

Dodge faces felony charges

by Cindy Glasson

A Thermopolis man is currently in jail in Fremont County after an incident that began in Hot Springs County on Friday, Aug. 29.

John D. Dodge, Jr., 59, was arrested on the west side of Boysen State Park by Fremont County Sheriff's deputies and is being held in the Fremont County Detention Center in Lander.

According to Hot Springs County Sheriff's Deputy Daniel Pebbles, local dispatch received a call from a mental health hotline, stating Dodge had called them, was allegedly in possession of a

weapon and was threatening suicide.

Local authorities immediately made contact with Dodge's wife who confirmed her husband was driving a red Dodge pickup, registered in her name.

Pebbles said they were able to contact his local cell phone service provider and "ping" Dodge's cell phone through his carrier, giving them an approximate location by bouncing the signal off the Copper Mountain cell phone tower.

Pebbles said after figuring the longitude and latitude of the cell phone through the ping, State Park Rangers in the Boysen State Park area were

notified of his whereabouts.

Some reports have alleged that Dodge made "terroristic threats" to Thermopolis police, however, according to Pebbles, Dodge was never in contact, either physically or by telephone, with local law enforcement.

Fremont County Undersheriff, Ryan Lee, said Dodge will probably be charged with felon in possession of a firearm and for making terroristic threats.

A hand gun was reportedly found by officers in Dodge's pickup.



A Loveland, Colo. man was the 100th fatality on Wyoming roads last Friday morning when the motorcycle he was riding was hit head-on by a pickup.

— Cindy Glasson photo

Highway 120 accident Friday results in fatality

by Cindy Glasson

Inattentive driving is being issued as the official cause of a fatal motorcycle accident approximately 42 miles from Thermopolis that occurred at the Little Buffalo Basin turn-off on Hwy. 120 Friday morning.

According to Wyoming Highway Patrol Trooper Randall Davis, the victim Christian M. Tafoya, 41, and his wife, both from Loveland, Colo., were

traveling westbound on separate motorcycles behind a semi truck when Tyler M. Schwab of Cody, driving a pickup in the opposing lane, drifted left of the centerline, hitting Tafoya's motorcycle with a glancing, head on blow.

The motorcycle lost control, sliding approximately 150 feet down the highway shoulder and into a grassy area just beyond a bridge.

Emergency personnel were dispatched from Hot

Springs County, Meeteetse and Cody along with a life flight helicopter, EagleMed, out of Cody.

One of the first people on scene, Carl Leyba of Thermopolis, a former EMT, was on his way to Billings when the accident happened and was able to assess the situation.

A trio of men from Red Lodge, Mont., who are medical personnel with the Veteran's Administration, came upon the accident as well, and to-

gether, the four men were able to begin working on the victim before an ambulance arrived.

Leyba later took the victim's wife in to Billings, Mont. to meet the life flight helicopter. Tafoya succumbed to his injuries at the hospital.

Davis said no drugs or alcohol were involved in the collision, but Schwab has been cited for failing to maintain a single lane of travel and for careless driving.

Commissioners appoint Conrad to hospital board

by Cindy Glasson

The Hot Springs County Commissioners opened bids for a new grader for the road and bridge department, appointed a new member to the Hot Springs County Memorial Hospital's board of directors, and talked with Emergency Management director Bill Gordon regarding an evacuation plan for the town and county during Tuesday's meeting.

Three bids were received for the new grader, two of which came from John Deere.

According to Dave Schlager, road and bridge supervisor, the two bids from John Deere included and individual equipment bid price as well as a price if the county were to "piggy back" the purchase on an order from the Wyoming Department of Transportation.

The first bid came from Cat Tractor and Equipment for a total of \$253,000. The first bid from John Deere came in at \$243,755 with their second bid totaling \$232,675.

The commissioners made no de-

cision on the purchase, instead, turning the bids over to Schlager to make sure they are correct. They will revisit the purchase at their Sept. 16 meeting.

An opening on the hospital board came about recently with the resignation of one of their

members. Three locals filled out the necessary paperwork to get their name in for consideration of the slot, Leslie Basse, Josh Conrad and Carl Leyba.

Commissioner Brad Basse recused himself from the vote, com-

pletely leaving the building, since his wife was one of the names on the ballot.

Commission chair Mike Baker and commissioner John Lumley were left to make the decision, voting Josh Conrad to the board. Hot Springs County Emergen-

cy Management has been working through a plan for Thermopolis and Hot Springs County that would quickly and safely evacuate citizens in the event of an emergency such as the dam breaking.

According to Gordon, they have

ally have more people to evacuate, but he intends to move on to other groups, businesses and individuals to encourage them to create their personal evacuation plans.

Eventually, he would like to conduct a tabletop exercise to bring the plans together.

Gordon said one of the bright spots in putting these plans together has been the cooperation of the school district and the superintendent, Dustin Hunt, in particular.

Hunt has offered the use of school buses for evacuation of the hospital and nursing home as well as any other areas that may need extra space to get everyone out safely. While they may not have enough bus drivers with the district to handle all the buses, Hunt said places like the nursing home could provide their own driver.

