

# Gillette News Record

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## 3RD TIME'S THE CHARM

Pronghorn women's soccer already has 11 wins in program's 3rd season, **B1**

**IMPEACHMENT** White House spurns probe as illegitimate, **A7**

## City leans toward 3 new fields at complex

City Council expected to award \$6.27M contract at next week's meeting

By **JONATHAN GALLARDO**  
NEWS RECORD WRITER

gjallardo@gillette newsrecord.net

When it comes to expanding the Energy Capital Sports Complex, the Gillette City Council has to make a decision. Does it want to build two multi-use fields and add a third one later on, or does it want to get all three of them done at once?

After talking about it at a work session Tuesday night, the City Council and administrators are leaning toward the latter, and much of it is because of the price of the third field.

The project received four bids, three of them from Gillette. DRM, Powder River Construction, Van Ewing submitted bids, as well as Mid-America Contractors, from Missouri. DRM was the lowest bidder.

The council will vote on whether to award a bid at its meeting next week.

There was a base bid and three bid alternates. The base bid included the construction of two multi-use fields and a parking lot. DRM was the low bid on that, with \$3.66 million, which came in under the engineer's estimate of \$4 million.

Bid alternates included lighting for the two fields, a third field and lighting for that third field.

The engineer's estimate for three fields with lights was \$6.64 million. DRM's bid was \$5.77 million. The total cost would include \$500,000 for design and contract management, so if DRM is chosen, the project's entire cost would be \$6.27 million.

Mayor Louise Carter-King was in favor of building three fields at once.

"I think we get one shot at doing this right now," she said. "Why not go ahead and do three fields?"

Although it would cost more than the \$5.5 million that the city was planning to use for the project, city administrator Pat Davidson said the city can make up the difference using excess revenue.

Revenues have been higher than the city budgeted, and Davidson also anticipates savings throughout the year.

Carter-King wondered how important it is to have lit fields. Wilde said lighting is a big issue for junior football and youth soccer, which have such big numbers that they would have to play into the evenings.

Four of the five councilmen who were at Tuesday's meeting were in favor of building three lit fields. Councilman Bruce Brown was the lone detractor.

He wants to build two fields with lighting because he doesn't want the city to spend more than it had originally planned for.

"I understand there's excess money, but we talked about that \$5.5 (million) from the beginning, so that's what I'd like to see."

The two lit fields would cost \$4.72 million, but "by the time we have change orders and all that over stuff comes along, we've spent our \$5.5 (million)," Brown added.

Public Works Director Sawley Wilde said city officials were excited about the third field "because the bid price we got on it was outstanding."

The engineer's estimate on a third field was \$1.72 million. Ry Muzzarelli, development services director, said if the bid for the third field had come in under \$1.5 million, it was going to be seen as a big savings.

DRM had the lowest bid of \$1.26 million on the third field, but the other three bids came in low as well, with the highest one being Powder River Construction at \$1.35 million.

Davidson said although the entire project is going to cost more than initially thought, the cost of the third field "is the piece that sticks out."

"The real win for us is that third field," he said. "So two, three years down the road, if we want to put in another field?" Carter-King asked.

"It'll be substantially higher," Davidson replied.

That failed to sway Brown.

"That's like going shopping at Sears and you buy stuff you really didn't want but you saved 20%," he said.



## It started Wednesday morning with a dusting ...



Gillette woke up Wednesday to a light dusting of snow, which continued to fall throughout the morning, prompting the city to implement a Level 1 snow emergency as of noon.

Above, **Dar Smith** walks by a fall-themed window display on Gillette Avenue as snow begins to fall more heavily. At left, Abe Lincoln doesn't seem phased by the cold and snow.

The National Weather Service in Rapid City, South Dakota, reports Campbell County and the surrounding area are expected to receive anywhere from 6 to 12 inches of snow Wednesday and Thursday. Snowfall is expected to end by Friday morning.

Along with the snow, wind gusts are expected to reach 35 mph. The National Weather Service cautions against traveling because blowing snow will make visibility difficult.

Temperatures will remain low throughout the week, getting down to 18 degrees overnight Wednesday and falling to 11 degrees Thursday.

News Record Photos/August Frank

## Airport traffic picking up, third flight added Sunday

By **JONATHAN GALLARDO**  
NEWS RECORD WRITER

gjallardo@gillette newsrecord.net

After a slow start to the year, traffic at the Gillette-Campbell County Airport has picked up and should finish the year on a very strong note, thanks to a third flight that was added on Sunday.

For the first three quarters of the calendar year, 42,716 passengers have passed through the airport, a 3% increase over 2018. It's 8.5% behind 2017, however.

Airport director Jay Lundell said he doesn't know why ridership has increased, other than that more people are flying. September's total of 4,984 was a 22% increase over September 2018. It's the second straight month to show a double digit percentage increase over its 2018 counterpart.

For the year, the airport has been averaging 4,746 passengers per

month, but that will increase the rest of 2019 now that it's added a third daily round-trip flight to Denver.

The third flight, which leaves Gillette in the early evening, started Sunday.

Lundell said it's too early to tell how successful it will be, adding that he'll have a better idea at the end of October. But initial returns are promising, he said, with full inbound flights and half-full outbound flights.

The airport will have three flights four days a week. That will continue through the end of the year. In January and February, it will drop to two daily flights, then go back to three flights in March.

June through August, there will be three daily flights every day of the week except for Saturday, when there will be two flights.

With the third flight, the airport should have no trouble this year surpassing 2018's total of 55,507 passengers.

## Body of missing Moorcroft girl found in Black Hills home

FROM STAFF, WIRE REPORTS

A missing 16-year-old Moorcroft girl is believed to have been found and a 17-year-old boy has been arrested after the girl was found dead in his basement in South Dakota.

Shayna Ritthaler had been missing from her home since Oct. 3 and was found in the boy's home near Sturgis after Meade County Sheriff's Office deputies and agents from the South Dakota Division of Criminal Investigation searched the home at the request of the Lawrence County Sheriff's Office, which was working with Moorcroft police to locate the girl.

Meade County Sheriff Ron Merwin hasn't confirmed the cause of death and said he isn't sure if the girl and boy knew each other. He

also said a definitive identification is pending, but the body is believed to be that of Ritthaler.

Her body was discovered in the basement bedroom of a house in Blucksberg, South Dakota, according to various South Dakota media reports. Authorities were at the house with a search warrant after an investigation into Ritthaler's disappearance led them there.

Although a cause of death hasn't been released by law enforcement, a post on Ritthaler's mother's Facebook page said Tuesday that "she was found last night, shot."

Ritthaler was last seen Oct. 3 at the Coffee Cup in Moorcroft, and then walking in the Sturgis or Deadwood, South Dakota, areas shortly after being reported missing, according to a report by television station KNBN.