

SW-WRAP hires Golden Hour director

By **Olivia Kennah**

Sweetwater Wyoming Recovery Access Programs, known as SW-WRAP, has a new CEO, and Beth Whitman is her name.

“While we had the luxury of several well-qualified candidates, we chose Beth as being the best qualified and best fit overall to lead this organization into the future,” Interim CEO, Gene Smith said. About 20 applicants applied for the position.

“She brought an organization to life with the Business Leadership Network, has human resource experience with a local company, and has done a wonderful job of leading the Golden Hour Senior Center” Smith said.

Whitman has been the executive director at GHSC for two years. “It is the most wonderful place,” Whitman said. She will miss the people she has seen everyday at the center, but she looks forward to the opportunity to help make a difference in the lives of the SW-WRAP community.

Whitman has memories of dinners, events and so many fun times that she cherishes.

“I will miss seeing our senior’s bright and shining faces,” Whitman said.

During her time at GHSC, she feels she and the staff have followed the boards direction to be more active and involved.

Her last day at GHSC was June 19 and she started training in Cheyenne for SW-WRAP Monday.

As CEO of SW-WRAP, Whitman will have many roles. She will be a manager, leader, grant writer, team builder and morale builder. Whitman will make sure the grant money is appropriately spent and accounted for.

In addition, she will be looking after the care and interests of SW-WRAP’s clients and employers. Whitman will manage all of SW-WRAP’s offices Wyoming and Nebraska, and all of the other employees will report to her. SW-WRAP’s coverage area includes the entirety of Wyoming, along with 28 counties in Nebraska.

“Integrity, leadership, forward thinking and caring. Beth is very strong in all of those traits and all will be needed to guide SW-WRAP’s future,” Smith said.

During the hiring process, the board of directors considered the candidates’ knowledge of the area, the organizations’ functions, and the local, state, and federal agencies that would be working with the hired person.

The board also had a list of certain skills they felt the candidate needed to possess to lead the organization to success. They individually came up with their top candidates, and met to come up with a short list, which ultimately decided the top two candidates

“Following a great deal of work, discussion, interviewing and soul searching, the board concluded Beth was the best candidate for the future of SW-WRAP,” Smith said.

Whitman hopes to provide service to the individuals who can't always voice their needs and opinions for themselves. “I'm excited, although it's heart-wrenching to leave the senior center that I've grown to love,” Whitman said.

Through funding from Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) grants, SW-WRAP assists veterans who are either homeless or at risk of becoming homeless by helping them obtain permanent housing.

In some cases, they are also able to assist in finding jobs for veterans. They can do this through partner organizations. SW-WRAP can also assist veterans with budgeting and can make referrals to several other assistance organizations, and they also receive referrals from other organizations.

For use in Wyoming, SW-WRAP also has a grant from the Wyoming Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC). This grant assists Wyoming's aging and/or disabled population.

SW-WRAP also has a federal funded grant through the Sweetwater County Commission. The Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) assists residents within the county with medical, dental, optical, prescriptions, emergency shelter and rental emergencies.

A Basic Needs and Emergency Assistance (BNEA) grant funded by the city of Green River is aimed specifically for the Sweetwater County School District No. 2 BNEA needs.

There are nine office locations in Wyoming, and three in Nebraska.

Nebraska works with SSVF grants only, eight of the Wyoming locations work with SSVF and ADRC grants, and Green River works with all of the grants.

Taking over as the executive director at GHSC is Sheela Schermetzler, formerly the grant manager for Albany county.