

# Chamber releases nominees

by Cindy Glasson

The Annual Chamber of Commerce Banquet for 2015 has been set for Saturday, March 21 at the Days Inn.

The past presidents of the chamber voted on the Business of the Year, Non-Profit Organization of the Year and Citizen of the Year at a recent board meeting.

Business of the Year nominees are: Axtell Ranches, Best Western Plus Plaza Hotel, Merlin's Hide Out, Mortimore Funeral Home, Pinnacle Bank, Storyteller, Thermopolis Eye Care,

The Wyoming Dinosaur Center, Vicklund Pharmacy, Wyoming Quarter Horse Ranch and Zupan Electric & Plumbing.

Non-Profit Organization of the Year nominees are: Federated Community Church, Gift of the Waters Pageant, H.O.P.E. Agency, HSC Fair Board, HSC Historical Society, HSC Memorial Hospital, HSC Museum, HS Greater Learning Foundation, HSC Senior Citizen Center, Hot Spot Car Rally, Thermopolis EDC, Thermopolis Kiwanis and the Wyoming Pioneer Home.

Citizen of the Year nominees are: Barbara

Vietti, Brandi Voss, Dixie Vialpando, Dorothy Milek, Greg Willson, Jacque Michel, Kim Enis, Linda Hughes, Lou Falgoust, Pat Cornwell, Pat & Chris Vosler, Stefanie Gilbert and Tony Deromedi.

The theme for the banquet this year will be "The Great Gatsby."

Chamber president Phil Scheel said while the event will be more formal as it was last year, "we're still here to have fun."

Winners for all the categories will be announced during the festivities.



Hayden Mayne, above, smiles with surprise after spelling a word correctly during the Annual Thermopolis Middle School Spelling Bee Friday. Mayne finished in second place after a tough spell-off against Owen Douglas who won the competition. Below, students cheer on the contestants during the spelling bee. -Zachary White photos

## Students abuzz at bee

by Zachary White

Students sparred with the spelling of words at the annual TMS Spelling Bee.

Three students made it to the final rounds; however, two of those children would not give ground and battled for supremacy.

In the end 6th grader Owen Douglas took home the first place prize, with 5th grader Hayden Mayne coming in a close second after going toe-to-toe with the older Douglas for four rounds. Seventh grader Darian Macie finished in third place.

All of the students in the TMS Spelling Bee vocalized

their way through increasingly difficult words, with the majority of students falling out of the competition after the fourth round.

The three students will next head to Rock Springs for the Annual Wyoming Spelling Bee.

Wyoming's state competition will be held on Mar. 21.

But first, in order for the TMS students to compete in the verbal competition in Rock Springs, the boys need to do well on a written spelling and vocabulary test.

"The top spellers from the written and vocabulary compete in a verbal contest," prin-

cipal Breez Daniels said.

The children who do the best, Daniels said approximately 20 students, will compete in the verbal portion of the state spelling bee.

Two staff members will be traveling with the students to cheer the boys on at the Rock Springs competition and parents are likely to follow.

And if by some stroke of luck or skill any of the Thermopolis boys are able to spell themselves a M-I-R-A-C-L-E, they will head to Washington D.C. for an all expenses paid trip to compete in the Scripps National Spelling Bee, which is nationally televised.



## Commissioners hire new Youth Alternatives head

by Cindy Glasson

The Hot Springs County Commissioners made one appointment and a hiring decision at their meeting Feb. 17 as well as discussed a possible change in how you pay your vehicle taxes and access public records.

With the resignation of Alan Rossler as Youth Alternatives Director, the commissioners have been searching for his replacement.

After several months of looking, they finally made the decision to hire Barb Rice as the new director.

The commissioners received several applications for the position and culled that number down to four candidates. After interviewing each applicant, Rice was chosen as the person best suited to handle the position.

The commissioners also approved the appointment of Dion Robbins as the new Hot Springs County Fire Warden after the resignation of Jay DuVall. Robbins' name was

brought to the commissioners on the recommendation of the fire department and fire district.

County Treasurer Julie Mortimore approached the commissioners regarding a change she would like to make to the way folks pay their motor vehicle taxes and license plates.

Mortimore would like to allow residents to pay their taxes online and has contacted the company that other counties in Wyoming have been using for years. Hot Springs County is one of the few counties in the state that doesn't have online payment of taxes in place already.

According to Mortimore, there would be a \$2,000 set up fee for the software, but the time saved, allowing those in the office to spend more time helping customers at the counter rather than spending time on the phone processing payments, would more than

make up for the initial outlay.

In addition, the cost to use the online payment method would be a bit cheaper than processing credit card payments by hand.

The online payment would also allow for the use of an e-check rather than a credit or debit card if the payee prefers.

Mortimore has talked with the head of IT at the courthouse, and he sees no problem with the current server handling the software needed for the online payment system.

County Attorney Jerry Williams is going to go over the contract presented by the online payment company and the commissioners will make a decision at their first meeting in March.

A few months ago the commissioners gave the go-ahead for ArcaSearch to begin putting the county's records into a digital format. At that time, it was hoped the project would be complete before the end of the fiscal year.

Peter Fox with ArcaSearch informed the commissioners at the meeting that due to unforeseen circumstances, the company will not have a team available to begin the process for the county until the latter part of the year, possibly around September.

That would mean the project would be completed some time in November. There is a slight possibility they could get a team in here sooner, perhaps late summer or early fall, but no way to get it completed before the end of the fiscal year, June 30.

After some discussion, the commissioners determined they could simply move the funds set aside for the project this year into next year's budget and move the project to a later date.

By putting all the county's records in a digital format, anyone wishing to access public records would be able to do so via the county's website.