



# The Ranch News

## WATER RATES UPDATE

TOWN COUNCIL OPTS FOR RATES REVIEW

At last month's Town Council work session (held September 12<sup>th</sup>), a review of water project loans and water rates was conducted. After considerable debate and discussion, the Council decided to align future water rate changes with the Town budget cycle. Each Town budget year begins July 1<sup>st</sup> and runs through June 30<sup>th</sup>. The latter is dictated by Wyoming Statute (see [W.S. 16-4-125](#)).

The Town usually begins work on the next year's budget in February in order to have enough time to approve the new budget by July 1<sup>st</sup>. In addition to aligning any future water rate changes with the budget cycle, the Council also voted to convene a citizen group to review rates and make recommendations to the Council for consideration during the 2024-2025 budget development process. *Note that this will be a change from the existing water rate setting process that up to now has implemented increases in January of each year.* See the "Mayor's Memo" article on page 2 for more on this story.

## LINCOLN COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH FLU CLINIC

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 5<sup>TH</sup> FROM 1:30PM TO 4:30PM

Lincoln County Public Health will hold a flu shot clinic at Town Hall on Thursday, October 5<sup>th</sup> starting at 1:30pm and running until 4:30pm. Town Hall is located at 171 Vista Drive; parking is on the north side of the building. There is lift access for those unable to use the stairs.

To schedule an appointment **\*\*FOR OTHER VACCINATIONS\*\*** or if you have any questions, contact Lincoln County Public Health at (307) 885-4700. Note that *you do not need to make an appointment for the flu shot clinic on the 5th!*

Keep your family flu free by remembering to: 1) Stay home when you're sick; 2) Wash hands often; 3) Cover your cough; and, 4) *Get immunized!*



## CALENDAR ITEMS

### UPCOMING MEETINGS

**Water Utility Board**

October 2<sup>nd</sup> at 1pm

**Natural Resources Board**

October 3<sup>rd</sup> at 2pm

**Coffee with the Mayor**

October 10<sup>th</sup> at 9am

**Finance Advisory Board**

October 10<sup>th</sup> at 1pm

**Town Council Workshop**

October 10<sup>th</sup> at 2pm

**Town Council Meeting**

October 10<sup>th</sup> at 7pm

**Planning & Zoning Board**

October 11<sup>th</sup> at 5pm

October 25<sup>th</sup> at 5pm

## NUMBERS YOU NEED

### CONTACTS

**Town Hall**

(307) 883-8696

[clerk@starvalleyranchwy.org](mailto:clerk@starvalleyranchwy.org)

**Special Municipal Officer**

(307) 880-2666

[smo@starvalleyranchwy.org](mailto:smo@starvalleyranchwy.org)

## MAYOR'S MEMO

A FEW WORDS FROM KATHY BUYERS

Dear friends and neighbors,

Another beautiful Star Valley Ranch summer has come to an end. Some of our residents will be chasing the sun and heading south for the winter. Most of our residents stay here because we love the beauty, quiet, and recreation the winters provide for us. For everyone, please have a fun and safe winter.

The Council has recommended a group of citizens to work on a water rates study and make recommendations to the Council. The first meeting of the citizen water rate group will be on October 3<sup>rd</sup>. The Council voted to review all rates during the budget cycle beginning in March and make any rate changes based on the fiscal calendar which begins on July 1<sup>st</sup>. We all agreed that it is difficult to have an accurate budget if you are not reviewing rates at the same time.

The Council approved four capital projects for the 2023-2024 fiscal budget. Middle Branch Bridge is currently waiting for permitting from the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, Water Improvement Project 2023 (Vista) has been awarded to Avail Valley Construction, LLC which will start in the spring, Brambleberry pavement and Alpine Way/Ridgecrest maintenance layer has been awarded to HK Contractors, Inc. and the Green Canyon tank liner will need to be re-bid in 2024.

You may have noticed 30 new package lockers in the hallway at the Mail Center. They were purchased and received by the Town in July at a cost of \$10,000.00 and cannot be installed until the Town receives locks that must be ordered by the Thayne postmaster. I agree that it is frustrating, and we are doing what we can to complete the project. Once we receive the locks our staff will have the boxes installed in a few hours. Thank you for your patience.

Sincerely,

*Kathleen Buyers, Mayor*

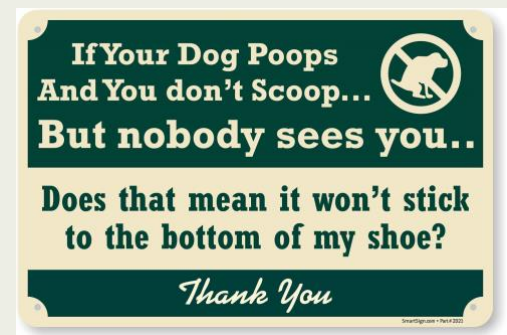
## FROM THE SPECIAL MUNICIPAL OFFICER

NOTES FROM JIM ROGERS, SMO

A couple of reminders for residents. Please remember that meter pits are to be clear of any structures and debris, i.e., wishing wells or any type of boxes, etc., that will hinder the water crew from accessing the meter pit. If such structures or debris exist, they must be moved off the meter pit. Also, it is the responsibility of property owners to keep meters clear of snow and other obstacles. Please refer to [Ordinance §53.12 \(A\)](#) which specifies "The *meter pit* and immediate area around the *pit* shall be readily accessible."

Another reminder, *please pick-up after Fido or Fifi*. Specifically, "it is unlawful for an owner or any person having charge or control of any dog to permit such animal to defecate and to allow the feces to remain upon any public street, sidewalk, pathway, park, pedestrian way or any public facility, or on any private property". Please refer to [Ordinance §90.05 \(F\)](#).

Thanks for your cooperation! Please contact Jim with questions at: [smo@starvalleyranchwy.org](mailto:smo@starvalleyranchwy.org)



## COUNCIL CORNER

A FEW WORDS FROM COUNCILMAN MERRILL

On the 12<sup>th</sup> of September, the Town Council of Star Valley Ranch passed the third reading of the ordinance to establish a Roads Advisory Board. The first Roads Advisory Board meeting will be on Wednesday, October 11<sup>th</sup> at 5pm. Like all Town Board meetings this will be open to the public. We encourage any positive ideas and feedback from citizens that can be used to form potential recommendations from the Board to the Town Council.

The Roads Advisory Board will have many tools at their disposal, such as road reports, traffic reports, and budgeting reports to aid in building and supporting recommendations to the Town Council. The Roads Advisory Board will not only provide recommendations for our Town roads but will also consider future pathway projects and safety.

At times, certain advisory members will be appointed to provide advice and counsel to the Board. If you or someone you know has special skills, knowledge, or experience that may bring insight to the Roads Advisory Board, please contact the Board Chairman, or myself as the Town Council Liaison. Thank you.

*Kirsten Merrill*



L. Martin

### CONTACT YOUR COUNCIL

#### COUNCILMAN ELLIS

[tellis@starvalleyranchwy.org](mailto:tellis@starvalleyranchwy.org)

#### COUNCILMAN DENNEY

[rdenney@starvalleyranchwy.org](mailto:rdenney@starvalleyranchwy.org)

#### COUNCILWOMEN MERRILL

[kmerrill@starvalleyranchwy.org](mailto:kmerrill@starvalleyranchwy.org)

#### COUNCILWOMEN ROK

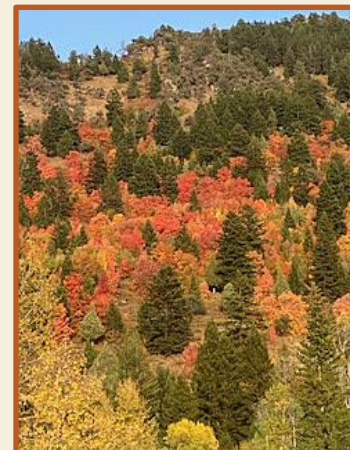
[rrok@starvalleyranchwy.org](mailto:rrok@starvalleyranchwy.org)



The beautiful photographs you see sprinkled throughout this newsletter are all submissions from our most recent photo call

### *"The Change of Seasons"*

Thank you Ranch residents for sharing your photos!



T. Christensen



## "The Change of Seasons"

*photo submissions from Ranch residents*



L. Martin



R. Montano



SVR Trail Crew



R. Rok



SVR Trail Crew



D. Cianflone



L. Martin



## ROADS 101

**SAFETY AROUND TOWN EQUIPMENT**

KEEPING YOU AND OUR ROAD WORKERS SAFE

Undoubtedly, residents are familiar with the various heavy equipment vehicles operated by the Town's Public Works Department to maintain and repair Town roads as well as to clear snow during the winter.

We all have places to go and be, however, operating your privately owned vehicle safely around Town heavy equipment is a responsibility not to be taken lightly. Your safety as well as the safety of Town employees depends on it!

Here are some tips to help keep you safe when heavy equipment is operating on the roadway:

- **Slow Down!** Speeding is one of the major causes of roadwork area crashes and injuries.
- **Keep a Safe Distance Between Your Vehicle, Public Works Personnel and Their Equipment**
- **Don't Be a Gap Shooter.** As mentioned earlier, we all have things to do and places to be, however, *please don't try and "shoot the gap"* in front of, behind, or around heavy equipment with your vehicle. Instead...
- **Make Sure the Equipment Operator Can See You.** Make eye contact with and alert the operator—and ensure the operator sees you—before approaching a heavy equipment vehicle. *Remember, blind spots can be a significant issue for a heavy equipment operator.*
- **Pay Attention to Warning Signs that May be Posted.** Warning signs are posted to help you and other drivers move safely through a work zone. Please don't ignore them.
- **Be Patient and Stay Calm.** Road work being conducted in Town isn't intended to personally inconvenience you. Rather, the Public Works crews are working to improve the roads and make driving around town a better experience for everyone.

*Thank you for your courtesy and patience!*

Have questions? Please contact the Town Clerk by email at [clerk@starvalleyranchwy.org](mailto:clerk@starvalleyranchwy.org) or give Town Hall a call at (307) 883-8696.



D. Hillman



D. Hillman

## MUNICIPAL FINANCE

WHERE TOWN GENERAL FUND MONEY COMES FROM (UPDATED)

*(This article from last month's newsletter drew a few comments and generated good discussion, so we are updating the numbers with the Town's financial results from the latest fiscal year ended on June 30, 2023, and have provided some enhanced definitions below for some of these revenue sources.)*

Understanding municipal finance is complex and oftentimes is unique to the specific community. Wyoming municipalities are statutorily bound to the revenues they receive and may generate. Moreover, municipalities are statutorily required to maintain balanced budgets. This is challenging when revenue streams are unpredictable and expenses ever-increasing. This only refers to General Fund revenue streams since Enterprise Funds (self-sustaining user-fee-funded programs like our water department) vary dramatically.

The smaller the population and the fewer commercial operations in the Town limits, the fewer locally generated revenue options there are, and thus more dependence on State revenue distributions. In fact, most Wyoming municipalities are heavily dependent on revenues from the State, both shared and appropriated, and Star Valley Ranch is no exception with 46% of our General Fund Revenue coming from State funding sources.

The following is a summary of the sources that made up the General Fund revenues for our Town based on the Town's actual revenue received in the fiscal year that ended on June 30, 2023:

**LOCAL REVENUES** – were 29% of our General Fund revenue, which includes the 5th penny sales tax which is collected by the county and then distributed by population based on the Census, and motor vehicle taxes which are also collected by the county and distributed to the Town.

**PROPERTY TAXES** – were 17% of the Town's General Fund revenue. The Town collects 8 mils of property tax (out of the total of 67 mils that property owner's pay - the other 59 mils go to the schools, county government, hospital, and other organizations). And, please keep in mind the Town is then contractually obligated to send 3 of its 8 mils (or 37.5%) to the Mid-Valley Fire District for fire protection services.

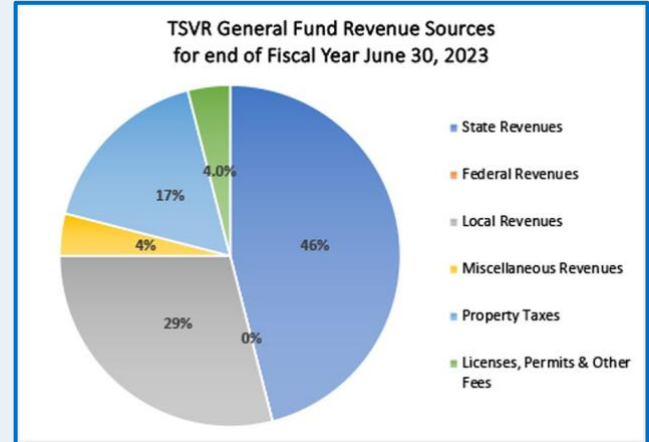
**LICENSES, PERMITS, AND OTHER FEES** – were 4% of the Town's General Fund revenue and represent locally generated revenue from Town-granted licenses, building permits and franchise fees.

**STATE REVENUES** – were 46% of the Town's General Fund revenue and include state sales and use tax (which is distributed by population based on the Census), direct State Aid payments, mineral extraction royalties and severance taxes, and revenue from taxes on cigarettes and fuel sales.

**MISCELLANEOUS REVENUES** – were 4% of the General Fund Revenue, and includes interest earned on the Town's cash investments, Lottery taxes, Natural Resources Board (NRB) donations, and other revenues that do not fit into another category.

**FEDERAL REVENUES** – In the fiscal year ended June 30, 2023 the Town did not receive any federal funding through loans and grants to our Town General Fund.

*Have questions? Please contact the Town Clerk by email at [clerk@starvalleyranchwy.org](mailto:clerk@starvalleyranchwy.org) or give Town Hall a call at (307) 883-8696.*



## NEWS &amp; NOTES FROM THE NATURAL RESOURCES BOARD (NRB)

## NEW TRAIL SIGN INSTALLED

ON VISTA DRIVE NEAR TOWN ENTRANCE

In case you haven't noticed it yet as you drive into Town, a new National Forest access sign was recently installed by Public Works on Vista Drive. The sign is located just east of the Ranch Center South pull-out after you turn onto Vista Drive from Muddy String Road.



The sign will assist Bridger-Teton National Forest visitors in finding the various trailheads that originate from within the Ranch.

## COMMUNITY GARDEN NEWS

UPDATES FROM OUR CROP CIRCLES COMMUNITY GARDEN

There has been lots of activity in the garden circles area, within and without. There continued to be reports by gardeners of missing produce. Investigation of the tanks did reveal evidence of possible raccoon visitation (scat and footprints in the tanks) as well as complaints about chiselers inside and in tanks. Live traps were set but no raccoons. The potato harvest will occur soon and be harvested all at once for the Thayne Food Bank. The potato crop had a hard season. Too cold in the beginning, then very hot for a short while, then mildew that required management. A tough growing season - but growing we shall do!

*Deb Johnson*

SVR Community Garden Coordinator  
[svrcommunitygarden@gmail.com](mailto:svrcommunitygarden@gmail.com)

## MORE NATURAL RESOURCES NEWS

## ASPEN TREE DISEASES ON THE RANCH

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

SUBMITTED BY RUSTY AD SHADE OF RUSTY'S TREE SERVICE

After 42 years of performing arborist services from Florida to California, I have come to believe that the Aspen tree is one of the most beautiful and dangerous trees in North America.

For the last 9 years, I have resided in Star Valley Ranch. My company, Rusty's Tree Service, has responded to hundreds of calls concerning Aspen trees that have fallen in yards, across driveways, and on top of homes and structures. I am writing this article as a warning to anyone who has large Aspen trees as part of their landscape. *Aspen Trees Can and Will Fall Down.*

Of the hundreds of fallen Aspen trees that we have removed from Star Valley Ranch homes, approximately 75% had a white mushroom growing out of the base. The roots of these trees were soft and spongy. Some of these trees had large dead branches at the very top. Many of them, however, looked completely healthy. Experts agree that this mushroom infestation, known as *Ganoderma* or

Here are a few stories from my customers who have experienced falling Aspen trees. All these events occurred on the Ranch.

*"Rusty told me that my beautiful three-trunked Aspen was in danger of falling. He showed me a large white half-moon shaped mushroom that was growing out of the tree at the base. He told me that the mushroom was a sign that the root system was rotten and that the tree would probably fall over within 2 or 3 years. I ignored his advice to remove the tree. Two years later I was sitting next to my tree when the wind blew my umbrella away. I got up to retrieve it when suddenly my tree fell right on the spot where I was sitting."*

*"My daughter had some friends over for the weekend. One of them was lying in our hammock when suddenly a large Aspen tree fell and missed her head by 6 inches."*

*"I was in my back yard with my wife. I casually leaned against one of the large Aspen trees and it tipped over."*

[continued on next page]



*butt rot* (*Ganoderma applanatum*), is incurable and that the tree should be removed immediately. The presence of the *white butt rot mushroom* usually means that the tree is too dangerous to climb and that alternative methods of tree removal must be used. Therefore, it is extremely important to consult with a professional tree removal expert.



The *Ganoderma applanatum* mushroom cause of butt rot in aspen trees.



A large *Ganoderma applanatum* mushroom at the base of a tree.

The remaining 25% of fallen Aspen trees in our community had a brown satin textured mushroom known as *Aspen trunk rot* (*Phellinus tremulae*). These mushrooms are usually located on the middle to upper trunk of the trees.

Trees infected with this mushroom are usually hollow or rotten in the center. Just like the *butt rot mushroom*, there is no cure. Infected trees will eventually fall and must be removed.

We encourage you to go online and read about these two mushrooms. Learn how to identify them. If you discover that your Aspen trees have *butt rot* or *Aspen trunk rot*, call us for a free inspection. We can help you determine which trees need to be removed.

Our landscapes can safely contain Aspen trees as long as we become familiar with the warning signs.

Have questions? Contact Rusty by phone at (307) 248-2442 or by email at [rustystreeservicewy@gmail.com](mailto:rustystreeservicewy@gmail.com)



Photos above and below show *Phellinus tremulae*, the mushroom associated with Aspen trunk rot.



## Ranch News

Here's a look at what's coming up!



Look for a new photo call in the December/November issue.

That's right, we'll want to see your best

*"Ranch Powder Hounds"* of the winter 2024 season!

Email photos to

[newsletter@starvalleyranchwy.org](mailto:newsletter@starvalleyranchwy.org)

and we'll publish them in January/February!



Have questions, comments or thoughts to share about our Town?

Please email the

*Ranch News*

Editor at

[newsletter@starvalleyranchwy.org](mailto:newsletter@starvalleyranchwy.org)

and we'll do our best to answer your query, publish your letter, or pass along your comments in a future newsletter.

Thank you!



## LINCOLN COUNTY SHERIFF DISPATCH REPORT

AKA - THE RANCH BLOTTER

The Lincoln County Sheriff's Office provided the following TSVR dispatch report for 1 - 31 August 2023.

[Summary information to the right with details below.]

Summary	Citations	0
	Warnings	0
	CFS/Law Incidents	58
	Special Patrol	9

Animal Problem	1	Abandoned Vehicle		Agency Assist	2
Alarms	2	Alcohol Problem		Auto Accident	
Burglary		Citizen Assist		Citizen Dispute	
Civil Standby		Controlled Burn		Child Abuse	2
Alcohol Problem		Custodial Interference	1	Disturbance	2
Court		Domestic Violence		Dead body	1
Elderly Abuse		e911	12	Harassing	1
Intoxication		Fire / Fireworks		Fraud	1
Lost/Found Animal	2	Information	3	Lost/Found Property	1
Juvenile Problem	1	Missing Person	1	Message Delivery	
Game & Fish		Protection Order		Medical	7
Missing person		Ordinance Violation		Reckless Driving	
Public Relations	1	Suspicious	4	Theft	
Threatening		Traffic	2	VIN Inspection	5
Welfare Check	4	Trespassing		VIN Stamp	2

## SMO REPORT

FOR 1 - 31 AUGUST 2023

During the month of August, the TSVR SMO issued 5 verbal warnings, 9 written warnings, and 19 citations.

Animal Complaint	4	Road Damage	1	Fire Prevention/Open Fire	0
Building & Zoning	13	STR Complaint	4	Stop Work Order	2
Road Right-of-Way	5	Water Shut-Off	0	Animal Impound	0
Snow Complaint	0	Meter Pit Tampering	1	Other	0
Nuisance Complaint	3	LCSD Assist	0		

## LETTERS, ORDINANCE UPDATES &amp; OTHER PUBLIC NOTICES

## LETTERS

FROM OUR TOWN RESIDENTS

*No letters this month. Please drop us a line.  
We'd love to hear from you. Thanks!*



## ORDINANCES

PENDING ORDINANCES OR UPDATES

The following ordinance updates were approved during the September 12<sup>th</sup> Town Council meeting. *Ordinance updates become effective 10 days after the third reading.*

**ORDINANCE 2023-08** [THIRD READING]  
TITLE III ADMINISTRATION CHAPTER 33 TOWN ORGANIZATIONS

This Ordinance is for the creation of a Roads Advisory Board and outlines the procedures in accordance with existing boards.

APPROVED BY TOWN COUNCIL.

**ORDINANCE 2023-09** [FIRST READING]  
TITLE III ADMINISTRATION CHAPTER 33 TOWN ORGANIZATIONS

This Ordinance is for the creation of a Travel and Tourism Board and outlines the procedures in accordance with existing boards.

SECOND READING PLANNED FOR 10 OCTOBER TOWN COUNCIL MEETING.

**ORDINANCE 2023-10** [FIRST READING]  
TITLE XV LAND USE CHAPTER 150 BUILDINGS

This Ordinance is an update to the existing code removing the fees from ordinance and making them set by resolution.

SECOND READING PLANNED FOR 10 OCTOBER TOWN COUNCIL MEETING.

The complete text of all ordinance updates can be found on the Town website under Government > Ordinances > and then by using the "Current Proposed Ordinance up for Reading" drop-down.

Or [click here](#). Questions or comments on proposed ordinances or ordinance updates can be emailed to: [clerk@starvalleyranchwy.org](mailto:clerk@starvalleyranchwy.org)



## PUBLIC NOTICE

NEW USPS PROCESS FOR MAIL FORWARDING

For residents who depart for warmer climes during the winter months, please pay attention to the new process for *mail forwarding which must be done online at USPS this year*. See the notice posted at the Town Hall Mail Center for more information.



## MORE NEWS IN BRIEF

QUICK NOTES ON TOWN OPERATIONS AS OF 30 SEPT

- After the Labor Day water pressure issue experienced in Town, all water pumps at the Green Canyon pump house have been repaired and are now in good working order.
- Recent new hires for the Town Public Works Department have brought staffing levels back up just in time for winter road work preparations.



*Ranch News* is published  
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