

Blair’s studying expansion

by Jonathan Green

The Thermopolis Town Council directed town employees to cooperate with representatives of Blair’s Super Market in the grocer’s efforts to expand in Thermopolis at a meeting Tuesday.

Ken Foulger, one of the Blair’s owners, asked the council to consider waiving right-of-way rules so the current store could be expanded 10,000 to 12,000 square feet to a total size of about 20,000 square feet. Construction could start as soon as next March, he said.

Ideally, Foulger said the expansion would bring the store about 50 feet east toward Sixth, within about eight feet of Richards Street on the north

and expand the loading dock on the back of the building toward Seventh.

He said the expansion would allow a full-service deli and bakery, as well as more selection and variety. Vicklund Pharmacy would also be moved inside the facility.

The current loading dock is a potentially serious safety issue, according to Foulger.

He will first present a detailed proposal for the expansion to engineer Heath Overfield and one of the town’s lawyers. Once any issues raised there are settled, the proposal to enlarge the supermarket can move forward to the planning and zoning board.

Ranch teams ready for rodeo

The 19th annual Lions Club Ranch Rodeo is Friday and Saturday at the Hot Springs County Fairgrounds at 7:30 p.m.

The rodeo features teams from ranches competing against each other. Each ranch team must have a member from a retail

business.

The first event Friday is a cal-cutta auction at 7 p.m.

Competition includes wild cow milking, wild cow riding, branding, team penning and more.

Defending their champion-

ship is the Slash A Bar Ranch team. Other teams entered include High Mountain Ranch, HD Ranch, Reed Ranch and Whitt Ranch.

Tickets are available at businesses in advance or at the gate.

County considers bids, plan, rates

by Cindy Glasson

The Hot Springs County Commissioners awarded a \$105,755 bid for a runway paving overlay at the airport to Maxwell Asphalt from Salt Lake City.

Other discussion at the meeting Tuesday included a possible update to the county land use plan, increasing electrical costs and acquiring a Hummer.

Dusty Spomer with GDA Engineers estimated the cost of the airport work at between \$145,000-\$323,000. Five bids were opened Tuesday.

Other bids included Hard Drives Construction of Billings, \$142,000; Intermountain Slurry Seal of Salt Lake City, \$154,800; Hi-Lite of New York, \$133,500; and Mountain Construction of Lovell, \$190,600.

Spomer said he has worked with Maxwell and is confident the firm will get the job done in a timely, professional manner. The type of product that will be used generally lasts five years.

“I have seen seven or eight years with the same product,” Spomer said.

County planning

County planner Lee Campbell and land use planning board chairman Larry Bentley discussed the ongoing Nakamura Estates proposed subdivision.

“This is the most contentious one we’ve done,” Bentley said.

Campbell reported he has put in countless hours trying to get all the items in final form before the public hearing. He showed the commissioners the size of the file, indicating it was twice the size of any other file in his office “and bound to get a lot larger.” One thing creating dissension between the neighbors is the question of access to the property. Some landowners insist the road to the Nakamura property is private and do not plan to allow access for subdividing, Campbell said.

Update land use plan?

Bentley said the planning board would like to take some time to update the county’s land use plan.

Commission chairman Brad Basse agreed, “We need a vehicle for the public to give their input on what they want too.”

Campbell has been in contact with officials in surrounding counties, discussing some of the issues the county has been having in regard to public hearings on planning items and subdivisions. He said some counties are requiring a packet be presented to all parties at least ten days before any public hearing to allow everyone involved an opportunity to review the information before the meeting.

“If all the parties don’t have access to all the identical information, then there is no time to prepare, and that causes a need to drag things out,” Campbell said.

Library electrical rates

Maintenance head Chuck Carver reported the library has been bumped to a higher rate by Rocky Mountain Power. He said the power company indicates the higher rate is due to an increased use of electricity.

Carver said he has several years of documentation on energy saving items that have been put in the library and can show the bills have been going down. The commissioners agreed Carver should contact the power company to discuss the issue.

Hummer available

Undersheriff Dave Larson and search and rescue head Chad Baldez discussed a U.S. Department of Defense program that would give the search and rescue unit a free Hummer.

The defense re-utilization program brings vehicles back to the United States and gives them away to various agencies.

Larson and Baldez put a Hummer on hold that has only 36,000 miles on it. The unit is in need of a new vehicle; however, the expense of the proposed new building would prevent that this year, Baldez said.

“Free? I don’t see a downside to it,” Basse said.

The commissioners gave the pair permission to complete the paperwork.



Exploding fireworks cast a red glow on T Hill, clouds and the Big Horn River in front of Justin and Nicky Bleak, two of the hundreds of people watching the display ignited by Thermopolis volunteer firemen on the Fourth of July.

—Jonathan Green photo

One suspect identified; police seeking reports of more items taken from cars

by Jonathan Green

Thermopolis police chief Mark Nelson said the department has identified at least one suspect in a string of car break-ins and has recovered property thought to be stolen.

He said the investigation remains open and declined to give further details. Several people reported items were taken from their vehicles in

late May, and at the time Nelson said it appeared most of the cars had been unlocked.

He asked anyone who noticed items, especially electronics, missing from their vehicles to contact the department and file a report. While some of the recovered property probably belongs to people who have already contacted police, Nelson said some items remain unclaimed.



Pulling Talon Newlan to safety atop the Rainbow Terraces are state park employees Jody Lange and John Fish, sheriff Lou Falgoust and Thermopolis police officer Mandi McDonald. After the youngster reached the shore just past

the Swinging Bridge, Greg Krizan, below, a 24-year veteran from the Houston Police Department, went over the slope to assist. For more on other people being rescued from the Big Horn River, turn to On the record, page 2.

Las Fuentes hit again by burglars; damage reported; funds taken

by Jonathan Green

Las Fuentes restaurant at 530 Arapahoe was burglarized sometime July 1 or 2, according to Thermopolis police chief Mark Nelson.

He said someone broke down the rear entrance to the restaurant before stealing money and damaging a number of items. The burglar or burglars also de-

stroyed the video surveillance system.

Las Fuentes was also broken into last year, part of a string of burglaries by Worland men that were eventually solved.

Nelson said the department has at least one suspect in the burglary, and he is confident none of the burglars from last year are involved.

Watch ‘Harry’ open a minute after midnight

Local fans of Harry Potter movies will not need to travel to see the opening of “Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince” early on Wednesday.

They can stay up late on Tuesday night and see the movie at The Ritz theater in Thermopolis.

The performance will start at a minute after midnight on July 15, according to owner Edie Rollings.