

TCT lawsuit granted class certification

by Mark Dykes

According to an order signed by District Judge Norman Young on May 25, a lawsuit filed by Joe and Barbara Campbell against Tri-County Telephone Association (TCT) co-operative, a motion for class certification was granted.

The Campbells, named as the plaintiffs in the case, were also approved as an adequate representative of the class defined as 825 former members (more or less) of TCT, according to the order.

It was further ordered that TCT and the individually named defendants, including

TCT CEO Chris Davidson, CFO Steve Harper, and former board members Dalin Winters, Clifford Alexander, J.O. Sutherland, Daniel Greet and John K. Johnson, and Neil Schlenker, purchaser of the member-owned cooperative, shall cooperate and disclose to the plaintiffs the names and addresses of potential class members so they can be identified and notified of the class certification.

Potential class members will have opportunity to request exclusion from the class, and those who don't make such requests will be included.

Litigation began against TCT in Decem-

ber of 2015, when the Campbells filed a suit claiming TCT board members robbed owners of the co-operative of the value of their interests when the co-op was sold in 2014. TCT later filed its own complaint alleging Joe, a former TCT board member, maintained control of a company laptop and took advantage of trade secrets on the computer and shared that information with others, causing fiduciary damage to TCT and violating the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act.

Jury trial in TCT's complaint against the Campbells is currently scheduled to begin Feb. 11, 2019.



photo by Mark Dykes

Hitting the pavement

Runners get moving at the start of Hot Springs County Recreation District's Running with the Buffalo. The road race is part of the district's Ready, Set, Run! program. Top three times were Ty Peterson at 19:36, Kanyon Gerber at 20:34 and Cannon Boren at 22:48.

Thermopolis makes list of most beautiful

Thermopolis has been selected by Expedia as one of the most beautiful towns in America in their second annual list. Although beauty is subjective, the company looked at destinations with downtowns oozing with character, sparkling waves under the glow of a sunset, wide-open ranges void of human handprints, and much more.

Thermopolis is sixth on the list of 30, beating out locations such as Grand Canyon, Ariz., Haleiwa, Hawaii and Grand Lake, Colo. for its spot in the top ten.

According to Chloe Mulliner, who composed the list, "There's no denying the natural wonders of Wyoming, and Thermopolis is the perfect example of what makes this region shine. Surrounded by mountains in every direction, from the Absaroka Range to the Bridger Mountains and beyond, this rustic town showcases Mother Nature's allure.

"Between the world's largest mineral hot spring and access to the spectacular Wind River Canyon, Thermopolis easily earned a spot on our list of beautiful towns and cities across the nation."

Expedia.com released its second Annual Most Beautiful towns in America feature on June 7. The full list is available at viewfinder.expedia.com/features/most-beautiful-towns-in-america-part-2

Travel and Tourism board seeks to clarify bylaws

Scheel board appointment questioned

by Mark Dykes

With the Hot Springs County Commissioners appointing Commissioner Phillip Scheel to the Hot Springs Travel and Tourism Board at their June 5 meeting, it raised some questions as to whether Scheel was able to serve on the board, as it was in direct conflict with Travel and Tourism's articles of organization. The position to which Scheel was appointed was required to be filled by someone who is representative of the travel and tourism industry.

Travel and Tourism conducted a meeting with Scheel, who was in attendance with wife and business co-owner Shurie, on June 7 to further discuss their concerns and come to some form of resolution.

Phil said his intent was not to ruffle any feathers or "wiggle my way in." When he learned that board member Rick Tudor did not submit an application, his first instinct was to call the Tudor, though he did not get an answer. Phil felt he had good experience with the board, having served on it as a liaison for the Thermopolis-Hot Springs Chamber

of Commerce.

Regarding his business, Tumbleweed Propane, Phil expressed his opinion that it is tourism-related. While they could go rounds about the definition of "tourism-related," he said it was not his intention to fight his way onto a board "that doesn't have any interest of me being here."

Phil noted if his job of selling propane to tourists doesn't meet the board's definition of a tourism-related industry, language in the bylaws should be revised so that's clear. As Phil is also a county commissioner, and the commission does appoint two members to the Travel and Tourism Board, he said a bit more direction would be helpful.

Shurie added it would be good to have a working definition of what a representative of the travel and tourism industry means. "To me that means anyone who is serving tourists and travelers in Hot Springs County, and we do that every day."

Board member Kevin Skates said he doesn't think Phil or the other commissioners should be on the

board. "It's nothing against you," he told Phil, further explaining he didn't like the idea of any commissioner or town council member on the board, as they are appointing people. As the commissioners and town council are already representative of the community, Skates said they should appoint others to broaden the variety of people on the board.

Travel and Tourism Director Amanda Moeller said the board's working definition, which should be an amendment to the bylaws, is that travel and tourism is "accommodation, food and beverage, recreation and retail shopping so far as gifts and souvenirs."

Board President Angie Guyon added tourism is the business of attracting, accommodating and entertaining tourists. "Tumbleweed propane provides a service to people, whether they be tourists or community members. My hairdresser probably cuts as many hairs for tourists as you guys sell propane to. The grocery store sells as many

See Board Position on page 8

Hot Spot Car Rally hits town

This weekend, celebrate Father's Day with a trip to Hot Springs State Park for the annual Hot Spot Car Rally, June 16 and 17. The first rally was at Big T Drive-In on Shoshoni, and featured 34 cars. The event has grown over the years, bringing in 140 or more vehicles some years.

The rally is a casual two-day event beginning at 10 a.m. on June 16 with pre-registration and the Ted Spatol Memorial Poker Run. A live musical jam session is scheduled for 1-3 p.m. There will also be a casual gathering of car enthusiasts, and at 4:30 p.m. will be the official Parade of Cars through town; lineup will be on Senior Avenue, facing north, beginning at 4 p.m.

The main event, also known as the "Show & Shine," will be on June 17 from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. in the state park. There will also be a professional DJ providing music, food available, and the raising of the National Flag in tribute to those who have served our country. This year will also feature kids activities like face painting, a dunk tank, a bounce house and Nerf wars. Four pedal cars will also be available to win in a raffle, with tickets \$5 each or three for \$10.

Door prizes will be given to paid entrants, and an awards presentation will close the show. Early registration is appreciated, and \$30 covers the entry fee for one vehicle and a shirt. Additional shirts are \$15 each and there is a \$10 fee for each additional vehicle.