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set for Wednesday
at auditorium

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team sets new
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on members
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HSSP terraces, boardwalk project under way

by Joe Sovo

Wyoming State Parks has contracted with Tommaron, Inc., out of Burlington, to work on the Rainbow Terraces' ponds and walkway at Hot Springs State Park, according to the State Parks and Cultural Resources office.

The project's intent is to improve mineral water flows over the terraces by reducing the pond bottom leakage as well as eliminate flow obstructions caused by mineral buildup against several areas of the pedestrian boardwalk.

The work includes: draining, filling and lining several ponds to decrease pond volume and prevent mineral water from leaking into the ground rather than flowing over the terraces; and raising the existing boardwalk in select areas to allow mineral water to flow freely under the walkway.

Currently, the contractor has diverted the flow of the Big Spring, drained four cooling ponds and is placing sand fill in the pond bottoms to facilitate the installation of the polyethylene pond liners. The contractor is also currently working on removing and raising areas of the boardwalk while making spot repairs to the walkway as needed.

Project construction started April 21 and should be completed by June 6, according to the State Parks and Cultural Resources office. Darin J. Westby, P.E., Chief of Field Support for Wyoming State Parks, Historic Sites and Trails, is overseeing the project. Hot Springs State Park Su-



A Tommaron, Inc. employee plows one of the cooling ponds in Hot Springs State Park to help dry the soil and prepare for the application of sand and a polyethylene pond liner. Four cooling ponds were drained and will be refilled as part of the project.

— Joe Sovo photo

perintendent Kevin Skates, who has been in that position for more than eight years, has kept a watchful eye on the terraces project. The contractor is working to make up some ground due to delays caused by recent cold and wet weather.

Tommaron employees were working early this week, tilling the soil in some of the ponds to aid in the drying process. The

sand fill will go in soon, followed by the pond liners. Then the cooling ponds will refill as mineral water from the Big Spring flows from one pond to another in the cooling process. There are three large ponds and one small one — near the Swinging Bridge — involved in the drainage and refilling.

“We hope to reduce the volume of the cooling ponds so we

can move water quicker,” Skates said, and the more efficiently the water moves out of the cooling ponds over the Rainbow Terraces the better. “The temperature of the (mineral) water is what gives you the different colors.” Those colors are evident as algae are formed — thanks to the mineral water.

“The whole project is to disperse water faster and spread it

State Parks director Simpson returns for May 27 events

Milward Simpson, director of Wyoming State Parks and Cultural Resources, is scheduled to return to Thermopolis on Tuesday, May 27 as a follow-up to his visit April 26 pertaining future plans for Hot Springs State Park.

Simpson said he would meet with the public on that date and plans to lead a tour of the Rainbow Terraces project underway in the state park and host a public gathering the evening of May 27 at the Hot Springs County Museum and Cultural Center.

Read Simpson's Letter to the Editor pertaining to his return to Thermopolis on page 4 of this issue of the Independent Record.

out. We'll have more water to get over the terraces,” Skates said.

There is no need for concern about mineral water that flows into the Big Horn River, according to Skates, as the Environmental Protection Agency conducts periodic tests to evaluate the contents of the water.

According to Wyoming state engineers, placing liners in the four ponds will scientifically reduce leakage of mineral water through the ground.

Skates spoke about an ongoing issue at the Big Spring, where mineral water enters the state park. Travertine build-up, caused by the elements of the water, continues to occur near the mouth of the spring and elsewhere on the terraces. Engineers have been looking at how to address that issue.

With the travertine build-up, the project includes raising part of the boardwalks that allow people to walk across the terraces.

“The boardwalks are being raised to keep them above the travertine,” Skates said.

The superintendent explained the operation of the heat exchanger in the maintenance/restroom building north of the Tee-Pee Pools and Star Plunge. The \$3.5 million system was installed in July 2006, just about the time Skates assumed his duties in the state park.

“River water goes into ponds after it cools the mineral water,” Skates said. He pointed out there is no physical contact between the river and mineral water. “We're borrowing river water and it goes back in the river.”

That river water is pumped from the Days Inn area to the building with the heat exchanger.

Should the terraces project finish on time, the cooling ponds will be filled and the boardwalk work complete by the first week-end of June.

Hot Springs County High School graduation Sunday

Forty-five seniors will be in cap and gown when the Hot Springs County High School Class of 2014 celebrates graduation with commencement exercises Sunday, May 18 at 2 p.m. in the high school gymnasium.

Co-valedictorians Ivy Paris and Julia Blakesley will each provide a brief address, as will salutatorian Austin Rush.

Paris' high school résumé includes involvement in many extracurricular activities, such as cross country, indoor and outdoor track, Rachel's Challenge, National Honor Society, Student Council, robotics, Spanish Club and Key Club.

Blakesley's activities have included four years of basketball and track and two years of volleyball in addition to Student Council, National Honor Soci-

ety (two years) and four years with the school yearbook — three as editor.

Rush has been kept quite busy with four years of fall golf, three years of spring golf, four years of basketball and one of track. He's been in band and the Student Council for four years, and Fellowship of Christian Athletes, National Honor Society and Key Club for two each.

The class motto is, “Each of us have different talents, different dreams, different destinations, but we all have the same power to make a new tomorrow.” The tiger lily is the class flower and the class song is a remix of class favorites. The class colors are purple and black.

Kara Janes, a HSCHS teacher, will be the guest speaker at the commencement exercises.

Janes indicated she knew she wanted to become a Spanish teacher during a red-eye flight from Spain back to her home in Deer Lodge, Mont.

“I also knew I would be wearing many hats in the district and have enjoyed being the high school/middle school Spanish and psychology teacher, volleyball coach at several levels, foreign language club advisor, Class of 2014 advisor and serving on the Hot Springs County Education Endowment Foundation,” said Janes, who has been in the school district for five years.

“When being asked to be the commencement speaker for the Class of 2014, I was deeply humbled and honored. This class has been like my own kiddos. They were my youngest class

and the one I have spent the most years with,” she said. “Several of them I have had the pleasure to teach every year in some capacity. You get to really know them and build relationships, care for them, build mutual trust and ultimately love them like your own.”

“Don't get me wrong, all these independent thinkers give me a run for my money, but I love them for that very reason!”

See the special 2014 Graduation Edition in this issue of the Independent Record for photos of the graduates, and salutes by businesses and other members of the community.

Special senior awards

Paris and Rush were named recip-

ients of Most Outstanding Boy and Girl awards during Senior Scholarship Awards Night on Tuesday at the school auditorium. In addition to Paris and Rush, honor students from the Class of 2014 — with GPAs of 3.5 or above — are Victoria Anderson, Blakesley, Shayna Cox, Annelisa Herold, Abigail Lankford, Zack Larson, Jared Mohr-Leiva, Megan Mortimore, Tiffany Mortimore, Kira Oliver, Paris, Christina Porath, Braedyn Richmond, Rush and Kaden Wood.

National Honor Society members are Anderson, Blakesley, Cox, Herold, Mohr-Leiva, Lankford, Megan Mortimore, Oliver, Paris, Rush and Wood.

A list of the scholarship recipients will be published in next week's Independent Record.

‘Splash and dash’ water park considered

Potential locations include Bicentennial Park, Candy Jack Park

by Drew Foster

Thermop officials are considering making a splash with next year's budget by setting aside money for the creation of an interactive park with geysers.

The Town Council discussed the idea late last month during a work session at Town Hall. Mayor's Assistant Fred Crosby said the “splash and dash” park is on the town's wish list, but a decision was not made to allocate money toward its building.

Similar parks feature ground-level geysers that spray water and are popular with children. Crosby said possible locations could include Candy Jack Park or Bicentennial Park.

“It's just a little something for the kids,” he said.

Crosby said Bicentennial Park would be an ideal location because the geysers could be run by pressure from a water main and would not require electricity. He was told a simi-

lar park in Ten Sleep cost between \$80,000 and \$90,000.

“It's not super costly,” Crosby said. “I'd like to see them do it.”

If the town decides to budget money for the park, Crosby said he would expect it to be built in a year or two.

He envisions the water feature being in use between May and September.

Boat ramp area upgrade

Upgrading the area around

the boat ramp near the Eighth Street bridge also was discussed. Crosby said ideas included enlarging the parking lot and laying down a road base, installing picnic tables and awnings, and adding a permanent bathroom.

“We've done a lot of infrastructure projects, but that stuff's buried in the ground and you can't see it,” Crosby said. “It'd be nice to do something that people can see.”

WYO Quarter Horse Ranch Sale rides into town

by Drew Foster

Nearly 100 horses will be up for auction Saturday when the 31st annual WYO Quarter Horse Ranch Sale comes to the Hot Springs County Fairgrounds.

A performance preview is scheduled for 9 a.m. and the auction begins at 1 p.m. The “Parade of Geldings” is planned for 7 p.m. Friday at the fairgrounds.

Carole Smith of WYO Ranch said last year's auction drew buyers from 23 states. This year's auction has drawn interest from buyers as far away as Hawaii, Smith said.

Bill and Carole Smith, as well as family

members and another independent rancher, raise the quarter horses.

Bidding on 69 broke geldings

Available at auction should be 69 broke geldings, seven started 2-year-olds and 19 yearlings.

“They're well-broke, they're gentle, they're friendly,” Carole Smith said of the horses.

She added: “We stand by these horses; we know them well. We ride them, and we get to know them.”

The Smiths go as far as to offer a 30-day guarantee to anyone who buys a horse.

“We run an honest sale, and we also stand behind them,” she said.

Last year's average price for the 56 geldings sold was \$14,482, while the average price for the 14 yearlings was \$1,457. Four 2-year-olds were sold for an average of \$2,475, and two 3-year-olds averaged \$3,350.

Last year's highest bid was \$37,000 for a 9-year-old bay roan gelding. Two horses sold for \$36,000.

Ty Thompson, a world champion auctioneer from Billings, Mont., will be leading the auction.

Has Beens prevail



It's been a few years. He's a little older and maybe a bit slower, but Rod Anderson of the 1974 state champion Bobcat basketball team shows he's still got what it takes to beat the young whipper-snappers in the Has Beens Basketball game last Saturday night. The charity event to benefit the Hot Springs County Senior Citizens Center raised \$4,487. Former Thermop men and women players took on the current Bobcat teams, running up the score (with a little help from cash donations), 125-96.