



Win a vacation to Waikiki Beach

by Chandler Smith

With cold, snowy weather setting in, the Thermopolis-Hot Springs County Chamber of Commerce Board approved Thursday the group's upcoming fundraiser, which will send one lucky Hot Springs County resident and a friend to Waikiki Beach, Honolulu, Hawaii.

The fundraiser is similar to a fundraiser ran last year by the board, which sold 113 tickets and raised over \$2,500 for the board. A limited number will be sold, improving buyers' chances of winning.

The winner will be given a travel credit of \$2,500 to travel to Honolulu, which, according to Executive Director Meri Ann Rush, will be

more than sufficient for both airfare and hotel stay. The beginning date of the fundraiser has yet to be decided, but tickets will be sold until the March Chamber Meet and Greet, and the lucky winner must book their trip by June 1. The drawing will take place on March 19 at Central Bank and Trust.

Also during Thursday's meeting, the board discussed organizing a weekend in July to host a hot air balloon festival. Jessica Lippincott of the Big Horn Basin Foundation suggested the idea to Rush, who researched the idea leading up to the meeting. Both Riverton and Cody have participated annually, although Cody has dropped the event due to lack of sponsors. The

board would have to pay lodging, food and propane for the hot air balloon pilots and crews, as well as mandatory insurance and for a balloon coordinator that would help solicit participation of balloon pilots.

The board did not make a decision, and instead will continue to do research to make sure the event would be worth the investment.

The board was shown prospective fliers for the upcoming Chamber Board Meet and Greets. Hosting businesses will now be charged \$25 each, which will allow the board to buy door prizes for those in attendance. The board is seeking to strengthen the Meet and Greet format in order to encourage wider participation.



photo by Chandler Smith

Holiday harmony

High school band member Darren Leonhardt plays the bass guitar during the high school Christmas Concert Thursday evening.

Hot Springs County Hall of Fame inductees

by Durward D. Jones

The Hot Springs County Hall of Fame committee is gearing up for the upcoming 2016 banquet on Saturday, Jan. 16 at 5 p.m. at the Days Inn.

Inductees in the HSC Hall of Fame are members of the community, past and present, who have been a pioneer in our community or a figure head and have made Hot Springs County a better place. This year's inductees are Dorothy Milek, Bill Smith, Doctor C. Dana Carter, John Herrin, Sr. and Dora McGarth.

Dorothy Buchanan Milek

Dorothy Milek has no peers when it comes to researching and writing the history of Hot Springs County. She has two books published in her own name and has contributed to many more. She is a charter member of the HSC Historical Society and has chaired the Pioneer Association for 50 years. She was twice honored by the Thermopolis Chamber of Commerce as Citizen of the Year.

The mother of five, she was a 4-H leader for 20 years, a school board member and head county librarian. The modest Milek has let her books and articles speak for her. In line with her abiding interest in the area, she was in-

strumental in placing both the iconic Halone Stone house and the Kirby Jail on the National Historic Register.

She has also served on the board of the HSC Museum and Cultural Center for several terms. Now retired, she still keeps her finger on the pulse of Thermopolis and Hot Springs County.

"Cody Bill" Smith

Giving credit where credit is due, Bill has said, "Everything I got, I owe to rodeo." He graduated from Cody High School in 1958 and almost immediately found his calling by riding roughstock in the Cody Night Rodeo where he earned the nickname "Cody Bill."

He began his professional rodeo career in 1961 by riding broncs, winning the RCA World Champion Saddle Bronc Rider titles in 1969, '71 and '73.

Semi-retired, he moved to Hot Springs County in 1981 and busied himself by conducting horsemanship clinics and raising high-quality Quarter Horses. In 1983, a yearly tradition began with the broke gelding sale every May and a companion production sale in the fall. The Circle 7 brand has graced the right hip

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Town water distribution system needs updated

by Durward D. Jones

Just how complicated does town water actually have to be? Turn the faucet on and there should be water, as much as you need. The water needs to be safe to drink, and ready on demand; but this comes with a caveat: a monthly price.

The Thermopolis Town Council just came off a long battle to adjust the water rates for the town resulting in a higher price for residents. This has been a much needed adjustment as the town suffered a loss last year and much of the delivery system has become antiquated.

It is the monthly price that becomes an issue, keeping it low and feasible for the residents but having it high enough to support the water system. Beginning this journey several months ago the council needed a starting point, and money. The town received a grant from the Wyoming Water Development Commission (WWDC) for \$100,000 to help begin the process of updating the water system.

As part of the grant the town received they would have to report back to the WWDC the results of what the engineers had found and recommend. Anthony Barnett, the town engineer, recently presented a report of the Master Plan Water Grant Summary to Kevin Boyce of the WWDC.

The report contained many suggestions and pointed out many issues with Thermopolis's water system. Barnett stated

there is roughly about 15 years left in the current water plant. Due to wear and tear and changes in the technology, this will be a future issue the town will have to face.

Another problem Barnett brought up was the transmission and distribution system. The plant has no issues making the water; problems are in the distribution system, Barnett explained. "The towns youngest pipes are from 1970," Barnett said. "Some of the oldest pipes are in the highest pressure areas."

Barnett's report came with several financial options for the town to consider to help fund many of the needed improvements with options one and two to be imperative for the town to get under way. These options are for replacing many of the older distribution lines with newer PVC lines. The cost would be almost \$3 million for the town to pay back over 20 years.

Boyce from the WWDC expressed it would be better for the town to just complete all the water pipe replacement at once explaining it would be cheaper in the long run.

Mayor Mike Mortimore agreed but said an annual cost of \$307,713 is a rather high. "That is a third of our budget," Mortimore said.

The town council made no decisions Tuesday night but know they face some big decisions regarding the future of water distribution in Thermopolis.

In other business during the council

meeting, Barnett reported to the council that Wilson Brothers still has not returned to fix a broken manhole. Barnett said they have had ample time to fix it and now the company could be held liable financially.

Michael Wright of Koerwitz, Michel, Wright & Associates presented the financial audit results. He praised the town on their records and keeping up to date with current laws and practices.

An interesting presentation came from Hot Springs County High School students regarding a survey they conducted on citizens thoughts about deer in the town. Presenting statistical data, several students gave the council an in depth look at the towns local deer population. Bringing up concerns that the population is slowly dwindling due to disease and not enough food. The students' findings show almost 50 percent of the residents do not like the deer in the city limits. Other findings were some residents feed the deer even though there are fines for doing so. Some options the students had for controlling the population was relocation and bow hunting within the city limits.

Fred Crosby announced the bids were in for the surplus equipment that was being stored at the town shop. The council approved all the bids but two, feeling those bids were just too low for the pieces of equipment. The auction brought in almost \$12,000.