

Town council looks at water issues

by Mark Dykes

During the comment period for mayor and council at Tuesday night town council meeting, the topic of water, particularly with regard to South Thermopolis, was raised. Council member Tony Larson was concerned the town was selling South Thermopolis good water, but they are making the town look like the bad guy. In his opinion, once prices in South Thermopolis are raised to make them pay the same as town residents they claim the town is rotten and is selling bad water, and start looking for other sources.

Other sources looked at include the Buffalo Creek well, but there is concern that would

negatively impact the Big Spring. The Lysite Mountain well is also being considered, and could become a viable option in the future.

Mayor Mike Mortimore said the water was tested again where it goes to South Thermop and Owl Creek, and it is in acceptable range of total trihalomethenes. He added there has never been a bad reading from that site.

A point raised during the discussion is that studies regarding alternate options are still being conducted and more information is expected before any formal decisions are made.

Council approved two catering permits from Shorty's Liquor, one for 4:30 p.m. until midnight on Feb. 24 for the Boots and Buckles

Ball, the other for 5 p.m. until midnight for the Chamber Banquet. Both events are at the fair building.

Council also approved support and sponsorship of a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for Gottsche. During the meeting, Gottsche Executive Director, Cheryl Shero, explained there is no information as to whether grants in the state are reduced, but they are submitting for consideration for the CDBG for their building project.

Shero said they are requesting the town lend their support and be a "pass through" for the

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TMS finalist for DuFour Award

by Mark Dykes

Hot on the heels of Thermopolis Middle School teacher Shannon Hill's receiving the prestigious Milken Educator Award, the middle school has been named one of three finalists for the Solution Tree third annual DuFour Award. The award honors one high-performing school that is recognized as a Professional Learning Community At Work™ model school.

Established in 2015, the award is named in honor of the late Dr. Richard DuFour. An award-winning educator and best-selling author, Dr. DuFour was recognized as one of the leading authorities on the PLC at Work™ (PLC) process.

Each finalist submitted an essay along with a video demonstrating their commitment and dedication to building a successful professional learning community, improving student learning, and advancing instructional best practices.

The award winner will be announced during The Summit on PLC at Work in Phoenix Feb. 20–22, and will be presented with a check for \$25,000.

"We received many exceptional applications this year and were highly impressed by the important work educators are doing in their schools," Solution Tree CEO Jeffrey C. Jones said. "Each of this year's finalists did a tremendous job showcasing how they operate in collaborative teams to achieve high levels of student learning across grade levels and subject areas."

Middle school principal, Breez Longwell Daniels, said they were notified of being a finalist right after the first of the year from Solution Tree, a book publishing company and professional development company for teachers.

"A lot of the research that we do around professional learning communities is from Dr. Rick and Becky DuFour. They are kind of the gurus and we have put all of our eggs in their basket, Daniels said, further explaining that it's based around the idea that teachers know best what is going on in their classrooms and how to empower them.

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photo by Cindy Glasson

Chicken-not-so-Little

Wyatt McDermott keeps a grip on one of the chickens being raised at Thermopolis Middle School while Seth Weyer, Spencer Calhoun and Alyssa Andreen look on. The Farm to Table class is not only raising the chickens, but the eggs are being used in the lunch room and veggies will soon be planted for use on the salad bar.

Wyoming State Legislature convenes Monday

Representative Winters says revenue has stabilized

by Cindy Glasson

The Wyoming State Legislature is slated to convene on Monday, Feb. 12 at 10 a.m. in Cheyenne.

House District 28 Legislator, Nathan Winters, said in an interview on Tuesday that after three years, the revenue for the state has stabilized.

"The decline started in 2014," Winters said, "but things are at about the \$94 million mark again. That doesn't make up for the \$750 million loss over the last three years, but it has at least stabilized. We still need to be very wise with our spending."

With all of the cuts to education seen last year, that, of course, is on everyone's mind going into the 2018 budget session.

Winters said education funding is paramount this time around.

"Wyoming spends more on education, based on our cost of living, than anyone else," he said. "We believe our students deserve the best education and we want to provide the highest levels of academic excellence while being wise with our spending."

There are several different spending bills relating to education that will be coming this session.

One, Winters said, allows schools

to make the decisions on where those cuts will be made rather than being told by the legislature where they need to cut back.

Another bill, which Winters is part author of, will let the people vote on whether or not a part of the State Lands Royalties should be diverted to stabilize school funding.

"It could be for a short term, say six years," he said. "It gives us time to be careful and considerate in our spending."

The Pioneer Home is another issue that is sure to come up during this budget session and we need to ensure the message that it benefits Wyoming and all its residents is heard loud and clear.

The costs of maintaining the Pio-

neer Home and its residents is far less than it would cost for the state to supplement residents in a private facility, so in actuality, the Pioneer Home is saving the state money in the long run.

Another bill Winters has been a part of is a bill that would provide state funding for continuing education for police officers and sheriff's deputies. The state mandates continuing education for law enforcement officers, and this bill could help smaller communities meet those mandates.

Winters will be heading to Cheyenne late this week in order to attend some meetings on Sunday before the session gets underway Monday morning.

Efforts were made to contact Senate District 20 representative Wyatt Agar, though due to scheduling conflicts he was unavailable for comment.



District 28 Representative
Nathan Winters

County river and stream awareness program approved

by Cindy Glasson

The Hot Springs County Commissioners gave the nod of approval to Emergency Management to begin a county river and stream awareness program to start on March 1.

Emergency Management director Bill Gordon, presented the plan to the commissioners that will include changeable signage at the various boat docks along the river and in Hot Springs State Park that will be color coded from green to red to indicate the safety of the river.

In addition, each week the Independent Record will run a color coded warning as well. An Internet link will be included that will allow residents or visitors to see what warnings are in effect not just for the river, but for streams and tributaries throughout the county.

With the issues we've had over the past few years with everything from high water to ice jams, Gordon is hoping this will be just one more item in the arsenal of water safety for the county.

Airport FBO Nate Messenger reported there were 82 total operations at the airport for the month of January – and one mountain lion.

Messenger said the mountain lion took a journey around all the buildings at the facility before heading on down the road, but he was able to catch it's trip on the cameras at the airport.

When the National Guard Black Hawk helicopters landed, they fueled up at the airport. However, we're not set up to accept military credit cards as

they are different from civilian cards, so Messenger presented a couple of alternatives for the commissioners to consider for the future.

One would be to order a special swiping system just for military cards, while the other option would be an online system connected directly with US Bank. The commissioners felt the web based system would work the best as the cost is minimal.

Messenger also informed the commissioners a flying group out of Colorado is planning a trip to Thermopolis in June and he is working with the chamber to figure out logistics to get the folks from the airport into town and possibly some kinds of tours.

Redd Roofing has completed installation of the membrane roof on the Senior Center, leaving just the metal flashing and gutter work to be completed.

Anthony Fruciano, county maintenance supervisor, said the remaining items will be finished once the weather gets a little warmer.

All of the electrical conduit that was buried in the insulation of the old roof has been moved and they did find the exhaust fans for the bathrooms needed replaced, so are waiting on a price for replacement.

At the courthouse and LEC, one of the air handlers was found to be defective and was replaced by LONG Building Technologies. They also rebuilt a circulating heat pump in the boiler room, with both repairs coming out of the repair and maintenance budget.

Gift of the Waters Pageant future unknown

The Gift of the Waters Pageant Committee will host a "town meeting" to discuss the future or fate of the annual Gift of the Waters Pageant on Tuesday, Feb. 13 at 5:30 p.m. in the Big Horn Federal meeting room.

The committee is a group of dedicated individuals who have striven to continue the production of the Pageant every year since 1950. For many years, local and community support was high and the Pageant was a vital part of summer activities. How-

ever, over the past few years interest has declined and it's become nearly impossible to continue unless positive changes can be generated.

Everyone is welcome to attend the meeting and provide input.