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Thermopolis
Hot Springs

Independent Record

SPECIAL INTERNET PREVIEW

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Warrant issued for suspect

by Tom Burkindine

Law enforcement officers are in the process of issuing a warrant for a suspect in the high-speed chase through Thermopolis Friday night.

At approximately 7:30 p.m. Thermopolis Police Department officer Jeff Hamman stopped a truck for running a stop sign while driving northbound in the 100 block of South Eighth. The male driver exited the vehicle and Hamman instructed him to return to the truck, according to TPD Chief Mark Nelson. After the suspect was in the driver's seat, the officer approached the window but the truck sped away before further contact could be made.

Hamman gave chase before deciding to abandon pursuit, a decision with which Nelson agreed because of dangerous speeds on uneven roads through city limits.

Hot Springs County Under Sheriff Don Larson, Deputy Jerimie Kraushaar and Wyoming Highway Patrol Trooper Susan Wilson took up pursuit the after spotting the truck heading west on Highway 120.

The truck was found approximately four miles west of town abandoned in a field. When deputies checked the vehicle for occupants, Larson reported a handgun was in plain sight in the rear passenger area of the vehicle.

Two pit bull puppies in the truck were taken to the pound.

Officer Jeff Brown conducted a thermal image search of the surrounding area but could not locate the suspect.

During a subsequent search of the vehicle, Wilson located three pistols and Brown found a semi-automatic handgun on the ground ten yards in front of the truck. All four of the weapons were loaded.

In the glove compartment, a wallet was located with a driver's license identifying a suspect.

The owner of the vehicle said it had been sold and could not identify the driver.

Nelson said a state-wide warrant would be issued for the suspect who had not been apprehended as of Tuesday.

Early egg hunting fun!



FFA members Kristin Daniels, left, and Dustin Griffin search with Kamron Schantle at the NWBOCES Easter egg hunt Friday afternoon. Several FFA members hid eggs and played games with the NWBOCES students as part of their Easter party. --Cindy Glasson photo

Morning chase

Woman saves llamas from lion

by Lara Love

Joan Maser received a phone call early Friday morning from a neighbor telling her a mountain lion was chasing her llamas. Maser lives at 501 Highway 20 North of Thermopolis.

"I ran outside in my bathrobe and slippers, hollering and yelling," said Maser.

She said the lion was in a small pasture chasing the llamas around. According to Maser, the lion jumped a four-foot fence and ran off. She guessed it to be one of last year's cubs from its size.

Maser said she called the Sheriff's office around 8 a.m. to report the sighting and they paged Game Warden Bengé Brown.

According to Maser, Brown responded and discussed the situation with her.

Phone messages left for Brown by the Independent Record were not responded to.

The Hot Springs County Sheriff's office report of the incident refers to GF-20 in a narrative written by sheriff's office personnel. It states "GF-20 advises it is actually an adult female and three bobcat size kittens. They have been running in an area just north of town out through the Sunnyside area. GF-20 advises there have not been enough sightings for WGF to act yet, but he would like to be notified of any and all calls regarding these cats because he definitely wants to take action."

Easter egg hunt set for youngsters Sunday

The annual Thermopolis Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt will be held at the Hot Springs State Park at 2 p.m. on Sunday.

The hunt is for children through 9 years old.

There will be prizes for all ages.

Baker offers alternative budget; intends to run

by Cindy Glasson

Former deputy county attorney Sandra Baker is tossing her hat in the ring for the county attorney's position currently held by Jerry Williams.

Baker presented a proposed budget to the county commissioners at their March 2 meeting along with a request for the commissioners to consider returning the county attorney's position to full-time.

The job was made part-time through a resolution in 2006 when Williams replaced former county attorney Dan Caldwell. The commissioners made the decision to allow an attorney to maintain a private practice while working part-time as the county attorney.

That resolution expires December 31, 2010. Baker told the commissioners she would like to see the position returned to full-time in order to better serve Hot Springs County and its residents.

"I think we need to cut every little bit we can from the budget to help the citizens," Baker said. "The difference from four years ago to now is like night and day."

Baker indicated she has been approached by locals to run for county attorney in this year's election.

"I have an idea for a better mousetrap," she said. "Now is the time, more than ever, to pinch pennies."

"This isn't the government's money, it's our money." Baker's proposed budget is \$200,250, a \$37,900 difference from the current \$238,150 budget for the office.

The current budget includes two salaries, one for the part-time county attorney of \$70,000 and a deputy county attorney's salary of \$58,600, for a total of \$128,600.

The two salaries account for 55 percent of the current budget. Baker's proposed budget eliminates the deputy county attorney as well as a summer intern and several meetings.

She proposes a full-time county attorney salary of \$95,000. In her proposal, the county attorney's salary accounts for just 48 percent of the budget. Salaries for county attorneys are set by state statute.

Williams contends Baker's numbers are faulty. "What she's presenting is not realistic," he said. "Half of my salary is being paid by the state. So is the deputy's (salary)."

While the county commissioners do not intend to take up the issue of a part-time county attorney versus a full-time position until April when they start working on budget items, questions were raised about the need for a full-time county attorney.

"This looks good, but are we going to get the work done," commissioner Brad Basse asked.

Williams indicated he is currently putting in about 50 hours per week as the part-time county attorney, spending less than one day per week on his private practice.

"My feeling is we're getting a full-time attorney for a part-time salary," Basse said.

"I've worked in this office," Baker said. "And there's

not enough work to keep two attorneys busy.

"There isn't a caseload that needs so many people." Williams voiced concern that few successful attorneys would be willing to give up a private practice where they could make \$140,000 a year for a job requiring so many hours at half the pay.

"You may find attorneys just starting out," he said. "Right now, Hot Springs County is the third lowest in the state (for county attorney's salary)."

Baker suggested the commissioners look to the Wyoming Supreme Court's website for statistics on caseloads. "I want the commissioners to have the hard facts to base their decision on," she said.

According to the website, comparing Hot Springs County to other counties with similar populations, Niobrara and Crook counties, Hot Springs County had 172 case filings in district court for 2009 compared to 95 in Niobrara County and 169 in Crook County.

Hot Springs County also covered 47 felonies in circuit court compared to 3 felonies in Niobrara County and 38 felonies in Crook County.

"The governor has asked everyone in the state to look at budgets and find places to cut," Baker said.

"This isn't personal, this is a budget issue."

Baker said she will run for the office whether the county commissioners return the position to full-time or not.

Easter Sunday services

Church of Christ, Seventh and Richards. Bible study, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 625 S. 10th. Bible study, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.

Community Federated Church, 244 N. Sixth. Good Friday Holy Services at 6 p.m. Easter Sunday, 8 a.m. and 10:30 a.m., a play "From Doubt to Faith, the story of Thomas." Cowboy Easter, 6:30 p.m.

First Baptist Church, 310 S. 6th St. Sunday school, 9:45 a.m. Easter musical presentation for morning service, 11 a.m.

Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, 642 Arapahoe. Monday/Thursday, April 1, 7:00 p.m., Holy Eucharist and Foot Washing. Good Friday, Stations of the Cross, 7:00 p.m. Saturday, Easter Vigil, 7:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist. Sunday, Easter Service, 11:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist.

Hot Springs Christian Church, 1102 Broadway. Sunday school, 9:30 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m.

Open Bible Ministries, 319 Broadway. Open breakfast, 9 a.m.; services, 10:15 a.m.

Red Bluffs Evangelical Free Church, Gottsche Conference room. Worship service, 9:00

a.m.

Risen Son Southern Baptist Church, 342 Amoretti. Sunday school 9:30 a.m. Worship service "Resurrection of Christ," 10:45 a.m.

Roundtop Baptist Church, 810 Park Street. Easter Sunrise services, 7 a.m. Breakfast to follow. Morning service to follow that.

Saint Francis Catholic Church, 815 Arapahoe. Holy Thursday, April 1, Mass of the Lord's Supper, 6 p.m. Eucharistic Adoration until midnight in the St. Nicholas Chapel; Good Friday, Service of the Lord's Passion and Death with Communion, 6 p.m. Easter Vigil Services, Saturday, Blessing of Fire, Scripture readings, Blessing of Easter water, and Mass, 8 p.m. Easter Sunday, Mass of the Resurrection, 9 a.m.

Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, 129 Mountain View Dr. Good Friday service, 7:00 p.m. Easter Sunday Worship services, 9:30 a.m., breakfast following.

St. Paul Lutheran Church, 288 U.S. Hwy. 20. Thursday, April 1, Devine service 7 p.m.; Friday Tenebrae, 7 p.m.; Saturday, Passion of the Christ, 4:30 p.m., and Easter Vigil, 7 p.m.

Burning out of control



Thermopolis Volunteer Firemen Chris Paris, left, and Jerry Williams work to get a controlled burn back under control near Missouri Flat Road. Nick Jamieson notified authorities of his plans to burn. However, the wind came up and quickly changed the situation. Landowners are reminded to call Hot Springs County dispatch with any planned controlled burns. --Lara Love photo