

Nine FFA students earn state degrees

5

Girls take first at Ethete track meet

6

Plea agreements net jail time for offenders

12

Republican dinner draws many candidates

14

Thermopolis  
Hot Springs

# Independent Record

SPECIAL INTERNET PREVIEW

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## Lease signed to begin Discovery Center study

by Tom Burkindine

The Joint Powers Board for the Big Horn Basin Nature and Discovery Center signed a lease agreement with Wyoming State Parks and Cultural Resources to begin the initial investigative land work on property in Hot Springs State Park.

The seven-acre site is located across from the former Armory Building between the highway and the railroad tracks north of town.

The Wyoming State Legislature passed House Bill 239 last year which set aside funding to determine the feasibility of the project including the building site and sustainability.

The proposed facility must act as a destination site and expand the community's ability to attract and serve its citizens and visitors while creating a venue for supporting the growth of art, humanities and natural sciences.

The legislation also required the Joint Powers Board be organized and a lease be signed before funding would be released. The funding request has now been approved and the project will move forward.

Preliminary investigation of the land site will begin this spring with Schultz-Foss Architects, of Gillette, managing the work.

## Chamber accepts new membership structure

by Tom Burkindine

Members of the Thermopolis-Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce will see changes in the way dues are structured this year.

The chamber board of directors finalized the layout of the new tiered membership program during a meeting last week. The new system will offer members several options for membership with each level providing levels of sponsorship for chamber events through the year. Chamber vice president Rick Ridenour said he hoped the new system will allow businesses to decide how involved they wished to be in events without being solicited for sponsorship before each event.

The ascending levels of membership are Hot Spot, Round Top, Canyon, Big Spring and Legend. Each level is associated with levels of sponsorship for annual events such as the Taste of Thermopolis, 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament and the Demolition

Derby. Members will be able to customize their program however by crediting sponsorship of one event towards one they are more interested in supporting.

Purchase prices of the membership levels will also be dependent on the type of business or individual. Board members officially introduced the program to the public during last week's Chamber of Commerce Meet and Greet at the Recreation Center.

Thermopolis Fire Chief Mark Collins asked the board if the chamber would continue to spearhead fundraising efforts for the annual July 4 fireworks display. Collins said the chamber has done so for the past three years with positive results.

"The past three years have been fantastic," Collins said. "It draws a crowd and they spend a little money in town."

The Thermopolis Fire Department puts on the event and Col-

lins said they have the requisite equipment for firing the display and ensuring safety. He said the chamber usually mails letters to local businesses and individuals asking for support and \$2,000 is needed to hold a good show. Flying Phoenix Production in Riverton then coordinates with the fire department to choreograph the display.

Board members will work out the logistics of the fundraising efforts and some members suggested distributing collection cans around town to increase awareness.

Board member Cindy Stevens said the Taste of Thermopolis was cancelled this year because of a lack of interest from local vendors and artists. She said the poor turnout is likely due to a struggling economy.

"We will back out of it gracefully and leave ourselves in a good position for next year," Stevens said.

### Prom Royalty 2010



Chase Mead and Baely Lofink reign over Hot Springs County High School as the 2010 Prom Royalty. The pair were crowned during the Grand March prior to prom on Saturday night.  
--Cindy Glasson photo

## Commissioners: County attorney position part-time

Hot Springs County Commissioners took no action on whether to make the county attorney position a full-time position, leaving it part-time per state statute.

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.

With the absence of commissioner Frank Manning who is currently battling a heart ailment in a Washington hospital, commissioner Brad Basse and commission chair John Lumley were divided on the issue.

By taking no action on the matter, the position remains part-time.

"I see no reason to change it," Basse said. "I think \$70,000 a year is a fair salary."

"My view is that it should be a full-time position," Lumley said. "But without a third commissioner we're kind of at a standstill."

Concern was voiced about possible conflict of interest should a part-time attorney fill the position.

"In the event of a conflict of interest, I would hope a county attorney would recuse himself," Lumley said.

Attorney Sandra Baker said a sunset clause written into the original proposal would end the part-time position December 31, 2010.

"If you do nothing, it goes back to full-time," Baker said. "It specifically says for this four year term."

Baker indicated at a recent bar meeting there were 11 licensed

attorneys in Hot Springs County.

Guest Nancy Blaich asked if the job could be made full-time after the election in November.

"If someone wants to run this as a full-time position that is up to them," Basse said. "The only thing they can't do is raise their salary to the proposed \$95,000. My contention is that the salary is set like a full-time salary already."

"So you're saying that's the only amount you'll pay whether you say full-time or part-time," Blaich asked.

The commissioners said a raise in the county attorney's salary would be forthcoming in 2011. The raise amounts to \$6,500, bringing the county attorney's salary to \$76,500, nowhere near Baker's previously proposed \$95,000 salary for a full-time attorney.

## Annex opens

by Cindy Glasson

Hot Springs County residents enjoyed beautiful weather for the ribbon cutting and official grand opening of the new Public Health and Government Annex April 9.

Wyoming's Governor Dave Freudenthal was in attendance along with local government officials and had the honor of cutting the red ribbon.

County commissioner Frank Manning was unable to be at the ceremony, however he did call the other commissioners with his congratulations from his hospital room in Washington.

Public health nurse Bree Gerber was joined by former public health nurse Marie McDougall who came in from Texas for the ceremony. Plans for a new public health facility had been in the works when McDougall retired several years ago.



Governor Dave Freudenthal cuts the ribbon for the Grand Opening of the Public Health and Government Annex building Friday. Joining the Governor are l-r, Beatriz Carilli, Ed Brantz, Fred Bronnenberg, State Auditor Rita Meyer, Commissioner Brad Basse, Freudenthal, Commis-

sion Chair John Lumley, U.S. Representative Cynthia Lummis, County Health Nurse Bree Gerber, Jake Schrickling, Marie McDougall, Public Health Officer Dr. Howard Willson and County Clerk Hans Odde.

--Cindy Glasson photo