



Ever popular Demo Derby Saturday

It's that time of year again. Time for crashes, bashes and the roar of engines as the Thermopolis-Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce hosts the 2015 Thermopolis Demolition Derby.

The event will be held at the Hot Springs County Fairgrounds Saturday, Aug. 15, starting at 6 p.m.

Grand prize this year will be \$3,000 cash with the second place winner taking home \$1,000, third place \$700 and fourth place \$500

along with trophies for the top four.

In addition to the main event, there will also be a truck derby and a men's and women's "Herbie" derby with \$1,000, \$500 and \$250 cash prizes awarded for the top three winners.

There is a \$50 entry fee for drivers.

Tickets are \$10 in advance for adults, \$4 for seniors and kids 5-12-years old and may be pur-

chased at Finishing Touches, Needful Things, Carquest, Storyteller, O'Reilly Auto Parts, Black Bear Café, Reese and Ray's IGA, the Senior Center or at the chamber office. Tickets will also be available at the door.

The first Demolition Derby in Thermopolis was held in 1975. The derby continues to be a popular event consistently packing the grandstands at the fairgrounds.

The derby is sponsored by the

Chamber of Commerce with support from the Hot Springs County Fair Board and numerous sponsor businesses.

For many it is a family affair with fathers and sons and husbands and wives both competing or working on cars for each other.

Bring the whole family and enjoy this survival of the fittest vehicle battle.

For more information please contact the chamber at 864-3192.



photo by Dennis Nierzwicki

Can we keep him?

Grant Coates hesitates before petting a wondrous and friendly velociraptor the Wyoming Dinosaur Center staff let loose for children to see during their 20th year anniversary celebration.

Town Council reviews water rates study

by Holly Thomas

Starting off the Tuesday, August 4 Town Council meeting was the approval of a catering permit for the fair grounds during the Demo Derby.

Town citizen Hanes "Butch" Hall approached council with a request for assistance constructing a well for raw water. Assistant to the Mayor, Fred Crosby instructed Hall that all he needed was a permit which he could apply for online. Hall's second request was for a simpler process to request information regarding town laws. Council informed Hall that all town laws were public information which is available at Town Hall, online, and at the public library. Finally, Hall asked about fencing rules which council explained privacy fences could not be built in a way that would obstruct the view for traffic.

Anthony Barnett presented the recommended chip seal project bid on behalf of the town engineer. The bid, sent from 71 Construction out of Riverton in the amount of \$93,271, was approved.

Town attorney, Mike Messenger, recommended council approve the second reading of the code upgrade ordinance and make adjustments before the third reading. Council approved the second reading.

Crosby reviewed multiple vac trucks of various models, but ultimately recommended a 2015 Mack truck with an 80-barrel tank located in Salt Lake City. The truck came in under budget and Ernie Slagle (Department of Public Works) described it as a good truck that would work for the town needs. Council approved purchase of the vac truck.

Lastly, the council discussed the recent town water rates study conducted by private consultant, Carl Brown. Brown was contracted to review the town's water rate situation which has been losing money at a regular rate for the last two years. Currently the water utility owes the town's general fund over \$1 million to compensate for shortfalls. Based on 2013 figures, Brown recommended increasing overall town util-

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Black Mountain Road improvements planned

by Cindy Glasson

GDA Engineers held a public meeting with members of the steering committee last Thursday evening to discuss the Black Mountain Road planning study.

The purpose of the study is to determine what improvements are needed to upgrade nearly 9 miles of Black Mountain Road to make it safer for those traveling the road as well as meeting the needs for Hot Springs County in the future.

The meeting was the final one before GDA puts together a series of proposals based on input from the public and information gathered from their study. At least three alternative plans of action will be presented at the end of the study.

Currently, the road is experiencing drainage issues which are undermining the road surface and its base, deterioration of the roadway has led to a rutted, rough surface creating unsafe driving conditions and the surfacing has passed its usual life which will undoubtedly lead to a sharp decline in its usefulness over the coming years.

The section of road in question is approximately 11 miles from Lucerne and is used by ranchers moving their herds along with various oil and gas companies as well as hunters and others using the area for recreation.

GDA determined an upgrade to the road was necessary on a number of fronts.

According to records from the Hot Springs County Assessor's Office, tax revenues from the area's oil and gas industry amounted to \$12 million over the past 10 years with \$1.13 million in 2014 alone.

Deterioration of the road would make it difficult to access the wells and pipelines in the area, which could directly impact the county's tax base.

Use of the road by ranchers is another driving factor for an upgrade.

In the spring and fall, many ranchers use the road to move their herds from one grazing area

to another. Most of the time, that moving is done by semi-truck.

With the deterioration of the road and the sharpness of the curves, moving the herds can sometimes be a harrowing endeavor.

In addition, some of the ranchers in the area have grazing land on one side of the road while

accounting of all the culverts along the section of road in question and found significant culvert and drainage issues abound.

Dusty Spomer with GDA said a majority of the culverts in the area are in a significant state of decline, showing erosion, sink holes, obstructions and damage to the point of being non-functioning,



Drainage issues are very obvious along a stretch of Black Mountain Road that is being surveyed for repair.

the water supply for their herds is on the other side of the road.

GDA determined there would be no impact on the environment should reconstruction of the road be deemed the proper choice for the future.

Studies of air quality, water quality, wetlands, floodplains, farmlands and historic or archaeological categories indicated no potential environmental impacts as long as construction stayed within the current alignment of the road.

During their field investigation, GDA made an

adding to the issue of drainage in the area.

According to GDA's study, 53% of the road's surface has failed with 37% in poor to serious condition.

Using ground penetrating radar they found as far as rutting of the road surface is concerned, 60% of it is fair with 30% being poor. That makes for a bumpy ride. As a matter of fact, it tells us 75% of the road ranks as poor as far as smoothness of ride.

The way the road was originally constructed and the various overlays on it over the years has

been called into question as part of the problem.

However, GDA found the asphalt and base thickness, on average, is within normal levels. There are some sections though that have just two inches of asphalt over five to six inches of road base.

Taking all of these things into consideration, GDA used the Wyoming Department of Transportation's present serviceability scale and determined 100% of the road is in poor condition.

So how much traffic is there on Black Mountain Road?

Numbers from a 2009 field study done by Hot Springs County Road and Bridge, there is an average of 62 cars and trucks driving over this particular section of the road every day. That includes semi-truck and oil field trucks that are sometimes overweight.

While 62 is an average count, according to members of the public who attended the meeting, during hunting seasons those numbers are significantly higher for short periods of time.

Amazingly, considering the deterioration of the road, the sharpness of the curves and the speed at which most are driving the road, the crash data on the road is surprisingly low.

After visiting with the brand inspector, GDA found there is generally one cow killed on the road, on average, per year. Just 31 incidents were reported to the sheriff's office between 1995 and

2007. Those incidents included vehicle accidents, multi-vehicle accidents and run-ins with wildlife.

The biggest hurdle facing the county with the work that will need done is funding and where that funding will come from. Each of the alternatives that will be presented later will not only include the initial cost but the costs for maintenance in the upcoming years.

The next public meeting on the Black Mountain Road survey will be held Oct. 6 at 6 p.m. at the county annex.