

Larson terminated by sheriff's department

by J.D. Stetson Sheriff Lou Falgoust confirmed Tuesday that undersheriff Dave Larson has been terminated from his position working for the Hot Springs County Sheriff's Department. Falgoust did not give a reason for the firing because it is a personnel matter. Larson was brought into the department as undersheriff in 2002 to serve the role of chief deputy for Falgoust and the department.

Falgoust is examining options for replacing Larson. One scenario Falgoust is considering would be to bring in a new deputy and look within the department for a new undersheriff. Larson had few words to say about his dismissal during a phone call Tuesday. "I just want to thank the citizens of Hot Springs County for support throughout the years, and I appreciated serving them," Larson said.

Commissioners hear about WYOLink tower

by Cindy Glasson The Hot Springs County Commissioners discussed the erection of a radio tower for the WYOLink system west of town, responsibility for payment for a recent helicopter flight and extended the airport service contract during Tuesday's meeting. Emergency management director Bill Gordon informed the board a new WYOLink tower for emergency personnel will be built west of Thermopolis on the old Cody loop road. The tower will handle traffic for low-level portable radios and local hand-held radios used by fire, ambulance and law enforcement.

The entire cost of the tower will be covered by the state; however, the county will have to pay electricity at the site and make the initial fill on a propane tank for an on-site generator. Gordon indicated the electric bill would be minimal. As the tower will also provide service to Thermopolis entities, commission chairman John Lumley suggested Gordon approach the town about paying a portion of the electric bill.

Airlift reimbursement While going through the bills for the county, the commission-

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This takes concentration



Xavian Vargas concentrates hard as he drives the obstacle course at the pavilion in Hot Springs State Park Saturday. The trike-a-thon event was sponsored by the Children's Resource Center and the Hot Springs County Sheriff's Department. -- Cindy Glasson photo

High school lockdowns

by Cindy Glasson Hot Springs County High School went into lockdown mode twice on Thursday afternoon due to suspicion of drug use by students. The first lockdown was initiated at 12:30 p.m. by principal Dustin Hunt after information was relayed to him regarding students using illegal drugs during their lunch period then returning to class. School resource officer, deputy Robert Dale, walked through the school parking lot with a K-9 officer who alerted Dale to the possibility of drugs in a student's pickup truck. Three juvenile males were then called to the office. The driver of the pickup was taken outside and questioned whether there was anything in the vehicle before a formal search was done. The driver indicated to deputies there were marijuana seeds in the floor mat and admitted to having smoked marijuana on Tuesday during lunch period before returning to school. The two passengers in the vehicle admitted they, too, had smoked marijuana on Tuesday before returning to class. One of the passengers also turned over a marijuana pipe he was carrying in his pocket. The three juveniles received five days suspension from school and loss of disciplinary points. A second lockdown was initiated by police officer Pat Cornwell, immediately following the first incident. The K-9 officer was again led through the parking lot and alerted on another student vehicle. Two male students were called to the office from the second vehicle and again, the driver was questioned before a formal search. The driver admitted the officers would find a marijuana pipe in the car, which was discovered in the glove box. The passenger in the second vehicle denied any use of illegal drugs, a statement corroborated by the driver. The second driver received a five-day suspension and loss of disciplinary points and as an athlete, also received a two-game suspension. Parents of all the students involved in the incidents were called into the school and the students were released to them.

Pearce land change back to commissioners

by Cindy Glasson A special meeting was held by the Hot Springs County Land Use Planning Board Monday in order to hold a second public hearing on a proposed land use change for property owned by Russ and Lisa Pearce. The Pearces have requested a change from agricultural to industrial for a 10-acre section of their land north of Thermopolis in order to open a single-use gravel pit. Concerns were raised at a hearing with the county commissioners in September about proper notification of adjacent landowners, dust issues, traffic issues, the possibility of damage to a natural spring that feeds into one of the properties and whether or not there were pioneer gravesites in the area. The commissioners returned the issue to the planning board for further investigation, requesting a second public hearing. Two representatives from the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the state engineer's office attended the special meeting to give their professional opinions on the issues raised by the landowners. County planner Lee Campbell provided the board and those in attendance with copies of five other land use change agreements that were approved with conditions attached to them as examples of what options could be considered in the Pearce case. In addition, Campbell passed

out a conditional land use change agreement written up for the Pearce change, indicating that it was merely a draft and could have additional revisions. In regards to the dust and traffic concerns, Campbell pointed out the property is already near two other industrial use areas and a feedlot. They are commonly referred to as "attractive nuisances." Comments received from the Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT) on the use of existing roads on the property showed there are no sight distance or safety concerns from the department, but they would suggest temporarily upgrading the road in question from residential to commercial.

Cotton water rights Dave Deutz with the state engineer's office addressed the landowner's issues first, saying a search on water rights for Jean Cotton's property that lies across the railroad tracks from the Pearce property showed no current water rights on the natural spring; however, a supplemental supply, domestic water and livestock permits have been given a temporary filing status. Deutz said with the addition of the natural spring, Cotton would have three permits for water, which include a direct flow permit and a supplemental permit. Based on his findings, Deutz said the gravel pit will not interfere with Cotton's water use and as a natural spring, the water

level will typically rise and sink along with the level of the Big Horn River. He said tests of several wells within a one-mile radius of the Pearce property showed a fairly high water level, averaging around 40 feet. "The state engineer's office looks at each individual case," Deutz said. "It's definitely not a one size fits all thing. I did not check every well in the area, but primarily looked at those within a mile of the proposed pit. "If individuals think they are being injured or affected, they can file a claim with the state engineer's office, but at this time, in my opinion, no, there will not be any interference with the water

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Dinosaur Gala set Saturday

Silent and live auctions, plus a fundraising raffle, will be featured during the third annual Dining with Dinosaurs Gala on Saturday at the Wyoming Dinosaur Center. A social with a cash bar begins at 5:30 p.m. and the prime rib dinner is served at 7 p.m. Guest speakers will be University of Wyoming president Tom Buchanan; UW Geology Department head Dr. Art Snoke; and Wyoming Dinosaur Center excavation director Greg Willson. U.S. Sen. John Barrasso will be a special guest and will make brief comments. Unique fossils, fine art and jewelry will be included in the auctions. The Lloyd Sheets group from Cody will provide live music. Cost is \$50 per person or \$90 per couple. The attire is casual. Only 180 seats are available for the gala and tickets will be sold through Friday. For tickets, call Angie Guyon at the Wyoming Dinosaur Center, 864-2997, ext. 229, or email wdinoc@wyodino.org. Proceeds from the gala will benefit the non-profit Big Horn Basin Geological & Research Foundation. Funding from the foundation allows the Wyoming Dinosaur Center to run outreach educational programs.



Wyoming Dinosaur Center excavation director Greg Willson points out part of the allosaurus exhibit. — Joe Sova photo

Free admission on Fossil Day

by Joe Sova Millions of years ago, dinosaurs ruled Earth. Some were meat eaters and others were plant eaters. Exciting news from the Wyoming Dinosaur Center (WDC) is that fossils of an allosaurus have been discovered at the dig site just outside Thermopolis. WDC excavation director Greg Willson said about 20 percent of the allosaurus had been excavated. "We're hopeful the whole thing is there," Willson said Monday. The allosaurus – a meat eater – was a predator of the late Jurassic period, living about 150 million years ago. "We always knew they were here," Willson said, since a plethora of allosaurus teeth have been found, mixed with teeth from other dinosaurs. Seven years ago, parts of two animals mixed together were found at the dig site, and eventually 10 to 15 percent of the dinosaurs was uncovered. WDC has an allosaurus on display, but it is constructed of casts of bone rather than actual bones from the animal. What excited Willson the most is the bones of the allosaurus found this summer at the dig site will replace the casts in the dinosaur on display. It will take three to four years to totally excavate the allosaurus; in the meantime, the bones that

are found will be prepared for the display. The allosaurus will stand about 15 feet high at the hip and the head will be about 25 feet tall. "The (WDC) museum isn't a static entity. It's continually changing," Willson said. In fact, Wednesday, Oct. 13 is National Fossil Day and Willson invites everyone to enjoy a tour of the museum – with free admission. "The Dinosaur Center would like to use this opportunity to meet members of the community who have yet to be here," Willson said. WDC will offer free hot dogs, hamburgers and beverages from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Willson said the entry into the museum has been recently remodeled and is called "A Walk Through Time." He said a couple of new dinosaurs will be added this winter; they were recently excavated from the WDC quarry. Some people don't realize that WDC is proud to have the only archaeopteryx on display in North America. When they lived millions of years ago, they had unique bird and reptile features, such as feathers, wings, teeth and a full tail. Willson calls the archaeopteryx a "transitional fossil," due to its being between birds and reptiles – demonstrating the evolutionary process. Follow the signs and footprints to WDC, located at 110 Carter Ranch Road. The museum is open seven days a week from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The WDC website is www.wyodino.org.