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Energy, telecommunications issues at forefront of UW Consumer Issues Conference

Organizers of the 2008 Consumer Issues Conference at the University of Wyoming hope to give power and a voice to the people by examining energy and telecommunications issues.

The 8th annual conference is Sept. 24-25 at UW with the theme “Focus on Energy and Telecommunications.”

“Both are so pervasive in our lives and becoming increasingly complicated and expensive with numerous confusing choices,” said Virginia Vincenti, a planner of the conference and a professor in the UW College of Agriculture’s Department of Family and Consumer Sciences. “Many people struggle to make decisions which address their own interests, while at the same time are socially responsible.”

She said the conference will provide opportunities to understand issues from different perspectives, for attendees to talk with policymakers, lawyers, educators, government professionals and business people, and to create working relationships that extend beyond the conference.

This conference will focus on the demand side of the energy equation, including such things as marketing, pricing and energy conservation, said Dee Pridgen, another conference planner, who will also speak.

“Communication is also essential to modern life, and it, too, has an impact on consumers’ lives,” said Pridgen, professor and associate dean of the UW College of Law. “Consumers are concerned about new technology, marketing, pricing and privacy with regard to telecommunications, and this conference will address those issues.”

Speakers include New York Times reporter Felicity Barringer, faculty members from the University of Wyoming and the University of Nebraska-Kearney, and a federal and international affairs policy analyst for Consumers Union, the non-profit publisher of Consumer Reports. More information about the conference will be released as it becomes available. The Web site is <http://www.uwyo.edu/consumerconference/>.