

Honors to be doled out Saturday

Winners of the Business of the Year, Non-Profit Organization of the Year and Citizen of the Year will be announced at the 2016 Chamber of Commerce Banquet Saturday, March 19 at the Hot Springs County Fair Building.

Business of the Year nominees include: A Cut Above, Bank of Thermopolis, Black Bear Café, Broadway Bygones, Finishing Touches, Martin's Appliance Repair & Sales, Merlin's Hide Out, New York Life, One Eyed Buffalo Brewing Company, RT Communications, Thermopolis EyeCare, Thermopolis

Petro & Tire and Wyoming Dinosaur Center.

Non-Profit Organization of the Year nominees are: Big Horn Basin Children's Center, Big Horn Basin Foundation, Big Horn Basin Riders, Gift of the Waters Pageant, Gottsche Therapy, Rehab and Wellness Center, H.O.P.E. Agency, Hot Springs State Park, Hot Springs County 4-H Council, Hot Springs County Commissioners, Hot Springs Greater Learning Foundation, Hot Springs County Senior Citizen Center, Relay for Life, Thermopolis Kiwanis and Thermopolis Rotary.

Citizen of the Year nominees are: Barb Heinze, Bev Koerwitz, Brad Basse, Carl Leyba, Ellen Reed, Greg Willson, Martin Andreen, Jacky Wright, Jeannette Titmus, Phil Scheel and Stefanie Gilbert.

The theme for the banquet is "Casino Royale." Doors open at 5:30 p.m. with a social hour featuring casino like gaming. An Italian buffet style dinner will be served at 6:30 p.m. with an auction and awards presentations beginning at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are available at the chamber office or at the door.

Artmobile visits RWE

by Dennis Nierzwicki

There is a world of art out there to see from paintings, sculptures, charcoal or ink, but in some areas of Wyoming it is not feasible or convenient to visit an art museum to experience it.

Queue the Ann Simpson Artmobile from the University of Wyoming; a traveling art museum directed by educator Erika Ramsey that visits small towns in Wyoming. They go to K-12 schools, libraries, senior centers and other available community areas to display and analyze these pieces with those who may never have had the chance to visit a museum of fine art.

The Artmobile carries art from the University of Wyoming Art Museum consisting of 15 pieces of art from 15 different artists demonstrating surrealism and displayed on boards that are setup just like a museum demonstration. These pieces are changed every two years and visit 20-30 places in Wyoming per year.

Last week the Thermopolis Lights On Afterschool Program hosted the Artmobile at Ralph Witters Elementary giving pre-kindergarteners, students at RWE and Lights On participants the opportunity to learn about what it is like to visit an art museum. They participated in proper etiquette, deep viewing of art pieces, colors and their meanings pertaining to mood, and messages delivered by the artist with lesson plans like "Perspective Shmersmective", "The Subconscious Poet" and "Making Fun of Observation."

Participants were also encouraged to draw the pieces themselves to garner the full museum experience like a training artist and breaking it down into simple shapes and designs.

The Artmobile program is sponsored by the Ann Simpson Artmobile Endowment. If you would like more information, visit the University of Wyoming website at <http://www.uwyo.edu/art-museum/learning-from-the-masters/outreach/artmobile1/> or contact Erica Ramsey at (307) 399-2941.



photo by **Dennis Nierzwicki**

Surreal-ly focused

Ralph Witters Elementary Library was abuzz with curiosity as Lights On students check out the Artmobile displays. Kaitlin Barral analyzes the shapes and colors of a surrealism piece she plans to reproduce in pencil.

Commissioners discuss WPLI

by April S. Kelley

The Hot Springs County Board of Commissioners met on Tuesday to discuss Wyoming Public Lands Initiative participation, funding for the Hot Springs County Weed & Pest to control mosquitoes, a grant amendment for the Public Health Reserve Corps as well as the implementation of a Diabetic Education Problem and updates on both the airport and the master facility plan for Hot Springs County Memorial Hospital.

Resident Larry Bentley discussed the WPLI program participation with the commissioners, specifically Cedar Mountain.

"Once an area is chosen for a wilderness study, the only way it can be removed is through Congress," Bentley said.

Chairman Brad Basse explained that the president can take executive action to declare an area for a wilderness study in every state except for Wyoming. In Wyoming, an area can only be designated for a wilderness study through Congress.

"The Cedar Mountain area has been designated for this wilderness study," Chairman John Lumley said. "It looks like a long process."

Bentley said this is not something that will happen overnight.

"The study is not going to happen today or tomorrow," he said. "We need geologists and environmental scientists to help."

Vice-Chairman Tom Ryan said he did not see the WPLI study as a great cost to the county, but rather a large time commitment. Basse made a motion to approve participation in the study.

"Working with WPLI is probably the way to go," he said.

The Hot Springs County Weed & Pest requested funds in the amount of \$1,300 to help defray the cost of the mosquito control program. The funds will be used to help with the cost of additional seasonal labor

and equipment. In addition to this, the funds will also help the Hot Springs County Weed & Pest in their grant seeking process. One of the priorities for the selection for the Emergency Insect Management grant is the number of cooperating entities. The total amount of the funding request for all entities in the county is \$3,000.

Lindsey Woodward, supervisor of the Hot Springs County Weed & Pest, explained that there are more than 40 traps throughout the county that are checked once per week.

Ryan asked Woodward if the concerns in South America of chikungunya disease in mosquitoes were also a concern in Hot Springs County as well as how Hot Springs Weed & Pest cover their costs for their mosquito containment in the area.

"The concerns of chikungunya in South America are not a problem here ... yet," Woodward said. "And last year, we only found one case of West Nile virus. As for our mosquito program, we typically cover it 100 percent."

Other than the funding for the mosquito program, the issue of building a mosquito control levy was brought to the attention of the commissioners.

Basse said the city would have to wait on the levy for the time being, however it will likely be approved in the future.

"I don't see us not approving it because we've got public health issues to worry about, and the fact that these pests are a nuisance to residents," he said.

The commissioners tabled the funding request until the next meeting, when they will address the pressing issue. All county road spraying by Hot Springs Weed & Pest will be done in early April.

County Nurse Manager Marie McDougall addressed the commissioners in regard to an amendment for a PHRC grant, concerning the Public Health Emergency Preparedness

Unit, and the implementation of a Diabetic Education Program.

The purpose of the grant amendment is to increase the contract dollar amount by \$6,000, which would make the total grant amount \$46,000.

The Diabetic Education Program will be a support program as part of the Chronic Disease, Prevention, Education and Management Services. It will be a free interactive six-week program to assist individuals with diabetes, to develop the skills and tools for living well with diabetes.

"This was a very in-depth project," McDougall said. "And it is extremely important for our community."

Both items were approved by the commissioners. Chairman John Lumley said he was glad for the partnership.

GDA Engineers discussed airport updates including the disposal of an old fuel tank and active containment regarding a spill. GDA said the spill was a blip on the radar and that now everything was in place.

Basse suggested GDA dispose of the old fuel tank by selling it instead of trying to clean it out.

"What we can do is we can sell it," he said. "Contract someone. Doing it this way says we are going above and beyond what the rules require by the FAA."

CEO of Hot Springs County Memorial Hospital Robin Rollings presented an updated layout for the master facility plan.

"We decided on a one story building because it was less expensive than a two-story building," Rolling said. "We want to have two or more orthopedic suites as well as a visiting physicians' center. Again, this is a concept and can be altered."

The cost of the new master facility will be approximately \$16 million. Rollings said she was satisfied with the public involvement in this project.

Council acts on grant, approves vehicle bids

by Mark Dykes

Tuesday evening, the Thermopolis Town Council met, with Mayor Mike Mortimore absent, approved bids from Brad Lofink of Plowboy Auto and Jacques Michel for unused vehicles. Lofink's bids were \$950 for a side load garbage truck and \$900 for a rear load garbage truck, and Michel's was \$400 for a Crown Victoria.

The council also approved closing a grant for a sewer replacement project on First Street. All of the bills have come in, and with everything taken out there is \$45,973.82 left over. The unused money will be returned to State Land Investment Board. Dusty Lewis was approved to sign for the return as Mayor Pro Tem

"We used every bit of that money we could that was justified for the project," Crosby said.

With regard to engineering projects, Mayor's Assistant Fred Crosby said work has begun on the Cedar Ridge tank, which is scheduled for painting and rehabilitation. Director of Public Works Ernie Slagle said work was scheduled to begin Wednesday, but that has since been delayed to Monday. A mobile 18,000-gallon tank will be brought in. Door hangers will be put out Friday, to alert everyone in the affected neighborhood

that, on Monday, they will be out of water for a time, hopefully a short one.

The portable tank will be filled with water from the regular tank. The regular tank will then be dumped, a valve installed and everything put back in place. An electrician will set the pressure.

Crosby also reported a bore has been completed on the way out of town. He further explained the bore would tie Upper Fremont, Crystal Lane and the area to some higher pressure water.

Slagle reported he has also been assisting surveyors in Hot Springs State Park, though no official decisions have been made. Higher pressure water will be accessible.

Crosby noted a cemetery project is also underway. A new tank is being installed to provide for grass watering.

Though Town Attorney Mike Messenger had no official report, he spoke to the council on his recent trip to Fairbanks, Ala., noting among the highlights were watching some dog sled races and the International Ice Carving Championship.

"I tell you, they do some fantastic work," Messenger said. "Those people come from all over the world to do that, and there were tourists from all over the world to view it."