

PUBLIC SERVICES

INTRODUCTION

Public Services in Thermopolis include general government, law enforcement, fire prevention and suppression, medical and health services, senior services, recreation, other social services, education, and public library.

GOVERNMENT

Thermopolis is the Hot Springs County seat. There are also some state and federal offices in Thermopolis.

Thermopolis Town Government

Town offices are located at 420 Broadway. Thermopolis has a Mayor-Council form of government. There are four council members. The mayor also serves as Chief Executive Officer (Town Administrator). The Assistant to the Mayor helps with day-to-day administrative affairs of the Town and is responsible to the Mayor and Council for making sure their directives are carried out. The Town maintains an active website with general information, contacts, city code, and links to other cities.

Departments and Services

- Public Works
- Clerk/Treasurer
- Police
- Codes Administration
- Engineering
- Economic Development
- Legal (Town Attorney/Municipal Court)

Hot Springs County

Hot Springs County offices are located at 415 Arapahoe, Thermopolis. The county has a Commissioner form of government with three County Commissioners. The county has a website with general information, contacts, planning documents, and links to other websites.

Departments and Services

- Agricultural Extension Service
- Airport
- Assessor
- County Attorney
- Circuit court
- Clerk
- Clerk of Court
- District Judge
- Emergency management
- Fairgrounds
- Family Services
- Fire District
- Library
- Museum and Cultural Center
- Planning
- Public Health
- Roads and Bridges
- Sheriff
- Treasurer

State

The State of Wyoming's presence in Thermopolis is primarily tied to the State Park (with employees involved in Park Management) and the Wyoming Pioneer Home. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department has a game warden's residence in Thermopolis.

Federal

Federal offices in Thermopolis include the Natural Resources Conservation Service and Post Office.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

The Thermopolis Police Department serves Thermopolis and East Thermopolis. The department has eight professional sworn officers and six civilian employees. The Thermopolis Police Department is located at the Joint Law Enforcement Center, which is shared with Hot Springs County Sheriff’s Department. (Town of Thermopolis website)

Thermopolis had 74 index crime offenses in 2008. According to the “Crime in Wyoming Annual Report,” index crimes include violent crimes (murder, forcible rape, robbery and aggravated assault) or serious property crimes (burglary, larceny-theft, and motor vehicle theft). The index crime rate per 10,000 inhabitants in Thermopolis was 231.6, compared to 299.1 statewide. (State of Wyoming, Office of Attorney General)

FIRE PROTECTION

The Hot Springs County Rural Fire Protection District is a taxing district and funding entity, with three elected board members. The Rural Fire Protection District has a 75 year contract with Thermopolis (with 72 years remaining in the contract at the time of this report) and contracts annually with East Thermopolis and Kirby. (Anderson) The Thermopolis Volunteer Fire Department is funded through the Rural Fire Protection District and provides fire protection throughout the entire county.

The Thermopolis Volunteer Fire Department is headquartered at 400 South 14th Street in a building constructed in the last two years. The Department consists of 25 all-volunteer fire fighters, 13 of whom are fully trained and equipped as the state’s Region 6 hazardous materials response team. Although the department was down to a low of 18 volunteers three years ago, new residents have come to volunteer and most of the rookies have considerable previous fire-fighting experience. Personal fire protection and hazardous materials gear is new, not more than two years old. The Fire Department has mostly new equipment and has no current needs. (Collins)

THERMOPOLIS VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT CALLS: 2009	
10 – 50 (Motor vehicle accident)	27
False alarm	20
Vehicle fire	5
Structure	7
Grass (510 acres burned)	27
Good intent/Service	14
Haz Mat	7
Dumpster	2
Downed power lines	2
River/lake rescue	1
Total calls	112
Calls within Thermopolis	58

Source: Collins

HEALTH CARE

Thermopolis is the health care center for the county. The town has a hospital, nursing home and assisted living facilities, counseling services, and a chiropractic clinic. There are six local doctors and three dentists. (Thermopolis EDC)

Hot Springs County Memorial Hospital

Hot Springs County Memorial Hospital is a 25-bed Critical Access Hospital. The hospital provides a number of services including the following:

- Emergency Services
- Inpatient Care
- Outpatient Care
- Imaging
- Chemotherapy Services
- Laboratory Services
- Obstetrics
- Diabetic Education
- Physician Specialty Clinics
- Physical Therapy
- Hot Springs Bone and Joint Center
- Cardiopulmonary Services
- General Surgery/Ambulatory Services
- Sleep Diagnostics Lab
- Pain Management Solutions

(Hot Springs County Memorial Hospital)

Gottsche Rehabilitation and Wellness Center

The Gottsche Rehabilitation and Wellness Center is a non-profit organization dedicated to treating crippling conditions. Now run by a 25 member board of citizens throughout Wyoming, the center began in 1954 with donations from William H. and Carrie Gottsche. The Gottsche's daughter was stricken with polio and they believed she benefitted most from her treatments at the Hot Springs. The Center offers physical, occupation, speech, psychological, and massage therapies. The Wellness Center began in 2002 as a small department for post therapy patients, but has grown into a community wide fitness and wellness center. (Gottsche Rehabilitation)

Home Health Care

Hot Springs County Memorial Hospital and Hot Spring County Public Health Nursing Services provide home health care. Home health agencies provide skilled nursing care, and some provide additional services such as medication management, personal care, etc. Assistance with paying for services may be available from a variety of federal, state or local programs. Most home health agencies also accept private insurance payments. (Wyoming Department of Health)

Hot Springs County Public Health, Hot Springs Memorial Hospital, and Hot Springs County Senior Center provide in-home health services. In-home services include non-medical services such as housekeeping, meal preparation, personal care, chore services, transportation, case management, respite care, assistive technology devices, and personal emergency response systems. (Wyoming Department of Health)

Assisted Living and Nursing Home Care

The Wyoming Pioneer Home provides assisted living licensed by the state of Wyoming. (Wyoming Department of Health) In order to qualify, individuals must be 55 years of age or older, able to ambulate themselves to and from the restroom, as well as dress on their own, only needing minimal help with buttons, socks or shoes. Assistance with some Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) is provided. (Wyoming Pioneer Home)

Canyon Hills Manor is an 80-bed nursing home. (Town of Thermopolis)

Emergency/Ambulance Services

Ambulance services are provided by a private company, housed next to the Thermopolis Volunteer Fire Department (Collins). The Hot Springs County Memorial Hospital provides emergency medical care.

Mental Health Care

Hot Springs County Counseling Services was incorporated as a non-profit entity in 1979. They provide mental health, substance abuse and prevention services. Adult services include individual and group therapy, medication management, psychiatric consultation, vocational rehabilitation, case management, and consultation and referral services. Children and family services include many of the same interventions as

adult services and also include family-based assessments, therapeutic foster care, and play therapy. They have therapists that specialize in treating children and their families. (Hot Springs County Counseling)

OTHER SOCIAL SERVICES

Big Horn Enterprises, Inc. provides services, employment, and residential facilities to individuals with developmental disabilities. (Town of Thermopolis)

SENIOR SERVICES

The Hot Springs County Senior Center is located at 206 Senior Avenue in Thermopolis. The Center provides meals, in-home services including homemaking and personal care, transportation, senior companions, info and assistance, shopping, letter writing and reading, recreational activities, social security and insurance assistance. (Wyoming Department of Health – Aging Division)

RECREATION

(The following is excerpted from the Hot Springs County Recreation District website.)

Hot Springs County Recreation District was established in 1986 by the Board of Trustees of Hot Springs County School District #1 to provide a system of public recreation for the residents of Hot Springs County and the surrounding area.

The Recreation District offers programs and activities for youth and adults. Youth programs include: soccer, arts & crafts, t-ball, baseball, golf lessons and tournaments, tennis lessons, volleyball, football, and basketball. The Recreation District teams up with the high school coaching staffs to offer volleyball, basketball, and football camps during the summer months. Special youth events include the Junior Olympic Skills Competition and the Aquafina Pitch, Hit & Run Competition.

Adult programs include: watercize classes (held at the Star Plunge), coed softball league, coed volleyball leagues (competitive and recreation), golf lessons and clinics, adult basketball league, Together In Art, and flag football league.

EDUCATIONHot Springs County Public School District

Public schools in Thermopolis are in the Hot Springs County Public School District #1. There are three schools:

- Ralph Witters Elementary (215 Springview Street). Kindergarten through 4th grade; 305 students; 12:1 student/teacher ratio.
- Thermopolis Middle School (1450 Valleyview Dr.). Grades 5-8; 150 students; 9:1 student/teacher ratio.
- Thermopolis High School (231 Park St). Grades 9-12; 185 students, 9:1 student/teacher ratio.

(Hot Springs County School District)

Big Horn Basin Children's Center

The Big Horn Basin Children's Center provides educational and residential services to emotionally disturbed and behavior-disordered students (ages 6-14) and to youth with developmental disabilities, medically fragile, traumatic brain injuries and/or multiple disabilities (ages 6-21). (Big Horn Basin Children's Center)

Post-Secondary Education

Central Wyoming College, a two-year community college located in Riverton, has an off-campus site in Thermopolis. (Central Wyoming College) Central Wyoming College is one of the seven community colleges in the Wyoming system. (Wyoming Community Colleges)

LIBRARY

The Hot Springs County Library is located at 344 Arapahoe with catalog information available on the internet (Hot Springs County Library). The County library had the following rankings among Wyoming's 23 counties in 2008 (the most recent year for which information is available):

- 2nd books per capita
- 3rd program attendance (children)

- 3rd program attendance per capita (all ages)
- 6th per capital circulation (children's)
- 13th per capita circulation (all ages)
- 17th operating expenditures per capita

(Wyoming State Library)

CONCLUSIONS

Thermopolis has a considerable amount of public services for a town with a population of approximately 3,000 people. Some of these resources are linked to the fact that Thermopolis is the county seat, the school district headquarters, and medical facilities interlinked to some extent with the mineral hot springs. The town's public schools have a very favorable student/teacher ratio. The town has considerable organized recreation through the Hot Springs County Recreation District

Thermopolis has significant public services, particularly health care, education, senior services, and recreation. These are desirable factors for newcomers with children as well as for seniors looking for quality retirement lifestyle.

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