

HSCHS graduation Sunday

by Lara Love

Thirty-four seniors will be in cap and gown when the Hot Springs County High School Class of 2015 celebrates graduation with commencement exercises Sunday, May 17 at 2 p.m. in the high school gym.

Co-valedictorians Vinchinzo Hinojos-Castle and Dakota Jeffs will each provide a brief address, as will salutatorian Haylee Hoffman.

Hinojos-Castle's high school activities include track, football and wrestling. He was named four time All Conference Wrestler, All State Wrestler and Regional Wrestling Champion. He is a two time State Wrestling Champion, three time Academic

All State Wrestler, Most Dedicated Wrestler 2012 and Most Outstanding Wrestler 2014.

Jeffs' activities include volleyball, basketball, golf, Key Club, Spanish Club, National Honor Society, Student Council and yearbook. She was named to All Conference Volleyball, All Conference Basketball and Top English Student for two years.

Hoffman's activities include track, volleyball, basketball, Student Council and Fellowship of Christian Athletes. She was named to All State Volleyball and All Conference Basketball, both for two years.

Ronda Freel will be the guest speaker at com-

mencement exercises. Freel joined HSCSD in the fall of 1984 at Hamilton Dome school. She started the young authors program here in the mid-eighties and supervised that program for approximately 20 years.

Freel has followed the class of 2015 since kindergarten, all 13 years. She currently serves as a junior advisor, dual credit facilitator and academic interventionist.

See the 2015 Graduation Section in this issue of the Independent Record for photos of all the graduates, brought to you by businesses and members of the community.

End of year school events

by Cindy Glasson

The last day of school is approaching and there are many events planned to culminate the year including:

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.

The high school music department will be having their annual POPS Concert on Tuesday, May 19 at 7 p.m. in the auditorium.

Risen Son Christian School children's choir/orchestra concert is at the Risen Son sanctuary Wednesday, May 20 at 5:30 p.m.

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 Sports Awards and Sports Hall of Fame. Dinner will be served at 5 p.m. in the high school parking lot with the awards ceremony beginning 6 p.m. in the auditorium on Thursday, May 28.



Leaping tall buildings in a single bound

Riley Shaffer, left, and Eric Bleak tear their shirts off to reveal comic book themed T-shirts during the middle school election speeches Friday. Members of Thermopolis Middle School have elected new student council officers for the 2015-16 school year. Results include: President, Tyler Kay; Vice President, McKenna Bomengen; Treasurer, Jarron Mortimore; Secretary, Cole Collins; Historian, Madeline Stam; 8th grade Class Representative, Hunter Bartholomew; 7th grade Class Representative, Hardy Johnson; 6th grade Class Representatives, Hallie Martinez and Johnnie Christman.

-Zachary White photo

Community members discuss future of HSSP

by Zachary White

Community members gathered at Thermopolis Middle School Monday to hear about the progress of the Hot Spring State Park Master Plan.

Wyoming State Parks officials still say the plan is in the developmental phases, with three different routes the master plan can be built towards.

In each of the plans, there is one thing in common -- the goal of updating how water is used in the park. "One of the main reasons people come to the hot springs is for the mineral waters and we want to continue that," state parks spokeswoman Tina Bishop said.

Part of the reason the hot spring water remains a focus is because of its diminishing flow.

"This big spring is declining," state engineer Dave Deutz said.

According to Deutz, information has been collected from the spring during the past 10 years. That combined with older information tells a strong story.

Deutz said during the last 49 years, there has been a two-thirds decrease of water flowing from the spring. "We're going to have a resource that is much more limited than it is right now," Deutz said.

With the parks water resource considered, there are still three different options that parks personnel and a local steering committee have put together.

There is a limited action plan, which aims to do maintenance to the park and to keep things at a status quo; an adaptation plan, which aims to make conservative changes; a legacy plan, which has a wide range of possible changes, upgrades, and updates to the park.

Input from community members is being used to help state parks officials craft the right plan for Hot Springs State Park.

All three plans come from a draft summary of findings that state parks personnel put together. Steering committee members suggested or refined the information in that summary before state parks personnel could create a draft of their findings.

Essentially, the plans come from community input during these meetings.

"It's what your community is saying they really want to see in the park," state parks spokesman Todd Thibodeau said.

Yet as the plans continue to evolve, the public con-

stantly scrutinizes changes.

One idea is to create facilities and activities that bring in tourists.

Some community members question if the ideas are long term.

"Are they going to be something that's here today and gone tomorrow?" Dorothy Milek asked a state parks employee.

Milek's fear is shared among some other community members who feel that something like a zip line for example, is popular today, but may not be popular in the future.

Other community members fear that changing the layout of the park could create more causes for concern.

For example, there is one plan that proposes a new road be built in the park to allow for more parking spaces.

"My concern would be there would be a lot more pedestrian contact," Howard Samelson said.

As he explained, having more roads would create more chances for a vehicle versus person collision.

Yet few community members appeared to have a problem with ideas like moving the boat dock to a new location, creating a visitor center, or building a bridge over the railroad tracks to connect T-Hill to the state park proper.

Most changes in the plans have support, but certain details are still being worked out.

Once those details are worked out, the steering committee will decide on which of the three plans to choose from.

The community will have another chance to comment on the plan during an open house some time in September.

Approximately one quarter of the seats were full during the meeting, and some community members grumbled about the low turnout.

Assistant state park superintendent John Fish said the meeting had been well advertised and promoted.

Community members can give their input online by visiting HotSpringsMasterPlan.com and clicking on the Community Forum tab.

"We continue to accept comments there on our community forum," state parks spokeswoman Mabel Jones said.

The next master plan steering committee meeting will be June 30.

