

## SCHD allocates rural grant funds

By Robert Galbreath, [rgalbreath@subletteexaminer.com](mailto:rgalbreath@subletteexaminer.com)

**MARBLETON** – The Sublette County Hospital District Board of Trustees passed two motions to use COVID-19 relief grant money to provide all employees with permanent pay raises and bonuses and purchase a new ultrasound machine on Feb. 23.

The district received a \$675,000 rural fund grant from the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), part of a \$7.5 billion federal stimulus package to assist rural health-care providers and facilities affected by the pandemic.

Using a portion of the grant to keep providers and staff in Sublette County was a top priority, said trustee Kenda Tanner, a member of the board finance committee. The committee met with Dave Doorn, district administrator, and Michelle Stauthamer, the district's staff accountant, to pore over the district's pay scale and come up with options, she added.

The finance committee recommended a 2.5-percent cost of living adjustment funded by the HRSA grant over the next two years, adopted unanimously by the board in its first motion.

Doorn said the district intended to continue the pay raise beyond the two years allowed by the HRSA grant through hospital district revenue.

In a second motion, the board voted to use another portion of HRSA funds to provide all district employees with an additional paycheck equivalent to 80 hours "effective immediately."

Board chairwoman Tonia Hoffman said the raise for employees was "a great use of the grant funds."

Trustee Wendy Boman agreed, highlighting the need to thank district staff for the extraordinary effort and time they put in during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We need to do whatever we can for them," she said. "They've gone above and beyond expectations. I'm glad we could budget for the cost of

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## Swain receives high honor



Joy Ufford Photo

Sublette County native Rhonda Swain, center, with Tiffany Olsen, left, and Matty Swain, right, is honored as the 2022 Ranch Woman of the Year Award by the Green River Valley Cowbelles Saturday at the annual convention. Swain was a founder and worked multiple roles at the Sublette Examiner, which has continued to cover the county's agricultural issues. More coverage from the Cowbelles and GRV Cattlemen Conventions can be found inside on pages 2, 3, 6 and 9.

## Cattlegwomen meet, eat, elect, honor

By Joy Ufford, [jufford@subletteexaminer.com](mailto:jufford@subletteexaminer.com)

**MARBLETON** – The Green River Valley Cattlegwomen/ Cowbelles met on Saturday morning, Feb. 26, for their annual business meeting, brunch and convention at the Southwest Sublette County Pioneers Senior Center.

Along with reports of the past year's successes such as GRVC t-shirts, gifts, books and craft sales, president Leah Zupan encouraged discussions on future projects. Andi James talked about starting a companion show at the Sublette County Fair for heifers bred and raised in Sublette County. Many agreed this was a great project that could include both commercial and breeding heifer classes.

Vice president Laura Noble, elected last year, resigned and a new election took place for the next person to take over

Zupan's role. Hailey Lockwood Clark was welcomed as the new vice president.

In other elections, Marsha Barlow was voted in as secretary and treasurer Terrie Springman agreed to return with the advice that someone interested in numbers can shadow her this year to get a handle on the group's many transactions.

The senior center's new director Cari James served a beautifully plated chilled steak salad and luscious cookies as Cowbelles began their 2022 awards ceremony.

Every year, they select the Ranch Woman of the Year, the highest honor to a deserving nominee.

Daughter Tiffany Olsen and daughter-in-law Matty Swain took turns reading highlights of Rhonda Swain's life and achievements and she received flowers and

a metal sign for the 2022 honor.

Becky Downs was nominated by Terrie Springman as the 2022 Lifetime Achievement Award and she accepted with her daughter Jacque and granddaughter Tali at her side.

Although everyone could have sat and visited for another couple of hours, the Cowbelles' convention ended in time so families and friends could attend the Green River Valley Cattlegwomen's Association's afternoon meeting at Marbleton Town Hall and the banquet later back at the senior center.

Anyone interested in agriculture and the beef industry is welcome to join the Green River Valley Cattlegwomen/ Cowbelles. For updates, photos and more, visit the Facebook page.

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**CHEVROLET**

# 2022 Ranch Woman of the Year - Rhonda F. Swain

Respectfully submitted by Tiffany Olson and Matty Swain

This ranch woman was born in 1951 to Earl and Thelma (Jensen) Steele. Her parents purchased the family ranch in the early 1940s and continued ranching until they purchased the Boulder Store in 1949.

She graduated from Pinedale High School in 1969 and enrolled in Stevens Henegar Business College in Salt Lake City. She and her friends had a lot of fun in the big city as hicks from the sticks, as she puts it. But, she left college early to come home and marry her high school sweetheart and love of her life on Feb. 14, 1970. She packed all her belongings, which didn't consist of much other than some newly acquired wedding gifts and her cat Fuzz Buzz, and she moved to the ranch where her new groom was raised.

She spent the first 21 years of marriage as her husband's top hand. She'd grown up riding horses in Boulder, learning to ride as soon as she could manage to crawl up her horse's leg. She preferred bareback but she quickly learned how to work cattle and ride in a saddle like the "real cowboys" as she would say. Her husband was her biggest confidence builder; he was always encouraging her. He frequently told her she should wear a cowboy hat, which she refused to do until she figured that neighboring cowboys such as Bud Sommers and Doug Price thought she deserved to wear one. She looks good in a cowboy hat, and has worn one for as long as I can remember.

She raised four children while working alongside her husband on the ranch. The oldest son was born in 1970, followed by another boy in 1972. Thirteen years later in 1984, the twins came along. She and her husband had always joked that good hired



GRV Cowbelles President Leah Zupan, left, gives Rhonda Swain a heartfelt hug.

Joy Ufford PHOTO

hands are expensive and hard to come by, so their solution to that problem was to raise their own crew. But when they started coming in litters, they decided it was up to the next generation to provide the ranch crew.

She worked all day next to her husband on the ranch, and came home to the work of a wife and mother. Aside from the normal mom and wife duties, she liked to make ev-

erything on her own. She went all out for birthday parties, inviting the whole class out for a sleigh ride and party. And everything was times two when the twins were involved. The party usually had a theme, like Ghostbusters, or Hello Kitty, complete with not one but two homemade birthday cakes along with matching one of a kind, hand-sewn, hand-painted, birthday party favor

bags and goodies that she had made.

She also is a wonderful seamstress and liked to make clothes for everyone. A popular hit was outrageously patterned and colored parachute pants for the three boys. They were so popular, she ended up making parachute pants for several of her sons' friends. A pair of her parachute pants even

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**Kindergarten**  
2022—2023 EARLY REGISTRATION

**Sublette County School District #1**  
P.O. Box 549 • Pinedale, Wyoming 82941  
www.sub1.org • www.boarddocs.com/wy/wyscsd1/Board.nsf  
Subscribe to the Superintendents blog at <http://sub1superintendentblog.wordpress.com>

**Registration opens March 7th**  
**To register call the Pinedale Elementary Office at (307) 367-2828**  
**Dates for registration are April 18th & May 13th, 2022**

Be sure to bring your child's birth certificate and immunization records. A current completed physical examination record is also needed, if you don't have one you can complete this prior to the 2022-2023 school year. (All children turning 5 prior to August 1st are eligible for registration, or those children who turn 5 on or before September 15th and show academic and social readiness on the District's readiness assessment.)

**Exciting Upcoming Events for Incoming Kindergartners**

- 3/18/22** Preschool visits to Pinedale Elementary School at 10:30am. Contact Tamara Currah at [tcurrah@sub1.org](mailto:tcurrah@sub1.org) or call #307-367-5412
- 3/22/22** STEAM Night at PES 5:30-7:00pm. Contact Tamara Currah at [tcurrah@sub1.org](mailto:tcurrah@sub1.org) or call #307-367-5412
- 4/18/22** Kindergarten registration at PES 7:40-11:40am / 1:00-3:30pm. Please call PES to schedule an appointment. Parent(s) and child registering only, please.
- 5/13/22** Kindergarten registration at PES 7:40-11:40am / 1:00-3:30pm. Please call PES to schedule an appointment. Parent(s) and child registering only, please.
- 5/24/22** Kindergarten Parent Informational Meeting at PES from 5:30-6:30pm, no registration necessary, parents only, no children please.
- 6/7-6/10/22** Kindergarten Camp 8:00-9:30am & 10:00-11:30am. Register your child when you complete Kindergarten registration.
- 8/15-8/18/22** Kindergarten Camp 8:00-9:30am & 10:00-11:30am. Register your child when you complete Kindergarten registration.
- 8/22/22** Kindergarten Parent Informational Meeting at PES from 5:00-6:00pm.

**KINDERGARTEN**

**STEAM**

COME MEET THE PES STAFF, THE LIAISON AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS!

**FAMILY NIGHT**

This event is geared for kindergartners entering into the **2022 school year**

**This night includes:**  
**DINNER, STEAM ACTIVITIES, BOOKS AND PRIZES**

Tuesday, March 22nd  
5:30 - 7pm  
Pinedale Elementary School

Please RSVP for this free family event: [shorturl.at/jpwQ8](https://shorturl.at/jpwQ8)

For more information: 307-367-5412 or email Tamara at [tcurrah@sub1.org](mailto:tcurrah@sub1.org)



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made an appearance at a high school graduation, when they were flashed from under the graduation gown on stage. Needless to say, the principal was not super impressed since they did not follow the dress code. She also made the best Halloween costumes for her kids, herself and her spouse. Some of the most memorable ones were My Little Pony, Puff the Magic Dragon, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, and a couple's costume for her and her husband to go to a costume party as Raggedy Ann and Andy.

In 1991 when her oldest son finished college and returned home to the ranch, she took a part-time position as a typesetter at the Pinedale Roundup. Over the next 10 years she worked her way up the ladder, promoted to business manager and eventually becoming the editor. Much to everyone's dismay, the Roundup was sold to the competing newspaper soon after that promotion in 2001.

After the sale of the Roundup, weeks went by and there was an overwhelming response from the Sublette County community stating, "You gals should start your own newspaper." This was already a plan that four ladies from the Roundup already had in the making. An amazing attestation to the fledgling newspaper was that over one hundred subscriptions were paid for before they even had a legitimate office space to work from. The sale of the Roundup happened in February 2001 and on April 5, 2001, the first issue of the Sublette Examiner rolled off the presses at the Jackson Hole News and Guide, featuring a front page photo of a newborn calf born that spring on her family ranch.

She was the editor, business manager, bookkeeper and proof reader extraordinaire at the Sublette Examiner. The pages were rich with fantastic news stories and county-wide coverage. If there was something going on in Sublette County you could bet



Rhonda Swain, center, is surrounded by family at the GRVCA banquet Saturday. JOY UFFORD PHOTO

there was an Examiner employee there to cover it. Quite often agricultural issues were highlighted and her way of life and ranching in Sublette County were always promoted. Even though she was no longer at the ranch every day, her connection to and love for it was often seen and read about on the pages of the Sublette Examiner.

While she maintained a full-time job in town with extremely demanding weekly deadlines at the newspapers, she was still an integral part of the ranch's operations. When she wasn't at her town job she could be found out on the meadow dragging fields or as part of the branding crew in the spring. Or on her favorite horse Nifty, wearing that cowboy hat she earned, pushing cows to summer pasture and again in the fall, holding herd and sorting cows to come home. She was a hay hand on the weekends in the summer, running the coveted 910 swather or raking, stacking or whatever job needed done. All of this she did seamlessly along with the duties of a wife, mother, business

owner, and ranch woman.

After several years of meeting the grueling weekly deadlines at the paper, she decided it was time for a change. A very hard decision was made and the Sublette Examiner was sold in August 2006. She quickly found employment as office manager and bookkeeper until her recent retirement in May 2020.

Now we all know that ranchers don't retire. She spent the first summer of her "retirement" back in the saddle moving cows to summer pasture. No longer riding her favorite horse Nifty, but a close second on YoYo, one of Nifty's offspring. She also found herself back in the hayfield raking hay for her husband, who was "hot on her tail" chasing her in the baler, and she was back at the drift fence in the fall sorting cattle to bring home for the winter.

One of her greatest qualities is her generosity and selflessness. She loves to do things for others, especially for her family and friends. She is always thinking of oth-

ers before herself. She cooks a branding meal almost entirely by herself each year, because she knows her girls would rather be out with the crew in the branding pen instead of in the kitchen. She would also drop everything to watch a grandbaby so their mom can go help the guys. She's been an impromptu taxi service when grandkids need picked up from school because both parents are tied up with work. More than once she's been called upon to haul a load of cattle at the last minute and she would always bail in and help whenever needed. She's always there, and always ready to help.

She really does love making others happy. We've learned that you don't show too much excitement over something you really like, because with the help of Amazon Prime shipping, in two days you'll have a 20-pound bag of those gummy bears you really liked the other day! Just ask her favorite son-in-law about that one! Now with her extra time she's spending more and more time in the kitchen. She's made many really amazing dishes from recipes she finds online, a few that came with a polite suggestion that she should lose that recipe, and a whole binder full of recipes she has yet to try on us.

She's held many titles in her life. Daughter, Sister, Wife, Mother, painter, bartender, typesetter, office manager, bookkeeper, proofreader, editor, cook, seamstress, ranch woman, and a little known fact, actress. She was in a Busch Beer commercial in the 1980s - but probably her most treasured title of all is Grammie, to which nine grandchildren and six great-grandchildren call her and she that she loves and spoils rotten.

Surely by now you've guessed who our nomination is for Ranch Woman of the Year, and we are beyond proud to present Rhonda Fay Swain to receive this year's award.

# KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION

2022-2023 Big Piney & LaBarge Elementaries

For children who will be 5 years old on or before August 1, 2022.

If you have a child beginning Kindergarten this fall, please call or stop by your local elementary school office and request a Kindergarten registration packet.

Please call for a registration packet:

Big Piney Elementary - 276-3313

LaBarge Elementary - 386-2227

You may return the packet to the BPES or LBES office.

You will be asked to provide copies of your child's birth certificate & immunization records.



# REGISTRO DE KINDERGARTEN

2022-2023 Las primarias de Big Piney y LaBarge

Para niños que cumplirán 5 años antes o en el primero de agosto de 2022.

Si tiene un niño que comenzará Kindergarten este otoño, llame a la oficina local de su escuela primaria y solicite un paquete de inscripción de Kindergarten.

Por favor llame para recibir un paquete de registro:

Primaria Big Piney - 276-3313

Primaria LaBarge - 386-2227

Puede devolver el paquete a la oficina de BPES o LBES.

Se le pedirá que proporcione copias del certificado de nacimiento y los registros de vacunación de su hijo.



# COVID cases further plunge in Sublette

By Brady Oltmans, [oltmans@subletteexaminer.com](mailto:oltmans@subletteexaminer.com)

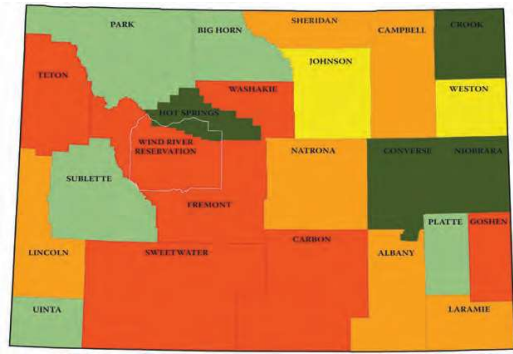
**SUBLETTE COUNTY** – The novel coronavirus responsible for a two-year pandemic that has killed 27 Sublette citizens, nearly 950,000 Americans and almost 6,000,000 people worldwide has once again achieved minimal spread in Sublette County.

In the latest Public Health update issued Feb. 25, the Wyoming Department of Health reported four new cases of COVID-19 last week and Public Health confirmed two active cases in the county.

Because of these latest statistics, Sublette County dropped to the low transmission zone for community spread. Wyoming’s community spread statistics vary greatly by county, with three of Sublette’s four neighbors in the high transmission zone.

As of the Feb. 22 vaccine clinics, Public Health has fully vaccinated 3,437 people in the county. That is approximately 34.96 percent of Sublette’s population. Attendance to vaccine clinics has continued to drop with only about two dozen going through vaccine clinics in Marbleton and Pinedale.

Public Health continues to offer COVID-19 vaccine clinics for those 5 and older. Those are Tuesdays at the Public Health Office in the Marbleton Senior Center from 1 to 3:30 p.m. and Thursdays at the Public Health Office in Pinedale from 1 to 4 p.m. Appointments are recommended and can be made by calling 307-367-2157.



COURTESY IMAGE

**Sublette County dropped to the low transmission range in the latest Public Health update as the rest of Wyoming varies greatly on the transmission scale.**

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living adjustment and bonuses – by God they deserve it.”

A third portion of the HRSA grant was designated to buy a new ultrasound machine. The new machine will be installed at the Pinedale Clinic while the Marbleton Clinic will receive the current gently used machine, Tanner said.

Dr. David Burnett, district medical director, praised the purchase. The presence of an ultrasound machine at the Marbleton Clinic would give providers greater capability to diagnose patients and improve patient care, he added.

### Financial audit

Leonard Garcia, a CPA at Leo Riley and Company in Casper, presented a draft audit of the hospital district’s finances from the 2021 fiscal year.

The firm gave the district a favorable rating, or “opinion,” that financial statements from each fund maintained by the district were “presented fairly in all respects.”

Accountants examining a sample of the district’s financial statements “detected nothing in the records to lead us to believe there were material errors of fraud,” Garcia explained.

Leo Riley also found no issues in the district’s administration of federal funds, including COVID-19 relief money, Garcia said.

Garcia briefly discussed two “issues” in the regular audit. The first concerned liabilities related to the district’s contributions to the Wyoming Retirement System.

All government entities are required to participate in the retirement fund and have little control over fluctuations in the state’s account, Garcia added.

The second “issue” involved what Garcia called a “separation of use” in the district’s finance department. In order to prevent overlap that could lead to errors or fraud, a finance office theoretically required a minimum of five staff members to carry

out each duty separately, Garcia explained.

Garcia noted that in practice, particularly in organizations with limited staff, maintaining a “separation of use” was difficult.

Doorn said the separation of use issue was noted each year because of the district’s small staff. Employees in the business office worked diligently to maintain a separation of use within the limits of their resources.

Doorn and the trustees thanked Stauffer, Kelli Lovell, finance manager, and Brittany White of the business office for their contributions to a clean audit.

The board received Leo Riley’s draft audit hours before the meeting, Hoffman said. In order to give trustees time to look through the report, Hoffman announced the board would vote to approve the audit at a special meeting or next month’s regular meeting.

### USDA and provider recruitment update

The board continues to await a final decision from the U.S. Department of Agriculture on the district’s loan application to fund a critical access hospital, Doorn said.

Doorn, Lorraine Werner of the USDA and the state architect are meeting weekly to prepare final plans for the USDA’s architect to approve.

U.S. Rep. Liz Cheney, Sen. John Barrasso and Gov. Mark Gordon are leaning on the USDA in favor of the hospital district’s application, Doorn said, and thanked county commissioner Joel Bousman for his role in gathering support.

“We just keep working on and addressing issues that have come up (with the USDA),” Doorn added. “They haven’t stumped us yet.”

The district signed a final contract to hire a new physician, Dr. Rafael Haste, a specialist in internal medicine from Madison, Wis., Doorn announced. Doctors in internal medicine typically provide adult care,



ROBERT GALBREATH PHOTO

**Sublette County EMS Director Bill Kluck, right, and EMT-intermediate Sue Briggs-Stanfill, with 25 years of service in the county, stand next to the new gently used ambulance the Hospital District Board of Trustees purchased in December. The 2014 F450 with only 15,000 miles was procured from a mining company in North Dakota for approximately half the price of a new vehicle. Kluck credited the board of county commissioners for funding the bus’s lift system. The new ambulance ‘exceeds every expectation,’ Kluck said, thanking the hospital district board.**

he added. Dr. Haste will start on June 1.

The district is in talks with a physician from Billings, Mont., a specialist in pediatrics and trauma with a background in critical access hospitals, Doorn said.

Vickey Marshall, director of nursing, reported she offered a full-time RN position to Tory Green, a former Big Piney resident, and hired a medical assistant.

### Additional district news

Dr. David Burnett discussed the formation of a medical executive committee consisting of himself, Doorn, Dr. Jim Demetriou and physician assistants Jason Ray and Cori Anderson.

The committee would supervise chart review system with partners at Star Valley Health to improve patient care,

Burnett added.

The medical executive committee was also evaluating patient complaints to find ways to communicate better with patients, Burnett said.








Burnett announced the arrival of the first doses of COVID-19 antiviral medications at the clinics.

The district wrapped up the competition to find a new name for the proposed critical access hospital and assisted living facility, said Kari DeWitt, public relations director. A majority of voters favored “Sublette County Health.”

The next step was to take the name and logo to the joint planning committee and Sublette Center to get their approval, DeWitt told the board.

## Weather for Sublette County, WY

Mar. 1 - Mar. 7

Today	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon
 <b>41°</b> <b>22°</b>	 <b>43°</b> <b>21°</b>	 <b>39°</b> <b>11°</b>	 <b>34°</b> <b>9°</b>	 <b>30°</b> <b>8°</b>	 <b>28°</b> <b>1°</b>	 <b>27°</b> <b>4°</b>
Precip: 10% Wind: NE 8 mph UV Index: 3 Moderate						