



Boys take second at state

by Cindy Glasson

The Thermopolis boys and girls track teams ended their season strong at the State Meet last week.

The boys team had five all-state members and a second place finish while the girls had one all-state member and a fifth place final.

The boys also set eight personal records and broke one school record over the weekend with the girls breaking five personal records.

The new school record was set in the 4x400 relay consisting of Jacob Hart, Domanic Jensen, Ryan Bradshaw and Choc Maddock with a time of 3:29.99.

Those athletes named to the All-State team

include Jules Ward, Jacob Hart, Choc Maddock, Domanic Jensen, Ryan Bradshaw and Cody Bjorhus.

See page 6 for photos.

Girls (48.50 points) 5th overall

Jules Ward (22 points) – 800M, 6th, 2:28.51; 1600M, 2nd, 5:32.88; 3200M, 1st, 12:03.54; 4x400, 5th.

Zoe Stehlin (15 points) – 100M, 4th, 13.49; 200M, 6th, 28.22; 400M, 3rd, 60.52 (personal record); 4x400, 5th.

Kailli Johansen (5.5 points) – pole vault, 3rd (tie), 7'0".

Haley McDermott (2 points) – 4x400, 5th (personal record); 4x800, 5th.

Haylee Hoffman (1 point) – high jump, 8th, 4'8".

Makayla George (1 point) – 4x400, 5th.

Kayla Conner (1 point) – 4x800, 5th.

Maggie Ryan (1 point) – 4x800, 5th.

Stacy Lewis (1 point) – 4x800, 5th; 4x400, 5th.

Boys (67 points) 2nd overall

Jacob Hart (19 points) – 200M, 3rd, 23.58; 400M, 2nd, 51.13 (personal record); 4x100, 1st, 4x400, 1st (school record).

Choc Maddock (16 points) – 400M, 3rd, 51.40; 200M, 4th, 23.99; 4x100, 1st; 4x400, 1st (school record).

Domanic Jensen (9.75 points) – 400M, 7th, 53.48; 800M, 5th, 2:03.99 (personal record); 4x800, 4th; 4x400, 1st (school record).

Ryan Bradshaw (9 points) – 4x100, 1st; pole vault, 5th, 11'6"; 4x400, 1st, (school record).

Cody Bjorhus (5.5 points) – 100M, 7th, 11.66; 200M, 8th, 23.84; 4x100, 1st.

Hudson Rolling (4.25 points) – 3200M, 6th, 10:54.82; 4x800, 4th.

Vinny Castle (2.25 points) – 4x800, 4th; pole vault, 8th, 11'0".

Cullen Becher (1.25 points) – 4x800, 4th.

Rain causes mud slides, road closures

by Cindy Glasson

Mother Nature reared her ugly head over Memorial Day weekend, bringing rain to the Big Horn Basin, which created unstable conditions in Wind River Canyon south of Thermopolis.

After a week of rain, things turned loose in the canyon on Sunday bringing rocks, trees and mud, up to eight feet deep in some places, down on the roadway as well as the railroad tracks.

According to the Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT) there are a total of 10 areas along the 13-mile stretch of canyon road that are affected.

Crews have been working through the daylight hours since Sunday to clear the road with help coming in from Meeteetse and Worland on the north end of the canyon and Riverton, Shoshoni and Lander on the south end.

Close call

Many travelers going through the canyon on Sunday had close calls with rocks and debris as well as poor visibility due to the pouring rain before the road was closed.

One Thermopolis local who works for WYDOT, Glen Thomas, had a particularly close call after dark on Sunday as he was working to clear the road.

According to Thomas, he was removing rocks and debris with a bulldozer when suddenly a cascade of rocks and mud slid down the canyon wall in front of him. Seconds later, a second barrage of rocks and mud trapped him from behind.

Not wanting to take any more chances, Thomas jumped from the dozer and scrambled over the rocks in the dark, heading on foot back to town. He made it a couple of miles before a sheriff's deputy picked him up and brought him home.

"It scared me," Thomas said. "I just left the dozer there. We weren't sure it would even be there when we got back this morning."

Because of the threat of additional mudslides, WYDOT determined it wasn't safe to be working after dark and have limited their time to daylight hours only.

One of the largest areas of destruction is about one-third of the way into the canyon from Thermopolis.

Boulders the size of cars, entire trees up-rooted from the earth and a massive amount of mud and water took out over 300 yards of guardrail on the south side of the road.

The amount of water and debris creates an issue with "under-cutting" of the roadway, which means the pavement could crumble under pressure, including cars driving over it.

WYDOT has brought in engineers and construction specialists to survey the roadway to determine if the road will be safe



More than 300 yards of guardrail were destroyed in Sunday's rock slide in Wind River Canyon. Here, crews from WYDOT work to move tons of mud, rocks, trees and other debris that roared down the canyon wall toward the river. – Cindy Glasson photo

to drive on or if areas will need to be torn up and repaved.

WYDOT opened US 20/WY 789 at 10 a.m. Wednesday. There will be reduced speeds some areas.

Railroad

Ironically, it was just five years ago last week when Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad (BNSF) had a train derailment in Wind River Canyon due to a rockslide.

Fortunately, in this case, no trains were on the tracks at the time of the various slides, but there were several cars on a siding in the Wolf Creek area that barely escaped being knocked into the river.

Matt Jones with BNSF said they have identified several slide locations that have left debris on the tracks. The amount of damage in terms of feet or yards of track is unknown at this time as crews have not been able to get to all of the areas yet.

Jones said they are in the process of cleaning things up, which could take 24 to 48 hours, however, if the weather turns

wet again, that could delay the cleanup.

After the derailment five years ago BNSF had tremor sensors installed in the canyon as an early warning system to prevent trains from blindly running into rocks or slides.

Jones said the sensors worked well, but they already had maintenance of way crews in the area monitoring conditions before the slides occurred.

By Tuesday morning, rails and ties were arriving in Thermopolis for repairs.

In the county

While the big news over the weekend for most people was the closing of Wind River Canyon, it wasn't the only weather related incident that went on in Hot Springs County.

Emergency Management Coordinator Bill Gordon said the county received one to two inches of rain on Sunday with the eastern end of the county getting between four and five inches of rain.

And that's where the problems started.

Gordon said a flash flood watch was issued on Sunday morning, which turned into a warning situation by around 2 p.m.

By 5 p.m. water was running high on Buffalo Creek.

Gordon said he and sheriff's deputy Danny Pebbles determined by midnight Sunday, the way Kirby Creek was running, it would reach Lucerne by morning. And it did, flooding fields by Monday morning.

Gordon gave kudos to Pebbles who personally went door to door along Kirby Creek to warn residents of what was to come.

The major contributor to the flooding issues was Spring Creek, which received an inch to an inch and a half of rain per hour on Sunday, sending water roaring down through East Thermopolis causing flooding in low-lying areas on its way to the Big Horn River.

Several residences had to be evacuated as water overflowed Carter Ranch Road for a couple of hours.

Currently, Buffalo Creek Road is closed due to a washout from the flooding and upper Kirby Creek Road is closed from Black Mountain Road because of a failed culvert.

Throughout the weekend Gordon said the Regional Response Team out of Worland was on stand by with crews, a sandbag filler and other equipment if needed.

At this time Gordon is confident the west end of the county could probably still hold some water if rain begins again, but said the east end of the county could really use a break from the weather for at least a couple of days.

Fremont County closed Dry Bridger Creek, Bridger Creek Road and Nowood Road in the Lysite area Tuesday afternoon because motorists attempting to use them as an alternate route to Thermopolis and Washakie County have become stranded due to impassable conditions.

Motorists may be subject to fines and reimbursement to Search and Rescue for expenses should they not obey the road closures and get stuck.

Changes coming at HSCHS

by Cindy Glasson

Things are going to get "shook up" a little at Hot Springs County High School next fall with some changes Principal Scott Shoop reported to the School Board at their meeting last Thursday night.

One of the things that will change is the bell schedule for students.

In past years, high school students who wished to leave campus for lunch were out at various fast food places at the same time as most businesses were having their lunch hour, too. This sometimes created issues with students being tardy returning from lunch and employees at local businesses sometimes returning late from lunch.

To keep from overwhelming eating establishments during the traditional lunch hour for businesses, the high school will be having a different lunch period than before. Shoop hopes this will cut down on the tardies being recorded.

Another change coming down in the fall revolves around advisory period.

Currently, students must all take the advisory period, but next fall students in academic good

standing, with no tardies or other school related issues will have the option to skip advisory.

However, if a student is absent, they must attend advisory period the following day.

While it won't affect all grade levels, it has been decided that freshmen will begin school a day earlier than their upper-classmen counterparts. This will give the incoming freshmen a chance to get settled in the high school environment.

Shoop would like to see the elimination of the community service requirement for future graduates.

As it is now, the students are very negative about having to perform a certain number of community service hours in order to graduate and it's sometimes difficult to determine what is or is not considered community service.

Instead, Shoop is proposing making it a graduation recognition based item. For example, students who complete a certain number of community service hours would wear a neck cord at graduation recognizing their accomplishment.

Another item to come before the board was the awarding of the paving bid for the district this summer.

State Rep. visits board

by Zachary White

State Rep. Elaine Harvey, R-Lovell, gave some advice to the Hot Springs County Memorial Hospital Board during their meeting Tuesday.

However, Harvey pointed out before she gave advice that she was hesitant to do so.

She informed the board that they need to be the ones actively seeking out a hospital district if they want one, as hospital employees do not receive positive responses from the public.

"Since you don't have a hospital district, you need to get one," she said.

As the chairman of the House Labor, Health and Social Services committee, Harvey was invited to attend the meeting in order to inform the board about the current state of health care measures at the state level.

According to Harvey, the state is paying out money to some hospitals in order to help them reach 100 days worth of cash on hand. Days cash on hand is the number of days a hospital can operate with the money they have readily available.

Currently Hot Springs Memorial has a little more than 80 days cash on hand.

Harvey said the hospital should be getting nearly \$200,000 from the state. But that doesn't amount to much as a single day's cash on hand at Hot Springs Memorial is about \$42,500.

Still, that amount is better than nothing as

Harvey pointed out there will almost certainly be no money coming from the state next year.

"You've got to do everything you can to help yourselves," she said.

A pyrrhic solution at best, Harvey did offer another quick fix. She said the legislature could require the County Commissioners to pay one mill levy to county hospitals around the state.

Also during the meeting, the board discussed changing the hospital policy regarding piercings and tattoos.

The proposed policy offered up by the department directors at the hospital limits the number of piercings at work to two piercings in the ears.

The old policy allowed ear piercing and nose piercing.

Tattoos were allowed to be worn if covering them up required too much work.

The proposed rule would require that all tattoos be covered.

But the new rules didn't pass the board as some members had problems with their potential side effects.

"I don't want to eliminate people from our applicant pool," board member Breez Daniels said.

Other board members pointed out that piercings are a generational thing, and people shouldn't be evaluated based on how they express themselves with their bodies.