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State Travel, Recreation, Wildlife & Cultural meeting

Story and photo by Gary Bégin

Members of the Joint Travel, Recreation, Wildlife and Cultural Resources Interim Committee met at the Hot Springs Museum & Cultural Center here Monday and Tuesday Aug. 4 and 5 and heard feedback from the public about issues concerning the TePee Pools operation, visitation statistics and other concerns.

The committee, made up of state senators and legislators, toured the Hot Springs State Park terraces in the morning before Monday's scheduled start. When the meeting began they heard from State Parks and Cultural Resources Director Milward Simpson about ongoing negotiations with the owner of TePee Pools, Bill Moriarity, for a 35-year lease based on a master plan which is to include upgrades to the current attraction.

These improvements included annual maintenance and a requirement to reinvest monies into capital improvements in order to ensure the facility meets "industry standards" and provides the public with a "safe and clean" bathing experience.

The committee also said TePee Pools was provided with examples of how other hot springs operations are run in places like Arkansas and were given other suggestions in hopes it will improve the next master plan submitted by the company.

TePee Pools, for their part, gave the state authority a variety of ideas including the remodeling of the men's and women's locker rooms, providing shade over the deck and hot tubs and replacing the steam room.

The state set a deadline of Oct. 31 for receipt of the final master development plan while simultaneously rejecting line items offered by the spa which included "painting, cleaning, repairs and replacement of certain items" as being in the

realm of ordinary maintenance that would be required regardless. Upgrades to carpets, roofs and mechanical equipment were also included as normal upkeep items and not part of a master plan.

TePee Pools, in a document obtained by the Thermopolis Independent Record, said it would create a "500 linear foot lazy river" at an estimated cost of \$325,000, but the state requested a specific cost breakdown for that project. TePee said it would finish the so-called lazy river by 2021, but the state response was that it wanted it done faster. The vendor also said it would construct a splash park at an estimated cost of "\$25,000 to \$30,000", but once again the committee wanted to know details on how that figure was arrived at.

Another issue brought up during day one of the two-day public forum was that of using Thermopolis city water for attractions that required fresh

water such as the splash park, lazy river and high speed slides. The state questioned in writing how use of fresh, or "treated" water was to be accomplished and if TePee Pools had the blessing of town council.

A potentially contentious issue was briefly discussed regarding TePee Pools claims that its master plan document was "confidential and privileged" whereas the state said such documents

do not meet Wyoming law criteria under the trade secrets designation.

State Parks and Cultural Resources Director Milward Simpson said he was "committed to a transparent and public process ... These documents are necessary for the public to be involved in this process."

Another issue about Hot Springs State Park land in general was brought up by Sen. Burns who asked if it wasn't feasible for the Wyoming



State Parks and Cultural Resources Director Milward Simpson speaks to Joint Travel, Recreation, Wildlife and Cultural Resources Interim Committee at a meeting in Thermopolis Monday.

Pageant performance



Sub-Chief Willie LeClair of the Shoshone Tribe dances at the end of the Pageant Parade Saturday in downtown Thermopolis. He followed with a blessing at the Gift of the Waters celebration and re-enactment at Hot Springs State Park.

-Gary Bégin photo

Velcro fun



Jeffrey VanAntwerp looks a bit like a character from a wild cartoon while stuck on the Velcro wall during Family Fun Night at the Hot Springs County Fair. Families had a ball at the annual event that featured games, food and fun for all ages.

Retail Committee hears ArtStroll requests

by Gary Bégin

The Thermopolis-Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce Retail Committee met Friday, Aug. 1 and discussed a variety of topics including upcoming promotions and to continue to meet the first Fridays of every month.

Art Stroll and Smoking Water Art Guild issues were discussed with Tom Butler of the guild saying he'd like to see increased visibility of art in the community and calling for a coalition of organizations to benefit local art-

ists by increasing overall tourism involving ArtStroll events and education.

Partnering with the Retail Committee was one of the solutions he suggested.

A suggestion was made to have a signboard at the spotlight featuring the host business for that month's ArtStroll as well as a special event hosted by retailers to take advantage of the art occasion.

The guild suggested retailers should be educated about what

the ArtStroll can do for their business and how it can benefit their business if they host such an event. To that end, more businesses will be recruited to host future strolls, more artists recruited and commitments received from those artists. As part of the fall promotion, a cash drawing was suggested. Also in the works will be a Thermopolis town map, 11 inch by 17 inch, with information on the back.

The "Eat and Shop Downtown" would like to expand be-

yond just downtown and perhaps change its name to "Eat and Shop Historic Thermopolis".

The next Retail Committee meeting is scheduled for Sept. 5 at the Storyteller at 8 a.m. The next Art Stroll will be on both sides of Broadway from 5 to 8 p.m.

Upcoming Thermopolis business events will be the Oktoberfest on Oct. 11, Moonlight Madness on Oct. 30, Hometown Holiday on Nov. 30 with a lighted parade and other holiday themed events to end the year.

Commissioners bring subdivision one step closer

The Hot Springs County Commissioners covered a lot of ground during their first meeting of August, held on Tuesday in the Annex.

One of the first items on the agenda was the approval of the preliminary plat for the proposed Miller/Schmidt subdivision to be built south of Thermopolis behind the Lutheran church.

County Attorney Jerry Williams told the commissioners it was within their jurisdiction to give approval for the preliminary plat as long as the landowners were aware that they would still have to have a complete, firm plat approved at a later date.

The commissioners gave their approval with a public hearing on the final plat to be held in the next few weeks.

According to GDA Engineers, work is moving along quickly on Phase IV of the airport project.

A couple of options were discussed between the engineers

and the contractor in regards to the rock that will be used with the de-watering system around the area.

One option was to bring in cleaned rock from an outside source, an option that would have been expensive.

The second option was to use gravel directly from the airport site that had been passed through a screen to ensure the proper size is used.

The contractor's preference is using on-site gravel since it will actually be a small amount.

The commissioners agreed, giving GDA the go-ahead to allow the contractor to use material that is already conveniently under foot.

Cement bases for the outdoor lighting at the site have been poured and some of the light poles have been erected, and paving should begin soon with a finish date for paving set for Oct. 8.

The commissioners gave ap-

proval to maintenance supervisor Chuck Carver to order a new counter with a few attached drawers to use in the law enforcement center for the new fingerprint machine.

Carver may order the needed materials with a \$2,200 limit on the purchase and do the installation in-house. The Wyoming Department of Criminal Investigation will come in and do the software installation and training on the new equipment.

Emergency Management Coordinator, Bill Gordon, discussed a couple of issues with the commissioners during the meeting, one being courthouse security.

There is some question regarding posting signage that states firearms are not allowed within the courtroom.

Williams said, by law, the judge has the authority to ban firearms from the courtroom if he so desires.

That raises the question, how-

ever, about security within the courthouse itself and whether or not firearms should be banned in the hallway area where people gather for court just outside the courtroom.

If they are allowed in that hallway, it puts those in the offices on that floor in a more threatening position, including the clerk of court and the judge's chambers.

More discussion will be done during the Sept. 16 meeting.

Gordon also pointed out to the commissioners there is an emergency management situation with the Senior Center. There is no back door to the building.

He said if there were an emergency situation involving the railroad tracks or a train derailment, there would not be an emergency exit for the seniors.

Gordon felt it would be an easy fix, but he wanted the commissioners to be aware of the situation.

Meeting

Department of Education to purchase the land currently occupied by the high school saying it was the only school in the state that is on state park land. Burns also asked the same about the armory saying the Wyoming Department of the Military should purchase that land as both purchases would benefit the state park system.

During the public forum part of the meeting, Thermopolis resident Debra Stewart said the “mineral content here is superior to Saratoga and Glenwood Springs”.

Another speaker, Peter Coggi, also of Thermopolis, said he felt the water here was having a “positive effect on me” after suffering from a medical condition since 1977 that was not cured by traditional medicine. Coggi, a resident here for the last year, said his condition was nearly healed and that past efforts at resolving his condition only mitigated the symptoms.

Perhaps the most divisive issue brought into the public realm during the first day’s meeting

was the statistic claiming “1.9 million visits” to the park last year. The explanation was given that three checkpoints are used to measure vehicular traffic and that each vehicle is counted as having four persons inside during the busy season and two persons in the winter. Thus, as Senator Ogden Driskill pointed out, “I count as twelve people since I went into the park three times”.

Park officials said the method of counting visits was a “statistically valid” way of doing so and was the same system used throughout the park systems nationwide, but promised to speak with University of Wyoming experts about tweaking the method to arrive at a more realistic number that would satisfy Thermopolis critics such as mayoral candidate Earnest Cummings, who wanted to know how visitation figures were derived.

Thermopolis-Hot Springs Economic Development Company CEO Amanda Moeller spoke to the committee saying the town “should all be working hard to make tourists want to return”

to the town and that it wasn’t all just about the pools.

Moeller said that despite the visitation figures of 1.9 million, lodging tax revenues have declined three years in a row and said Thermopolis was shrinking, the newest hotel is 20-years-old that she had mixed feelings about demanded improvements needed at TePee Pools.

Moeller said the community faces an identity crisis and wants to be a destination point, but is usually a pass through for tourists on their way to other locations like Yellowstone and Cody. “No offense to the mom and pop motels, but we need improvements,” she said, saying there weren’t enough quality lodging spaces in the summer and that it was dead in the winter.

For more information about the two-day meeting, the committee urges the public to visit uyoleg.gov for minutes. Due to press deadlines, an article about day two of the meeting will be published in next week’s edition of this paper.

from page 1

Girl scout parade



Girl Scout Troop 1100 marches in the Pageant Parade Saturday at the intersection of Broadway and Fifth Streets. Hundreds of tourists and locals came out to the show during a beautiful summer's day and were also treated to ceremonial Shoshone tribal dancing afterwards.

-Gary Bégin photo

Wyoming Lottery releases names of local retailers

With the Aug. 24 launch of Powerball® and Mega Millions® ticket sales less than a month away, the Wyoming Lottery has started releasing the names of the retailers it has approved so far. The Lottery’s goal is to have a maximum of 450 to 500 ticket-selling locations statewide. As of this week, there will be five Lottery outlets in Thermopolis. They are Blair’s Super Market, Days Inn, Exxon Southside, Maverik and Reese & Ray’s IGA. There are five outlets on the roster in Worland, plus one in Shoshoni, two in Basin, four in Greybull and 11 in Cody. WyoLotto™ locations are listed online at www.wyolotto.com. The online list will be updated continually as additional retailers are approved. According to the WyoLotto website, over the next several weeks,

residents will start seeing the bright blue and yellow WyoLotto signs appearing on approved retailers such as gas stations, grocery stores, convenience stores, restaurants and bars across the state. “The excitement is pretty high as we work to notify and train retailers to sell tickets,” said Jon Clontz, the Wyoming Lottery’s Chief Executive Officer. “Our focus right now is on working hand-in-hand with retailers, holding retailer training sessions and testing the equipment so we can be ready on August 24.” The Lottery selected retailers based on several criteria, including annual sales, foot traffic, the size of the population over 18 years of age and geographic location. Earlier this spring, retailers reviewed the criteria and application process and gave their input

during statewide workshops attended by over 400 people.

Clontz stressed that retailers are the backbone of the lottery’s success. “We have worked hard to make the selection process fair and have made efficient, effective decisions to maximize revenue.”

Retailers will be notified of their selection status over the next couple of weeks. However, the lottery plans to continue to accept applications.

“We expect to add more retailers as the lottery grows,” Clontz said.

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Thermopolis Liquors

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Sat., Aug. 9 • Lost Springs Band • 7 p.m. - ?

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WEDNESDAY
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THURSDAY
Baked Chicken Breasts, Mashed Potatoes w/Gravy, California Blend Vegetables, Asian Salad, Muffin, Apricot Crisp

FRIDAY
Meatloaf, Baked Potato w/Sour Cream, Craisin Salad, Roll, Pineapple Upside Down Cake

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THANK YOU

Owl Lumber
for buying my FFA Market Steer

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for buying my 4-H Market Lamb

Everyone’s support of the fair, FFA and 4-H youth in Hot Springs County is appreciated.

Thank you, Jessie Pennoyer

A special thank you to the following and everyone who made the 2014 HSC Fair so great!

HSC Fair Board	4-H Council	TJ & Cassie Owsley	Lofink Auction Services
Martin & Carol Bader	Joey & Melissa Johnson	Britton VanHeule	Valerie Stothart
Carol Smith	Vicki Nichols	Ginger Ward	Grandma
Glade Edwards Foundation	Troy Daniels	Stevie Ann Jellis	Mom & Dad

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