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Council tables funding request for golf course

by J.D. Stetson
The Thermopolis Town Council stood against a bevy of worries from local residents seeking to keep the Legion Town and Country Club from falling into financial ruin Tuesday night.

After intense discussion on the town's ability to provide assistance and after hearing the voices of a packed council room, the council chose to re-examine its finances and double-check its books for any financial assistance it may be able to give.

The council tabled the issue until a future meeting in order to give Mayor Bill Malloy and town officials time to check for possible avenues of funding.

During the discussion, Malloy stated his current understanding of the town's financials would not allow the council to provide any financial assistance without detriment to town services.

"I'm not going to start laying off people in the town who haven't had a raise in six years in order to keep the golf course going," Malloy said.

The town learned about the financial difficulties facing the golf course during a work session Oct. 18. Malloy summarized the golf course board's request to seek assistance in paying off a \$184,000 debt and increase funding for the facility to \$70,000 a year, but added the board is seeking any assistance the town can provide.

Golf course issues
Golf course board president Dan Herdt explained at Tuesday's meeting the course doesn't have the money to finish out the current year, and it currently owes the bank a \$15,000 payment for one of its three debts.

Council members asked Herdt how much the course would need to make it to the start of the next season, where it will receive increased revenues from membership fees, green fees and cart rentals. Herdt estimated the course would need

about \$30,000, but said he would refine the number between Tuesday's meeting and the next meeting on the issue.

Herdt added the course is now readying its contracts for next summer's greens keeper and golf pro. He said he isn't willing to sign a contract if he isn't sure the course could fulfill its financial obligation for the contracts.

The course also faces a substantive balloon payment on its debt within the next year.

The town also heard from Stones Throw owner Krista Raymond, who said her business is in the process of planning for the summer.

Raymond said if the golf course were to close next summer, it would be a detriment to her business and employees.

Citizen participation
During the meeting, Hot Springs County Commissioner Brad Basse told the council the golf board had approached the commissioners earlier in the day and the commissioners also are not in a position to help the board because they do not have a budget for the golf course.

Basse said the commission would likely be willing to hear the board out again at a future time, but added the commission also currently supports various other public services such as the library, museum and senior center to enhance the community.

Tom Sullivan, Sr. asked the council if they would consider "leasing" the course to a group of citizens for \$1 each, and also the council would work to find a solution to the problem.

The golf course means very much to many members of the community, he said.

"I'm going to do everything I can to try and save the golf course," Sullivan said.

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Prize-winning catch



Angus Annan, dressed as a vampire, reels in a treat at Risen Son Baptist Church during the Fall Festival on Saturday evening. — J.D. Stetson photo

Bentleys file \$1 million claim pertaining to loss of horse

County, sheriff's office and former undersheriff named in document

by Cindy Glasson
A million-dollar claim has been filed against Hot Springs County, the Hot Springs County Sheriff's Office and former Undersheriff Dave Larson by Larry and Chris Bentley for the loss of their horse in August, 2010.

According to County Attorney Jerry Williams, the Bentleys had to first file a claim against the above parties in an attempt to collect compensation for the animal and other losses before a formal lawsuit could be filed.

The claim results from a 2010 incident when a horse belonging to the Bentleys was put down by Larson after consultation with a

local veterinarian indicated the horse was in poor physical condition and should be humanely taken care of, according to the sheriff's office report.

The Bentleys were not contacted at the time as neither the veterinarian nor Larson believed the animal belonged to the Bentleys, the report said.

The compensation claim is made for "their damages and losses that resulted from the acts, errors and omissions of those officials known and unknown, as outlined herein."

Under the Wyoming Governmental Claims Act, the Bentleys are asking \$250,000 for loss of trust in law enforcement, \$250,000 for loss of faith in the justice system, \$250,000 for loss of property and \$250,000 for emotional distress.

The Bentleys are represented by John H. Robinson of Jamieson and Robinson, LLC in Casper.

The commissioners declined to comment on the claim on Tuesday.

Technicolor horse



Fourth grader Tyrell Cardenas joins other NW BOCES students in painting a "Spirit Horse" during an Equine Therapy session Saturday with certified instructor Maria Lisa Eastman of Rainhorse, a Hyattville-based organization specializing in equine-assisted therapies. — J.D. Stetson photo

EDC, WRDF co-host business workshops

Thermopolis-Hot Springs County Economic Development Company (EDC) and the Wind River Development Fund (WRDF) are co-hosting two business workshops next week. Both workshops will be held at Common Ground, 124 N. Fifth St. in Thermopolis and pre-registration by 4:30 p.m. Monday is required. There is a \$5 fee to attend each workshop.

The Start Right: Build Your Own Business workshop runs from 1 to 5 p.m. Tuesday.

It will guide you step-by-step through the process of turning your idea into a successful business.

In the end, you will have a business plan ready to help you get your business started. EDC Executive Director Kendi Heinze and WRDF staff will be available to help finalize

your business ideas.

Credit Where Credit is Due is the title of the workshop set for Wednesday from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Carolyn Miller, business development specialist from WRDF, is the instructor.

This workshop will help you learn about earning, saving, budgeting and similar topics. Upon completion, each participant will get their certificate stating they've passed the workshop automatically sent to each of the reporting credit bureaus. This will help improve your credit rating.

Snacks and refreshments will be available at Tuesday's workshop. Lunch and refreshments are included with Wednesday's workshop.

To register for either or both workshops, call Heinze at 864-2348.

Costume contest winners announced

Dozens of local children filled Bicentennial Park last Thursday night for Pinnacle Bank's annual Halloween costume contest and kiddie parade.

First- through third-place awards were given in seven divisions as chosen by Pinnacle Bank employees. Here are the award winners:

1-year-olds – First place, Mack McCumber (raining cats and dogs). Second, Journey Nicodemus (pink flamingo). Third, Mackenzie Buckner (the moth).

2-year-olds – First place, Kaden Scheel (John Deere tractor). Second, Tannan Lee Bird-sley (Lego). Third, Anna Lynn Sharp (rodeo clown).

3-year-olds – First place, Dean Michael Bihr (fireman). Second, Kale Newby (bank robbing cowboy). Third, Mercedes Martinez (green fairy).

4-year-olds – First place, Jordan Kelly (punk rocker). Second, Mikayla Moore (rodeo princess). Third, Talya Meyers (California raisin).

5-to-6-year-olds – First place, Kia Oliver (cookie sheet). Second, Josie Newby (paper doll). Third, Autumn Bensomer (girl bat).

7-to-8-year-olds – First place, Brandon Thomas (zombie). Second, Johnny Christman (black-bird). Third, Aden Nicodemus (monkey business boy).

9-year-old and up – First place, Jolie Nicodemus (my mummy). Second, Clinton Harris (table guy). Third, Stevie Ann Jellis (old man).

NWS to use enhanced radar

The National Weather Service (NWS) Doppler radar serving western and central Wyoming will be enhanced with the latest dual-polarization technology, beginning Monday.

Installation of the enhanced technology will require the radar to be offline for about two weeks. The dual-polarization enhancement will result in better estimation of precipitation amount, size and type.

Dual-polarization radar technology can better detect heavy rainfall in flooding events, improve hail detection in thunderstorms, and improve classification of precipitation types (rain, snow, ice). It can also detect the presence of airborne tornado debris, giving a forecaster a high degree of con-

fidence that a damaging tornado is occurring.

This helps a forecaster confirm and track the location of a tornado, which is especially helpful at night when tornadoes are difficult to spot with the human eye.

“This is the most significant upgrade to the nation’s weather radar network since Doppler radar was first installed in the early 1990s,” said Jack Hayes, director of NOAA’s NWS. “Dual-polarization technology provides significantly more information and clearer pictures of current weather conditions, helping National Weather Service meteorologists provide more accurate and timely forecasts.”

Current NWS radars provide forecasters information on precipitation intensity

and movement (direction and speed). Dual-polarization technology adds new information about the size and shape of an object, which will improve estimates of how much rain is falling, improving flash flood detection and warnings.

“This radar upgrade will help us provide better forecasts of hazardous weather for the residents of western and central Wyoming,” said Kevin Lynott, meteorologist-in-charge of the NWS Forecast Office in Riverton.

Installation of dual-polarization technology in all 122 NWS radars is expected to be completed in 2013. Thirty-eight other Doppler radars owned by the Air Force and Federal Aviation Administration will also be upgraded.

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Council support

The discussion brought up the question about whether all the members of the council are in support of the golf course.

Malloy stated he disagreed with the prospect that any member of the council is not in support of the golf course.

Since he became mayor, he said he has fought for the golf course and to improve the situation at the course, which had suffered from past mistakes.

When he became mayor, he proposed increasing the golf course’s funding from a non-set figure amounting to \$1,000 to \$5,000 a year, to a standard annual subsidy of \$40,000 a year, he said.

At that time, the council had no qualms about giving the course the money, and all of them said they would support the golf course.

Since then, the council has contended with the downturn

of the economy and the cuts to its own budget in order to keep essential services such as water, sewer, trash collection, police and public works operating.

He said the issue is similar to the situation the town faced in closing and selling the Old West Wax Museum.

His recommendation to the golf course and its supporters is to take the issue to the residents and raise the money it needs to stay afloat.

Herdts added the board has sought to save money where it can through volunteer labor and seeking donations through its membership forums.

He said the board has no financial interest in the golf course and it doesn’t get paid for the work it does in running the course.

“There’s only so much this board can do with *your* golf course,” he said.

Ghoulishly scary!



Dakota Wedor tries to jump out of the way as Clemens Abbott runs toward him in a mask and a ghoulish suspended above him during the Gottsche Haunted House last Thursday. — J.D. Stetson photo