



# Townsend picked for Senate

## Former PRECorp chairman selected from three candidates

by Randi Owens of NLJ

Newcastle oil man Chuck Townsend was named senator of Senate District No. One in a special meeting held Monday. "It's a great honor to be appointed to serve the people of northeastern Wyoming. This is a tremendous opportunity to do the public service I have wanted to do all my life," stated Townsend.

The 60-year-old Osage area resident has been a resident of Weston County all of his life. His home is located on the onetime site of Oil City. "Many of my longtime friends urged me to go into public office when I left Powder River Energy," commented the former chair of the rural utility company. "Hard work, public service, family and integrity have been and are my chosen way of life," Townsend promised while hinting at the type of legislator he will be. "Less government is better. Government should only be involved in those areas where the people cannot handle them," he said. Townsend stated that governing bodies such as school boards, county commissioners, and city councils know their people best and should have minimal state and federal interference. "I believe that home rule of government is best. I believe that the people's strong voice in government is vital," said Townsend. The issues in which Townsend will be dealing with directly are uncertain. However, Townsend does have a strategy in the way he plans to deal with the issues. "I plan to take the integrity in northeastern Wyoming and use it to influence the entire state," said Townsend. Townsend will attend his first session of the senate and then must start his campaign for office. Although Barton's office would not have been up for reelection until November 2006, Townsend will have to be elected by the people in November 2004. "I'm in for the long haul. I want a term of my own," Townsend said with his first session and campaigning in mind.

Commissioners from Crook, Converse, Goshen, Niobrara and Weston Counties gathered to first interview the three senatorial candidates

brought forward by Republican committeemen and committeewomen at a meeting last Wednesday to fill the seat of recently retired Senator Bill Barton. The candidates entered the meeting room one at a time to give a five minute introduction of themselves. The commissioners asked each candidate five questions ranging from school financing to multiple use of state and federal lands. Niobrara resident Kari Jo Gray was the first candidate to be interviewed. "Something effective must be done with tort reform. A cap could possibly be placed on funds, but more research needs to be done," insisted Gray. Townsend spoke next, followed by Niobrara County Commissioner Chairwoman Donna Ruffing. The candidates were questioned on their philosophies on revenue balancing and tort reform. "Multiple land use is extremely important. It is vital to residents of northeastern Wyoming. However, we must still recognize private property rights," said Townsend who garnered 83 percent of the weighted vote. "We need to make counties and towns a higher priority and make sure that they get the funding they need," Ruffing told the commissioners.

Wyoming statute prescribes that, while all commissioners represented in District One vote on the appointment, those votes are weighted according to the population of the county, or part of the county that lies within the district. Senator Townsend started work as soon as the vote was announced. He said he will begin by contacting other senators around the state to set meetings and learn what is expected of him. "Many senators called to show their support of my nomination. I will now contact those people this afternoon to learn what it is I am to do next. I am a rookie and have a lot to learn," the oil man grinned. He said he believed that he will step into the same committees with which Barton was involved. These senate committees include Agriculture and Natural Resource and the Transportation and Highway Committee.



Chuck Townsend



# Chemical leak spurs evacuation

By Jeff Moberg

Students and staff at Sundance High School ended their week a little early last Friday as a chemical scare forced the building to be evacuated Friday afternoon.

The episode began as approximately two ounces of red phosphorus was discovered to be leaking from a dilapidated container in the science classroom at around 1:55 p.m. Friday afternoon. Red phosphorus is used largely as a component of matchbook strike plates, pyrotechnics, tracer bullets and more sinisterly- methamphetamine labs.

School officials identified the substance and spoke with chemical experts before evacuating the building and contacting the Fire Department. Fire Department, Police Department and EMS personnel all descended on the building and quickly completed the area evacuation. Roads leading into the school from all directions were soon barricaded while emergency personnel began the cleanup.

Hazardous materials response experts from Gillette were summoned

to the scene and worked with the Sundance squad to remedy the danger.

Fire Chief Glenn Englehaupt noted that in hind site "we may have gone a little overboard," noting that at the time they had no idea of what they were up against. Englehaupt continued "when it comes to things like that we will error on the side of safety."

Emergency crews completed the cleanup and returned the building back to normal at around 4:30 that afternoon without incident. Englehaupt noted that other than a \$3.00 shelf and the possibly substantial cost of the chemical disposal no other damage was incurred.

While Englehaupt was pleased with the incident outcome, he did express concern that people were moving around emergency vehicles, proceeding into the cordoned off area. "If you see the streets blocked off, you should not drive past the emergency vehicles," he added, noting that irresponsible behavior endangers not only the offender but emergency personnel as well.

# Winter swap meet coming

By Jeff Moberg

Winter is upon us and if you're like most people you've probably got a closet (or garage) full of extra winter clothes, helmets, snowmobile parts or even ice skates and skis. Now's the time to drag out that stuff and bring it down to the old high school gym in Sundance. It's a great chance to turn it into cash during the Bearlodge Snowmobile Association's First Annual Snow Swap Meet.

If you are in the market to buy or sell snowmobiles, trailers or similar items, an outdoor area will be provided in front of Old Stoney to showcase these items as well. Area motorsport vendors are expected to be in attendance as well with new and used snowmobiles, clothing and accessories for sale. Experts will also be on hand to visit with outdoor enthusiasts about avalanche safety, snowmobile trails information and related topics.

The swap meet is scheduled to take place on Saturday, November 22, 2003 from 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. at the old gym located at 108 N 4th in Sundance.

Anyone who is interested in selling their items should reserve a table in the gym or a space outside as applicable. Cost for a table or an outside 12' x 12' space are \$5.00 each. Tables and spaces may be split if needed. All proceeds from the fees will go directly to the association. Contact any member of the Bearlodge Snowmobile Association or Jeff Moberg at 283-3411 to reserve a space or for more information.



# Officials discuss natural gas

Kinder Morgan considering expansion into Sundance area

By Jeff Moberg

Kinder Morgan Area Manager Edgar Thompson met Thursday with Mayor Jim Miller, Councilman Alan Roberts and City Foreman John Kiplinger at City Hall to discuss the possibility of providing a natural gas distribution system to the Sundance area. Thompson told the city officials that Kinder Morgan, one of Wyoming's largest natural gas suppliers, is interested in possibly expanding into the Sundance and Hulett areas, thus initiating his initial probe. Thompson also noted that while he was serious in his interest, the concept is in its infancy with questions of economic feasibility still lingering.

The distance to a major pipeline, limited demand and terrain features which make digging difficult were discussed as possible limiting factors which may make the expansion impossible. Conversely, new technologies and increasing demand were also discussed which may improve the odds of a possible expansion.

Thompson made clear that his company had not yet studied the possibilities at any length but that this informal meeting served as a "kickoff" to begin a more in-depth assessment. Thompson noted that he expected to have a more complete idea of where the project may stand within the next two to three weeks.

## Inside



- Editorials .....5
- School .....6-7
- Weather .....12



Find us on the World Wide Web at [www.sundancetimes.com](http://www.sundancetimes.com)

# Wyoming trails among the best

Rated by readers of Sno West Magazine

Readers of SnoWest Magazine, "The Authority for Western Snowmobiling," have rated five Wyoming snowmobiling areas among the Top 10 in the western United States for 2003-2004. Editor Lane Lindstrom says 2,000 readers participated in the survey. The five Wyoming snowmobiling areas and their rankings are: #2 - Continental Divide Snowmobile Trail; #5 - Alpine (Wyoming Range); #6 - Snowy Range; #7 - Big Horn Mountains; #9 - Black Hills. Wyoming received more Top Ten trail rankings than any of the 13 states assessed. Specific trail category rankings placed the Continental Divide system at the top for off-trail riding. The Alpine area was number one for scenery and the Black Hills won out for both grooming and signage.

According to Lindstrom, "Those right there are the reasons Wyoming always scores well in the Top 15. We've always found the snow to be consistent, you can almost always find decent snowfalls somewhere in the state, the trails are well maintained and the off-trail riding is excellent. All of these things don't go unnoticed by our readers and that's why Wyoming always does well in the Top 15 survey."

Kim Raap, Wyoming state trails program manager commented, "Wyoming snowmobiling trails and

snowmobiling areas have long been recognized as some of the best in the country. We have a great combination of well signed and groomed trails that lead riders to some of the best powder riding you'll find anywhere...when you combine that with Wyoming's magnificent scenery, it simply just doesn't get any better than what we have to offer."

"Snowmobiling provides an important seasonal balance and economic income to many areas of Wyoming. Last year we had over 200,000 out of state snowmobilers who came to Wyoming - that's quite a nice economic impact," said Diane Shober, director of Wyoming Travel & Tourism.

Snowmobiling information and current conditions are available online at: <http://wyotrails.state.wy.us>. Wyoming Travel & Tourism also has recorded information on snowmobiling, skiing and more available by calling (307) 777-7777 or (800) 225-5996 or online at [www.wyomingtourism.org](http://www.wyomingtourism.org).

Travel and tourism is Wyoming's second largest industry. In 2002, over 6.7 million visitors spent nearly \$1.8 billion, directly supported \$461 million in personal income and 28,100 jobs and generated \$87.5 million in state and local tax revenues.

Check out our new Web Site at [www.sundancetimes.com](http://www.sundancetimes.com)