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Thermopolis
Hot Springs

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Giddy up

Rodeo wrangles up thousands of fans

Spectators come from as far as Germany for PRCA event

by Drew Foster

Mark Ellis was already thinking about next year's Thermopolis Cowboy Rendezvous PRCA Rodeo before the dust settled at the Hot Springs County Fairgrounds arena Saturday night.

Ellis deemed this year's rodeo a resounding success – it attracted about 3,000 attendees and 135 contestants over both days. Rodeo fans from as far away as Germany took in the action from the grandstands, he said.

"We had ticket sales from New Jersey, North Carolina, Texas, Iowa," Ellis said. "We're pulling tourists in, as well as people from the Big Horn Basin and all over Wyoming."

A PayPal feature added to the rodeo's website in recent years has boosted ticket sales among out-of-area rodeo fans, Ellis said.

"I might be a little partial, but I think it was a success," he said.

Still, that doesn't mean Ellis and other rodeo organizers aren't focused on improving the experience. He and other coordinators are now listening to comments, suggestions and recommendations from vendors, participants and others involved in the Thermopolis rodeo. He wants to keep improving and continue attracting big-name competitors.

"Our whole attitude is that we're putting on a show," Ellis said.

This year's rodeo coincided with the Reno Rodeo in Nevada and the College National Finals Rodeo in Casper, both big draws in the rodeo world that lured competitors away from Thermopolis. But top talents such as professional bull riders Clayton Savage and Bobby Welsh and world champion saddle bronc rider Chet Johnson still attended this year's Rendezvous Rodeo. Four National Finals Rodeo competitors also found their way into the lineup, as well as a few collegiate stars that made their way over from Casper.

Local bull rider Justin Ellis also competed.

Nearly \$28,000 in prize money was awarded.

Cowboy Rendezvous PRCA Rodeo results

Bareback riding: 1. Grant Denny, Minden, Nev., 74, \$1,023.66. 2. Ethan Crouch, Smiley, Texas, 72, \$775.50. 3. Wyatt Denny, Minden, Nev., 70, \$558.36. T-4. Jace Daly, Casper, 66, \$294.69. T-4. Levi Nicholson, Severance, Colo., 66, \$294.69. 6. Craig Wisehart, Kersey, Colo., 63, \$155.10.

Steer wrestling: 1. Johnny Silva, Powell, 5.9 seconds, \$1,029.06. 2. Brad Johnson, Reva, S.D., 7.3, \$851.64. 3. Kyle Callaway, Gillette, 7.5, \$674.21. 4. Garrett Henry, Douglas, 8.9, \$496.79. 5. Dan Cathcart, Carpenter, 9.2, \$319.36. 6. John Franzen, Riverton, 11.2, \$177.42.

Team roping: 1. Lee Hagler, Fort Lupton, Colo., and Ryan Zurcher, Torrington, six seconds, \$920.03 apiece. 2. Scott White, Oelrichs, S.D., and Justin Johnson, Casper, 6.4, \$761.40 apiece. 3. Bill Parker, Billings, Mont., and Jace Crabb, Billings, Mont., 8.3, 602.78 apiece. 4. Jeff Cover, Ashley, Neb., and Matt Cover, Ashby, Neb., 10.9, \$444.15 apiece. 5. Payden Emmett, Ponca, Ark., and Chad Mathes, Lawson, Mo., 11, \$285.53 apiece. 6. Pat Grieve, Baggs, and Chad Braun, Dixon, 12.5, \$158.63 apiece.

Saddle bronc riding: 1. Joe Harper, Paradise Valley, Nev., 77, \$1,070.19. 2. Chase Brooks, Deer Lodge, Mont., 74, \$810.75. 3. Colton Miller, Lance Creek, 73, \$583.74. 4. Cody Martin, Eagle, Colo., 70, \$389.16. 5. Hardy Braden, Welch, Okla., 68, \$227.01. T-6: Andy Clays, Riverton, 60, \$81.07. T-6. Josh Griggs, Fraser, Colo., 60, 81.07.

Tie-down roping: 1. Payden Emmett, Ponca, Ark., 7.5 seconds, \$1,253.96. 2. Seth Mahaffey, Sweetwater, Texas, 7.6 seconds, \$1,037.76. 3. Troy Hubbard, Wheatland, 8.2 seconds, \$821.56. 4. Dusty Moore, Douglas, 9.4 seconds, \$605.36. 5. Stuart Hoar, Pine Bluffs, 10 seconds, \$389.16. 6. Roger Jones, Farson, 10.3 seconds, \$216.20.

Barrel racing: 1. Carmel Wright, Roy, Mont., 17.47 seconds, \$916.92. 2. Dianne Bath, Burns, 17.55, \$785.93. 3. Rachael Mylymaki, Warren, Utah, 17.84, \$654.94. 4. Della Epler, Worland, 17.97, \$567.62. 5. Sadee Kreike-meier, Jackson, 18.02, \$436.63. T-6. Sharon Harrell, Wickenburg, Ariz., 18.09, \$305.64. T-6. Brenda Sims, Riverton, 18.09, \$305.64. 8. Kelly Martin, Eagle, Colo., 18.11, \$174.65. 9. Sami Jo Sweeney, Keenesburg, Colo., 18.12, \$130.99. 10. Jordan Taton, Corona, N.M., 18.18, \$87.33.

Bull riding: 1. Clayton Savage, Yoder, 84, \$1,737.18. 2. Bobby Welsh, Gillette, 83, \$1479.82.

PRCA Rodeo parade



Rod McQueen manned the wheel and Ed Shaffer sat shotgun as the old fire truck cruised Broadway Street during the Thermopolis Cowboy Rendezvous PRCA Rodeo parade Saturday. Parade awards went to the Little and Jones families in the Walking category, Patsy Dorman for her "Tough

Enough to Wear Pink" entry in the Automobile category, Clay and Jeffery Van Antwerp in the Equine division, Kyzar Stoddard and his Roman riding six-team hitch in the My Pet category, and to the Brooks, Wright and Hutson group in the Music division. – Drew Foster photo

Lots of input at State Parks master plan meeting

by Joe Sova

Bringing water back to flow over the terraces in Hot Springs State Park, concessionaires' leases, the railroad underpass at one entry into the state park and developing a nature and discovery center on the state property were among issues of concern expressed by people attending the public meeting hosted by Wyoming State Parks and Cultural Resources on Monday evening at the Hot Springs County Museum and Cultural Center.

This was the second in a series of monthly meetings, which are being scheduled in Thermopolis by State Parks and Cultural Resources Director Milward Simpson. He was accompanied at Monday's meeting by Domenic Bravo, Todd Thibodeau and Mabel Jones from the state office. Bravo is the division's facilitator. Thibodeau is the planning and grants manager while Jones serves as senior planner. State Parks and Cultural Resources Commissioner Don Schmalz of Cody was also in attendance.

HSSP Superintendent Kevin Skates and Assistant Superintendent John Fish were also part of the contingent and answered some of the questions posed by meeting attendees.

The purpose of Monday's meeting was to



Nancy Darland and Mayor Bill Malloy cast their votes for the most important issues pertaining to Hot Springs State Park at the end of Monday's master plan meeting.

share information about the state's master plan for Hot Springs State Park and hear what community members feel are the strengths of the park and what areas need improvement.

Simpson turned the presentation of the master plan over to Thibodeau and Jones. While Thibodeau has been associated with State Parks

and Cultural Resources for two decades, Jones has been involved for nearly 10 years. A former teacher at the Hamilton Dome School years ago, she has a strong natural resources background – currently involved in the Boysen State Park master plan.

"This is a road map of what's going to happen in Hot Springs State Park," Thibodeau said early in his part of the presentation, indicating the current master plan is about 30 years old and certainly in need of updating. "Visitation (to HSSP) has changed.... This is a vision of where we want to be," he said. "You can influence how we manage the park."

Thibodeau explained the HSSP master plan as systematic, collaborative and comprehensive. "We should be able to defend our actions," he said.

He said the State Parks office would bring in an independent firm right after the Fourth of July.

The firm would evaluate existing conditions in HSSP, gathering information in order to develop alternatives – and how to implement the master plan.

Thibodeau said the planning team would

See HSSP on page 10

Pack Horse Race



Jeffery Van Antwerp makes his way through the Pack Horse Race course on June 19 during the Thermopolis Cowboy Rendezvous PRCA Rodeo weekend event at the fairgrounds arena. Jeffery partnered with his father, Clay, to finish the race in 17 minutes, 51 seconds – with no broken eggs – en route to a first-place finish. Brett McKinley and Gary Baer of Cody finished second and Tim Izell and Brett McKinley finished third. Teams of Melissa and Jules Ward and Gary Baer and Caleb Norris also competed. – Drew Foster photo

Relay For Life Friday night in Hot Springs State Park

Things will be rockin' in Hot Springs State Park on Friday night as 2014 Relay For Life kicks off to "Finish the Fight."

The event has a Duck Dynasty theme this year and will start with a survivor and caregiver dinner at 6 p.m. at the new Smoking Waters Shelter across from the Big Spring, fol-

lowed by their opening lap at 6:30 p.m.

The remainder of the relay will take place in the area of the new shelter rather than at the Kiwanis Washakie Shelter as it has in the past.

Aluminaria ceremony will be held at dusk in remembrance of those who have lost their fight

with cancer or are continuing their battle with the disease.

Luminaria are available from any Relay For Life team member for \$5 each or three for \$10.

If you have any questions or would like to purchase luminaria, contact Kim Enis at 864-5278.

People of the Earth Days this weekend

Visitors are coming from as far away as Canada this weekend for the first People of the Earth Days, starting this Friday, June 27.

New York Times and USA Today best-selling authors Michael and Kathleen Gear and their novel "People of the Earth" are the centerpiece of the event that begins with a reception for the couple at

Days Inn on Friday at 7 p.m.

People of the Earth Days is sponsored by the Thermopolis-Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce.

Throughout the weekend, attendees will tour historic and scenic areas in Hot Springs County and finish their time here with a writing workshop on Sunday afternoon.

Everyone is invited to attend a book signing at Storyteller on Sunday as well.

Each event is individually priced, or you may purchase a package that includes the entire weekend. Reservations must be made through the Chamber of Commerce.

For more information, call the Chamber of Commerce at 864-3192.

HSSP

consist of State Parks, a consultant, steering committee and the public. Once the steering committee is put together, it will hold some of its meetings in Thermop.

He turned the presentation over to the Jones, who outlined the steps in the planning process. They are: 1. Identify issues, management concerns, opportunities and challenges. 2. Establish planning and decision-making criteria. 3. Evaluate existing conditions of recreation and natural and cultural resources. 4. Develop alternatives. 5. Evaluate consequences, benefits and effects of alternatives. 6. Select the preferred alternative. 7. Final master plan.

Jones indicated it would take about 18 months to reach the final HSSP Master Plan from the project start-up date. "The first six months there is a lot of interaction with stakeholders and the steering committee," she said. "We want to get on the same page of where we want the park to go in the future."

A handout at the meeting showed the timeline for the HSSP Master Plan. The project start-up date is Sept. 1 of this year. Other notable dates: April 14, 2015 - Summary of Existing Conditions and Decision Criteria; July 13, 2015 - Draft Alternatives; Oct. 11, 2015 - Present Preferred Alternative; and Jan. 14, 2016 - Final Master Plan. There are three 30-day public comment periods built in during 2015 - April 15-May 15, July 12-Aug. 12 and Oct. 11-Nov. 11. The agency review period is set for Dec. 10, 2015 to Jan. 15, 2016.

Jones spoke about the importance of HSSP visitor demographics and opinion, plus the flora, fauna and landscape features. Hydrology comes into the picture in a valuable way



Mabel Jones

as well. "We're gathering the best data that we can," she said.

State Parks will choose a contractor for the overall master plan through the request for proposal, or RFP, process. Thibodeau indicated contractors are often architectural engineers with expertise in working with natural and cultural resources. In answer to a question,

funding for developing the master plan comes from a state special revenue fund, fed by fees collected at Wyoming state parks. It was noted that Hot Springs and Bear River are the only two state parks that do not charge an admission fee.

There was discussion of surveys to determine who is using HSSP and where they live. Skates and Fish indicated surveys are available at the State Bath House and HSSP headquarters. The Chamber of Commerce has been added as another source.

Fish said data from traffic counters in HSSP is collected monthly and sent to the State Parks office. He said there are about 19 million visitors to the park each year. "We back out a lot of variables," Thibodeau said, such as locals who pass through the park to access East River Road and other neighboring areas.

The subject of heavy use of streets in HSSP arose and traffic

was said to be a concern.

"We want to be sure the infrastructure can handle it," Simpson said.

There was a brief discussion of state leases in HSSP and Skates reported there were currently 19 leases in force.

Attendees of the meeting were divided into small groups - each providing input on: what is going well in the local state park; what needs improved; where the future opportunities are; and the constraints or challenges pertaining to Wyoming's most-used state park. The input would provide a framework for State Parks to develop the goals and scope of work in the RFP and would also be used in steps 1 to 3 of the master planning process.

After the meeting, Simpson indicated the next public meeting in Thermop would be held around the middle of July. The date will be announced when the meeting is scheduled.

New chamber signage



New signs have gone up at the Chamber of Commerce office - thanks to a grant written by chamber director Meri Ann Rush. The grant covered 75 percent of the cost of the colorful additions. - Cindy Glasson photo

Hot Springs County SENIOR CENTER LUNCH MENU
June 30-July 4

MONDAY
Hard & Soft Shell Tacos, Lettuce/Tomato/Onion/Salsa/Sour Cream/Cheese, Mexicali Corn, Fruit Cup, Brownies

TUESDAY
Hamburger Gravy, Mashed Potatoes, Tomatoes & Zucchini, Peaches, Cookies

WEDNESDAY
Lemon Pepper Fish, Garden Rice, Creamy Coleslaw, Peas & Carrots, Bran Muffins, Fresh Fruit

THURSDAY
Hot Dogs & Hamburgers, Condiments, Potato Salad, Tossed Salad, Applesauce

FRIDAY
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Fourth of July

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By Tony Deromedi

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