

Area ranchers
inducted into Wyo
Cowboy Hall of Fame

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DOUGLAS BUDGET

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**DOUGLAS
ROCKS**

By Ethan Brogan
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A new craze has had Douglas residents running around the city dropping off and picking up painted rocks everywhere they can. On window sills, park benches, and sometimes, waiting for a person just outside their door.

The Kindness Rocks Project started as a nationwide movement to spread some cheer and promote a town scavenger hunt for painted rocks with positive messages. Since

Please see **DOUGLAS ROCKS**, page A-6



Courtesy photo

A beautifully painted rock is one of many posted online since the inception of DouglasWY Rocks on Facebook.

City water slide
flowing again

By Ethan Brogan
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The motor for the machine running the Douglas Municipal Water Park's slides burned up, resulting in the slides being closed early, and initial predictions said they would be closed for the remainder of the season. Luckily, Brandon Frye of the Douglas Parks and Recreation Department located a new motor and went to work fixing it.

Last week, Frye was pulling at straws to get a hold of the replacement motor and coming up empty.

"We were out four weeks on getting a replacement pump and motor," Frye said. "Since then, we got in contact with an outfit that will be able to repair



**BRANDON
FRYE**

Please see **WATER SLIDE**, page A-2



Jennifer Kocher photo

Danny Martinez hugs Peggy Hopkins goodbye at the Wyoming State Fair office, where they were waiting for him with trays of treats, cupcakes and a Wyoming State Fair belt buckle to say thank you for his years of service.

PACKING IT IN

Beloved Martinez makes his last run after 39 years of delivering for UPS

By Jen Kocher
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For the first time in his career, Danny Martinez is running woefully behind schedule. This pains him more than he would care to admit as he checks his watch nervously and jumps out of the brown UPS van.

It's barely 11 a.m. and already Martinez is sweating as he loads seven awkwardly shaped, large cardboard boxes onto a hand truck in the Wyoming State Fair Park parking lot.

He's a good 30 minutes late, courtesy of current and retired UPS staff members, Scott Ramsey and Gary Olsen and others, who showed up at the UPS distribution center on Yellowstone this morning for some final hugs and good-natured ribbing.

He's been on the job for 39 years, during which time he has piled up an armful of distinctions, including the elite Circle of Honor distinction for those select drivers who make it without an accident for 25+ years. Along with being a mentor, Martinez is also a good friend and this small, tight-knit group of drivers are like family. No way they are going to let him go softly into this good night, and last Friday, this caravan of well-wishers trail behind him for his final route. His wife Linda is among them to take photos and document this day for the books.

Linda narrates as she videotapes Martinez's play-by-play as he struggles to get the awkward load of packages jig-sawed together on

the cart.

"Nothing like the first stop being a killer," Martinez laughs as he strong-arms the hand truck up the curb and into the air-conditioned office building at the fair grounds. More well-wishers greet him at the door.

"You're late," Wyoming State Fair Assistant Director Vicki Rupert teases as she ushers Martinez into the office, where a buffet of meat and cheese snacks, cupcakes and other goodies await, including a couple of boxes for himself.

Rupert hands Martinez a package of his own to unwrap as WSF Director James Goodrich and staff swarm around him, lamenting his last day and explaining the various reasons why he needs to stick around for a few more years.

"You can't leave us," Peggy Hopkins tells him. "You've been coming here for so long. What are we going to do?"

Martinez smiles and fumbles with the package, which is akin to unwrapping a set of Russian nesting dolls, one box within another. Martinez struggles to be gracious. The extra time is killing him, he laughs as the package flies out of his hands and the staff kids him about all those broken deliveries in the past.

"I don't know what you're talking about," Martinez laughs as he dives down to grab the final rectangular box off the floor. Inside is a

Please see **DANNY'S LAST DAY**, page A-2

Road to recovery

Trained to handle other people's tragedies, former undersheriff Scott survives accident during high-speed chase, only to face his own long, winding path aimed at getting his life back

By Jen Kocher
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In his former life, Justin Scott mitigated disasters and saved lives. In his current one, he's trying to save his own.

The former Converse County undersheriff was a tactician who managed resources and sharply made split-second decisions. He devoted his energy to emergency services, including serving as the head of the volunteer county search and rescue.

As long as he can remember, he's wanted to be in this life-saving role, beginning as a student at Douglas High when he life guarded to college where he studied forestry and was trained in emergency response. His first job was fighting fires for the US Forest Service. He transitioned to a career in law enforcement.

He was prepared for emergencies. Even at home. The family had a code word, followed by a precise plan to avoid harm. He was prepared everywhere.

Except this time.

One high-speed chase brought his career – and life as he knew it – to a screeching halt.

He's told the story so many times that he's pretty much committed it to memory: The wintery cold day last December when his patrol truck collided head-on into John Hankinson's vehicle as the suspect tried to flee. Typically, Scott wouldn't have been out that day but he was running errands when he heard the call and jumped into action.

With highway patrol on his tail, Hankinson allegedly raced off I-25 at exit 135 into Douglas, using the on-ramp. As he turned toward Douglas city limits, Scott attempted to ram the suspect from the side but

hit a patch of ice. Instead, Scott and the suspect collided head-on.

Scott remembers jumping out of the patrol vehicle and tackling the driver to the ground as fellow law enforcement officers joined him. As more officers descended, Scott stood up and headed toward Sheriff Clint Becker.

His legs crumpled. He collapsed on the snow-covered ground.

Next thing he knew he was being driven by CCSO Investigator Eric Koss to the hospital. All he remembered were the stabs of pain shooting down his back.

MENDING AND FORGIVING

Today, nearly seven months later, Scott sits on a

Please see **RECOVERY**, page A-3



This week's weather

	Wed.	Thur.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
High	82	75	86	81	78
Low	51	49	53	51	52



INSIDE:

The Wyoming State Fair Book
Pick yours up today!



Recovery

from the front page

stationary bike and pedals at a leisurely pace at Big County Rehabilitation. He jokes with his therapist who banters back. The staff here has become like family, and he doubts what he would have done without them. A couple weeks ago this wouldn't have been possible, he says, which is just one of the milestones he's celebrating today.



Courtesy photo
Justin Scott received medical disability in May after he was forced to step down from his position as Converse County Undersheriff.

way. Speaking in a halted monotone voice, a ramification of the traumatic brain injury, Justin's nouns and verbs are precise and measured. During the crash, his right leg was braced on the brake pedal, he explains. His labrum and femur were shattered. He also sustained vertebrae damage when his spine impacted.

The injuries were severe enough to end his career. In May, he received medical retirement benefits. His job now is to heal.

As he pedals, Scott also taps the screen of his cell phone as he practices vocabulary words as part of his occupational therapy. He's got a long road ahead of him, but the only way through it is to stay positive

and set small, attainable daily goals, he says. Some days this might mean learning a new word or taking 16 extra steps.

That, and staying positive, which Scott admits is by the far the hardest part.

"It's real easy in this situation to get negative," he says, his eyes watery behind the thick lenses as he stares forward, pumping his legs on the pedals with heavy breaths. "It kinda tears ya up and it's hard to stay positive every day."

It helps to stay focused on recovery, he adds, and not compare his life now to that of the past – one in which he was in control and the provider. The new one means getting use to being dependent on others. It means overcoming acute insomnia. And getting use to how his own words now feel in his mouth as they jumble and get stuck somewhere between his brain and mouth. And feeling vulnerable for the first time in his son's and daughter's eyes as they struggle to understand why dad can't run to the park with them or carry them on his back up a mountain like he used to.

"It's getting better," he said, nodding resolutely with his eyes on the handle bars. Now, he's looking forward to recovery and a new career in human resources. That was his favorite part on the job at CCSO. He enjoyed helping the deputies sharpen their skills and interests and grow into their preferred roles. He loved keeping up morale in the workplace. That's the key to success both in business and in life, he believes.

He's also had to let the disappointments go, the guilt between who he used to be and who he is now. This means learning to forgive the man who led him here. Scott has no interest in following the court case and instead hopes that he finds help to recover and become a better man.

Hankinson has pleaded not guilty and is awaiting trial on multiple felonies.

Ultimately, Scott says, it's out of his hands. Like everything else, he's just taking it one day at a time.

One man's actions led him down this road. It's up to him to find a new path.

"Sometimes you get down, but it's been quite an experience," Scott says.



Kesly Porter photos
Justin Scott pedals his stationary bike at Big County Rehabilitation as part of his recovery in the wake of the high-speed chase last December that ended his law enforcement career.

Full fire ban in effect

The Bureau of Land Management has increased from a partial to a full fire ban in Converse, Natrona, Platte and Goshen counties from July 28 until conditions improve.

The following acts are prohibited until further notice: Building, maintaining, attending, or using a fire, campfire, charcoal barbecue and the use of grills.

You can still use a portable stove, gas lanterns, jellied petroleum, pressurized liquid fuel or fully enclosed burning stoves with a quarter-inch spark arrestor type screen. Smoking is also prohibited unless in an enclosed vehicle or building, a developed recreation site or while stopped in an area with at least three-foot diameter that is barren or cleared of all flammable material.

Several fire restrictions were added to BLM's year-round wildfire prevention. No discharging of fireworks or discharging a firearm using incendiary or tracer ammunition. Burning, igniting any tire, wire, magnesium or any other hazardous or exploding material is also prohibited. Operating any off-road vehicle on public lands unless the vehicle is equipped with a properly installed spark arrester.

You can be exempt from this fire ban if you have a permit or letter of authorization specifically for any of the items above, persons using a fire fueled solely by liquid petroleum or LPG fuels and any federal, state or local officer apart of an organized rescue or fire fighting force in the performance of official duty.

Restitution for total suppression and damage costs incurred will be borne by the violator. The fire ban will be lifted when dry conditions around the county improve.

Man killed in rollover

By Sandra Mudd
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A fatal crash near Glenrock claimed the life of a Wyoming man just before midnight July 25.

Drew Weythman, 23, was traveling northbound on I-25 near milepost 164, when he failed to negotiate a left curve, drifted off the right side of the road and rolled the 2014 Dodge Charger he was driving.

After leaving the roadway, Weythman's vehicle "traveled several hundred feet in the borrow pit, ran through the right of way fence, went air born and then rolled numerous times. While rolling, the Dodge Charger collided with a power pole and crossed an irrigation ditch before coming to rest in a field where it caught fire and

was burned beyond recognition," according to the official crash summary report from the Wyoming Highway Patrol.

Weythman was not wearing his seat belt and was ejected during the rollover.

Road conditions were reported as wet and speed and driver fatigue are cited as contributing factors to the crash as evidence at the scene suggested there was no indication of sudden steering or over correcting, according to the report.

Toxicology results are pending to determine if alcohol or drug use were contributing factors.

This marks 81 fatalities on Wyoming highways this year. There were 53 last year at this time, according to the WHP website.

Please join
Pam & Jack Stewart
to celebrate their
50th Wedding Anniversary
Saturday, August 5th, 2017
6:00 p.m.

Sleep Inn
Conference Room
Douglas,
Wyoming

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!
(Events are free unless otherwise noted)

Tuesday August 8

Master Impersonator
Duffy Hudson as:
Dr. Seuss
10 a.m.

Albert Einstein
7 p.m.

Tuesday August 15

Astronomer
Kevin Manning
Nationwide Star
Tour 2017

"Astronomy for Everyone!"
7 p.m.

CONVERSE COUNTY LIBRARY

For more information contact the
Converse County Library - Douglas
300 East Walnut • 307-358-3644

Contractor hired for last phase of landfill closure

By Ethan Brogan
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The final phase of covering the last cell at the Douglas Landfill has been approved. The \$688,307 bid from MD Leasing LLC has been accepted and passed through council.

The project is expected to be underway in August but may be stalled by winter weather. Calvin Twiford of Inberg-Miller Engineers handled the bidding process and has estimated 128 work

days to complete the project.

"We have stressed and contractors have also expressed to me his interest in getting the clay layer before the winter season," Twiford said.

The landfill was converted to a transfer station two years ago and since has been sending refuse and waste to a Casper landfill several times a week. In recent weeks the landfill has been sending an average of 140 tons of waste to Casper every week, at a rate of \$37 per ton. Equating

to more than \$269,000 per year being spent to remove the 7,280 tons of garbage annually.

"The landfill closure is for municipal waste. We will be keeping the construction and demolition pits," Mayor Bruce Jones said. "Most of it has been transferred for right now; this is the official closure." Residents will still be able to drop off construction and demolition waste as well as things like grass, tree limbs, metal and cardboard for free.



Bigger isn't always better.

Bigger surgery scars and longer recovery times definitely aren't better. At Memorial Hospital of Converse County our providers work to lessen the impact of surgery and get you on the road to recovery. We brought to Wyoming one of the only DaVinci Surgical Systems in the state. This gives our patients access to a robotic system which provides less scarring, quicker recovery times, and less invasive procedures. Don't take just our word for it, we were recognized by Press Ganey in the 99th Percentile for patient satisfaction. One of the highest in the Rockies Region.



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SCHOOL BOARD MEETING AGENDA
Converse County School Board meetings are held the second Tuesday of the month. School Board meeting agendas will be posted after 5:00 p.m. every month on the Thursday before the Board meeting for review, available at:
<http://www.converse1schools.org>

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We can order exactly what you need! (depending upon availability)

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