

Hot Springs County High School honor rolls announced **3**

Thermop teams go 6-3 in Bobcat Team Camp **7**

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Thermopolis Hot Springs

Independent Record

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Chuck Cornella of Thermopolis waves while driving his Ford Roadster during the 2011 Hot Spot Car Rally Parade of Cars. This year's rally will feature well over 100 cars on display this weekend at Hot Springs State Park. See the story on page 11 about how Ted Spatol and Dick Howe got the car rally started in 1993.

Trustees review finance options for new hospital

by J.D. Stetson

Hot Springs County Memorial Hospital Board of Trustees and staff met with Align Healthcare and Davis Partnership Architects representative Leigh Hantho Thursday for a final review of financial information with regard to building a new hospital.

The review is not the final report and the information provided could be revised before the final report is published.

Hantho presented a potential construction budget of \$28.78 million for the new facility, which figures in \$500,000 for land as part of the contingency. The budget does not include capitalized interest on any loans.

The company and the board have not determined a site for a future hospital, but it could be located either south or west of town.

The hospital won't build north of town because of federal rules regarding critical access hospitals. The new hospital must be at least 35 miles

from Washakie Medical Center, which also is a critical access hospital.

Trustee Heath Overfield pointed out the need for additional water storage for fire protection if the hospital were to be located south or west of town. Overfield, a professional engineer for Engineering Associates, is familiar with the current water systems and future plans for both South Thermopolis Water and Sewer District and Owl Creek Water District, and he is certain the districts would not be able to provide adequate storage for the hospital's fire protection needs.

Financing options

Hantho presented two ways for the hospital to fund the project, and both would require the hospital to form a district.

The first option is for the hospital to contract with a third party to finance and build the facility with the hospital leasing the building with an option

See Trustees on page 11

Hot Spot Car Rally featured this weekend

by Joe Sovo

Rainy weather did not dampen the spirits of exhibitors during last year's Hot Spot Car Rally at Hot Springs State Park in Thermopolis, and pleasant, sunny weather is expected for the 20th anniversary edition of the popular event Saturday and Sunday. It's a special way for all members of the family to celebrate Father's Day weekend.

This will be the sixth year the rally has been held in the area of the Kiwanis Washakie Shelter in the state park. It had previously been held on the grass at the Wyoming Pioneer Home for a number of years. The current location makes it more accessible for people in wheelchairs and with other limitations.

"There were 124 die-hards who didn't leave," Hot Spot Car Rally committee chair Tawna McQueen said of the 2011 event. There were 143 vehicles registered in 2009, the most in the history of the car rally. "We're hoping to go over that."

Featured will be classic cars, pickups and motorcycles. By popular demand, a 4x4 category will be added this year.

Early-bird registration is from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday. The Ted Spatol Memorial Poker Run is featured from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The Parade of Cars through Thermopolis starts at 4:30 p.m. Poker Run awards

will be given just before the parade begins.

The parade starts at the state park, proceeding along Senior Avenue through downtown Thermopolis to Fourth Street. The route goes up Broadway to the stoplight at Sixth Street, then south around the curve onto Shoshoni Street, right on Canyon Hills Road and concluding on 14th Street.

A 20th anniversary party is set from 5 to 9 p.m., with free cake and ice cream. A band from Lovell, the Rewinders, plays Saturday from 5:30 to 9:30 p.m. at the state park pavilion. There is no admission charge.

Registration for the rally resumes at 7:30 a.m. Father's Day and the main "show and shine" featuring vintage cars, pickups and motorcycles runs from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. There will be special kids' judging from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., when youngsters cast votes for their favorite vehicle. O'Reilly Auto Parts is donating four \$25 gift certificates to be given to owners of the top four entries in the kids' balloting. Summit Motor Sports is supplying the kids' ballots.

Saturday and Sunday, door prizes will be given away. Food vendors and a beer garden will be in operation.

Awards ceremony Sunday

The awards ceremony and jacket giveaway is set for 3 p.m. Sunday, featuring

the awarding of 11 trademark rock trophies engraved by Mike Stevens.

"These are very sought-after," McQueen said of the stones.

Randy Nissen of Worland repeated as the People's Choice award winner in 2011 with his 1936 Ford three-window coupe. Leonard Miller of Mills took Best Car honors with his 1950 Ford coupe.

During the awards ceremony, drawings will be held to culminate a raffle for three pedal cars. They include a 1955 Chevy, a 1932 Roadster and a 1926 Roadster. Results of the kids' judging will also be announced at that time.

Tickets for chances to win the pedal cars are \$5 each or three for \$10. They are available from committee members, at the Thermopolis-Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce, Storyteller, Thermopolis Liquors, Owl Creek Graphics and Pinnacle Bank.

McQueen said raffle tickets would be sold at the state park during the car rally, until the 3 p.m. drawings. Proceeds from the raffle will go to a local charity and a family in need.

At the start of the rally, Scott Koehler of Scott's Creative Signs from Platteville, Colo., will be pin-striping all three pedal

See Rally on page 11

Student enrollment numbers encouraging

by Joe Sovo

Average daily membership, known as ADM, in Hot Springs County School District No. 1 was up to close out the 2011-12 school year compared to the same time last year. However, understand ADM is different from actual enrollment, and ADM is a "three-year rolling average" rather than numbers for a specific school year.

ADM was 664 at the end of the 2011-12 school year, compared to 638 at the end of the 2010-11 school year. However, that comparison could be misleading since it reflects the three-year average.

"Our ADM has been so constant," school district business

manager Lisa Pearce said.

"We're pretty level."

The ADM is based on a 175-day enrollment period for three school years. Via funding from the Wyoming Legislature, the state's public schools, on average, spent about \$15,000 per traditional student for the 2010-11 school year. The numbers for the just completed 2011-12 school year have not been released.

Therefore, when a school district has a rise in ADM, there is generally more money available from the State of Wyoming for public education.

Compared to the end of the See Enrollment on page 11

WYDOT District 5 faces major decrease in highway funding

Receipts could drop from \$57 million in 2011 to \$29 million by the year 2015

by Cindy Glasson

Hot Springs County and the remainder of Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT) District 5 will be seeing a marked decrease in the amount of funding provided for road maintenance in the coming years.

According to Shelby Carlson, district engineer for WYDOT, the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) will be funneling money normally used in District 5 to other districts within the state.

In 2011, District 5 received \$57 million in STIP funds, dropping to \$55 million for 2012. The 2013-2014 funding will drop drastically to just \$39 million and see another huge drop in funding in 2015, down to just \$29 million.

The drop in 2015 amounts to a 25-percent transfer of funding to other districts. Wholly, 50 percent of the remaining funds will be allocated to pavement preservation projects.

Pavement preservation

With funding throughout the state being hampered by the economy and rising construction costs, WYDOT has made a change in their strategy, going from road construction to road preservation.

The vast area of Wyoming and the miles needed to drive from place to place puts the state at the top of the list for number of miles driven, per person, per year at 16,976 miles. Mississippi comes in second with 13,624 miles per person.

The national average is just 9,566 miles per person per year.

By 2015, WYDOT will be committing about 63 percent of its funding to preservation projects.

It is hoped that by doing pavement preservation, the decline in the state of Wyoming's roads should improve over the next 20 years.

Roads deteriorate over time from use as well as weather conditions.

Asphalt pavement sees a 40-percent drop in road quality in just the first two years of use, while the same road done with concrete pavement hits the 40-percent deterioration mark after five years.

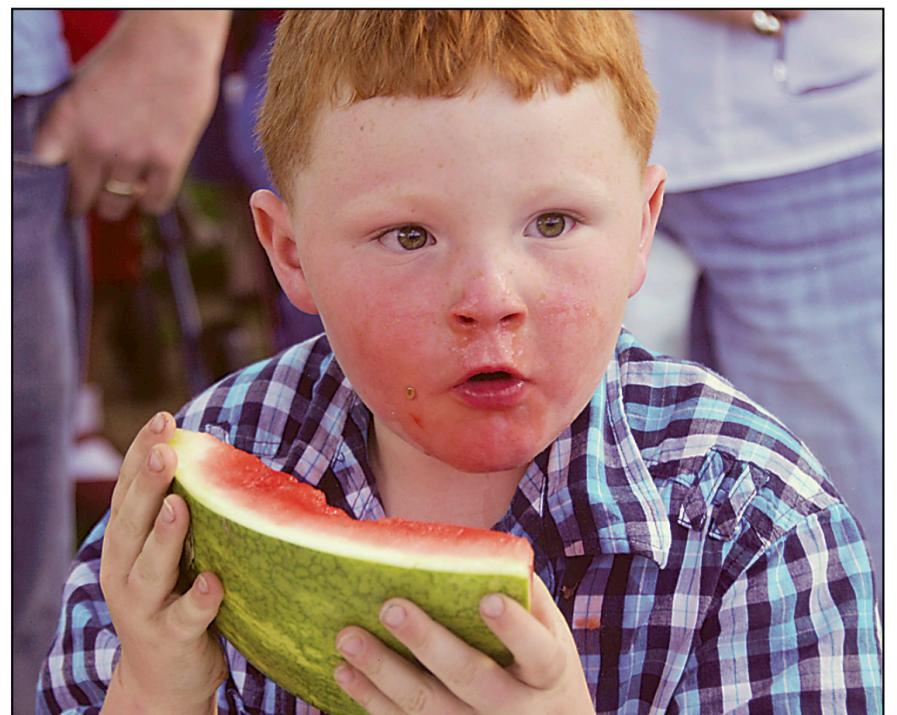
Within the first eight years, with no preventative maintenance, an asphalt road will lose 75 percent of its life span.

Concrete pavement suffers a 75-percent loss at 20 years.

According to WYDOT, by year 14, an asphalt pavement will have failed completely. Concrete

See Funding on page 11

Welcome to Summer appetite



Colton Robb tries hard to finish his watermelon during a Welcome to Summer contest Friday at the state park, hosted by Red Rock Family Practice. Category winners were Ivan Thomas, Hunter Bartholomew and Miracle Snooks. — J.D. Stetson photo

Spatol's memory carried on by daughter Krystal, other members of family

by Joe Sovo

Ted Spatol started a poker run to be part of the Hot Spot Car Rally each summer in Thermopolis about 15 years ago. Every Father's Day, Spatol is remembered and his memory lives on during the annual rally.

"After Ted passed, we renamed it the Ted Spatol Memorial Poker Run," Hot Spot Car Rally committee chair Tawna McQueen said. "We're going to let him run with it."

Ted was a staff sergeant with the Wyoming Army National Guard and had 41 years in the military. He died Dec. 14, 2006, just a few hours after returning from Iraq to be reunited with his family. The family believes his life was cut short due to "chemical warfare" that caused his illness.

After Ted's passing, his daughter Krystal Spatol took his position on the Hot Spot Car Rally committee.

Most poker runs involve only

motorcycles, but the event in the Hot Spot Car Rally includes any of the vehicles registered for the rally. Last year, 78 poker hands were dealt – to drivers and passengers. There are again seven stops during the run to pick up cards for poker hands this year. The run has a 100-percent payout, with 60 percent of the pot going to the holder of the high hand and 40 percent to the low hand. Sandy Howe of Thermop had four jacks and an ace kicker for high hand last year.

To Krystal's recollection, her father and Dick Howe officially got the car rally off the ground in 1993; the first event featured about 21 cars at what was the Big T Drive-In on Shoshoni Street (now the Lil' Wrangler). Two years earlier, the pair chatted about starting a car/truck show since they owned rival 1946 pickups – Ted's Ford and Howe's Chevy. Both were entered in the initial show in '93.



Pictured, front row from left, are Krystal and Lisa Spatol; back row, Pam, Ted and Kathy Spatol. Ted Spatol, who passed away in 2006, and Dick Howe got the Hot Spot Car Rally started in 1993. His wife is Kathy. Krystal, Lisa and Pam are his daughters.

Ted and Krystal had started renovating his '46 Ford in 1987, on Krystal's seventh birthday. Since her father's passing, Krystal has taken possession and put more work – and parts – into the truck, preparing it for eventual re-entry in the rally. She'll drive

it in Saturday's rally parade, the first time in eight years the vehicle has been in the event. The '46 pickup won't be entered in the show, but it will be parked at the state park after the parade. Krystal will enter two vehicles – Ted's 2003 Harley-Davidson

Sportster (100-year edition) and her '68 Bronco.

Krystal said the weather forecast for the rally is for a high of 85 degrees with scattered afternoon thunderstorms. She's depending on her dad for a pleasant Father's Day weekend.

Rally

from page 1

cars. By appointment, he is also pin stripping cars entered in the rally.

Collector car rally T-shirts will be sold Saturday and Sunday at the state park; the cost is \$12 each.

Tawna McQueen said exhibitors generally enter from four to 12 car rallies each summer, beginning Memorial Day weekend (including one in Casper) and going through Labor Day weekend. Nearly one-third of the exhibitors are from Hot Springs County, but the local rally has recently drawn classic car, truck and motorcycle owners from Colorado Springs, Colo., Shepherd, Mont., and Moberly, S.D. David Burrows of Winnemucca, Nev., has been to the Thermop rally for about 10 years, bringing his classic wood-grained Ford van to display. One year, a man from Texas brought his DeLorean to show. A modified 1981 DeLorean DMC-12 was featured in the movie "Back to the Future."

In addition to McQueen and her husband Rod, other committee members are Dick and Sandy Howe, Jim and Dollie Daniels, Krystal Spatol, Tom and Patti Jeunehomme, Toddi Darlington, Dave Smith, Gene and Marcia Boehmke, Tim Arthur, Skip Zancanata and Kellie Faith.

Trustees

from page 1

to buy it back at a future date.

The other option is for the hospital or the county to issue government bonds for the project.

In both scenarios, the financing would require the hospital to collect about \$650,000 a year from the district's mill levy, starting in 2015.

Under the lease option, the hospital would pay \$2.89 million a year with the option to buy it at a future date. Under the bond option, the hospital would issue a \$30 million bond at 4.5 percent interest with a 25-year

amortization period.

The current plan schedules the period for construction from April 2013 to June 2014. Hantho said the construction period is likely to be delayed while the hospital works to form a district, finds a suitable site and works out financing and construction details.

The hospital also is in discussions with Gottsche Rehabilitation and Wellness Center and Red Rock Family Practice for their involvement and potential part to play in the new hospital.

Hospital district

Hantho broke down the tax impact on residents and corporations if the hospital forms a district and collects 3 mills.

Using the county's assessed valuation for 2011 of \$223 million, Hantho estimated the property tax on a home valued at \$150,000 would increase about \$42.75. He pointed out the average market value of a Thermopolis home in 2010-2012 to be \$138,638.

The 10 largest property taxpayers include various energy companies and the railroad.

Hantho estimated the additional tax to the largest taxpayer, Merit Energy, to be about \$141,000.

The board discussed the criteria to place the districting issue on the ballot for an election. At minimum, the citizens or companies responsible for 25 percent of the assessed valuation must be in favor of the district and 25 percent of all property tax payers must be in favor of it.

Only one or two of the largest property taxpayers could account for the assessed valuation requirement, but those companies would only have a single

vote in the second requirement.

Hospital CEO Robin Roling added there also is a pending decision from the Wyoming Attorney General's office with regard to getting hospital districts on the ballot. Roling said there are currently 13 other county hospitals seeking to become districts in the state.

Other discussion

The board also discussed the possibility the hospital would need to have another election after forming the district because the state requires districts to

hold a referendum before entering into a bond issue that exceeds a certain amount. The amount threshold was unavailable during the discussion.

The hospital also is working to develop education materials to inform other groups, community members and officials of the plan, and the need for the new hospital.

Based on the discussion, both Roling and Hantho said further research would be needed on the election requirements and other factors as the process moves forward.

Enrollment

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2010-11 school year, there was a substantial increase in kindergarten in the district in 2011-12, according to the district enrollment summary. The only decreases were in third, ninth and 10th grades. Third grade had the

fewest students, an average of 41 over the period.

The enrollment summary shows there were 64 students in fourth grade during the three-year rolling average – the grade with the largest ADM in the dis-

trict. That bodes well for boosting the ADM in Thermopolis Middle School, which accommodates fifth- through eighth-grade students. On average, there were 49 eighth graders, meaning approximately that number would

be going to Hot Springs County High School in the fall. There were 52 students in the senior class in the ADM, the actual number of HSCHS graduates in the Class of 2012.

There is an "ebb and flow" from

grade to grade at Ralph Witters Elementary, where there is an anticipated increase in third-grade numbers for the 2012-13 school year. Such fluctuations often make it necessary to shuffle teachers from one grade to an-

other to meet the required 16:1 student-to-teacher ratio mandated by the Wyoming Department of Education. Unlike some other school districts in Wyoming, Hot Springs County No. 1 has been able to stay under the 16:1 ratio.

Funding

from page 1

pavement fails at the 35-year mark.

If pavement preservation is done early on, renovation costs are about a quarter of what they would be if the road is not maintained.

Construction and inflation vs. tax rates

A full 80 percent of WYDOT funding comes from federal aid programs, including surface transportation funds, national highway system funds, interstate maintenance funds and federal grants.

Twenty percent comes from state appropriations which include fuel taxes, mineral royalties, severance taxes, general fund appropriations and other fees.

Mineral royalties amount to \$66 million and severance taxes account for \$6.7 million in funding. General funds appropriations vary from year to year and other fees are generally a small addition to the appropriations.

Known for its lower taxes, the State of Wyoming has the lowest gas tax rates among surround-

ing states, creating the lower funding base available for road construction and maintenance.

Wyoming's gas tax for all types – gasohol, gasoline and diesel – is a flat 14 cents per gallon, bringing in approximately \$88.82 million in anticipated revenue per year.

Colorado charges 22 cents per gallon for gasohol and gasoline with 20.5 cents per gallon tax on diesel fuel.

Nebraska and Utah both charge 24.5 cents per gallon for all motor fuels; Idaho taxes gasohol at 22.5 cents per gallon, and gasoline and diesel are both taxed 25 cents per gallon. South Dakota charges 20 cents per gallon for gasohol and 22 cents per gallon for both gasoline and diesel.

The highest tax rate for fuel is in Montana where residents pay 27 cents per gallon for both gasohol and gasoline and 27.5 cents per gallon on diesel, nearly double what Wyoming receives in fuel taxes.

Lower tax rates and inflation will have a big impact on road construction within the state.

Currently, construction costs, per mile, for a 2-lane, thin overlay of asphalt amount to between \$200,000 and \$400,000.

Resurfacing of those same lanes comes in at \$700,000 to \$1.25 million per mile. A complete reconstruction would cost between \$1.25 million and \$2.74 million per mile.

Four lane roads are, of course, more expensive, coming in at \$1.3 million to \$2.75 million per mile for resurfacing, \$2.5 million to \$4 million per mile for asphalt reconstruction and \$4 million to \$5.25 million per mile for a concrete reconstruction.

If WYDOT maintains the current trend in maintenance, the minimum reasonable investment in our roads will cost in the neighborhood of \$300 million just to maintain the deteriorating road system.

Maintaining the current infrastructure, to preserve the investment in Wyoming's roads, would require approximately \$430 million.

In order to improve our roadways, meet performance goals and invest in the safety and

mobility of our highways, an investment of \$650 million would be needed.

Unfortunately, inflation has dropped the purchasing power of Wyoming's construction dollars from a high in 2009 of about \$550 million to about \$350 million in 2011.

Revenue and allocations

For 2012, WYDOT anticipates 52.84 percent of its revenue will come from federal aid, just over \$288 million.

Other revenue sources include fuel taxes, royalties, registrations and vehicle fees as well as severance taxes, drivers' licenses and other smaller sources, for a total of \$545.33 million.

Highway improvements take a big chunk of WYDOT's allocated funding, nearly 44 percent or \$239 million. An additional \$144 million is spent on other maintenance, operations and contract maintenance.

WYDOT's aeronautics commission oversees a multitude of projects, including airport infrastructure and approval of loans and grants to Wyoming

airports for other projects, fly-ins and air shows across the state, garnering \$33 million in allocated funds.

The Wyoming Highway Patrol enforces the laws, spending more than 150,000 hours annually patrolling our highways. That amounts to more than 6.8

million miles in a year.

More than 1,000 pounds of illegal narcotics and 842 pharmaceutical pills, with a street value of more than \$5 million, was confiscated by patrol officers last year.

Their portion of the funding pie is just short of \$42 million.

Read the public notices for your protection.

Attention all Eagles Aerie and Auxiliary members:

An important joint meeting is scheduled for **June 19, 7 PM at the Eagles Lodge. Please plan on attending.**

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