



Council hears Copper Mountain proposals

By Mark Dykes

Tuesday night, Thermopolis Town Council heard from Ginger Bennett, who is on the Fremont County Public Lands Initiative Committee, spoke to council regarding Copper Mountain. Currently designated a Wilderness Study Area, the committee is looking at possibly changing that designation.

Bennett explained about 18 months ago a group of people in Wyoming decided to look at Wilderness Study Areas and determine what to do with them. In 1991, Congress had areas set aside that were recommended for wilderness, but did not have wilderness characteristics too them for one reason or another so they were

not given wilderness status. Copper Mountain is one of these areas.

Proposals currently on the table for the area include motorized access, non-motorized access, grazing, wilderness and non-wilderness recreation, trail improvement, oil and gas exploration, mineral exploration and development, improving rangeland projects by motorized means and purchase by the state if released from federal control.

More information, as well as an area for public, is available online at fcpli.com.

Council also approved a liquor license transfer, filed Dec. 21 by Melvin Guertzgen. Prior to approving the transfer, council conducted

a public hearing, during which Guertzgen expressed concern if the license, which is for the business at 500 South Sixth Street, were not renewed, it would be lost.

The license for the business, the former Loonie's Bin, has been non-operational since 2010, outside a small period where it was operational. Guertzgen said he is the representative of the estate of Claudia Guertzgen, and he is trying to protect the estate from losing money if the license is lost.

With renewal of the license, Melvin has until December or January to sell the property. He

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photo by Mark Dykes

Keeping the beat

Shoji Kameda of On Ensemble shows his approval to high school students learning Taiko patterns during a workshop Tuesday morning, while Masato "Maz" Baba (behind) directs. The group, which also includes Eien Hunter-Ishikawa and Abe Lagrimas Jr., gave a public concert Monday evening that was enjoyed by a large crowd.

Blood Moon lunar eclipse

by Cindy Glasson

After August's spectacular solar eclipse with the moon passing between the Earth and the sun, its time to return the moon's favor with a total lunar eclipse on Wednesday, Jan. 31.

Again, Wyoming is blessed to be a prime viewing area and in Thermopolis we'll just have to get up a little earlier than normal to appreciate it.

The eclipse is unusual, this type not actually seen for 35 years, as it falls in line with the Blue Moon phase (a second full moon in a month) as well as the Super-moon phase where the moon is 15 percent larger and 30 percent brighter due to its closer proximity to the Earth.

This eclipse is also known as a Blood Moon since it will not completely go dark, but instead, will take on a red hue. The amount of color will be determined by the amount of dust in the air and other atmospheric conditions.

For us, the lunar eclipse will last almost four hours, 3 hours and 44 minutes to be exact.

It will begin at 3:51 a.m., reach its maximum at 6:29 a.m. and be finished at 7:34 a.m. We will have totality for an hour and six minutes.

Just like the solar eclipse this summer, the lunar eclipse will begin with a small "bite" out of one edge of the moon, move its way slowly across the surface, and finish with another "bite" out of the other side.

Daniel Webber named new county assessor

by Cindy Glasson

Upon the recommendation of the Hot Springs County Republican Central Committee, the Hot Springs County Commissioners appointed Daniel Webber as the new county assessor at their meeting on Tuesday evening.

Webber was sworn in on Wednesday morning to fill the position recently vacated by the retirement of Shelley Deromedi.

A native of Hot Springs County, Webber has been with the assessor's office for 13 years. He is a permanently certified property tax assessor by the Department Revenue.

"Shelley Deromedi was here for 31 years and during the 13 years I worked for her I learned a lot about the office and the assessor position," said Webber.

Webber will be up for election this year.

According to the committee, they did their due diligence in looking for a qualified candidate. Webber was the only person who actually applied for the position. State statutes require the committee to have three candidates, so two other names, Mike Baker and Bengé Brown were added to the committee's ballot to conform to the statute.

Neither Baker nor Brown were actually interested in the position.

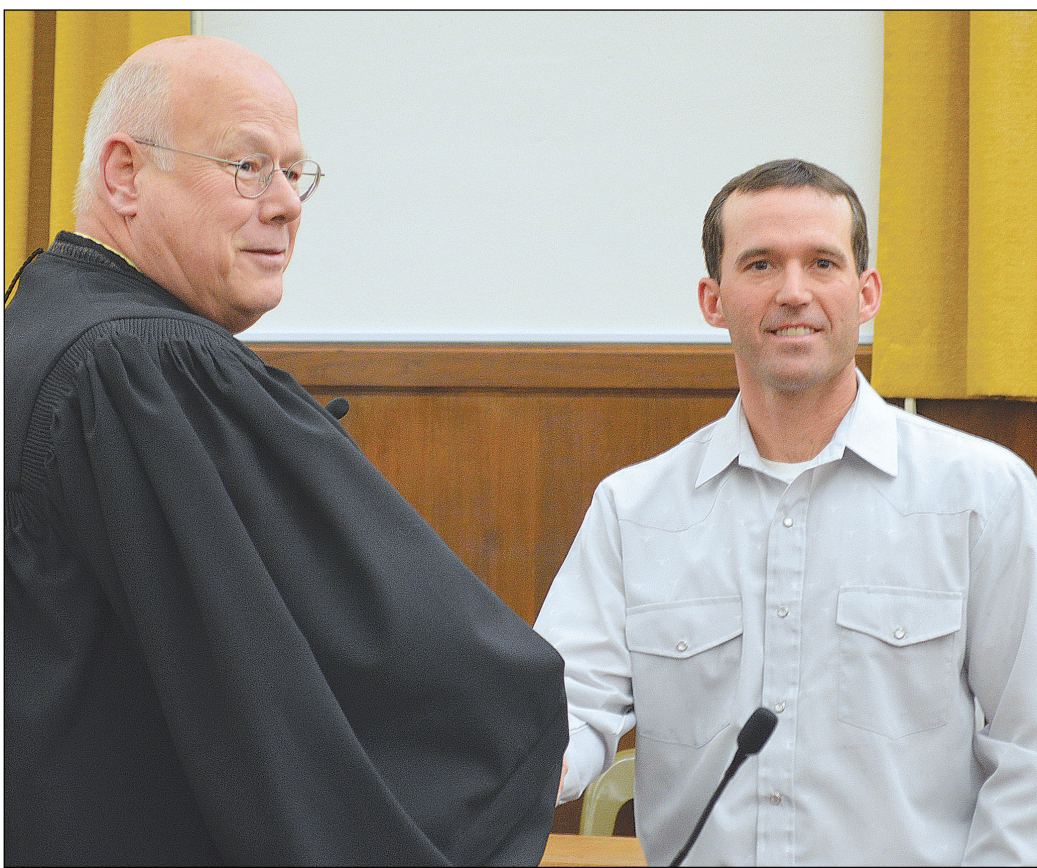


photo by Cindy Glasson

New assessor

Daniel Webber shakes hands with Judge Robert Skar after his swearing in.

In other business, the commissioners again discussed the roof situation on the multi-purpose building at the Hot Springs County Fairgrounds.

Insulation from inside the building was recently removed and found to be so saturated with moisture some of it remains frozen to the

ceiling on the inside of the building. In fact, the insulation that was taken down had to be scraped from inside the dump truck as it had frozen to the bed of the truck on the drive from the fairgrounds to the dump.

The fair board is concerned about the frozen insulation that still remains stuck to the ceiling, fearing it could be a safety hazard. Heaters and fans are being run day and night to get the sections thawed.

Thane Magelky with Malone, Belton and Abel, the company overseeing the roofing project, says the best solution is to remove the entire roof and install a new one along with properly installed insulation.

The second solution would be to use spray-on insulation as a replacement, however, he noted there is no guarantee with the spray-on that it would last even 10 years.

Magelky was given the go-ahead by the commissioners to contact qualified contractors, get their input on the situation, cost estimates and

then put together architectural drawings to work from along with a bid packet.

The commissioners do not want to wait until spring to get going on the project, but would like to see some warmer weather before some of the work is done.