

Local distillery announces partnership

by Mark Dykes

Wyoming Whiskey recently announced the addition of a new member. As of Sept. 6, Edrington and Wyoming Whiskey have formed a strategic partnership. Edrington, the international premium spirits company, has a portfolio of products which includes The Macallan, Highland Park, The Glenrothes, The Famous Grouse, and Cutty Sark Scotch whiskeys, Brugal rum, and Partida tequila. As a result of this partnership, Wyoming Whiskey will immediately join Edrington Americas' nationwide distribution network which will assume all sales, marketing and distribution of products. David Defazio, Wyoming Whiskey founder

and COO, explained the business did not approach anyone to suggest a partnership. He attended the Shanken Impact Seminar in New York, which brought together several presidents of spirit manufacturers. During that seminar, he was introduced to a handful of presidents from different companies. There have been about a dozen different companies that have taken an interest in Wyoming Whiskey over the past three years, Defazio said, from those interested in being minority stakeholders to others wanting to completely buy out the business. Defazio said Edrington provided the "right fit," and one of the great things about the partnership is there

is no desire to change the business. The partnership with Edrington places Wyoming Whiskey alongside the most respected whiskeys in the market. Chris Spalding, President and CEO of Edrington Americas, stated, "Wyoming Whiskey holds its own against the nation's finest. We are proud to be playing our part in helping more consumers discover the quality of this outstanding American Whiskey." Wyoming Whiskey has been able to achieve this by partnering with a company that is aligned with it culturally, not by selling out.

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photo by Mark Dykes

Language lessons

In addition to providing energetic performances for students and the public, members of La Patronal visited with Hot Springs County High School Spanish students during their stay in Thermopolis. As very little English is spoken among the Peruvian band, students had to ask questions in Spanish and test their comprehension of the answers.

Will Farrell to be inducted into CSC Hall of Fame

by Mark Dykes

Will Farrell of Thermopolis, a two-time national college bull riding champion, will be among the eight former Chadron State College athletes inducted into the school's Athletic Hall of Fame this fall. The ceremonies will be at 6 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 27 following the Eagles' football game with New Mexico Highlands.

Fellow national bull riding champion Dustin Elliott, four football players and two basketball players are the other inductees. All were standouts at CSC around the turn of the century.

Farrell said he is honored and excited to be put into the hall of fame as it is a great honor. It's not something he was planning on, as he only wanted to do the best he could while at school at CSC, but he's glad he had such a good career to warrant his induction.

Farrell was the Wyoming State High School bull riding champ as a senior at Hot Springs County High School in 1997. He enrolled at Chadron State a year later at least partially because his girlfriend and now his wife, Shawna, was on the Eagles' basketball team.

Farrell won the College National Finals bull riding champion as a freshman at CSC in 1999 and again as a senior in 2002. Elliott won the title as a sophomore in 2001.

Farrell is one of the few Chadron State rodeo contestants to qualify for the CNFR four times and is the only one to win three Central Rocky Mountain Regional titles and two national championships.

As a college freshman, Farrell placed at six of the nine rodeos to easily win the

regional championship. The week before the CNFR in Casper, he tuned up for the big event by staying aboard "Leaping Lizard," a bull that was previously unriden, at the rodeo in Worland.

At the national finals in Casper, he was bucked off his first bull, placed fourth in both of the next go-rounds and was second in the final go-round with 74 points to win the title by one point over defending national champion Corey Navarre of Southwest Oklahoma.

After winning the championship, Farrell competed at two special events later in the year.

He finished second among 40 entries at the Overland Stagecoach Invitational Bull Riding at Monahans, Texas, in early August and placed fifth among 20 contestants at the International College Finals Rodeo in Maringa, Brazil, in November.

By being the runner-up at the Texas rodeo, he earned \$4,000, a large amount for a college student nearly 20 years ago.

As a sophomore at Chadron State, Farrell won the bull riding at four of the 10 rodeos in the region and was fourth in two more. At the college finals, he won the first go-round with 80 points, tied for fifth in the second go-round, but was bucked off during the next two go-rounds to finish seventh in the final standings.

He did not ride any of the three bulls at the finals rodeo in 2001, when Elliott caught fire and was the national champion.

It was Farrell's turn to win the whole shebang again the next year, giving CSC

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Several file for special districts

by Cindy Glasson

The following citizens have their names on the ballot for special districts in Hot Springs County. The general election will be held on Tuesday, Nov. 6.

Hot Springs County School District #1 Board of Trustees: Jennifer Axtell, Kelli Odell-Bloedel, Richard (Rick) Engelbrecht, Ronda Freel, Kendi Heinze, Daniel Pebbles and Sherman Skelton. Three trustees at large open, four year terms.

Hot Springs County Conservation District Rural Supervisor: Kevin Dickey and Jim Wilson. Two trustees open, four year terms.

Hot Springs County Conservation District At-Large Supervisor: Lee Campbell. One trustee open, four year term.

Hot Springs County Cemetery District Director: John Huckman, Basil Sorensen and Mary Jane Starnes. Three trustees open, four year terms.

Hot Springs County Rural Fire Protection District Director: Stefanie Gilbert. Two district directors open, four year terms.

Hot Springs County Hospital District Director: Daniel Herdt, Melissa McCumber-Johnson, Heath Overfield. Three district directors open, four year terms.

Belt award to remain at HSCHS for now

by Mark Dykes

Two years ago, Thermopolis claimed a victory for vehicular safety when Hot Springs County High School won over Worland High School in the Battle of Belts competition. The "battle," which was used to make students, staff and parents more aware of their seat-belt habits and improve them if they could, was planned to be a two-year event with Thermopolis working to defend its title in 2018.

However, it looks like the local high school will retain the sparkling award — which resembles a WWE championship belt — indefinitely. Noel Cooper, executive director of Injury Prevention Resources (IPR), the organization sponsoring the battle, explained it was taken over by Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) and the name was changed to Rock the Belt, a campaign done in conjunction with National Teen Driver Safety Week.

Cooper noted the IPR works more closely with Fremont and Sweetwater counties, but would like to partner with a SADD chapter in Hot Springs County again for an event like Battle of the Belts.

The first and last rounds of

2016's Battle of the Belts competition included seat belt observational surveys that show who buckles up the most.

The surveys were conducted by IPR, and included a sample of 100 vehicles to measure how safe drivers are at Hot Springs County High School and Worland High School. Percentages of buckled up drivers from the initial and final Thermopolis surveys are as follows:

Total Drivers: Initial Survey — 67 percent; Final Survey — 91 percent

Adults: Initial — 50 percent; Final — 85 percent

Students: Initial — 72 percent; Final — 96 percent

Worland showed improvement as well, but not enough to beat the Bocats, with results of:

Total Drivers: Initial — 54 percent; Final — 78 percent

Adults: Initial — 65 percent; Final — 89 percent

Students: Initial — 51 percent; Final — 69 percent

In addition to conducting the competition, Cooper and Tom Cunningham for WYDOT District 5 held assemblies to teach students the importance of buckling up and used a roll-over simulator to show what can happen to a person in a severe accident.