



The Mark and Debbie Mount home at 353 Bonneville was voted the best-decorated house in Thermopolis by the secret panel of judges. Bob's Upholstery was judged best business. -- Gary Linton photo

'Season's Greetings' tops them all

by Keith E. Domke

A grand message of "Season's Greetings" in front of the Mark and Debbie Mount home at 353 Bonneville helped earn the couple first-place honors in the residential portion of the Thermopolis-Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce holiday lighting contest.

Bob's Upholstery, 1232 Broadway, claimed the top prize in the commercial

lighting category.

"We're so lucky to live in a gorgeous town where residents take the time to decorate so beautifully for the rest of us to enjoy," chamber director Kathy Wallingford said. "This just adds to our Christmas spirit in Thermopolis and Hot Springs County."

Six residences and two businesses participated in the contest.

Earning runner-up house honors was Shawn and Jerry Fields, 704 Park. Finishing third was Thomas A. Sullivan Jr., 1401 Valley View. The secret panel of judges also tabbed Joey and Bob Leavitt, 541 Webb Road, as the out-of-town winner.

Other participants were Kevin and Linda Kolar, Glenn Witt and A&W Lanes. "Thanks to everyone who participated," Wallingford said.

Plumbers extra busy when deep freeze settles in

by Cindy Glasson

The recent bitter cold snap in Hot Springs County kept area plumbers working steadily on repairs as nightly temperatures dipped to double-digit below-zero readings.

Fred Carey with Riverbend Sheetmetal was on his way to Casper on Friday to pick up parts when he was contacted by the Independent Record.

"It's been pretty crazy," Carey said. "We've been chasing frozen pipes all over."

He added that furnace problems have been on the list of tasks as well.

"Remind folks to check their furnace filters and get them changed," he said.

Clogged filters force the furnace to work harder and can cause damage to the unit, he said. It also can reduce the efficiency of the furnace, driving up heating costs.

John Zupan, owner of Zupan Electric, said most of their calls have been during the day rather than late at night.

"You know, the temperatures drop at night and that's when things freeze," he said. "Then when they start unthawing during the day, that's when the problems start."

He said most individuals have been fortunate with the cold this time, catching problems early enough that pipes have not burst.

"Of course, we've had some who have let things go for a few days and that's made the problems worse," he said. "If you let it go too long, the pipes in the ground can actually freeze."

Zupan indicated the worst area during last week's deep freeze seemed to be in Lucerne where stock tank water lines froze in the ground when temperatures dropped to about 34 degrees below zero.

"It is a little early for this kind of cold," he said. "We don't usually get it until around January so it could hit again."

"Anything that you think might have been a problem with this cold, now is the time to get it taken care of, just in case."

Rob Stehlin, owner of Stehlin Plumbing, echoes Zupan's thoughts on being prepared ahead of time.

"Folks just aren't prepared," he said. "They've forgotten to plug in their heat tape or neglected to put antifreeze in their boilers."

While Stehlin says he has seen a 50-50 split between homes and businesses that weren't ready for the freezing temperatures, he said his worst case was a business that was low on antifreeze in its boiler.

"We'd ordered the antifreeze, but this hit before it got in," he said. "They got to work this morning (Friday) and pipes had burst in the night leaving around 2,000 gallons of water to clean up."

"Places are frozen that people don't even realize are until things thaw. Then you've got a real problem."

Assistant to the mayor Dan Stansill said the town's main lines are fine.

"We generally get a break or two in the older lines," he said. "But so far, knock on wood, we've been lucky."

Cold weather tips:
• Let faucets trickle overnight to prevent pipes from freezing.

• Buy heat tape at any hardware store and install it on pipes.

It was not that cold!

by Keith E. Domke

Thermopolis and Hot Springs County may have shivered through a cold snap this month, but the majority of those bone-chilling temperatures actually could be considered mild compared to the daily record lows set for the period.

From Dec. 4-13 this year, eight of the 10 daily lows were below zero, according to information obtained from the official local reporting station for the town at the wastewater treatment plant, and the mercury bottomed out at a frigid minus-24 degrees on Wednesday, Dec. 9. That figure set a record for the date, breaking the minus-17 reading from 1932. And it was so cold on that day that the high was 1 degree above zero.

On three other days, temperatures reached double-digit below-zero numbers with a minus-12 on Monday, Dec. 7, a minus-19 on Dec. 10 and a minus-10 on Dec. 11.

But the record low set on Dec. 9 was the only one set during the period, and most of the other low temperatures this month have not come close to the all-time marks.

A check of the record books revealed three brutally cold periods during various stages of December. In 1909, the mercury plummeted to minus-24 on the 4th of the month, to minus-30 on the 5th, to minus-16 on the 6th and to minus-26 on the 7th. From Dec. 8-11, 1932 is in the record book with minus-20, minus-17, minus-25 and minus-31 degrees, respectively, counted as the low-temperature marks for the period, with the 2009 reading replacing 1932 on Dec. 9. A minus-20 reading was recorded on Dec. 12, 1949, before 1926 owns the next three low-temperature record days - minus-26 on the 13th, minus-31 on the 14th and minus-26 on the 15th.

"It's been cold lately, but there were some very cold years in there," said Chris Jones, warning coordination meteorologist for the National Weather Service Riverton office. "There were some periods of very cold temperatures there."

The all-time record low temperature in Thermopolis

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Bid awarded for senior center study

by Cindy Glasson

Seven bids were considered for a feasibility study for a new senior citizen's center during a joint work session between the Hot Springs County commissioners and the senior center's board of directors on Tuesday.

The commissioners awarded the bid for the study to TSP out of Sheridan in the amount of \$32,000.

Speaking on behalf of the senior center's board of directors, secretary Karl Allen said the group had two specific items it wanted to see in each of the bid packages. Board members wanted the project winner to have Wyoming connections, and that the project fall within the

budget guidelines.

Allen said each of the board members had reviewed the bids and there were some which automatically were rejected because they did not fit the criteria the board wanted to see.

ProsConsulting from Carrollton, Texas, did not meet the local roots criteria and its bid came in over \$36,000, an amount that crossed the budget line by \$3,000.

Business Resource Group from Costa Mesa, Calif., met the budget requirement with a bid of \$33,000, but missed out on the Wyoming connection. Although the company has a satellite office in Casper, the board expressed concern with the main office being so far away.

The list was narrowed down to three companies, TSP from Sheridan, Plan One Architects from Cody and CTA from Billings, Mont.

The senior center's board indicated one of the reasons it would choose TSP over the other firms was having everything "in-house," making it handier to work with the company.

In addition, senior center director Jan Dickeson said she liked the fact that TSP wanted to consult with the kitchen staff to get ideas to make its work easier.

TSP also designed Worland's senior center.

"These are all top-notch firms," commission chairman Brad Basse said.

"I think we should look to the senior board for their comfort level," commissioner John Lumley said.

The \$33,333 budget for the feasibility study is part of a 75/25 percent Community Development Block Grant. The senior center's board will provide the matching \$8,333.

- Firms entering bids were:
- Plan One Architects \$23,712.
 - CTA \$25,516.
 - GSG Architecture \$31,687.
 - TSP \$32,000.
 - Ohlson Lavoie Collaborative \$32,500.
 - Business Resource Group \$33,000.
 - ProsConsulting \$36,180.

Halls decked, and then some, for tour

by Cindy Glasson

Six uniquely decorated homes were featured at this year's Christmas Tour of Homes on Monday.

For most, the decorating started before Thanksgiving with outside lighting before moving inside to complete the holiday spirit.

Jennifer Domhoff, 1221 Amoretti, said she was somewhat nervous Monday afternoon while waiting for the festivities to begin.

She said she didn't have a theme for her home, but decorated with a little bit of everything.

"I didn't put out any of the family decorations that have been passed down," she said. "My daughter is awfully young, and those things can wait until she's a little older."

Domhoff had every room in her home decorated, right down to tea lights floating in the sink in her bathroom casting a warm glow. Modern table settings in holiday red featured square chargers and plates along with stained-glass candleholders as a centerpiece.

In the living room, her Christmas tree was covered with red and white poinsettias as well as silver, white and red glass

ornaments.

The décor at the home of Charlie and Mary Myers, 1144 Arapahoe, was best described by Mary as "cozy."

"This has been lots of fun," Myers said. "We've been in Thermopolis just a year, and this has been a great way to meet lots of people."

Charlie Myers has collected antiques for years which fit wonderfully in the 1930s home. Included in the Christmas decorations were his grandmother's table settings and antique post cards picturing a skinny Santa Clause from his grandfather's collection. An antique tester bed in the guest room was made up with holiday linens.

Kelly Andreen's home at 827 Amoretti was filled with snowmen and bears.

"I really didn't have a theme in mind for decorating," she said. "But friends and family have given me lots of snowmen over the years, so I guess there is kind of a theme."

Andreen has several family items that have been passed down along with decorations made for her by nieces and nephews and ornaments given to her by her grandmother.

When her grandmother



Elizabeth Rose Arcand is delighted with the silver ball from the Christmas tree at Jennifer Domhoff's home. -- Cindy Glasson photo