

THE SHERIDAN Press

Impress the whole family with Helen's pecan pie recipe. A4



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WEDNESDAY

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FATAL CRASH

2-year-old dies in accident on I-90

FROM STAFF REPORTS

SHERIDAN — A single vehicle rollover crash Tuesday on Interstate 90 north of Sheridan resulted in the death of a 2-year-old child.

Ja' Kodda R. Wegner, of Sheridan, died from injuries sustained in the accident, according to the Wyoming Highway Patrol.

Alyssa Wegner, a 23-year-old Sheridan resident, was driving eastbound at 12:05 a.m. when she overcorrected a 2004 Jeep Liberty, causing the vehicle to enter a spin, trip and roll in the median. The Jeep eventually came to rest in the westbound lane of Interstate 90 near milepost 17.

Ja' Kodda Wegner was transported by ground ambulance to Sheridan Memorial Hospital, where he succumbed to his injuries. He was seated in an improperly installed child seat and was ejected during the crash.

Alyssa Wegner, who was not wearing her seatbelt and was ejected during the crash, was life-flighted to St. Vincent Hospital in Billings, Montana. A GoFundMe account states Alyssa Wegner is in critical condition and asks for donations to pay for medical bills and funeral costs. At press time, 27 donors had contributed \$1,280 in 23 hours.

Driver fatigue is being investigated as the contributing factor in the crash. WHP is looking at improper securing of the child seat as the primary reason for the fatality.

SEE CRASH, PAGE 3

SERVING UP HOPE

Community meals provide residents Thanksgiving dinner

BY TRAVIS PEARSON
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SHERIDAN — Margaret Tibbets might not get the chance to see family this Thanksgiving. Handicapped and homebound, the Sheridan resident cannot travel or prepare the classic meal.

Fortunately, Tibbets' condition won't keep her from enjoying the holiday. Because of the hard work and kindness of individuals and businesses in the community, Tibbets and hundreds of others will still be treated to a delicious, restaurant-quality meal on Thursday.

The Sheridan Senior Center will not only continue its transportation and home-delivered meal programs — the center keeps these services going 365 days a year — but it will also provide a traditional Thanksgiving meal to residents from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The Senior Center's commitment to services goes back decades, preceding even Executive Director Carmen Rideout's association with the organization. The sense of duty has been passed down through time.

"The board of directors of the Senior Center from the very beginning valued and thought it was really important to stay open (on holidays)," Rideout said. "One of our past board members, the late Rev. Raymond Clark, told me it's even more important for us to be open on the holidays because that's when people need to be with other people the most."

Preparing a delicious meal every day of the year is critical, but ensuring the Senior Center stays open and offers food and fellowship on the holidays takes on even more importance.

"You just can't turn your back on people on a holiday," Communications Director Lois Bell said. "When you have an opportunity to



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Holli Weber stirs a pot of salad soup on Tuesday in preparation for a meal at the Senior Center.

extend your warmth even more, this is a great time to do that."

The Senior Center will prepare 450 meals on Thanksgiving, including all the classics — stuffing, mashed potatoes, turkey, gravy, pumpkin pie and more. This task will fall on Kitchen Manager Ronda Paavilainen and her staff.

While many local residents treasure getting a day off on Thanksgiving, Paavilainen is more than happy to head to work bright and early. Sponsors make the meal possible for free or a donation, which is important

because many people are down on their luck during the holidays and can't afford a \$12 or \$18 dinner.

"We enjoy providing a meal for those people who don't have families or don't feel like making the turkey and stuffing and want to come here and have a homemade meal," she said. "I know it's much appreciated by the folks who sit out in the dining room."

Paavilainen said working that day and see-

SEE GIVING THANKS, PAGE 3

Dayton's Mountain Inn also offering Turkey Day meal

DAYTON — The Mountain Inn Bar in Dayton will continue a longstanding tradition this year and offer a free community dinner on Thanksgiving beginning around 4 p.m.

Bar owners Nancy and

Michael Mahon have only owned the bar about two years, but the idea of a free holiday meal dates back more than a decade. Nancy Mahon said former owners Howard Paige and Greg Wilder established the din-

ner at least 15 years ago, and it likely dates back a lot longer.

The Mahons always enjoyed the event and decided to keep it going as part of the Mountain Inn's legacy. Nancy Mahon said she looks forward to seeing

friends and neighbors each year.

"It's just really fun. ... Come on in if you're hungry or tired of your relatives," she laughed.

The Mountain Inn Bar is located at 810 Main St. in Dayton.



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Ashley Fox, left, and Robby Smith, right, move a Santa display into the window Tuesday morning in preparation for the holidays at Sheridan Stationery, Books and Gallery on Main Street.

Local businesses gear up for busy season

BY MIKE DUNN
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SHERIDAN — A day off is a pipe dream for Pamela Kritner.

The local artist and owner of Wynot Design located in downtown Sheridan has been a perpetual machine of production the past couple weeks. She's been working long hours filling orders, attending regional craft shows and stocking her inventory.

It will cost Kritner hours of sleep

and long days in her shop, but it will pay off.

The next few weeks will be the most profitable time of year for local retail businesses, but the actual selling of the items is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to making a profit this season.

Kritner isn't the only person who has been working long hours preparing for the holiday rush — Robby Smith began stockpiling her inventory months ago.

The longtime owner of Sheridan Stationery, Books and Gallery is no stranger to the Christmas rush. Smith said she placed most of her orders around September and is now beginning to put her inventory out on display.

Yet, no matter how many times she has been through the busy holiday season, the outcome every year can be a tossup.

SEE BUSINESS, PAGE 3



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Today's edition is published for:
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GIVING THANKS: Taking time to volunteer on a holiday

FROM 1

Paavilainen said working that day and seeing the appreciation on people's faces makes the hard work worth it and puts a smile on the faces of those who work behind the scenes.

The same can be said for individuals who take time out of their Thanksgiving to volunteer. Judy Yeager and her husband go to the Senior Center every year for the big meal. She said it's not a tough decision and something she really relishes. The fellowship and camaraderie is second to none, and she loves supporting the important work of the Senior Center.

"I get more out of it than I give, I think, and I'm glad to do it," Yeager added.

For Tibbets and others in the community who rely on the service the Senior Center provides, it's tough to adequately express their gratitude. Tibbets points out she's one of many homebound individuals in Sheridan County, and getting a well-balanced meal is truly invaluable — and takes on even more meaning on Thanksgiving.

"I can't say enough about it because it's so special and so important to me, and those cooks down there are just wonderful," she said.

The Senior Center is located at 211 Smith St.

CRASH: Injuries reported

FROM 1

Three other individuals — Kaylla Washburn, 23 years old; Xaiden Wegner, 8 months old; and Emma Pritchett, 1 month old — were properly secured and survived the accident. Each was taken to Sheridan Memorial Hospital.

The crash caused a temporary closure of I-90, with traffic being detoured. The incident marks the 138th highway fatality in Wyoming for 2015, compared to 140 fatalities during this same reporting period in 2014.

BUSINESS: Christmas Stroll kicks off shopping season

FROM 1

"You always hope everything is going to go well," Smith said. "You always hope it's going to be busy."

Over the years, Smith said her sales from Thanksgiving to Christmas triple any other time of the year.

Because of this, she has to make adjustments to maximize profits. Not only does the shop increase merchandise, but Smith also keeps her business open an extra day — on Sundays from now until Christmas, during regular business hours — to cash in on the weekend crowd. Smith says she also plans to stay open later in the evening as it gets closer to Christmas.

The goal for most local businesses is to be entirely prepared by the time the annual Christmas Stroll comes around, which takes place the Friday after Thanksgiving. The stroll, which is put on by the Downtown Sheridan Association, is a huge boost for Jennifer Nelson's business.

"Really the kickoff for us is the Christmas Stroll," the

owner of Side Street Bed and Bath said. "Most of our efforts right now are concentrated on getting ready for the stroll."

For many in Sheridan's retail trade, the next six weeks can make or break the entire year. Kritner says her sales typically increase steadily throughout the calendar year, peaking in December.

But from January through March, the retail business traditionally takes a dive.

"The money does," Kritner said, responding to whether or not December's sales carry her business through the rest of the year. "But when I really get a chance to make my product is during the winter months."

Nelson agrees. Now in her second Christmas season, she is still fairly new to Sheridan's downtown business scene. She said that while her shop had a great December last year, she saw the lowest revenues in February and March.

"Last winter was very slow," Nelson said. "I'm learning quickly that winter dies down here."

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THE HUNGER GAMES: MOCKINGJAY PART 2	1:30 4:15 7:00 9:15

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The Brinton holiday show set to open Sunday

FROM STAFF REPORTS

BIG HORN — The Brinton's annual holiday show will open Sunday and be on display through Dec. 23.

The show, "Off the Wall," will exhibit the paintings and handcrafted

furniture of Wyoming artists Julie Oriet and Ann Hanson.

The show will be open Tuesdays through Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sundays from noon to 5 p.m.

Admission to The Brinton is \$10 for adults and \$8 for seniors and stu-

dents. Children 12 years old and younger get in free.

For additional information, call the museum at 672-3173 or see thebrinton-museum.org.

The Brinton is located at 239 Brinton Road in Big Horn.

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Wyoming's Rib & Chop House

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SHERIDAN COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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Post a selfie on the Sheridan Christmas Stroll Facebook page of you with 5 or more different Stroll Buttons from previous years for a chance to win \$50, or post a picture of you wearing 10 or more buttons from previous years for a chance to win \$100.

Winners will be randomly chosen on December 1st.

GET YOUR STROLL BUTTONS TODAY!
Match your button number to the winning number in any participating store through December 24th and win!

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