

End of year school activities

by Cindy Glasson
 These final few weeks of school for students in Hot Springs County School District No. 1 are full of activities and events.
 Baccalaureate will be held Monday, May 11 at 7 p.m. in the school auditorium. Everyone is welcome to attend the ceremony.
 Seniors will receive their scholarships on Tuesday, May 12 at 6:30 p.m. Senior Scholarship Night will be held this year in the high school commons.

Thursday, May 14 the Risen Son Christian School will be filling the auditorium for their spring concert. It will begin at 6 p.m. and is open to everyone.
 Ralph Witters Elementary (RWE) will be having their Field Day on Friday, May 15 at the high school track. Fun and games begin at 9 a.m.
 Sunday, May 17, the seniors take that walk across the stage for Graduation in the high school gym starting at 2 p.m. A graduation party will

be held that evening for the seniors at Thermopolis Middle School (TMS).
 The high school music department will be having their annual POPS Concert on Tuesday, May 19 at 7 p.m. in the auditorium.
 Then it's an important day for the fifth graders as they have their DARE ceremony on Thursday, May 21 at 1 p.m. in the auditorium.
 The last day of school for every student in the district will be on Friday, May 22.

Several things will be going on that day, including the RWE awards assembly in the auditorium at 8:15 a.m., fifth and sixth grade awards assembly in the TMS gym at 10 a.m. and the seventh and eighth grade awards assembly and eighth grade graduation in the TMS gym at 11 a.m.
 Finishing off the schedule of upcoming events is the Spring Sports Awards and Sports Hall of Fame in the auditorium at 7 p.m. on Thursday, May 28.

RWE students learn science through sheep

by Zachary White
 Ralph Witters Elementary kindergarten students visited Lucy's Sheep Camp last week as part of their science class lifecycle unit.
 The ranch, run by Billie Jo Norsworthy, has been doing an educational unit with the kindergartners for eight years. Other grades have also benefitted from visiting the ranch.
 Kindergarten teacher Bethany Webber said the students go out to the farm in order to give them an out of classroom experience they can take back and learn from.
 "They're learning what animals need to survive and grow," Webber said. "And how they change over time."
 While they were at the ranch Friday students learned about how sheep are tagged, taken care of, and students also get to pet one of the newborn sheep.
 "It was kind of, like, squishy and soft," Trysten DeVries said.
 Norsworthy explained to the students that she put blue tags on the newborn male sheep and yellow tags on the female sheep. She also told them how she numbers and keeps track of the sheep.
 At one point a student asked why the sheep didn't have any tails, and she explained to them that the tails are hotbeds for germs and disease.
 "They put these rubber bands on their tails and they fall off," DeVries said.
 But most of the trip was spent walking the field and allowing the children to simply watch the sheep move about.
 "(We) walked with the animals," Lilly Quintanilla said. "Walked them and petted them."



Petting sheepishly

Aleyna Robb pets a newborn sheep while Hayden Franklin watches during the Ralph Witters Elementary kindergarten field trip to Lucy's Sheep Camp. -Zachary White photo

Commissioners approve mill for mosquito eradication

by Cindy Glasson
 The Hot Springs County Commissioners covered a lot of ground at their meeting on Tuesday, including a report from Youth Alternatives Director Barb Rice, information on replacing the floor in the fair building and a request from the Weed and Pest District for mosquito intervention for the season.
 Rice told the commissioners there are currently seven youth in the program and she has been coordinating community service projects for them each week.
 Most of the students in the program are required by the judge to do some sort of community service. The latest project

was helping with the painting of Monument Hill this past Saturday.
 Rice is also looking into a wellness program for the students through the Gottsche Wellness Center.
 Her hope is to be able to get a couple of memberships for the program that can be used by the students on an alternating basis, a way to help the students with their overall health as well as helping them with their court-based issues.
 For a few months the commissioners have been looking at replacing the cement floor in the fair building as well as other alternatives to tearing the en-

tire thing out.
 There are places in the floor that are heaving, causing raised areas of the concrete that could be hazardous.
 An engineer has looked at the problem from all angles and has determined the problem is due in part to a small retaining wall behind the building.
 Apparently, runoff from rain moves around the edges of the retaining wall, heading straight for the fair building, allowing all the water to run under the building. This has caused the dirt beneath the floor to become like mush, creating the heaving and dipping of the cement.
 The thought now is to re-

place the retaining wall to allow the water to go somewhere other than right under the fair building. In addition, the engineer suggests letting things sit for a year to let the soil beneath the floor to dry out, hoping that will allow the floor to settle back into place. Then all that will need to be done is a grinding of the floor's edges to make it level again.
 Originally, SLIB monies had been set aside for the project, but at the time it was for replacement of the entire floor.
 County Clerk Nina Weber is going to check into what the process is to get the project revised to the current suggestion.

Weed and Pest approached the commissioners for an additional mill levy to cover mosquito control for the summer.
 The district runs a very aggressive mosquito program each year, working on the ground to spray any standing water that might harbor eggs or larvae, then moving to aerial spraying when the population gets to a certain level.
 Last year, for the first time, the district used a fogger to spray within the town limits. In the past it would take an average of three days to spray the town, but renting the fogger allowed them to do it in a single night.
 Hot Springs County has been

fortunate not to have a single case of West Nile virus for the past nine years.
 Traps are set out in several areas, especially in the Lucerne area where mosquitoes tend to be thickest, and are collected and sent to a lab for testing each week. There have been no positive West Nile mosquitoes for almost a decade.
 Using larvaecides and varying the chemicals used against mosquitoes has been an effective pro-active measure to keep citizens protected.
 The commissioners approved the additional mill to be used for this summer's mosquito program.



Council approves sale of fireworks in town

by Zachary White
 An increase of \$25,000 will be added to the town's roads budget in order to make repairs to many of the streets falling apart around town.
 The main street council members are concerned with the future of 14th Street, which has slowly unraveled and is currently lined with potholes filled with gravel.
 However, the roads may be filled with asphalt when 1st and 2nd streets are repaired and asphalt trucks are on scene.
 The roads budget is now \$100,000.
 The town council also approved a firework ordinance, which makes it legal to sell fireworks in town if properly permitted.
 It will also give the council the ability to set aside times for fireworks to be shot off in town.
 However, one community member voiced a concern.
 "Why are you having fireworks when it's a fire season?" Anita Smith said.
 Mayor Mike Mortimore explained that until the town council gives the go ahead, fireworks are not permitted to be used.

"It allows us, if it's a wet season, to set aside a time and place to designate for fireworks," Mortimore said.
 Additionally, the state and county can issue a fireworks ban that would stop the town's ability to allow firework use.
 "It's still illegal to fire fireworks in town," Mortimore said.
 The ordinance passed unanimously and will take effect June 1. Yet, if the town council wants to allow people to use fireworks in the upcoming 4th of July holiday, they still need to designate a time and place to use it.
 Derrick Burrows, who led the charge in asking for the ordinance change, said that he is in the process of getting a space set up to use.
 The council also discussed the possibility of allowing backyard chickens in town.
 A petition circulated in the last two weeks since the issue was first discussed, and it gained more than 100 signatures.
 Yet, council members were underwhelmed by the support out there for backyard chickens. Additionally, few were willing to back the

change unless they saw a draft of what the rule would be.
 "Just unlimited chickens, I'd say no to," Mark Nelson said.
 He explained that he would want stringent rules on how they're kept.
 "I've had quite a few calls from people saying they don't want them in town," John Dorman Sr. added.
 Tony Larson agreed with Dorman's remark, saying he had heard more dissent than support.
 Community member Jerry Smith added that he had kept chickens in his life, and the change seemed like a bad idea.
 "I can't think of any reason to have them in town," Smith said.
 Other council members said they're not opposed to the idea if the community really wanted them.
 "It's what the public wants, not what I think," Nelson said.
 And Nelson said it best as the petition had too few names to get the council members behind it.