

2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

A LOOK BACK AT WESTON COUNTY'S TOP NEWS STORIES

Another year is coming to an end and we couldn't help but compile all of the top Weston County news from 2024 for you to enjoy.

From the Weston County Courthouse to the Newcastle City Council Chambers, from neighbor accomplishments to the latest in high school sports, the News Letter Journal brought you the news that mattered. As your local news source, the NLJ staff have worked tirelessly to cover everything that makes Weston County great and to keep everyone informed. In this, the Year in Review, we present to you some highlights from the year.

Beyond those stories, enjoy a wrap-up of all your favorite Dogie and Lady Dogie sports from the year, in the back section of this issue.

So, take this opportunity to reminisce and catch up on all of the hottest news, amazing people and Dogie sports from 2024, before we kick-off 2025.

We can't wait to bring you all that Weston County has to offer in 2025. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from everyone at the News Letter Journal!

JANUARY

- Maxine Groner was named the News Letter Journal's Person of the Year for 2023 for her service to the community. This hairdresser is always found helping others, including serving Thanksgiving dinner to many people who don't have a place to go.

- 2024 brought changes for the Weston County commissioners, including Don Taylor being elected chairman of the board, nominated by Commissioner Vera Huber. The Weston County Gazette was again chosen as the county's legal newspaper in a 3-1 vote.

- The Wyoming Division of Criminal Investigation reported an increase in crime in 2023 over 2022, including aggravated assault and sexual assault. The News Letter Journal article stated that sexual assaults reported in Newcastle

increased by 150% over 2022. Violent crimes, property crimes and domestic violence also increased.

- The Wyoming Refining Co., affiliated with Par Pacific Holdings Inc., was recognized by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency with an Energy Star certification for performing in the "top 25% of similar facilities in the nation for energy efficiency, and also meets the strict energy efficiency performance levels set by the agency," the article states. This was the Wyoming Refining Co.'s first time earning an Energy Star.

- Kim Dean was nominated by Bob Bonnar for the Wyoming Business Report 2023 Women of Wyoming, Women of Influence for her years of service to the community through her work at the News Letter Journal. Dean, who began working at the News Letter Journal about 30 years ago, has shown tremendous dedica-

tion to the community through her numerous roles at NLJ, including her current position as managing editor.

FEBRUARY

- Prayer was returned to Weston County commissioners meetings for the first time since 2019 in a Jan. 16 meeting in a 3-2 vote. A prayer was conducted before the official start of the meetings. The two nay votes were due to concerns for potential litigation, the News Letter Journal article states.

- Carter Farella, who had been mountain lion hunting for a couple years, finally realized his goal of a successful mountain lion hunt. Carter experienced the hunt with his dad, Chuck, and both of them were very excited for Carter's success.

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Submitted photo

Bailey Crackel paints the mural on the VFW Post No. 2516 building in Newcastle, giving the building patriotic pizzazz.

HONORING VETERANS

Upton artist completes VFW mural

Mary Stroka
NLJ Reporter

There's nothing more patriotic than an American flag.

That was the decision made by artist Bailey Crackel and Veterans of Foreign Wars officials in designing a mural for the VFW Post No. 2516 building in Newcastle,

Crackel said.

Post Senior Vice Commander Bryan Taylor said that the post began discussing the idea of having a mural in June after he saw murals during visits to VFW posts in Ohio and Niagara Falls. He brought the idea back to Newcastle's post, whose building at 2990 W. Main St. is now adorned with the flag design emblazoned upon it.

According to Crackel, VFW board members contacted the artist, and explained that they were seeking a patriotic mural that would both honor veterans and draw the attention of prospective venue renters. Taylor said the hall is rented out to other organizations and anyone who wants to use

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Help is on the way

Hospital board approves short-term contract in special meeting

Mary Stroka
NLJ Reporter

Weston County Hospital District's board of trustees approved a contract at a special meeting Dec. 12 in an effort to hasten transition to a new financing and accounting system and avoid extending its current contract.

The hospital is currently supported with the MEDITECH information system through a contract with Tegria, a Madison, Wisconsin-based health care consulting and technology services firm. That firm charges the hospital \$32,000 a month, and officials say the hospital needs help speeding up the process of finalizing its entry into Sage computer systems, which will replace the Tegria system.

"We will save \$32k in charges from Tegria after February by getting the work between the two vendors completed in January," CEO Cathy Harshbarger told the

News Letter Journal on Dec. 12. "We will have a cost of under \$7,000 to build the financial reports, load the 2025 budget in Sage and all accounting forms required to meet the timeline in January and start having financial reports."

Harshbarger said that the chart of accounts (the way the hospital breaks up all the charges it has and places them into a journal entry) is "way, way too broad" for what a usual critical access hospital has and what accountants would typically see.

"Instead of having them have to do crosswalks between all our different categories, we're going to have ours match what is normally seen in general accounting purposes for a critical access hospital," she said.

Tish Miller, the hospital's chief financial officer, who has been in her position for about a month, said at the

— See Contract, Page 2

WEATHER FORECAST

Thursday
Mostly Sunny
Hi 44, Lo 28



Friday
Partly Cloudy
Hi 41, Lo 27



Saturday
Partly Cloudy
Hi 44, Lo 30



Sunday
Partly Cloudy
Hi 46 Lo 30



Monday
Mostly Cloudy
Hi 39 Lo 21



Tuesday
Partly Cloudy
Hi 30, Lo 15



Wednesday
Mostly Cloudy
Hi 28 Lo 12



INSIDE

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Life Happens

In todays world, even something as simple as picking up after your kids can be the beginning of a hectic day. And misplacing a debit card is sure to be stressful.

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GOOD CITIZENS

DECEMBER 2024



American Legion Post # 3 proudly presents Good Citizen Certificates to these Newcastle Elementary School students



Mason Washburn
3rd, Mrs. Wynia

The holiday season is filled with moments of kindness and generosity. Students often go out of their way to help and support one another. This month's Good Citizen not only reflects these qualities during December, but has displayed them consistently throughout the year. Like the glow of Christmas lights, this month's third-grade Good Citizen shines bright. This student always gives his best effort in everything he does. He is responsible, kind, and a friend to everyone. He is always willing to work with any classmate and is constantly helping around the classroom. His peers describe him as helpful, respectful, and nice. They also note how he listens attentively during lessons and helps keep our classroom clean and organized. We are so lucky to have him in Room 132. Congratulations to our third grade Good Citizen, Mason Washburn!

December is such a magical time of year. It's the time of year for giving, kindness, and joy. Choosing this month's Good Citizen was such a gift, because I feel this person truly embodies all the wonderful qualities you think of when you think of a good citizen. What stands out to me the most about this special student is their kindness. Often, I sit back and observe how everyone interacts and treats one another when they don't think anyone is watching. This young lady is always warm and friendly to everybody. She also works so hard to be responsible by always completing her work and keeping track of her schedule. She never misses a beat. I am so impressed by her responsibility. Everything she does is done with thought and care. Her work is always completed with 100% effort, and not to mention her art is beautiful. She treats adults with such respect and is always willing to be helpful to her peers. It brings me so much joy to teach such a loving and wonderful girl, and I think she is a true role model for what a good citizen should be. December's Good Citizen is Diamond Perry-Godoy.



Diamond Perry-Godoy
4th, Ms. Weigel

During the month of December, we need to remember the true meaning of Christmas. Many of our students are talking about what they want or hope to get for Christmas. There are those exceptional students who are thinking of ways to help others, not just during this time of year but year-round. I have found one student who truly displays and radiates the ideas of always looking to help others and embraces the morals of doing what is truly right. Whether it is inviting another student who is sitting by themselves to join her group or helping younger students out, this student stands out as a true leader. I just sit back and watch in awe as her and a few of her fellow classmates set up a candy store to help raise money for Operation Santa, all on their own. She is always ready to volunteer to do any job and even sees things that need to be done without being asked. Not only does this student display these wonderful qualities, she also is responsible for her own learning and strives to do her best. I have been blessed to have this student with a heart of gold in my room not once, but twice, and have genuinely enjoyed seeing her grow as a person. It is for these and many more reasons that I am honored to give Roberta Haynes the fifth grade Good Citizen Award for the month of December.



Roberta Haynes
5th, Mr. Marty

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Good business



Photos by Walter Sprague/NLJ

Ruth and Don Taylor visit and enjoy a drink on Nov. 23, at the Newcastle Lodge and Convention Center, during the Newcastle Area Chamber of Commerce annual banquet. Silent auction items are viewed and bid upon at the Newcastle Area Chamber of Commerce annual banquet, held at Newcastle Lodge and Convention Center on Saturday, Nov. 23. During the event, a meal of pulled pork, Swedish meatballs and salad was served to guests, and a silent auction was held.



Contract

from Page 1

meeting that she spoke with the hospital's auditors, who said that as long as "we have a crosswalk, they're fine with it. She said the most cumbersome part of working in Sage is building a budget, and the hospital's 2025 budget is based on general ledger numbers from MEDITECH (Medical Information Technology Inc).

Keith Gnagey, who was the CEO of Teton Valley Health Care in Driggs, Idaho, and is now retired, has signed on to build the hospital's chart of accounts in Sage. The "top end" estimate for the work, which will include building the chart of accounts, the crosswalk, the financial reports and balance sheet accounts "where they need to be and doing what they're supposed to be doing," is about \$7,000, according to Miller.

She said she worked with Gnagey on a similar project when they were both working at Teton Valley, and predicted the work should take no more than 40 hours to do, based on that experience. If she had to do it by herself, while staff are present, Miller said, it would take her twice as long. She assured the board she will not allow the contract to go over the budgeted amount, and said she actually seeks to finish under budget.

Harshbarger said she's aware that paying consultants is "a sensitive subject" in the com-

munity currently, but she believes the hospital needs to do so in this instance.

"It's a get out of jail project to try to have everything into Sage," Harshbarger said.

She said that Miller could build the reports herself, like "anybody that's a well-educated person" could, but the hospital needs to prioritize Miller's time to work on other challenges the operation is facing with its system, which means it makes sense to delegate this project.

"Of all the projects that we have to accomplish so we can get our audit started, our financial reports out, this is the lowest-lying fruit," Miller said.

If she were to do the project, while juggling her other duties, she said, it would take her two weeks, or into mid-January. Instead, she will be concentrating on infrastructure, communication and interdepartmental relations, which require on-site, hands-on work.

Trustee Nathan Ballard said that considering what he knows about the state of the chart of accounts, he supports the change, as long as it's just one time.

Harshbarger said on Dec. 17 that she has signed the contract with Gnagey. Once his work begins, it will take a week.

VFW

from Page 1

the space for funerals, graduation parties or fundraisers.

In addition to the flag, the mural features the six military branch seals and a bald eagle, the national emblem of the United States since 1782. Crackel said she spent about three weeks on the project and finished it around Nov. 22.

"We gave her free rein," Quartermaster Stan Dixon said. "If we didn't like what she was coming up with, we would have changed it, but she did an excellent job, we feel."

Taylor said the post selected Crackel because its members wanted to support a young artist who's also a local business owner.

Crackel owns the Upton-based Crackel Artworks, and said her customers inspire her with their ideas, which

she seeks to elevate. For her personal, original projects, she enjoys painting with wildlife and nature themes. Apart from attending "YouTube University," Crackel's education in art comes from her high school studies and independent learning.

"I'm completely self-taught after graduation," she said.

Six years after starting out of a studio in Upton, mostly painting commissions, Crackel's now gained about three years of experience in murals too.

"The mural thing kind of took off," she said.

She also enjoys sign painting and restorations. What she likes most, however, is creating connections with other people, she said. With the VFW project, she enjoyed the opportunity she had to talk with a couple of

veterans.

"That was really cool for me because I don't get to meet those kinds of people unless I'm in that position, out there doing art and stuff," Crackel said. "I love meeting new people. That's my favorite part."

The most nerve-wracking aspect to creating murals, on the other hand, is starting, Crackel said. The blank wall is intimidating and it's "almost like jumping off a cliff" to have to lay down the first little bit of paint. After that, though, the focus is on finishing the piece.

Newcastle Mayor Pam Gualtieri recognized the VFW at the Nov. 18 City Council meeting for commissioning the mural.

"It's a nice addition to the west side of town, for sure," she said at the meeting.

Ideas

News Letter Journal

Editorial

Christmas around the world

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas all over the world and the News Letter Journal thought it would be fun to share Christmas celebrations from across the globe, including various time-honored traditions that celebrants hold near and dear to their hearts. Depending on where someone lives, their Christmas traditions may look quite different from those in other parts of the globe.

It can be enjoyable to learn how Christmas is celebrated elsewhere and perhaps even incorporate a few new traditions into your celebrations. Take a peek at these customs near and far.

- Seafood and beachside celebrations: Australia is located in the southern hemisphere, which means Aussies are enjoying the peak of their summer come December 25. A white Christmas is unlikely, unless the "white" refers to white, sandy beaches. Santa is probably swapping his thick coat for a pair of board shorts, and heavy, roast-laden meals are unlikely to make it on to the menu. Instead, Australians dine on seafood feasts and spend Christmas outdoors camping or at the beach.
- Krampus parade: Some Christmas elves are not so jolly. Just ask residents of the Austrian, German

and Hungarian Alps. Each year in this region, a true "Bad Santa" is the talk of town. Villagers believed that Krampus, a half-man, half-goat creature with a legion of ill-tempered elves, roamed the mountains wreaking havoc. Krampus was said to abduct miscreants and set unruly youth or even intoxicated adults straight. Today, Krampus is more the "bad cop" to Santa's "good cop" persona. Krampus is celebrated as an antihero at parades and other events.

- Las Posadas: According to scripture, Joseph and Mary had to make an arduous journey from their

struggle to find lodging.

- La Befana: In Italian folklore, La Befana is a witch-like old woman who, like Santa, delivers gifts to children throughout Italy. Instead of this gift-giving taking place on Christmas, La Befana hands out gifts on the Epiphany Eve in a similar way to how the Three Magi brought presents to Baby Jesus. Le Befana also is believed to fly through the night sky to sweep away all the troubles of the old year and clear the way for a fresh start.

- Move over reindeer: Although reindeer often garner fanfare this time of year, the Yule goat is a Christmas symbol and tradition in Scandinavia and northern Europe. Each year in towns throughout Sweden and other areas, large statues of Yule goats are built on the first day of Advent and stand throughout the holiday season. This tradition dates back to ancient Pagan festivals, and some believe the goat is connected to the

Norse god Thor, who rode in the sky in a chariot pulled by two goats.

Holiday traditions differ considerably in various regions of the world. Celebrants may want to consider incorporating foreign traditions into their own Christmas celebrations this year.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from the News Letter Journal!



hometown to Bethlehem for census purposes while Mary was pregnant. When the couple arrived, they found lodgings were nonexistent, and Mary ended up giving birth to Jesus in a manger surrounded by animals. In celebration of that journey, people in Mexico and Guatemala celebrate Las Posadas, a procession representing Mary and Joseph's journey and their

POLL of the WEEK

QUESTION:
Jesus or Santa Claus?

- Jesus
- Santa Claus

Go to newslj.com to vote!
Look for results in next week's News Letter Journal.

Deadline for letters is noon on Friday.

We love hearing your opinion! Send your letters to the editor to editor@newslj.com. Please note, all letters must include name and contact information for verification. Sometimes we receive great letters, but we need to verify your identity. For more information, call (307) 746-2777.

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WHAT

We strive to cover all the news and entertainment important to the people of Weston County, Wyoming. Our entire staff takes part in the decision-making process of what appears in these pages and all content is locally generated. If you have a story idea please contact any of the people you see here. NLJ editorials appear in the upper left hand corner of this page and are written from the position of the newspaper, usually with the influence of several people, and in the hope that they will carry the weight of our 100-plus years of leadership. The personal columns and letters appearing elsewhere on this page, and others, represent the opinions of single individuals and do not necessarily reflect the position of the newspaper. The NLJ welcomes and encourages your Letter to the Editor. We will print all signed, original letters of local interest. Please provide a phone number for verification. We will not publish letters that are libelous or scurrilous in nature. Letters of thanks are offered at a reduced price in our classified section.

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WHEN

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WHY

To serve the best interests of the people of Weston County by providing informative news and entertainment.



MEMBER 2024
2023 Award-winning Newspaper



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Top 10 reasons for shopping local in your rural community

We have written many columns in the past on the critical need to shop local, rest assured it isn't just a feel-good slogan – it's a crucial economic and social strategy that helps maintain the vitality of small towns and rural areas. Here are the top 10 evidence-based reasons why supporting local businesses in rural communities is essential:

#1 – Studies show the local economic multiplication effect by shopping at locally owned businesses recirculate a far greater percentage of revenue locally compared to chain or online stores. According to research by the Institute for Local Self-Reliance, local retailers return an average of 48% of their revenue to the local economy, compared to just 14% for chain retailers and even less for online. In rural communities, this multiplier effect becomes even more critical.

#2 - Small local businesses are collectively the largest employers nationally. In rural areas, they provide 63-67% of employment opportunities, according to the SBA. These jobs are typically more stable during economic downturns, as local businesses are more likely to cut hours than eliminate positions, thus maintaining better community stability.

#3 - Local businesses contribute

more in local taxes relative to chain stores and online retailers. A study by Civic Economics found local businesses generate about 70% more local tax revenue per square foot than big box retailers. This revenue is crucial for communities to maintain essential services like schools, emergency services, and infrastructure.

#4 - Shopping local reduces transportation-related carbon emissions. When rural residents shop at local stores, they typically travel shorter distances compared to driving to distant shopping centers. Additionally, local businesses often source products regionally, reducing shipping distances. The National

Transportation Group estimates that shopping local can reduce transportation-related emissions by up to 26% compared to shopping at distant retail centers.

#5 - Community Health and Food Security Local grocery stores and farmers' markets in rural areas play a vital role in food security. Research from the USDA shows that 40% of rural counties are considered "food deserts," where access to fresh, healthy food is limited. Local food retailers are more likely to stock locally grown produce and support regional farmers, improving access to fresh, nutritious food while supporting the local agricultural economy.

#6 - Local businesses foster community connections and social cohesion. A study in the Journal of Rural Studies found communities with a higher density of local businesses show stronger social networks and civic engagement. Local owners in rural areas are 15-20% more likely to serve on local boards, volunteer, and contribute to local organizations.

#7 - The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated how local businesses contribute to community resilience during crises. Rural communities with strong local business networks adapted more quickly to changing circumstances, with 76% of local businesses modifying their operations to continue serving their communities, compared to 61% of chain stores.

#8 - Local businesses help maintain the unique character and heritage of rural communities. Studies show that communities with a higher percentage of local businesses attract more tourism dollars, with visitors spending an average of 23% more in areas characterized by unique local businesses rather than chain stores.

#9 - Local businesses are more responsive to local needs and preferences. Research from the Small Business Administration shows that small local businesses introduce more new products and services per employee than large corporations, particularly in rural areas where they can identify and fill specific community needs more effectively.

#10 - When residents shop at locally owned businesses, more money stays within the community. A study by the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta found rural communities with strong local business sectors experienced 15-20% less wealth leakage compared to similar communities dominated by chain stores. This retained wealth is critical in small rural towns.

These benefits create a virtuous cycle: as more people shop locally, businesses become more viable, creating more jobs and generating more tax revenue, which in turn supports better community services and infrastructure. This makes the community more attractive to both residents and businesses, further strengthening the local economy. For rural communities facing challenges such as population decline and economic stagnation, supporting local businesses isn't just about preserving mom-and-pop shops – it's about maintaining the economic and social fabric that keeps these communities viable and vibrant for future generations.

John Newby is a nationally recognized Columnist, Speaker, & Publisher. He consults with Chambers, Communities, Business & Media. This column appears in 60+ newspapers and media outlets. As founder of Truly-Local, he assists chambers, communities, media, and businesses in creating synergies that build vibrant communities. He can be reached at John@Truly-Local.org.

Guest Column

"Building Main Street, not Wall Street"
John Newby

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Rep. Chip Neiman
Chip.Neiman@wyoleg.gov or (307) 290-0366

2024 PASSAGES

REMEMBERING THOSE WE HAVE LOST

FLORENCE 'CAROL' STEPHENSON
June 26, 1937–Dec. 17, 2023
SHARON KAY (HILDEBRAND BECVAR) HAUCK
Nov. 18, 1949–Dec. 18, 2023
ANNA MARIE DIXON COLLINSWORTH
April 1, 1939–Dec. 20, 2023
BARRY NORDELL PETERSON
Nov. 17, 1945–Dec. 23, 2023
DAWN LORAIN (BOHLMAN) LEONE
Nov. 11, 1967–Dec. 24, 2023
WAYNE 'MAC' LEELAND McDOUGALL
–Dec. 25, 2023
JOHN F. DUMBRILL
Dec. 6, 1932–Dec. 26, 2023
ALYCE JANE KNIGGE
April 18, 1935–Jan. 7, 2024
RUTH 'RUTHIE' M. (SHIELDS) NORRIS
Feb. 10, 1937–Jan. 7, 2024
JOAN McCOY
March 22, 1939–Jan. 9, 2024
JAMES 'JIM' THOMAS BOLDING
Sept. 7, 1935–Jan. 13, 2024
CAROL ANN WANG
March 14, 1939–Jan. 21, 2024
MICHAEL L. FITZWATER
Nov. 19, 1946–Jan. 27, 2024
CHARLES 'CHUCK' RICHARD GORDON
Nov. 26, 1957–Jan. 31, 2024
VERONICA TERESA MARIE (DOLAN) NOVAK
Nov. 30, 1932–Feb. 2, 2024
SANDRA KESSLER
July 5, 1940–Feb. 9, 2024
DONNA BERDAHL
Dec. 7, 1955–Feb. 11, 2024
ROHN SMITH
Nov. 7, 1983–Feb. 14, 2024
MARIA 'MIA' KAISER
Oct. 26, 1936–Feb. 16, 2024
JUDY LEE (DOLLISON) HAWTHORNE

May 19, 1947–Feb. 19, 2024
MARY LOIS McQUIN
July 22, 1936–Feb. 19, 2024
MICHAEL DUTCHER
Aug. 9, 1944–Feb. 20, 2024
CHERI A. SMITH
Oct. 19, 1948–Feb. 27, 2024
IDA WANNER
Dec. 19, 1926–March 1, 2024
SUSAN KAYE JONES
June 23, 1951–March 2, 2024
JOHN BUTTON
May 1, 1956–March 3, 2024
BETTY JOAN HOLWELL
July 31, 1937–March 10, 2024
JANET ROSE GRAHAM
1948–April 2024
KIM WATSON
March 6, 1956–March 12, 2024
KEVIN KIRK JAHRIG
March 3, 1968–March 18, 2024
RENA 'MINNIE' QUICK
April 3, 1936–March 18, 2024
ELIZABETH GRACE (PILLEN) HAWLEY
Oct. 30, 1978–March 20, 2024
CHRIS ALLEN HANSEN
June 29, 1954–March 27, 2024
BARBARA LYNNE ANDERSON
June 13, 1966–April 3, 2024
JACQUELINE 'JACKIE' KAY COX
Aug. 20, 1941–April 5, 2024
DANIEL 'DAN' E. GRANT
1940–2024
KARL HENRIK FREDERIKSEN
Jan. 8, 1930–April 9, 2024
LONNIE DICKINSON
Nov. 1, 1946–April 12, 2024
SUSAN IONA (TAVEGIA) BRAUN
Sept. 15, 1948–April 18, 2024
CONNIE E. RAINBOLT
Dec. 26, 1950–April 24, 2024
RICHARD 'DICK' CRUM
Dec. 11, 1950–April 29, 2024
JOYELLE MARIE (STAFFORD) HESSLER
March 3, 1976–May 1, 2024
EUGENE SWEET

Oct. 14, 1937–May 7, 2024
AURORA RAE MASTERS
July 10, 2018–May 16, 2024
CHARLEAN 'SUSIE' DANIELS SONESEN
March 5, 1972–June 1, 2024
NORA 'EVA' STRANGE OWL LEE
Aug. 22, 1940–June 4, 2024
JAREMY JESS ERICKSON
July 12, 1976–June 5, 2024
RANDALL 'RANDY' JAMES BRATTON
May 14, 1962–June 11, 2024
LORRAINE DAVIS
Sept. 10, 1932–June 11, 2024
LAURIE SUE MARTIN
Feb. 26, 1964–June 11, 2024
CHRISTINE 'CHRIS' ERDMAN
May 31, 1947–June 12, 2024
VIRGINIA LEE AINSLIE GARHART
May 3, 1944–June 16, 2024
WILLIS 'WILLIE' WILLADSON
1934–June 19, 2024
TIMOTHY KENT STITH JR.
July 14, 1965–July 5, 2024
ROBERT 'BOB' ZERBST
1940–July 7, 2024
LORRAYNE (ROTTER) BALSITIS
Oct. 10, 1925–July 10, 2024
DAN EPPERSON
May 22, 1943–July 13, 2024
HELEN FARNSWORTH
April 1, 1932–July 13, 2024
CARLA REED
Feb. 28, 1934–July 13, 2024
ELLEN BOAL
Aug. 7, 1920–July 20, 2024
STEVE MACHEICHOK
March 21, 1951–July 26, 2024
GWENDELL FAY MILLS EWING
1947–July 28, 2024
NANCY L. BAIR
April 18, 1954–July 30, 2024
CAROL LEA DEWEY
Nov. 15, 1950–Aug. 2, 2024
JEANNINE DANIELS
July 19, 1946–Aug. 6, 2024

GEORGE W. EGGE JR.
April 2, 1938–Aug. 8, 2024
BRIAN LEE WEEG
Dec. 27, 1961–Aug. 14, 2024
DAVID LEE LAWSON
1945–Aug. 20, 2024
TIM NEIL FRARY
1947–Aug. 21, 2024
MARY LOU BURR
Aug. 1, 1931–Aug. 26, 2024
SHELLY RAE ROBERTS
Nov. 4, 1964–Sept. 8, 2024
NICOLE CHRISTINE KESSLER JENSEN
Aug. 17, 1978–Sept. 10, 2024
FLOYE ROBERTA 'BOBBIE' JONES
Jan. 30, 1957–Sept. 10, 2024
JANINE K. (FORDYCE) UTTENHOVE
April 21, 1960–Sept. 11, 2024
MICHAEL EVERETT HANSEN
Nov. 19, 1941–Sept. 12, 2024
JEREMY WILL RICHARDSON
May 30, 1969–Sept. 23, 2024
LINDA LU CHILDS
Nov. 9, 1954–Sept. 24, 2024
EDWARD 'EDDY' CARGILL
Oct. 15, 1937–Sept. 26, 2024
DEBORAH McLELAND
May 18, 1951–Sept. 30, 2024
DAVID LYLE DUTCHER
Sept. 5, 1948–Oct. 3, 2024
JUDITH ANN (WADSWORTH) WOOD
July 28, 1940–Oct. 4, 2024
LOUIS GABRIELLE DOELL
Aug. 15, 1928–Oct. 8, 2024
DORIS LUELLA (HARRIS) WEIBERT
Sept. 25, 1930–Oct. 8, 2024
ROBIN EARL KING (SR.)
April 14, 1952–Oct. 10, 2024
LARRY DOIL MORGAN
Oct. 1, 1937–Oct. 12, 2024
LEONA FAY SORENSEN CARR
Dec. 28, 1935–Oct. 15, 2024
STEPHEN JAMES THORPE
Jan. 13, 1944–Oct. 15, 2024

DONALD LOUIS HAMPTON
Aug. 30, 1935–Oct. 19, 2024
TIMOTHY JAMES CHAMBERLAIN
Feb. 4, 1954–Oct. 20, 2024
NAOMI 'PEGGY' YVONNE BERDAHL
Dec. 14, 1926–Oct. 22, 2024
BEVERLY ANN ONDRIEZEK
Jan. 25, 1937–Oct. 22, 2024
WILLIAM 'BILL' ALBERT MORRIS
June 5, 1939–Oct. 23, 2024
FRANCIS DEAN BERGSTROM
Aug. 16, 1949–Oct. 24, 2024
MICHAEL BRADLEY BELCOURT
April 6, 1942–Oct. 26, 2024
ROSE A. (HANSEN) ALLEN
May 5, 1927–Oct. 28, 2024
ROBERT E. TANNER
1930–Oct. 30, 2024
DEBBIE ALBERT
Aug. 18, 1954–Nov. 1, 2024
GARRY NELSON
–Nov. 2, 2024
JOYCE ANNE (STRONG) HAPTONSTALL
July 17, 1947–Nov. 6, 2024
JEREMY RYAN RUSSELL
March 5, 1987–Nov. 14, 2024
CHET ANDREW SMITH
June 28, 1979–Nov. 15, 2024
ROBERT C. HENRY
Dec. 20, 1934–Nov. 19, 2024
JERRY ARLEN SPRACKLEN
Aug. 3, 1946–Nov. 23, 2024
NICK HARPER
May 30, 1963–Nov. 26, 2024
ALICE JANE CUNNINGHAM
April 21, 1942–Nov. 29, 2024
ELIZABETH FARNHAM FIELD
May 8, 1926–Dec. 6, 2024
PEGGY OMEGA HOPE DUCLO
Feb. 22, 1951–Dec. 8, 2024
BETTY JO UPDIKE BENSON
1935–Dec. 18, 2024

...

Obituary

BETTY JO UPDIKE BENSON 1935–2024

Betty Benson passed away Dec. 18, 2024, at age 89, after a brief stay at Davis Hospice in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

Betty was born on Nov. 21, 1935, in Newcastle, Wyoming, to NS and Reta Updike while they lived in the Osage oil field.

She married Ken Benson in 1958 after both graduated from the University of Wyoming, Ken in pharmacy and Betty in education.

She is preceded in death by her

husband, Ken, and sister, Pat Smith, of Newcastle. She is survived by her three sons, Bret (Laurie), Gillette, Wyoming, Scott (Ruth), New Braunfels, Texas, and Kent (Trish), Cheyenne; four grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

Betty, Ken, and the boys lived in Cheyenne throughout their life.

Betty volunteered for many community service organizations and worked for years at Needs Inc.



Betty Benson

She was an avid Bridge player and continued playing cards up to her death. Betty was also an avid reader and always watched the Denver professional sports teams as well as UW sports. She was a longtime member of "Daughters of American

Revolution" and "Colonial Dames."

Betty has been cremated and she will be laid to rest in Newcastle at her family plot this spring. As per her wishes, there will be no service.

How to send an obituary

To send an obituary for a loved one with connections to Weston County, please email design@newsjlj.com. The News Letter Journal publishes obituaries on this page weekly. Deadline is Monday at 5 p.m., however, if you let us know an obituary is coming we can reserve a space until noon on Tuesday, or arrange to publish a short notice until a longer one has been prepared. We do charge a minimal fee, and will confirm receipt of your submission along with the cost to print. All obituaries are also published for FREE on our website, newsjlj.com, and on the NLJ Facebook page.

FAITH & VALUES

Daily Devotional Reading

December 26
John 1:19–34

December 30
Revelation 22:1–21

December 27
John 1:35–51

December 31
Isaiah 65:17–25

December 28
Luke 2:22–52

Scriptures Selected by
the American
Bible Society

December 29
Revelation 21:1–27

• **ASSEMBLY OF GOD CHURCH:** Rev. Norm Brotzman, 216 S. Seneca, 746-2249. Call to Worship 9:30 am; Prayer Service 5 pm

• **BAHA'I FAITH:** Firesides (open to all) 1st & 3rd Fridays 7:30 pm at 15 Skyview Dr; 746-3626

• **CAMBRIA COMMUNITY BAPTIST CHURCH:** 19 Stampede St. 746-2321. Sunday School 9:15 am; Worship 10:30 am; Youth (6-12 grades) and Adult Bible Study Sunday Evening 6-7 pm; Wednesday Night Youth and Adult Bible Study 6 pm; Life Recovery Bible Study Sunday Night 7 pm

• **CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH:** Fr. Steve Christy, S. Summit & Winthrop Streets. 746-9684. christchurchnewcastle@gmail.com. Service time: Sunday 10 am

• **CHRIST THE KING LUTHERAN CHURCH:** 224 West Road, West of Dow Park, 746-2415. Sunday Worship 9 am

• **CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS:** Bishop Ty Checketts, 120 Ash, 746-4131. Sunday Sacrament Mtg 9 am; Sunday School 10:20 am; Relief Society & Priesthood Mtg 11:15 am

• **CHURCH ON THE HILL:** Pastor Wayne Wilson, 301 Delaware, 746-9663. Adult Sunday School 9:30 am; Prayer 10:15 am; Worship 10:45 am; Prayer Service Tuesday 6 pm; Undeafened Youth/children's ministry (3 years old-12th Grade) Wednesday 6 pm

• **CORPUS CHRISTI CATHOLIC CHURCH:** Father Brian Hess, 19 W. Winthrop, 746-4219. Saturday Mass 5 pm; Sunday Mass 8 am; Weekday Mass 8 am

• **COUNTRY CHURCH:** Four Corners, Pastor Bill Haley and Micah Popma, 746-9712. Worship 10 am

• **FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH:** Pastor Ben Roberts, 903 S. Summit, 746-2188. Sunday School 9:15 am; Worship Service 10:30 am; AWANA Clubs Wednesday 6:30 pm

• **FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH:** Rev. Calvin Hill, 23 N. Seneca, 746-4119. Adult Bible Study 8:45 am; Traditional Church Services 10 am; 10:15 am Children's Church

• **GATEWAY FELLOWSHIP:** Pastor Jon Anderson, 12 Old Hwy. 85, Evangelical Free Church, Bible Study 9:15 am. Worship 10:30 am. Call 746-8091

• **KINGDOM HALL OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES:** 5018 US Hwy 16, 746-2319 or 746-4517. Tuesday 7 pm. Congregation Bible Study, Theocratic Ministry School and Service Meeting. Sunday Public Talk 10 am; Watchtower 11 am

• **NEWCASTLE FOURSQUARE CHURCH:** Pastor Mick Bohn, 1525 S. Summit, 746-3618. Sun. Worship 10 am; Wed. Night Prayer

• **OSAGE COMMUNITY CHURCH:** 348 Sheridan St. in Osage, 465-2341. Sunday School 10 am; Worship 11 am

• **SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST:** Pastor Edney Santos 303-990-7640, 78 Old Hwy 85. Saturday Sabbath School 9:30 am; Worship 11 am

• **ST. ANTHONY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH:** Father Brian Hess, Upton. Sunday Mass 5 pm

• **UPTON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH:** 834 Pine, Upton, 468-9302. Worship 11 am Sunday

For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – His eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse. ~ Romans 1:20



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From the vault ...



This is a photo of the Fordyce Family Band.

Photo courtesy of WC Historical Society

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LIL' DOGIE LUNCH

Ryker Rhoades, Charlie Pzinski, Cloey Krause, Ellee Hesper, Mesa Johnson, Valen Dow

Thank you, Hot Stuff, for hosting this month's Lil' Dogie Lunch, and partnering with Newcastle Elementary School to reward students who display good citizenship by helping others.



Some Time Ago

25 Years Ago
December 30, 1999

For Weston County service providers ringing in Y2K will be a business as usual day. Well, almost. Standby for Y2K has some agencies pulling additional duty. Weston County Emergency Manager Vonda Rothleutner has been pulling extra duty in preparation for this day since spring.

It's been eight years since the people of Osage held an election, and decided to form their own water district, and with the lowering of the old Osage water tower last week, it appears their battle to get a steady, reliable source of water is almost complete. Work records indicate the old tank arrived from Phillip, South Dakota in the summer of 1948, but nobody knows whether it was new or used at the time.

President Clinton's plan to close off several million acres of National Forest land to vehicular travel may not pertain to most areas of the Black Hills, but operators of Black Hills sawmills perceive Clinton's roadless initiative as a definite and immediate threat to local economies.

The Dogie wrestling team nearly went undefeated in the first three weeks of the season, with a 42-27 dual loss to the defending state champions from Douglas as the only blemish on an otherwise sparkling record.

Not everybody thinks Super

Bowl Sunday is meant strictly for filling up on greasy foods, logging significant couch time and viewing disappointing blowouts on the big screen. Starting at the Sundance Elementary School on Super Bowl Sunday, January 30, 2000, and looping four miles back to the finish, the Freeze Your Fanny road race/walk will provide an alternative for those who want to get in a little physical activity while others are watching worthless hours of pregame coverage and getting molded to their chairs.

50 Years Ago
December 26, 1974

The warming shed at the ice skating rink will be open Saturday and Sunday and evenings when ice conditions permit. School superintendent Lee Albert made the announcement this week.

At the time of our 1974 forecast a year ago, the American economy was beset by a critical shortage of fuel and energy, with its multitude of threatening implications. Fortunately, despite widespread anxiety in the business world and the inconvenience of queuing up at the gasoline stations, there were no massive disruptions of commercial and industrial activity.

A college English composition course will be offered in Osage this winter and spring, under the auspices of Eastern

Wyoming College and the Lifetime Learning program of School District Number One. Mrs. Jane Tavegia will teach the course, which will be available for three semester hours of credit.

Dr. Wayne B. Erickson has been called to be the Bishop of the Newcastle Ward, Rapid City, S.D. Stake, by the first presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Bishop Erickson was sustained by the membership of Newcastle Ward with his two councilors, Ron R. Moody and Douglas D. Scott, also of Newcastle.

Funeral services for Slyvanus P. "Van" Wilson, 66, will be held in the chapel of the McColley Funeral home Tuesday, at 2 p.m. with Bryan Clark officiating. He died at his home in Newcastle Friday, Dec. 20.

100 Years Ago
December 25, 1924

Our story in last week's issue concerning the establishing of the Chevrolet Agency in Newcastle and the purchase of the Hixson Garage has been construed by some to mean that C.E. Hixson is going out of business as the Dodge Sales representative in Newcastle. Such is not the case. All that was sold was the shop and the lease on the building. Claude will find himself new quarters and continue to sell Dodge

cars.

The first of the week S.V. Washburn received a letter addressed from Hampshire calling for certain articles for the holidays. The letter was unsigned and Mr. Washburn has simply had to make a guess and take a chance on the goods reaching the party writing. You can't be too careful about signing your communications.

The Sam Hinn Mercantile Co. store was totally destroyed by fire last Saturday night. The origin of the conflagration is not definitely known, but it is presumed it was caused by a defective flue.

During the past month we have mailed out bills to every delinquent subscriber on our list and to all thus who would be delinquent or before January 1st. The replies have been numerous but many failed to respond.

The school gave a very interesting program last Friday. The assembly room was decorated in festive attire bespeaking the holiday season. The tree was heavily laden with gifts for each child and faculty.

Stacy Cox of the Osage Mercantile Meat Market "Forded" to Sundance Sunday to spend the day with friends and while there he heard of the death of Tommy Roark's mother who died Saturday night. She had been sick for many months and the end was not expected.

The Broken Chain



Charles Townsend
1943-2011

We didn't know that morning,
God was going to call your name.
In life we loved you dearly,
In death we do the same.
It broke our hearts to lose you.
You did not go alone.
For part of us went with you,
The day God called you home.
You left us beautiful memories.
Your love is still our guide.
And though we cannot see you,
You are always by our side.
Our family chain is broken,
And nothing seems the same.
But as God calls us one by one,
The chain will link again.

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WESTON COUNTY MEETINGS & EVENTS CALENDAR

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LET US KNOW WHAT'S UP!

Is your group or organization hosting an event? Send your event listings to design@newsj.com for inclusion in the News Letter Journal's weekly What's Up Calendar, sponsored by Pinnacle Bank.

Thu. Dec. 26	Closed 6-8:30PM	Christmas Break - No Classes/Mtgs Celebrate Recovery	WC Senior Center Church On The Hill
Fri. Dec. 27	9AM 1PM 5:30PM	Caramel Rolls Bridge Bingo	WC Senior Center WC Senior Center VFW
Mon. Dec. 30	9AM 1PM 7PM	Exercise Class Computer Clinic Alcoholics Anonymous	WC Senior Center WC Senior Center WC Senior Center
Tue. Dec. 31	Closing Early 11AM 4PM 8PM-1AM	New Year's Eve - No Classes/Mtgs Story Time T.O.P.S. #135 Boot Scootin Boogie New Years Eve	WC Senior Center WC Library First United Methodist Church WC Fairgrounds Event Center
Wed. Jan. 1	closed	Happy New Year - No Classes/Clinics/Mtgs	WC Senior Center

Remember Those Who Serve

Free 1 year subscription to all active military!
News Letter Journal 14 W. Main, Newcastle (307) 746-2777

YIR from Page 1

• A Feb. 1 special meeting of the Weston County Health Services board of trustees brought about an updated influenza vaccine policy after a lengthy discussion. The policy at the time was that anyone who had a religious or medical exemption from the influenza vaccine had to wear a mask for the entirety of the flu season. The new policy, while still requiring the influenza vaccine, no longer requires the use of masks for those who have exemptions.

• At a Feb. 6 meeting of the Board of Weston County Commissioners, Weston County Road and Bridge Superintendent Jim Hansen announced that the replacement of the Old Highway 85 bridge was delayed until 2025. The Wyoming Department of Transportation engineer for District 4, Scott Taylor, said that the delay was due to limited funding.

• 2014 Newcastle High School graduate Kianna Ehlers was about to take over Newcastle Vision Clinic as its new owner. Ehlers became a licensed optometrist in 2020 and said she was excited to come back to Newcastle and take over at Newcastle Vision Clinic.

MARCH

• In a Feb. 20 meeting, the Weston County commissioners decided to table a resolution to declare two vacancies in the Wyoming State Legislature — a representative and a senator for Weston County. The topic was set to be discussed again on April 2. The resolution was in response to the 2022 redistricting approved by the Wyoming Legislature that continued to split Weston County into two districts in both the Wyoming House of Representatives and the Senate.

• A report from the Wyoming Community Development Authority showed that Weston County's home ownership rate was the highest in the state, increasing substantially since 2010. However, the poverty rate in Weston County also rose in that time and exceeds the state average.

• The Newcastle Middle School drama club performed "Alice in Wonderland" in February. The News Letter Journal article stated that this was the second production the drama club has done through Empowering Teens, the 21st Century Community Learning Center after-school program at the middle school. Seventeen NMS students took part in the production.

• After considering two proposals for the use of state funds supplied to the county to address issues associated with problem gambling, the Weston County commissioners awarded the News Letter Journal a bid to educate the public about gambling addiction, as well as raise awareness for treatment options. The two proposals, from the NLJ and 21 Wellness Coalition, were considered over three meetings, with the choice to award the bid to the NLJ coming on a 3-2 vote in a March 5 meeting.

• According to Weston County Emergency Management coordinator Gilbert Nelson, the noon siren came to an end after the practice of testing the warning sirens on a daily basis went away. The change was announced on Facebook on March 7.

APRIL

• Both births and deaths were up in 2023 for Weston County, with deaths

still outweighing the births, according to information provided by the public information officer for the Wyoming Department of Health, Kim Deti. The information was provided following a March 15 release with the state's 2023 death, birth, marriage and divorce totals, according to records held by the Vital Statistics Services, a part of the Department of Health.

• Lucas Keeler of Newcastle was elected to the Wyoming Historical Society executive board to serve a three-year term. The Wyoming Historical Society, started in 1953, encourages the study of Wyoming history. Keeler has always had an interest in history and looked up to local historians.

• In an April 2 meeting, the Weston County commissioners approved a resolution to declare a vacancy for both senator and representative for Weston County in a 3-2 vote. The resolution was first discussed by William Curley with the board on Feb. 6 and is in response to the 2022 redistricting approved by the Wyoming Legislature that continued to split Weston County into two districts in both the Wyoming House and Senate.

• After 14 years as the director of the Weston County Library System, Brenda Mahoney-Ayres retired. Mahoney-Ayres loved working for the library but decided it was time to enjoy her retirement sooner rather than later and spend more time with grandchildren and engaging in her hobbies.

• In an April 16 meeting, the Weston County commissioners voted to return to the original plans for Old Highway 85 that will include full-depth reclamation, or FDR, of the road instead of paving a portion. Reasons for decreasing the scope of the project were related to costs.

MAY

• The Wyoming Department of Transportation decided to reduce speeds near Newcastle Elementary School, according to Michelle M. Edwards, the department's District 4 traffic engineer. Weston County School District No. 1 officials felt the change would improve safety near the busy school approaches.

• Miranda McDonald, 1999 Newcastle High School graduate, was recently named the vice president of a major record label in Nashville, Tennessee. McDonald moved to Nashville after studying at Chadron State University in Nebraska and after meeting a keyboard player for Rascal Flatts in Portland, Oregon, that summer, sparking her idea to live in Nashville.

• A May 2 meeting of the Weston County Health Services board was packed with community members with concerns about communication within and outside the hospital and to express frustration over staffing changes and other actions taken by board members and the hospital's CEO, Randy Lindauer. H&H Leadership Solutions, a consulting team that was hired to conduct three months of advisory solutions and operational review work, presented its operational assessment at the beginning of the meeting.

• Weston County Hospital District CEO Randy Lindauer announced his resignation at a May 23 special board



Photos by Stefanie Roth/NLJ

On Aug. 31, at the Madness on Main Street Dance, kids of all ages take to the street for the Chicken Dance.

meeting. Board Chair Ann Slagle said immediately after Lindauer's statement that the board accepted his resignation.

• Nate Strickland, a 2024 graduate of Newcastle High School, was selected as one of the 2024 class of Daniels Scholarship Program recipients. The scholarship included \$100,000 to help with college over four years. Strickland was one of 23 Wyoming students to receive the scholarship, with a total of 209 students receiving the scholarship across Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico and Utah.

JUNE

• In a May 7 meeting, the Board of Weston County commissioners voted to begin the process of looking into creating an emergency medical services district. The idea of creating an EMS district to help fund services in Weston County was first mentioned by Shane Kirsch of the Campbell County Health EMS.

• Michael Carpenter, a certified physician assistant at Weston County Health Services, retired after 36 years serving the community. Carpenter said he is attached to the folks he took care of and will miss serving them in that capacity.

• According to Brad LaCroix, superintendent of Weston County School District No. 1, a bus driver shortage has been on the radar for some time. Transportation Director Troy Allen said the district has had to combine some school bus routes in recent years to help with coverage. Allen said the most important thing was to get routes covered, and if they can't cover routes, there won't be drivers for activities.

• Catherine Harshbarger started as interim CEO at the Weston County Hospital on June 24. At a June 20 meeting, the Weston County Health Services board had approved extending CEO Randy Lindauer's employment through June 25, but his role was to only involve training.

• Ruthie Spence retired from her business, A-1 Agency, after many years of serving the community in her role there. Shawnda Sandrini took over the business and will continue it.



Photos by Emalee Sweet/NLJ

It was a busy season for firefighters, with fire danger at extreme throughout most of the year. Here, Meritt Pederson works on at the Sweet Water Fire on Oct. 5.

JULY

• Rare Element Resources still planned to begin operations on Sept. 1 at their rare earth recovery and separation demonstration plant under construction in Upton, despite inflation driving up costs. President and CEO Ken Mushinski said in an email on July 2 that they plan to continue whether they can secure additional funding from the Department of Energy or not.

• Safe Haven laws were updated in Wyoming to make it easier for new mothers to seek help for their babies if they are overwhelmed by their situation. Newcastle Police Chief Derek Thompson said that his department has a procedure in place in case a baby is received by an officer, including the Department of Family Services being notified immediately.

• Eileen Vickers donated a pickleball court to the community for public use, offering another outdoor activity for the area. While players have to bring their own ball and paddles, the court is free to the public.

• The Newcastle City Council was considering a loitering ordinance to help address the issues noticed in the community concerning young people gathering at the Loaf n' Jug parking lot on Washington Boulevard. The issue was discussed during the council's regular meeting on July 15. Police Chief Derek Thompson said the department has received several complaints regarding the Loaf n' Jug parking lot.

• Newcastle High School senior Aspen Bloom was recognized when one of her art pieces, "Devils Tower," was chosen to be displayed in the Governor's Mansion in Cheyenne. Every year, the first lady of Wyoming chooses several art pieces for display in the mansion that were created by

young artists from across the state and exhibited at the Annual Wyoming High School Art Symposium.

AUGUST

• The Board of Weston County Commissioners approved the fiscal year 2025 budget of \$20,181,988.48 during its July 16 meeting. This is up from last year's \$19,588,113.83 budget by \$593,874.65. According to Weston County Clerk Becky Hadlock, the biggest change, in addition to the increase in total budget amount, was the assessed valuation, which was down \$9,753,013 from last year.

• A weight-lifting competition was held on July 13 and resulted in a Newcastle High School record-breaking deadlift. The competition was put on by the high school girls wrestling coaches, Brooks and Shaide Bowthorpe, and had over 20 competitors. Jayde Harrington broke the Newcastle High School record for girls' deadlift at 300 pounds.

• 2021 Newcastle High School graduate Skylar Jenkins was recently deployed with his Wyoming National Guard unit to the Middle East. The occasion was historic because the entire Second Battalion, 300th Field Regiment, which Jenkins is a part of, was deployed together for the first time in 70 years. The last deployment of the entire battalion was for the Korean War.

• In Weston County's primary election, held on Aug. 20, voters cast a total of 2,026 ballots. Some of the results included: Ed Wagoner and Marty Ertman winning the top slots for the Weston County commissioner race, and J.D. Williams coming out on top over Allen Slagle for the race to represent District 2 in the Wyoming



Photo by Kim Dean/NLJ

The Pinnacle Bank meeting room and parking lot were full of well-wishers who came out on June 14 to celebrate with Ruthie Spence. Spence retired from A-1 Insurance Agency and she was also celebrating her 80th birthday. The celebration continued on Saturday with family members taking a ride together to see the old homestead where Spence and her siblings grew up. The remaining duo, Glenn Zerbst and Ruthie Spence, share a hug, above.



Christmas at the museum

Photos by Emalee Sweet and Walter Sprague/NLJ

On Dec. 6, the Weston County Museum District hosted Christmas events at the Anna Miller Museum in Newcastle. The event featured Christmas carols and cookie decorating, along with treats and refreshments. Clockwise from top: children decorate handmade snowflakes; 10-year-old Aleya Grummons pantomimes and sings to many of the songs; Mick Bohn, Bill Haley and Kenny Fordyce sing carols with much of the crowd singing along; Sharon Blessing and OnaMae Fuller enjoy the carols as they visit.



YIR

from Page 6

House of Representatives.

- The Aug. 29 issue of the News Letter Journal noted that 17 fires had been reported over the previous five days, according to Weston County Fire Warden Daniel Tysdal. This brought Weston County's total fire count since July to 47 at the time of writing.

SEPTEMBER

- According to an email from Cathy Harshbarger, chief executive officer of the hospital, on Aug. 30, Weston County Health Services Chief Operating Officer Piper Allard resigned. The statement announcing Allard's resignation as of Aug. 30 was a "joint message" from the hospital and Allard.

- The 71st annual meeting of the Wyoming Historical Society took place in Weston County, hosted by the Weston County Historical Society. Many people came from around the state for tours and lectures about some of the history of the area.

- Weston County Health Services' radiology department saw improvements in image quality through technology it began using, according to radiology manager Keisha Brueggeman. The team wanted to offer a wider range of services, including scoliosis exams and better equipment for orthopedic and podiatry views.

- A year after escaping from Wyoming Honor Conservation Camp, John Eric Handy was found on July 11, 2024. Handy had escaped in June 2023. Handy was found on a recreational trail head south of Lead, South Dakota, and was arrested and taken to the Lawrence County jail. On Aug. 16, he was extradited from South Dakota to the Weston County Sheriff's Office.

- Nick Johnson resigned from the Weston County Hospital District's board. The board is seeking a new trustee to replace Johnson, who was also the board's secretary. His term wasn't to end until May 2026.



Photos by Stefanie Shirk/NLJ

"Confident" plays in the background as the Double A Aces Dance Squad dance the night away on Friday, May 17, at the NES School Talent Show held in the Crouch Auditorium.

OCTOBER

- Joe and Darian Samuelson both work at the Upton schools and are involved in coaching. As youth, they were both involved in the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and wanted to

bring the organization to Upton. The couple was recently recognized in a feature story in FCA's national magazine.

- J.D. Williams, in an Oct. 9 meeting, told the Weston County School District No. 1 board of trustees

that House District 4 Rep. Jeremy Haroldson will bring back House Bill 125 from the 2024 budget session, which passed both chambers but was vetoed by Gov. Mark Gordon. The bill would allow people who may legally carry concealed weapons to do so in government meetings, public school facilities and public school athletic events on public property that "does not sell alcoholic beverages."

- Kenneth Hoffman, of Newcastle, was named TOPS Club King for 2024. TOPS was founded in 1948 and is a nonprofit weight-loss organization. Hoffman explained that he struggled with weight as he got older and began to gain. However, he eventually decided he needed to pay more attention to his health.

- The Weston County commissioners selected Karl Lacey and William Curley to fill the state representative and state senator seats that commissioners had declared vacant in April. That decision was made in response to the Wyoming Legislature's decision to continue to divide the county when it created legislative district maps in 2022.

- Joanna Akers was named Agent of the Year for the Association of Wyoming Insurance Agents at the organization's annual convention in June. Akers has been with First State Insurance in Newcastle since 1989.

NOVEMBER

- A group of Newcastle residents is committed to building a memorial to honor local veterans. The Newcastle Wyoming Veterans Memorial Committee formed about six years ago and has been dutifully working toward the realization of the memorial ever since. Fund-raising efforts are a slow process, but the donation of land by Pinnacle Bank was a big boon to the group.

- Despite having only 16 students, Custer County's Elk Mountain School has gained some well-deserved attention. Sixth grader Evelyn Rosse had the winning design for the "I voted"

sticker contest, which is held by the South Dakota secretary of state every other year.

- Jennifer Proffer has been appointed new executive director of the Newcastle Chamber of Commerce as of Sept. 13. Proffer said she has bright plans for the development of the town. Those ideas, in part, prompted her to get involved with the chamber.

- Randi Carpenter, a 2001 Newcastle High School graduate and former News Letter Journal reporter, made an historic journey to the other side of the world earlier this year. Carpenter, a major in the Wyoming Air National Guard, was one of eight members of an all-female aircrew that conducted an airlift mission in Africa on Jan. 2, 2024. They were the first all-female aircrew deployed by the Wyoming Air National Guard.

DECEMBER

- One of Weston County's representatives in the state Legislature will hold the highest seat in the Wyoming House after Rep. Chip Neiman, R-Hulett, was elected unanimously by House Republicans, at the Republican caucus, to be speaker of the House. Neiman told the News Letter Journal, "That was a real honor to be considered and have unanimous support."

- Weston County will be using a portion of the county's Wyoming Opioid Settlement Funds, the result of an opioid lawsuit, to purchase a new vehicle for the K-9 unit and to bring training to Weston County for all law enforcement officers. The new vehicle will replace the current one, which is having issues, and will accommodate the drug dog. In addition to the new vehicle, \$20,000 of the funds will bring law enforcement training to Newcastle for all officers in the county, including officers in both the Newcastle and Upton police departments.

- Wyo Help, whose roots lie in

Old Town lights up



Photo by Stefanie Roth/NLJ

A crowd of people showed up at The Red Onion Museum and Old Town in Upton for the annual Christmas Lighting on Dec. 6. Above, folks stand in line for hot chocolate and homemade cookies in the Red Onion Museum building. At left, The museum glows in purple and white, and one of the historic buildings at Old Town features icicle lights.

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Photo by Walter Sprague/NLJ

A Celebration of National Historic Preservation Month was held on May 16, at Christ Episcopal Church of Newcastle. Presented by the Weston County Historic Preservation Board, several speakers gave a small crowd the history of the church, the first church built in Newcastle. Afterward a fellowship was held with cookies and drinks. The event was also sponsored by Weston County Museum District and Weston County Commissioners. Dr. Mike Jording, of the WCHPB, shows a copper box that was used a time capsule in a cornerstone of church. The capsule, originally placed in the stone in 1890, was removed in 1990 and held a couple of newspapers along with a prayer book and other memorabilia.

Thank You!

Thanks to the overwhelming support of our local donors, Weston County School District No. 1 received an incredible surplus of beef. We are deeply grateful for their generosity and are excited that we were able to share this bounty with school district families at a beef giveaway on Dec. 18.

Thank you to these area ranchers whose generosity made this possible:
John and Robin Riesland • Sean Crabtree/Andy Podio • Halverson Farms
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WESTON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT # 1
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YIR from Page 7

Goshen County, has launched a new program called the Good Neighbor Club. Channing Lutz, resource coordinator for the organization in Weston County, said that Wyo Help is a community action organization committed to enhancing the quality of life for people in need by providing assistance with rent, utilities, medical bills, groceries and other unexpected expenses. The Good Neighbor Club is meant to meet needs beyond what available resources, such as grants, can provide.

• David Charles Riggle was arrested on Dec. 11 and released on a \$10,000 bond. Riggle, born 1985, is charged with possession, manufacture, transportation and sale of explosives, improvised explosive device or incendiary apparatus with unlawful intent prohibited, a felony under Wyoming law. Judge Lynda Bush imposed a \$10,000 cash-only bond, which Riggle paid the same day. The device, according to the affidavit of probable cause, was found shortly after 8 a.m. in a shop/storage trailer at the TYVO Drilling yard, located one mile south of Upton on Wyoming Highway 116. When the call came into dispatch, Deputy Jared Engle responded and met with Keith Materi, the owner of TYVO Drilling yard. Robert Finn and Les Dixon had located the device after smelling propane when they arrived at the yard. After observing the device, a 100-propane tank, Deputy Engle waited for the Campbell County Sheriff's Office bomb squad to arrive.

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Photo by Kim Dean/NLJ

First Northern Bank's Newcastle branch has a real, live "Grinch." Bank employees decorated every wall, door and window with an assortment of wrapping paper in President Mike Morrison's office on Wednesday, and he willingly played the part and posed for a photo the next day while seated amongst the Christmas décor.

2024 SPORTS IN REVIEW

CELEBRATING A YEAR OF NEWCASTLE HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETES

SPORTS SCHEDULE

NEWCASTLE HIGH SCHOOL

Boys Swimming

12/28	Campbell Cty @Gillette	A	10AM
1/10	Cody MHS	A	TBA
1/11	Powell HS	A	TBA

Boys Wrestling

1/10	Shane Shatto Invitational @Douglas	A	TBA
1/11	Shane Shatto Invitational @Douglas	A	9AM

Girls Wrestling

1/4	Spearfish Tournament	A	9AM
1/10-11	Hettinger Invitational	A	9AM

Boys Basketball

1/11	Custer High School	H	NOON
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Girl's Basketball

1/11	Custer High School	H	NOON
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NHS athletes finish strong

Sonja Karp
NLJ Sports Editor

It was a year of program debuts, a state title run, strong performances by many young athletes, a conference swimming champion and a state high jumping champion. The Dogies and Lady Dogies showed up and showed out in a variety of different sports throughout 2024.

The ladies joined the ranks of women's wrestling as Wyoming instituted a season dedicated to the girls in 2023-24. Newcastle High School ended the season with six young ladies who competed at the All-State East Regional Tournament, and three who advanced to the All-Class State Tournament.

Newcastle High School had their debut season of high school golf this fall where eight men and two ladies took advantage of the opportunity to compete on the links. The fall season was short, but will resume in the spring and several golfers finished the fall as competitors among more seasoned high school golfers.

The Dogie football team secured the No. 2 seed in the 2A East Conference, so earned the advantage of hosting the first round of the playoffs. This was the first time since 2014 that Newcastle clinched the home-field advantage in post-season play. Though the team lost that first-round game, they finished the season with a winning record.

In swimming and track, several young athletes put up performances during their 2024 seasons, earning

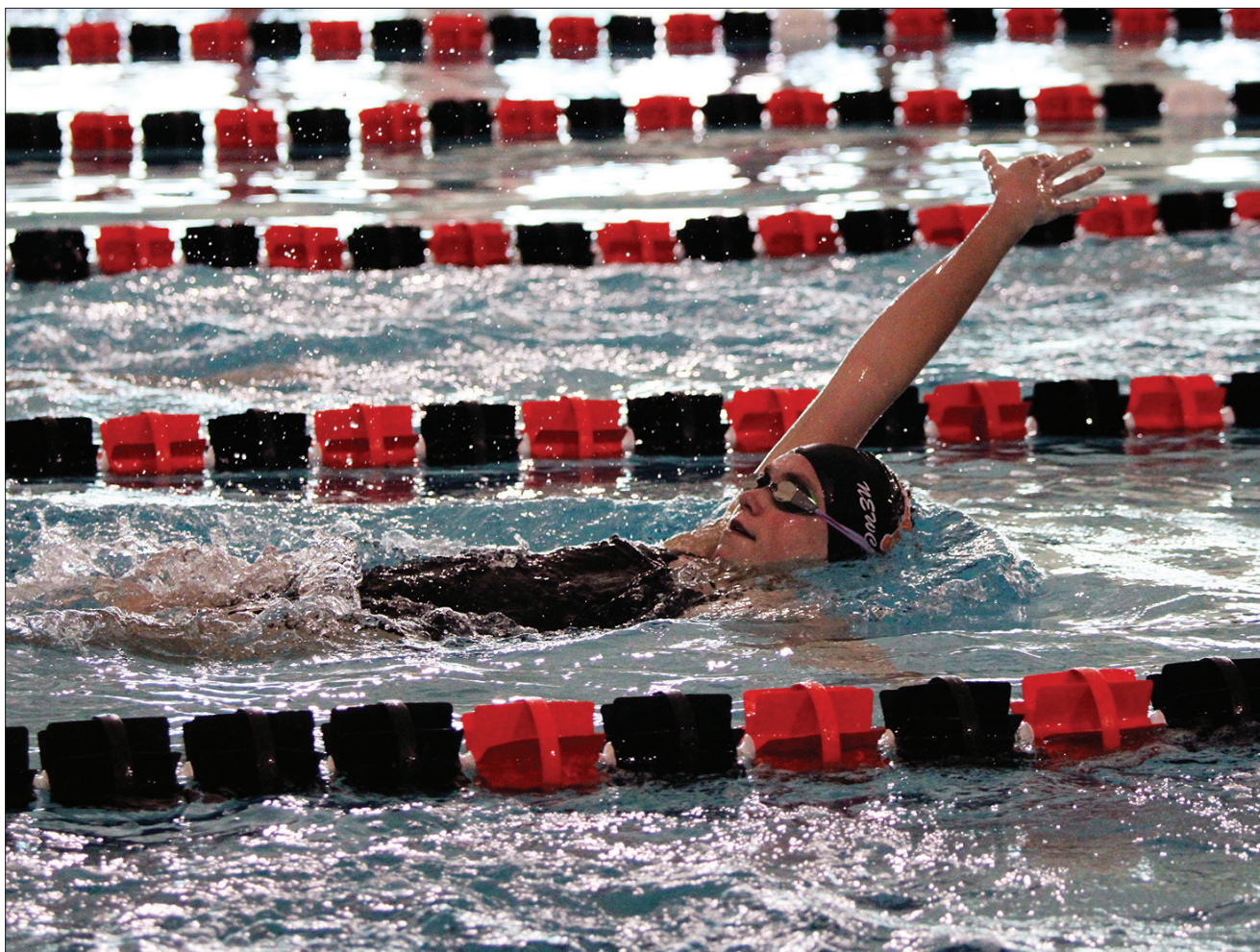


Photo by Emalee Sweet/NLJ

Emily Beaström claimed a 3A East Conference championship in the 50 Freestyle event in the fall. In this photo, taken in September, she was competing in the 100 Backstroke at a home meet.

them post-season hardware. In the fall, Hailey Beaström claimed a 3A East Conference championship in the 50 Freestyle event, and last spring CJ Hardy leaped his way to a 3A State title in the high jump.



Photo by Amy Menerey/NLJ

Newcastle High School junior CJ Hardy cleared the high jump bar at 6 feet, 4 inches, setting a new personal best and claiming the title of 3A State Champion in that event in 2024. He is pictured here competing in a relay race at the Wheatland track meet in March.

Rants and raves, 2024

Another year has flown by, and it's once again time for my annual rants and raves regarding Newcastle High School sports.

Some really cool things happened in high school sports in 2024! The Dogies and Lady Dogies gave us much to be proud of, and



Sonja Karp
Karpe Dogie

I'm looking forward to more in 2025.

As always, with the good there are bound to be some not-so-good moments, and I do have a

couple of rants which may sound familiar since they are becoming chronic issues.

In no particular order — because both of my rants are potentially problematic — there is still a troubling trend of fewer and fewer high school students going out for sports lately.

As a small school in a tough 3A class in Wyoming, we are always going to run into the issue of not having as many athletes on our rosters as those we play against, but if things keep going the way they are, Newcastle is going to have a problem competing at all.

Though things have improved from last year, we still suffer when it comes to being competitive against bigger schools within our own conference.

The girls cross country team finally had enough runners to compete as a team at meets this fall. That was great, given that the last couple of years they weren't

— See Karpe, Page 11

Take a look at highlights from 2024.

Lady grapplers finish debut season

It wasn't the finish that head coach Shaide Bowthorpe was hoping for, but the Lady Dogies had nothing to hang their heads about after finishing their first ever wrestling season at the All-Class Girls Wrestling Tournament in Casper.

"There was a lot of really tough competition," Bowthorpe said. "Having an All-Class state tournament is challenging for sure."

There were 45 teams, and over 200 ladies all vying for hardware, so the field was vast and deep as Courtney Matthews, Netanya Prell and Adelyn Bergstrom began to make their bid for a place on the podium.

Matthews (115) began her quest with a Hulett opponent who got the better of her a little over a minute into the first period in the first round match of the championship bracket. Matthews came back in round one of the consolation bracket with a 2:25 win over Sheridan to advance to round two. There, her season came to an end as she fell to a Cheyenne Central opponent in 1:46.

"Courtney's win came against a girl she beat earlier in the year, so it was a textbook match for her," Bowthorpe said. "She came out and did all the right things that she usually does, and she got the pin."

Freshman Netanya Prell (125) went two-and-out in her first high school state tournament, but she didn't go down without a fight. In round one of the championship bracket, Prell fought

hard against Campbell County but the 4A wrestler had the 7-4 edge at the end of the third period. The loss sent Prell into round one of the consolation bracket where she fell to Laramie in 2:54, thus ending her season.

"Netanya lost to the same Gillette girl at regionals by pin, so to go the distance and just lose by decision was great, and we are really happy about that," Bowthorpe said. "She had the girl on her back for about a minute, but the ref just didn't see the pin."

Freshman Adelyn Bergstrom (140) also left the tournament without a win. She fell to Lyman in round one of the championship bracket in 1:40, then was pinned in a minute against Greybull/Riverside in the first round of the consolation bracket, bringing her season to a close.

"Addie wrestles well and stays in good spots," Bowthorpe said. "I think with her we need to work on a little more offense, because she is strong defensively so with a little more offense in her repertoire, that will take her up another level."

The Lady Dogies were a very young team this year composed of sophomores and freshmen, so Bowthorpe is excited about the future of the fledgling program.

"Our first ever girls wrestling season was a success," she said. "Our goal was to get enough girls out and keep enough out to be a team that could legitimately compete at the regional and state tournaments, and now I'm hoping to build on that going forward."

— See Sports, Page 10

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Sports

from Page 9

Her hope has become reality given that in the 2024-25 season, Bowthorpe is returning as head coach and her roster has expanded from six to 17.

Dogie swimmers finish season strong

The Dogie Swim team wrapped up their season in Laramie at the 3A State Swim Meet. Four individual swimmers and three relay teams dove in at the prelims and head coach Doug Scribner was pleased with how his team performed in that pivotal round.

“We had very good prelim swims all around. The team had consistently been dropping times for the final three weeks of the season and I was confident they would drop time for prelims,” Scribner said. “The hope is always that the time drop will be enough to get them into the top 12 and we were able to do that in two events.”

Gabe Hoover, Logan Olson and Harrison Gross each qualified in enough events to fill their state slates by competing in two individual races, while Sam Cunningham punched his ticket in one event.

“Our seed times were pretty good going into prelims with Gabe and Harrison seeded in the top 12 in two events,” Scribner explained. “All the other swims were within reach if they could drop enough time.”

Hoover and Harrison were both seeded in the top 12, so just had to hold their time in order to advance to finals in the 100 Backstroke and 500 Freestyle, respectively.

Gross not only held his time, but dropped .68 of a second off his previous best time to finish eighth in the prelims and then dropped to ninth in the finals of the 500.

Hoover held his spot in the prelims of the 100 Back, clinching 12th place, then repeated his finish in finals on Saturday.

The 200 Freestyle and 400 Freestyle Relays were both contenders to advance to finals. The 200 Freestyle Relay team just had to hold their time to make the top 12, and the 400 Free team went in seeded 10th.

“The highlight of the meet would be the two and four free relays,” Scribner said. “The boys were confident that they could be faster in those two relays so we decided to make a couple changes to see what they could do.”

Scribner decided to switch Gross out of the 200 Free Relay for finals in order to allow him to focus on the 500 Free open which took place right before the relay. By doing so, the team of Cunningham, Strickland, Anderson and Olson had enough rest to shave three seconds off their previous best time to move up one place from prelims to finals and grab the 11th spot with a time of 1:44.86.

“We have been a 1:44 three

times in the last five years which are three of the fastest relays we have ever had,” Scribner said.

The 400 Free relay team of Cunningham, Gross, Hoover and Olson had a strong race at the conference meet, so Scribner opted to keep that team together and they went into the state meet seeded in 10th place. Despite being admittedly tired by the time the race began in prelims, the squad swam hard to maintain that 10th spot.

In the finals, the team dropped seven seconds from their time the day before to once again finish 10th.

“We had a good time drop and almost moved up into ninth place,” Scribner said. “This was a great time for this relay and 3:47 was the fastest 400 Free time we’ve had in the last 20 years. We do not graduate any swimmers on this relay which makes the potential for even faster times next year.”

Hardy soars to new heights and a state championship

Twelve Dogies made their way to Casper for the 3A State Track Meet last spring. At the elite competition the athletes did well, with four individuals and one relay team making the podium in their events.

Junior CJ Hardy was among those who stood on the podium after he cleared the high jump bar at 6 feet, 4 inches, setting a new personal best and claiming the title of 3A State Champion in that event.

“The Douglas kid that beat him at regionals didn’t have a good day, but a Powell kid just kept hanging with CJ,” NHS track coach Matt Conzelman said. “CJ went first at 6 feet, 4 inches and cleared it, but then the Powell kid missed. He got it on his second try, but because CJ made it in one, he got first!”

With his first-place finish, Hardy also earned 3A All-State honors and was just one-quarter of an inch shy of setting a new school record in the high jump for Newcastle.

“With one year to go, I think we can get him a little stronger and he should be able to get that record,” Conzelman said. “It’s also the first time in quite a while that we’ve had an individual state champion in the men’s division, so that was really cool.”

Colton Vanderpool Mobley was busy in the sprints in Casper. He raced his way into the finals of the 100 Meter Dash by finishing eighth out of a field of 22 runners in prelims with a personal best time of 11.38. In the finals, Mobley improved his finish by one place to take seventh in the finals.

Mobley was also the lead off leg of the 4x100 Meter relay where he, along with Dane Crabtree, Casey Matthews and Collin McConkey finished fifth out of nine teams, vying for hardware.

Adalyn Olson did well on the



Photo by Walter Sprague/NLJ

Collin McConkey slips an Eagle defender for a Dogie gain in October. McConkey ended the day with three touchdowns in the Dogies’ 34-12 victory over Tongue River.

big stage over the weekend. The freshman qualified for the state meet in three individual events. She made the finals in the 100 Meter Dash with her eighth-place finish out of 16 runners in the prelims. In finals, she repeated her eighth-place finish.

Aspen Bloom competed in both the mile and two-mile races. She made the podium in the 1600 Meter race by finishing eighth out of 17 runners with a personal best time of 5:40.55.

Given that only three of the 12 athletes who qualified for state this year were seniors, the future of Dogie track is bright.

Golfers wrap up debut season

The Dogie golfers finished up their inaugural season at the 3A State Tournament in Rawlins. Head coach Scott Beehler, along with senior golfers Thatcher Troftgruben and Jayden Corley, admitted that the course they competed on was a challenge for everyone on the team.

“The course was definitely a unique one,” Beehler said. “It was a links-type course. It was flat, no trees, a lot of sagebrush, older sand traps that weren’t really groomed and really big greens. If you didn’t hit your ball straight to keep it on the fairway, you didn’t find your ball.”

Despite getting off to a slow start for the most part on day one, day two of the meet was better pretty much across the board for both the men and women.

“For some reason, we struggle a little bit the first day we golf,” Beehler said. “But we ended up golfing about 20 strokes better on day two.”

Thatcher Troftgruben was

again the top golfer for the Dogies, finishing the tournament in 27th place with a total score of 179, shooting 91 on day one and 88 on day two. Making three birdies on day two factored into the decrease in his score.

“It was exciting but it was a very different experience than I’ve ever faced. The playing field was better than what we’ve faced, and it was also a very different course than we’ve ever played,” Troftgruben said. “The fairways were wider to compensate for the sagebrush that took the place of the rough, so if you were hitting good, it was great. However, if you were off and ended up in the sagebrush, it was impossible to get out.”

According to Beehler, the size of the greens definitely impacted the kids’ game. He noted that if the ball was on the wrong side, the player could be faced with an 80-foot putt.

“The greens were huge so it took a little while to get used to, and my short game really made a difference in my score on day one,” Troftgruben said. “I had to get used to putting maybe 60 feet so I went from three-putting to make it to the

hole to doing better the second day. It was a fun challenge, but I wish it wouldn’t have presented itself at state.”

Jayden Corley struggled a little on day one so didn’t put up a great score, but then shot nine strokes better on day two. Corley admitted that his attitude on day one probably played a big role in his performance.

“I didn’t have a great attitude, and that really got in the way of my game,” Corley said. I really had to make an adjustment and get back in the right mind-set, which I was able to do the second day.”

DeLaney Fullerton was again the exception to the rule given she turned in her lowest score of the year on day one of the tournament. On day two, she went up nine strokes but was still the top golfer for the ladies.

“I asked her about golfing better the first day than she does on the second and she said she doesn’t know, maybe I’m a first-day golfer,” Beehler said. “Maybe she over-thinks things the second day?”

With the fall season coming to a close, the Dogies looked forward to the start of the spring season, which runs from

the beginning of April though the end of May.

“It was a great start for our golfing program,” Beehler said. “The kids really enjoyed themselves and showed a lot of improvement...”

Dogies secure a home-field first round playoff game

The Newcastle Dogies rolled their way into the 2A playoffs in the fall, and in the last game of the regular season, they played a vital contest against the Bulldogs in Wheatland. Head coach Matt Conzelman’s crew left no question that they deserved the No. 2 seed in the 2A East football conference with their dominating 40-13 victory.

“It was a great win and a total team effort, and I’m really proud of them,” Conzelman said. “All week long I really didn’t know what to expect because they (Wheatland) are the third-ranked defense in 2A and we run the same offense so I just wasn’t sure. But it worked out pretty good.”

Heading into the night, the Dogies knew they were facing

— See Sports, Page 11

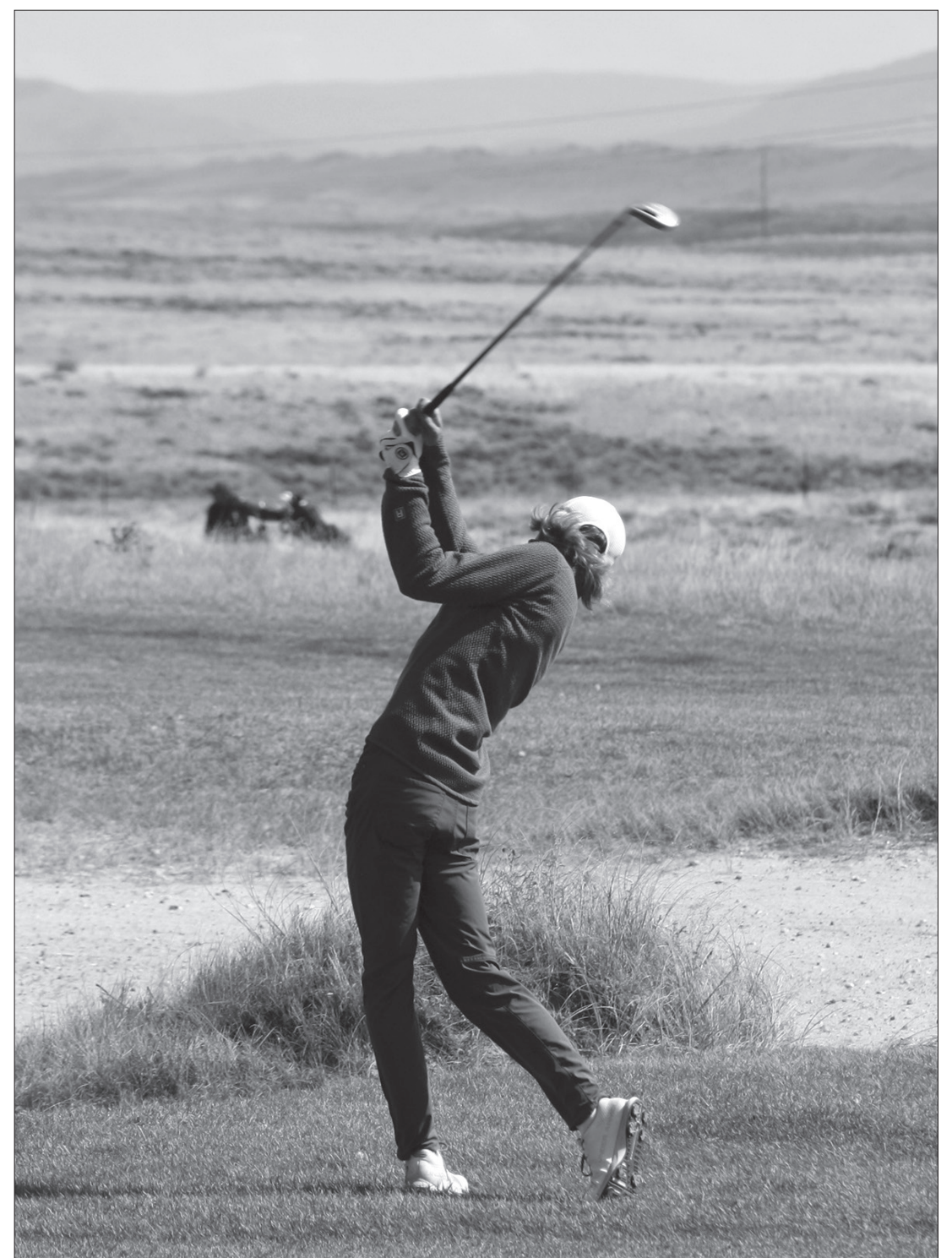


Photo courtesy of Jessica Troftgruben

Thatcher Troftgruben is among the Newcastle High School students who took a swing at golf this season for the Dogies’ inaugural season in 2024.

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Upton Lab Draws: (1st Wednesday, except holidays) Jan. 1

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Wellness Wednesday, W.C. Upton Clinic 1st & 3rd Wednesday, 7-9 am

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Sports from Page 10

a team who was as close to a mirror image of themselves as it can get. The Bulldogs are a run-heavy team and play a “smash-mouth” game, as described by Conzelman.

“Yeah, Wheatland kind of stole our offense,” quarterback Teddy Troftgruben said. “We knew they were going to be physical, but we also knew exactly what they were going to do. It turns out that we were still able to do what we needed to do though, even though they knew our offense.”

From the opening kickoff, the Dogies brought it against the Bulldogs. Newcastle received to start the contest and Connor Stohlhammer was off to the races returning the ball 60 yards to give the Dogies great field position in their opening possession.

Four plays later, Landon Hatheway punched the ball into the end zone for the first touchdown of the night. Cole Erb was right on target with the PAT to give the Dogies an early 7-0 lead.

All night long, the Dogies took possession of the ball in great field position to set up scoring drives.

“I think there was only one drive where we actually had to cover some ground,” Conzelman said. “Our defense just did a great job of stopping them and we just got ourselves in a pretty favorable position.”

Collin McConkey was the next Dogie to score, doing so with an eight-yard scamper, then Hatheway book-ended the quarter with another touchdown. Erb was good on the McConkey touchdown PAT and then McConkey was thwarted on his two-point conversion attempt after Hatheway’s TD, giving the Dogies the 20-0 lead to end the first frame of play.

In the second quarter, Dane Crabtree took it to the house on a 34-yard touchdown run and Erb was good on the PAT.

The Dogies went into the half up 27-0, and came back out still on a mission to hold the Bulldogs at bay.

“I thought Teddy had a knockout game,” Conzelman said. “He had 10 carries for

111 yards, he went 4-5 on pass completions for 59 yards and he had two touchdowns.”

Troftgruben scored his two touchdowns in the second half. The first was a 21-yard cruise into the end zone in the third quarter, and the second was a 15-yard run in the fourth. Erb went one-for-two on the PATs.

“Once again, I had great blocks and our offensive game plan was just really effective in opening up pathways for us,” Troftgruben explained. “Both of my touchdowns were really pretty easy because of that.”

The Bulldogs were finally able to get on the board late in the fourth quarter when they wrangled themselves two touchdowns. Though they were good on the first PAT, the second attempt was unsuccessful resulting in a big Dogie victory 40-13.

The following week, the Dogies hosted the Cokeville Panthers in the first round of the playoffs. The two teams duked it out for the full 48 minutes of play, and the outcome of the game was questionable until the final seconds when the Dogies lost a heartbreaker 20-28, thus ending their season. Cokeville went on to play Big Horn in the championship for 2A.

“It was a really great season to go out on,” senior Aidan Butler said. “We had a great conference record (6-2) and the pain of this loss was significantly less than the pain of losing to Torrington last year. The team worked their tails off, and this last game was a close one, so it actually feels good to know we gave it everything we had.”

Beastrom is conference champ

The Lady Dogie swim team hosted the 3A East Conference Swim meet in October. For the first time since 2017, head coach Doug Scribner’s crew qualified 10 individual swimmers and three relays for the finals of the meet, and though the team finished in sixth place overall, they scored 120 points which is the most points scored since 2015.

“We thought about spreading out events to get girls in several

of them, but that didn’t work out, so we went with plan B which was to play to our strengths,” Scribner said. “That ended up being good for us and we had four girls score in the 50 Free and three girls score in the 100 Free.”

For the first time in her swimming career, senior Hailey Beastrom was able to cap off her season with All-Conference Honors in the 50 Free. The senior went into the meet ranked fourth in this event, but the stars aligned to set her up to swim the best 50 yards of her life.

“I got the privilege of swimming against the top seeded swimmer from Douglas in my heat,” Beastrom said. “Everything was set up perfectly. I was in my practice lane, which is lane four and get this! It was event four, heat four, and I was swimming in lane four so it was meant to be!”

In prelims Beastrom cut 1.97 seconds off her previous best time, then in finals she cut even more time for a total of a 2.07 second time drop.

“I was totally hyped going into the race,” Beastrom said. “I swam a 27 in practice on Thursday, which I’ve never done, so I knew I could do it!”

Beastrom led all swimmers in both the prelims and the finals, and on Saturday when she came out of her turn, she exploded off the wall, defeating the top seeded swimmer by a second to take first place and stand at the top of the podium.

“I breathe to my right, so I could see Abby during the first 25 yards,” Beastrom said. “Even though I couldn’t see her in the back 25, I knew I was ahead and I just wasn’t going to let her beat me!”

In addition to Beastrom, Shelby Smith also made the highlight reel of the meet when she punched her ticket to the state meet in the 100 Backstroke with her 11th-place finish in the prelims and her 10th-place finish in the finals. In both races, Smith set a new PR and she improved her time by 4.41 seconds in her first swim of the weekend.

The 200 Free relay team of



Photo by Nicole McFarland/NLJ

Delainey Dresen goes to the rack for a layup in the Lady Dogies quadrant win over Glenrock in late January.

Madalyn Francis, Ruth Rose, Beastrom and Allie Lunstra were third in prelims with a time of 1:54.67 and then, though they improved their time by nearly a second in the finals, finished in fifth place overall.

“We dropped a ton of time in our two-free relay, and we have

to go back to 2006 to see a time of 1:53 in that event,” Scribner said. “We can even be faster though and the girls have been excited about this relay all year.”

At the state meet, Beastrom stood on the podium with her fifth place finish in the 50 Free, Lunstra also took her place on

the podium with her fifth place finish in the 200 Free and she made the finals and finished eighth in the 100 Butterfly.

The 200 Free Relay team was seventh in finals, the 200 Medley Relay was ninth in finals and the 400 Free Relay team finished 10th in finals.

Karpe from Page 9

able to do so. However, they had just enough, which meant that if everyone didn’t run varsity, or if anyone was injured, they would have been right back in the same boat of no team score, regardless of how well individuals ran.

There are only 14 boys out for basketball and, although the number of girls out for basketball has increased from 14 last year to 18 this year, nine of those girls are freshmen. As such, neither program will be able to play a C team game this year, and if there are any issues that keep players from being able to participate in every game, the boys may not even be able to play a full junior varsity game.

Not only is it too bad that a 3A school can’t get enough kids to be able

to fill three teams, it’s also too bad that the young athletes miss out on the opportunity to develop their skills as they enter into high school sports.

I mean, some of the freshmen who are seeing varsity action would have been playing up regardless of numbers, but for those players who needed to transition a little more slowly, they are being thrown into a pretty hot fire, which can have repercussions.

It’s sad to me that kids are opting to forgo playing sports in high school, because the window to be able to do that closes in the blink of an eye. It bums me out to think that these kids will one day look back in regret for not playing a sport that they loved when they had the chance.

Making the list for the fourth year running is my second rant of the year, and it also has to do with low participation.

We still have an officiating crisis! Officiating is a thankless job, because you know that pretty much everyone in the gym is going to be unhappy with you at some point in the game.

The abuse heaped upon these brave souls who put themselves in the bullseye of abuse from parents and fans just doesn’t seem to let up.

We also need to be able to put ourselves into the shoes of officials and figure out if we could do the job better. If so, maybe then we need to step up and fill some of those shortages.

But, enough with the negativity, let’s get on with my raves!

The first is that the young ladies here at NHS got the opportunity to wrestle in an all-girls division for the first time ever, and three young ladies competed their way to the state tournament in March!

We had a first-time state champion in CJ Hardy last spring when he soared over the high jump bar at 6 feet, 4 inches. The junior made improvements by leaps and bounds over the course of the season and reached the pinnacle of his performance when it really mattered at the state track meet.

This fall we had a first time conference champion in the ladies 50 Freestyle in Hailey Beastrom. The

senior set her mind to finish her career strong, and she willed it to happen. That kind of determination is rare, but she totally embodied it.

The football team had a banner season this fall. After 10 years, the Dogies earned the second seed in the 2A East Conference, clinching the home-field advantage for the first round of the playoffs. Though that contest ended in a loss, the team went out with a winning record and will be returning several key players to the gridiron next season.

Finally, all of the different Dogie sports programs have a plethora of young talented athletes who will be so fun for all of us fans to watch in the coming years.

Here’s to 2025!

Need firestarter to keep things toasty this winter?
NLJ has bundles of our old newspapers available for **FREE!**
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Weather Vane

DATE	HI	LO
Dec. 16	34	19
Dec. 17	36	19
Dec. 18	41	18
Dec. 19	39	19
Dec. 20	41	14
Dec. 21	50	30

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Sale Notice

**PUBLIC NOTICE
ADVERTISEMENT OF SALE OF SURPLUS EQUIPMENT**

The City of Newcastle has the following surplus equipment that will be sold to the Weston County Solid Waste District. Both entities are a political subdivision of the State of Wyoming.

Item	Make	Model	Qty	Unit price	price
Scraper	Cat	627	1	\$50,000	\$50,000
826 Landfill compactor	Cat	826	1	\$4,600	\$4,600
Landfill screens			14	\$100	\$1,400
Used oil tanks			2	\$750	\$1,500
Clean oil storage tanks			2	\$750	\$1,500
Portable welder	Lincoln	A-200	1	\$1,500	\$1,500
Tool box	Dewalt		1	\$300	\$300
Pressure washer trailer	North Star		1	\$5,000	\$5,000
Diesel fired heater	Dewalt		1	\$200	\$200
Roll off containers	Protainer		5	\$60	\$300
2003 Pickup with snowplow	Chevrolet	2500	1	\$3,000	\$3,000

(Publish December 12, 19 and 26, 2024)

Meeting Notice

MEETING NOTICE

The Weston County Natural Resource District's January board meeting has been moved to January 7, 2025, a change from the regularly scheduled date of January 14, 2025. The meeting will be held in person at the district office. Our meetings are open to the public. If you have any questions, please contact our office at 307-746-3264x4.

(Publish December 26, 2024)

Public Notice

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to the Laws of the State of Wyoming, W. S. 11-24-114, we hereby give notice that a list of unclaimed estray livestock taken up by brand inspectors at various locations during the past year is posted and is available for examination in the courthouse of this county.

(Publish December 26, 2024)

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6		3		2	8			

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Fill in the blank squares in the grid, making sure that every row, column and 3-by-3 box includes all digits 1 through 9.

Last week's answers

A	L	E	P	H	O	R	C	P	L	E	A	
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9	2	6	3	8	1	5	4	7
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7	6	4	5	3	2	1	8	9
2	8	5	4	1	9	7	3	6
3	9	1	8	7	6	4	5	2

- SCIENCE FICTION**
- ACROSS**
- Le Corbusier's art
 - "The Matrix" protagonist
 - Captures
 - Funkiness in the air
 - Vegetative state
 - Capital of Vietnam
 - Fairy tale villain
 - Beware of these in March
 - Spiker and Sponge of "James and the Giant Peach"
 - "Bioengineered humanoid in "Blade Runner"
 - The Beehive State
 - Burn with coffee, e.g.
 - Tire meas.
 - Sea nymph
 - Salad dressing option
 - *Pierre Boulle's Cornelius
 - Hoity-toity
 - Back arrow key
 - Covered with sphagnum
 - Tiny Tim's guitar
 - Allegro _____, in music
 - Sign of escape
 - Apprehension
 - Emergency responder, acr.
 - Neuron junction
 - Sleeping sickness vector
 - *Katniss Everdeen's sister
- DOWN**
- Point of entry
 - Side of a ruler, e.g.
 - S or C follower, in business
 - Two-word threat
 - Relating to node
 - Make corrections
 - Kiln for hops
 - *Captain Nemo's submarine
 - Tolstoy's Karenina
 - This and that
 - Bro's sibling
 - Droning insect
 - Niger and Nigeria language
 - In an unfriendly manner
 - Parent org.
 - "He named _____"

- Strong adhesive
- Pine juice
- Original thought
- Garment enlarger
- "The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy" author
- Neil Diamond's "Beautiful _____"
- *Frank Herbert's famous novel
- "I Like _____" 1950s campaign slogan
- "Where no man has gone before" TV series
- "The Tortoise and the Hare" author
- "It's no _____!"
- Beale of Memphis, e.g.
- South Korean port
- Main dish
- Japanese cartoon art
- Like thick smoke
- Solo, pl.
- Long narrative poem
- Worshiped one
- Minnesota's southern neighbor
- Last word on radio
- Famed loch
- Rogue or rascal

Gwamma by JaNel M. Farnsworth

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News Letter Journal

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COMMUNITY

TOPS
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locations each week: Tuesday at 4 p.m. at First United Methodist Church, call Joyce Brown at 307-629-1033; and Thursday at 8 a.m. at WC Senior Center, call JoAnn Dunn at 746-2654. All are welcome!

Helping Hands Foundation of Weston County

Are you in need of funds for medical traveling assistance? Contact Glenna at 307-468-2316 or Carol at 746-2298.

Donations needed
The Newcastle Ministerial Association is accepting donations to their Benevolence Fund at NMA, PO Box 65, Newcastle, WY 82701.

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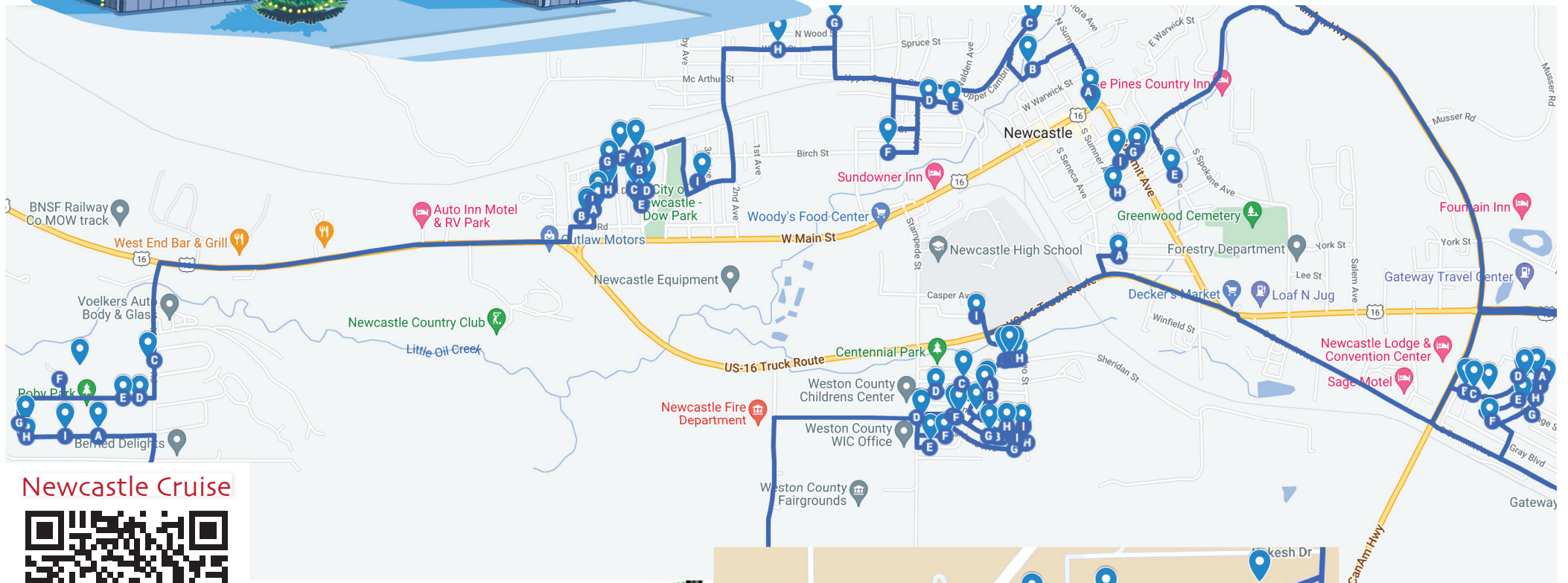

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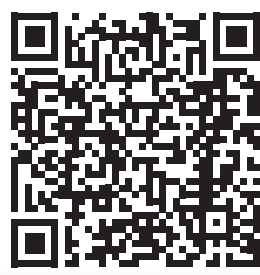


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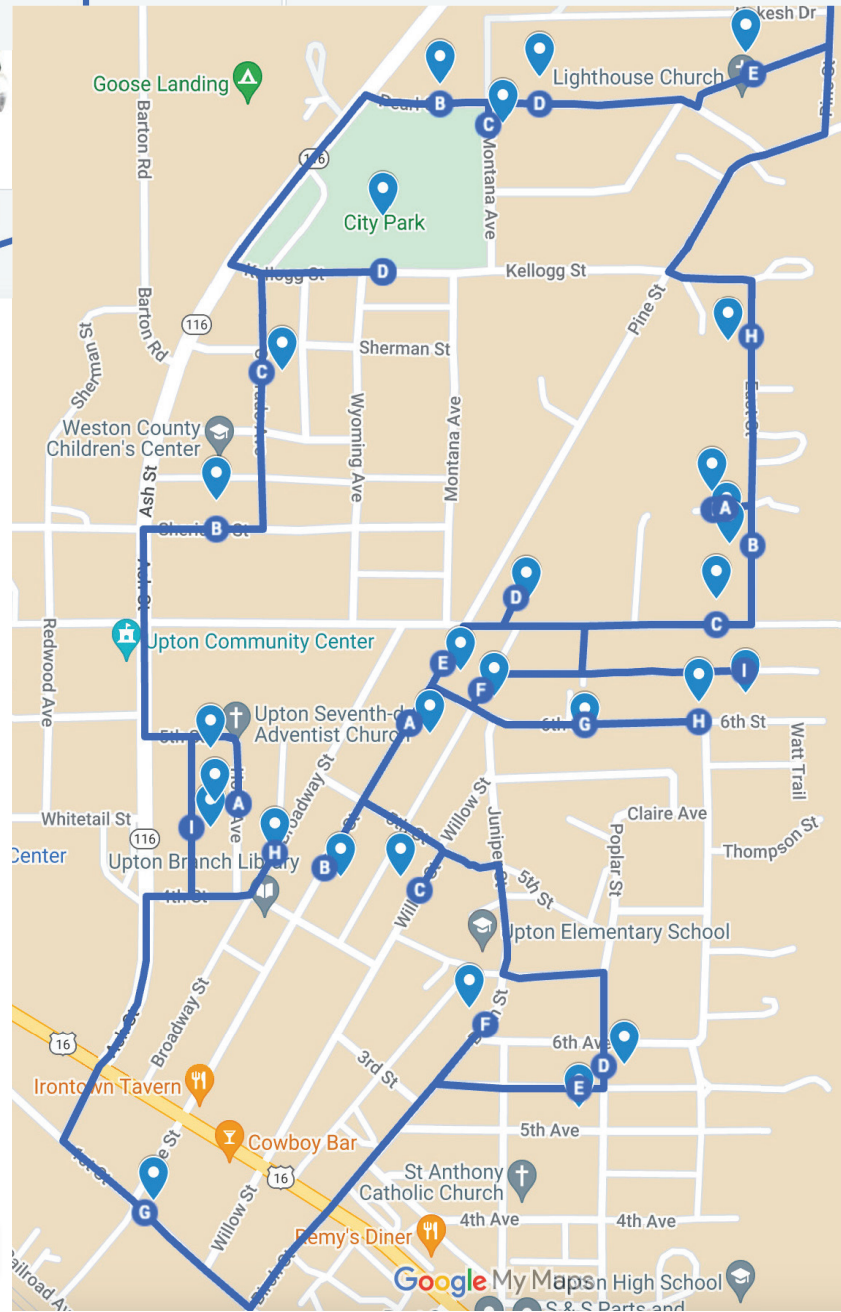
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- 3314 Latigo St.
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- 108 Frontier Ave.
- 115 Frontier Ave.
- 117 Frontier Ave.
- 213 Frontier Ave.
- 219 Frontier Ave.
- 311 Cascade Ave.
- 309 Cascade Ave.
- 116 Bonnie Brae Ave.
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- 405 Cascade Ave.
- 410 Cascade Ave.
- 412 Cascade Ave.
- 421 Cascade Ave.
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- 135 Butte Dr.
- 158 Butte Dr.
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- 1536 Gray Blvd
- 134 Cedar St.
- 137 Cedar St.
- 142 Cedar St.
- 151 Cedar St.
- 301 Carrington St.
- 9 Skyview Drive
- 28 Duncan Road
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- 724 Broadway St.
- 815 Holly Ave.
- 817 Holly Ave.
- 826 Holly Ave.
- 713 Sheridan St.
- 1335 Colorado Ave.



WARM AND BRIGHT

From cozy nights by the fire to gathering 'round the glowing tree, we're grateful to fuel the memories you create this holiday season.

