

# Lodging Tax Board considers 'Hot Springs Eternal' for slogan

by J.D. Stetson

The Hot Springs County Lodging Tax Board took its first look Tuesday at the direction of a new Thermopolis and Hot Springs County tourism marketing campaign orchestrated by Casper-based firm Adbay.

Adbay president Shawn Houck presented the concepts for the first set of promotional materials the firm has compiled for the 2011-12 fiscal year and laid out the marketing strategy and budget for the board to discuss.

The goal of the campaign is to bring a unified brand to Thermopolis advertising in print, television, the Internet and billboards. The campaign will hopefully bring people to town year-round instead of just in the core summer months when hotels are already full.

Adbay also will create a modern website maintained by the Thermopolis-Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce that will feature a mobile website for smartphones and handheld devices.

The website also will be closely tied to social media websites such as Facebook and Twitter and it will feature slideshows, videos and photos of local attractions in an easy-to-use format.

Houck and the board outlined the principle behind the campaign to include, "Thermopolis represents the opportunity for visitors to interact with the timeless, natural, rugged beauty of the world's largest mineral hot springs and the Bighorn Basin."

The goal of the principle is to closely align Hot Springs County and Thermopolis to Yellowstone National Park, which is the primary tourism attraction for the region.

Board member Dan Moriarty added the campaign also should consider the fact that Yellowstone is closed during the winter months, while Thermopolis is open year-round.

## Slogan alternatives

Houck then moved to the new slogan and logo for the campaign. The original slogan idea presented was "HOT SPRINGS ETERNAL," followed by a logo bearing "Thermopolis, WY" above the slogan and a tagline "swim-soak-slide-stay" below it.

The board decided the tagline should be different depending on where the logo appears in various media. The board also wanted to see the slogan with "ETERNAL" replaced with either "WYOMING" or "FOREVER" before making a final decision.

The board also reviewed two concepts for billboard ads, one in which a person is emerging from the water with the "HOT SPRINGS ETERNAL" logo superimposed on the side, and another featuring a silhouetted person sitting in a pool in Hot Springs State Park with the park as a backdrop during a sunset. The new logo would be superimposed over the scene.

The board immediately didn't like the first billboard idea, but thought the second had merit.

Houck then moved to the television spots: One featuring time-lapse videos featuring the rugged nature of the county and the other featuring a comical scene with a family at the pools in the state park.

The firm's first idea for a TV commercial

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# Town Council approves first reading of budget

by J.D. Stetson

The Thermopolis Town Council saw for the first time this year their 2011-12 budget at its regular meeting Tuesday night.

The council voted to pass on first reading the budget for its general fund, enterprise funds, insurance trust fund, special assessment fund, revolving loan fund, Nicholson and other trust funds.

For the general fund, the bottom line is \$2.938 million, which will call for the town to tap into reserves for \$636,789 to balance the expected revenues with anticipated expenses.

Mayor's assistant Fred Crosby told the council he is optimistic about the budget even though the town expects to see a state-funding shortfall of about \$116,000 due to a drop in population from recent census counts.

The town expects sales taxes may make up the difference in the shortfall given there are two

large businesses now open and people may choose to buy locally instead of going out of town, Crosby said.

Crosby added the town saw an almost immediate drop in revenues once the census data was released for the area.

To combat declining revenues, the town has made preparations to cut back on spending in all departments. The town has not hired at least four open positions. The town plans to only hire a part-time seasonal labor person in the streets department during the heavy seasons and has cut hours at the landfill to reduce overtime. The landfill is now open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. instead of from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

The town also plans to spend about \$715,000 on Optional 1 Percent Sales Tax projects throughout the next fiscal year. Money collected by the sales tax, which is voted upon every four years by general ballot, can only

be spent for capital construction, upgrading utilities or buying equipment.

In the next year the town plans to use the money to replace curb and gutter, buy new street equipment, provide decorative lights, buy new police vehicles and equipment and cover their costs for street maintenance in the summer and winter.

For the town's enterprise funds, which are the funds for all three utilities, the town hopes to overcome a shortfall in expenses with additional revenues from the town's recent utility rate increases.

The town hopes expenses at the landfill would be offset by state funding as the town works to bring the landfill up to Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality standards.

The council will have two more readings of the budget before it is

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## Mother's Day card making



Ryan Dumas has a great time using two colors of hand paint to make a Mother's Day card Monday at the Children's Resource Center. Teacher Connie Foehrweiser cheerfully lends a hand.

– Joe Sovo photo

# Lummis: Considers balancing nation's budget a 'high-wire act'

by J.D. Stetson

U.S. Rep. Cynthia Lummis, R-Wyoming, stands firm in her belief to show the world the nation is "getting our house in order."

With economic pressures building in the form of Standard and Poor's recent placement of a negative spotlight on the nation's debt, and the dollar reaching its lowest value in years, financial reform is becoming more necessary.

Lummis supports the recent budget for the next fiscal year proposed by Rep. Paul Ryan, R-Wis., which passed the House of Representatives recently because it takes steps to cut spending for entitlement programs.

But the meat of the bill isn't the cuts, it's the tax code reforms introduced by the bill, which would reduce the loopholes, credits and deductions in order for the government to broaden its base by simplifying the system and creating a flatter income tax structure, said Lummis, who was in Thermopolis last Friday to attend the Reagan Day Dinner.

The most obvious evidence in the tax reform debate is the recent news of General Electric not having to pay a corporate tax the last fiscal year, Lummis said.

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Ruth Clare Johnson, second from left, was honored during a recent Washakie Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) luncheon for 70 years of service. Also pictured, from left, are Darla Teter, DAR state regent; Marilyn Strausborger, Washakie Chapter regent; and Dorothy Kimbro, DAR state registrar. DAR state librarian Susan Haines was also in attendance.

– Joe Sovo photo

# DAR honors Johnson for 70 years

by Cindy Glasson

The Washakie Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) held a luncheon recently at the Hot Springs County Museum and Cultural Center to honor Ruth Clare Johnson of Thermopolis for 70 years of service to the organization.

Joining as a junior member of DAR, Johnson has held nearly every office in the local group as well as on a state level. She is presently the local chapter secretary and honorary state regent.

A strong proponent of Flag Day and Constitution Week, Johnson has appeared before the town council and the county commissioners throughout the years, asking their support in signing declarations to recognize the national celebrations.

She has been the chair of the Constitution Week committee for more than 40 years.

One of the founding members of the Washakie Chapter was Johnson's own mother, Clare Axtell. Johnson joined her mother and her aunt in the chapter while still in college on April 14, 1941.

Keeping the dedication to DAR in the family, Johnson's daughters, as well as her granddaughters, are also members.

What has kept her so active in the organization all these years?

"Their objective is what keeps me in it," she said. "Their dedication to veterans, education and philanthropy."

"There is such a variety of things we are in, supporting six schools, promoting ROTC, the national DAR library and all of the ancestry and historical buildings in the country."

Johnson can trace her own ancestry back nine "lines" to the Revolutionary War.

"Our history is so important," she said. "The people who estab-

lished our country were quite amazing.

"We need to continue to recognize the things our ancestors have done and be good citizens of this country."

On a local level, the DAR has recognized a variety of historical places in Hot Springs County, including Washakie's Bathtub and the Yates Ferry Crossing near the canyon.

Johnson is the oldest DAR member in the state of Wyoming.

Elected to three-year terms at the April 14 chapter meeting were Marilyn Strausborger, regent; Mary Berry, vice regent; Carolyn Jo Marshall, treasurer; Karen Musgrave, registrar; and Johnson, secretary.

Anyone interested in his or her genealogy or perhaps becoming a member of DAR may contact Marilyn Strausborger at 864-9306 for more information.



Reagan Day Dinner



Wyoming Gov. Matt Mead attended the Hot Springs County Republican Reagan Day Dinner, giving a short speech before having to leave for another event.



Featured speaker for the evening, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Cindy Hill, answered audience questions regarding education in Wyoming.

Eternal

would’ve featured scenes from around town in the winter time while a western version of “Winter Wonderland” played, but the rights for the song would cost too much for the Lodging Tax Board budget, so the idea was scrapped, Houck said.

**\$105,600 marketing budget**  
After covering the logo, TV,

website and billboards, Houck presented the board with a proposed marketing budget of \$105,600 for marketing and creative materials.

Houck stressed the board will have an opportunity to make adjustments to the budget and cut items they do not think will be necessary before the start of the fiscal year.

A breakdown of the proposed budget would be \$43,000 for print advertising, \$35,000 for television, \$17,000 for billboard’s, cinema and other outdoor advertising, and \$10,000 for Internet/social media advertising.

The budget also calls for \$6,000 for creative materials development and \$600 for site hosting, both of which will be paid for

in the current fiscal year’s budget. The actual marketing items would be paid for in the 2011-12 budget.

Lodging Tax Board members did not make any budget decisions during the meeting, but planned to have a workshop to discuss the materials before its next regular monthly meeting at noon May 17 at Days Inn.

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finalized for the next fiscal year. The second reading of the budget will be at 7 p.m. May 17 during the next regular meeting.

**Chamber’s request**  
Thermopolis-Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce Interim Executive Director Michelle Lue asked the town council Tuesday for any financial help the town could provide the chamber as it works to survive in a tough eco-

nomic environment.

Lue was joined by chamber president Donna Nally, vice president Gene Boehmke and board members Cindy Ellison and Meri Ann Rush in asking the town for funding.

Lue stressed the chamber is now operating with only one employee, who is not provided health insurance benefits, and is contractually responsible for running the Tourist Information

Center for seven days a week — even though it is not possible for one person.

Lue provided the council with the latest financial statements and budget information, and conveyed the chamber’s dedication to serve its members.

Mayor Bill Malloy stressed the town has only recently been provided with a budget, but the council would consider the request while it works to tweak it

in the coming weeks.

He added the town also is strapped for money and faces a tough funding shortfall.

It hasn’t been able to hire replacement workers recently or give raises to employees for three years.

The H.O.P.E. Agency also submitted a funding request to the council, but the amount of the request was not discussed during the meeting.

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Lummis

The tax code system is in desperate need of simplification in order for people to know what their tax burdens are ahead of time, instead of the “mish-mash” of credits and deductions currently offered and made worse by increases included in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Lummis considers balancing the budget to be a “high-wire act,” because of the spending in response to natural disasters, the weakening dollar and the debt.

**Energy policy**  
Lummis is very concerned with the price of energy in all sectors and thinks the government can do more to promote new technologies and industry in the U.S.

Particularly, Lummis commends the Wyoming Oil and Gas Commission for its forward thinking in getting oil and gas companies to make public the chemicals used in Wyoming for hydraulic fracturing.

At the national level, the industry has been under assault because of problems in other states with the practice, which allows for enhanced recovery of oil and natural gas.

“We cannot let regulators in Washington (D.C.), who don’t know us as well as our own Oil and Gas Commission, tell us

what’s good for Wyoming,” Lummis said.

Wyoming has now become a template for other states for the chemical requirements because of the work the state has done to protect its resources.

“Wyoming has been a leader in this area, and I am very proud of our Oil and Gas Commission,” she said.

**Gas prices**  
While Wyoming may have one of the lowest average gas prices in the nation, it also is the most affected by rising gas prices because of the long distances people travel and because there is little to no public transportation.

Lummis said she goes on national television and radio programs such as CNBC and FOX News regularly to explain the unique circumstances in Wyoming and the impacts of prices.

She also recently went to Saudi Arabia to evaluate for herself the long-term sustainability of the foreign oil reserves.

All of this is leading up to a bill introduced this week from the Natural Resources Committee meant to enhance production capabilities of all of the nation’s oil exploration, including reopening the Gulf of Mexico for off-shore and deep sea oil

exploration.

Also, in light of the recent oil spill in the Gulf, Congress will push for the regulators to carefully regulate the industry for the safety of the environment and the workers, but continue to pursue new sources of oil and gas.

“We need to take what we can learn from the experience and do what we can to protect and go forward,” Lummis said.

**Unprecedented influence**  
Lummis stressed her current committee assignments in the appropriations committee, the agricultural subcommittee and the environment and interior subcommittee combined with Sens. Mike Enzi and John Barrasso’s status in the senate have given Wyoming an unprecedented opportunity to protect Wyoming’s interests at the national level.

Enzi has unique access to the president as a senior member of the Senate and he is a ranking member of the health and labor committee, while Barrasso serves in a leadership role in the Senate.

Under her committee assignments, Lummis has a say in the funding for all land management agencies including the Environmental Protection Agency.

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