



# Hangin' out

Emily McGaugh (right) and her twin sister, Lena, climb the side of the swingset at City Park Tuesday. Many people were outside throughout the community, enjoying the sunny, balmy afternoon, which topped the day.

## Tax reprieve for county, area municipalities

By John Miller

Staff Writer

The state giveth, and the state taketh away. And then its gives it right back again.

In a turn of events guaranteed to please counties and municipalities

throughout Wyoming, State Treasurer Joe Meyer successfully suspended repayment of overpaid severance tax money until he pleads his case against reimbursement before the State Appropriations Committee in December.

Meyer originally sought to let counties and municipalities keep the \$2.5 million in overpayments from 1995, when the matter was first brought before the committee

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We didn't have that amount in our budget this year. I think all of the cities and towns will appreciate it.

Lynette Strecker  
Torrington city treasurer

## Sowing seeds of knowledge

By Adam Louis

Staff Writer

Any farmer or rancher could tell you it takes hard work to go from ground to grocery store for most vegetables, fruit and livestock. Since not everyone is in the agriculture industry, this fact is often overlooked.

Several groups, however, are looking to spread the word.

Eastern Wyoming College will host the "Today's Agriculture, Feeding the World" at the Fine Arts

food on the table.

"We were looking to plan a district event for a learning and social networking opportunity for farmers and ranchers and to learn about the issues that impact us," Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation spokeswoman Kerin Clark said.

This forum includes a presentation entitled "The Impact of Technology on Agriculture" by Dr. Gary Sides of Pfizer Animal Health starting at 9 a.m. Sides' presentation is meant to show advances

presentation at a similar forum in San Diego that helped shape the idea for Torrington's forum, according to Christine Miller of the Goshen County Farm Bureau.

"(My husband and I) asked (Dr. Sides) how we can get the information he presented to Torrington. He said 'Invite me to speak'. It was that simple, and we've been working with (EWC) faculty to try to put together a day."

Following Sides' presentation and a lunch

sage about agriculture," Clark said of the Hadricks. "It's

agriculture." "I hope (audience members) will

Farm Bureau mem-ber Luncheon must RSVP with Clark by October 5. The cost

mation, contact Kerin Clark at (307) 532-2002 or at [kclark@wyfb.org](mailto:kclark@wyfb.org).

# Reprieve: County, area municipalities

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earlier this year, reasoning the money was better served staying where it was. The committee disagreed, however, considering it their "fiduciary responsibility" to collect the overpayments for the state.

After calculating what each county and municipality owed, statements were sent to each requesting repayment. Meyer convinced the committee to allow the various state entities up to four years to pay back the funds via deductions from their quarterly severance tax allowance.

With a \$288 billion budget, Meyer said he assumed such a relatively small amount

would be of no great consequence to the state. He believed his recommendation to simply let the counties and municipalities keep the money and write it off from the general fund would be abided by the committee.

But after a collective outcry from many financially-strapped counties and towns, Meyer decided it was in their best interest to present his solution in person, which he did not originally do.

"This time I'll go to the appropriations committee myself, and we'll see if the new governor and legislature agree," Meyer said. "There are so many differences in

county budgets and how much they would have to pay back. After 16 years, it just doesn't make sense to do this. It's been too long and it's not that much money."

The city of Torrington was presented a bill for \$31,193.50, which they decided to spread over four years with payments of \$1,949.59 every three months. After receiving notice last week from the state that the repayments were being disputed, City Treasurer Lynette Strecker said she was happy to see Meyer take action.

"We didn't have that amount in our budget this year," Strecker said. "I think all of the cities and towns will

appreciate it."

County Commission Chairman Jim Hudelson heard about the reversal in a Thursday, September 23 meeting with Gov. Dave Freudenthal. The commissioners earlier decided to pay the approximately \$21,000 the county owed in one lump sum out of the county's reserve account as to not disrupt future finances that may become necessary with the impending oil play.

"If we owed more we would have had to extend it," Hudelson said. "I'm not sure if we'll have to pay it back at all. We'll find out after the joint appropriations meeting in December."

# Duck: Car won by local teacher

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"They just dug in (the duck pile), dove on it...it was so much fun to watch," Special Events and Marketing Coordinator Jeana Allen of the United Way of Western Nebraska.

Durfee said this change in the event's style is probably why she won.

"Normally, it's just nuts," she said. "If the ducks hit the river bank and stop

moving, you're out. That's the kind of luck I would have."

Durfee won the grand prize, while Tom Gentry of Gering took home a 2010 Honda 4WD ATV and Susan Dickinson of Scottsbluff won a cruise for two.

Durfee has been the talk of the school and has been showered with a mixture of congratulations and requests to go for a drive.

"All the guys want

to take a look," she said. "It's a dream car. But everyone's been very kind and supportive. I'm really surprised they go out of their way."

Durfee said one of her students went as far as to buy her a pair of matching red fuzzy dice for the rear-view mirror.

Yes, Durfee has a dream car but she's not sure if she wants to keep it as she has to pay the taxes on it.

"Even if I can't keep it, it's nice to be chosen out of the whole thing," she said. "I'm very thrilled."

Durfee added she will not sell the car until her whole family has seen it.

United Way of Western Nebraska supports several

agencies in the Panhandle area, including the Longs Peak Council of the Boy Scouts of America, the Greater Nebraska Panhandle Chapter of the American Red Cross and the Boys & Girls Club of the Nebraska Panhandle. This year's Duck Dash marked a record-breaking year for the non-profit organization as donors purchased 18,332 rubber ducks, raising approximately \$70,000. This broke the 2008 record of 18,036.

"We're really, really pleased with our results, especially on the day of the race," Allen said. "We sold anywhere from 700 to 900 (that day)."

