

Shorts

Rio Grande County Republican Caucuses March 7

CONTRIBUTED
RIOGRANDECOUNTY — Rio Grande County Precinct Caucuses for Republican and unaffiliated voters of the county will be held at 6 p.m. on March 7, according to the Rio Grande County Republican Central Committee.

“Caucus is where your concerns are put into resolutions that go to the county assembly, on to state assembly, then to the Republican National Committee,” organizers stated.

If a person does not know what precinct they are in, they should contact their county clerk's office at 719-657-3334 or visit online riograndecounty.colorado.gov — click on elected officials, clerk and recorder, elections and voter information and then precinct maps.

For more information, email RGCRpublicans@gmail.com.

Precinct meeting locations:
• Precinct 10 — Carnegie Library, South Fork Branch, 0031 Mall St., South Fork

• Precincts 2, 3, and 11 — Rio Grande County Courthouse Annex Building, 965 6th St., Del Norte

• Precincts 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, and 15 — Nazarene Church Gym, 228 Madison St., Monte Vista

Who is eligible to participate in the Rio Grande County precinct caucuses?

All registered Rio Grande County Republican voters:

• Who have lived in the precinct for at least 22 days before the caucus (Feb. 14)

• Who have been registered to vote no later than 22 days before the caucus (Feb. 14)

• Who have been affiliated with the Republican Party for at least 22 days (Feb. 14)

• Anyone who turns 18 or becomes a naturalized citizen less than 22 days before the caucus may participate (Feb. 14)

• A pre-registrant who is 17 years old at the caucus but will be 18 years old on the date of the next general election (Nov. 5)

No voting by proxy or absentee is permitted at caucus.

Unaffiliated voters in Rio Grande County can attend and observe the Republican caucus for their precinct.

For more information, visit online www.cologop.org.

Cardoza is excited about the possibility of advancing to state Scripps Spelling Bee

By MARIE MCCOLM

CENTER — Anna Bishop was excited about her daughter Elliot Cardoza participating in the Scripps Spelling Bee. Cardoza, 12, is a seventh-grade student at Skoglund Middle School in Center.

According to Spellingbee.com, the Scripps Spelling Bee is held once a year in the United States. It is separated into four segments, preliminaries, quarterfinals, semifinals, and finals. The National Spelling Bee first took place in 1925 when 9 newspapers hosted it. In 1941 The Scripps Howard News Service took over the event, and local sponsors and weekly newspapers also sponsored the event.

The preliminary round consists of three

rounds of oral competition, two rounds of spelling, and one round of multiple-choice word meaning. The quarter and semifinal rounds are also oral spelling and multiple choice meaning. An incorrect answer automatically eliminates a participant from the bee.

The finals also include oral rounds, but they can be changed to a lightning round if the bee progresses to the end with time running out. This works by spellers having 90 seconds to

Please see CARDOZA on Page 2A

Skoglund Middle School seventh-grader Elliot Cardoza competes in the regional spelling bee at Adams State University this past week.

Courtesy photo



Rogers speaks candidly about being on 'Farmer Wants A Wife'

By MARIE MCCOLM

CENTER — Potato and barley farmer Brandon Rogers recently spoke candidly about his experience on the reality dating “Farmer Wants A Wife.”

Rogers, 29, is one of four farmers that is on season 2 of the Fox show that airs Thursday nights. The four farmers, looking for the loves of their lives, were selected from across the United States. Each farmer selects five women from a pool of 29 to come live with them on their farm. This gives the ladies a full taste of what it takes to be a farmer's wife.

Rogers, who operates a 1,000-acre farm in Center. He said he started farming in 2014 and is proudly carrying on the family tradition of farming — his mom and dad are both farmers.

“I am a sarcastic person. I like joking,” he said. “I pride myself on being a big part of everything with my family and friends. I enjoy the outdoors. I am an avid fisherman, and I like to hunt. I like to be involved in the community. I



Courtesy photo

Brandon Rogers operates a 1,000-acre farm in Center and is on the Fox series 'Farmer Wants A Wife.'

am the vice president of the Ski-Hi Stampede. I serve on the Monte Vista Noxious Weed Board. I like being part of this community and I am

proud of where I am from.”

Rogers said his stepsister, who lives in Los Angeles and is “kind of in the

Please see ROGERS on Page 7A

Republicans make their case at Lincoln Day Dinner

By MARIE MCCOLM

MONTE VISTA — Approximately 300 people attended the prestigious Lincoln Day Dinner on Feb. 17 at the Outcalt Event and Conference at SLV Ski-Hi Complex.

The dinner gave people the chance to hear from and meet with Colorado GOP legislators and candidates such as Russ Andrews (U.S. House District 3 candidate), Ron Hanks (U.S. House CD3 candidate), Stephen Varela (U.S. House District 3 candidate), Curtis McCrackin (U.S. House District 3 candidate), Jeff Hurd (U.S. House District 3 candidate), state Senator Cleave Simpson (CD6), state House of Rep. candidate Carol

Riggenbach (CD62), and 12th Judicial District Attorney Anne Kelly.

The banquet room was at capacity, with tables full of people and grand desserts of chocolate cake, along with various flavored pies, and Lincoln Dinner napkins, all laid out all over the tables, with bottled waters and silverware. A small bar with wine and spirits was also offered by the Elks Lodge, and Sunflour Café catered the event. Dinner consisted of pulled beef, with potatoes, carrots, and a home-made dinner roll.

The event began with an introduction by Cheryl O'Dowd, who is chair for

Please see DINNER on Page 6A



Photo by Marie Mccolm

Approximately 300 people attended the prestigious Lincoln Day Dinner on Feb. 17 at the Outcalt Event and Conference at SLV Ski-Hi Complex.

CPAC hosting Sen. Simpson, Rep. Martinez to discuss SB 24-137

STAFF REPORT

MONTE VISTA — The Colorado Potato Administrative Committee (CPAC) has asked state Senator Cleave Simpson (R-D6) and state House of Representative Matthew Martinez (D-D62) to meet at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday, Feb. 24, at the CPAC office, 1305 Park Ave., Monte Vista, to discuss SB 24-137 — “Planting of uncertified potatoes and, in connection therewith, requiring that uncertified potato seed stock be tested and approved by the certifying authority of Colorado before planting.”

“We know the timing is inconvenient, but this is when Sen. Simpson and Rep. Martinez have time to meet during the legislative session,” CPAC officials stated. “We encourage you to attend the meeting. If you are unable to attend, you can contact Senator Simpson and Representative Martinez by email.”

Simpson and Martinez are sponsors of the bill along with two other *Please see CPAC on Page 2A*

Mineral County remains dating back 33 years identified

CONTRIBUTED

MINERAL COUNTY—Remains located in Mineral County dating back to 1991 have been identified through work performed by the Colorado Bureau of Investigation Cold Case team and the Mineral

County Sheriff's Office.

Using Forensic Investigative Genetic Genealogy (FIGG), confirming with dental records and other investigative tools, the remains have been identified as those of Steven Kenneth Risku, 66,

of Indiana.

Risku's remains were located on Wolf Creek Pass in Mineral County in 1991.

Risku's last known address was in Indianapolis, Ind. His family indicated that he did visit California on occasion. It is still unknown why Risku came to Colorado, but he was known to be adventurous and had a love for the outdoors, according to his family.

In 2023, DNA was submitted for FIGG testing in which information was developed that led to the identification of Risku.

It is unknown if foul play is involved in Risku's death, according to CBI.

"The identification of Mr. Risku is a tremendous first step in

helping provide his family with answers," said Mineral County Sheriff Terry Wetherill. "If anyone has information as to why or how Steven Risku was at a remote location on Wolf Creek Pass or if

anyone has any additional questions, please contact the Mineral County Sheriff's Office."

Those with information are asked to call the Mineral County Sheriff's Office at 719-658-2600.

CARDOZA

spell as many words as they can correctly.

Bishop stated her daughter placed second at the Oral Regional Spelling Bee that took place at Adams State University this past week.

"Elliot studied hard for this. She got second place last year too. We bought previous year's winners' words to study with her. I mean these words are hard, but she has tried so hard. We have been practicing with her so much too," Bishop said.

Bishop stated that her daughter has always had a love for reading and writing. Cardoza at a young age, always enjoyed English and spelling.

"She is in gifted and talented classes. She is extremely intelligent," Bishop said. "This is a middle school spelling bee; she is in seventh grade. We have always tried to encourage her. Last year she had so much fun, we wanted her to try again this year too. She has always had this love for reading and writing and she is doing what she loves the most."

Bishop stated that there are both written and oral rounds in the Spelling Bee.

"So, the way that it works is, there is a written round, and if you score in the top 3 to five in the written

Continued from Page 1A — round, then you get to go to the oral round," Bishop said. "Elliot scored in the written round and then scored and went to Adams State and placed second in the oral round."

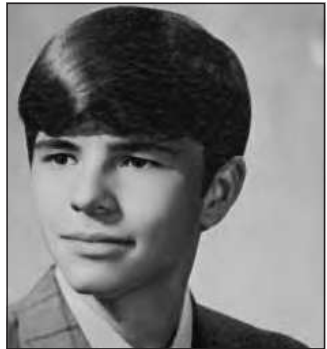
Bishop stated that her daughter has advanced to second place and needs to pass the written spelling bee in second place now to proceed to the oral round that will take place in Denver.

"So, she has another hurdle to cross to get to Denver. The top 50 scorers in the state get to go to Denver," Bishop said.

Bishop stated that her daughter has put forth a lot of time and dedication and she is hoping that Cardoza will progress further this year and fulfill her dream of going to the State Championship.

"Either way we are so proud of her. She has done so much and had so much support," Bishop said. "Her support has been from her teachers since she was younger, all the way up until where she is now. We can't thank them enough for all the support that they have given her. We are excited about her possibly going to State and we are hoping she is able to do that this year."

For more information on the Scripps Spelling Bee, you may visit their website at spellingbee.com.



Steven Risku

CPAC

Continued from Page 1A

state representatives. The bill was introduced in the state Senate on Feb. 7. It was assigned to the Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee and was scheduled for witness testimony and or committee discussion only on Feb. 15.

According to the Colorado General Assembly fiscal note, the bill amends the Colorado Potato Seed Act to require potato growers to submit any uncertified potato seed stock to the certifying authority, the Department

of Agriculture (CDA), for testing prior to planting.

Official summary of the bill states, "Under current law, a potato grower in Colorado is allowed to plant uncertified potatoes if the uncertified potatoes are no more than one generation removed from certified parent potatoes or qualified parent potatoes, but does not require any testing to verify the health of those potato seeds.

"The bill clarifies that uncertified

potatoes may be planted only if they have been submitted and tested by the certifying authority of Colorado prior to planting. The testing process is aimed to ensure that if uncertified potatoes are planted in Colorado, those potatoes are free from disease or other issues that may be detrimental to Colorado's potato crop."

CPAC asks that people planning to attend RSVP, by calling 719-852-3322, so the room can be set up appropriately.

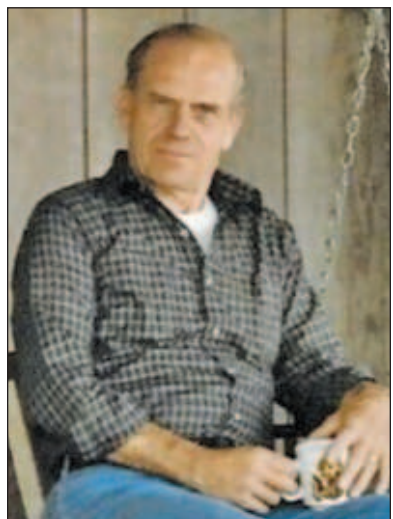
OBITUARY

Thomas Harold Kutzley

Thomas Harold Kutzley passed away on Monday, Feb. 12, at his beloved mountain home that he designed and built in 1980.

Tom was born in Jackson, Mich., on July 15, 1934. He moved to Albuquerque, N.M., as a young man where he met Rita Mae Grassham and started a 66-year poem of love. They married in 1957 and entered the military where he was stationed at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. After serving in the Army, he and Rita moved back to Albuquerque where they raised two daughters.

Tom was an engineer for Gulton Industries. He retired from Gulton in 1980 and moved to the mountains in Southern Colorado. He found property in the



small town of South Fork and decided to build his dream home. After completing his home, Tom worked on his hobbies that included model railroading and model planes. He was so moved by the beauty and history surrounding Creede, he decided to

build a panoramic landscape and model railroad depicting Creede in the 1880's. The town of Creede was able to transport the landscape and model railroad to the Visitor Center in Creede.

Tom lived a wonderful and fulfilled life, surrounded by loving family and friends. He leaves behind his cherished wife Rita, his loving daughters Kim Knight (married to John), Kristi Payne (married to Doug), his five adoring grandchildren, and seven treasured great-grandchildren. Tom will be missed, but his family knows that he is helping God make model train locomotives.

Cremation was selected and a service will be held at a later time.

To express condolences, please visit www.mvmortuary.com. Mountain Valley Mortuary is in care of the arrangements.

SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Farewell and Celebration of Life for Michael Kukuk

Please join us to celebrate the life of Michael Kukuk, who left this world on January 24. As a tribute to Michael and his family, please consider wearing your favorite shade of green in honor of his favorite color. Also please dress

accordingly and warmly for the Creede winter weather.

LOCATION: Sunnyside Chapel, 100 Bee McClure Dr., Creede. This beautiful chapel is close to the cemetery on the hill above the town of Creede.

WHEN: 10 a.m. on Feb. 26

A bank account has been established to help Michael's children in their futures. For details, please contact Janelle Kukuk (mom) or Melanie Dickey (sister).

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OPINION & EDITORIAL

Wanna buy a stereo?

Living near a metroplex during the winter brings about all sorts of challenges not found during my summer sojourn in Colorado's smalltown living. Some of these are to be expected like masses of people, traffic jams, increased crime activity and other things found when you have large numbers of people living closely together. I do believe that the higher crime rate we find here is probably just due to more people jammed into a smaller space as it seems to be increasing wherever we go these days.

Last week Miss Trixie and I were in town, and she needed to go to the local grocery for canned mandarin oranges which go out of our cupboard as fast as we stock them. It seems, you see, there are two little mice, Grand #1 and #2, who rob that space bare of those delectable orange sweets every time they are over at the house.

On this particular day, Ol' Dutch parked next to the supermarket parking lot in a big mall space due to having a trailer full of lumber on board. Miss Trixie often walked across the parking lot to the same store, so it was business as usual. Almost. Ol' Dutch was finishing a phone call when two men drove up alongside us and tried to carry on a conversation with me, which presented an impossible situation.

Most of you know that Ol' Dutch is generally hard of hearing which Miss Trixie calls "selective." I am not sure if that's a compliment or accusation but will look that up as soon as I get done writing this.

These two guys were shouting across the distance between our cars, and I told them I couldn't hear but they kept it up. So, Miss Trixie got out to see what they needed while Ol' Dutch, ever the conspiracy theorist, dug around in the seat for some form of protection. In the end it appears that they were trying to sell stereos out of the back of their van, and I guess I looked like I needed one. Trixie politely declined and for once she did not enter into a long conversation with a complete stranger and become new best friends with them.

They drove off but that event got me thinking - a dangerous endeavor according to Miss Trixie. I recalled that the very same thing had happened to me one time before in the same



Trout Republic
by Kevin Kirkpatrick

area. Of course, the deals they offer are too good to be true and after doing an Internet search they discovered step-by-step instructions for pulling the scam. Basically, the stereo, radio, computer or whatever they have, when you get home you find out you have an empty box or electronics with no parts inside the cases. A scam-orama for sure.

I guess it was the famous circus promoter P.T. Barnum who was credited with saying "There's a sucker born every minute" meaning there are naive people in untold numbers willing to be conned out of their money. He pulled a lot of cons on people and made a tidy profit on the game too. But in the end Ol' Dutch escaped from the clutches of another con man and Miss Trixie got her groceries, unscathed by people with ill intent.

I am not sure if there is an increase in these types of activities or it's just that we are more available via cell phones to their tempting ways, but I do know this. A day does not go by that I am not pursued by dishonest salespeople hocking everything from solar panels to sheriff association raffle tickets to life insurance to Medicare plans. All of which I do not want or need.

All I can say is be careful out there and like my neighbor said who lost his donkey to theft last week. You gotta watch your ass.

Kevin Kirkpatrick and his Yorkie, Cooper, fish, hunt, ATV or hike daily. His email is Kevin@TroutRepublic.com. Additional news can be found at www.troutrepublic.com or on Twitter at TroutRepublic.



Where have all the doctors gone?

There's never been enough doctors in rural Wyoming, where I live, but a shortage of obstetricians is now increasing the risks for pregnant women across the state — and the nation.

In the last decade in Wyoming, three hospitals have closed their maternity ward. That includes Rawlins, where pregnant moms now must risk travel on Interstate 80 — notorious for weather-related closures — to deliver their babies in Laramie, 100 miles away.

But Wyoming isn't the only state to face inadequate maternal care: Less than half of the rural hospitals in America even offer labor and delivery services.

Gwenith Wachter has experienced this erosion firsthand. She first gave birth in her hometown of Riverton, Wyoming, back when the local hospital was a bustling place with a well-seasoned staff. By 2016, the for-profit hospital's owner had closed its labor and delivery unit. Five years later, when her last child was arriving, she had to travel 26 miles to Lander, the closest birthing facility.

Today, her county of Fremont, a New-Hampshire-sized area home to 40,000 people, has gone from two birthing hospitals and many obstetricians, to one delivery facility and a single pregnancy doctor for the general population. The trend prompts women in increasing numbers to travel out of the county to give birth — an expensive and logistically challenging option. "I just think it's insane," Wachter said. "It puts women at risk."

The statistics bear out her observation. Women who live farther from delivery hospitals are more likely to experience adverse medical outcomes, such as requiring neonatal intensive care.

But with traveling doctors and nurses filling the on-call schedule

gaps, Fremont County has it better than some other rural counties, because at least it has a birthing facility.

Keeping one going is complicated by factors like the unprofitable nature of deliveries for hospitals and burnout of medical staffers.

In an unfortunate "Catch-22," robust health care is a key ingredient in creating the local jobs and tax revenue that in turn, drive patient volume and support the economics of rural communities. Worse, said University of Wyoming professor and midwife Esther Gilman-Kehrer, without enough staff, "I would envision that at some point we'll see deaths."

Women who received no prenatal care at all are showing up already in labor at Fremont County general hospitals, according to nursing staff. Add that to the prevalence of risk factors like diabetes, substance abuse and high rate of travel, and the chance of a bad outcome grows.

Wyoming's maternity-care gap, however, is not the state's issue of highest concern — not by a long shot. It competes with other challenges such as high suicide rates and declining coal mining revenues. Many lawmakers also appear more interested in hot-button social issues like school library policies. People outside of the childbirth realm express shock when I tell them that health care for women has sharply deteriorated.

The state has begun to take notice. An obstetrics subcommittee of Gov. Mark Gordon's Health Task Force is working to gather data on doctor shortages. An effort to create a maternal health strategic plan could spring from a

University of Wyoming program. What's known is that many factors, including more livable schedules and

the chance for better pay offered at city hospitals, make it difficult to attract promising medical professionals.

Another issue is a pair of abortion bans held up in litigation. The Wyoming Legislature argues that while the state constitution guarantees residents the freedom to make health care choices, those choices don't include abortion because "abortion is not health care."

Will good solutions come fast enough? From

2018 through 2020, 13 Wyoming women died during pregnancy or within one year after the end of their pregnancy, according to the state health department. All six pregnancy-related deaths were deemed preventable. Meanwhile, maternal mortality more than doubled in the United States from from 1999 to 2019, putting us far behind other first-world countries.

It's a fundamental experience for women to have a baby, yet even in the smoothest case, there are lasting implications for women's bodies. It's time to stop shrugging the matter off and start treating maternity care with the gravity it deserves. The health of moms is absolutely central to healthy families and thriving communities.

Katie Klingsporn is a contributor to Writers on the Range, writersontherange.org, an independent nonprofit dedicated to spurring lively conversation about the West. She lives in central Wyoming and recently wrote a series about Wyoming's maternal care shortage for WyoFile.



Writers on the Range
By Katie Klingsporn

LETTERS POLICY

Letters are welcome and encouraged. They should be fewer than 300 words, unless arranged beforehand with the editor, and they are subject to editing for length and clarity.

All letters must be signed by the author and include a phone number and address where the author can be reached (these are not for publication). Letters forwarded from other organizations or sent to staff and not for print must be designated as such. Letters over 300 words and without contact information will be returned to

the sender or discarded.

We will accept one letter per person, per subject, per four issues. We reserve the right to reject letters for reasons we believe are appropriate. Please send letters to Letter to the Editor c/o Valley Publishing, PO Box 607, Monte Vista, CO 81144 or e-mail to bwilliams@valleypublishinginc.com (Attention: Letter to the Editor). Deadline for letters is 5 p.m. Friday.

Political letters may be limited due to space constraints.

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SRM Agriculture Conference grows attendance

By JOHN WATERS

MONTE VISTA— The Southern Rocky Mountain Agriculture Conference and Trade Show held in Monte Vista the past week was a huge success according to Larry Brown with Colorado State University Extension and Kay Harmon, who both co-chair the conference.

“What is unique about this conference is that it is a full-blown educational event with a trade show attached and that is not to downplay the trade show in any way, it is just that most farm shows are a trade show with a few seminars. The history of this one is it started as an educational event and remains a strong educational event with a strong trade show,” said Brown who is responsible for the educational component of the event.

The show boasted many educational seminars, including ag labor law, National Potato Council political update, Colorado legislative update, macroeconomic outlook, forage testing for livestock nutrition, Gut Informed: The connection between gut health and soil health, to name just a few. Brown said there were 44 educational sessions.

The education roster of presenters at the conference was replete with CSU faculty members including Dr. Temple Grandin, a distinguished professor at the university who is a designer of livestock handling facilities and teaches animal science. Grandin is also a noted author and advocate for the autism community. Many CSU support staff assisted with the convention.

The conference had a total registration of about 675 attendees



Photo by Brian Williams

James Henderson, a fifth-generation farmer and rancher and Vice President of the Colorado Farm Bureau, gives the Colorado Legislative Update on Feb. 6, the opening day, of the 2024 Southern Rocky Mountain Agriculture Conference and Trade Show at the Outcalt Event and Conference at SLV Ski-Hi Complex in Monte Vista. The main conference room was standing-room-only for Henderson's presentation.

versus 380 last year, said Brown, who attributed the spike to having Grandin at the conference and give the keynote address: Visual Thinking: The hidden gifts of people who think in pictures, patterns, and abstractions.

“A large portion of that increase is having Grandin give the keynote and the two other education sessions. I think we also had an increase in registrations given the breadth of the education sessions that we offered,” said Brown who offered that he doubled the size of the education committee this year.

“We had the goal of getting better geographic representation throughout the Valley and better representation of the different types of crops, livestock, and agricultural enterprises in the variety of sessions we offered. There are still some people

who call it the potato and grain conference but it is way beyond that now,” Brown said.

Brown said he will meet with the ag conference committee members in March to pick a theme and start working on the next convention.

Brown expressed his gratitude to the sponsors of the convention and to Co-Chair Harmon, of the Monte Vista Chamber of Commerce, Jim Ehrlich, Executive Director of the Colorado Potato Administrative Committee, and “my team and staff that I have here is the magic that pitches in and makes sure it runs well. I'm getting tremendous support from CSU. My thanks to Zach Czarnecki, Manager of the CSU San Luis Valley Research Center worked very closely with me. I'm on that planning committee and he is a key part of that.” Thanks to Andrew



Photo by Brian Williams

A representative of 1st Choice Irrigation, of Rocky Ford, speaks about the company's product during the 2024 Southern Rocky Mountain Agriculture Conference and Trade Show on Tuesday, Feb. 6, inside the Outcalt Event and Conference at SLV Ski-Hi Complex in Monte Vista.

Houser from the research farm.”

Harmon told the Valley Courier, “This conference has a positive impact on the entire region, not just Monte Vista. We have 110 vendors that have booth spaces, about two-thirds are from outside the Valley. For each vendor, they have at least two people, so 220 people. We have \$45-\$50 thousand that comes in just from the catering.” Harmon added, “The conference has a huge economic impact on the Valley.

Recently, agricultural and resource economists from CSU have issued their final report on the economic impact the conference has on the region. The Valley Courier will have a forthcoming article on that analysis.



Larry Brown



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(719) 850-2312

Adam Kinney announces bid for Saguache County Commissioner

By JOHN WATERS

CRESTONE — Longtime Crestone resident Adam Kinney has announced his candidacy for Saguache County Commissioner, District 1 as a Democrat. The Valley Courier offered Kinney the opportunity of an interview to afford Saguache County citizens an understanding of this candidate for office.

According to Kinney, "I came in the Spring of 2001, up near Villa Grove, and was introduced to what became dear friends, and we purchased two acres in the Town of Crestone. We've been in the Town of Crestone proper and have been learning about that social-political arena since 2002. We built our own home and built some spaces we have been able to offer affordable rent to some dear friends." Kinney came here with his ex-wife and remarried Christina Cabeza, a community activist who is the executive director of the Colorado Coalition for Restorative Justice Practices.

Kinney, who is 47 years old, is originally from Texas, and in high school, his family moved to Madrid, Spain, an experience he said, "Kind of opened my eyes and transformed the way I see the world."

Kinney has served as a Town of Crestone Board Trustee, "On and off for 20 years." When he first came to the region, Kinney worked in the construction trades and in 2014 purchased a business, Blue Earth Design, a product display manufacturing facility located on T Road near Crestone. "For the last 10 years or so, we have put our whole lives into that business building it up and trying to hire as many local people as possible. One of our biggest successes is we bring in 95% of our revenue from outside the Valley, so we have found a way to bring money into our area."

"When I showed up here, I was in my early to mid 20's, had long hair, and pretty hippied out. Somehow, I was invited to get into local politics and was invited to join the town board, which was the beginning of my transformation into who I've become today.

To have access and be a part of that process has been inspiring and insightful. It has helped me develop the skill set of working with people and groups and working within that structure. I've been doing that off and on for 20 years and that has provided me with a lot of opportunity to make certain mistakes and learn certain lessons that I believe are invaluable for my intent to serve as a county commissioner."

Regarding his time on the town board of trustees, Kinney said, "One of the most valuable skill sets I have developed through that experience is learning how to work with people that I have different opinions than. It is so valuable to sit at a table with people who see things differently than you, and then work together for the good of the community. That is one of the qualities that I see can use improvement in our current county commissioners and our entire political realm. I've learned that well. One of the greatest lessons I've learned in the two or three years that I was not on the town board, and I was building my business as a small occupation is I felt pushed around by my local government and my livelihood was being threatened. That is a feeling that I carry with me every day, and I remember and understand that as elected officials our job is not to control and regulate our community. It is more community service and how we can support people and their right to livelihood."

"I'm 47 years old, I have a fire in my belly to serve the county in this way, through the skill set I've developed. As I look around at the world and what is going on out there it is becoming more and more clear that as a community leader, I have a civic duty and responsibility to build up the courage to put myself out there and make myself known in order to participate in what I would consider to be an inevitable influence of change and growth what is coming to the Valley. I want to be able to help temper and direct that in a good way. I recognize I can't do that alone.

One of my biggest goals and intentions in the short term is to inspire other people from my age range and not to exclude elders at all, but to inspire other future leaders and community servants to realize that they can access local government and have a seat at the table and influence the direction that our Valley and county goes. It is really important to appeal to that age range as I feel those people have more direct access to the struggle of creating a livelihood in the county and the struggle of raising a family in the county now. We're all in it and immersed in the struggle. I want to inspire my peers to participate and to bring energy to the system that many people don't have a lot of faith in right now.

"I've put in a letter of intent to serve on the Saguache County Planning Commission so I can start learning more. Through that, I've been reminded of the value of having the Crestone Baca Sub Area Planning Commission. I want to bring that back so I can offer direct access to my district, and my peers to participate in the process and political arena. So they can participate in making land use and cell tower decisions and conditional land use decisions in their district. If we can bring that back, it was here for years, people can serve on that, it will be exciting, it will allow people more opportunities to influence decisions.

"In my time going out into the county and meeting people, I've started going to the county departments, Sheriff, Road and Bridge, and Land Use. I've been listening in on county commissioner and planning meetings. I am seeing a lot of this national division showing up in our small county. I'm seeing breaks in communication between our commissioners and our departments and department heads, and most of it is about budget. I intend to develop my listening skills with these departments and their staff so I can have a better understanding of their needs to bring that back to the board of commissioners and develop relationships that are more cohesive and working together.



Adam Kinney

"I'm a huge advocate for youth services and enhancing the quality of life for our youth. I have three kids, two of them have grown up and left, one of them is 13. Just in my observation of watching them grow up here and hearing them tell us adults what they need, I have a very good understanding of that and I want to develop that for them."

Regarding the incumbent, Tom McCracken, Kinney said, "I'm not running against Tom, I'm running for the office, and I think Tom [McCracken] has done a good job and I admire his conviction. I would be honored to follow in his footsteps and learn from him as much as possible."

"One of the most important things I can do is listen and learn, whether it is an old-time rancher in Saguache or a wilderness advocate. I know there are communication gaps, and the more I can listen and not put my own opinion or perceptions in the more I can learn. I hope to find the common ground with people and help us move into the future."

The Valley Courier has offered Saguache County Commissioner Tom McCracken equal time and the opportunity of a similar interview.

San Luis Valley Scoreboard Basketball 2023-2024

GIRLS

CSCS 45	Centauri 35
Alamosa 44	Manitou Springs 23
Alamosa 71	Bayfield 36
Sangre de Cristo 32	Swink 25
McClave 88	Sierra Grande 33
Creede 59	Lake City 24
Centennial 47	Moffat 33
Sangre de Cristo 61	Antonito 15
Hoehne 61	Sierra Grande 10
Creede 64	Centennial 23
Primerero 51	Moffat 12
Sangre de Cristo 53	Lake City 21
Sierra Grande 46	La Veta 43
Crested Butte 46	Centennial 23
Primerero 53	Antonito 24
Lake City 30	Antonito 21
Kim/Branson 52	Centennial 7
Sargent 56	Custer County 16
Sangre de Cristo 32	Swink 25
Monte Vista 51	Trinidad 25
Del Norte 36	Sanford 28
Cotopaxi 32	Center 30
Sanford 35	Center 23
Pagosa Springs 58	Del Norte 15
Monte Vista 51	Sargent 35
Center 49	Las Animas 43
Pagosa Springs 56	Monte Vista 23
Hoehne 44	Del Norte 34

BOYS

Centauri 58	Lamar 27
Alamosa 66	Montezuma-Cortez 34
Alamosa 62	Bayfield 46
Swink 55	Sangre de Cristo 38
McClave 70	Sierra Grande 52
Centennial 66	Moffat 65
Sangre de Cristo 53	Antonito 19
Sierra Grande 45	Hoehne 43
Centennial 74	Creede 41
Primerero 57	Moffat 36
Sangre de Cristo 52	Lake City 12
Primerero 86	Antonito 31
Sierra Grande 66	La Veta 44
Antonito 64	Lake City 22
Kim/Branson 51	Centennial 41
Monte Vista 51	Trinidad 25
Sanford 74	Del Norte 38
Cotopaxi 58	Center 43
Sanford 54	Center 31
Pagosa Springs 59	Del Norte 36
Monte Vista 35	Sargent 24
Las Animas 44	Center 33
Pagosa Springs 54	Monte Vista 27
Del Norte 37	Hoehne 26

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DINNER

Continued from Page 1A

Alamosa County GOP. After the event, she gave some background on the host group — SLV GOP.

"We have people ask us what is the SLV GOP? and I love answering this question," O'Dowd said. "The San Luis Valley is the largest area in Colorado with the smallest population. Conservative leadership from all six counties decided to get together and create the SLV GOP so that we have a louder voice, after all the Front Range makes all our decisions and we are tired of that. Our Lincoln Day Dinner included people from all six counties coming together. It was awesome hearing from the candidates and elected officials that do and will represent the Valley. The whole event gave the audience the opportunity to know that we as a Valley are working together to save our Valley, state and country. From the feedback this event rocked."

Door prizes were given. Auction items were also sold in between speakers. Items up for auction were a family pass at the Hooper pool, a red velvet cake that was decked out in red, white, and blue, 5-year-old Brandy that was encased in a glass container shaped like a large pistol, a beautifully encased flag that sold to Rio Grande County Sheriff Anne Robinson for over \$3,000, and homemade cookies along with other items.

Senator Simpson spoke at the dinner, "I am up for re-election this year. I want to talk about the session last year. As the session ended last year, it ended so horribly, it was all about proposition HH. It was really frustrating to see how public policy was trying to deal with property taxes, it was just a terrible way to deal with those in that short time frame. When I left the Capitol on that Monday after 120 days, I didn't want to come back but I knew that wasn't the right time to make that decision. I came home and thought about it a lot harder. I know that there is still a lot more work to be done and representing rural Colorado is really important to me, and all the things we all stand for."

Simpson said that although things are a little more challenging this year, as his district has changed and he now represents Senate District 6, the San Luis Valley and everything west of Utah.

"This district is a lot more competitive than my prior one," he said.

Simpson said it is important to him to gain help from everyone across the new district.

"I am committed to representing you all at the Capitol. One of my favorite Abraham Lincoln quotes, 'A man should be proud of the country he represents, but equally important the country should be proud of the man.' I have lived my life making sure that the community, my mom in heaven, my dad, and you all are proud of me as well. I appreciate your support. Thank you."

Riggenbach, who is running for the Republican nomination in the state House or Representatives District 62, also spoke at the dinner.

"Mathew Martinez who represents us right now, he does not represent you he does what (Gov. Jared) Polis tells him to do," she said. "We did a lot of doors 17,000 doors in 2022. We cover the counties in the San Luis Valley, and we also cover Gardner. We won in Gardner, it's all Democrats and we won. We won five counties out of eight in 2022. There are so many great ideas this year. One of the big ideas for a big project is there is money for seniors out there. There is money that is used, but the extra goes back to the general fund. Where is the general fund money going right now? The invasion, immigration. We have been invaded. We are going to do a lot. I am going to be knocking on doors asking for help. We can do it. I am very proud of the San Luis Valley, Pueblo. I am proud of District 62. Pueblo is fantastic, and the people of the San Luis Valley we need to do some good stuff. God bless you and I pray Psalm 91 over our entire district. May we all have a good time tonight. Thank you."

Republican DA Kelly also spoke at



Photos by Marie McColm

The Lincoln Day Dinner was held Feb. 17 at the Ski-Hi Complex in Monte Vista and featured many Republican legislators and candidates including Valley voices such as state Senator Cleave Simpson (Colorado District 6), state House of Rep. candidate Carol Riggenbach (CD62) and 12th Judicial District Attorney Anne Kelly.

the dinner.

"I don't think I have an opponent this year," she said. "I don't think anyone is running against me, so I can take a huge sigh of relief and get back to work. I have been a Republican for longer than I could register to vote. What I can say about our Republican party today is we need to win. We need to look at Ronald Regan and think how did he win. I will give an analogy to a jury trial. When I am trying a case in front of a jury my goal is to provide them with the facts that they need to do justice."

Kelly said that she can provide the jury with the facts as to why her case is strong and why she is right.

"Often the lawyers will get involved and bicker with one and other and object to one another very strongly and being kind of jerks. They start yelling at the judge and questioning the judge's ruling," she said.

Kelly said if she were to get herself involved in that she would lose her jury.

"What my jury wants me to do is give them the facts so they can do the right thing to convict the bad guys," Kelly said.

Kelly said she wanted to analogize that to the Republican party right now.

"We have one of the strongest cases that we have had in a long time," Kelly



said. "People are so sick and tired of jumping the shark as the Democratic party has done. They have really outdone themselves with the kind of ludicrous legislation that they are purposing."

Kelly explained how the Democratic party was asking to make every pet owner pay a fee to register their pet with the state.

"The fact that, that piece of legislation even made it onto paper, they are jumping the shark," she said.

Kelly said that it was necessary to show everyone that Republicans are strong on education, immigration, and law and order.

"We are going to fight against the ridiculous notions that the society of socialists are trying to shove down our throats," she said.

Kelly said that when she is in front of a jury, she does not think about what the other side is doing because her case is strong.

"I hope our party can think about how strong our case is, and make the case, instead of focusing on bickering with one another. We have to make the case. We can this year. We can take our state back," Kelly said.

Public Notice

Rio Grande Water Conservation District Appointment

The Saguache County Board of Commissioners is again accepting letters of interest for appointment to the Rio Grande Water Conservation District Board from an individual who would like to serve as the Saguache County representative to the Rio Grande Water Conservation District Board who resides NORTH of Saguache County Road L. This is a three-year term ending in April 2026.

Letters of Interest may be addressed to the Board of County Commissioners and submitted to the Saguache County Administration office - 505 3rd Street, Saguache, CO 81149 or mailed to PO Box 100, Saguache CO 81149, letters may also be emailed to wmaez@saguachecounty-co.gov.

The deadline for letters of interest is Thursday, February 29, 2024, at 3PM, for an interview with the Commissioners on Tuesday, March 12, 2024. The Board of County Commissioners will make an appointment to this board during their regular meeting on Tuesday, March 19, 2024.

No. 1692 published in the Center Post Dispatch, Thursday, January 25 and February 1, 8, 15 and 22, 2024.

Request For Proposal (RFP) Trash and Rubbish Removal

In response to the Saguache County Nuisance Ordinance, Saguache County is seeking contractors for the removal of and disposal of trash, rubbish, debris and assorted waste materials from land located in Saguache County. This shall include, but not be limited to, the removal and disposal of vehicles, trailers, building materials, trash, debris, and various materials that require removal. This position shall be on call or as needed. Bids should include, but not be limited to, hourly rates, and the rate for special material removal that may not be allowed for disposal in a land fill or conventional waste facility. Salvageable materials (excluding vehicles) may be kept by the contractor. Any salvaged vehicles must be taken to the designated vehicle area that will be located at the Saguache County Landfill. If hazardous materials are located, it will be up to the County to contract for that service.

For questions, please email Amber Wilson at atorrez@saguachecounty-co.gov or call 719-655-2321. Proposal may be emailed, mailed or hand delivered. Email RFP to atorrez@saguachecounty-co.gov, mail to PO Box 326, Saguache, CO 81149 or hand deliver to 505 3rd Street, Saguache, CO 81149.

No. 1695 published in the Center Post Dispatch, Thursday, February 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29, 2024.

Saguache County Board of Commissioners Seeks Saguache County Planning Commission Members

Saguache County Board of Commissioners are seeking members and alternates from:

- La Garita/Center area - member and alternate
- Town of Center and surrounding area - alternate
- Moffat and surrounding area - alternate
- Hooper and surrounding area - member and alternate
- At Large for All of Saguache County - alternate
- Crestone and surrounding area - alternate

The representative must be a property owner or property manager and reside in the area they are interested in representing. Regular member terms are for three years and the alternate terms are for one year.

Saguache County Planning Commission meets on the last Thursday of each month in the Road and Bridge meeting room. The Planning Commission may also have work sessions throughout each month to work on the Saguache County Master Plan and different items.

Saguache County Planning Commission members and alternates are paid \$100 for every regular meeting they attend, plus mileage reimbursement.

If you are interested, please send a brief letter of interest stating qualifications and interest to: Saguache County Land Use, Attn: Amber Wilson, PO Box 326, Saguache, CO 81149 prior to Thursday, February 29th, 2024. All applicants will be interviewed by the Board of County Commissioners. Should you have any questions please call Amber Wilson at 719-655-2321.

No. 1696 published in the Center Post Dispatch, Thursday, February 8, 15, 22 and 29, 2024.

Mineral County remains dating back 33 years identified

CONTRIBUTED

MINERAL COUNTY — Remains located in Mineral County dating back to 1991 have been identified through work performed by the Colorado Bureau of Investigation Cold Case team and the Mineral County Sheriff's Office.

Using Forensic Investigative Genetic Genealogy (FIGG), confirming with dental records and other investigative tools, the remains have been identified as those of Steven Kenneth Risku, 66, of Indiana.

Risku's remains were located on Wolf Creek Pass in Mineral County in 1991.

Risku's last known address was in Indianapolis, Ind. His family indicated that he did visit California on occasion. It is still unknown why Risku came to Colorado, but he was known to be adventurous and had a love for the outdoors, according to his family.

In 2023, DNA was submitted for FIGG testing in which information was developed that led to the identification of Risku.

It is unknown if foul play is involved in Risku's death, according to CBI.

"The identification of Mr. Risku is a tremendous first step in helping provide his family with answers," said Mineral County Sheriff Terry Wetherill. "If anyone has information as to why or how Steven Risku was at a remote location on Wolf Creek Pass or if anyone has any additional questions, please contact the Mineral County Sheriff's Office."

Those with information are asked to call the Mineral County Sheriff's Office at 719-658-2600.



Steven Risku

LEGAL NOTICE

District Court, Saguache County, Colorado
Case No. 2023 CV 30024

Plaintiff: AFC LIMITED, LLC, a Washington limited liability company

Defendants: JAMES P. JENKINS, MICHAEL L. PARRAVANO A/K/A MICHAEL R. PARRAVANO, BENJAMIN B. VALTE A/K/A BENJAMIN V. VALTE, JR., JOCELYN A. VALTE, NOEL C. AQUINO, PORTIA E. AQUINO, S.P. BALTAZAR, CATALINA S. BALTAZAR, JAMES CRANDALL, DEBORA CRANDALL, ALBERTO G. OLACO, ALMA OLACO, STEVEN DAMIANI, LUKE ADAMS, THOMAS R. STEVENS, JR., WENDY L. CLEAL, JOHN F. MITCHELL, ROBERT DOMAOAL and ALL UNKNOWN PERSONS WHO CLAIM ANY INTEREST IN THE SUBJECT MATTER OF THIS ACTION

Attorney for Plaintiff:

Tracie J. S. Hulbert, #33058
The Hulbert Law Office, LLC
P.O. Box 7278
Breckenridge, CO 80424

SUMMONS BY PUBLICATION

The People of the State of Colorado To the Defendants named above:

You are summoned and required to appear and defend against the claims of the Complaint filed with the Court in this action, by filing with the Clerk of this Court an answer or other response. You are required to file your answer or other response within thirty-five (35) days after service of this Summons upon you. Service of this summons shall be complete on the day of the last publication. A copy of the Complaint may be obtained from the Clerk of the Court.

If you fail to file your answer or other response to the Complaint in writing within thirty-five (35) days after the date of the last publication, judgment by default may be entered against you by the Court for the relief demanded in the Complaint, without any further notice to you.

This is an action to quiet the title of the Plaintiff in and to the real property situate in Saguache County, Colorado, more particularly described as follows:

Parcel 1: Tract 113 of Section 33, Township 44 North, Range 9 East, N.M.P.M., County of Saguache, State of Colorado.

Parcel 2: Lot 1617, The Baca Grande, Chalets Unit One, County of Saguache, State of Colorado.

Parcel 3: Lot 150, The Baca Grande, Mobile Home Estates Unit One, County of Saguache, State of Colorado.

Parcel 4: Lot 1292, The Baca Grande, Grants Unit One, County of Saguache, State of Colorado.

Parcel 5: Lot 1096, The Baca Grande, Grants Unit One, County of Saguache, State of Colorado.

Parcel 6: Lot 3264, The Baca Grande, Chalets Unit Two, County of Saguache, State of Colorado.

Parcel 7: Lot 1114, The Baca Grande, Grants Unit One, County of Saguache, State of Colorado.

Parcel 8: Lot 3727, The Baca Grande, Chalets Unit Two, County of Saguache, State of Colorado.

Parcel 9: Lot 1166-C f/k/a Lots 1166 and 1167, The Baca Grande, Grants Unit One, as shown on the Vacation/Consolidation Plat thereof recorded on June 15, 1999 at Reception No. 327105, County of Saguache, State of Colorado.

Parcel 10: Lot 4453, The Baca Grande, Chalets Unit Two, County of Saguache, State of Colorado.

Parcel 11: Lot 699, The Baca Grande, Grants Unit One, County of Saguache, State of Colorado.

Parcel 12: Lot 287, The Baca Grande, Grants Unit One, County of Saguache, State of Colorado.

No. 1693 published in the Center Post Dispatch, Thursday, January 25 and February 1, 8, 15 and 22, 2024.

ROGERS Continued from Page 1A

industry, she does commercials and different things” was the person who said he should apply to be on show. “She called me up and said, ‘Hey there’s a new show coming out and I think you should sign up for it,’” Rogers recalled. “I was skeptical at first and I asked her OK what is it. She said, ‘it’s called ‘Farmer Wants A Wife,’ and I know how dating is in the Valley and a small town. I told her I don’t know I am busy I don’t know if I want to be on TV and do all of that. She said, ‘just fill out the application.’ So, I filled out the application to please my stepsister,” he said with a chuckle.

About two months later production from Los Angeles started calling and “got the ball rolling. So, that’s how it all started,” he said.

Rogers said he was surprised to get the call. When he saw the call coming in from Los Angeles, he thought it might be his stepsister calling from a different number.

“It ended up being casting producers. They said they had looked at my social media and wanted to hop on Zoom to see if I looked like my social media representation, and that’s when it all really started,” he said.

Rogers said filming started in September at his farm in Center. He received confirmation around Sept. 15 that he got the part, and around Sept. 25, they showed up to start filming.

“They had me filling out paperwork and stayed connected with me the whole time, but when I got the confirmation on the 15th, that’s when it made it all real,” he said.

Rogers had never been on camera before. He felt that the crew represented him well and documented his family in a genuine way.

“They really showed what it’s like to be in a small town on a farm, to be a part of the San Luis Valley,” he said. “A little nerves at the beginning, yes, but around week three of filming, I settled in and felt comfortable with everything.”

Rogers said that meeting the women on TV for the first time was the most intense first date he had ever experienced.

“Essentially for the show, the ladies got a 1-minute video clip of me, and I got one picture and like 5 to 7 sentences about the women that I chose from,” he said.

Rogers said as they walked up on camera that it was the first time they met.

“It’s an intense situation,” Rogers said. “You meet someone you have never met on camera, and you have 10 minutes to decide if this is someone that you want to get to know more. It’s a different animal for sure.”

Rogers said that he met eight



Center’s Brandon Rogers, far right, is one of four farmers on season 2 of the Fox series ‘Farmer Wants A Wife.’

women at the first mixer and had to reduce that to five women and ask those five women to come experience life on the farm.

Rogers said that all through the filming, he had a great experience. He would recommend other farmers try it.

“I enjoyed it. I felt like it was great networking. I met a lot of great people,” he said. “The women were all very sweet. I would say if you’re not too shy, fill out the application. It’s a great experience.”

Rogers considers himself an “open book.”

“This is who I was before the show, and I am the same person after,” he said. “I feel like the best part of the show for me was I did no acting at all. What you see is my true, authentic self. I went up there with an open mind and open heart. I tried to make the best of the entire experience and I enjoyed it all.”

Rogers said that there are many beautiful women in the San Luis Valley but dating in the Valley is hard.

“A lot of the theory behind what I was doing on the show was looking for someone who would want to be on farm with me,” he said. “I am not looking for a housewife or a farm wife, but I do think that it takes a special person to realize what farmers do on a farm, how demanding their jobs really are.”

Rogers said that part of the show that interested him was that there were women who were there who would understand the sacrifices of the farm work.

“This was an influential part in me joining the show,” Rogers said. “There is nothing like farming all year, and at the end of the season seeing the fruits of all your labor come to life. It’s important to me to find someone to share that with, too.”



Courtesy photos

Brandon Rogers said he had a good experience on the Fox series ‘Farmer Wants A Wife.’

Rogers said he could not reveal whether he found love on the show.

“You will just have to keep watching,” he said. “What I can tell everyone is I am very happy with the outcome of the show. It was a great experience.”



Photo courtesy of NPS

In this 2023 NPS photo, artist Nancy Arbuthnot leads participants in sketching the dunes and mountains in preparation for making their own handmade haiku/watercolor book.

Great Sand Dunes seeks artist to lead workshop on Oct. 5

CONTRIBUTED

SAN LUIS VALLEY — Great Sand Dunes is accepting artist proposals to lead a public program or workshop in their chosen medium (painting, photography, sculpture, music, dance, writing, etc.) on Saturday, Oct. 5.

This is an opportunity for an artist to gain exposure for their work and share their work with participants in a free workshop or program.

The selected artist may also be able to exhibit one or two pieces of their work or conduct a performance at the visitor center in a future year.

The artist will be reimbursed for

lodging and round-trip mileage. The workshop and information about the artist’s work will also be featured in a press release and the park’s social media and website.

To apply, write a summary of your proposed workshop or program (one page or less), along with samples of your work in the form of digital images or a website link to patrick_myers@nps.gov. Applications must be received by March 31.

Learn more about artists at Great Sand Dunes at www.nps.gov/grsa/getinvolved/artist-opportunities.htm.

Burnt But Not Bitter

I think we’d be amazed if we knew how many people are walking around with bitterness, resentment, and unforgiveness in their hearts.

Bitterness often begins with the little things. When people wrong us in some way, it’s tempting to store it away in our memory and never forget. Apart from the help of the Holy Spirit, our natural inclination is to “keep score” and want to make people pay for what they’ve done.

However, this is how a root of bitterness gets planted. First, we get offended, then we allow that offense to fester and grow. Hebrews 12:15 (AMP) says, “See to it that no one falls short of God’s grace; that no root of resentment springs up and causes trouble.”

You see, regardless of how big or small the offense, God commands us to keep a clean heart so we can continue to grow in Him and experience the freedom He has created us for. Ephesians 4:32 says, “Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you” (NIV).

I recently saw a movie that really impacted me. The main character had been mistreated very badly, but he eventually chose to forgive the person. Even his wife asked him, “How can you forgive?” His answer has stuck with me ever since. He replied: “If you forgive, you only have to do that once. But if you hate, you have to do that every day for the rest of your life.”

So, I ask you: Has someone hurt or cheated you? If they have, don’t let them continue hurting you every day of your life. When you choose to forgive someone, you are taking your life back!

For years, I used to be controlled by my emotions. If I was upset at Dave about something, I could go days without talking to him. Or if someone rubbed me the wrong way at church, I was really good at holding a grudge.

Of course, I was the one who lost my peace and joy while the other person had no idea I was even upset. But it wasn’t only me—my anger and bad attitude also created a toxic atmosphere

in my house and affected my family and those around me.

It was a great day when I realized I could do the right thing even when I don’t feel like doing it. And when we do, something marvelous happens—our feelings catch up with our decisions.

You see, God desires for us to grow and mature to the place where we’re not always led around by our feelings. He desires for us to obey His Word and choose to forgive others even when we’re right and even when the other person doesn’t seem very sorry.

The truth is, life isn’t always fair. But God is fair, and He will make wrong things right if we continue to trust Him. If we allow Him to, He can take our bad experience and work it out for our good.

Just look at the life of Joseph. Genesis tells us that as a young man, Joseph had great dreams for his life. But his older brothers resented him and sold him into slavery, and he was taken to Egypt.

Now, let’s stop right here. If Joseph allowed himself to stay hurt and offended and never forgave his brothers, I don’t think anyone would have blamed him. However, Joseph refused to grow bitter and let this stop him. As a result, he found great favor with his master, Potiphar, and was eventually put in charge of his entire household.

Years later, Joseph faced another test when Potiphar threw him in jail for a crime he didn’t commit. But he still didn’t allow bitterness and unforgiveness to take root, and the Lord eventually gave Joseph an opportunity to interpret a dream for Pharaoh, who then promoted him to the highest official in Egypt!

Joseph literally went from the pit to the palace. Then, years later, when a famine struck the land, the Lord used Joseph to save his family and the entire house of Israel.

When Joseph finally came face to face with his brothers, they were petrified because of what they had done to him. But look at what Joseph said: “As for you, you meant evil against me,



but God meant it for good...” (Genesis 50:20 AMP).

Because Joseph was willing to forgive all along the way, God was able to take what was wrong and make it right!

I don’t know where you are today. Maybe you’ve suffered some painful experiences in the past that have left you struggling to forgive. Or maybe little things are slowly chipping away at one of your relationships and bitterness is attempting to take root in your heart.

Whatever it is, the single greatest thing you can do is forgive and trust God to reward you and make things right. I encourage you to pray and ask for God’s help even before someone offends you!

Because when you’re determined to do what’s right—when you’re ready to forgive others and keep your heart free from anger and resentment—it honors God. And the Bible says that when you honor God, He will honor you (1 Samuel 2:30).

For more on this topic, order Joyce’s three-part teaching resource **Burnt But Not Bitter**. You can also contact us to receive our free magazine, *Enjoying Everyday Life*, by calling (800) 727-9673 or visiting www.joycemeyer.org.

Joyce Meyer is a New York Times bestselling author and founder of Joyce Meyer Ministries, Inc. She has authored more than 140 books, including *BATTLEFIELD OF THE MIND* and *OVERCOMING EVERY PROBLEM (FaithWords)*. She hosts the *Enjoying Everyday Life* radio and TV programs, which air on hundreds of stations worldwide. For more information, visit www.joycemeyer.org.

Please note: The views and opinions expressed throughout this publication and/or website are those of the respective authors and do not necessarily reflect those of Joyce Meyer Ministries.

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2024 WRESTLING RECAP

Third time's a charm for Polkowske

By KEN HAMRICK

DENVER — After advancing to the state championship match the last two years and coming up short, Centauri High School's Josh Polkowske was determined to come away with a state title this year.

The third time proved to be the charm for Polkowske as he left little doubt to who the champion would be as he defeated Resurrection Christian's Isaiah Johnson by an 8-0 major decision to win the Class 3A 190-pound championship.

"It was the charm," Polkowske said.

"That's what happens when you wrestle hard," said Centauri coach Micah Keys.

Polkowske went on the offense early as he scored a takedown and a 3-point near fall in the first period to take a 5-0 lead. He started in the down position in the second half but recorded an escape and another takedown to extend his lead to 8-0.

Johnson chose to go in the neutral position for the third period. Both wrestlers attempted a takedown in the period, but Polkowske came away with the decision.

This was the second time that Polkowske and Johnson had met. Polkowske won the first meeting by a slim margin.

"I'd seen him one other time this year," Polkowske said. "We had a close match, a 5-4 match. The last

two years I had always been hesitant but as a senior I had nothing to lose. I just took it to him with my offense."

This was more than likely Polkowske's final wrestling match. He may follow his faith after graduation.

"I don't know for sure yet," Polkowske said. "I might go serve a mission for my church. I haven't made up my mind. There's a good chance that was my last match."

The Falcons had five additional state placers. Matthew Salazar (106), Caden Casias (113) and Parker Buhr (157) all took third place in their weight divisions. Riley Valdez was fourth at 126 and Aundre Chavez was sixth at 120.

Buhr wrestled much of his third-

place match with an injured knee, but he kept going despite the injury. He trailed Eaton's Quirt Carroll 7-1 late in the match, but he found the strength to toss Carroll on his back and pin him at the 4:32 mark.

Salazar won by a 3-2 decision in his final match against La Junta's Joseph Gamez, and Casias pinned Abraham Lincoln's Samuel Trujillo in 45 seconds.

Valdez lost to Grand Valley's Trevor Hermosillo by a 15-7 major decision, and Chavez had to forfeit his third-place match to Gunnison's Cody Casebolt because of an injury.

Centauri finished in fifth place with 106 ½ points.

"Everybody wrestled tough," Keys said. "This tournament is a tough one, but the kids came through. We get to return quite a few of them so I'm looking forward to it."

Alamosa

Two of Alamosa's wrestlers placed at the state tournament as Jeremiah DeLaCerde (106) and Dyson Woodward (138) both finished in fifth place.

DeLaCerde scored a 12-3 major decision over Skyview's Andrew Pedragon in his fifth-place match, while Woodward won by a 6-2 decision over Eaton's Paxton Pettinger.

The Mean Moose's final wrestler, Anthony Griego (126) was eliminated in the third round of the consolation bracket.

Alamosa finished in 19th place with 26 points.

Team scores

Mullen 140 ½, Brush 122 ½, Eaton 119, Resurrection Christian 107, Centauri 106 ½, Gunnison 99, Jefferson 96 ½, Severance 94 ½, Pueblo Central 75, Valley 74 ½, Holy Family 67, Fort Lupton 56, Abraham Lincoln 53, La Junta 49, Pagosa Springs 42 ½, Grand Valley 39, Berthoud 34, University 31, Alamosa 26, Moffat County 25, Englewood 24, The Classical



Photo by Ken Hamrick

Centauri High School's Josh Polkowske (left) and Resurrection Christian's Isaiah Johnson battle for position in the Class 3A 190-pound championship match Saturday at Ball Arena in Denver. Polkowske won by an 8-0 major decision.

Valadez, Cisneros fall short of state titles

By KEN HAMRICK

DENVER — Two San Luis Valley wrestlers advanced to their respective Class 2A state title matches Saturday at Ball Arena. Unfortunately, both were defeated.

Center High School's Aaron Valadez faced Wray's Samuel Meisner in the 144-pound final. After a scoreless first period, Valadez started the second period in the down position and recorded a reversal. Meisner, however, escaped and then scored a takedown and turned Valadez onto his back. The Meisner fall came at the 3:35 mark.

Monte Vista's Kevin Cisneros then went for the 150-pound championship against Holly's Tripp DuVall. DuVall recorded an early takedown and scored three more points on a near-fall. DuVall finished the match by fall at the 1:32 mark.

Center

Four additional Vikings placed in their weight divisions.

Jordan Duran finished third in the 113-pound division as he defeated Highland's Korbin Hoke by fall in 4:16 in the third-place match.

Two more Center wrestlers, Andre Meraz (138) and Jesus Valadez (175) both took fourth in their weight

classes. Meraz lost by a 9-2 decision to North Fork's Braeden Flores, while Jesus Valadez was pinned by Nucla's Arthur Connelly in 2:36.

The final Viking, Martin Palma, took sixth place. He forfeited his final match at 165 pounds to North Fork's Jakob Carver.

Monte Vista

The Pirates had two additional state placers as Jacob Pacheco was fourth at 165, and Ethan Wolfe was sixth at 132.

Pacheco was pinned by Buena Vista's Carter Stromer in 4:35, while Wolfe lost by a 5-3 decision to Meeker's Clay Crawford.

Sargent

The Farmers' sole representative, Jaycian Sierra (138), lost in the third round of the consolation bracket.

Center finished in sixth place with 70 points, Monte Vista was 14th with 52, and Sargent tied for 45th with two points.

Team scores

Meeker 150, Cedaredge 145, Wray 129, Buena Vista 96 ½, North Fork 84 ½, Center 70, Highland 67 ½, Sedgwick County/Fleming 66 ½, Mancos 61, Wiggins 61, Burlington 56, Fowler 55, Rocky Ford 54 ½, Monte Vista 52, Nucla 49, County Line 41, Ignacio 38, Dayspring Christian



Photo by Ken Hamrick

Center High School's Aaron Valadez, right, looks to score a takedown against Wray's Samuel Meisner in the Class 2A 144-pound championship match Saturday at Ball Arena in Denver. Valadez lost the match by fall.

Academy 34, Holly 34, Las Animas 34, Merino 34, Limon 33, Swink 33, Crowley County 32, Dolores Huerta Prep 29, Lyons 29, Walsenburg 28, Trinidad 27, Akron 22, Rangely 19, West Grand 18, Hayden 14, Dove Creek 13, Ellicott 12, Rye 9, Yuma 8, Colorado Springs Christian 6 ½,

Soroco 6, Baca County 5, La Veta 4, Manzanola 4, Platte Canyon 4, Byers 3, Custer County 3, Holyoke 2, Olathe 2, Sargent 2, Norwood 1, Primero 1, Calhan 0, Del Norte 0, Golden View Classical Academy 0, North Park 0, Sierra Grande/Centennial 0, Stratton 0.

Academy 24, Fort Morgan 23, Rifle 23, Salida 22, Wellington 20, Platte Valley 18, Alameda International 12 ½, Delta 12, Montezuma-Cortez 10, Manitou Springs 9 ½, Florence 9, Lutheran 9, Skyview 9, Coal Ridge 7, Weld Central 6, Arvada 5, Lamar 5, Bennett 4, Middle Park 4, Strasburg 4, Bayfield 3, Denver West 3, Timnath 3, Woodland Park 3, Elizabeth 2, Forge Christian 2, Sierra 1, Liberty Common 0, Steamboat Springs 0, Sterling 0, Summit 0.

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Courtesy photo
CDOT crews have worked clearing rockslide debris from the roadway and have had to navigate significant snowfall with springtime temperatures changing from one extreme to the next.

CDOT gives update on rockslide, avalanche mitigation along Wolf Creek Pass

By LYNDISIE FERRELL

WOLF CREEK — On the morning of Jan. 29, many travelers heading west up Wolf Creek Pass came to a full stop when a rockslide closed the pass in both directions for almost the entire day. During that week, weather patterns had caused the ground to shift after temperatures warmed and then cooled almost overnight.

In an interview with CDOT Region 5 Communications Manager Lisa Schwantes, it was confirmed that the pass and the roadway were in good condition.

“After the rockfall, we had our Geotech CDOT team inspect the area and after the debris was cleared from the roadway, the mountain and road were deemed safe. Teams performed immediate mitigation and underwent a thorough inspection, and we will continue to

monitor the area and mountain for any changes,” she said.

Schwantes explained that most roadways that have the potential for rockslides in Colorado are inspected regularly.

“If we do identify an area that needs further mitigation or scaling, we either do the work using in house crews or we put the work out to bid and have it completed as fast as possible,” said Schwantes.

Rockslides like the one that happened on Jan. 29 are not uncommon and are part of routine inspections that occur along mountain passes throughout the state. Wolf Creek is a pass that has been engineered for higher speeds of travel but still poses a danger to anyone who travels the pass during the winter.

“Travelers should always use

caution along the pass in any time of year. Whether it is avalanche danger, dangerous road conditions or rockslide, high mountain passes should be traveled with care,” she said.

In the week following the rockslide on Wolf Creek Pass, CDOT crews closed the pass on Feb. 7 in the early morning hours for avalanche mitigation. During that time, crews found a semi-trailer stuck on the pass and had to spend a good portion of the morning removing the semi from the road so they could continue their avalanche mitigation work.

“It’s things like this that cause a closure along the pass for something like avalanche mitigation to be longer than normal. It hinders traffic, but our crews work as quickly as possible to ensure the safety of travelers,” she said.

Please see CDOT on Page 2

RGC Public Health Department gears up for Public Health Week

By LYNDISIE FERRELL

RIO GRANDE COUNTY — It is an exciting year for Rio Grande County as it prepares to celebrate its 150th anniversary. One of the first things the county plans to do is to celebrate National Public Health Week at the beginning of April.

In 2022, Rio Grande County passed a proclamation designating the first full week in April as National Public Health Week to shine a light on the communities of Rio Grande County and on the work and dedication the public health department puts into the communities they serve.

The proclamation was an announcement of a National Public Health Appreciation week for all the time and effort public health professionals have put in to ensure that local communities stay safe and healthy. Throughout the past several years, nurses, medical professionals and public health officials have worked countless hours to make sure communities were safe and healthy through programs that included COVID prevention, tobacco prevention, general vaccination and much more.

The proclamation states, “Since 1995, the American Public Health Association, through its sponsorship of National Public Health Week, has educated the

public, policymakers and public health professionals about issues important to improving the public’s health; and U.S. life expectancy dropped from 2014 to 2017 in the longest sustained decline since the Great Recession and only in 2018 began to increase again; U.S life expectancy then dropped again in 2020 by a full year, which is the largest drop in life expectancy since 1943.”

According to the American Public Health Association, this year, the focus will be on equality and inclusion.

“This year we are ‘Centering and Celebrating Cultures in Health’ to ensure everyone, in all cultural communities, has a chance at a long and healthy life. To do so, we must address and prevent the underlying causes of poor health and disease risk. We can use social determinants of health to understand how those causes are different for each person based on various factors like race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and financial situation.”

The Rio Grande County Public Health Department plans to integrate this year’s focus into the celebration of Rio Grande County’s 150th anniversary celebration and share the importance of public health within communities

Please see HEALTH on Page 2

CEO of SLVREC and Ciello keynote speaker for February URGED meeting

By LYNDISIE FERRELL

DEL NORTE — The Upper Rio Grande Economic Development meeting was held in Del Norte on Tuesday, Feb. 13 and featured keynote speaker Eric Eriksen, CEO of SLVREC and Ciello.

Eriksen gave an update and outlook for 2024. Eriksen has been with SLVREC and Ciello for a year and has helped to streamline concepts for reliability, sustainability and growth throughout SLVREC and Ciello service areas in the San Luis Valley.

“Last year, in July, we started an employee engagement process to develop our 2024 road map. There was a lot of time and effort from the whole group that went into this beginning with our logo,” began Eriksen.

Eriksen explained that through his observations, he discovered that there was some confusion as to whether SLVREC and Ciello were two different companies, and as a result he and his

team wanted to capture that the two companies were one and the same.

“We are one company. Ciello is a division of REC, and we wanted to signify and make that significant statement by putting our logos together,” he said.

Other changes that were reviewed by Eriksen included the changing of certain words in the member needs, or ethos, mission statement and values of the company. During the employee engagement sessions, members of the REC team worked together to combine and compress the ideals of the company, working to shorten but still capture the essence of SLVREC and Ciello.

“The road map is all employee driven and the reason we made some changes was because there was some confusion on what those values were. When you would ask someone what, for instance, was our mission, it was a paragraph, and no one could

remember a paragraph. Really, the change was focusing and being very clear and concise,” Eriksen said.

The road map presented by Eriksen also involved a five-year strategic plan including workforce satisfaction and performance, financial equity to asset ratio, reliability percentages and communications.

“This is a five-year strategic plan. In 2021, our board of directors developed a five-year strategic plan that identified four focus groups that included workforce, financial, reliability and communications. As an employee group we went through and assigned metrics to these areas so we could measure our progression through the next five years,” he said.

Goals for 2024 included completing satisfaction surveys and developing a communications plan, completing a rate case study and to develop a

Please see CEO on Page 6



Photo by Lyndsie Ferrell

SLVREC and Ciello CEO Eric Eriksen was the keynote speaker for the Upper Rio Grande Economic Development meeting in Del Norte on Tuesday. Eriksen gave a presentation on the roadmap and goals of the company for the coming year and announced the launch of a new incentive program that is expected to help families and business owners upgrade to more energy efficient homes and businesses without breaking the bank.

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CDOT

Continued from Page 1

According to CDOT Traffic and Safety Program Manager Jen Allison, accidents along Wolf Creek Pass have declined significantly over the past several years since CDOT did a major amount of work to improve safety features, roadway caution painting and signs.

“From 2015 to 2018, an average of nine commercial truck crashes occurred on the west side of the pass each year. After the completion of two significant projects and the launch of the ‘Beware the Wolf’ campaign (aimed at commercial vehicle drivers), big rig crashes have been reduced to an average of two per year,” said Allison.

Allison added, “We are continuing to improve driver experience on the pass, we will be finishing up a current fiber optic project this summer. This extends fiber from the eastside tunnel to Pagosa Springs. The project will allow us to install additional high-tech features on the pass and will bring Wolf Creek Pass to life!”

Plans to finish the fiber installation along the pass are underway for the coming summer season, “Fiber is the bloodline and connectivity for all devices we are planning to install this summer. The three technologies described below (DMS, VSL, and CVRU) are the voices of Wolf Creek.”

CDOT plans to install DMS (Dynamic Messaging Sign): an electronic sign able to display messages in color, dynamic (moving) images, and provide the ability for more text messages, VSL

(Variable Speed Limit Signs): electronic signs that display the enforced speed limit and can change the limit to more appropriate speeds based on data collected for road conditions, weather systems, and traffic volumes, CVRU (Connected Vehicle Roadside Unit): This technology provides in-cab or in-car communication for vehicles that have that technology. This will allow messages sent directly to drivers in real-time for information such as: the pass is closed, chain law is in effect, or crash ahead.

“Additionally, three other high-tech features, described below, will also be installed. These are the heartbeat and health status of Wolf Creek Pass,” Allison said.

(MVRD) Microwave Vehicle Radar Detection: These technology units provide data collection. This will give CDOT feedback on the speed of vehicles and the types of vehicles traveling.

WMS (Weather Monitoring System): This will give CDOT feedback on current weather conditions.

Cameras: CDOT will add more web-digital cameras that will be used by operations centers, maintenance personnel, and the public. The cameras provide more “eyes” on Wolf Creek Pass to allow observation of current road and weather conditions.

These improvements and more are on the docket for the coming year. For more information or to check road conditions, visit www.COtrip.org.



Courtesy photos
Over the last few weeks, Wolf Creek Pass has been a hotspot for winter weather, avalanche control and improvements that will ensure the safety of travelers along the pass.

HEALTH

Continued from Page 1

throughout the nation.

The department recently announced the launch of a new international program that is now available to the public along with all the other programs it offers.

“We are thrilled to introduce our latest initiative — the International Travel Clinic! As part of our ongoing commitment to the health and well-being of our county, this program is designed to ensure that persons embark on their international journeys fully prepared. It is designed to provide you with comprehensive health services and information before, during, and after your international travels,” said Rio Grande County Public Health Director Dr. Kolawole Bankole.

The International Travel Clinic offers:

- Immunizations and Vaccinations: Receive expert advice on essential vaccinations tailored to your travel destination. Pre-travel consultations with travel health experts. Vaccinations

and prescriptions for travel-related illnesses.

- Health Tips: Get personalized health tips to stay well during your trip and return with fond memories. Travel health education and resources.

- Travel Safety Information: Access valuable resources to enhance your safety awareness while abroad.

- Post-travel follow-up and care

Whether a person is traveling for work, leisure, or humanitarian purposes, the International Travel Clinic can help them prepare for a safe and healthy trip. Visit the RGC Public Health office’s clinic at the courthouse in Del Norte or call 719-657-3352 to schedule a consultation.

The department is working on the details for this year’s Public Health Week and will be sharing dates, times and activities as they become available. For more information or to stay up to date on coming activities and programs, visit www.riograndecounty.org/publichealth

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Solution to last week’s puzzle

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Del Norte Jr/Sr High School is looking for an energetic and experienced candidate to serve as the district's Strength and Conditioning Coach. This position will assume the responsibility and obligation of establishing and maintaining a strength and conditioning program for all sports.

Additional responsibilities include teaching junior high school physical education and high school physical education/weight training courses. Applicants must have a bachelor's degree and either possess or be able to obtain the appropriate Colorado teaching license. Please submit your application, resume, and cover letter to: Annie Hardy, DNHS Principal at ahardy@urtigers.co or contact Mrs. Hardy at 719-657-4020. Applications can be picked up at the District Office or online at www.urtigers.co.org (2-28)

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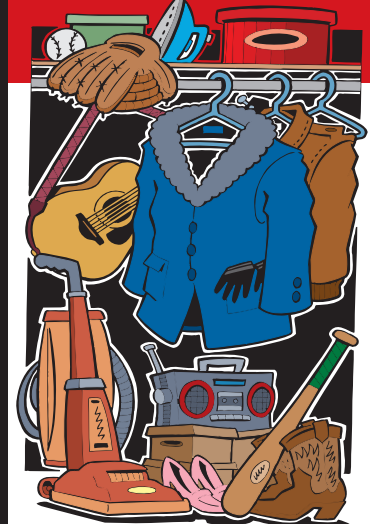
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Auctioneer's Note: Items on this auction are in good condition. Mike had many hobbies and interests the items on this auction are the tools, equipment and items needed to pursue those interests. Check our FB page for more pictures.

Equipment & Misc.
2 HD cement mixers
Davis Backhoe 3pt hook-up
Miller portable Welder on trlr
7 sets metal Scaffolding w/alum. deck boards "nice"
20' fiberglass ext. Ladder
10' fiberglass step Ladder
100 sq ft (aprx) Pine T&G Paneling
Scrap Iron

Trailers & Camper
16' Pace American enclosed trlr
20' Spirit enclosed car trlr
5'X12' Dump trlr
16' Car trlr w/winch
1998 Lance overhead PU camper "nice"

Sporting Goods
Gary Fisher bicycle
Cannondale bicycle
Weight bench w/weights
Sev sets golf clubs
Softball equip.
Tents

Household
2 Antique Dressers
Armoire
Metal patio set
Desks
Queen bedroom set

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March 2nd, 2024

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Delta Drill Press
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Lincoln 225 amp Welder
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Several handheld Grinders
Metal welding table
Assortment of handtools
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Craftsman shop vac
2 elec. Air compressors
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Sev sets Jack Stands
Craftsman ATV jack

Vehicles & SUV's
03 Porsche Cayenne damaged front end mid 50's model Ford PU in restoration
04 Ford Expedition
06 Yamaha Rhino w/snow tracks
Honda 300 4-wheeler

Lawn & Garden
Ingersoll riding mower
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National Potato Council at the forefront of advocacy

By JOHN WATERS

MONTEVISTA — At the Southern Rocky Mountain Agriculture Conference and Trade Show on Tuesday, Kam Quarles, Chief Executive Officer at the National Potato Council, gave a presentation updating farmers of what the council is doing for them.

At the forefront is maintaining recommendations to the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee that potatoes are indeed horticulturally a vegetable.

“Right now, the federal government is going through a five-year process where they review and revise the Dietary Guidelines for Americans... this basically sets the foundation for all nutrition policy in the U.S. If they get it right, it is like a tailwind, if they get it wrong it is like a ball and chain around your ankles,” said Quarles. He added that one of the first issues the committee considered is if potatoes are a vegetable or a grain.

In 2023, the Departments of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture appointed 20 nutrition and public health experts to serve on the 2025 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee to review nutrition science and base recommendations to those agencies to assist in determining policy.

The guidelines assist in shaping nutritional policy and school cafeteria menus.

According to Quarles, a December 2023 Wall Street Journal article, “Does That Potato Count as a Vegetable? The New Polarizing Food Debate,” sparked serious consideration of reclassifying spuds as a grain.

Keeping potatoes classified as a vegetable is good for demand. Keeping demand high is good for farmers. According to the USDA’s Economic Research Service, the potato is the most commonly consumed vegetable in the country.

In 2023 Quarles testified before the committee and said, “The Committee should focus on strategies to increase vegetable consumption and maintain recommendations for servings of what are often referred to as starchy vegetables.

“Americans do not eat enough vegetables and potatoes are key to addressing this gap. Potatoes are a versatile, affordable, and popular nutrient-dense choice across socioeconomic groups and cultures. Prepared in any form, potatoes provide essential, under-consumed nutrients such as potassium and fiber. Potatoes also play a key role in federal feeding programs such as National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. Here, potatoes serve as a ‘springboard vegetable,’ which

introduces children to other types of less-consumed vegetables, increases participation and decreases food waste. We encourage the Committee to maintain recommendations for America’s favorite vegetable.”

Quarles warned of the danger the Canadian PEI [Prince Edward Island] Potato Ward poses to American producers. The potato wart is a soil-borne fungus that can remain dormant in a field for decades and can spread rapidly when soil is moved or disturbed by farm equipment.

According to the Canadian Food Inspection Service the wart can lead to field losses of 50% to 100%. In 2021, PEI potato exports to the U.S. represented 92% of seed potatoes, 97% of seed potatoes and 89% of processed potato products. Currently the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, under certain circumstances, bans the importation of seed potatoes from the province.

The 2024 priorities for the NPC are to spend \$200 million annually for the Market Access Program, \$9

million for Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops that funds substantial work on access to Mexican Markets, and \$80 million for Specialty Crop Research Initiative.

“Mexico has been open for more than a year now and we actually have Mexican inspectors come up in the last six months and gave a tremendously clean bill of health to the activities that are happening in the United States...a very positive thing and really positive for Colorado,” said Quarles.

In describing the potential of potato exports to Japan, Quarles said, “Japan, we have had a lot of bipartisan focus, the Senate Finance Committee the Agriculture Committee in getting Japan open, our next big battle.”

The NPC expects Japan to become a massive market for American fresh potatoes. If the market opens, American producers may experience exports of up to \$200 million annually. Quarles added that talks between the U.S. and Japan are stalled.

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SLV Health free lunch and learn Feb. 22

ALAMOSA — SLV Health is having a free lunch and learn that will provide information about the patient portal and telehealth at noon on Thursday, Feb. 22, at the Education and Conference Center, 1921 Main St., Alamosa. There will be hands-on training and Q-and-A with a provider. To attend, RSVP to Donna Wehe at 719-587-1209 or email donna.wehe@slvrhc.org.

CEO

Continued from Page 1

grant funding resource strategic plan, as well as process improvement training and decreasing outage hours lower than the three-year average along with several other goals outlined in the road map.



Photo by Lyndsie Ferrell

Eriksen also announced a new program that will launch through the company on March 4. The new program “Electrify and Save” is an on-bill repayment program that allows funding to be provided to SLVREC members who are looking to make energy efficiency upgrades to their home or business.

According to the literature provided by SLVREC and Cielo during the meeting, “SLVREC, through partnerships with wholesale power supplier Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association and the Colorado Clean Energy Fund (CCEF), is offering an on-bill repayment (OBR) program to residents or business owners to install certain energy upgrades to their property at no upfront cost. These upgrades are repaid via a voluntary tariff on their monthly utility bill. The term “repayment” denotes that a third party, in this case CCEF, provides the upfront funding for the installation. In turn, SLVREC will bill customers on a monthly basis to recover CCEF’s costs over an agreed-upon timeframe. In many cases, the energy savings achieved through the newly installed measures is greater than the monthly repayment obligation, thereby saving customers money on their utility bill every month.”

The program will launch on March 4 and could be a game-changer for many homeowners and businesses in the Valley looking to lower energy costs through upgrades. SLVREC is also hosting an On-Bill Payment Trade Ally Incentive Program Workshop on Feb. 28 at 3 p.m. for any contractor in the Valley that would like to learn about the program and be added to the growing list of authorized network of qualified contractors.

For more information or details on how to apply for the program, visit www.slvrec.com/electrify-and-save.

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- 6 acres with incredible views in the gated subdivision of Bear Creek, South Fork, CO. Owner financing is available for this gorgeous lot. MLS#803984 **\$99,000**



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23 Fairway Drive - OWNER FINANCING AVAILABLE
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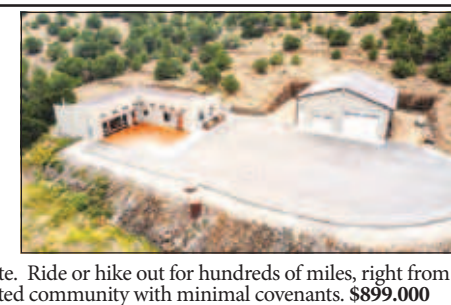
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242 Birch \$69,000
MLS#810124 and **64 Vista \$49,000**
MLS#810125. Two adjacent commercial lots in South Fork, each .35 acres. Right behind Mtn Pizza. Easy paved access off of Hwy 160.



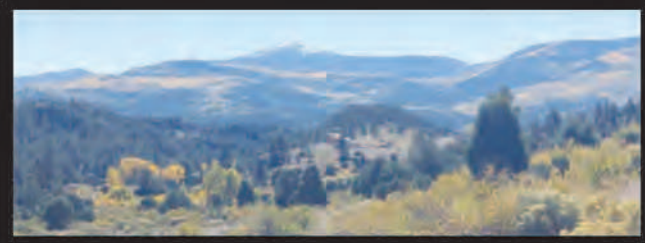
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4100 Wilderness Canyon Road - Mountain Luxury at the end of the road, secluded and private, this gorgeous, bright, energy-efficient home sits on 42 acres bordering the National Forest with views of the Natural Arch. Ghost Mine Ranch, near Del Norte. Ride or hike out for hundreds of miles, right from your backyard. Gated community with minimal covenants. **\$899,000**



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San Luis Valley Area Real Estate



YEAR-ROUND CREEK FRONT! Idyllic location with picturesque Mountain, Bear Creek Canyon views and live water runs the entire length of this 7.52-acre lot. Paved roads buried fiberoptic and electric to lot. Well and septic will need to be installed. Hike the Bear Creek Canyon trail, walking/horseback access to National Forest from the subdivision and owner access to the Rio Grande River. Hundreds of miles of ATV trails close by skiing at Wolf Creek within 30 minutes.

\$171,750 | MLS# 801331
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30635 W. US HWY 160, South Fork, Colorado



UNDER CONTRACT

Nestled amidst the serene beauty of Del Norte, this expansive 35.5-acre ranch. With San Francisco Creek flows flowing through the entirety of the property allowing fishing on your own land. The residence itself is secluded, ensuring privacy with its 1/4-mile driveway that shields it from the main road. Call Bruce Steffens today for a showing appointment.

\$975,000 | MLS# 808345
 6680 County Road 13, Del Norte, CO

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30635 W. US HWY 160, South Fork, Colorado



This property is once parcel containing 593 +/- acres surrounded by the San Juan Mountain Range. Located northwest of Del Norte, Colorado, on paved County Road 15 in Rio Grande County. Call Bruce Steffens today for more information.

\$1,104,450 | MLS# 809047
 TBD County Road 15, Del Norte, CO

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THE SUN HOUSE FARM has a total of 1910.5 +/- acres with 1,433 acres under pivot irrigation, which is 12 center pivots and all in excellent condition. 25 irrigation wells. Each Pivot has two wells. Two homes, one for hired help and one main home with corrals/sheds. Farmers Union water rights on the entire 1,910.5 acres. Call Bruce Steffens today for more information.

\$15,000,000 | MLS# 807640
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30635 W. US HWY 160, South Fork, Colorado



This two-story brick Denver Square building, constructed in 1911, exudes historic charm and character that seamlessly blends with the neighboring properties. Nestled on the iconic Main Street in Alamosa, Colorado, this property offers a unique opportunity for business and investment. Currently zoned as business commercial, it serves as a boarding house, presenting a variety of possibilities for its future. Call Bruce Steffens today for more information.

\$495,000 | MLS# 808721
 911 Main Street, Alamosa, CO

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30635 W. US HWY 160, South Fork, Colorado



Amazing business opportunity located in Antonito, CO. This car wash is in the perfect location, and is the only one for many miles! Much work has recently been done to the property including new cement being poured in both bays. This car wash is completely up to date and is ready to put money into YOUR pocket. Don't pass up an amazing opportunity to own this cash flowing property.

\$225,000 | MLS# 809144
 219 Main Street, Antonito, CO

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30635 W. US HWY 160, South Fork, Colorado



Pronghorn Ranch is a gated development located 2.5 miles south of the town of Del Norte. Here the panoramic view encompasses the mountains, valley, and visually interesting rock outcroppings. Natural grasses and evergreen trees dot the landscape. The large parcel lots offer space to grow and privacy. There are 29 available lots ranging in size from 35 to 88-acre parcels. Call Bruce Steffens today for more information.

\$87,000 - \$180,000 per lot
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The **FLYING W Ranch** is level, buildable, accessible year around, and is close to neighboring towns. This acreage is located 5 miles east of Monte Vista on Hwy 160 and 4 miles north on County Line Road.

Lot 2 - 35+/- acres	Lot 3 - 37+/- acres
Lot 4 - 83+/- acres	Lot 5 - 35+/- acres
Lot 6 - 35+/- acres	Lot 8 - 81+/- acres

Call Bruce Steffens for pricing and additional information.

\$2,700 - \$2,900 per acre
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Senior CONNECTIONS

How nutritional needs change with age

Healthy eating is important at any age and can set the course for a life of vitality and wellness. Sufficient nutrition can help prevent chronic illnesses and make sure that growing bodies develop properly. As one ages, various changes take place in the body, making healthy eating even more essential.

According to Healthline, nutritional deficiencies can effect aging individuals, which can decrease quality of life and lead to poor health outcomes. Individuals should pay attention to their vitamin and mineral intake at various ages so they do not miss out on important nutrients. As a person ages, here are some approaches to consider.

- Consume fewer calories: According to Connie Bales, PhD, RD, associate director of the Geriatric Research, Education, and Clinical

Center at Durham VA Medical Center, people need fewer calories every decade. That's because individuals are moving around less and have less muscle. This causes a decline in metabolic rate.

- Include more nutrient-dense foods: Even though caloric needs go down with age, it's important to pack as much nutrition into the calories a person does consume. That means finding nutrient-rich foods like whole grains, fruits, nuts, beans, vegetables, fish, and lean cuts of meat.

- Consume more lean protein: Muscle loss and loss of strength can develop as a person ages. Healthline says the average adult loses 3 to 8 percent of their muscle mass each decade after age 30. Eating more protein could help aging bodies maintain muscle.

- Eat fortified cereals and grains: The ability to absorb vitamin B12 can decrease as one gets older and with the use of certain medicines. Many health professionals recommend patients get more vitamin B12 by consuming foods enriched with this vitamin. Vitamin supplements may be needed in addition to food.

- Drink more fluids: Health.com says sensation of thirst declines with age. Drinking water and other fluids becomes a priority to stay hydrated. It also helps with digestion.

- Prioritize bone health: Osteoporosis is a concern for older adults, particularly women who have reached menopause. Osteoporosis occurs when bones become brittle and can break from only the slightest bump or fall, says the Mayo Clinic. Vitamin D and calcium help strengthen bones, and older adults may need



more of these nutrients.

Individuals should speak with their health care providers and nutritionists for further insight into their changing nutritional needs. Such professionals can help customize diets to address specific health concerns.

What to Know About RSV

(NAPSI) — You may remember the old saying, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." That's never been more true than it is right now about good health and older adults, especially when it comes to protecting yourself during what is commonly known as respiratory disease season (fall through early spring).

Last year saw the devastating effects of an increase in COVID, flu, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and pneumonia on the wellbeing of older Americans. Fortunately, most people had access to vaccines for all but RSV last year. And in good news for this year, for the first time ever, there is a vaccine approved by FDA for preventing RSV in older adults.

The Problem

RSV is a serious respiratory virus whose full toll on seniors is just now being recognized. Each year, RSV results in up to 160,000 hospitalizations among people aged 65 and over and leads to as many as 10,000 deaths in older people in the U.S., according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

It can also prove serious for anyone with chronic conditions such as asthma, COPD, heart or other lung problems, certain autoimmune conditions and those receiving chemotherapy or radiation treatments. It is easily spread from contact with a contaminated surface as well as through the air (when someone infected sneezes or coughs), so anyone at any age can get it.



A Solution

RSV vaccines are now approved and available throughout the U.S. and the cost is covered fully for Medicare beneficiaries. These vaccines can truly protect your health across your lifespan as they are now available for adults aged 60 years or older, as well as for infants through maternal immunization.

What Else You Should Know

It is always a good idea to review your health plan. When contacting Medicare, make certain that you are contacting the actual government agency itself. Only government agencies can use the .gov ending and the best number to use to reach trained Medicare experts is 1-800-633-4227. It's easy to remember, it's 1-800-Medicare.

The National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs (NANASP) created a resource outlining the five things to know about RSV to help get the word out about this important opportunity to protect the health of older adults. English and Spanish versions can be found at <https://www.nanasp.org/vaccines>.

It's a good idea to talk to your pharmacist or healthcare provider about whether you should get the RSV vaccine, and any other recommended vaccines.

Safely manage multiple medications

Individuals who are 60 and older are accustomed to making routine trips to the pharmacy to fill prescriptions. In fact, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that roughly 84 percent of adults between the ages of 60 and 79 use one or more prescription medications.

Prescription medications prolong individuals' lives and can make their daily lives more comfortable and manageable. As individuals age, their doctors may recommend various prescriptions, some of which they may need to take long-term. Managing multiple medications at once can be difficult, as it can be easy to lose track of which medications have been taken when individuals are prescribed more than one. In recognition of that difficulty, the National Institutes of Health offers the following tips to help individuals safely manage multiple medications.

- Maintain an updated list of all medications you take. The NIH notes a medication list should include both prescription and over-the-counter medications. OTC medicines include vitamins, supplements and herbal products.

- Share your medication list with family or close friends. A medication list should be accessible, and seniors can even share it with close family members, who can then advise medical professionals like EMTs, nurses and emergency room doctors which medicines you are taking in emergency situations when you may not be conscious.

- Routinely review your medicine list with health care providers and pharmacists. The NIH recommends individuals discuss their medicines with their physicians during each appointment. Ask if all medicines still need to be taken and if dosages should be changed. When visiting

specialists, be sure to provide a list of all medications you are currently taking.

- Ask questions about newly prescribed medications. Drug interactions can be dangerous, so it's important to ask if and how any newly prescribed medications may interact with drugs, vitamins or supplements you are already taking.

- Alert health care providers to any new side effects. Immediately contact your physician if any new side effects present. The NIH recommends individuals continue to take their medications unless their doctor says otherwise.

- Use a pill organizer. A pill organizer makes it easy to manage



multiple medications and can help individuals remember which pills they have taken.

Millions of individuals 60 and older take more than one medicine each day. Some simple strategies can ensure seniors safely manage their medications.

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Did you know?

Falls pose a significant threat to the senior population. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says someone age 65 or older suffers a fall every second of every day in the United States. This makes falls the leading cause of injury and injury death among this demographic. The National Council on Aging says one in four Americans fall each year. In fact, the NCOA

notes that falls result in more than three million injuries treated in hospital emergency rooms each year, including more than 800,000 that lead to hospitalization. The financial toll of falls among older adults also is significant, and estimates suggest falls will cost \$101 billion annually by 2030. That cost is only expected to increase as the population ages.

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The Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area (SdCNHA) is now accepting applications from students throughout the San Luis Valley to participate in its two annual youth programs. Pictured are students from the 2023 Heritage Camp.

SdCNHA 2024 youth programs applications now open

SdCNHA is recruiting SLV youth for annual programs

CONTRIBUTED

ALAMOSA—The Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area (SdCNHA) is now accepting applications from students throughout the San Luis Valley to participate in its two annual youth programs, the Heritage Camp and the Caminos del Valle Youth Walking Tours.

Both are free programs used to educate local San Luis Valley youth on the history, heritage, culture,

and traditions of the Heritage Area, which encompasses Alamosa, Conejos, and Costilla counties.

The Heritage Camp is a week-long program held every first week of June for middle and high school aged students to visit historic and heritage sites within the three counties. Students are provided with meals, transportation around the southern half of the Valley, and interpretation by local historians and educators at each site they visit.

The Youth Walking Tours is a program for high school students. Students research three sites around the Heritage Area and then lead a supervised walking tour of the

site for the general public. Students earn a stipend for their work, and are provided with a public speaking course, a CPR and First Aid course, and a self-defense course.

All students interested in learning more about local history and heritage, or future careers in historical or environmental preservation are encouraged to apply. SdCNHA will be accepting applications for the Youth Walking Tours from Feb. 1 until March 1. Heritage Camp applications will be accepted from Feb. 1 until May 15. Applications for both programs are available on SdCNHA's website: sangreheritage.org/education.

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Photo courtesy of SLV Health

Dr. Sam Slade and Monica Hindes, RN, consult with a patient at the SLVH Regional Medical Center Emergency Department.

SLV Health participates in Colorado ALTO Project

By DONNA WEHE

SLV Health

ALAMOSA AND LA JARA — San Luis Valley Health (SLVH) is participating in the Colorado Alternatives To Opioids (ALTO) Project as part of the Hospital Transformation Program to reduce the administration of opioids in our hospitals' emergency departments (ED).

SLV Health's goal is to improve pain management for its patients and return them to a maximum quality of life while also recognizing and controlling the inherent risks of prescribing highly addictive medications like opioids. SLV Health's clinicians are dedicated to understanding and responding appropriately to patients' physical and emotional symptoms of pain and helping the community combat the ongoing opioid epidemic. This project includes both the Regional Medical Center in Alamosa and Conejos County Hospital in La Jara.

This initiative implements components from the 2017 Opioid Prescribing and Treatment Guidelines developed by the Colorado chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) in both of SLV Health's emergency departments. These guidelines include using alternatives to opioids as a first line of defense in treating patients with painful conditions before using opioids.

"When patients come to us in pain, we want to make them comfortable without adding to their distress," says Margaret White, Director of Quality and Safety at San Luis Valley Health. "By participating in the ALTO program, we have more options to help our patients than we

have in the past. Our clinicians assess each patient at each visit and utilize the most appropriate medications for each patient's condition. That sometimes includes using non-opioid medications first, before deciding to use opioids for pain."

Colorado is at the forefront of the nation's opioid epidemic with the 12th highest rate of prescription opioid misuse and abuse out of all 50 states. Colorado hospitals, particularly the EDs, are in a strong position to integrate new and more effective pain management treatments that are tailored to each patient's unique pain experience.

The Colorado Hospital Transformation Program (HTP) was designed to increase and improve transitions of care. The ED ALTO measure is one of the measures that SLVH selected as it is imperative for our community and consumers to participate in the statewide effort to reduce opioid use and abuse. Our goal through HTP is to reduce opioids and increase ALTO's (alternatives to opioids). We are being measured on the number of opioids and ALTOs given to patients in the ED. This care redesign around decreasing opioids and increasing ALTOs will improve patient outcomes, help SLVH expand relationships with our community partners, and provide better care to our patients.

In January 2018, Colorado Hospital Association announced the results of the Colorado Opioid Safety Pilot initiated in 10 EDs across the state in 2017. During the six-month pilot, the participating facilities, which included the SLVH RMCED, reduced the administration of opioids by an average of 36 percent and increased the usage of ALTOs by 31 percent.

BEBOP Studio promotes local wellness

CONTRIBUTED

SAGUACHE — BEBOP Studio is offering OLE exercise and free motion and chair yoga in February.

The studio is sponsored by Saguache Works and is located at 317 San Juan Ave., Saguache, right behind the First Southwest Bank on 4th Street and San Juan Avenue.

OLE exercise involves stretching, gentle bar balance board and more, ending up with floor exercises — or you can sit in chairs. This exercise is for all ages and the counters are

Wilma Lewis and Kathy Geddes. They count while exercisers visit and stretch. OLE days and times

are Monday and Wednesday at 4 p.m. and Friday at 9 a.m. For more information, call or text Kathy Geddes at 719-221-6893.

Free motion and chair yoga will be joining the BEBOP space starting Wednesday, Feb 21. It will be led by certified instructor Kathy Rose, who received instruction at the Shoshoni Ashram in the Nederland. All are welcome as she teaches "gentle yoga with a sprinkle of other modalities to enhance well-being."

Days and times are Wednesday starting Feb 21 from 10 to 11 a.m. For more information, call or text Kathy Rose at 719-580-5720.



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SRMAC keynote speaker Grandin advocates several ways of thinking

By JOHN WATERS

MONTE VISTA — Colorado State University (CSU) professor and renowned expert on autism, Dr. Temple Grandin, gave the keynote address at the 42nd Annual Southern Rocky Mountain Agricultural Conference and Trade Show in Monte Vista on Feb. 7, “Visual Thinking: The hidden gifts of people who think in pictures, patterns, and abstractions,” to a packed audience.

Grandin gave a similar talk at Society Hall in Alamosa the night before. Grandin herself has autism.

Advocating new directions for the way people who have autism should be taught, Grandin said, “A lot of kids are not learning how to work,” and suggested they learn job skills early including working at a dollar store, church volunteer jobs, or cleaning stables as she had done at a young age.

“Do you know how you get them off the video games? Introduce them to car mechanics, and introduce them to fixing center pivot sprinklers. They’re gonna find that stuff is a lot more interesting,” she said.

Grandin added that instead of eliminating the use of video games, limit their use to an hour a day on weekdays and two hours daily on weekends.

Grandin said there are visual thinkers, music and math thinkers, and verbal thinkers, and we need to have them all at the table in any decision-making. She proposes educating, employing, and collaborating with visual thinkers who she says are essential for their perspectives.

Noting that many successful people think differently, Grandin said, “Michelangelo, filthy, dirty, naughty, 12-year-old. He dropped out of school because he didn’t want to become a lawyer, yuck, learning all that Latin. He was running around all those churches that were commissioning all that great art; that’s exposure.”

Grandin used that as an example of how to cultivate the promise of a young person with different thought processes.

According to the CSU website Grandin has said, “You think about the number of students that are forced to become a lawyer or a doctor, and then they find out they hate it later on. There’s a lot of people today that are going down that track, you know, and that’s a bad

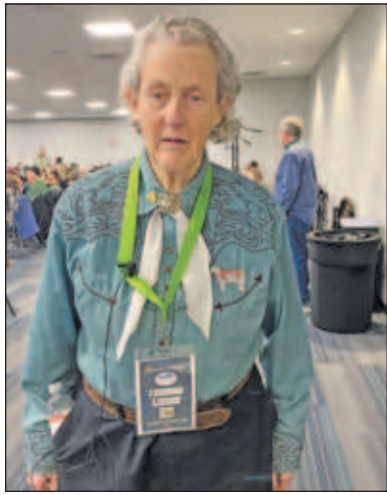


Photo by John Waters

Dr. Temple Grandin, Colorado State University professor and expert on autism, at the 42nd Annual Southern Rocky Mountain Agricultural Conference and Trade Show held at the Outcalt Event and Conference at SLV Ski-Hi Complex in Monte Vista on Feb 7.

one to go down. It’s important to find out the things you hate doing.”

Neurodivergent and neurodiverse are terms used to describe people like Grandin and others whose brain differences including autism, affect how they think and how their brain works. The term was introduced in the 1990s by sociologist Judy Singer who is autistic. People with autism are on a broad spectrum. Today, people on this spectrum are understood to be part of all normal human experience.

Often, autistic people are delayed in speech and visual processing remains primary. According to The New York Journal of Books, Einstein did not speak fully until age 7. He wrote, “Thoughts do not come in any verbal formulation. I rarely think in words at all. The psychological entities that serve as building blocks for my thoughts are certain signs and images, more or less clear, that I can reproduce or recombine at will.”

Grandin says the world is increasingly focused on verbal thinkers and people need to refocus on visual thinkers and synthesize the three types of thinkers into education and policy making.

“Visual Thinking: The hidden gifts of people who think in pictures, patterns, and abstractions,” is available in both hardcover and paperback



February is National Potato Lover’s Month!

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Sargent FBLA advances to state competition

The Colorado Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) District 8 Leadership Conference was held Feb. 6 at Adams State University. The entire Sargent School District FBLA Chapter qualified for state in either an individual or group presentation. They will be participating in Colorado FBLA State Leadership Conference at the Gaylord Rockies Resort and Conference Center on April 1-3 in Aurora. Pictured back row, left to right, Stephanie McBartlett- Adviser, Lyza Davis, Kaitlynn Roberts, Amelia Ford, Mia Stickens, Dio Camacho, and Danny Willis. Pictured front row, left to right, Makayla Brown, Emma Sewell, Sylvia Daugherty, Catie Deacon, Makenzie Consaul, Mayan Stephens, and Josiah Yocom.

Photo courtesy of Sargent School District



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