

# School board drops controversial ideas

by Jonathan Green

Hot Springs County school board members eased back from two contentious issues Thursday, electing to continue with a district-run food service while deciding against a district-run preschool.

The board unanimously voted to accept the recommendation of a committee chartered to audit the district food service and compare costs with a private provider. The district will continue providing food service internally.

Board member Hub Whitt, who had sat on the committee, said reforms are already underway to reduce costs. The district hired a consultant to help identify areas of waste, he said.

Whitt would not put a dollar figure on anticipated savings but said they were likely to be substantial.

The greater controversy was not how to vote on the issue but whether to. State health inspector Joe Martinez, a board member, abstained on the advice of his boss.

The district lawyer advised superintendent Marty Kobza that board member Clay Van Antwerp should not vote because of a conflict of interest. Van Antwerp's mother works part-time as a food service employee.

Van Antwerp disagreed. "I think this is an important issue and I want to weigh in on it." He was "absolutely" willing to risk "legal action" against him.

"My opinion is that according to our policy, it is a conflict of interest if your voting affects your close relative's position," Belenda Willson told him.

Martinez opined one lawyer's interpretation of the board policy was not equivalent to a finding of law in court and accepted Van Antwerp's decision to vote

against legal advice.

After several minutes of discussion, Van Antwerp voted. Dr. Travis Bomengen was absent.

About three hours later the board took up another controversial subject, that of launching a preschool program.

On April 8 the board directed Kobza to develop a detailed proposal for opening a preschool. Thursday he recommended the board set the idea aside and focus on forming a "Parental-Preschool Resource Center," open both to parents and preschool providers.

Money and time were the two reasons Kobza recommended tabling a full-fledged preschool.

"Quite frankly we can't afford to do it," he said.

At issue is the method of funding the school board would use to fund a preschool. The board could have levied up to a half mill but Kobza said it was unclear whether that would be sufficient to pay for the program if tax receipts were to fall in the future.

The district could not pay any shortfall out of general fund monies.

Kobza also said there was too little time to develop a program in time for the fall.

Board member Karen Leyba agreed.

"I think we were moving too fast to make a decision," she said.

The board is still considering whether to offer technical-vocational programming through the Fremont County Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), the organization which would have provided any preschool program.

If the district does offer technical-vocational programming, district business manager Lisa Pearce said a tax levy of 1/8 to 1/4 of a mill would be sufficient.



The slide in Bicentennial Park waits for a youngster to come along and disturb the four inches of snow that fell on Thursday morning. Shortly after, temperatures soared into the 70s, melting all the snow and turning the park and the country surrounding Thermopolis into a green oasis. Total precipitation is 1.05 inches for April and 2.65 for the year.

# South Thermopolis Water District pondering sites for storage tank to solve pump problem

by Cindy Glasson

A lack of water pressure for most of the South Thermopolis Water and Sewer District has prompted a study to alleviate the problem.

Charlie Stickney, operator for the district, has been working on a solution for three years.

Engineering Associates was hired to complete the study giving the district three options for the placement of a new water tank.

The company determined a tank needs to be at about 4,800

feet elevation in order to create enough water pressure to reach the entire district.

Until the second phase of the study is complete, the size of the tank needed is unknown.

Three placement options have been discussed with the board favoring the Coyote Run area.

This placement could provide enough water pressure to deliver water to the Mountain View Subdivision on Buffalo Creek.

According to Stickney, some of the problem is created by the use of booster pumps.

When those who have the pumps turn them on, it causes

a vacuum, causing cavitation in the district's pump, forcing it to shut off. When the pump shuts off, no one has water.

Stickney said if a solution is not forthcoming there is the possibility water restrictions will have to be put in place this summer.

# Wine, Food, Fine Arts in 3rd festival

The Third Annual Hot Springs Wine, Food and Fine Arts Festival is Saturday at the Hot Springs County Fair Building.

Twenty-one vendors will display their artwork including paintings, pottery, furniture, stained glass, western art, wood carving, jewelry and photography.

Wine, microbrews and gourmet appetizers will be provided. Guests will also have opportunity to purchase artwork and wine.

Doors are open from 11 a.m.-7 p.m. with a silent auction concluding at 6:30 p.m.

All proceeds will benefit the Gottsche Rehab and Wellness Center.

# Hall of Fame Class of '09' announced

The Bobcat Athletic Hall of Fame Class of 2009 includes:

- Female athletes: Shannon Jones Shaffer and Marta Raicevich Hartman.
- Male athletes: Joe McKethen and Don Bracken
- Coach or administrator: E.J. Joe Bush
- Team: 1954 Boys Basketball
- Special Contributor: Earl Myers



Leadership Hot Springs County Class I members Mark Nelson, Gayla Mead and Connie Krueger place cement before installing one of five new benches in the state park.

Members of the first Leadership Hot Springs County class graduated Thursday after completing eight months of training.

The graduates include:

- Angie Guyon and Gregory Willson of the Wyoming Dinosaur Center
- Tracey Kinnaman of the county library
- Connie Krueger of R&S Well Service
- Dusty Lewis of Gottsche Wellness Center
- Lara Love of the Independent Record
- Gayla Mead, administrative assistant for the special master on the Big Horn River water rights case
- Police chief Mark Nelson
- Attorney Bobbi Overfield of Messenger and Jurovich
- Karissa Williams of Gottsche Rehabilitation Center
- Cindy Wallingford, food service director for the school district
- Miranda Wagner, medical technologist for Banner Health in Worland
- Town engineer Heath Overfield of Engineering Associates
- Donna Litsey, a VISTA match specialist for Big Brothers, Big Sisters here
- Carol Pickett of Red Lane
- Kimberly Schierkolk of Red Rock Family Practice
- Wyoming Pioneer Home administrator Sharon Skiver
- John Gibbel of Bank of Wyoming
- Thermopolis town clerk-treasurer Tracey Van Heule

FEATURED speaker was Wyoming Supreme Court Chief Justice Barton Voigt, a Hot Springs County High School graduate.

Leading the ceremonies was University of Wyoming area community development educator Rhonda Shipp of Cody, the coordinator of the Leadership Hot Springs County project. Melissa McCumber Johnson of Thermopolis was her assistant.

THE CLASS project involves placing five benches in Hot Springs State Park. Names of those who donated toward the benches will be featured on plaques on at least one of the benches.

Leadership classes had been conducted in Park County for over a decade and in Big Horn and Washakie counties for years before this initial class in Hot Springs County. The classes are held under the auspices of the University Extension Service and the University of Wyoming.

OBJECTIVES of the course include:

- Build a broad range of talented leaders able to use progressive, dynamic and innovative ideas to develop and promote the county.
- Inspire creative thinking.
- Build communication skills.
- Learn to work together and take advantage of local, state and national resources.
- Recognize the issues and challenges arising from different sectors and age groups within our community.
- Develop leadership capabilities to meet the demands of an ever-changing community.
- Cultivate civic involvement and networking.
- Increase understanding of different styles of leadership.

SITES VISITED or tours conducted during the course included the Kirby Creek Coordinated Resource Management project, Red Rock Commercial Center, Hot Springs State Park, law enforcement center, Thermopolis Town Hall, fire hall, hospital, Gottsche and Wyoming Pioneer Home.

Hot Springs County and Wyoming businesses, individuals, groups and foundations funded much of the program.

FOUNDING members who organized the first classes were honored at graduation, including Toni Casciato, Bree Gerber, Melissa Johnson, Bev Korerwitz, John Lumley, Becky Mortimore, Lorraine Quarberg, Pat Schmidt, Cheryl Shero, Barton Stam, Kathy Wallingford and Jim Wilson.

Instructors honored included LeAnn Baker, Mike Baker, Brad Basse, Sue Blakey, Leah Bruscano, Lee Campbell, Warren Crawford, Bree Longwell Daniels, Rick Engelbrecht, Lou Falgoust, Dee Hillberry, Harry Hughes, Jim Kirsch, Marty Kobza, Bill Malloy, Mary Mills, Charles Myers, Hans Odde, Jay Otto, Steve Radabaugh, Pat Schmidt, TJ Schoenewald, Cheryl Shero, Sharon Skiver, Kevin Skates, Dave Spencer, Dan Stansill, Amber Wallingford, Jim Wilson and Rod Wittkop.

RESIDENTS are needed for the next Leadership Hot Springs County class. Watch for information on how to apply.

The registration fee includes instruction, materials and meals. Some scholarships are available.

College credit is available at the undergraduate and graduate levels through the University of Wyoming or Central Wyoming College.

Related story on page 3.