

## WYDOT plans to spend \$300 million on roads in 2011

by Cindy Glasson

State senators and representatives from the Wyoming Legislature's Transportation, Highways and Military Affairs Committee met in Thermopolis last week to review plans proposed by the Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT).

The committee, meeting in the basement of Big Horn Federal, heard from WYDOT officials about an asset management plan developed to preserve paved roads in Wyoming.

WYDOT plans to spend about \$300 million on Wyoming's roads in 2011; however, that number will drop dramatically over the ensuing years to a \$200 million level by 2013. The department expects that amount to remain level at least through 2017.

Part of the drop is the fixed, 14-cent per gallon fuel tax in place since 1998. Those 14 cents have not matched the inflation rate since 2001, leaving the state with fewer funds for road construction while construction costs have skyrocketed.

Wyoming has the lowest fuel taxes of the surrounding states. Fuel taxes in Montana are 27 cents per gallon, 20-22 cents per gallon in South Dakota, 24.5 cents in Nebraska, 20.5-22 cents per gallon in Colorado, 24.5 cents in Utah and 22.5-25 cents per gallon in Idaho.

### Statewide construction

Due to those funding constraints, WYDOT has determined a pavement preservation program would be a more effective use of available funds rather than full construction.

By 2015, the department plans to commit 63 percent of its construction funding to pavement preservation projects, meaning more dollars will be spent keeping roads maintained in good condition rather than repairing poor roads.

Preventive rehabilitation projects will see a 10 percent increase in funding along with minor rehabilitation projects.

Major rehabilitation projects will lose 20 percent of their funding under the preservation plan, and WYDOT says full reconstruction projects will see

a huge reduction because they simply cannot afford that type of work any longer.

### Construction costs

- Chip sealing a single mile of roadway costs WYDOT \$23,000 for a 26-foot width.

- Preventive reconstruction, thin overlays, cost \$356,000 per mile on interstates, \$178,000 on state highways and \$141,000 per mile for non-state roadways.

- Minor rehabilitation, thicker overlays, amount to \$668,000 per mile of interstate, \$334,000 on state highways and \$264,000 per mile on non-state roads.

- Major rehabilitation, including chip seals, overlays and slope or shoulder repair, requires \$1.7 million per mile for interstate, \$892,000 on state highways and just over \$700,000 per mile for non-state road repairs.

- Complete reconstruction of roads runs \$3.6 million per mile on interstate roads, \$1.8 million on state highways and \$1.4 million per mile for non-state roads.

So what will this mean to drivers?

According to WYDOT's Kevin Hibbard, poor roads are going to get worse because they are more expensive to fix; however, good roads may get better because overlays on those roads are less expensive and could actually improve their condition.

Those roadways already in poor condition will not be receiving much maintenance, Hibbard told the transportation committee, saying some may fail, deteriorating to the point where it will be easier to take them back to dirt roads.

Hibbard said there is a steep deterioration curve in Wyoming due to weather and heavy equipment traffic, especially on the non-state roadways.

### District 5

Hot Springs County falls into WYDOT District 5 along with Park, Washakie and Big Horn counties.

District 5 is scheduled to lose about \$10 million a year in road funding, approximately half of its current funding, which will

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## Welcome to Summer watermelon fun



With her mouth full of juicy fruit, Alexis Peden looks up from her sweet slice to check the competition during the watermelon eating contest at the Welcome to Summer

bash in Hot Springs State Park last Friday. The annual event is sponsored by Red Rock Family Practice.

—Cindy Glasson photo

## Hot Spot Car Rally ready to roll this weekend

by J.D. Stetson

Dads who are nostalgic for vintage cars will be happy Saturday and Sunday as the 19th annual Hot Spot Car Rally rolls along at Hot Springs State Park.

The annual event started in 1992 by founders Dick Howe, Jim Daniels, Skip Zancanata and Ted Spatol, when they decided to get together and do something for Father's Day. It originally took place near the Lil' Wrangler, then grew to the Blair's Super Market parking lot and eventually moved to Hot Springs State Park.

The rally has featured more than 130 vehicles from various decades and garners more people every year. The rally has featured phenomenal growth and has brought vehicles from as far away as Bend, Ore., Nevada and Texas.

The event, which is organized by the Hot Spot Car Rally Committee, had 24 mail entries as of June 9, which was about par for the course, spokeswoman Tawna Mc-

Queen said.

The event usually only gets 30 to 40 mail entries, while about 90 to 100 show up at the event Saturday and Sunday.

"I think the draw is to have a beautiful area like the state park," McQueen said. "It's location, location, location."

### Special events/awards

Starting the day Saturday will be the Ted Spatol Memorial Poker Run from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and the parade through Thermopolis will begin at 4:30 p.m.

The car rally will serve a "no host BBQ" at 5 p.m. Saturday, provided by Thermopolis Boy Scout troops, who are celebrating the Boy Scouts' 100 years of service this summer.

Afterward, the rally will feature The Ron and Opal Show, a variety show from Branson, Mo., which consists of country, pop, ragtime, gospel and 1950's music with comedy throughout.

Ron is known for playing several instruments, while Opal sings favorite songs by Connie Smith, Loretta Lynn, Patsy Cline and Vestal Goodman.

Besides Ron and Opal, the show may also feature Greg Jones, who plays several instruments and has performed on stage with Louie Armstrong, Tony Bennett and others.

All of the events Saturday lead into Sunday, when the main car show begins at 9 a.m. culminating in the awards ceremony and jacket giveaway at 3 p.m.

The awards will cover 11 divisions in which the drivers vote on nine of the awards. The event will feature two "People's Choice" awards and one award chosen by the committee. The committee will choose six drivers to give jackets away to and they will announce the winner of the Car Rally Quilt Raffle.

The quilt, which was made by the Old

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## A splashing we will go!



Tucker Whitt splashes through the underpass coming out of Hot Springs State Park last Thursday after a pair of severe storms converged on Thermopolis. The storms dropped 1.23 inches of rain and pea-sized hail that created some minor flooding issues all over town.

— Cindy Glasson photo

## Law enforcement uses tactical team in meth/weapons bust

by J.D. Stetson

The Big Horn Basin Tactical Response Team knocked down the doors of a trailer home at 185 Lane 7 Saturday after law enforcement suspected drugs and an assault weapon were in the home.

Both Thermopolis Police officers and Hot Springs County Sheriff's deputies received information Friday from separate sources alleging illegal activity was taking place at the residence, said Sheriff's Lt. Dan Pebbles.

Witnesses said a person in the residence allegedly threatened him or her with the assault weapon, Pebbles said.

Based on the information of the assault weapon and a general 35-point threat assessment conducted on the home based on initial surveillance and unknown information of the occupants, the departments chose to utilize the tactical response team to enter the residence after receiving a "no knock" search warrant for the home. The search warrant allowed the team to enter the home without announcing themselves as peace officers. Anytime the threat assessment is over 35 points, authorities will use the tactical team.

The team entered the home by knocking down

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## Kid's Aviation Day at airport Saturday

by Cindy Glasson

Bring the kids to the airport from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday for Kids' Aviation Day, featuring an egg drop, glider competition and barbecue.

Brett Crowley with Crowley Air Service said they are doing the day just for the kids in place of the annual fly-in, but are planning to have the fly-in later in the summer.

"It was hard getting folks to fly in here on Father's Day weekend," Crowley said, "so we figured we'd do this day just for the kids and hold the fly-in a little later in the summer."

Crowley said they would have an "egg drop," where the kids are given materials to build a protective cage for their egg, then climb up on a platform where they drop it to

see if it breaks.

"If their egg survives, they win a prize," he said.

Kids in the glider competition will get a balsa wood glider to test their skills with flying, loop-the-loops and other tricks.

"We will have planes for everyone to look over," Crowley said. "The pilots will be here to explain everything about them and answer questions."



# Rally

West Quilt Guild from past car rally T-shirts donated by Dave Smith, has had tickets for sale since May. Tickets are still available at Storyteller until the car show, where they will be for sale all weekend at the park.

### Parade route

Line-up for the parade starts about 4:15 p.m. Saturday in the parking lot near the Kiwanis Shelter in Hot Springs State Park. The parade will run past the Pioneer Home and then down

Park Street to Senior Avenue.

From Senior Avenue, it will follow Arapahoe Street to Fifth Street and then go along Broadway to Sixth.

The parade will go south on Sixth Street and up Shoshoni Street to Canyon Hills Road. The parade will end after the cars turn around at Thermopolis Rehabilitation Center. Participants will need to find their own way back to the park from the end of the parade route.

Throughout both days, the

event will feature “freehand” pin stripe artist Scot Kohler, a beer garden, food vendors, various door prizes and transport parking.

If the weather holds to tradition, it should be the first official great weekend of a summer of activities in Hot Springs County, McQueen said.

The weather usually gets nice just in time for Father’s Day, where families can get together for the rally as it was intended — as a tribute to dads.

# Bust

the door and setting off a “flash bang” grenade meant to disorient the occupants. The team secured four persons inside the home while officers and deputies took control of the scene.

During the search, deputies and officers found numerous items used in connection with the use, possession and sale of controlled substances as well as 1.65 ounces of methamphetamine, a small amount of marijuana and an SKS assault rifle loaded with

a 30-round clip.

Authorities arrested Juanita June Simmons, 47, Anthony Aaron Simmons, 20, and Timothy Michael Mitchell, 37. The fourth person in the residence was not arrested or charged.

Juanita Simmons is charged with two counts of possession of methamphetamine with the intent to deliver, two counts of conspiracy, one count of accessory before the fact to delivery of a controlled substance and one

count of possession of methamphetamine.

Anthony Simmons is charged with four counts of delivery of methamphetamine, two counts of possession with the intent to deliver, two counts of conspiracy and one count of possession of methamphetamine.

Mitchell is charged with two counts of possession with the intent to deliver, two counts of conspiracy and one count of possession of methamphetamine.

All three have had their arraignments in Hot Springs County Circuit Court and are being held on \$100,000 bonds.

Officers and deputies involved in the bust included deputies Jerimie Kraushaar, Rick Brill and Steve Chapel, police Sgt. Pat Cornwell, officer Mandy McDonald and Thermopolis canine officer Maris.

“The warrant resulted only because of the cooperative efforts in investigating the illegal sales by both departments,” Pebbles said.

Pebbles stressed how important it was in this case for people in the community to come to law enforcement when they suspect illegal activity is taking place.

“Law enforcement wants to send a message to those involved in the use or sale of drugs. It’s not a matter of if we catch you, it’s when,” Pebbles said.

Pebbles added anyone who suspects illegal activity or has information pertaining to drug activity in town can call either the Thermopolis Police Department at 864-3114 or the Sheriff’s Office at 864-2622, or they can use the department’s anonymous TIPS Text messaging service by texting to “274637” or “CRIMES” and writing the code “TIP810” in the subject line.



A joint law enforcement effort resulted in the discovery of 1.65 ounces of methamphetamine, a small amount of marijuana and an SKS assault rifle and clip stored in a guitar case at a Lane 7 trailer home.



A T-shirt for the 2011 Hot Spot Car Rally sits between engraved rock trophies for the division awards to be presented at 3 p.m. Sunday. The committee also will announce the winner of a quilt raffle during the awards. The quilt was made by the Old West Quilt Guild out of past rally T-shirts. Early registration for the car rally runs from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday registration starts at 8 a.m.

# WYDOT

be redistributed to District 1 and District 2 for use on Interstate 25 and Interstate 80.

The federal government funds 80 to 85 percent of Wyoming’s roads, with stipulation that a majority of that funding be used for interstate maintenance. The state will be responsible for the remaining roads, and counties responsible for non-state roadways.

Shelby Carlson, engineer for District 5, said she and her staff have been challenged by what they have to work with in the coming years.

“We can only do what we can do,” Carlson said. “It may not be what we want to do, but we will do what we can.”

Over the next several years there is very little construction or maintenance planned for the district.

In Hot Springs County, 2011 will see construction on Lane 3 south of Thermopolis.

Highway 120 toward Cody will see an overlay in 2012, with work in Wind River Canyon to correct areas of downslope, and repair or replace guardrails where portions of the road’s shoulder are deteriorating.

Patching and chip seals are planned on various roadways from 2013-2015.

Major work will be done in 2016 with a level, overlay and chip seal project south of town,

including repair work that will be done by Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad that may require pulling the bridge over the railroad tracks just past Red Cut.

If the project requires removing the bridge, traffic would be rerouted over Buffalo Creek Secondary, which would need to be leveled and overlaid to handle the increased traffic.

Carlson said the department realizes the Grass Creek and Hamilton Dome roads are not in the best of shape and there is some dirt work being done, but an overlay on them is not in the program at this time.