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Thermopolis
Hot Springs

Independent Record

SPECIAL INTERNET PREVIEW

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Rollover in Wind River Canyon



Hot Springs County EMTs, firefighters, sheriff's deputies and Search & Rescue responded to the aid of 60-year-old Lynn Butler of Manderson after he crashed his vehicle through the guardrail at mile marker 120 on Highway 20 South near Wolf Creek at 4:30 p.m. Friday. The vehicle rolled down the embankment and stopped just short of completely entering the Big Horn River. Butler was taken to Hot Springs County Memorial Hospital and was Life Flighted to Wyoming Medical Center in Casper.

Butler was improving Monday and was waking up from a medically-induced coma, according to Basin Republican Rustler Editor Karla Pomeroy. Wyoming Highway Patrol Trooper Susan Wilson said Tuesday Butler was currently in stable, but critical, condition. Troopers are unsure of the cause of the crash and had not yet interviewed Butler with regard to the rollover. He was wearing a seatbelt, and alcohol is not suspected as being a factor in the crash.

— J.D. Stetson photo

Ad campaign promoting HSC 'best in state'

by Cindy Glasson

A new advertising campaign launched by the Thermopolis-Hot Springs Lodging Tax Board via Adbay has been chosen as the best in the state by the Wyoming State Office of Tourism.

Featuring various plays on the word "Thermopolis," Casper-based Adbay changed the first few letters for each ad, creating "Viewopolis," Happily "Everopolis," "Steamopolis" and "Timeopolis." The campaign will be honored at the Governor's Conference Feb. 26-28 in Cheyenne at Little America.

Along with the new ad campaign, the board agreed at its Tuesday meeting to move forward with the launch of its new website within the next few days. The website was created by Adbay.

The board decided to continue with the launch in order to get feedback from the public to see what may need to be fixed or reviewed.

Carl Leyba presented his report to the board from his recent attendance at the NTA Conference, saying there was much excitement about Thermopolis and Hot Springs County during the convention.

Leyba said he spent quite a bit of time with the regional director for NTA, discussing other conferences that are available to

promote the area as well as suggestions that would make a bigger impact at the next NTA meeting.

"What we found out was that people are looking for western things," Leyba said. "They want chuck wagon dinners, horseback riding and fireside poets."

"The groups that we visited with found Thermop is a better value than staying in Cody. They're looking for tours, too, for things like Wyoming Whiskey, the Dinosaur Center and the petroglyphs."

Leyba indicated most of the touring companies are looking for a single night's stay; however, the Lodging Tax Board would like to see that expanded to two-night stays.

The tours would benefit all the hotels, not just the chain hotels in town, too. Once the tours come into the chain hotels that allows the smaller, personally owned hotels to pick up the overflow tourists.

It was found that room prices in Thermopolis were very attractive to the tour companies compared to Cody, too.

"The rates will attract them first," said board member Jim Mills. "The attractions we have will bring them in next and then the downtown businesses."

The next meeting of the Lodging Tax Board will be at noon Feb. 21 at Days Inn.

Council asked for fireworks code change

by J.D. Stetson

The Thermopolis Town Council plans to move forward with a change to town codes to allow fireworks to be sold closer to town.

Derrick Burrows approached the council at its Tuesday night meeting to ask for a change in the existing ordinance banning the sale and use of fireworks within five miles of the corporate limits of the town.

Burrows owns property a little more than a half mile north of town on Highway 20. It is on the west side of the road north of the Hot Springs State Park corrals and south of the entrance to the Fountain of Youth Campground.

Burrows said a person is interested in buying a small portion of the property to erect a fireworks stand. The person interested in the land is the same person who owns and operates the existing fireworks stand near the intersection of Sunnyside Lane and Highway 20 North.

He said there are no nearby structures

threatened by having a fireworks stand close by. He added that to his knowledge, Worland currently has a fireworks stand just outside its city limits and that it has not caused any negative effects to the city.

The council discussed changing the five-mile limit on selling fireworks, but they agreed the limit for fireworks use within five miles should remain in effect.

Council members debated some of the negative circumstances of having a fireworks stand closer to Thermopolis, which included the dangers posed by a large concentration of explosives in a building close to town, fire hazards and pedestrian safety for children going to purchase fireworks from the stand.

The council also questioned whether the town had authority to enforce the ordinance outside the town limits. Town Attorney Mike Messenger said the courts have ruled the town does have the authority to enforce the ordinance based on past court cases.

The council also discussed the ramifications changing the limit would cause for other areas of town. While the area north of town is sparse without many buildings, the area south of town is bustling with businesses.

Councilman Dick Hall said he thought it would be beneficial to allow people the chance to buy the fireworks locally, but he also said he was uncomfortable with making fireworks more available to children in town when it is illegal to set off fireworks within the town limits.

The council also considered the increased traffic of pedestrians and children who would ride bikes or walk up to the stand along the hill, which, at times, features heavy traffic from vehicles and increased speeds by vehicles.

After the discussion, the town decided to instruct Messenger to draft an ordinance to change the existing codes in order to allow a fireworks stand closer to town.

Rockfall project finished

A damage repair project to eliminate hazardous rock from falling on roadways near Greybull and Thermopolis concluded Jan. 10, ahead of schedule, according to the Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT).

Prime contractor Oftedal Construction, Inc., completed rockfall work on the \$937,000 project at 13 locations in Wind River Canyon along U.S. 20/Wyoming 789 between Shoshoni and Thermopolis, and at six locations in Shell Canyon along U.S. 14 east of Greybull.

"Within the 19 sites as part of the final cleanup, ditches were cleaned, and in some cases, the

slopes were excavated more to establish increased storage for material to slide toward the roadways, and as a buffer to motorists using the highways," said Paul Koenig, WYDOT project inspector in Basin.

"These scaled slopes will remain in a very tender state due to the scaling process, and until adequate moisture, wind and sun re-compact and form a crust on these slopes. It could be a year until this process is complete, and until then, minor amounts of material will continue to slide toward the bottom of the canyon slopes," Koenig said.

Chamber welcomes new members; discusses possibility of new events

by J.D. Stetson

The Thermopolis-Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors welcomed four new members to the board Jan. 12.

The new board members include Mark O'Loughlen, Dixie Vialpando, Hannah Bird and Jessica Lippincott. They join current board members Phillip Scheel, James Raymond, John Gibbel, Tawna McQueen, vice president Gene Boehmke and president Donna Nally.

The chamber moved on to discuss various events proposed for 2012. The first event the board discussed is the chamber's participation with the Greater Learning Foundation in bringing a statewide Folk Festival to town in the fall.

The foundation's request was for the chamber to help provide manpower during the event while the foundation will work to organize and find funding for it.

The board decided to offer the foundation the chamber's support in the endeavor, but they also discussed its intention to see whether the chamber membership is interested in the event.

The board discussed having a membership forum in early February to inform the chamber members about the Folk Festival and other endeavors the chamber has proposed for the year, which include a fly fishing tournament and a microbrew festival.

The goal of the forum will be to gauge support for the events and to drum up membership involvement in chamber activities.

Later in the meeting the board further discussed the possibility of a microbrew festival and decided the best time to have the festival would likely be during a weekend in September. The board requested Boehmke to continue researching the event and continue contacting breweries interested in participating.

Fly fishing tournament

In November, the Thermopolis-Hot Springs County Economic Development Co. (EDC) approached the board to discuss the possibility of Thermopolis hosting a fly fishing tournament. Since the

meeting, executive director Michelle Lue said she had met with members of the agency to discuss the event further.

Lue reported the agency proposed the invitation-only event would be limited to 12 non-local participants.

The agency wants to limit the participation to 12 people because they want to keep the event small during its first year and don't want to interfere with others using the river at the same time, said HSEDC Executive Director Kendi Heinz.

After the tournament, the agency would host a banquet for the participants that would be open to the public.

The goal of the event is to invite specific people to town who are in a position to also bring new businesses or would be able to attract business to the area. The event would not be intended to make money for either EDC or the chamber, Lue said.

The board discussed the merits and downsides of the event and questioned how the event would benefit the chamber membership.

After the discussion, the board chose to request the agency submit a formal proposal with a specific dollar amount requested for the event in order for the board to consider participation.

Chamber Banquet

The chamber's next major event is the Chamber Banquet scheduled for March 24. The board discussed possible changes to the menu, but decided to keep the menu the same as in 2011 because of the large turnout and success of the event.

Originally, the board questioned whether to have king crab legs during the event because of the significant cost, but they decided to keep it on the menu because they believe people look forward to the opportunity to have their choice of crab legs, prime rib and beer-boiled shrimp during the banquet, which is one of the chamber's largest fundraisers of the year.

For more information about the banquet or other chamber events, contact Lue at 864-3192.

4-H Mustangs project



4-H Mustangs club members Rebecca Clouse and Maggie Jones, wearing hat, learn how to bake pies from scratch. They sold the pies as part of a fundraiser. Watching over them is Leann Clouse.

— Cindy Glasson photo