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# Food grant intended for reservation improvements

By Martin Reed  
Staff Writer

The Wind River Indian Reservation will benefit from a \$5 million multi-state grant through the University of Wyoming that will invest in sustainable and quality food production methods.

Christine Porter, assistant professor of public health at the university, secured the grant through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agriculture and Food Research Initiative program.

The five-year grant will help research various methods in Wyoming, New York and California concerning community food production efforts.

"The emphasis is not particularly on the research itself. It's to help us educate our people in becoming more self-sufficient and be able to grow better, nutritious foods and make them available to their families because going to the grocery store for low-income people is really difficult," Porter said April 7.

Additionally, improving food quality can help people become healthier, she said. "We feel like nutrition is an essential part of helping our people to combat these different diseases" such as diabetes, Porter said.

A significant goal is to allow the reservation community and other areas targeted under the grant to increase control over their food sources, she said.

"I think that communities taking control over their food systems has enormous potential for economic development, community health both in preventing obesity and hunger," she said.

The benefit is "for sustainability as well, because it is shown if you're producing food locally or processing it locally people are more accountable to their community," she said. "I think this is actually an opportunity for solving many problems at once."

The funding will provide grants distributed through a steering committee that will form on the Wind River Indian Reservation.