



# Town approves support of hospital request

by Mark Dykes

At the Thermopolis Town Council meeting Tuesday evening, council approved providing a letter of support of the Hot Springs County Memorial Hospital Board of Trustees' application for \$1.5 million in SLIB funds for the hospital addition and renovation.

Representing the hospital board were Dan Herdt and Melissa Johnson. Herdt noted there are two times a year when SLIB funds can be applied for, and they're in a bit of a rush to get the application in to Cheyenne. It's hoped the SLIB board will grant the money in January.

The master facility plan for the hospital was completed in 2015, and at that time the addition and renovation was \$16.4 million. In the three years since the plan was developed, according to the Turner Building Cost index, construction inflation has been 14.2 percent, or an additional \$2.3 million. Inflation was accounted for in initial estimates, but the rate is above average and will increase the project an additional 9.7 percent or \$1,591,000.

Additionally, geotechnical investigation has revealed deep foundations are required, which will increase foundation costs by up to \$500,000. Asbestos abatement is

also necessary, costing \$100,000. The additional combined costs brings the project to \$18.6 million.

According to a project summary presented to the council, the \$1.5 million is to supplement the project budget due to unforeseen expenses stemming from the foundation issues, asbestos abatement and inflationary factors.

In other action, the board approved the second reading of an ordinance increasing sewer and solid waste collection rates for users with and customers of the Town of

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photo by Dennis Nierwicki

## Airborne

The Thermopolis Bobcat football team and trainers supervised the bouncy house on Saturday during Oktobrewfest. There were plenty of smiles and laughs all around as children and adults took part in the many activities.

## Stone's Throw liquor license transferred back to Legion Town and Country Club

by Cindy Glasson

With not a lot of business on their agenda Tuesday afternoon, the Hot Springs County Commissioners had a brief meeting.

The afternoon started out with a public meeting regarding the transfer of a liquor license from Stones Throw Restaurant and Bar, LLC to the Legion Town and Country Club, dba Thermopolis Golf Course.

Per the lease agreement Stones Throw had with the Country Club, if they decided not to continue with their lease, the license would be transferred back to the Club.

Since there was no public comment during the meeting regarding the transfer, the commissioners approved the transfer.

Margie Molitor approached the board regarding a grant application the Hospital District is currently pursuing in the amount of \$1.5 million.

Molitor needed a letter from the commissioners indicating the district currently exists, along with another letter stating the commissioners had reviewed the application and endorsed the district going forward.

The grant is a Mineral Royalty Grant through the State Lands and Investment Board (SLIB) and a decision will be made by SLIB in January as to whether or not the district will receive the mon-

ies for the Hot Springs County Hospital District Addition and Renovation project.

Suzanne Samelson, president of Main Street Thermopolis gave a short report to the board on what the group has been doing for the past few months.

Along with travel to various conferences, Samelson was happy to announce an insert has been created that features Thermopolis that will be placed in the Main Street Wyoming brochures. Along with information on how to get in touch with the local group, the insert lists the accomplishments and goals for the group as well as a listing of their partner companies.

Main Street Thermopolis reports record sales with the downtown businesses during the eclipse. Those sales carried over into Oktobrewfest last weekend as Samelson said businesses reported a bump in sales during the fourth annual event.

With cooler weather, a little rain and some snow in the higher elevations, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has lifted their fire restrictions.

Following suit, Dion Robbins with the Thermopolis Volunteer Fire Department let the commissioners know the decision had been made to lift the fire restrictions in Hot Springs County as well.

## How to make Thermopolis a destination

by Mark Dykes

During the Tuesday meeting of Hot Springs Travel and Tourism a motion passed 4-1, with Rick Tudor voting "no," to approve a contract with Young Strategies Inc., for firm representative Berkeley Young to have a conference with board members at the Governor's Conference in Cheyenne Feb. 25- 27.

The motion included a contingency that money be obtained through the Technical Assistance Co-op Program offered through the Wyoming Office of Tourism. The program would provide 50 percent matching up to \$5,000. A motion passed unanimously for Moeller to pursue the funding, which will bring the cost of the meeting with Young from \$15,640 to \$10,640. If the funding is not

received, the conference with Young won't be scheduled.

Moeller pointed out in her discussions with Young they discussed lodging aspects such as who is coming to town, how long they're staying, where they're staying and what they're spending their money on, as well as how to make Thermopolis more of a destination. The meeting with Young at the Governor's Conference would be to provide suggestions to the board, but he also wants to meet with individual hoteliers regarding how they might improve their businesses.

Kevin Skates there are always questions coming up as to who is staying here and why, and there isn't really any data to provide. He said the information would be good for the board to have, to move

forward as to what they can do beyond helping funding special events.

Tudor was concerned any questions asked might not be answerable because local data is not available, and the information provided by Young would be a generic package geared more toward visitor information from the Jackson and Cheyenne area, and not really anything to do with those who visit Thermopolis. Moeller said she doesn't expect the information will be like that, as Young is familiar with Thermopolis and knows the community. She also pointed out there are several opportunities he will use to gather information regarding people who stay in Thermopolis.

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## School board hears performance results

by Cindy Glasson

Hot Springs County School District #1 Board of Trustees held their monthly meeting on Tuesday night, starting things out with a meet and greet of the new teachers in the district.

David Duncan and Carrie Ryan were on tap for the district initiatives discussion, telling the board what they are doing to help those students with problematic behaviors in the classroom.

Duncan said it isn't just the students with disabilities they are working with, although some of the students do qualify as special education.

Problematic behaviors not only affect the student's learning, but can also impact the learning of their fellow students.

The behaviors can be anything from disruptive to physical and while most can be handled within the classroom,

sometimes they go beyond what can be handled in the classroom and a functional behavior assessment needs to be conducted.

The assessment includes family members and teachers and looks at what the consequences are after the behavior, what is motivating the child to act this way – looking for attention or what triggers it?

Ryan went on to talk about her room at Ralph Witters Elementary, the CATS room, Children Achieving Through Support.

CATS, Ryan said, is for learning positive behaviors and works as a stop-gap between teaching the coping skills and having to send a child home. They teach behavior management strategies and have weekly meetings with the teachers to keep tabs on what's happening

with the child and adjust their work as necessary.

Social skills practice is a large part of CATS along with relationship building as Ryan says we don't always know what kind of trauma a child has experienced and how it affects their learning.

Laurie Graves, principal at RWE kicked off the data presentation to the board, saying her staff has decided to keep the same goals this year as they had created last year. Graves says, yes, the goals are lofty and they didn't reach them entirely last year, but they are not giving up.

In the school performance report, Graves indicated the scores for students remained fairly consistent which is great considering the number of new staff.

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