

LOCAL
**Sandy Fire
grows**
See A2

LOCAL
**Rendezvous
Preview insert**



Pinedale Roundup

Newspaper of the Upper Green River Valley, Est. 1904

JULY 1, 2022

One Dollar

Sublette County Health's hospital a reality

*USDA approves SCHD's
\$32-million loan application*

By Robert Galbreath
rgalbreath@pinedaleroundup.com

PINEDALE – The century-long quest for a hospital in Sublette County is finally a reality. On June 28, the U.S. Department of Agriculture approved a \$32-million loan application submitted by the Sublette County Hospital District to construct a new critical access hospital.

The USDA's historical decision gives the SCHD the green light to break ground on its proposed 70,000-square-foot hospital facility in Pinedale. In addition to inpatient and emergency room care, the critical access hospital will provide services not previously available in Sublette County, including blood transfusions, chemotherapy, CT scans and mammograms, said Kari DeWitt, SCHD public relations director, in a press release.

Good news

"In the past, we have lacked basic services in Sublette County," said Dave Doorn, SCHD administrator, in the release. "Having a critical access hospital will greatly increase care and will be a game changer for our community."

See 'SCHD' on page A6



COURTESY DAVIS ARCHITECTS INC.

The architect's rendering of the entrance to the new Sublette Center.

Brazen black bear tore up tents, coolers

By Joy Ufford
jufford@pinedaleroundup.com

SUBLETTE COUNTY – A cinnamon-colored black bear spent a week rampaging through hikers' backcountry camps and the Green River Lakes campground, even as people tried to eat their lunches.

After hearing a report on June 21 about a hiking group's encounter several days earlier with the 3- to 4-year-old male bear, about 5 miles from the Green River Lakes trailhead, Wyoming Game and Fish large carnivore biologist Clint Atkinson.

The group said the bear had first ripped up their tent and sleeping bags while they were gone and when they returned for lunch, the bear came back and stole their food bag. Atkinson said he hiked in with dogs to try and find the food-conditioned bear without luck, so he warned campers to properly store their food and other "attractants" that include anything with an aroma.

Unafraid

On Thursday, June 23, the same bear appeared at the Green River Lakes campground and faced off a large group of at least 15 people who watched him score their coolers of human foods, according to Atkinson.

"This is a great example as to what happens when people recreating and camping in bear country fail to maintain clean camps," he said on Tuesday. "Bears are very food intelligent animals and once they gain access to a human food reward, they will not stop seeking more. Bears can then become very bold toward people and start exhibiting dangerous behaviors."

The bear spent the rest of the day roaming "both at the campground and in the backcountry, accessing other human

See 'BEAR' on page A7

Ag rezone requests propose development around Daniel

Commercial, residential uses sought for both on U.S. Highway 191

By Joy Ufford
jufford@pinedaleroundup.com

SUBLETTE COUNTY – Two separate requests, both at high intersections between Forty Rod and Daniel, ask county commissioners to rezone about 328 agricultural acres for commercial, light industrial and rural/multifamily residential uses.

Both requests are filed with the Sublette County Planning Office.

The larger of the two, submitted by Jason and Melinda Moyes of Pinedale, asks Sublette County commissioners to reclassify 299 acres zoned A-1 at the junction of Pape Road-Forty Rod Road and Highway 1891/91, several miles north of Daniel.

The second, across from the Daniel Junction Store where Highway 189 splits to the south, seeks a rezone of 28.47 A-1 acres for a mixture of light industrial, highway commercial and multi-family residential zoning. It is submitted by Danielle Dover and the Dorothy Noble Trust of April 19, 1991, which is shown as the owner.

Neighbors of either development proposal can submit written comments that refer to applicable county regulations for change-of-zoning requests to county planner Dennis Fornstrom by July 18 at his office in the Sublette County Courthouse.

Both rezone requests will be reviewed by the Sublette County Planning & Zoning Board at its public meeting on Thursday, July 21, at 6 p.m. in the Commissioners Meeting Room, 21 S. Tyler Ave., Pinedale.

The board's recommendations then go to Sublette County Commissioners for a public hearing and vote on Tuesday, Aug. 2, at 1 p.m. in the Commissioners Meeting Room.

Pape-Forty Rod

The Moyes' request is to rezone the large parcel land,

adjacent to longtime family ranches, into Rural Residential parcels of 5 and 10 acres, according to the application. Along with that come other proposed commercial uses.

The property includes pieces on both sides of Pape Road and a sliver of highway frontage across the highway at Forty Rod Road. Notices were sent to 55 different owners of 72 parcels.

"The purpose of this rezone is to develop this property into a commercial subdivision," the Moyes' application says. "This proposed subdivision would contain approximately six (I-L) Light Industrial zoned lots, two (CH-1) Highway Commercial zoned lots and one (MFR) Multi Family Residential zoned lot."

Development standards require at least 2 acres for Light Industrial, 2 acres for Highway Commercial and for 1 acre Multiple Family Residential.

If commissioners approve the requested rezone, the Moyes would apply for "the proposed subdivision."

County records show the Moyes also own the Hoback Rim Station and 569 agricultural acres across the highway, and a half-dozen vacant commercial and residential parcels in the Bloomfield subdivision that border Ehman Lane and Highway 191 on the west edge of Pinedale.

Junction at Daniel

The second change-of-zoning request, from Danielle Dover and the Dorothy Noble Trust of 1991, is for the 28.47-acre parcel that runs along the west side of U.S. Highway 189/191 from the Horse Creek Road intersection around the corner and again south along Highway 189 as it splits off to Daniel.

It seeks "approximately six I-L lots," two CH-1 commercial highway lots and one MFR zoned lot.

Fornstrom asked Wyoming Game and Fish and WYDOT

See 'P&Z' on page A7

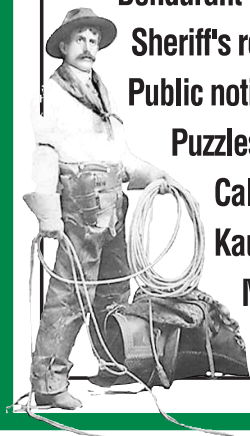


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Official newspaper of Sublette County and the town of Pinedale.

THE ROUNDUP, ROUNDED UP

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COURTESY PHOTO

Longtime Bondurant firefighters Gloria and Richard Thomas spotted this smoke from the Sandy Fire near Monument Ridge after it started on Tuesday afternoon, June 28.

Sandy Fire grows to 64 acres

By Joy Ufford
ufford@pinedaleroundup.com

HOBACK BASIN – Wildfire smoke was spotted in the Cliff Creek drainage on Tuesday afternoon, June 28, and after a storm passed through, the now-named Sandy Fire that started at 15 acres grew to 64 acres by Thursday morning, June 30.

The Sandy Fire is about 6 miles west of Bondurant and on Thursday, “spotted” into Snag Creek in the Bridger-Teton National Forest’s Big Piney Ranger District, according to spokeswoman Mary Cernicek.

The fire began near Sandy Marshall Creek on a steep mountainside partly burned in previous Cliff Creek Fire and was spotting ahead into “continuous fuels,” according to the BTNF.

Its cause is under investigation.

Sublette County Unified Fire and BTNF firefighters initially responded June 28 and on Thursday, a Type 2 handcrew, a helicopter, two engines and 77 people were on the scene with more resources ordered. A helicopter fire crew flew over Tuesday to draw its perimeter and help with suppression.

No trails or roads were closed as of Thursday, June 28, but visitors are advised to use caution. The Sandy Marshall Road, which connects at the Cliff Creek trailhead and goes around Monument Ridge to the Clarks Draw trailhead, is a well used route for camping, riding, biking and sightseeing. Permitted livestock are turned out on BTNF summer grazing allotments.

For updates on the Sandy Fire, visit www.Tetonfires.com or call the Big Piney Ranger District at 307-276-5800.



Weekly Weather Forecast

Pinedale, Wyoming • July 1 - July 6

Today

Sunrise: 5:44 a.m. **Sunset:** 9:02 p.m.

High: **74°** Low: **42°**

RealFeel® 81° 41°

Day: An afternoon thundershower

Night: Partly cloudy.



Saturday

High: **75°**

Low: **46°**

A t-storm around in the p.m.



Sunday

High: **80°**

Low: **49°**

A t-storm around in the p.m.



Monday

High: **78°**

Low: **42°**

Breezy in the afternoon.



Tuesday

High: **82°**

Low: **45°**

Nice with sunshine



Wednesday

High: **81°**

Low: **42°**

Mostly sunny.



Town passes 2022 rate and fee resolution

By Robert Galbreath
rgalbreath@pinedaleroundup.com

PINEDALE – Pinedale Town Council members gathered at their June 27 regular meeting to consider the 2022 resolution setting rates and fees effective July 1. The resolution contained minor changes to several fees levied by the town for municipal services.

These included a 2-percent increase in fees for hangar leases at the Pinedale Airport. Rates for sewer and water connections will also go up to account for inflation in meter-pit equipment and supplies, allowing the town to recover the cost of installation, said Abram Pearce, director of public works.

Town staff is currently studying sewer rates as part of the Sewer Master Plan. If the town recommends a sewer fee hike, the council will hold multiple meetings permitting the public to comment on any proposal before it would go into effect.

Town staff encouraged the community to check town meeting agendas posted on the town’s website for future discussions on sewer

fees. The meetings will also be advertised, said Mayor Matt Murdock.

In other town news

The town’s Transportation Master Plan and pedestrian safety study went out to bid, with Jorgensen receiving the award, Pearce reported. Town staff and members of Jorgensen’s intend to meet to establish the scope of both projects before bringing a draft to the council, Pearce added.

Plans are underway for HK Contractors to make minor asphalt repairs on a portion of the runway at the Pinedale Airport, Pearce told councilmembers. The repair was expected to be finished in mid-July, he said.

Thirty days after the completion of the asphalt repair, grooving the runway will begin during the night, with completion expected before temperatures begin to drop in late August, Pearce added.

Councilmembers unanimously approved a temporary use permit for the Rocky Mountain Short Takeoff and Landing Series to host an aviation competition at the Pinedale Airport, Aug. 11-14.

Death notice

Barry Guy Gaston

May 11, 1959 - June 24, 2022

Memorial services will be held at a later date this summer in Rawlins.

SUBLETTE COUNTY

Circuit Court report

New charges were filed in Sublette County Circuit Court from June 20 to June 26.

Alisha Bell: Domestic battery, first offense.

Corey A. Johnson: Possession of marijuana, misdemeanor.

Matthew Waggie: Possession of marijuana, misdemeanor.

No fines and sentences were imposed from June 20 to June 26.

New internist on the block

Dr. Hastey joins SCHD with diverse specialties

By Robert Galbreath
rgalbreath@pinedaleroundup.com

MARBLETON – Medicine involves a measure of detective work – unraveling the mystery of the complex human body to discover the root cause of a patient’s distress.

“People’s symptoms are not always what the textbook might say about a specific disease,” said Dr. Rafael Hastey, new doctor of internal medicine at the Sublette County Hospital District. “You have to find those clues. That is part of the excitement of medicine – to find those clues and answers.”

Practitioners of internal medicine focus on adult illnesses, particularly patients with multiple chronic medical conditions, Hastey said. Some internists specialize in specific areas, like cardiology. Dr. Hastey practices general internal medicine and can treat people suffering from a wide variety of ailments, from diabetes and high blood pressure to autoimmune diseases.

The diversity of Dr. Hastey’s patients highlighted the importance of good detecting skills. A key to detection is communicating with patients, building a sense of rapport and trust to get to the bottom of the problem.

“Most of what we do is based on questions – asking the right questions and asking questions in the right way, because people interpret questions differently,” Hastey said. “(Laboratory) tests can help confirm things, but a good chunk of what we’ll find in terms of answers is asking the right questions.”

Getting to know patients and interacting with them is an aspect of the job Hastey particularly enjoys.

“Once you learn more about people, you can help them better in terms of meeting them where they are and knowing what works for them as you help them through their medical problems,” he said.

Hastey’s primary practice principles are “to give practical and accurate medical advice” to improve a patient’s quality of life while “respecting patients’ personal autonomy.”

Hastey is eager to apply these principals to help people across Sublette County. So he dove dove right in. He is already seeing patients at both the Pinedale and Marbleton-Big Piney clinics.

“I look forward to having longer, steady



COURTESY PHOTO

Dr. Rafael Hastey, a doctor in internal medicine, joined the team of providers at the Pinedale and Marbleton-Big Piney clinics this spring.

relationships with patients in terms of following their health over time,” he said. “I’ve been very lucky to be around great coworkers and great people already in Sublette County. Everything has been really positive.”

A passion for science and people Science fascinated Dr. Hastey for as long as he can remember. As an undergraduate at the University of Montana, he majored in physics and set his sights on pursuing a medical career.

“I initially thought about doing veterinary medicine, but I wasn’t very good with animals,” he said.

Animals cannot speak to their doctor, a factor that makes human medicine more attractive.

“You can talk to people, which is huge,” he added. “There are so many aspects of science that come together in human medicine. I like to have that pragmatic side of things, as far as being able to help people. I do have great respect for veterinarians, though.”

Hastey enrolled at the University of Virginia

School of Medicine in Charlottesville where he spent the first two years in the classroom, learning the “textbook science” on how the body works.

The next two years of medical school consisted of rotations through different specialties, including work in hospitals and the emergency room.

From the beginning of medical school, Hastey knew he preferred adult primary care and focused on internal medicine. The rotations proved beneficial in helping Hastey pursue a path in general internal medicine, rather than focusing on a single organ as a cardiologist or gastroenterologist.

Upon graduation from medical school, Dr. Hastey began his residency at the University of Wisconsin. Residencies are renowned for brutal shifts and stress.

“People’s lives are on the line and you are tired,” Hastey said. “On top of that, you’re learning how to practice medicine.”

Seeing and helping actual patients in a primary care setting inspired Hastey to stick

with the grueling pace.

Strong mentors, in residency, medical school and college, guided Hastey through the challenging process. Instructors that stood out to Hastey pushed a holistic approach to internal medicine – going beyond the medical angle to include a person’s social background, their day-to-day habits and their ability to pay for medication or travel to appointments.

“Practical things like that often times makes or breaks whether a treatment works,” Hastey said. “I had a few mentors that helped me see that and that was very useful.”

An ounce of prevention

Internists spend significant time treating chronic illnesses and responding to acute problems caused by different diseases. Part of the job involves preventing long-term health issues from happening in the first place.

“I love preventive medicine, because I feel like prevention is underplayed, or almost ignored sometimes, and we only tend to focus on acute issues,” Dr. Hastey said. “There are so many things we can do to prevent illness, especially in younger adults, so they don’t get to that chronic illness stage later on.”

Changing personal habits cannot prevent all disease, Hastey acknowledged, although making different life choices can avert certain chronic conditions.

Developing good practices, including maintaining a healthy diet, regular exercise, getting enough sleep, staying mentally and socially active and avoiding smoking and excess alcohol, all play a role in preventing some chronic illnesses, he added.

Hastey believes in modeling prevention in his own life.

“I try to do healthy things myself, in terms of diet, exercise and sleep,” he said. “If I don’t, I have less credibility as far as telling other people to do those things, plus I can actually speak from experience on things that might work for others.”

One healthy step is to hit the great outdoors. Hastey’s hobbies include bicycling, basketball, downhill skiing and hiking – a perfect fit in a place like Sublette County with endless recreational opportunities.

Hastey thanked his wife for being by his side as he pursued his dream to become a doctor.

“My wife has supported me a lot, especially through medical training, which is pretty stressful,” he said. “Having someone there who is supportive is huge.”

Dr. Hastey plans to make Sublette County home as he builds his practice.

“I really look forward to living here for a long time,” he said. “It’s a really nice community and a gorgeous place.”

Street Talk

By Terry Allen

How do you hope to see the state of our county in 10 years?



I don’t want another Jackson. I’d like it to reflect the old ways as much as possible.

Debbie Buchmann,
Pinedale



It is awesome just the way it is now. I hope it doesn’t change.

Connie Gallegos,
Utah



Slow growth, but smart growth. Manage our growth better than Jackson.

Ronan Harris'
Pinedale



The most important thing is to keep our water safe, and here. Don’t sell it or give it away.

Phylis Stevens,
Pinedale



I just hope our elderly are taken care of.

Taibree Richards,
Pinedale

2022 Spirit of the Meadowlark Awards

Sublette WCF honors Jill and Don Tegeler

By Jericca Becken
Wyoming Community Foundation

PINEDALE – For Wyomingites, the song of the meadowlark is a welcome sign of spring. It offers us hope for the future, and a renewed sense of optimism. Part of what makes this song so special is that the meadowlark, unlike most other birds, sings both while perched and in flight – as though the bird works overtime to spread hope and joy.

The same could be said of Jill and Don Tegeler of Pinedale, who received the Spirit of the Meadowlark Award on June 22. This award is presented annually by the Sublette Local Board of the Wyoming Community Foundation (WYCF) and recognizes individuals in Sublette County who strive to make a difference in their area.

The 2022 award recognized the Tegelers, who moved to Sublette County in 1974, for their tireless work to build and inspire their community.

After Don and Jill bought the Allen Agency insurance and real estate office from Paul and Lillian Allen in Pinedale in 1974, Don decided he wanted another office in Big Piney to serve all of Sublette County. The Big Piney location was opened in 1976 and continues today along with the 12 other Wyoming locations that have been added since. Through Jill with Allen Agency and Don with Tegeler & Associates, Don and Jill were always community minded.

Jill has been active in 2-BETTER-U Homemakers, Pinedale Chamber of Commerce, Pinedale Council of Catholic Women, and Pinedale Food Basket Board (serving for 20 years) and continues to serve on the Food Basket Resource Committee. Jill volunteered her time weekly at the Retirement Center and for years took one or two ladies to church on Sunday with her family. Jill, with the help of Don



COURTESY PHOTOS

Jill Tegeler, far right, accepts her Spirit of the Meadowlark award from WYCF Sublette Local Board Chair Tara Bolgiano and statewide WYCF Board Member, Roger McMannis.

and the coworkers at Allen Agency Real Estate, sponsored and ran the Rendezvous Ramble, donating any monies earned to a local charity.

Main Street that he felt could add value to the community. He consulted with Jill and, with the help of several community members and his granddaughters, turned the lot into a park and donated it to the Town of Pinedale for their use.

“We are thrilled to recognize Jill and Don’s countless contributions to our community and to the state,” said Tara Bolgiano, chair of the Sublette Local Board.

The Sublette Local Board is an affiliate of the Wyoming Community Foundation, which works to connect people across the state with causes that matter.

Through the support of donors, the local board has made over \$1.2 million in grants since its inception in 2005, supporting over 50 local nonprofits. WYCF has granted over \$100 million across all 23 Wyoming counties.

WYCF offers donors a variety of options for giving, providing expert guidance in fund creation and estate planning. WYCF also supports Wyoming nonprofits through grant making and organizational development, helping them build their professional capacity and establish their own endowments to ensure long-term security. This work would not be possible without the support of generous people like Jill and Don.

“The Wyoming Community Foundation believes in making Wyoming better by giving back,” says Roger McMannis, Marbleton resident and current member of the statewide WYCF board. “The Tegelers truly embody everything that the Wyoming Community Foundation stands for. They inspire each of us through their continued dedication to our Wyoming community.”

Just like the meadowlark, Jill will no doubt keep working hard to help Sublette County flourish, offering hope and inspiration to us all, while Don watches over her and the community he so loved.



Ken Konicek, former Tegeler & Associates employee and current WYCF Sublette Local Board member, shares fond memories of Jill and Don Tegeler alongside Sublette Local Board Chair Tara Bolgiano.



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COMMENTARY

Presidents are people too



LOCAL COMMENTARY
TRENA EIDEN

James Madison was our smallest president at only 5 feet, 4 inches – 2 ½ inches taller than me. I'll bet he hated having to use a stool to see over the podium. I can relate. When I walk up to a hotel counter and my chin barely skims the surface, I always want to say, "Hi, I'm 3 years old!" President Madison barely weighed 100 pounds, which brings to mind our wiry, mountain-climbing daughter. In college, she had guy friends who were soccer players. When her aunt asked if she ever went out with them, she grimaced, "I could never date a boy who weighs less than me."

We've had presidents who've made us proud and some we wish we could forget, such as Chester Arthur, who was a fancy sort, ordering in daily flowers and owning 80 pairs of pants. His staff, I'm guessing behind his back, called him, "Elegant Arthur." He redecorated the White House with money he gained by selling 24 wagonloads of historical artifacts, including a pair of Abe Lincoln's pants. That was odd, being such a pants man himself.

Harry Truman was the opposite and paid for all of his own travel and food expenses. He didn't use Secret Service detail after retiring and declined corporate positions at high salaries saying, "You don't want me, you want the office of the President and that belongs to the American people and it's not for sale."

I beg to differ. It's for sale today.

When John Adams was president and running for reelection, Thomas Jefferson, his vice president, was

running against him. Eww boy, that wasn't good. Adams called Jefferson "a mean-spirited, low-lived fellow" and in an ad, warned of the consequences of a potential Jefferson presidency by saying, "Murder, robbery, rape, adultery, and incest will be openly taught and practiced, the air will be rent with the cries of the distressed, the soil will be soaked with blood and the nation black with crimes." Well, gee John, tell us how you really feel. Jefferson won the election and went on to invent the swivel chair, probably for quick turns to see who was stabbing him in the back.

During his campaign, William Henry Harrison's opposition cast him as someone who'd rather, "sit in his log cabin drinking hard cider." Soon-to-be President Harrison happily made spiked lemonade and handed it out in whiskey bottles shaped like log cabins. In your face, adversaries.

Interestingly enough, Ulysses S. Grant, the first four-star general who saw his share of battles, couldn't stand the sight of blood, but it's not as weird as it seems. Our son the doctor can't do needles. If he's forced to give blood and poked more than once, over he goes, passed out into the soup. Does he give blood often? No, no he does not.

Andrew Johnson had a rough childhood after his father died. His mother sent him and his brother out to a tailor as indentured servants. Two years later the boys ran away, but a few things were retained as useful in Andrew's brain and while president, he made all of his own suits.

Benjamin Harrison was the first to have electricity in the White House, but fearfully refused to touch the light switches so he often went to bed with all the lights on. Well heck, that's why Gar never turns off a light; he's afraid of electricity.

Martin Van Buren's wife, Hannah, died 18 years before he became president. He never remarried, but he also never mentioned her name a single time in his nearly 800-page autobiography. Maybe like Gar, his thinking was clearly, "Once of that was enough" and "I escaped with most of my mind intact."

John Tyler, born in 1790, had 15 children, one being born when he was 60 years old and the last when he was 75. I'd go into how this happened, but suffice to say, the man could obviously recite the birds and bees narrative really well.

Woodrow Wilson's wedding was catered by Chef Boyardee, the canned pasta guy, though at the time his name was Hector Boiardi, who was an Italian immigrant. I get it – open and serve is my favorite recipe.

Twenty-six-year-old Grover Cleveland legally avoided the civil war draft by paying a Polish immigrant (who thankfully survived) \$150 to go in his stead. That's \$4,300 in today's wages. \$4300!!!! to die for somebody he didn't even know! Honest, I'm really, truly not racist, but maybe, just maybe, that's what started all those Polish jokes.

Trena Eiden trena@hotm.com

Schmid announces challenge to Sommers for HD Seat 20

Mike Schmid of La Barge, Wyo., has thrown his hat in the ring challenging long-term House member Albert Sommers.

Schmid is the founder, president and CEO of SOS Well Services, LLC. Mike has over 40 years of experience in oilfield services, including managing roustabout crews, constructing well field roads and drill pads, and managing trucks, equipment and hundreds of employees.

"I have considered running for office over the years; however, the timing wasn't right. Encouragement from friends, neighbors, and even family, I felt now is the right time, especially with our state's core conservative values slipping away," said Schmid.

Schmid was raised in the small town of Daniel, Wyo., graduating from Pinedale High School and immediately finding work and an eventual career in the oil & natural gas fields of southwestern Wyoming. He eventually moved to La Barge, to be closer to work.

Giving back to the community and state has always been important to Schmid. He has been a member of the Board of Directors for the Wyoming State 4-H Foundation for the past 12 years, while currently serving as a director for the Wyoming Trapping Association representing Area 5 in southwest Wyoming. He is a former LaBarge City councilmember and served as a member of The Wyoming Wildlife Foundation, The Old West Turkey Shoot and The Wyoming Game & Fish Commission. He was the recipient of Field and Stream's Conservation Award and played a significant part in the Dry Piney Wildlife Highway Crossing Project. While serving

on the Game & Fish Commission he was instrumental in forming and serving as the president of the newly formed WYWildlife Fund.

Schmid says, "Sublette and Lincoln

counties have been good to me and my family. The people of this area have been supportive of what we've been able to accomplish, as employees, vendors, cheerleaders and even competitors. I have

learned from them all.

I have the time and passion to commit to this seat as your representative. I will use my years of experience to Restore Conservative Values."



Pinedale Roundup

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SCHD

Continued from 1A

SCHD board chairwoman Tonia Hoffman told the Roundup she was "thrilled to have finally received the news we've long awaited" from the USDA.

"It took a significant amount of time, research and questioning to determine, at least from a personal perspective, that this was the right course of action for our county," she said. "I am ready to take the next big steps towards more self-sufficient care for our friends and families."

The USDA's validation of the loan request is the result of years of hard work by the SCHD board, employees and administration along with cooperation by local entities across the county. These efforts culminated in voter approval of a November 2020 ballot initiative to levy an additional 1 mill to establish a special hospital district. Sixty-percent of votes cast favored the initiative.

The USDA's approval comes just in time, allowing the SCHD to lock in favorable interest rates. Ninety percent of the loan, roughly \$29 million, is funded directly through the USDA at a 2.5-percent interest rate. Doom confirmed at a special meeting on June 27. The remaining 10 percent, financed by Stroudwater, comes with a 3.25-percent interest rate.

"Critical access hospital" designation is key to recouping higher reimbursement for services rendered by the SCHD. The Pinedale and Marbleton-Big Piney clinics provide crucial emergency care, yet the SCHD can only bill as a doctors office, explained DeWitt, which drains revenue from the district.

Rep. Albert Sommers highlighted the

potential for a hospital to become an "economic pillar" for the community.

"A critical access hospital optimizes reimbursement rates, which makes financial sense," he said. "Quality health care and nursing home care is essential for the residents of this rural county."

Mike Hunsaker, chief operating officer for the SCHD and its management partner, Star Valley Health, expressed optimism the project will succeed.

"Star Valley formed its first critical access hospital in 2002 when we had only 65 employees," he wrote in the SCHD's release. "We currently employ about 450 people, operate in the black and only need to use tax revenue for capital construction processes. We hope to mentor Sublette County along the same path we have traveled and are excited to see their progress."

Next steps

Layton Construction, the SCHD's construction manager, is standing by to begin the bidding process. The district's owner's representative will provide oversight for the project.

"Earth will move soon and architectural renderings will become reality," said trustee Jamison Ziegler, member of the board's building committee. "We have reached a tremendous milestone in our journey."

The SCHD will host a pre-bid conference in the next several weeks "to get bidding information into the hands of potential subcontractors," said Hoffman.

"We'd love to use local contractors as much as we possibly can," she said.

After the bidding process, the district

intends to go through a second round of value engineering to "trim things to accommodate for inflationary pressures," Hoffman added.

Meanwhile, the SCHD plans to pursue federal health-care infrastructure grant money available through Gov. Mark Gordon's office via the State Land and Investment Board, said Hoffman, to pay for projects like completing surgical suites in the hospital.

New future

The new health-care campus, located atop the hill where the Pinedale Clinic stands, will also include a 50-bed long-term care facility with a 10-bed memory care unit.

In February 2020, the Sublette County Commissioners pledged up to \$20 million to replace the ageing Sublette Center with a new facility. Their intent was to encourage an agreement between the SCHD and Sublette Center to place health care in the county "under one umbrella," said commissioners Joel Bousman and Tom Noble in the release.

"The goal is to improve health care services in our county and allow senior citizens the option to remain in the county for care," Bousman and Noble added.

Dawn Walker, administrator at the Sublette Center, told the Roundup "the future is bright for elder care in Sublette County" following the USDA's decision.

"The Sublette Center is very excited to have solid direction," she said. "Talks of a hospital and its potential impact on the Sublette Center have been going on since 2013. Finally, we have a defined common goal and will work diligently with the hospital district to ensure quality services for the elders of Sublette County."

Higher reimbursement rates charged by a hospital provide an opportunity to expand care across the county, including Big Piney and Marbleton, said SCHD board treasurer Kenda Tanner.

"With a new long-term care facility and the additional services a critical access hospital will provide, Sublette County will finally be able to have the continuum of care our citizens deserve," she added. "This also means we will be on our way to providing 24/7 emergency services in South Sublette County."

Joan Mitchell, former director of the Marbleton Senior Center was "absolutely thrilled" upon hearing news of the USDA's decision, and praised the SCHD board and staff for "moving forward" in the "right way and the right procedures."

"This has been a long time coming and involved endless hours of work," she said. "We're so thankful for the dedication put in by Hospital District, Dave Doom and Kari DeWitt."

The long road to a hospital

On Oct. 15, 1925, the Big Piney Examiner's editor wrote a plea titled, "A Hospital is our Most Essential Need."

Critical patients in Big Piney were forced to cover long distances to receive "the right kind of care" at a hospital, the editor stated nearly 100 years ago.

"The patient must be taken or sent to a neighboring city where a hospital has been established, thus taking the work from the home physician, which requires a larger fee than the ordinary service of a doctor ... thereby making it harder for (the patient) to exist," the editorial continued.

The journey to build a hospital really took off eight years ago with efforts by the Sublette County Rural Health Care District (RHCD), said Dr. David Burnett, SCHD medical director, in the district's release. The SCHD took up the reins when the RHCD dissolved in summer 2021.

Burnett added that the cooperative effort "from all towns, mayors, county commissioners, our state representatives and our citizens" brought "one hundred years of progress and hard work" to fruition.

At the special meeting on June 27, Hunsaker thanked Doom for leading the team, commending him for his "focus and ability to stick with the project."

Trustees Wendy Boman and Dave Bell also thanked SCHD staff, administrators and the community.

"There are so many people, entities and agencies to thank," said Boman. "Additionally, thank you to the good people in Sublette County who have been so supportive in seeing this project through. Finally, onward and upward!"

Bell credited the board and SCHD staff for "pushing the project over the finish line."

"During the long approval process, the board and staff have been hard at work preparing for this moment - laying the groundwork, strengthening our human infrastructure, developing important operating policies and fine-tuning our management objectives," he said.

DeWitt expressed excitement as Sublette County health care takes a significant step into the future.

"This historic project checks so many boxes about what is important to a community - quality of life, job creation, economic development, retention of trained workers and good-paying jobs that will retain young families," she said. "But most of all, it will provide lifesaving care to an area that has lacked these services. As Sublette County looks to the future, we couldn't be happier about where health care is heading."

Church DIRECTORY

Pinedale Community United Church of Christ
 115 S Maybell, Pinedale
 Interim pastoral care: Rev. Randy Belton
 In-person and live on Facebook
 WORSHIP IS 10:00AM, 3 Sundays a month and more!
 Call for Updates: 307-264-0418
 Email Questions: communitychurchpinedale@gmail.com
 Visit the website: pinedalecommunityucc.org
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Pastor Ted York

SUNDAY SERVICE
 Sunday school.....9:45 a.m.
 Morning worship 11 a.m.

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OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Bible study 7:45 a.m.
 Sunday Service.....9 a.m.

Pastor Kevin Rose
 307-367-2612
 512 N. Tyler, Pinedale

Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church
 112 S. Sublette Ave

Mass Schedule

Saturday: 5:30 p.m.	Monday: 9 a.m. at Church
Sunday: 8 a.m.	Tuesday: 5:30 p.m. at Church
Holy Day of Obligation: 7 a.m. & 7 p.m.	Wednesday-Friday: 7 a.m. at Church

"Come to Me all who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest."
 -Jesus Christ

Pinedale Bible Church

Sunday School Service
 9 a.m. to 10 a.m.

Sunday Worship Service
 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Livestream of worship service
 10:30 a.m.

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 Sunday School is available for children.

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Director of Quality - RN

This is a full-time, Monday through Friday day shift position

Requirements

- Wyoming RN license with a BSN/Masters is preferred.
- 10 years experience along with Joint Commission experience.
- Must demonstrate strong leadership and interpersonal skills
- Proven ability to mitigate risk in healthcare

Job Duties

- Performance Improvement in all patient settings, safety and clinical outcomes
- Oversee Infection Control, Employee Health and Quality Programs
- Perform root analysis and promote evidence-based practices
- Assure development of policy, procedure, and education for staff impacting these outcome

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