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Hello, this is Albert Sommers reporting to you from interim work with the Wyoming Legislature. In the last two weeks the Wyoming Broadband Advisory Council, the Opioid Addiction Task Force, and the Joint Appropriations Subcommittee on Revenue Streams and Budget Process and Simplification met. I serve on all of these committees in some capacity.

The Wyoming Broadband Advisory Council was created from legislation last session, and was charged with developing a Broadband Enhancement Plan for Wyoming, which would include mapping broadband quality in Wyoming. The Council held several meetings, starting June 5 and wrapping up on August 24, which complied with the statutory deadline of having a plan by September 1, 2018. The Council developed a Mission and Vision statement to guide enhancing broadband in Wyoming. The Mission: Enrich lives, enable economic diversification and move Wyoming to a position of leadership in the new digital world by ensuring every citizen and business has access to affordable, reliable, redundant and future-proof broadband. The Vision: Every Wyoming citizen and every identified business corridor will have the opportunity to access broadband internet capabilities that exceed defined standards by no later than 2023. The vision is focused on achieving minimum speeds of 25 megabits per second (Mbps) download and 3 Mbps upload for residences and one Gigabit per second (Gig) download and 100 Mbps upload for major business corridors. These speeds will be reviewed by the Advisory Council, who will make recommendations to the Wyoming Business Council as needed. Recommendations include developing a mapping strategy, leveraging public-private partnerships, removing barriers to deployment, increasing access to funding, and integrating emerging technologies. This plan was adopted by the Wyoming Business Council, and the Broadband Advisory Council will continue efforts to meet its mission and vision.

On August 28, the Joint Appropriation Subcommittee on Revenue Streams and Budget Process and Simplification met to finalize recommendations to the whole Joint Appropriations Committee (JAC), which will meet in Buffalo on September 18-19. In a prior meeting, the subcommittee had generated 25 ideas to examine as recommendations, but only 13 of those passed the subcommittee on the 28th. Most of these recommendations revolve around

increasing transparency in the budget process. To this end, we recommended that the Governor provide the budget to the Legislature by the third Monday of November, instead of by December 1. This will give the JAC more time to work the budget, which facilitates our second recommendation to provide the worked budget to the public and the Legislature on the first day of session. The Legislature uses a tool called the “Goldenrod” to track changes in the state budget’s various accounts, including revenue sources, transfers, and expenditures, throughout the budget approval process. We hope to improve the Goldenrod by creating a more readable summary page, which will include a summary of the Wyoming’s Consensus Revenue Estimating Group (CREG) reports.

We are also recommending transitioning school district and community college major maintenance payments to quarterly payments. Currently, these major maintenance payments are done early in the biennium, even though the state doesn’t collect all of its taxes by then, which means we must borrow from ourselves. The School Foundation Program must borrow money from the permanent Common School Land Account, in order for the state to make its payments. An additional recommendation is to borrow from Wyoming’s “Rainy Day” fund, the Legislative Stabilization Reserve Account (LSRA), instead of the permanent account. The permanent account has a far greater return on investment than the LSRA, which means the state will make more money by borrowing from the LSRA (similar to a checking account), instead of the Common School Land Account (similar to a savings account or pension fund). This would require a statute change, but could save the state \$13 million per year.

On August 29, the Opioid Task Force met in Cheyenne. We reviewed 8 bill drafts, and condensed these into 4 bills. The biggest bill would require some continuing education for health care providers, a query of the state’s Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) before a prescriber writes a prescription for certain controlled substances, would eliminate veterinarians from having to report daily their dispensing of controlled substances, would move the state toward electronic prescriptions for opioids, and would give the Board of Pharmacy the ability to allow Medicaid to query the PDMP in certain instances. We passed a bill limiting opioid prescriptions for acute pain to 7 days, which coincides with research on addiction, but

this bill was contentious. The bills we recommended will proceed on to the Health Committee, which will decide whether to move them to the session as committee bills. The task force will continue its work during the summer of 2019, and hopefully we will work with the Health Committee to develop strategies for better and more available controlled substance abuse treatment.

If you have any questions or comments, I can be reached at albert@albertsommers.com, or at 307-360-7060. Thanks.