

Meet the candidates forum Monday

by Mark Dykes

The public is invited to meet and chat with those on the ballot for the primary election on Monday, Aug. 1 at a public forum in the Thermopolis Middle School Commons, beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Of those vying for the U.S. Representative position Liz Cheney and Tim Stubson have submitted letters, while Ryan Greene will appear in person.

Four on the ballot for State Senate District 20 — Mary Norskog, Bob Bayuk, Ron

Harvey and Wyatt Agar — are scheduled to appear, as well as two for State Representative District 28 — Nathan Winters and Howard Samelson.

Five going for a single Hot Springs County County Commissioner seat — Joseph Casciato, Mike Chimenti, Joe Martinez, Phillip Scheel and Hub Whitt — will be present, as well as Dusty Lewis, who is on the ballot for Town of Thermopolis Councilperson.

There will be a two-minute introduction from all candidates, and time to visit and

refreshments following.

Prior to the forum, from 5-6 p.m. the Hot Springs County Republican Party is hosting a casual meet and greet for republican candidates local and across the state, at Hot Springs County Museum. It's a chance to visit with candidates in a less formal setting, and pick up items such as brochures and yard signs.

A similar event is not planned for Democratic candidates, as there are no contested primary positions on the ballot.

Agencies hit hardest by county budget cuts

by April S. Kelley

Several county funded agencies including Thermopolis Economic Development, the Hot Springs County Counseling Services, the Chamber of Commerce, the Hot Springs Crisis Line, the Soil Conservation District and Predator Management were allotted no funds from the county despite requests for the 2016-17 budget year.

Thermopolis Economic Development had the biggest budget cuts from the county for the 2016-17 fiscal year. For the 2015-16 budget year, Thermopolis Economic Development received \$20,000. This year, they requested \$26,000, but received no funds from the county.

Thermopolis Economic Development Executive Director Amanda Moeller said the EDC (Economic Development Center) requested \$25,000 - \$30,000 and received less last year. She said they always ask for more than they expect.

Moeller said since the EDC will receive no funds, their budget is going to be tight.

“My total budget this year is divided into a project budget that covers everything we do project wise and an operating budget,” she said. “This year my total project budget is \$30,000 and my total operating budget is \$15,000. So, \$45,000 is our total budget and that was taking out what we normally would have gotten from the county.”

This year there will be no money for fluff, Moeller said.

“We have no money for travel, no money for conferences and no money for marketing,” she said. “Everything that we are spending money on is basically for me to work with clients and my time. I’m here four hours a day, four days a week, so it’s been cut down to the bare bones. This year, my salary as a consultant or contractual employee has been narrowed down to this much of my time is spent on projects and this much of my time is spent on administration.”

Moeller said the EDC will continue to pay dues as members of the Wyoming Economic Development Association (WEDA) because they provide the EDC with leads.

“If there’s a new business moving to Wyoming and they’re not sure where they want to move, we get those leads and we have the opportunity to compete for them,” she said.

Other necessities for the office will also still be



photo by Dennis Nierzwicki

No hammer needed

Sydnee Griffin, Julie Johnson, Shila Little and Brooklyn William, participants in the Lights On Mythbusters program at Thermopolis Middle School, react as a juicy watermelon violently explodes after more than 300 rubber bands were stretched around it.

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Dutchmen riding historic Harleys turn heads

by Mark Dykes

They might not have been flying — except for the trip over — but 10 riding Dutchmen had a brief stop in Thermopolis for breakfast and a refuel Thursday morning. At this time of year, with the weather perfect for riding, and of course the Sturgis rally coming up, motorcycles are becoming a more common sight around town.

However, the Dutch riders turned plenty of heads with their Harley-Davidsons, as people caught a brief glimpse of history.

That's because these Harleys are from World War II. Left behind following the war, the motorcycles — the oldest of which was manufactured in 1943 — were restored and made road-worthy.

The group consists of 10 men with varying backgrounds, training and work; the only connecting factor is that they all own Harleys. Though they might feel like young gods on their bikes, the average age for the riders is

60. As for their bikes, they prefer to ride 70-plus-year-old 750 cc WLA or WLC “Liberators” left behind by American soldiers in World War II after the hunt for Hitler. All of them have the same type of motor, which brings several advantages including

equal speeds, and the ability to share tools and engine parts so repairs can be made during the trip. Other bikes that have joined the ride include a 1953 1,200 cc Hydra Glide, a 1986 FXC Super Glide and a 1,600 cc Road King — strong and big enough to rush heavy spare parts.

The riders have another reason than just hitting the road with some good friends, as they are raising money for the Dutch Cancer Society.

Two of their Harley friends, Theo Bartels and Paul Punte, passed away from cancer, and

they regularly receive messages from family, friends and acquaintances who are battling the disease.

The Dutch Cancer Society provides funding for research and helps finance about 400 research institutions, in the worldwide effort to beat cancer.

In the early years, the riders traveled to Belgium, France, Germany, and occasionally England and Scotland. They would also see trips to Poland and the Czech Republic. Everywhere they went they visited sites, but also found they and their

bikes have an attraction of their own. The riders have made easy friends and “turned quiet pubs to lively ballrooms.”

In 1998, they had plans to head to the Harley-Davidson factory in 2003 for a celebration. However, costs and their busy lives stalled that plan, but

10 years later the tide turned in the favor and it became reality. They hit the bike weekend in Sturgis, S.D., the antique motorcycle swap meet in Davenport, Iowa, and the 110th Harley-Davidson event in Milwaukee. Though late to register for the

parade, the Milwaukee Police gave the riders a place of honor in front — along with an escort of six police vehicles — and allowed them to park in an enclosed VIP area.

This trip, the guys started their ride in Denver, and their path will take them up through

Yellowstone, to Salt Lake City and Las Vegas before heading back to Denver along a stretch of Route 66.

In contrast to the cities like Chicago and Milwaukee, the riders praised the “dusty gravel paths, wonderful winding roads, infinite highways” in this part of the States, as well as the sites — Devils Tower and Mount Rushmore among them — and the wildlife they’ve seen.

They hope their ride will produce an enormous contribution to the global fight against cancer, and riders Gerard van Gulijk, Chiel Jongerius, Jan van Kuijk, Ton van Lint, Hugo Plomp, Benno Poelma, Freddy Poelma, Rob Punte, Eric Schenkhuizen and Kees Spierings express their appreciation to all donors.

People can keep up with the riders online — facebook.com/backintheusa2016 — and those who would like to donate can do so via Paypal at backintheusa2016@gmail.com or directly to the Dutch Cancer Society.



photo by Mark Dykes

Riding Dutchmen

Before heading on their way to Cody and the remainder of their trip, 10 Dutch riders stopped briefly for breakfast and to refuel their World War II era Harleys. The trip is part of a global fight against cancer.