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County examining phone alert system

by Dick Hall

Bill Gordon, county emergency management coordinator, briefed the Hot Springs County Commissioners at their Tuesday meeting on a new system that can be used to spread emergency news by telephone, both land line and cell.

The system can be used by five or six different local agencies to alert just those in their group or the entire population of the county—all within five minutes of deciding that an alert should go out.

The county itself would be one of the agencies allowed access to the system. The Town of Thermopolis, the hospital, the school district or the fire department might be other approved users.

The cost to the county is \$5,000 per year and that fee is set for the future, as long as the county is a subscriber. A company called Code Red would provide the service.

Chuck Carver, head custodian, reported the re-roofing job on the courthouse is finished. He also discussed the upcoming holiday season and the decorations routinely displayed on the courthouse.

The commissioners, after considerable discussion, voted to provide \$3,500 to the group responsible for the decorations with the understanding any future requests for funds would be looked at with a jaundiced eye.

Economic Development Company director Lorraine Quar-

berg updated the commissioners on the Red Rock Business Park. Three lots have been set aside for some months in anticipation they will be sold to one company that had asked for an option. She also said marketing plans are in place and the effort will be launched this winter.

In other action, the commissioners:

- Discussed again the no-smoking policy effective in county offices and surrounding areas. There have been some violations of the policy, and the commissioners let everyone involved know there are no exceptions.

- Listened with interest as Bob Wyss discussed a new approach to juvenile justice. A committee will be set up to review the case against each youngster and determine, based on several criteria, whether to forward the case to district court or handle it in lower courts.

- Heard from a disgruntled citizen who had his property taxes raised 80% over last year. He was looking for relief, but the commissioners pointed him to the legislature, from which tax rates and any relief would come.

- Voted to spend nearly \$4,000 to replace the broken computer server in the courthouse.

- Discussed the possibility of establishing a Hot Springs Protection Zone with county planner Lee Campbell and Larry Bentley. The group was instructed to proceed with the plan.

- Noted several Red Lane water issues.



Sixth and Fifth streets in Thermopolis stretch north toward the red hills near the airport, upper left, in this view from the cargo hatch of the new Thermopolis C-130 Wyoming Na-

tional Guard aircraft dedicated Oct. 1. The C-130 flew over Thermopolis after the ceremony at the Greybull airport. More on page 12.

—Brenda TenBoer photo

Thermopolis C-130 flies over Thermop after dedication ceremony in Greybull

by Brenda TenBoer

The C-130 officially dubbed the “Thermopolis” during an Oct. 1 dedication ceremony is one of four new additions to the fleet of eight the Wyoming Air National Guard received in 1993.

The C-130 flew into South Big Horn County Airport near Greybull last Wednesday because the airstrips and taxiways at Thermopolis and Worland are not strong enough to accommodate such a large aircraft.

Mayor Bill Malloy and Hot Springs County commissioners John Lumley, Brad Basse and Frank Manning led the delegation attending the dedication ceremony at the new Russell Hangar, which is leased by the aviation company B&G Industries, a firm that also has a machining business in Thermopolis.

Roughly 40 people received personal invitations to fly on the C-130, which will soon bear the name of Thermopolis across its side.

A 15-county Wyoming license plate lo-

cated in the pilot’s window has the same number as the plane, 7311. The plane has been used for hurricane relief efforts in recent weeks, according to Wyoming Adjutant General Ed Wright.

The plane, which can carry 72 patients, is such a workhorse it is used to evacuate people in the paths of hurricanes and also to spray chemical for mosquito control. The C-130 is also quite often used to fight wildfires, Wright said.

“I sincerely hope, Mr. Mayor, that you do not have to see this aircraft again because it means that it’s coming for active duty,” Wright said to Malloy.

The “Thermopolis” flew out of Greybull loaded with civilians on its dedication flight. While flying low over Thermopolis, the rear cargo hatch was lowered for an up-close view of the town it was named after.

“It was an experience you cannot begin to tell someone about, the feeling of flying in that big plane with the hatch open, it was just awesome,” Lumley said.

Burlington resident and Greybull airport board member Walter Hibbert said, “I will remember that flight always. That was something else.”

Although the C-130s are located in Cheyenne, the National Guard is involved in communities throughout Wyoming, said Colonel Stephan Pappas.

“To give back to those communities the Wyoming National Guard hosted a contest asking Wyoming residents to choose the towns we would dedicate our new planes to,” Pappas said.

People cast more than 7,400 votes for 56 communities in all, an overwhelming response. The names of three finalists for each C-130, the three towns that received the most votes in each quadrant of the state, were placed in air crew helmets and Gov. Dave Freudenthal, a Thermopolis native, drew the winning names.

“We are very proud that Thermopolis is one of the names drawn from that hat,” Pappas said.

Town, commissioners discuss possibility of switching to countywide landfill system

by Breez Longwell Daniels

A solid waste management plan and detailed economic analysis was discussed by Thermopolis Town Council and the Hot Springs County Commissioners at the joint work session.

The town owns the landfill on West Sunnyside Lane and other entities including East Thermopolis, Kirby and the county pay proportional costs to participate.

“All citizens should have participation in a solid waste district,” assistant to the Thermopolis mayor Dan Stansill, said. “We are looking at dramatic changes in collection and disposal.

“There are going to be changes

in what we can dispose of. The state is going to mandate changes that require more time and administrative duties.”

He said, “Just like we have weed and pest and conservation districts, we should have an entity that oversees and administers solid waste.”

STATE statute allows the county commissioners to establish a solid waste district by resolution. The commissioners would then appoint three to nine board members to govern the district and set the usage fees.

Inberg-Miller Engineers conducted an analysis of the current landfill that includes costs for the past five years. Estimates show a cost per ton for basic operations.

Howard Johnson of Inberg-Miller said the rule of thumb is approximately one ton of landfill waste per year, per person. Current basic landfill operational costs are estimated at \$54.54 per person/ton in the county each year. When transportation and administration costs are added it increases to \$82.11 per ton.

The plan and cost analysis written by Inberg-Miller is being submitted to the Wyoming Department of Environmental

Quality as required by the state. The plan and analysis includes an environmental assessment with ground water samples and other tests.

THE DEQ will make recommendations for future landfill modifications and construction that may require a lined landfill at increased costs, according to Johnson.

Thermopolis town engineer Heath Overfield said regulations dictated by the state could have a huge impact on what the town can do and what it will cost to operate and maintain the landfill in the future.

Johnson gave examples to the council members and commissioners of landfill operations in other counties. He said Fremont County levies three mills to fund their landfills, and landfill operators become district employees.

“THE OTHER option is ‘pay as you throw,’” Johnson said. “The landfill district would put in scales and charges would be based on daily operation and the creation of a necessary cash reserve. A third option is to levy the three mills and charge for specialty items like tires or concrete.

“A recycling option is also

needed,” Johnson said. “People need to get rid of the recyclables before they hit the landfill.”

COUNTY commissioner Frank Manning said the county would barely have enough to cover current costs if all three mills were levied, “and this is good economic times.”

County clerk Hans Odde said, “That’s the thing about pay as you throw. The landfill district would always be able to balance the budget.

“If you go with the three mills you will be at the whim of oil and gas prices.”

THE DISCUSSION continued with the engineers and commissioners debating the pros and cons of a mill levy funded district versus a pay as you throw system.

Johnson recommended the pay as you throw option, saying, “It encourages front end recycling before the scale, including electronic waste, compost, newspapers, glass, tin and aluminum.”

Commission chairman Brad Basse said he doesn’t see the commission taking any action until the DEQ makes its recommendations to the town in July.



A tiny flame creeps out from under the walls of a home at 728 Amoretti as assistant fire chief Bob Butchart uses a special saw to remove the window. The firemen were called to the structure three times.

—Gary Linton photo

Three fire calls at house

by Jonathan Green

Thermopolis firefighters were called to an unoccupied house at 728 Amoretti three times in a 16-hour period after the building caught fire.

The house, owned by Dan Brownell, was being renovated at the time and was unoccupied. The first call was at 4:57 p.m. Oct. 1, where they found the smoke coming from a wall and the chimney.

Firemen cut out a portion of the wall and broke out a door while fighting the fire for over an hour. Fire chief Mark Collins said the fire appeared to

start near the west wall under a window in the living room.

At 6:45 p.m. a concerned neighbor called 911 to report the house was smoldering, and firefighters returned to the scene. The firefighters again wetted the building, using foam to help knock out any hot spots, before retiring for the night.

At 9:31 a.m. Thursday, firefighters were called a third time to the scene when someone backed into a gas meter at the property, causing a leak.

No one was injured.