

Main Street group discusses \$7,000 grant

by Zachary White
During the Main Street Thermopolis meeting, the group discussed a \$7,000 grant that may become available through their new status as a Main Street Affiliate town. However, some members cautioned accepting the money without knowing what all the rules are for spending it. Member Damien Oliver said he would like to know what strings are attached to the grant funding from Main Street Wyoming.

“Free money is never really free,” Oliver said. The money needs to be spent for technical assistance. Meaning it could be used to hire a professional to come in and lay out a plan for improving the downtown area, or assist in planning downtown improvements. The group also discussed the cost of renovating historic buildings. In some cases large renovations could cost the building its historic status, creating problems for owners. However,

there is not a clearly defined line between enough and too much renovation. The Main Street Committee is planning on sharing the presentation they made to Wyoming Main Street with other local groups in order to share their goals for Thermopolis. Groups interested in seeing the presentation can contact chairwoman Stefanie Gilbert for more information. Also discussed during the meeting was the need to increase knowledge around Thermopolis about the Main

Street organization. The group discussed creating a website for Thermopolis Main Street and increasing their social media presence. Main Street is also planning an “Uncorked” event at Bighorn Federal on March 27. The event would have a local artist teaching participants how to paint. Similar events have become a social craze lately, and often include a learning experience while participants indulge in fine wines.



Ready, aim, fire

4-H Archery member Hardy Johnson takes aim at a target during archery practice. The archers practice every Monday leading up to Hot Springs County fair. -Lara Love photo

Community input for Hot Springs State Park Master Plan

by Zachary White
Wyoming State Parks held an open house meeting Monday to allow community members a chance to give their input about what they would like to see happen to the park throughout the next 20 years. Nearly 50 community members gave suggestions during the meeting that will be used to help shape Hot Springs State Park’s master plan. Some of suggestions included changes to the entryway of the park, changes to signage leading up to the park and changes to parking. However, there were many more suggestions made by community members than the park has

the potential to accomplish. State parks spokeswoman Mabel Jones said as the process of shaping the master plan progresses, some ideas will have to be left out. “We have to look at feasibility and development potential,” Jones said, expounding on how some ideas may not be possible based on cost and park usage. Ideas like a trolley to drive people around, Segway rentals, and a cold-water pool may be too expensive to accomplish. Also, plans to change or alter the entryway to the park would be unlikely to accomplish. “Everyone here knows the underpass gives us

fits,” Kevin Skates, Hot Springs State Park Superintendent, said. Currently, the underpass needs to exist so that emergency vehicles are not held up due to a train. However, digging downwards is not a solution as sewer, power and water lines may run under the road. A possible solution that has been discussed would be to add an alternative entryway into the park. Kari Sholtes, a spokeswoman for the state parks, said the offered ideas would be separated into similar groups so the master plan steering committee, which is made up of community members, could understand what the communi-

ty wants before deciding what they, the steering committee, want the master plan to look like. She added that a document is being made on the progress at the park that will be sent to the state legislature. Skates said that if any community members missed the meeting but would still like to give input, there are suggestion cards located at the bathhouse in the state park. The cards are labeled “I Wish.” For more information about the master plan, visit hotspringsmasterplan.com. Suggestions can also be made on the website under the community forum tab.



Jay Erk and Becky Mills welcomed the first baby of 2015 to Thermopolis.

HSCMH Ladies Auxiliary welcomes First Baby of 2015

by Cindy Glasson
Christopher James Erk took his time in coming, but he managed to get the plethora of gifts awarded to the First Baby of 2015 born at Hot Springs County Memorial Hospital. Christopher is the son of Becky Mills and Jay Erk. He is Becky’s first child. He was born on January 20 at 2:14 a.m., weighing in at 7 lbs. 10 oz. and 20½ inches long. He did have kind of a scary entry into this world, having some

problems breathing, and had to be taken to Billings to the neo-natal intensive care unit as a precaution. As it turned out, things were fine, Christopher just hadn’t figured out how to eat quite yet and the milk was pushing up into his sinuses, making it hard for the little guy to breathe. Mom, dad and baby are all home and doing just fine. As the first baby of the year, Christopher and his family were given a mountain of gifts courtesy of dozens of local businesses

and individuals. The items ranged from gift certificates to the grocery stores to blankets, baby albums, toys and clothes. In all, about \$1,300 in donations were received. The gifts were presented by the Hot Springs County Memorial Hospital’s Ladies Auxiliary, who organized and gathered all the items. Each year, the Ladies Auxiliary welcomes the first baby of the new year, but also provide gifts for other babies born at Hot Springs County Memorial Hospital.