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Grave uncovered at gravel pit site

by Cindy Glasson

The remains of at least one Hot Springs County pioneer have been uncovered during excavation of gravel on property owned by Russ and Lisa Pearce north of Thermopolis.

McGarvin-Moberly Construction recovered 76 bones while gravel was being removed from the area that will be used for road construction this summer on Black Mountain Road.

It is unknown whether the remains are from a single body or multiple bodies as there could be as many as seven pioneers buried in the immediate area.

The land in question was once known as Andersonville as well as Old Town Thermopolis, according to a map dating back to 1892.

According to local historian Dorothy Milek, there were apparently 10 burials in the area; however, three of those gravesites were moved some years ago.

During public hearings for a land use change from agricultural to industrial for the acreage, then county planner Lee Campbell informed the county commissioners any remains found on the property would be considered under the ownership of the Perces, with the exception of Native American remains, which would become property of the respective tribe.

Ernie Stratterberg with McGarvin-Moberly assured the commissioners his company had

worked on projects in the past that had required extra attention to the possibility of remains and said, "it is paramount to us to protect anything like that."

Lisa Pearce said she truly commends McGarvin Moberly for the care they've taken with the pioneer remains.

"It is like looking for a needle in a haystack," Pearce said. "It is so impressive to me that they were able to see what they did while they were digging."

“
It will be a
meticulous
process, but
we want to
be extremely
careful.”

**Phil Caines of
McGarvin-Moberly
about excavation at the
Pearce gravel pit**

"I walked down there to see what they'd found and am really impressed with how careful, how serious they are about taking care of the bones."

Pearce said the company completely stopped what they were doing in the area where the remains were found and are now very carefully excavating around the spot.

"Everything is being respectfully handled," she said, "and we intend to keep everything respectful."

Pearce said she and her husband had been told there was a white picket fence around the burial site — many, many years ago — and they plan to re-entire the remains and put up another picket fence sometime in late July or August, along with a plaque identifying the pioneers.

"Of course, if there are any locals with ties to these folks we're

See Grave on page 10

3-on-3 tournament in spotlight



William DeVries of one of the Bartholomew Well Service teams guards an opponent during the Thermopolis 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament last weekend. A recap of the tournament is coming in next week's issue. — Cindy Glasson photo

HSCHS graduation on Sunday afternoon

Fifty seniors are part of the Hot Springs County High School Class of 2011, which celebrates graduation with commencement exercises Sunday at 2 p.m. in the high school gym.

Tri-valedictorians Sarah Basse, David Leonhardt and Josh Materi will each provide a brief address, as will salutatorian Sallie Myers.

Long-time teacher and coach LeRoy Hayes will be the guest speaker and will address the graduates attending the ceremony and other graduation attendees.

Sunday evening's graduation party is set for the Thermopolis Middle School at 9 p.m.

See the special 2011 Graduation Edition in this issue of the Independent Record for photos of the graduates and salutes by businesses and other members of the community.

Leonhardt and Basse were named recipients of Most Outstanding Boy and Girl awards during Senior Awards Night on Monday. Other seniors named to the Senior Honors Class of 2010 were: Service, Erin Shay; Leadership, Bridger Lewis; and Citizenship, Reid Odde.

National Honor Society seniors are Kassidi Marquart, Kristin Daniels, Shae Starkey, Sarah Green, Alanna Freel, Materi, Shay, Leonhardt, Myers, Lorraine Carver, Basse and Elizabeth Palmer.

A list of the scholarship recipients will be published in next week's Independent Record.

Chamber budget hinges on memberships

by J.D. Stetson

The Thermopolis-Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce board of directors approved the entity's \$153,273 budget for the next fiscal year at its May 12 regular board meeting.

Board president Donna Nally said the new budget has more certainty than the previous budget for the 2010-11 fiscal year because it is based on actual expenses the board has incurred in the past year.

"It has to pay all of the bills," Nally said. "We're cutting it to the bone on what it's going to take to operate the chamber."

Even though the budget has been finalized, the numbers can adapt if actual numbers change throughout the year. The chamber is counting on bringing in about \$45,000 from its mem-

bership fees under a new dues and sponsorship structure. The chamber board hopes it will be able to bring former members back into the fold and to add new members who want to take pride in their community and show support for the chamber.

The chamber's end-of-the-month fund balance for April stood at \$3,728, with \$906.98 for 3-on-3 and \$903.02 for Leadership Hot Springs County. This left \$1,968.98 for chamber operations. The chamber board hoped to make enough money from the 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament to get them into July when many of its members' fees will be due.

For the upcoming budget, the chamber plans to keep interim executive director Michelle Lue at work being the voice of the community as she answers

phones at the office and is the first face people see as they visit the tourism center. They also plan to get assistance from Wyoming Department of Workforce Services to hire two part-time employees to help out over the summer at the center, but Lue is still compiling information to present to the board.

The chamber isn't counting on receiving any money from either the Town of Thermopolis or the Hot Springs County Commission, although they have already made a request to the town and planned to meet with commissioners Tuesday to ask for any assistance the entity can provide.

The chamber's second largest expected source for revenue is from reimbursement from the Hot Springs County Lodging Tax Board. The chamber es-

timates it may be reimbursed about \$27,000 the next year based on previous years, but it will depend on their receipts and what they can prove needs to be reimbursed by lodging tax, Nally said.

For special events, the chamber expects a net income from the Demolition Derby of about \$7,500, about \$4,000 from next year's 3-on-3 tournament and about \$5,000 from the chamber banquet. None of those revenues is guaranteed, and the budget is supposed to allow the board to keep on track and make the necessary alterations as the actual numbers come in.

"If we don't get the revenue, then we'll lose Michelle as our voice," Nally said. "She's the first person to let people know what there is to do in this town."

Council may extend alcohol-serving hours

by J.D. Stetson

The Thermopolis Town Council voted Tuesday night to allow staff to write up an ordinance to change the town code to allow restaurants with bars to serve alcohol after 10 p.m. on Sundays.

The council received a letter from Mary Mills and Jim Mills, owners of the Days Inn and Safari Club, asking the council to make an exemption for their restaurant to serve alcohol after 10 p.m. on Sundays during the summer months.

Jim Mills told the council it is inconvenient for the restaurant to stop serving alcohol to tourists and patrons on Sunday when his restaurant stays open past 10 p.m.

In the letter, Mills told the council he would like to be able to serve until midnight on Sundays.

The council wasn't sure if they could make an individual exemption for the Safari Club without changing the ordinance for all restaurants that serve alcohol.

Town attorney Mike Messenger said he would contact the regulatory authority to see if the council could make an individual exemption.

In attendance at the meeting were Vicki Lahoe of Mac's Bar and a representative from Ther-

mopolis Liquors. Both said it would be unlikely the bars would change their hours of operation on Sundays if the ordinance passes and it affects all license holders.

Sgt. Mike Chimenti of the Thermopolis Police Department said adding on two hours of serving time for restaurants on Sundays would likely not adversely affect the department's ability to police the area.

Councilman Dick Hall said he wanted to see the code get changed to allow Mills the ability to accommodate his guests.

Council sets 24-hour bar nights

Lahoe attended the meeting to ask the council for four nights in the next year for taverns to be open 24 hours.

Lahoe asked for reunion weekend (July 15), Demolition Derby (Aug. 20), Halloween (Oct. 29) and New Year's Eve (Dec. 31) for the bars.

Chimenti said the department worries about having an all-night bar night on Halloween because of the number of children out on the streets during the holiday, but since it falls during the middle of the week this year, he did not expect

it would be a problem.

Budget progress

The council had a short discussion on the progress of the proposed \$2.9 million budget. Mayor Bill Malloy said the council can take a look at the numbers and convey them to town clerk Tracey Van Heule or mayor's assistant Fred Crosby for discussion during the second reading of the budget at the first June meeting.

After the meeting, Crosby said the next iteration of the proposed budget could take into account rising fuel and gas prices in the streets and public works division.

The town has traditionally budgeted \$25,000 for diesel fuel and \$17,000 for fuel, oil and lubricants for its streets department. The town usually buys fuel wholesale, but the price is still based on the market price, which can fluctuate throughout the year.

The budget still has two more readings before it can be finalized. The council plans to vote on second reading for the budget at its June 7 meeting and for third and final reading at its June 21 meeting.

Special day at hardware store



Janelle Davis uses bright colors to paint a rock during Kiddie Kollege Day at Thermopolis Hardware last week. The youngsters also learned how to plant flowers and handle other spring activities. — Joe Sova photo