



Travel and Tourism Board goes mobile

By Durward D. Jones
Carl Lebya took over the reins of the Travel and Tourism Board as he called the November meeting to order in his new position as the board president.
Tourism director Amanda Moeller gave a brief update for the financial report. Reporting that there was a 2% income fall compared to last year.
Moeller also reported that the billboards west of town on Highway 120 were up and that many residents have said what a great improvement they are from the previous version. Though there was some discussion on the "ARTOPOLIS" board and how it was a bit of a challenge to read.

Moving on to old business a motion was made to enter into a contract with Touch Point Designs for a mobile app, the motion carried after some discussion of the apps capabilities.
Lebya discussed with the board the need for a work session over the Special Event Funding process. Saying that the board needs to develop a marketing plan and they need to spend some time on it to make it effective. The work session will take place in December.
Under new business the board was reminded that the Governor's Conference was coming up and it is a great event to go to. Moeller asked the board if there was anyone who wanted to participate in the Rocky Mountain International Roundup, an event that is

designed to capture international attention.
As the new president Carl Lebya asked the room what was new in their businesses during the open floor discussion. Treasure Angie Vetos reported that with the new Disney dinosaur movie "The Good Dinosaur" coming out after Thanksgiving that the Dinosaur Center has been a source of information for Wyoming Office of Tourism. The Wyoming Office of Tourism is promoting Wyoming as the real life environment for the movie.
The board discussed the benefits of electronic billboards and whether Gillette is a viable place with the coal mine slowing production.
The board will meet next on December 8 at 2 p.m.



photo by Lara Love

Planes hit runway for first time

Nate Messenger, FBO, guides an airplane into its parking place at the new Hot Springs County Airport Saturday during the grand opening.

New Hot Springs County Airport opens

by Lara Love
A sizable crowd braved the wind to attend the grand opening of the Hot Springs County Airport northwest of Thermopolis.
The celebration began Saturday at 9:30 a.m. when the first plane landed at the airport, signaling the lifting of the NOTAM (notice to airmen) and the opening of the airport to the public.
Flying in to join the celebration were Wyoming Gov. Matt Mead, U.S. Sen. John Barrasso, former Gov. Dave Freudenthal and U.S. Rep. Cynthia Lummis.
Ford Roes, quality assurance administrator with GDA Engineers, opened the ceremony by welcoming everyone and inviting Hot Springs County Commissioner Chairman Brad Basse to the podium.

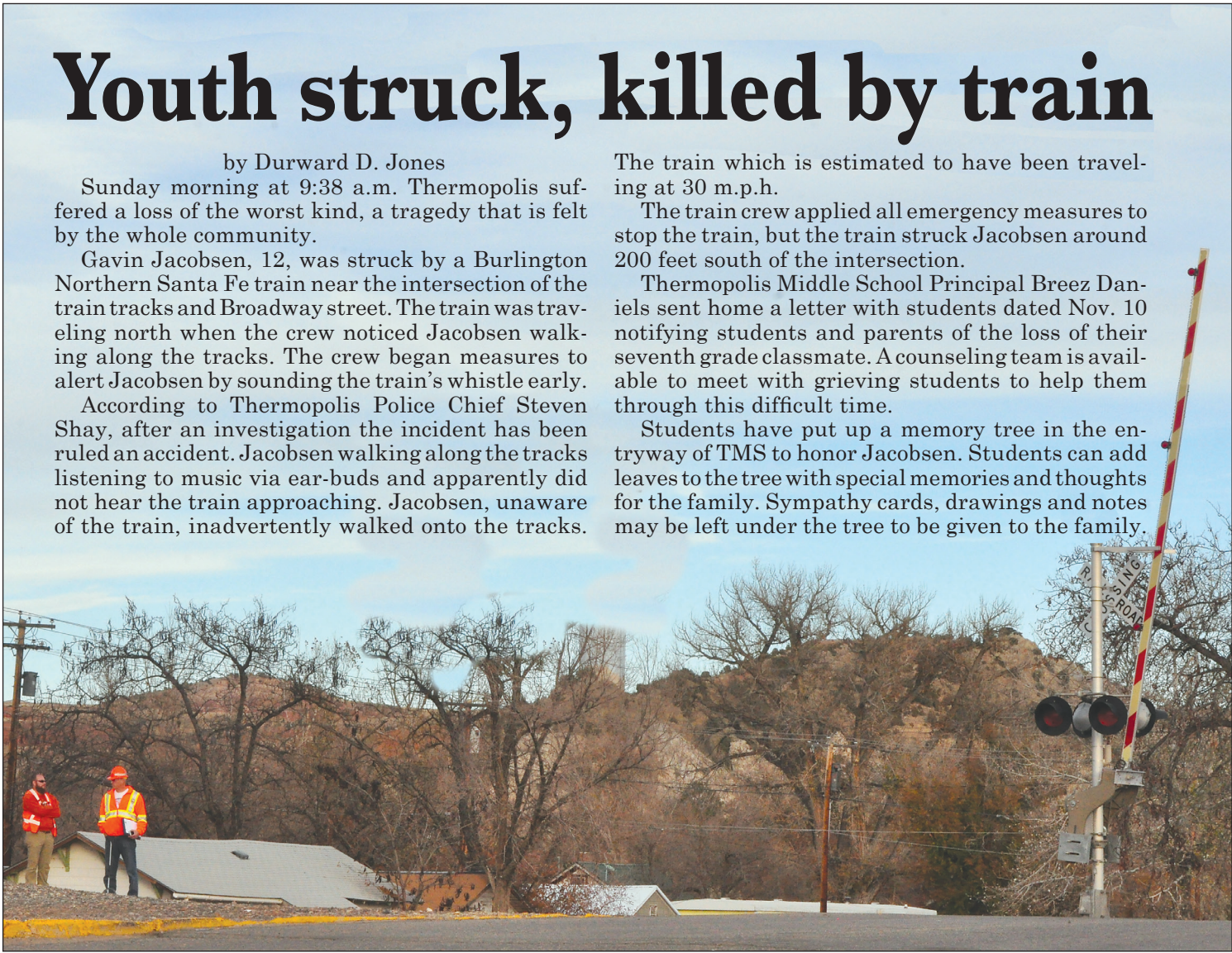
Basse spoke of starting down the path to a new airport in 2003 with the encouragement of WYDOT Aeronautics. He explained the Hot Springs County portion of the 22 million dollar project came in at around 4 percent with the FAA contributing 82 percent, WYDOT Aeronautics stepped up with 13 percent with the remaining 1 percent coming from State Loan and Investment Board funds.
"Hot Springs County has gotten the bargain of a lifetime with the promise of help through entitlement monies for maintaining this airport into the future," said Basse.
Basse thanked community members for their involvement in process.
According to Basse, Tim and Sylvia Lippincott of Aero Plus constructed a new hanger at the HSC airport along

with eight T-hangers that were relocated from the Thermopolis Airport.
Basse also thanked various past FBOs from Thermopolis Airport including Gwenda Urbikit, Ray and Jocelyn Arey, Brett Crowley and Tara Chesnut along with JT Aviation.
Nate Messenger with Owl Creek Aviation is the FBO at HSC Airport. Basse praised Messenger as a skilled mechanic saying he has great potential.
On a personal note, Basse said he was honored to have served with six men over the past 13 years that have been friends, mentors, colleagues and community leaders. Karl Allen, Charlie Stump Jr., John Lumley, Dr. Frank Manning, Mike Baker and Tom Ryan served as commissioners at various times over those 13 years.
"It was an honor to be able to name

the access road to the airport after Frank - a recognized community leader long before his term as county commissioner," said Basse. Manning passed away in 2010.
Basse said in 2010 the county selected an engineering firm for design and construction as well as land acquisition. "I think the wisest decision we made in the entire project was the selection of GDA Engineers to carry us to the end," said Basse.
Basse praised former Hot Springs County Clerk Hans Odde, referring to him as "the fourth commissioner." He explained he was not using the term in what is the traditionally derogatory manner among commissioners, but in recognition of Odde's hard work, well beyond the scope of the duties of a county clerk.

Administrative assistant Penny Herdt was also praised by Basse for her thoroughness and accuracy.
Governor Matt Mead spoke next praising locals for their grit, guts and vision.
Senator John Barrasso gave a lively speech telling the crowd "We are shaping the future of Wyoming here."
Former Governor Dave Freudenthal, who lived on Owl Creek while he was growing up in Hot Springs County, told the crowd, "I hope you view this as the beginning of a really bright future, not the end of an arduous process which inflicted a fair amount of pain around the community, but a process that having gone through it you know now that you can make a difference."

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Youth struck, killed by train

by Durward D. Jones
Sunday morning at 9:38 a.m. Thermopolis suffered a loss of the worst kind, a tragedy that is felt by the whole community.
Gavin Jacobsen, 12, was struck by a Burlington Northern Santa Fe train near the intersection of the train tracks and Broadway street. The train was traveling north when the crew noticed Jacobsen walking along the tracks. The crew began measures to alert Jacobsen by sounding the train's whistle early.
According to Thermopolis Police Chief Steven Shay, after an investigation the incident has been ruled an accident. Jacobsen walking along the tracks listening to music via ear-buds and apparently did not hear the train approaching. Jacobsen, unaware of the train, inadvertently walked onto the tracks.

The train which is estimated to have been traveling at 30 m.p.h.
The train crew applied all emergency measures to stop the train, but the train struck Jacobsen around 200 feet south of the intersection.
Thermopolis Middle School Principal Breez Daniels sent home a letter with students dated Nov. 10 notifying students and parents of the loss of their seventh grade classmate. A counseling team is available to meet with grieving students to help them through this difficult time.
Students have put up a memory tree in the entryway of TMS to honor Jacobsen. Students can add leaves to the tree with special memories and thoughts for the family. Sympathy cards, drawings and notes may be left under the tree to be given to the family.

Harvest Moon Ball set for Saturday

by Lara Love
The Ag Citizen of the Year and Rising Star award winner will be announced at the Harvest Moon Ball Saturday, Nov. 21 at the Hot Springs County Fair Building. The ball will feature a dinner and dance beginning at 6 p.m.
The Century Award will be presented to the Shumway/Ready families. The Shumway/Ready families originate back to 1908 when Edith (Ready) Shumway's father Jesse Ready and his brother Abe settled on Owl Creek in 1908. Leonard and Edith Shumway settled on Mud Creek in 1938.
The following are the nominees for Ag Citizen of the Year:
Chip Axtell
Axtell is a fourth-generation rancher. He runs a cow/calf operation, heifer breeding program and raises hay for the livestock, with his wife, Jennifer, and four children. In addition to his ranch responsibilities, he's been on the Weed and Pest Board for 5 years, serves on the Kirby Ditch Board, coaches recreation football in the fall, and leads the Catholic Youth Organization for his church. Being involved in the community and his children's lives is very important to Axtell. "I was never involved in 4-H or FFA when I

was young and that's probably why I'm so involved with my kids in their 4-H projects. It's such a worthwhile program and they have learned so much," Axtell says. He also served as an area representative in the Wyoming Stockgrowers Association and is a member of the Farm Bureau.
In Axtell's line of work, time is always an issue, and he always seems to find the time to be where he is needed. Ranching is a 24/7 job with no sick days, but there are perks that make it worth it. His job allows him to work with his family, teaching his children the value of hard work and perseverance. Working together to get the job done makes a strong family and a bright future for his children.
Ray Shaffer
Shaffer was born, raised and educated in Hot Springs County, and has been active in both 4-H and FFA, serving as president of both organizations. Except for 10 years working in the uranium and petroleum industries, Shaffer has lived on a farm or ranch. For the last 33 years, he and his wife Carol have owned and operated the North 40 Ranch on Owl Creek north of Thermopolis. They ran a livestock operation for several years, but are currently farming - raising hay and small grains. Shaffer retired two years ago after serving as Hot Springs County Road and Bridge Department supervisor.

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