

Community Arts
Month observed
during October

3

Bobcats travel to
Lyman for key
2A West game

6

Chamber, commercial
center discussed
by town council

9

Grasshopper numbers
affected by wet,
cold spring

14

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Council discusses, takes action on 14th Street safety

by J.D. Stetson

The Thermopolis Town Council has heard the public's concern for safety on 14th Street near the Thermopolis Middle School and Hot Springs County Volunteer Fire Department.

At its Sept. 20 meeting, Wayne Ward, a 14th Street resident, approached the council to express his concerns and his appreciation to the council for discussing the issue.

Ward said he has been a long-term resident of the street who has seen traffic increase exponentially from year to year.

For the past two years, he's sought changes to the street to decrease the flow of traffic or semi-trucks and people pulling trailers.

Ward informed the council there is a current ordinance prohibiting the transportation of "towed vehicles" on the road.

The ordinance does not impede the locals and it is aimed at people who use the street as a quick way to get around town, he said.

However, Ward said a previous discussion with various law enforcement agencies on the subject has given him an impression the ordinance may be unenforceable. He was proven wrong the previous week when he saw an officer stop a truck pulling a trailer on the road.

He expressed his desire to see more instances where people pulling trailers on the street are pulled over and given warnings or tickets for violating the town ordinance.

Police Chief Mark Nelson stated he thinks the ordinance is an enforceable ordinance and that he has written warnings on the road on several occasions. He said he would encourage officers to provide extra patrol of the area, particularly during school times, and inform them of the ordinance.

Stop sign violations, speeding

Large trucks aren't the only problem. During rush hours, Ward has seen many people go

through stop signs or speed down the street in a hurry to get to the other side of town.

He said the construction during the summer was a blessing in disguise because it forced people to slow down and kept larger vehicles from traveling the road.

"I loved the construction," he said adding he found it comical to watch the semi-trucks trying to navigate the construction, but eventually having to go back.

Ward also expressed interest in making the school zone speed limit on the street run from 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. instead of starting at 7:30 a.m.

Since school now starts earlier, Ward said many of the children start their walk to school at about 7:15 a.m., which is much earlier than the posted speed limit starts. Since the meeting, the town changed the speed limit to start at 7 a.m.

While the council agreed the time for the speed limit needed changing, they also agreed they needed to address signage on the street to keep trucks and towed vehicles off the road.

During the brainstorming session, some of the ideas presented by council members and staff presented as jokes included the building of a small overpass, making it a toll road, making the street one-way and adding multiple speed bumps. While none of these actions are viable options, the council is still considering what action could be taken to address the issues.

"We need to have a reputation like Shoshoni, where people automatically slow down," said Mayor Bill Malloy.

The council also discussed the condition of the road and the need eventually to do serious roadwork to address issues of deterioration. Council members added the popularity of the road by heavier vehicles doesn't help with the wearing down of the road.

"We are looking at it, and we'll keep looking at it," Malloy said.



The Town of Thermopolis has changed the hours for 20 mph speed limits on 14th Street from 7:30 a.m. to 7 a.m. to increase safety on the street.

Lodging Tax Board, chamber discuss finances

by Cindy Glasson

Finances, including who pays for what, were discussed at length by the Hot Springs County Lodging Tax Board at its September meeting on Tuesday.

Board members had requested a breakdown of various costs covered by the Thermopolis-Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce and the Lodging Tax Board from Chamber Interim Director Michelle Lue.

Lue has presented the financial breakdown to the board for the past couple of months, showing each visit made to the chamber as well as every phone call or visitor contact.

She has broken the list down even further, showing the length of each call or visit, computing the time out at \$10 per hour to account for the

\$14,000 given to the chamber by the Lodging Tax Board.

Chamber President Donna Nally was concerned the Lodging Tax Board was planning on cutting the funding they give the chamber or possibly cutting them out of their budget altogether.

"We're paying \$14,000 a year," board member Carl Leyba said. "We just want to know what the chamber is paying. If we're paying two-thirds of the administrative costs and the chamber is paying one-third, is that fair?"

Nally assured the board the chamber was paying over \$14,000 for their portion of the expenses associated with the Chamber of Commerce.

"The chamber income stream amounts to three fundraisers," Nally

said. "We do a lot of work for the Lodging Tax Board and swallowing about 20 percent of the costs for administration.

"I would say 75 percent of our time is spent on tourism and the other 25 percent of the time is spent on our members."

"Our job is to get them here," Leyba said. "Once they're in your door it's your job to direct them to the member businesses."

"We aren't cutting back, we just want to know who is paying what and that the chamber is pulling its weight."

Lue assured the board the chamber was getting back on track after a very successful demolition derby.

"We have cash in the bank (more than \$30,000) right now and the out-

look is good," Lue said. "We have the Susan G. Komen event coming up that could potentially bring in another \$10,000."

Bids for fairgrounds signage

In other business, Leyba informed the board he had received two bids for the proposed electric signage at the fairgrounds. One bid arrived from California, the other from Billings.

The electronic signs would not only be used for fairgrounds events, but could also display Amber Alerts and community messages.

Board President Angie Guyon told the members she had had a conference call with Adbay last week and had the outline, or site map, for the website for their approval.

The members looked over the pa-

perwork, making changes as they wished, then turned everything over to Guyon and Harvey Seidel to work on with the company.

Guyon also said the first four television ads for Thermopolis are ready. There will be several variations, which run 15 seconds each.

The group also discussed newspaper advertising throughout the state, planning on quarter-page, full-color ads in weekend editions with smaller ads in papers closer to towns like Cody, Worland and Riverton.

Leyba suggested they look into full-color inserts for the larger papers as well, citing a low cost with a higher customer return.

The next Lodging Tax Board meeting will be at noon, Oct. 18 at Stones Throw.

Ceremony remembers the victims of domestic violence



Jennifer Domhoff, H.O.P.E. Agency director, lights some of the 59 candles representing those who lost their lives due to domestic violence in Wyoming since 1985 in last year's Silent Witness Ceremony.

by J.D. Stetson

If you are a victim of domestic violence, or if you know someone who is a victim, it's now time to raise awareness of the problem through remembrance of those who have died.

Starting at 2 p.m. Saturday, people from all around the state will gather in the community park at Sixth and Broadway streets to begin the march leading up to the Statewide Silent Witness Ceremony at the Hot Springs County High School Auditorium. A dinner will be served at the Hot Springs County Fair Building immediately after the memorial.

The event is free and open to the public and is hosted by the H.O.P.E. Agency. The agency will require various volunteers to help throughout the day, and anyone interested can contact the agency at 864-4673.

The goal of the memorial will be to raise awareness of domestic violence and its prevalence in the communities around the state. It will feature a keynote speaker, a musical performance and candle ceremony.

"It's a subject no one wants to talk about," said Jennifer Domhoff, H.O.P.E. Agency director. "This is putting it out

there."

The event is expected to garner at least 200 people from around the state and will feature 60 silhouettes honoring victims of domestic violence in Wyoming. The families of each of these victims have been invited to attend the ceremony.

Two of the silhouettes are in remembrance of Becky Wiley and Kelley S. Taylor, both from Thermopolis, and are listed as silent witnesses on www.wyomingsilentwitness.state.wy.us.

Domhoff also is encouraging people to "paint the town purple" on both Friday and Saturday to greet the families of the victims as they enter the community. The agency planned to offer businesses and residents purple ribbons to display throughout the week, and it is encouraging residents to use purple light bulbs outside to shine a light on domestic violence awareness.

The agency expects the large ceremony will provide more education to people in the community on the issue, including the victims who don't know they are victims, such as people who suffer emotional, verbal or other types of abuse than physical.

"You are not alone," Domhoff said.