



Council hears from private waste company

by Mark Dykes

During a brief meeting Tuesday evening, Thermopolis Town Council heard from Bruce Leven, the operations manager and site manager for Wyoming Waste Systems out of Riverton.

Leven, who has visited with council previously, wanted to present the idea of his company taking over waste disposal from the landfill, essentially privatizing the system when the landfill permit expires on June 12, 2020.

Council previously had a work session regarding options when the permit expires.

Though a lifetime permit of 25 years is available it would require lining the southern half of the landfill and the town would have to prove it would not leak.

Other options discussed at the work session include transferring the waste to other area landfills via packer truck or transfer station. Area landfills that might take waste from the area include Worland, Cody, Sand Draw and Casper.

A packer truck might work if the waste were hauled a short distance — such as to Worland — and a transfer station and different trucks would be necessary if the

waste was hauled longer distances.

One of the biggest factors in determining what to do with the landfill is grant funding. Around 2006 or 2007 solid waste studies were funded. Between 2008 and 2010, the Legislature started setting aside money for transfer stations, and decided on 30 locations for them based on the studies and landfill permits. Locations were further prioritized, and \$40 million was set aside; of the 30 locations, there was enough for 22 of the stations. Thermopolis was 24.

Wyoming Waste Systems currently provides services for Kirby.



photo by Mark Dykes

Grab and go

Hot Springs State Park saw plenty of visitors, young and old, for the annual Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt on Sunday. Age division winners of the bikes and/or wagon were: Gabriele Nehecheck, 2 and under; Zoey Sharp, age 3-4; Reed Lavin, age 5-6; and Anthony James Cheatham, age 7-9.

Woman sentenced to one year in county jail for felony charges

by Cindy Glasson

A case that has been going on for over a year in District Court finally came to a conclusion on Monday as Lola Vialpando was sentenced to one year in county jail and 10 years of supervised probation by judge Robert Skar.

Vialpando was charged with 21 felony counts of forgery, theft and larceny along with two misdemeanor counts of larceny in November of 2016.

The charges stem from as far back as December, 2010, with Vialpando forging check's using her employer's name, Kevin Smith, owner of Smith Oilfield Services. Additionally, she made mobile transactions, used company credit cards and even altered bank statements to cover her tracks.

In total, Vialpando skimmed nearly \$180,000 to pay her husband's child support, buy groceries for family members, pay cell phone bills and even medical bills for her children.

In November 2017, Vialpando plead 'no contest' to the charges and a plea agreement was reached between the two parties.

At sentencing on Monday, Vialpando said she was very sorry for everything.

"I have four children at home," she said. "I have been taking care

of my grandmother as much as I can. I have failed my family and friends, but I've learned a lesson.

"I want to start paying restitution. I am sorry to have caused so much pain."

Skar asked how much per month she was able to pay toward the restitution and Vialpando indicated she had been working and was putting \$500 a month toward it.

With close to \$180,000 to pay back, Skar pointed out it would take 30 years for her to pay it all back at that rate.

As mentioned, Vialpando had plead 'no contest' to the 21 charges, however, Skar was not receptive to that plea in light of the plea agreement. Instead, he said she would have to plead guilty in order to even consider the plea agreement.

After consulting with her attorney, Vialpando did change her plea to guilty on all counts.

Jerry Williams, prosecuting attorney representing the State of Wyoming in this case had several things to say before Skar made his final decision.

Williams pointed out the money stolen was in such a large scale it was obviously not for 'need,' but for 'greed.' They

See Sentenced on page 8



photo by Mark Dykes

Close call at county museum

The Thermopolis Volunteer Fire Department hauls out fixtures damaged by a fire at Hot Springs County Museum Friday morning.

Minimal damage from museum fire

by Cindy Glasson

Although the official cause of the fire last Friday morning at the Hot Springs County Museum and Cultural Center has not been released by fire authorities, the commissioners heard some of the details of the fire from maintenance supervisor Anthony Fruciano.

Fruciano said the fire department's initial assumption is that it was a chemical fire that started under the sink in the breakroom just to the right of the building's entrance.

What combination of chemicals was under the sink is still to be determined, but it is possible the fire itself actually started through spontaneous combustion of steel wool that was stored there.

They do know it started at 6:12 a.m. thanks to security camera footage that pinpointed the exact time it began.

The fire in the cabinet under the sink melted the water pipes under the sink, allowing the water to flow freely for a couple of hours before anyone discovered it.

Varney Clean Care from Worland was on the scene by noon on Friday to clean up the mess, pulling the water from the carpeting and getting things dried out. At this time, they are checking to see if the carpets can be cleaned and brought back to their original shape as some areas became discolored.

Fruciano said it was amazing more damage wasn't done, especially in the basement.

"We went downstairs and it was like waterfalls coming from the ceiling," he said. "There would be this waterfall and then a display and then another water-

See Fire on page 8