



THERMOPOLIS INDEPENDENT RECORD

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# Voters to speak on hospital propositions

by Mark Dykes

Aside from the races for various political positions, the hot topics for the general election Tuesday, Nov. 8 are the two propositions concerning Hot Springs County Memorial Hospital. One is for the formation of a special hospital district; the other is for the creation of a one percent Specific Purpose Sales and Use Excise Tax, which would be used to collect \$16.4 million for the construction, expansion, remodeling, renovation, furnishing and equipping of the hospital.

**Vote yes for our hospital**  
The Yes for Our Hospital Political Action

Committee (PAC) supports the hospital as it offers a wide variety of services, and supports other entities in the medical community, such as pharmacies, dentists, family practice doctors and surgeons. Additionally, the hospital draws people to the town, representative Karen Sinclair said, which positively affects other businesses.

Sinclair pointed out the hospital itself is old and in constant need of repair, and also struggles to accommodate new technology. Further, restrooms are not handicap-accessible and there is a definite lack of shower facilities.

The layout of the building also impedes

efficient staffing, and these factors make it difficult to recruit and retain healthcare professionals and physicians.

With regard to the two ballot propositions, Sinclair said the formation of a district ensures the hospital continues to be locally run, and allows the community to take advantage of new technologies and advances in healthcare. The three mill tax levy the district can raise annually, she said, would provide steady funding and access to other funding opportunities.

The second proposition establishes the one

*See Propositions on page A6*



photo by Cindy Glasson

## Cute as a bug

Taiya Olds, an adorable little lady bug, reaches into the basket of goodies offered by the county clerk's office for the trick or treaters who visited from Storytime at the Hot Springs County Library. Dozens of little ones received sheriff's badges and sugary treats during their visit to the Hot Springs County Courthouse.

# Council approves amendments to fire ordinance

By Mark Dykes

Tuesday evening, the Thermopolis Town Council approved second reading of an ordinance regarding open burning, after some amendments were approved.

Language was removed from the ordinance with regard to section 2b. The ordinance now simply reads, "Materials such as rubbish, construction materials, paper products, yard debris, branches, leaves, garbage and similar materials cannot be burned."

The section formerly had language that would allow for burning of such materials if a permit were obtained from the fire chief or his designee.

Fire Chief Mark Collins, who was present at the meeting with Hot Springs County Fire Warden Dion Robbins, said the Town would have to come up with a permitting process, as right now the fire depart-

ment currently does not have a contract with the town, making the language in the ordinance regarding permits null and void.

Section 3, concerning bonfires, was amended to read that such fires require approval from the mayor and council.

In other action, the board approved renewal of the employee health insurance, with a \$30,000 deductible. Mayor's Assistant Fred Crosby explained the agent came in and provided figures, and if the renewal were done at a \$25,000 deductible, it would result in a 10.62 percent increase, where as going with the \$30,000 deductible would keep the rate about flat.

Action regarding applications to the Big Horn Basin Discovery and Nature Center Board was tabled. Applications from Wesley Whipple and Todd

Darlington were received; there was a recommendation to approve Whipple's application, though it was questioned whether Darlington's term is actually up.

Also during the meeting, Town Engineer Anthony Barnett provided an update concerning the million-gallon tank project. He noted painting has finished on the walls, and next steps were to clean the floor to do some welding repair. The first pay estimate of \$79,646.13 for the project was approved.

Director of Public Works Ernie Slagle gave an update with regard to the tire situation, noting he is in contact with a shredder operation, and they will let him know this week when they are headed this way. Slagle also updated on the track loader that was having transmission issues; the company in Casper looking at it has begun teardown, and he hopes to hear what the issue is by the end of the week.

The commissioners voted to move the hangar back and bear the cost of the concrete needed to lengthen the apron. GDA will submit the plan for review by the state.

There have been a lot of questions about what is going to be done about the old airport.

Currently, it is not officially closed, but at their next meeting the commissioners plan to make that decision, which would make the official closing of the airport Jan. 1, 2017.

Rather than make any rash decisions on what to do with the land the old airport sits on, the commissioners will be appointing a steering committee to toss around potential ideas. GDA will be compiling a comprehensive study of the airport grounds for the steering committee to work with.

A public hearing was held to discuss a liquor license application made by the LLL Company for a 24' x 14' dispensing room at the Quality Inn. The small lounge area would be allowed to sell alcohol and malt beverages.

The commissioners approved the license.

Two years later, there is still no resolution to the sagging insulation and water issues in the multi-purpose building at the Hot Springs County Fairgrounds.

A meeting was held last March between the contractor, fair board members and commissioner Tom Ryan in an attempt to get the situation taken care of.

At the time, the contractor agreed to make the necessary repairs under warranty, however, neither the commissioners nor fair board have heard back from the contractor and the repair work has not been done.

The concern now is we are headed back into winter once again, which means more moisture and more leaks are bound to appear, making the situation even worse.

While the commissioners took no action, they asked County Attorney Jerry Williams to review the warranty and make a recommendation on how to proceed.

## Emergency management planning begins for influx of visitors during August 2017 solar eclipse

by Cindy Glasson

August 27, 2017 will be a big deal for the United States, but for Wyoming in particular, as an estimated 500,000 people will converge on the Equality State to view the first total solar eclipse in 26 years.

While all of Wyoming will be able to see at least a portion of the eclipse that morning, according to NASA, totality will be viewed in Pavillion, Shoshoni, Riverton, Casper, Douglas, Glendo, Lusk, Torrington and Thermopolis.

The celestial happening could have a huge effect on our little community, not just from the standpoint of full hotels, full campgrounds, full restaurants and lots of gasoline sales, but from an emergency management standpoint as well.

Emergency Management Coordinator Bill Gordon said there have already been meetings between various entities to discuss emergency planning for

the week prior to and the week following the Monday eclipse.

"We can't really tell how high our numbers will be," Gordon said, "but the statewide numbers are expected to be huge, with people from all over the world."

Gordon said Casper hotels are already completely booked and the Events Center is planning on using their parking lots to hold campers and RVs.

Meetings have been held here that include the State Park, Chamber of Commerce, the hospital, county health officer and public health, the Highway Patrol, BLM and WYDOT.

An emergency plan needs to be in place well ahead of time to cover things like snake bites from visitors wandering around in unfamiliar places, broken or twisted limbs, and due to the time of year, August, heat stroke.

Interpreters will be needed in the event of an emergency that involves a non-English speaking visitor. Cell service may go down because of overloaded towers. There could also be a number of missing children and missing pets, all of which need to have some kind of plan in place.

"We can't depend on the National Guard," Gordon said, "because this is a state-wide event. They can be called out anywhere in the state so we have to have ourselves as prepared as possible."

With the number of people expected, law enforcement will be outnumbered as will Highway Patrol. Gordon said Highway Patrol has already told their people state wide that there will be no vacation time taken during the week before and after the eclipse.

The coordination meetings will continue over the next several months and Gordon said, "Our efforts are on schedule."