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Search and Rescue finds stranded pair of hunters

by Cindy Glasson

Hot Springs County Search and Rescue was successful over the weekend in finding a pair of hunters stranded above the Copper Mountain area.

Father and son, Randy and Freddie Coulter, were hunting Saturday when the pick-up they were driving became high-centered on a rock in a rugged area.

When the two realized they were stuck, they called 911, but the call was sent by the cell phone tower to Washakie County first. Once dispatch realized they were actually in Hot Springs County, the call was forwarded here.

Search and Rescue was paged out at approximately 6:30 p.m. and two units were sent to the mountain to look for the pair along with five members of the team.

According to Search and Rescue head Chad Baldes, Chip Axtell, who owns land in the area, was significant in helping the rescuers through the area via cell phone.

At one point in the search, it was thought they might actually be in Fremont County and their rescue team was paged out as well. Fremont County Search and Rescue did not actually make it to the area before the pair were found.

Jim Joyner and Mike Robertson were the Search and Rescue team that eventually found the missing hunters.

Once found, father and son were in good condition, Baldes said.

"They had food with them, water and heat, so things were fine," he said. "We tried to retrieve the truck, but ended up breaking our winch, so the guys brought them back to town."

In all, the search took about four hours to complete.

"I really want to thank everybody who called and helped guide us on this one," Baldes said. "I had a lot of people calling me on my cell phone to give us directions."

Will to Win!



Players and coaches on the Thermopolis football team whoop it up after the Bobcats won their second straight Class 2A state championship Saturday in Laramie. Pictured from left are Chris Ryan, Luke Casciato, Kyle Pebbles, assistant coach Bryan Bailey and Tanner Abbott. A special commemorative section featuring the Cats' championship season is coming next week. See page 6 for details.

— Photos by Joe Sov



Kim Enis was up in arms cheering for the Bobcats during the state championship game Saturday against Big Horn. Enis' son William is one of the nine seniors on the state title team.

Cats capture another 2A state crown

by Joe Sov

Who would have thought the high-powered Big Horn offense would be held without a touchdown in the Class 2A football state championship game Saturday at War Memorial Stadium in Laramie?

The Thermopolis defense did just that, limiting the Rams to three field goals en route to repeating as state champions with a 13-9 victory on Jonah Field. It was the culmination of a stellar 10-1 season and prevented top-ranked Big Horn from completing an unbeaten year.

It was the Cats' sixth football state title. Thermop was the state champ three years in a row, from 1990-92. The first crown came in 1932 with a 26-7 win over Kemmerer in Thermopolis.

Thermop's win in the state title game last weekend avenged the only loss by the Cats this season. Big Horn rolled to a 42-7 win over the Cats in the fifth game of the year. Since then, Thermop reeled off six straight wins, including a 53-0 blanking of Lyman in the first round of the state playoffs and a 39-15 victory over Lovell in the semifinals.

With the Cats and Rams averaging a combined

790 yards a game, a high-scoring game was expected by many, but it was Thermop's defense that kept the Cats in the contest. Twice the Cats held Big Horn inside the 20-yard-line in the first half, forcing successful field goals by Colby Wollenman.

Needing a touchdown and extra point to take the lead, the Cats did just that – marching 71 yards in just more than a minute. Senior quarterback Mitch Syverson scored on a one-yard run and senior Kyle Larson kicked the conversion for a 7-6 Thermop lead with 19 seconds left in the first half.

Neither team scored in the third period, setting the stage for a dramatic fourth-quarter finish.

After a Thermop punt, Big Horn took over at its own 45 and moved the ball inside the Cats' 10-yard-line. Again the Cats' defense held and the Rams settled for a 30-yard field goal by Wollenman with 6:55 remaining in the game.

With perhaps only one possession to take the lead, Thermop mounted a 75-yard drive – converting on third down four times, twice on passes from Syverson to senior Jacob Brown and runs by Syverson and Kyle Pebbles.

To cap Thermop's most time-consuming drive of the season, Syverson scored on a five-yard run to give the Cats a 13-9 lead with just 1:03 to play. The conversion pass was incomplete, but the touchdown forced Big Horn to get into the end zone instead of going for a game-winning field goal.

Big Horn quickly moved into Thermop territory after the kickoff, but sophomore Christian Syverson and Pebbles combined for a big defensive play. Syverson pressured Wollenman, whose off-balance pass was picked off by Pebbles to seal the win.

It was a thrilling but tiring day for the throng of Thermop students who climbed aboard the booster bus at 4 a.m. Saturday for the 10 o'clock kickoff. The support by those students and the faithful parents and other fans that made the trip to Laramie – including the pep band and cheerleaders – truly made a difference in the game. The outcome made it a joyous ride home. Central Bank & Trust, Big Horn Federal, Pinnacle Bank and Bank of Thermopolis shared the cost of the booster bus. For a complete championship game recap, see the story on page 6 of this issue of the Independent Record.

Early deadlines for Nov. 25 issue of IR

Due to the Thanksgiving holiday, next week's Thermopolis Independent Record will be published a day early. The Nov. 25 issue will go to press on Tuesday rather than Wednesday and will

be available around town Tuesday evening. Most mailed copies will arrive in post office boxes and on county rural routes Wednesday morning.

Since we'll publish early, the

display advertising and legal deadline for the Nov. 25 issue will be 4 p.m. Friday. The deadline for classified ads is noon Monday. The deadline for submission of information for sto-

ries will be noon Monday rather than Tuesday.

Our office will be closed Thanksgiving Day, but will be open Friday, Nov. 26 for regular hours.

'Forever West' tree greeted by hundreds Sunday

by Joe Sov

Wyoming is sending the Capitol Christmas Tree to the White House in Washington, D.C., for the first time and the 67-foot Englemann spruce made a stop in Thermopolis on a beautiful Sunday. Hundreds of people turned out to see the tree and sign the banner on the trailer hauling the tree.

A number of events were held in conjunction with Wyoming's "Forever West" tree visit, which was coordinated by the Thermopolis-Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce.

"Everything worked out really well," said Michelle Lue of the chamber office. "The tree in general put everyone in the Christmas mood."

"Attendance was phenomenal," said chamber president Donna Nally and she noted people from outside Thermop came to town to see the tree and take in the activities.

At least one person was at the scene of the tree cutting last month near Jackson and was also in Thermop on Sunday.

"Lots of people were signing the banner," Lue said.

An entourage, which included Thermopolis Police Department vehicles, escorted

the tree along Fifth Street to Bicentennial Park.

There were minor issues hauling the tree through Wind River Canyon, but the entourage arrived around 11 a.m. The Charity Fashion Show, coordinated by Barb Rice, started on time at 11:30 a.m. and Wyoming singer-songwriter Bryan Ragsdale performed two songs from his new Christmas album, including the title cut, "Cowboy Christmas Tree." He also sang, "My Mommy, My Daddy and Me," a song he wrote with the help of Thermopolis students.

Ragsdale offered to sing the national anthem to start the festivities and the chamber appreciated that gesture.

"Bryan was very accommodating," Lue said.

Lue said the vendors at the event, as well as stores open downtown Sunday displaying their Christmas wares, had lots of traffic and a good sales day.

"They had a very good

response," Nally said.

Santa and Mrs. Claus appeared and posed for photos with children.

The Elementary Cloggers, directed by Ciley Andreen, performed to several songs. Ellen Mortimore directed the Christmas Carols Choir, which sang for 30 minutes to cap the activities.

"The choir was awesome," Lue said.

Wyoming's "Forever West" tree will be erected on the White House lawn. Ragsdale will perform "Cowboy Christmas Tree" while Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi lights the tree during a Dec. 7 ceremony.

Chamber lighting contests, parade

Several Thermopolis-Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce events are coming up early in December.

Registration forms for the residential and commercial lighting contests are available on the chamber website, www.thermopolis.com. Print out a form, complete it and submit to the chamber office or fax the form to 864-3128. The entry deadline is Dec. 13.

The Lighted Christmas Parade is set for Saturday, Dec. 11. Line-up at the senior center is from 5 to 5:45 p.m. and the parade begins at 6 p.m. Parade entry forms are also available on the chamber website. Entry deadline is Dec. 10.



Bailey Fisher, left, and Dakota Jeffs smile as they "work it" on the runway during the Hazel-n-Pearl's style show Sunday during the Capitol Christmas Tree festivities.