

Wonderful Wyoming Guardians of the Range Event

By Echo Renner, WLR Field Editor

Sheridan ~ Over 100 people attended the first annual Wonderful Wyoming event at the Historic Sheridan Inn, May 13, in Sheridan. The non-profit organization Guardians of the Range raised over \$27,000 to further their cause of assisting ranchers with public land grazing issues, advocating for multiple use of public lands, and helping to better inform the public about their enduring benefits to this nation.

Craig Mead of Council Bluffs, Iowa was awarded the American Spirit Award. "As a very successful independent businessman, Craig has repeatedly made time to help build the Guardians infrastructure, at no cost to us," says Guardians Executive Director, Kathleen Jachowski of Cody. "Craig is a man with an American spirit to the core. He volunteers as our webmaster. He also participates in public comments relative to our issues, which makes the blood pressure rise among extremists who can't seem to understand his respect and appreciation for the American way of life that is so evident in the ranching culture."

Kimberly Michaelis of Las Vegas, Nevada was awarded Guardian of the Year. "Kimberly has proudly supported the Guardians for several years in a number of ways," comments Jachowski. "A highly successful entrepreneur and owner of the Rafter Star Ranch near Sheridan, Kimberly has a valuable and unique perspective. She has stepped forward on more than one occasion. Kimberly represents what it really means to be a Guardian of the Range; she has a strong mind and character and a warm spirit."

Guardians Board President, Dana Kerns of Sheridan adds, "The point that was so well made at the fundraiser is that people across this great country are desperate to protect private property rights. Our award recipients do not have public grazing allotments. Craig Mead doesn't own a horse or a cow, but both Kimberly and Craig have put more into this organization I have."

"In our live and silent auctions, we had bidders from 19 states and Canada. Once people get exposed to what we offer in the West - whether it's hunting, fishing, a cattle drive or whatever - they realize we offer a way of life that helped to build this nation. We offer a life of integrity, morality, hard work, getting knocked down and getting back up and finding joy in life's simple pleasures." Kerns continues, "It's our job to better inform the general public our way of life. Groups like the

Guardians are essential in the education process of preserving the building blocks of this great nation.”

Krayton Kerns, DVM and Montana State Legislator, was the featured speaker. Local FFA members served as the Color Guard.

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