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Thermopolis Hot Springs

# Independent Record

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## Making sure that it's a *clean* sweep in your hospital room

by J.D. Stetson

People who work, stay or visit a hospital know there is an atmosphere of cleanliness in the building that seems to be different from anywhere else in the community.

They smell the detergents, see the hand-sanitizer dispensers and feel the calmingly sterile mood of the building.

What they don't see is the work that goes into keeping the hospital clean and the various ways the hospital maintains its quality of cleanliness in order to protect patients, employees and the people who choose to visit or use the facility.

Hospitals across the nation are constantly fighting myriad bacteria, viral infections or other microorganisms because of the susceptibility of their patients, or workers, of getting sick.

Everyone knows the hospital keeps its operating room positively sterile because of the dangers posed to patients and staff, but some people may be surprised to know that many of the same high quality products used in cleaning the operating room are also used to clean a patient's room.

The hospital has found that by measuring and reporting the quality of this simple service go a long way toward creating peace of mind for its patients and a safer place for all in the hospital.

### Testing process

Since January, Hot Springs County Memorial Hospital Environmental Services Director Griff Hodson has implemented a quality assurance program to measure how well the hospital cleans its patients' rooms.

Hodson knew the hospital uses quality-cleaning products from a highly regarded manufacturer in the industry, but he wanted to know how effectively the hospital used those products.

While doing some research, the manufacturer provided a free sample of a fluorescent spray and a simple method for checking the process used by staff to clean rooms.

Within a hospital room, there are 17 areas people are most likely to touch with their hands. After a patient is discharged, Hodson sprays a single squirt of the spray in each of these areas before the room is cleaned.

Hodson checks each of the areas with a black light after the room is cleaned. The black light and the spray tell him how thorough the cleaning staff was in catching every part of the table, or object, with detergent.

Hodson developed a tracking sheet where he

*See Clean on page 12*



Hot Springs County Memorial Hospital Environmental Services Director Griff Hodson illuminates a fluorescent spray on top of a hospital bed table using a black light in order to demonstrate the first step in a test designed for the hospital's room cleaning quality assurance program. The hospital implemented the program in January with a goal of measuring the effectiveness of staff in cleaning patient rooms. — J.D. Stetson photo

## HSC candidate forums in spotlight Oct. 22 and 23

Two local candidate forums will be sponsored by the Thermopolis Hot Springs Independent Record about one week before the 2012 General Election.

The first forum, set for Monday, Oct. 22, is geared toward the two candidates on the ballot running for House District 28, the four candidates vying for two Thermopolis Town Council seats and all other local candidates running unopposed in the Nov. 6 General Election.

Six candidates running for four seats on the Hot Springs County School District No. 1 Board of Trustees are invited to attend the

Tuesday, Oct. 23 forum.

Both forums begin at 5:30 p.m. and will be held at the Hot Springs County Museum and Cultural Center in Thermopolis.

Candidates in contested races as well as those who do not have opposition in the General Election are invited to participate in their respective forums.

The HD28 candidates are Republican Nathan Winters and Democrat Connie Skates. Each won a contested race on their respective party tickets in the Aug. 21 Primary Election.

Challengers LeRoy Hayes and Mark Nelson and incumbents Al-

lan Braaten and Dick Hall are running for Thermopolis Town Council. Hayes, Braaten and Hall were on the Primary Election ballot and Nelson received enough write-in votes to qualify for the General Election; Nelson accepted the nomination. Incumbents Jack Kuiper and Merle William Moore are on the ballot for two East Thermopolis Town Council seats. Ross Rhodes, Raymond Nettles and Jessica Slagle are running for a pair of seats on the Kirby Town Council. Rhodes and Nettles advanced from the Primary Election. Slagle had enough write-in votes to qualify

for the General Election and she accepted the nomination.

There were no mayoral races in this year's local election.

Republican incumbent Brad Basse is unopposed in the race for Hot Springs County commissioner. Another Republican incumbent, Mark Mortimore, is unopposed on the General Election ballot for county coroner.

Republican State Sen. Gerald Geis ran for reelection and is unopposed in the General Election. He represents Senate District 20, which includes Hot Springs County.

Candidates for seats on the

school board are incumbents Travis Bomengen, Joe Martinez and Clay VanAntwerp, and challengers Brittany Nelson, Melissa Johnson and Danny Pebbles. They are running for four-year terms.

Board chairwoman Liz Mahoney and trustees Hub Whitt and Tom Sullivan remain on the school board.

Each candidate in attendance for their respective forums will be allowed a two-minute introduction during which they can give their background and reason for running for election. Candidates are being asked to confirm their

attendance by Friday, Oct. 19 to the Independent Record office by phone or email.

IR reporter Cindy Glasson will be the moderator of the 90-minute Oct. 22 forum and IR editor/publisher Joe Sovia will moderate the hour-long Oct. 23 forum. The moderators will ask each candidate questions pertinent to the position which they seek. The forums will conclude with an opportunity for persons in the audience to ask candidates specific questions.

The candidate forums are open to the public and refreshments will be served.

### Snow flower



The much-needed moisture that arrived last week blanketed the grassy areas in the county with a layer of snow and created white caps on the marigolds still blooming in Hot Springs State Park. According to the National Weather Service, temperatures over the next 10 days should remain in the low- to mid-60s.

## County commissioners pondering energy-saving options after audit

by Cindy Glasson

The Hot Springs County Commissioners have a lot to think over and discuss after receiving a 135-page energy savings report from Trane at their Oct. 2 meeting.

Trane was hired by the commissioners earlier this year to do an energy audit on the buildings under the county's umbrella to find ways to save the county money on its energy expenditures.

Included in the energy audit were the courthouse and law enforcement center (LEC), the library, agriculture extension building, government annex, museum, road and bridge building, counseling center and fair building as well as the indoor arena. A lighting-only package was also proposed for the outdoor arena at the fairgrounds.

The county is under no obligation to do any of the proposed work. They may choose to do just portions of the proposal or walk away from the entire project. At this time, the commissioners are perusing the documents individually and will meet at a later date to make any decisions.

The audit team came to Thermopolis and did a complete walk-through of all county buildings to build a detailed audit.

The main focus was on lighting systems, inside plumbing systems, and heating and cooling systems to determine their current conditions and then recommend corrections to improve each system's efficiency and functionality.

They gathered details on the building envelope, lighting and mechanical systems, then plugged that information into

the Trace 700 modeling program. That computer program told Trane where the problems were with the county systems and suggested improvements.

### Courthouse/LEC

The Trace 700 program took all the information about the courthouse and LEC and found the current energy utilization index (EUI) for the two buildings currently amounts to 97,269 btu/sq.ft./yr. With the energy conservation measures Trane suggests, the EUI would drop to 79,853 btu/sq.ft./yr., a 17.1 percent saving in energy costs.

The largest savings items for the courthouse would be lighting improvements and a change out of all the current heat pumps, 54, one for each room in the courthouse. The new heat pumps would be fit

with electronic controls to allow for a variety of conditions. The lighting improvements would include occupancy sensors.

The building envelope should be as airtight as possible to prevent a loss of heat or cooling.

According to Trane, the courthouse building is sound; however, various doors and windows need to be weather stripped and sealed along with a pipe penetration that goes through two floors that will need sealing.

At the LEC, eight exterior doors need to be sealed, weather stripped and door sweeps added along with 12 exterior windows that will need sealing.

The project cost for these two buildings would be \$568,933, but with the savings in electrical usage, gas and maintenance

*See Commissioners on page 12*

## Town to allow credit cards, online bill pay

by J.D. Stetson

The Town of Thermopolis is in the process of making changes to the way it collects payment for utility bills.

Mayor's Assistant Fred Crosby asked the Thermopolis Town Council to approve the creation of a new bank account that would be used to process payments with credit cards and those who pay online through their banks.

Crosby said customers are becoming more accustomed to paying their bills either online

or through a credit card because of the convenience.

The town is currently researching companies, computer software and hardware that would allow the town to modernize the way it collects payment.

Crosby said there may be a minimal cost incurred to credit card customers based on a fee for the service.

The online bill pay option would allow customers to pay bills online through their bank's online payment op-

tions, which some customers currently use to pay their bills by check. Instead of the bank issuing the town a check, it would enact a transfer to the town's account.

The town is not looking to make changes to its website at this time to allow customers to view their town accounts or make direct online payments. The cost of software and equipment upgrades for a direct online service is currently not feasible for the town, said Town Clerk Tracey Van Heule.

Crosby asked for the second bank account as an additional protection to the town's general fund from electronic fraud. The funds from the credit card and online account would eventually roll over into the general account on a regular basis.

Van Heule said the town is working toward setting up the bank account and acquiring the software and hardware to offer the service. The town hopes to have the service up and running by Nov. 1.



# Clean

determines if the object’s cleaning “passed,” was “marginal” or “failed” the simple inspection. Under a passing inspection, Hodson sees the entire area without dark spots. A marginal inspection may have some dark spots but is otherwise covered. A failing inspection sometimes shows a fluorescent “S” on the table from the swipe of the cloth, indicating the cleaner had missed large areas.

### Results

After the first four months of the program, the hospital had a 35-percent fail rate, which opened the cleaning staff’s eyes to how effectively they had cleaned the rooms in the past. The results also helped to motivate a different outcome in the second round. From May to August, the results showed drastic improvement with staff earning a 3-percent fail rate, which was a single failed inspection out of 40 tests. Hodson said the goal of the staff is to reach a 0-percent fail rate and to maintain it. A failed

test may occur from time to time, but that means the staff needs to adjust to maintain the process and get the rate back down. He said the program has become a competitive component of his department that he hopes will spread to other areas in the hospital. “(We) consistently remind staff that the next person in this room might be you,” Hodson said.

### Sharing specifics

The hospital only recently began to share the specifics of the program with patients as a way of showing them the hospital’s commitment to cleanliness and quality. Hodson said he had visited with a patient and his two daughters and told them about the program and its results. He said both the patient and the daughters thanked him for sharing the information because “they knew it was truly in their best interest.” “What matters the most to me is (the patient’s) satisfaction, 100 percent,” Hodson said. If he and his staff can help a patient and their

family with the peace of mind of knowing their room is clean and safe, while maintaining their commitment to the cleaning process, then he knows they have done their job. Hodson added that the cost of the testing supplies are very low and affordable for the hospital to keep the program going into the future, and for the possible expansion of the program to other departments of the hospital. Despite the new program, the hospital has always maintained high quality standards for cleaning. Hodson said, to his knowledge, the odds at the hospital for anyone contracting the bacteria or viral infections afflicting other, larger hospitals have always been very low. The new program helps to add just another

### International Infection Prevention Week

Visitors to the hospital next week may notice booths in the front lobby dedicated to International Infection Prevention Week, Sunday through Oct. 19.

The number-one way to fight infection is by thoroughly washing your hands and using hand sanitizers, said Robin Griffin, director of nursing.

Hospital staff across all departments will focus on their continued efforts to decrease the probability of infection and provide awareness to the public.

One of the goals is to teach the importance of hand washing for the public – not only at the hospital, but also at home.

For more information about infection prevention, stop by the hospital or visit [www.iipw.org](http://www.iipw.org).

layer of protection, to ensure the products are used in the right way to do their job and to ease the minds of the patients, their visitors and the employees at the hospital. “We’re not just clean, we’re *really* clean,” Hodson said.

# Commissioners

savings, it would pay itself off in 27.5 years.

### Library

Built in 1965, the 9,430-square-foot library is heated by a boiler which Trane says is in average condition. Cooling comes from an air-cooled chiller that is near the end of its useful life. The Trane team observed it cycling on and off frequently during their examination of the premises. The current EUI for the library is 79,261 btu/sq.ft./yr. After implementation of all the suggested energy saving measures, the EUI would be 59,734 btu/sq.ft./yr, a savings of 24.6 percent. Replacement of the HVAC system and lighting upgrades are recommended along with sealing two exterior doors. In addition, there is an insulation problem in one area where insulation is installed, but is not sealed to the walls. Trane saw visual signs of

air infiltration in this area. The weather stripping and sealing would save about 15 percent in energy costs. Sealing the envelope, including getting the insulation correctly installed, would cost \$6,496. The entire library project would pay for itself in less than 10 years just through the energy savings. Total cost for the project would be \$51,041.

### Bottom line

The remaining buildings examined by Trane showed significant savings, especially in the area of upgrading indoor and outdoor lighting. One item proposed by Trane was a new lighting configuration for the outdoor arena at the fairgrounds. Total cost for the upgrade would be \$251,516; however, Trane did not give any information on how many years it would take for the project to pay itself off. The total installed cost in-

cluding engineering, permits, and startup services, if the commissioners were to give the go-ahead on the entire project, is \$964,241. Trane identified \$36,536 in electric rebates and \$39,915 total energy and maintenance savings. The simple payback for the entire project would be 23.2 years.

from page 1

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## MAKE SATURDAY FAMILY LIBRARY DAY

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## PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE WYOMING CONSTITUTION TO BE VOTED ON AT THE GENERAL ELECTION NOVEMBER 6, 2012

Underlined words would be added to existing law. ~~Words stricken through~~ would be removed from existing law.

### Constitutional Amendment A

The adoption of this amendment will provide that the right to make health care decisions is reserved to the citizens of the state of Wyoming. It permits any person to pay and any health care provider to receive direct payment for services. The amendment permits the legislature to place reasonable and necessary restrictions on health care consistent with the purposes of the Wyoming Constitution and provides that this state shall act to preserve these rights from undue governmental infringement.

#### Article 1, Section 38. Right of health care access.

(a) Each competent adult shall have the right to make his or her own health care decisions. The parent, guardian or legal representative of any other natural person shall have the right to make health care decisions for that person.

(b) Any person may pay, and a health care provider may accept, direct payment for health care without imposition of penalties or fines for doing so.

(c) The legislature may determine reasonable and necessary restrictions on the rights granted under this section to protect the health and general welfare of the people or to accomplish the other purposes set forth in the Wyoming Constitution.

(d) The state of Wyoming shall act to preserve these rights from undue governmental infringement.

### Constitutional Amendment B

The adoption of this amendment will recognize and preserve the heritage of Wyoming citizens' opportunity to fish, hunt and trap wildlife, subject to regulation as prescribed by law.

#### Article 1. Section 38. Opportunity to hunt, fish and trap.

The opportunity to fish, hunt and trap wildlife is a heritage that shall forever be preserved to the individual citizens of the state, subject to regulation as prescribed by law, and does not create a right to trespass on private property, diminish other private rights or alter the duty of the state to manage wildlife.

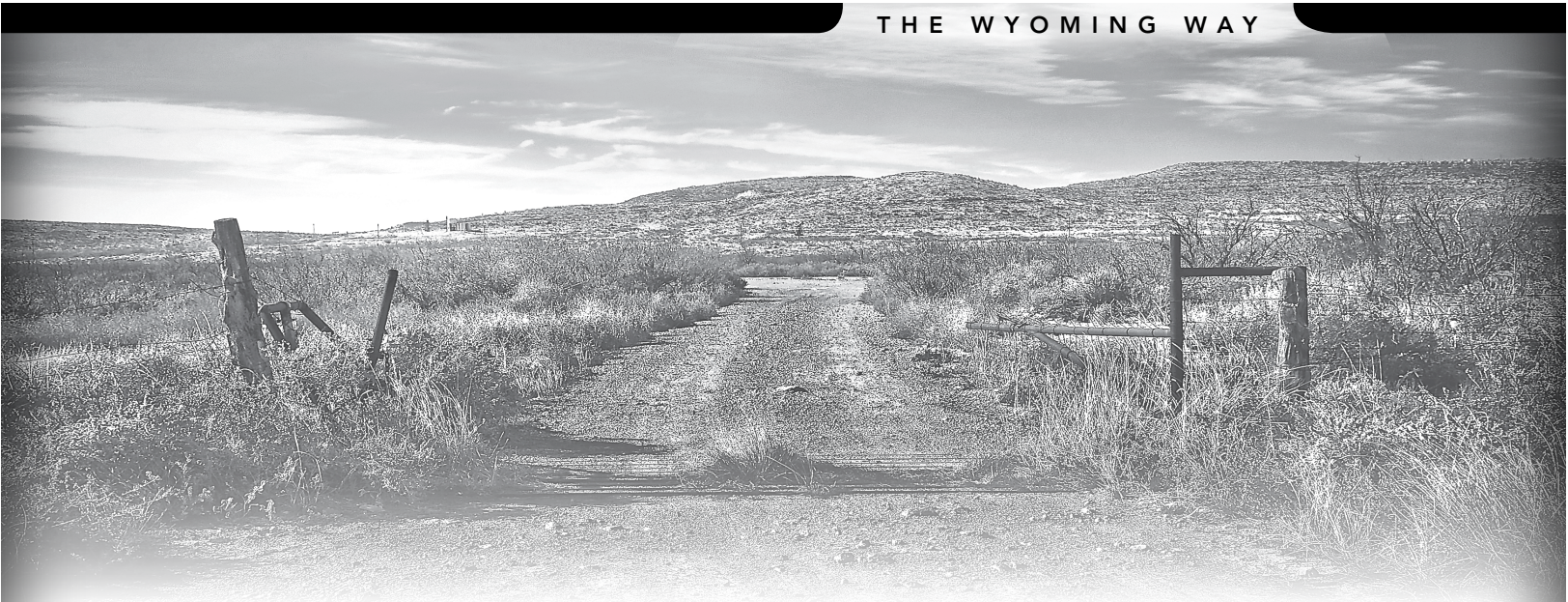
### Constitutional Amendment C

The adoption of this amendment would expand the authority of district court commissioners. If the amendment is adopted, a district court commissioner could perform additional duties assigned by a district court judge, subject to any restrictions the legislature may impose by law.

#### Article 5, Section 14. District courts generally; commissioners.

The legislature shall provide by law for the appointment by the several district courts of one or more district court commissioners (who shall be persons learned in the law) in each organized county in which a district court is holden, such commissioners shall have authority to perform such ~~chamber business in the absence of the district judge from the county or upon his written statement filed with the papers, that it is improper for him to act,~~ as may be prescribed by law, to take depositions and perform such other duties, and receive such compensation as shall be prescribed by law.



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