

Gillette News Record

SATURDAY, MAY 1, 2021 * \$2.00 * GILLETTENEWSRECORD.COM



FOUND IN TRANSLATION

Stocktrail students transcribe books into Spanish for kids in Guatemala, **B1**

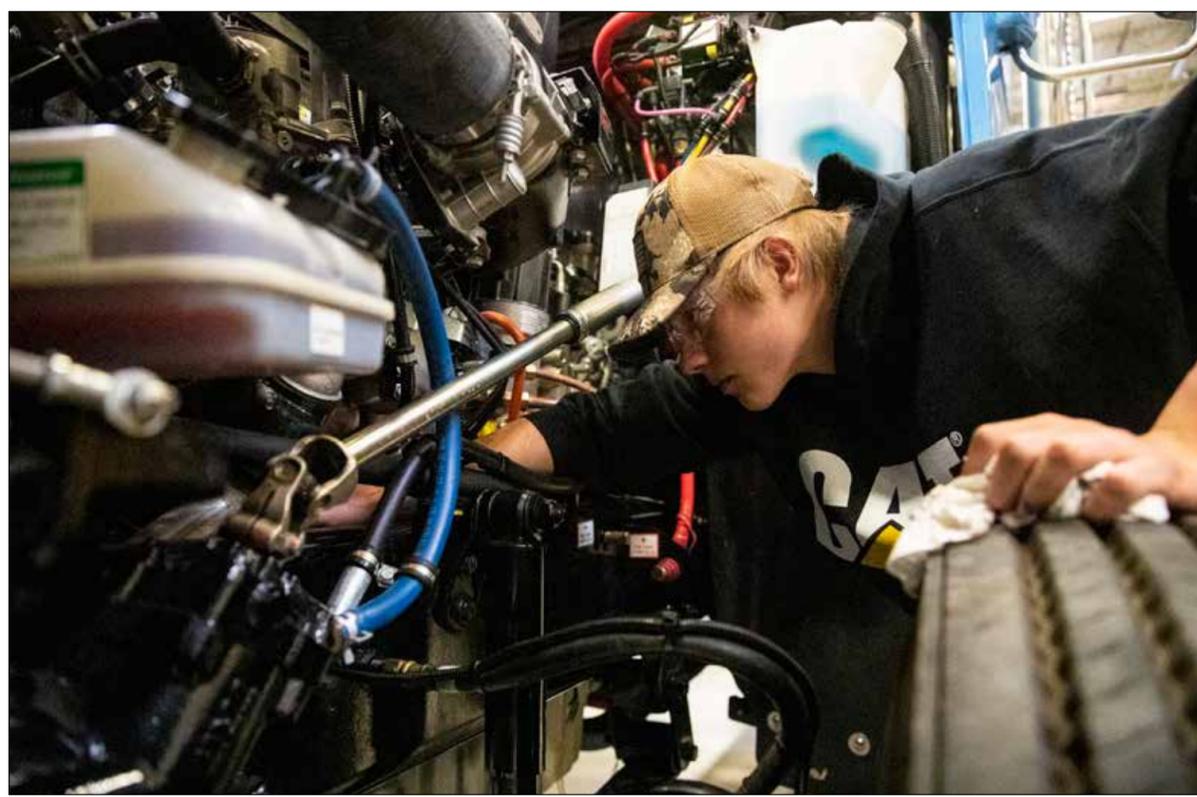
NO DIMINISHING RETURNS

CCHS' Tom Holm voted assistant coach of year for first time in 47-year career, **C1**



INCENTIVES

Beer, pot used to entice people to get vaccine, **A2**



News Record Photos/Mike Moore

Dual-enrollment student Jacob Randall checks the electronic connectors on a semitruck while in a diesel mechanic workshop class at Gillette College last week. Randall finished his studies at Westwood High School in December and graduated with his associate degree in diesel technology Friday evening.

A class by himself

Jacob Randall is first Westwood student to earn dual high school, college diplomas

By CARY LITTLEJOHN * NEWS RECORD WRITER
clittlejohn@gillettejournal.com

On a recent Friday morning, two high school students were working in tandem in Gillette College's diesel technology workshop. They're the youngest students in the program and often work together.

They're not out of place, though; they're exactly where they're supposed to be.

One of the pair, Jacob Randall, an 18-year-old student at both Westwood High School and Gillette College, will celebrate two graduations in the coming weeks. He's not the first student in the Campbell County School District to earn an associate degree from Gillette College at the same time as his high school diploma, nor is he the only one this year.

But he's the first Westwood student to do it.

Westwood High School is an alternative high school, which can mean different things for people depending on their perspectives. It gives some a second chance to get a high school diploma. For students like Randall, it's an opportunity to take advantage of the options presented by the school district that implicitly understands there isn't just one way to do high school.

Randall was a student at Campbell County High School



Jacob Randall puts away tools after pulling a transmission apart during a diesel mechanic workshop at Gillette College.

for much of his high school career, but it wasn't an easy and comfortable fit.

"I had no interest in going to school," Randall admitted. "I was ready to just be done with it, get on with life, figure something out."

Randall said he's a hands-on learner. At CCHS, he enjoyed things like construction, woodworking, welding, small engines, but there are lots of other requirements that a traditional high school can place on students that don't allow for a complete immersion in the content areas in which he was most

interested.

Two things helped Randall stay invested in his education when he might have otherwise given up: Westwood High School and the dual-enrollment program with Gillette College.

Westwood's alternative format allowed for him to focus on just the core classes needed to graduate high school with a great deal of flexibility to allow him to continue with his Gillette College classes in diesel technology.

His mother, Roxanne, called the combination a blessing. "For Jacob specifically, he was

bored at school," she said. "He just hated it. He didn't want to keep doing it. He wanted to get on with life, so this was like a perfect fit for him."

There's no point in pondering the what-ifs in life, but Randall was self-aware enough to know his could look a lot differently were it not for Westwood and Gillette College.

"If it wasn't for the dual-enrollment, I wouldn't have gone to college," Randall said. "But since I was able to do college and high school at the same time, it kind of helped me."

"Now I'm getting my degree at the same time that I would have graduated high school. So really, the time difference was nothing, but I'm getting two separate things at the same time."

The diesel technology program is a practical educational experience that feels more purposeful to Randall.

"I think it's a fantastic program," he said. "They teach very well. There's a lot of hands-on. That's how most of the people who go into the trades, they learn well with their hands. And most of the stuff they do is hands-on, which is fantastic."

"If we're learning about the engine, they have an engine there for us to work with. Or the

See **RANDALL**, Page A7

Calling for a consult

As negotiations begin, what could affiliation mean for CCH?

By JAKE GOODRICK
NEWS RECORD WRITER

jgoodrick@gillettejournal.com

As talks of a potential affiliation become more tangible, the goals and expectations of a deal between Campbell County Health and UHealth are taking form.

After a special meeting and executive session this week, the CCH board of trustees directed administrators to negotiate a letter of intent with UHealth, a Colorado-based health care system, to craft a potential agreement that could provide management and IT services for CCH.

The hospital board asked administrators and its legal council to have the letter of intent prepared by its next regular board meeting, which is May 27.

Leading up to that meeting, CCH will host a series of listening sessions to gather feedback from employees and also host an in-person community town hall sometime in May.

If an affiliation agreement is to be reached, questions remain over what impact it could have on CCH and its community of patients.

Compared to CCH, UHealth is a giant in the health care industry. The Colorado-based nonprofit system has 25,000 employees and 12 acute-care hospitals staffed with hundreds of physicians.

Its reach extends into Wyoming and Nebraska. UHealth has standing affiliations with two other Wyoming hospitals in Cheyenne and Laramie. Its deal with Iverson Memorial Hospital dates to 2013 and it has been in partnership with Cheyenne Regional Medical Center since 2018.

There have been several potential partners vetted throughout the years that CCH has explored affiliations with, said CCH CEO Colleen Heeter.

The difference now is that UHealth can offer benefits at a larger scale, such as cost savings and more medical resources, while ensuring CCH remains independent in Campbell County.

"CCH has been exploring how to elevate the care that we provide our patients and the community while maintaining our independence and autonomy," said Adrian Gerrits, chairman of the hospital board of trustees, in a press release.

"We believe exploring a relationship with

See **CONSULT**, Page A8

County denies 1% money for Gillette Reproductive Health for 2nd straight year

By JONATHAN GALLARDO
NEWS RECORD WRITER

jgallardo@gillettejournal.com

For the second straight year, Gillette Reproductive Health will not receive money from the county's Optional 1% Sales Tax revenue.

The organization had applied for \$25,000 to pay for preventative wellness exams for uninsured or underinsured women in Campbell County. During the Campbell County Commission's budget discussions this week, the board decided not to fund the agency in fiscal year 2021-2022.

Last year, the commissioners also decided to cut Gillette Reproductive Health's county funding to zero based on a claim that the organization was doing abortion referrals.

Commissioners Del Shelstad and Colleen Faber

See **1% MONEY**, Page A7



WEATHER, A2
HIGH 75
LOW 45

FROM THE COURTHOUSE: Man pleads to lesser charge for stabbing friend in neck, **A8**

INSIDE
BLOTTER, A2
CLASSIFIEDS, D1-D3
REAL ESTATE, D1

OBITUARIES, A4
OPINION, A3
SPORTS, C1-C3



0 94922 92117 8