

TCT West checks are out

by Zachary White
Tri-County Telephone Association Inc. (TCT West) was sold to business investor Neil Schlenker of Meeteetse for \$51 million.

At a meeting on Dec. 20, members of the company decided to approve the sale by a vote of 652 to 42. The sale needed a two-thirds vote from members in order to be approved.

Following the sale of TCT West

to Schlenker, more than 100 Hot Springs County members have received a substantial reimbursement.

Letters have already been sent out with capital credit checks attached — some of which have values well over \$10,000.

TCT services a portion of Hot Springs County and Thermopolis as well as a section of northern-central Wyoming and southeastern Montana.

Over the past year, Schlenker and

TCT West had been negotiating an offer in which Schlenker would purchase the co-operative.

Following the \$51 million sale, \$29 million is being distributed among the approximately 850 total members of the co-op.

Even though the company services more than 10,000 customers, the co-op had 850 members.

Members include those in the Hamilton Dome exchange, Ten Sleep,

Hyattville and Burlington areas who opted to be a part of the co-op.

Following the vote to approve the sale, Felix Carrizales, Dan Evans, Lisa Horton, Kathy Irons and Tony Preator were elected to an oversight committee to help with the company's transition from a co-op to a corporation system.

According to Schlenker, the rates will not go up for current users following the sale.

River ice jam comes on fast

by Zachary White

While an ice jam in the Bighorn River caused some concern for flooding last week, local officials have said there shouldn't be any problems going forward because of this ice jam.

Bill Gordon, the Emergency Management Coordinator for Hot Springs County, said the river is flowing through a channel in the ice.

The ice build up occurred near the swinging bridge in Hot Springs State Park, Dec. 30, as temperatures dropped more than 25 degrees below zero.

Also, John Fish, Assistant Park Superintendent, said this was the worst ice jam he's ever seen.

"I'm going on 23 years (working at the park) and I've never seen something hit that hard or that fast," he said.

Because of that, river water started backing up south of the ice jam, causing some properties to flood.

On New Years Eve there was a special Town Council Meeting to discuss the procedures that would go into effect if the river continued to rise, and at which heights emergency procedures may have had to go into effect.

"If the river got up to those points we would have had another meeting," Gordon said.

He said that fortunately, the river never rose to the point of having to start any emergency procedures.

"Pat Cornwell watched the river all night," Gordon said. Having the police around to do that was a major benefit.

Following flooding in Worland last year that ended up with 60 people being evacuated, and a situation in Greybull last year where the river almost did the same, people had cause to be concerned.

"After what Worland went through last spring, and Greybull, we just couldn't (take chances)," Gordon said.

The river is now clearing up with a channel emptying water to the north and Gordon said the backed up water should clear, eventually.

"I don't know if it all will be gone by the time spring comes along, but the channel is open," he said.

Though the river is flowing through a channel, Gordon said there was some damage done.

Along with flooding some of the properties north of town, Gordon said the river also took out the newly built dock in the state park.

"That was our one victim," Gordon said.

The aluminum dock had been crumpled by the ice jam, as it stood almost exactly where the jam started.



Ice jam takes out the boat dock

An ice jam on the Bighorn River through Thermopolis caused concern beginning Wednesday of last week. This photo from that day, taken from the Swinging Bridge, shows the newly built boat dock on the left which was crumpled by the ice. - Lara Love photo

New mayor appoints Steve Shay Police Chief

by Zachary White

After being sworn in as Mayor, Mike Mortimore used his power of appointment to shape his administration.

Mortimore appointed Steve Shay to be Chief of Police and Ron Jurovich to be municipal court judge.

Shay will be replacing Mike Chimenti, who Mortimore said resigned his position Dec. 15 but has been working as acting chief since.

Jurovich will be replacing the current municipal court judge Jill Logan.

Mortimore said he decided to appoint these two because they're people he trusts and who he knows will work towards improving the town.

According to Mortimore, Shay was the police chief during Mortimore's first term in office, which made him an easy choice.

Also, Mortimore said Jurovich has been around for a while and the two have worked together in different offices. "I worked with him many, many years," Mortimore said. Jurovich used to be one of the county attorneys in Ther-

mopolis.

"When I had the opportunity to have him in the administration, I jumped on it," Mortimore said.

However, the appointment of Jurovich did catch Jill Logan off guard, giving her little notice that she would be losing her position as municipal court judge.

"I really enjoyed serving the people of Thermopolis," she said. "I'm sad that I don't get to serve the people anymore."

Other positions that are appointed by the mayor include the assistant to the Mayor and the town clerk.



Julie Mathews, Steve Shay and Tracey Van Heule get sworn in to their appointed offices Tuesday at the Town Council meeting. Mathews was appointed to the position of Animal Control officer, Shay to the position of Municipal court judge and Van Heule was reappointed as town clerk.