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Pools, state meet

by Cindy Glasson

Representatives from the Wyoming Department of State Parks and Historical Sites met with Hot Springs State Park vendors Oct. 14 in an attempt to create new 20-year leases for the TePee Pool and Star Plunge.

In order to increase monies in the state's enterprise fund, state officials want to increase what each of the pools contributes from their annual revenue. That boost would be 3%-5%, compared to the current 1%.

According to Gary Schoene, public information officer for the State Parks and Historical Sites, the 1% contribution from the Star Plunge in 2008 was approximately \$3,900. That amount would triple under the new proposal to \$11,700.

The contribution from the TePee Pool in 2008 was approximately \$4,500 at the 1% rate. At 3%, that amount would jump to \$13,500.

In addition to tripling the concessionaire's outlay, the state officials would like to impose penalties to assure more accountability from the venues.

According to Milward Simpson, director of State Parks and Cultural Resources, the meeting between the state and the pool owners was productive and healthy.

"We were encouraged," Simpson said. "We made some progress, but there is a lot to negotiate about."

He said the discussions did not venture into the possible penalties alluded to in the state's draft proposal.

"They're negotiating and really working with us," Star Plunge owner Roland Luehnesaid. "That's very good for us and for the community."

Bill Moriarity, one of the TePee Pool owners, said both concessionaires had received sample leases from the state a few days prior to the meeting.

"There were some things in there that we just didn't agree with," he said. "When you're dealing with your landlord you really want some kind of agreement."

"There's a tremendous amount more at stake here than just the leases. Without the hot springs the pools wouldn't be here and without the pools the park would be completely different."

Other things at stake in the equation would be revenue for the town, the county, the state, business owners and the like if the pools were to close.

"We received a counter offer from the TePee Pool," Simpson said. "We'll go back to Cheyenne, look things over and come back with our own counter offer."

Simpson could not say when or where the next meeting would be.

"We've always had a good working relationship with the state," Moriarity said. "You never know until you have a finished product how it really went."

Kirby's population soars for Wyoming Whiskey opening

by Pat Schmidt

Hundreds of people flocked to Kirby Saturday for the grand opening of Wyoming Whiskey.

Vehicles from Wyoming and several states filled the parking spaces for several blocks throughout the afternoon.

Those attending were treated to tours of Wyoming's first bourbon distillery, auxiliary buildings such as the rickhouse partially filled with around 200 white oak 52-gallon barrels of aging bourbon, live music on a dance floor outside and fine food and drink inside a giant tent dubbed the "Kirby Astrodome" by some.

Co-owner Brad Mead told how he, his wife Kate and David DeFazie turned their dream of a Wyoming distillery into reality and thanked a long list of helpers, especially the people of Kirby and Hot Springs County.

"It's a pretty good place to be making whiskey," he said.

The Meads acquired their farm and home northeast of Kirby from Terry and Jim Wilson several years ago, and the distillery sits on the south edge of that property.

Master distiller Steve Nally and his wife, Wyoming Whiskey public relations director Donna Nally, were introduced, and Mead called Donna to the stage to present her a birthday cake decorated with her favorite, sunflowers.

Mead said without the Nallys Wyoming Whiskey would be just a large metal sculpture or barn sitting on the east edge of Kirby. He also paid tribute to suppliers such as the nearby Lofink Farms, which provide the grains for the bourbon, and the water from limestone beds at the base of the Big Horn Mountains east of Worland.

Double praise

Speaking at both the open house in Kirby and later that evening at the Wyoming Dinosaur Center Gala, Gov. Dave Freudenthal praised Wyoming Whiskey and the people behind it, predicting the business will flourish when the first bourbon is ready in a few years, thanks to a quality product and the pride Wyoming people will take in a bourbon produced in their home state.

More than one person noted this is the first legal distillery in Hot Springs County and probably Wyoming.

The governor, a county native, noted in jest the county history of people here dating back to the old days seldom drinking but said with a legal distillery right here they might be tempted to take a taste or two. He also denied ever imbibing, especially at gatherings in the state park buffalo pasture when he was a young man.

In that same spirit, Mead said his grandfather, former Wyo-

oming governor and U. S. senator Cliff Hansen had kidded him about creating Wyoming Whiskey so Mead would have a personal supply.

Freudenthal questioned his own wisdom in appointing Mead to the University of Wyoming Board, noting he had found an oak barrel on which Mead had misspelled Whisky. Then Freudenthal also recalled Mead had first set the grand opening for the same Saturday as homecoming at the University of Wyoming, a must event for UW trustees.

Earlier Mead took credit for arranging the perfect fall weather for the grand opening.

Music was provided by a Jackson Hole band, Mandatory Air.

Jets fly over

The biggest surprise was a fly-over by a Russian MiG 17 and two L-39 Albatros jets. The aircraft were from Teton Aviation in Driggs, Idaho, just across the mountains from Jackson.

Another producer of spirits, Snake River Brewing Co. of Jackson, served its products. Other beverages available from booths inside the giant tent were from Pepsi and wineries.

The menu included a barbecue dinner and specially-decorated Wyoming Whiskey cakes.

Other guests included officials from UW including President Tom Buchanan and representatives of the Wyoming Liquor Division.



Framed by a bony giant, Dining With the Dinosaurs Gala attendees, l-r, Lorraine Quarberg, Brad Basse, DeLloyd Quarberg, Sonja Stump and John King discuss items for sale at the Big Horn Basin Foundation fund-raiser.

—Pat Schmidt photo

Dino Gala packs center

A capacity crowd packed the Wyoming Dinosaur Center Saturday night for the second annual Dining With the Dinosaurs Gala.

Dr. Kelli Trujillo, the featured speaker, said oil and gas exploration and development are actually beneficial for paleontologists. She works from the Laramie office of Uinta Paleo, a firm that helps monitor pipeline and other digging projects for archaeological discoveries.

Nobody expected to find dinosaurs in the flatlands three miles south of Laramie, but that's what happened while the Rockies Express/REX pipeline was being dug. In cooperation with

Kinder Morgan, Trujillo and her crew worked quickly to excavate portions of four dinosaurs within ten feet of the pipeline, the actual right-of-way.

They hope to return later and excavate the other parts of the dinosaurs in the surrounding area.

Emcees for the night were Greg Willson of the Wyoming Dinosaur Center and his father, Dr. Howard Willson, president of the Big Horn Basin Foundation. Dr. Burkhard Pohl, founder and director of the WDC, attended but remained in the background playing the role of host.

Dr. Willson, who is also on the University of Wyoming board, told of the progress in the relationship between the WDC and the university since a working agreement was announced one

year ago.

Other speakers included Gov. Dave Freudenthal, UW President Tom Buchanan and U.S. Sen. John Barrasso. Freudenthal, Buchanan's wife Jacque and Barrasso's wife Bobbie are all from Thermopolis.

Wyoming's other U.S. Sen. Mike Enzi, who attended grade school in Thermopolis, had to cancel because of obligations in Washington, D.C.

The evening closed with a benefit auction conducted by auctioneer Gary Nash to raise funds for the foundation.

For information about joining the foundation, call the WDC at 864-2997.

Memberships range from a \$30 Kids Club through several levels of adult and business categories.

A&W liquor license headed to Maverik

by Cindy Glasson

A&W Bowling Lanes is in the process of relinquishing a full retail liquor license.

Maverik is in the process of purchasing the full retail license.

"We've never done a lot of package liquor," A&W owner Glenn Witt said. "So I think we're better off selling the full license and getting just a restaurant liquor license."

With the restaurant license, beer, wine and mixed drinks would still be available for purchase.

"We will probably turn the

bar into a small meeting room," he said.

Carol Stewart with Maverik Stores said it will take almost a year to go through the purchase process as well as getting the building ready to sell package liquor.

Stewart said a small addition will be made to the building, probably to the south.

According to Thermopolis assistant to the mayor Dan Stansill, there is a restaurant liquor license available. A public meeting regarding the liquor license for Maverik will be held Nov. 17 at 7 p.m. at town hall.



Arm in arm, friends walk toward all the attractions at the Wyoming Whiskey grand opening on Saturday, including the

main distillery building, left, the rickhouse in center background and the giant party tent.

—Pat Schmidt photo