

Rollover claims life of Kirby man

by Zachary White
A single vehicle rollover on Feb. 14 resulted in the death of 60-year-old Douglas Hugh Whitt of Kirby.
The crash occurred around 3:45 p.m. at milepost 142 on US Highway 20, approximately 10 miles north of Thermopolis.
Around that time Whitt's Ford Ranger pickup was headed north-bound on US 20 when his truck

partially left the roadway on the east side of the highway.
According to the Wyoming Highway Patrol after this, Whitt overcorrected the Ford pickup, sending the vehicle into a counterclockwise spin.
The spin sent him west, across both lanes of traffic on highway 20 North.
The truck continued west as it spun, finally tipping and roll-

ing over twice before coming to a stop at the bottom of a steep embankment.
According to a press release, Whitt had not been wearing a seat belt and was ejected from the vehicle during the crash.
His injuries were reported to be fatal at the time of the accident.
Traffic on the highway was not stopped, but instead detoured

around the crash scene.
As of 11 a.m. Monday, the Wyoming Highway Patrol was investigating alcohol use and driver inattention as contributing factors in the crash.
Whitt's death is the 12th highway fatality in Wyoming for 2015.
Wyoming Highway Patrol Public Relations officer David Wagner did not responded to a call for comment.



Celebrating their achievements

Hayden Franklin, Destiny Abrams and Autumn Rogers display paper chains recognizing their MAP test accomplishments Friday at Ralph Witters Elementary. The chains circled round and round the gym featuring different colors for fourth grade through kindergarten. Each link represented a point students improved their math or reading score.
-Lara Love photo

Advancements to Hot Springs State Park Master Plan

by Zachary White
The Hot Springs State Park Master Plan Steering Committee furthered details about what changes may be seen during the next twenty years at the park, but a draft will not be released to the public until after the second open house meeting for public comment.
That meeting date has not yet been decided on.
However, even though it is not in the final stages there has been some advancement to the plan.
One idea was to expand the state bathhouse, one to add recreational experiences like a zip

line and another would add a visitor center, nature center, and/or discovery center to the park.
Despite it all, assistant State Park Superintendent John Fish said people need to be adaptable to change.
"We could build a brand new zip line and it could be underused in five years," Fish said.
And as the plan is not finished yet, there may still be changes to ideas that have so far been accepted by the steering committee.
Also, the committee agreed unanimously that there needs to be full time law enforcement in the park, as local police already have their plates full with activities in town.

While ideas to work on a new entry way to the park are still being discussed, the committee also put a strong emphasis on providing increased tourist accommodations at the park and around town.
Tina Bishop with the State Parks said there might even be a need to increase how the water resources are used.
"People also come here obviously for the water, and we want to do more with that for tourism and lodging," Bishop said.
The master plan currently includes a section that highlights how water could be manipulated for a greater visitor experience.

Areas to explore include a possible lazy river, a splash or spray park and even a climbing wall above the water.
However, it is possible that none of these ideas come to fruition.
Regardless of what changes come to the park, there is one thing every visitor looks for.
"It doesn't matter where they go, they want a positive experience," Fish said.
For more information and to stay updated on the status of the master plan, visit www.hotspringsmasterplan.com. Comments made on the website will be included in discussions at state park master plan meetings.

The IR spans our nation

"It's always fun to look at the front page."
-David Boelens

The distance from Thermopolis to Anchorage, Alaska is 2,830.1 miles and to Exeter, N.H. is 2,283.9 miles.

by Cindy Glasson

It would be a very long road trip if you were to go searching for the subscriber to the Independent Record that lives the furthest from Thermopolis since he lives in Anchorage, Alaska.
David Boelens has been in Alaska since the 1980s, having graduated from Hot Springs County High School in 1974.
His parents are the owners of Boelens' Well Service, and his mom, Katherine, has made sure he's had a subscription to his hometown newspaper since he moved to the north country.
"It's always fun to look at the front page," Boelens said. "And I really like the color, especially the extra color pages now."
The other thing he looks for, even though he thinks it may be kind of strange, is the obituaries.
"I see family names, friends of my father's, people I knew," he said.
As a matter of fact, Boelens says there are a lot of connections to Wyoming in Anchorage in particular.
"Merle Estes built a subdivision up here," he said. "All of the street names are from Wyoming, like Worland and Natrona."
He may be living way up north, but Boelens said he's always loved Thermopolis.

East to New Hampshire
Home is where the heart is and for Noreen (Cook) Pramberg, that would be Thermopolis and the reason she subscribes to the Independent Record, even though she currently lives in New Hampshire.
Noreen graduated from Hot Springs County High School in 1951 and uses the newspaper to keep up on what's happening with her classmates and friends, their children and grandchildren.
"I knew a lot of the young men who went to Korea," she said. "I like keeping track of everyone."
Each year at Christmas time she sends out a list of address changes and news from Thermopolis to her classmates, much of which comes from the newspaper.
Noreen worked for Dr. Gitlitz before joining the military, where she met her husband while stationed in Texas.
The couple also lived in Massachusetts before retiring to New Hampshire.
"My husband couldn't get over how close my class was," she laughed. "He came from a metropolitan area and couldn't believe the camaraderie we all had. It was interesting to watch his reaction."
In honor of her military service you can find a brick with her name on it in the military memorial in front of the Hot Springs County Museum.