

County must upgrade software

by Cindy Glasson

The Hot Springs County Board of Commissioners held their first meeting for March on Tuesday, discussing election items, road and bridge work and fuel and holding tank issues with the airport.

County Clerk Nina Webber said the State of Wyoming has sent down a mandate to all county clerks requiring an upgrade to the operating system used during elections.

As of this year, the software the state is requiring will no longer recognize the Windows XP operating system. Webber had set aside funds to order a new computer for the

change over, however, with the new requirements there is not nearly enough in her budget for the purchase.

Computers used for elections are stand-alone units and may not be used for any other county business other than the elections. Total cost for the new computer and the associated software will be nearly \$3,000.

The commissioners voted to authorize the purchase of the new computer and software, not to exceed \$3,500, out of the courthouse equipment budget.

Road and Bridge superintendent Dave Schlager reported fill material has been hauled

to the site of the guard rail project and things should get underway this week. In addition, his crews have been working on the shoulders on West Sand Draw.

With road construction season right around the corner, Schlager said a gravel crusher will be moving in this week at the county's Wagon-hound pit to get a jump on what will be needed for this year's road work.

Schlager said the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) suggested, with the price of crushing being so low this season, that

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photo by Dennis Nierzwicki

Throwing the perfect loop

Risen Son Christian School kindergartner Andreanna Moon gets some roping tips from Koy Myers at the FFA Petting Zoo on Thursday. FFA members put on the petting zoo and held other activities as part of National FFA Week.

Mayor casts deciding vote on excavator bid

by Mark Dykes

At the Thermopolis Town Council meeting Tuesday evening, it was Mayor Mike Mortimore who had the final say to approve a bid for \$66,402.38, from Bobcat of the Big Horn Basin for a 2016 Bobcat E55 compact excavator.

Prior to Mortimore's vote, Council was divided, with members Tony Larson and John Dorman Sr. voting "no" and Mark Nelson and Dusty Lewis voting "aye."

Other bids that came in were: \$64,565 from Titan Machinery, \$72,084.70 from Pro Rental and Sales, and \$81,631.16 from Honnen Equipment. Though Titan's bid came in lower, the machinery did not meet requested specifications. Assistant to the Mayor Fred Crosby noted \$75,000 was budgeted for the machine.

Prior to the vote on the matter, Councilman Tony Larson said he was not comfortable purchasing the excavator, as it seemed a waste of money on an already tight budget, for equipment that might be used only once or twice a year.

Director of Public Works Ernie Slagle said the excavator would get used much more, because holes in alleys are sinking and the excavator also has a compactor to fix such issues. Having the excavator, Slagle said, would be the "cat's meow" for fixing the alleyways, and will likely get used quite a bit.

Also during the meeting, Town Engineer Anthony Barnett presented a draft pay estimate, which was approved, for the treated water system improvement project. Barnett noted the draft was prepared previously, but there was a leak in the near the lagoons and he did not feel comfortable turning in the document. The line with the leak, he said, was in service for a couple days before requiring a shut down for repair. The pay estimate includes \$88,093.50 for Upper Fremont and \$123,771 for River Crossing, for a \$211,864.50 total work completed.

Police Chief Steven Shay reported Sergeant Mike Chimenti has tendered a letter indicating his intent to retire at the end of the month, after more than 35 years of service to the town.

Fred Crosby noted a permit was issued to TePee Pools and Spa for an extensive remodel that includes swapping locations of the restrooms.

Greater Learning Foundation receives Governor's Arts Award

Hot Springs Greater Learning Foundation was awarded the prestigious Wyoming Governor's Arts Award during an awards ceremony Friday evening in Cheyenne.

The foundation is dedicated to bringing arts to Thermopolis.

"This is an award for the whole community because we have so many volunteers, sponsors and partnerships," said HSGLF board member Jacky Wright. "We could not do what we do without the community support," she added.

Wright said it was a privilege to accept the award and meet Gov. Matt Mead and his wife Carol, the First Lady, during the ceremony.

One of the first outreach programs of HSGLF was the music jams, which have been going now for over 10 years. The jams were just the beginning.

Wright, the foundation's education director, forged a partnership with the schools for Arts in Education. Wright identifies potential groups or artists to bring to Thermopolis and negotiates the details. The groups hold a public performance and work with various classes within the school district.

The success of the ArtStrolls has surpassed the foundation's expectations. The stroll was expanded to Saturdays due to the overwhelming amount of interest. The foundation helped organize Smoking Waters Art Guild. They work to identify regional and local artists to display their work.

The foundation brought a new event to Thermopolis last year with the Big Horn Basin Folk Festival. It will be held again this year on August 6-7. The festival included artists and musicians who are all from Wyoming.

A long range goal of the foundation is a proposed Nature and Discovery Center in Hot Springs State Park.

The award, pictured on the right, is on display at Broadway Bygones.

