

## Marathon Woman



### Virtual but not alone, Oban pounds out the 26.2 miles for the Boston Marathon

**W**hen Allie Oban qualified for the Boston Marathon on her first try, it was one of the biggest accomplishments of her life. When the in-person event was postponed, then cancelled, due to the coronavirus pandemic, it threatened to ruin the milestone she worked years to achieve. Instead, friends and family rallied around her, giving her an experience that not even Boston could provide, and all from her adopted hometown of Douglas.

See the full story and more photos on page B-1  
Photos by Zach Miners and Joshua Clark; Story by Joshua Clark

### COVID-19 UPDATE

## Cases spike with cluster from bar; schools stay open for now

By Mary Stewart  
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In less than one week, Converse County saw a 41% increase in lab confirmed COVID-19 cases, many from a cluster originating at a bar and some at Douglas schools.

Despite the incidents at schools, in-person classes will continue operating and the district has no plans to close buildings again and teach virtually, according to Douglas School District Superintendent Paige Fenton-Hughes.

As of Sept. 9, Converse County Emergency Management Agency (CCEMA) had reported the 39th positive case. However, on Sept. 14, just five days later, CCEMA had notified residents of eight positive cases, bringing the total to 55.

In that time frame, six positive cases and one probable case were confirmed and had been linked to a local business, The Waterhole. Those cases are considered a cluster, which means that a single source for multiple cases has been identified, and that source is tied to all ancillary cases even if the person hadn't been at the original source but had been in close contact with someone who had.

"In our contact tracing investigation, we found that several people who had tested positive had been at the bar," Converse County Public Health Nurse Manager Darcey Cowardin said. "Those people had also been in other places in the community, which contributes to the spread of the virus."

Nineteen people had been tied to the cluster, with six positive cases, one probable and 12 quarantined, according to Cowardin.

Both staff and customers were identified as positive cases, according to Cowardin. Calls and emails to The Waterhole management from the Budget were not returned.

Positive cases last week identified at all school buildings, except for the primary, according to CCEMA. Three staff members at Douglas Intermediate School, one student at Douglas Middle School and two students at Douglas High School have been identified as lab confirmed cases.

"Precautions were taken prior to the confirmed cases and those will continue," Fenton-

Please see **COVID**, page A-8

## Yes, there is such a thing as a free lunch

By Mary Stewart  
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The COVID-19 pandemic has created a lot of uncertainty around town with energy companies announcing layoffs and people having to take on more than one job to keep up with the bills.

The Douglas School District is ready to alleviate some of the worries, at least when it comes to breakfasts and lunches for children.

"We are so excited to announce that as of Sept. 14 the nutritional services department will again be offering free grab-n-go breakfast/lunch meals to residents of Converse County who are between the ages of 2-18," Douglas School District Nutritional Services Director Monty Gilbreath said. "If you have a child that is between 2 and 18 they are eligible."

This includes children who are at home and not already in school, attending day care, Headstart or pre-school, is home or virtually learning or those students in the district who are registered for adaptive learning, according to Gilbreath.

"Special funding has been made possible by the U.S. Department of Agriculture," he said. "We are so grateful and appreciative and are excited to be able to take care of

Please see **FREE SCHOOL LUNCHES**, page A-2



Zach Miners photo

Malakye Britt (from left), Brekyn Jensen, Brock Jensen, Layla Mitchell, Luis Galica and Drake Wolf stand in front of their creation, parked Sept. 12 at the Douglas Locomotive Park.

## 'God came with the bus'

By Zach Miners  
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**T**he bright yellow and black of school buses zipping around town this time of year are common sights.

Unless you're looking at this particular bus. Then

you may have to pause and reflect on its unique colors and its message.

Then, of course, there is the special passenger aboard... God himself.

Arthur Mitchell purchased the used bus in early July from the Cowboy Church in Glendo for roughly \$1,800, and he quickly

went to work on it.

Mitchell and the bus formed an instant, almost inexplicable, connection, even before he transformed it into what it is today.

"As soon as I saw it, I

Please see **ONE SPECIAL BUS**, page A-2

## Ghost town or recovery?

It all depends on how you want to look at the numbers

By Cinthia Stimson  
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Wyoming's rig count skyrocketed by the end of last week, with four operating, a significant turnaround from not so long ago when the rig count hit zero, but still a far cry from the height of the most recent boom last year.

The four rigs are in four counties – Converse, Campbell, Natrona and Sublette – Wyoming Oil & Gas Conservation Commission Supervisor Mark Watson confirmed Monday.

While this is quadruple the number of rigs active a month ago, it's still a small number, indicative of an economy hard hit by a Saudi-saturated oil market at a low of \$25/barrel and the coronavirus pandemic.

It's still not good news for our county, said Converse County Commission Chairman Robert Short, who has been involved in the energy industry for decades.

Please see **ENERGY OUTLOOK**, page A-7

### This week's weather

	Wed.	Thur.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
High	82	85	86	82	78
Low	47	49	55	51	43

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