



San Luis Valley Fair and Summer Agriculture
Inside this week's Center Post Dispatch!

'Orisons' artist creates a site of reverence

People need to register to view the earthwork

By MARIE MCCOLM

CENTER — People had the chance to see the new earthwork—Orisons—created by artist Marguerite Humeau on Friday and Saturday for no charge during an opening celebration.

Black Cube hosted the event that included shuttles to view the art, and informational sessions about the art and much more.

Orisons is an unprecedented large-scale earthwork located
Please see ORISONS on Page 7A



Courtesy photos

'Orisons' was created by Black Cube fellow Marguerite Humeau on 160 acres near Hooper. The work consists of the land in its entirety, as well as a series of 84 sculptural interventions that invoke the land's histories and vast network of interrelations.

Arts Walk and Hollyhock Festival draws crowds

By MARIE MCCOLM

SAGUACHE — The Arts Walk and Hollyhock Festival drew crowds of people to Saguache on Saturday, July 29. The events are organized by the Saguache Chamber of Commerce.

People were smiling as they walked up and down the streets, visited vendor booths, and purchased artwork.

Please see FESTIVAL on Page 2A

The Arts Walk and Hollyhock Festival drew crowds of people to Saguache on Saturday, July 29. The events are organized by the Saguache Chamber of Commerce.

Photos by Marie Mccolm



Shorts

Changes to Colorado's Move Over law take effect Aug. 7

CONTRIBUTED

Starting Monday, Aug. 7, Colorado is enhancing its Move Over law to provide greater protection for people and their vehicles on the side of the road. This change goes beyond just safeguarding police and emergency responders; it now requires drivers to also move over when passing disabled vehicles on the side of the road.

Earlier this year, Gov. Jared Polis signed into law HB23-1123, requiring drivers to move over a lane whenever they encounter any stationary vehicle on a highway with its hazards flashing — and if they cannot move over, they must slow down to at least 20 mph below the posted speed limit. The new protections come as 2022 marked the deadliest year on Colorado roads on record.

Gov. Polis has also proclaimed Monday, Aug. 7 as "Slow Down, Move Over Day" in the State of Colorado.

On July 31, the Colorado Department of Transportation, Colorado State Patrol, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and AAA held a press conference announcing the changes that take effect statewide on Monday, Aug. 7.

"With the updated Move Over Law, we are taking a significant stride toward our goal of zero deaths on Colorado roads," said Matthew C. Packard, chief of the Colorado State Patrol. "Slowing down for disabled vehicles shows respect for every road user, and together, we can create a safer

Please see MOVE on Page 2

Stampede rodeo action thrills crowds over three days

By MARIE MCCOLM

MONTE VISTA — Colorado's oldest pro rodeo, the Ski-Hi Stampede, put on a show celebrating 101 years in Monte Vista on July 28-30.

On Sunday, July 30, the bleachers were packed with excited people cheering as the rodeo began with a bang. A prayer was said at the beginning of the rodeo and the National Anthem was sung.

First up in the arena were

Please see RODEO on Page 4A



Photos by Brian Williams

Blake Denton and Sommer Amos were the recipients of the scholarships from Adams State University Foundation and the Stampede Committee.



The Stampede Committee recognized David Cooper's 30 years of service to the committee with the presentation of a plaque.

Chief District Court Judge Gonzales steps down

Will remain on the bench in 12th Judicial District

By PRISCILLA WAGGONER

ALAMOSA — Chief District Court Judge Michael Gonzales will be stepping down from his position as Chief Judge of the 12th Judicial District but plans to remain on the district court bench and preside over a docket. Confirmation of Judge Gonzales' plans was received in an email to the Valley Courier on Monday morning following a request to the Supreme Court on Friday evening, July 21.

According to Robert McCallum, Public Information Officer with the Colorado Supreme Court, Chief Judge Gonzales informed Chief Justice Brian Boatright of his

plans "but will stay on in that capacity until the Chief Justice appoints another judge to take on that role."

Judge Gonzales' tenure on the bench in the 12th Judicial District began more than 15 years ago with his appointment to the Alamosa County Court in 2007. Four years later, in 2011, he was appointed by former Governor John Hickenlooper to be district judge.

Colorado Supreme Court Chief Justice Nathan B. Coats appointed Gonzales to serve as Chief Judge of the 12th Judicial District in October of 2019 when the former Chief Judge Pattie P. Swift retired. Judge Gonzales assumed the role on Jan. 15, 2020.

Judge Gonzales is currently presiding over some of the major cases in the 12th Judicial

Please see JUDGE on Page 2A



Photo by John Waters

As part of his duties, Chief District Court Judge Michael Gonzales swore in District Attorney Anne Kelly after her appointment by Governor Jared Polis.

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Member FDIC

Continental Bridge repair to begin this week

Access to the immediate area will be fully restricted during construction

CONTRIBUTED

DEL NORTE — The Divide Ranger District announced Monday, July 31, the start of long-awaited repairs to the bridge on

Forest Road 513.1A, just below the dam. To provide for public safety during the repair, access to the bridge was closed on July 31 to all uses including foot, horse, bicycle, motorcycle, ATV/UTV, and full-sized motor vehicles.

Additionally, the Santa Maria and Continental Reservoir Company will be assisting this work by reducing stream flows in North Clear Creek on an as need basis.

Fisheries biologists stated that the planned water flow reduction will not negatively affect the fish populations in the stream.

“We are excited to begin the repair work on this bridge and look forward to opening full-sized vehicle access to this popular fishing area soon,” said Kristen Schmidt, acting ranger for the Divide District. The district is

asking the public to be patient and avoid the area during the construction activity to ensure everyone’s safety. “We’ll have it back open as soon as we can make the necessary repairs and the bridge meets the required standards.”

Access to the bridge was restricted after a 2021 bridge inspection. The bridge has been closed to motorized traffic over 60-inches wide since

June 28, 2022. Specialized heavy equipment had to be ordered for this project which will be conducted by the Forest’s Road crew. Access to the reservoir from this location will remain fully closed during the repair which will take up to approximately four weeks.

For information on the Rio Grande National Forest, call 719-850-2374.

FESTIVAL

Continued from Page 1A

Many artists set up and in attendance.

Chelsea Langly had a booth and was displaying and selling her homemade jewelry. Langly said that many people had visited her booth. She said it was nice that she could have a booth at the vendor show as an artist and did not have to pay a fee. Langly said her favorite part was walking around looking at the other artists’ designs and enjoying the summer day.

Patricia and Dave Boyle, artists from Gunnison, said that they had rocks, including earth rocks, and healing stones and rocks, that they had mined themselves that they were selling, along with others that they purchased from all over the world. They said that they enjoyed the Hollyhock festival immensely.

Macey and Dustin Sigaty of Monte Vista said that they were excited to view the art and to take in the different sights of Saguache.

“This is a great festival to view all things art,” stated Macey, who is a photographer and artist alongside her husband who is also an artist.

Saguache resident Greg and Carol McCoy said that they enjoy attending the festival every year.

“You honestly never know what you are going to see or purchase at the festival,” Carol said. “Last year a woman came with glazed frogs on glazed trees; they were baked and glazed and looked so inviting for my garden at home. This year, I purchased a giant ladybug that hangs from the front of my roof. Artists are so talented and so colorful. We love this festival.”

Byron Williams, a former artist and resident of Saguache, started the first Arts Walk over 10 years ago. Williams was known for his creativity and love of the hollyhock flowers. It was William’s idea to highlight artists and celebrate their artwork.

Hollyhock is the town’s flower, and the festival pays tribute to that. Williams was instrumental in collaborating with the Hollyhock Festival around the same time as the Arts Walk.

For more information on the Saguache Chamber of Commerce, visit online saguachechamber.org.

JUDGE

Continued from Page 1A

District, including the case involving Adre Baroz and co-defendants Julius Baroz and Francisco Ramirez which has been in proceedings for close to three years.

McCallum closed his email to the Valley Courier by saying, “(Judge Gonzales) is simply stepping down from the Chief Judge role, as happens from time to time.”

With District Judge Gonzales having only served in his top position for three-and-a-half years, the Valley Courier sent an email asking what prompted him to make a decision to step down. Below is a copy of his resignation letter, submitted on July 14.

Chief Justice Boatright and the Mighty Twelfth:

I was appointed Chief Judge on January 15, 2020; the past three and a half years have been the most difficult and yet the most rewarding years of my professional career. In those short years, I experienced leadership during a global pandemic, a statewide budget crisis, the Recall of our elected District Attorney, and then when

things seemed to be improving, the courts experienced an unfortunate circumstance that led to a crisis of trust and leadership. I am tired and, in many respects, embarrassed at the failures I have had while serving as the leader of this district. While I am confident that we are in a far better state today than we were a year ago, I believe it is time for a change in direction and leadership in the 12th.

I am very proud of the work and dedication of the judges and staff of the 12th Judicial District.

Working beside them over the years has filled me with great joy and pleasure and I truly feel that we are a family. As leader of that family, I must demand the very best for my family. We have made great strides in the past year to form a strong and caring organization and to address past issues of concern. As proud and honored as I am to be Chief to the “Mighty 12th”, I believe that a fresh perspective will serve to make this an even better place to work and make for an even stronger family. There are three very wonderful and dedicated District Court Judges and any one of them would make an

incredible Chief Judge.

Thank you for the honor that you have given me for the past three and a half years to serve as Chief of the 12th. I will always cherish my time as Chief and hopefully now I can rest easier transitioning into a role of “administrative ignorance”! It has been an honor to serve alongside you and the other Chief Judges on the Chief Judge Council; we have some wonderful and dedicated leaders in this state. I am happy to continue in this role until you have appointed a new Chief Judge and I will remain available to provide support for that new Chief Judge well into the future.

Finally, to my family here in the 12th. Thank you for always being your best. Thank you for always serving the public with dignity and respect. Thank you for your dedication and compassion and most importantly, thank you for your friendship and the patience that you have shown me as your Chief. I look forward to what the future holds for all of us!

*Sincerely,
Michael A. Gonzales
Chief Judge*

MOVE

Continued from Page 1A

driving environment for everyone.”

While all states have a Move Over law to protect emergency responders, Colorado joins nineteen other states that provide protections to all disabled vehicles. With this change, Colorado’s Move Over laws are now among the nation’s strongest.

The penalty for failing to move over or slow down for a disabled vehicle includes a Class 2 misdemeanor traffic offense, with a possible fine of \$150 and a 3-point license violation.

“People dealing with an issue on the side of the road are in a dangerous position, especially our first responders and others who regularly are near live traffic,” said Shoshana Lew, executive director of CDOT. “It is up to all of us, in every situation, to make the road as safe as possible when we see a vehicle pulled over on a shoulder. Move over and slow down for everyone, every time.”

So far this year seven CDOT safety patrol trucks have been hit by passing motorists resulting in one serious injury. In addition, four CDOT attenuators trucks have been hit in

Denver.

“Please think about the hundreds of law enforcement officers, fire, EMS, maintenance and tow operators when you’re driving down the road or highway,” said Gina Espinosa-Salcedo, the Region 8 regional administrator for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. “We need your cooperation and compliance. Please give space to emergency personnel, because it isn’t just a courtesy — it’s the Law.”

The roadside’s inherent dangers are why, according to research from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, motor vehicle towing is one of the country’s deadliest lines of work — with a death rate 15 times more than that of every other private industry combined. In 2022, across the country, 51 emergency responders who were working at the roadway were struck and killed, including 17 law enforcement officers, 18 tow truck operators, 4 mobile mechanics, and 11 firefighters and EMS personnel. Each year, nearly 350 people are struck and killed while outside a disabled vehicle,

according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

“As Coloradans, we look out for one another,” said Skyler McKinley, regional director of public affairs for AAA - The Auto Club Group. “This strengthened Slow Down, Move Over law takes that spirit to the roadside with a straightforward message: If you see any vehicle on the side of the road with its hazards on, slow down and move over. It’s always been the right thing to do, and now it’s the law, too.”

Despite the existence of a Move Over law in all states, the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety found that nearly a quarter of people (23%) are unaware of the law in the state where they live - even though 51% of Coloradans, for example, report having been stuck in a disabled vehicle on the side of the road. To help ensure widespread awareness of Colorado’s updated Move Over law, AAA, in partnership with CDOT and the Colorado State Patrol, has launched a campaign to educate drivers about these changes and their role in keeping our roads safe for everyone.

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OPINION & EDITORIAL



Alaska needs to value its live bears

Grizzly bears in Alaska, called brown bears, that live around the town of Bethel, population 6,325, should have a good life as they don't interact with many people. But their future is in peril.

Alaska's bears have powerful governmental enemies, starting with the state of Alaska. This spring, state wildlife agents in helicopters gunned down 94 brown bears, including cubs. Agents also killed five black bears and five wolves.

Why were these animals destroyed? It was an attempt to eliminate carnivores in a misguided effort to grow a small caribou herd for hunters. By Alaska's own admission, the aerial gunning went too far. An early assessment by a state biologist said fewer than 25 brown bears would be killed.

Fornow, in the lower 48 states grizzly bears are protected, though some Western governors and members of Congress support trophy-hunting seasons targeting bears.

In Alaska that's already legal, although a 2019 study co-authored by conservation biologist William Ripple, and others, found that in addition to state-sponsored shooting and trapping of brown bears, trophy hunters have doubled their kill numbers for bears over the past 30 years.

That is not sustainable. Alaska's population of some 32,000 iconic brown bears now face the same fate as their lower 48 cousins, which once numbered 50,000 but are reduced to 2,000 animals.

Alaska's predator-control projects cater to a small number of hunters who want to bring home trophy animals, or who wrongly believe that fewer carnivores like bears and wolves will create more prey animals.

Alaska's wildlife culls have been roundly criticized by many biologists as unnecessary. Numerous studies indicate that predator-prey relationships are always complicated by multiple factors. In this case, the caribou herd was plagued by brucellosis, a disease of ungulates, as well as inadequate food and poachers.

What is undeniable, say multiple biologists from North America — writing as part of a 2018 letter to the U.S. Department of the Interior — is that officials need to protect Alaska's bears and wolves from too much trophy hunting.

Shockingly, Alaska's bear-killing activities are funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, using Pittman-

Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act dollars, which is an excise tax on guns, ammunition and archery equipment. The Service also funds other controversial predator-control programs such as in Colorado and New Mexico.

What's puzzling is why hunting would come first when Alaska decides the fate of its brown bears. Why is bear-related tourism — a growth industry — ignored?

Americans love to watch bears. Because of their popularity, brown-bear viewing opportunities in Alaska's Katmai National Park had to be limited by lottery. What's more, over 10 million viewers tune into bear cams annually to virtually watch Katmai bears fish for salmon.

Tapping into this fervor, the National Park Service began an annual Fat Bear Week contest at the park, based on grizzlies gorging themselves to get ready for hibernation. In 2021, more than 800,000 voted for Otis, an aged, toothless fellow who lost out the next year to 747, a colossus nicknamed "Bear Force One" by the Park Service.

Thousands of tourists travel to Alaska every year just to catch a

glimpse of Alaska's brown bears in the wild, a pilgrimage that pours dollars into the state. A 2011 survey valued wildlife-watching tourism in Alaska at more than a billion dollars and this number has almost certainly grown as appreciation for wildlife has expanded in the United States. A 2018 American Wildlife Values national survey showed that more Americans than ever before appreciate their wildlife alive.

The question almost asks itself: What sense does it make for Alaska to kill bears? The answer is none. Federal funding for state wildlife agencies to kill carnivores makes no sense.

The Fish and Wildlife Service needs to adopt the widely supported 2021 formal petition, led by the Global Indigenous Council and co-signed by 28 organizations and scholars, which asks the agency to set up a public comment process before Pittman-Robertson funds can go to states for killing projects.

Wildlife management ought to represent all the people who care about wildlife, and sound science should be the guide when it comes to deciding what animal gets to live or die.

Wendy Keefover is a contributor to *Writers on the Range*, writersontherange.org, an independent nonprofit dedicated to spurring lively conversation about the West. She is a senior strategist for the Humane Society of the United States.



Writers on the Range
By Wendy Keefover

Watching Trixie's rear end all summer

Most of you know by now that Miss Trixie and I have been driving shuttle vans this summer for Mountain Man/Narrow Ridge Outdoors in beautiful South Fork. It's a fun job and we try to entertain the guests with some history and geology of the area, plus deliver them safely back from their adventure.

One major part of the job is the ability to back a trailer down a steep and sometimes narrow ramp to the edge of the mighty Rio Grande River twice daily. Now Ol' Dutch has been backing up ever since grade school and almost had to repeat a grade because of said actions, but that's a story for another day. This is more the backing up of a trailer behind a van type of thing.

Miss Trixie worked in the rafting business last year and proved her mettle as she can easily maneuver a four-boat high trailer to and from the river. And even though Ol' Dutch can back a 40-foot camper into a 30-foot spot, I was still so proud of her for mastering that skill with a good level of proficiency.

For you see, I have spent a lifetime around boat ramps waiting in line and watching couples attempt to launch or load a boat and let me tell you what, more divorces start there than any place else on Earth.

The same can be said for backing campers into spots as I have seen normally sane adults lose their ever-loving minds trying to follow the directions given by a spouse some 40 feet away.

Many of you know that I first fell in love with Miss Trixie the day I saw her pee in the woods. And before you think I am some demented old man with a penchant for some kind of kinky activity, I didn't actually see her pee, but she was able to go in the bushes and get the job done.

Unlike my ex-wife who had to go into town and away from nature every time nature called, Miss Trixie can take care of business. Finding a woman who can stay up in the mountains all day without complaint is as good as it gets for Ol' Dutch.

So, as they say, from humble beginnings come great things, and here we are some ten years later still abiding in our happy abode.

This summer Miss Trixie once again impressed me as I spent the entire summer watching her back up a trailer.



Trout Republic
by Kevin Kirkpatrick

And I have to say I am pretty darned proud of her for honing that skill, too. I must confess that the amount of pride I have in her is probably more selfish in nature than I want to admit.

Just the other day I realized that no longer will I need to back the boat in the water when I want to go fishing but I can simply have Miss Trixie ease me into the lake saving countless minutes better spent chasing the elusive finned swimmers.

My adventures on the Gulf Coast mean that I must step in and out of the salty abyss and mess my shoes. Now, that is a thing of the past as I can simply let Miss Trixie back in the boat with me in it and with one call, she can pick me up.

Now I know that many of you reading this wonder just how in the world I managed to snag just such a woman. And I can tell you from a vast amount of experience amongst the females of the species that it's like winning the jackpot to have a multi-talented partner with two of the most important outdoor skills.

I am somewhat amicable to the idea of maybe loaning out Miss Trixie for some boat ramp assistance to the rear moving challenged among you. But you will have to work on the other skill with your spouse on your own as that's on a level Ol' Dutch won't even touch.

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.



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RODEO

Continued from Page 1A

the bareback bronc riders. There were cowboys that got immediately bucked off, but one held steady, Isaac Richard won the contest with a score of 84.5.

The mutton busting contest was also held. In this contest children are put on the back of a sheep and the sheep runs and they try to hold on for as long as they can without falling off. The kids held on tight for a rough little ride on a sheep. The winner of the day was Blanca Montoya who won the mutton busting trophy.

A special presentation was held halfway through the rodeo by the mustang man, Bobby Kerr. Kerr held the attention of three mustangs, and three cattle dogs, on top of a tiny car along with a small trailer hooked to the back.

One dog danced with one of his mustangs, and all three mustangs on command laid down for Kerr and rolled on the ground playfully. All three mustangs stood back up for Kerr and loaded themselves in the front of his car and back of his trailer with his simple commands. Kerr is a rodeo entertainer and travels the country performing at rodeos.

The rodeo also held a barrel racing contest, whipping around the barrels as fast as they could.

Toward the end of the rodeo, there was also a presentation by the Ski-Hi Stampede Committee with Adams State University. Scholarships were presented to Blake Denton and Sommer Amos. Each scholarship was \$5,250.



Bailey Danylo was the overall winner of the Stampede's local barrel racing contest in 18.49 seconds and took home a saddle.



The Ski-Hi Stampede concluded with PRCA action on Sunday in Monte Vista, featuring saddle bronc and bareback riding, bull riding, steer wrestling, tie-down roping, breakaway calf roping, team roping, barrel racing and mutton busting.

The Stampede Committee recognized David Cooper's 30 years

of service to the committee with the presentation of a plaque.

Bailey Danylo was the overall winner of the local barrel racing contest with 18.49 seconds and took



Chase Francis and Fernando Gonzales took home the saddles in local team roping at the Stampede.



Mustang Man Bobby Kerr wowed the crowd with his performance at the Ski-Hi Stampede on Sunday. Kerrn was in total command of his three dogs and three mustangs.

home a saddle. Chase Francis and Fernando Gonzales took home the saddles in local team roping.

The end of the rodeo brought in the feisty bull riding event. Hunter

Boydston was the overall bull riding champion with an 86-point ride.

For official results and information on the rodeo, visit online prorodeo.com.



Photos by Brian Williams

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Rio Grande Hospital ranks in National Hospital Rating System

By LYNDSIE FERRELL

DEL NORTE — According to a press release provided by Rio Grande Hospital, the facility was again given “5 stars” by the National Hospital Rating System.

“CMS updated its Overall Hospital Quality Star Ratings for 2023, awarding 483 U.S. hospitals with a rating of 5 stars as of July 26. This year, 54 more hospitals were given 5 stars than in 2022.

CMS annually assigns star ratings to hospitals nationwide based on their performance across five quality categories.

Below is a state list of the hospitals that received a 5-star rating from CMS, pulling from data on the Hospital Compare website.

CMS assigns star ratings to U.S. hospitals annually based on 46 hospital quality measures. These are divided into five quality categories: safety of care, mortality, patient experience, readmission rates and timely and effective care. Data reporting periods range from July 2018 to March 2022, depending on the measure.

- Rio Grande Hospital (Del Norte)
- Poudre Valley Hospital (Fort Collins)
- Mercy Regional Medical Center (Durango)
- University of Colorado Hospital Authority (Aurora)
- Saint Joseph Hospital (Denver)
- Centura Health-Penrose St. Francis Health Services (Colorado Springs)
- VA Eastern Colorado Healthcare System (Aurora)
- Centura Health-Porter Adventist Hospital (Denver)
- Grand Junction VA Medical Center (Grand Junction)
- Vail Health Hospital (Vail)
- Centura Health-Avista Adventist Hospital (Louisville)
- Sky Ridge Medical Center (Lone Tree)
- Parker Adventist Hospital (Parker)
- Good Samaritan Medical Center (Lafayette)
- St. Anthony Summit Medical Center (Frisco)
- Medical Center of the Rockies (Loveland)
- Centura Castle Rock Adventist Hospital

Rio Grande Hospital Development and Communications Officer Eva Timberlake had this to say, “To be recognized on this prestigious list is an honor and a testament to the hard work our staff strives for. With this fantastic rating, our Wellness Center is underway, and our upcoming event Keeping the Dream Alive — we have much to celebrate.”

The hospital is continuing to work on the new Wellness Center and planning for their annual fundraiser Keeping the Dream Alive with this year’s focus on health in all forms. With the Wellness Center underway and plans for more growth, the hospital is grateful to the communities they serve and is looking forward to hosting them for this year’s Keeping the Dream Alive fundraiser on Aug. 12.

The event will feature food provided by Mountainview Restaurant out of Monte Vista and is supported by several local sponsors including SLVREC, Ciello, Del Norte Fire Department, uchealth, San Luis Valley Bank, Del Norte Bank and many others.

The event will take place on Aug. 12 beginning at 5:30 p.m. in the Del Norte Fire Department’s new headquarters located in the old Del Norte High School Gym also known to locals as the Field House.

“We are really looking forward to this year’s event. It is our 15th year, and we have something special planned for our community. We will have some wonderful door prizes and great auction items which will be auctioned off by our wonderful auctioneer, Darrel Plane,” said Timberlake. “It is going to be a lot of fun.”

For more information or to purchase tickets, visit www.riograndehospital.org.

Historic Zapata Park ribbon cutting Aug. 4

By JOHN WATERS

ALAMOSA — Three new interpretive signs have been installed at Historic Zapata Park in Alamosa that detail the Maestas Case of 1912-1914 that ended Mexican-American school segregation in the region.

In that case, District Judge Charles Holbrook ruled in favor, stating, “In the opinion of the court...the only way to destroy this feeling of discontent and bitterness which has recently grown up, is to allow all children so prepared to attend the school nearest them.”

The old school that was at the center of the case is long gone, replaced with lovely recreational facilities and now, new interpretive signs commemorating the history of a landmark case.

The signs are a collaborative effort of the City of Alamosa, the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area, and the Maestas Commemoration Committee. A ribbon-cutting ceremony is scheduled for 9 a.m. on Aug. 4.

The name of the park was slightly changed by the city from Zapata Park to Historic Zapata Park in May.

Also in May, the City of Alamosa and the Alamosa Bicycle Coalition celebrated the installation of a bike stand in the park where cyclists can work on their bikes.



Photo by John Waters

Three new interpretive signs have been installed at Historic Zapata Park in Alamosa that detail the Maestas Case of 1912-1914.



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Simpson announces run for second term

By PRISCILLA WAGGONER
ALAMOSA — In the midst of traversing a large senatorial district that, as a result of the Independent Redistricting Commission, now runs from the southern tip of Costilla County and encompasses eight counties on the Western Slope up to the Utah state line, first-term Republican Senator Cleave Simpson has announced his plans to

run for a second term. It's a distinctly different district from the one that first elected him in 2020. But since the first days he took office, Simpson has learned that being a state senator in Colorado is different from what he expected. "I'm not a career politician," he told the Valley Courier in a previous interview, noting that he's a fourth-generation

farmer and rancher. "I never really expected to go into politics. I ran for office because I was concerned about the future of water in agriculture and wanted a hand in shaping what that future would look like." Once in office, he made true on that mission, introducing legislation that allocated — by unanimous consent in both houses — \$60 million to address

groundwater sustainability and interstate compact requirements in the Rio Grande River Basin and the Republican River Basin. He was also responsible for legislation that transferred \$20 million to the Colorado Water Conservation Board for watershed programs, allocation of \$20 million to implement the State Water Plan, critical funding to address wildfire risks around high-priority watersheds, and legislation that provides protection for stream restoration projects.



Colorado State Senator Cleave Simpson

But, as he also mentioned in a recent town hall moderated by the Valley Courier, becoming informed in order to understand and vote on legislation before the Senate required Simpson — who has a degree in engineering from the Colorado School of Mines — to spend significant time in the "behavioral health space" learning about an area he had little background in prior to being elected.

The result was his introduction and or sponsorship of several key pieces of legislation, including the formation of the Behavioral Health Administration in the Colorado Department of Human Services, the creation of the 988 Suicide Prevention Hotline and creation of the Behavioral Healthcare Workforce to support behavioral health staffing and licensure attainment.

Simpson has also stood out for his other accomplishments, including recently being honored as one of three legislators for his support of the role county clerks play in assuring free and fair elections and being one of the only Republicans to get a nod of acknowledgment from the Colorado Education Association.

Being a senator representing a rural district in the state legislature has not always been an easy task, and Simpson says he "believes leadership through a

thoughtful, collaborative approach is necessary to provide solutions to the pressing needs in State Senate District 6 and improve the standard of living for all rural Coloradans."

A review of Simpson's legislative record reveals significant success in obtaining bi-partisan support in his legislative efforts, and he says he has taken steps to bridge the rural-urban divide that is very much a reality. But he also acknowledges that more work remains.

"There is still an opportunity to represent rural Colorado, to continue to build our reputation, and work toward building resiliency and relevance in rural Colorado. There is truly a rural-urban divide. Trying to work in that space the last three years to help close that, I recognize there's still a lot of work to do," Simpson said.

In his announcement, Sen. Simpson credited the support of his wife, Cathy, and the entire Simpson family for the support and encouragement to continue to work on behalf of the citizens in Senate District 6.

Even with extended periods of time away from his wife and family, the farm and ranch he operates in the San Luis Valley, Simpson is committed to a second term.

Adams State hires Atkins for Student Health and Wellness Center

By ADAMS STATE UNIVERSITY
ALAMOSA — Following the 2023 fall commencement, Stephanie Atkins won't have to travel far for her next job. In fact, she starts as the inaugural care coordinator at Adams State in August.

A joint venture between Adams State, SLV Health, and Valley-Wide Health Systems, the care coordinator will help students access local and affordable health care based on their individual needs.

"We aim to meet our students' academic, mental health, social and emotional, and food insecurity needs," noted Heidi Schneider, Ph.D., inclusive excellence liaison and faculty sponsor of the initiative. "The university recognizes the importance of healthcare for our students' overall well-being; we also understand navigating the health care system can be overwhelming and a bit scary for some students. Stephanie will be a tremendous asset in bridging the gaps."

For Atkins this role is not new; she assisted and supported customers with the San Luis Behavioral Health Group for seven years while pursuing her associate degree at Adams State.

"Being a first-generation, non-traditional student and wanting to help people first, especially students, was incredibly important to me," added Atkins. "The 'care' component of the title isn't lost on me and shouldn't be by anyone in the community. I grew up in Monte Vista and understand the healthcare needs in the San Luis Valley; I'm excited to get started."

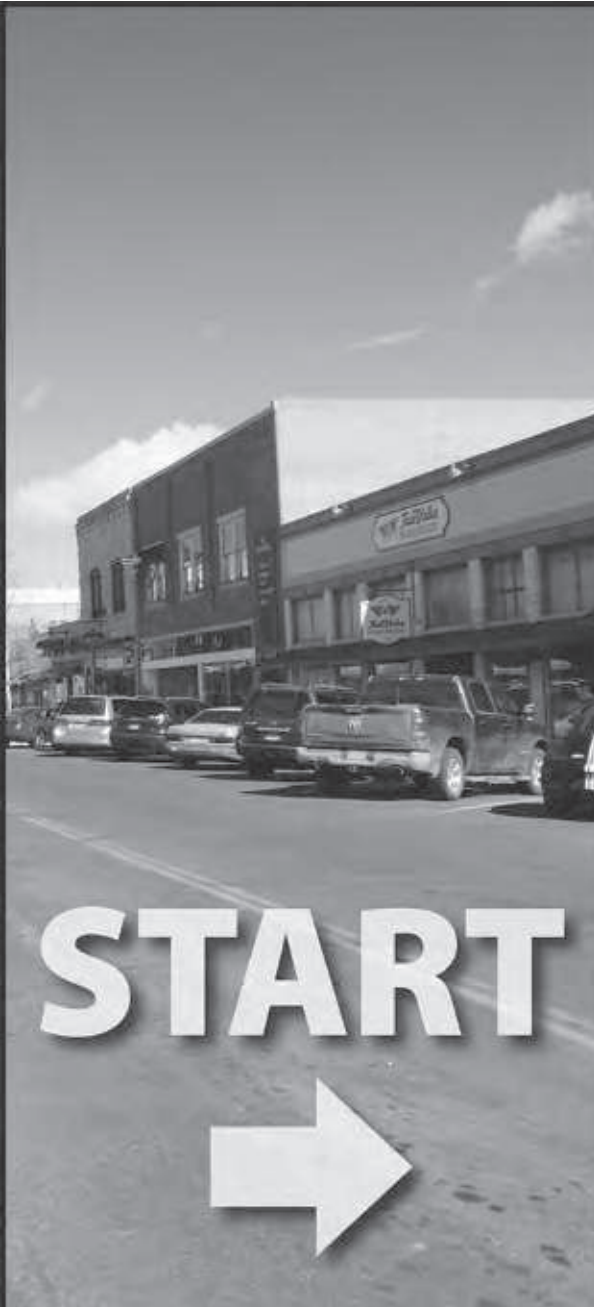
Atkins lives in Alamosa with her husband, Larry, and children Jaleysia, Alejandro, Michael, and Xylina.

A University Innovation Grant was also submitted by Dr. Schneider to outfit space in the Student Union Building (SUB) into a Student Health and Wellness



Stephanie Atkins

Center. The Center, on the first floor, will be open prior to the fall semester with Atkins available 20 hours-per-week to assist students with scheduling appointments at local clinics or specialized services, assist with required medical related paperwork, and/or accessing health care.



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ORISONS

Continued from Page 1A

in Hooper. It was free for the public to view. Many people participated in the viewing taking a shuttle from Frontier Drive-Inn in Center to Hooper.

At 160 acres, Orisons marks one of the biggest earthworks created by a woman, and is a more ecologically conscious approach to property art by being minimally intrusive and sensitive to the ecosystem, according to Black Cube.

According to orisons.art, "Humeau's Orisons is a subtle earthwork that transforms an unfarmable plot of land in Colorado's San Luis Valley into a place of reverence, honoring its expansive history, existing ecosystem, and imaginable futures."

"The work consists of the land in its entirety, as well as a series of 84 sculptural interventions that invoke the land's histories and vast network of interrelations. Dozens of whistling and rhythmic, plant-like sculptures inspired by the native and nomadic vegetation become activated by the wind, a legendary force in the valley, to summon the site's energies."

"Also, a part of the work are large-scale sculptures that hover over the ground and visually reference the outstretched wings of Sandhill Cranes, iconic birds that migrate through the region, which visitors can lay upon."

Orisons will be open for viewing through June 30, 2025.

More than 75 people showed up for the

two-day opening celebration. Vendors were set up at the event. Cocktails were served by ESP HiFi, and a signature Orisons Elixir was created by DRAM Apothecary that allowed attendees to drink the Orisons land.

Humeau was excited that so many people came to view her artwork.

"Working on Orisons has provided me with a multitude of perspectives on the land in the San Luis Valley. Research is an immense part of my practice," she said. "As I research each project, I usually meet with many researchers, experts, not only scientists but also human beings who hold ancient forms of knowledge."

She said she met with many different experts—the United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, agronomists, soil scientists, rangeland management specialists, pivot irrigation system experts, Monte Vista Crane Wildlife Refuge, local field ornithologists, Sandhill crane experts, San Luis Valley bird watchers, flora and fauna researchers, experts from the department of ecology and evolutionary biology from the University of Colorado Boulder, the Montezuma Land Conservancy, mythology researchers, thunderbird and rainmaking ritual specialists, musicians, members of the communities. She said she received a reading of the land from a geomancer. Black Cube was instrumental in the entire project.

"Like a palm reading but at the scale of the landscape. I am grateful for Black Cube to have organized all these meetings and has been on this research journey with me," she said.

When asked what inspired her to create the earthwork, Humeau said it began with the lifeblood of the Valley — water.

"I discovered the circles used in agriculture in many parts of the world in the context of intensive agriculture," she said. "My first question was: what happens to them when there is no more water to pump in the aquifer? What do the pivot irrigation systems do? Do they keep spinning and dancing for water? I immediately thought of them as being related to ancient architecture and ancient, very early human constructions such as Stonehenge."

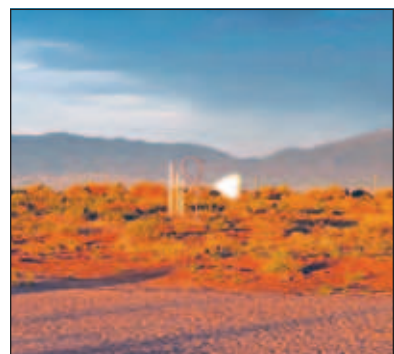
From there, she knew she had to

acknowledge the land as being the artwork — a site of reverence.

"I wanted to transform a circle into an artwork, and then my idea evolved into acknowledging the land as being the artwork," she said. "As humans, we have used this site as a site for extraction for many years, and my idea was to transform it into a site of reverence."

"In order to survive on this planet, we need to merge within the greater whole of life. This is what Orisons is about: resilience, care, transformation, the transience of existence, the edges between life and death, and the acknowledgment of the whole being the sum of its parts, the inhabited solitude that makes you feel alone in the vastness of a very rich, entangled web of life," she said.

Aubrey Salas after viewing the artwork said it was some of the best she has ever seen.



Courtesy photo

"I truly breathed it all in. A person really needs to visit and experience it all to see the extreme beauty behind the artist's vision. I am still trying to digest it all but it was sheer enlightenment. Some of the best work I have seen ever," Salas said.

People must register to view the artwork and can do this by visiting the website at www.orisons.art.

Request For Proposal (RFP) Trash and Rubbish removal

Saguache County is looking for a contractor 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 trailers, building materials, trash, debris, asbestos, 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.

For question, please email Amber Wilson at atorrez@saguachecounty-co.gov or call 719-655-2231.

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 delivered to 505 3rd Street, Saguache, CO.

Proposals must be received by 3pm on Thursday, August 31, 2023.

No. 1675 published in the Center Post Dispatch, Thursday, July 27 and August 3, 10, 17 and 24, 2023.

Saguache County Landfill
RATE INCREASE NOTICE
 NEW RATES EFFECTIVE: August 15, 2023

Services	Current Rate	New Rate
Min. Trash Charge (200 lbs. and under)	\$6.00	\$7.00
Add'l Charge/100lbs - (201 lbs. and above)	\$2.00	\$2.00
Untarped or Uncontained Charge	\$20.00	\$20.00
*Burnables	\$1.20	\$1.50
Construction Debris (non-compactable)	\$2.00	\$2.00
*Commercial (compactd)/ton	\$17.90	\$18.50
Freon Unit (w/certificate of freon removal)	\$37.00	\$37.00
Junk Vehicle	No Charge with Title	No Charge with Title
Mobile Home - In County	\$500.00	\$500.00
*Mobile Home - Out of County	\$1000.00	\$1200.00
Small Animal (400 lbs. and under)	\$10.00	\$10.00
*Large Animal (401 lbs. and above)	\$19.00	\$20.00
Passenger/Light Truck Tires (no rim)	\$5.00	\$5.00
Passenger/Light Truck Tires (with rim)	\$10.00	\$10.00
Truck/Large Tires (no rim)	\$12.00	\$12.00
Truck/Large Tires (with rim)	\$23.00	\$23.00
*Tractor Tires (no rim)	\$20.00	\$25.00
*Tractor Tires (with rim)	\$27.00	\$37.00
Large Furniture (mattresses, box springs, recliner etc.)	\$10.00	\$10.00
Recyclables (see website for accepted items)	Regular Trash Rates Apply	Regular Trash Rates Apply
Metal	No Charge	No Charge
Non-Friable Asbestos	NO LONGER ACCEPTING	NO LONGER ACCEPTING

Mixed loads will be charged as trash
 THE FOLLOWING WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED AT THE SAGUACHE COUNTY LANDFILL:
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 No Hazardous Materials (Needles, Batteries, Light Bulbs or HUMAN BODILY FLUIDS OR WASTE)
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New rates will be posted on the county website under the landfill tab: saguachecounty.colorado.gov

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How a Merciful Attitude Makes Life Sweeter

Webster's Dictionary defines *mercy* as "kindness in excess of what might be expected or demanded of fairness."

Mercy is not fair, but it's godly. Not fair, but Christlike. And when we do what God leads us to do, He always brings justice into our life. To honor God in this area, we need to learn to trust Him more fully. Every single one of us has opportunities to do that each day...with friends and family, coworkers and even the clerk at the grocery store.

Whenever people hurt or disappoint us, our human nature leads us to dislike them because of their shortcomings. But God's desire for us is to love all people, including our enemies (see Matthew 5:43-48).

If they can see love in your heart... instead of anger and judgment...that shows them "kindness in excess of what might be expected." More importantly, it gives them hard evidence that Christ is working in you! I believe one of the greatest privileges we have in life is to follow His example, and we can do that by being generous in spirit, giving mercy to others, as they need it.

Quit Keeping Score
 When someone hurts or offends us, it's easy to make a list and keep count of everything they've ever done wrong. But God is asking us to be like *Him*.

Lamentations 3:22-23 tells us that God's mercies are new every morning. In Isaiah 43:25 He says, "I am he who blots out your transgressions..." and remembers your sins no more" (NIV).

When my husband, Dave, and I were newly married, I was pretty good at keeping score. Every time we had an argument, I would bring up *every single thing* he ever did to me since the day I met him.

I'll never forget one day, after I recited my list, when Dave looked at me and said, "Where in the world do you keep all that stuff?"

I've learned that the best thing we can do for ourselves is to let go of the hurt... to lose count of how others have wronged

us...and leave the past in the past.

The "Why" Behind the "What"
 I always say that mercy understands the "why" behind the "what." It cares about the person, not just what they've done to us.

Let's say you walk into a grocery store and the checkout clerk is grouchy with you and has a sour look? You have a choice...

You can say, "I don't appreciate your attitude. I am a customer here and I don't like the way you're acting. I'm going to tell your manager."

Or you can be merciful and say, "It looks like you're having a hard day. I really want to say that God loves you and really cares about you." Choose to believe the best about that person and realize they are upset for a reason.

When someone hurts us, our first inclination is to think, "You're not going to treat *me* that way. And if you think you're going to get by with it, you have another thing coming!"

However, it helps to remember that everyone who acts badly is hurting in some way.

When I first met Dave, I had a lot of problems from the sexual and emotional abuse I endured growing up. I was wounded and hurting, and it seemed like every other day I was starting an argument or saying something I regretted.

Because Dave already had a strong relationship with the Lord, he continuously showed me mercy and loved me, in spite of my behavior. No matter how badly I acted the night before, he wasn't mad the next morning. He didn't let my behavior change *his* character.

You Reap What You Sow
 Luke 6:36-37 says, "Be merciful just as your Father is merciful. Do not judge, and you will not be judged...Forgive, and you will be forgiven" (NIV).

We reap what we sow, and whatever we give away to others is what we'll receive in return. If you want mercy, then give (sow) mercy. If you need a friend, then sow friendliness. If you have financial needs,

Moving Up Higher
 with **Joyce Meyer**

then look for ways to meet someone else's needs.

It's easy to judge. I cringe when I look back at the critical, judgmental person I used to be. In fact, before I was a serious Christian, judging others was one of my favorite things to do. I would sit at the mall and watch people walk by, sizing them up and thinking negative things about their clothes, hair, or the people around them.

But the Bible says, "Judge not" (Matthew 7:1; Luke 6:37 NKJV). I wasn't only sowing bad seed; I was making *myself* miserable by not walking in love and believing the best of others.

The truth is, when we sow mercy, we reap a harvest of peace, joy and healthy relationships. We also take a giant step forward spiritually. Because choosing to do what's right—even when it hurts—causes us to grow and mature in an amazing way.

So...who will you give new mercies to today?

For more on this topic, order Joyce's three-part teaching resource **Life-Changing Attitudes**. 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.



Courtesy photos

High Valley Community Center is saying goodbye to summer in style. Between catching fish and swimming the last few days of summer have been a blast.

HVCC End of Summer Bash is this week

CONTRIBUTED

DEL NORTE — Hi, community members! Happy new month. What is everyone doing to stay cool during these warm summer days? High Valley Community Center's favorite way is to play lots of water games outside.

Last week the kids hiked, built edible aquariums, made soap and sugar scrub, and learned about being a doctor and dentist from Dr. Amy Robertson and Carly Santi Lozoya.

The older kids worked on making their products to sell at the upcoming market on Aug. 3. They also spent their afternoons working at participating local businesses.

The kids learned a lot this summer and we want to thank the local businesses for being such great mentors to them!

On Wednesday, the kids enjoyed a day in Monte Vista bowling, picnicking, and watching "Super Mario Bros." at the Vali 3 Theater.

Now that registrations for sports have closed, we are working on finalizing sports schedules. Volleyball practices will be Tuesdays and Thursdays beginning Aug. 15. Please make sure to wear knee pads! Flag football will also begin Aug. 15 and practices will be Mondays and Wednesdays. Stay tuned for more information. We're looking forward to a fun season!

We hope you will join us for our End of Summer Bash on Thursday, Aug. 3, to celebrate a successful summer program! The older kids will be hosting a market selling their homemade goods. We will also have a lot of fun street fair inspired food, bouncy houses, music, fun games, and face painting. The best part is that it's all free and available to everyone in our community! The fun begins at 2 p.m. and goes on until 6 p.m. We hope to see you there.

All of us from HVCC wish you a wonderful week!



How to help students improve their focus on their studies

Teachers strive to create supportive and challenging classroom environments for their students. Such settings can bring out the best in students and help them overcome obstacles, including an inability to focus.

The struggles students can have with focusing on their studies was apparent during the pandemic. A 2020 survey of more than 400 college students found that 64 percent were concerned about their ability to maintain their focus and discipline in remote instructional environments. Though educators, students and parents are hopeful that remote learning will soon be a thing of the past, no one is certain about what lies ahead in regard to the 2021-22 school year. Ideally, students will be back in school time full-time five days per week by the start of the new academic year. However, there's no guarantee that will be the case, and students may need help focusing on their studies.

• Emphasize one activity at a time. Various studies have shown that multitasking adversely affects performance and makes it hard to concentrate. A recent study from researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology found that performing two or three activities simultaneously puts significantly more demand on the brain than simply doing those tasks one after another. All students, and especially those who are struggling with focus, should be encouraged to take on one task at a time.

• Take breaks. The Cleveland Clinic notes that various studies have found that periodic breaks improve mood, boost performance and increase a person's ability to concentrate and pay attention. Many students are well acquainted with lengthy cramming sessions on the eve of a big exam, which can feel like a rite of passage for high schoolers and college students. Parents and educators can emphasize the importance of taking breaks during such sessions and how periodic rest can help improve performance.

• Take a piecemeal approach to big tasks. The Child Mind Institute notes that breaking big tasks down into smaller, more manageable pieces can help kids effectively tackle more challenging tasks. The piecemeal approach can make big tasks seem less daunting, and the success kids have at each smaller task can provide some needed momentum as they draw closer to solving the problem.

Many students struggle to focus on their studies. Some simple strategies

can help students overcome such challenges and fulfill their academic potential.

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Photos by Lyndsie Ferrell

Covered Wagon Days is set for the first weekend in August beginning on Aug. 3. Del Norte will be a hot spot for fun for the entire family with everything from a car show and a parade to a book sale and ice cream.

Covered Wagon Days sets schedule for first weekend in August

By LYNDSIE FERRELL
DEL NORTE — It is hard to believe that the summer is quickly coming to a close and that the annual Covered Wagon Days celebration is just a few weeks away. This year events will take place beginning on Aug. 3 with two quilt shows coming to town and then three days of fun and activities for the entire family. These wonderful quilt shows highlight local talents of quilters from around the Valley and beyond. Kathy's Fabric Trunk is always an intriguing and fanciful place to visit even when a quilt show is not taking place but when the quilts are brought out and hung along the walls, it transforms into a quilter's dream. Kathy's Fabric Trunk Quilt Show runs through Saturday, Aug. 5. The San Luis Valley Quilt Guild will once again be gracing the halls and show rooms at the Rio Grande County Museum with their assortment of quilts that they have worked on for several months. Each year, the quilt guild prepares what are called Challenge Quilts for different categories, and these are on display for two weeks beginning Aug. 1. People that



come to the show are encouraged to vote for their favorite. Friday will feature the annual Veteran's dinner and auction which will be held at the High Valley Community Center. **Please see DAYS on Page 3**

Rhythms on the Rio sets stage for locals

By LYNDSIE FERRELL

DEL NORTE — With only one week until Covered Wagon Days and Rhythms on the Rio, South Fork Music Association and event coordinator Scott Stecken and his team of volunteers are gearing up for the busy weekend, Aug. 4-6.

The music kicks off on Thursday, Aug. 3, with a special concert in the Del Norte Town Park to close out the summer music program. The Town of Del Norte, in partnership with Rhythms on the Rio, brought one of the bands from the concert to play for free and to celebrate the beginning of the weekend-long festival which runs Aug. 4, 5, and 6.

Friday night gets funky with a touch of good jiving soul with headliners The Motet. According to their bio, "Forming over two decades ago, the funk five-piece The Motet have learned to work as an interlocking unit, with each member bolstering one another towards the best creative output. This symbiosis has led to a unique style and cohesive musical chemistry, as seen in the band's immaculate live performances and seamless blend of funk, soul, jazz, and rock."

The festival grounds located just north of Del Norte will be packed with food vendors, craft vendors and even the tie-dye tent will be back.

Stecken also confirmed that the morning yoga classes, and other activities will be available throughout the weekend. Locals wanting to come and enjoy the lineup can do so and receive a local's discount off of tickets. Tickets can be bought online or at Trade and Post

in Del Norte and at the gate each day.

Saturday night is all about bluegrass and folk music. Headliners for Saturday night are The Kitchen Dwellers and according to their bio, they are full of colorful tunes that will please crowds of all ages. "Kitchen Dwellers twist bluegrass, folk, and rock through a kaleidoscope of homegrown stories, rich mythology, American west wanderlust, and psychedelic hues."

Sunday closes out with the award-winning Infamous String Dusters. "The GRAMMY Award-winning quintet — Andy Falco [guitar], Chris Pandolfi [banjo], Andy Hall [dobro], Jeremy Garrett [fiddle], and Travis Book [double bass] — have musical influences that truly run the gamut, but their common denominator is certainly bluegrass — the sound that has in essence defined the course of their career. The Infamous String Dusters stand out as the rare group who can team up with contemporary artists on late night television one night and headline the legendary Red Rocks Amphitheatre or perform alongside The Grateful Dead's Phil Lesh and have recently emerged as proprietors behind their newly found independent record label, Americana Vibes."

Other bands that will play throughout the weekend and bring flare and good vibes wherever they go include Cabinet with Larry Keel, The Brothers Comatose, Lindsay Lou, Shinyribs, The Hip Abduction, T-K, and the Holy-Know-Nothings and so much more.

For the full lineup and schedule of events, visit <https://rhythmsontherio.com>.



Creede Ladies Aid Society hosts successful fundraiser



Courtesy photos

Before and during pictures show the work that goes into the Creede Ladies Aid Rummage Sale fundraiser. This annual event was a hit again this year, raising funding to help support those in need throughout Creede and the Valley.

By LYNDSIE FERRELL

CREEDE — As the oldest organization in Creede, the Ladies Aid Society brought another year's fundraiser to a close on July 13, and once again, the community that supports this annual event showed up in style. The annual Creede Ladies Aid Society's Rummage Sale was a huge success, and the organization thanks the community for all the support over the years.

The Ladies Aid Society was established in 1899. Being such a small town, residents have had to rely upon one another in times of need. In true community spirit, the Ladies Aid Society continues to this day its mission

of providing financial assistance to neighbors experiencing unexpected misfortune, with the Rummage Sale proceeds being its major fundraiser.

"We were able to bring the largest department store to Creede for a day and a half. We have such generous donors every year and we are so grateful. People plan their summer vacations just so they can be here to help with this event. It is amazing to see how wonderful our community is, near and far. We are very fortunate to be able to help each other in this way," said Ladies Aid President Jenny VanRy.

The day and a half event saw crowds **Please see FUNDRAISER on Page 2**

Silver Thread Studio Tour

Studio & Gallery Tours
 Demonstrations • Q&A
 Art for Purchase



Saturday, August 12, 9am - 5pm

A self-guided scenic driving tour along the Silver Thread Byway: South Fork, Creede, Upper Rio Grande
 Get a Map: creedeartscouncil.com • South Fork or Creede Visitor Center



Courier photo by John Waters

Seated (left) is Rio Grande County Veteran Service Officer Jack Rudder, and (right) is Eric Moncibais with the Colorado Division of Veterans Affairs at the Veteran Resource Fair on July 24 at the Colorado Army National Guard Armory.

Veteran gathering a success

By JOHN WATERS

ALAMOSA — The Veteran Resource Fair at the Colorado Army National Guard Armory on July 24 was considered a huge success with dozens of Veterans participating, according to organizers.

The focus of the fair was to educate Veterans about the benefits available under the federal Pact Act. The legislation, passed last year, allows Veterans who were exposed to burnpits, Agent Orange, and other substances during their service to be eligible for benefits.

Although there is no deadline to apply, Veterans who file claims before Aug. 9, 2023, can have their claims backdated to August 2022.

The fair was sponsored by the Veterans Coalition of the San Luis Valley. Mary Cornum with the organization said the event was a success and had over 100 Veterans and providers in attendance.

“We are a frontier community, we are underserved in healthcare, access, and in transportation to the Front Range,” Cornum said. “We have many elder Veterans who don’t want to travel and can’t travel and yet they have to get services in Denver. Many Veterans will not travel and don’t get services. The

FUNDRAISER

Continued from Page 1

of people flocking to the Virginia Christensen Center that was packed full of treasures donated over the years to the organization. Everything from furniture to books and more filled the gym and offered people a chance to repurpose some wonderful items.

Throughout the rest of the year, funding raised during the Rummage Sale is used to provide for those in need within the Creede community and beyond. With rising costs and inflation, the organization has seen an increase in need over the last several years and they are happy to help in every way they can. “We donate to the Homelake Veteran’s home every year in partnership with the Sewing Sisters. Each resident Veteran receives a gift certificate, cookies and the Sewing Sisters make quilts, walker bags, neck pillows and blankets.”

Their generosity doesn’t end there. The organization also provides hygiene kits inside sewn fabric bags to migrant workers in the Valley as well as bereavement dinners and so much more. “We are so very happy to be able to provide services to our communities.”

This year the fundraiser made \$28,500 in just a day and a half and that isn’t even the end number for the year. “Not bad for a day and a half and during that time we were able to meet the needs of people from Creede and valley wide. When you think about it, \$28,000 in a day and a half would make many retailers in the valley happy!”

Plans for the group’s 125th anniversary in 2024 are already underway.

VA [Veterans Affairs] is a maze that is hard to function in. Our purpose is to help Veterans function in that system.”

In addition to the coalition, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the Colorado Division of Veterans Affairs, and Alamosa County Veteran Service Officer Bill Brown, all were at the fair providing services to Veterans.

Veterans can reach Veterans Affairs at www.va.gov. Alamosa County Veteran Services Officer Brown is at 719-589-1109.

SLV Pride set for Aug. 25-27



Photo courtesy of SLV Pride

Members of SLV Pride accept a donation check of \$269 from the Narrow Gauge Book Cooperative in Alamosa. SLV Pride is gearing up for a weekend of events, including music, entertainment, food, and a parade in Alamosa the weekend of Aug. 25-27. On Aug. 25, the festivities get underway with a party at Spare Keg Brewerks in Alamosa at 7 p.m. Pride Fest at Cole Park in Alamosa is Saturday, Aug. 26, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. On Sunday a drag brunch begins at 9 a.m. at San Luis Valley Brewing Company in Alamosa and the cost for the brunch and show is \$30.



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Event



Saturday August 12 2023

Dinner 5:30 pm

Program 6:30 pm

Auction 7:00 pm

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will be handling the live auction

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FOR MORE INFO

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RIOGRANDEHOSPITAL.ORG

Compton selected as superintendent of Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve

CONTRIBUTED

MOSCA — The National Park Service (NPS) announced Wednesday, July 19, the selection of Andrea Compton as superintendent of Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve. She started her new assignment on July 17.

“Andrea has been acting in the park superintendent position and has already proven to be a great fit for the role,” said Acting Deputy Regional Director Jim Ireland. “We are excited to have Andrea officially fill the position. She has a passion for team collaboration to find solutions to short and long-term efforts.”

At Great Sand Dunes, Compton will oversee a staff of 26 permanent and seven seasonal employees. The park protects the tallest dunes in North America and are the centerpiece in a diverse landscape of grasslands, wetlands, forests, alpine lakes, and tundra.

In addition to serving most recently as the superintendent at Cabrillo National Monument, Compton previously was acting superintendent at Joshua Tree National Park and worked as chief of resources at both Joshua Tree and Cabrillo.

Prior to joining the NPS, Compton worked in academia and in environmental consulting. She has a master’s in fishery and wildlife biology from Colorado State University and a bachelor’s in ani-



Andrea Compton

mal ecology from Iowa State University.

“I am pleased and honored to have been selected as the next superintendent at Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve,” said Compton. “While serving in the acting role, I was impressed by the park, its staff and its strong partnerships and Tribal relationships. I look forward to continuing to work with these

groups as we look to the future.”

Compton will relocate to the area with her husband, and they are looking forward to exploring the area around Great Sand Dunes and learning more about the San Luis Valley. She succeeds Pam Rice, who recently accepted a new position as partnerships program coordinator with the National Park Service’s Washington Office.

Mid-summer seat belt enforcement period began Monday

Seat belt citations in Colorado are up 52% this year

CONTRIBUTED

STATEWIDE — Starting Monday, July 24, through Friday, Aug. 4, the Colorado Department of Transportation, the Colorado State Patrol (CSP) and 51 participating law enforcement agencies throughout Colorado will begin the July seat belt enforcement period.

During the same enforcement period last year, 788 citations were issued to drivers for not wearing a seat belt or having unbuckled passengers in their vehicle. That included 68 drivers who had an improperly restrained child in their vehicle.

Recent data shows that 479 drivers and passengers were killed in vehicle crashes in Colorado in 2022. Most of those lives lost (236) were not wearing a seat belt. Thirteen Colorado counties, including Gilpin County, Gunnison County and Logan County, reported that 100% of their roadway fatalities in 2022 were unrestrained vehicle occupants.

“Refusing to wear a seat belt can’t be uncoupled with a possible consequence of death. So, while you may have the right not to protect yourself, I can’t accept that unbuckled fatalities in Colorado are a far too common occurrence,” said Col. Matthew C. Packard, chief of the Colorado State Patrol. “As we head into the last Click It or Ticket enforcement period of the summer, remember, there can be consequences much worse than a citation.”

Last year, 1,963 drivers were issued citations in Colorado during the April and May Click It or Ticket enforcement periods. This year, 2,992 drivers were cited during the same two enforcement periods. This is a nearly 52% increase from last year.

“Those who decide to go unbuckled must understand they are at greater risk of injury or death in the event of a crash,” said CDOT’s Office of Transportation Safety Director Darrell Lingk. “We have the power to lower the

rate of unbuckled traffic fatalities with one simple action: wear your seat belt.”

Properly wearing a seat belt is crucial — no matter if you’re the driver, a passenger, or sitting in the second or third row of a vehicle. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), wearing a seat belt in the front seat of a vehicle reduces the risk of moderate injury by 50% and fatal injury by 45%. Additionally, nearly 60% of backseat passengers who were killed in a crash in 2021 nationwide were unbuckled. Wearing a seat belt will always be the first choice a driver or passenger can make to prioritize safety while on the road.

The Click It or Ticket campaign urges Coloradans and visitors to fasten their seat belts, every ride, every time. Proper seat belt usage is the No. 1 way to protect yourself in the event of a vehicle crash and minimize the risk of injury or death. Fines for not buckling up begin at \$65, and parents or caregivers caught with an improperly restrained child can receive a minimum fine of \$82.

• Adults — Colorado has a secondary enforcement law for adult drivers and front-seat passengers. Drivers can be ticketed for violating the seat belt law if they are stopped for another traffic violation.

• Teens — Colorado’s Graduated Drivers Licensing (GDL) law requires all drivers under 18 and their passengers, regardless of their age, to wear seat belts. This is a primary enforcement, meaning teens can be pulled over simply for not wearing a seat belt or having passengers without seat belts.

• Children — Colorado’s Child Passenger Safety law is a primary enforcement, meaning the driver can be stopped and ticketed if an officer sees an unrestrained or improperly restrained child under age 16 in the vehicle.

Click It or Ticket is a nationwide campaign from NHTSA. Since Click It or Ticket was introduced in Colorado in 2002, statewide seat belt use has increased from 72% to 87%. For more information about seat belt safety and enforcement citation numbers, visit SeatBeltsColorado.com.

DAYS

Continued from Page 1

community Center this year. The dinner begins at 6 p.m. and raises funds for the Homelake Veterans Center in Monte Vista. Tickets for this event will be available for purchase at the door.

Saturday is packed full of events that kick off at 7 a.m. with the Val Alto pancake breakfast at the High Valley Community Center and the Bees Knees 5k run. The starting line and registration will also be at the community center.

As people finish breakfast, they can go to the annual Del Norte Public Library book sale and support the community organization. All proceeds from these events go toward community funded projects.

At 9 a.m. there will be a car show at the Del Norte Town Park and a merchant open house all along Grande Avenue. The parade kicks off at 10 a.m. and this year’s theme is “Through the Ages”. Parade participants will be decorating floats with 60s, 70s, 80s and 90s themes.

At 11 a.m., the Del Norte Fire Department serves barbecue off the grill for its annual fundraiser. After lunch at the fire department, people can visit the Rio Grande County Museum for its annual ice cream social and fundraiser that will help preserve the Barlow and Sanderson Stagecoach and Stage Office.

Afterward, and as the warm afternoon hits the streets of Del Norte, adults can have a beer at the new beer garden and then take a tour of the Historic Windsor Hotel.

The park will busy with plenty for people to do — enjoy the car show, participate in corn hole, volleyball, and horseshoe tournaments, and shop the many vendors that will be set up.

The weekend will end with the annual fly-in breakfast at the Kent Rominger Airport and church in the park. For more information or a full schedule of events, visit www.coveredwagondays.com or visit them on Facebook under Covered Wagon Days.

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RATES

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To place your ad in person come to the office at 835 First Ave. in Monte Vista, or call (719) 852-3531. Business hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. You may also fax your classified to (719) 852-3387 or email at montevisaadclass@gmail.com

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05 Notices

WE BUY ANTLER: Use code "ELK18" and you will get \$18/lb for Elk Grade A and \$13/lb for Deer Grade A. 5 miles west of Del Norte on Hwy 160. 719-657-0942 (TFN)

For information on meetings for ALANON NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS AND ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS Please visit slvaa.org or call 719-937-5083.

07 Help Wanted

Ecodynamics Inc is hiring a general shop and field worker. Tasks include inventory, loading customer orders, shop cleaning, pump tech.assistant in the field. Please drop off resume in person at 5492 US Hwy 160 E, M.V. For more info, call 719/852-2662 (8-23)

Rio Grande County Department of Social Services is seeking an Employment Benefits Unit Case Manager. Position provides a full range of ongoing case management services to clients. Requirements are a High School Diploma or GED, in addition to one to three months related experience and/or training, or equivalent combination of education and experience. Must have computer skills, including word processing, spreadsheet applications, and various data entry programs. \$18.34/hour (negotiable)

depending on experience). Background check and pre-employment drug testing, including testing for marijuana is required. Applications are available online at www.riograndecounty.org or pick up and submit to Human Resources, 925 6th Street, Room 200, Del Norte, CO 81132. (8-23)

Rio Grande County Clerk & Recorder Office is seeking a Deputy Clerk. This position assists the public in person and over the phone, processes documents for recording, Maintains receipts. Assists with voter registration and election preparation and other duties. Requirements are a High School Diploma or GED, in addition to one to three months related experience and/or training, or equivalent combination of education and experience. Must have computer skills, including word processing, spreadsheet applications, and various data entry programs. \$17.18 - \$17.86/hour (negotiable depending on experience). Background check and pre-employment drug testing, including testing for marijuana is required. Applications are available online at www.riograndecounty.org or pick up and submit to Human Resources, 925 6th Street, Room 200, Del Norte, CO 81132. (8-23)

Needed: EXPERIENCED Head

Cook-Monte Vista - (2+ years experience; references needed). This position is responsible for Food Preparation according to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and must be familiar with Colorado Retail Food Establishments Rules and Regulations and certification Food Safety and Handling. Cooks and oversees the preparation and service of meal. Cooks in large quantities. Paperwork. Must be familiar with the monthly inventory of food and supplies. Will assure the safety and hygiene of food preparation and food delivery. Hours: 5:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m., M-F. For more information call 719-589-4511. Applications and Full Job Descriptions are available at South-Central Colorado Seniors, Inc., 1116 3rd St. Alamosa CO or call 719-589-4511 for more information. (8-9)

Monte Vista Head Start is accepting applications for the following Positions: Teachers Assistants and a Fulltime Floating Substitute Teacher. Requirements: High School Diploma or Equivalent. CDA/Colorado Shines Level 2 or Higher. Please Contact MVHS or Pick up an Application at: Monte Vista Head Start, 2863 Sherman Avenue, Monte Vista, Co 81144, (719) 852- 3215 (8-2)

Work for Rent. One Queen, small

motel Room. Wolf Creek Ranch Ski Lodge. 9 miles from Wolf Creek Ski Area. Free utility, free wifi, and free direct tv. Email or call us for an application. wcrsl@wolfcreekranchco.com (719) 873-5371 (8-9)

Remarkable opportunity for a personal care provider in the Antonito Area for a young lady, will train. This excellent position requires dedication, trustworthiness, and transfers. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday some weekends and overnights when needed. \$15.00 an hour call if interested 719-588-9430 or 719 376-2348. (8-9)

WANTED: Saguache County Road and Bridge is hiring for Operator I positions... starting at \$18.00/hour NO CDL REQUIRED! Or \$19.68/hour for those with a CDL License! REQUIREMENTS: Applicants must have a current and valid Drivers License. Applicants should have a high school diploma or GED and six months or more of relevant experience. Prospective employees applying with Saguache County, please note that the cho-

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Valley Publishing has an immediate need in advertising sales (part-time). Any sales experience is appreciated but will train. Email resume to General Manager Brian Williams at bwilliams@valleypublishinginc.com

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For Center and Saguache areas. Writing and photography experience necessary. Send resume, writing and photography samples to Valley Publishing Inc., P.O. Box 607, Monte Vista, CO 81144 or email bwilliams@valleypublishinginc.com

ESTIMATED CROP WATER USE

Weather Data from SLV Research Center located on the 9N and Hwy 285

Crop	Date Planted	Daily Crop Water use for Dates Shown (in./day)					Accumulated Water Use (ET) From 7/27 (inches)				
		7/27	7/26	7/25	7/24	2day	3day	4day	5day	7day	
		Moravian 69	04/05	0.08	0.10	0.13	0.14	0.18	0.31	0.45	0.59
Moravian 69	05/05	0.20	0.24	0.29	0.29	0.43	0.72	1.02	1.30	1.84	
Early Wheat	04/05	0.10	0.13	0.16	0.17	0.23	0.39	0.57	0.74	1.10	
Early Wheat	05/05	0.20	0.24	0.29	0.29	0.43	0.72	1.02	1.30	1.84	
White Wheat	04/05	0.14	0.18	0.23	0.23	0.32	0.55	0.78	1.01	1.47	
White Wheat	05/05	0.20	0.24	0.29	0.29	0.43	0.72	1.02	1.30	1.84	
WinterWheat	10/01	0.06	0.08	0.10	0.11	0.14	0.24	0.35	0.46	0.69	
Potatoes											
Norkotah	05/05	0.20	0.25	0.30	0.31	0.45	0.76	1.07	1.36	1.93	
Centennial	05/05	0.20	0.24	0.29	0.29	0.43	0.72	1.02	1.30	1.84	
Nugget	05/05	0.19	0.23	0.28	0.28	0.41	0.69	0.97	1.23	1.75	
Alfalfa	Est.	0.22	0.27	0.33	0.34	0.50	0.83	1.16	1.48	2.10	
Lawngrass	Est.	0.19	0.23	0.28	0.28	0.41	0.69	0.97	1.23	1.75	

For the latest ET information, call 754-3494 extension x40 for Center, x36 for Center #2, and x38 for La Jara. Use the crop maturity and planting data and weather station closest to your own. Find this up June 8d table each day at this web address: <http://aes-slvrc.agsci.colostate.edu/daily-crop-water-use-report/>
This information is provided by the SLV Research Center (Colorado State University) and the Colorado Potato Certification Service. For info, call 754-3494 x26 or e-mail: andrew.houser@colostate.edu

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sen candidate will be required to submit and pass a pre-employment drug screening and criminal background check, prior to being hired. In addition to the increased hourly rate, the County Employee benefit package includes: vision, dental and health insurance coverage, paid time off, and a generous 401k retirement plan. Operator I is a full time position – applicants must be able to operate light and heavy equipment and perform manual labor in the maintenance, repair and minor construction of roads, streets, bridges, signs, markings and related facilities. Applicants must be physically capable of periods of sustained physical exertion and may be required to lift and move up to 75 lbs. to 150 lbs. Applications are available at the Saguache County Road and Bridge Office 305 3rd Street, PO Box 476, Saguache, CO 81149 – 719-655-2554 or on the Saguache County website – saguachecounty.colorado.gov under the Road and Bridge Department tab. Please fill out and submit the County Application. A complete job description is available at the Road and Bridge Office. Completed applications can be hand delivered or mailed to Saguache County Road and Bridge – at the address listed above, sent by email to mhashbarger@saguachecounty-co.gov or faxed to: 719-655-2543. APPLICATION DEADLINE: Open until qualified candidates are hired. Saguache County is an Equal Opportunity Employer. (8-2)

WANTED: Saguache County Road and Bridge is looking to hire a Shop Foreman.... Starting at \$27.00/hr SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS: Applicants must possess a current Class-A CDL license with

heavy semi-truck endorsement and a current medical certificate. Applicants should have a high school diploma or GED equivalent, along with extensive knowledge of vehicles, equipment and mechanical maintenance procedures. Prospective employees applying with Saguache County, please note that the chosen candidate will be required to submit and pass a pre-employment drug screening and criminal background check, prior to being hired. Shop Foreman is a full time salaried position – qualified candidates will be able to perform a variety of skilled and semi-skilled duties associated with the supervision of assigned road crew which include installing, repairing and maintaining Saguache County Road and Bridge's property within the Right-Of-Way. This position is expected to work during road emergencies so you should be available to work nights, weekends and holidays when needed. In addition to the salaried rate, the County Employee benefit package includes: vision, dental and health insurance coverage, paid time off, and a generous 401k retirement plan. Applications and a complete job description are available at the Saguache County Road and Bridge Office 305 3rd Street, PO Box 476, Saguache, CO 81149 – 719-655-2554 or on the Saguache County website – saguachecounty.colorado.gov under the Road and Bridge Department tab. Please fill out and submit both applications: The Saguache County Application and the Drivers-Application. Completed applications can be hand delivered or mailed to Saguache County Road and Bridge – at the address listed above, sent by email to mhashbarger@saguachecounty-co.gov or faxed to: 719-655-2543.

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Open until a qualified candidate is hired. Saguache County is an Equal Opportunity Employer. (8-2)

13 Mobile Homes for Rent

3-2 double wide on 3 acres in South Fork. nice place. (Horses allowed). On well water. No smokers. must provide verifiable references of employment, income, previous rental history and pass a background check. \$1075 a month 512 627 9787

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14 Business Properties For Rent

Pleasant Professional Office OR Residential space located in Del

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Norte. Approximately 800 square feet with an open entry area, separate office or bedroom, kitchen area, and 3/4 bath. \$875/month. Please call 719-850-0750 (8-23)

16 Vacation

Vacation Cabin for rent by the night only. Full bath, queen bed, microwave & refrigerator. 469-446-2499. (9-27)

17 Real Estate For Sale

FARM FOR SALE in Waverly Area Sub-district #6, 1 1/2 center pivots in grass and alfalfa, large hay shed, 2 bedroom home, 3 steel grainers, numerous out buildings on 8 Mile Road. Ready to farm 2023 season. Call Bruce at Steffens & Company Realty, Inc 719-580-0770. (TFN)

35-80+ acres parcels with good grass on County Line Road north of Hwy 160. Fully surveyed and ready to build on. Perfect location between Alamosa and Monte Vista. Call Bruce at Steffens & Company Realty, Inc. 719-580-0770. (TFN)

35-80+ acre parcels on San Francisco Creek south of Del Norte. Very private, views, 3 miles from town, electric and phone. Call Bruce at Steffens & Company Realty, Inc. 719-580-0770. (TFN)

40 Acres 5 miles west of Monte Vista on Lariat Road with power, phone and year around access on county road. \$60,000. Call Bruce Steffens 719-580-0770 at Steffens & Company Realty Inc. (TFN)

23 Lawn and Garden

Sprinkler repair. Done at reasonable rates. Quick Service. Call anytime, weekdays, weekends, evenings. 719-580-0033 or 719-376-2593. TFN

24 Garage/Yard Sales

Big Yard Sale: August 4-6 8 AM - 4:30 PM 430 Cherry Street, Del Norte Construction supplies, tables, chairs, much more. See SLV Yard Sale FB (8-2)

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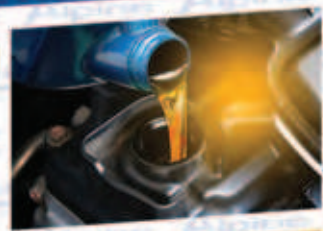
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If you live in Center and are missing a dog, please give us a call! We have quite a few dogs that have been picked up over the past couple of months that haven't been reclaimed.

Please note adoptions go in order of contact made.

All breeds & ages of animals are a "best guess" and are not guaranteed to be accurate. Adoption fee includes: neuter/spay, vaccinations, de-worming and micro-chipping. *This ad space donated by Valley Publishing Inc.*

All adoptions over 8 months old are half-off until Labor Day!

We currently have 3 litters of puppies and could use any supplies to help them over the next few months. Puppy food, sheets and treats would be amazing! Thank you all in advance!

San Luis Valley Area Real Estate



All Dee's properties are detailed in her blog. 

Steffens & Company Realty

719-873-5605
30635 US HWY 160
South Fork
dee@steffenscorealty.com
Dee - formerly known as Diane Chapman - is a 4th generation South Fork Native and 1994 graduate of Del Norte High School. Licensed in 2011, Dee knows the area and knows local real estate.

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3023 Bear Creek Circle
Mountain cabin on 20 acres bordering National Forest in gated Bear Creek. Fully furnished - paved driveway. 4 bedrooms. 2.5 bathrooms. MLS#803394



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Duncan Cabin offers primitive cabin rental experience

Historic cabin offers unique recreation experience on the National Forest

CONTRIBUTED

SAGUACHE — The Saguache Ranger District announced recently that the historic Duncan Cabin joined the District's Cabin Rental Program on June 24. The district's only primitive cabin offers a unique experience for the hearty cabin-goer with a four-mile hike in, no water, electricity, heat or cookstove, and plenty of remoteness. "This new recreational opportunity comes after a significant preservation process," said Saguache District Ranger Tristram Post. "We are pleased to offer this unique cabin stay experience

for the adventurous folks that prefer to stay in places off the beaten path." The cabin offers solitude and amazing views of the valley in a setting that is far from your typical 3-star hotel stay. Post added that, with a small corral on-site, horses would be the ideal mode of transportation into the cabin. As with all rental cabins on the Rio Grande National Forest, the Duncan Cabin has unique features and rules. Cabin renters should bring their own cookstove and can get water to filter, or for their stock at the nearby Pole Creek. Learn more at www.fs.usda.gov/recrea/rio-grande/recreation/camping-cabins/recrea/?recid=84408&actid=101. Restoration of the cabin was conducted by partners at HistoriCorps in 2011

with the goal of preserving site history and to eventually include on the Forest Service cabin rental program. In doing so, the cabin will be preserved, maintained, and enjoyed for future generations. Funds for the majority of restoration work were allocated as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Additional restoration work will continue into the future. See the cabin preservation plan, including a brief history, on the cabin's web page above. Reservations for the Duncan Cabin are available by calling 1 877-444-6777, or online at Recreation.gov and searching for the Duncan Cabin. Reservations can only be made up to 6 months in advance. The nightly fee is \$40. There is no minimum night stay, and a maximum of 14 nights are allowed.



Courtesy photo

The Saguache Ranger District announced recently that the historic Duncan Cabin joined the District's Cabin Rental Program on June 24.

San Luis Valley Area Real Estate

SOLD

Majestic Custom-Built Log Home! Fabulous 7 bed, 5 bath 4,619 Sq. Ft. Home with attached garage on 9.04 acres in Beautiful gated Bear Creek. This Home has several outdoor entertainment areas with wrap around decks to enjoy the 360 views of the San Juan Mountains. The main level has an open floor plan with great room and grand fireplace with vaulted ceiling opening into the dining and kitchen area. Entertain in this beautiful large kitchen with large island, custom cabinetry, granite countertops and state of the art stainless steel appliances. The Master bedroom suite is located on main floor with walk out patio, your perfect place to enjoy that hot cup of morning coffee. From here you can access your private boardwalk leading to your entertainment area with fire ring and Jacuzzi. Upstairs beautiful reading sitting loft with additional guest bedrooms, bath and great bunk room for additional family and guest. Lower level of this home includes a large family room with fireplace and pool table. Great for all your entertainment needs, additional bedrooms, and office. Beautiful furniture, furnishings and accessories are all included with this home. Bear Creek also offers a wonderful river adventure for rafting, gold medal fly fishing with a 20-acre area on the Rio Grande River exclusive to Bear Creek property owners. Minutes away from everything outdoors -gold medal fly fishing, hunting, four wheeling and thousands of acres of public land. Start your Adventure! Don't wait, Call, and schedule your showing today! **\$1,650,000** MLS #792162
2951 Bear Creek Circle • South Fork
Bernadette Gingrass •Steffens & CO. Realty
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This South Fork Beauty checks all the boxes, both his and hers - and is a fun place for family and friends. Custom built Log home tucked in the trees and backs up to the National Forest. The main level has a grand and Mighty Rio Grande with world class fishing. The property. The main floor consists of an open area with beautiful carved mantel stone fireplace ceiling. Stunning entrance to behold! Custom designer backslash and large eat in counter space looking over the living area with custom soft close cabinets and plenty of storage and room for all your entertaining. Kitchen has wonderful large butler pantry with pantry sink and beautiful custom stained glass floor. The Detailed Check Boxes include radiant floor heating with four zones and two Rainin on-demand water tanks. Light Touch lighting system and electrical in the floor. Master bedroom is on the main floor with sitting area with luscious mountain views. Master bath with beautiful large tiled walk-in shower. Guest bedroom and bath on main floor with elegant soaking antique tub. Upstairs spacious loft with two electronic skylights with rain sensors that will close automatically with additional sleeping areas including office space and additional large size bedroom with barn door and bath. Enjoy your 3-car garage with large workshop and more than enough room for all your mountain toys. Your family and friends will love the upstairs bungalow above the garage with kitchenette, living area, built-in beds additional bedroom and bath. Bring your family and friends to gather to enjoy the great outdoors! Boarders National Forest, with streams, creeks, lakes rolling topography, open fields, pine, fir, aspen trees, mountain views and abundant wildlife! Beautifully designed home tucked peacefully into the woods and easily accessible to town, Wolf Creek Ski Area and the Rio Grande Golf Course Resort. Once in a lifetime Opportunity! This property perfectly captures the best of both worlds between outdoor recreation and exceptional entertainment. Start your dream and Call/Text me to schedule your personal showing today! **\$1,395,000** MLS #796960
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PRICE REDUCED

Darling authentic 1,232 Sq. Ft. 2-bedroom 2 bath log cabin with upgrades galore! Located in Log Haven. Tucked along the mountain side backing up to national forest with beautiful views of the surrounding cliffs. Open living room, dining, kitchen area with new propane Vermont Casting stove to keep you cozy and warm all winter long. Kitchen is quaint and bright with custom granite countertops. This cabin has a covered front porch and wonderful back deck. The perfect place to enjoy the wildlife, peace and quiet and that first hot cup of morning coffee. Nice fence back yard with gate opening to the national forest. Hike for miles out your own back door. Downstairs has a master bedroom and a full bath. Upstairs additional bedroom, bathroom and nice size sitting nook, great space to enjoy that best-selling book or use for your office den. This cabin comes compete with one car garage, storage shed, central well and town sewer. Cabin can be used as a full-time residence, or home-away-from-home winter or summer get-a-way! Rentals are not allowed in this subdivision. Don't wait! Start your adventure today! Only a short 17-mile drive from Wolf Creek Ski area. The mighty South Fork and Rio Grande River, Beaver Mountain reservoir & Million reservoir are just moments away. Bring your fishing pole and enjoy hours of world class fishing, Ski Wolf Creek, go 4 wheeling, hike, camp, hunt, Enjoying everything outdoors! Let's get started call /text and schedule your showing today! **\$325,000** MLS #800364
31517 Us Highway 160 • South Fork
Bernadette Gingrass •Steffens & CO. Realty
 (719)850-1993 • bernadette@steffenscorealty.com

PRICE REDUCED

Check out this small diverse farm. The home is a 2bed/2bath, 1703.2 sq foot, historic adobe that has been fully and beautifully restored. Enjoy Colorado from the large (768 sq ft) open porch. This home sits on 126.06 deeded acres of land situated in the bottoms of the old Culebra River Drainage. The soil is sandy and loamy and has been used for vegetable crop production in the past w/o the use of pesticides or herbicides. It is watered by the San Acacia acequia with an early decree for 1.62 CFS. There is a domestic house well permit number 284703. The property also has a holding pond for irrigation water. The owner is installing a new side roll sprinkler, which will irrigate up to 80+ acres M/L. The new side roll irrigation system will be installed before closing and will increase production. There are several outbuildings useful for storage and/or animals. The farm is located in Costilla County, Colorado just north of the New Mexico state line. It is about one hour to Taos. The Rio Grande River is about 12 miles away. Red River Ski area and Rio Grande del Norte National Monument are near Questa, New Mexico about 40 minutes away. The Sand Dunes National Park is about 45 minutes north. **\$550,000** MLS #797313
12272 County Road R5 • San Luis
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PRICE REDUCED

Stately 2,818 Sq Ft. Mountain Home with Stunning Natural Light on 3.19 acres. This beautiful 3 bed 4 bath home is your perfect retreat. Open Split floor plan with beautiful cathedral ceiling and fireplace, large windows taking in the breath-taking outdoor sunlight and mountain views. Complete with beautiful furnishing, accessories and decor. The kitchen with eat in counter, gorgeous custom cabinetry, granite countertops and butler pantry is your dream kitchen for entertaining your family and friends. Separate office space off the dining area with patio door leads out to the great outdoors. There are two guest rooms one with private bath could be considered a separate master bedroom. Large master bedroom with large walk-in closet, fireplace gorgeous walk-in shower and access to deck with hot tub. Take in the stunning views from the main floor outdoor balcony. Your perfect place for that hot morning cup of coffee or relaxing evening glass of wine. This is a luxurious home located with private access to the national forest in The Timbers subdivision of South Fork Ranches. All this, just moments from Rio Grande Golf Club, Rio Grande River gold medal fishing and world class skiing at Wolf Creek Ski area. Don't wait call and schedule your private showing today! **\$1,150,000** MLS #798101
497 Timberline Drive • South Fork
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Brian Williams — bwilliams@valleypublishinginc.com

SOLD

You Found It! Home Sweet Home, Finely Crafted, Ranch Style 2,109 square foot 3 bed 2 bath split floor plan home with detached 4 car garage for all your outdoor tools and toys! Large master bedroom bath with jacuzzi tub. Beautiful open kitchen, dining area with eat in counter, living area with cathedral wood beam ceiling, custom cabinets and wood burning stove. This home has large windows that brings in lots of natural light. Patio doors leading out to your back and front deck with 360 views of the beautiful Colorado mountains. Perfect place to enjoy your morning hot cup of coffee. You have year-round access in Highland Meadows, South Fork, CO, with paved roads, your own well and South Fork water and sanitation. This home is situated on a beautiful 1.1-acre lot with room for your RV, gardens and so much more. Additional heating sources on demand water heater and radiant floor heat to keep you nice and warm all winter long and indoor laundry area. This could be your permanent residence, your home away from home or your perfect vacation home. Moments from skiing at Wolf Creek, A stone throw away from public access to gold medal fishing on the Mighty Rio Grande River. Enjoy nearby hiking, golfing, hunting and 4-wheeling. Start Your Adventure - Won't last long. Call and schedule your personal showing today! **\$489,900** MLS #801796
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Look Reduced Price! \$875,000 Owner Willing to Owner Finance for Qualified Buyer's! Must See Custom-Built 5,350 sq. ft. Commercial Property in Fabulous South Fork, CO. Great Highway 160 exposure! This building is extremely well built. The building was built for retail with many amenities. The environment is warm and welcoming. The 3,000 sq. ft. main floor consist of large receiving office, full kitchen and bath and several large open spaces and two additional design show rooms and large 1,000 sq. ft. heated warehouse with plenty of shelving for storage and 12-foot overhead door. Lovely concrete outdoor patio with new vinyl fencing wired for low voltage lights this property sits on two lots with wiring running outside for lighting off outside signage. 1,350 sq. ft. Spacious upstairs with large open space, several large storage closets two additional offices, New ¾ custom tile bathroom and large storage over warehouse. This well-built property has radiant floor heating downstairs and upstairs baseboard hot water heat. Property is wired for Cat 5 telephone jack in all offices, design rooms, kitchen bar, receiving office - etc. Cable tv jack, upstairs big room. There are 3 gas fireplaces, 2 wall thermostats with remote control. Wired for speakers though out the building for music. Swamp cooler and wired for electric dryer, set up for washer and has a Propane fired boiler and propane hot water heater. This property is a blank canvas with so much POTENTIAL for the right builder or person. Because there is no existing business at the present time, this makes this building available for a variety of Business opportunities: Professional Work Environment for Professionals, Restaurant, Brew Pub, Events Center, Lodge or Cottage hotel, Retail etc. Come Paint your Canvas and start Your Business Adventure. Call and schedule your personal showing today! **MLS#802191** Improved Price **\$925,000!** **\$875,000** MLS #802191
173 W Frontage • South Fork
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NEW

Amazing Riverfront property located in beautiful well established Deer Park subdivision in South Fork, Colorado. This property is complete with paved streets, with sewer and water tap available. Flat building site overlooking the Mighty Rio Grande River with mature evergreen trees. Bring your fishing pole this property extends to the middle of the river. Located only a stone throw away from National Forest and public river access. Start your adventure call and schedule your showing today! **\$175,000** MLS #804121
63 Doe Circle • South Fork
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Adams State receives \$4.6M USDA inaugural grant

By ADAMS STATE UNIVERSITY

ALAMOSA — Adams State University announced recently received a \$4.6 million NextGen grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The inaugural, “From Learning to Leading: Cultivating the Next Generation of Diverse Food and Agriculture Professionals Program,” will support student scholarships and paid internships over the five years.

As Colorado’s premier Hispanic Serving Institution, Adams State will receive \$4.6 million over the five years from the investment. Zena Buser, Ph.D., professor of business, will oversee the program.

“We are excited for the USDA Next-Gen opportunity as it increases support for our students in pursuit of their academic goals as well as their active introduction to the SLV agriculture, food, and natural resources industries. The grant supports scholarships as well as internships, so will reduce students’ economic burden to pursuing a degree while simultaneously supporting their access to hands-on experience in the industry. We also thank our regional employers; they are instrumental to this endeavor as they welcome students into their operations, providing mentorship as well as experiential learning opportunities.”

The USDA \$262.5 million grant is an investment in institutions of higher education to foster the next generation of diverse agricultural professionals across the nation. This program is funded by President Biden’s Inflation Reduction Act, which aims to lower costs for American families, expand access to markets to producers from all backgrounds and communities, build a clean energy economy and strengthen American supply chains.

The National Institute of Food and Agriculture’s (NIFA) “From Learning to Leading: Cultivating the Next Generation of Diverse Food and Agriculture Professionals Program” (NextGen) will enable eligible institutions, from New York to the Northern Mariana Islands, to build and sustain the next generation of food, agriculture, natural resources and human sciences workforce. This includes efforts to strengthen USDA’s workforce through enhanced educational support, experiential learning and exposure to early career opportunities.

Eligible institutions include: 1890 Land-grant Universities, 1994 Tribal Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-serving Institutions (HSI), Alaska Native-serving and Native Hawaiian-serving Institutions and institutions of higher education located in the insular areas, as well as their partners. The \$262.5 million investment will provide training and support to more than 20,000 future food and agricultural leaders through 33 project partners.

“Each generation of agricultural professionals faces new challenges as we feed our world’s growing population, and the future generations give me hope that we will rise to the occasion to meet these challenges with opportunity,” said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. “We need to ensure our youth have the education and training they need to accelerate the development of an agricultural system that is climate-smart, sustainable, profitable and equitable. This historic investment from the Biden-Harris Administration in our nation’s Minority-serving Institutions brings us closer to building a workforce that represents the richness and diversity of all the communities we serve.”

The NextGen program is part of

USDA’s commitment to equity across the Department and steps it has taken under Secretary Vilsack’s direction to improve equity and access, eliminate barriers to its programs for underserved individuals and communities, and build a workforce more representative of America. Earlier in the year,

the USDA Equity Commission, which is comprised of independent members from diverse backgrounds, released its interim recommendations to remove barriers to inclusion and access at USDA, including by strengthening research, extension, and teaching in the food and agricultural sciences at

all minority-serving institutions.

“Adams State University is very excited at the opportunities the USDA Next Gen grant will provide through experiential learning opportunities for high school and college students helping them explore and pursue agriculturally related careers,” said

Adams State Acting Vice President of Academic Affairs Margaret Doell. “The scholarship opportunities provided by this grant will also reduce or eliminate the financial burden of a college education for many of the participants making college an option for all.”

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Mosca-Hooper Volunteer Fire Department holds fundraiser barbecue

By **MARIE MCCOLM**

MOSCA — The Mosca-Hooper Volunteer Fire Department held a community barbecue for the public on Saturday, July 22. There was no charge for the barbecue, but donations were accepted.

The volunteer fire department served beans, roasted pork, coleslaw, mashed potatoes, and a slice of bread with the dinner. There were several beverages to choose from including ice water and lemonade.

At least 150 people attended the community barbecue.

Volunteer firefighters served plates of food to the public. Many of the children who attended the barbecue rode on a fire truck that was honking and flashing its lights as they went down the road.

Volunteer firefighter Tuck Slane spoke about being a part of the department and how he felt about the barbecue.

“I have been with the department now for about 3 years,” Slane said.

“We aren’t super busy, but we do have quite a few calls and we are first responders as well. We have a department here and we also have another station in Hooper. There are 24 volunteer firefighters in total, and others waiting in line to be firefighters. The firefighters and station have been here since 1948. I really enjoyed the barbecue tonight. We do this for the community. We have had lots of people show up tonight and we didn’t run out of food so that’s a good thing. Every year, we try to have this, and it’s usually the weekend before Stampede.”

Slane said that his favorite part of being a firefighter is being helping the community.

“When something happens, something goes wrong you hope somebody comes. I enjoy helping people,” Slane said. “We had an older lady call one time, in the winter, for help. It’s hard to wait and have someone come out from Alamosa or another town. It’s nice



Photo by Marie McColm

Children take a ride on the fire engine at the Mosca-Hooper Volunteer Fire Department community barbecue on Saturday, July 22.

to be local and be able to help the community like that.”

Resident Ricky Dean was at the barbecue with his wife and daughter and stated they he really enjoyed it.

“It’s a nice meal that they give to the community. I think everyone likes to come out and support the fire department. We come every year,” he said.

Jay Young of the Colorado Gator Farm was also at the barbecue and stated, “It was an excellent barbecue. The department is just excellent, they are heroes. We had a fire a few months ago at the Gator Farm and they came out and helped us so much. They got out there, they put out the fire, saved some buildings and saved a bunch

of animals. We really appreciate everything they do. They are not just a fire department they are first responders, too, and they are a very important part of the community, and we appreciate them so much.”

For more information on the Mosca-Hooper Volunteer Fire Department, call 719-378-2339.



Photo by Marie McColm

The Mosca-Hooper Volunteer Fire Department held a community barbecue for the public on Saturday, July 22.

Puzzle Sponsored by MDS Waste & Recycle



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CLUES ACROSS

1. Midway between south and southeast
4. Celebrations
9. Pulpits
14. Pin
15. Rare laughing
16. Parts of the circulatory system
17. Financial term
18. Pearl Jam frontman
20. Cores of vascular plants
22. Strong sharp smell or taste
23. City in S. Korea
24. One from Damascus
28. Short message at the end of an email
29. It cools your home
30. Towards the mouth or oral region
31. Intestinal pouches
33. Boys and men
37. The 12th letter of the Greek alphabet
38. Former CIA
39. A way to arrange
41. Body cavity
42. The Great Lake State
43. A type of seal
44. Stop for a moment
46. Ancient kingdom
49. Of I
50. White clerical vestment
51. Songs to a lover
55. Prices
58. Sun-dried brick
59. Where to park a boat
60. One who values reason and knowledge

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14			15					16				
17			18				19					
20			21				22					
23						24	25				26	27
			28			29			30			
31	32					33	34	35	36		37	
38				39	40					41		
42				43				44	45			
46		47	48				49		50			
51				52	53	54			55		56	57
			58					59				
60	61						62	63			64	
65						66					67	
68						69					70	

64. Partner to feather
65. Sailboats
66. Actress Zellweger
67. Type of screen
68. Country singer Haggard
69. Puts together in time
70. When you hope to arrive

24. Tree resin
25. The academic world
26. Khoikhoi peoples
27. Infer from data
31. Arrives
32. Apart
34. Takes on cargo
35. Beloved Hollywood alien
36. Takes apart
40. Dorm official
41. Secondary or explanatory descriptor
45. Relating to wings
47. Speaker
48. Situated in the middle
52. Loop with a running knot
53. Alaska nursing group (abbr.)
54. Beloveds
56. Establish by law or with authority
57. Border river between India and Nepal
59. Millisecond
60. Revolutions per minute
61. They ___
62. ESPN broadcaster Bob
63. A place to stay

CLUES DOWN

1. An involuntary muscular contraction
2. PA transit system
3. Leaves a place
4. Sweet greenish fruit
5. Lends support to
6. Chap
7. Singer Di Franco
8. Water at boiling temperature diffused in the atmosphere
9. Asserts to be the case
10. Doctor (Spanish)
11. Auction attendee
12. Characterized by unity
13. Soviet Socialist Republic
19. Way to analyze video (abbr.)
21. Nonclerical

Solution to last week's puzzle

3	7	4	2	6	1	9	5	8
9	6	2	5	8	3	4	7	1
5	8	1	7	4	9	6	2	3
2	9	3	8	5	4	1	6	7
1	5	6	9	3	7	8	4	2
7	4	8	1	2	6	3	9	5
6	2	5	4	1	8	7	3	9
4	1	7	3	9	2	5	8	6
8	3	9	6	7	5	2	1	4

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El Pomar Foundation awards \$62,500 to SLV organizations

CONTRIBUTED
COLORADO SPRINGS — El Pomar Trustees approved \$62,500 allocated to 11 nonprofit organizations and government entities in the San Luis Valley at the Foundation's May Trustees meeting. Through the Foundation's grant making process, the following entities were awarded grants:

- Care and Share, Inc. (Colorado Springs) — \$7,000 for San Luis Valley general operating support; Trustee regional merit
- Center for Restorative Programs (Alamosa) — \$5,000 in general operating support; regional merit
- City of Alamosa — \$20,000 for the soup kitchen and emergency shelter; competitive
- Creede Musical Arts Collective, Inc. — \$2,500 in general operating support; regional merit
- Creede Repertory Theatre, Inc. — \$2,500 for technology upgrades at Ruth Humphreys Brown Theatre; regional merit
- Equal Representation of Media Advocacy Corporation (Alamosa) — \$2,500 in general operating support; competitive
- San Luis Valley Animal Welfare Society (Alamosa) — \$3,000 in general operating support; Trustee regional merit
- San Luis Valley Immigrant Resource Center (Alamosa) — \$5,000 in general operating support; regional merit
- The HadaNou Collective (Denver) — \$10,000 for Shooting Stars Cultural and Leadership Center support in Alamosa; regional merit
- Upper Rio Grande Animal Society (Monte Vista) — \$2,500 in general operating support; regional merit
- Valley Citizens Foundation for Health Care, Inc. (Del Norte) — \$2,500 in general operating support; regional merit

Founded by Spencer and Julie Penrose in 1937, El Pomar Foundation has an established legacy of general purpose grant making. The competitive process remains the Foundation's primary vehicle for organizations to receive funding. Additionally, over the last 85 years, El Pomar has either developed or been entrusted with the stewardship of a number of other funds, as well as presenting merit grants in each region recommended by Trustees and regional council members. Competitive applications are accepted on a rolling basis.

In an effort to increase impact and establish connections across the entire state, the Regional Partnerships program was established in 2003. Each of the Foundation's eleven regional councils advises El Pomar Trustees and recommends grants to help support its communities. The San Luis Valley Regional Council recommends grants in Alamosa, Conejos, Costilla, Mineral, Rio Grande and Saguache Counties.

CDOT crews to pave a short section of CO 142

SOUTH VALLEY — Beginning July 24, motorists can expect full stops and up to 20-minute delays while the Colorado Department of Transportation paves Colorado Highway 142 near the Rio Grande. Operations will continue through late August and take place approximately 10 miles east of Manassa (Mile Points 13-15). Motorists are encouraged to plan for lengthy delays, Monday through Thursday between 9 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

CDOT crews will work as swiftly as possible to complete the surface treatment, however, resurfacing operations are weather dependent.

Council members are regional leaders in the business, nonprofit, and public sectors and provide first-hand information about current needs in their own communities. To view a full listing of El Pomar's funds and grant making areas, visit our line www.elpomar.org/grant-making/.

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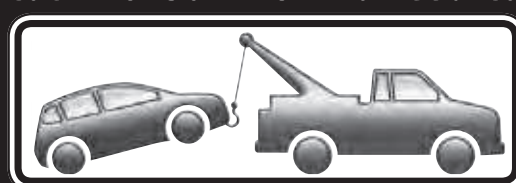
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Agriculture mural on the Fassett Building complete

By MARIE MCCOLM

MONTE VISTA — The agricultural mural on the back side of the Fassett Building is finally complete. Owner of the Fassett Building, Carol Riggenbach, agreed to allow the mural to be done and Monte Vista City Manager Gigi Dennis helped with support and sponsors.

The sponsors for the mural included Molson Coors, Xcel Energy, and the Monte Vista Coop, who provided the paint.

The mural was originally started by Jamie Brodie, but he did not finish it, said Bernadette Hagendorf, who designed the mural and oversaw the projection to completion. She did not provide details on why he did not return, only that he was paid in full to finish it and did not.

Cheryl Morris, a recently retired Monte Vista School District art teacher, volunteered to help complete the mural.

Her talent and time were appreciated by everyone involved, and the mural was officially completed, according to Bernadette Hagendorf, Bill Hagendorf and Colton Hagendorf also gave their time to the mural, spraying it down



Courtesy photo

The agricultural mural on the back side of the Fassett Building is finally complete.

with mural shield, a compound that will keep the mural's colors bright and vibrant for many years to come.

The idea behind the mural was to spotlight the San Luis Valley Central Steam Locomotive No.1. Service on this locomotive originally started in January 1914. The locomotive was named "Little Nell," but was also commonly referred to as the "Pea Vine."

The mural features a large grey black locomotive prominently with white steam billowing from its

stack and from under the wheels. There are fields of rich potatoes growing, the signature crop of the Valley, and brown barley, along with picturesque grain silos, yellow hay bales, a water canal, a well-

structured barn, and some cattle grazing in a large green field. All of it is backdropped by a mountain range and clouds, with a bright orange sun in the corner.

Bernadette Hagendorf thanked

everyone involved in the completion of the mural. She said this is an excellent addition to the town.

The Fassett Building is located at 102 Adams St. in Downtown Monte Vista.

Trujillo Family Reunion set for Aug. 4-6 in Center

CONTRIBUTED

CENTER — The descendants of Maximiliano/Henry and Felina Trujillo from Center will have a "Trujillo Family Reunion" in Center the weekend of Friday, Aug. 4 through Sunday, Aug. 6.

Felina Segura was originally from Garcia and married Maximiliano Trujillo. In this marriage, they had four daughters, Aunt Mabel Alvarado, Colorado Springs, Maxine (Martin) Sanchez, Las Cruces, N.M., Eurcelia (Max) DeHerrera of Center, and Marie (Andy) Barela, Center. Also, they had two sons, Arthur (Gertrude) Trujillo and Mike/Adonis (Cora) Trujillo of Center. Tragically, Maximiliano was killed in an auto accident.

Felina then married Henry Trujillo, who was Maximiliano's brother. From this marriage, came Charlotte (Joe) Salazar, Colorado Springs, Betty (Art) Madrid, Colorado Springs, Edna (Gene) Velasquez of Monte Vista, Lorretta (Leo) Manzanares of 7-Mile Plaza and Orlando (Janice) Trujillo of Denver.

From these 11 families, 69 first cousins were born.

In addition to these 11 families being represented at the reunion, the families of Anselmo (Celia) Trujillo of Center and Crisostomo Trujillo of Montrose will be attending.

On Friday, Aug. 4, there will be a Block Party in Center. This will give the attendees a chance to "meet and greet" long lost cousins.

Saturday, Aug. 5, the families will convene at the Center Community Park to join in festivities such as volleyball, softball, basketball, lawn games and of course, there will be a barbecue. This event is from 10



Courtesy photo

Descendants of Maximiliano/Henry and Felina Trujillo will have a family reunion Aug. 4-6 in Center.

a.m.-5 p.m.

Saturday evening, there will be a dance at the Monte Vista Elks Lodge for the families to put on their "blue suede shoes" and dance the night away.

The final weekend event will be in Center on Sunday morning as the families will gather one last time for breakfast burritos, juice, coffee, and donuts.

Thus far, there are close to 200 family members who have RSVP'd, and more are expected to join in on the festivities over the weekend.

This Trujillo Family Reunion is being organized by Lawrence Trujillo of Center, JoAnn Trujillo, and Freida Trujillo of Alamosa, Peggy Manzanares of 7-Mile Plaza, Zach Manzanares of Denver and Anthony Trujillo of Denver.



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Dark sky celebration to coincide with Perseid showers

By JOHN WATERS

CRESTONE — The 2023 Crestone Dark Sky Celebration will be held at the Crestone Charter School on the evening of Saturday, Aug. 12. The gathering will dovetail with the peak of the Perseid Meteor Showers.

According to NASA, the Perseid shower, which peaks in mid-August, is considered the best meteor shower of the year. With swift and bright meteors, Perseids frequently leave long “wakes” of light and color behind them as they streak through Earth’s atmosphere. The Perseids are one of the most abundant meteor showers with about 50 to 100 meteors seen per hour. NASA has called the Perseids the “fireball champion” of annual meteor showers for its record-breaking frequency of super-bright meteors, known as fireballs.

Meteors come from leftover comet particles and bits from broken asteroids. When comets travel around the Sun, they leave a dusty trail behind them. Every year Earth passes through these debris trails, which allows the bits to collide with our atmosphere and disintegrate to create fiery and colorful streaks in the sky. The meteors can travel at speeds of up to 37 miles per second.

The fragments of space debris that interact with our atmosphere to create the Perseids originate from comet 109P/Swift-Tuttle. This comet takes about 130 years to orbit the Sun once. Comet Swift-Tuttle was discovered in 1862 by Lewis Swift and Horace Tuttle. Swift-Tuttle is a large comet: its nucleus is 16 miles across.

In addition to the Perseid showers, both the Alpha Capricornids (known for bright fireballs) and the Southern Delta Aquariids are active from mid-August through mid-September, and a few extra



Photo courtesy Scott Stevens

At the 2021 Crestone Dark Sky Festival participants gather before dark.

meteors will also appear in the night sky. The charter school is nestled at the foot of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. This year, the festival will be led by Crestone astronomer Scott Stevens who, as a former professional meteorologist, has spent a lifetime thinking and working with the atmosphere.

Stevens has been using instruments to measure the darkness of the skies near Crestone and will kick off the evening by sharing his findings.

“I will review my observations, what contributes to our dark skies, what seasons are better, how clouds affect dark skies, how clear skies do, the Milky Way, and how the population in the Valley as it continues to grow,” Stevens said. “I’ll talk about amateur astronomy, and what can you do on a particular budget. There has truly been a revolution in the last 20-30 years in the night sky [viewing] because of technology.”

The evening will include a discussion about astrophotography and Stevens will offer suggestions on the gear available.

This year the festival will focus more on astronomy than entertainment says Stevens. The presentations will begin inside the school at 7 p.m., lasting about 90 minutes, and then move outside for celestial observations and all the Perseids can offer.

“We can bring our lawn chairs, blankets, binoculars, and watch the meteors,” says Stevens.

In 2021, the International Dark Sky Association (IDA) designated the Town of Crestone as an International Dark Sky Community. The town became the 31st designated as such worldwide, and the fourth in Colorado.

This fall, Stevens says he plans on having two other dark sky events near Crestone on the Baca Grande.

The Valley Courier will have news of those celestial gatherings and more on the Dark Sky Celebration as they become available.

The Crestone Charter School is located at 330 East Lime Ave. For more information, visit www.Darkskycrestone.com.

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~ Sarah S., Google reviews

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San Luis Valley Fair Schedule August 5-12, 2023

Friday August 4

4:00pm Fair Set-up (Clubs Split)

Saturday August 5

9:00-11:00 am Dairy Goat Check-in

10:00am

Mandatory Livestock Exhibitors' Meeting

11:00am

Dairy Goat Judging Followed by Milking Competition

Free BBQ from Rio Grande County Farm Bureau

11:00am-NOON Horse Exhibitors Test

11:00-1:00pm Breeding Livestock Check-in Barrows for Barrow Show Check-in

6:00pm Mike Kelley Memorial Open Barrow Show

Sunday August 6

8:00-9:00am 4-H Dog Check-in

9:00am 4-H Dog Show

9:00am Breeding Beef Show/ Dairy

2:00 - 4:00 pm Market Swine Weigh-in/ Check-in

1:00pm Breeding Sheep Show

2:30-3:30 pm Open Class Check-in

3:00pm Production Meat Goat Show

4:00-6:00pm Poultry Check-in

5:00pm Breeding Swine Show

5:30pm Swine Showmanship

BREEDING STOCK CHECK OUT BY 9:00 PM

Monday August 7

8:00-8:30am Horse Check-in

8:00-11:00am Market Lamb/Market Goat Check-in/Weigh-in

9:00am Poultry Show

9:00am Horse Show

9:00-11:00am 4-H/ FFA Project Check-in

9:00am-2:00pm 4-H/FFA Project Judging

5:00pm Poultry Showmanship

5:30pm Market Swine Show

Tuesday August 8

8:00-8:30am Horse Check-in

8:00-11:00am Market Beef Check-in/Weigh-in

9:00am 4-H Working Ranch Horse Show

10:00-NOON 4-H Fashion Revue & Show

1:00-8:00pm Open Class Judging

1:00pm Rabbit Check-in

5:00pm Poultry Check out

5:00pm Market Goat Show Followed by

Showmanship

Hypnotist - Following Goat Show

Wednesday August 9

8:00am 4-H Gymkhana (Horse Awards Ceremony to follow)

9:00am Rabbit Show

5:00pm

Market Sheep Show Followed by Showmanship

Hypnotist - Following Sheep Show

Thursday August 9

9:00am Creative Cooks Contest

12:00pm Cake Decorating Contest

5:00pm

Market Beef Show Followed by Showmanship

Hypnotist - Following Beef Show

Friday August 11

8:30am Round Robin

4:00pm Sale birds back in pens

6:00pm

SLV Fair Junior Livestock Auction- BBQ Presented by Rocky Mountain Farmers Union

6:00pm Indoor Projects that did not make State Fair Check-Out

6:00pm All State Fair Projects to Extension Office (Extension Staff)

Dance to immediately follow the Sale

Saturday August 12

8:00am Tear Down/ Clean-up (Clubs Split)



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'A growing sense of urgency'

By PRISCILLA WAGGONER

ALAMOSA — A long-anticipated case in the San Luis Valley went before the water court last week with the expectation that the case would take a month to resolve.

That did not happen. Proceedings began Monday morning and, because of a bombshell development on Tuesday, the case was dismissed without prejudice Thursday morning. "Without prejudice" means the case is dismissed for now. If things change, there's room for the case to be brought back to court.

Outside of farmers and ranchers in the Valley, the case was not on anyone's radar. Hydrology, water resources, water rights, subdistricts are all complicated, dense, nuanced issues and difficult to understand for those outside of agriculture. But for those outside of agriculture who think water issues only impact the ag community, it might be advisable to think again.

The case involves a group named Sustainable Water Augmentation Group (SWAG), which operates in the Rio Grande Water Conservation District's Subdistrict No. 1. SWAG has petitioned the water court to grant a water right and an augmentation plan that, if approved, would allow them to function independently of Subdistrict No. 1, which the farmers have been a part of since the subdistrict first became operational in 2011.

At the heart of the issue is a plan crafted, approved, and adopted by Subdistrict No. 1 to require that every acre foot of water taken out of the aquifer is replaced by an acre foot of surface water. Any acre-foot of water not replaced will levy a fee of \$500. The plan has been approved by the top water guy in the state — that is, the state engineer with the Division of Water Resources.

It is a much more aggressive approach than any effort in the past to decrease the amount of water taken out of the aquifer, upon which all the farmers and ranchers in Subdistrict No. 1 rely to survive. But SWAG is in direct opposition to the plan and, criticizing Subdistrict No. 1 for their management of the aquifer, basically wants out.

Cleave Simpson, General Manager of Rio Grande Water Conservation District, sees the plan as necessary for agriculture's survival.

"We've reached this place where we have a growing sense of urgency," he says. "We've cut out 100,000-acre feet of pumping. We ended 2021 at the lowest meter pumping in our history. And we're rewarded for all that with the lowest level of water in January of 2022 that we've ever had. If we're going to survive, in reality, we have to make it more problematic to take more water out of the aquifer than we put back in."

The story behind the story

With about 3,000 wells in operation, Subdistrict No. 1 is the largest, most agriculturally productive subdistrict in the Valley and governs the unconfined aquifer, the largest aquifer in the Valley, with water that is the easiest to access.

As part of their Plan of Water Management agreed to with the state, Subdistrict No. 1 is mandated, by legal statute, to create and maintain a sustainable aquifer by restoring its water to a level identified as "0" — not meaning zero water in the aquifer but the level by which gains and losses are measured — by 2031.

Should the aquifer not be restored to that level "0" by then, the state engineer is empowered to take drastic measures to shut down all wells until the aquifer is restored. The impact of that action in the Valley is immeasurable and would extend beyond agriculture.

That is a tall order with equally high stakes.

Against a backdrop of persistent drought, punctuated by a few "wetter" years, the subdistrict has historically had an approach that is heavy on "carrot" with some "stick" thrown in, all designed to reduce consumption of groundwater. As part of the carrot approach, they have bought property with water rights, offered incentives to take acreage out of production, rewarded conservation efforts that garnered results and offered education on improving soil health. A bill was even passed in the state legislature in 2022 that allocates \$30 million to buy water rights in the San Luis Valley.

The "stick" exists in the form of fees assessed for "over-pumping", designed to act as a deterrent for excessive withdrawals of water with money collected used to fund more financial incentives.

The "carrots" have yielded results. It has been estimated by former Subdistrict No. 1 program manager Marisa Fricke that more than half of the roughly 300 farmers who are part of the subdistrict have employed practices that have resulted in less water being taken out of the aquifer.

At the same time, fees have increased, starting at \$45, then increasing to \$90 and then \$150. Even at that highest rate, there were producers, especially larger growers who pumped large amounts of water out of the ground, that have decided to continue operations as usual and just pay the fee, even when amounts ranged from \$50,000 to \$300,000.

Meanwhile, the aquifer has continued to decline.

In December of 2002, when talk of creating a subdistrict first began, the aquifer was 260,057-acre feet below 0. By 2012, when the drought had worsened and the subdistrict was barely more than a year into operation, the level had dropped to minus-849,136-acre feet. By December of 2022, it was 1,158,539-acre feet below level 0.

One-for-one or a \$500 fee

In a region that averages less than 7 inches of precipitation a year, Subdistrict No. 1 reports in 2023 that 139,801 acres are irrigated with wells pumping groundwater out of the aquifer.

To grow crops currently grown in the Valley, irrigating with groundwater is a must, but it is possible to both irrigate and eventually restore the aquifer if, as hydrology suggests is true, the amount of water pumped out of the aquifer for irrigation is matched by water on the surface (such as what's in creeks, streams and canals) that isn't used for irrigation but, instead, allowed to go back into the ground.

Based upon that hydrology, Subdistrict No. 1 has crafted its Fourth Amended Plan of Water Management that implements a strict one-for-one approach. Every acre foot withdrawn from the aquifer must be replaced with surface water; any acre foot not replaced will prompt a fee of \$500.

That Amended Plan of Water Management is at the heart of SWAG's petition of the court.

According to figures from the Division 3 engineer with the Division of Water Resources, SWAG, which has 257 wells in their plan and is comprised of some of the larger growers in Subdistrict No. 1, consumed 16,179-acre feet of groundwater each year from 2011 to 2021. They pumped more than that but reducing what they pumped by 4,700-acre feet of recharged surface water and other factors taken into consideration, SWAG collectively accounted for 16,179-acre feet that were taken out of the aquifer and not replaced each year for the past 10 years.

SWAG, also required by statute to be "proportionately responsible for creating and maintaining a sustainable aquifer", was petitioning the court to allow them to consume 11,000-acre feet of water — a cut back of 5,000-acre feet from what they currently consume and one they said would "ensure sustainability."

Subdistrict No. 1 disagreed heartily with that assumption.

Under the Subdistrict No. 1 plan, SWAG would be cut back to the 4,700-acre feet, which they could replace with their recharged surface water, and then be assessed a fee of \$500 per acre foot for whatever more they consumed, whether it was the difference between the 11,000-acre feet of water they feel ensures sustainability or the 16,179-acre feet they've been consuming without replacement for the last decade.

As mentioned earlier, the case was



Photo by John Waters

Ditch at Rio Grande Farm Park.

dismissed due to a development that put SWAG's entire case in question. But what the group was petitioning to do highlights the underlying point of the whole situation.

The impact of climate change or aridification, if that term is preferred, is becoming a reality. Highest temperature records are being broken across the southwest and Alamosa is on track to break a record of its own.

While predicting climatological changes is still not a precise science, across the board, all predict that conditions in the San Luis Valley are going to become hotter and drier and water is going to become scarcer.

What is also predictable is that the scarcer water becomes, the more difficult the decisions will be.

"Mother nature has dealt us a horrible hand and we've got to figure out how to deal with it," Simpson recently told the Valley Courier. "The next kind of obvious step is the place where Subdistrict No. 1 is now — this one-for-one

concept.

"It will hurt," he went on to say. "It may even make it impossible for any number of farmers to continue farming when the price of water is at \$500 an acre foot. I understand how difficult that is. But it has to be done to decrease withdrawals."

Since 2011, the "dead-line" of 2031 — when the state engineer was empowered to determine the future of the San Luis Valley based upon levels of water in the aquifer — has hung over the head of farmers and ranchers like a sledgehammer ready to drop.

But Mother Nature may — and probably will — be the ultimate force to decide the Valley's fate. The other deciding factor that cannot be ruled out — at least, not yet — is how those in agriculture will choose to respond to the truth, which is echoed in words Simpson has said before.

"We can't continue to do things the way we've been doing them. We have to find a better way," he said.

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SLV Ag Coalition hosts appreciation picnic and resource fair

By MARIE MCCOLM

CENTER — The San Luis Valley Ag Coalition hosted an appreciation picnic and resource fair on Friday, July 21, in downtown Center at the main park pavilion.

The sun was shining bright, and the smell of hotdogs and hamburgers was strong in the air at the park. Approximately 100 people attended and visited various informational booths. Free drinks, hot dogs and hamburgers were served to everyone in attendance.

The coalition held the fair to provide information to people looking for ag resources as the Valley ramps up for harvest. Many people move from town to town and travel extensively with their agricultural jobs and do not always have resources available to help them while traveling.

Renaé Chavez, of the Community Resources and Housing Development Corporation, explained how the establishment that she works for assists agricultural workers.

“We provide assistance to our migrant seasonal farmworkers,” Chavez said. “We assist them with a



Photos by Marie Mccolm

The San Luis Valley Ag Coalition hosted an appreciation picnic and resource fair on Friday, July 21, in downtown Center at the main park pavilion.

number of things, for example tuition expenses, we help offset the cost of their rent, utilities, food, groceries, it's based on need. Another thing that we do is have a work experience program and an on-the-job training program where we can assist to help offset the wages of our clients who have been placed on a work experience or on-the-job training contract by their employer. Specific other things that we help with are gas,

tools, uniforms, like I said rent, and other supplies that the workers may need. Our guidelines are good. One thing we do ask to meet the criteria is at least 51% of the income in the household does have to come from agricultural work.”

A booth was also set up at the picnic by the San Luis Valley Area Health Education Center, also known as SLV AHEC. Matias Francisco was at the booth and spoke about SLV AHEC.



“We are here to empower and help our community, with special consideration for the underserved population,” Francisco said.

Francisco explained some of the services that SLV AHEC provides include health information, referrals to health agencies, health kits, home covid test kits, food for quarantined families, medicine, and any other services families might need.

Other businesses that attended the fair were La Puente, providing housing in many instances for migrant workers; Otero Migrant seasonal head start, providing head start services to families working in agriculture.

Carol Gurule, who is the secretary for the Board of Directors for the SLV Ag Coalition, stated, “We support from the beginning to the end, that's what we are about.”

Adams State receives \$4.6M USDA inaugural grant

By ADAMS STATE UNIVERSITY

ALAMOSA — Adams State University announced recently received a \$4.6 million NextGen grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The inaugural, “From Learning to Leading: Cultivating the Next Generation of Diverse Food and Agriculture Professionals Program,” will support student scholarships and paid internships over the five years.

As Colorado's premier Hispanic Serving Institution, Adams State will receive \$4.6 million over the five years from the investment. Zena Buser, Ph.D., professor of business, will oversee the program.

“We are excited for the USDA NextGen opportunity as it increases support for our students in pursuit of their academic goals as well as their active introduction to the SLV agriculture, food, and natural resources industries. The grant supports scholarships as well as internships, so will reduce students' economic burden to pursuing a degree while simultaneously supporting their access to hands-on experience in the industry. We also thank our regional employers; they are instrumental to this endeavor as they welcome students into their operations, providing mentorship as well as experiential learning opportunities.”

The USDA \$262.5 million grant is an investment in institutions of higher education to foster the next generation of diverse agricultural professionals across the nation. This program is funded by President Biden's Inflation Reduction Act, which aims to lower costs for American families, expand access to markets to producers from all backgrounds and communities, build a clean energy economy and strengthen American supply chains.

The National Institute of Food and Agriculture's (NIFA) “From Learning to

Leading: Cultivating the Next Generation of Diverse Food and Agriculture Professionals Program” (NextGen) will enable eligible institutions, from New York to the Northern Mariana Islands, to build and sustain the next generation of food, agriculture, natural resources and human sciences workforce. This includes efforts to strengthen USDA's workforce through enhanced educational support, experiential learning and exposure to early career opportunities.

Eligible institutions include: 1890 Land-grant Universities, 1994 Tribal Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-serving Institutions (HSI), Alaska Native-serving and Native Hawaiian-serving Institutions and institutions of higher education located in the insular areas, as well as their partners. The \$262.5 million investment will provide training and support to more than 20,000 future food and agricultural leaders through 33 project partners.

“Each generation of agricultural professionals faces new challenges as we feed our world's growing population, and the future generations give me hope that we will rise to the occasion to meet these challenges with opportunity,” said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. “We need to ensure our youth have the education and training they need to accelerate the development of an agricultural system that is climate-smart, sustainable, profitable and equitable. This historic investment from the Biden-Harris Administration in our nation's Minority-serving Institutions brings us closer to building a workforce that represents the richness and diversity of all the communities we serve.”

The NextGen program is part of USDA's commitment to equity across the Department and steps it has taken under Secretary Vilsack's direction to improve equity and access, eliminate barriers to

its programs for underserved individuals and communities, and build a workforce more representative of America. Earlier in the year, the USDA Equity Commission, which is comprised of independent members from diverse backgrounds, released its interim recommendations to

remove barriers to inclusion and access at USDA, including by strengthening research, extension, and teaching in the food and agricultural sciences at all minority-serving institutions.

“Adams State University is very excited at the opportunities the USDA Next Gen

grant will provide through experiential learning opportunities for high school and college students helping them explore and pursue agriculturally related careers,” said Adams State Acting Vice President of Academic Affairs Margaret Doell.

URGED learns about the impact of CPAC in Valley

By LYNDISIE FERRELL

DEL NORTE — Few people throughout the San Luis Valley know what CPAC is let alone what it does, but Director Jim Ehrlich knows the impact his team has on the economic stability and growth is paramount to farmers from one end of the Valley to the other.

The Colorado Potato Administrative Committee (CPAC) helps farmers from around the Valley produce some of the highest quality potatoes in the nation and some of which are specifically requested by larger companies such as Wal-Mart.

According to Ehrlich, CPAC serves as a means of education for farmers throughout the San Luis Valley as well as the committee who works with each grower to produce high-quality product and to relay issues from farmers to officials to ensure each grower has what they need to produce the best product they can which stabilizes both the economy and agriculture that sustains communities in the Valley.

“I think a lot of people don’t really know what the CPAC committee does,” Ehrlich said during the Upper Rio Grande Economic Development meeting on June 13. “We are

a marketing order for the San Luis Valley. There are a lot of regulatory issues that affect our growers that elected officials need to know about and they need to know what the economic impact of those issues and regulations are. The need for the committee came about in the 1950s after the Great Depression farmers were really struggling here in the United States and so congress wanted to do something about that, and they created the Marketing Order Act.”

A Marketing Order is an agriculturally driven act that bind regulations to a region such as the San Luis Valley that help solve shared issues throughout that region like disease, quality issues and condition of the product. Ehrlich explained that the San Luis Valley alone produces 50,000 acres of potatoes last year which was down from the 73,000 it used to be.

“Some of the problem is water shortages but mainly the issue is that we saturated the market and had to cut back on the amount we produce. It really is a complicated and diverse world that people don’t know is out there,” he said.

Ehrlich continued to speak about some of the issues potato farmers face including storage and longevity

of the potato, needing to understand and fight disease in the plants, the soil versus water consumption and crop yields as well as the rising costs.

“We work through all of these things, and I work with some of the best people,” Ehrlich said. “We are proud of our farmers and Colorado produces the best quality potatoes Nationwide. We may not grow the most, but we grow the best.”

CPAC also spends most of its funds from the USDA on education and research. They work closely with Colorado State University at the research center on the 9N and Highway 285 outside of Center. According to Ehrlich they spent about \$400,000 on research last year to help with some of the issues concerning water and disease. Right now, a new researcher is looking to develop a potato variety that uses less water and a shorter growing season. It can take up to 14 years to develop a new potato variety.

In addition to the research, CPAC hosts the annual San Luis Valley Potato Festival in the fall which includes farm tours where interested people can see potato harvesting firsthand as well as how potatoes are grown, stored, shipped and consumed.

“Potatoes have no sodium, no



Photo by Lyndsie Ferrell

Colorado Potato Administrative Committee Director Jim Ehrlich was the keynote speaker for the Upper Rio Grande Economic Development meeting on Tuesday, June 13. Ehrlich spoke about what CPAC does and how it helps farmers produce some of the nation’s highest quality potatoes.

fat, no cholesterol and regardless of what people say, they are very good for you. They have higher potassium than a banana, so go out and eat more potatoes,” said Ehrlich with a laugh. More information about CPAC can be found on its website at www.coloradopotato.org.

USDA Rural Development announces availability of technical assistance grant funding

Purpose: to lower energy costs for rural business owners, ag producers

By PRISCILLA WAGGONER

WASHINGTON D.C. — U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Business-Cooperative Service Administrator, Dr. Karama Neal has announced that USDA is making \$21 million in technical assistance grants available to provide “hands-on” assistance to agricultural producers and rural small businesses in accessing federal funds for renewable energy and energy efficiency improvements.

A “technical assistance grant” is generally described as funding made available to organizations, agencies, and both for-profit and non-profit groups to help communities in accessing funding that’s available to further needed projects and improvements.

In the case of this grant from the USDA, tribal or local governments, colleges and universities, electric cooperatives and utility companies, and for-profit and nonprofit organizations are invited to apply.

Grants will be awarded to recipients who will use the funding

to provide information on how business owners and agricultural producers can improve the energy efficiency of their operations and use renewable energy technologies and resources. “Hands-on” assistance can also include conducting required energy assessments and audits or helping agricultural producers and small business owners plan, build or develop renewable energy or energy efficiency projects.

Equally important, funding can be used to help rural agricultural producers and small business owners apply for REAP funding.

REAP, administered through USDA’s Rural Development, was created by the USDA to encourage the development of renewable energy in rural areas, and help reduce energy costs for agricultural producers and rural small businesses.

“USDA Rural Development offers these technical assistance grants to ensure fair opportunities for rural businesses, farmers, and ranchers to access the Rural Energy for America Program,” says Armando Valdez, USDA Rural Development Colorado State Director, adding that this “unique option empowers rural Colorado to make climate-smart investments in rural infrastructure to help Colorado, and America, build back better and stronger.

“This funding greatly enhances the ability of smaller projects to participate in REAP. All of these investments and resources are targeting economic prosperity for rural America and are made possible through the landmark Inflation Reduction Act. This investment is great for Colorado and great for a robust future in rural communities.”

USDA will give funding priority to applicants proposing to assist disadvantaged communities, applicants pursuing projects using underutilized technologies, and applicants seeking grants under \$20,000.

For program inquiries in Colorado, email SM.CO.REAP@usda.gov. For additional information, see the July 13 Federal Register which can be found by going to <https://public-inspection.federalregister.gov/2023-14832.pdf>.

As stated in the Federal Register, paper submissions must be received by the Agency no later than 4 p.m. local time on Aug. 15, 2023, in the USDA RD State Office (RDSO) of the State where the project is located to be eligible for funding under this grant opportunity.

Paper submissions from the San Luis Valley can be sent to Armando Valdez, State Director, Denver Federal Center Building 56, Room 2300 PO Box 25426 Denver, CO 80225-0426.

Farmers markets across Valley are in full swing

By LYNDISIE FERRELL

SAN LUIS VALLEY — Farmers Markets throughout the Valley are in full swing, and many are offering locally sourced, fresh produce. The Valley has a rich and inspiring artisan community, and these markets are the best locations to find homemade and homegrown goods.

Beginning at the western end of the Valley, the Creede Farmers Market takes place every Friday and during specific events like the coming Labor Day weekend. The market features fresh produce and locally made arts and crafts as well as a chance to enjoy the downtown scene in Creede on cool Friday mornings. Just one visit to the organization’s Facebook page will provide a list of vendors and goods that are available for the current week’s market. The market takes place on Main Street in Creede

on Fridays from 8 a.m. until 2 p.m.

Coming down Highway 160 and into South Fork, the South Fork Farmers Market takes place on Friday and Saturday mornings at the park next to the South Fork Visitors Center. This flourishing market has everything from fresh produce sourced from Sol Mountain Farms, arts and crafts, freshly popped kettle corn and much more. Vendors line up along the grassy area outside the visitor center.

Thursday nights in Del Norte are the perfect time to catch a tune along the Rio Grande at the Del Norte Town Park hosted by the Town of Del Norte. In conjunction with Music in the Park, Sol Mountain Farm hosts the weekly Mercado Farmers Market. This is a great way to spend a warm summer evening gathering fresh produce, listening to great

family friendly music in a beautiful setting next to the Rio Grande. The market runs from 5 until 9 p.m. each Thursday through Sept. 1.

The Monte Vista Farmers Market has changed locations and now takes place on Friday mornings in Chapman Park right along Highway 160 at the west edge of town. This market is a great place to go for canned jellies, honey, produce and more. Locally sourced produce is also available. This market takes place from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. through the end of summer.

Saturdays should not be missed in Alamosa as one of the Valley’s largest farmers’ markets starts at 8 a.m. and runs to 1:30 p.m. and is in the low on the corner of 6th Street and Ross. This market features live entertainmets, crafts and much more. The market will run through October.



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Courtesy photo

The agricultural mural on the back side of the Fassett Building is finally complete.

Agriculture mural on the Fassett Building is complete

By MARIE MCCOLM

MONTE VISTA — The agricultural mural on the back side of the Fassett Building is finally complete. Owner of the Fassett Building, Carol Rigenbach, agreed to allow the mural to be done and Monte Vista City Manager Gigi Dennis helped with support and sponsors.

The sponsors for the mural included Molson Coors, Xcel Energy, and the Monte Vista Coop, who provided the paint.

The mural was originally started by Jamie Brodie, but he did not finish it, said Bernadette Hagendorf, who designed the mural and oversaw the projection to completion. She did not provide details on why he did not return, only that he was paid in full to finish it and did not.

Cheryl Morris, a recently retired Monte Vista School District art teacher, volunteered to help complete the mural.

Her talent and time were appreciated by everyone involved, and the mural was officially completed, according to Bernadette Hagendorf, Bill Hagendorf and Colton Hagendorf also gave their time to the mural, spraying it down with mural shield, a compound that will keep the mural's colors bright and vibrant for many years to come.

The idea behind the mural was to spotlight the San Luis Valley Central Steam Locomotive No.1. Service on this locomotive originally started in January 1914. The locomotive was named "Little Nell," but was also commonly referred to as the "Pea

Vine."

The mural features a large grey black locomotive prominently with white steam billowing from its stack and from under the wheels. There are fields of rich potatoes growing, the signature crop of the Valley, and brown barley, along with picturesque grain silos, yellow hay bales, a water canal, a well-structured barn, and some cattle grazing in a large green field. All of it is backdropped by a mountain range and clouds, with a bright orange sun in the corner.

Bernadette Hagendorf thanked everyone involved in the completion of the mural. She said this is an excellent addition to the town.

The Fassett Building is located at 102 Adams St. in Downtown Monte Vista.



Photos by Brian Williams

Harvest is quickly approaching for many farmers and ranchers in the San Luis Valley. These photos were taken north of Monte Vista on July 26.

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SLV counties, facing drought and thirsty neighbors

Move to block water exports

By SHANNON MULLANE

ALAMOSA — County officials in the San Luis Valley are adamant: They want their water to stay in the valley so much they're actively building new roadblocks to shut down, or at least delay, attempts to sell it to the Front Range.

The San Luis Valley, home to about 46,000 people in southern Colorado, is at the center of a decades-old story in the West: a water-based tug of war between growing urban areas and rural, primarily agricultural regions. This month, six counties in the valley held public hearings, debated and, for some, approved an agreement to create a new regional oversight board that adds an extra layer of vetting for projects that propose taking water out of the valley.

Locals say they don't have water to spare. Once water leaves a basin, it doesn't come back, and the idea of exporting water threatens their economies and way of life.

"We've seen attempts in the past to export the water from the valley out of the valley," said Vern Heersink, an Alamosa County commissioner. "We're all joined together, not only by the mountains, but the aquifer underneath us. So we should join together and try to protect that really vital asset."

The San Luis Valley is a flat expanse with long, straight roads stretching between the San Juan Mountains and the Sangre de Cristo mountains, which rise like teeth to the west and the east. It's bordered by New Mexico to the south, and to the north, Salida and the Arkansas River.

It's a high-elevation desert where agriculture is the primary economic force, one capable of providing better-paying jobs in the local economy, according to the 2023 Colorado Water Plan. It's even one of the top regions nationwide for growing potatoes, which need 14 to 17 inches of water per irrigation season, or about twice the annual rainfall there of 8 inches.

But its water supply has been threatened by overuse and a long-term drought, just like the water supply in the Colorado River Basin, which lies across the Continental Divide to the west.

Crops are fed by rivers and streams in the Rio Grande Basin or by underground aquifers. In dry years, the runoff from the winter snowpack can be eight times less than average, according to the state water plan, and the valley must comply with legal obligations to share water with New Mexico, according to the 1938 Rio Grande Compact.

Since 1977, water users have pumped so much groundwater that the Closed Basin aquifer dropped by 1.2 million acre-feet, according to the water plan. In 2002, one of the driest years on record for the Rio Grande Basin, engineers recorded a 400,000 acre-foot drop in the valley's aquifers. Water users in the region now face a 2031 deadline to repay the water debt, according to published reports.

"It's just a bad situation all around, and we just can't afford to lose more water. We need to police ourselves more than we have been," said Tom McCracken, a Saguache County commissioner.

Since the 1980s, some enterprising landowners — which some might call water barons — have come up with a few proposals to sell their water to

Front Range counties in need. Locals are familiar with names like American Water Development Inc., Gary Boyce of Stockman's Water, and Sean Tonner of Renewable Water Resources.

The AWDI bought land in the San Luis Valley in the 1980s and unsuccessfully tried to export its water. It sold the land to Stockmans, whose efforts to export water were also stymied.

Valley residents quickly united against those efforts, McCracken said.

"Everyone's against the water exports," he said.

In 2002, The Nature Conservancy bought a portion of the company's land, and it is now part of the Baca National Wildlife Refuge and Great Sand Dunes National Park. The remainder of Boyce's land, Rancho Rosado, was sold to Tonner, former deputy chief of staff for Colorado Gov. Bill Owens, who is an RWR principal.

In 2021, RWR unsuccessfully proposed selling its water to Douglas County, and this year, the company has contributed thousands of dollars to candidates for the Parker Water & Sanitation District Board, one of the largest water providers in Douglas County.

The proposal wasn't viable from the get-go, said Cleave Simpson, general manager of the Rio Grande Water Conservation District, a San Luis Valley resident and a state legislator.

"I listened to them for two years. I watched them attack my character even though I didn't reciprocate," he said. "Without batting an eye, (I) could demonstrate to the Douglas County commissioners, or anyone who wanted to listen, that the proposal was without merit and could not be done."

How the agreement works

Enter the joint planning agreement.

It's not yet finalized, but the intent is clear: Residents want to increase local control over projects that would take water out of the valley. And since what happens in one county impacts others, the officials want an avenue for local governments to weigh in when water export projects are proposed to their neighbors.

If approved as written currently, the intergovernmental agreement would create the San Luis Valley Planning Board, which would include representatives from counties and local towns and cities.

These governments would also agree to create a joint planning area, which includes the six counties in the valley: Alamosa, Costilla, Conejo, Mineral, Saguache and Rio Grande.

If a member of the agreement, say Saguache County, gets a project proposal that aims to export water out of the valley, that triggers a joint planning board review. The extra layer of review does not apply to projects that occur entirely within the valley.

The planning board's job is to scrutinize whether the project meets all the appropriate permitting regulations, some of which are still being updated. After its analysis, the board will make a recommendation for approval or denial of the project and send it to the local government with permitting authority, like Saguache.

The local government makes the ultimate decision, but it must take the board's recommendation into consideration. This involves some tricky legal footwork because the board can't step on a local government's powers, but local officials wanted to give the board some teeth, said Heersink of Alamosa.

The idea is to make the approval process even more cumbersome to stall or delay water export projects.

"We hope it presents a roadblock to an applicant that they're like, 'This is too much to overcome. We don't even want to do it,'" Heersink said. "That's a hope."

The joint agreement becomes active as soon as all six counties in the valley sign on, but some counties are pointing out portions of the agreement that still need fine-tuning from legal teams.

County commissioners from Alamosa and Saguache signed the joint agreement after holding public hearings in early June. Conejos and Mineral counties plan to hold their public hearings in late June.

The county commissioners in Costilla and Rio Grande counties held public hearings on June 6 and June 14, respectively. Rio Grande commissioners decided to table their vote on the agreement after Dusty Hicks, a Rio Grande County landowner and local project manager for a controversial resort proposal on Wolf Creek Pass in Mineral County, pointed out a few provisions that either lacked clarity, specificity or could leave the planning board vulnerable to third-party lawsuits.

Costilla officials tabled their discussion over concerns about how difficult it would be to leave the agreement. Under the current agreement, if a local government decided to split, they're bound by the terms of the agreement for five years after their withdrawal.

The finalization of the agreement could be delayed by a month or more while commissioners consider these local concerns. Once final, it could trigger a moratorium on new water projects in some counties while local officials update related regulations.

"This is a brand-new concept for counties to join together, form a joint planning area and a joint planning board," McCracken said. "We gotta do everything we can do, so innovative strategies are appropriate."

A new spin on water management

This level of regional collaboration is unique, said KC McFerson, a senior planner in the Community Development Office at the Colorado Department of Local Affairs.

Intergovernmental planning boards are not commonly used around the state, but governments do use them to set up joint review processes for development proposals and to formalize coordination among jurisdictions.

As far as McFerson knows, Colorado does not have any active joint planning boards that deal with water issues at the scale of the San Luis Valley agreement, which could include up to 23 local governments.

"Water is an issue statewide. In different ways, but it is an issue. Thinking regionally and planning regionally ... has been on the top of people's minds more and more in my opinion," McFerson said based on her work at the Community Development Office. "Finding more regional frameworks to deal with shared problems is a huge need given the growing pressures from things like drought."

The San Luis Valley plan also relies on an act passed in the 1970s, House Bill 1041, commonly known as 1041s. The statutes allow local governments to designate areas and activities as matters of state interest and to create corresponding local rules and regulations to manage them.

Each county in the San Luis Valley is creating or updating its 1041 regulations as part of this process. For example, they're adding provisions to say that site selection and construction of new water systems, or extending existing water systems, are matters of state interest.



Photo by Dean Krakel, Special to The Colorado Sun

Fourth generation San Luis Valley farmer Tyler Neeley checks a pivot irrigation system on land his family farms along the Rio Grande near Del Norte, Colorado on July 19, 2022.

Other counties have used the 1041 statutes to co-regulate planning issues that go beyond one jurisdiction's borders, often related to oil and gas regulations, historical preservation efforts or natural hazards areas. Some counties have used the statutes on water-related issues, typically dealing with wastewater treatment, McFerson said.

"Using 1041 powers isn't new. Using IGAs isn't new. Doing regional thinking isn't new. But putting all that together to face this emerging and growing issue around how do we effectively meet needs with this limited and increasingly strained resource? That is a new spin," she said. "I'm going to be watching this on the edge of my seat. Because I want to know, what are the lessons learned? What pitfalls do they run into? How do they overcome them?"

An additional layer of regional control will help the San Luis Valley with its water export pressure, but it's not an end-all solution.

In Saguache County, McCracken has been advocating for other ideas, like investing in research into alternative crops, soil health programs that could help improve the water-retention of the soils, and even agrotourism and dark-sky tourism along Highway 17. There, drivers see signs for the "cosmic highway" and "UFO, UFO, UFO" flash by as they drive north or south across the valley.

Securing the San Luis Valley's future is a joint effort and this intergovernmental planning board has reinvigorated that collaboration, he said.

"I think we can carry that unity onto other activities and areas of concern for the valley," McCracken said. "I think it's a real positive thing that way."

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