

# Water line project on schedule

by Mark Dykes

The streets of Thermopolis have been a variety of detours this past couple months as the water line replacement project has gotten underway.

Work began in Hot Springs State Park but was plagued with delays. According to Town Engineer Anthony Barnett things are a bit behind but they should hit the final completion date fairly close.

A second crew has been beneficial, allowing for work on Seventh Street at the same time that work continues on Fifth

Street and the 400 block of Warren. Barnett noted one of the businesses has to be tied back in to the new line before work continues along Fifth.

There have been a couple bumps along the way, as a line to a local business has been hit twice, disrupting service. Barnett was concerned this would be a reoccurring theme going along Fifth Street, but Seventh Street should be a bit easier.

The estimated completion date is for the end of August. Barnett noted there was a stop work order for work planned for Sixth

Street, close to the bridge.

In early fall, he said, they'll have to see where the water use is at. If the water plant can handle pushing water through the Canyon Hills leg and across the Eighth Street bridge, it might be possible to finish the Sixth Street work by the planned completion, though he estimated it might be done by the end of October.

As for the completed state park portion, Barnett said the lines are on and concrete work is being done. He's hopeful to have paving done next week.



photo by Cindy Glasson

## Beating the heat

Baer McPhie took on summer with a splash at the Water Fun Day put on by Hot Springs Public Health and Safe Kids. The event was held on the grassy area behind the Hot Springs County Library, bringing moms and their kids together for some fun along with information on kid safety. Parents were all entered in a drawing for safety items like door knob covers, outlet cover, corner cushions and even braces to keep flat screen TVs securely fastened to the wall to prevent injuries.

# Hospital board approves policies

by Mark Dykes

Tuesday evening, the Hot Springs County Memorial Hospital Board of Trustees approved a number of policies, including the complaint/grievance policy.

The policy is designed to allow handling of all patient and family complaints in a timely manner, and also track and track and trend complaints and grievances so as to implement any necessary changes and process improvements under the direction of Quality Assurance, Risk Management and Patient Care committees.

Patti Jeunehomme reported on recent changes to various policies, including those concerning absences, dress code, disciplinary action, worker's compensation, employee evaluation, performance and salary review, resignations and drug testing.

The policies undergo an annual review and were approved as presented, though it was suggested that prior to the next year's review, the policies and any changes be presented to allow time for the board to look over them.

Also during the meeting, John Gibbel reported the fourth quarter HCAP scores for the fiscal year could've been better, but looking at it month to month the scores were better in June than in May. He further noted July scores are looking great, so things are off to a good start for the year.

Gibbel also reported a Patient Experience Team has been created, with several representatives of the hospital on it, and they look for ways to improve patient experience at the hospital. The team's current focus is leader rounding, hourly rounding and interdisciplinary team rounding.

Gibbel also noted there has been promotion of the hospital's services, such as obstetrics, to Riverton which has been "quite the market," as at last count there were 17 births to Riverton parents at the hospital that are either scheduled or already happened.

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photo by Cindy Glasson

## Swine soup

Adults and kids alike had a sloppy good time at Pig Wrestling Tuesday night. Results will be available next week.

# Not guilty plea entered in attempted murder charge

by Mark Dykes

Monday in Hot Springs District Court, Hugo A. Luna pleaded not guilty — through an interpreter — to felony charges of first-degree attempted murder and kidnapping.

The charges stem from a Friday, April 13 incident, during which Luna allegedly attempted to kill a woman who he had been traveling with for several days. The woman was found along the side of the road, and upon being interviewed said she became suspicious of Luna when he wasn't stopping in populated areas and did not allow her access to her phone. She also observed a mattress with blood on it in the sleeping area of Luna's truck.

After getting out of the truck along the road to go the bathroom, the woman said Luna assaulted her and strangled her. She lost consciousness, but later awoke in a ditch along Highway 120. Her injuries included cuts to her face, head and neck. A truck matching the description of the one Luna was driving was later stopped in Powell, and a purse with the victim's license was located inside. Prints from where the woman was found matched Luna's shoes and the tires on his truck.

Luna is being held on a \$500,000 cash bond, and if found guilty of the charges he faces a maximum of the death penalty or life in prison — with or without parole — and fines of \$20,000. As an interpreter is needed for the trial, it is scheduled for eight days.

Also in District Court, a plea agreement for Jared Dumas was accepted. According to the agreement, Dumas would plead guilty to felony strangulation of a household member and misdemeanor second-offense domestic battery. The charges are from an Oct. 25, 2017 incident, during which Dumas allegedly strangled a female, slammed her against the wall and threw her to the floor.

The agreements were previously not accepted, as Judge Robert Skar felt Dumas was not taking the matter seriously and there were some inconsistencies with information provided through a pre-sentence investigation.

Dumas was sentenced to three to five years in prison, though that sentence was suspended for four years supervised probation. Additional requirements of the probation are that Dumas attend a high intensity resident treatment program.