



Laramie couple releases card deck of local trail maps / D1

COMMUNITY

Step by step



Runners Adam Meyer, left, and Ashley Donovan make their way down Skyline Drive Wednesday morning before crossing over onto Interstate 80 as head toward Cheyenne from Laramie during their run across the country. JEREMY MARTIN/Boomerang photographer

Pair running across country to learn about local communities

By EVE NEWMAN
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Twelve-hundred miles into a 3,000-mile run across the country, Ashley Donovan and Adam Meyer have learned a thing or two about what makes communities tick. The pair passed through Laramie on Tuesday and Wednesday on their way from Portland, Oregon, to Washington, D.C. Along the way, they're gathering examples of successful community projects and education initiatives. They're calling their project "Run to Connect," and they plan to complete the journey in late November. By then, they hope to have gathered reams of stories about communities working together

At a glance:

Ashley Donovan and Adam Meyer are running across the country looking for examples of successful community initiatives as part of a project called Run to Connect. What examples have they found so far?

to solve challenges, which they plan to compile, analyze and share.

"It seemed like a neat way to really look at the details of what is going on and be able to share some of those success stories as we travel across the country," Meyer said.

A former state legislator from Oregon, Meyer met Donovan while working in Washington, D.C. He

spent several years in the city working for nonprofit organizations developing policy mostly related to transportation and energy. Donovan, who grew up in northern Virginia, recently finished a Ph.D. in chemistry from Princeton University. She's passionate about local educational policies and the preparation of students for post-high school education and careers.

They hatched the idea of a cross-country run after seeing the difficulty of disseminating good ideas through the levels of government. They knew there were people out there doing good things, and they wanted to find them.

"We both saw a lot of good things happening but not getting noticed," Meyer said.

As runners, the idea of covering 3,000 miles on foot became the fun part of the project, Donovan said. As well, running would allow them to take their time and meet more people.

"It's much more to get out and meet people in person at a slowed-down pace and have face-to-face conversations," Meyer said.

Starting July 28, they headed east, passing through Boise, Idaho, and Idaho Falls, Idaho, before entering Wyoming. They stopped in Jackson and passed through Riverton and Casper earlier this month.

The pair is averaging more than 20 miles a day, with a recreational vehicle driven by

See Run to Connect, B8

CITY COUNCIL

No working at home

Not one live/work business licensed

By THADDEUS MAST
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Dwelling live/work has been on the Laramie City Council agenda for the past two months, but not one such business is currently registered in the city.

A motion that would have allowed live/work businesses in all residential zones — under conditional use permits — was struck down by the council because of the broadness of the amendment.

A motion to rezone the Church of Christ, 1730 Custer St., building for the purpose

of obtaining a dwelling live/work permit caught the attention of the council, but this is the first formal application for a live/work permit the city has received.

"We've had some informal requests, but they never wanted to take it to the next step," said Randy Hunt, community development director.

One reason for the lack of live/work businesses is people do not want to disrupt their neighborhoods, Hunt said.

"People are naturally respectful of their neighborhood and they don't want to inflict a lot of traffic and noise on their

neighbors," he said.

Another reason is the problem of visibility and pedestrian traffic. As a business grows, it can attract walk-in customers with signs and location. Businesses then move to more commercial areas, such as downtown, to get more business.

While there are no permitted live/work businesses, there could be some around the city that were grandfathered with the adoption of the Unified Development Code in 2010, Hunt said. A business that was previously allowed in a residential

See Council, B8

LARAMIE COUNTY
COMMUNITY COLLEGE



Community college training generates awkward questions

By AERIN CURTIS
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CHEYENNE — A new training at Laramie County Community College has reportedly been asking students some personal questions.

In an effort to follow new federal rules, the college recently started requiring that students complete a new training, college President Joe Schaffer said at a recent Board of Trustees meeting.

"It's a phenomenon across the U.S.," Schaffer said. "There are too many incidents, and (students are) truly uninformed in, one, how to avoid it, and, two, what you do when you identify it. That's why (the training) is no longer strongly encouraged, it's required."

The training covers drug and alcohol awareness and abuse, harassment and sexual conduct, and violence, he said.

"It talks about how to understand blood-alcohol levels and how to escape from uncomfortable situations," he said. "This is very real stuff for our students; it's happening to them."

The training gives information on how to handle different situations, including how to refuse a drink and concerns about being drugged, he said.

But the training has generated some pushback from students, college officials said.

One concern is the length of the program, since it can take about two hours, Schaffer said. Another is that it is geared only toward traditional-aged students and might not be as accurate for nontraditional students.

Additionally, some of the topics covered and the questions have made some students uncomfortable, he said.

"They're sensitive subjects," Schaffer said. "We have to be sensitive to that sensitivity, and decide how much and how hard do we want to push that boundary."

Trustee Kevin Kilty said some of the questions could be illegal in a different context. He wanted to know why they were being asked.

"From what I've heard, there are a number of students who are thinking of lawyering up on this, because they claim that they are not allowed to register until they finish the survey, and they're not allowed to opt out on any of the questions," he said.

Some of the questions asked of students during the training have been about past sexual behavior or experiences, Schaffer said. These include things like if students have had unwanted or uncomfortable sexual experiences.

Answers on the questions are anonymous, he said.

"It's helpful for us to know, is this a major issue on our campus or is it not?" he said.

"We can argue are they answering

See LCCC, B8



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Adam Meyer, left, and Ashley Donovan have been making their way, running across the United States for the past 51 days. The duo left Laramie for Cheyenne Wednesday on day 50 of running. They expect the entire trip will take them 120 days. JEREMY MARTIN/Boomerang photographer

Run to Connect

Continued from B1

a rotating cast of friends and family serving as their home base. They’ve covered as much as 34 miles in one day, and Wednesday marked 17 days of running in a row. So far, they’ve talked with dozens of people in communities across three states. In Warm Springs, Oregon, they learned about a K-8 school that opened this fall with funding from a community bond, which will allow students to stay in their town for school instead of traveling to another town 30 minutes away. In Boise, they learned about a new suicide prevention hotline, which grew out of work among local leaders to prevent suicide. Jackson residents told them about the town’s commitment to energy conservation. Dubois residents boasted of numerous public facilities

built during the past couple decades with funding from grants, donations and a bond. “There are some larger things that require a lot of implementation, but most of them are just simple ideas that many communities can look at and adopt if they haven’t done them already,” Meyer said. Many successful initiatives were driven by residents, he said. “They happen at a small, local level where people really know one another and they feel a great sense of pride in the outcome of these things,” he said. During an overnight stop in Laramie, the pair met with officials from the University of Wyoming and Mayor Dave Paulekas. Donovan said she’s amazed at the amount of funding Wyoming schools receive from the state and the low cost of in-state tuition at the University of Wyoming.

“It’s been really impressive to see,” she said. Meyer said he was interested in learning about energy-related research at UW. “Universities are hotbeds of ideas of all kinds, and it seems like Wyoming is really doing a lot of neat things,” he said. After leaving Laramie, Donovan and Meyer continued east on Wyoming Highway 210 to Cheyenne, where they planned to take a day off and meet with state officials. Then they’ll cross through southern Nebraska and Iowa before stopping in Chicago. From there, they’ll head to Washington, D.C. They don’t yet have concrete plans for what to do with the information they’ve collected once they finish their journey, but they have been sharing stories and photos on their blog, www.runtoconnect.org. “We’re starting to feel like there’s some road behind us,” Meyer said.

Council

Continued from B1

area and has been there legally in the past is allowed to operate. Spic and Span Laundromat and other businesses along Fourth Street are examples of businesses in residential areas. A dwelling live/work business can occupy up to

50 percent of a residence, and can have a small number of employees and other business amenities, if it can obtain a conditional use permit, which analyzes parking, traffic and other possible disturbances to the neighborhood. A home business is separate from dwelling live/work businesses. A

home business cannot have any employees and cannot occupy more than 50 percent of the house, but restricting the business to around 25 percent would be best, Hunt said. It also does not need any permit or license. The city gets involved with home businesses when a complaint is received. A home accountant or

landscaping business that has few customers coming and going to the house would qualify as a home business. Home businesses do not need a license or permit to operate, so there is no way to tell how many there are in town. “There could be several dozen or up to 100,” Hunt said. “It’s really all speculation.”

LCCC

Continued from B1

truthfully or not, and there is going to be some of that, but those questions are intended to get us an understanding of what students are doing.” However, the college has gone back to the test vendor to address some specific complaints from students, Schaffer said. “There are some questions that are very, very personal, and from an

institutional perspective, we don’t see how we would use that information in any productive way,” he said. “So why would we want to make our students uncomfortable and upset if we don’t have a valid reason? We’re working with the group to remove those.” Vice president of student services Judy Hay added that the new version of the training is now being used. The college also is looking at using a training that is geared for older students and might be shorter.

When the training first started, students were unable to register for spring semester classes until they had completed it because the entire student population needs to compete the training, Schaffer said. That was halted while the college went back to the creators of the training to ask for the changes. “The hope is to have a safer campus,” Hay said. “The core of all of this is for students to understand what consent is, or is not, with any level of sexual activity.”