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Thermopolis  
Hot Springs

# Independent Record

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## Multi-county vehicle chase results in Riverton crash

by J.D. Stetson

A high-speed chase spanning across Hot Springs County and into Fremont County ended with a crash along U.S. 26 West on Main Street in Riverton.

At 5 p.m. Monday, Hot Springs County Sheriff's Deputy Rick Brill was dispatched to Highway 120 to stop a vehicle containing Jamie Lindsey Cleghorn, 34, after Park County authorities indicated Cleghorn had allegedly tried to use a forged check at a business in Meeteetse.

Brill found a white Chevrolet crew cab pickup waiting in construction and identified the driver as Cleghorn based on a photo provided. Brill pulled over the vehicle and went to the driver side door where he instructed the driver multiple times to place the vehicle into park.

Cleghorn allegedly took off through the construction and Brill gave chase while deputy Julie Matthews attempted to cut off the vehicle.

The vehicle eventually made it into Thermopolis, where officers Kevin McGinty and Jeremy Pittsley joined the chase in a single vehicle. McGinty said speeds in town were close to 100 mph with the suspect vehicle slowing down in spots to gain control. Cleghorn allegedly blew through a red light at the stoplight on Sixth Street and swerved through traffic as she headed south.

Cleghorn allegedly tried to elude officers by taking Buffalo Creek Road/Yellowstone Highway. Brill attempted to block the vehicle in at the intersection of Yellowstone Highway and Highway 20 South. Cleghorn allegedly came close to hitting Brill's vehicle and ran through a delineator post

as she passed the sheriff's vehicle.

Officers and deputies continued the chase through the Wind River Canyon. They observed multiple instances of Cleghorn allegedly passing vehicles on blind corners and double yellow lines as well as swerving in and out of the oncoming lane in which she almost hit head-on with at least two semi-trucks.

Speeds in the canyon varied between 80 and 100 mph with Cleghorn slowing down several times to gain control, McGinty said.

In the second tunnel, Cleghorn's vehicle hit the wall on the opposite side – causing damage to the truck box and turn signals.

Officers continued the chase further into Fremont County where Wyoming Highway Patrol troopers and Fremont County Sheriff's deputies attempted to stop the vehicle using spike strips.

McGinty said there were seven spike strip setups used throughout the chase, with nine total spike strips used. Cleghorn allegedly was able to avoid the strips by driving into the ditch.

### End of pursuit

The pursuit continued through Shoshoni and highway patrol took over as lead pursuers halfway between Shoshoni and Riverton. Hot Springs County deputies and officers continued in a supportive role for highway patrol.

The chase went through a residential area in Riverton along Country Acres Road where totes in the back of Cleghorn's vehicle fell out. The totes

See Chase on page 10

### Beautiful butterfly



A Tiger Swallowtail butterfly enjoys a sunny summer afternoon, dipping its toes in the nectar of a flower in one of the pots at Bicentennial Park adjacent to the Independent Record office.

— Cindy Glasson photo

## Chamber mulls bringing Wyoming Senior Olympics here

by J.D. Stetson

The Thermopolis-Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors heard a presentation Aug. 8 from members of the Wyoming Senior Olympics Board of Directors to garner interest in possibly bringing the statewide event to Thermopolis in 2015-16.

Senior Olympics committee spokesmen Reg Filkey and Bill Stone explained the committee had sent out a request for proposals in July and did not receive interest from any parties.

The committee decided to visit potential communities that may be interested in hosting the event for two years. The

first year is a nonqualifying year for the national Senior Olympics, and the second year will be a qualifying year.

The event garners about 480 athletes who are age 50 or over, with 18 activities involving track and field, swimming, basketball, pickleball, etc.

The event usually takes place in July at a date approved by both the host city and the state board.

Both spokesmen said Thermopolis would be a fabulous location because of its central location in the state; however, the board expressed concern regarding whether the town has the facilities to support the event.

It was suggested that many of the obstacles could be overcome by sharing the event with Worland, which has a pool that meets the standards for swimming events.

The chamber board also questioned whether the hotels would have capacity to house the athletes, a burden which also could be shared with Worland.

The Senior Olympics does require a \$10,000 commitment, which can be demonstrated in sponsorships or in-kind services from government entities.

The board briefly discussed the possibility of applying for the event. The undertaking would require coordina-

tion with the school district, recreational department, town, state park and hotels both in Hot Springs County and in Worland.

The chamber chose to investigate further to see if Thermopolis and Worland combined have the capability of hosting the event.

### 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament

The chamber board made the decision to schedule a public meeting at 6:30 p.m. Sept. 10 at the County Annex Building to discuss input with regard to the 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament. The board has not yet renewed a

yearly contract with World Events to facilitate the tournament next year. During the past tournament in May, the contractor and others in the community suggested more teams may be available to attend the tournament the first weekend of June, rather than the first weekend in May.

The chamber board has not made any decisions regarding the tournament, but it intends to seek public input from stakeholders similar to a meeting the chamber hosted before the tournament last year.

See Chamber on page 10

## Commissioners to file appeal on Indian land going into trust

by Cindy Glasson

The Hot Springs County Commissioners have voted to file an appeal to the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs Division, regarding land south of Thermopolis that has been placed in trust for the Northern Arapaho Tribe.

After a lengthy executive session, the commissioners came back into session and voted to retain the law firm of Holland and Hart to file the appeal. No more than \$3,000 is to be spent on the appeal.

The four parcels of land, amounting to just under 250 acres, border the Arapaho Ranch, and the Northern Arapaho Tribe has suggested the land could be used for farming or ranching (its current use) or "might include gaming and other such uses which will promote the economic interests of the Northern Arapaho Tribe and its members."

While the commissioners see no problems with continuing its current use as farm or ranch land, the erection of a casino in the area could put a

considerable strain on county resources such as law enforcement, fire and other emergency services.

By filing an appeal, the commissioners hope to keep the door open to negotiation for costs that may be incurred by the county should a casino be built on the land.

According to a certified letter received by the commissioners from the Department of the Interior, the closest and primary responding law enforcement department would be from Hot Springs County as well as the primary

fire department.

The letter goes on to state the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) is in the process of entering into a mutual assistance agreement with the agencies, but says "the location of this parcel makes it extremely unlikely that the BIA Wind River Police Department would need to call upon an external agency for assistance in responding to this location."

"Similarly, it is very unlikely that the Fort Washakie Volunteer Fire Department would need assistance in re-

sponding to this location."

The concern for the commissioners is that by slipping in the gaming statement the Tribe could essentially bypass discussion regarding local impacts, essentially muting the voice of the county and town as far as reimbursement for services is concerned.

During the announcement of their decision to file an appeal, the commissioners also revealed they had been contacted by the governor's office, wanting to know what the county's position was regarding the land trust.

## History of the Thermopolis Demolition Derby

by J.D. Stetson

It was July of 1975 when Dave Francis was offered a car to use in the first of many Demolition Derbies in Hot Springs County.

It was a spur-of-the-moment deal when he decided to participate in the Derby. Many had asked if he was going to get involved, but it wasn't until a little old lady offered to give him a 1962 Oldsmobile F85 that he knew he was going to give it a try.

Francis dragged the old car out of a garage, broke the windows and spent about a day-and-a-half getting it ready.

At the time, the Derby was sponsored by the Thermopolis Rodeo Club and was brought in as an event to help improve attendance on Pageant Days weekend.

It was an experiment, Francis said. No one necessarily knew how it would go, how to drive in a derby or had clear rules from other derbies across the nation.

Francis had a lighter car that could move faster to avoid collisions. He would just concentrate on knocking the front wheels off of the Cadillacs, he said.

"I was a bee because I could move faster than the other cars," he said.

The event had about 27 other cars competing with Francis and Jerry Smith facing off in the final heat with three other cars, according to an Independent Record story.

It came down to just Smith and Francis as they paced around the track, trying to disable each other.

"Francis struck the front of the Smith's car, which stalled. Smith, racing the clock, could not get his car moving and Francis was the winner," the story reads.

In the first Derby, the purse was based on ticket receipts and Francis won \$820 for his victory, plus additional money from winning his heats. In the end,

Francis said he walked away with about \$1,000.

It was the first of two wins in Thermopolis for Francis, who also won the Derby about 15 years ago, he said.

The first Demolition Derby also made history by attracting one of the largest crowds at the Hot Springs County Fairgrounds at the time with 1,800 fans.

### An institution

The Thermopolis Demolition Derby has become an institution in Hot Springs County since the first derby in 1975, and it's been around for more than a third of the county's 100-year history.

It has seen ups and downs in attendance, but continues to persevere as one of many summer events that continue to entertain the people of Hot Springs County and its visitors.

See Derby on page 10



Flames erupt in Jeannette Gerrells Strong's white derby car during the 1978 Thermopolis Demolition Derby. A strong hit caused fumes and gas to fill the vehicle and Strong suffered second-degree burns to her arm in the historical event.

— Jeannette Strong photo

# Chase

from page 1

were later recovered. The chase led past Central Wyoming College to Main Street where Cleghorn's vehicle sideswiped another vehicle, lost control and rolled. The vehicle collided with a gas meter and power pole, knocking both over. Because of the danger of the gas and the power lines, Fremont County authorities, highway patrol and Hot Springs County authorities decided to extricate Cleghorn from the vehicle. A Fremont County deputy broke the glass while Brill and Pittsley cut the seatbelt and removed Cleghorn from the vehicle. Cleghorn was taken to Riverton Memorial Hospital and was airlifted to University of Utah Hospital in Salt Lake City. Officers and deputies reported the extent of Cleghorn's injuries are no longer life threatening.

### Wanted person

Cleghorn faces the possibility of numerous felonies in Hot Springs County, but she also is wanted on 42 outstanding felony and misdemeanor warrants from multiple agencies in

Utah and Wyoming. In Utah, Cleghorn is accused of identity fraud, possession of counterfeit money, child abuse, distribution of pornography to children under the age of 10, forgery and false imprisonment. Cleghorn also is a suspect for check fraud and forgery in Hot Springs County on separate cases. The totes that fell out of her vehicle in Riverton allegedly contained counterfeit bills and the U.S. Secret Service is investigating the counterfeit charges. The Secret Service has asked anyone who may have obtained any of the counterfeit bills to turn them over to law enforcement. Regarding the number of law enforcement personnel from the various agencies in Hot Springs County and surrounding counties, both the sheriff's department and police department had high praise.

"It was a team effort," McGinty said. "We're very fortunate nobody was injured, with the exception of (Cleghorn), and it was a cooperative effort on everyone's part."



The aftermath of the wreck of a Chevrolet crew cab pickup after a multi-county high speed chase on Main Street in Riverton. The driver of the pickup was later Life Flighted to a hospital in Salt Lake City. — Thermopolis Police Department photo

# Chamber

from page 1

### Miscellaneous

The chamber board briefly discussed the possibility of reinstating Cash Mobs for the fall and winter seasons. The board decided to start the mobs back up again in October. The Cash Mobs are events that take

place the second Saturday of the month where participants meet at the chamber at 10:45 a.m. and were then provided the names of a retail business and a restaurant drawn from a list.

The participants pledge to spend from \$10 to \$20 at the businesses as

a way of promoting in-town shopping and giving each business an infusion of cash.

The board decided it needs to provide more information to shoppers ahead of time in order to encourage more participation in the mobs.

The chamber also met with Jerry Burgess of Sheridan-based GoExplore Wyoming!, which is a mobile phone travel application for visitors and locals.

The "app" allows chambers and Wyoming businesses to join and create profiles for downloaders to explore as they

travel through Wyoming.

The app is free for download, but would require a \$400 fee for joining as a promoted destination.

The chamber board did not take any action during the meeting with regard to joining the application.

# Derby

from page 1

In a preview story of the 1975 Derby, the Derby is described for the first time to residents as a "modern day gladiator race, dealing with survival of the fittest. Over 25 cars are expected to compete in the first annual Gift of the Waters Demo Derby. The object of the contest is to eliminate all the other cars in the race while keeping your own moving under its own power."

Thirty-eight years later, hundreds of cars have been smashed in the Derby. It has become a family affair for many as fathers, sons, daughters and wives have all sat in the driver's seat of a Derby, or Herbie Derby, car.

While rivalries have been built, the concept of sportsmanship that started in 1975 perseveres as drivers give it their best shot in learning, building and demolishing their vehicles.

### A tough driver

While there were several drivers throughout the late 1970s and 1980s, one of the first female drivers was Jeannette Gerrells Strong.

In 1977, Nory Yetter, who was not yet old enough to drive in the Derby, asked Strong to drive her car. Strong was 26 at the time and worked with Nory to paint and get the car ready for the Derby.

Strong is not sure if she was the first woman to drive in the derby. She said Linda Doak may have driven in 1976, but neither Doak nor Strong is sure of the year that Doak drove.

Strong does believe she was the only woman in the 1977 Derby heats, and she would later place in the losers' heat.

The determination to drive continued into the 1978 derby, where a hit by Jerry Smith caused her

cart to stall. Strong went to restart the ignition, which sparked fumes and filled the interior with fire.

She remembers Jerry Kobielusz pulling her by her helmet out of the flaming vehicle and the second-degree burns she suffered to her arm as a result of the blaze.

She never stepped into another Derby car after the 1978 event, but she would go on to race modified 318s in Nevada for five years.

She still sees the Derby as a fun and exhilarating activity, and she hopes it has become much safer since the 1970s. She understands the drive and the strategy as well as the expectation of the hard hits.

"If you don't have an attitude of rough and tumble, then you should not be out there," Strong said.

### Remembrance

Many names are associated with the history of the Demolition Derby, but only a few are consistently remembered for their dedication and involvement throughout the eras of the derby.

These names include Donnie Richardson, Dave Smith, Mark Blakesley, Al Foust, Dick Howe, Ed Capen, Tim Yetter, Jim and Dolly Daniels and many more.

Jim Daniels was the winner of the third annual Derby in 1977. He remembers the early years and traveling to many different derbies in Greynbull, Worland, Riverton and as far away as Chadron, Neb. Dolly remembers the long hours that Jim spent working on



Dave Francis and Jan Anderson pose with the 1975 Thermopolis Demolition Derby trophy. — Photo courtesy of Dave Francis

the cars.

But the derbies in Thermopolis were special, just because of the local involvement and the competitiveness of the drivers.

"When we were doing it, we were the ones to beat," Jim said.

After the first derbies, a group of drivers and enthusiasts took over the operation of the Derby, forming the Thermopolis Demolition Derby Association.

Throughout the 1980s, the Derby continued to fill the stands, but eventually the number of cars began to dwindle. The association would later dissolve, leaving behind a legacy of \$1,500 in an account to be given away as a scholarship.

### Tourism committee

The dissolution of the derby association obviously did not end

the Derby. In 1993, members of a Tourism Committee operated under the Thermopolis-Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce took over the Thermopolis Demolition Derby.

Capen served as arena master and brought about changes to help rejuvenate the Derby by encouraging more drivers from other areas to attend.

In the 1993 Derby, Blakesley won the top prize after more than a decade of trying to win in Thermopolis.

Blakesley first drove at the age of 16 in the 1976 Derby. He missed the 1977 Derby because a rule change required drivers to be age 18 or over, but that didn't stop him from continuing a tradition.

Throughout the years, Blakesley partnered with Jim Cramer to build cars for various derbies in Thermopolis and surrounding areas.

Both Blakesley and Cramer have lost count of the number of cars they built, but they fondly remember many of them being old Chrysler Imperials, which were the preferred derby cars because of their tough design.

Although Blakesley has since retired from driving for various reasons, he said he's still involved by driving the winch truck to help remove the cars from the field.

While he didn't agree with many of the changes that have taken place since the Derby's early days, he still thinks it continues to be special to Thermopolis.

"(The Demo Derby) is the one thing that fills the stands and always has," Blakesley said.

"It's always been a good draw," Cramer said.

Cramer only drove in the 1988 Derby, but knows how tough Thermopolis drivers were throughout the years.

"Thermopolis is a tough derby!" Cramer said, adding that most drivers weren't going to be able to use their vehicles again at any other derby after bringing them to Thermopolis.

Cramer also has noticed in recent years that it has become harder and harder to find a regular derby car. He said the addition of the Herbie Derby has helped to garner more local participation and the little cars are easier to find.

### Modern Derby

The modern Thermopolis Demolition Derby has run continuously for 20 years under the auspices of the chamber and support of the Hot Springs County Fair Board, and numerous sponsor businesses.

During the majority of the modern era of the Derby, Yetter has served as arena master and manager during the derby.

Yetter has made several changes to increase the efficiency, safety and fairness of the Derby. Video technology also became a tool to help settle disputes and increase fairness.

The Derby has become easier for locals to participate with the relatively recent inclusion of the Herbie Derby and with the newly enacted Truck Derby.

The Truck Derby is a new event for the 2013 Demolition Derby with prizes the same as the men's and women's heats in the Herbie Derby.

The inclusion of the additional events is also intended to length-

**Thermopolis Demolition Derby**  
 Time/date: 6 p.m. Saturday  
 Place: Hot Springs County Fairgrounds  
 Ticket prices: Advance tickets, \$10 for adults, \$4 for children ages 5-12 and seniors; at the door, \$12 for adults, \$5 for children and seniors  
 Advance ticket locations: Finishing Touches, Needful Things, CarQuest, Storyteller, O'Reilly Auto Parts, Thermopolis-Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce  
 Contact: Chamber office, 864-3192

en the time it takes for the competition, which has been refined in the past few years to last between an hour-and-a-half to two hours.

In Yetter's experience, the Derby has been the only continuous event that consistently fills the grandstand and has garnered the appreciation of the local sponsors. He could not think of a single business that hasn't donated something to the Derby when asked.

Yetter also has appreciation for two judges who have worked the Derby consistently every year: Ike Blakesley and Randy Wahler.

As for the Derby's legacy, Yetter said it's always been "just good fun for everyone," and he hopes it continues to garner the families, young people and local contestants who choose to learn from building a car and eventually drive for the sport of it.

THANK YOU  
**RUTH CLARE JOHNSON**  
 &  
**MATT & TERESA BROWN**  
 for buying my pig and supporting Hot Springs County Fair and 4-H.  
 Logan Petty

Thanks to  
**Nielsen Oil for**  
 buying my basket and to the  
**Fair Board**  
 for making all of this possible.  
 Darren Leonhardt

Thank you **Big Horn Co-op** for add-ons,  
**Vern Lofink** for auctioneering  
 and **HSC Fair Board**  
 for all your help  
 at the fair.  
 Hardy Johnson

**STEVIE**  
**!Zt3vi3!**

Thank you for buying my steer. I really appreciate it.  
 Thank you!  
 Jules Ward

I would like to thank all the businesses that supported the 4-H and FFA this year.

A special thank you to Tri County Telephone for buying my pig and Bank of Thermopolis for buying my lamb. I would also like to thank Pinnacle Bank for the wonderful meal they served for the buyers.  
 Rebecca Clouse

Thank you  
**Troy Daniels Construction**  
 for purchasing my market lamb.  
 Your support is greatly appreciated.  
 Hardy Johnson