



# WYDOT reports on canyon walls

by Cindy Glasson  
The rock slides in Wind River Canyon this spring and into part of summer are one of the top priorities for the Wyoming Department of Transportation according to the state director, Bill Panos, who met with the county commissioners on Tuesday.  
Panos said this was the first year they had brought in the state's geology department to take a look at the canyon walls, even before the slides started happening, to get a better idea of where they may occur.  
Fortunately, they were already in the area with equipment, scaling some of those poten-

tially dangerous rocks when the first slides started happening. Since they were already there, it was very easy to get to each of the corresponding slides.  
Panos said the canyon is one area he worries about the most and had many discussions with Governor Mead about it.  
The logistics of having to close the canyon is the biggest concern, basically shutting Thermopolis off from the outside world. With that in mind, he and the governor agreed the geology department needs to come every year before slide season starts to do preventative rock removal.

To that end, more money will be expended on Wind River Canyon as well. The geologists have already created a map of the canyon showing possible slide areas for next year.  
Panos also discussed several projects in Hot Springs County that are planned over the next few years.  
Hamilton Dome Road has been completed at a cost of \$1.9 million and Hwy. 120 between Thermopolis and Meeteetse in the Goosberry Creek area will be completed to the tune of \$2.8 million.

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**Get to the bucket piggy** photo by Dennis Nierzwicki

Ashlynn Huckfeldt and Hannah Boren work to guide their pig toward the bucket during Tuesday night's pig wrestling at the Hot Springs County Fairgrounds.

## Council approves park use for vendors

by Mark Dykes  
Tuesday evening, Thermopolis Town Council approved the use of Bicentennial Park for vendors during Aug. 18, 19 and 20, the weekend before the eclipse. Council heard from Michelle Lue, who noted the ArtStroll has already been rescheduled for the same weekend and there's expected to be an influx of people, and allowing vendors to set up in the park could help to draw them downtown.  
Jerry Fields added they're not looking to charge anyone, but they want to invite people to come down and set up.  
Deb Stewart and Marsha Nelson, representing Smoking Waters Art Guild, said they have an activity planned for noon until 1:30 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 19, during which people could place objects on a special fabric that is reactive to the sun. The objects then leave an impression on the fabric, which stays until it's rinsed off.

Stewart and Nelson noted they didn't know anyone else had requested the space. Likewise, those looking to use the space for vendors didn't know of the Art Guild's activity. It was decided that space would be allowed near Fifth Street and Broadway for the guild's activity.  
Council approved allowing the guild to hang pipe cleaner sculpture from one of the street light signs on the south side of Broadway on Friday, Aug. 18. Anyone who come along is welcome to build a pipe cleaner sculpture and hang it from those already set up, essentially building one large sculpture, or mobile.  
In other action, the board approved a catering permit for Shorty's for the demolition derby Aug. 19, 3 p.m. until midnight.  
A right-of-way agreement was approved for the Maverik store, which will undergo an expansion beginning Aug. 28. Mayor's Assistant Fred Crosby said Maverik has purchased all the necessary permits, but

the plans call for some trees and shrubbery by the curb and a possible fence off the backside of the store, which would be in the town right-of-way.  
Also with regard to the store, Crosby shared plans with the council. He noted the company executives he's been working with have been great. They've noticed some deterioration along the curb and gutter and they plan to replace it. They recently purchased the land to the east of the store, and plan to scrub everything off the entire half-block they now own and have a new building up in 45 days. The new building is pre-fabricated.  
Crosby also asked the gas pumps be moved, and the executives plan to move them back an additional 37 feet to allow more room for long vehicles and traffic.  
A lot split application was approved for 120 and 132 Fremont Street. Crosby explained the lots are di-

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## No new trial in Justin Spence case

by Mark Dykes  
A motion for a new trial in a case against Justin Spence was denied Monday in Hot Springs District Court.  
Spence was found guilty of incest on April 27, following a three-day trial. According to the charge, he molested a juvenile female on July 4 or 5, 2014. A motion for a new trial was filed in early May, and prosecuting attorney Marcia Bean noted the hearing on the motion was not within the allowed timeframe — 15 days from the motion filing and 60 days from the conviction — so it would be automatically denied based solely on that.  
However, defense attorney Travis Smith presented argument for the new trial motion. He noted the "alleged victim" in this case delayed reporting any contact with Spence until she was confronted about her relationship with another male subject. Further, Smith said, she did not disclose that her relationship with the other male was ongoing.  
Smith also argued that a counselor called during the

trial was not identified as an expert and the defense had no notification he would be called as an expert witness, which violated Spence's right of due process. He also argued the testimony of the counselor was prejudicial more than probative, and done only to bolster the testimony of the victim.  
Though a caseworker with the Department of Family Services (DFS) was also called, Smith argued she presented no relevant evidence to the case, and her being called was an extreme attempt by the prosecution to vouch for the victim. Smith pointed out the caseworker said she was misled by the victim.  
Bean said Smith opened the door with regard to the DFS caseworker, as there was video an audio recording of interviews with the victim. The prosecution's position was to have parts of those interviews redacted; it was Smith who insisted the entire recording be played.  
Bean noted Smith continues to assert credibility issues with the victim, but also asked about Spence's

credibility. She pointed out there were over 200 text messages between Spence's phone and the victim's during the dates of the incident. During the trial, it was indicated these texts were inappropriate and, at one point, Spence sent an inappropriate picture to the victim and asked for one in return.  
As to the counselor, Bean noted he was on the witness list and pointed out he diagnosed the victim with a disorder due to a trauma, though he did not specifically name the trauma or where it came from. The testimony, Bean said, was not to bolster the victim.  
Regarding the victim's relationship with another male subject, Bean pointed out the jury heard that testimony and still found Spence guilty.  
Judge Robert Skar denied the motion for a new trial based on both the fact that the motion was not heard in the allotted time and Smith's arguments did not merit a new trial. A sentencing date for Spence has not been set.

## Record year for Boysen

by Cindy Glasson  
By now, most everyone understands that Boysen Reservoir and the Wind and Big Horn Rivers were full and fast for the past two months. Several river rescues were required during that time, ruining the chance of floating the river for most.  
What we didn't realize at the time, however, was the water flows this summer have broken a 50-year old record.  
The record was first set in 1967 when 1.3 million acre feet of water flowed into the reservoir.  
As of Wed., July 26, 1.67 million acre feet flowed in with the possibility of that number going a little higher still until the snowmelt is completely over for the season.  
On Monday, the Bureau of Reclamation lowered the out-flow from the reservoir down river to 3,000 cubic feet per second, a more normal flow.  
Even with a lower flow, Hot Springs County Emergency Management still recommends everyone wear a life jacket while floating or recreating on the water.