



Public comments sought on bentonite mine

by Lara Love

Public input is being sought by the Bureau of Land Management regarding an environmental assessment (EA) which analyzes a proposed bentonite mining project located in Hot Springs County.

Wyo-Ben, Inc. proposes to amend bentonite mining and concurrent reclamation of its 108T plan of operations on public land approximately five miles northwest of Thermopolis. The proposed amendment consists of extending operations at pit 108T. The mining would be active for a period of 10 years and final concurrent reclamation for five more years, with a proposed total distur-

bance of 375.5 acres.

According to a map of the proposed mine area, it would run from right up to Highway 120 at one point and along the highway on BLM managed public lands for approximately a little over a quarter mile (see page A6).

The EA and unsigned finding of no significant impact are available for review at: <https://eplanning.blm.gov/epl-front-office/eplanning/project-Summary.do?methodName=renderDefaultProjectSummary&projectId=49204>

Wyo-Ben's mine, map and reclamation plan can also be found on the website for reference. The EA analyzes potential impacts to access to

public lands, geology, cultural and paleontological resources, vegetation, visual resources, soil and hydrology.

According to the project description, equipment used will include: Caterpillar 627 and 631 scrapers, Caterpillar D-8 to D-10 dozers, excavator/rock truck systems, front-end loaders, backhoe-excavators, motor-graders, tractors and over road haul trucks with trailers.

Public input is valuable in the process and will enable the BLM to make a well-informed decision. The review period runs through Oct. 17, 2016.

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photo by Mark Dykes

Give it a toss

Areas of Thermopolis received over an inch of rain from Thursday through Saturday. However, that did not keep Bob Ryan and others from competing in the Cornhole tournament and enjoying Oktobrewfest.

Oktobrewfest sees good turnout despite rain

by Mark Dykes

For the third annual Oktobrewfest, all was in preparation the evening before. Barrels were ready to be put up, and picnic tables were stacked — unfortunately, that's how the tables remained, as rain settled in for nearly the whole day.

However, Main Street Thermopolis wanted to make sure the event still went on, and moved what vendors they could to the

indoor flea market.

Main Street Treasurer Meri Ann Rush said the event went better, and longer, than expected as people were enjoying themselves. The scheduled musicians still played, and the beer pong and cornhole tournaments went on. The only thing that didn't, she said, was the bouncy house planned for the kids.

Many even braved the weather to go

with Ray Shaffer of the Hot Springs County Historical Society, touring the Post Office, Klink Building and Masonic Temple and sharing stories and pictures. Shaffer noted on Oct. 8 at 2 p.m. at Hot Springs County Museum, there will be a presentation on the historic downtown buildings.

Rush said the committee has yet to meet to determine if the event will be held a fourth year, but doesn't foresee it being retired.

Candidates, PACs invited to forum

by Mark Dykes

The 2016 general election is just around the corner, and the Thermopolis Middle School Commons will again be the venue for a public forum for this year's candidates, Thursday, Oct. 6 at 6:30 p.m. A similar forum was held in June, prior to the primary election.

Among those invited to the forum are candidates for House District 28, Senate District 20, Hot Springs County School Board, Town of Thermopolis, Town of East Thermopolis, Town of Kirby, Hot Springs County Memorial Hospital district and soil conservation district.

Additionally, there will be representatives from the Yes For Our Hospital Political Action Committee (PAC), Citizens for Common Sense Healthcare PAC and the Lodging Tax PAC.

Though the forum in June allowed candidates time for introductions and to answer questions, Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Meri Ann Rush explained this forum will allow candidates two minutes each, and PACs 10 minutes to state their positions. Following that, there will be some social time for people to visit.

Rush said the session will be informative, and people are encouraged to ask questions following the main program.

Three honored at WCHF induction

by Mark Dykes

Sunday in Casper, 49 men and four women from across the state were inducted into the Wyoming Cowboy Hall of Fame. Among them were three men from Hot Springs County, two of whom were honored posthumously.

Joe Campbell

Joe Campbell said he wasn't really aware of the Cowboy Hall of Fame awards until last year, noting this is the third year for it. Though nominated by his family last year, unbeknownst to him, he wasn't selected. His wife, Barbara, noted the nomination carries over to the following year, though one of his daughters added to it a bit. Joe didn't find out he'd been nominated until he read about it in a magazine article.

He noted his daughter Carolyn was the contact person during this process, and kept track of everything.

Though he initially thought the Cowboy Hall of Fame was for rodeo cowboys, Joe has since found out it is more about trying to preserve the heritage of the ranching industry, though rodeo cowboys certainly are not exempt. Among the requirements for nomination is at least 45 years in the saddle, and he pointed out with a laugh that for a lot of people that's very minimal; Joe's been riding since before he was eight.

Joe's grandfather, Joe Sneider, came alone to Wyoming from Germany when he was a teenager. He homesteaded west of Casper, and had a ranch with some cattle. He later left the ranch, selling the cattle and horses, and moved to Thermopolis in 1909, where he opened a livery stable, the Stonefront Barn. Some might recognize Joe Sneider's name from the marker in the buffalo pasture, though Sneider was

also friends with Chief Washakie, who gave him a buckskin tobacco pouch.

Joe said his mother, Hazel, was the one who had a love of horses and ranching, and she came horseback from Casper, over Bird's Eye Pass, when she was nine. In 1947, she and his father, Ralph, bought the Whetstone Ranch 30 miles west of Thermopolis. Joe was a freshman in high school that year, and outside of his time at school and serving in the U.S.



Campbell family members at the Wyoming Cowboy Hall of Fame induction ceremony include Chris Campbell, Belinda Moore, Kathy Lucas, Barbara and Joe Campbell, Connie Hoffman and Carolyn Conner.

Army from 1956-58, he lived at the ranch.

His high school years saw Joe in a variety of activities, including, FFA, Boy Scouts, Honor Society, class president, basketball, band, rodeo, calf roping and football.

During those years in the Army, he served as a Tank Recovery Instructor, and was stationed at Fort Knox, Ky. While in that state, he met and married Barbara Jean Alvey, and they returned to the family ranch in 1958, where they raised five children: Carolyn, Chris, Kathy, Connie and Belinda.

Barbara recalled when she came out this way she

wondered what they would feed the cows, as she was used to the green of Kentucky.

In addition to his time working the ranch, Joe has served the community on the Hot Springs County Farm Bureau, Northwest District Farm Bureau, school boards at Thermopolis, Hamilton Dome and Middleton, the Owl Creek Irrigation District and the Big Horn Basin Range Board.

As to why he's been on so many boards, Joe said

it must be something in his genes, as his grandmother was on City Council, his grandfather was a County Commissioner, his mother was active in the PTA and his dad was a member of the Chamber of Commerce and the Masons, a County Commission and chaired the Rodeo Committee when Thermopolis had one of the top 10 rodeos.

The Campbells' ranch somewhat blends the old and the new, as Joe began using artificial insemination in the 1970's and a computer for bookkeeping in the 1980's, and he's also a private pilot. He uses his plane to locate cows and he hopes it disperses some of the wolves and bears. He has also helped locate predator kills on his own property

and neighbors', so they can be reported to and confirmed by Game and Fish.

Joe said the generations who came before him are what he considers the cowboys. He knew the other inductees — Lee Martinez and Dub McQueen — as well as Durward Jones, whom he spent many summers with, and they were excellent mentors. Barbara added Joe still rides, and has not retired by any means.

See Hall of fame on page A6