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Independent Record

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Rainbow Terraces talk State officials and commissioners discuss possible solution to issues

by Cindy Glasson

The Hot Springs County Commissioners and members of the State Department of Parks and Historical Sites met Tuesday afternoon in a joint meeting at the county annex regarding the condition of the Rainbow Terraces in Hot Springs State Park.

Parks and Historical Sites Director Milward Simpson started the meeting by saying his department looks on the care of the park and the terraces as a privilege.

“We want to make sure they’re just as beautiful as ever,” Simpson said.

Darren Westby with the state engineer’s office took a few moments to explain to those attending the meeting how the water treatment system, or heat exchanger, works in place of the cooling ponds used historically.

According to Westby, the treatment starts near Days Inn with a reverse leach field that pulls water from the river into large, concrete holding bins. The water is then pumped over to just east of the State Bath House.

Mineral water comes from the Big Spring through three separate pipes to the heat exchanger

where the river water circulates around the pipes, cooling the water sufficiently for use in the swimming pools and bath house.

The river water is then returned to the Big Horn River.

Each of the pools and the bath house receive a certain amount of water per minute – based on past consumption.

One of the problems comes from the water not being cooled enough to make it safe for swimming, according to TePee Spa owner Dan Moriarity.

“We were told the water would get down to between 96 to 98 degrees,” he said. “We’ve found out the heat exchanger can’t get it down that far.”

Moriarity suggested something should have been done early on, when the issue was first discovered, such as putting in a larger heat exchanger.

Westby says it’s not the size of the exchanger that is the problem, really, but rather the mineral buildup that is created when the water gets below a certain temperature.

Another issue has been valves and meters wearing out or breaking. Last winter, for example,

valves were stuck in the open position and the concessionaires were asked to use the valves on their own end to stem the flow of water into their facilities.

Water rights

Loren Smith, also with the state engineer’s office, presented copies of water rights granted by the legislature in 1899, allowing for use of 7.1 cubic feet per second (cfs) in the State Park.

According to Smith, in reality, that amount of water is not there.

“The calculations were done by my predecessor back in the 1980s,” Smith said. “I’ve never seen flows anything close to that. Total outflow from the Big Spring averages 3.3 cfs, half of what was granted.”

Just 46 percent of the water coming from the Big Spring is actually flowing over the terraces. When the pools are pulling water through their pipes to their facilities, that number goes down.

All of the data gathered from metering the water from the Big Spring is posted on the state’s website.

See Terraces on page 11



The Hot Springs County High School Drama Club brought home its fourth consecutive state championship last weekend from Cheyenne. Members of the club include, bottom row from left, Amanda Randolph, coach Eric Kay, Becca Blackhawk, Alisha Luers, Cody Bleak, Ryan Bleak and Darren Leonhardt; second row, Clare Denney, Clarissa Lanik, Aressa Goodrich, Tori Anderson, Alex Jensen and Morgan McCain; third row, Keri Krueger, Callie Lorenz, Fawn Rush, Macinna Holm and Makelti Blake; and top row, Jared Mohr-Leiva, Logan Kay, Kameron Olsen, Kaden Wood, Darby Abbott and Amanda Dinsmore.

Drama Club takes state title

by Cindy Glasson

The Hot Springs County High School Drama Club has done it again, bringing home first place honors for the fourth year in a row from State Drama competition in Cheyenne last week.

The Class 2A state champion team was awarded 13 All-State medals along with seven All-State Honorable Mention awards.

In addition, the arena show they performed, “Stroke Static,” took fourth place overall in competition.

Three seniors on the team were also granted scholarship auditions while in Cheyenne – Tori Anderson, Morgan McCain and Clarissa Lanik.

All-State honors went to Darby Abbott, Anderson, Becca Blackhawk, Makelti Blake, Cody Bleak, Amanda Dinsmore, Macinna Holm, Logan Kay, Darren Leonhardt, Jared Mohr-Leiva, Kameron Olsen, Amanda Randolph and Kaden Wood.

Honorable mentions were awarded to Abbott, Anderson, Ryan Bleak, Kay, Alisha Luers, Mohr-Leiva and Randolph.

Clare Denney received ninth place for her portrayal of Woman 1 in the arena show.

Aressa Goodrich received 15th place for her duet with Blackhawk, 15th place for her original script and 11th place for costume

ing for “Alice in Wonderland.”

Alex Jensen received seventh place for the humorous monologue, “I Hate Pigeons.”

Keri Krueger took 15th with her realistic makeup and publicity, both for “West Side Story.”

Lanik placed 11th with her realistic makeup of Mrs. Cratchett from “A Christmas Carol” and 15th for her costuming of the same play.

Callie Lorenz took 15th with her publicity for “Rocky Horror.”

McCain placed 13th for the monologue “My Mother’s Touch” and 15th for her original script.

Fawn Rush placed 13th with the same monologue, “My Mother’s Touch,” 15th for publicity for “The Laramie Project” and third for her original script.

“This was one of the largest teams I’ve ever traveled with,” said director Eric Kay. “I had more help this year than ever before. We had a new assistant, Jenny Manning, and several “Drama Mamas” including Nancy Scovil, Ronda Freel, Mary McGillivray and Vita Kraushaar, and of course, Ron Philips was, as always, a huge help.”

With the points acquired during the competition, the Bobcats would have taken second in 3A and third in 4A.

“We were very competitive for such a young team,” Kay said.

This will be Kay’s final year as the HSCHS drama director.

“It has taken me a while to come to this decision, but I have,” he said. “This was my last state drama, and I will do one more show in the spring, then I am retiring (from directing, not teaching).”

Kay has directed or coached speech for the district for 20 years, 19 of which having been as drama director.

“I actually did two years as both drama director and speech coach, before my boys were born, but now that they are older, I simply don’t want to miss out on the other things that they are doing. My family needs to come first,” he said.

“I can’t tell you how many birthdays have fallen on practice nights, or how many anniversaries have been production nights in May,” Kay said. “My family has been very understanding over the years.”

“I will miss working with the kids in this capacity, and the creative team that I have surrounded myself with.

Going to state this year was a bittersweet experience, according to Kay.

“I feel very proud of the program and whoever takes over the director position, I feel will have a great opportunity and an outstanding group of kids,” he said.

Subzero temps expected to abate

by J.D. Stetson

Thermopolis will finally get a respite from the icy grip of Mother Nature after nearly a week of subzero temperatures placed the town in a deep freeze.

Temperatures have stayed consistently below zero since Dec. 3 with a trough of arctic air holding steady over most of Wyoming.

In Thermopolis, the unofficial automatic observer at the Thermopolis Fire Hall measured the coldest temperature of minus 19 degrees Sunday at 7 a.m.

Prior to Monday, the highest the observer measured was 1 degree about noon Friday and from 2 to 3 p.m. Sunday.

Monday brought a maximum temperature of 14 degrees and the forecast as of Tuesday morning calls for more moderate high temperatures in the 20s and 30s throughout the week.

The low temperatures also are expected to increase to the lower 10s as the week progresses.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration recently released its winter weather outlook for the season.

Temperatures for most of the country have an equal chance for either below average or above average temperatures during the next three months. The exceptions are the Northern Plains and Alaska panhandle, which are expecting below average temperatures. The southwest, south-central U.S. and parts of the southeast, New England and western Alaska are expecting above average temperatures.

Precipitation and snowfall

Additionally, precipitation also is expected to be above average for the Northern Rockies, particularly over Montana and northern Wyoming. Below average predictions are expected in the southwest, southeast and the Alaska panhandle.

So far this winter, Thermopolis has already measured 19 inches of snow officially at the Town of Thermopolis Wastewater Treatment Plant. The 30-year-average snowfall from July through December is about 11.2 inches, placing Thermopolis 6.8 inches above average so far this winter.

The amount of precipitation from July through December translated from the snow combined with rainfall is 6.67 inches for the past six months. The average precipitation for the same time period is 4.99 inches, which places Thermopolis 1.68 inches above average during the past six months.

Christmas Tree & Wreath Festival raises \$15,775



Nichole Ciz and Bev Koerwitz admire wreaths hanging above the decorated trees Tuesday evening just before the Christmas Tree & Wreath Festival auction at Hot Springs County Memorial Hospital. The event raised \$15,775 for the Thermopolis Community Fund. — J.D. Stetson photo

Popular event
features 32
auction items

The annual Christmas Tree & Wreath Festival raised \$15,775 for the Thermopolis Community Fund during the auction Tuesday night.

The event, which was hosted by Hot Springs County Memorial Hospital and Red Rock Family Practice, featured 15 decorated trees, 15 decorated wreaths and two additional festive items.

The two additional items included a “Hand-painted pail of greenery and décor,” courtesy of Cindy Clancy, and a “Holiday on Ice” figure skate, donated by Aikido of Thermopolis.

Individual dollar amounts for the trees were unavailable Wednesday.

Various businesses and individuals contributed to the auction, which was well attended by people in the community.

Event organizer John Gibbel said the dinner and auction went great with people enjoying the food and the decorations.