

COUNTY

## Resident tag scheme spoiled

See **A2**

LOCAL

## Local film screened

See **A3**



OUTDOORS

## Back in the pool

See **B Section**



# Pinedale Roundup

Newspaper of the Upper Green River Valley, Est. 1904

SEPTEMBER 24, 2021

One Dollar

## Commissioners take moment to honor Hoelscher



BRADY OLTMANS PHOTO

**U.S. Forest Service District Ranger Rob Hoelscher (center) accepts a plaque presented to him by the Sublette County Board of Commissioners. Commissioners (from left), Sam White, Doug Vickrey, Joel Bousman, Tom Noble and Dave Stephens thanked Hoelscher for his several years of cooperation with the county.**

**By Brady Oltmans**

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**PINEDALE** – Part of Monday morning’s meeting of Sublette County Board of Commissioners took a somewhat somber, bittersweet turn.

Sandwiched between typical agenda items, the board welcomed supervisor Trisha O’Conner and Rob Hoelscher to the table so it could give Hoelscher special accommodations for his years of service to the U.S. Forest Service Pinedale Office.

Hoelscher previously announced he’s leaving his post with Oct. 8 being his last day.

“I thought it was appropriate to, we’ve had a really good working relationship with Rob Hoelscher, district ranger of Pinedale, for a lot of years that he’s been here,” commission chair Joel Bousman said. “The commission feels it is appropriate to recognize you, Rob,

for your willingness and the way you work with local government. We’ve had input on anything we desired that we thought we should have input on, Rob has been proactive in reaching out to the county and to local government to participate.”

Bousman also said Sublette County has maintained a good working relationship with the U.S. Forest Service and most of that relationship can be attributed to Hoelscher.

So, the board presented Hoelscher with a plaque to commemorate his service and thank him for that service.

“In appreciation to Pinedale District ranger Rob Hoelscher for your many years of service and commitment to Sublette County,” the plaque read. “The Sublette County commission offers their sincerest thank you and wishes you all the best in your future endeavors.”

See ‘COMMISSIONERS’ on page **A3**

## District waits on decision

*USDA response now expected in October*

**By Robert Galbreath**

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**PINEDALE** – Federal loan applications for multi-million-dollar projects involve thousands of pages of documentation and require many staff hours to compile, said Tonia Hoffman, the Sublette County Hospital District Board of Trustees Chairwoman on Sept. 15.

The complexity of the process can result in delays.

The hospital district initially expected a decision from the U.S. Department of Agriculture on a loan to fund a new critical access hospital at the end of August but now have to wait until October.

Kari DeWitt, public relations director, explained to the Roundup the wait was “100 percent” due to the federal fiscal year ending on Sept. 30. Grant applications submitted to the USDA require a final hearing at the national level. The agency spends September completing end-of-year reports and does not hold hearings again until the start of the next fiscal year in October, DeWitt added.

Once the loan application gets to the national level, hearings before the USDA board typically take only a half-hour, Doorn told the trustees. The need for an airtight application to present to the federal board in a short time period is crucial, he added.

Lorraine Werner, the USDA community programs director in Wyoming, is working to guarantee all the district’s ducks are in a

See ‘BOARD’ on page **A3**

## Assault victim speaks out for changes

**By Joy Ufford**

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**SUBLETTE COUNTY** – It was a warm, balmy summer night – the perfect start to a beautiful weekend outside with good friends.

The group had camped in a special place set up during the very popular Fremont Lake Sailing Regatta. The friends talked, laughed, danced and celebrated gathering to race in the annual regatta.

Carefree and happy to be home, one young woman – a sailor by profession and lifestyle – said goodnight to friends and stretched out to sleep under the stars near her car.

But around midnight on Friday, Aug. 13, the young woman woke to find a strange man fondling her and trying to sexually force himself on her. Frightened, she shouted for help, and the man ran away. Her friends heard her and chased after the man in the dark but couldn’t catch him.

Just like that, he was gone.

Her friends called 911 at 12:14 a.m. on Saturday, Aug. 14, according to Sgt. Travis Bingham.

Now distressed and shaking, the woman told deputies she did not see the man’s face or know who he was. Always extremely cautious and conscious of her safety and others, she was shaken deeply and even shamed – briefly – by the violation of her confidence and body.

Four of five deputies on duty – including two new female officers – responded immediately.

“The deputies said he has probably done this before and will probably do it again – ‘We need evidence,’” she recalled. “They took it very seriously; they were very kind.”

### Struggle

The violation also marked the beginning of Jess Piper Hewitt’s struggle to deal with an unexpected sexual assault and to speak her mind and express frustration with shortfalls she found in the system’s response.

The deputies were awesome and supportive she said. They were professional and concerned.

But to formally report the assault and have

biological evidence collected, Hewitt had to travel alone to a hospital. Her only choices were distant – 77 miles to Jackson or 101 miles to Rock Springs.

She chose Jackson, thinking she would be seen more quickly.

Enduring several hours of “suspense and misery” before the specially trained “sexual assault nurse examiner” or SANE nurse came in at 7 a.m. at St. John’s Hospital, Hewitt was told she could not go to the bathroom. Deputy Hanna Patterson stayed with her until the SANE nurse arrived; she could not bear the thought of being alone.

She was “extremely frustrated” having to repeat the same story so many times, Hewitt wrote.

Hewitt took a photo of herself and was shocked at her ravaged face. She wrote in her notebook to keep track of her thoughts. She finally went to the bathroom when she could wait no longer and the nurse tossed her urine.

She was “extremely frustrated” having to repeat the same story so many times, Hewitt wrote.

“I wasn’t driving, I was with friends,” she said. “I shouldn’t have to fear what someone will do to me when I’ve been drinking with friends. It felt so surreal. ... Even if I had flirted with someone – I was asleep! I wasn’t passed out somewhere. It was a beautiful night and I was sleeping outside by my car. That’s what blows my mind.”

### Float plan

As a professional sailor, Hewitt “makes a float plan” and takes personal protection very seriously. She has a baseball bat, bear spray, a shotgun and a Taser. She has a locator beacon and checks license plates. She shares her travel plans with friends and family, checking in on them while they check in on her.

“That’s why I moved to Wyoming,” she said. “I was terrified of being alone and I wanted to conquer that, to be alone but not feel alone. I was trying to capture that feeling.”

Protecting herself while awake, however, did not prepare her for a personal attack while she was sleeping. “It just happened so quickly.”

### First encounter

Several minutes after her assault, a woman said “one of the most traumatic things said to me: ‘Honey, you gotta watch how much you drink.’ That’s so wrong, that opinion has to change, that viewpoint has to change. People should be more sensitive after a sexual assault happens. Some people don’t realize the impact of the words.”

Sublette County deputies who responded were compassionate and “wonderful,” she said.

They gave her a SAFV brochure that deputies carry as a resource for assistance.

SAFV Executive Director Robin Clover said that is routine; a victim can ask a SAFV volunteer to accompany them to a clinic or hospital for biological evidence collection. If Hewitt called the crisis line, Clover said a volunteer “would do whatever (she) wanted us to do.”

If that means not reporting the assault, so be it – “The only time we would contact the sheriff’s office without the individual’s permission is if it is a minor. We are ‘mandatory reporters.’”

### Evidence

Hewitt had no doubt about wanting to catch her attacker. But Sublette County does not have a specially trained or SANE nurse. She consented to go to St. John’s Hospital. Hewitt did not want to be alone but her friends could not come along because they had been drinking. Deputy Patterson followed her to the hospital and “did not leave my side” while they waited several hours for the SANE nurse to arrive at 7 a.m.

“It was a long wait; there needs to be someone in Sublette County trained in that kit,” Hewitt said. “It’s inexcusable. You can’t tell me they’d want their daughter to wait like that.”

Clower said a victim can ask SAFV for an advocate that will come to either hospital.

Hewitt also spoke out about the poor clothing choices available at Jackson to her as an assault victim – oversized scrubs, “extra large granny panties and bright pink thongs –not appropriate.”

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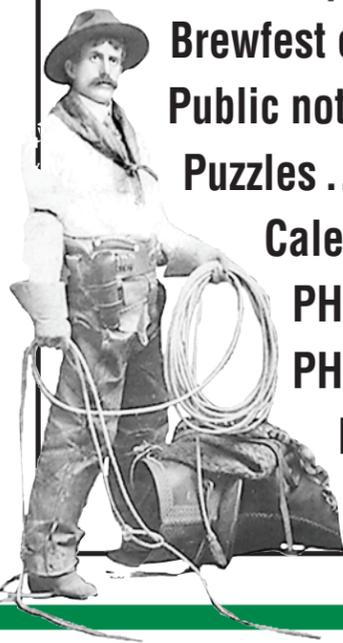


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## Weekly Weather Forecast Pinedale, Wyoming • Sept. 24 - Sept. 29

### Today

**Sunrise:** 7:09 a.m. **Sunset:** 7:13 p.m.

High: **68°** Low: **29°**

RealFeel® 71° 28°

Day: Sunny to partly cloudy.

Night: Partly cloudy.



### Saturday

High: **73°**

Partly sunny and pleasant.

Low: **36°**



### Sunday

High: **72°**

Mostly sunny and pleasant.

Low: **32°**



### Monday

High: **73°**

Mostly cloudy.

Low: **35°**

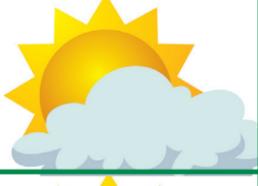


### Tuesday

High: **71°**

Sunny intervals.

Low: **33°**

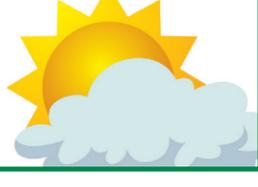


### Wednesday

High: **69°**

Sun and clouds.

Low: **34°**



## Homecoming coverage notice

Due to the Pinedale Roundup deadline schedule, all Pinedale High School Homecoming Week coverage will be in next week's edition of the Roundup.

Full coverage of all the week's festivities, including Homecoming games on Sept. 24, will be in the Sept. 30 edition.

# Strangulation qualifies as 'habitual offender'

By Joy Ufford

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SUBLETTE COUNTY – A man living in Bondurant is charged with strangulation of a household member and 13 separate counts of domestic battery – each based on specific injuries he allegedly struck to a woman who was living with him.

Mark S. Estrada remains in custody since his Sept. 13 arrest with bond set at \$500,000 cash or surety, according to court records. A handful of deputies and a Wyoming Highway Patrol trooper participated in his arrest at an Elkhorn Lodge apartment. Several filed affidavits detailing the incident and interviews with the woman he allegedly beat and strangled on Sept. 12-13, court records show.

The strangulation charge as a habitual offender has maximum penalties of 10 to 50 years in prison and \$10,000 fine. Estrada is also charged with misdemeanors of unlawful contact and breach of peace; each of 15 misdemeanor charges carries maximum penalties of six months in jail and \$750 fine.

Sublette County Deputy Attorney Clayton Melinkovich filed 16 charges against Estrada on Sept. 16 in Circuit Court, where Estrada's preliminary hearing is set for Friday, Sept. 24, at 9:30 a.m. In the criminal information, Melinkovich noted Estrada faces the felony strangulation charge as a "habitual offender" with two previous felony convictions, one for stalking in Campbell County and one for assaulting a peace officer in Pueblo County, Colorado.

On Sept. 13, the Elkhorn Lodge owner called

Sublette County dispatch, asking for a deputy to come help the woman who lived with his tenant Estrada so she could gather personal belongings, an affidavit says.

She was afraid to go into the apartment alone, he said, adding it could be a domestic violence scenario. Sgt. Jack Killey, on duty near Big Piney, said he could be there in an hour. His affidavit says that the "very frightened" woman had multiple bruises on her face and hands and he called Sublette County EMS to come to Bondurant.

The woman said Estrada had hit her a number of times over the past several days, it says. Another tenant and an employee said Estrada had hit the woman and they had argued for several days.

When Sublette EMS arrived, a deputy took the woman to the ambulance while others covered possible exits and arrested Estrada, who was "highly intoxicated" and would not come to the door, the affidavit says.

Female deputies interviewed the woman, noting "multiple bruises all over her body in different stages of healing." The woman had black eyes, finger-shaped bruising, patches of hair pulled out, older bruising over her back and bruises from her knees to ankles on both legs, according to their affidavits. She was taken by ambulance to St. John's Hospital.

They asked the woman about blood spots in her eyes and bruises around her neck; the woman said on Sept. 12 Estrada closed both hands around her throat allegedly for about 10 seconds.

Estrada is ordered to have no contact with the woman or anyone from the Elkhorn Lodge.

# Utah man charged for years of resident game licenses

By Joy Ufford

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SUBLETTE COUNTY – A man who told wildlife investigators he "feels" like a Wyoming resident did not spend enough time in Wyoming to qualify for many years of obtaining resident deer and elk licenses.

Craig L. Hunt, of Morgan, Utah, was charged Sept. 16 with 21 high misdemeanor counts of swearing in false statements for many years to Wyoming Game and Fish that he lived in Cora, court records show. Specifically, Hunt is charged with false statements for 13 resident elk licenses from 2008 through 2020 and eight resident deer licenses from 2009 to 2016, court records show.

In his affidavit, Game and Fish Warden Herb Haley said in 2019 he received an anonymous tip that Hyde lived and worked in Morgan, Utah, but used his parents' post office address to apply for the licenses.

Wildlife investigator Dustin Kirsch assisted Haley by investigating Facebook posts, Google Earth photos and other records, it says. Haley and Kirsch interviewed Hyde on Jan. 27, 2021 in Utah. Hyde said he started building a cabin near Cora in 2015 and his camper was his permanent residence, although he had to bring it to Utah for the winters, according to court records.

He said he spent a lot of time in Wyoming and considered himself a Wyoming resident, the affidavit says.

Using cell phone records, Haley determined that Hyde spent 115 days or about one-third of a one-year period year in Wyoming — or more than 180 days outside Wyoming, thus disqualifying him for residency, it says. Hunt also paid taxes as a Utah resident, Haley noted.

Hunt's arraignment is scheduled in Sublette County Circuit Court for Oct. 4 at 11 a.m.

Each offense has a maximum penalty of 1 year in jail and \$10,000 fine with hunting license suspensions.



## Sublette Hospital District

### HIRING - Nurses

The Hospital District is looking for Nurses and a Medical Technologist  
Application and info at [sublettehospitaldistrict.org/careers](http://sublettehospitaldistrict.org/careers)

# Local documentary gets first local screening



COURTESY PHOTO

**Irja Sandvik holds the original sketch while daughter Deirdre Smith examines it as the two try to determine if they are in the exact spot Charles Preuss sat in to make the iconic sketch.**

**By Brady Oltmans**  
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**PINEDALE** – People of Pinedale were invited to two separate showings of a documentary centering on their own backyard.

“Mofar’s View of the Winds” was created by Burning Torch Productions, the team of Mark Pedri and Carrie McCarthy out of Rock Springs, and follows photographer Dr. Conrad Smith’s final expedition into the Wind River wilderness to locate the exact rock from which the first published drawing of the Rocky Mountains was created in 1842. Pedri served as the film’s director, editor and cinematographer while McCarthy was the film’s producer.

Pedri and McCarthy hosted an afternoon screening at Rendezvous Pointe and an evening showing at the Pinedale Library’s Lovatt Room on Sept. 16. Previously, the pair screened the 27-minute film at the Breckenridge Film Festival, at Western Wyoming Community College and the 307 International Film Festival – where it won Best Wyoming Documentary.

The pair previously came before the Sublette County Board of Commissioners for sponsorship of the film, which would secure the film’s funding and afford an advertising outlet for the county where the majority of the

film takes place.

The film will be broadcasted on PBS for three years starting next month. It will premiere on Wyoming PBS at 9 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 11. The following day it will air on WORLD Channel – available in most major American cities – at 7:30 p.m.

“Mofar’s View of the Winds” follows an 80-year-old photographer, also known as Mofar, who has spent a decade trying to locate the exact rock Charles Preuss sat on to create the sketch that became the first published image of the Rocky Mountains. Preuss’s sketch, along with John C. Fremont’s report from the expedition, paved the way for the Great Western Expansion of 1850 that eventually included the California Gold Rush, the Oregon Trail and Mormon migration to Salt Lake City.

Dr. Smith is joined by his daughter and granddaughter on the journey. Together they navigate their way from Laramie to the Wind River Range in hopes of verifying Preuss’s exact location with the intention of recreating the iconic sketch about 177 years later.

A trailer is available for viewing at <http://vimeo.com/553470975/b5f6ee7fe1> and more information can be found on the film’s website, [www.burningtorchproductions.com/mofar](http://www.burningtorchproductions.com/mofar).

## BOARD

Continued from 1A

row for an October hearing, Doorn said.

“Lorraine Werner is really doing what she does best – fully understanding our application and leaving no stone unturned and is completely prepared to present it at a national level,” Doorn said in a press release.

Werner supported the hospital district’s proposal, though she is not able to officially endorse the application at this time, Doorn stated to trustees on Sept. 15.

The hospital district’s application will be one of the first on the docket in October, Doorn explained to the board. The delay reflected “nothing negative” in the hospital district’s application, he said.

Werner and her staff remained in constant communication with the hospital district and management team at Star Valley Health, Doorn and Hoffman said.

Layton Construction Company, the district’s construction manager, is prepared to move forward with a pre-bid meeting with subcontractors to begin construction, DeWitt stated in the press release.

Trustee Jamison Ziegler encouraged the board to meet with Layton and discuss the construction timetable. Building is not expected to begin until March when steel becomes available on the market, Ziegler said.

### Staffing shortages

Trustees and hospital district staff addressed staff shortages, including the loss of several nurses, during last week’s meeting.

Hoffman said the board was working to “do the best we can” to remedy the situation. The trustees “understand staff concerns” and asked the public for patience.

Doorn reported the district already hired one nurse and was aggressively advertising to

fill additional positions. The district was also in the process of interviewing physicians, he added.

The nursing shortage reflected a nationwide crisis in staffing and was not simply a local issue, Doorn said. The district was competing in an unfavorable labor market where large health-care companies are able to entice nurses with much higher wages, Doorn added.

The district hoped to receive money from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021 to offer providers and staff working at both clinics a significant retention bonus, DeWitt said. Gov. Mark Gordon committed \$30 million in ARPA funds dedicated to retaining hospital and clinical providers in Wyoming – \$20 million for hospitals and \$10 million for other facilities like the hospital district, DeWitt added.

Trustee Dave Bell, a member of the finance committee, stated he and Doorn met to discuss purchasing 2022 health insurance plans for employees. Bell encouraged the board to put health insurance out to bid, look at the market and seek out “various alternatives and approaches” to find the best plans.

Due to concern over a conflict of interest, Bell stressed that he no longer holds a license to sell insurance.

### An exceptional month

Trustee Kenda Tanner, a finance committee member, reported that the clinics had an “amazing month” in August 2021 compared to August 2020. Profit was up significantly, and Tanner called August 2021 “the best month to date” financially.

The clinic made a net profit of \$210,317 in August not including capital expenditure, the public financial report indicated.

## COMMISSIONERS

Continued from 1A

O’Conner, Bridger-Teton National Forest supervisor, was there for the presentation and talked about the high bar Hoelscher has set in his time at the Forest Service.

“This is a great honor,” O’Conner said. “It’s not common that district rangers get recognized like this from our county cooperators. On behalf of the forest, I really do appreciate it.”

“I agree Rob has done an outstanding job here and has worked very hard with you all. To get this is pretty special.”

O’Conner and Bousman agreed that, despite the county and Forest Service not always agreeing on the issues either face, the two institutions have been able to work together for the benefit of each.

Commissioner Tom Noble said Hoelscher set an especially high bar and left some exceptionally large shoes to fill. The board and O’Conner talked briefly about what could be expected from a new

district ranger and what the county would appreciate in terms of working relationship.

Hoelscher, when presented with the opportunity to speak, said he’d been thinking about what he was most proud of in his time. He said, almost without exception, it’s been the relationships built in Sublette County. He said that would be important to see in a future district ranger.

“I just wanted to thank you all for being a great commission and, like everybody else, the commission has changed in the eight years since I’ve been here,” Hoelscher said. “Being able to approach you all with confidence that it’s not an adversary relationship, that it’s a working relationship, that made things easier.”

One of the things Hoelscher was told in his time is that a bad district ranger is remembered forever and a good one is forgotten by the time they leave.

“So I’m hoping none of you will remember me,” he said with a laugh.

Bell highlighted major increases in services at both clinics, from radiology and EMS to the laboratory.

Scheduled appointments at the Big Piney and Marbleton Clinic were up 23 percent compared to the previous year with same-day visits up 13 percent. Scheduled appointments at the Pinedale Clinic dropped slightly, but were offset by a 49-percent rise in same-day visits.

Nursing visits increased 93 percent at the Pinedale Clinic and 260 percent at Big Piney-Marbleton.

Bell said he and the board were “proud of

the staff” for their exceptional efforts during a busy month.

### Additional board news

• Trustees approved the transfer of \$750,000 from reserves to fund hospital district operations. Tanner explained the district would not receive expected tax revenue of \$2.4 million until November. Doorn added that the district was also waiting on the USDA loan money to reimburse project-related expenses like architectural fees.

• Following an executive session, the board passed a motion to approve its contract with Doorn pending final review by Doorn.

## Street Talk

By Terry Allen

## What was your favorite part of the Renaissance Faire at the Pinedale Library?



I’m a Harris hawk, so I see a full color spectrum plus even more. For that reason, I am particularly intrigued by all the flashy costumes.

*Wounded Knee, Paradise Road*



I love the singing better than the scary falcons and hawks.

*Eli Olson, Pinedale*



Grandma Talli says I love the fairies, elves and unicorns, but I really like the Nerf jousting.

*William Rafferty Ingram, Pinedale*



I like the sword fighting.

*Brixyn Ivy Lake, Pinedale*



The falcons because I like their eyes..

*Hunter Collet, Pinedale*