

IR Thermopolis Independent Record



Make sure you are signed up for CodeRED

by Cindy Glasson
Over the past few weeks Hot Springs County has had several tornado watches or warnings, something that is rather unusual for our basin. Hot Springs County Emergency Management attempted a test of the tornado warning sirens last Friday, but due to technical difficulties, the sirens did not go off. Emergency Management Director Bill Gordon said a technician was called in and the situation has been rectified. After a CodeRED message was sent out sounding the all clear last Thursday, many people were concerned that they had not received a message earlier stating there was a tornado warning for the county. When the National Weather Service issues a

warning, Gordon immediately reviews the live radar to see where the potential storm is and which direction it is traveling in. In some cases, the warning may be in just a sliver of the outside edge of the county, not posing a threat to the community. "After I've looked at the data I make the decision whether a CodeRED is needed or not," Gordon said. "I'm not going to send people to their basements about a storm that's 45 miles away and not moving this direction. "People need to be aware that if a storm is even touching our county border, the National Weather Service is required to add Hot Springs County to the warning." Unfortunately, in this age of electronics in

nearly everyone's hand, panic about the possibility of a tornado can spread like wildfire. There are several weather apps for cell phones, but just because Hot Springs County is listed on the warning it does not necessarily mean there is an actual threat to town as the storm may be miles away. "If you hear the sirens, that's the time to take cover," Gordon said. "The tornado siren is a high-low tone. A steady tone is used for the all clear when we're safe again." If you are not yet signed up for the CodeRED service, you may go to the county's website, hscounty.com, click on the CodeRED logo to register your phone number. You may also sign up by calling 864-4649.

THERMOPOLIS INDEPENDENT RECORD

YEAR 118, WEEK 26, Sections: 1, June 28, 2018

THERMOPOLIS, WY 82443

USPS 627-300

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photo by Mark Dykes

Patriotic parade

This past weekend brought the action of the annual PRCA Cowboy Rendezvous Rodeo to town. The parade saw plenty of entries from businesses, rodeo royalty and individuals. Keeping with the theme of United We Stand, many featured patriotic colors and tributes to veterans and the Armed Forces. It being an election year, there were plenty of local and state candidates shaking hands and visiting with their constituents. Overall winners from the parade were the Wyoming State Fair with their draft horses in first, the Big Horn Basin Riders motorcycle club with a revved up patriotic display in second and a unique musical presentation by the Wyoming Bagpipers in third.

Hospital board amends budget

by Mark Dykes

During their meeting Tuesday evening, the Hot Springs County Memorial Hospital Board of Trustees approved amending the budget for the 2017-18 fiscal year. Chief Financial Officer Shelly Larson explained because they are a hospital district they are subject to different rules in terms of their budget. The state auditor's office requires the board amend the budget for any line items so they don't exceed what was approved by the board. Larson further explained she takes the actual revenue and expenses from July to May and tries to estimate June's, providing the amended budget.

Larson pointed out the total operating revenue on the amended budget was about \$18,861,000, compared to the budgeted \$18,165,000. Total operating expenses were \$18,942,000, compared to the budgeted \$18,244,000. There is an estimated net operating loss of about \$80,000, where there was a budgeted net income of about \$20,000, causing a variance of -\$100,000. As for non-operating revenue the amended amount was about \$88,000 for the year against an original budgeted amount of \$45,000.

The hospital has a total net operating surplus, before restricted grants and taxes, of \$8,486 on the amended budget, compared to \$65,574 on the original budget.

The board also approved the preliminary budget for the 2018-19 fiscal year, presented by Larson. Among the budget estimates: gross patient revenue is about \$32,170,000; total operating revenue is about \$21,228,000; and total operating expenses are about \$21,518,000. A net operating loss of about \$290,000 is also expected, but so is a non-operating income of \$243,000.

There will be a public hearing on the budget at 6 p.m. July 31 in the hospital conference room, prior to the regular board meeting.

Another financial decision made at the Tuesday meeting was to approve renewal of the hospital line of credit with Central Bank and Trust.

Also during the meeting, Dr. Jason Weyer reported he is looking into creating binders for new providers so they have an easy introduction to things such as procedures, passwords and other items. Weyer also reported there has been some discussion regarding the creation of an "easy" button, something that can be activated to get a helicopter immediately. As part of the process he is looking into whether one company would be used for the helicopters or the service would be spread across multiple agencies.

Phil Scheel, a member of the hospital foundation board, said the board meets every quarter but some members have discussed becoming more active. One of the primary roles of the foundation, he noted is to help with equipment needs for the hospital and they will hopefully be very active in the hospital's renovation and expansion.

Scheel noted they are also looking at potentially having an executive director or professional grant writer to help the foundation board set and accomplish goals. Among the goals already discussed, he said, is to be more directly connected to the hospital board. "I'm just here to communicate our ideas and our enthusiasm," Scheel said, "and see if we can work with you."

He encouraged the board to attend their regular meetings if they would like to see what the foundation board is all about.



photo by Mark Dykes

Clowning around

Rodeo clown Justin Rumford gathers youth around him to explain the rules of the boot scramble during the rodeo.

Airport drainage project

by Cindy Glasson

The Hot Springs County Commissioners discussed the ongoing issue of drainage at the Hot Springs County Airport during last week's meeting, voting to go forward with granting the project to Owl Creek Excavation.

The commissioners received funding, not to exceed \$100,000 from the FAA to fund the project.

The FAA has made \$1 billion in funds available for small, non-primary airports across the country with funding at 100 percent. Hot Springs County is one of the airports on a priority list for these funds.

The commissioners gave the go ahead to GDA Engineers to make an application for funds that would cover Phase I and II of the proposed taxiway connector/apron project.

An upgrade to the enhanced 9-1-1 system is one step closer to coming to fruition as the commissioners

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