



NEWS PHOTO / GARTH DOWLING

Jeremy Crapo of St. Anthony, Idaho takes to the air over the ten-foot "Mount Hansen" jump at the Jackson Hole Elks' Snowcross competition Saturday. For more photographs and a story on the event, please turn to page 3C.

PART FOUR

Bison's future unclear

States, federal officials and environmentalists debate wildlife herd growth.

By Angus M. Thuermer Jr.

he agency that many blame for the ang nearly a thousand migrating Yellow-e bison this winter admits it has no rority over wildlife. ne federal Animal Plant Health Inspection ice is responsible for protecting America's ulture, but that protection has slopped to affect wildlife like never before. e're not maintaining we have any auth- over bison," said Patrick Collins, an IS spokesman in Washington, D.C. at in seeking to eradicate the bovine bac- brucellosis, APHIS has threatened

trade restrictions on states where brucel- losis-infected bison wander free.

Any reservations it has regarding the health of the cattle industry reverberate widely, forcing Wyoming and Montana to kill bison to defend their dis- ease-free reputations. Such buckling under pressure by the states is "cowardly," an APHIS critic says.



"APHIS has estab- lished [brucellosis] crite- ria which are only rele- vant to domestic cattle," said D.J. Schubert, a wildlife biologist who works frequently for the Fund for Animals. "The fact that some bison or elk may be exposed or infected with the bacteria is not grounds for downgrading a

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mentation that a "transportation pro- ject" be listed on the cap tax ballot. The transportation pro- ject would include a \$3.3 million town streets project, \$1 mil- lion town sidewalks project, \$604,000 in START bus funding, and a newly formulated "Teton County Road and Pedestrian" project.

The county originally asked for \$3.3 million to renovate its courthouse. It decided to withdraw that proposal and instead request \$1.2 million for "arterial road and pedestrian projects." That will enable the county to pay for courthouse renova- tions from its own budget.

The "road and pedestrian project" is projects "like the South Park Loop Road project and matching funds," Shuptrine said. "We have several pathways projects that

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Rental critics spark backlash

■ Community reels at biased comments about "Mexicans," renters.

By Alison Gregor

A Pandora's box of preju- dice opened by several coun- ty residents over a county- proposed rental project near Melody Ranch has the rest of the community reeling.

Derogatory comments about "Mexicans," low- income laborers and renters delivered at a hearing by about six of the 10 who spoke triggered a spate of opinions and letters from community members.

"I guess horrified is not too strong of a word in terms of how I felt when I heard some of the comments made there," said Dail Barbour,

who attended the hearing held last week.

"It was very discouraging to me to think that in spite of all the gains that have been made in this country in terms of fighting prejudice . . . that there's still this level of 'us and them' out there," she said.

But comments displaying a bias may not be given credence by county officials charged with approving or denying the rental housing plan. "I doubt that kind of perspective will have very much effect on the decision," said county planning director Bill Collins.

The Housing Authority wants to build 35 to 55 feder- ally subsidized low-income units on 5 acres near Melody Ranch. The parcel was given to the county to offset the impact of the Melody develop- ment. Another 5 acres nearby will remain as open space.

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Rental

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People of Mexican heritage and renters alike were offended by what they read in the *News*. And at least one silent witness at the hearing left without being swayed by the rhetoric.

"I think that there's a compelling need for housing of all types, and all income brackets," Sara Carroll said. Inger Koedt, a member of the Teton Grassroots Project, which works to advance human rights and social diversity, also attended the hearing.

"I can only say the meeting was worse than what you wrote [in the *News*]," said Koedt, who arrived in the U.S. as an immigrant when she was 36. "I was really shocked. I thought it was sad that we couldn't discuss things like, 'Was this the right place to put it?'. . . The whole thing was so irrational."

Collins said issues like the development's compatibility with its neighborhood, how it looks, and highway noise should be factors in its approval. Most of them were barely touched on at the hearing.

Melody Ranch developer Gene Geritz was pleased that the county promised whatever is developed on the parcel will conform with ranch guidelines. Geritz's subdivision lies to the west and south of the property.

However, Geritz doesn't support the proposal for a relatively dense residential project. "Such a [dense] development should be located in town, where it is near services, buses, shopping and jobs," Geritz said.

Collins agreed, but said that may never be possible. "We have to be opportunists to build affordable housing in this valley, because it's so difficult," he said. "We have to balance that against our desires to locate affordable housing nearer to services and transit routes than perhaps Melody Ranch is."

The Melody Ranch exaction site is desirable in at least one respect: utilities like water and sewer are readily available, Collins said.

Residential development is not assured for the parcel, Geritz said. A police or fire station, library, park, recreation facility or offices could be built.

But county commissioners have about made up their minds, County Commissioner Sandy Shuptrine said. Due to site constraints and county needs, "at this point in time . . . I'd



say we've determined that housing is probably the most desired use on that piece," she said.

Shuptrine attended the hearing and was disturbed at the prejudice that surfaced. "I was very uncomfortable to hear some of the comments," she said.

Shuptrine supported the proposal in concept, but recognized that it was just a draft. "This addresses the rental market that cannot currently accommodate people without cost burdening them," she said.

Housing Authority director Bill Knight said that about 59 percent of the valley's population — or 1,000 out of 1,700 households surveyed — would qualify for the project. Most people working jobs in the service industry, retail, manufacturing and agriculture would qualify, he said.

But should those low-income residents be subsidized? Many valley residents were enraged by comments made at the hearing about renters having less stock in the community.

"I am a renter, and I have been very involved in the community," said Joyce Dunkelberger, who has volunteered for at least six organizations in her nine years in Jackson. "I think some people pursue their values [of community service] in lieu of economic gain."

Two-term Town Councilman Scott Anderson also rents. "I know lots of other young people who rent who provide a lot of community service," he said.

Grassroots member Mark Houser said that if rental housing isn't subsidized, the community pays other costs. "There's the cost of re-training employees in the public and private sector, which is either reflected in tax dollars or in higher prices."

"This project is not aimed at transient renters," Shuptrine said. "It's aimed at permanent residents . . . who need a stepping stone to begin their life here."