

Council acts to address drainage problems

by Mark Dykes

Tuesday night, Thermopolis Town Council approved two plans to address drainage issues on Upper Fremont.

Ray and Belinda Moore first brought the issue before the council in July last year, noting that the installation of a new city water line had caused a lot of water in their home. This water, they said, has devalued their property and required them to run a sump pump.

The Moores have come before the board on the matter a couple times since that initial meeting, and attended Tuesday’s meeting to see where things are.

Town Engineer Anthony Barnett explained

he and Director of Public Works Ernie Slagle looked at two spots — one around the Moores house and one closer to the WYDOT highway — where drains could be put in. Barnett further noted the added drainage would be of benefit to the longevity of the street.

The projects are estimated to cost about \$17,000 or more, though there was no determination during the meeting as to when work would begin.

A notice to proceed was approved for Wilson Brothers, which successfully won the bid for the upcoming water line replacement project at \$2,127,702.80. Approval of the notice means the firm can begin to order equipment and start

prepping for the project, which is expected to start at the end of March or early April.

Following a brief public hearing, during which no comment was given for or against, council approved liquor license renewals for Mac’s, Thermopolis Café, Reese and Ray’s IGA, Loonie’s Bin, Grand Cru Enterprises, Maverik, Safari Club Lounge, Thermopolis Liquors/Beer Barn, Pizza Hut, Las Fuentes, Front Porch, One Eyed Buffalo, Raptors Grill & Pub and VFW Post No. 2281. A microbrewery liquor license was also approved for One Eyed Buffalo.

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photo by Cindy Glasson

Engineer in the making

DeAnna Myers is all concentration as she works building her ship at the Lego Club, sponsored by the Hot Springs County Library. The club meets the first and third Friday of each month.

Jury finds Herrera guilty on four counts

by Mark Dykes

Friday evening in Hot Springs District Court, a jury found Holly Herrera guilty on three counts of child endangerment — exposure to methamphetamine — and one count of possession of a controlled substance.

The charges stem from a July 1, 2017 incident, after a vehicle in which Herrera was a passenger was stopped for not having illumination on its rear license plate. Herrera was located inside the vehicle, along with three juveniles, a small amount of meth and various paraphernalia.

During opening arguments of the trial, prosecuting attorney, Marcia Bean, said the jury would hear testimony from Wyoming Highway Patrol Trooper, Beatriz Regina Schulmeister, who conducted the traffic stop. Schulmeister would lead the jury through the reasons why she initiated a stop on the vehicle, as well as the procedures she used to identify the vehicle occupants and do a search of the vehicle.

During the arguments, Bean noted the jury would hear of how Schulmeister would find a bag, later described as a cosmetics bag, in the rear row of seats, where Herrera also was. Inside that bag was a pipe that could be used for smoking methamphetamine.

Defense attorney, Dan Caldwell III, stated there were no prints or

DNA evidence taken at the scene which showed the bag actually belong to Herrera. Caldwell further added there were times during the stop when an occupant of the vehicle is not being closely observed, and suggested that occupant could’ve put the pipe inside the bag.

Caldwell intended to prove Herrera was not knowingly in possession of the drug, which is one of the elements of the child endangerment charges.

During the trial, Trooper Schulmeister testified that during her shift, which ran from the afternoon of June 30, 2017, to the early hours the following morning, she was in her southward-facing patrol unit on Highway 20 near the base of what is commonly referred to as Hospital Hill. During that time, she observed a northbound Chevy Cobalt go by her.

Looking in her rearview mirror, Schulmeister said, she noticed there was no light on the vehicle’s rear license plate. She further turned her head to observe the plate and later followed the vehicle, turning of her unit’s headlights briefly to prevent any interference.

Confirming the plate had no light, she waited until both vehicles were past the hill and in a safe, open area — near mile marker 135

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Legislature discusses future of Wyoming Pioneer Home

Winters: People need to come first

by Cindy Glasson

It has been a busy week in Cheyenne as the Wyoming Legislature is now in session, but the question weighing heavily on the minds of those in Thermopolis and Hot Springs County is the future of the Wyoming Pioneer Home.

The fate of the facility should be on the minds of everyone in Wyoming as the Pioneer Home is available for any Wyoming resident, not just those who reside in the Big Horn Basin.

According to Representative Nathan Winters, the bill was once again in the appropriations committee on Monday morning.

SF112 calls for the privatization of the Wyoming Pioneer Home as well

as the State Nursing facility in Basin. This would allow a private company to come into Wyoming, take the facilities over and charge whatever they wish.

Nationally, the average cost for assisted living such as the Pioneer Home runs \$3,500 per month, nearly double what the average cost is currently at the facility.

“I have been fighting like a Bobcat on behalf of the Pioneer Home,” Winters said. “People need to come first. We need to know that they’re safe and well cared for. The Pioneer Home was started for a reason and we need to make sure the state holds up their end of the deal.”

In order to make an introductory

vote, two-thirds majority must approve the bill be sent to the floor.

Originally, the bill was to be introduced on the House floor, however, Winters gathered all the representatives — plus a few more — from the Big Horn Basin to sit in on the initial vote.

“We had a good show of force,” Winters said. “I think they were a little intimidated, so the bill was brought to the Senate first, instead.”

People across the state need to call their senators and representatives in order to stop the bill from passing since it affects elderly across Wyoming.

“The bill, as written, is not right for the people of Wyoming at either facility,” Winters said.

Agar working on amendment to allow time for options

by Mark Dykes

The biggest question Thermopolis residents have been asking this past week has to do with the Wyoming Pioneer Home. Under SF112, the facility would be privatized, allowing a company to take over it as well as the Wyoming Retirement Center in Basin.

Senate District 20 representative, Wyatt Agar, was not present during the bill’s introduction on Friday, as he was assisting his wife during their annual bull sale, but he returned to Cheyenne early Saturday.

Agar said he and Representative Nathan Winters have been working on an

amendment to stretch the timeline should the decision be made for privatization, a decision which would be made by the State Health Department. Agar further explained extending the timeline would provide the community time for options such as putting together a non-profit for operating the

Pioneer Home or bringing it under the Hot Springs County Memorial Hospital District. At the same time, Agar is also putting together an amendment for a bill that looks at establishing skilled nursing facilities for veterans. The amendment would

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