

Teams returning
to long trips
next school year

6

Riding the bus
through scenic
W. River Canyon

8

Economic downturn
saving town
thousands?

11

School board
debates joint
math credits

13

Thermopolis
Hot Springs

Independent Record

SPECIAL INTERNET PREVIEW

VOLUME 109, No. 47, November 20, 2008

THERMOPOLIS, WY 82443

USPS 627-300

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State delays planning grant for proposed senior center

by Breez Longwell Daniels

A planning grant for the Hot Springs Senior Citizens Center feasibility study for expanded facilities is not being fully recommended by the Wyoming Business Council at this time.

The Hot Springs County commissioners learned Friday the WBC had received a large number of planning proposals and would be unable to fully fund all of the requests in this cycle.

County clerk Hans Odde informed commissioners John Lumley and Frank Manning that \$15,000 would be recommended by the WBC, leaving the grant short \$10,000. One option suggested was to wait for the funding cycle that begins in February and reapply for the full \$25,000 needed for the feasibility study.

"The senior center has been trying for this money for four years, working towards a plan for expansion," Lumley said. "There is no guarantee that if we wait they will get the funding they need."

Manning agreed but said, "I think we can wait for six months and try for the February funding cycle."

The commissioners then voted to reapply for full funding from the WBC in February. The grant money for that funding cycle will be awarded in June.

In other business, the commissioners awarded the bid for asbestos abatement at the old Oddfellows building, across the street from the courthouse, to Environmental Contractors LLC out of Billings for \$14,872. There were no Wyoming bidders. Of the six bids received, the high bid was \$85,004.

The building is scheduled for demolition by

the county crew to make way for a new public health office.

Bob Brownell of Terracon Consultants Inc., in attendance to assist with the asbestos abatement bid, recommended the commissioners hire a consultant to oversee the EPA air quality standards required when the county completes the demolition. He said there must be a competent asbestos specialist on site during the demolition process.

Brownell proceeded to give commissioners Lumley and Manning a price for his services to perform the monitoring requirements and was simultaneously awarded \$5,627 for monitoring of the demolition work and a final visual inspection.

County planner Lee Campbell provided the commissioners with an update on the Gooseberry and Cottonwood Vegetation Management Plan. There are over 4,000 acres involved in the study.

Terry Root, district ranger of the north zone of the Shoshone National Forest said, "The plan has received a very positive response from everybody across the board."

A priority concern for the commissioners was the ability to design logging in the area for small sales contracts.

Carl Dockery, who was at the meeting, asked Root about the possibility of logging for posts and poles.

Root responded, "It looks like there will be the opportunity to get back into the post and pole business for personal need and commercial opportunities."

Ray Shaffer of the county road and bridge reported the Grass Creek road has been graveled up to the forest service access.

Blair's opens a store here

Hot Springs County now has a Blair's Super Market to go with those in Park and Washakie counties. Brent and Kent Foulger and their families completed the purchase of Consumers Market on Saturday and reopened as Blair's Super Market on Sunday.

Manager Eric Mackay, a Cody native who has a business management degree from the University of Wyoming, has worked at Blair's stores for over 20 years.

Brent Foulger manages the Powell supermarket, while Kent operates the supermarket in Worland.

The family moved to Powell in 1980 from Shepherd, Mont., when Blair Foulger, their father,

decided to leave his position with Associated Food Stores and buy Max's Food Farm in Powell.

In 1984, they opened a large new store on Coulter Avenue in Powell. The family also operated a supermarket in Cody for about seven years. The store on U.S. Highway 16 in Worland was added nine years ago.

Manager here

Mackay graduated from Cody High School in 1991 and the University of Wyoming in 1999, serving a Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints mission in between.

He and his wife, the former Mindy Yorgason of Burlington, are looking for a house here. She is also a University of Wyoming

graduate and currently is a preschool teacher at the Children's Resource Center in Powell.

Few changes

"We will offer a clean, friendly store with great service and an excellent selection," Mackay said. "We will work to be the store everyone thinks of when they think of a grocery store."

He anticipates keeping the same staff. No immediate expansion is scheduled.

He said the Blair stores emphasize a family approach, and that came in particularly handy on Sunday as store family members from Powell and Worland converged in Thermopolis to restock the new store and turn it into a Blair's Super Market.

Churches plan joint services

Five Thermopolis churches are sponsoring the annual Community Thanksgiving Service Tuesday.

It will begin at 7 p.m. at the Hot Springs Christian Church at 1102 Broadway. Participating churches are Community Federated, Holy Trinity Episcopal, Hot Springs Christian, Red Bluffs Evangelical Free, and St. Francis Catholic.

A free-will offering will be taken up for the Transient Fund to assist the needy people who travel through the community. Fellowship and refreshment will follow the service.

Early copy requested

Early advertising and news copy is needed for the next edition of the Thermopolis Independent Record. The deadline is 5 p.m. Friday for the Thanksgiving edition, unless special arrangements are made in advance.

The Thanksgiving edition will be available on the newsstands Tuesday night and in the mail Wednesday. Our office will be closed Thanksgiving Day.



Nathaniel Knight ascends the steps of the Episcopal Church with part of the food collected by Thermopolis Scouts of all ages on Saturday. Other nonperishable food may be dropped off at the church, and funds for other goodies in the program may be addressed to Christmas Baskets, P.O. Box 950.



Steam rises from the Big Spring on a cool fall morning as grass holds onto the last vestiges of summer green in Hot Springs State Park.
—Jonathan Green photo

G&F Commission chair Williams briefs county on wolf possibilities

by Breez Longwell Daniels

Wolves have been the topic of meetings across the state this week, and the Hot Springs County commissioners had a front row seat as Thermopolis veterinarian and Wyoming Game and Fish Commission chairmain Bill Williams briefed them Friday on changes that may be proposed in wolf management.

Williams started off with a quick history of wolf status in Wyoming over the past year.

"The Wyoming wolf management plan was published and delisting (from endangered species status) approved on March 28," he said. "Several conservation organizations immediately notified they would sue in 60 days, and on July 18 the judge issued an injunction to stop delisting."

Williams said the judge gave three main reasons for issuing the injunction, which included a lack of regulatory control, a lack of genetic diversity and the perception Wyoming did not guarantee 15 packs with 150 individual wolves in Wyoming to include the national parks.

In the meantime Idaho and Montana's plans were approved and they are moving ahead with delisting.

Williams said Wyoming would have to work very quickly on a revised plan. "If we can address the concerns voiced by the judge we might be able to get back on the delisting train."

At this point he said the Fish and Wildlife Service believe it is going to take statutory change by the Wyoming Legislature to make the changes needed in wolf status.

The first of two main changes would include a modified plan agreeing to manage 15 packs and 150 wolves, Williams said.

"We would have to clear up the verbiage and establish Wyoming's willingness to manage for 150 wolves," he said. "That would mean that if disease comes through the park and decimates packs, we would manage for wolves out of the parks."

The second change, according to Williams, would be to modify the wording on what it means for a lethal take.

"A lethal take permit allows for not more than two wolves per permit and expires at the end of

the calendar year," he said. "A person would not be limited to one permit per year, but the landowner would have to establish repeated depredation."

Williams said the meeting being held by the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission in Jackson this week includes an opportunity for public comment.

"I expect the commission will vote for the revised plan, but I don't think it will do us a lot of good; this will be symbolic," he said. "I think they (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) are going to reject our plan and proceed to delist (Montana and Idaho) without us, unless we have a statutory change made by the legislature."

"If we don't have an approved plan, Wyoming will revert back to the 1994 rule. If we revert back there will be no compensation when wolves eat cattle. It will be illegal for a landowner to kill a wolf, even if it has a calf in its mouth."

Williams said without a plan the producers lose all protection, and the state can't do any wolf control to protect wildlife.

"If we have no plan or delisting we can't do anything. If we change the statute and wolves become trophy game, they would be managed like grizzlies, black bears or mountain lions, and there would be a hunting season."

"If we would get some legislative action in January with a change from dual classification to trophy game status that would be best. By next fall, even under the best of conditions, there are organizations that are going to litigate."

"In order to achieve delisting the state is going to have to have more regulatory control. If something is trophy game there is controlled take. That is what the government and the judge want."

"Wolves are not easy to get; landowners have damage but they don't see the wolf. Now if you see them taking an animal you can take them and call the game warden."

"But most of the time the landowner only sees wolf sign and damage."

Williams said he has a lot of empathy for people who have acreage and provide habitat for wildlife. "This problem is in their backyard."

Related story on page 10