

**Downtown  
 JCPenney to close  
 this spring. A3**



## Sheridan infrastructure in good shape despite D+ for country

BY ASHLEIGH FOX  
 ASHLEIGH.FOX@THESHERIDANPRESS.COM

SHERIDAN — Driving down the street, flying in a plane, turning on a faucet — daily tasks tie into the bigger picture of infrastructure.

Infrastructure funding affects everyone and makes up a large portion of government budgets.

With the next fiscal year's budgets starting to take shape, the effects of changes to those budgets — both locally and nationally — could impact the daily lives of local residents.

### National focus

While President Donald Trump hasn't released a list of specific projects, he has pledged to seek \$1 trillion in public and private funds to improve America's infrastructure and create jobs.

The Associated Press reported that Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao has said the administration wants to "unleash the potential" of private sector investors in highways and other projects.

America's infrastructure received a "D+" grade on the most recent report card from The American Society of Civil Engineers. The low grade translates to 9.1 percent of the nation's bridges being structurally deficient in 2016. It also means congestion at airports, an estimated 240,000 water main breaks occurring in America each year and a 7 percent increase in traffic fatalities from 2014 to 2015, according to the infrastructure report card.

### A county approach

Despite negative national infrastructure reports, Sheridan County finds itself sitting fairly stable with infrastructure projects and funding for them.

"As a whole, I think we're sitting quite well," said Renee Obermueller, Sheridan County's administrative director.

SEE INFRASTRUCTURE, PAGE 8



JUSTIN SHEELY | THE SHERIDAN PRESS  
**Crews work on a bridge at Decker Road and Goose Creek in Sheridan. As budgets take shape for the next fiscal year, officials discuss possible effects funding could have on local projects.**

# A CHANGING OF THE GUARD



JUSTIN SHEELY | THE SHERIDAN PRESS

**Executive Director Jay McGinnis looks over the swimming pools as children from the after-school program play on Wednesday at the Sheridan County YMCA. Building the pools and raising funds for the new aquatic center are among McGinnis' proudest achievements. McGinnis will retire at the end of August after serving at the nonprofit organization for more than 40 years.**

## McGinnis to step down as YMCA leader

BY KRISTEN CZABAN  
 KRISTEN@THESHERIDANPRESS.COM

SHERIDAN — Whether it meant singing songs, driving the camp bus, mowing lawns or fundraising for a multimillion dollar project, if something needed done at the Sheridan County YMCA over the last 41 years, Executive Director Jay McGinnis did it.

"He has great drive," YMCA Board President Ellen Treide said Thursday. "He knows how to work with people and engage with people. ... When he walks

into a room, I think the whole room changes in a really fabulous way because of his energy."

That energy will shift later this year, though, as McGinnis plans to retire at the end of August.

### A calming presence

If you ask those who know McGinnis to describe the kind of person — the kind of leader — he is, most remark on his calm demeanor.

Center for a Vital Community Executive Director Amy Albrecht said

she's looked up to McGinnis over the years and called him a "quiet force" who always has the community's best interest at heart.

"Everything I learned about how to run a board effectively and fundraise, came from watching Jay," Albrecht said, noting that during her tenure on the YMCA board she had said she didn't want to fundraise. McGinnis, though, convinced her otherwise. "You find yourself saying 'Yes' before you know it.

SEE LEADER, PAGE 2

## Associate executive director switching to part-time role

BY KRISTEN CZABAN  
 KRISTEN@THESHERIDANPRESS.COM

SHERIDAN — While Sheridan YMCA Associate Executive Director Diane Ballek won't leave the YMCA completely, she will step down in the coming weeks from her leadership position.

She'll shift, instead, to a part-time role at the nonprofit organization focused on youth and family development.

SEE ROLE, PAGE 2

## School districts plan for shift to new standardized test

BY MIKE DUNN  
 MIKE.DUNN@THESHERIDANPRESS.COM

SHERIDAN — When the Proficiency Assessment for Wyoming Students testing wraps up for Sheridan County School District 2 on March 22, it will not only be the end of the testing season, but the end of an era.

The 2016-2017 school year will be the final year of PAWS testing for schools around the state.

At its February board meeting, the Wyoming State Board of Education voted to begin contract negotiations with American Institutes for Research to implement its AIR Assessment. According to local and state officials, the new test has plenty of advantages and

will better serve students.

The test change comes after the implementation of the 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act, which replaced the No Child Left Behind Act.

SCSD2 assistant superintendent Scott Stults said the new test will not change the way teachers educate their students. While school officials have not yet seen the test, districts have been told that it aligns with Wyoming performance standards.

Testing time is limited to 1 percent of the school year, totaling nine hours for elementary, 10 for middle school and 11 for high school.

SEE TEST, PAGE 3



FILE PHOTO | THE SHERIDAN PRESS

**Middle school student Trayton Scheeler concentrates during a test in March 2015 at Sheridan Junior High School.**



**The Sheridan Press**  
 144 Grinnell Ave. Sheridan, WY 82801  
 307.672.2431  
 www.thesherdanpress.com  
 www.DestinationSheridan.com

Today's edition is published for:  
**Eric Roe  
 of Sheridan**

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**sheridanhospital.org**

With you, our patients and visitors in mind, we've just completed an update and redesign of our hospital website. As you browse our site — here are a just a few of the things you can do:

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