



# Vehicle stolen from parking lot

by Mark Dykes

A Wisconsin couple has been transported back to Hot Springs County to await charges related to the theft of 2007 Saturn passenger van. The Thermopolis Police Department utilized social media to alert the community about the theft, as well as security video footage which shows the couple pulling up to the van in a green Dodge, also reportedly stolen from Worland, getting in the car and driving off headed south.

According to information from the Park County Sheriff's Office, Cody Milton Wallace, 24, whose last known address was Alma

Center, Wis. and Tracey Rae Matti, 35, Merrillan, Wis. were arrested after a brief manhunt Sunday evening north of Monster Lake by deputies from the Park County Sheriff's Office and officers from the Cody Police Department.

The Park County Dispatch Center received a call from the Hot Springs County Sheriff's Office on May 20 at 5:32 p.m. and were advised of the theft and that the owner's cell phone, which was still in the vehicle, was "pinged" 18 miles south of Cody on Highway 120. Deputies from Park County immediately responded. At about 5:45 p.m., a deputy

passed the suspect vehicle northbound in the construction zone on Highway 120 and began to follow it north towards Cody awaiting back up officers.

At 5:50 p.m., the suspect vehicle turned into Monster Lake, proceeded around the main ranch area and continued north on a two-track road still being followed by deputies. Eventually, the vehicle veered off of the two-track road and out over open ground. Pursuing deputies were able to maintain visual contact at this time.

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photo by Mark Dykes

## Hats off to the graduates

Caps went up and confetti came down with the presentation of the Hot Springs County High School Class of 2018. During the ceremony, Salutatorian Shianne Yarrington and Valedictorians Haley McDermott, Mary Ryan and Stormy Cox gave advice to their classmates, entertained the audience and provided some humorous comments about the class. See their speeches on Page 12.

## Tourism season underway

by Mark Dykes

The end of the school year is, literally, just a day away. That means the flurry of summer activities and tourists is again getting ready to fire up for the next few months.

Travel and Tourism Director Amanda Moeller said they've been doing the regular radio spots and promotion of special events, noting those events are also promoted on the digital billboards in Gillette.

Kicking off this Memorial Day weekend and running through Labor Day is the annual sticker venture between Travel and Tourism and the Thermopolis-

Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce. Many people collect the stickers promoting the town from year to year and they can be picked up at the chamber office.

Moeller noted they are also



coming up with ideas for community pride, among them possibly having some new welcome signs and nominating citizens, schools and businesses for awards for doing things that make Thermopolis a better place to live.

Chamber Executive Director Meri Ann Rush said they're already gearing up for the increase of tourists to the community. There are plenty of events happening this summer, she said, including a new addition with the Cycle Greater Yellowstone riders coming through this year. At many of the events, she said, the chamber helps through providing convention bags.

Rush encourages people to be prepared that the lines might be a bit longer, and there will certainly be an increase of sidewalk and highway traffic, and she encourage everyone to be safe and have fun.

## Still time to file for an elected position

Primary election day will be upon us before you know it and the filing deadline for elected officials in Thermopolis and Hot Springs County is June 1.

To file for county offices, please visit the county clerk's office, and for Thermopolis, please see the town clerk at town hall.

The primary on August 21 will have the following on the ballot: Hot Springs County:

Two County Commissioners (4-year terms)  
One County Assessor (four-year term)

One County Attorney (four-year term)  
One County Clerk (four-year term)  
One Clerk of District Court (four-year term)  
One County Coroner (four-year term)  
One County Sheriff (four-year term)  
One County Treasurer (four-year term)  
Town of Thermopolis:  
One Mayor (four-year term)  
Two Council Members (four-year terms)

Town of East Thermopolis:  
One Mayor (four-year term)  
Two Council Members (four-year terms)  
Town of Kirby:  
One Mayor (four-year term)  
Three Council Members (four-year terms)  
August 6 will be the last day to register to vote at the county clerk's office for the primary election. You may register at the polls on election day, however, you will have to have proper identification such as a driver's license to register.

## Theft may keep flags from flying on Memorial Day

by Cindy Glasson

A sight that has become something of a staple in Thermopolis the last few years, Hawk's Avenue of Flags, may not be on display this Memorial Day due to the theft of four flags and poles.

The theft was discovered on Monday when sometime between 6:30 a.m. and 7 a.m. a bag containing the flags, a note and \$311.50 was found outside the VFW.

The note said the theft occurred some time in January when the trailer that is used to store the flags was parked at Raptor's on Shoshoni.

Signed by "A Single Mother", the note expressed regret at what had happened, but did not want to ruin her son's life. About \$30 of the money left with the bag of flags was in change inside a sock.

One of the flags stolen was Don 'Hawk' Hawkins' coffin flag, the man whom the display is named after.

Although the four coffin flags were returned, the poles on which they flew have disappeared. After an inventory of the flags, Ross Hawkins said they know which poles are missing.

The stolen flags were not defaced, however, the remaining flags still

need to be examined to ensure they are intact as well.

John Gerrels with the VFW said the flags, note and money left behind have all been turned over to the police department.

"This could have been a learning experience for this kid," Hawkins said. "They could have come down to the VFW, met the vets and learned why we honor them the way we do."

Since the theft was discovered, people have stepped up and offered to replace the poles, but at this point, it's simply too late to get them ordered, have the personalized plaques made and get them here in time to display for Memorial Day.

Hawkins said he understands the mother's reticence to come forward, but "He needs to do community service. This shouldn't be on his record, but let's teach him what is morally right."

Gerrels would like to see the flags go up in spite of this setback.

"You know," he said, "you don't quit in battle because you lose three or four men."

Watch for updates on social media letting people know whether the flags will fly or not.

