



Town council considers legalizing chickens

by Mark Dykes

Tuesday night, Thermopolis Town Council heard quite a bit from Darren Butcher regarding an ordinance that would allow for people to have chickens in town.

Butcher explained the motivation for his argument came, in part, when he noticed that the food being given out to people during food giveaways was mostly processed and he and his father-in-law, Lonny Ramsey, started talking about how they could provide better food for people. The pair had previously given out a lot of vegetables and participated in the annual farmers market. Butcher noted he has also planted mangoes in Haiti and is current-

ly developing 2.5 acres in Central America to help the villagers live better.

Butcher said he wasn't at the meeting to persuade the popular opinion or turn poultry haters into lovers, but intended to show it was not a crime to own a chicken. Though previously past board members have continued a ban on "urban chickens," Butcher argued that such decisions were not based around facts but bias and prejudice.

The last effort to legalize chickens within town limits was in April of 2015, Butcher said, noting the topic appears to be a potential political hot button. Butcher later pointed out that Thermopolis Middle School students and

teacher Becky Martinez presented a request to have chickens at the school and the council approved them. However, council further noted that the request from the school was for a specific area near the edge of town and was for a school project, with requirements that council be updated regularly.

Butcher requested the chickens be allowed in area with boundaries of Amoretti and Arapahoe to the north and south, and the river and train tracks to the east and west.

Also during his presentation, Butcher addressed the concern that chickens might cause

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photo by Mark Dykes

By the horns

Bridger Peil makes a successful throw on the roping dummy, during the Thermopolis Gymkhana's Bucks for Buckaroos on Saturday evening. The event was a fundraiser for the Gymkhana Series year-end awards. For results see page 6.

Time to talk about mosquito control

by Cindy Glasson

The Hot Springs County Commissioners met with two representatives from the State of Wyoming's Public Health Division to discuss changes to contracts the county has had with them for years.

While the contracts themselves are not changing much, what is changing is a consolidation of three contracts into one single contract.

There are no changes to things like maternal and child care, funding for emergency preparedness or nursing services, just to name a few.

Funding for Public Health See Commissioners on page 8

appears to be remaining fairly flat, with local director Marie McDougall saying her funding rose by just a couple of thousand dollars this year.

On the horizon is a prevention contract that will be moved away from prevention management for alcohol, drugs and tobacco use and put in the hands of the various counties to control.

In addition, \$1.5 million has been added to the suicide prevention portion of the circle and it will be up to the counties to determine who is going to manage the entire

Hospital holds town hall meeting

Hot Springs County Memorial Hospital will be holding a Town Hall style meeting to discuss a hospital addition and renovation project as well as a USDA application.

The meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 27 in the Hot Springs County Government Annex building starting at 5 p.m.

Comments from the public will be welcomed as they review the hospital's plan to file an application for Federal Assistance with the USDA Rural Development Community Facilities Loan and a grant program for renovation of the existing facility.



photo by Mark Dykes

Grass fire near Gebo

The Thermopolis Volunteer Fire Department responded to a grass fire near Gebo Sunday at 1:35 p.m. Fire Chief Mark Collins said the department responded with four engines and a water tender, along with 14 personnel who were at the scene for over three hours. The fire was caused by a controlled burn that got out of control, Collins said. The fire burned 2.5 acres.

Changes planned at high school

by Cindy Glasson

There will be a few changes at Hot Springs County High School next year with a move to six periods of 60 minutes each rather than the seven periods of 55 minutes they are experiencing now.

At Tuesday night's school board meeting, principal Breez Daniels said not only are they looking at a period change, but a change in the schedules for Fridays as well.

"We want to keep everything," she said, "just concentrate it down more."

Another issue that has arisen is possible damage taking online classes is doing to outgoing seniors.

"They need to be very careful about eligibility for scholarships," Daniels noted, "especially athletic scholarships."

When entering college, students who have taken online college courses are actually burning up their eligibility as they are not entering school as a 'true' freshman. Students are also finding that a lot of those credits don't transfer to the college of their choice.

"We have been sold on 'collecting credits' by junior colleges," Daniels said, "but that's not necessarily a good thing. We need to concentrate (the offerings) on core subjects."

Another question that has arisen is students arriving on campus with no idea how to study. Right now, there appears to be a lot of downtime within classrooms so students get any homework they may have done during class time.

While this helps with them being able to have more family time or time for sports and activities, the students are not learning to study and Daniels believes this is an item the district needs to take a hard look at.