

BPMS students swarm Regional Science Fair

From Big Piney Middle School

ROCK SPRINGS – Science fair season is underway and 16 Big Piney Middle School students traveled to Rock Springs to compete in the Southwest Regional Science Fair on Thursday, Jan. 27.

Big Piney's young scientists vied for top honors against students from Rawlins, Pinedale and Kemmerer middle schools.

Western Wyoming Community College hosted the fair, with Tata Chemicals sponsoring fair registration, meals and t-shirts for students.

BPMS eighth-graders Zeferino Zuniga and Hays Espenscheid earned the overall Reserve Championship for their biochemistry project titled "Effect of Aging on Meat Tenderness." The duo also placed first in the biochemistry category.

Eighth-grader Kamia Runyan took third place overall for a project on animal behavior titled "Effect of Music on Guinea Pig Eating Habits." She picked up first place in the behavioral science category.

The projects presented by Zuniga, Espenscheid and Runyan were evaluated by the entire WWCC faculty judging team and received commendations from the judges, said BPMS science teacher Kristi Hibbert.

Students and groups placing in each

category qualified for the State Science Fair hosted by the University of Wyoming on March 7. The fair will be held in a virtual format for a second year, Hibbert said.

Students will meet with and present their projects to professors online on March 7. Before the fair, students prepare and submit a video presentation on their research and complete a chart highlighting the four main points of their results, Hibbert added.

The virtual format allows judges from across the state and neighboring universities to join University of Wyoming faculty to evaluate projects in specialty areas Hibbert said.

BPMS students will participate in virtual tours of the University of Wyoming and virtual labs conducted by college professors.

Additional results

Biochemistry: Second place awarded to Sakiusa Meador for "Catalase Reactions."

Chemistry: First place awarded to Tilly Evans, Kaydence Guest and Maybrie Denison for "Cotton Candy Chemistry."

Microbiology: First place awarded to Addi Cunningham for "Antibacterial Properties of Honey."

Earth Science: First place awarded to



HANK KETELSEN PHOTO, WWCC

BPMS eighth-graders Zeferino Zuniga, second from left, and Hays Espenscheid receive the overall Reserve Championship award for their biochemistry project, 'Effect of Aging on Meat.' Also pictured are Katrina Marcos, far left, WWCC associate professor of biological services and chair of the Southwest Regional Science Fair Committee, and Randy Goff, right, WWCC associate professor of chemistry and Fair Committee member.

Nate Brown for "Effect of Wastewater on Algae Growth," with Christian Dennis earning second place for "Monsoon Rains in the Upper Green."

Plant Science: First place awarded to Dylan Foster for "Effect of Music on Plant Growth."

Computer Science: Second place awarded to Jason Durant for "Dissecting a Computer."

BPMS students who traveled to present projects but did not place and qualify for State were Cactus Chrisman, Teague Goodman, Maggie Jones and Catie Langlois.

Commissioners eye transfer agreement with SCHD

By Brady Oltmans, boltmans@subletteexaminer.com

SUBLETTE COUNTY – Deputy County Attorney Clayton Melinkovich approached the Sublette County Board of Commissioners during its Feb. 1 meeting.

He handed out the first rough drafts of transfer agreements with the Sublette County Hospital District to each commissioner and simply asked them how much they'd like to be involved. He asked them how much commissioners want to be involved in health-care delivery in Sublette County in the future, what it would look like and what their goals were.

From there, the county attorney's office could build a transfer agreement that fit those questions.

"This agreement also incorporates the idea that the county would rely on a USDA local person (Lorraine Werner) and her team in conjunction with the hospital team to ensure the usage of county money is used for the long-term care facility," Melinkovich said.

Commissioners have pledged up to \$20 million in construction of the project. It was explicitly written into the agreement the county's pledge would go towards the long-

term care facility portion of the project.

As it was explained to him, under the proposed format, Werner would have multiple invoices. One would allocate costs attributed to the hospital portion of the project, one attributed to the long-term care facility portion of the project and one for shared costs. As is currently proposed, the county is responsible for 40 percent of shared costs with a reversion clause built in to recoup county money spent.

Commissioner Sam White said he'd like the board of commissioners to allow the SCHD to "sink or swim" on the project and not micromanage.

"We've got an elected hospital board, the voters made them," White said. "I would like to see us with as little bit of input and hands-on as possible."

Commission chair Joel Bousman said he shared similar thoughts but wanted to make sure the \$20 million pledged by the commission went to the construction of a long-term care facility. Melinkovich assured the board that, through conversations he's had with Werner, this wouldn't be a novel thing for the USDA.

Bousman said he'd like to see the process be as simple as possible. County clerk Carrie Long said she's talked with Werner, who said they'd create a separate account with different signatories so the county would earn interest on the funds it contributes.

SCHD Administrator Dave Doorn assured the board that any construction bids would go out with gross maximum prices to ensure construction of the critical access hospital and long-term care facility doesn't mount costs beyond projects. Bids will have costs broken down.

Melinkovich explained the county could put into place a clause where any signature on the county's behalf could be paused in case anyone spots a concern among the invoices.

"We'll have a master budget and in that master budget it'll have that dollar amount," Melinkovich said. "When Carrie (Long) gets that dollar amount she'll refer back to the master budget to ensure the beams are the right costs, went to the right place, the county paid its chunk of shared costs."

The board granted Melinkovich

permission to move forward on the payment procedure so he could work on an agreement with the USDA.

Vickrey asked about Dr. David Burnett's contract. Vickrey, along with others in the community, were operating under the assumption Burnett's base pay was \$250.00 an hour. Doorn explained that the position – which has always been clarified as part-time at 16 hours per month – is paid at \$4,000 per month covering both clinics in the county, with an additional \$250.00 per hour for busier months. Doorn explained that overtime pay is to compensate for additional work that may come with building a hospital and the position existed before the hire. Burnett's contract also includes a cap and cannot surpass \$75,000 a year.

"We are totally committed to making this as efficient as possible," Doorn said. "We have to have medical directors for the clinics and there have to be MDs for regulation."

"That base amount that is in there is something we've been paying for years for that same service. So the only difference we have is we did allow for some extra hours to prepare for a hospital."



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