

# Campbell's file class action suit

by Durward D. Jones  
On Dec. 28, 2015, Joe and Barbara Campbell, on behalf of themselves and as representatives of a class of similarly situated persons, filed a class action lawsuit against Chris Davidson, Tri-County Telephone Association, Inc. in Park County District Court.

The suit stems from Campbell's belief that 800 members of the Tri-County Telephone (TCT) co-op were victims of fraud. Campbells live in the Hamilton Dome TCT prefix in Hot Springs County.

The claim alleges the fraud was perpe-

trated by Chris Davidson the CEO of TCT and several former board members, Clifford Alexander, J.O. Sutherland, Daniel Greet and John K. Johnson. It is alleged that these members had cooperated with Neil Schlenker a resident of Park County.

"In this action, Plaintiffs seek to certify a class of owners of TCT to address the collusion of the Chief Executive Officer and certain members of the Board of Directors (with the aid of counsel for the company) with Neil Schlenker to rob the owners of TCT of the value of their ownership interests in TCT and TCT's investment compa-

nies," as stated in the complaint filed in the District Court Fifth Judicial District.

Attorney Robert J. DiLorenzo of Emblem, Wyoming, representing the Plaintiff said it took six to seven months of research and gathering of documents before he was ready to file. "Things were heavily misrepresented," Dilorenzo said.

"There was no reason to sell the co-op, it was a very profitable enterprise," plaintiff Joe Campbell said when asked why he was against the sale. Campbell explained that

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## Council hears more on water rate increase

by Durward D. Jones

The trickling drip of the new water rate increase haunts Thermopolis Town Council once again.

After months of hard work and long hours troubleshooting the need for a rate increase for town water, the council finally enacting the new rate increase which started the beginning of January. The council found themselves revisiting the issue Tuesday night.

John Waid, a local landlord, sat before the council and explained his grievances about the rate increase.

Waid who was late to the meeting and had missed the citizen participation time slot on the agenda was given the opportunity to speak just shy of the meeting being adjourned. Mayor Mike Mortimore recognized Waid in the audience and opened the floor up to him.

"I'm concerned about the method that was chosen," Waid said. Stating that he understood the need for the increase and the need to keep the old pipe system updated.

Waid, armed with the square footage of his new apartment buildings, explained to the council that it was a unfair cost compared to a standard home. The tenants would be of a low income nature and he would have to charge an extra \$100 more to their rent. "If someone owns a 3,600 square foot house their minimum is \$72 the same as 332 square foot apartment, but they have 10 time more area and possibly consume 10 times the water," Waid explained.

Mayor Mortimore asked for clarification if Waid wanted the council to change not just water, but sewer and sanitation. "If we are going to go by square footage to charge it would be a nightmare," Mortimore explained. "Each household pays the same" said Mortimore.

Assistant to the Mayor Fred Crosby tried to explain that if Waid reports to the town if the apartment is occupied or not, the town will adjust the rate. The town will not charge for an unoccupied apartment.

"You want my opinion?" Waid asked "You need to raise your rates another 40 percent." Council member Tony Larson responded with "Thank you." Larson was for a high increase just to get it over with so the residents would not have to deal with slight rate increases over the next couple of years and allowing the town to build a surplus.



## This is Hollywood baby!

Barb and Merlin Heinze, owners of Merlin's Hide Out purveyors of fine buffalo hides and furs had the chance of a lifetime when they were contacted by the costume designer for Quentin Terentino's recent movie "The Hateful Eight" to make a buffalo coat for actor Kurt Russel. The coat soon became a character itself, known as "The Big Boy".

The Heinzes wound down the week at One Eyed Buffalo to discuss and answer questions about working with Hollywood and what this will mean for their future. "You cannot buy your way into something like this," Barb told the crowd after someone asked how Hollywood found them. Barb explained that they were at the top of the list when it comes to buffalo hides and all it took was a Google search. It was actually more than that. It is the quality of their work and reputation that has landed them at the top of that search and in the world of Hollywood. The eight coats they made for the movie was just the beginning. They have now made small pieces for other movies and have consulted for others.

A special private showing on Friday of "The Hateful Eight" at the Ritz Theater was attended by 120 guests.

Right, Tom Anderson, adorned with his buffalo hide hat, visits with other guests before the movie.



photos by Durward D. Jones

## Cattle buyer charged with felony

Richard Keyhoe Wayman, 49 was arrested earlier this week on felony charges for writing a check with non-sufficient funds to pay for cattle.

Wayman, from Hyattville, was brokering a deal for the cattle from a Hot Springs County rancher. Successfully arranging to purchase cattle worth over \$200,000, Wayman issued a check to pay the final installment and did not have the funds to cover the amount, which was in the tens of thousands of dollars.

The seller made several attempts to contact Wayman about the issue and was unsuccessful.

Lieutenant Danny Pebbles of the Hot Springs County Sheriff's Department informed the Independent Record a warrant had been issued for Wayman for non-sufficient funds. The Sheriff's department in Big Horn County served the warrant and extradited Wayman to Hot Springs County.

Wayman stood before Judge Ron Jurovich in Hot Springs County Circuit Court for his arraignment and was scheduled for a preliminary hearing later in the month.

Wayman was released on a \$5,000 cash bond.

## Commissioners add to airport lot size to solve hanger issue

by Chandler Smith

With the new year only five days old, the Hot Springs County Commissioners are already hard at work. Opening their monthly full-day meeting, the commissioners took care of the yearly business of reorganization, which included electing a new chairman and vice chairman, setting commission meeting dates, and setting public holidays for 2016.

As a first order of business, John Lumley was named Chairman, while Tom Ryan was named Vice-Chairman. Lumley noted that in his experience as both a sheriff and county commissioner, former Chairman and current commissioner Brad Basse was the best commissioner he had ever seen.

After opening business of 2016 had been settled, the commissioners voted for appointments to

the Fair Board, Natural Resource Planning Committee, Predatory Animal Control Board, and the Big Horn Basin Nature and Discovery Center. Billie Jo Norsworth was elected to the Fair Board, Robert Overton and Carl Dockery were elected to the Natural Resources Planning Committee, Robert A. Aguiar was elected to the Predatory Animal Control Board, and Howard Samelson was elected to the Nature and Discovery Center Board. The only contested election was for the Predatory Animal Control Board. All other races were uncontested.

Dave Schlager then presented the Road and Bridge monthly report to the board, which included the setting of speed limits on Cowboy Road, East and West Sunnyside Lane, and East River Road. After extensive study, it was sug-

gested that the commissioners change the speed limit of Cowboy Road to 45 miles per hour, West Sunnyside Lane to 45 miles per hour, East Sunnyside Lane to 35 miles per hour, and East River Road to 35 miles per hour.

Schlager then opened bids for an upcoming gravel crushing project. The four bids ranged from \$3,499 to over \$17,000. Schlager reviewed the bids for completeness during the morning session and returned in the afternoon to recommend that the bid be awarded to Owl Creek Engineering for the price of \$3,499. The commissioners voted unanimously in favor of Schlager's recommendation.

The commissioners discussed a solution to an issue with the new airport's hangars. Although the commissioners researched the construction of hangars and received

word that they did not need to submit a plan review to the local Fire Marshal, the board recently received notice that the hangars must be placed ten feet from their lot line. Hangars at the airport are currently five feet from the lot lines, which means another five feet is needed to satisfy the 2015 International Building Codes.

After a lengthy call to the fire marshal's office in Riverton, it was decided that the commissioners would modify Sylvia Lippincott's lease to add five feet and two inches to the west side of the lot, which would satisfy building codes.

Lippincott, who spent seven hours on the phone with the fire marshal's office the day before, left the meeting relieved. The Lippincotts have five airplanes at the new airport, and use it to run Aero Plus, LLC.