

Local races heat up with close of filing period

by Cindy Glasson and Mark Dykes

The political races in Thermopolis and Hot Springs County are heating up as more folks waited until the filing deadline last Friday to sign on the dotted line, putting themselves in the race.

Some have remained the same on the county ticket as we reported last week, Daniel Webber for County Assessor, Jerry Williams for County Attorney, Terri Cornella for Clerk of District Court, Mark Mortimore for Coroner and Julie Mortimore as County Treasurer.

However, your choices for the two open spots on the County Commission are now Tom Ryan, Steven Shay, Sonja Becker, Jack Baird,

Michael Liesch and Carl Leyba.

The County Clerk race has grown as well with incumbent Nina Webber being challenged by Rosemary Deseyn and Joe Martinez.

The Hot Springs County Sheriff's race has settled down to Jerimie Kraushaar, Tom Christensen, Daniel Pebbles, Pat Cornwell and Michael Nelson.

For the Town of Thermopolis, incumbents John Dorman Sr. and Tony Larson have submitted their names. They will be on the ticket with newcomers Joshua Brown, Krista Raymond and John Fish. Vying for the position of Mayor are current mayor Mike Mortimore, Michael Chimenti, Forrest Coleman-Weisz

and Bradyn Harvey.

In East Thermopolis, town council incumbents Dolores Bush and Sybil Hannah have filed, as well as Debra Lackey. Current mayor David D. Peake has filed for the mayoral seat.

For Kirby, Alberta Hurley, Kim Graham and Corey Walk have put in their names for the three four-year council spots and Sam Mead has submitted his name for the four-year mayoral term. Council member Jessica Slagle still has two years on her term.

On the state level, Anthony Van Risseghem, Charlie Hardy, Dave Dodson, John Holtz,

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photo by Mark Dykes

Keeping in step

A collection of colorful costumes fills the stage during the Hot Springs Dance LLC's recital Friday evening. With the theme of "On Broadway," the show featured songs from stage musicals. Between dances, several vocalists also performed.

Is Bird's Eye Pass a county road?

by Cindy Glasson

The Hot Springs County Commissioners are going to spend the next couple of months reviewing information before making a decision on whether or not Bird's Eye Pass is a county road.

According to research done by Ray Shaffer, a stage stop was established there in 1906 along with several roads in the county. Of course, there was no funding available to improve the road at that time.

The train arrived in Wind River Canyon in 1913 and the road went through in 1944, basically eliminating the need for the Bird's Eye Pass road, however, no records can be found that it was abandoned as a county road at that time.

In fact, map surveys done at that time showed it as a county road, but another survey in 1982 did not include it in the county road designation.

Currently, the road is blocked on both ends by private landowners. Shaffer said he understands private property rights, but still believes it is a bona fide county road.

Commission chair Tom Ryan said he isn't sure the county would ever actually use it as a county road, and with the condi-

tion its in, is not sure it's a road we would want to use anyway.

The issue came up a few years ago when an enormous slide in Wind River Canyon rendered the canyon impassable. An alternative way from Thermopolis and Casper was discussed then, suggesting Bird's Eye Pass would be a viable alternative.

Commissioner John Lumley said the county somewhat set a precedence when they fixed Kirby Creek, but the decision needs to be made on whether to abandon it or not.

Although they did not make a definite decision on Tuesday, they will be having County Attorney Jerry Williams look over all the information Shaffer gathered and any other history available before making a final finding.

Maintenance director Anthony Fruciano spoke to the commissioners on Tuesday as well, expressing his concern that several unanticipated items that have arisen lately may drain his budget and he wanted the commissioners aware of the situation.

Once instance is the rooftop HVAC units on the Senior Center building.

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Council makes budget adjustments

by Mark Dykes

Tuesday evening, Thermopolis Town Council approved the 2018-19 fiscal year budget upon second reading with a few adjustments made, mainly to the Reserve Fund of \$137,700.

Mayor Mike Mortimore said there were some issues with the parks. While money has been set aside for playground equipment, there are also problems with trees, restrooms and fencing. Council approved moving \$20,000 from the reserve and put it into the parks fund.

Another move from the reserve was for an additional \$3,500 put toward the fireworks show, bringing the total town contribution to \$5,000. John Fish noted the current funds for the show is only about \$6,000, compared to usual \$15,000. Fish said the fire department is also hitting Worland for donations, noting after the show there is a stream of vehicles heading north that goes on for 45 minutes.

Mortimore pointed out the fireworks show is a big event for the summer that brings a lot of people here and the fire department has also, in recent years, provided service in the area near the skate park where people can set off their personal fireworks prior to the main event.

Another change to the budget was the purchase of a three-quarter ton truck rather than a requested full ton truck, which would reduce the cost by about \$5,000. Director of Public Works Ernie Slagle requested that money, as well as an additional \$1,000, be moved to the budget for line maintenance.

The budget also shows a reduced amount for chip sealing, and Town Engineer Anthony Barnett plans to get caught up with crack sealing this next year so the chip sealing is more effective. It was noted there are several streets that need completely torn up and replaced, but doing so would be a multi-million dollar project and the budget is already looking at a shortfall of over \$1 million.

Mortimore noted when 80-90 percent of the budget goes toward things like salaries, insurance and other benefits it doesn't provide much wiggle room. The budget will go through a third reading before final approval.

Barnett said the work in the state park continues to drag on, as it was expected to do, but there's been some further delays going through the buffalo terraces off Buffalo Street but since the weather's been good it's hoped that portion will be finished soon. Wilson Brothers has also ordered the pipe for the Canyon Hills bore repair, and that will be done as soon as possible.

Slagle said he was ordered to do some patching in Waldorf Acres on Circle Drive, but instead a large hole was dug because of a massive water leak. Plans were to cut out a 20-foot section of pipe Wednesday and replace it. Ernie noted the pipe was cast iron with lead joints.

In other action, council approved three catering permits for Shorty's, for the Sounds of Summer concerts on June 10, June 19 and July 4. Council also approved a second pay estimate for the pipeline replacement project.

A lot split application was approved for a three-apartment complex, as the owner wants to take out the center area and make it two separate properties. All of the parameters were met as far as square footage for

each lot, Mayor's Assistant Fred Crosby noted, though at the meeting there were some concerns as to whether the newly-formed properties would retain a shared sewer line and previous work on service lines. The lot split was approved, provided the separation complies with plans provided to council and lines are brought up to code.

Council approved re-appointing Carl Leyba to a three-year position the Travel and Tourism Board. Leyba noted he has been on and off the board since 1982. Jen Fisher also applied for the position, and Mayor Mortimore noted he would like to see her on the board as well.

Though the Hot Springs County Commission intended to appoint Phillip Scheel to fill a position on the board that was open due to Rick Tudor's term expiring, Travel and Tourism Director Amanda Moeller pointed out the open positions were for those who are involved in the travel and tourism industries rather than general "at large" spots. Moeller further added Scheel would have to show he's involved in the travel and tourism industries by the board's by-laws and organizational documents. She plans to discuss the matter further with the commission, and there is the possibility the spot could still be open.

Board members Tony Larson and Dusty Lewis voted "no" on a 3-2 decision to allow a company to contact citizens and inform them their service lines from their homes to the main are their responsibility. The company provides contracts in which they will pay up to \$8,500 if such lines need to be replaced. Though a possible franchise agreement with the company was previously discussed, it was not pursued further.