

# Preliminary hospital design

by Mark Dykes

When talking about Hot Springs County Memorial Hospital, it's hard not to mention or think about the planned renovation and expansion of the facility.

According to Shawn Warner, president of Sletten construction, the preliminary design and coordination activities are taking place for the project. On July 13, the hospital Board of Trustees approved Sletten as the design/build team for the project, and that team has begun preliminary measures for the design process.

Among the measures are geotechnical investigation, during which engineers will use a drill rig to explore and analyze subsurface conditions on the site. This information will be used to design all future foundations and pavements.

A high-tech drone will be used to create a detailed site survey map of the land, to show existing site utilities, grades, and topographical features. Past construction plans and onsite field measurements are also being used to create an accurate base map of the existing facility conditions.

Sletten also plans to do facility tours of newly constructed hospital projects in the region, to generate ideas for the Thermopolis project. Staff meetings are also planned as a source of input as the project moves forward.

Warner further noted all of the involved regulatory agencies are being contacted to keep them informed of the project status and timelines. The agencies involved include the State or Wyoming Healthcare Licensing and Surveys, USDA Funding and the State Fire Marshal.



**Ring pop**

Riley Dean takes aim at small bottles of soda pop while Soren Webber waits for his turn and Corbin Dean cheers her on, during a ring toss game at the Hot Springs County Fair Family Fun Night. A ringer resulted in the prize of a pop.

photo by Mark Dykes

## Livestock auction sees over \$100,000

by Mark Dykes

Several people came out to support the county FFA and 4-H at the 2017 Junior Livestock Auction and Judges' Choice Bake Sale Friday night at the fairgrounds. The events saw a total of \$103,963.60. The amount is down about \$745 from last year.

The total for baked goods sold was \$5,225, with the high seller being Oakely Bowman with \$550. The buyer was Road Runner Service & Supply.

Thirty head of swine sold for a total \$30,814.35. The average price per head was \$1,027.15. Remington Ferree's grand champion animal brought in \$4.50 per pound for a total \$1,210.50. The buyer was Properties West.

Jaysie Owsley's reserve champion animal brought in \$5 per pound for a total \$1,235. The buyer was Rod Graves. Owsley and Eli Ready tied for the high price per pound, with Belle Belden, 00 Ranch buying Ready's swine. The average price per pound was \$3.87.

Twenty-one head of sheep sold for a total \$9,782.50. The average price per head was \$465.84. Hallie Martinez's grand champion brought in \$3.50 per pound for a total \$455. The buyer was Owl Creek Vet. Jaysie Owsley's reserve champion also brought in \$3.50 per pound for a total \$444.50. The buyer was New York Life.

The high price per pound paid was \$4.50, on Tucker Lake's animal purchased by Messenger & Overfield, and the average price per pound was \$3.47.

Seventeen head of beef sold for a total \$58,141.75. The average price per head was \$3,420.11. Strite Daniels' grand champion animal brought in \$3 per pound for a total \$3,774. The buyer was Thermopolis Hardware. Daniels did not sell his reserve animal.

The high price per pound was \$3.25, paid by Owl Lumber for Maile McCumber's animal, and by Arapahoe Ranch for Ellis Webber's animal. The average price per pound was \$2.68.



Tymber Eckley shows off her market pig during the Junior Livestock and Judges' Choice Bake Sale.

## Hotline update

by Cindy Glasson

In order to take some of the strain off the 9-1-1 system for Hot Springs County during the upcoming solar eclipse, a special hotline number has been created for people to call with questions that are non-emergency related.

With the influx of visitors expected up to a week before the eclipse, Emergency Management Coordinator Bill Gordon thought a hotline number would be a good idea to redirect those just looking for information away from the emergency number, freeing up dispatchers to handle actual emergencies.

Of course, if there is a real emergency, folks should dial 9-1-1, however, if they are just looking for directions to an event or where to purchase propane or dump the blackwater tanks from their RV, the hotline number will be the number to call.

The hotline will be set up at the firehall with dedicated lines provided through the IT department of the county. There will be one central number with the capability to "roll over" to the next line if more than one call comes in.

Along with the ability to use more than one line at a time, the system will allow those answering the hotline to transfer a call over to 9-1-1 if appropriate.

Gordon said they are still looking for volunteers to man the hotline. It will be in service starting on Thursday, Aug. 17 at noon and be open from 8 a.m. til 8 p.m. the remaining days of the weekend, closing operations on Monday, Aug. 21 at 6 p.m.

A series of possible questions along with the answers is being generated, so every volunteer will have the answers right at their fingertips when a caller is on the line. Of course, there will be someone there for assistance if a question comes up that is not covered on the script.

If you are interested in volunteering to man the hotline, please contact Meri Ann Rush at the Chamber of Commerce, 864-3192. Volunteers will only work four hours at a time.

A training for volunteers will be held on Wednesday, Aug. 16 at 1 p.m. at the firehall.

## Interim committee meets here

by Mark Dykes

Wednesday and Thursday of last week, the Joint Revenue Interim Committee, chaired by Senator Ray Peterson and Representative Michael Madden, came to Thermopolis to meet and discuss revenue options available. The joint committee is tasked with looking at various revenue options for the state.

Among the topics of discussion were the markups and taxes related to beer, wine, liquor and cigarettes, wind energy production taxes and gross receipts tax.

With each topic, several people testified whether they were for or against particular items, and their reasons why.

House District 28 Representative Nathan Winters was in attendance during the first day of the session, interested particularly in the gross receipts tax. These sessions, Winters explained, are more for bill proposals and information gathering rather than concrete, final solutions. Those, he noted, happen closer to the end of the year, yet these public meetings are an interesting part of the process.

With regard to the gross receipts tax, Winters said it could be very damaging as it, essentially, creates a "tax pyramid" in which all steps of production are taxed. Whether there is a profit or not, or even if there is a loss, he said, there is a climb in cost which consumers will see but may not understand.

In other states, Winters said, as a result of being taxed at every step of production, it's been found a lot of companies start to vertically integrate rather than having a healthy relationship among companies where they can collaborate.

With the gross receipts tax, everything would be taxed whether it be minerals, medical supplies or any other items produced in communities across the state. Take for instance the oil fields, he said. There has to be a certain price per barrel of oil. If the gross receipts tax were to cut into that, it would mean the shutting down of more wells. Essentially, an attempt to increase revenue winds up decreasing it instead.

Tax is one area where we have