

Wyoming Business Council

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Pictured from L to R Back Row - JW Rankin, Pierson Hodgens, Riley Hunter, Justin Hesser, Haley Lockwood, Brian Boner and Tyler Lindholm. Pictured from L to R Front Row - Karley Shepperson, Holden Hergert, Saige Albert, Becky Tekansik, Cindy Garretson-Weibel and Summer Schulz. Not Pictured: Dan Henry Hanson and Cody Ann Bainter

Ag leadership program graduates 13th class

Fourteen agribusiness men and women from throughout Wyoming graduated from the Wyoming Leadership Education and Development (L.E.A.D.) program's Class 13 in March with the ceremony held in Saratoga.

The 14-month training program, sponsored by the Wyoming Business Council's Agribusiness Division and the Wyoming Agricultural Leadership Council, began in November 2013.

Fellows participated in 10 educational seminars in an effort to enhance their leadership skills and understanding of all aspects of agriculture and policy making. Eight seminars were held in Wyoming, one in Washington, D.C., along with an international study seminar in India.

Class 13 graduates include:

- Saige Albert of Casper, managing editor of the Wyoming Livestock Roundup. Albert currently is the secretary of the Natrona County 4-H Foundation. She is also involved as a volunteer in the Wyoming FFA Association at the state and local levels and is a member of several advisory boards in Casper.
- Cody Bainter of Cheyenne, ag marketing and leadership coordinator at the Wyoming Business Council. Bainter grew up on a commercial cattle operation in Montana and remains involved in the family operation. She has held various ag marketing jobs and has been heavily involved in Beefmaster Breeders United.
- Brian Boner of Douglas, former U.S. Air Force officer who recently transitioned to manager of his family's ranch in Converse County. Boner is a member of the American Legion, Knights of Columbus and Moose Club. He recently filled the state Senate District 2 seat vacated by the retired state Sen. Jim Anderson.
- Dan Henry Hanson of Lusk, vice president of Hanson Livestock and member of the Niobrara County Board of Directors for the Wyoming Stock Growers Association.
- Holden Hergert of Thermopolis, soil conservationist for the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Hergert currently is involved in the Western Society of Weed Science and the Soil Science Society of America.
- Justin Hesser of Cheyenne, an associate attorney at Dray, Dyekman, Reed & Healey P.C. and a former law clerk to Judge Thomas Campbell, First Judicial District Court. Hesser grew up on a family farm in western Nebraska and is developing a law practice that focuses on agricultural issues.
- Pierson Hodgens of Meeteetse, has spent his career in agricultural production and is the ranch manager for Wood River Ranch. He is a member of the Johnson County Cattlemen's Association.
- Riley Hunter of Gillette, an associate broker with Prudential Preferred Properties. Hunter grew up in Wheatland and is a sixth generation rancher. He has been working for Prudential Preferred Properties in Gillette for the past six years, performing residential and commercial transactions across the state.
- Tyler Lindholm of Sundance, a lead substation electrician for Basin Electric Power Cooperative. Lindholm is also a ranch hand and shareholder of his family's ranch, Jackpot Ranch Corp. He twice received the Naval and Marine Corps Achievement Medal and Humanitarian Aid Medal, as well as a Meritorious Unit Commendation – all from the U.S. Navy. Lindholm was elected to represent Wyoming House District 1 in the November 2014 election.
- Haley Lockwood of Cheyenne, graduated from the University of Wyoming in May 2013 with a Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Communications. She is the communication and publications director for the Wyoming Stock Growers Association.
- JW Rankin of Shawnee, co-owner of JS Rankin Ranches, Inc. Rankin is a third-generation rancher on a commercial Black Angus ranch in Converse and Niobrara Counties. He previously worked for Baker Hughes as the Northern Rockies Station manager while remaining involved in the family operation.
- Summer Schulz of Pinedale, self-employed land/conservation consultant and real estate agent for Dusty Spur Consulting, LLC and Real Estate of Wyoming, LLC.
- Karley Shepperson of Casper, a manager at KS Ranch, a Black Angus beef cattle operation with cows located on several ranches around the Casper area. Shepperson is also a storm water drainage inspector for Rangeland Consulting.
- Becky Tekansik of Pine Bluffs, worked for Muddy Creek Ranch but has taken on other agricultural endeavors. Tekansik has spent her life working in cattle production. She is a member of the Red Angus Association of America and the Wyoming Farm Bureau Association Federation.

“We are excited that Class 13 members have already taken on responsibilities in their communities to better the state of Wyoming. We look forward to their continued involvement in advocating for agriculture,” said Cindy Garretson-Weibel, the Wyoming Business Council's Agribusiness Division director.

Recruitment for Class 14 is underway, with the program beginning this fall. For more information, contact Garretson-Weibel at 307.777.6589 or cindy.weibel@wyo.gov or visit wylead.org.

To date, classes totaling 218 men and women have graduated from the L.E.A.D. program since its creation.

About the Wyoming Business Council. Our mission is to increase Wyoming's prosperity. We envision a Wyoming where industries are strong, diverse and expanding. Small business is a big deal. Communities have the highest quality of life. Wyoming is the technology center of the High Plains. Wyoming knows no boundaries. Please go to www.wyomingbusiness.org for more information.

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