

Batman and Robin



The Dynamic Duo, aka Dr. Travis Bomengen and Dr. Jason Weyer, flew around town fighting crime at various locations and fighting illness at Red Rock Family Practice on Halloween. Incognito, the pair visited Ralph Witters Elementary School and local businesses via Robin’s motorcycle.

— Cindy Glasson photo

Hospital District initiative rejected by majority vote

by J.D. Stetson

The ballot initiative to form a hospital district failed to receive enough votes to pass election Tuesday.

The initiative received 877 votes against and 666 for the creation of a district from among the four precincts. The voter turnout was 1,546, or 58.56 percent of total voters.

The results broke down to 56.73 percent against and 43.08 percent in favor.

Hot Springs County Memorial Hospital Board Chairman Bill Williams said the failure of the initiative will make future funding difficult, but the hospital will continue to take care of the people in Hot Springs County the same way it has always done.

Williams said initial feedback from the election indicates that people were perhaps not well educated on the issue. The hospital held numerous education meetings to help people understand the issue in the months leading up to the election, but the meetings were poorly attended.

“We will revisit it and we will gather our forces and listen to the people,” Williams said.

As a 12-year member of the board of trustees, Williams said he has been immersed in the hospital for the benefit of the community.

“In order for a community to be viable, it needs good schools and good health care,” Williams said, adding that in order to ensure both are sustained it will be up to the people who live here to make the investment.

Hospital CEO Robin Roling said that while there is disappointment in the results, she is energized to continue to do the hospital’s work of providing quality health and healing to the community.

Roling said she is still in a review process of the lessons learned in the election, but said she thinks there is so much uncertainty in the future of health care that she doesn’t think people fully understood the importance of the community taking care of itself.

While the issue became very political, Roling said she thinks it should remain a community issue bringing together people to endeavor to make improvements.

With so much uncertainty in the healthcare industry continuing to unravel at the local, state and federal levels, Roling said it is important to plan accordingly.

“We want to be as well positioned as possible to access health care in the long term,” Roling said.

The Independent Record attempted to contact a representative of the Just Say NO to The Hospital District Committee, but was unable to make contact in the short timeframe Wednesday morning.

Changes in school accountability model and HSCSD performance

Sorting out how schools perform can be somewhat difficult these days.

As an example, all Wyoming schools will be rated in two systems this year and again in 2014-15.

The federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) was created in 2001 under the Bush Administration and set targets that by the year 2014, 100 percent of all students would be proficient in all areas as determined by their state test.

The test for K-8 students in Wyoming is PAWS (Proficiency Assessment for Wyoming Students), and last year became the ACT (American College Testing) for students in grades 9-12. The NCLB legislation is the current target for Wyoming schools, and generates a school and district rating primarily on the basis of numbers of proficient and advanced students. The score is termed Annual Yearly Progress or AYP.

This year Hot Springs County School District No. 1 was one of the 35 school districts that met their AYP standards as a district. The school ratings are as follows:

- Ralph Witters Elementary – Met AYP targets.
- Thermopolis Middle School – Did not meet AYP in the area of math and must address math improvement in their efforts.
- Hot Springs County High School – Met AYP targets.

Building accountability models

With NCLB culminating dates passing, many states are looking at ways to build accountability models that will rate the performance of their schools. The state of Wyoming is no different.

This year, all schools will receive a rating on last year’s performance – based on legislation known as Wyoming Accountability in Education Act (WAEA). This system was developed at the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) and is being piloted this year.

WDE released these scores to the press on Oct. 25, 2013. Each school will receive an overall rating based on four indicators. The combination of those scores will determine their rating. While this system is a pilot, it will be used as the accountability model in years to come in Wyoming.

The ratings for schools in this system will be labeled one of the following: Exceeding Expectations, Meeting Expectations, Partially Meeting Expectations and Not Meeting Expectations.

This year, the pilot rankings do not indicate official school performance, but rather have been released to allow districts to prepare for the new system.

Pilot system rankings

The rankings for the pilot system this year are as follows in HSCSD No. 1:

- Ralph Witters Elementary was rated as Partially Meeting Expectations. The areas needing improvement will be in achievement, and growth particularly in science, which is not calculated in the NCLB accountability model.
- Thermopolis Middle School was rated as Partially Meeting Expectations. The areas needing improvement will be growth and equity primarily focused in math.
- Hot Springs County High School was rated as Meeting Expectations in all areas. HSCHS will need continued improvement as well with indicators such as growth from year to year.

While most districts have particular areas for improvement – no matter which method is used to evaluate them – there are also bright spots worth celebrating, according to Superintendent Dustin Hunt.

This past year in the HSCSD third-grade math scores reached 97 percent proficient/advanced and ranked third overall in the state of Wyoming. Third-grade reading was 79 percent proficient/advanced and ranked sixth overall in the state.

In eighth grade, the PAWS reading score reached 92.5 percent proficient/advanced and ranked second overall in the state.

The high school raised its overall ACT composite by 1.2 points since a year ago,

See HSCSD on page 10

Harvest Moon Ball Saturday

by Joe Sovia

Dee Hillberry, a fourth-generation homesteader in Hot Springs County, and his family will be honored by the receipt of the 2013 Century Farm/Ranch Award during the Harvest Moon Ball on Saturday, Nov. 9 at the Hot Springs County Fair Building.

The 2013 Ag Citizen of the Year will also be announced and recognized along with the winner of the first Rising Star Award. The Ag Citizen of the Year nominees are Chip Axtell, Tom Christensen, Terry Jackman and Bruce Thurgood.

Nominees for the Rising Star Award are Ransom Logan, Jayci Mead and TJ Owsley.

It was unexpected when Hillberry was notified by the FFA Alumni Association that his family was the recipient of the Century Award.

“I was surprised when they called me,” he said. “I’m pleased to be a part of the county and am able to maintain the roots and keep it together.”

The Hillberry family has been homesteading in Hot Springs County for about 115 years. There have now been seven generations of Hillberrys in America, the first generation coming to the United States from its native Germany in pre-Revolutionary War times. Generations were homesteaders in Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Colorado before coming to Wyoming.

Laban Hillberry, Dee’s great-grandfather, was the first of the family to homestead in Hot Springs County – settling on Gooseberry Creek, northwest of Thermopolis, in 1895, after ranching at Big Horn. Laban was known for using two cow elk to pull his wagon in 1892, before the days of game laws.

A couple of generations later, Dee’s father Harry Gilbert and mother Clara Louise were ranching at the Gooseberry property. Dee attended Oregon State University and graduated with an industrial engineering and business degree.

In 1992, Dee and his cousin Jim Hillberry bought the Red Gilbert place on Grass Creek, calling the operation the Spring Gulch Cattle Co. While Dee had 200 head of cattle, Jim, who now lives in Powell, had 150 head.

Dee bought the Rhodes place on Cottonwood and Grass Creek in 1994. He expanded his herd to 750 head while Jim had 250 head under the name of Prospect Land and Cattle.

“I tried to put it together in one unit,” Dee said. “That’s what I’ve got now.”

What was quite a challenge for Dee was that he worked for a glass company in foreign countries

See Harvest on page 10

Veterans Day program Friday, ceremony Monday

Two local events will be held to commemorate Veterans Day, which is officially celebrated Monday, Nov. 11.

The Thermopolis Middle School Student Council will host a Veterans Day program at 10 a.m. Friday at the school auditorium.

On Monday, a Veterans Day ceremony will be held in front of the Thermopolis VFW Club, beginning at 11 a.m. The ceremony is held on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month each year. A Veterans Day dinner will be served starting at 5:30 p.m. Sunday at the VFW, and all veterans and their families are invited to attend.

“Everybody in the community should stop and thank our veterans,” said Ken Harvey, one of the organizers of the ceremony and dinner.

TMS Student Council hosts program

Friday’s Veterans Day program will be presented by the TMS seventh and eighth grade student council members in an assembly to honor all veterans, according to TMS Principal Breez Daniels.

The event will include patriotic songs performed by the middle school honor choir, under the direction of Dustin Olsen. Featured will be speeches by students honoring veterans they know and educational messages to teach all students why Veterans Day is important.

The community is welcome to attend the TMS Veterans Day program.

TMS community service



From left, fifth-grade students Monte Love, Owen Douglas, Brianna DeVries and Remington Ferree use teamwork to move a trash bag of leaves and debris during a Thermopolis Middle School community service project Friday. Each class at the middle school visited homes around town to help residents with their yards. — J.D. Stetson photo

Harvest

from page 1

for 28 years while owning the ranches in Hot Springs County, spending time in Brazil, Spain and Puerto Rico.

“I was able to keep this thing together,” Dee said of his ranching operation. “It was kind of a survival mode.”

By 1999-2000, Dee “pretty much sold out” his stock of 1,000 head of cattle, due to drought. In 1998, he and his partners bought the 1,450-acre Big Horn River Ranch at Lucerne. It has pasture and feedlot; he has 45 head of his own cows. He moved there in 2000 with his second wife, Judy. Then in 2007, Dee bought Nate Brown’s range on Prospect Creek, between Cottonwood and Grass Creek.

That property has been leased to the Agar family since 2007 and he has developed a lot of water on the ranch since then. Before he became “semi-retired,” Dee has raised some beans and malt barley with Verne Lofink for seven or eight years, sharecropping with him. Dee said he’s put up a lot of hay on Cottonwood and Grass Creek, all for livestock feed, over the years.

Dee’s son George farms wine grapes in Oregon and will take over for Dee when he is fully retired. George’s daughter Samantha will be the seventh generation of the Hillberry family in Hot Springs County.

Nomination biographies

Here is background information about the Ag Citizen of the Year and Rising Star award nominees:

Ag Citizen of the Year
Terry Jackman



Dee and Judy Hillberry are pictured on the front porch of their home just off Black Mountain Road at Lucerne. – Joe Sovo photo

Jackman was born and raised in Hot Springs County. He grew up on the Mill Iron on Owl Creek. After high school he spent four years in the Navy. When he was discharged from the Navy all he wanted to do was return to Hot Springs County to start and raise his family.

He has two daughters, Mickey and Teryn. As soon as they were old enough he started them in 4-H and then FFA. He has helped Teryn with her beef breeding program and both girls with their horses. Now he has two grandchildren that will be the next he will put through 4-H and FFA.

Jackman is just determined to not let the ag way of life go away.

Tom Christiansen
Christensen has been a member of the

Hot Springs County agricultural community since relocating his family here in 1986. He has worked on several different outfits and raised his own registered heifers. Although he would prefer to be horseback, he has done his share of farming, and still puts up hay each summer.

A 20-year veteran of the Hot Springs County Fair Board, Christiansen became the local brand inspector in 2006. He and his wife, Debbie, are happy to offer a helping hand to local ranchers with branding, trailing, working cows and sheep, shipping, and all manner of working livestock.

Through his work as a fair board member and brand inspector, Christiansen is also a knowledgeable resource to our community's

youth in 4-H and FFA, and can be found donating his time to local events such as the county fair, Lions Club Ranch Rodeo, Thermopolis Cowboy Rendezvous PRCA Rodeo, and was a volunteer when Thermopolis hosted a high school rodeo.

Chip Axtell

Axtell is a fourth-generation rancher. He runs a cow/calf operation, heifer breeding program and raises hay for the livestock, with his wife, Jennifer, and four children. In addition to his ranch responsibilities, he is on the Weed and Pest Board, Kirby Ditch Board, coaches recreation football in the fall, and leads the Catholic Youth Organization for his church.

In Axtell's line of work, time is always an issue, and he always seems to find the time to be where he is needed. Ranching is a 24/7 job with no sick days, but there are perks that make it worth it. His job allows him to work with his family, teaching his children the value of hard work and perseverance. Working together to get the job done makes a strong family and a bright future for his children.

Bruce Thurgood

Thurgood moved his family to Hot Springs County about 27 years ago and went to work for Jim and Willard Wilson. He was able to do numerous things with their large cattle operation. After 10 years, he and his wife Heidi leased the Talovich property south of town – allowing them the opportunity to expand their personal operation. He farmed it for 10 years before it was sold.

After this adventure they decided to purchase their own land north of town off of West Sunnyside Lane. They have owned their own land for about 10 years and continue to raise cattle, sheep, and hay. Thurgood puts up his own hay and provides a grinding service that serves the Big Horn Basin, and northern Fremont County.

Rising Star Award

TJ Owsley

Owsley grew up learning the ways of farming and ranching from his grandfather, Homer F. Geis, and dear friend, Stanley Pennoyer.

He and his wife Cassie have been raising and selling club lambs for the past six years. Owsley has only gotten back into farming in the past three years. While he manages to hold a foreman's position at Merit Energy full time he also finds time to lease 56 acres of farm land and do any other custom haying job that someone may need.

Owsley is also active in the community; he has been a 4-H sheep leader in the past, and is currently a member of the FFA Alumni, Search and Rescue, and an executive member of the Thermopolis Rendezvous PRCA committee.

Jayci Mead

JC's Dream Team Bucking Bulls has been very successful the last couple of years. Mead has always had a passion for being a stock contractor, and was able to make that dream a reality a few years ago when she started a partnership with two others. Her 2013 Million Dollar Bucking Bull contender JJ's Dream, trained by L.J. Jenkins, finished a strong fifth at Champions Tour 3, in Stephenville last March. He is definitely a standout for the finals at the NFR next month.

Mead's passion and work ethic have helped her become one of the youngest stock contractors in the country. Everything is in place for Mead to be very successful with her business.

Logan Ransom

Ransom has spent the last decade employed at the Arapahoe Ranch. He began as a cowhand, working later as the cow foreman, and through years of hard work and dedication, took over the ranch manager position in March of 2013. He met this responsibility equipped with a considerable knowledge of the ranching industry and a great deal of enthusiasm. Ransom continues to endeavor to raise the quality of the livestock under his care through successfully combining hands on care, a well thought out feed program and careful range management.

He has been able to continue to increase calf weights and pregnancy rates, maintaining a certification for natural grass fed cattle – all while remaining a dedicated steward of the environment.

HSCSD

from page 1

and the graduation rate climbed from 86 percent to 89.47 percent – a gain on the district goal of a 100 percent graduation rate.

Focus on constant improvement

Hunt stressed the need for constant improvement, no matter the system used to evaluate performance. “Our fundamental purpose is student learning,” he said. “Scores are one indicator of performance, and we strive for the very best in this area, but we also want to ensure that we are graduating 100 percent of our students that are prepared to be successful citizens.”

Hunt also shared that he is pleased that the dis-

trict reached its AYP goals, but indicated that the need for improvement in schools never goes away.

“When you are working with our most precious resource, you have to continually set targets for improvement,” he said. “That is what these accountability models such as NCLB and the new WAEA system aim to do, and we will work with whatever system our state chooses.”

The superintendent also indicated that he advocates for consistent state testing, accountability models and school performance ratings.

“Consistency helps build student, staff and community knowledge about how schools are performing,” Hunt said.

Expanded Space...Expanded Service!

Now Serving the Big Horn Basin at our
New Location
in the old Big West AutoPlex Building

***Diesel & Gas Truck Service**
Diesel Mechanic, Big Trucks, Farm & Industrial

***Maintenance**
Air Brakes, Clutches, Transmissions, Engines,
Drive Lines, Shocks & Struts, Brakes

***Tires For All Vehicles**
Balancing, Front End Alignment, Toe Set

**WE'VE
MOVED**

*Our Service Truck will go
wherever you need us!*

Fast, Friendly Service with a Smile!

**FRONTIER
TIRE**

545 N. 10TH
WORLAND
347-2221
1-800-870-5220

Getting out on the open road.

There are a lot of things you have to look forward to. Cancer doesn't have to change that. At Big Horn Basin Regional Cancer Center, we offer the latest therapies right here at home including infusion, radiation and alternative treatments. That means less time traveling to a place you have to go and more time traveling to the places you want to go.

You don't have to travel far to get exceptional care.
Learn more about Big Horn Basin Regional Cancer Center at
www.BigHornCancer.org.

Big Horn Basin
Regional Cancer Center

A collaboration of
St. Vincent Healthcare and West Park Hospital

Cancer Care Close To Home

1025 Ninth Street, Cody, WY 82414 • (888) 870-7377 • BigHornCancer.org



Dr. Jimmie G. Biles
Orthopedic Director

Clinic every Wednesday at **Gottsche Rehabilitation Center**

Call 1-877-372-4537 for an appointment.

Serving
the community
for over 20 years!



YELLOWSTONE
SPORTS MEDICINE

148 E. Arapahoe

The Big Horn Basin's
**Regional
Medical
Center**



West Park
HOSPITAL
CODY, WYOMING

The West Park Hospital Medical Staff includes a wide range of primary care physicians and specialists, from Anesthesiology to Urgent Care, to serve the needs of the entire Big Horn Basin.

For more information about these doctors, including educational background and professional interests, visit www.westparkhospital.org and click on "Physician Directory."

Anesthesiology

Ajax, Theodore(307) 527-7501
Bracke, Luke.....(307) 527-7501
Low, Bradley.....(307) 213-9713
Schmidt, Catherine(307) 578-1960

Cardiology

Rashkow, Andrew.....(307) 578-2980

ENT / Allergy

Boudreaux, Bridget(307) 578-2976

Emergency Medicine

Beasley, Benjamin(307) 578-2000
Beia, Todd(307) 578-2000
Bollinger, Kirk(307) 578-2000
Peters, Stanley(307) 578-2000
Polley, Scott.....(307) 578-2000

Family Medicine

Bower, Ryan(307) 527-7561
Bowlby, Adair(307) 527-7561
Morton, Douglas(307) 527-7561
Peters, Adam(307) 527-7561
Trotter, John.....(307) 527-7561

General Surgery

Etter, Thomas(307) 578-2947
Evans, Bill(307) 578-2947
Welch, Charles G.(307) 587-9800

Gynecology

Myers, Dale.....(307) 587-1155

Hospitalists

DiVincenzo, Kathleen(307) 527-7501
McCue, Gregory(307) 527-7501
Seger, Clint.....(307) 527-7501
Slight, Kim(307) 527-7501

Internal Medicine

Anderson, Richard(307) 578-2975
Bracke, Rachael(307) 578-2975
Dykstra, Alden(307) 527-7561
Tabrizi, Hassan(307) 578-1800
White, Robert(307) 578-1800

Medical Oncology

Collins, Carletta.....(307) 578-2800

Neurology

Gee, Allen.....(307) 578-1985

Obstetrics / Gynecology

Bowman, Debra.....(307) 587-3133
Williams, Lisa.....(307) 527-7811

Ophthalmology

Welch, Barry(307) 587-5538

Oral/Maxillofacial Surgery

St. John, Dane.....(307) 578-2886

Orthopedic Surgery

Biles, Jimmie(307) 578-1953
Emery, Stephen.....(307) 578-1959
Lee, Jared(307) 578-1955
Schmidt, Frank.....(307) 578-1955
Winzenried, Jay(307) 527-7100

Pathology

Clegg, Pamela P.(307) 578-2696

Pediatrics

Jamieson, Charles.....(307) 587-5545

Podiatry

Beachler, Lael(307) 527-9191
Fraser, Hugh(307) 527-9191

Psychiatry

Hopkins, Matthew(307) 586-2324
Nelson, Sandra(307) 578-2283
Pollard, Scott(307) 578-2283

Pulmonary Medicine

Mainini, Stephen.....(307) 527-7561

Radiation Oncology

Gilroy, Jeffery.....(307) 587-2955

Radiology

Cross, Gregory(307) 527-7501
Graham, Travis(307) 527-7501

Rheumatology

Danforth, Rebecca.....(307) 578-2975

Urology

Stewart, Gregory.....(307) 587-5131

Urgent Care

Beau de Lomenie, Kyle.....(307) 578-2903
Harvey, Lisa.....(307) 578-2903

707 Sheridan Avenue
Cody,
Wyoming

**BECKER'S GREAT
PLACES
100 TO WORK**

307-527-7501 • 1-800-654-9447
www.westparkhospital.org