

Runoff into Boysen down 44 percent

by Zachary White

Current projections have snowmelt runoff in the Bighorn River Basin significantly lower than their 30-year average.

In particular, Boysen Reservoir is projected to have significantly less runoff during the upcoming Spring and Summer months.

This year Boysen is expected to get an inflow of 300,000 acre-feet of snowmelt runoff from April through July.

An acre-foot is approximately 325,851 gallons of water.

This amount of runoff is down 44

percent from previous years. The runoff average over the past 30 years has been 533,800 acre-feet. So the reservoir will see only 56 percent of its average inflow.

What this means is that Boysen Reservoir's volume of water will start to decrease as the summer wears on.

However, Office of Recreation area manager Mahonri Williams said even though the inflow will be less than usual, water from the reservoir will be dispersed at the same rate as in previous years because Boysen still has a sufficient amount of water.

"For all the irrigators downstream of Boysen, we're expecting an adequate amount of flow," Williams said.

A major part of the inflow decrease this year was the weather Wyoming saw during March.

"March was mild and relatively dry," Williams said.

Williams also explained that the estimated inflow numbers could change, but not significantly.

Because of all this, he said there is not a high chance that Boysen dam will have to adjust its schedule.

"We do not expect we will have very high releases," Williams said.

If the inflow is at the same low rate next year there could be a problem for irrigators downstream of Boysen Reservoir.

As weather can be unpredictable, only time can really tell what next year will bring.

Williams said another determining factor could be how hot and dry the summer will be.

"It depends on what nature gives us," Williams said.

Commissioners discuss fate of airport hangars

by Cindy Glasson

The Hot Springs County Museum is one step closer to having a new roof over their heads.

The Hot Springs County Commissioners accepted a bid from Red Roofing, Co. of Powell to fix the museum roof, which has been leaking periodically over the past year or so.

Masonry work will have to be completed before the work on the actual roof can begin, but the company feels it can get the job finished late this summer or early fall.

The commissioners also approved seeking an estimate through High Plains Power for running utilities along the apron area at the new county airport.

The lines will be both above ground in some areas and below ground in others, making their way to where the SRE building and hangars will eventually be built.

By bringing the lines this far, the hangar owners will then have the option of hooking into the electricity or going without.

There has been lengthy discussion regarding hangars at the new airport.

Some would like to purchase the hangars they already use at the current airport and move them to the new location, while others want to build new per the specifications created by the commissioners.

Still others are interested in purchasing several of the hangars and moving them to the new airport, creating a rental situation for those who do not want to purchase or build their own.

The commissioners are not certain what the ramifications are regarding selling the hangars, if they may be sold outright or must go to bid, so they must wait for input from county attorney Jerry Williams before making any kind of decision.

A few months ago the commissioners started looking into a company that would allow the public to view things like the budget or expenditures online, making our county government more transparent.

At Tuesday's meeting, the commissioners discussed the ins and outs of the project with the company that would put everything online in order to get an idea of costs and contract length.

The fees are based on the county's income with a tiered structure in place. While the contract would be good for three years, if, at any time during that three years the county's coffers were to decrease, there would be a discount on the fees until such time as the income rose again.

No action was taken regarding signing the county on with the company, but they are going to discuss it further during their budget meetings in May.



Yummy!

Reagan Shaffer is really getting into (literally!) the delicious garlic bread served with the spaghetti dinner sponsored by Risen Son Christian School last weekend. Her mom, Lacey, helps her with the rest of her dinner, swirling the 'sketti for the next bite.

Council discusses allowing chickens in town

by Zachary White

The Thermopolis Town Council approved the purchase of a new garbage truck at the cost of \$145,075 during their meeting Tuesday.

The new truck is a made to order 2016 Freightliner with a reinforced frame and Wayne Fury rear loader. The vehicle will be purchased from Jack's Truck and Equipment out of Casper.

According to Joe Mounts, who works in the town shop, this new truck will replace a mid 1980's truck that is currently in use, but in ill repair.

Additionally, buying replacement parts for that vehicle has come at a premium, as the parts are scarce.

Originally, the town budgeted \$220,000 for a replacement truck.

The town council also discussed possibly changing town codes to allow people living within town limits to own chickens and keep them on their property.

Community member Charlene Anderson brought the proposal to the council.

"I wanted to know if we can change a law, or an ordinance to allow backyard chickens in town," Anderson said.

While some council members didn't

seem to have opinions set in stone, most voiced concerns.

"There are responsible pet owners and irresponsible pet owners and I feel it would be the same with chicken owners," mayor's assistant Fred Crosby said.

However, some community members at the meeting voiced support for the proposal saying that they would prefer chickens in comparison to barking dogs.

Additionally, Anderson said she wanted the change just to include chickens, not roosters.

"They bother the neighbors early in the morning," she said.

Yet, Mayor Mike Mortimore said having chickens in someone's back yard could lead to more barking dogs.

"We're going to be adding potential nuisances," Mortimore said.

This isn't the first time a chicken proposal has come forward, and discussion among the council members made it clear that the last time the request was made, council members may have been too chicken to move on it.

Regardless of past experience, and because of the council's reluctance to create a potentially new nuisance in town,

Anderson said she would be circulating a petition to gauge the interest of people in town.

In other news, town engineer Heath Overfield said that because of delays, Wilson Brothers Construction, Inc. is requesting more time to complete the emergency sewer line project taking place along the river.

Because of a hiccup with the gas company, work on the sewer crossing Broadway Street on Second Street was delayed.

"The gas line was not where they told us it was," Overfield said.

The town council extended the project an additional 14 days.

Also, the town council passed the proposed firework ordinance on second reading. The change would allow for the sale of fireworks in town during designated times.

According to the ordinance, sale of fireworks would be allowed by a licensed retailer for no more than 14 consecutive days around the time of the 4th of July holiday and for no more than seven consecutive days during the New Years holiday.

The use of fireworks would also be allowed in areas, on days, and during hours, which the town council allows for.

