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Hot Springs

# Independent Record

SPECIAL INTERNET PREVIEW

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## Simpson leads HSSP discussion

by Joe Sov

“Healing waters” was the catchphrase that made up the theme of the State Parks and Cultural Resources public meeting held Thursday, July 17 at the Hot Springs County Museum and Cultural Center.

Milward Simpson, the State Parks and Cultural Resources director, led the discussion of the benefits of the mineral waters in Hot Springs State Park (HSSP) and facilitated testimony by Gottsche Rehabilitation and Wellness Center CEO Cheryl Shero, Dr. Bob Bomengen and Joe Martinez, inspector for the Wyoming Department of Health.

After a brief discussion of the Rainbow Terraces project in HSSP that was recently completed, Simpson led into the discussion of the healing waters.

“It’s important to pay close attention to and honor the therapeutic aspect of the state park,” he said.

Shero gave a background of

the Gottsche facility, which has been in Hot Springs County for 58 years. She opened by saying, “The mineral pools speak for themselves....People keep coming back.”

She explained that William and Carrie Gottsche, who were ranchers near Rock Springs, established the Gottsche Foundation. They had transported their polio-stricken daughter Marguerite to Thermopolis for treatment in the mineral water. However, Marguerite died at the age of 14.

“They started a treatment facility using the hot springs. This is their legacy,” Shero said, calling what Gottsche provides as aquatic therapy. “There is so much relief from this water. We hear it at Gottsche every day.

“Our little place has a big history. Let’s keep it going....We’re lucky we’ve got the state involved.”

Shero spoke briefly about how the mineral content of the water – which has analyzed and found to contain 17 different minerals – is the key to its medicinal benefits and how mobility is improved via the use of the healing waters.

Mayor Bill Malloy gave a brief testimony, saying how using the mineral water at the State Bath House healed a rash on his arm and hand when he came to visit from his home in Laramie many years ago.

Bomengen, the father of Dr. Travis Bomengen of Thermop, spends two weeks at a time in town – coming from his home in Oregon. He indicated studies of the mineral water are “clinically real.” He said, “In the medical field we know the therapeutic benefits.” He referred to the book “Healing Springs” by Nathaniel Altman, who wrote about the benefits of mineral water.

“Medicine is absorbed through the skin,” Bomengen said. “Why it works is because it’s a molecular phenomenon.” Members of the audience were surprised to hear him say that the low-level arsenic in the local mineral water could kill fungus in your nails.

“You have a gold mine here in Thermop that is awesome. It’s not the temperature – it’s the minerals,” Bomengen said. “I’m blessed to be related to this community.”

Martinez spoke about the local mineral water from a state safety standpoint. “We have to be active in providing safe (swimming and soaking) water,” he said, and he works with operators of the hot pools to ensure safety. He said it was important for users to shower before entering the mineral pools – to help rinse impurities from your body.

According to Martinez, mineral water is very acidic – meaning it has a low level of pH – and Bomengen testified to the therapeutic benefits of acidic water.

HSSP Superintendent Kevin Skates explained that there was currently a 20-minute limit to soaks at the State Bath House, which has water temperatures of 103 to 104 degrees. “We limit the time so you don’t overheat,” Martinez said.

“Heat plays a very sensitive role,” Bomengen said of the mineral water.

Skates pointed out that neither city water nor chemicals is added to the mineral water in HSSP. “We use it as a selling point,” he said.

“The waters do have a huge community benefit,” Simpson said to conclude the discussion.

Simpson will return to Thermop for a legislative Joint Travel, Recreation, Wildlife and Cultural Resources Interim Committee meeting Aug. 4 and 5 (see related story). Simpson encourages the public to attend the Aug. 4 meeting to provide input for the legislative committee on HSSP.

### Blaze destroys shed, pickup, trailer



An old shed, a flatbed trailer and older model Ford pickup were destroyed and there was some damage to a utility trailer as a result of a fire at a large storage lot in the 400 block of Fremont Street on Sunday afternoon. The fire was reported at 5:20 p.m. and volunteer firemen responded to douse the blaze. According to fire chief Mark Collins, an investigation was underway to determine the origin of the fire. The property is owned by Scott Taylor of Cheyenne. – Joe Sov photo

## School trustees approve hirings, policy changes

by Cindy Glasson

Hot Springs County School District No. 1’s Board of Trustees combined their regular July meeting with its budget hearing last week.

Under staffing recommendations, the board approved Jim Lash as Special Services director, Brockton Merrill as a new elementary teacher and Brad Morrison as a paraprofessional for the upcoming school year.

In addition, Becky Martinez will advance from a part-time vocational teacher to full-time, effective at the beginning of the 2014-15 school year.

On third reading, the board approved revisions to the compulsory attendance age policy,

consent to withdraw policy and its tobacco-free schools policy.

A second reading of revisions for policies referencing volunteers at the schools – including background checks, code of conduct and the volunteer information form – were approved. A third and final reading of the revisions will take place in August.

### High school, TMS handbook revisions

The student handbooks for each of the schools came up for approval also, with the only one getting final approval being the Ralph Witters Elementary handbook.

Several changes to the high school hand-

book were requested by new high school principal Scott Shoop. Middle school principal Breez Daniels, in an effort to make students’ transition from middle school to high school smoother, will be making some changes to correspond with Shoop’s requests.

In order to have time to make those changes, the board did not have a final reading of those two handbooks.

Shoop said he sees some “minor issues that shouldn’t be major problems. If it doesn’t disrupt learning I see no need to make an issue of it.”

An overview of the school district’s budget will appear in next week’s Independent Record.

### Horse Show leads into county fair



Rhiannon Goffena leads her horse during the Pee wee Halter class at the Hot Springs County 4-H/FFA Horse Show on Saturday morning in the multi-purpose building. All pee wee participants received purple ribbons. The 4-H Clothing Judging is today (Thursday) at the museum, followed by the Style Revue. More photos from the Horse Show will be posted on the Independent Record’s Facebook page. – Joe Sov photo

## Farmers’ Market Saturday

The old saying goes, “The early bird gets the worm,” but in this case, the early bird gets the best produce as the Red Dirt Master Gardeners bring the Farmers’ Market back for their third year, starting this Saturday, July 26.

From 8 to 10 a.m. each Saturday through the end of September, local growers will be bringing their produce, baked goods and more to Fifth Street, next to Bicentennial Park in downtown Thermopolis.

All items are personally grown, personally made and personally sold, so it’s a great time to get to know your farmer.

Anyone interested in being part of the Farmers’ Market will need to bring their own table, change and items for sale. A single Saturday at the market has a \$5 fee for sellers, but if you are wishing to sell throughout the season you can save with a \$25 fee for the entire eight weeks.

For more information, contact Sonja Becker at 921-8456.