



Five vie for single commissioner seat

by Lara Love

Tuesday's primary election will decide which of five men seeking an open position on the Hot Springs County Board of Commissioners will advance to the general election and also most likely be elected to the position.

Joe Martinez, Mike Chimenti, Hub Whitt, Joseph Casciato and Phillip Scheel are all Republican candidates for the commissioner position. There are no Democratic candidates. One of these five men will be elected in the primary and will move onto the general election in November. Only a write-in candidate would offer any choice to voters at that time. This is an important local race which

will likely be decided by voters on Tuesday, Aug. 16. Commissioner Brad Basse did not seek re-election.

Another important local race involves three Republican candidates running for Wyoming State Senate District 20, Wyatt Agar, Bob Bayuk and Ron Harvey. One of these candidates will advance to the general election to face the single Democratic candidate Mary Jane Norskog. The winner of the general election in November will replace Sen. Gerald Geis who did not seek re-election.

Another local race between Republican candidate Nathan Winters and Democratic candidate Howard Samelson for Wyoming

State Representative of House District 28 will not be decided until the general election. Both will advance from Tuesday's primary.

In the primary election statewide, the race for U.S. House of Representative Congressional seat will be narrowed down to one from the eight running as Republicans and also for the two running as Democrats. There is a single candidate representing the Constitution Party and one candidate running as a Libertarian. U.S. Rep. Cynthia Lummis did not seek re-election.

For more information about all the primary election candidates see the stories on page A6 and A7.



photo by Dennis Nierzwicki

Mouthwatering

Jonah Coleman shows how serious he is about trying to win the watermelon eating contest sponsored by FFA Alumni at the Hot Springs County Fair Family Fun Night Wednesday evening.

Big Spring output down overall despite recent increase

by April S. Kelley

The Big Spring in Hot Springs State Park shows a slight increase in output over the last three years. However, officials say the overall trend is still in decline.

According to a report from the State Engineers Office, the Big Spring has increased from 1336.42 gpm (gallons per minute) in July 2013 to 1693.51 gpm in July 2016.

The lowest output occurred in March 2014 at 1169.7 gpm, with the largest output being the last measurement in July 2016.

The output has increased almost every month in 2016, from 1444.1 gpm in January to the July output of 1693.51 gpm. The only month for which there was a slight decrease was from March's output of 1527.73 gpm to April's output of 1493.97 gpm.

Despite this increase over the last three years, Director of the Wyoming Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources Milward Simpson said the output of the Big Spring is still declining.

"The output of the Big Spring fluctuates," he said. "If you look at the long-term history starting in 1960, the overall trend is down and continuing to decline. There are a lot of dynamics and variables, but it's very clear if you look at the history."

Hot Springs State Park Superintendent Kevin Skates said the State Engineer's Office started measuring it monthly in 2006 and it has been on the decline.

"We probably need to get a couple more months of measuring," he said. "The State Engineer's Office said it is higher than it's been for quite a while, but we'll have to have a few more months to see what it does."

Skates said if the output of the Big Spring continues to increase, it would be good news for the park.

"It'd be wonderful if it came up," he said. "If it comes up, the thing that is going to benefit the most is the terraces. The pools are still getting the water they need and the terraces are kind of suffering. Any extra water we can get will help the terraces. From our end, that's what we're going to do."

Cemetery Board discusses flags

by April S. Kelley

The Riverside Cemetery Board discussed Hawk's Avenue of Flags at their meeting last Thursday.

The Cemetery Board had recently had communication issues with representatives for Hawk's Avenue of Flags — a program to honor veterans that takes place at Riverside Cemetery — regarding putting the Avenue of Flags up for Reunion Weekend.

Julie Lehman, a representative for Hawk's Avenue of Flags, said she knew the board had some questions about some misunderstandings about putting the flags up for other special occasions.

"We know you guys had some questions about some misunderstandings and some bumps in the road since this project started, so we're here to answer questions if you have any for us," she said. "Maybe we can move forward."

Board member Mary Jane Starnes said she thinks the Hawk's Avenue of Flags is a good idea and she was impressed Memorial Day weekend.

"I thought you did a very good job," she said. "The only thing is I think we should have a schedule when you're going to fly these flags. I think it's only fair to our employees that they know when you're going to be out there doing this. They should know what's going on."

Lehman said the group wants a member of the Cemetery Board on their committee so that the communication would not get lost. She said several people requested to have the Avenue of Flags up for Reunion Weekend because they bought flags and they do not come home for Memorial Day.

"Reunion Weekend — In our minds when we asked for it, we asked for Veterans Day, Memorial Day and special occasions," she said. "That's where the misunderstanding came from. We thought we had that covered."

"Special occasions, does that mean the second Tuesday of each month?" Rose Watkins, Chair of the Cemetery Board, said.

"Well, you know that's neither here nor there now," Lehman said. "We've been asked by several veterans to put them up for funerals, but it's a major problem. We don't want them going up too many

times a year because the flags are going to wear out and it's a major program putting them up and taking them down."

Board Member Basil Sorenson said Hawk's Avenue of Flags is meant to be special, and pointed out other things in Thermopolis meant to honor veterans.

"The Christmas tree downtown is no longer the Christmas tree," he said. "It hasn't been for years. It's the Veterans Tree. Bicentennial Park is to honor veterans. You might want to talk to them, because that is a veteran tree and a veteran park."

Lehman said she received a letter from the board saying the group could only put up the flags for Memorial Day and Veterans Day.

"Unfortunately the communication broke down somewhere but moving forward, we received your letter and you said Veterans Day and Memorial Day," she said.

Lehman said they are looking at possibly putting the flags up in Hot Springs State Park for the Fourth of July and Reunion Weekend in the future. She said park superintendent Kevin Skates is enthusiastic about the idea and there will be future discussions about displaying Hawks Avenue of Flags in the park.

"I do think the park would be just right because that's where the whole class gathers," Board Member John Huckman said.

Starnes also suggested creating a pamphlet explaining who each flag represents because some people who drive to the cemetery cannot get out and walk around. Lehman said there are little plaques on all of the poles giving that information.

"They just can't walk around and it's hard to see those plaques sometimes from their vehicle," Starnes said.

"That will be something that everybody will agree on as we move forward," Lehman said. "We haven't gotten to that point yet. We're still regrouping."

Lehman said the group does not want to put the flags up and down so many times a year that people forget about them.

"We still want the 'wow' factor," she said. "It was impressive when people were wowed by it. We want to continue that."

Fair sale brings in over \$100,000

by Lara Love

The Hot Springs County Junior Livestock Auction and Judge's Choice Bake Sale Friday evening showcased a total of 70 livestock and judge's choice bake sale entries and brought in \$104,707.65.

Although the total amount collected at the sale this year is down sharply from last year's total of \$133,137 for 66 sale entries, it still shows strong community support for 4-H and FFA youth in the county. Auctioneer Verne Lofink noted there has been a significant downturn regarding the economy in the past several months, but encouraged bidders to still show as much support as they could for the kids who work so hard to raise and show their animals. He was also able to get a few laughs from the crowd, and had plenty of encouraging words for the kids. John Holm helped with the auctioneering.

Sale results provided by the Hot Springs County Fair staff do not include add-ons or donations.

Market sheep

The livestock auction featured 16 market lamb entries with sales totaling \$12,722.50. Hallie Martinez did not sell her Grand Champion animal. Hayden Overfield sold his Reserve Champion Sheep to Bank of Thermopolis for \$1,143 at \$9

per pound. Overfield's sheep brought the highest price per pound. Market sheep averaged \$5.97 per pound and \$795.16 per head.

Market swine

An outstanding thirty-four entries were sold at the livestock auction for market swine totaling \$41,626.50 in sales. Remington Ferree's Grand Champion sold for \$1,071 at \$4.25 per pound to Kevin and Liz Mahoney. Jayssie Owlesley did not sell her Reserve Champion animal. The highest price per pound was paid to Luke Dickey by Owl Creek Ranch at \$5.75 per pound for a sale price of \$1,638.75. Market swine averaged \$4.72 per pound and \$1,224.31 per head.

Market beef

The auction showcased 14 beef entries with sales totaling \$47,253.65. Strite Daniels did not sell his Grand Champion animal. The Reserve Champion, also owned by Daniels, was sold to Thermopolis Hardware for \$4.50 per pound for a sale price of \$5,913. His animal brought in the highest price per pound. Market beef averaged \$2.62 per pound and \$3,375.26 per head.

Bake sale

The annual Judge's Choice Bake Sale featured six entries and brought in \$3,105. A basket belonging to Hallie Martinez was the high seller at \$800 going to the Bomb Photography.



Auctioneer Verne Lofink encourages the crowd to bid on the Reserve Champion Market Beef shown by Strite Daniels at the Hot Springs County Fair Junior Livestock Auction Friday evening.