



Wyoming Pioneer Home on the chopping block

by Cindy Glasson

Approximately 125 concerned citizens filled the basement of the Wyoming Pioneer Home last week as the Joint Appropriations Committee (JAC) once again put the facility on the chopping block to fulfill their budget cuts.

Department of Health Director Tom Forslund addressed the JAC, reminding them the Department of Health oversees five facilities in the State of Wyoming and were asked to cut \$90 million from the Department's budget.

According to Forslund, last year the legislature asked for another \$60 million in cuts and now, they are looking at the various facilities under their purview to see where they can make those additional cuts.

Forslund said, when the Pioneer Home began, there were very few private care facilities in the state, but with the onset of Medicare and Medicaid there was a huge burst of beds and private facilities available for citizens to choose from.

What started as a safety net for Wyoming's elderly is no longer needed because of the amount of space available in privately run facilities.

The Pioneer Home is 65 percent subsidized by the state with 35 percent of the remaining costs covered by revenue gathered from those who live there.

Forslund told the committee the Pioneer Home is in excellent condition and there are many different models available for privati-

zation – who owns the facility and who runs the facility?

The State could continue to own the facility and bring an outside company in to run it, they could sell to another entity to own or operate, or the State could sell it completely.

Because it is on state land, the complete sale may not be possible.

Of course, there is concern about rates going up if privatized and what would happen to the employees, however, Forslund said that could all be handled through contracts.

Representative Albert Sommers from Sublette County questioned Forslund regarding

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photo by Mark Dykes

All from a seed

Jay Richards holds up a seed from one of his giant pumpkins to students at Ralph Witters Elementary last Wednesday. A regular grower of the massive fruits, this year Richards grew a pumpkin that clocked in at over 1,000 pounds. In addition to bringing his pumpkins to show, he spent time answering the abundance of questions from students.

Hospital board approves resolution

by Mark Dykes

Tuesday night during the Hot Springs County Memorial Hospital Board of Trustees' meeting, the board approved Resolution No. 4. This resolution, Chief Financial Officer Shelly Larson explained, authorizes on a preliminary basis the hospital to move forward with expenditures. She noted it allows the hospital to go back 60 days for anything not a preliminary and utilize funds from the bond issue, and allows the hospital to be reimbursed for preliminary expenses for the expansion and renovation project.

The board also approved a purchase of equipment for use in orthopedic surgeries from Arthrex in the amount of \$130,176. Various discounts based on the purchase actually results in a savings of about \$13,600, Larson noted. There is also a 30 percent discount on disposable supplies, and that savings can then be passed on to patients and results in about a \$36,000 annual savings in costs. Purchasing the equipment also eliminates rental costs of \$3,200 for the instruments.

Prior to approving the purchase, board member Dave Koerwitz said the board had to be alright with taking the money out of the hospital's cash reserve, though he believes the benefits of purchasing the equipment would be worth it. Larson pointed out the hospital has paid out \$1.1 million in construction

expenses that it will receive back.

Larson also noted the hospital is hitting a record with respect to gross revenue, up 57 percent for the first three months of the fiscal year compared to the previous, which she credited to a busy summer and fall.

Also during the meeting, it was reported Mattson Mathey, MD started Oct. 15. Hospital CEO Margie Molitor said this means the hospital is at full staff with providers. She further noted that on the recruiting front there is a full RN staff.

Molitor noted Director of Diagnostic Imaging Daryl Mathern, after 34 years with the hospital, is moving to more of an "as needed" basis. Molitor commended Mathern's work on getting equipment for the hospital at great prices.

Also, Molitor is working with Central Wyoming College so the hospital can be used as a training site for their nurses and potentially medical assistants

Chief of Staff Dr. Vernon Miller reported there has been good work in following the 96-hour rule, in which patients are appropriately documented for their 96-hour stay, under federal guidelines. Miller also reported an upswing in obstetrics, and it's delightful to see the number of babies being born at the hospital.

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Pennoyer featured in Ram video

by Cindy Glasson

The Pennoyer family, Arnold, Donna and Jessie, attended the 91st Annual

National FFA Convention last week in Indianapolis where Arnold was recognized by the national organization as well as the Ram Truck brand as one of three finalists in "The Farmer in All of Us" program as an individual who has made an impact on the agriculture community. To commemorate and celebrate of the fifth anniversary of Ram Truck's iconic Super Bowl commercial featuring Paul Harvey's speech "So God Made a Farmer" Ram Trucks set out to find a few special people who have impacted the agriculture industry by hosting a contest. Nominations were submitted, and three ordinary people doing extraordinary things were selected as finalists.

Three categories were selected by Ram they felt best reflected the spirit of "The Farmer in All of Us", the Icon, the Innovator and the Future.

Pennoyer was chosen as the Icon.

At the meeting of the FFA Alumni at the convention, they introduced him, saying, "Arnold Pennoyer is a rancher from Wyo-

oming who is a third generation rancher. He has been working his ranch and giving back to the community for decades.

music of Corbin.

Once selected as a finalist, a film crew flew out to film Pennoyer at work around his ranch. They toured the area and chose a few spots to film footage and do some audio, asking him questions about his life and operation. A separate video featuring just Pennoyer should be released on YouTube in mid-November.

At first Pennoyer was nervous about the whole contest, not even realizing he had been nominated until he received a call from the marketing agency that handles Ram Trucks. Overall, he felt it was a great experience though, "It was fun to meet the other winners. It was really neat how they used the drone to capture some of the footage. When trying to film the cows, they did

not like the noise it made and they ran!" The promotion nomination form, which revolves around Harvey's "So God Made a Farmer" speech he delivered in front of the convention 40 years ago, asked just two questions – How does the nominee represent the ideals of "God Made a Farmer" and how has the nominee impacted their community.

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Arnold Pennoyer is filmed and interviewed as part of his being chosen as the Icon for "The Farmer in All of Us".

His humility and dedication to his family and the land will really shine through and speak to the farmer in us all."

Ram Truck's partnership with the FFA is in its 60th year and their presence this year at convention featured an exclusive live performance by country recording artist Easton Corbin and the recognition of three finalists of the "The Farmer in All of Us" program. A compilation video showed the finalists at work set to the