

Band and choir rated superior

by Cindy Glasson

The Hot Springs County High School band and choir were in Lovell last week for the 2015 District Music Festival.

Keeping with tradition, the band and choir both came home with multiple superior ratings with solos and ensembles ranging from excellent to superior as determined by the panel of judges.

"I am so proud of our musicians," director Dustin Olsen said. "They

represented the high school and community on the highest level. Not only did they perform at an extremely high level of musicianship, they proved that they are proud of what they perform."

Olsen said all of the hard work in rehearsals paid off for them at the competition.

They will travel to Denver next week for the annual "Music in the Parks" competition.

"I am excited to see them perform in Denver next week," Olsen said.

Results:
High School Concert Band: 3 Superiors
High School Concert Choir: 3 Superiors
Chandra Maddock: Excellent Vocal Solo
Korey Smith and Caleb DeCroo: Excellent Vocal Duet
Kayla Gilbert and Bree Peterson: Superior Vocal Duet
Dani Yarrington: Superior Vocal Solo
Chauncey Morris: Superior Vo-

cal Solo
Chloe Crosby: Superior Clarinet Solo
Shianne Yarrington: Superior Trumpet Solo
Jessica Shierkolk: Superior Trumpet Solo
Zoe Stone: Excellent Vocal Solo
Darren Leonhardt: Superior Vocal Solo
Zoe Stone and Michael Meier: Superior Vocal Duet
See photos from the pre-festival concert on page B8.



"She was only Marginally Modest"

Seymore Stoutfellow (Logan Kay), hero of the day, is not quite sure what to do with Marginally Modest (Sierra Schmidt) after she faints during the high school drama production. The melodrama's final night is tonight (Thursday) in the auditorium at 7 p.m.

Identifying economic needs in Hot Springs County and beyond

by Zachary White

There was a Wyoming Business Alliance workshop in Thermopolis last week to help local business owners and public representatives identify and address economic needs in Hot Springs County.

During the April 23 meeting, more than 20 people discussed the past, present and possible future of Hot Springs County. This included discussion of economic staples like energy, businesses that have had success in the county, and where economic growth can come from in the future.

When asked a simple prompt of how people thought Hot Springs County is doing economically, 10 said the county is moving forward, eight said it's holding steady and four said it's slipping.

In the process of gathering information, locals were broken into groups to discuss how change can be made, as well as what changes.

During the meeting, participants were asked to focus on the positive aspects of the community and to generally leave out the negatives.

Moderator Bill Schilling explained this

was needed because the information the Wyoming Business Alliance will be compiling will go to the legislature, and focusing on the negatives will only hamper their work with that government entity.

Part of the meeting was reserved for a look back at the economic history, and future, of the state's economy.

For instance, presenter Anne Alexander explained that Wyoming did alright during the 2007 great recession while the rest of the country fell on hard times.

Only 10 other states maintained a lower unemployment rate. However, Wyoming still has not returned to its pre-recession peak employment level.

She also explained that the state expects to see a 34% decrease in oil revenue in 2015 and a 20% decrease in natural gas revenue. Coal revenue is expected to increase one to four percent.

She also explained that Hot Springs County has fewer employees and a lower weekly income than most other counties in the state.

When the conversation switched to what local work can be done to increase the eco-

nom ic state of Hot Springs County, the conversation was handed off to local people.

The conversation was led by this question: what do you want to see done in the county, and how can you do it without state help?

Ideas included expanding the river walk out of the state park and into town, using old airport space for new housing developments that cater to an elder population, increasing the number of meetings between government bodies and increasing code enforcement in town – especially in terms of beautification.

However, some people said everyone needs to get on the same page before anything can be accomplished.

"As long as people want different things, and have different goals, we won't get anything done," Barb Heinze said.

By the end, most people appeared to feel they accomplish good conversations and progressive discussion, but others were a bit apprehensive.

"We have these meetings and we talk about doing these great things," Shurie Scheel said. "I hope this accomplishes something."

Committee plans for dry conditions, local emergencies

by Zachary White

The Local Emergency Planning Committee met April 23 to discuss potential emergencies facing Hot Springs County.

One of the more immediate concerns is the potential for large-scale fires in the coming spring and summer months.

Coming off relatively dry March and April months, the spread of forest fires could be rapid.

"We're looking at quite the wildfire season," chairman James Coates said.

Part of the unraveling concern this year comes from the fact that the number of fire spotters has decreased significantly.

"Between the Rocky Mountain Region and the Northern Rockies region we have four analysts where we used to have 15," fire chief Mark Collins said.

Collins also said the chances of a large fire will increase after Memorial Day when there starts to be an increased human factor with more people spending time outdoors.

Yet, there are some technological advancements that may make up for the decreased number of analysts.

Other local fire and emergency agencies have equipment that can pinpoint potential location of forest fires based on their satellite imaging capabilities.

This means that if there is a dry lightning strike somewhere, local firefighters will be able to find out quickly where the exact location of the strike happened.

Additionally, Collins said new fire fighting planes are precise enough to put down fire retardants so precisely that wildfires can be stalled long enough to get fire engines on the ground near the fires.

Collins said he can also access information about every fire taking place in real time, with updates every four to six hours.

This information is gained by using an inter agency website that collects and shares data between local and state agencies.

The committee also discussed planning for emergencies caused by an accident on the train tracks.

Coates said he had invited representatives from buildings along the train track line to attend the meeting, along with a representative from Burlington Northern Santa Fe, but almost no one from those places showed up.

"It's hard to have a conversation about these problems on the rails when the people involved don't show up," Coates said.

Also, Emergency Management Coordinator Bill Gordon said the information storage system software for all emergency situations is being updated. The new system will allow for a more fluid system.

"If a local official changes then we only have to change their information once," Gordon said.

The next meeting will be Thursday, July 23 at 9 a.m.

The time was changed in the hope more people will attend a morning meeting rather than a night meeting.



Prom Royalty

Hot Springs County High School Prom Queen Kimberlee Robbins and King Vinchinzo Castle were crowned during Grand March Saturday. For more photos from prom see page A8

-Lara Love photo