



Willson land use change considered

by Cindy Glasson

The Hot Springs County Land Use Planning Commission heard a request for a land use change from Howard and Belenda Willson at their meeting on Wed., Dec. 19, asking for a 15-acre parcel of their property be changed from agricultural to industrial.

Presented as the "Willson Third Land Use Change," the acreage in question has been industrial previously, then changed back to agricultural, making this the third requested change for the same plot.

In 2014, the Willsons were granted a 10-acre land use change from agricultural to industrial to create a gravel pit just west and

north of their home at 810 Sprowl Road.

The couple was unable to market the pit due to not having a hot-mix plant in place and in 2016, after never opening the pit, requested it be returned to agricultural.

They came back to the commission asking to change the original 10-acres back to industrial along with an additional five acres.

The general uses of the surrounding properties is a mix of rural residential, agricultural and some mining activity. A small feed lot is also in the proximity.

Big Horn Redi-Mix has a gravel pit nearby, the Wyo-Ben bentonite mining operation is just a mile away and their Lucerne plant

on Black Mountain Road is less than a mile from the proposed pit.

In 2009 there was another gravel pit, the Pearce Gravel Pit, just over a half-mile to the southeast. That pit was reclaimed in 2013 and reverted back to agricultural use.

Hot Springs County Planner, Bo Bowman, found there would be some visual impacts to other properties as the pit is on a ridge and could be visible to several nearby residences. As for noise levels, those could impact nearby residences dependent upon the pit's hours of operation.

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photo by Mark Dykes

Can't even whistle

Kindergarten and Kinder Boost students at Ralph Witters Elementary emphatically sing about wanting their two front teeth for Christmas. The elementary program was "Christmas Around the World" and featured songs from the United States, France, Spain and other countries.

2018

A look back at the year in Hot Springs County

January

Jan. 4 - There were some changes in leadership during the Hot Springs County Commissioners meeting Tuesday. John Lumley stepped down and Tom Ryan was newly elected the chair of the Hot Springs County Commission going into 2018 with Phillip Scheel as the new vice chair. Ryan was not in attendance at the meeting, so Scheel chaired it.

Jan. 11 - Numbers were recently released by the State of Wyoming on the costs of maintaining county governments throughout the state, including Hot Springs County.

The report is broken down by county, showing the expenses incurred as well as the revenue and their sources, finally showing what running the government actually costs each taxpayer in each county.

The largest expense Hot Springs County has is administration costs, which came in at \$1,268,359 for the year.

Jan. 18 - After August's spectacular solar eclipse with the moon passing between the Earth and the sun, its time to return the moon's favor with a total lunar eclipse on Jan. 31. Again, Wyoming is blessed to be a prime viewing area and in Thermopolis we'll just have to get up a little earlier than normal to appreciate it.

The eclipse is unusual, this type not actually seen for 35 years, as it falls in line with the Blue Moon phase (a second full moon in a month) as well as the Supermoon phase where the moon is 15 percent larger and 30

percent brighter due to its closer proximity to the Earth.

This eclipse is also known as a Blood Moon since it will not completely go dark, but instead, will take on a red hue. The amount of color will be determined by the amount of dust in the air and other atmospheric conditions.

Jan. 25 - Last week, Dr. Howard Willson was honored as Wyoming's 2018 Physician of the Year by the Wyoming Medical Society. Willson was recognized during a ceremony in Jackson.

According to a tribute from Senator John Barrasso in the Congressional Record on Jan. 11, Willson worked tirelessly during his medical career to improve healthcare in Wyoming. His contributions in medical education, quality improvement and public health touched countless patients. Outside medicine, he served Wyoming as a member of the University of Wyoming's board of trustees and as an officer in the United States Air Force.

February

Feb. 1 - During the Tuesday night meeting of the Hot Springs County Memorial Board of Trustees, Board Chair, Bill Williams, and hospital CEO, Margie Molitor, spoke about their recent trip to Cheyenne to visit with the SLIB board.

The hospital's SLIB application for \$1.5 million was not recommended for funding, Molitor said, and there were two main reasons. There were \$11.6 million worth of

requests for SLIB grants, and they only have about \$4 million to give. "At this point in the game with the biennium funding," Molitor said, "large projects like ours usually don't fair so well."

The grant request was for the hospital addition and renovation, to supplement the project due to unforeseen expenses regarding asbestos abatement, the need for deep foundations and inflation factors.

Feb. 8 - The National Weather Service in Riverton, Wyoming recognized Hot Springs State Park as StormReady® on Tuesday, February 6.

"Through a partnership between the National Weather Service and emergency management community, the StormReady® program encourages communities to take a proactive approach to improving local hazardous weather operations and public awareness," said Tim Troutman, Warning Coordination Meteorologist with the National Weather Service Riverton, Wyoming forecast office.

Troutman presented Hot Springs State Park Superintendent, Kevin Skates, and Assistant Superintendent, John Fish, with a recognition letter and a special StormReady® sign during a ceremony at the Superintendent's office Tuesday.

Feb. 15 - Last Thursday, the Thermopolis-Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce voted for the Citizen, Business and Nonprofit of the Year. Joining the regular board was chamber past president, Reg Filkey, who was named

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Hospital board approves ambulance increase

by Mark Dykes

At their Dec. 18 meeting, the Hot Springs County Memorial Hospital Board of Trustees approved an ambulance service contract with a six percent increase.

Hospital CEO Margie Molitor explained the hospital bills for ambulance service, and pays the service for any runs that are made. She noted the service has not had any increases in the past three years. Additionally, new quality measures were incorporated into the contract, particularly in regard to heart attacks, strokes and trauma.

In other action, the board approved extending a contract to Todd Wilder of Byron and Arete Design Group of Sheridan as building representatives for the hospital's renovation and expansion. Molitor noted they would be local representatives for the project, a set of eyes and ears to make sure everything is going correctly. The project is in the final steps of secured financing.

The board also approved the infection prevention program. Under the policy contained in the program, the hospital will maintain a facility wide system for identifying, reporting, investigating and controlling infections and communicable diseases of patients and personnel, with an emphasis on prevention.

Under the program definitions of healthcare associated infection and communicable diseases will be used for surveillance, identification, investigating, and reporting and controlling infection and communicable diseases of patients and staff. It will have consistent and acceptable measures for identifying staff and patients at risk for infection and communicable diseases, as well as obtaining reports on such people in a timely manner and acceptable measure for prevention of infection.

The program also calls for safe and sanitary environments and practices so as to prevent the transmission of infections and communicable diseases, and working with state and local emergency response in incidents of bioterrorism.