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Bull rider Junior Souza steals the spotlight at Central Wyoming Rodeo

SPORTS, B1



One issue unites church members: medical debt

360°

LOCKED OUT

CHILDCARE CRISIS KEEPS 10K WYOMING ADULTS ON THE SIDELINES



ANDREW TOWNE, STAR-TRIBUNE

Children from Wyoming Child and Family Development Head Start program take a walk in 2024. Many places in Wyoming are considered to be childcare access deserts.

Families face limited childcare options as agencies work to expand access and strengthen the provider network

ALLISON ALLSOP
Casper Star-Tribune

Nearly 10,000 Wyoming adults may be unable to return to work after having a child, not because they don't want to, but because they can't find childcare. Finding childcare in Wyoming

can depend on where a family lives and what they can afford. Some communities face childcare deserts, while others struggle with the rising cost of care. Now, agencies across the state are working on solutions to close the gap.

Childcare deserts are "any geography where the supply of licensed child care is insufficient to meet demand," according to the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services.

Please see **CHILDCARE**, Page A5

NATRONA COUNTY

Commissioners discuss data center relocation, approve fire restrictions

Leaders discuss the project's new location, fire restrictions and county pay changes

HANNAH WARD
Casper Star-Tribune

The proposed Prometheus Hyper-scale data center once again took center stage Wednesday, as Natrona County commissioners discussed its new location before turning to wildfire precautions, zoning requests and other county business.

The meeting marked the board's first since Prometheus Hyperscale announced plans to locate its proposed data center entirely within Natrona County, a change commissioners briefly discussed.

The Star-Tribune was the first to report that the developer now plans to locate its proposed data center in Natrona County, rather than neighboring Converse County, alongside the project's man camp and natural gas generators. The change came after public outcry over the previous potential location north of I-25.

"Instead of being immediately adjacent and upwind to an important part of our family's ranch, it's now roughly two to two-and-a-half miles," Commissioner Peter Nicolaysen said.

The last update county staff received from Prometheus Hyperscale was that they plan to locate south of the interstate, Development Director Sabrina Kemper said.

"I haven't seen anything from them yet... but at least from my perspective, they were willing to foot the bill for any expertise we thought necessary, regardless of the outcome," Commissioner Casey Coates said.

Commissioner Dave North added representatives from Prometheus Hyperscale indicated they wanted to do a presentation on the change in location for the board in August if possible.

In regular business

Commissioners approved Stage 1 fire restrictions for Natrona County, limiting legal fires to campfires in established fire rings, nighttime refuse burning, charcoal fires in enclosed grills, electric arc welding and portable stoves.

All fires must have a 15-foot cleared radius.

The board also heard an update from Natrona County Fire Protection District Chief Howard Oden and Fire Marshal Chris Cody about why the department needs \$30,000 allocated for inspections.

Please see **DATA CENTER**, Page A5

NATRONA COUNTY ELECTIONS

Candidates outline priorities, brace for potential property tax cuts

Hopefuls emphasized efficiency and protecting core services

HANNAH WARD
Casper Star-Tribune

With all seven Natrona County elected positions on the ballot this year — each race unopposed — all candidates agreed on the importance of streamlining county services

and pursuing improvements.

During a forum on Wednesday evening, six candidates discussed lessons from their respective offices, property tax funding challenges and future goals in front of a sparse crowd.

In attendance were Natrona County Clerk Tracy Good, Clerk of District Court Jill Kiester, Chief Deputy Treasurer Heather Bryan, District Attorney Dan Itzen, Assessor Tammy Saulsbury and Coroner Jim Whipps. All except Bryan are incumbents seeking

reelection.

Also running for a county position is current Sheriff John Harlan, who is seeking reelection but was not present at the forum.

Hosted by the Natrona County Republican Women and the Natrona County Republican Party, Politics in the Park will resume next Wednesday at 5:30 p.m. with Republican candidates for Senate Districts 27 and 29 as well as state treasurer and auditor.

Please see **CANDIDATES**, Page A5

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The Grouch

I always wanted a career that made an impact. Apparently, the impact was just my forehead hitting my desk before deadlines



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