

Planning board sends request to commission

by Cindy Glasson

The Hot Springs County Planning Commission heard a request from the South Thermopolis Water and Sewer District for a land use change from agricultural to institutional for a series of buried water tanks.

The 1.12 acres is located on Coyote Run, south of Thermopolis. There is also an additional 0.8 acres for a water system connection station. The parcels are approximately a mile apart.

No written or oral comments had been received at the start of the public meeting Dec. 17, and there were no members of the public at the meeting

to make comment.

Planning commission chairman Heath Overfield recused himself from participating in the discussion regarding the land use change as well as voting since his engineering company is heading the project.

The District is in the process of upgrading and extending its water system south of Thermopolis. Two facilities, a series of buried water tanks on Coyote Run and a valve/connection building near Lane 3, are proposed for construction in 2015 that would be essential elements of that water system.

The tank site on Coyote Run would

contain three underground tanks in series, each tank measuring 12 feet by 80 feet. The tanks would be constructed of fiberglass.

The Lane 3 site would contain a 12-foot by 20-foot (240 sq. ft.) cinder block building, contained within a 45 foot by 80 foot fenced area.

The commission voted to send the items on to the county commissioners with a "do pass" recommendation with the following three conditions:

Parking and driveway areas shall be surfaced in gravel or a similar material to reduce dust.

Exterior lighting shall be limited

to one fixture near the building entrance, shielded and downcast, and this fixture shall not be placed on a timer or light sensor. If additional exterior lighting is proposed for either site in the future, a lighting plan shall first be submitted for the review and approval of the Land Use Planning Commission. This lighting plan shall provide for illumination while minimizing the number, direction, and intensity of light fixtures when viewed from off-site.

A Weed Management Plan shall be submitted for each site, for the review and approval of staff.



Sneaking up on Santa Claus

Elementary school students do a creeping motion while they describe sneaking up on Santa while performing the song "I saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus." Front row: Claire Simpson, Tristan Stehlin, John Baker, Charlee Oliver, middle row: Kanyon Gerber, Pinager Anderson, Bethany Duncan, back row: Aiden Sanders, Ethan Music and Samantha O'Brien.

- Zachary White photo

School board elects officers

by Cindy Glasson

Hot Springs County School District #1 Board of Directors elected new officers for the year at their meeting last Thursday.

Tobi Johansen was elected chairman of the board and will be backed up by Melissa Johnson as vice chairman. Clay VanAntwerp was elected clerk and Nicole Weyer will serve as treasurer.

The board agreed to keep their meeting dates on the third Thursday of each month with two exceptions.

The July meeting will be on the third Wednesday as stated by statute to correspond with the end of the fiscal year. The November meeting will be the second Thursday so as not to conflict with the Wyoming School Board Association meeting.

Director of food service, Cindy Wallingford, reported to the board she had recently had a state review, which found just a few minor issues. Wallingford indicated those issues have already been addressed.

The reviewers from the state felt there was a good atmosphere in the lunch rooms and said they thought the food was good.

They interviewed some of the students during their visit and the students all said they liked the lunches they were getting.

She is hoping food costs are going to go down for the next few months as there are plenty of commodities and main dishes on hand.

One reason food costs have been higher is the number of student meals being served have gone up considerably. Wallingford said they have fed nearly 2,000 more meals from August to November this year than were served during the same period of 2013.

The board also discussed a maintenance staffing recommendation.

They will be moving one of the bus drivers over to the high school for a part-time custodial position.

This will enable them to reduce costs for both summer work and with the substitute custodians they have who come in on the weekends to clean after games and school activities.

The move will take some of the pressure off maintenance supervisor Jere Apland as well with the security changes that will be coming up in the next several months.

With all the changes required, Apland will need to concentrate on the security issues so the move will free him from some of the maintenance and custodial duties.

Local health officials say get the flu shot

by Zachary White

Though only one person has been diagnosed with the flu in Hot Springs County, flu season is just starting.

Sheila Lutz, the infection prevention nurse at Hot Springs County Memorial Hospital, said she has seen flu season go as late as April.

And even though the flu can be dangerous every year, health officials still say people need to take it seriously.

"You can be home and sick and not know you have the flu," Lutz said.

The chief flu strain this year is H3N2, a strain of the Type A Influenza virus.

The Wyoming Department of Health has received reports of influenza from 15 counties around the state; the majority of which were Type A Influenza viruses.

Health officials across the board agree that the best way to prevent the flu is to get the seasonal flu shot.

The CDC says 91% of cases nationwide have also been the H3N2 strain, which is the most severe and potentially deadly strain.

However, the vaccine has been effective in only 48% of the Type A cases.

Dr. Travis Bomengen, of Red Rock Family Practice, said that even though the vaccine isn't as effective, it's still the best way to prevent severe sickness.

He said in the worse case scenario people can be hospitalized or can even die, and the best way to prevent that is getting the flu shot.

Although health officials say vaccination is the best way to prevent getting the flu, risks can be reduced by washing hands regularly with soap and water or, if need be, an alcohol-based hand rub.

In addition, cough into your elbow instead of your hands and avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth because germs are spread that way. Also avoid close contact with sick people.

"Lots of times you can pass the flu on to someone else before you start to show symptoms," Lutz said.

Adults are also advised to make sure their children are taking steps to avoid getting the flu.

"People with kids, I always

tell them to (have their children) wash their hands when they get home," Lutz said.

Bomengen said it's also a good idea to avoid sharing food, cups or utensils with others during flu season.

Flu symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue.

One of the biggest myths about the flu is a person can get the flu from a flu vaccine.

In reality, the flu shot contains killed viruses, and the nasal spray treatment has a weakened virus that cannot cause illness.

It takes the body approximately two weeks to build up protection after receiving the vaccination.

According to the CDC, in past seasons when this strain of the flu has been prominent, higher overall and age-specific hospitalization rates and more mortality have been observed, especially among older people, very young children and persons with certain chronic medical conditions compared with seasons during which other strains have dominated.

