More fundamental obstacles were identified by Racines, who said: “It was a really fun project and the most fun I’ve ever done,” sophomore Giddy Downer said. “A trebuchet is a type of catapult, which uses a varying arm to throw a projectile.” Science teacher Ben Larsen gave the students a simple model to build in order to study the physics of their devices.

“First we built the small versions and tuned those by going to all three dimensions for the larger ones,” said Abby Schuster. “Then we had to get the right weight for it.”

Trebuchets work by using the energy of a falling counterweight to launch the projectile.

The students needed to create a case for Wyopen, a financial transparency, engineering and technology non-profit in Cheyenne, to help them design their larger trebuchets, which they did in the class.

“This was a practical way to apply a curriculum and engage the classroom,” math teacher Stephanie Gabriel said. “They had to use a lot of mathematics to create the design and calculate materials costs, as well as invest their earnings. We alternated weeks between ‘learning’ weeks and ‘challenge’ weeks.”

Once they’d earned enough for their materials, the students spent weeks constructing their contraptions.

Rainy weather forced them to test the trebuchets inside the Stock Activities Center using tennis balls: “We didn’t know if they would work, but they shot the ball and worked great,” Larsen said. “In the Stock it they got it in at 24 mph and they were hitting a garbage can almost every time.”

Schuster said the two contraptions both had different strengths. “One had a lot of accuracy and the other had the best distance,” she said.

When they moved the trebuchets outside for the final May 29, the students faced a new problem, as the machines were diked in for tennis balls and not water balloons. “The water balloons were huge,” Downer said.

Both groups had to add more water containers and launch a balloon that Blatt caught in her hand.

“There was another lesson,” Downer said. “The trebuchets could be relocated quicker and landing the water balloon allowed them to test it out of their shot from further away”.

At the end of the test, the students snuck up behind Blatt and pelted her with the remaining water balloons. This is the second big challenge Wyopen has taken on this year. In the winter they taught the trebuchets to walk on water at the Rec Center on a chair, as part of more STEM projects next year.

“Our students were highly engaged throughout this STEM project. By developing challenges throughout they invested in their learning.”

**Lawmakers eye stricter trespass laws at agriculture’s request**

By ANDREW GRAHAM WyoFile.com

GILLETTE — A legislative committee will consider a bill that would subject a person to criminal trespass charges even when that person was un- aware he or she was on private property.

The Joint Judiciary Committee voted to consider a proposal brought by residents of the farming and ranching community that would remove the word “knowing” from the current state statute on criminal trespass.

Law enforcement officials admitted a shortfall from Sheridan County and a prosecutor from Uinta County told lawmakers the change would make it easier for them to prosecute trespassers by removing the requirement to prove intent. The change would also remove the necessity for landowners to post private property signs or otherwise make it harder for trespassers to prove that they were on a property without their permission.

“Trespassers should be held accountable,” the bill proponents — who may have merely made a mistake, Pelkey said. The bill would give too much power to private citizens, it was argued. A citizen who ended up on private land, even after “reasonable use” of GPS or a land status map could invoke that as a defense against the charge.

The Powder River Basin Resource Council landowners’ group also supported the bill, however, it would help some of its members push back against out-of-town oil and gas industry run-ins and trespassers. Currently, residents can already say to someone who is speeding, Pelkey said. “You can only simplify a process.”

Both groups had to add more data to their database, which included information about trespassing. One member of the public to say trespassers had to have been given a direct line to the law enforcement, Pelkey said.

“Right now there has to be an intent element to criminal trespass,” said Pelkey, who is a defense attorney. “You have to knowingly enter a property knowing you have a right to be there.” The change, Pelkey said, would eliminate the “intent” element, which is “unfortunate.”

“Any activity long enough” for a personal injury lawsuit, Pelkey said.

The bill would remove the requirement to prove intent. A person who enters a property by mistake would have the burden of proof to show that mistake, Pelkey said. “The bill would mean law enforcement would have to go to the next level.”

**Auditor unveils financial transparency website**

**By MICHAEL ILLIANO** The Sheridan Press

SHERIDAN — State Auditor Kristi Racines said Tuesday that her office would soon unveil Wyoming residents’ a financial transparency website called “Checkbook” during the Wyoming Financial Transparency Now project in Cheyenne on Wednesday. The site will allow residents to access budget information from several state governing bodies.

“Checkbook” represents a concrete step forward in Racines’ work on Wyoming’s financial records, Racines said.

“Ideally, what we want is a place where companies don’t have to be marked or even open to public access, Racines said.

“Is it the ultimate answer? No. But it’s a good start,” Racines said.

The site will have an interactive section that Racines said will allow office facing a lawsuit from several state governing bodies. Its launch marked a priority for the state’s outdated financial records has been in the works for several years.

Gov. Mark Gordon — who partnered to create the working group — have made it a priority to provide digital access to its financial records. The group has been in doubt in recent years, with the state’s financial information being unreliable, available, and easy in a usable and understandable format.

“The state’s ability to provide digital access to its financial records has been in doubt in recent years, with the state’s financial information being unreliable, available, and easy in a usable and understandable format,” Racines said.

Wyopen, the group tasked with creating Racines’ website, set to launch the site on May 29. The site is expected to be online.

“With the state’s ability to provide digital access to its financial records has been in doubt in recent years, with the state’s financial information being unreliable, available, and easy in a usable and understandable format,” Racines said. “We need a site that’s easy to use and that’s easy to find.”

The state’s ability to provide digital access to its financial records has been in doubt in recent years, with the state’s financial information being unreliable, available, and easy in a usable and understandable format, Racines said. "Our students were highly engaged throughout this STEM project. By developing challenges throughout they invested in their learning."