



GDA updates commissioners on airport

The Hot Springs County Commissioners received an update from GDA Engineers on the progress at the new county airport west of Thermopolis at their second meeting of the month of August.

GDA has been working with High Plains Power and the Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT) on the road closed gate that will be placed just past the entrance to the new airport.

Per the agreement between WYDOT and the county, the county will be responsible for a new meter on the gate, however, WYDOT will take over the maintenance of the gate and meter after installation.

In addition, the commissioners are sched-

uled to open bids at their Sept. 2 meeting for new fuel tanks for the airport.

According to GDA, they have contacted various manufacturers of the tanks and equipment needed and discovered production is between 70 and 120 days. With that in mind, a 100 day limit was placed on bidders in order to have the tanks installed, filled and ready to go on opening day, Nov. 7.

Seal coating and markings for the runway have been going on this week and should be finished by Friday or Saturday, making the runway ready for its first touch down of an aircraft.

The commissioners also signed a contract with Redd Roofing during their meeting. The

contract is for replacement of the Hot Springs County Museum's roof at a cost of \$89,763.

Road and Bridge superintendent Dave Schlager came to the commissioners with a question he's been getting from various contractors regarding the purchase of gravel from the county's Brown gravel pit.

Schlager said he didn't feel it was right to be competing with other sellers of gravel in the area, but wanted to touch base with the commissioners on the situation.

The commissioners agreed with Schlager, saying they didn't feel the county should be selling gravel to outside contractors that has been set aside specifically for use on our county roads.



photo by Holly Thomas

Ready for a Dino-mite school year

Second grade student Carson Christensen is welcomed by a friendly velociraptor for his first day of school Wednesday at Ralph Witters Elementary.

School board updated on finished summer projects

by Cindy Glasson

Although students have been away from their desks for the summer, that doesn't mean everything came to a halt in the school district.

Maintenance supervisor Jere Apland filled the Hot Springs County School District Board of Directors in on what projects had been done over the summer during their meeting Thursday, Aug. 20.

Most have probably noticed a lot of paving going on in the parking lots at the schools, and Apland says that is now all completed, including striping, just waiting for the first day of classes.

Some major work was done on the AG building, specifically the replacement of several windows in the building.

Apland said they ran into a bit of a curve when they discovered some of the window openings had no bracing in them. That meant the windows themselves had been holding things together. Unfortunately, that added another \$5,000 to the project.

There has been a good deal of crack sealing going on as well, especially at the middle school.

Apland said the sealing should be done every five years and some areas were closer to six or seven years since their last fill. Now that everything has been filled, he plans to keep the work on a strict schedule to hopefully prevent the need for asphalt replacement in the future.

Some classrooms and other areas of the schools have also received a fresh coat of paint over the summer.

"I quit counting at 200 gallons," he said.

Everyone has probably seen the new playground equipment at the middle school by now, and it has been getting a good work out since going up.

Concrete pads have been poured in the area, including footers at the corners so picnic tables can be added later. The footers will allow some type of canopy to be added, too, to provide some shade.

In the interest of student safety, several plans were drawn up this past year to address security issues at district buildings.

This past June, members of the School Facilities Division of the State of Wyoming spent two days in Thermopolis reviewing not only the plans, but the buildings themselves.

With some new rules and regulations put in place by the state regarding school facilities and student safety, our plans had to be thrown out the window.

The state has determined the top eight needs in relation to security and wants all the districts to begin with those first eight needs.

Apland said he will be attending a regional meeting in the next few weeks to find out exactly what the district will have to do to meet the regulations, but initially it will cover vestibules in each of the main buildings and communications issues.

Originally the district was allowed to write the work orders for what they wished to do, however this time around, the state will be writing the work orders. How everything is implemented will be up to the individual districts.

Apland said the 35-page report from the state can be found on the school facilities website at sfd.wyo.gov.

More than \$10 million doled out in final county budget

by Cindy Glasson

The Hot Springs County Commissioners had just over \$10 million to work with this budget season, but with a little trimming here and there, they managed to cover everything.

While some requests for funding were significantly higher, the commissioners were frugal in their spending knowing next year the monies coming in will be tighter.

They did have to dip into the cash reserve fund to meet their total appropriations - the amount was just \$200,000.

Large cuts were made to the requests from the sheriff's office, jail, museum, emergency management, senior center and EDC.

The sheriff's office had \$27,900 cut from their original budget request, but lost just \$3,750 from last year's budget. They will work with \$365,786 for the coming year.

The budget request for the jail was trimmed the most, losing \$40,650 from what they had asked for.

However, the final budget for the jail remained the same for the coming year as

their 2014-15 budget at \$351,060.

The Hot Springs County Museum's annual budget was dropped to \$75,000, down \$15,000 from last year's \$90,000.

Emergency Management also took a hit, getting their budget trimmed to \$14,400, down from last year's \$28,145.

The EDC and the senior center suffered cuts as well with the EDC receiving \$20,000 this year, \$5,000 less than last year.

The senior center will receive \$70,000 this year compared to last year's \$80,000.

Any of the departments or requesting entities that received increases in their requested funds over last year found the numbers were modest.

The clerk's office will receive just over \$3,200 more in their upcoming budget and the treasurer's office will see just \$2,100 more for the year.

Smaller bumps were seen in the county attorney's office with \$1,140 and the coroner's office with a \$200 addition to their budget.