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Trademark fight

'Taco Tuesday' tiff heats up in Taco John's hometown



Sports 1B

High school football

Scottsbluff once again loaded for run at the top



NATIONAL HOT AIR BALLOON CHAMPIONSHIPS

Learning from task one

Cusick strategizes for second day of national competition.

By Lauren Brant
Star-Herald

GERING — U.S. National Hot Air Balloon pilot Jim Cusick of Marysville, Ohio, prepared for his fourth U.S. National competition Monday after completing test flights over the weekend.

As they awaited instructions on the morning flight, the judges canceled the flight due to the weather conditions being hazardous. With the first competition postponed until Monday evening, Cusick and his crew chief Jason Petite and crew member Sally Petite decided to explore the valley.

"It's a gorgeous view," Sally said.

After enjoying a day of sight-seeing, Cusick and his team prepared for the first task of the national competition, which was to throw a baggie as close to the center of a target located at Landers Soccer Field in Scottsbluff. Jason's role as crew chief was to drive the pickup, tell the crew members what to do, check the radios and help the pilot find a wind line to the target.

"I make sure Jim has all his baggies, he has water, weather sheets and walkie talk," Jason said.

With the help of his crew, they navigated to the north-east side of Scottsbluff Monday evening to find a launch site that would take the wind close to the target at the soccer fields.

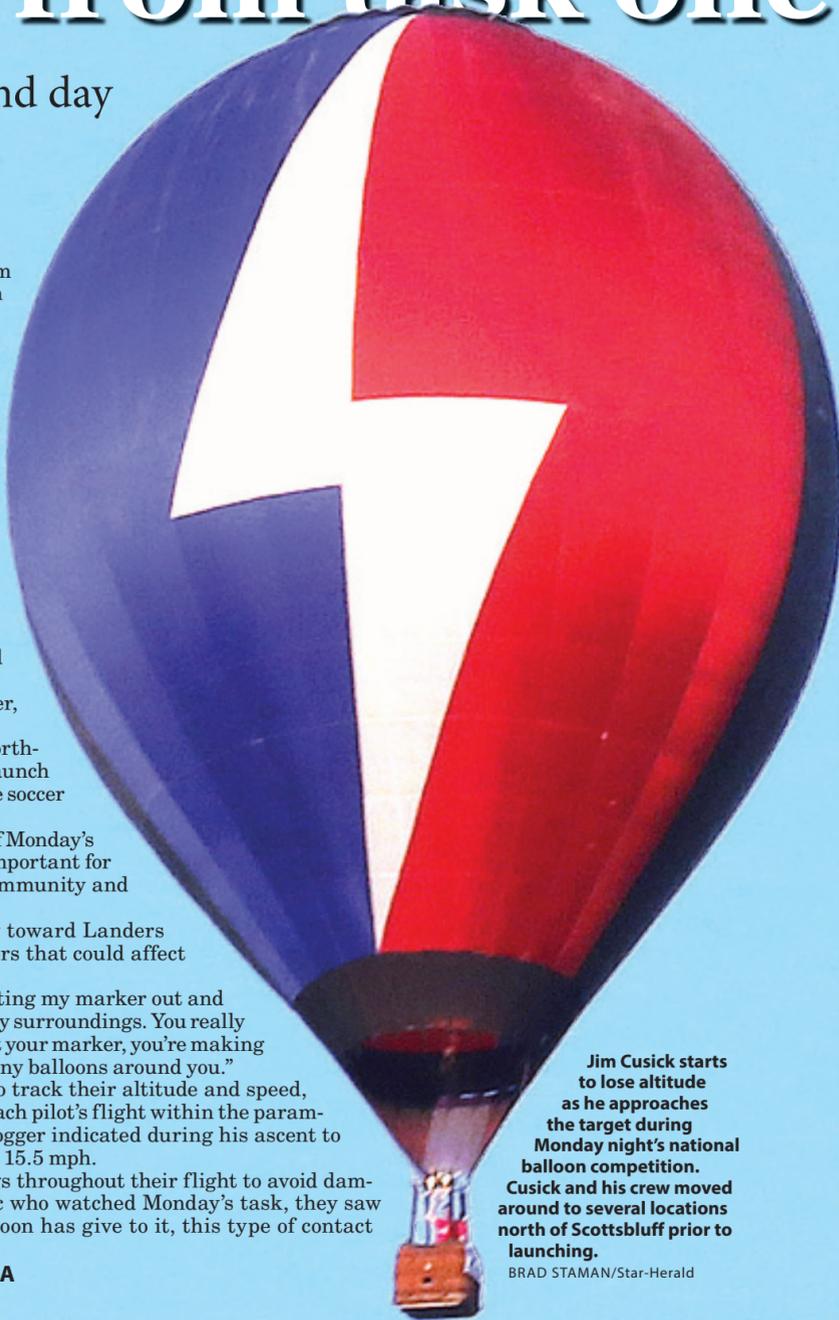
"Last night's flight was as expected," Cusick said of Monday's task. "They called it a safe task, which is what is important for the event. We were able to put on a show for the community and everyone was able to fly safely."

With the balloon in the air and Cusick heading toward Landers field, he said he remained focused on several factors that could affect his marker.

"I'm so focused on flying the balloon, but also getting my marker out and scoring," Cusick said. "But paying attention also to my surroundings. You really are a multi-tasker. You've got your balloon, you've got your marker, you're making sure you're not getting too close to the ground and any balloons around you."

During Monday's flight, the pilots use a logger to track their altitude and speed, which they return to the judges for them to assess each pilot's flight within the parameters of the task. Throughout Cusick's flight, his logger indicated during his ascent to 1,500 feet, the balloon was traveling approximately 15.5 mph.

The pilots remain conscious of their surroundings throughout their flight to avoid damaging contact with another balloon. For the public who watched Monday's task, they saw some envelope-to-envelope contact. Since the balloon has give to it, this type of contact



Jim Cusick starts to lose altitude as he approaches the target during Monday night's national balloon competition. Cusick and his crew moved around to several locations north of Scottsbluff prior to launching.
BRAD STAMAN/Star-Herald

See **CUSICK, 2A**

BUSINESS

Chamber of Commerce introduces Blueprint Nebraska to public

By Jerry Purvis
Star-Herald

SCOTTSDLUFF — Members of the Nebraska Chamber of Commerce and Industry stopped in Scottsbluff as part of their fall forums across the state to unveil the completed Blueprint Nebraska report.

MORE ONLINE
See video from the forum at starherald.com

"The key difficulty in getting some of this proposed legislation passed for Nebraska is finding the continuity between east and central, north and south, urban and rural," said Gering native Bryan Slone, president of the State Chamber. "Our mission is to move economic policy to businesses not just in Lincoln, but to all areas of the state. That's how things are going to get done."

"Nebraska really is a fantastic place and we do have the good life. As you transition from one generation to another, you need to hold on to what is great and look toward what needs to be done to make it better."

JIM SMITH | Executive Director, Blueprint Nebraska

He said the completed Blueprint Nebraska is a roadmap to lead the state toward being competitive with other states — and that requires unity of purpose.

See **FORUM, 2A**

ENTERTAINMENT

Midwest Theater 2019-2020 performing arts season lineup set

By Lauren Brant
Star-Herald

SCOTTSDLUFF — The Midwest Theater will welcome some familiar faces to the stage as well as some new performers for the 2019-2020 performing arts season.

Some of the family shows this season include the Missoula Children's Theater returning to the stage as well as the Omaha Symphony performance.

The fall Missoula Children's Theater production is "The Emperor's New Clothes." The show is scheduled for Nov. 23 at 7:30 p.m. Auditions will be held Monday, Nov. 18, at 4 p.m. The spring production is "Beauty Lou and the Country Beast," which will be presented Feb. 7, 2020, at 7:30 p.m. "Beauty Lou and the Country Beast"

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