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Hello Sublette County, this is Albert Sommers reporting to you from Cheyenne on Thursday, February 16. Today, the Speaker of the House welcomed ten former Speakers, who visited the House and shared important moments in their careers. All the Speakers stated that the relationships we build are far longer-lasting than the legislation we create. They also relayed an even more important point: by developing relationships, we find solutions. As the Senate and the House work toward common ground on the budget bill, I hope we remember the lessons that these former Speakers tried to impart to us today.

I floor-managed (that is, presented) Senate File 147 today in Committee of the Whole. This bill reflects the Appropriation Committee's strategy to shift agencies away from General Fund dollars to their own fee dollars. The supplemental budget bill, also in line with that strategy, cuts most investigators from the Wyoming Livestock Board, and shifts \$500,000 of brand inspector costs from the General Fund to brand inspection fee dollars. The Livestock Board currently has statutory authority to raise fees up to 20 percent a year, but without the \$500,000 in General Fund dollars, it may have to raise fees by more than 20 percent the first year.

SF 147 gives the Livestock Board authority to raise fees by 25 percent per year, instead of 20 percent. Without this authority, the Livestock Board may struggle to absorb the cuts, while having the statutory responsibility to provide current brand inspection services. SF 147 barely passed in Committee of the Whole. I support this bill, because it is fair that we livestock producers pay for more of the services we receive, and not expect the state, in a down economy, to continue to supplement the brand inspection program at the current rate.

The Legislature will take a four-day weekend, and return to work on Tuesday Feb. 21. I can be reached at albert@albertsommers.com

Goodnight for now.