

Join the fun on
Saturday after
the Light Parade **6**

Tourney: 16 teams
playing 24 tilts
Friday, Saturday **7**

Wilson: Bank
working with
the regulators **11**

Section Two:
County grants
total \$94,000 **13**

Thermopolis
Hot Springs

Independent Record

SPECIAL INTERNET PREVIEW

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THERMOPOLIS, WY 82443

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Lodging tax election set

by Cindy Bartlett Glasson
A special election to renew the lodging tax will be held in May following discussion at the Hot Springs County commissioner meeting on Tuesday.

The lodging tax was overlooked during the recent elec-

tion and not placed on the ballot, according to county clerk Hans Odde. As a result, it will expire on June 30.

May is the official time for a special election, and 60 days is required for a notification period. As a result, even if the election is

successful, the tax won't be collected July through September. On an average year, the lodging tax generates over \$170,000 for use in attracting visitors to the county. The 4% tax is collected only from people staying at motels and campgrounds.

Christmas Light Parade tops holiday events this Saturday

The annual Lighted Christmas Parade is Saturday at 6:30 p.m.

Floats should line up starting at 6 p.m. at the Washakie Shelter in Hot Springs State Park. The parade will go to the Wyoming Pioneer Home gazebo, where the Snow King and Queen will be crowned at approximately 6:15 p.m.

The procession will go east to Buffalo Street, south to Arapahoe past the hospital and proceed west on Broadway across the bridge to the traffic light. There the floats will make a u-turn and go east, lining up for judging.

Santa and Mrs. Claus will be waiting at Bicentennial Park and pictures will be offered. A children's choir will perform. Refreshments will be served by the Hot Springs County Search and Rescue at the old fire hall next to town hall.

Martin Andreen is the parade marshal and the theme is "A Child is Born."

For the last two years, the parade has culminated in the state park with activities there, including fireworks. None are planned this year.

The schedule:

Friday: Bar J Wranglers Cowboy Christmas Concert, auditorium, 7 p.m.

Saturday: Free holiday movie, "A Christmas Story" for children, The Ritz, 1 p.m. Bring a non-perishable food item if possible. Other movies will be shown on Dec. 13 and 20.

Monday: Festival of Trees, Bank of Wyoming.

Dec. 9: Fourth and fifth grade Christmas Concert.

Dec. 11: Middle and high school Christmas Concert.

Dec. 12: Entry deadline for Lighting Contest.

Dec. 13: Elf Workshop, Kiddie Kollege, 10:30 a.m.-noon.

Dec. 14: Christmas musical, "The Wise Men Had It Easy," Community Church, 4 p.m.

Dec. 15: Holiday Tour of Homes at 5:30 p.m. ending with reception at the Hot Springs County Historical Museum from 7-9 p.m. Homes include Deb Donahue, Jennifer Graham, Shirley and Charlie Towers, Jacky and Michael Wright, Patsy and John Dorman and Karissa and Ryan Williams.

Dec. 18: Kindergarten through third grade Christmas Concert.

Dec. 18: Taste of Holidays tour and treats, Gottsche, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Dec. 18: Meet and Greet Christmas Party, Pinnacle Bank, 5:30 p.m.

Dec. 19: Home and business lighting contest judging.

Dec. 20-21: Bowling for tots, A&W.

Dec. 25: Free public Christmas dinner, Episcopal Church, 1 p.m.

Organizations and individuals should call the chamber, 864-3192, to list their events.

The Christmas committee includes Dave Wood, Nancy Madrigal, Deb Mount and Kellie Faith.



Fifth Judicial District judge Robert Skar congratulates his successor, Tom Harrington, after the swearing in ceremony in the Hot Springs County district courtroom on Monday. Harrington, a former Thermopolis resident who lives in Worland, will concentrate on Hot Springs, Washakie and Big Horn counties.

—Jonathan Green photo

Town officials proposing system for building contractor licensing

by Breez Longwell Daniels

Contractors working in Thermopolis may soon face licensing requirements if the mayor and council act on the recommendation of the Town Planning Commission.

John Dorman represented the planning commission at the council meeting Tuesday and asked the council to adopt a licensing program for general contractors.

Town engineer Heath Overfield gave the mayor and council an overview of the recommendation.

"The planning commission heard it was done in other communities and thought it was a good idea," Overfield said. "Right now it is done with plumbers but not general contractors."

"Essentially I think the consensus at the last (planning) meeting was they want to move forward with it. They are modeling it after Worland, a community of the same size and many of our contractors come from Worland anyway."

Overfield said he had spoken to local contractors who were in favor of a licensing program.

"Generally they are all in favor of it," he said. "They are tired of getting undercut by a guy with a hammer and a box of nails."

Assistant to the mayor Dan Stansill encouraged the council to consider inviting the contractors to meet with the planning commission in an effort to field their comments. He proposed ob-

taining a sample of the testing requirements from Worland and getting the contractors involved in the process.

"We would have to provide a resource for education and allow the contractors time to study up for the test," Stansill said. "We should also make arrangements to have the test here in Thermopolis."

Overfield said other communities have allowed contractors that have been issued a construction permit within the last one to two years to be grandfathered in with a license. New contractors would be required to meet the testing requirements.

According to Stansill, the town gets several calls a week from people asking for a list of licensed contractors. Currently there are no licensing requirements and people new to the community cannot differentiate between contractors.

"I think some of the other areas have a contractor board that helps make decisions," Dorman said.

Council member Toni Casciato said, "I think those involved should have input."

Stansill and Overfield agreed and recommended the planning commission sit down with the contractors and come back to the town with a plan for creating a licensing process. The mayor and council agreed, but placed a March deadline on meeting with contractors in order to move forward with licensing requirements in the spring.

Precipitation now at 11.16

Precipitation in November in Thermopolis was .30 of an inch, well above the trace recorded in November a year ago.

The wettest November this century was 2001 with 1.23 inches recorded.

The total for the first 11 months of this year is now 11.16 inches, compared to 10.35 inches in 2007. The high this century was in 2005, with 15.85 inches recorded in 11 months, and several years had just over 7 inches.

The totals in inches of precipitation in recent years include:

Year	Nov.	Year
2008	.30	11.16
2007	Tr.	10.35
2006	.12	7.76
2005	.89	15.85
2004	.07	11.54
2003	.20	11.86
2002	.36	7.60
2001	1.23	7.68
2000	.45	9.77
1988	.58	7.03



Christmas Light Parade grand marshal Martin Andreen decorates his home. The parade will start at 6:30 p.m. Saturday in Hot Springs State Park and end downtown.

Spirit of volunteerism led to selection of Martin Andreen as parade marshal

by Breez Longwell Daniels

Martin Andreen will get to sit back and enjoy the ride during the Christmas Light Parade Saturday evening.

Andreen will be Parade Marshal as Santa's helpers at the Thermopolis-Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce provide the transportation.

A Christmas parade participant since 1973, Andreen said his worst memory is the year he decorated his entire pickup to look like Santa's sleigh.

"The sleigh runners came down and covered the wheels and the reindeer were carefully secured," Andreen said. "I spent four days decorating the pickup to look like a sleigh."

Minutes before the parade Andreen couldn't get the pickup to start. Andreen had completely covered the hood and couldn't open it at the last minute to see what the problem was.

"You could have seen a grown man cry back in that alley," he said. "There I was cranking on the key while the parade went on without me."

Chamber executive director Kathy Wallingford expressed appreciation for his volunteer role in

decorating Wyoming's Christmas City.

"Martin embodies the Christmas spirit," Wallingford said. "He was very instrumental when we got money for the facelift for the Christmas decorations."

"He worked Sunday afternoons and until midnight on many nights. He has put up Christmas lights around town each year; he redid the wreaths and put new garland on each one."

"He is an all-around volunteer. He just does it, things people don't even think about like turning on the Christmas lights."

Former chamber secretary Frances Smith praised Andreen's volunteerism. "It all started back when he took on his business, Andreen's Consignment," Smith said. "He never told anybody no."

"He worked with the retail committee and then got so involved with the chamber."

"We relied on him to help move the chamber office twice, and every year he helped put up the Christmas lights."

"As I look back on the years, Martin was always good about helping out with all of the community events."

Man jailed months for sex assault

by Jonathan Green

Hot Springs County attorney Jerry Williams is keeping mum about James Barber, who has been jailed here since Aug. 9 on two counts of sexual assault.

The jail roster lists Barber

held on two counts of sexual assault, although it is not indicated whether the assaults were in the first, second or third degrees. Williams' reticence to discuss the issue and the presence of a closed case in District Court dat-

ing from August, indicate a minor was probably involved.

It is unknown when Barber will face trial.

There are no Barbers listed in the Thermopolis telephone directory.

Who's been naughty, stealing the nice holiday decorations

by Jonathan Green

Thermopolis police chief Mark Nelson says his department has recovered holiday decorations and lights stolen from residences around the community and suggests anyone missing decorations contact his office.

Nelson said several reports of stolen or vandalized decorations were received in the prior week. The first call came Nov. 25, when candy cane lights

were reportedly vandalized and one stolen from the 200 block of Sunset.

While one candy cane light was missing, the man reported two Thanksgiving figurines were left in his yard.

On Sunday morning a homeowner in the 100 block of Chevy Chase reported an inflatable snowman wearing an orange cap and holding a rifle had been cut loose or stolen. Monday evening a \$30 polar bear and other

lawn ornaments were reported stolen from a yard in the 100 block of Meadowlark Lane.

Sunday police received a report of Christmas lights stolen in the 800 block of Big Horn, as well as a complaint of stolen ornaments from the 1000 block of Arapahoe Monday evening. The Christmas lights were recovered and returned, while the lawn ornaments were found in the 100 block of Warren and returned.

