

Dubois Museum Press release

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LeClair shares the culture and traditions of the Eastern Shoshone tribe

Willie LeClair, an enrolled member of the Eastern Shoshone tribe from Riverton, will tell the traditional tales of his people in a free program at 7 p.m. on Friday, March 12 at the Headwaters Center in Dubois. The evening talk offers a unique opportunity to learn more about the culture of our neighbors on the Wind River Reservation.

On Saturday morning March 13, LeClair will talk about his personal experiences growing up in two cultures during an informal workshop from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Headwaters Center. "Astride two cultures: The Indian in the Cowboy and the Cowboy in the Indian," is free and open to everyone. Refreshments will be available.



The Friday evening talk and Saturday morning workshop are sponsored by the Dubois Museum, Dubois Branch Library, and Central Wyoming College Outreach and funded by a grant from the Dubois Recreation Board.

LeClair speaks from experience about growing up in two worlds. He was born in Fort Washakie, the son of a Shoshone rancher and a white mother.

He received a college education and was taught the traditions of his people by elders of the Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho tribes.

LeClair grew up in a ranching family and continues to love ranching. Until recently, he raised Texas Longhorn cattle on his small ranch near Riverton. He served in the military and worked for a time in the Denver area in construction and as an air traffic controller. After his return to Fremont County, LeClair began to seek a spiritual path that at first involved only traditional dance. Then, more and more he began to study with Shoshone and Arapaho tribal elders as he sought to put his feet on the spiritual path of his ancestors. His search led to participation in the Sun Dance, the holiest of Native American ceremonies, and completion of six vision quests.

Today, LeClair dedicates his time to teaching others about Native American spirituality and traditions, conversational sign language and traditional dance. He has performed at the Smithsonian National Portrait Art Galley in Washington, D.C., the Buffalo Bill Museum in Cody, the Snake River Institute, Central Wyoming College, and for many other Wyoming schools and groups. His goal is to dispel stereotypes that "encourage people to view American Indians as figures in the historical past, or, even worse, as the characters that Hollywood has created."

For more information about LeClair's programs call the Dubois Museum at 307-455-2284, the Dubois Branch Library at 307-455-2992 or the Central Wyoming College coordinator at 307-455-2625.

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