

Lady Bobcats
close to second
place in league

6

Driver survives
crash with truck
at intersection

9

Owl Creek water
'opt out' lands
map unveiled

10

Stun gun and
pepper spray
used in dispute

13

Thermopolis
Hot Springs

Independent Record

SPECIAL INTERNET PREVIEW

VOLUME 109, No. 42, October 16, 2008

THERMOPOLIS, WY 82443

USPS 627-300

75¢

Ten candidates remain

Lewis withdraws from school race

One of the 11 candidates for four Hot Springs County School Board positions has withdrawn from the general election on Nov. 4.

Don Lewis notified the Hot Springs County clerk by letter that he was withdrawing due to business interests that will require considerable out-of-state travel.

The remaining candidates

are Lexie Yarrington, Clay Van Antwerp, Tom Christensen, Gary Olheiser, Mark Wagstaff, Bruce Thurgood, Dr. W. Travis Bomengen, Dr. Howard Willson and two incumbents, Karen A. Leyba and Breez Longwell Daniels.

The holdover members of the school board are chairwoman Liz Mahoney, Belenda Willson and Hub Whitt.

Magistrate waits on judge choice

by Jonathan Green

Hot Springs County officials say the absence of both a permanent magistrate and circuit court judge here are presenting only limited difficulties.

Sheriff Lou Falgoust said the vacancies have not affected his department. Circuit and district court judges as well as magistrates are empowered to issue search warrants, he said.

Falgoust said district court judge Robert Skar has always been accommodating of department needs, making himself available day or night to consider warrant requests. The sheriff said Skar's availability has continued since his elevation to the district bench.

Louis Walrath has been serving as acting magistrate.

A new circuit court judge will be named by Oct. 23, Wyoming Judicial Nominating Committee chairman and Supreme Court chief justice Bart Voigt said. That judge will be headquartered in Worland.

A full-time equivalency mag-

istrate will be appointed by the new circuit court judge, likely in consultation with the other Fifth Judicial District circuit court judge, Bruce Waters in Cody, Voigt said.

Voigt said it will be some time before the situation returns to normal. A transition period of up to 60 days is possible after the appointment as the new judge concludes private practice business.

County attorney Jerry Williams said the situation has been more difficult for attorneys, especially the three in contention for the circuit court position (Tom Harrington, Ed Luhm and Dan Massey). They must consider whether to accept new clients, knowing they may be called upon to shutter their private practices when elevated to a judgeship.

Williams also said his own role as prosecutor has been impacted by the vacancies, especially in scheduling trials. "The courts have been very flexible but inevitably there are lots of conflicts."



Starting the massive job of cleaning up hundreds, perhaps thousands, of limbs in Hot Springs State Park, John Fish loads an almost hidden truck for driver Brett St. Pierre. On

Monday, park superintendent Kevin Skates was uncertain about the total loss but was requesting other help from the state level.
—Pat Schmidt photo

Heavy snowfall measured at up to two feet ravages trees, cuts power, cancels events

by Pat Schmidt

Snowfall reached 24 inches in Thermopolis last weekend, according to one report received by the National Weather Service.

A second report from Thermopolis put the snowfall at 22.5 inches. Other reports received by the NWS included:

- Thermopolis 93, 14 inches.
- Thermopolis 4N, 9.5 inches.

- Thermopolis 0.2SSW, 6 inches.

- Owl Creek Snotel (an automatic measuring device on upper Owl Creek): 21 inches.

Most snowpack measurements around Thermopolis on Sunday morning placed the snowpack around 16.

Measuring snowfall

An official at the NWS facility in Riverton explained the difference between snowfall and snowpack measurements.

For snowfall, trained NWS observers use a snow board, measure the snow every three hours, clearing it off in between.

Snowpack is the amount of snow on the ground and can be for a day or longer. The snowpack total is less than the snowfall because of factors such as the weight of snow causing some compaction and melting.

1.49 inches precipitation

Total precipitation measured at the official NWS instruments at the Thermopolis Wastewater Pumping Station next to the Big Horn River was 1.49 inches, during the storm, .29 of an inch by 4 p.m. Friday and another 1.2 inches by 4 p.m. Monday.

The pumping station is not staffed on Saturdays and Sundays, so no snow measurements were available those days. When a town employee checked on Monday, the remaining snowpack was 11 inches.

Some power outages

Thousands of tree branches in and around Thermopolis broke, although no reports were received of homes or vehicles being crushed.

Rocky Mountain Power spokesmen reported one major outage lasting just over four hours early Saturday morning, affecting customers on Clark and Fremont streets between First and Eighth streets.

There were several shorter outages around Susan Kay, Chevy Chase, Sunset, Circle

Drive and 14th streets, attributed to limbs falling on lines and service boxes.

High Plains Power area foreman Sid McDonald said his six-member crew was able to limit the longest outage on High Plains lines to five hours, but tree limbs falling on electrical lines kept them busy starting Friday night. Problems were concentrated in the Lucerne area but reached all the way to Black Mountain.

Things were controlled well enough that on Sunday they worked from 6 a.m. to about noon, and McDonald praised his crew for handling all the problems. He said Tuesday the High Plains workers were spending some time cleaning up things that could be a problem in the future.

Highways stay open

Russ Dowdy reported the Wyoming Department of Transportation kept three snowplow trucks operating, using two three-man shifts. To get a sixth driver, area supervisor Pat Mosbrucker from Riverton drove one truck.

The crews used 11-hour shifts, plowing all night Friday and Saturday, with a little lull Saturday afternoon. They were able to shut down before noon on Sunday.

"The temperatures helped us a lot," Dowdy said.

Visibility was poor at times, so a no unnecessary travel advisory was used for a while. He said no highways in the county were closed, and he knew of just one wreck on what he described as a wet highway at the time in Wind River Canyon.

WYDOT plows were even able to clear the low priority highways such as Owl Creek at least once a day during the storm.

"The driving public paid attention and the traffic volume was low," he said.

County plows pavement

County road and bridge superintendent Jim Skelton said two plows were kept busy Saturday and Sunday on paved county roads.

He tries not to plow gravel roads during the first snowfall, because the plows tend to roll up the gravel, damaging the surface.

Hot Springs State Park superintendent Kevin Skates said the hundreds of limbs that fell



Jazmyn Schuft, 9, closes her eyes as her plastic sled catches some air during the snowstorm on Saturday. Several youngsters had improvised a sledding slope on the northeast corner of the Broadway Bridge in East Thermopolis.

and damaged trees have prompted him to request assistance from the state.

On Saturday, Thermopolis volunteer firemen were called to four downed power lines and the wreck in the canyon.

Other storms have resulted in serious damage to trees in and around Thermopolis in the past, but this is the most damage anybody could recall in a storm that did not involve ice, just snow.

Temperatures were not severe as in some past storms, which probably limited that type

of damage.

In fact the official low was 32 degrees on Saturday and 28 on Sunday at the wastewater pumping station.

Events cancelled

The Bobcats football game Friday at Worland was played in snow, but the temperature remained around the freezing mark, and the players did not have to worry about hard, frozen turf or high winds.

Several events were cancelled, including middle school football and volleyball and the 4-H Bingo Night.



In a clash between fall and winter, a colorful fall scarecrow on Judy Lee holds onto a mail box and peeks forlornly from under a heavy load of winter snow.
—Pat Schmidt photo