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State H.O.G. Rally unfolds today in HS State Park

by Cindy Glasson

The 25th Annual Wyoming State Harley Owners Group (H.O.G.) Rally kicks off today (Thursday) at the host site, Days Inn, in Hot Springs State Park.

Local organizer Jenni Dorman said today's events include a "walk about" poker run at the downtown businesses as well as a "ride about" poker run.

A charity bike wash to benefit Muscular Dystrophy can be found in the Days Inn parking lot today, Friday and Saturday.

The parade of bikes will start tonight at Days Inn at 6 p.m., winding its way through town and finishing at Owl Lumber, where opening ceremonies begin at 7 p.m.

On Friday, the group will be riding out to Legend Rock in the morning and be back in town by 3 p.m. for off-bike games in the state park.

Wyoming Whiskey is holding a meet and greet in Kirby at 6 p.m., including a tour of

the distillery and bottling area. Representatives from Harley-Davidson will also be on hand to unveil a special motorcycle—designed specifically for Wyoming Whiskey.

The public is invited to attend a free concert by comedian/singer Kip Attaway Friday night at the state park pavilion, sponsored by Wyoming Whiskey. The show starts at 8:30 p.m.

An all-you-can-eat breakfast to benefit Relay for Life will start things off Saturday from 7 to 9:30 a.m. Cost for the breakfast

will be \$7.

There will be a bike show in the parking lot at Days Inn from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., then riders will participate in traditional rally games on their motorcycles from 1 to 5 p.m.

The H.O.G. Rally finishes in Thermopolis with a banquet, awards and closing ceremonies that evening.

The public is invited to attend any and all events throughout the three-day rally.



Lighting up the Fourth of July sky



Fireworks cast an eerie glow across Thermopolis on the Fourth of July as the community enjoyed nearly 30 minutes of "ooohs and aaahs," presented by the Thermopolis Volunteer Fire Department. Last year's show had to be cancelled because of a fire ban, but this year, in spite of spitting rain, the show went off without a hitch. Daily winds and high temperatures may still bring about a fire ban for the remainder of summer. — Cindy Glasson photo

cancelled because of a fire ban, but this year, in spite of spitting rain, the show went off without a hitch. Daily winds and high temperatures may still bring about a fire ban for the remainder of summer. — Cindy Glasson photo

Lions Club Ranch Rodeo to feature family fun

by Joe Sova

Family events are a trademark in Thermopolis and one of the most popular each summer is the Ranch Rodeo, sponsored and hosted by the Thermopolis Lions Club. The 23rd edition of the annual rodeo features evening performances Friday and Saturday at the Hot Springs County Fairgrounds arena.

Gates open at 5 p.m. each day. Rodeo action begins at 7:30 p.m. both Friday and Saturday.

There will be a Calcutta Friday at 7 p.m. where spectators can choose their favorite teams for the performances. According to Trenda Moore of the Thermopolis Lions Club, a portion of the money raised during the Calcutta and all the net concessions proceeds both days are donated by the Thermopolis Lions Club locally for eye care. She encourages community members to attend and support the Ranch Rodeo for its valuable cause.

Teams consist of five members, including a businessperson. Each team must include either one female or youth age 15 and under. The deadline to enter is this morning (Thursday).

Popular yet challenging events include wild cow milking, wild cow riding, branding, trailer loading and ribbon roping. Team mugging will be another featured event. Prizes will be awarded based on the number of teams entered.

Events for the kids will include mutton bustin' and a calf scramble. There will be special prizes for winners in those events.

With the variety of events testing the skills of competitors, the Ranch Rodeo is truly a family event—with no shortage of laughs.

Tickets for each Ranch Rodeo performance are \$5 for adults, and \$3 for children ages 7-12 and seniors (age 60 and over). Kids under 7 are admitted free. Advance tickets are available at the Thermopolis-Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce office and the Hot Springs County Senior Citizens Center or from any Thermopolis Lions Club member.

Concessions will be available. The Lions Club asks that those attending the performances to not bring in any coolers.

For more information about the Ranch Rodeo, call 921-1902 or 921-9547, or contact any Thermopolis Lions Club member.



Ranch Days — early beginnings

The Thermopolis Lions Club's Ranch Rodeo, originally known as Ranch Days, dates back 40 years—having its beginning in 1974. It got its start largely due to the effort of Dick Dickeson and a handful of other Hot Springs County residents.

Dickeson remembers that first Ranch Days event, a one-day rodeo featuring events that started in the morning and ran past midnight. "We started team roping at 10:30 at night," Dickeson said Monday.

The second year, the rodeo was expanded to two days—thus, its name was Ranch Days. It was just too much to cram into a single day. During its early years, the rodeo covered either two or three days.

In those early years, there

were five couples organizing and coordinating the rodeo.

However, the rodeo went into hiatus after six years, according to Dickeson. "It was a fantastic group, but we got burned out," he said.

After spending about 12 years "on the shelf," what came to be called the Ranch Rodeo was revived—becoming an annual event again in 1991. The Ranch Rodeo is just two years away from its silver anniversary, celebrating its 25th year in 2015. That will also be the 90th birthday of the existence of the Thermopolis Lions Club.

Dickeson indicated that such ranch rodeos have spread all over the United States and the Thermopolis Lions Club is keeping the spirit alive. "It's very

significant," Dickeson said. "I'm glad it did expand until it's now national."

Over the last several decades, many ranches—on a nationwide basis—have downsized, making it more of a local challenge to get a team together for the annual Ranch Rodeo.

"These teams are picking up members from different ranches and from town and making their teams," Dickeson said. "It's pulling them together."

There may not be quite as many events at the Ranch Rodeo that you'll see these days, but the high enthusiasm and competitive spirit remains the same.

For pure entertainment value, the Ranch Rodeo is top-notch and well worth the nominal price of admission.

An all-American parade



Zane Stone rides his pedal car during the second annual Pedal and Pet Parade July 4. Place winners include first, Rhiannon Goffena; second, Autumn Bansemer; and third, Zerrian Stone. Look for more photos on the IR Facebook page. — J.D. Stetson photo

State looks to town for landfill closure costs

by J.D. Stetson

The Town of Thermopolis recently responded to a request from the Wyoming Office of State Lands and Investments (OSLI) and the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) regarding the potential cost to close the current town landfill and build a transfer station for town sanitation services.

In May, the town received a letter from the directors of both state agencies explaining the recent enactment of House Bill 66/Enrolled Act 114, which established an account for grants and loans for communities planning to close municipal solid waste landfills and construct transfer facilities. Both agencies are in the process of making rules to implement the legislation.

The letter explains that before funds can be expended, the Wyoming Legislature must approve a prioritized list of projects. Both the OS LI and DEQ plan to determine the number of applicants for the grants and loans as well as the projected costs and timeline for when funding will be needed.

The agencies set a July 1 deadline in order to prepare a report for the legislature. In the revised response, the town indicated it

planned to build a transfer station in the next five years and that it would begin closing the current landfill in the next five to eight years.

The town had sent a response earlier to meet the July 1 deadline, but chose to send a revised response after the OS LI and DEQ imparted further information regarding costs.

The revised costs include a very rough cost estimate to build the station at \$2 million and the cost to close the landfill at about \$2.5 million. Recent landfill closure costs have been approaching \$100,000 per acre and the town's landfill is approximately 32 acres.

Although the town and DEQ have concluded that a large portion of the property for the current landfill won't be used for landfill operations because of cost-effectiveness, it does not mean some level of restoration would be needed on the entire site.

The response states some other factors that could affect costs include additional groundwater monitoring wells, imported cover material, drainage and collection systems.

The town also imparted the town is very interested in using grants and loan funds authorized under the legislation.