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Thermopolis  
Hot Springs

# Independent Record

SPECIAL INTERNET PREVIEW

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## Town and chamber share thoughts, ideas

by J.D. Stetson

The Thermopolis Town Council and the Thermopolis-Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors had a face-to-face workshop Tuesday night to focus on financial support, philosophies,

ideas and feelings.

The town had arranged the workshop at its May 21 meeting after the chamber requested \$5,000 of town funds to go toward rent on the chamber office and postage. No decisions or actions

were taken at the workshop, and any potential decision on funding would be discussed at a regular town meeting.

Mayor Bill Malloy began the workshop explaining the budgetary restraints the town has contended with

in the past four years.

He explained between three to four years ago at a Wyoming Association of Municipalities (WAM) meeting in Cheyenne, the governor told the towns and cities they would need to go back

and trim about 10 percent from their budgets.

As the budget began to tighten, Malloy said the town chose to cut funding to

*See Workshop on page 12*



From left, Mark Mortimore, Fred Carey, Kendi Heinze and Harry Hughes are pictured at the Red Rock Commercial Center where Carey will relocate Riverbend Sheet Metal.

## Riverbend Sheet Metal to build at Red Rock Commercial Center

by Cindy Glasson

After six years of waiting, the Red Rock Commercial Center is finally getting its first business, Riverbend Sheet Metal.

Fred Carey, owner of the company, has been in Thermopolis for four years and has plans to not only expand his business, but increase his workforce once building is completed.

Carey said he has spent about six months negotiating with the Thermopolis-Hot Springs County Economic Development Company (EDC) for the space in the business park.

"I'm planning on having twice the capacity I do now," Carey said. "That's just Phase I. We'll

be building a 60' by 100' building to start."

Carey purchased the first lot on the north side of the road as you drive into the park, giving his business high visibility.

EDC Executive Director Kendi Heinze said there are two other companies currently looking at the business park, but would not release any further information on who the companies might be.

The EDC hopes, with the sale of this first lot, that other companies will follow suit, and Heinze said things are picking up at the EDC with a lot more inquiries than before.

"This is very exciting," said Mark Mortimore with the EDC.

"This has been a tough market situation, but it's been that way all over the country. We're actually in better shape than most."

Heinze said it's important for businesses thinking about coming to Thermopolis to know there is funding available from the Wyoming Business Council to move into the business park.

Red Rock Commercial Center began with the purchase of 22 acres south of Thermopolis. The EDC then obtained a Business Ready Community Grant from the Wyoming Business Council to develop the sites and put in the necessary infrastructure to stimulate job growth in the county.

## Water/sewer rates to rise *Support of economic issues questioned*

by J.D. Stetson

The Thermopolis Town Council made a decision to raise water and sewer rates, discussed the possibility of allowing residents to raise chickens (hens only) in town and approved the first draft of the proposed budget for the 2013-14 fiscal year at its May 21 meeting.

The council approved two water and sewer rate resolutions that will take effect July 1. The increases were under 5 percent, and are meant to cover the costs of operating the town water system and sewer treatment facilities.

For wastewater, the resolution increased the base rate for residential units in Thermopolis and East Thermopolis from \$22 to \$23, and the rate for out-of-town residential customers to \$34.50 from \$33.

Sewer rates are charged a base fee plus an additional charge of \$1 per 1,000 gallons used based on an average of monthly treated water usage in the preceding months of December, January and February with a minimum charge of \$2 per month.

For water rates, the resolution increases the rate for residential and business units to \$3.20 for each 1,000 gallons used from \$3.05 for each 1,000 gallons.

For water users in East Thermopolis, the South Thermopolis Water & Sewer District, Red Lane Domestic Water Inc., Lucerne Water District, Monument Hill Cemetery District and Owl Creek Water District, the rates will increase to \$3.97 per 1,000 gallons from \$3.78 per 1,000 gallons.

Residential customers outside the town limits will also see the rate increase to \$3.97 per 1,000 gallons from \$3.78.

During the discussion, Mayor's Assistant Fred Crosby explained the increased costs for electricity and chemicals, as well as upcoming maintenance for the facilities.

Crosby pointed out there has been a decrease in demand that has affected revenues to the enterprise funds regarding both due to weather. He said in April, the water plant produced 14 million gallons as opposed to April 2012, when the plant produced 21 million gallons.

The town briefly discussed the drop off in revenue expected as Kirby and Lucerne switch to a regional water system and the addition of Owl Creek Water District after the pipeline connecting the district to the town is complete.

**Infrastructure vs. social/business services**

During the discussion of water rates, a resident asked the council to consider green alternatives or promotion to improve the efficiency of usage of water in the community.

The discussion took off on a tangent regarding neglected lawns and other nuisances in the town and perception of the town of its citizens and visitors.

Regarding perception, Earnest Cummings questioned the perception the town portrays when they close public restrooms and cut funding to support social or economic issues in town.

The question became a debate between the need for infrastructure versus social/economic aspect of government.

Cummings said in his eyes people make a town, not streets and waterlines.

Councilman Mike Mortimore briefly provided a historical perspective citing his time as mayor as an example of when the town focused on social aspects, but neglected infrastructure, leaving the work to the next administration.

Since that time, the town has accomplished a "ton of work that will pay off down the road," Mortimore said.

Town Attorney Mike Messenger suggested the people take their arguments regarding funding to representatives and senators of the State Legislature because the state is responsible for decreases in town sales tax revenues and other funding.

Ultimately, Mayor Bill Malloy said the residents told the town they want the town cleaned up, good infrastructure and safety during the process to develop a master plan.

He cited the closure of the Old West Wax Museum as an example of a service that had to be cut in order to ensure the town kept financially sound.

"We won't get financially in the red," Malloy said.

## Six grizzly kills

### Owl Creek landowner loses cow, yearlings and calves

by Joe Sovia

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGF) has verified six livestock kills by grizzly bear in the Owl Creek drainage area northwest of Thermopolis as of Tuesday morning, according to Mark Bruscino, large carnivore section supervisor in Cody.

Bruscino said the cattle losses include one cow, three yearlings and two calves. To his knowledge, the livestock kills involve just one grizzly.

"He's been a little elusive," Bruscino said of the grizzly. "We're (WGF) reimbursing the livestock owner. We're given the opportunity to capture the bear...The property owner is keeping a good watch on the livestock."

According to Bruscino, it's not all that unusual to have livestock kills by grizzlies this early in the year.

"It kind of fits the pattern we've seen the last few years. As soon as bears come out of the den we have some losses," he said. "Livestock depredation in northwest Wyoming has been a common thing for decades. We (WGF) have reimbursement and management programs.

"This is a fairly routine way of handling grizzly bears." A spokesman for the landowner confirmed six grizzly kills and two wolf kills on the property over the last two weeks. He said the two wolf kills were yearling steers.

According to the WGF website, one 7-year-old male grizzly caught southwest of Cody was relocated to the Shoshone National Forest north of Dubois. WGF captured and removed one adult male grizzly from private land south of Cody. Both were relocated due to livestock depredations during the period of May 4-10.

Information from such updates is draft and subject to change as details from the field become available. Finalized annual reporting of this information is published in the annual report of the Interagency Grizzly Bear Study Team available at <http://www.nrmssc.usgs.gov/products/IGBST>.

### *Fun for all at Risen Son track day*



Oakley Bowman and Waylon Nelson jump in unison, as shown by their shadows, in a hurdle race May 24 during the

Risen Son Christian School track and field day at the Hot Springs County High School track. — J.D. Stetson photo



# Workshop

from page 1

outside agencies instead of implementing budget cuts across the board. Malloy also noted that all of the agencies continue to function today.

Malloy referred to an article published in the Independent Record April 11 detailing a joint meeting between the chamber board and the Hot Springs County Lodging Tax Board.

In that article, Malloy referred to comments involving “buy in” from the town and Hot Springs County Commissioners as well as a specific comment noting lack of participation of the leaders at chamber and lodging tax board meetings as well as an idea to change the political landscape.

Malloy did not mention the names of the people quoted in the article, but did say the town has appointed a liaison to the chamber, and that he had also been a

liaison with the lodging tax board in the past.

Malloy’s comments led up to a point regarding a misconception he sees in the community regarding an attitude that has formed laying blame on the town council for failure of growth. Malloy then said the town continues to support growth and has attended functions with industry, but then pointed out inherent drawbacks of recruiting businesses amidst a small town climate where people travel distances for shopping and amusement.

Ultimately, Malloy wanted to know the chamber’s feelings, saying he hopes the chamber doesn’t think the town doesn’t support the events or activities of the chamber. He said the town does provide support through “in-kind” services for events such as overtime for public works and law

enforcement.

“We feel we’re doing our part,” Malloy said. “We want to know what you want.”

Malloy said the town has never turned down its support of chamber or local events and has always attended events in which he has been invited. He explained he personally feels the town should help the chamber more financially than just the town’s membership fee to the chamber.

### 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament

Malloy questioned the chamber on the 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament and whether the chamber had room to negotiate for more of the proceeds with the contractor.

Chamber Executive Director Amanda Moeller explained the chamber hopes to attain more sponsorships after the positive re-

sponse regarding the tournament this year. Currently, the chamber pays the contractor \$12,500 for the hoops, bracketing and organization of the tournament.

The council briefly discussed history of the tournament and the missed opportunity offered by a community member to build baskets for the chamber to use instead of using a contractor.

The chamber and town later discussed the point of the tournament to support businesses in Thermopolis, such as the hotels, attractions, restaurants and grocery stores.

### Public restrooms

The board discussed general finances and membership of the chamber before returning to the tournament issue. Chamber Board Vice President Phillip Scheel presented ideas for discussion that may benefit both organizations.

However, Scheel first spoke on the mayor’s comments regarding the news article. Scheel said the chamber doesn’t consider the city or the county to be “stumbling blocks” and they don’t need to “invade” the political organizations to achieve goals.

Scheel then talked about the changes the chamber has seen in the past few years and that the reason the chamber is approaching the town for financial aid at this juncture is because of

the “fresh blood,” improved image and blossoming of the chamber.

“We think it’s time that we can work together and grow,” Scheel said.

One of the ideas Scheel presented is the need for the town to open its public restroom during events such as 3-on-3 or other events.

The town has currently refrained from opening the restrooms due to vandalism.

“We have got to get over the locked bathroom deal,” Scheel said.

Later in the meeting, other chamber board members and Moeller further explained the benefit of open restrooms not just for 3-on-3, but for downtown businesses.

Moeller said many businesses do not allow the public to use their restrooms, and older buildings do not have adequate restroom facilities for the general public. She explained a hypothetical example regarding a person leaving downtown and quitting shopping simply to use a restroom at another location.

Moeller also indicated that during 3-on-3, there was only one portable toilet equipped for people with disabilities, and that the public restrooms would have been beneficial to those individuals.

### Other comments/ideas

Scheel also presented for dis-

cussion an idea to possibly relocate the office the town provides to the Thermopolis-Hot Springs County Economic Development Company (EDC) to the chamber as a way for the two organizations to combine forces.

Council member Mike Mortimore said he found the idea interesting simply because the EDC originally started as a chamber offshoot that was moved under the wing of the town at a time when the chamber was pursuing other avenues.

Board member Dixie Vialpando explained a general frustration regarding lack of motivation in the community. She explained a difference between Thermopolis and Cody being the fact that all of the agencies and people in Cody appear to be “on the same page.”

She explained one reason for the lack of motivation is the continued decline of volunteerism among younger generations and the lack of employers to volunteer employees for events and projects.


The council and the chamber board covered other community issues regarding volunteerism, support and mutual problems and eventually decided the answer to Malloy’s question to be that the chamber genuinely wants monetary figures for the in-kind services the town has provided, funding of the request for \$5,000 and for the town to open the public restrooms for the summer.

## FFA plant sale successful



Sasha Bleak waters colorful petunias during the Thermopolis FFA Plant Sale held near the end of the school year. Money raised will be used for a number of FFA activities.

— Joe Sovo photo



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