

Lost hunters rescued from Blondie Mountain

by Zachary White

After getting stranded in a pass three hunters were rescued from Blondie Mountain Saturday night by Hot Springs County Search and Rescue.

Some time after 8 p.m. a 911 call was received detailing that three hunters had gotten stranded. Lieutenant Dan Pebbles received the call that Tribal Game and Fish would not be able to search for the lost hunters until Sunday morning.

After contacting Arapaho Ranch Manager Ransom Logan who gave him information about the area and advice about where the lost hunters were likely to be, Pebbles called upon Hot Springs County

Search and Rescue volunteers to begin searching for the lost hunters.

"We want to use these people as often as we can, but at the same time we don't because it's always an emergency when we need them," Pebbles said.

As the night got windier, colder and darker the eight-person response team headed up the mountain.

At the base camp, Emergency Medical Services were stationed waiting to see if anyone was hurt. They remained there until after the hunters were found.

Officer Bobbi Zupan said the wind was so strong that snow drifts were forming up behind them on the mountain after

the search and rescue team went through an area, and most regular trucks probably would not have been able to drive the search and rescue team up the mountain in those conditions.

Instead, Steve Jellis and Julia Schleusner brought their Snowcat to assist in finding the hunters.

"If we didn't have that we would not have gotten them out of there," Zupan said. While the search and rescue team was up in the mountain looking for the lost hunters, members of the rescue team were calling 911 periodically to ping their location off a cell tower.

Every half an hour, the hunters would

call 911 to check in. Using those two 911 calls, dispatch officers were able to tell search and rescue when they were getting closer. After hours of searching, the hunters were found on a ridge.

"We could not see their fire until we were right up on top of them," Zupan said.

The ridge the hunters were on was hidden away so that the fire they had started couldn't be seen unless search and rescue was looking down onto their impromptu camp from an elevated position.

Pebbles said even though the hunters were wearing good coats, one of them stepped in a creek and the situation could have been worse.

TePee Pools to make some improvements

by Cindy Glasson

After years of work and an especially intense six months of negotiations, the State of Wyoming Department of Parks and Cultural Resources and TePee Pools, Inc. have come to a contractual agreement.

"Tepee Pools is pleased and relieved to report that we have come to an agreement after eight years of negotiations with Wyoming State Parks," said Bill Moriarity with TePee Pools. "We now have a perfected long term lease and can move forward with some delayed and needed improvements."

Director of Parks and Cultural Resources, Milward Simpson, said he believes the issue has been resolved to the satisfaction of both sides.

"We now have a positive partnership," Simpson said. "We have mutual goals that include short term amenities, healthful benefits and family friendly benefits."

A 35-year lease agreement was reached recently after months of intensive negotiations between the two parties.

The state had threatened to pull the pool's lease, citing a lack of a master plan that the state approved of.

The state wanted the pool closed down by Oct. 31 with the entire facility razed to the ground in order to build a "world class" facility in its place.

The community rallied around the Moriarity family, attending meetings with Simpson each month in Thermopolis as well as writing letters and providing some measure of financial support.

"We especially want to thank the people of Thermopolis and the Big Horn Basin for their considerable support during this process," Moriarity said. "The many hours of meetings, the words of encouragement, the letters of support and the financial support of the public were truly what made this lease possible. We thank you individually and collectively."

Moriarity said the staff and management of the pools welcome the community's suggestions and their questions regarding the improvements that will be coming at the facility.

While the long-term improvements are going to take some time to see, like a lazy river and additional hot tubs, some plans will be taken on almost immediately, such as improved locker rooms, a coffee shop, new steam room and sauna as well as other upgrades both inside and out.

"We are excited about the future of the pool, and will be forever grateful for your support," Moriarity said.

"We feel this is going to be good for the community and the region," Simpson said.



Max the dog

Even though the wind chill factor had temperatures in the negative seven-degree range, folks turned out in hats and gloves to enjoy the annual Lighted Christmas Parade through downtown Thermopolis Saturday night. The "Christmas Carol" themed parade had three winners for the night. First place was given to Red Rock Family Practice, followed by the Bar-N' Supper Club in second place. The third place winner was the Deere Family with their Grinch float. Above, Adriana Deere, dressed as the Grinch's sidekick, Max the dog, had a wonderful time grinning and barking at everyone along the parade route.



Patrick Chapel puts an ornament on the Outlaws 4-H Club tree which will be up for auction at the tree festival. - Lara Love photo

Christmas Tree and Wreath Festival tonight

by Zachary White

Today (Thursday) is the annual Thermopolis Christmas Tree and Wreath Festival located at The Wyoming Dinosaur Center.

This year's event will be co-hosted by Red Rock Family Practice (RRFP) and Hot Spring County Memorial Hospital.

Stephanie Conrad, RRFP spokesperson for the event, said the festival is planned to start with dinner to be served at 5:30 p.m.

Dinner will be served buffet style with donations from Pizza Hut, Blairs, IGA, Black Bear Cafe, Las Fuentes and Thermop Cafe.

The auction will follow dinner at 6 p.m.

Conrad said there are 16 fully decorated trees that are to be

auctioned off, 21 wreaths, an ice skate floral arrangement and a doll house donated by Thermopolis Rotary.

Proceeds from the doll house sale will go towards purchasing a fetal heart monitor for the hospital.

Other proceeds go into the Thermopolis Community Fund.

The event is always well attended, having been held at several different venues in Thermopolis over the years.

Last year the event was held at the hospital, however, this year the Dinosaur Center should prove to be an interesting change, blending the prehistoric with fun, glittering Christmas trees and wreaths.

Purchases should be delivered Dec. 5.