

LOCAL

Jan. 1 driver gets sentencing date

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LOCAL

Update on hospital's USDA loan

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OUTDOORS

Thriving Surly Pika

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Pinedale Roundup

Newspaper of the Upper Green River Valley, Est. 1904

JULY 23, 2021

One Dollar

Public Health building to be demolished

By Robert Galbreath

rgalbreath@pinedaleroundup.com

PINEDALE – A split vote by the Board of County Commissioners sealed the Sublette County Public Health building's fate on Tuesday, July 20.

Commissioner Tom Noble moved to reaffirm the previous board's action deeding the clinic property to the Sublette County Hospital District and expanded the motion to include the Public Health building.

The motion will allow the hospital district to demolish the Public Health building and begin construction on the proposed critical

access hospital and long-term care facility.

The motion passed by a slim 3-2 margin, with Noble, chairman Joel Bousman and commissioner Sam White voting affirmative and commissioners Doug Vickrey and Dave Stephens voting "nay."

The motion also affected the Sublette County Veteran Service Office and Sanitarian. Bousman stated relocating the Veteran Service Office would involve minimal effort and Tuesday's discussion revolved primarily around Sublette County Public Health's fate.

Bousman stressed the need to revisit the critical access hospital project and agreements made between entities due to "major changes"

in his board's membership following the 2020 election.

Tonia Hoffman, hospital board chairwoman, and Dave Doorn, the district's administrative director, appeared before the commissioners with the hospital's lead architect on Tuesday.

J.D. Dreyer, with Davis Partnership Architects, presented floor plans and virtual building models to explain the decision to remove the Public Health building. The end goal is to place Public Health in space now occupied by the emergency room at the Pinedale Clinic, Dreyer said.

In the meantime, every attempt was made

See 'BUILDING' on page A4



COURTESY DAVIS PARTNERSHIP ARCHITECTS

A rendering of the entrance to the proposed critical access hospital and long-term care facility without the Sublette County Public Health building.

A fabulous float



BRADY OLTMANS PHOTO

Volunteers help lasso all of the rubber ducks from Pine Creek following the annual Rubber Duck Race as part of the Wind River Mountain Festival on July 17. Organizers said over 1,000 ducks were sold and floated the creek, which was more ducks on a lower water level compared to last year.

County adopts balanced budget

By Brady Oltmans

boltmans@pinedaleroundup.com

PINEDALE – Workshops, public comment, countless input and a few final statements precluded the eventual vote that sealed the Sublette County Fiscal Year 2022 budget at the July 20 commissioners' meeting.

This budget, which long forecasted a downturn due to declining revenue, eventually reached a slight drop compared to the previous year. In total, the budget the county treasurer's office tabulated was \$181,192,985, down from \$186,038,407 the previous year – that met the 12 mil balanced budget and without dipping into county savings.

The budget request for Fiscal Year 22 was \$42,690,482.68 – a drop from final appropriations from last year at \$50,758,910. That came with a 26.4-percent

drop in revenue and amid gloomy forecasts that predicted a possible dip into savings.

Some items slated for cuts were kept in because of federal relief dollars and grants.

According to a pre-written budget message shared at the July 19 public meeting, there remain about \$900,000 of CARES Act funds available, with an addition \$900,000 coming from the American Rescue Plan. Those funds were not included as anticipated revenue.

"Almost every department and entity made significant cuts in their FY22 request along with, leaving budgeted money not spent to carry over for FY22," the message stated.

Department heads were previously instructed to tabulate their budget requests with cuts in mind and the commissioners passed a motion stating no hires would be made without first getting approval from

See 'BUDGET' on page A12

Sublette approves exemption requests

Shortfalls convince commissioners in final vote

By Brady Oltmans

boltmans@pinedaleroundup.com

PINEDALE – Once more, Sublette County Treasurer Emily Paravicini approached the Sublette County Board of Commissioners on July 20. She arrived with fresh fiscal numbers showing the local impacts of Senate File 60 and what the board's decision on an exemption from monthly ad valorem payments.

Two weeks after commissioner Tom Noble said he'd like to take a closer look at the numbers, after commissioner Doug Vickrey voiced his apprehension to granting exemptions and after commissioner Sam White sat through yet another discussion he started unsympathetic to, they all voted in favor by the time Paravicini was done.

She laid out numbers in front of board, showing the actual financial impacts of not granting an exemption from monthly ad valorem tax payments. She said she first

did the spreadsheet with 2020 numbers and said the shortfall would be \$16 million with the exemption. The shortfall without the exemption would be closer to \$26 million.

Then, Paravicini got the information for 2021's anticipated numbers in to tabulate a more current comparison. Granting exemptions under that fiscal year would have resulted in a budget shortfall of \$10 million – compared to \$18 million if they granted no exemptions at all. Those were total numbers, Sublette County, specifically, would see a \$1.5-million shortfall allowing exemptions, compared to \$2.8 million if the board elected to not grant exemptions.

"We're only a small piece of the pie, we're 16 percent of what we collect," Paravicini said. "So, the ones that it's really going to hit are, of course, the schools."

She explained that Sublette County School District 1's budget shortfall would be just over \$6 million if the commissioners elected to not seek exemptions. With exemptions, that shortfall is closer to \$4 million.

Commissioner Dave Stephens asked how it would affect Sublette County School District 9. Paravicini said, with an exemption, that

district's shortfall would be \$297,000 – with no exemption it is a \$1.6-million shortfall.

Exemptions will help bridge the short-term gap, according to numbers presented. But Senate File 60 conditions, and PureWest (aka UP Energy, aka Ultra) not applying for an exemption, will cost the county a \$2.5-million shortfall, based on Paravicini's calculations. In anticipation of the shortfall, an additional \$1 million was placed in the shortfall reserve county.

More than likely, this is a fix for this year and the Wyoming State Legislature will make changes to the tax structure when it convenes in early 2022, Paravicini said. Commissioner Sam White said it would make sense to change the sunset provision from three years to one, which Paravicini agreed. Changing that sunset to a year would also allow producers freedom if a new tax structure benefits them more than an exemption.

"We didn't think it was going to get worse one year ago when they did House Bill 159," said Paravicini, "then when Senate File 60 passed, it was worse. For all the county."

Commission chair Joel Bousman said he'd suggest a task force to Gov. Mark Gordon

with the sole focus of looking at simplifying the energy tax code. He said that would reduce NOVCs and audits significantly.

White said he was against the exemption the whole way going in but after hearing those numbers he'd support granting the exemption on the condition of a one-year sunset date.

Deputy county attorney Clayton Melinkovich suggested making that sunset date end at the end of a calendar year, for ease.

The board then brought up a motion to approve the eight applicants (Huntington Energy LLC withdrew its application) with the change in a sunset date. The motion received a second and passed unanimously.

Other items

• In an update from the county's road and bridge department, Billy Pape said water remains an ongoing issue but they're working through it. Pape also said it looks like another tier could be added to the landfill, which would save the county a significant amount of money in the future.

• The board discussed what was needed to reach local farmers and ranchers to support

See 'EXEMPTIONS' on page A12

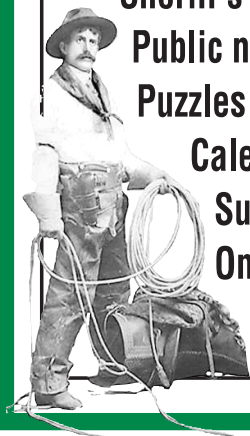


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Official newspaper of Sublette County and the town of Pinedale.

## THE ROUNDUP, ROUNDED UP

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# Sweetwater man caught here held on \$1M bond

By Joy Ufford  
jufford@pinedaleroundup.com

**SUBLETTE COUNTY** – A Green River man was arrested here after Sweetwater County issued an active warrant on allegations he tried to kill one Green River police officer and assaulted two during a June 6 confrontation.

Matthew R. Culley, 33, was arrested without incident on July 15 by Sublette County deputies, according to Sgt. Travis Bingham. Culley was transported back to Sweetwater County where a judge set his bond at \$1 million at his July 16 initial appearance. Culley faces nine felonies involving a firearm, including attempted first-degree murder of one officer and aggravated assault and battery against at least two officers, according to news reports.



Culley SCSO PHOTO

## Jewkes' sentencing set for Aug. 19

By Joy Ufford  
jufford@pinedaleroundup.com

**SUBLETTE COUNTY** – The Jackson woman who pleaded guilty on May 27 to causing the New Year's Day aggravated vehicular homicide of a Pinedale man will be sentenced on Thursday, Aug. 19, in 9th District Court.

Jade S. Jewkes changed her earlier "not guilty" pleas made at her March 25 arraignment without forging a plea agreement between her attorney and Sublette County Attorney Mike Crosson. This is called a "cold plea," leaving the prosecution and defense to argue their respective, recommended sentences to 9th District Judge Marv Tyler.

Jewkes' 12-person, five-day jury trial beginning Sept. 20 is canceled, court records show.

Jewkes was driving through Hoback Canyon on New Year's Day when her vehicle collided almost head-on with a truck driven

in the opposite direction by Shane Deal, of Pinedale. Deal was life-flighted to St. John's Hospital and was to be transferred to Idaho Falls' Eastern Idaho Regional Medical Center. Deal died at the Jackson hospital. Jewkes was treated for injuries to her hands, records show.

Jewkes was arrested and charged with the felony of aggravated homicide by vehicle with an alcohol concentration of .08 percent, which has a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison and a \$10,000 fine. She was also charged with the felony of aggravated homicide by vehicle while incapable of safely driving, which has the same maximum sentence.

She also pleaded guilty to driving under the misdemeanor of influence of alcohol, with a maximum penalty of six months in jail and a \$750 fine.

Crosson requested five hours for Judge Tyler to hear both sides' sentencing arguments. The judge set aside five and a half hours for the Aug. 19 hearing, which starts at 9 a.m.

## Jonah on pace for 'Gold Standard' emissions award

**SUBLETTE COUNTY** – Jonah Energy announced it is scheduled to receive a "Gold Standard" emissions rating from the Oil and Gas Methane Partnership, sponsored by the United Nations. The Denver-based company with a heavy footprint in Sublette County was the first American company to join that partnership when it did so late last year.

"We believe that natural gas will play an important role in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from the global energy value chain, but the industry must be transparent for natural gas to achieve its full potential," Tom Hart, president and

CEO of Jonah Energy, said. "The OGMP 2.0 framework is the leading example of an independent, verifiable and measured performance standard that will help create that transparency."

Hart went on to say that Jonah Energy's involvement is merely one component of the company's "Responsible Produced Gas initiative," which seeks to lower emissions.

Recently, PureWest (formerly known as both UP Energy and Ultra) announced its participation in "responsibly sourced gas," through a partnership with Denver-based Project Canary.



## Weekly Weather Forecast

Pinedale, Wyoming • July 23 - July 28

### Today

**Sunrise:** 6:01 a.m. **Sunset:** 8:50 p.m.

High: **86°** Low: **44°**

RealFeel® 87° 42°

Day: An afternoon thunderstorm.

Night: Mainly clear.



### Saturday

High: **87°**

Low: **49°**

Partly sunny.



### Sunday

High: **86°**

Low: **50°**

Sunny.



### Monday

High: **85°**

Low: **46°**

A p.m. t-storm possible.



### Tuesday

High: **84°**

Low: **49°**

Clouds and t-storms possible.



### Wednesday

High: **83°**

Low: **45°**

A p.m. t-storm possible.



Opening Memorial Weekend for outfitting and lodging. Restaurant will be open to the public July 7th.

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# Popular art show returns to the fair

**SUBLETTE COUNTY** – Big Piney artist and art show director Sharon Schell is pleased to announce the return of the Sublette County Fair Lynn Thomas Memorial Art Show. Because of continued COVID concerns, there will be no reception, quick draw or auction this year. However, fair goers can anticipate and enjoy a vibrant exhibit of new work by 22 local artists.

There will be a special section in the show where artists will have the opportunity to display work pertinent to Sublette County's 100th anniversary celebration.

The show will begin on July 28 at the Sublette County Fairgrounds' Community Hall. The hall will be open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Wednesday July 28, Thursday July 29 and Friday July 30. It will be open on July 31 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at which time artists may pick up their work.

The art show is dedicated to the memory of well-known local artist Lynn Thomas who was a long-standing member of Women Artists of the West, a stalwart supporter of 4-H, a signature member of Mixed Media artists, a member of the Sublette County Artists' Guild and member, president and Grand Wyoming Artist of the Wyoming Artists' Association. She and her husband Joe owned and operated Big Sandy Lodge for 20 years. She passed away from cancer in 2009.

Also memorialized this year is Susan Rose of Victor, Idaho, and Michigan, who lost her battle with cancer earlier this year. Susan was very supportive of the Lynn Thomas show in past years, as well as a distinguished award-winning artist, teacher and revered mentor.

For more information, please contact Sharon Schell at 307-749-7661.

## Garden of Beauty – July 23



COURTESY PHOTO

The colorful array of flowers adorning the large deck and patio at 120 Fox Willow Drive in Pinedale earned the Sage and Snow Garden of Beauty Award this week for gardeners Michele and Bill Doyle. They have created a spectacular display of container gardens, featuring marigolds, petunias, pansies, alyssum, lobelia, verbena, geraniums, daisies and salvia. But even more noteworthy is their inclusion of some unusual flowers for our area: cannas, begonias, fuchsias, dahlias, geraniums and mallow. The flowers are big and beautiful, and Michele attributes the growth to Black Gold potting soil, Miracle-Gro fertilizer and plenty of water. The flowers attract hummingbirds, bees and butterflies to their gardens, much to the enjoyment of the Doyles and their neighbors.

# Hospital district submits USDA loan application

**SUBLETTE COUNTY** – The Sublette County Hospital District has submitted a loan application to the United States Department of Agriculture for \$32 million to fund construction of the critical access hospital residents approved by vote in November. That will be in addition to up to \$20 million the county commissioners have committed to build an adjoining long-term care facility.

"The assumption may be that this application was one large and complicated document that was submitted once completed, but it turns out a USDA application actually has many smaller parts that are submitted individually," new public relations director Kari DeWitt said.

Just a few items the application required

were a new tax identification number, DUNS number, hospital board bylaws, a medical staff listing and the Eide Bailly financial forecast.

"The most recent Eide Bailly forecast shows the decrease in tax revenue that Sublette County is currently experiencing," administrative director Dave Doorn said, "but it wasn't as bad a drop as we had thought and the future debt ratios are well within the USDA guidelines."

The latest Highlands Irrigation Ditch part of the agreement was one of the final pieces needed before submission. Currently, the Highland Ditch runs across the property and will have to be rerouted. The Highlands Irrigation District, hospital district and Town of Pinedale have all signed an agreement on

that project.

The hospital district also fulfilled USDA requirements by hiring a management team – including CEO, CFO and clinical administrator – from Star Valley Health as a management partner. The hospital board selected Dan Ordyna and Mike Hunsaker, both from Star Valley Health, as interim CEO and COO.

"Our board is working diligently to consolidate the many facets of this project, and to keep everything moving in the right direction," hospital board chair Tonia Huffman said in a release. "We are grateful to the employees who are working hard through the transitions taking place, and we are trying to complete the preparatory work necessary to make those transitions as seamless as

possible. We are thrilled to help usher in a new era of health care in Sublette County."

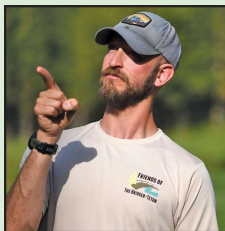
Layton Construction, which built Pinedale Elementary School, has been chosen as the project construction manager. Pending USDA approval, construction is slated to begin in August or September. However, yet another construction discussion was planned at the county commissioners' July 20 meeting with some hopeful to maintain the current Public Health building in construction plans.

The hospital district and Sublette County will begin joint Facebook updates every Tuesday at 1:30 p.m. to keep the public informed on the latest aspects of the project. Questions can be asked during the update or be emailed to DeWitt at kdewitt@sublettehealthcare.com.

# Street Talk

By Terry Allen

The question asked at the Wind River Mountain Festival:  
Why is it important to adventure in our great outdoors?



We live in one of the most beautiful places on the planet and we shouldn't take it for granted, like leaving campfires unattended.

Scott Kosiba, Pinedale



I'm a school teacher and I got tired of hearing about kids not being in the outdoors, so I started working with a foundation to bring fly fishing to kids so they could see how putting in the time pays off.

Matt Mueller, Worland



Being in nature helps to connect oneself with the Earth. You can gain an overwhelming feeling of peace and freedom.

Mariah Nystrom, Pinedale



So you can help us raise money for the PAC with our Rubber Ducky race down Pine Creek, to support our children's aquatic and athletic programming and scholarships.

Kim Miller, Pinedale



I don't know, but you should never hike alone, so adopt me and my friends so we can go with you and find out.

Roscoe, Pinedale

# BUILDING

Continued from 1A

to save the building until the hospital project was finished and Public Health can move into the clinic, Dreyer said.

The floor plan presented by Dreyer indicated the existing Public Health building competed for space with the future hospital's main entrance, lobby area and walk-in emergency entry. The Public Health building overlay part of the emergency department's triage room.

The overlap would prevent an open, clear entrance area to accommodate patients, ambulances and life-flight helicopters.

"There is obviously a time period where (the Public Health building) needs to be moved," said Dreyer. "It's one of the very first things."

An "interim space" would include emergency electrical power for Public Health and refrigeration for vaccines, Dreyer added.

Hoffman affirmed that the district would take responsibility to provide temporary space for Public Health and pay for the relocation.

Doom stated that the former Rural Health Care District started a dialogue to involve Public Health in the process to find a new home over a year ago.

Stephens expressed frustration that the hospital district's plans to demolish the Public Health building so soon in the process was not brought to the commissioners' attention earlier. Tearing down the existing building and requiring the agencies to move would cost taxpayers money regardless of whether the final dollars came from the hospital district or county, Stephens added.

The recent change in plans came after the hospital district hired Layton Construction as a construction manager, Hoffman said.

"We barely hired a construction manager about a month and a half ago," Hoffman added.

Layton determined starting construction with the existing Public Health building still standing was not a viable option, Hoffman stated.

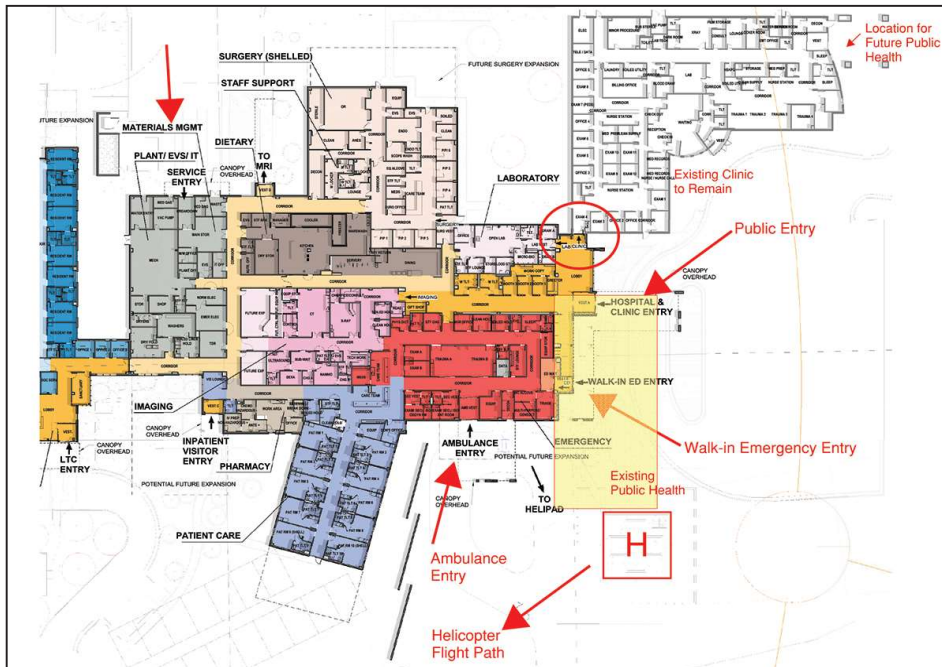
Jamison Ziegler, a trustee on the hospital board, explained that the hospital district considered three separate bids for the construction manager. Each bidder presented a separate timeline and approach to the project.

"The group we selected, Layton Construction, has a very aggressive schedule," Ziegler said. "They want to do this project in 15 months and they want to start immediately. Part of that schedule produces nearly \$10 million in savings between that group and the other two groups that gave us proposals."

Vickrey asked Doom and Hoffman if the loan application to the U.S. Department of Agriculture was approved yet.

Hoffman replied the application was not fully ready yet. The hospital district received additional requests to fill out documentation from the federal agency on Friday, July 16. She believed the forms would be "easy" to fill out, and added the USDA felt optimistic about the loan.

Vickrey voiced opposition to any plan to



COURTESY DAVIS PARTNERSHIP ARCHITECTS

The floor plan for the proposed critical access hospital and long-term care facility presented by Davis Architects on Tuesday. The existing public health building is outlined in light yellow at the bottom. The existing Pinedale Clinic is indicated by white. Orange indicated the lobby/entrance area and red the emergency department.

demolish the Public Health building until the USDA approved the district's loan.

"Slow down and make sure everything is in place," including an acceptable home for Public Health, Vickrey said.

In the meantime, the hospital district needed to "get their collective act together" and find a suitable location for Public Health, Vickrey added.

Dreyer stressed keeping "the foot on the gas" as prices for construction commodities continued to "rise astronomically."

"I think we can do both - we can work smart and quick," Dreyer stated.

Bousman called Public Health's concerns "legitimate," particularly the need to store vaccines, provide anonymous care to patients and be able to move without spending millions.

Noble suggested the county work with Clayton Malinkovich, the deputy county attorney, to include these concerns as written expectations for the hospital district to follow in the deed when the property is transferred.

Noble reminded the commissioners about the progress made in uniting the community behind the critical access hospital project after a series of mediation meetings in January 2020.

Bousman affirmed that the county would not move forward on the transfer of "any of these assets until such time as the loan is approved."

In the meantime, Bousman directed Malenkovich to clarify that the hospital district will pay costs for Public Health's relocation. Bousman also recommended a memorandum of agreement between the district and county to ensure Public Health's concerns are met.

Ideas for a temporary Public Health location were already in the works spaces and a meeting is scheduled next week between the county, Public Health and the hospital district,

Bousman told the Roundup.

At the hospital district's regular meeting on July 21, Mike Hunsaker, chief operating officer for Star Valley Health and the Sublette County Hospital District, said finding space for Public Health was the district's "most pressing issue."

He said the district would do its "due diligence" to "meet the obligations of Public Health" and work with Lee and Layton to establish a demolition timeline.

## Management agreement with Star Valley Health finalized

Tonia Hoffman, chairwoman for the Sublette County Hospital District, signed the final version of the management agreement between the district and Star Valley Health at the district's meeting on Wednesday, July 21.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Office of General Counsel approved the drafted management agreement and authorized the hospital district to endorse the agreement this week, Hoffman announced.

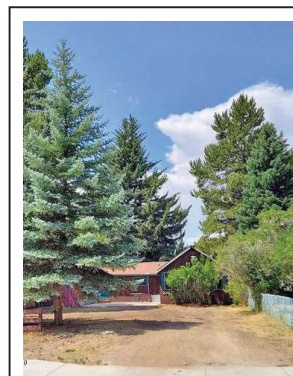
The agreement on Wednesday, binding the two entities formalized Star Valley Health's CEO Daniel Ordyna as the Sublette County's interim CEO and Mike Hunsaker

interim chief operating officer.

Hunsaker told the hospital district board he and the Star Valley management team appreciated the opportunity to work with the hospital district to make the critical access hospital and long-term care facility a reality.

Hunsaker and Ordyna were fully committed to "grow together" as organizations and looked forward getting to know the "great staff" working at the hospital district and Sublette Center.

The board thanked Hunsaker and the Star Valley management team for their hard work over the past months before the agreement became finalized.



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