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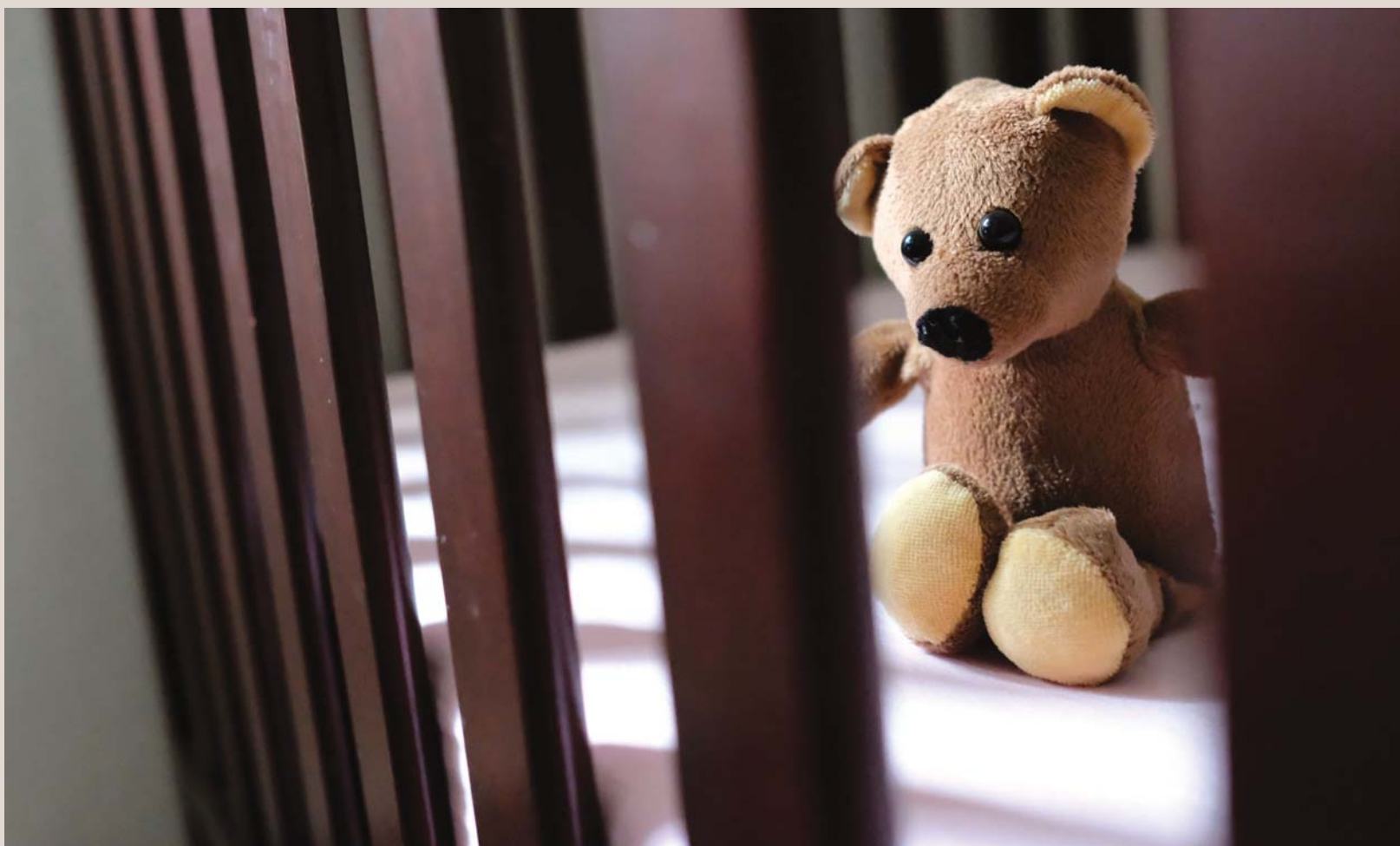
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Four Broncs to
play in Shrine
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FOSTERING FAMILIES



JUSTIN SHEELY | THE SHERIDAN PRESS

Congress passed the Family First Prevention Services Act in February, shifting federal funding priorities to family prevention and treatment and imposing tougher restrictions on group homes.

New law aims to keep families together, out of foster care

BY RYAN PATTERSON

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SHERIDAN — A new law could eventually lead to more children staying in their homes and less children in foster care and group homes.

Congress passed the Family First Prevention Services Act in February, shifting federal funding priorities to family prevention and treatment and imposing more restrictions on group homes, beginning October 2019.

Wyoming Department of Family Services support services administrator Roxanne O'Connor said DFS prefers the new legislation, which could help address family dynamics without removing children

from the home.

"We used to have prevention dollars from the state general fund perspective, but through the recent budget reductions that we've seen over the past few years in the state, those prevention dollars were significantly cut," O'Connor said. "So we are actually really excited about the prospect of the Family First Act from a funding perspective, that now we will be able to kind of rejuvenate and build those funds again through federal dollars."

The federal government will reimburse states for up to 12 months of programs that help keep families together, such as substance abuse treatment, mental health services and

parenting classes.

However, the legislation may lead to less funding for group homes. The federal government will reimburse states for placing children in group homes for a maximum of two weeks, unless a group home is qualified to provide treatment for children with mental health or behavioral needs. Other exceptions to the two-week limit include teens who are pregnant or parenting. There is currently no maximum time limit.

The law also places additional requirements on group homes, such as accreditation by an independent organization and having a licensed clinical staff on site. Ideally, this will lead to group homes

dealing only with children who have the most severe needs, while other kids stay with their family or are placed in foster care.

It could lead to unintended consequences, however. If a group home doesn't meet the requirements and a child has stayed in the group home for two weeks, states might have to pay — without federal reimbursement — to shelter kids who would otherwise be on the street.

The only group home in Sheridan is Milestone Youth Home, which is run by Volunteers of America Northern Rockies.

SEE FOSTER, PAGE 3

ON A MISSION 12-year-old boy to run 52-mile ultramarathon

BY ASHLEIGH FOX

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SHERIDAN — Noah Maneval has Bighorn Wild and Scenic Trail Run blood pumping through his veins. His mother and race director, Michelle Maneval, and his grandmother and course director, Karen Powers, have been involved with the race since its inception 26 years ago.

Noah Maneval started his dream of completing the Bighorn's 100-mile run as a young child when he saw the racers running through the finish line in Scott Bicentennial Park.

"I would be playing with my friends, standing underneath the finish stand and I'd see 100-milers running through with these big, dirty, strong legs with their veins out, all muscly," Maneval said. "I was thinking to myself, 'Oh man, I gotta do this someday.'"

Ever since, Maneval has been working his way up to the ultimate goal completing the 100-mile race.

SEE MISSION, PAGE 2



COURTESY PHOTO | MICHELLE MANEVAL

Twelve-year-old Noah Maneval trains for next week's Bighorn Wild and Scenic Trail Run 52-mile race.

Wyoming Business Council seeking broadband consultant

BY MICHAEL ILLIANO

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SHERIDAN — The Wyoming Business Council put out a request for proposals this week seeking assistance in the development of the state's broadband enhancement program created by legislation related to the ENDOW initiative.

Tom Dixon, a communications manager with the

Wyoming Business Council, said the RFP is soliciting consultants that can help the Broadband Improvement Council write a broadband enhancement plan over the summer.

"This all kind of ties in to what the business council has been trying to do already," Dixon said. "The state Legislature agrees that broadband is critical when it comes

to economic development; it's something that companies need and it's a quality of life issue."

Colin McKee, a policy advisor in the governor's office who has been working with the Wyoming Business Council on broadband improvement, said the specifics of the improvement plan will largely be determined by the consultant the state selects.

"We didn't want to get very

prescriptive on what was going to be in the enhancement plan," McKee said. "We intentionally left the scope of the work fairly general."

The plan will include a data inventory and mapping component, which McKee said will give the improvement council a picture of the sections of the state with the greatest needs.

SEE CONNECTIVITY, PAGE 8



JUSTIN SHEELY | THE SHERIDAN PRESS

The Wyoming Business Council has put out a request for proposals for a consultant to help the Broadband Improvement Council draft a statewide enhancement plan over the summer.



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