from purchasing new sprayers, to building a new office addition and equipment storage facility.

### Cemeteries

The Big Piney Cemetery District uses its .8480 mill levy allocation to pay for upkeep and maintenance totaling \$783,360.

The Upper Green River Cemetery District uses its .1050 mills to fund expenditures of \$381,769.

### Improvements

The Hoback Ranches Service and Improvement District passed an 8-mill assessment to fund its \$106,024 budget to repair and maintain roads and

fences, and allow for protection of wildlife within the special district.

The Boulder Lake Improvement District agreed to assess 8 mills for \$11,508 in road improvements.

The Meadow Canyon Road Service and Improvement District is assessing 8 mills for its \$2,500 budget for the purpose of road reconstruction, grading and graveling.

The Redstone Upper Green River Service District enacted a 6-mill rate to pay \$10,000 for road and bridge maintenance and improvements, as well as administrative costs.

### Mosquitoes

The Sublette County Mosquito Abatement District No. 1 board set an assessment rate of \$20 per business or residence in the Pinedale-area district to fund the \$9,000 budget for spraying.

Mosquito Abatement District No. 2 proposed a \$124,010 budget, of which \$100,000 is in an emergency spray fund. The cost will be \$117.40 per household or business for the 198 entities within the district.

The Boulder Mosquito Improvement District board assessed a rate of \$25.00 per landowner and \$2.50 per acre to fund the \$11,330 in spraying costs.



**Mosquito spray plane near Marbleton.**

PINEDALE ONLINE PHOTO

## INCOME

The county budget includes about \$49 million in tax revenue to fund governmental operations, but that's not the only income on which the budget is based. The county generates more than \$16 million in other revenue as well, mostly from sales and use taxes. For budget estimation purposes, 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.

Outside of property tax, the big money-maker for the county is the sales and use tax, which stands at four percent in Sublette County. The budget calls for \$10 million in revenue from this source, although that's probably a fairly low estimate since the county generated over \$13 million in sales and use tax revenue.

The county invests its money into interest-bearing accounts, generating more than \$1.6 million in interest last year, but the conservative estimate for the current budget anticipates \$1 million in interest income. The county anticipates \$50,000 in income from miscellaneous fees, although it received more than \$1 million in miscellaneous fee income last year.

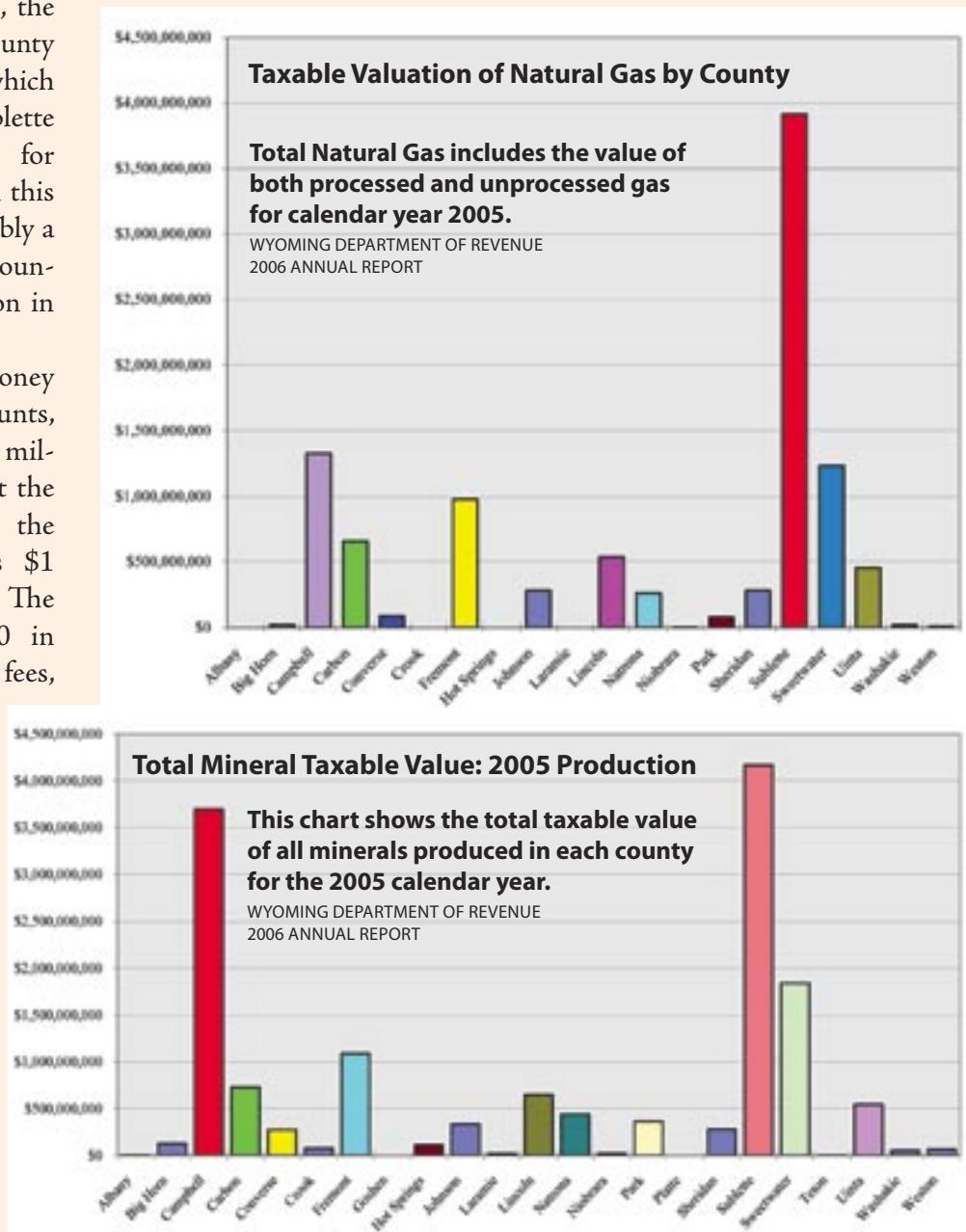
The county budgeted \$150,000 for user fee revenue as well. This includes fees for items such as titles, marriage licenses and recording documents.

The county generated more than \$631,000 in landfill fees last year (mostly from Teton County), and is budgeted

for \$620,000 in fee income this year. Motor vehicle fees should generate \$575,000, while special fuel fees will bring in about \$778,000 and the gas tax is estimated to generate \$446,000 in revenue.

There are numerous other sources of income for the county, from grants programs and reimbursements from other government, to smaller revenue streams from varied sources such as special taxes and penalties.

About \$60 million of the \$124 million budget is unspent and carried over to the current year.



# An invitation

The Sublette County Commission begins its annual budget discussions in May, holding special budget work sessions in June, and adopting the final budget after a public hearing in July. We invite you to provide input throughout the budget process. Let us know what projects you would like to see supported, or let us know how you feel tax dollars should be put to work for the citizens of the county.

## Sublette Board of County Commissioners

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**Cowboys at the cutting grounds during the Green River Drift.**

PINEDALE ONLINE PHOTO

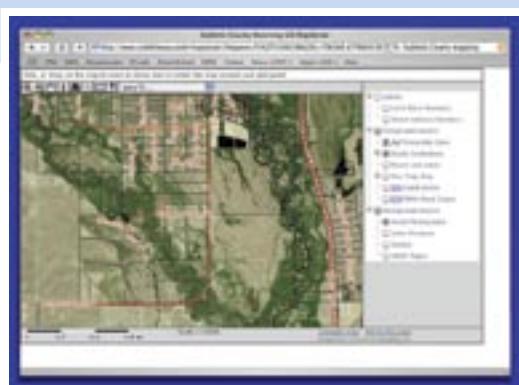


**Two bull moose meet up during the fall rut.**



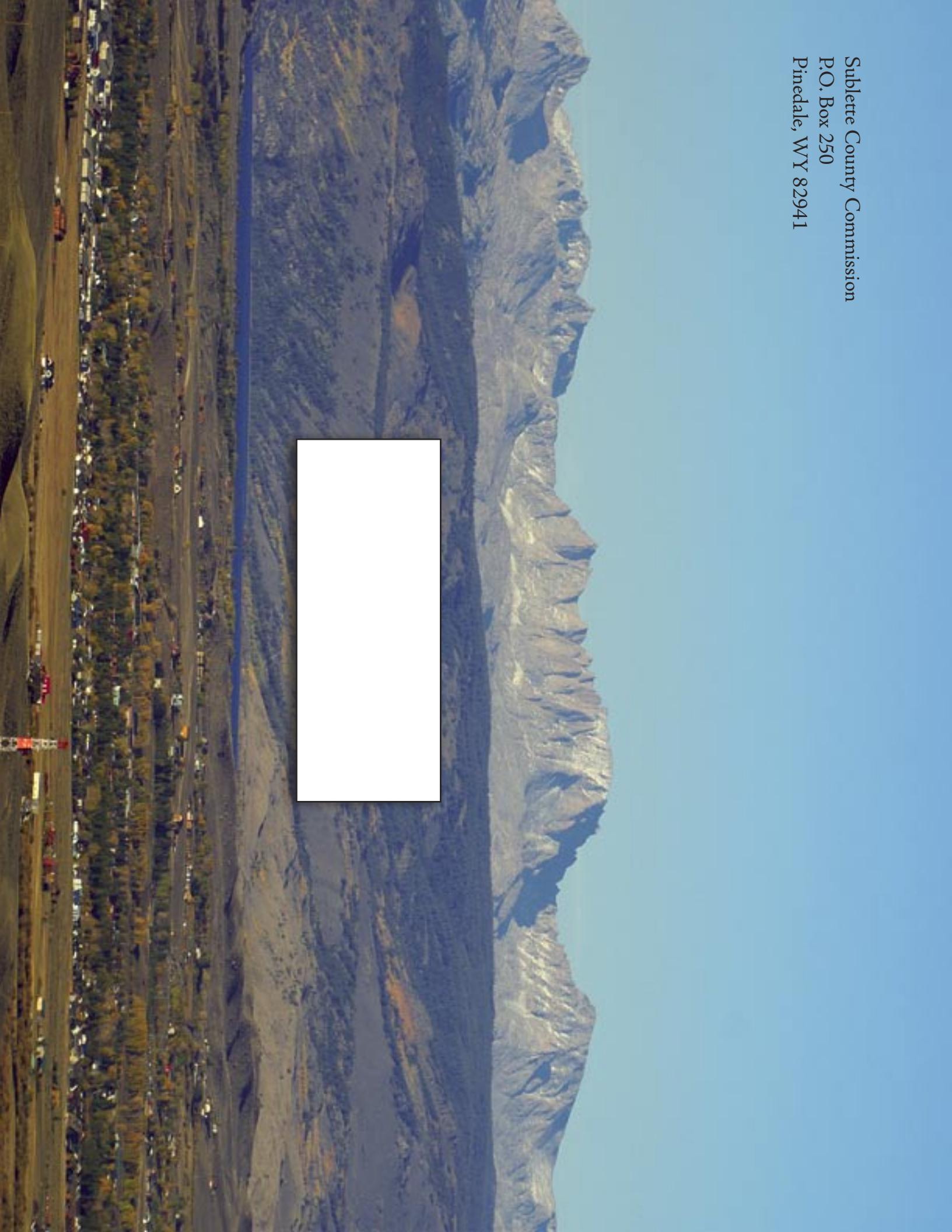
**Snowmobile races in Bondurant.**

PINEDALE ONLINE PHOTO



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Log onto [www.sublettewyo.com/mapserver](http://www.sublettewyo.com/mapserver) to view custom maps of Sublette County, including lot and block numbers, street addresses, roads, rivers, fences, aerial photography, voter precincts, zoning districts, and more.

An aerial photograph of a valley. On the left, a town with numerous houses and buildings is nestled among green trees. A river flows through the center of the valley. To the right, a range of rugged, snow-capped mountains rises against a clear blue sky. A large, solid white rectangular box is overlaid on the image, centered over the town area.

Sublette County Commission  
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