

COUNTY

Quick response stopped fire

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LOCAL

Big Sandy levels low

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OUTDOORS

Fremont swim

See Section B



Pinedale Roundup

Newspaper of the Upper Green River Valley, Est. 1904

AUGUST 13, 2021

One Dollar

Trial dates set for Peterson, hunting guide

By Joy Ufford

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SUBLETTE COUNTY – A Timberline Lodge hunting guide joined Melanie Peterson, his employer and fellow guide, in pleading not guilty last week to multiple hunting violations.

Eddie L. Patterson, now of Daniel, and Peterson were charged after a four-year investigation into alleged violations of Wyoming Game and Fish regulations.

Patterson is charged with nine misdemeanors – knowingly taking big game without a license, three counts; professional guide or outfitter failing to report a violation, two counts; false statement to obtain a deer license; false statement to obtain an elk license; “miscellaneous violation” and failure to wear fluorescent orange clothing.

Attorney John LaBuda submitted Patterson’s not guilty pleas on Aug. 5. A one-day trial in Sublette County Circuit Court trial is set for Dec. 14.

Timberline Lodge owner and hunting guide Peterson appeared on Aug. 9 before Judge Curt Haws via videoconference; her attorney Joey Darrah spoke for her with not guilty pleas to 19 misdemeanor hunting charges.

She is charged with seven counts of taking game without a license or during a closed season, two counts of taking a furbearing animal without a license and two counts of guiding without a professional license. As a guide or outfitter, Peterson is also charged with eight counts of failing to report the violations, according to court records.

Patterson is listed on the Timberline Lodge’s website as a “seasoned guide and outfitter.”

She is also known for winning the title of Extreme Huntress 2018 in an international women’s competition that tests outdoor skills, fitness and marksmanship.

Patterson’s one-day trial is set for Jan. 11, 2022.

Maximum penalties for nearly every charge the two face include jail time, fines and suspension of hunting privileges, records show.

Patterson charges

As a Timberline Lodge hunting guide, Patterson allegedly took a buck antelope illegally on Sept. 26, 2016, a bull elk on Oct. 19, 2018, and a bull moose on Oct. 20, 2018.

Patterson allegedly killed the buck antelope that Peterson, who had a license, had shot and injured, records show.

Patterson also allegedly killed a bull elk and “conspired” to tag it with the client’s

elk license, the “miscellaneous” violation, and also allegedly killed a bull moose after the client’s wife, who had a license, shot and injured it.

In his affidavit, Game and Fish investigator Dustin Kirsch said that Patterson, who lived in Springville, Calif., at the time, made a 1,000-yard shot to bring down Peterson’s antelope in 2016; she gave him the shoulder mount at a Las Vegas show. In 2019, investigators seized the shoulder mount from Patterson’s home.

Recreating posted Facebook posts, Messenger conversations, GPS coordinates and cell phone texts were a large part of the investigation, according to the affidavit.

The husband and wife on the bull elk and bull moose hunts in 2018 were interviewed. The husband said he considered reporting Patterson’s kill of it, the affidavit says. **A2**

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Council expedites meeting

By Robert Galbreath

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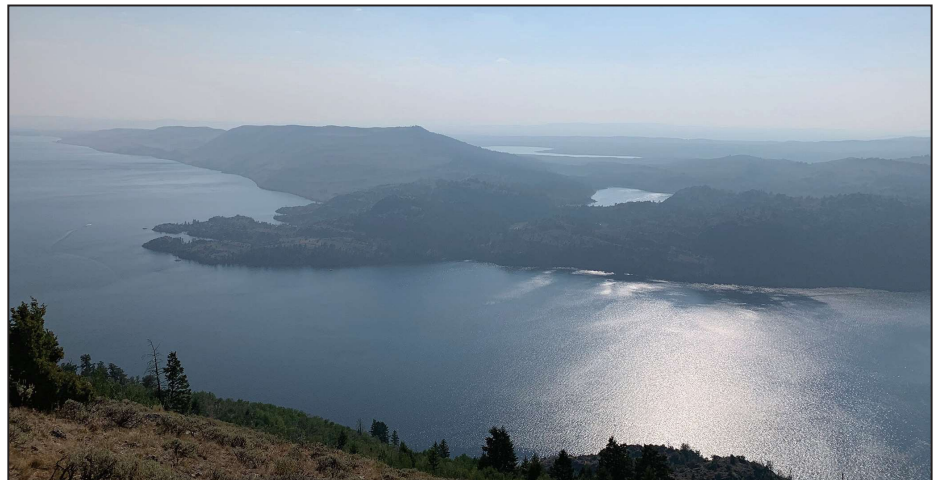
PINEDALE – The Pinedale Town Council worked through a short agenda at its regular Aug. 9 meeting. Mayor Matt Murdock and councilmen Tyler Swafford and Isaac Best constituted a quorum. Councilmembers Judi Boyce and Dean Loftus had excused absences.

Ball fields – final change order

The final contract price for the Dudley Key Sports Complex came in \$10,563,54 under budget. Councilmembers passed a motion to move the additional funds back into town accounts in the final change order on the ball field project.

See ‘COUNCIL’ on page A4

Smoke on the water



BRADY OLTMANS PHOTO

The calm waters of Fremont Lake glisten in the summer sun but the view stretches into cloudiness. Wildfires throughout the West have blanket the Sublette County skyline with smoke, causing limited visibility of its natural wonders.

SCHD shares latest financial forecast

Hospital district optimistic after latest Eide Bailly projections

By Brady Oltmans

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PINEDALE – The Sublette County Hospital District publicly released the latest Eide Bailly report earlier this week. That report serves as an analysis of financial feasibility of the district’s financial viability during and after its transition into a critical access hospital.

Accountants at the nationally recognized firm previously performed a forecast in October 2020.

Dave Doorn, the district’s administrator, said the district didn’t want to use the financial

forecast generated before the election last November in the USDA application in case revenues changed.

“So we had another financial feasibility study done in May 2021 to be sure we were working with the most up-to-date numbers,” Doorn said in a release issued by the district.

The most recent Eide Bailly report showed a 1.65 debt ratio – well within USDA guidelines.

The report stated debt issuance costs and interest payments on borrowed funds would be funded by proceeds from debt and the district’s cash contributions. Upon construction completion – in fiscal year 2023 – debt payments were forecasted to be funded through existing cash reserves. The district will open as a hospital and is forecasted to obtain

critical access hospital status on July 1, 2023 (which would be in fiscal year 2024).

The report outlines a forecasted deficit after the five-year forecast. Kari DeWitt, the hospital district’s public relations director, said the district is putting more emphasis and priority on cash flow and income available for debt service. In 2024 and 2025, depreciation (non-cash) represents \$2.7 million in expenses – that puts cash flow margins at 8.62 percent for 2024 and 6.77 percent for 2025, and income available for debt service is around \$2.3 million.

“Depreciation is a very large non-cash expense in the first several years. We will put more emphasis and priority on cash flow and income available for debt service during that

time,” she said. “It will take a few years to move into a profitable position, including the massive depreciation, but we have the cash flow to manage through the lean times in the beginning.”

Colliers, a national firm the district used to organize its USDA loan application, reviewed the report, as well as Star Valley Health, the district’s management partner.

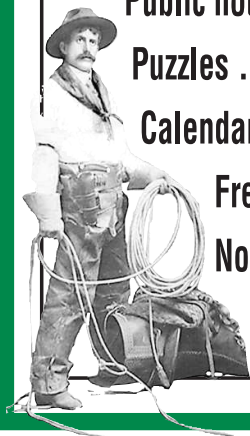
“This most recent report takes into account a variety of factors in the financial forecasting, including a drop in tax revenue balanced by new income generated by the increased reimbursements associated with being a designated critical access hospital,” Chad Turner, Star Valley Health chief financial

See ‘SCHD’ on page A4



THE ROUNDUP, ROUNDED UP

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Local crews confident after containing Soda Lake blaze

By Brady Oltmans

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SUBLETTE COUNTY – Smoke from the various wildfires throughout the American West retained the haze throughout Sublette County skies on July 27 as responders moved towards a reported wildfire in the Big Piney Ranger District of Bridger-Teton National Forest.

Fire chief Shad Cooper couldn't see the smoke of the fire the Sublette County Unified Fire, Sublette County Sheriff's Office and U.S. Forest Service were en route to. At least, not until his truck was essentially right under the billowing gray column. No one had a full picture of what to expect.

When they all arrived, they quickly assessed the situation.

Evan Guzik, the public information officer for the Soda Lake Fire from the U.S. Forest Service, said that first day on a fire is always an evolving situation. And after initial assessments, there were certain risks with this fire.

About 10 days after that initial call, crews had the Soda Lake Fire 100-percent contained to 97 acres. It was the first wildfire in the county this season, which is susceptible to fires by nature. Crews used that experience in battling blazes to keep a hectically anticipated fire season from starting prematurely in Sublette County. However, without a few breaks, crews could have faced a much more serious blaze outside Big Piney.

"There was a lot of risk out there," Guzik said. "With BLM land, oil and gas leases, private land, all that necessitated a strong response."

Air resources, tankers carrying tons of water, arrived early to provide over-the-top aid. At one point, between all agencies, there were five planes in the sky simultaneously. Guzik said he relied a lot on Sublette County Unified Fire and the agencies' years of cooperation during those initial hours.

Fire volunteers and Forest Service rangers all underwent the same basic wildfire training and relied on that to establish a list of priorities as the fire initially grew to 35 acres. Four total SCUF battalions responded with the two Forest Service wildland trucks available.

Wind was blowing in with sub-alpine fir and pine in the area, giving significant fuel resources to the growing blaze.

Crews tried to hold the line until the promise of rain – the first forecasted amount in weeks – arrived. Winds picked up around 10 a.m. on Wednesday, July 28, past 15 miles per hour. Air tankers returned to the skies to suppress fire activity.

"The entire objective there was to slow

down the rapid growth of the fire," SCUF fire warden Cooper said. "Our hope was maintaining the fire and take advantage of the weather pattern predicted."

Sure enough, dark clouds rolled in around noon. Nearly an hour later the rains came.

"The fire started to diminish just like we hoped for," Cooper said.

That aid helped ground crews get close enough to battle the blaze from there. They were able to establish a perimeter, improving containment from 5 to 85 percent in two days.

Initially the fire was extending in a narrow path, driven by wind and spreading towards fuel potential accelerants and the next potentially huge wildfire. Instead, the weather cooperated. Crews steadily improved containment from 85 to 100 percent without additional acres burning.

"Looking back at it, it was really smooth sailing," Guzik said. "But without that initial response it could have gone a different way and if weather didn't go through, it could have been a different story. All around it's been a big success."

Forest Service rangers took control of the operation, but it was truly a cooperative effort. That collaboration has been built up experience and exposure. Some of it, also built upon previous tragedies.

"I think after the Roosevelt Fire we are better prepared from lessons learned and fast notification," sheriff's office Sgt. Travis Bingham said.

Guzik said Forest Service rangers and cooperating agencies will throw the term "slide deck" around. It's a reference to the old Kodak projectors and the system that loads the next image.

"Every fire is different but the more you're there, the more you can pull similarities from the past," he said. "It's the lessons learned through opportunity. Every one is a chance to learn something new."

Battling these fires have taken Cooper away from his efforts to recruit more volunteers. The applications have slowly been coming in, and he's excited about those, but he said he's still seeking an able crop of volunteers to aid in this sort of response.

Local responders will clean the scene near Soda Lake with some pride. No property damage, no loss was reported other than the 97 acres of timber. It's a small victory with an ominous path forward.

"We're definitely worried about the remains of the rest of the season," Cooper said. "We're likely to see future fires whether they are human-caused or natural. It's still likely to occur. It's critically important the public do all they can to prevent fire and not do anything that would start those."



Weekly Weather Forecast Pinedale, Wyoming • August 13 - August 18

Today		
Sunrise: 6:23 a.m.	Sunset: 8:25 p.m.	
High: 86°	Low: 48°	
RealFeel® 90° 46°		
Day: Mostly sunny.		
Night: Mainly clear.		
Saturday	High: 87°	
Mostly sunny.	Low: 48°	
Sunday	High: 89°	
Mostly cloudy.	Low: 48°	
Monday	High: 84°	
Breezy in the afternoon.	Low: 46°	
Tuesday	High: 79°	
A p.m. t-storm possible.	Low: 46°	
Wednesday	High: 71°	
A p.m. t-storm possible.	Low: 39°	

TRIAL

Continued from 1A

husband also said he did not want to ruin his wife's once-in-a-lifetime moose hunt.

His wife shot and injured a moose and while they were tracking it, Peterson gave Patterson her "cheetah gun," the man said. He thought Patterson was only looking at the moose but then the guide shot twice, he told investigators, and the couple never touched it.

Patterson, however, said the man saw the elk, went to buy an elk tag, came back and killed it, the affidavit says.

Resident, non?

Patterson is charged with making false statements to buy resident deer and residential licenses in 2019 when he had not lived in Wyoming long enough to be a resident, according to the charges.

Investigator Kirsch said he traveled past and photographed Patterson's cabins on the

Merna-North Beaver Road in February 2019; the place was not inhabited and boarded up.

On Aug. 1, 2019, Patterson bought the resident licenses, using California as "his home of record," Kirsch wrote, noting that he would not be eligible until Nov. 10, 2019.

Patterson said he spent half his time in Wyoming and half in California; he did not fill the licenses.

Patterson allegedly led a nonresident hunter to the wrong antelope hunt area where he killed a buck; the hunter told Kirsch he did not know they were in the wrong area.

The final violation of not wearing fluorescent orange refers to Patterson guiding another nonresident in an elk hunt and when she shot, she allegedly tucked her orange knit cap into her jacket hood where it was not visible, according to court records.

PUBLIC NOTICE OF INTENT

The Sublette County Hospital District intends to apply for funding of a Critical Access Hospital from USDA Rural Development's Community Facilities programs in the amount of a \$32 million loan and/or grant.

Maryland man busted after speeding stop

By Joy Ufford
jufford@pinedaleroundup.com

SUBLETTE COUNTY – A Maryland man who was stopped for speeding when his VW Jetta came up behind a trooper now faces felony and misdemeanor drug charges.

Not only did Benjamin Stillson, of Bowie, Md. allegedly have a felony amount of liquid THC in his vehicle, he was also charged with taking four LSD tabs into the Sublette County Jail when he was booked, according to court records.

Stillson is also charged with misdemeanor possession of a controlled plant substance in the form of a psilocybin mushroom-infused chocolate bar, records show.

Wyoming Highway Patrol Trooper Tyler Schilling wrote in his affidavit that he was patrolling Highway 189 on July 30 when a white car closed the distance to his patrol vehicle. He activated his rear radar and clocked

Stillson going 78 mph in a 70-mph speed zone, it says.

After they stopped, the trooper said he noticed a vape pen that Stillson allegedly said he used THC in but not where marijuana is illegal.

A deputy and another trooper helped Schilling search the Jetta and logged numerous packages with rolled joints, THC oil cartridges, pot residue and the labeled chocolate bar, the affidavit says. When Stillson was arrested and cuffed, he said he had another THC cartridge in a daypack and it was taken out, it says.

At the jail, Stillson's wallet was emptied and a piece of folded foil was found that had four tabs of LSD, weighing .1 grams; the liquid THC weighed more than .3 grams, the affidavit says.

Stillson was released Aug. 3 after paying the \$2,500 cash bond.

His preliminary hearing in Sublette County Circuit Court is set for Aug. 31.

Over \$12K raised for PAC in July

SUBLETTE COUNTY – Friends of PAC, the local nonprofit that provides support for the Pinedale Aquatic Center, raised over \$12,000 in donations for the PAC in July.

WyoGives Day, a statewide day of giving that resulted in over \$2.2 million donated in the state this year, resulted in a total of \$6,897.44 raised for the PAC. That includes donations and corresponding matches by the Hughes Charitable Foundation and Jack and Carole Nunn.

Friends of PAC also held the Great Pine Creek Duck Derby during the Wind River Mountain Festival. A total of 1,047 ducks were adopted. Symon Carpenter's duck won the race, resulting in a \$200 prize. Katharine Collins and her duck finished second. Dorothy Fornstrom's duck earned the "ugly duckling" award, given to the duck that finishes last. Volunteers joined the fun to help the menacing regatta down low waters in Pine Creek.

Duck sales for the event resulted in more than \$5,500.

Friends of PAC continue to raise funds all year and more information on its activities is available at www.welovepac.com.



COURTESY PHOTO

Pinedale Aquatic Center Secretary JJ Huntley, left, poses with Symon Carpenter, the first-place winner of the annual Great Pine Creek Duck Derby following the race on July 24.

It's time for Heritage Day!

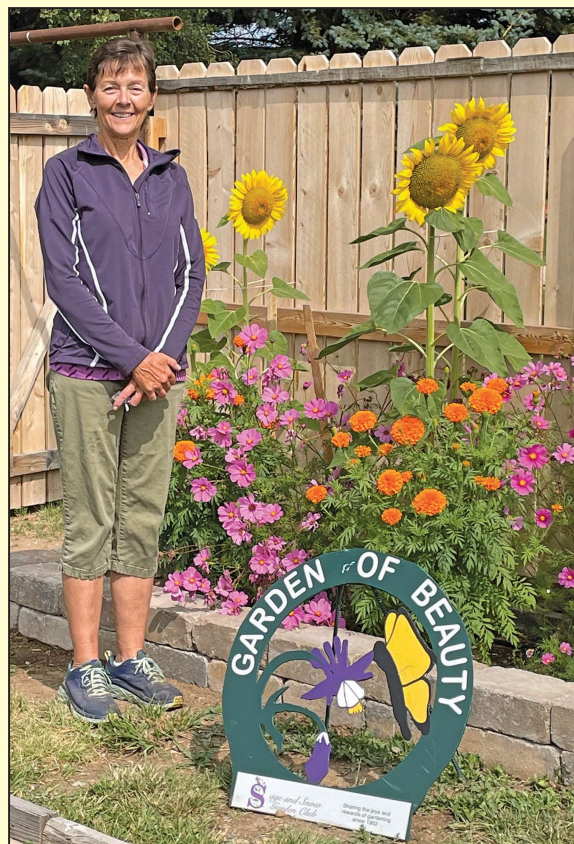
BONDURANT – On Saturday, Aug. 14, the Bondurant Community Club hosts its annual community-wide rummage sale and all-around summer festival.

The event runs from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at St. Hubert the Hunter Episcopal Church. Perennial favorites include the bake sale; art and craft vendors; rummage including clothes, kitchenware, furnishings, books, toys, tools and gear. Join us for lunch, great bargains and lots of fun for all!

Head north on Highway 191 until you get to the Bondurant Church and Library grounds. Crafters are welcome! Call 619-723-6769 or 859-200-3080 to reserve your booth.

Proceeds benefit Bondurant's neighborhood service organization, the Bondurant Community Club. See www.bondurantwyoming.org for more information.

Garden of Beauty – Aug. 13



COURTESY PHOTO

This week, the Sage and Snow Garden Club awarded Laurie and Mike McClain at 7 Faler Lane near Pinedale its coveted Garden of Beauty Award. The McClains enjoy viewing sandhill cranes, moose and deer from their spacious yard. But, they have fenced off a large part of their back yard to create a spectacular vegetable garden with raised beds and a small greenhouse. To encourage bee visitors, Laurie has planted pollinator-friendly sunflowers, cosmos, nasturtiums, marigolds, German chamomile and borage, all of which were started from seed indoors in April. In raised beds, she grows kohlrabi, spinach, radishes, onions, turnips, lettuce, dill, garlic, potatoes, broccoli, cauliflower, peas, carrots, raspberries and asparagus. The greenhouse is overflowing with tomatoes, cucumbers, beans, spaghetti squash, yellow summer squash, peppers and more sunflowers and marigolds. When touring gardens, the Sage and Snow crew is always astounded with the ingenuity and resourcefulness of Sublette County gardeners. A neighbor was going to demolish an old greenhouse and the McClains rescued it, reinforced it and added a new wing. We also noticed Laurie's spaghetti squash, which is not a typical greenhouse plant cultivated by local gardeners. Laurie is also experimenting with growing elderberry in the garden, a popular medicinal shrub that is native to our area but is difficult to cultivate in a garden. The bees love the beautiful white flowers and the birds love the berries. The McClain's garden is a true labor of love and a quiet respite from our busy world

Street Talk

By Terry Allen

Should animal cruelty laws be stronger?



Yes. Animals are often overlooked and not considered. But also, we should consider the laws of the shelters and other refuges that we take our animals to.

*Trisha Margolis,
Bondurant*



I'm not real familiar with the laws. The topic isn't covered a lot in the media except for a sensational story from time to time.

*Dave Heller,
Sylvan Bay*



In many cases I feel they are too lenient, but in others too harsh. Our personal perspective is influenced if we see the cruelty in person, and we tend to want a harsher penalty. We are supposed to do what is best for them. Period.

*Keri Reynolds,
Pinedale*



We have stewardship of all beings on this planet. The idea that we have a privilege to be cruel or kind is erroneous because we are dependent on this planet. The planet would be fine without us.

*Leeza Steindorf,
Portland, Ore.*



The philosophy of a reciprocal existence is resurfacing from native knowledge and is benefiting our extractives conversations. It is helpful to pause and reflect on our relationship with the land and other beings. There is more than the human world.

Madison Traziss, Iowa/Pinedale

Museum honored by True West

PINEDALE – The Museum of the Mountain Man has been selected among the Top 10 Western Museums by True West Magazine.

Pinedale's own museum was actually listed as No. 4 in the list, which was released in True West's September 2021 issue, on newsstands now.

"The Museum of the Mountain Man seems to be a fixture on our honors list," executive

editor Bob Boze Bell said. "But it is well deserved, considering the time and attention it provides to the many great stories of the West. It is truly a top Western museum."

Cody's Buffalo Bill Center of the West was ranked fifth, just behind the Museum of the Mountain Man. Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West in Scottsdale, Ariz., earned top honors from True West.

SCHD

Continued from 1A
officer, said.

The report also predicts the Sublette Center will have an increase in patients using its services.

"While we are licensed for 50 beds, we currently average about 33 filled," Dawn Walker, director of the Sublette Center, said. "With a new facility, more private rooms, access to a hospital and a new memory-care wing, we anticipate filling more beds."

Those changes increase potential future revenue.

The latest Eide Bailly report shows promising indicators but the district said it would continue to evaluate growth and revenue opportunities where they make sense. Additional services would create jobs and bring more revenue to Sublette County by ensuring health-care services in the county and keeping residents from going beyond Sublette borders to seek care.

A release issued stated the district's intentions to seek a variety of grants, including one for an MRI machine and for equipment to fill the surgical wing.

"It's really a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that we are building a critical access hospital at the same moment that the federal government has authorized the American Recovery Plan stimulus funds," DeWitt said. "The first priority listed in the ARPA funding guidelines is increasing access to health care, and our project is a perfect fit for this funding."

Star Valley Health has continued to guide the hospital district in this process. Mike Hunsaker, chief operating officer at Star Valley

Health, said there has now been a critical access hospital in Star Valley for 22 years. That hospital started with around 90 employees and now operates with 450.

"We are operating in the black, in spite of COVID, and we do it on minimal tax revenue," he said.

DeWitt addressed that drop in tax revenue, saying the district anticipated a 30-percent drop. It ended up closer to 26 percent. The district took that as an encouraging sign.

Hunsaker said the forecast is a complicated process, as it includes figures from both the hospital district and the Sublette Center. It's also simply a forecast and conditions will likely change over time as the health-care needs of Sublette County residents change.

"It's taken this much time to release because of the level of detail, but we are pleased with the thoroughness of the final report," he said.

"The report shows it is possible to effectively run a critical access hospital in Sublette County."

Doorn said the district is using the report as a baseline – the most conservative estimate for how the project can succeed.

The Sublette County Hospital District stated its intention to duplicate that success in creating a stable, fiscally conservative hospital district that will rely less on tax revenue and more on its own income sources.

Doorn previously told the Sublette County Board of Commissioners that the USDA loan was submitted and they hope to hear back from the USDA on potential approval early next month.

COUNCIL

Continued from 1A

The change order effectively zeroes out the contract with Telectractors, Inc., Abram Pearce, director of public works, explained to the council.

Colter Booth of Jorgensen Associates, the engineering firm overseeing the project, stated construction on the new sports complex reached "substantial completion" on June 28.

The final contract price included the conclusion of work expanding Wilson Street to the ball fields, Mayor Matt Murdock added.

Booth said Jorgensen Associates was "privileged" to work with the town and Telectractors, Inc., to build an "asset for the community." Jeff Biffle and Lance Biffle, representing Telectractors, said they were proud of the outcome.

Murdock expressed "sincere thanks" on behalf of the town to Jorgensen's and Telectractors.

"It looks great," he said. "Pinedale should be proud."

Ordinances – motels, hotels and the cemetery

Councilmembers present on Monday unanimously passed Ordinances 689 and 690 on first reading. The ordinances would amend the definitions of hotels and motels in town.

The changes simplify restrictions on hotels and motels, said Ed Wood, town attorney. Existing code requires motels and hotels to provide three services: on-site housekeeping, custodial services and front-desk management services.

Ordinances 689 and 690 eliminate the requirement for on-site management services.

Pearce told the council the proposed ordinances passed a public hearing before the town planning and zoning committee.

Redefining hotels and motels was a follow-up to discussions on Ordinance 682, relating to short-term rentals, Murdock stated. Ordinance 682 passed a third and

final reading on April 12.

Cleaning up the language in the hotel and motel codes would allow some short-term rentals to operate as a hotel, Murdock explained.

The Pinedale Cemetery is now located entirely within Pinedale following passage on third and final reading of Ordinance 688, annexing a small section of cemetery laying outside town limits.

The Upper Green River Cemetery District pays for town utilities and it made sense to include the whole property under the jurisdiction of a single entity, Murdock told the Roundup.

Additional items:

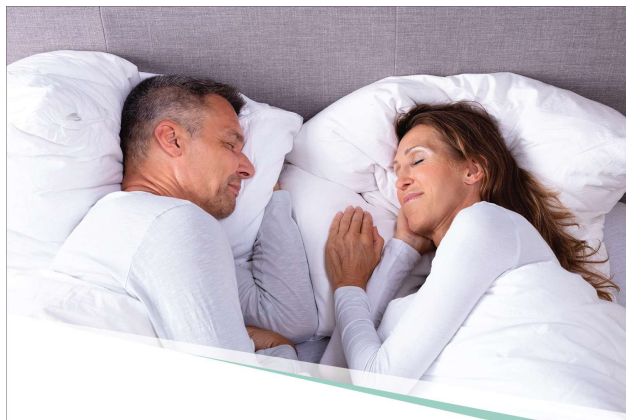
The council directed Wood to continue work on a petition to include zoning for a recreational resort development district. The petition was proposed by Chauncey Goodrich to create opportunities for recreation businesses in Pinedale, including long-term sites for recreational vehicles and motor coaches.

Wood told the council the petition's language required tightening to properly define facilities like resorts, recreation vehicles and the size of the parcels to be rezoned.

The council accepted two professional service agreements with Jorgensen Associates and Rio Verde Engineering to assist with surveying and engineering on small town projects. The agreements for both firms are not to exceed \$10,000 for the fiscal year. Similar agreements were formed in 2018 and 2019.

Councilmembers approved a temporary fuel farm lease with Emblem Aviation at the Pinedale Airport while a new fuel facility is built.

The council authorized a \$10,000 contract for services with the Pinedale Fine Arts Council to partially fund production and marketing for the Summer Soundcheck Music Series.



No masks. No machines. Just zzz's.

A new sleep apnea innovation at St. John's Health

Introducing Inspire, the only FDA-approved sleep apnea surgical treatment that addresses the root cause, not the symptoms. Better sleep health is part of how we're specializing in Wyoming.

Learn more at:
www.stjohns.health/inspire



The Sublette Center would like to

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FOR YOUR

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- Richard Trefren Builders & Dead Shot Ranch
- Rocky Mountain Yeti-Pinedale
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