

Shorts

Saguache County Republican caucus is March 7

SAGUACHE COUNTY — The Saguache County Republican party will be conducting a caucus at 6 p.m. on Thursday, March 7, at two locations in the county.

• Precincts 1, 2, 6 and 7 will meet at Mountain Valley School cafeteria in Saguache.

• Precincts 3, 4 and 5 will meet at Moffat School cafeteria in Moffat.

Registered Republicans can call to find out what precinct they are in.

“We’ll give you that information and answer any other questions you may have about the caucus and upcoming County Assembly,” organizers stated. For more information, call 719-530-1257 or email mkc@accentusa.com.

Sangre de Cristo School Board of Education Meeting

MOSCA — The Sangre de Cristo School Board of Education regular monthly meeting will be at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 13, in the school library at 8751 Lane 7 North, Mosca CO at 6:00 p.m. Copies of agendas are posted at school site, website, the Hooper and Mosca Post Offices, and the Mosca Pit Stop. Meetings are open to the public.

Senior health fair in Saguache Feb. 14

SAGUACHE — A Senior resource and health fair will be held in Saguache on Feb. 14 from 11 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., at the Saguache Community Building, 525 7th St., Saguache.

There will be presentations, health screenings, giveaways, fun and music. The event is sponsored by the San Luis Valley Area Health Education Center.

For more information, call 719-937-8381.

Center’s Rogers debuts on ‘Farmer Gets a Wife’

STAFF REPORT

CENTER — Twenty-nine-year-old Brandon Rogers of Center was among four farmers who were featured on FOX television’s dating series “Farmer Gets a Wife” which debuted Thursday night.

According to a news release from FOX, Season Two of the series follows the plot, “In a trend that continues to sweep America, there’s been a migration from city-centers to suburban and rural locales, and with that, love follows. Hosted by superstar entertainer and Grammy Award winner Jennifer Nettles, the anticipated season follows four farmers in search of real, lasting love.

“Season Two’s new crop of farmers...host a group of single women who leave behind the comfort and convenience of city life for the charms and challenges of country living, as they embark on an adventure that could change the course of their lives forever.”

FOX continued, “Brandon is our most remote farmer, living in a small, one-stop-light town surrounded by his farmland. He grew up on the farm working with his dad. Later in his twenties, he returned to work the farm full-time to continue his family’s farming legacy. His business is set up and doing well, and now the missing piece is that special person to share it with.”

Brandon Rogers



Courtesy photo

Haskin Elementary first-grade teacher Lindsay Stillwagon and her students pose for a photo during Space Day in Center. The imaginative event was the culmination of curriculum on space, Stillwagon said.

Haskin Elementary first-graders are out of this world

By MARIE MCCOLM

CENTER — Haskin Elementary first-graders reached for the stars during their recent “Space Day.”

Teacher and students dressed as astronauts and aliens and went on imaginary space walks while tethered to their desks.

“For Space Day, some of the kids enjoyed pretending that they were tethered to their desks, and they

had to walk to get things from across the room, like they were walking in space. They went on space walks. It was so cool to see the imaginative side of the kids,” said first-grade teacher Lindsay Stillwagon.

The imaginative event was the culmination of curriculum on space, Stillwagon said.

“It was such a great time with

the kids, and they really enjoyed themselves. We were celebrating our end to a unit that we had been studying of Sun, Moon, and Stars. A fun celebration day at the end of our learning. The kids just loved it.”

Students could dress up as anything in space.

“We had little astronauts and

Please see HASKIN on Page 6A

Docuseries ‘Love Has Won’ being shown to raise funds for Neighbors Helping Neighbors

By MARIE MCCOLM

CRESTONE — “Love Has Won: The Cult of Mother God” is being shown at T-Road Brewing Company and the proceeds will be given to the non-profit Neighbors Helping Neighbors in Crestone.

On Feb. 24, the three-part docuseries will be shown in its entirety. The cost of the event is \$10 and a non-perishable food item. The money from the event will be given to the non-profit group Neighbors Helping Neighbors. T-Road, Mary Lowers and NHN are organizing the event.

The series examines the life of Amy Carlson, who according to the movie’s website, chronicles the life and death of Carlson. Carlson, also known as Mother God, was a self-proclaimed mystic savior who built a cult and had a following of 12 to 20 people in the Crestone area with about 150 followers online.

Carlson believed that she lived many past lives, having been reincarnated as Jesus, Joan of Arc, and Marilyn Monroe. She also believed she birthed all humans.

The series shows how the cult began when Carlson left Kansas in 2007, and

Please see LOVE on Page 5A

DA Kelly announces bid to run for re-election



Anne Kelly
District Attorney

By PRISCILLA WAGGONER

ALAMOSA — Anne Kelly, District Attorney for the 12th Judicial District, has announced her intention to run for re-election in November.

In a statement to the Valley Courier, Kelly writes, “I am committed to the San Luis Valley. In partnership with law enforcement agencies, community leaders and the citizens of this Valley, the District Attorney’s Office has risen from a place of dysfunction to a position of restored hope and trust. We still have so much work to do, and I am committed to continuing to

raise the level of professionalism and competence in the Office.

“It has been an absolute pleasure over the last 18 months, meeting community members, listening to their concerns and advocating on their behalf. You have made me feel very welcome in your spaces, and I truly appreciate that. It would be my honor to continue to serve this very special place.”

Kelly first came to the San Luis Valley as a visiting prosecutor following the resignation of her predecessor. As she has stated before, after being here for just a few weeks, she felt personally

compelled to come back and restore justice that had been lacking in the 12th Judicial District. As a result, she submitted her name to Governor Jared Polis in consideration for being appointed to the position.

Polis appointed her and she took the helm in August of 2022. She subsequently ran in November and was voted in by a sizeable margin.

As a result of her advocacy “from day one,” and subsequent support from county commissioners across the Valley, it was recently announced that the DA’s office will eventually be relocating to a

site on Main Street in Alamosa, that will offer significantly more space, better accommodations for meetings and training and easier access to the public.

Kelly also states she has been able to hire a full staff of highly qualified attorneys, which had been an ongoing challenge for years. She and her staff have “cleared” a backlog of several hundred cases she inherited upon assuming the position while, personally, she has been to trial on “about 15 cases.”

Kelly has also investigated four officer-involved shootings, an unprecedented number of cases for the San Luis Valley.

OBITUARIES

Michael Kukuk

Michael was born Aug. 26, 1995, at Gunnison Valley Hospital to Robert and Janelle Kukuk.

He was a miracle baby that they had waited so long to have and hold, and really had given up hope of conceiving a child prior to his conception. As a young boy he enjoyed playing around Santa Maria Reservoir with his little sister Melanie and all the other visiting kids in the summers, this really shaped him into who he was and what he loved to do. He wasn't too happy though when he asked for a puppy and his parents returned with his sister, "Beeps", her forever nickname because he couldn't say baby.

He spent his teenage summers working with Melanie at Freemon's. They first started by filling condiment bottles and scooping ice cream and worked their way up to flipping burgers. He grew up as his dad's right-hand man; always wanting to help. Many know about his love for snowmobiling, but it didn't begin until he got a '95 vintage Arctic Cat. He was terrified of that machine, until he realized he could master it, then that's exactly what he did. He was an avid and skillful snowmobiler, and it was an amazing thing to be able to witness. He was recognized in 2012, with a broken wrist sustained while jumping his sled, as snowmobiler of the year.

He had an innate sense for anything mechanical and loved to tinker. As a teenager, he worked on a '69 Chevy K10, and in adulthood he loved his collector car — a '76 Corvette. Many memories were made in that 76 Corvette with his wife, Jennah and his three daughters. He loved to show it off to the world and he was so proud of it.

Michael was married twice and had four children through these two marriages: Darcy, Jayda, Bristol, and Robert. He was the kind of man who accepted another man's child as his own; a really special kind of man. He always had a passion to love and be loved and this showed through his marriages and his love for all four children. His love was a wondrous thing to feel. Many fond memories



were made in his marriage to Jennah: snowmobiling as a couple and with friends, going to Minnesota, a trip to Ouray, multiple spring flings with friends, late-night talks of life's adventures yet to be had, and best of all; a beautiful, blended family was created.

He was always willing to extend a helping hand to those in need. He had a deep love for all of his animals: Thor, Freya, Kitty, and even their chickens.

He had a drive to work that was unmatched and admirable. His love for trees and passion for work propelled him to start and operate his own tree service for the last seven years. He did an extraordinary job working in very intimidating work environments. His children always enjoyed the crane rides he would give bringing them high up into the air.

He was a devoted husband, father, son, grandson, brother, brother-in-law, nephew, and friend who showed his compassion and love often to all of his loved ones. Through life and death, he will always be remembered as a loving, funny, ambitious, thoughtful, generous, adventurous, charming, and beautiful human.

Michael is survived by his wife Jennah Kukuk, his children Darcy Kukuk, Jayda Graber-Kukuk, Bristol Kukuk, and Robert Kukuk, his parents Robert and Janelle Kukuk, his maternal grandparents James and Laverne Lambert, his sister Melanie Dickey and her husband Andy Dickey, and many aunts, uncles, cousins, and close friends.

He was preceded in death by his paternal grandparents Coleman and Joan Kukuk.

Robert 'Bob' Davie

nieces and nephews.

Bob chose cremation. A Celebration of Life will be held at Rogers Family Mortuary at 404 Morris St., Monte Vista, Colo., on Feb. 9, at 11 am.

Flowers can be sent to Rogers Family Mortuary.

Bob had a great sense of humor and will be missed dearly.

Rogers Family Mortuary is in care of the arrangements. To leave online condolences, tributes and words of comfort for Bob's family, please visit www.RogersFunerals.com.

Ann Brunsvold, aged 84, passed into heaven on January 30, 2024, in Comfort, Texas. She was born in Winfield, Iowa to Herman and Margarete Wolf on October 29, 1939. She married Michael A. Brunsvold on August 12, 1962, in Winfield, Iowa.

After graduating from Winfield High School, Ann attended the University of Iowa for a nursing degree. She worked in several hospitals as a registered nurse for about 20 years, moving every three years with Mike in the United States Air Force. Later she studied for a master's degree in Public Health Nursing at the University of Texas Health Science Center in San Antonio. She finished a 50-year career as a public health nurse in San Antonio. This included many years as a school nurse at Thorton Elementary School in San Antonio. She loved her job there - especially the children. When she retired, she received recognition for her years of dedicated and caring service to the students and staff of Northside Independent School District.

Ann was a long-time member of

Ann Brunsvold

St. Andrew Presbyterian Church in San Antonio where she sang in the choir for about 30 years. Later Mike and Ann joined the First Presbyterian Church in Kerrville where they have worshiped for almost 20 years. She loved to participate in short term mission trips which included travel to Mexico, Africa, Guatemala, and Haiti.

Ann was preceded in death by her parents, Herman and Margarete Wolf, and her brother Raul Wolf. She is survived by her husband, Michael Brunsvold and their two children, Paul Brunsvold and his wife Lisa, and Mary Ann Nally and her husband Paul. She is also survived by her sister, Mary Whistler and her husband Don, and brother, John Wolf and his wife Pat. Ann is survived by 5 grandchildren: Elise Brunsvold (wife of Misha Beltrami), Regan Brunsvold, Katlyn Hamilton, Jake Hamilton, and Addison Nally.

A celebration of Life Memorial Service will be held at First Presbyterian Church, Kerrville, Texas on Thursday February 8, at 1:00PM. The service will be officiated by Jasiel Garcia. The



family request donations be made to St. Judes Hospital in lieu of flowers.

The family wishes to extend sincere thanks to the community of Falling Water, Peterson Hospice, and five angels from heaven, Rosalie Salazar, Marielena Cruz, Debbie Siler, Maria Garcia and Ana Orta for their dedicated and loving support of Ann in her last times.

Thanks also is expressed to Grimes Funeral Chapels of Kerrville for funeral arrangements. Condolences may be sent at www.grimesfuneralchapels.com.

Oma Jean Hansen



Oma Jean Hansen, 94, passed away peacefully at home surrounded by her loving family. Jean was born in Opal, Ark., to Marvin Davis and Dovie (Bates) Davis. The second of four children.

She lived in Arkansas until the family moved to Santa Fe, N.M., for work. She worked for the phone company and was a star player for the company's women's basketball team.

She met the love of her life, Gerald Hansen. They were married on May 14, 1950, and had two children, Ron and Kathy. In 1957, they moved to Dolores, Colo., where she was mother, homemaker and bookkeeper for the family business.

In 1968, the family moved to Saguache, Colo. After Gerald's passing in 2001 she moved to Canon City, Colo., until her passing.

Jean loved music, playing guitar, piano and loved to sing. Along with music she also loved to dance, especially square dancing. She also loved the

outdoors with fishing, camping, water skiing and snowmobiling. She also tried her hand at tennis. She was always smiling and had a verse from a song for every occasion.

After the nest emptied, she was clerk of court for a time and was sought-after speaker for Christian Women's Club events. She also enjoyed the Red Hat Club. Jean was always active in church and was strong in her faith. Jean was

loved by all who knew her and will be missed.

Jean was preceded in death by brother Marva Lee who died at birth, her parents Marvin and Dovie Davis, husband Gerald Hansen, brother Jimmy Davis, and sister Billie Hansen.

She is survived by son Ron (Wyoma) Hansen, Saguache, Colo., daughter Kathy (Paul) Clarke, Canon City, Colo., five grandchildren, 12 great-grandchildren, four great-great-grandchildren, numerous nieces and nephews and special friend Jim Jones.

Services will be held Wednesday, Feb. 7, 2024, at 10 a.m. with lunch to follow Canon Community Baptist Church, 1111 Monroe Ave., Canon City, CO 81212. Burial to be held Friday, Feb. 9, 2024, at 11 a.m., Memorial Gardens of Santa Fe, Santa Fe, N.M.

Special thanks to caregivers Jeri and Madison and Fremont Regional Hospice.

Services entrusted to Harwood Funeral Home. Online condolences at www.harwoodfunerals.com.

Please see OBITUARY on Page 7A

FULL-TIME SALES

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OPINION & EDITORIAL

Punxsutawney Phil strikes again

It looks like the weather is on a rampage once again across the U.S.A. as the week opens up with rains on the West Coast setting records for amounts received plus snow in the Northeast piling up like leftovers at the church pot-luck dinner which, even though good at the time, begin to smell if allowed to accumulate for too long.

I do not think that the weather occurrences we are currently having are any worse than we have had in the past. It's just that now we have non-stop reporting on the same coming into our homes and phones like never before. And as I said in an earlier column, the events are also blown way out of proportion by the media trying to gain market share.

One happy event occurring on Jan. 2 in a small town in middle Pennsylvania was Groundhog Day. And for those of you that do not know or are so old you have forgotten, Groundhog Day is a day set aside in that State to allow Phil, the local groundhog, a chance to predict the coming Spring weather or lack thereof.

He is named after the town, and they root Punxsutawney Phil out of his man-made den and then some appointed groundhog holder lifts him up like Aaron's Rod in front of friends, family, and others to see if he can see his shadow. If he doesn't, it means spring will come quickly. If he does, it means that the winter will drag out like a cat bringing in dead mice to the house.

All the news outlets saved us this

year from such an awful fate of more winter by announcing that Phil didn't see his shadow thereby guaranteeing an early Spring for which Ol' Dutch is certainly thankful.

This tradition started way back in the 1880s, so we begin to understand that there were some not so sane people around even back then and their descendants have carried on the tradition of hosting Groundhog Day ever since. Of course, it has now grown into quite an event with parades and vendors selling all sorts of confectionaries and other eatables, T-shirts, memorabilia, and autographed photos by Phil himself.

There is a great movie about this day with the title "Groundhog Day" and if you have not seen it then you need to dial that puppy up on Netflix or Disney or whatever you subscribe to as it's a funny flick. It's good enough that even Ol' Dutch would consider going up there one of these days just to be a part of such a celebration and maybe just maybe get caught up in some of the same antics that Bill Murray does in the movie.

And before you try and pour cold water on my dreams and say it was "just a movie" and did not happen there I have to ask you if you have been there and if not, then how do you know? Ol' Dutch still likes to have some dreams and those also include Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny, so if you are simply a spoilsport who likes to go through life with dull expectations, then so be it but leave us free thinkers alone. Maybe I am like the old farmer



Trout Republic
by Kevin Kirkpatrick

who went to the movies and in one scene saw some ladies across the railroad tracks undressing to go swimming. And just as they were about to reveal their full glory of nakedness to the viewers, a train comes along and blocks the view. The farmer had gone to the same movie over 40 times and when asked why, he said that he was hoping that sooner or later the train would be late. Got to love a dreamer.

So, you all can celebrate with me the great news that Phil brought to us about an early Spring and rest easy knowing that he is always right — about 30% of the time. Which is probably a tad better than the local weatherman at least where I live.

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.

Saguache County mill levy considerations

By LIZA MARRON
For Saguache County Board of County Commissioners

State Property Tax relief action in a 2023 special session of the Colorado Assembly will give considerable property tax reduction benefit to Saguache County homeowners when 2024 taxes come due. In light of this, Saguache County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) certified the 2024 mill levy for county operations the same as the 2023 number at 18.831 mills.

Soaring home values showed up on 2023 Notices of Value sent out in April 2023. The value of all residential, agricultural and commercial properties in the county increased by 27% from the previous year with residential properties experiencing the biggest surge. At a time when the rising cost of living has left many struggling to cover their monthly bills, many are understandably concerned about their ability to pay their taxes and to stay in their homes.

The Commissioner's local response was to call together the taxing entities of the county to include school, library, ambulance and water conservation districts to talk about a joint temporary reduction of the mill levy. A mill levy comes into play after a home is taxed using an assessed value percentage of approximately 6.765%, or the taxable amount of your home. That amount is then multiplied by the mill levy to come up with the taxes owed. About 10% of property taxes go to the county. The rest supports social services, public health and that tax district's school district as well as the other districts.

Last year, the Colorado General Assembly passed daunting legislation to "Reduce Property Taxes and Voter-approved Revenue Change". Proposition HH came out of this and was placed on the November ballot to be soundly defeated on election day. The Assembly then held a Special Session to pass a different version of property tax relief. It gave residents \$55,000 of exempted value and took the assessment rate down to 6.7%.

Kaye Maez, Saguache County Deputy Assessor performed several residential scenarios at Commissioner Lynne Thompson's request and found that if the Commissioners were to lower the mill levy by even 3 mills at substantial loss in income to the county, the savings would be insubstantial at about \$27 for a \$187,000 home in Saguache. The State's property tax relief however saved that same homeowner \$387.

- An \$80,000 Moffat home saved \$378 State, and \$3 from the county.
- A \$237,000 Crestone home saved \$371 State, and \$39 from the county.
- A \$106,000 Center home would see \$345 from State relief, \$9 county.
- A \$590,000 home in the Baca would save \$526 State and \$108 county.

After reviewing the data, the BOCC agreed that the State Assembly had done well for homeowners and the reduction of the County mill levy was not necessary or even very helpful.

The money saved by not reducing the mill levy was able to be invested in the county staff with a .50 cents an hour plus 5% Cost of Living raise, and a 5% match for every 3% an employee invests in a retirement account.

When character was king

By MARK HILLMAN
Capitol Review

Forty-four years ago this month, Ronald Reagan won the New Hampshire Republican presidential primary, vaulting him on a path to the 1980 nomination and a landslide victory over President Jimmy Carter.

The last presidential candidate to largely unite the country, Reagan defeated Carter 489-49 in the Electoral College and 51%-41% in the popular vote. Four years later, he won 49 states and 59% of the popular vote.

Reagan "rose from the ashes" of Barry Goldwater's 1964 presidential campaign thanks to his "A Time for Choosing" speech, writes Peggy Noonan in her Reagan biography, *When Character Was King*. Goldwater could define what conservatism was against, but "Reagan could define it by what it was for: for greater individual authority and freedom, for the right to hold on to more of your wages, for defending democracy against totalitarians."

First elected California governor in 1966, Reagan carried 57% of voters against incumbent Gov. Pat Brown who complained that Reagan voters were

extremists. Instead, Reagan's support "came from middle-of-the-road voters in both parties," Noonan writes. "They were tired of high taxes, tired of college upheavals spreading across the university system."

Reagan called his win, "A rebellion of ordinary people."

How did Reagan unify so many? For starters, he was nice. That was "considered important for your career in those days," Noonan writes. He came from humble roots. His father, Jack, was a door-to-door salesman and a blue-collar Democrat. "Ronnie" was an FDR Democrat until his strong opposition to Communism caused him to register as a Republican.

A longtime friend who knew Reagan from early in his acting career said, "The thing about him is he never changed. He was humble. He had no sense of entitlement. It wasn't about him, ever."

Reagan didn't look down on people. "He was not given to conceit, didn't play with people when he had the chance, didn't show up places late because he (was) the most important."

His humility and "common touch" was ingrained by his parents — his father, an

Irish Catholic; his mother, an evangelical protestant.

"The biggest sin in their eyes," Reagan said, "was racial or religious preference. ... Any kind of bigotry, they'd really lay into you."

Under Reagan, the Republican Party transformed from the party of big business to one that supported a strong economy for the benefit of both workers and employers. His relentless optimism and vision for a strong, prosperous America was contagious.

He was a breath of fresh air at a time when elites apologized for America and even ordinary citizens began to doubt. America's disgraceful exit from Vietnam emboldened communists and tyrants worldwide. The Soviet Union expanded its communist empire, and American leaders feared confrontation. OPEC pinched American consumers, leading to gas lines and rising energy prices. Inflation soared and the economy stagnated. Then in 1979, Iranians stormed the U.S. Embassy and held 52 Americans hostage for 14 months.

Although a decent man, President Carter was simply in over his head; he wasn't respected by Russia or Iran and

had no plan for America's return to prosperity.

By contrast, Reagan exuded confidence in America and its people. But his confidence wasn't cockiness.

He didn't think certain jobs were beneath him. When first elected president in 1980 and before leaving for Washington, he and a young aide, Dave Fischer, put up Christmas lights at his California home. Secret Service could have done it, but it wasn't their job. "It was a husband and father's job to do it for his family," Fischer recounted.

After being shot by John Hinckley in March 1981, Reagan spilled water on the floor of his hospital bathroom and was found sopping it up because he didn't want a nurse to have to do it. He also showed kindness in unexpected ways. While praying for others who were shot that day, he also said a prayer for the shooter.

"I can't ask God to heal (my friends) and at the same time feel hatred for the man who shot us," he later explained.

Reagan confronted his political opponents with optimism and good humor. Campaigning against Carter 1980, he said, "Recession is when your

neighbor loses his job. Depression is when you lose your job. Recovery is when Jimmy Carter loses his job."

In 1984, opponents sought to make an issue of Reagan's age, then 73. During a debate with Walter Mondale, 17 years his junior, Reagan was asked about being then "the oldest president in history." He softly quipped, "I am not going to exploit, for political purposes, my opponent's youth and inexperience." Even Mondale laughed.

Unlike most presidents, Reagan's legacy grows more impressive with time. His tax cuts produced the longest peacetime economic expansion in U.S. history. His peace-through-strength foreign policy led to the unraveling of the Soviet Union and the fall of the Berlin Wall — both unthinkable when he took office.

Even President Barack Obama recognized Reagan as a "transformative" President. His quiet tenacity, persistent focus, and humble optimism remain a model even — or especially — today.

Mark Hillman served as Senate Majority Leader and State Treasurer. To read more or comment, go to www.MarkHillman.com.

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Daughters join Blake for his 103rd birthday

Special celebration held at Homelake veterans center

By MARIE MCCOLM

MONTE VISTA — Family and friends surrounded beloved Veteran George Blake to help celebrate his 103rd birthday on Jan. 29 at the Veterans Community Living Center at Homelake.

Blake's children traveled a great distance to be with their father on his birthday. Approximately 50 people attended the celebration.

People were greeted by a huge sign over a table that read, "We appreciate your sacrifices, United we stand." The party's theme was the roaring 20's, and some people were dressed in 1920's attire, complete with featherhead dresses and cute outfits.

Blake walked in with a huge smile as center Director Pam Self introduced him and said they were going to celebrate his birthday with trivia, and games.

Blake was asked what his secret was to live to 103. He smiled and responded, "A little gin and tonic never hurt."

Blake was all smiles as Self began to ask attendees questions from the 1920's including what the number one name of little girls was from the 1920's. Correct answers received a 100 Grand candy bar.

Blake enjoyed the trivia and even answered one correctly. Local businessman Bob Richards, along with local businessman James Pacheco attended the party and reminded Blake that they would soon be inducting a large version of his poem on a plaque, into the Faith Hinkley Memorial Park in Monte Vista.

Blake, who is a Pearl Harbor survivor, wrote a poem and received recognition for his poem by the two businessmen.

Self was excited to give the party and said, "This is just such an incredible milestone. George is such an inspiration to all of us. If you think of everything that he has experienced in his lifetime, the changes in technology. It is such an honor to know him for sure. To also have this overwhelming attendance for him, and to know that he knows all these people and they care so much about him. It is also very special that his family has been



Photos by Marie Mccolm

George Blake celebrating his 103rd birthday with his three daughters, who traveled from New Jersey and Illinois to the Veterans Community Living Center at Homelake.

able to travel here from their homes back east, from Illinois and further east than that. His three daughters

and their husbands. At lunch, the residents also get to request a special meal, and George had his special meal at noon and all the residents and dietary aids got to sing 'Happy Birthday' to him there, too."

Blakes' daughters were excited to see their father. One traveled from New Jersey and two of them traveled from Illinois. Blake was excited and said that he saw an interview on YouTube that he did about Pearl Harbor when he still lived in Salida. Michelle Velasquez of the Proud

Military Parents group was happy to provide Blakes' special cake at his party.

He was asked if he got everything he wanted for his birthday and answered, "Yes, I got to see my kids and eat cake. I got to see my nurse and I got lots of birthday cards in the mail and got several phone calls. Being with my kids today has been great."

When Blake was asked how it felt to be 103, he said, "I don't know it just happened."



George Blake, sitting in the center of everyone, during his 103rd birthday celebration at Veterans Community Living Center at Homelake.



The entrance of the Veterans Community Living Center at Homelake was decorated for George Blake's 103rd birthday.

San Luis Valley Scoreboard Basketball 2023-2024

BOYS

Nucla 49	Sangre de Cristo 39
Creede 59	Antonito 43
Sierra Grande 71	Moffat 43
Sangre de Cristo 59	Creede 11
Centennial 78	Cripple Creek-Victor 55
Antonito 59	Lake City 19
Sanford 56	Trinidad 22
Sargent 47	Del Norte 37
Monte Vista 73	Center 37
Sanford 65	Crested Butte 46
Del Norte 53	Trinidad 23
Sargent 53	Cotopaxi 43
Center 56	South Park 49
Centauri 68	Montezuma-Cortez 45
Pagosa Springs 63	Alamosa 49

GIRLS

Sargent 51	Cotopaxi 38
Sanford 46	Crested Butte 223
Montezuma-Cortez 48	Centauri 44
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Author, professor Gulliford to speak about 'The Woolly West'

Event is set for March 29 at the Rio Grande County Museum

By **LYNDSIE FERRELL**

DEL NORTE — The Rio Grande County Museum recently announced that its first program of 2024 will highlight some of the origin stories about the San Luis Valley through innovative writing done by Andrew Gulliford, professor of History and Environmental Studies at Fort Lewis College in Durango.

Gulliford has been a patron of the Rio Grande County Museum for several years and has come to this location to research his book, "The Woolly West." On March 29 from 5:30 to 7 p.m., the museum will feature stories about the sheepherders who were some of the first settlers of the San Luis Valley and other activities that will be announced as soon as details become available.

Gulliford teaches popular college courses in wilderness and environmental history and is the author of "America's Country Schools," "Sacred Objects and Sacred Places: Preserving Tribal Traditions," and "Boomtown Blues: Colorado Oil Shale," which won the Colorado Book Award. He also edited "Preserving Western History," which was voted one of the best books on the Southwest by the Tucson-Pima County Library. His

articles and photographs have appeared in national publications, including High Country News, Preservation, American Heritage, Colorado Heritage, and Montana.

He writes a regular monthly column titled "Gulliford's Travels" for the Southwest Life section of the Durango Herald, and some essays are picked up by the "Writers on the Range" syndicated column of High Country News. Gulliford also writes for Inside/Outside Southwest and Mountain Gazette.

Gulliford has received the National Individual Volunteer Award from the U.S. Forest Service for wilderness education and a certificate of recognition from the Secretary of Agriculture for "outstanding contributions to America's natural and cultural resources."

The governor appointed Gulliford to two terms on the National Register of Historic Places Review Board for the State of Colorado. Gulliford also has his third federal appointment to the BLM's Southwest Colorado Resources Advisory Council, where he represents environmental interests.

Gulliford has led tours across the West by canoe, raft, horseback, van, cruise ship, private train, and private jet for the Smithsonian Institution, the National Geographic Society, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the Colorado Historical Society.

He regularly donates tours to raise money for the Durango Adult

Education Center, American Red Cross, Western Colorado Congress, Fort Lewis College Foundation, Rocky Mountain Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), and Great Old Broads for Wilderness.

In "The Woolly West," Gulliford writes that the sheep industry was as integral to the history of the American West as any trail drive.

With vivid, elegant, and reflective prose, Gulliford explores the origins of sheep grazing in the region; the often-violent conflicts between the sheep and cattle industries; the creation of national forests; the segmenting of grazing allotments with the passage of the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934; the challenges of ecological change and the politics of immigrant labor; and the conflicts between hikers and dogs guarding flocks that have again put the sheep industry on the defensive.

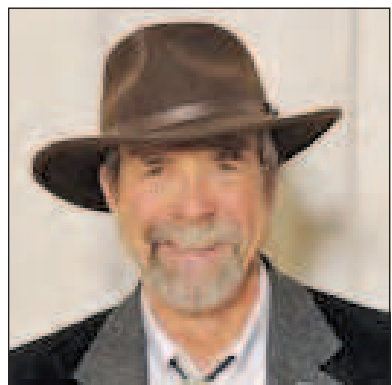
Gulliford also weaves an account of his interaction with what he calls the "sheepscape"—the sheepherders' landscape itself. Visiting with Peruvian immigrant herders and Mormon families who have grazed sheep for generations, he explores stone cairns assembled by shepherds now long gone and ponders the meaning of arboglyphs carved into unending aspen forests.

"The Woolly West" is the first book in decades devoted to the sheep industry and breaks new ground in the history of the Colorado Basque, Greek, and

Hispano shepherding families whose ranching legacies continue to the present day.

Gulliford will also be selling and signing copies of "The Woolly West" and his other publications, including "Sacred Object and Sacred Places" and "Bears Ears: Landscape of Refuge and Resistance."

For more information or to stay up to date on this and other events, visit www.riograndecountymuseum.org or follow their Facebook page under Rio Grande County Museum and Cultural Center.



Andrew Gulliford

Grief Support Group starts Feb. 23

STAFF REPORT

ALAMOSA — Nancy Torres, a nurse with 15 years of hospice experience, is going to be leading a Grief Support Group starting in February.

Torres is best known for her "Journaling for Grief Class," which she has offered during the spring and summer over the last few years for those who are struggling with grief. That class was offered free of charge as Torres felt "it was something that has been lacking in our community."

The Grief Support Group, also free

of charge, is being held to address a similar need and will be facilitated by Torres with assistance from the Grief Counselor at Hospice del Valle.

The group begins at 10:30 a.m. and lasts until noon.

"There is a separate topic for each class," Torres says, "however, I think people will get more out of the experience if they attend all sessions."

Groups will be held on the following dates focused on the following topics:

- Feb. 23 — Introductions, Where are you on your Journey?

- March 8 — Stages of Grief
 - March 22 — Feeling Your Grief and Expressing Your Feelings
 - April 12 — Adjustment/New Norm
 - April 26 — Support
 - May 10 — Understanding and Coping
- Torres can be reached at 575-779-8332.

"People are welcome to reach out to me," she says, "as I'm trying to keep the group to an intimate size."

The group will be held at the Living Water Bible Fellowship, located at 2910 Clark St., Alamosa.

LOVE Continued from Page 1A

moved to Colorado with a man who convinced Carlson that she was a mystic who possessed many different powers. Carlson became the leader of an online cult and was given the name "Mother God."

On her website, Carlson along with roommates who believed in her, and her powers, created many videos that were livestreamed to others, stating that they could heal cancer by drinking colloidal silver. The cult also sold many healing products online to support themselves.

Carlson's following grew and she convinced others that she was the reincarnation of many famous people and held a spiritual connection to the late actor Robin Williams.

Carlson died of alcohol abuse, chronic ingestion of colloidal silver and anorexia, at age 45. Her body was discovered in Crestone. She was found mummified and wrapped in a sleeping bag adorned with Christmas lights. Her eyes were also decorated with blue glitter.

Law enforcement determined when she was found she had been dead for several weeks. Members of the cult, believed like she believed, that after her death a starship with celebrities from the afterlife would pick up her body and carry her to a new place away from Earth.

There are various interviews in the series that show how members of her cult, believed her to be Jesus, and believed in her ways and everything that she said. She is pictured in the film as a vital healthy happy woman, but the film also shows her slow fade to death.

three-part series on Feb. 24 beginning at 5 p.m.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors is a non-profit whose mission is to bring the community together in supporting the well-being of households in crisis to stabilize their situations. The group has helped with many different things in the community including

food, utilities, medical bills, propane, firewood, rent and mortgages, funeral expenses, and medical travel. All money collected from the event at T-Road Brewing will go to Neighbors Helping Neighbors.

For more information, contact the T-road Brewing Company or Neighbors Helping Neighbors online.

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2024 District History Fair winners announced

By ADAMS STATE UNIVERSITY

ALAMOSA — Middle and high school students competed in the annual District History Fair, part of the National History Day Competition. The event was in the Adams State University Student Union Building Saturday, Jan. 27. Hosted by the Adams State history department, the event's theme, "Turning Points in History," included individual and group entries. According to Ed Crowther, Ph.D., Adams State emeritus professor of history and event organizer, 152 contestants from nine middle schools and four high schools competed in the event. Winners will proceed to the state contest, hosted by the University of Colorado, Denver, on April 27.

The following students received award certificates:

Senior Division

Senior Papers

First place: Durea Naranjo, Sargent High School; second place: Makayla Brown, Sargent High School.

Senior Individual Website

First place: Madeline Mitchell, Sargent High School; second place:

Celeste Chacon, Monte Vista High School.

Senior Group Website

First place: Jesus Aguilar and Tyler Alley, Monte Vista High School.

Senior Individual Exhibit

First place: Emma Sewell, Sargent High School; second place: Jessica Buser, Sargent High School; third place: Joshua Ortiz, Centauri High School.

Senior Group Exhibit

First place: Sylvia Daugherty and Lyza Davis, Sargent High School.

Senior Individual Documentary

First place: Josiah Yocom, Sargent High School; second place: Tanner Houser, Sargent High School.

Senior Group Documentary

First place: Amelia Ford, Kaitlynn Roberts, and Reagan Curtis, Sargent High School.

Junior Division

Junior Papers

First place: Liam Griffin, Sargent High School; second place: William Keefner, Centauri

Middle School; third place: Jayla Cary, Centauri Middle School.

Junior Individual Website

First place: Emmalynn Ortega, Ortega Middle School; second place: Julia Marques, Centauri Middle School; third place: Lucy Brittain, Creede Junior High School.

Junior Group Website

First place: Bristol Pence and Anaya Baroz, Centauri Middle School; second place: Riordan Harvey and Junior Johnson, Sanford Junior High School; third place: Jalieyah Dunn and Aubrey Sowards, Centauri Middle School.

Junior Individual Exhibit

First place: Addison Gilbert, Sargent High School; second place: Isabella Mortensen, Ortega Middle School; third place: Tyshiana Frank, Sargent Junior High School.

Junior Group Exhibit

First place: Jaelie Jaminet, Kamry Crowther, and Luz Chavez-Vargas, Sanford Junior High School; second place: Camry Casias, Raven Medina, McKinley Miller, Sanford Junior High School; third place: Shelby Adelman, Levi Evas, Creede Junior High School.

Junior Individual Performance

First place: Jonathan Olsen, Ortega Middle School.

Junior Group Performance



Photo by Jenna Sinclair

The annual District History Fair, hosted by the Adams State history program, included individual and group exhibits.

First place: Lilly Bagwell and Siena Taylor, Centauri Middle school

Junior Individual Documentary

First place: Heidi Heersink, Ortega Middle School; second place: Parker Mitchell, Sargent Junior High School; third place: Wesley Neilsen, Ortega Middle School.

Junior Group Documentary

First place: MiAna Flores and Madelyn Jackson, Centauri Middle school; second place: Hayden Fobert and Kortney Johnson Centauri Middle School; third place: Benjamin Voutsalath and Judah Stephens, Sargent Junior High School.

Happy February

By HIGH VALLEY

COMMUNITY CENTER

DEL NORTE — We'll be celebrating this month with kindness toward each other and teaching our kiddos to treat each other with respect. They love to play together and make new friends, but sometimes it can be hard for them to be nice when they're having big emotions! Our goal is to help them learn to regulate their emotions and to work through conflicts in a friendly manner.

This last week was loads of fun!

We had a series of Lego Challenges, which taught the kids to use their critical thinking skills and engage in a little bit of healthy competition. They also got to become architects and build their own graham cracker houses!

We took a field trip to the bowling alley on Friday, which was so much fun! The kids loved getting some energy out and learning new strategies to knock all the pins down. After their game was over at the bowling alley, they headed over to the gym to play

some more!

Our boys' basketball teams have had a great season! Hotshots have also had a blast learning all the basketball skills and getting to participate in their first sport.

We are nearing our spring soccer season, so make sure to register for the team at thehvc.org! The last day to register is Feb. 21. Don't miss out on a season of fun!

As always, feel free to stop by HVCC to say hi and learn more about who we are.

We'll see you soon!

HASKIN

Continued from Page 1A

solar systems, and some students just wore black, so they were night or space. It was a lot of fun the kids just had a blast with it," Stillwagon said.

Stillwagon explained the curriculum was taught for a full quarter. Stillwagon said that usually learning like this concludes at a quarter, so it would have ended by the Christmas break, but it was extended so the children could have a Space Day in the new year.

Stillwagon stated that each week the kids would learn more facts about the sun, the moon, the stars, and other topics that pertained to space each week, such as astronauts.

"Then each week the kids would create their own little stories using all the facts that they learned about all these different things. We tied that into our writing curriculum. The kids really did a great job with it, too," Stillwagon said.

Stillwagon explained they learned about the patterns that the sun and moon make in the sky. They learned about the ways in which the sun and moon moved.

"We also learned how to tell the beginning, middle, and the end of a story. We compared all of this to that, so that the kids can see the sunrise, the midday, and the sunset, as the beginning and middle and end of a story," Stillwagon said.

Stillwagon said the kids were excited for Space Day and added that some of the kids said it was the best day ever.

"We were so excited to bring this

to life for the kids and make this a memorable learning experience for the kids. We dressed up like astronauts too and it really helped bring learning to life for the kids.

OBITUARY

Gail O'Connor

Gail O'Connor passed away Jan. 20, 2024, in Cañon City, Colo., with her son by her side. Primarily of Irish descent, Gail was born Aug. 29, 1936, in San Diego, Calif., and fondly remembered summers with her beloved cousins and Grandmother Brown at Blue Eyes Mine in California's Gold Country.

Gail met her future husband Greg Minor in high school in Auburn, Calif., and they later relocated to the Bay Area and raised three children: Mark, Lisa, and Tani. Beginning in 1976, Gail and Greg traveled to nearly every continent together, supporting anti-nuclear causes, while forming lifelong friendships through social justice pursuits and environmental activism.

Gail found her vocational calling in the healing arts as a Reiki, acupressure, and Zero Balancing practitioner. Gail brought a special spiritual presence to her healings that were transformative to many. She sought spiritual guidance and self-healing through respite into the wilderness, striving to learn as much about the natural and spiritual worlds as she could in this lifetime. One of her fondest memories was rafting the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon. She felt at peace amongst the mountains, even climbing Mt. Wilson at the age of 61. She flourished until her mid-eighties in her beloved log cabin amongst the Continental Divide at 9,000 feet until she could no longer. Gail possessed a will of steel that belonged in the wilds of the American West.

Her lifelong journey and adventuring toward "home" found her through a trip with friends to the Colorado Rocky Mountains. She knew the day she arrived in Creede that it would be her forever home. Becoming a patron, volunteer and supporter of Creede Repertory Theatre, she proudly and elegantly displayed an extensive collection of vintage clothing and



finery annually for many years to raise money for CRT. She was a proud member of the Ladies Aid Society and was known for her fine sewing, quilting and knitting skills, which she donated to many causes and persons throughout her life. Gail championed many local artists/friends through building her art collection and hosting many events in her dining room with delicious, indulgent meals, good conversation, and her particularly mouth-watering European-inspired baked goods (often with a rousing song in the background) and her furry companion at her feet. One of her proudest titles was the "Mountain Lion Lady" born from a fateful meeting with a big cat one winter's night traveling home from an evening out with friends.

Gail was transformative and created the world she wanted to live in: a woman who could conjure the most romantic, erudite spaces and then wake up and stack wood. She was in a category all her own. She celebrated the uniqueness of each person. Gail loved people without exception. She embraced being a student of life while simultaneously possessing a wisdom fit for a family matriarch.

Our family is forever grateful for those souls enveloping Gail in



their love and treating her like their Creede family. Gail's memory will live on through these loved ones and the many living relatives of her three children: Mark Minor of Howard, Colo., Lisa Buckey of Capitola, Calif., and Tani Scheiner of Santa Rosa, Calif. Her beloved grandchildren will also carry her legacy: Jessica Buckley of Santa Cruz, Calif., Alyssa Machado (Sean) of Boulder Creek, Calif., along with two beloved great-grandchildren Alaina and Emmett, Evan Kolar of Corralitos, Calif., Sam Scheiner of Santa Rosa, Calif., Jake Scheiner (Amanda) of Pearland, Texas, Sophie (Alex) Baldry of Knutsford, UK, Seth Minor of San Diego, Calif., and Nathaniel Minor of Durango, Colo. She is survived by her sisters-in-law Sue Bird of Oregon and Michelle Minor of Vancouver, Canada.

A memorial/celebration of her life will be held in Creede sometime this summer.

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Getting Along When Differences Get in the Way

You've probably noticed that every person is not the same. Each of us has a unique personality with various likes and dislikes. And while we are often drawn to people who are different than we are, it's these differences that can lead to strife in our relationships.

Sometimes we try to convince others to be more like us, but that's not what the Bible teaches us to do. We're all created for freedom and liberty, and if we want to have healthy relationships with people, we need to give them the freedom to be who they are.

I can't tell you how many years I tried to get my husband, Dave, to stop watching sports. But it seemed the more I tried, the worse it got. One Saturday afternoon, I walked into the family room to find him shining his golf clubs while he watched one game on TV and listened to another game using his headphones. I thought, Joyce, your plan is just not working!

The truth is I wanted Dave to do what I wanted to do—I wanted him to be more like me. But trying to change him wasn't accomplishing anything, and it left me frustrated and upset.

I love what Romans 12:16 (AMPC) says: "Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty (snobbish, high-minded, exclusive), but readily adjust yourself to [people, things]...."

It's impossible to be selfish and have healthy relationships. If we truly want to live in peace and harmony, it's going to require some give and take. At times, we'll have to adjust our lives to accommodate someone else's needs or desires.

Sometimes this simply means being patient and understanding with those who don't share your own strengths. For instance, have you ever noticed yourself getting irritated with someone who takes more time to make decisions than you do? Or maybe they don't catch on to things as quickly as you would like.

If we allow ourselves to get into prideful thinking, we can hurt people by acting out of our own self-importance and selfish interests. The Lord doesn't want us to have a lowly opinion of ourselves, but He certainly doesn't want us to think we're better than anyone else!

First Corinthians Chapter 12 provides the perfect illustration. It says we are all part of one body, each with our own distinct and important role to play. Verse 25 (NIV) tells us "there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each another."

We all need each other, and when we learn to recognize and appreciate each other's talents and abilities, it develops a respect that can strengthen and heal our relationships.

Let's make this practical. When I'm having a hard time accepting someone's differences or agreeing with others, there are a few things I try to do to maintain the right attitude...

When you need to confront someone about a problem or discuss a negative issue, choose your timing wisely. Pray about what to say and ask God to lead you in each conversation.

Be respectful, even if the other person doesn't agree with your opinion.

Listen with an open mind. Be willing to pray about what they say.

Look for things to agree about, instead of focusing on your differences.

Use positive body language and voice tones, and choose every word with care.

There will be times when you won't find a thing to agree on, and in those circumstances, the best thing you can do is trust God, let it go, and become



an expert at forgiveness.

Yes, some things are very important and you need to stand your ground, but there are so many things in life that just don't make a difference.

The bottom line is you won't always agree with your spouse, family, or friends, but you can still respect and appreciate them. I don't agree with Dave about all his opinions or 100 percent of everything he does, but I do agree with Dave. He's a good man, and I love him and value his character and principles. Over the years, we've learned how to "disagree agreeably."

I encourage you to trust God with the people in your life. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you see the positive in your relationships and the things you have in common. And as you do your part to "keep the peace," God will not only honor your commitment, He will also bless your life in greater ways than you can imagine.

For more on this topic, order Joyce's four-part teaching resource *Enjoying Successful Relationships*. 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.

Mayor Coleman to give keynote speeches in celebration of Black History Month

CONTRIBUTED

ALAMOSA — City of Alamosa Mayor Ty Coleman will be the keynote speaker at Adams State University in Alamosa as part of Black History Month celebration.

Black History Month was created to focus attention on the contributions of African Americans to the United States. It honors all Black people from all periods of U.S. history, from the enslaved people first brought over from Africa in the early 17th century to African Americans living in the United States today. Carter G. Woodson was a scholar whose dedication to celebrating the historic contributions of Black people led to the establishment of Black History Month, marked every February. Since 1976, every U.S. president has officially designated the month of February as Black History Month. Other countries around the world, including Canada and the United Kingdom, also devote a month to celebrating Black history.

Mayor Coleman has dedicated his work to supporting the business community, promoting housing development, facilitating financial literacy programs, advocating for early childhood educational opportunities, and working with non-profit organizations, government agencies, and schools throughout Colorado.

Coleman serves his community in many roles. He is the Chief Operating Officer of the San Luis Valley for Community Resources and Housing Development Corporation which focuses on providing quality, safe, affordable, and attainable housing opportunities for people in rural communities throughout Colorado. He also serves on different financial boards that provide access to capital to rural small businesses and minority owned businesses.

He volunteers his time for several community causes such as the Center for Restorative Programs, The Early Childhood Council, Kiwanis Club, Save the Children Action Network, SLV Theatre Company, 12th Judicial Commission on Judicial Performance, Alamosa Recreation Board, SLV Boys and Girls Club, and Alamosa Youth Football.

He is a published author of a motivational and inspirational book "Jump-Start How To Recharge Your Life." This powerful inspirational book chronicles his business and personal experiences and provides helpful keys to living a successful and balanced life.

He has traveled all over America and has given over 400 keynote



Ty Coleman
Alamosa Mayor

empowerment seminars and workshops to business groups, banks, faith-based organizations, government agencies, colleges, nonprofit organizations, high schools, and municipalities. He is often asked to sit on an array of business discussion panels and he is a frequent guest on radio talk shows.

Mayor Coleman's mission in life is to "reach one and teach one daily by his actions!"

"I am excited to speak with the students, faculty, and staff about the importance being part of the positive change they would like to see in this world," Coleman stated.

Coleman is appearing at Adams State University on Feb. 22 at 6 p.m. in McDaniel Hall room 101.

Ag Conference underway in Monte Vista



Photos by Brian Williams

Nearly 100 vendors, including the Monte Vista Coop, were set up inside the Outcalt Event and Conference at SLV Ski-Hi Complex in Monte Vista on Tuesday, Feb. 6, for the Southern Rocky Mountain Agriculture Conference and Trade Show. The conference was Feb. 6-8.

Left: 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.



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.

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NOTICE OF ELECTION RIO GRANDE COUNTY

TUESDAY, March 5, 2024

TO THE ELECTORS OF RIO GRANDE COUNTY

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a Presidential Primary Election will be held by Mail Ballot on Tuesday, the 5th of March, 2024 between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. If you are a registered voter, you will receive a ballot at your mailing address beginning February 12th. Mail Ballots may be dropped off at the Rio Grande County Clerk's Office, 965 Sixth Street, Del Norte, Colorado, Monday through Thursday from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Ballots may also be dropped off at the Voter Service Polling Center (VSPC) in the Rio Grande County Annex Building, at 965 Sixth Street, Del Norte, Colorado, Monday through Friday beginning Feb. 26th through March 4th, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Saturday, March 2nd from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on Election Day, November 7th. A 24-Hour Drop Box is available on the west side of the building at 965 Sixth Street, Del Norte. Ballots can also be mailed using the envelope enclosed with the ballot. Ballots must be received at the County Clerk's Office by 7:00 P.M. on March 5th. The Postmark does not count as being received.

Your ballot will contain only the Races or Issues on which you are eligible to vote. IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and seal of the office of the County Clerk and Recorder this 29th day of January, 2024.

Cindy Hill
Rio Grande County Clerk and Recorder

Cindy Hill
Rio Grande County Clerk and Recorder

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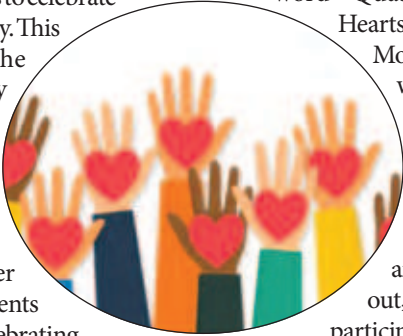
Supplement to The Monte Vista Journal, Center Post-Dispatch, The Conejos County Citizen, The Mineral County Miner, The South Fork Times, and The Del Norte Prospector.

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Creede Ladies Aid to celebrate 125th anniversary

By LYNDIE FERRELL

CREEDE — It is an exciting year for the Creede community as Creede Ladies Aid prepares to celebrate its 125th anniversary. This organization is the oldest community organization in Creede's history and in honor of that the group is planning to celebrate all summer with a variety of events geared toward celebrating the community they love to serve.



For the past 125 years, Ladies Aid has helped the Creede community in so many ways and while looking back through the years, only one word comes to mind, blessed. "This is really exciting for us, and it makes me very proud to be a part of this organization. When you look at the bigger picture and look back through the years and all the good things the Ladies Aid has done for Creede and the support of the community for us, it's just amazing," said Ladies Aid Member Janet Harrison.

As their Quasiquicentennial year gets started, the committee planning events is looking for recipes, photos, historical anecdotes, or any other historical

information about the organization from anyone willing to share. The theme for the year beyond the whimsical word "Quasiquicentennial" is Hearts and Hands Moving Mountains. This theme will be present in everything the organization plans to do for the coming summer.

Though details are still being worked out, the group plans to participate in the Fourth of July Parade, to host a community celebration and to hold their annual Ladies Aid Rummage sale for two days in July. As the summer gets closer, more details about their events will be announced.

Through the years that Ladies Aid has served Creede they have done everything from providing the first safety net for Creede residents including supporting other local organizations like the Mineral County Search and Rescue, the Creede Repertory Theatre, Creede Early Learning Center, the local veterinary clinic, the Care and Share Program and more.

Not only do they support other
Please see 125TH on Page 2

'Fire in Ice' draws huge crowd



An estimated 500 people attended the 'Fire in Ice' bonfire in downtown Alamosa on Saturday night as one of the featured events of the 14th annual Rio Frio Ice Festival. Other highlights of the weekend included the Rio Frio 5k on the frozen river which drew a new record of over 300 participants, and the polar plunge at Blanca Vista Park just north of town. More than 50 took advantage of the ice bath.

Adams State University President David Tandberg went sky-high into a cannon ball pose to splash down in the polar plunge at Blanca Vista Park just north of Alamosa as part of the 14th annual Rio Frio Ice Festival on Sunday.

Courier photo by Keith R. Cerny

DJ Salazar announces Veterans Coffee Connection at Tri-County Senior Center

By MARIE MCCOLM

MONTE VISTA — Director of Activities for Tri-County Senior Center DJ Salazar recently announced Veterans Coffee Connection will be from 8 to 10:30 a.m. on Wednesdays at the Tri-County Senior Center. The event is being organized by SSG Fox SPGP, and Valley Veterans ReCreation.

Veterans all over the San Luis Valley are invited to attend and come and enjoy a cup of coffee and socialize with fellow Veterans. Tri-County Senior Center is at 311 Washington St., Monte Vista.

The first Veterans Coffee Connection was held on Wednesday, Jan. 24, at the center and Salazar said that it went well.

"We had about four Veterans come down. It was a success. Out of those, we had two of them lined up with Craig Rauwolf, to help line them up with some Veteran's benefits. Also, to hopefully get them in with another organization to help them with some things they need," he said.

Salazar said that the main premise of the Coffee Connections was for the Veterans to get Veterans more resources in Monte Vista.

"We want to connect veterans with help they may need, as well as help them socialize together, with other Veterans," he said.

Salazar is also the director and founder of Valley Veterans ReCreation. He has been the director and founder for 3 years now.

"I came up with the idea for this when I was working out at the Veterans at Homelake Living Community Center. I heard from a Veteran that they are always looking for more resources. We wanted to get Veterans outside for more exercise. We started Valley Veterans ReCreation to help get Veterans more resources, and to help Veterans get outside more and utilize outdoors as a resource. In the wintertime, we want this too, from finding activities like ice fishing, to snowboarding, to cross country and snow shoeing. We want to

Please see COFFEE on Page 2



Courtesy photo

Veterans Coffee Connection is being held Wednesday mornings at the Tri-County Senior Center in Monte Vista.

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Larry Holder Exercise and Cancer Survivorship program still seeking participants

By ADAMS STATE UNIVERSITY

ALAMOSA — The Larry Holder Exercise and Cancer Survivorship program is accepting participants through Friday, Feb. 9, for the spring session.

All cancer survivors ages 18 years or older are welcome regardless of gender, type, or stage of cancer. There is no cost to the participant but completing the entire 12 weeks of the study is crucial to ensure accurate research data is obtained.

The study consists of one week of pre-testing by appointment, followed by 10 weeks of exercise programming, with post-testing starting the week of April 8.

This unique program offers cancer survivors in the San Luis Valley the opportunity to participate in an individualized exercise program conducted in a group setting which meets three times per week. Now in its fifth year, this program continues to offer a place where participants can work toward their personal fitness goals in a non-judgmental setting while enjoying a support network of fellow cancer survivors. The program also gives Adams State undergraduate and graduate kinesiology students experience in fitness testing and guiding and supporting program participants throughout the exercise program.

For more information, or to register

for the program, please contact the Adams State Kinesiology Department program coordinator Nico Alvarez at 720-272-4635, alvarezna@adams.edu, or Peggy Johnson at pvjohnson@adams.edu.

Participants stretch as part of cool-down activities at the end of class during the Larry Holder Exercise and Cancer Survivorship program. The Adams State Department of Kinesiology is seeking volunteers to participate in this ongoing program again this spring.

Courtesy photo



CPAC electing board members at ag conference

MONTE VISTA — The Colorado Potato Administrative Committee will be electing new board and alternates members to serve on the CPAC Committee from June 1, 2024-May 31, 2026, at the Southern Rocky Mountain Ag Conference on Feb. 6-8.

If you are interested in a board member or alternate position, let CPAC know prior to the conference to

ensure your nomination is on the ballot. CPAC is accepting nominations for representation in the following categories — Rio Grande County, Saguache/Chaffee County, Costilla/Conejos and all other counties, Alamosa County, Bulk Shipper and Independent Handlers.

Contact CPAC by calling 719-852-3322 at the CPAC office, for more information or to express interest.

COFFEE

get every activity possible and make it available to Veterans. If you think about how Veterans have always given to us, we definitely want to give back to them. We are a 501C3, not-for-profit organization. We just want to give back and help our Veterans. We recently also had an ice fishing tournament for the Veterans. The Coffee Connection is just all a part of it. We hope to connect Veterans with each other as well as with other resources that can help them too. That is our main goal," he said.

Salazar said that at the Coffee Connection they provide coffee and donuts for the Veterans and SSP Fox SPGP is also helping with a grant so that they can continue the Coffee Connection every Wednesday.

SSG Fox SPGP honors Veteran Parker Gordon Fox, who joined the Army in 2014 and was a sniper instructor at the U.S. Army Infantry School at Ft. Benning, Ga. Known for a life of generosity and kindness to others in need, SSG Fox died by suicide on July 21, 2020, at the age of 25.

"Valley Veterans donated as well. We will also be having SLV GO! come up with the Coffee Connection. We have an MOU with SLV GO! as well, to help get more Veterans outside too," Salazar said.

125TH

Continued from Page 1

local organizations, but the group also provides medical help and other financial assistance, grocery vouchers for fresh food for families in need, bereavement dinners for mourning families, make and sell migrant worker and foster child bags and so much more.

"We are just so proud of the work we do and the community we serve. It is our greatest blessing, and we want to make sure and thank the many women who are here during the summer, our generous and outstanding men who come out every year to help and to the Creede community for all of the support. This will be a great year, so get excited!" said Harrison.

Send recipes, photos, or other historical information to Creede Ladies Aid at PO Box 174, Creede, Colo.

Continued from Page 1

Salazar explained that Valley Veterans ReCreation also hosts other coffee connections in other towns for Veterans.

"We have Staff Sgt. Fox who helps with the Coffee and Wi-Fi Café on Tuesdays in San Luis. The muesum in Alamosa also holds a Coffee Connection on Thursdays. This side of the Valley really didn't have it so once I came here to Tri-County a couple of weeks ago as the activities director, we worked things out, and now we have this one on this side. I believe Monte Vista has the second-largest population of Veterans in the Valley so we would love them all come down and socialize on Wednesdays here."

For more information, contact Salazar at the Tri-County Senior Center at 719-852-5778.

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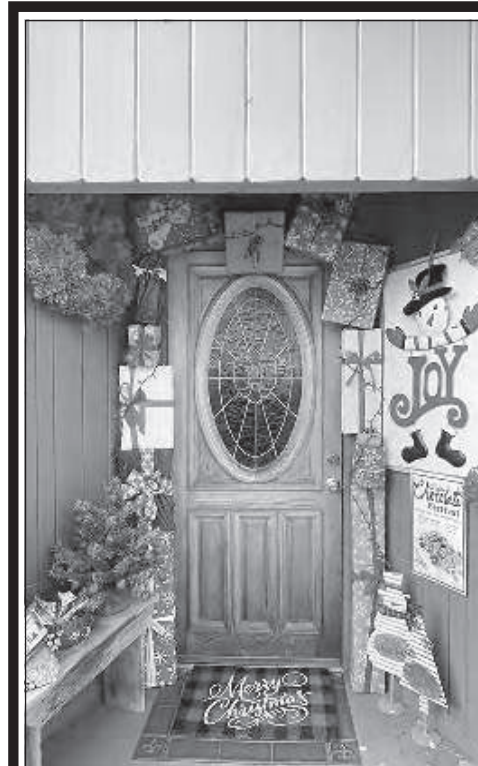
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07 Help Wanted

Position of Visitor Center Director: The Town of South Fork is seeking to fill the position of Visitor Center Director. The Director will welcome visitors on behalf of the Town of South Fork, with the objective of providing information and recommendations on activities, retail shopping, restaurants and accommodations, given specific visitor preferences. Information available at the Visitor Center – through displays, maps, handouts, retail items, business attraction racks and conversations with the VC Director will enhance visitor overall experience and

trigger future planning, thereby fulfilling South Fork as the Base Camp to Adventure destination of preference. The Visitor Center Director will manage visitor center operational and facility needs, town-sponsored events and marketing activities, as well as provide guidance for other local events, business establishments, and outdoor recreational activities – including but not limited to fishing, camping, rafting, biking, bird-watching, snowshoeing, sledding, skiing, snowboarding, snowmobiling, etc. Experience with marketing and outdoor activities is preferred but not required. Candidates will undergo a background investigation and drug screening. The pay ranges between \$19.00 - \$20.00 an hour. The Town of South Fork offers an attractive benefits package. The application and position information is available at www.colorado.gov/southforkcolorado. Questions should be directed via email to townadministrator@southfork.org. The Town will accept applications until February 15th, 2024,

at 4:00 p.m. The Town of South Fork is an Equal Opportunity Employer. (2-7)

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	6			7				2
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Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

Solution to last week's puzzle

P	L	O	P			M	P	G			P	A	R
P	E	K	O	E		I	R	E			C	A	F
T	A	R	R	Y		M	O	N			R	C	A

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1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24

Words: _____ Times: _____ Price: _____

Class: _____ Start Date: _____

San Luis Valley Area Real Estate



Large stone home situated on a spacious lot. Recently installed insulation throughout the house ensures optimal energy efficiency, complemented by a wood stove (less than 5 years old) and modern electrical system. The house boasts brand new PEX SharkBite plumbing. Come check out this property.

Call Tate Huffaker today for more information.

\$167,000 | MLS# 807663
1822 Sickles St., Monte Vista, CO

TATE HUFFAKER
ASSOCIATE BROKER | REALTOR®
M: 719-298-6560
O: 719-873-1700

30635 W. US HWY 160, South Fork, Colorado



Beautiful 7.0 Acres provides for an easy build and is nice, flat multiple building location possibilities. Electricity to lot line, incredible mountain views, mature aspen trees, access to the community pavilion, stocked lake and warming cabin, camping is allowed prior to buildout and community trash service is provided.

Call Yvonne Hoffman today for more information.

\$161,900 | MLS# 808914
284 Lake Drive, South Fork, CO

YVONNE HOFFMAN
ASSOCIATE BROKER | REALTOR®
M: 719-580-1901
O: 719-873-1700

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

BRUCE STEFFENS
OWNER | BROKER | REALTOR®
M: 719-580-0770
O: 719-873-1700

30635 W. US HWY 160, South Fork, Colorado



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.

7 available lots
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
TBD County Road 100, Del Norte, CO

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30635 W. US HWY 160, South Fork, Colorado



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

BRUCE STEFFENS
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O: 719-873-1700

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
Pronghorn Ranch Development
Del Norte, Colorado

BRUCE STEFFENS
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O: 719-873-1700

30635 W. US HWY 160, South Fork, Colorado

STEFFENS & CO REALTY, INC.

O: 719-873-1700



30635 W. US HWY 160
South Fork, Colorado



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
57075 County Road C, Center, CO

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M: 719-580-0770
O: 719-873-1700

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

BRUCE STEFFENS
OWNER | BROKER | REALTOR®
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O: 719-873-1700

30635 W. US HWY 160, South Fork, Colorado

Homelake Veterans Center makes Valentines for Veterans request

CONTRIBUTED

MONTE VISTA — This year will be the 35th anniversary of the “Valentines for Vets” Program. It began in 1989 with Ann Landers suggesting that valentine cards be sent to Veterans in Veteran Medical Clinics nationwide.

On any given day, there are over 50,000 Veterans hospitalized or living in VA facilities. These men and women served in World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and the Persian Gulf Wars and in these

areas of Armed Hostilities; Lebanon, Grenada, Panama, Persian Gulf, Somalia, Afghanistan, Kuwait and Iraq.

The staff at the Colorado Veteran Community Living Center at Homelake would like to encourage people to send or drop off a letter, poster or card to its residents. If you are a teacher, this may lend itself to a class project. Posters, handmade cards or personalized notes would be most welcomed and treasured.

“For our residents, being

remembered and appreciated for their part in serving and protecting their country, would truly be a wonderful Valentine gift. Due to the privacy act regulations, specific resident names cannot be provided by our facility but a general card would be very welcome,” Homelake officials stated.

For more information, call Pam Self or Melanie Squire at 719-852-5118. The mailing address for Homelake is — CVCLC Homelake, PO Box 97, Homelake, CO 81135.



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Storytime is Tuesdays at the Saguache Public Library

By MARIE MCCOLM

SAGUACHE — The Northern Saguache County Library will be hosting Storytime on Tuesdays from 10 to 11 a.m. The public is invited to attend this event. Different books will be read every week.

On Feb. 6, Lisa Anne will be reading “One Special Day,” by M. Christine Butler.

The book is illustrated with colorful pictures that are set in the woods. The book tells the story of a little hedgehog who babysits his

cousin, with help from some forest friends. His baby cousin’s blanket gets lost and provides the group with lots of fun adventures trying to get the favorite blanket back to the baby hedgehog.

Storytime would be a great time for parents to bring their young ones in to hear this sweet story. The Northern Saguache County Library District is a combination of two libraries that cover multiple areas, including Moffat, Saguache, and Crestone. The Saguache Public

Library and the Baca Grande Library are two wonderful learning centers that help keep the community engaged in paper resources and education.

Both libraries also host local artists and provide many opportunities for learning and education by teaching classes and hosting regular educational events. For more information on both libraries, visit the Saguache Public Library at 712 Pitkin Ave. in Saguache, or call 719-655-2551.

San Luis Valley Area Real Estate

5299 County Road 12 S. Alamosa
160-acre circle planted in Alfalfa. Two shares of Commonwealth Ditch and use of Carmel Drain. Zimmatic Pivot, three stock wells. Waverly area. MLS#810432 \$400,000



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28 acres on the Rio Grande River in South Fork.
Approx 1/2 mile of prime fishing - own to the middle of the river. \$1,500,000. MLS#807305




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61 Red Tail Court
- 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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Rito Hondo Estates - 18 Rural Mountain Lots Available
West of Antonito in the Conejos Canyon OWNER FINANCING AVAILABLE \$950,000 home on 35 acres located on lot #2 \$85,000 (6 acre lots) \$200,000 (17.5 acre lots) \$400,000 (35 acre lots) \$950,000 (35 acres with home)



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7541 Indian Creek Road Ft. Garland
Off Grid Cabin on 5 acres ON THE CREEK \$279,000. Virtual tour and Drone video available. MLS#809447



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Steffens & Company Realty
719-873-5605
30635 US HWY 160 South Fork
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Dee - formerly known as Diane Chapman - Local Luxury Home Broker. Licensed in 2011, Dee knows the area and knows local real estate.

All Dee's properties are detailed in her blog.




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Lots 11 & 12 in Riviere Estates
Two lots together in a quiet community. VRBO & Air B&B OK subject to town guidelines. All utilities are available at the lot line. MLS 808212




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23 Fairway Drive - OWNER FINANCING AVAILABLE
- this beautiful lot is a 1-minute walk from the Clubhouse on the Rio Grande Club and Resort in South Fork. Flat and easy to build, this lot has water, sewer, electricity, landline phone and high-speed internet at the lot line. MLS#794077. \$56,000



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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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CHFA names new Community Relationship Manager serving SLV

By COLORADO HOUSING AND FINANCE AUTHORITY

DENVER — Colorado Housing and Finance Authority (CHFA) welcomes Kaylee A. Romero as its newest Community Relationship Manager serving the San Luis Valley and surrounding region. In her role, Romero will support CHFA's mission to strengthen Colorado by investing in affordable housing and economic development.

Romero will advance CHFA's work in Alamosa, Chaffee, Conejos, Costilla, Hinsdale, Lake, Mineral, Rio Grande, and Saguache counties. During CHFA's 50-year history serving Colorado, the total invested in these nine counties exceeds \$187 million, including \$112 million in mortgages and down payment assistance to support affordable homeownership, \$19.7 million to support the development and preservation of affordable rental housing, \$55.7 million to help small- and medium-sized

businesses access capital, and more than \$500,000 in grants, sponsorships, and donations.

An Alamosa resident born and raised in the San Luis Valley, Romero most recently served as the Project Director for the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) at Adams State University, where her work centered on supporting migrant seasonal farmworker youth and their families. She is also a proud double alumna of Adams State, having earned her bachelor's

and master's degrees from the university.

Romero currently sits on boards of directors for La Puente Enterprises, The Young Professional Association of the San Luis Valley, and The San Luis Valley Migrant Seasonal Agricultural Coalition. She is fluent in Spanish, and deeply committed to ongoing involvement in the community.

More information about CHFA's regional engagement work and Community Engagement Managers

is available at chfainfo.com/crm.

CHFA strengthens Colorado by investing in affordable housing and community development. Created in 1973, CHFA invests in affordable homeownership, the development and preservation of affordable rental housing, helps small- and medium-sized businesses access capital, offers technical assistance and financial support to strengthen local communities, and supports mission-aligned nonprofits through philanthropic investment.



Kaylee A. Romero

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Valerie Larsen Agency ribbon cutting is Feb. 15

MONTE VISTA — A ribbon cutting for the Valerie Larsen Agency will be at 2 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 15, at 126 Adams St., Monte Vista.

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35 years implant and oral surgery experience

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