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Thermopolis Hot Springs

# Independent Record

SPECIAL INTERNET PREVIEW

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## Pool owners, state disagree over contracts

by Cindy Glasson

After six months of negotiations, a contract between the State of Wyoming Department of Parks and Historic Sites and the TePee Pool and Star Plunge is still up in the air.

Negotiations for new contracts began in October.

Under their current contracts, the two pools pay 1.25% of their annual revenue to the state as concessionaires. The state is proposing raising that amount to 3%.

Other than the Thermopolis park there are only three other concessionaires in the Wyoming park system, Boysen Marina, Glendo Marina and Keyhole Marina.

Boysen and Glendo contribute 2% of their income through their contract.

Keyhole is a new concessionaire and will be giving 3% of their income.

A previous draft put lease payments on a sliding scale

that could have risen as much as 5%.

Some progress has been made in this area with the state agreeing to phase in a rate increase rather than hitting the concessionaire's with an immediate jump in revenue given to the state.

The lease between the state and the TePee Pool expired in 2007.

However, owners indicate there is a clause that provides for extensions of the lease agreement through 2026.

The Star Plunge is operating on a year-to-year lease agreement after that lease contract expired in April 2008.

The Department of Parks and Historic Sites hopes to have a contract with the concessionaires in place by the start of tourist season.

Visitors to Hot Springs State Park account for nearly one-half of the 2,841,948 total visitors to Wyoming's state parks.

### Try this test



Joan Hays with Thermopolis Rehab and Care Center shows Shelley Deromedi what it feels like to have

dementia by having her follow the lines on a map using a mirror during the Health Fair Saturday.

## Sign placement under question

by Tom Burkindine

The Thermopolis Town Council is reviewing its options regarding the sign in front of the new Hot Springs County Public Health Annex Building.

Police Chief Mark Nelson said he has received numerous complaints from town residents that the sign blocks the view of the roadway at the intersection of Arapahoe and Broadway for drivers traveling west.

Because it is difficult to see cross-traffic, vehicles have been forced to pull further into the intersection. When the building was being constructed, the county decided to move the sign closer to the roadway.

However, the move put the sign on the town's right-of-way and Town Engineer Heath

Overfield suggested the town place a revokable license on the sign.

Overfield said the county would then be required to pay the town \$75 per day and move the sign at the county's expense if asked to do so by the council.

Nelson said he was working with Overfield to investigate the possibility of lowering the speed limit at the intersection from 30 mph to 20 mph in order to reduce the likelihood of an accident.

Public Works Director Ernie Slagle echoed Nelson's concerns saying a school crosswalk is also near the sign.

The council tabled the issue until a future meeting so more information can be gathered.

## Williams may seek second term

by Cindy Glasson

County attorney Jerry Williams intends to run for office again, provided the position remains part-time.

"I enjoy this work a lot," Williams said. "But I think I would be doing the county a disservice to start campaigning now."

"If this were a state-wide race, it would make sense to be campaigning, but I have duties in the county attorney's office to take care of and I don't think the public wants to hear about all of this now."

Williams said he has always

enjoyed prosecution, but would not make a final decision until the county commissioners have determined whether it should be a full-time job or remain part-time.

Others have said there isn't a large enough caseload to warrant a part-time county attorney as well as a deputy attorney.

Williams agrees it could be a one person job, but points out that previous county attorneys had to budget for contract attorneys to handle additional work, something he feels is a waste of the voter's money.

"Dan Caldwell had to hire contract attorneys to do some of the work," he said. "Why do that when you can have a deputy county attorney that has half his salary paid for by the state?"

"The office has always had to hire some kind of contract attorney and we get no reimbursement for that."

The county attorney not only handles court cases but contracts for the county entities and grant work as well.

"There is a huge amount of grant work to do," he said. "Most of the building done within the

county has grant money of some kind attached to it, and its part of my job to take care of that."

He said having a deputy attorney frees him up to be in court and devote time to other county matters.

"We've had a good success rate," he said. "The more you have to divide your attention, the harder it is to win (in court)."

State statute indicates counties under 9,000 in population may designate the county attorney as a full-time position, suggesting if the county commissioners do not designate the job as full-time it will remain a part-time position.

"This position can make positive changes in peoples lives. It's not always about putting someone in jail. There are treatment options and community service options to consider.

"You have to be motivated to affect that change."

## Annex grand opening

by Cindy Glasson

Governor Dave Freudenthal will be in Thermopolis on Friday for the grand opening of the new County Government and Public Health Annex.

Ceremonies begin at 3 p.m. with a ribbon cutting and tours of the new facility.

Local government officials will be on hand for the afternoon along with several state officials. Invitations have also been sent to Senator Mike Enzi, Senator John Barrasso and Representative Cynthia Lummis.

The grand opening will continue until 5 p.m.

### Wind swept fire



Firefighters Jim Andreen and Hubert McAllister fight flames north of Thermopolis Saturday near Black Mountain Secondary. What started as a controlled burn eventually covered about 16 acres, burning just

six of those acres. No structure damage was reported with the blaze, however four different properties were involved after winds picked up in the area.

--Peggy Shaffer photo