

Schoenewald takes volunteer position

by Holly Thomas

The Hot Springs County Museum was busy the evening of Monday, June 22. The Wyoming Business Council’s Access to Capital Solutions and Strategies presentation by Ryan Whitehead, Business Finance Program Manager from Cheyenne, held an informative discussion at 5:30 p.m.

Whitehead presented the public with multiple loan and investment programs offered by the Business Council and encouraged local banks to investigate these programs to offer local small business owners more options for funding. Many of the programs offer low interest rates and can help downtown business owners improve the infrastructure and appearance of main street buildings.

The Main Street Thermopolis board met directly after the Business Council at 6:15 p.m. After reviewing the current financial report, Oktobrewfest was the main discussion for old business.

One Eyed Buffalo owner Damien Oliver resigned from his positions on the board which included his involvement in Oktobrewfest activities. Whether Oktobrewfest would be ran similarly to last year or be more representative of a brewfest had not been decided. The group decided that, with as many details that still needed to be researched, Oktobrewfest should be re-assigned to the promotional committee. Due to time constraints, the strategic planning committee moved their meeting time to accommodate the promotional committee directly after the evening’s meeting. The strategic planning committee’s next meeting will be August 27 directly after the board meeting.

Board member Lea Schoenewald resigned from her position to volunteer for the Main Street Manager Volunteer position. This position came about with the acceptance of Main Street Thermopolis as an Affiliate Main Street community in January of this year. The purpose of this position will be to give Main Street Thermopolis a face and be available to talk to downtown business owners about opportunities to help their businesses succeed and improve the face of downtown.

Schoenewald is very passionate about the rejuvenation of downtown Thermopolis, and with her long-standing ties to the community, the board feels she is an excellent fit for the position. While discussing her new role, she remembered Thermopolis from her childhood as having a vibrant and busy downtown area and this is what she wishes to restore.

“I am very honored and excited to take on this position, and I will do everything in my power to help Thermopolis and downtown business owners succeed,” said Schoenewald.

Shurie Scheel volunteered to replace Schoenewald’s position as Secretary.

Term limits for board members were set for staggered lengths. With ten board positions available, three positions were appointed a 1-year term, three positions were appointed a 2-year term, and four positions were appointed a 3-year term.

To coincide with the board’s annual budget deadline, the Main Street Thermopolis First Annual Meeting was set for the month of June 2016.



Lea Schoenewald

School continues shortened weeks

by Cindy Glasson

Hot Springs County School District No. 1 has decided to continue with the four-and a half-day school week for the 2015-2016 school year.

The intent with the shorter week was to ensure students were getting more time with their teachers as well as opening up Friday afternoons for sports and other activities without a loss of class time, especially on the high school level.

Since the change, the district has been able to schedule professional development for educators on Friday afternoons rather than having to take time away from the classroom, creating more instruction time for students.

The numbers keep getting better, too, when it comes to hours in the classroom.

For the 2013-2014 school year, just three percent of the total learning time for students was lost to absentee teacher/coaches. In 2014-2015, that number dropped to 2.94%

A breakdown of instruction time shows the school district actually has more instruction time in each of the three schools than is required by the state, giving our students more

time to learn.

On an elementary level, the state requires 900 hours of instruction time. At Ralph Witters Elementary, our students received 1,080 hours this past year.

Middle school students are required to have 1,050 hours under their belt, however, students at Thermopolis Middle School managed to have 1,129 hours.

The high school cut things a little close this year with the state requiring 1,100 hours and students spending 1,112 hours in the classroom.



photo by Dennis Nierzwicki

A super slide for a super hero

Gunner Morningstar got to be one of the first children to use the new Thermopolis Middle School playground. It was ready to be enjoyed on Thursday after the crew put down the last of the wood chips.

Shaffers, Jones named to Wyoming Cowboy Hall of Fame

by Holly Thomas

You can see it in a person’s eyes when they are passionate about something. You can hear it in their voice and you can see it in their work when they are doing what they love. It’s something a person spends a lifetime working towards and passes on to the next generation; and in the cowboy state, it’s that cowboy way of life that so many live for and the Wyoming Cowboy Hall of Fame (WCHF) is preserving.

2014 marked the first year for WCHF inductees, and recently 2015 Honorees were chosen. Nominations were submitted online between January 1 and March 31, organized and voted on by county, and then submitted to the state board for review. Hot Springs County is a part of Region 8 and had three honorees chosen: Ed “Eddie” and Peggy Shaffer and Dennis “Denny” Jones.

Ed and Peggy Shaffer started their ranching career together on the Mill Iron Ranch in 1967 and a year



Ed and Peggy Shaffer

later the couple moved their growing family to the HD Ranch on Owl Creek. In 1977 Ed became ranch manager in charge of looking after 800 cows and 600 yearlings; but by 1989 his job grew as the HD expanded to over 80,000 acres putting Eddie in charge of 2000 cows and 1800 yearlings. Ed and Peggy worked the ranch together as a team, riding and working cows together, but when it came to cooking, Peggy fed everyone well.

The HD sold in 2000 to Frank Robbins and Ed and Peggy managed the ranch for one more year before retiring and moving to Thermopolis. The couple spent 33 years working on the ranch.

Dennis Jones began his ranching career as a small child on his family’s ranch. After school, Dennis joined the Navy and upon his return in 1954 he and his brother leased the family ranch and cattle from their father.

For three years, Dennis and wife Caroline ran the Northern Cheyenne Steer Enterprise in Lame Deer, MT where they ran over 4,000 yearlings. In 1974,

Dennis moved his family back to Thermopolis and ran the family ranch until 2005 when he sold it to his daughter and son-in-law Jack and Ellen Baird.

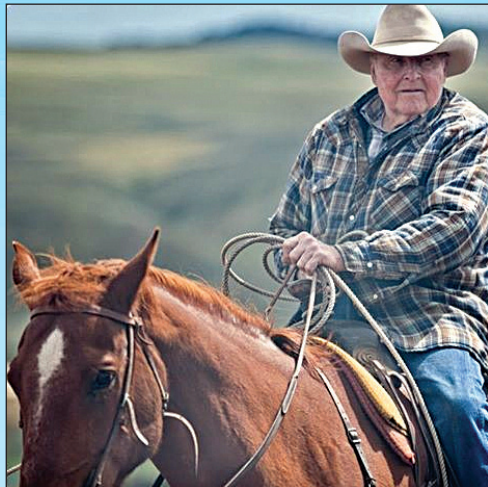
Over the years, Dennis was active in rodeo, served as bank director, and was a member of the Wyoming Stock Growers Association. He continues to be active on the ranch when he can and enjoys sharing his experiences with friends and family.

The men and women that commit their lives to the ranch don’t do it for the money. They do it because they love it. They love the culture, the lifestyle, and, of course, the horses and the cattle.

“[The cowboy lifestyle] is a culture. A good honest culture,” said Eddie Shaffer with a nod and a smile.

When asking about his feelings about being inducted in the WCHF he said proudly, “Oh, it’s a great honor.” His wife Peggy passed in 2012 but his eyes glistened and he added, “Peggy would have liked it a lot.”

Ellen Baird described her father Denny’s reaction to the news of being hon-



Denny Jones

ored as very proud and so surprised. Traditional cowboy methods have been important to Denny and his family. Baird described a few of their traditions, “We still use a wood fire for branding. It’s a natural resource on the ranch. We have an abundant supply of dead trees and we never use propane. That’s because of Denny. Also, all of our ropers still throw an overhand. Dad was an artist at overhanding.”

The cowboy legacy that these individuals are leaving is what the WCHF is trying to preserve. The next generation that holds the same sparkle in their eye when it comes to riding horses and chasing cows will be able to look up to their family, friends, and these honorees that helped pave and preserve the way. The advice they are leaving for the younger generation is simple.

“Be honest, hard working, and you’ll make it,” said Ellen Baird on the advice Denny Jones gave.

“They’ve gotta get on a good ranch and learn the ways. It’s something you just don’t go out there and learn in a week,” said Ed Shaffer.