

County mitigation plan in the works

by Mark Dykes

County Emergency Management Coordinator Bill Gordon explained mitigation is a process wherein people try to accomplish projects that will lessen the effects of disasters on the community.

"You try to determine some places where you can take action ahead of time, to minimize the damage and the threat to the public when a disaster hits."

Currently, the Hot Springs County All Hazards Mitigation Planning Committee is developing a mitigation plan.

The plan, Gordon said, would be a living document, and at the committee's next meeting

— 2 p.m. June 14 at Big Horn Federal — they will look at what the goals are for the county and specific projects they would like to see accomplished. Later in the day, at 6 p.m. at Big Horn Federal, they will invite the public to hear information and provide input.

"There's a very quick survey which is now posted on the front page of the Hot Springs County website," Gordon said. "It's a very brief survey for the public, for their input." The initial results of the survey will be tabulated. The survey is accessible at www.hscounty.com

"It's a great opportunity for the public to express what they see as the hazards, and what they would see as projects, ideas they might

have for strengthening our resistance and resilience to disasters," Gordon said. He encourages everyone to take the survey and provide some input.

Twenty-two people attended a recent meeting of the committee, representing town governments, health agencies, communications, schools, law enforcement and emergency response.

"It was a successful meeting, and it was a good cross-section which can only get better with time," Gordon said, and there was plenty of time for feedback. He further noted they

See Plan on page 8

THERMOPOLIS INDEPENDENT RECORD

YEAR 117, WEEK 22, Sections: 1, June 2, 2016

THERMOPOLIS, WY 82443

USPS 627-300

75¢



photos by Lara Love



Memorial Day tribute

Members of V.F.W. Post 2281 performed Memorial Day services at Monument Hill Cemetery, Riverside Cemetery and on the Park Street Bridge.

Above, Jeff Strong, Gary Evans, Alton Ramsey, Dick Howe, Rod Slocum and Dave Weber pay tribute during the service at Riverside Cemetery.

Hawk's Avenue of Flags, created in memory of Donald L. 'Hawk' Hawkins, were on display at Monument Hill Cemetery. His family members created the memorial to honor deceased Veterans by displaying the casket flags used at their funerals. Each pole includes a spot for the name, rank and branch of each Veteran.

Hospital board approves needs assessment

by Mark Dykes

Tuesday evening, the Hot Springs County Memorial Hospital Board of Trustees accepted the Community Needs Assessment as presented by Marketing Director John Gibbel.

According to the report, which includes all of Hot Springs County — as it is the hospital's service area — 21 percent of people do not have access to health insurance. These people fall under the Medicaid expansion that the Wyoming legislature refused to pass. They don't make enough to qualify for subsidies under Enroll Wyoming. They are Hot Springs County's working poor, and go without insurance.

Thirty-five percent of people don't have access to health care education for their medical issues, and only 65 percent have regular diabetic monitoring. This also increases factors for low birth weights, as people don't get necessary education prior to the first visit to the doctor.

Thirty-eight percent of school age kids are eligible for free or reduced price lunch. These kids tend to belong to lower income and less educated families that would benefit from additional health education.

Gibbel met with former mayor Bill Malloy, Jane Norskog of the HOPE Agency, public health nurse Marie McDougall, landowner and pastor Frank Robbins, and community prevention professional Becky Mortimore. Additional review was also sought from Allan Braaten of the Hot Springs Counseling Center.

Gibbel noted Wyoming Health Matters was chosen a gauge to measure how the county is doing in various lifestyle choices. Using this gauge, as well as the socio-economic factors noted, Gibbel explained, they looked at things the hospital could affect.

See Hospital on page 8

Thomas Ryan receives the Wyoming Trucking Association Pioneer Award

by Mark Dykes

On Friday, May 20 in Casper, one of Thermopolis's long-time businessmen was awarded the Pioneer Award from the Wyoming Trucking Association.

Thomas E. Ryan of Ryan Brothers Trucking was nominated for the award by his grandson Matt, who stated his grandfather began driving for his great-grandfather John in the late 1940's at about the age of 13. That operation was based in Douglas, and hauled livestock and general flatbed freight.

Thomas noted his father didn't have vehicles other than the trucks back then, and Thomas drove before he had his license, as having one was not yet a requirement.

Matt also shared a story of his grandfather's high school days, when he was hauling salt to a local ranch when in the middle of a large grade the truck powered out and he could not continue. Rather than simply give up, Thomas started unloading bags of salt and packing them by hand to the top of the hill. When the truck was unloaded enough, he drove it to the top of the hill, reloaded the salt and continued his delivery.

As for Ryan Brothers Trucking, the company was founded in 1958. Leading up to the start, Thomas explained he and his brother James had a truck they had built from spare

parts. They spoke to Vern Herman in Thermopolis, and suggested he use their truck in his business.

Herman, however, suggested the two just buy his trucks, and the Ryans soon found themselves the owners of another two trucks and



Family members Quinton Hetzel, Tom Ryan, Thomas Ryan and Matt Ryan are shown with the Wyoming Trucking Association Pioneer Award.

two trailers. Thomas was working for Skelly Oil at the time, and on his vacation he went to get money for the trucks and trailers. He noted Skelly had a policy that required employees to work for them at least a day after returning from vacation, or else they would not pay for the time off. Thomas offered to work for a week after his return, but they allowed him to leave after a day back.

Jim moved to Worland, and bought out Lyle

Hallstead's operation — another three trucks — and the next year saw the brothers buying out trucks from George Haun.

Ryan Brothers hauled mainly livestock when they started, Matt stated, until Thomas's son, Tom, bought into the business in 1985 and began hauling liquid asphalt. While they still haul cattle, Thomas said, asphalt is what they haul more than anything. He added they have clients all over the state.

Ryan Brothers also provides for hauling of general flatbed freight.

The company works quite closely with contractors when it comes to asphalt. Thomas explained there are lettings — generally one per month — which contractors and asphalt producers attend to bid on jobs. Ryan Brothers provides contractors with quotes on the freight for the asphalt. The communication doesn't stop there, however, as they also need to know how much asphalt a job will use and how many trucks will be required to get it there.

Now 82 years old, Thomas stopped driving truck altogether a couple years ago, but noted that he worked in the office for several years and drove only when he absolutely had to. He still pays the bills at the office, and his son Tom said that Ryan Brothers remains a family-owned company with himself, his son Matt, his brother Bob and his son-in-law Quinton Hetzel continuing the business begun in 1958.