



Shinost sentenced to six to eight years

by Mark Dykes
Monday, in Hot Springs County District Court, it was a packed room — physically, and emotionally — for the sentencing of Cody Shinost, who was found guilty in February on a count of aggravated vehicular homicide while under the influence of alcohol and two counts of control of a vehicle while under the influence of alcohol resulting in serious bodily injury. The charges are the result of a May 2014 vehicle rollover accident that claimed the life of Madisen Price, left her sister Delanie in a months-long coma with severe head trauma and caused severe injuries to Dylan Balstad. Judge Robert E. Skar sentenced Shinost to

six to eight years in the Wyoming State Penitentiary on the aggravated assault. He further sentenced Shinost to four to six years on each of count of control of a vehicle while under the influence resulting in serious bodily injury; those two sentences, however, will be suspended and Shinost was sentenced to 10 years supervised probation on each, consecutively, for a total 20 years probation following the end of the first prison term. Judge Skar noted the prison sentence means Shinost is eligible for the intensive treatment program at the penitentiary; should he choose not to do the program, he is required to do outpatient treatment. Shinost was also ordered to

serve 400 hours of community service. Shinost was also fined \$2,000 on each count, though the fines are suspended to ensure his money first goes to restitution of \$27,922.02. With regard to the death of Madisen, Wyoming Division of Victim Services paid out compensation of \$3,728.22, which was 50 percent of food, mileage, travel and funeral expenses incurred. The family has expense in the same amount, so the total is \$7,456.44. With regard to Delanie, compensation of \$10,085.29 was paid by Victim Services for food, travel, hospital care and home renovations to accommodate

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photo by April S. Kelley

Creating masterpieces

Greyson Amick paints a picture during the Hot Springs County Recreation District Arts and Crafts program on Monday at the Recreation Center.

Council discusses sponsorship for grant

by Mark Dykes
Tuesday night, the Thermopolis Town Council approved a street closure for the Gift of the Waters parade. Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Meri Ann Rush explained the closure would be the same as previous years, from Senior Avenue, up Arapahoe until Fifth, then to the flagpole and turning around in the intersection and heading east along Broadway to Fourth. Rush further presented a permit from WYDOT, which was signed at the meeting. The permit is required for the parade turnaround at the intersection. An intersection closing was also approved for the parade June 18 during the Hot Spot Car Rally. Rush also asked about the replacement of the trees on either side of the intersection at Fifth and Broadway. She noted she would like to see a community Christmas tree, and the Chamber has some funds left over from the Christmas season earmarked for the tree. Mayor Mortimore said discussion with Parks to this point has been to replace the tree on the east side of the intersection and a raised flowerbed on the west side. Mayor's Assistant Fred Crosby said there have been some positive comments regarding the removal of the trees and the resulting improved visibility. Mortimore pointed out there was money budgeted for a tree, and the council approved replacing the tree on the east side. Rush also introduced Emmy Hergert, who began attending the Community Coffee and pointed out one of the goals was to incorporate and expand on the trail system around town. Among the points brought up during discussion of the trails was the Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) fund. Hergert explained TAP is a grant opportunity through the Wyoming Department of Transportations. Application is due July 15, and the funding provides 80 percent of a project bid but requires a sponsoring agency to help for the remaining 20 percent. The proposed project for the grant is for updating the sidewalk on Senior Avenue by the high school — putting in ramps and a pedestrian crosswalk — and extending the sidewalk over by The Ritz and the VFW. The second part is to update the sidewalk from the downtown crossing to the Broadway bridge. A bid for the sidewalks and ramps came in at about \$30,000, so the Town portion would be about \$7,300. Later in the meeting, prior to the board's approval of the second draft of the 2016-17 budget, the board considered how to possibly allocate money for the TAP grant while keeping the budget balanced. However, questions also arose regarding engineering fees for the project and other concerns, and a commitment to the TAP grant was not set in stone. Also during the meeting, new police officer Ron Cunningham was sworn in. Cunningham began on May 23, and Police Chief Steve Shay noted he comes with some considerable experience, and he's glad to have him on board. Shay was commended later in the meeting, for the work done to enforce speeding penalties.

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Johnson to serve five to seven years for theft

by Mark Dykes
Rosalee Dawn Johnson of Aurora, Colo. was transferred to the Wyoming Women's Correctional Center near Lusk, following her sentencing in May. In March, Johnson pleaded guilty to theft and wrongful receiving, concealing or disposing of property. The state moved to dismiss a second count of the latter charge, and the court granted it. Johnson was sentenced to five to seven years at the Women's Center on each of the remaining two counts, served consecutively. However, upon completion or parole from the sentence in the theft charge, the second sentence will be suspended and Johnson will be on probation supervised by the Wyoming Department of Corrections. She was given credit for 290 days served. While imprisoned, Johnson must follow any and all recommendations of the substance abuse assessment contained in the pre-sentence investigation, specifically attending Intensive Treatment Unit while incarcerated or a residential treatment program upon her release. Johnson was fined \$5,000 on each count, but the fine for the receiving charge will be suspended upon completion of her probation. Johnson was also ordered to pay \$50,000 to DiAnn Butler. According to an affidavit, Johnson entered Butler's home, found an unlocked safe and took \$50,000. The affidavit further states Johnson purchased a 2011 Camaro after she returned to Colorado. The title of that vehicle — valued at \$16,000 — was ordered transferred to Butler, to offset the restitution total. Johnson was ordered to endorse a check issued to her from AutoNation — where she purchased the vehicle — in the amount of \$27.20, again to offset restitution. Johnson must pay the remaining \$33,972.80, and she is required to set up a plan to do so.

Public comment period ends, master plan controversy continues

by April S. Kelley
Public comment on the Hot Springs State Park draft master plan ended June 6, but the controversy is far from over. Director of Wyoming State Parks and Cultural Resources Milward Simpson said the state will learn from the public comments in order to create a finalized master plan. "We will look for patterns for recommendations," Simpson said. "We will then make small changes to the plan based on those and finalize the plan." The state will remain open to what the public wants, Simpson said. "We are hoping to finalize the plan by the end of the summer, but if there is an overwhelming want to have more public comment periods or public meetings, then we will do that. We want a plan that encompasses what the public wants as well as what's best for Hot Springs State Park." Simpson said he appreciates all feedback the state has received on the draft master plan. "I appreciate members of the public who took the time to comment," he said. "We were very pleased with all of the feedback we received. It was good to see people energized and participating in this process." Despite the efforts of the state to include facilities like Star Plunge in the draft master plan, there is still much confusion

about whether or not the facility will be eliminated, will be given a lease or will be forced to use potable water rather than mineral water in their facilities. Hot Springs State Park Superintendent Kevin Skates said he was not sure why there was so much misinformation going around about Star Plunge and the use of mineral water. "After the steering committee meeting on March 14 where Roland Luehne gave a presentation of behalf of Star Plunge, Star Plunge was put back into the aquatic zone of the plan," he said. "I'm not sure why there is still misinformation going around about the Star Plunge being eliminated or all of the facilities having to use potable water. During steering committee meetings and public meetings, eliminating mineral water was never talked about." Skates did say expansions in already existing facilities, such as new slides, may have to use potable water. "The most important thing to understand is that we have to have a plan in case the spring keeps diminishing," Skates said. Star Plunge owner Roland Luehne said he has no idea what will happen from here. "I have no idea what the state really wants or why they want to do what they want to do," he said. "What I do know is that if they cut back the use of mineral

water for Star Plunge or Tepee, it isn't going to bring the terraces back any faster. It's just going to take time." Regarding a longterm lease, Luehne said he has not heard back from the state. "We have not heard a response from our letter three years ago regarding a lease," he said. "They won't talk to us. They won't comment to us. Without a lease, we're doomed. We can't get any loans to expand or anything. I know the park wants to expand, and I would like to expand. I'm wanting them [the state] to be my partner the whole way through, but it seems like they don't want to be partners with me." Luehne said that without a lease, the state could shut their water off anytime. "Any minute they could shut off our water, they could say, 'You don't have a lease, so we're going to turn off your water,'" he said. Star Plunge has two petitions going — one online and one at the business — and over 7,000 signatures. "The petitions say 'Save Star Plunge. Give us a lease. Secure our Future,'" Luehne said. Simpson said the state would discuss a lease with Star Plunge once the draft master plan is finalized. "We told Star Plunge long ago that once the plan is finalized, we will talk lease agreements," he said.