

TOUR 23—an ambitious Wyoming Business Alliance effort to discuss and document business conditions and economic development strengths and needs throughout the state—will hold its Hot Springs County session Thursday, April 23 at 7:30 p.m. at the Hot Springs County Museum.

The program is a comprehensive effort involving the Wyoming Business Council, state agencies, and business and government associations. It consists of four-hour meetings in every Wyoming county between April 13 and June 25. Each session will be moderated by

Wyoming Business Alliance, with facilitation by President Bill Schilling and Vice President Fred Catchpole. University of Wyoming Associate Dean of Outreach Anne Alexander will provide local and state economic profiles at each stop.

According to Schilling, “This unprecedented effort features 23 sessions, with every county having its own meeting, and total participation from more than 500 Wyoming citizens. It has never been done before by any state.”

Reports will be prepared after each of the sessions, with final conclusions and recommendations presented at this

year’s Governor Matthew H. Mead’s Wyoming Business Forum (a Wyoming Business Alliance/Wyoming Heritage Foundation event) on November 17-18 in Cheyenne. Accordingly, regular updates will be provided to state legislators, which “will be viewed with keen interest,” according to Drew Perkins, Vice President of the State Senate.

The TOUR 23 conversations will be positive and directional. Shawn Reese, CEO of the Wyoming Business Council, believes the “the tour process will help shape the state’s economic strategies going forward.” The meetings will follow

an open forum concept. There will be assigned seating for 23 local leaders in an open “U” setting, but additional open seating will be available for any community members who wish to attend.

There will be a meet and greet beginning at 7:30 a.m. The program officially begins at 8 a.m. and ends at noon. Assisting in every county is a local coordinator. Amanda Moeller is the coordinator for Hot Springs County.

For more information, contact the Wyoming Business Alliance (307) 577-8000 or visit www.wyomingbusinessalliance.com under “Upcoming Events.”

Chamber board holds annual member meeting

by Cindy Glasson

The Thermopolis-Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce held their annual meeting last Thursday, touching on a number of items of interest.

Chamber director Meri Ann Rush talked about where the chamber has come over the last couple of years, including a 28-percent increase in membership over the last two years.

They have recently made the redemption of chamber bucks easier for businesses who may now process them like checks creating an increase in the amount of chamber bucks being purchased and used in the county.

The executive board has looked over the by-laws, mission and vision statements and re-worked everything to bring them up to date.

The Chamber Ambassadors, an off-shoot of the chamber, have been visiting an average of 3-4 businesses each month and the chamber itself helped the Main Street Thermopolis organization get off the ground.

The Retail Committee is meeting each month, an Oktoberfest celebration has been added, school representatives are now on the chamber board, there’s a cash mob and on and on, all items created to not only help businesses but Hot Springs County as a whole.

In other business, the board discussed the need for volunteers for various projects and activities that will be going on throughout the next year.

“It’s an opportunity for everyone to get involved,” Rush said. “We have something every month, especially during the summer, and the more people we have to help and plan the easier it is for everyone.”

They are working on getting a committee together for the 4th of July Pet Parade that has expanded to include not just kids and pets, but motorized entries as well.

Last year, the Big Horn Basin Riders participated in the parade with a large number of motorcycles. Unfortunately, they won’t be participating this year as they will be on one of the poker runs held during their rally here.

A theme needs to be found for the parade, but the committee will work on ways to improve things and get folks to stay downtown after the parade.

Seven businesses and organizations were congratulated on their longevity in Hot Springs County: Town of Kirby (100 years), Lions Club (90 years), Mortimore Funeral Home (70 years), Gift of the Waters Pageant (65 years), Wyoming Pioneer Home (65 years), Wyoming Dinosaur Center (20 years) and Captel (10 years).

The board’s next meeting will be on Thursday, May 14 at the Hot Springs County Museum.



Making it Gourd-ious

Zena Tapia watches as her sister Analea paints a gourd in the Wesaw Studio during the Second Friday ArtStroll.

-Zachary White photo

Commission hears from Youth Alternatives Director

by Cindy Glasson

The Hot Springs County Commissioners heard their first report from newly appointed Youth Alternatives Director, Barb Rice, during their meeting last Friday.

Rice said things are going well with the program and while she’s setting certain times to actually be in her office, she’s also working with the courts, being there for the kids going through the system and learning all the ins and outs of the job.

She’s currently working with the Wyoming Highway Patrol to bring in their “25 Alive” program that helps young drivers understand their responsibility behind the wheel, including no drinking and driving or texting and driving.

One concern she expressed to the commissioners was in regards to municipal court, which goes through the Town of Thermopolis.

So far, municipal court has not been going along with the mandated single point of entry process for juveniles. Municipal fines can be handed down for a number of offenses includ-

ing DUI and tobacco issues.

While she’s making some progress with municipal court, she is concerned that municipal court is more concerned about revenue.

“If it is, its too bad, because our first priority is to help the kids,” Brad Basse, commission chair said. “That’s what the diversion program is meant to do.”

County Attorney Jerry Williams echoed Basse’s concerns.

“I hope it changes,” Williams said. “I think we’re making some progress. We could actually take them to court about it, as an option.”

Basse indicated he’d like to see Rice take a shot at it first and see how things go.

“How is this in the best interest of the kids,” he asked.

Williams said he hasn’t spoken with mayor Mike Mortimore as of yet, but will talk with him soon if things don’t work out with police chief Steve Shay.

In other business, the commissioners heard from Emergency Management director Bill Gordon

regarding the recent poisonings of domestic dogs in the Meeteetsee area.

Gordon said the Bureau of Land Management is offering a reward for information on the poisonings and urges anyone recreating with their dogs in that area to be extra cautious.

“That’s pretty close to home,” Gordon said. “It wouldn’t take much to cross over into Hot Springs County.”

We’ve all enjoyed a fairly mild winter this year, bringing into question how run-off and river flows will be for the summer, especially for farmers in the county.

According to Gordon, Boysen Reservoir is currently at 88% and said irrigation from the river should be fine this year.

In addition, Gordon said he’s not promoting a fire ban yet as things are fine for now, but does day wind and higher temperatures could change that idea in a very short time.

Sheriff Lou Falgoust and deputy