



# A Report to Our Citizens

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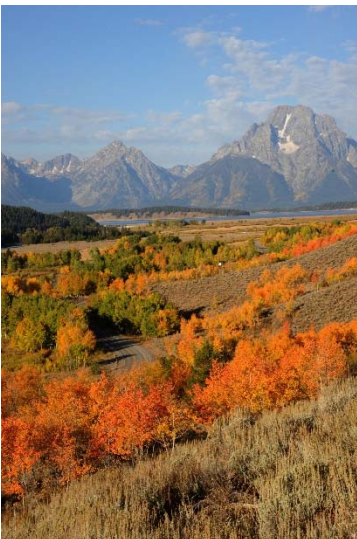
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A Statewide Elected Office established in the Wyoming Constitution at Statehood



## Wyoming’s Leaders are working for:

- Continued job and economic growth
- Infrastructure – roads, schools, water projects, community development and more added support for towns, cities and counties
- Efficient, effective state government operations
- Investments in our state that benefit citizens now



### Plans

- Advancing the state energy strategy and initiatives identified in that strategy
- Implementing the state water strategy issued in January 2015
- Furthering the development of broadband and opportunities that flow from high speed access
- Working for increased international trade and in other ways to support Wyoming industries

### Wyoming accolades include:

- 2nd highest rate of trust in state government – 76%
- #1 for business friendly tax climate
- best return on investment for taxpayers
- lowest state/local tax burden
- lowest foreclosure rate
- highest credit rating, AAA, from Standard & Poor’s for last four years
- top 5 award for excellence in data center recruiting for last three years

Wyoming has received many accolades recently and those listed above are some of them. In 2014, there were more Wyoming residents employed than ever.

**We’re on the Web!**  
<http://sao.state.wy.us>

## Wyoming’s Progress: Fiscal Year 2014

**Increasing Broadband:** High-speed connections to schools increased over 1900% the last four years. The Unified Network received funding and got underway in 2014. In less than a year, this network has been fully built. The Unified Network

brings an even higher standard of broadband to Wyoming. The state has been a facilitator, helping on rights-of-ways and providing infrastructure upgrades for schools and government, which will also be available to the private sector. High speed broadband opens doors to the world of knowledge

for teachers and students. It enhances opportunities for tele-education, tele-health, and tele-business. It shows tech and other companies that Wyoming has the technology infrastructure to compete globally - we are wired and ready for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Improving State Government:** State agencies undertook an initiative to reduce rules. Many rules on the books were outdated or overly long. The objective was a rules reduction of

1/3 in number and 1/3 in length, understanding that some agencies might be able to cut more and some might be able to cut less. The rules have been reduced significantly. The Legislature changed state law to allow

for further rules reduction and to provide for an updated rules database. The efforts continue and the result, when the database project is completed, will be rules that are easier for citizens to find and use.

**Recognizing Wyoming Entrepreneurs:** Wyoming citizens have retained the traits that made our state great and will keep our state great – independence, entrepreneurial spirit, grit, to name a few. Consequently, Wyoming has numerous business success stories.

In fall 2013, the inaugural Wyoming Business Hall of Fame inducted five Wyoming business trailblazers – James Cash Penney, W. Edwards Deming, H.A. “Dave” True, Homer Scott, Sr. and Clarene Law. The first four named were honored in memoriam; and Clarene Law, a standout in the hospitality business

and for her public service, received the honor in person. The fall 2013 business forum, which Governor Mead cohosted with the Wyoming Business Alliance/Wyoming Heritage Foundation, also featured 23 Wyoming enterprises, showing the diversity and dynamism of our business community.

**Fighting against Federal Overreach:** Wyoming has pushed back against federal overreach. We have been at odds most frequently with the EPA, a federal agency that churns out harmful regulations seemingly nonstop. The state filed suit over EPA’s decision to partially

disapprove Wyoming’s regional haze plan. We have a good plan for addressing visibility, and we continue to defend it. The Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the state’s plan regarding sulphur dioxides. The state’s plan insofar as it relates to nitrogen oxides is still before the Tenth Circuit.

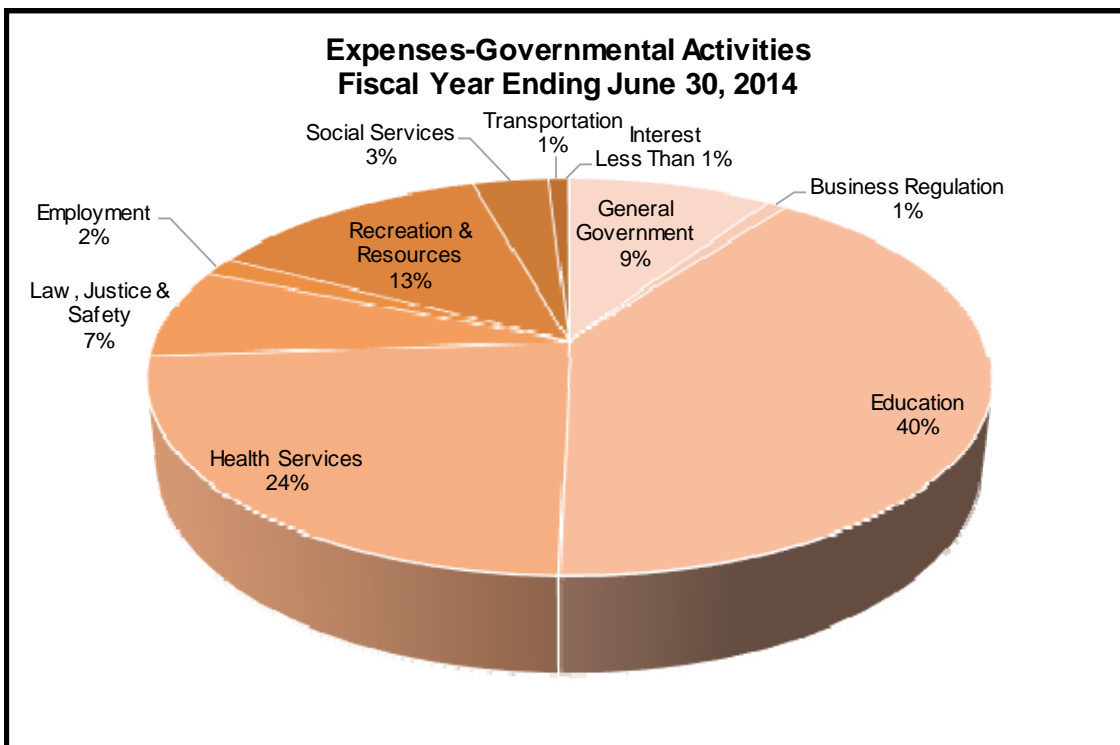
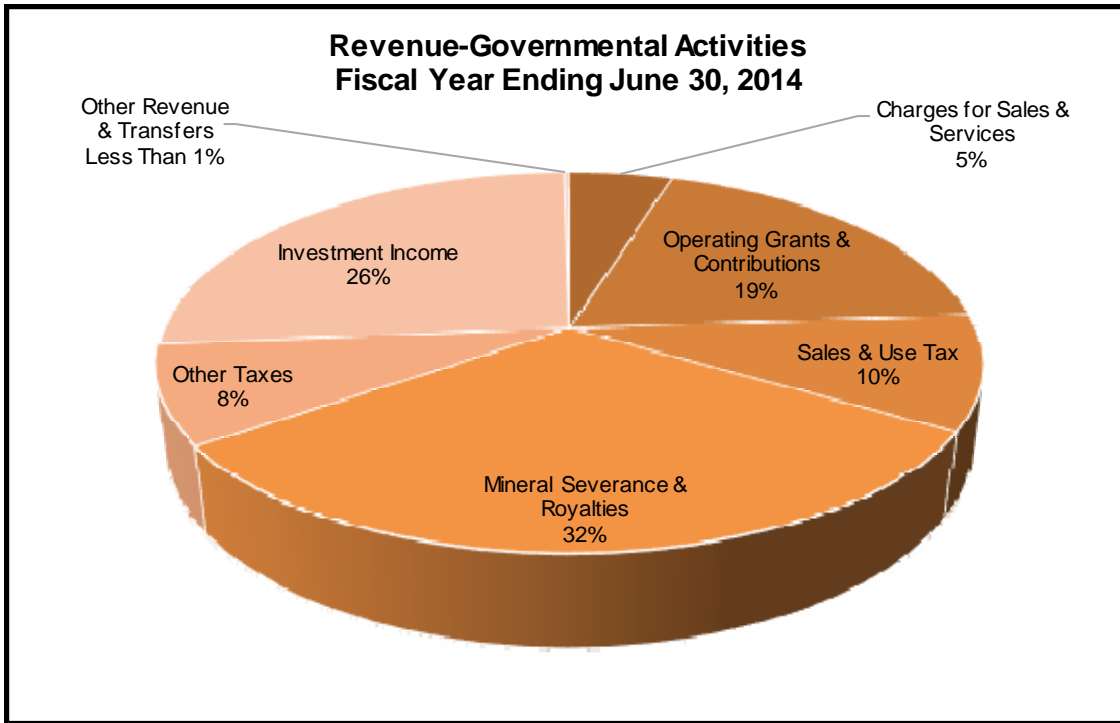
Wyoming challenged EPA’s decision regarding the Wind River Indian Reservation boundary and that case is pending in the Tenth Circuit. The state also opposes EPA’s rulemaking for power plants, waters of the U.S., and others in the works.

## Demographic Information

	Fiscal Year 2013	Fiscal Year 2014
Population	576,412	582,658
Per Capita Income	\$48,670	\$52,826
Visitors to State Parks & Historic Sites	2,915,409	3,878,478
Public School Enrollment	90,993	92,218
State Government Employees	9,327	9,853
Unemployment Rate	5.4%	4.6%



## Wyoming’s Finances: Revenues and Expenses



*An independent audit of the State’s financial statements resulted in an unqualified audit opinion, which is best possible audit opinion. Financial information in this report is derived from Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) data in the State’s Comprehensive Annual Financial Report prepared by the State Auditor’s Office. To see the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, visit: <http://sao.state.wy.us>.*

## 2015 and Beyond: Challenges and Opportunities

### Wyoming’s Elected Officials

Governor:  
Matthew H. Mead

Secretary of State:  
Ed Murray

State Auditor:  
Cynthia I. Cloud

State Treasurer:  
Mark Gordon

Superintendent of Public Instruction:  
Jillian Balow

### We’re on the Web!

<http://wyoming.gov/>

**Thank you, Governor Mead, for contributing information contained in this report.**



Photos courtesy of Rick Carpenter

Wyoming is solid – fiscally and otherwise. Past leaders made decisions that put our state in an enviable position, and current leaders are preserving and building on it. We will continue to build on the solid foundation laid. The result will be better today and a better future.

As a state, we are fortunate to have such great resources – energy and mineral resources, to be sure, but also wildlife, treasures of nature, and strong citizens. We continue to support energy, tourism and agriculture – our big three industries, and we work hard to keep a business friendly environment for all businesses. We have developed a state water strategy, issued in January 2015, and are eager to implement it. We have welcomed new and expanded manufacturing facilities, data centers, and oil to rail facilities and look forward to welcoming more businesses in the coming years. We will continue to invest in our communities - they are, after all, where most people live and where Main Streets can thrive.

On July 10, 2015, Wyoming will mark the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of statehood. We invite visitors near and far to join us for this special occasion and any time of the year because there are always amazing things to see and do.

In this General Session year, we are working on a supplemental budget that will stand the state in good stead for the second year of this biennium – that will continue to move Wyoming forward. The Governor’s budget proposal holds operating expenses relatively flat; strengthens the University of Wyoming and our community colleges; provides added support for local government as past budgets have; and invests in strategic areas, like job training and placement and forest health.

Falling oil prices are a challenge we face. For every five dollar drop in oil, the state loses \$35 million in revenue. We should all be concerned, but we have experienced commodity price drops before and we will weather this one.

Medicaid expansion is a challenge. Many of us do not like the ACA and would rather not have to deal with it at all, but it is upon us. The Legislature asked the Department of Health to put together the best possible plan for Wyoming. The Department has submitted such a plan for the Legislature to consider. Some in the Legislature are looking at an alternative plan. Medicaid expansion needs to be resolved this session.

In a time when the federal government is bloated and struggling with debt, states like Wyoming have stepped up to lead. In Wyoming, we are getting things done. We have become a leader in energy and other areas as well. We accept our leadership role and the responsibilities that come with it. We will meet the challenges and embrace the opportunities. The prospects ahead for Wyoming are indeed exciting.