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# Independent Record

SPECIAL INTERNET PREVIEW

VOLUME 111, No. 1, January 7, 2010

THERMOPOLIS, WY 82443

USPS 627-300

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The month of December featured two full moons, with the second referred to as a "blue moon." Above, the full moon shines in Wind River Canyon between bluffs near the Hot Springs-Fremont County line. — Keith E. Domke photo

## No triple-digit heat in 2009

by Keith E. Domke

When history buffs look back at 2009 in assessing Thermopolis weather, most probably would agree the climate was pretty average — with one exception.

The mercury never reached triple digits during the year.

The high-water mark in the Hot Springs County seat was 97 degrees, and it was reached twice, on July 24 and Aug. 22. The thermometer never hit 96 and reached 95 degrees six times, including three days in a row from July 11-13.

A year ago, three days topped the century mark, led by 101 degrees on July 22 and Aug. 1. This past year marked the first time since at least 2001 Thermopolis didn't have a 100-degree day. During that timeframe, the highest mercury reading was 106 degrees in 2005.

In all other aspects, the local weather was relatively non-eventful. Precipitation topped 10 inches for the third straight year, and other than an early December frigid spell, the town didn't experience a true deep freeze.

### 2009 Thermopolis temperatures

Month	Avg. high	Avg. low
January	37.3	10.7
February	46.2	19.9
March	49.8	21.9
April	59.6	32.6
May	73.3	42.5
June	75.6	48.9
July	87.9	55.3
August	84.9	52.5
September	81.7	48.0
October	52.4	29.3
November	53.5	22.8
December	25.4	1.9
Annual	60.6	32.2

### Temperatures

Overall, 35 days reached 90 degrees in 2009 and they occurred in the normal months of May through September. The

highs in almost half of July's 31 days hit 90 with 14, followed by nine in August. June experienced five days of 90-degree highs, September had four and May featured three.

July, therefore, had the warmest average high temperature of 87.9 degrees, followed by August's 84.9. September also was warm with its average daily high temperature 81.7 degrees.

For all of 2009, the average daily high temperature was 60.6 degrees, the coldest it has been in several years. A year ago, that number was 60.9. The average high temperature was 64 degrees in 2007, 66 degrees in 2006 and 64.8 degrees in 2005.

On the other end of the high-temperature ledger, there never was a day last year when the mercury failed to get above zero. The closest call came during December's cold snap when on the 9th, the thermometer topped out at 1 degree. The high was 2 on Dec. 8 and 5 on Dec. 7.

Other than that, a 6-degree high on Jan. 25 and a 7-degree high on Jan. 26 marked

See "Weather," page 9

## Commission reorganizes

by Cindy Glasson

John Lumley was named county commission chairman for 2010 during the Hot Springs County commissioners meeting Tuesday, with Dr. Frank Manning named vice chairman.

Each of the three commissioners, as required, will attend to special duties among the county boards. All three will work with the Thermopolis town government.

Lumley will be the liaison for town properties, the Senior Citizen Center, Yellowstone Development District, the chamber of commerce, road and bridge and the Wyoming County Commissioners Association board of directors.

Manning will oversee town properties, Hot Springs County Library, Hot Springs County Fair Board, human resources, Hot Springs County Memorial Hospital, Hot Springs County Museum and the Joint Powers Board for both the Discovery Center and the Armory Recreation District.

Commissioner Brad Basse, the outgoing chairman, will handle town properties, the Thermopolis Hot Springs Economic Development Company, search and rescue, the Land Use Planning Board and the Basin Authority Child Support Enforcement.

The commissioners again named the Independent Record the official newspaper for Hot Springs County.

Applications for the 18 various open board positions in the county were due in the clerk's office by Thursday, Dec. 31, to be considered for appointment.

County clerk Hans Odde said some applications were received after the due date and some consisted of a letter of interest with no formal application included. If a letter was received with no application attached, one was sent to the applicant.

County attorney Jerry Williams advised the commissioners that procedure must be followed with the board appointments to ensure legality of the appointments. Therefore, incomplete applications were removed from consideration.

## Health forces resignation of county coroner

by Cindy Glasson

The Hot Springs County Commission on Tuesday accepted the resignation of perhaps the longest serving public official in the state.

County coroner Clark Mortimore tendered his resignation after health problems prevented him from maintaining his required certification. He has been battling cancer for several years.

"It is with regret that we accepted his resignation," new commission chairman John Lumley said. "He has worked for many years for Hot Springs County."

Mortimore has served as county coroner for 51 years, stepping in to fill the position when his father, Max, resigned in 1959.

Mortimore's youngest son, Mark, now will step in to fill his father's position until elections later this year. He is currently the deputy county coroner.

His older son, Mike, has been taking care of Mortimore. See "Coroner," page 9

### Appointments

- Fair board: Arnold Penoyer.
- Hospital board: Ellen Roden and Carol Pickett.
- Land Use Planning Board: Tom Anderson.
- Library board: Cindy Toth and Curtis Cheney.
- Museum board: Dorothy Milek.
- Lodging Tax Board: Ernest Cummings.
- Predatory Animal Control Board: Don Harvey.
- Natural Resources Planning Committee: Matt Brown, Terry Wilson, Dorothy Milek and Carl Dockery.

Not all board positions were filled. They will be advertised again.

## First baby of new year an early arrival

by Cindy Glasson

Hot Springs County welcomed the first baby of the year at 2:06 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 3.

Kloe Katalena Vega was born at Hot Springs County Memorial Hospital to Amber and Moses Vega of Worland. She weighed 6 pounds, 10.8 ounces and was 20 inches long.

"She wasn't due until Jan. 11, so we did not expect this," her mother, Amber, said.

The couple has two other children, 4-year-old Noa and 3-year-old Oan.

"We didn't know what we were going to have," Amber said. "I'm not quite sure what we're going to do with a girl."

Big brother Noa was happy to have a baby sister. He said that is what he had wanted all along. Kloe's younger big brother, Oan, was not as excited.

"Oan wanted a monkey," Amber said.

As the first baby of the new year, Kloe received a pile of presents from the hospital's ladies auxiliary and several businesses in town.



Thermopolis welcomes the 2010 New Year's baby, Kloe Katalena Vega. Pictured with the new arrival are her father, Moses, mother Amber, older brothers Noa and Oan, and Mary Tschiffely with the hospital Ladies Auxiliary.

"This is so much more than we expected," Amber said. "She's going to be spoiled already. Thank you so much to everyone."

## December jolly for retailers

by Keith E. Domke

It seems that December was the season to be jolly for many area business owners. In fact, for some, the month was full of jingle-bell-ringing cash registers.

Across the board, Thermopolis businesses contacted by the Independent Record after the Christmas holiday said their final month of 2009 was a pretty good one. For some, December helped make up for an off year while for others it was the continuation of a strong season.

"We had an excellent December, the best we've ever had," said Lisa Shaffer of Needful Things, 521 Broadway. "People we never saw before came in. I'm thinking maybe because of the economy, more people shopped locally."

Susan Lankford of WOW Discount, 541 Broadway, echoed those comments.

"We noticed people were busy and shopping locally in town this year, and that's wonderful," she said. "I know we had a pretty good December."

Lankford said the solid December helped offset an otherwise mediocre year.



Game Time Athletics owner Annette Arey rearranges inventory inside her store after the December holidays rush.

— Keith E. Domke photo

the year weren't as strong. But, we're carrying on and doing the same things. We're going to keep filling up the store to get people excited about coming in."

At Thermopolis Hardware, 158 U.S. Highway 20, it was the same as December was strong after a couple of slower months.

"We're up for the month," owner Dennis Sinclair said. "We did pretty well. We were slower in October and November, but we

did well with several things in the store in December. ... We feel we about matched last year as far as December. But all in all, we had a good year. We're blessed with the support we get from the community."

Dave Denton of White Horse Country Store, 180 U.S. Highway 20, basically gave a "ditto."

"December was very good," he said. "We were behind almost all

See "Shopping," page 9