



# Money refunded to Set Free Church

by April S. Kelley

Hot Springs County Commissioners decided to refund \$7,000 to the Set Free Church at Tuesday's meeting, due to disagreements between the church and the Sheriff's Office.

Set Free Church minister Frank Robbins addressed the Commissioners regarding these disagreements. Robbins said his ministry raised \$7,000, which they gave to the county to get the jail facilities upgraded. He also said he had set up a negotiation with the sheriff to visit with inmates for two hours at 8 a.m. on Thursdays. Recently, Robbins said the jail was trying to make him share his two-hour time slot with another religious group. Robbins also

threatened to sue the county and the sheriff's office over these disagreements.

"During last week's visit, an officer came in and told me to leave after only 45 minutes," Robbins said. "In the meantime, she had a deputy in there with a camera trying to get me to say something or do something that they can use against me."

Robbins said the jail does not want to allow inmates any chance to get help.

"That place is run like a dictatorship," he said. "It's a place of punishment and that's all that is allowed."

To explain, Robbins gave an example of an inmate he had been trying to help. Robbins

was visiting with the inmate regularly. He said she had plans of coming to the ministry's ranch after she was released to get help with her drug issues, until she got into a fight with another inmate and was put in lockdown.

"She was put in lockdown for 65 days," he said. "She stopped visiting with the ministry after 30 days. One hundred hours after getting out of jail, she was dead. I put part of the blame on myself and I put part of the blame on the jail. No one should be put in lockdown for 65 days."

Chairman John Lumley asked Robbins

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## A fantastical spectacle

This year's Fourth of July fireworks from T-Hill were bigger and better than ever. The Thermopolis Volunteer Fire Department spent nearly \$11,000 on fireworks, with money from donors, to provide the community with an impressive show.

photo by April S. Kelley

## Council signs off on study

by Mark Dykes

Tuesday evening, the Thermopolis Town Council approved a memorandum of understanding with the South Thermopolis Water and Sewer District to have a study done to look at the possibility of another artesian well to supply the district. The study will not cost the town anything.

Also approved was a street closing for the Farmer's Market. Sonja Becker, market manager for the Farmer's Market, noted it would be Saturdays, 8-11 a.m., beginning July 30 through the last Saturday in September, with an option to carry over for the first couple Saturdays in October if weather holds. The street closure will be on Fifth from Broadway to the alleyway by Pinnacle Bank.

A conflict comes with Oktobrewfest on Saturday, Sept. 24. It was suggested Becker visit with Meri Ann Rush to determine if the events could be coordinated.

A change order regarding the Cedar Ridge tank painting project was approved. According to information provided, the original contract price prior to the order is \$98,925, and the increase of the change order is \$28,075, for a total \$127,000.

Town Engineer Anthony Barnett explained there was a request that Carr Coatings bring in an ultrasonic metal thickness testing technician, at \$2,500, to inspect the tank, as a person could look at it and see the pitting in the sides and there was concern it would not hold. It was determined the tank would hold so long as no additional corrosion took place. An epoxy pit filler was used to provide a smooth, paintable surface on the tank.

Carr Coatings also requested for additional blasting on the tank, at \$24,000, and had additional cost associated with work on an asbestos cement pipe for valve installation, at \$1,575. The original budget for the project was \$170,000, and the total cost, including items such as engineering, comes in at close to \$160,000.

A pay estimate of \$31,747.50 on the project was also approved.

Barnett noted if the project ad waited another couple years, the tank would

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# Motorcycle chase results in a whopping 22 charges



Members of Hot Springs County Sheriff's Office, Thermopolis Police Department and Wyoming Highway Patrol assist with putting Jerome Dunks into the patrol vehicle after Dunks was apprehended outside of Shorty's Liquor.

by Mark Dykes

On Thursday, June 30, law enforcement agencies worked together to end a pursuit involving high speeds on a stolen motorcycle.

According to an affidavit, Trooper Hoffman of the Wyoming Highway Patrol (WHP) was at mile marker 5 on Highway 120 and observed a motorcycle with a male driver and a female passenger eastbound, going 95 miles per hour in a 70 mph zone. Hoffman attempted to get the bike to stop, to no effect.

As the trooper approached the Thermopolis city limits, he noted the motorcycle was doing 63 mph in a 30 mph zone. Hoffman further observed the motorcycle go through a red light, and confirmed the driver was attempting to elude him. He called for assistance from local law enforcement, believing the bike was headed for Hot Springs State Park.

Trooper Kress of the WHP, in her marked patrol vehicle, headed into the park, and was notified by male subjects that they saw the motorcycle. Kress proceeded to the area where the bike was last seen, and encountered it heading her direction. As it approached, she rolled down her window and motioned for the driver to stop. Instead, the motorcycle passed her vehicle and proceeded into the park.

Officer Pahl of the Thermopolis Police Department, also on duty in a patrol vehicle, proceeded to the Buffalo Pasture. Pahl was notified by Kress the motorcycle was headed for the park entrance near Star Plunge. Pahl waited on the side of the road, with the overhead emergency lights of the patrol vehicle

activated. The motorcycle approached at a high rate of speed, made contact with the patrol vehicle's front bumper and hood, and continued traveling away from Pahl.

The motorcycle proceeded out of the state park, zipping past Thermopolis High School. For a time, according to scanner traffic, the pursuit was called off. Then, dispatch advised a call had come in from Thermopolis Liquors that subjects matching the description of those on the motorcycle were there.

Deputy Milek of the Hot Spring County Sheriff's Office and Officer Pahl made contact with the reporting party, and learned the male subject fled on foot, while the female was hiding in a back room. Pahl later found the subject, who identified herself as Samantha Messick.

During an interview, Messick said she did not know the driver of the motorcycle, but he identified himself to her as "Bud," and had picked her up hitchhiking from Cody. Messick was adamant she was at Thermopolis Liquors by herself, she did not know where the driver was and he had dropped her off behind Pizza Hut. The caller who reported seeing the two at Thermopolis Liquors stated seeing them enter the business together and stay together.

Messick further noted she told the driver "Go!" when she saw the trooper turn around, and again after the bike hit Pahl's patrol vehicle, though she said "Bud" attempted to stop after the accident.

Dispatched later advised a call had come in from Shorty's Liquor, and it



photos by Lara Love

Dunks abandoned the stolen motorcycle in the alley of the 700 block between Richards and Amorette.

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