

WEDNESDAY

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75 CENTS

Sidney Herald



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Bulletin Board

Filling canal

The Lower Yellowstone Irrigation Project began filling and flushing the Main Canal Tuesday. Priming some laterals will begin Thursday. Please ensure all children, livestock and fences are out of the canals, ditches, drain and harm's way.

Annexation meeting

A public meeting is set to discuss annexation and the future growth of Sidney at 6 p.m. Monday at Sidney City Hall.

Car wash

Sidney High School FCCLA will hold a car wash Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Footers parking lot. Free-will offering with funds going to the club's Salt Lake City service project trip will be accepted.

Magic show

The Magic of Jay Owenhouse is Sunday at 4 p.m. at the Sidney High School gym. Advance ticket prices are \$20 for adults and children. Tickets at the door are \$20 for children and \$30 for adults. Call 1-800-779-8600 for tickets.

Concert Thursday

The Northeastern Arts Network presents Trio Vornonezh in concert on Thursday at the Sidney Middle School auditorium at 7 p.m. Tickets prices at the door: adults \$15, senior \$13 and students \$10.

Candidates forum

The Sidney Chamber and Richland County Farm Bureau will host a candidates forum at 7 p.m. April 26 in the MSU Extension/Eastern Ag Research facility. Candidates will include for the offices of state senate, state house, commissioner and clerk of District Court.

Happy birthdays

The Sidney Herald wishes happy birthday this week to friends Karen Unruh, Tana Lee, Darlena Whittet, Jeffery Light, RoseMary Ganzeveld, Nikki Green, Tish Neuleib, Melody Ann Eksteen, Susan Bogar Larson, Kathy Pumroy, Darlena Whittter, Brittaney Castro, Jeffery Light, Jared Troutd, Amanda Vojacek Reynolds, Kennedi Sheehan, Bryce Napier, Diane Volk, Matt Johnson, Alex Irigoin, Samuel Stephenson, Anthony Tracy, Barb DeShaw Cybulski, Grace Yu, Samuel Stephenson, Judd Burman, Vicky Panasuk, Teresa Asbeck Chatterton, Chris Quamme, Leslyan Moen-Ronholdt, Sharon Gardner, Theresa Denowh Winebarger, Leslyan Moen-Ronholdt, Travis Berndt, Colten Herbert, Mike Veltman, Jeff Reed and Robbie Kavon.

Deaths

Dorothy (Paschke) Boyd, 91
Mary Lou Brese, 75
Brittani Burgess, 27
Howard Hoff, 57
Tyson James Nimmick, 30
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BILL VANDER WEELE | SIDNEY HERALD

School play

Annie Sullivan (portrayed by Tori Hill), left, and Helen Keller (portrayed by Taylor Fay) have a confrontation during the Sidney High School's play, "The Miracle Worker," Friday.

County OKs tax abatement

BY BILL VANDER WEELE
SIDNEY HERALD

Richland County commissioners voted unanimously to give Presidential Hospitality a tax abatement for its Microtel Inn and Suites in Sidney during a meeting Monday morning.

"It's definitely an incentive to have franchises look at our community," Commissioner Shane Gordor said of the tax abatement process. "We want to grow, and we're growing with highly reputable names."

In September, commissioners approved tax abatements for the Best Western Golden Prairie Inn and Suites and the Holiday Inn Express and Suites.

Commissioners explained the hotels knew of the possibility of a tax abatement when they decided to build in

Sidney.

Terms on the resolution are that the tax abatement would only apply to "building and improvement" taxes and not "personal property" taxes. On an example tax bill for a hotel, the building and improvement taxes were about five times more than personal property.

Based on state law, the commissioners require hotels annually prove that 50 percent or more of the hotel's gross income is from out of state.

The tax abatement would allow the business to pay 50 percent of county taxes for a five-year period. Then the business pays 10 percent more for each additional year until the 10-year span is complete.

During last week's public hearing, there were no complaints against the proposed abatement. Commissioners, however, did receive an email from Bob

and Sharon Heick that read, in part, that if the abatement was approved it is "a slap in the face to all other taxpayers."

Richland Economic Development executive director Leslie Messer said at a previous abatement hearing annual property tax for a \$5 million property is about \$72,000. Those taxes are mainly divided between the county, city and schools.

During last week's hearing, officials said Microtel Inn and Suites, which cost \$5.8 million to build, could open this Friday.

The hotel will feature 76 rooms, meeting space, a fitness center, pool and spa. The rooms will include 45 double doubles, 13 queens, 12 kings and six accessible doubles.

editor@sidneyherald.com

Emergency siren tests scheduled for Friday

BY BILL VANDER WEELE
SIDNEY HERALD

When sirens go off in Sidney and Fairview Friday, it will be an educational lesson for residents of the two communities.

As part of Montana Severe Weather Awareness Week, the Richland County Disaster and Emergency Services will hold siren tests Friday starting at 10 a.m.

"We figured it's a good time to do this," Butch Renders, Richland County's Disaster and Emergency Services director, said.

In Sidney, the alert siren used for tornado warnings or any other life threatening incident will go off at 10 a.m. for a minute. After a 30-second pause, the fire siren will be heard for a minute.

"So you will have the opportunity to compare the two," Renders said.

Siren Alert Sounds

The Fire Alert Signal

A wavering tone means the local fire department has been paged to a call.



The Attention or Alert Signal

A steady blast or tone for 3-5 minutes. Listen for essential emergency alert system (EAS)



Glasgow National Weather Service activates the EAS warning system through encoders.

Then, after a pause, the curfew siren will be heard for 30 seconds.

Sidney currently has sirens located at the fire hall and the county shop. The sirens focus in one direction and then rotate.

During Friday's tests, officials will be located throughout Sidney to determine whether they can hear

the alarms. Renders asks for public comment if residents can't hear the sirens at their location.

"Most of the feedback has been good as far as most being able to hear it," Renders said.

Because of a programming issue, the 10 p.m. curfew siren hasn't been used for several months, but

the plan is to start the siren again in the near future.

In Fairview, the alert siren will go off for a minute Friday. After a pause, the fire siren will sound for a minute.

If case of an actual emergency, upon hearing the sound of the alert siren, tune to 660 AM, the official EAS station, and/or a Weather Radio or any of the local radio or TV stations for instructions and information and proceed as instructed.

In addition to the local EAS system, Richland County broadcasts emergency alert information through local TV and radio providers and would be activated as needed. Often this alert is used for severe weather warnings for the area. Once again, take necessary precautions and proceed as instructed.

Wolff receives sentences for casino case

Andrew M. Wolff was sentenced April 10 for his role in the attempted robbery of the Club Royale Casino in Sidney last August.

Wolff originally pleaded not guilty to robbery, assault with a weapon and theft. On Jan. 3, he changed his plea to guilty of robbery and assault with a weapon. The state dismissed the theft charge.

Last week, District Judge Katherine Irigoin sentenced Wolff to 30 years with the Department of Corrections with 25 years suspended for the robbery charge. He was sentenced to 20 years with 15 years suspended for the assault with a weapon charge. The sentences are to run concurrently.

He received credit for his 246 days already served in jail.

Wolff, who was 18 at the time of the robbery, must also register as a violent offender.

According to court reports, Wolff entered the Club Royale Casino with a dark turban and bandana. When he told a casino employee that it was a robbery, she asked if it was a joke. Reports said Wolff replied it wasn't a joke and leveled the rifle in the employee's direction. The employee said she heard a "pop" sound like that of a rifle being discharged.

Court reports read that at about 8:40 a.m. an employee and customer of Club Royale Casino called law enforcement and reported an armed robbery. They said the robber left in a car while carrying a rifle. They provided a description of the vehicle.

Sidney Police Chief Frank DiFonzo notified other officers that he spotted a vehicle matching the description heading west on Holly Street. He stopped the vehicle, and other police officers and county deputies were soon at the scene.

Prior to being apprehended, the vehicle stopped at Redline Audio where the money and rifle were moved to the trunk. Police found the money, which exceeded \$1,500 in cash and checks, and the rifle in the trunk.

During the investigation, police found a hole at the casino assumed to have been created by a .22 caliber bullet.

Sidney man dies in accident

A 57-year-old Sidney man was killed Saturday evening while riding his motorcycle three miles south of Culbertson.

The Montana Highway Patrol reports Howard Hoff was traveling southbound on Montana Highway 16 heading to Sidney. He passed two fellow motorcyclists and turned around to motion them to follow. In doing so, the motorcycle crossed the center line, hit the east ditch and went into a steep embankment. Hoff was thrown from the bike.

He was not wearing a helmet. It is unknown whether alcohol was involved. He was pronounced dead on the scene, and his body was taken to Sidney.

Personnel were still investigating the accident Monday morning.

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