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Independent Record

High school period changes approved

Sullivan resigns his trustee seat

by Joe Sovo

There will be changes in the high school daily period schedule for the 2014-15 year after action was taken by the Hot Springs County School District No. 1 Board of Trustees during the March 20 regular meeting. The changes pertain primarily to collaboration, intervention and lunch times.

To begin the meeting, the board approved the resignation of trustee Tom Sullivan, Jr., effective immediately. The board clerk is serving the final year of his term. Sullivan cited personal reasons for his resignation. He expressed his appreciation for support as a trustee during his term and was thanked by other board members and administrators for his service to school district patrons.

According to state statute, the board vacancy must be filled within 30 days by action of the remaining members of the board. The person appointed would fill the vacancy until the next election of school district trustees, which is Nov. 4 of this year. Therefore, the vacant board position would be filled before the next regular meeting, which is April 17. The board approved advertising for letters of interest and will schedule a special board meeting to conduct interviews prior to the April 17 regular meeting.

During the Feb. 20 board meeting, high school teachers London Jenks, Todd Helms, Alex McLean and Donna Daniels shared a recommendation to change the high school daily period schedule. It would include a start time of 8:15 a.m. and would reduce the total lunch period to 30 minutes. They spoke about the amount of time, currently and proposed, for collaboration, intervention, passing

periods, lunch and classroom time. All felt the important pieces of this adjusted schedule would allow daily advisory/intervention time for all students and collaboration time for all teachers.

Students from Jacob Smith's transitional algebra class presented data regarding adequate time for lunch for high school students. The class surveyed students who left campus and timed the number of students serviced in the school cafeteria.

After a brief discussion at the March 20 meeting, trustees voted unanimously to approve the high school daily period schedule changes as proposed.

Teacher-student contact

"Teachers want to see every student every day," said high school principal Travis Anderson during a break in the meeting. He indicated the goal is to have

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Jackalope Jumpers



From left, Clay "Superman" Van Antwerp, Danny Pebbles and Travis Bomengen of the Board Boneheads team get ready to take an icy plunge during the Jackalope Jump fundraiser Saturday at the high school. Other participating groups included the Community Care Bears from Home Health, the Super Cool Ninja Turtles made up of students and local Special Olympic athletes. All in all, 15 people took the plunge. The event raised \$1,800 for Wyoming Special Olympics.

– Drew Foster photo

Farmers welcome Boysen's bounties

by Drew Foster

Delbert Daniels watches the water. Daniels farms about 120 acres of alfalfa and oats north of Thermopolis. He has direct-flow water rights, which means each year he initially receives one foot of water per 70 acres. That much is as good as guaranteed, Daniels said, but it's hardly enough to sustain his crop. The water comes from Boysen Reservoir, and when Boysen is close to full, Daniels is liable to receive an additional foot per 70 acres. But when Boysen's low, as it has been the past two years, he has to purchase the additional water. That can cost more than \$9,000.

But it's a cost this year that Daniels, and farmers like him who have direct-flow rights, likely won't have to pay.

Boysen Reservoir has received its 30-year average inflow just four times since 1998, but 2014 should mark the fifth.

Bureau of Reclamation officials expect Boysen to receive 1.09 million acre-feet of inflow this water year, which runs from Oct. 1 to Sept. 30. That's more than double the 502,100 acre-feet it received during the 2013 water year and almost double the 571,400 acre-feet the reservoir received during the 2012 water year.

"We are very encouraged when there's a chance Boysen will fill," Daniels said. "If we don't buy water, then we save that money."

Water inflow to Boysen typically increases in April, May, June and July during good years. In

2011, the last year the reservoir received more than 1 million acre-feet of inflow, those four months produced almost 995,000 acre-feet of water. In 2012 and 2013, the reservoir saw 219,100 acre-feet and 216,300 acre-feet of inflow during those months, respectively, and never topped 580,000 acre-feet either year. Reclamation officials predict the reservoir would receive 650,000 acre-feet during the next four months, and possibly as much as 850,000 acre-feet.

"It's likely our inflow into Boysen will go up with what we're seeing right now," said Lyle Myler, deputy area manager of Reclamation's Wyoming Area Office, during a Boysen Reservoir water information meeting last week in Worland.

The 30-year average inflow between April and July is 534,000 acre-feet, well below what's expected to enter the reservoir this year during those months.

"Even with minimum expected inflow, we'd still have plenty of water to meet irrigation demand," said Hilaire Peck, chief of Reclamation's Wyoming Area Office's water management branch.

Boysen Reservoir was 82.9 percent full earlier this week. And Reclamation officials expect that number to increase as spring progresses.

For farmers like Daniels, that offers some peace of mind as he prepares for planting season.

"If (Boysen) fills then that means our direct-flow right is going to be sufficient," he said. "We are very encouraged when there's a chance Boysen is going to fill."

Week of the Young Child activities

The Hot Springs County Day-care Association, Children's Resource Center, Head Start and Hot Springs County School District No. 1 will be celebrating the Week of the Young Child with a lineup of activities sure to keep the kiddies active and entertained.

Parents, grandparents and caregivers are encouraged to bring their children – from infants through school age – to the Fire Hall and Search and Rescue building Thursday, April 3 from 9 to 11 a.m. to celebrate the annual event.

This year, there will be arts and crafts sponsored by the school district, health and wellness activities courtesy of Gottsche Wellness Center and even a booth for moms that deals with maternal health and hypothermia, sponsored by Hot Springs County Public Health.

Ambulance and much more

There will be an ambulance, fire truck and rescue boat from Mortimore Ambulance Service, Thermopolis Volunteer Fire Department and Hot Springs County Search and Rescue along with a forklift from Owl Lumber, garbage truck from the Town of Thermopolis, construction vehicle from the Wyoming Department of Transportation and police vehicle, complete with Maris the police dog (K-9), courtesy of the Thermopolis Police Department.

Kids can get their fingers dirty with a gardening activity sponsored by Thermopolis Hardware and Mercantile, hear stories from Barb Rice and participate in an awareness activity from the Prevention Management organization.

After all that fun, snacks and drinks will be donated by Absaroka Early Head Start and McDonald's, and the Bank of Thermopolis is providing tote bags for all the children.

The Week of the Young Child is sponsored nationally by the National Association for the Education of Young Children whose purpose is to focus public attention on the needs of young children and their families as well as recognize the early childhood programs and services that meet those needs.

Chamber Banquet honors Hot Springs County's best

Rice, Owl Lumber/ACE Hardware, PRCA Rodeo, Gerrells spotlighted



Patsy and John Dorman of Owl Lumber/ACE Hardware accept the 2013 Business of the Year Award during the Thermopolis-Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce Annual Banquet. Chamber President Phillip Scheel presents the award.

– Drew Foster photo

by Drew Foster

Hot Springs County gathered under a flowing canopy of white gossamer and tulle Saturday night at the fair building to celebrate its outstanding residents, businesses and nonprofits during the 2014 Thermopolis-Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce Annual Banquet.

Gift baskets were auctioned, food was served, dancing was done and, of course, awards were bestowed.

Barb Rice was named the 2013 Citizen of the Year, Owl Lumber/ACE Hardware won Business of the Year honors and the Thermopolis Cowboy Rendezvous PRCA Rodeo was Nonprofit Organization of the Year. Steve and Donna Nally received a Hometown Hero Award and John Gerrells was honored with the Chamber Service Award.

"I think it was a huge success," Chamber Executive Director Meri Ann Rush said of the banquet. "I think people in the community embraced the changes."

This year's banquet deviated from its usual Hawaiian luau theme, and was instead dubbed "Celebrating the Spirit of Community." The banquet was catered by Incredible Edibles and sponsored by Big Horn Radio Network, Bank of Thermopolis, Properties West and Gottsche Wellness and Fitness Center.

Rice was honored for her dedication to the community – refereeing 3-on-3 Basketball and umpiring baseball, hosting artisan gatherings

with Homegrown Girls, serving on school committees, participating in her church and being a foster parent along with her husband, Todd.

Three days after winning, Rice remained emotional while talking about the award on Tuesday.

"I'm still almost shaken by it because there were so many amazing people there," she said. "I still feel not deserving of that kind of (award). I appreciate it, for sure, but I was just not thinking of myself that way. I'm just so humbled by it."

"It's more powerful than you can really put into words," she said.

Owl Lumber/ACE Hardware

John Dorman of Owl Lumber/ACE Hardware also was moved by his company's award, choking back tears at one point while receiving the honor with his wife, Patsy, on Saturday.

"We weren't expecting it at all," Dorman said. "Our name got thrown into the hat."

Dorman deferred credit for the award, saying his customers' loyalty and satisfaction was what earned Owl Lumber/ACE Hardware the Business of the Year honor.

"It's quite an honor, and it's the community and the customers that have made it possible for us to receive that award," he said. "Without them, we couldn't be here to receive it."

Dorman said he and Patsy strive for customer satisfaction.

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Barb Rice, left, was elated to receive the 2013 Citizen of the Year Award from Chamber Board President Phillip Scheel during the Thermopolis-Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce Annual Banquet held Saturday. Above, Mark Ellis accepts the Nonprofit Organization of the Year Award with Donna and Steve Nally on behalf of the Thermopolis Cowboy Rendezvous PRCA Rodeo. The Nallys also received a Hometown Hero award. — Drew Foster photos

Chamber

“We try to treat them fairly,” he said. “We don’t want to sell them something we don’t want ourselves. Customer service – that’s our goal.”

Cowboy Rendezvous PRCA Rodeo

Mark Ellis, president of the Thermopolis Cowboy Rendezvous PRCA Rodeo committee, received the inaugural Nonprofit Organization of the Year award on behalf of the rodeo. The event is approaching its 10th year in its most recent incarnation, but dates back nearly 100 years in

Thermopolis.

“It’s part of our culture,” Ellis said. “Thermopolis has had, down through the years, a real quality rodeo.”

Like other award recipients, Ellis said he was surprised by the distinction.

“It was a great honor and something that was unexpected,” he said.

Ellis is looking forward to growing the rodeo, planned for the third weekend in June.

“There are a lot of good, quality rodeos in the area and we try to lead off of that,” he said. Ellis

added, “It’s something we want to make bigger and better every year.”

Gerrells, Nallys get surprise honors

Gerrells, winner of the Chamber Service Award, has been auctioneering since the early-1990s. He hasn’t kept track of the money he’s raised or the number of events he’s called. Those figures aren’t as important to him as the communities and people he’s helped along the way.

“It’s really good to be recognized,” he said. “It’s kind of hum-

bling, really. There are so many people that do a lot for the community and (auctioneering) is about the only thing I do. I put a lot of work in at the VFW, but it felt really good to win that award. It was nice.”

Gerrells said he was “shocked” to receive the award.

“I just went down there to do their little auction like I always do,” he said. “I didn’t anticipate that at all. They got me good.”

Steve Nally, former master distiller and general manager at Wyoming Whiskey, also said he’d attended Saturday night’s banquet without knowing he’d be honored.

“It was quite shocking,” he said. “It left me speechless.”



Auctioneer John Gerrells, center, received a special Community Spirit Award during the Chamber Banquet Saturday. From left are granddaughters Rashal Williams and Dreama Thorpe, Gerrells, grandson Josh Frazier and daughters Dawn Jones and Jodi Bender. — Drew Foster photo

High School

each student to have the same advisor all four years of high school. “They can build a relationship,” Anderson said. The principal said the teaching team that visited schools in Anchorage, Alaska, late in 2013 saw the use of that policy. “It was impactful and we wanted to incorporate it at Hot Springs County High School. I think it will be a win-win.”

It’s anticipated that advisory/intervention will strengthen academic performance through building teacher-student relationships. The new schedule com-

bines the current flex and intervention time, and would lead to student enrichment and remediation.

More collaboration time

With the new schedule, teachers will have an additional 15 minutes of collaboration time daily. All the high school teachers will be involved – core and elective – rather than just the core teachers.

Collaboration time for the 2014-15 school year will be from 7:30 to 7:55 a.m. and 7:55 to 8:15 a.m. Flex Time is currently 8 to

8:20 a.m. First period would begin at 8:15 a.m. and would be 55 minutes long rather than 50 minutes. Lunch period will be 11:55 a.m. to 12:25 p.m. Monday-Thursday. The advisory/intervention period will be 12:25 to 1 p.m. Intervention is currently 12:05 to 12:30 p.m. and lunch is 12:30 to 1 p.m.

Anderson also noted the Pledge of Allegiance returns to the high school classroom in 2014-15. “It brings back something we can support and can be beneficial,” he said.

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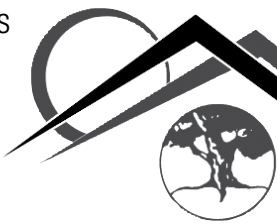


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