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Thermopolis
Hot Springs

Independent Record

SPECIAL INTERNET PREVIEW

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2011 HSCHS Prom royalty



Dustin Griffin and SashAnn Daniels were crowned Hot Springs County High School Prom king and queen to conclude the grand march held last Saturday at the school auditorium. Their court consisted of, from left, Alanna Freel, Luke Casciato, Reid Odde and Sarah Basse. The prom was held after the grand march in the fair building. See prom photos on page 4 of this issue. — Joe Sovo photo

Casino meeting draws crowd

by Cindy Glasson

Around 50 Hot Springs County residents attended a public meeting with the County Commissioners and the Northern Arapaho Business Council at the middle school Tuesday evening to discuss the Tribe's plans for land just south of Thermopolis.

Commissioner Mike Baker started the evening off giving some background on what the commissioners had experienced when dealing with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the federal agency that works side-by-side with the Arapaho Tribe.

Baker pointed out the dealings with the BIA had been rather secretive, not the open communication provided by the business council.

"We've had some good discussion with the Tribe on some things that can be done," Baker said. "The county has not taken a side one way or the other on the issue of a casino, but we wanted to open up discussion with the council before the land goes into federal trust."

"Once the land goes into trust, we will have little or no say in how the land is used, so this communication is crucial."

"The Tribe's position at this time is no gaming is planned," commissioner Brad Basse said, "and

we have to believe that's what they're going to do."

"We are very happy and very honored to come over and meet with the commissioners to open dialogue with them," said Keith Spoonhunter, co-chair of the Northern Arapaho Business Council. "The one thing we have assured them was the reason behind the property's purchase was future expansion of the Arapaho Ranch."

"We don't want you to be surprised if gaming comes in the future, but that is not our intention. Our intention is not to have gaming here, I can assure you. That was not the reason for buying the land."

"It's a pretty piece of land and we are proud to have it."

"It wouldn't be economically feasible for the Tribe to put a casino here," he said. "It would be a very long process and we really want to work with the community and keep ideas open all along if need be."

Julian Hubbard, another member of the council, said any decisions made by the council have to be agreed upon by four of the six members.

"We did an economic study and it really wouldn't be feasible for us to put a casino here," he said. "That

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Duard Cable pleads guilty to making terroristic threats, aggravated assault

by J.D. Stetson

Duard Cable pleaded guilty Monday on one count of making terroristic threats and one count of aggravated assault.

Cable, who was 36 at the time of his arrest, told District Court Judge Robert E. Skar he had snapped on Dec. 22 when he threatened to blow up buildings in the vicinity of the 1300 block of Clark Street, which includes the Hot Springs County Volunteer Fire Department.



Duard Cable

During the incident, members of the Big Horn Basin Tactical Response Team subdued Cable after distracting him with a "flashbang" grenade, shooting him with a 40-millimeter less-lethal "sponge" round and chasing him into a home where he attained a firearm.

Under a proposed plea agreement, Cable pleaded guilty to the aggravated assault charge and the first of two counts of making terroristic threats. The state

would dismiss the second count.

The first count deals with an incident Dec. 21 at the Hot Springs County Counseling Center, where he threatened employees of the center that he would blow up the building. The second count dealt with the threats he made Dec. 22.

The aggravated assault charge came after he brandished a rifle and pointed it at a member of the tactical response team. The officer attempted to fire his weapon and it malfunctioned. Two more officers who entered from the back of the home subdued Cable and took the rifle.

Skar ordered Cable to undergo a pre-sentence investigation and mental evaluations to determine if he knew right from wrong at the time of the incidents. Cable told the judge he had been between psychiatrists during the incident and he was unable to receive medication for a mental condition during the Christmas break.

Skar expected it to take about two months to schedule a sentencing hearing in the case during which time he will consider a plea agreement between the prosecution and the defense.

Plea agreement
Public defender Richard Hop-

kinson explained the conditions of the plea agreement to the court to include Cable serving three to five years in prison with credit for time served. He would pay \$40 in court costs and \$300 to the Crime Victims Compensation Fund.

Hopkinson requested Skar to consider a 10-day furlough for Cable after the sentencing hearing in order for him to get his affairs in order. Cable has been incarcerated since the incident took place under a \$50,000 bond. He was involuntarily committed to the Wyoming State Hospital after the incident under Wyoming's Title 25 statutes. He told the court he was doing much better while in jail and he is taking his medication.

Skar then asked Hopkinson to provide a factual basis for Cable's guilty pleas. Hopkinson asked Cable if he had threatened the employees and director of the counseling center, to which Cable said, "Yes." He then asked if Cable had brandished a weapon and pointed it at a police officer knowing the weapon was loaded, to which Cable said "yes" again.

County attorney Jerry Williams asked Cable if he knew it was a dangerous act to point a loaded weapon at a police officer, to which Cable replied, "Yes."

Lions Easter Egg Hunt Sunday

Youngsters through 9 years old are invited to fill their baskets during the Thermopolis Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt.

The event is set for 2 p.m. Easter Sunday at Hot Springs State Park.

The egg hunt will divide children into age categories

and will be held in the Days Inn-Plaza Hotel area of the state park.

There will be prizes for all ages.

Holy Week church service schedule

The schedule of Holy Week church programs and services includes:

Church of Christ, 701 Richards. No information available.

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 625 S. 10th. No information available.

Community Federated Church, 244 N. Sixth St. Maundy Thursday, Passover presentation by a Messianic Rabbi, 6 p.m.; Easter Sunday, Easter presentation "The Rock," 8 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.

First Baptist Church, 310 S. Sixth. Easter Sunday, Easter breakfast, 8:30 a.m.; Easter service with choir presentation "Amazing Grace," 11 a.m.

Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, 642 Arapahoe. Maundy Thursday service, Holy Eucharist, 7 p.m.; Good Friday, Station of the Cross, 7 p.m.; Saturday, Easter Vigil, Holy Eucharist, 7 p.m.; Easter Sunday, Easter service, Holy Eucharist, 11 a.m.

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

Living Waters Assembly of God, 318 N. Eighth. No information available.

Red Bluffs Evangelical Free Church, hospital cafeteria. Easter Sunday, Easter worship service, 9-10 a.m.

Risen Son Southern Baptist Church, 342 Amoretti. Easter Sunday, Sunrise service, 6:30

a.m. (Bryon and Nita Ramsey, 683 Ramsey Lane); pancake breakfast at the church, 8-9:15 a.m.; Sunday school, 9:30-10:30 a.m.; Easter service, 10:45 a.m.-12 p.m.

River of Life Fellowship, 319 Broadway. Easter Sunday, Easter worship and word, 10:15 a.m.

Roundtop Baptist Church, 810 Park. Easter Sunday, Easter sunrise service, 7 a.m., breakfast to follow. Morning service following breakfast.

St. Francis Catholic Church, Eighth and Arapahoe. Holy Thursday, Mass of Lord's Supper, 6 p.m., church; Eucharist Adoration, 7 p.m.-midnight, St. Nicholas chapel; individual confessions after mass, reconciliation room; Good Friday, Day of Fast and Abstinence, Good Friday service, 6 p.m., church; individual confessions after service, reconciliation room; Holy Saturday, Easter vigil service/Mass, 8 p.m.; Easter Sunday, Easter Sunday Mass, 9 a.m.

St. Paul Lutheran Church, 288 U.S. Highway 20 South. Maundy Thursday Divine service, 7 p.m.; Good Friday Tenebrae service, 7 p.m.; Saturday, Easter vigil, 7 p.m.; Easter Sunday, sunrise sermon at state park, 6 a.m. and Divine service at church, 9 a.m.

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

Town approves water, landfill projects

by J.D. Stetson

The Thermopolis Town Council voted to award a contract for the Thermopolis Water Storage and Pumping project to Wilson Brothers Construction, Inc., during Tuesday night's meeting.

The town opened bids for the project April 1, but the bids had to be reviewed by the Wyoming Water Development Commission (WWDC) before the council could award the contract.

Since the bid came in significantly under budget, town engineer Heath Overfield of Engineering Associates recommended the town award the bid and include three additional alternate options that would increase the cost of the project.

The bid for the project came in at \$1,596,895 for the core work, \$300,000 for the first addition, \$191,900 for the second addition and \$67,066.80 for the third addition.

The total project cost would run at \$2,155,861.80 and the

WWDC would pay the majority of the project.

The core project entails construction of a new 256,000-gallon water storage tank on property southwest of Roundtop Mountain, construction of a pump station, three pressure-reducing valve stations, a SCADA (supervisory control and data acquisition) system, 7,200 lineal feet of 10-inch water line and 4,300 feet of 8-inch water line. The project includes demolition of a water tank near the west end of Arapahoe Street.

Overfield added the additional work will include construction of a second water tank for additional storage in five to 10 years, expansion of the SCADA system to cover all existing town water operations and using state-of-the-art pipe, which uses interior restraint mechanisms instead of older metal outer mechanisms.

Town officials expect the project to start this spring and the work is to be substantially

complete by December under the proposed schedule for the project.

Landfill project and fees

The council also chose to award a \$58,900 project to DNA Construction, Inc., to develop a new cell at the landfill.

However, the bid from DNA Construction was the only bid for the project and it came in after the bid deadline. Overfield had not opened the bid package, which was submitted on behalf of DNA Construction by 71 Construction of Riverton.

Town attorney Mike Messenger explained the council could accept the bid since it was the only bid to be received or they could not open the bid and start the process over again.

The council chose to open the bid to allow Overfield to examine it to see if it was in line with specifications and in

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Harley, meet Ziggy the cockatoo



Harley Shafer, 3, had Ziggy, a 1-year-old female cockatoo sitting on her arm during the Spring Fling last Saturday at Gottsche Rehabilitation and Wellness Center. Melissa Kinney, who owns the bird, said Ziggy is learning to talk and color is coming into her feathers. — Joe Sovo photo

Casino

in itself would be a gamble, and that’s something the Tribe, right now, cannot afford.”

Another council member, Lydell Whiteplume, laughed as he told the audience, “It doesn’t really matter to me if we have gaming there or not. Personally, I would like to see a bunch of fat cows out there.”

There was a decidedly mixed group attending the meeting.

One question was why “gaming” had been placed in the application for federal trust and could the word just be removed from the application.

According to Spoonhunter, the Tribe has to protect itself when it comes to the purchase and trust status of lands.

“As individuals, you have the opportunity to protect yourself,” he said. “By putting land into trust, it allows us to do what we want with our lands, too, without the federal government stepping in and messing things up for our people and our future.

“Historically, they haven’t done the best for the tribes. If we could take ‘gaming’ off of that piece of paper we would, but it is there, just in case.

“It allows us to keep our options open. Our contingency plan starts right here, with this community.”

Land Use Planning Commis-

sion chair Tom Anderson said he feels its their land and they should be able to do with it whatever they want, but wondered if there was a way to recoup the tax money lost should the land go into trust status.

“Is there a way to deal with (Ken) Salazar to get a land trade, a swap?” Anderson asked. “Maybe a no net-gain on public ground?”

Basse said it was his understanding that the no net-gain policy that began when Sen. Craig Thomas was in office did not apply to tribal lands.

Once the land is placed into trust, the Tribe can do just about anything they want to with it, within reason.

“It’s your county,” Spoonhunter said. “We don’t want to be coming in here treading on toes, you know?”

“We want to be diplomatic with things. There really isn’t a whole lot you can say, but we want to keep the communication open.”

Several in attendance suggested something needs to be done to help the economy in Hot Springs County and perhaps a casino wouldn’t be such a bad idea.

“One thing we have consistently tried to do, since most of us may not be around in the future,” commission chair John Lumley said, “is do the best we

can right now for Hot Springs County and mitigate problems that might come up.”

On the other side of the aisle, there were people who felt the casino would be a boon to the economy.

Hubbard told the audience, having grown up in Las Vegas, he had seen both sides of casinos.

“About 10 years ago our tribe was going through some real hardship,” Hubbard said. “Within one year of the casino opening, we got our head above water. That’s what the casino has done for us.

“Last year, Yellowstone had a record-breaking year. Thermopolis had over a million visitors. Those are numbers to look at economically.

“I know the social impacts of a casino. The positives outweigh the negatives, tremendously.”

Concerns were raised about area aesthetics should a casino eventually be built on the property.

“We appreciate the views and the land and that’s why we want to keep it as is,” Spoonhunter said.

The meeting closed with comments from an elder council member.

“We’re experts on being infringed on. We don’t want to infringe on you. We’re not a threat. We just want to make it so both of us benefit,” he said.

Full house for bluegrass jam



Last Friday’s bluegrass acoustic jam at Shell Southside filled the food plaza with musicians and spectators. Featured was special guest guitarist John Lowell, who appeared during a bluegrass workshop Saturday at Thermopolis Middle School. A bluegrass performance was held Saturday night at the home of Michael and Jacky Wright.
– Joe Sova photo

Town

line with specifications and in proper order.

Overfield opened the bid and examined the documents. He concluded he would recommend the bid for approval and the council chose to follow the recommendation.

The council also chose to vote on first reading an ordinance to

raise rates for landfill use fees for entities that dump at the landfill by the cubic yard.

The ordinance would raise the rate from \$5.50 per cubic yard to \$7 per cubic yard..

The rate increase is to bring the fee structure in line with the town’s new sanitation utility rates and to cover the costs

of the service. Mostly commercial entities with large trucks dump by the cubic yard.

The council will have two more readings of the ordinance before it can be given an effective date. The next reading of the ordinance will take place May 2 at the next regular council meeting.

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