

Shorts

Creede Arts Council's Music in the Park to feature classical musicians

CREEDE — A family-friendly, outdoor concert is set for the Pavilion in Jim Basham Park from 2-4 p.m. on Aug. 14, featuring operatic classics, American standards, country music, and more.

Performances by Alexandra LoBianco, soprano; Jeremy Reger, piano; Greg Zuber, marimba; and Patricia Wolf Zuber, flute as well as appearances from some of Creede's local musicians.

LoBianco and Zuber appear courtesy of the Santa Fe Opera. In case of rainy weather, the Music in the Park on Aug. 14 will be held in a tent to the south of the Creede Hotel.

Music in the Park is sponsored by the Creede Arts Council. CAC is offering this concert in conjunction with the Creede Musical Arts Collective. This concert is **free** and open to the public. No ticket needed.

FAMLI Town Hall is Aug. 11 in Alamosa

ALAMOSA — The Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE)'s Division of Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) will be hosting a community meeting in Alamosa to prepare businesses for Colorado's paid family and medical leave insurance program in early August. The FAMLI Town Hall will be from 12 to 1 p.m. on Aug. 11 at San Luis Behavioral Health Group, 8745 County Road 9 S in Alamosa.

The FAMLI Division is traveling across the state to provide an overview of the program, answer questions and help businesses prepare for the rollout of premium deductions beginning in January 2023. The new voter-approved initiative will ensure workers across the state won't have to choose between earning a paycheck and taking care of themselves or a loved one when life happens. The Alamosa Town Hall is one of 15 statewide community meetings the Division is hosting through October. A complete schedule is listed on famli.colorado.gov.

Attendees are encouraged to RSVP with the Division on famli.colorado.gov.

New high school principal highlights change at Center Schools



Nicole Neufeld

By **PATRICK SHEA**

CENTER — Classrooms are humming again at the Center Consolidated School District, highlighted by a new high school principal, Nicole Neufeld.

Although Neufeld isn't new to the district, her current position fits with the trajectory of her career. Principal Neufeld started as a special education teacher at Sangre de Cristo Elementary 16 years ago. Then she spent two years managing kindergarteners at Haskin Elementary, her first position in the Center School District.

Neufeld stretched beyond the

classroom from 2013 through most of 2021 before returning to Center last November to teach secondary special education. For the intervening eight years, Neufeld held the position of Associate Director of the Early Childhood Council of the San Luis Valley.

The Early Childhood Council of the San Luis Valley concentrates on the connection between education, family stability, and available services for early childhood development. Neufeld's experience in the classroom helped her contributions to the Council, an experience likely to bolster

her job as a principal.

After Neufeld returned to the district last fall, Center High School principal Kevin Jones took a job as Superintendent for Sierra Grande School District at the conclusion of the 2021-22 school year.

Neufeld started her new leadership role this summer. She started her career in education by earning a bachelor's in Sociology at the University of Colorado in Boulder. She then earned her master's in Educational Leadership and Early Childhood Education from CU-Denver.

Please see NEUFELD on Page 6A

Crestone Music Festival drums up dancers

By **PATRICK SHEA**

CRESTONE — Tom Dessain, Executive Director of Crestone Performances Inc., steered another Crestone Music Festival to success on Aug. 6 with the help of volunteers, vendors, quality performers, and decades of experience putting on public spectacles.

Before an interactive demonstration of a Brazilian tradition called "Capoeira," Dessain said, "We take acts like you're about to see to the schools in Saguache County, Salida, and into the San Luis Valley. The Japanese Taiko Drummers that you saw earlier, they're our most popular act in the schools. We've done 25 shows over 20 years with the Taiko Drummers." Saturday marked the 21st

Please see MUSIC on Page 6A

Drummers and dancers filled downtown Crestone on Aug. 6 for the 21st Annual Crestone Music Festival, another blend of performance, participation, and education.

Photos by Patrick Shea



At the end of the Capoeira demonstration at the Crestone Music Festival, members of the audience paired up with experts to work through the movements together.



Courier photo by Priscilla Waggoner
Colorado Attorney General Phil Weiser while in the SLV meeting with victims, law enforcement officials, members of the public and the Valley Courier related to his interim role in leadership of the District Attorney's Office of the 12th Judicial District following the resignation of former DA Alonzo Payne.

The start of a new chapter

By **PRISCILLA WAGGONER**

ALAMOSA — "We're rebuilding. It's going to take time. We're in this for a while."

That was the takeaway from two of the conversations Attorney General Phil Weiser had during his trip to the San Luis Valley this week. While the settings were different — one, a conversation with the Valley Courier

Please see WEISER on Page 7A

San Luis Valley Fair is underway

STAFF REPORT

MONTE VISTA — The San Luis Valley Fair was buzzing with activity on Monday, Aug. 8, inside and out.

The fair setup took place early Saturday, Aug. 6, morning followed later that night with the ever-popular Ranch Rodeo — buckles and cash went to Almost Singleton's, Johnson Ranches, Day Thugs and ARJ Ranches.

There were also children and adults who have been working hard on other items for the fair, including homemade cakes, home-grown produce, woodworking, pictures,

and other handiwork that will be judged and on display at the fair through Aug. 12.

The fair got rolling on Sunday with the 4-H Dog Show, followed by Dairy Goat judging and Milking competition and the Mike Kelley Memorial Open Barrow Show.

Please see FAIR on Page 4A

The washing station at the San Luis Valley Fair in Monte Vista was full of people washing their swine for the breeding show and showmanship later in the afternoon.

Photo by Brian Williams



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OBITUARIES

Carla Jayne Worley May 21, 1957 — July 25, 2022

Carla Jayne Worley passed away peacefully on July 25, 2022, after a long battle with ovarian cancer. Carla was born on May 21, 1957, in Monte Vista, Colo., to parents Carl and Audrey Worley. She was the third or middle daughter out of five girls.

After she graduated from Sargent High School, she attended Colorado State University where she attained a Bachelor of Science Degree in Civil Engineering. She moved to Denver and worked for several years with Leonard Rice Engineers as a water engineer.

In 1984 she moved back to the Sargent community to join the family farming operation with her father and two brothers-in-law and continued farming with the inclusion of her three nephews. From an early age she loved playing in the dirt and water. Carla truly was a pioneering woman in agriculture and in the potato industry not only locally but nationally as well.

She was a member of the Colorado Certified Potato Growers Board of Directors. She served as a Board member on the United States Potato Promotion Board for 12 years including service on the Executive Committee. She served on the Rio Grande County Museum Board of Directors and on the Sargent Community Church Board of Directors and the Pastor/Parish Relations committee.

She inherited her interest and passion for water from her father Carl and when the opportunity arose, she took his position on the Rio Grande Canal Board of Directors, she held that position from 2006-present. She also served on the Rio Grande Water Users Board from 2009-2017. She was a member of the Sub District No. 1 Board of Managers from its inception until the present.

Carla, though she never married, lived a full life, never backing down from a challenge. She was instrumental in the start-up and operation of one of the first on-farm tissue culture lab and greenhouse operations in the San Luis Valley, producing disease-free plantlets and mini-tubers.

She got her pilot's license, loved traveling around the country and beyond, she wrote computer programs for the Hi-Land Potato Company. Anything from sitting down and sewing Barbie doll clothes or making clay figurines or working for hours putting a puzzle together, nothing was out of the question.

She loved kids, not only her nieces and nephews and great nieces and nephews, but she always found time to help other kids in the community. She was a 4-H leader for many years teaching youngsters to sew. She also served as the SLV



Fair Board manager. She was a volunteer with Kid's Hope helping kids with school work and after school activities.

As a dedicated member of the Sargent Community Church, she enjoyed teaching Sunday school, Bible study, singing in the church choir and worshipping with friends and neighbors.

Carla joins her parents Carl and Audrey in heaven and leaves behind her four sisters: Annette (Tom) Hosmann of Springfield, Mo., Kerry Worley of Creede, Colo., Gail (Bob) Mattive of Monte Vista, Colo., and Yvonne (Lee) Seaman of Highlands Ranch, Colo.

What she cherished most was being Aunt Carla to her nine nieces and nephews and 12 great-nieces and nephews: Matthew (Samantha) Smartt (Dali, Tristin) of Monte Vista, Colo., Christopher Hosmann of Lee's Summit, Mo., Grant (LaRae) Mattive (Lane, Cason) of Monte Vista, Colo., Andrea (Nick) Denning (Brooke, Layla) of Littleton, Colo., Timothy (Alyssa) Hosmann of Lee's Summit, Mo., Marcia (Eric) Stephens (Kimaya, Keiryn, Kalina) currently stationed in Italy, Megan (Brandon) Cleghorn (Hudson) of Monte Vista, Colo., Michelle (Curtis) Jones (Emma, Carson) of Columbus, Ga., and Reid Mattive of Center, Colo.

She wasn't just Aunt Carla to them; she was Aunt Carla to Everyone. We will always remember her energy, her positive outlook on life and her "glass half full and Can Do" attitude.

A memorial service is scheduled for 2 p.m. on Thursday, Aug. 11, 2022, at the Sargent Community Church.

Contributions are suggested to the San Luis Valley 4-H and may be made in care of the funeral home office. To express condolences, please visit www.rogersfunerals.com.

Rogers Family Mortuary in Monte Vista is in care of the arrangements.

Robert Virgil Clark

Robert Virgil Clark, 73 (Robbie to everyone who knew him) went to join his little dog, Clara, in heaven on July 24, 2022, in Yuma, Ariz. Robbie was born on Nov. 10, 1948, to Delmar V and L Ruth Clark.

He and his wife, Connie, were married for 53 years. Robbie always thought his greatest accomplishments in life were being a good husband and a good father to their three sons, Fritz, of Ada, Okla., Justin (Kelli), of Grand Junction, Colo., and Jeremy (Bridget), of East Aurora, NY, and especially a good grandfather to his four grandchildren, Jesse and Mathew, of Grand Junction, Colo., and Brooklyn and Aiden, of East Aurora, NY.

He often expressed how proud he was of his sons and grandchildren. There was no limit to the support he gave whether it was football, baseball, wrestling, golf, soccer, volleyball, gymnastics, rodeo or their academic successes.

Robbie graduated from Monte Vista High School where he excelled in football, wrestling, and track. He laughed when he told friends that this "little fat guy held the school record in the 100 yard dash."

He also was a bull rider and later a team roper where he won the Ski-Hi Stampede with his son Fritz. He was on the Ski-Hi Stampede Committee for 20 years where he generated many great memories and a whole lot of great friends.

Later in life Robbie took up golf, mainly to spend time with his grandson Aiden. He also spent many hours elk and deer hunting.

Robbie owned and operated J & R Sales with his sons. When he sold the business, he was the equipment salesman for the Monte Vista COOP.

When they retired, Robbie and Connie made the decision to become snowbirds and spent the last six years between Monte Vista and Yuma, Ariz. They loved the warm weather and low elevation.

Robbie was preceded in death by his parents, Delmar V and L Ruth Clark and, of course, his special little traveling partner, Clara.

He is survived by his wife, Connie, his three sons, four grandchildren, and his two sisters, Nona (Kenneth) VanIwarden, of Monte Vista, Colo., and Lynette Freel, of Albuquerque, NM, his forever brother in law, Rod Freel, Belen, of NM. He is



also survived by his nieces, Christy (Monte) Smith, Tandy Freel, Blair (Brian) Lopez, and great nephews Luke and Trey Jones, and Joey and Alex Lopez.

A celebration of life will be held on Aug. 20, 2022, at 11 a.m. at the new Ski-Hi building with lunch to follow.

In lieu of flowers, please make donations to "Ski Hi Stampede Committee for Tough Enough to Wear Pink Stephanie Miner Imaging Center" or "Ski Hi Stampede Scholarship," PO Box 391 Monte Vista, CO 81144.

Jerry Paul Bethe

Jerry Paul Bethe, 82 of Monte Vista. On May 5, 1940, an amazing man was born. The youngest of three born to Ernest E. Bethe and Dorothy L. (Dahl). Jerry married the most patient woman on the planet and the love of his life Emma Jean (Swinehart). Together they raised daughter Helen Harris, were blessed with two grandsons Danny and Jerry Harris and celebrated 56 1/2 years of wedded bliss.

Dad was kind, extremely generous and hard working. It took a while, but he was finally after 40-plus years talked into retirement. He promptly fast talked his way into a brand new RV, packed his bride and a lifetime of stuff into 40 feet and hit the open road.

Still up with the sun, but now his own boss, Dad would be where he wanted and take his sweet time getting there! Along the way, the old fart and his bride made many wonderful memories and many wonderful friends. Eventually they hung up the keys to the RV and settled in his hometown of Monte Vista, Colo.

As his health declined Dad

expressed the desire to be at home with mom and for heaven's sake, no fanfare! As a family we made him as comfortable as possible. Dad never rested however, he kept busy making sure that mom ate, slept and was going to be OK.

On July 16, 2022, at 10 a.m., Dad passed peacefully and at home with his family. He was welcomed to his Heavenly home by both parents, one brother Corky Bethe (Flora), and many other friends and family.

He is survived by his wife Jean Bethe, daughter Helen Harris (Kyle Moderie) and grandsons Danny and Jerry Harris, nieces, nephews, many close friends and brothers and sister in Christ.

His wise words, broad shoulder and infectious laugh are missed already. We love you Papa, a bushel and a peck and a hug around the neck! OXO

Cremation was chosen and celebration of life will be held on Aug. 12, 2022, at 2 p.m. in South Fork, Colo., at the Emmanuel Chapel. Services are in the care of Strohmayer's Funeral Home in Monte Vista, Colo.



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OPINION & EDITORIAL

Rocks in my head

Ol' Dutch comes from a very long line of rock collectors, so it comes as no surprise that I find all kinds of "treasures" scattered on the ground wherever I go. While most people walk around with their head up and eyes front and center to keep from running into things, if you watch me very much you will notice my eyes are always glued to the ground in front of me. This has caused me to walk into no small number of things as I stroll along which is a little embarrassing to say the least.

So, whether it's a malformation of the spine due to childhood abuse of being forced to look for rocks on vacations or just a learned trait, Ol' Dutch is always looking for the next great find.

This past week Miss Trixie had overcommitted, as usual, to entertaining people and Ol' Dutch found himself out in a dry creek in Colorado looking for petrified wood which is an ancient tree that now has turned into stone. Exiting the Jeep with my usual good attitude about such things which is easily identified by me saying "I don't want to do this," we ambled slowly across the rattlesnake-infested terrain toward a small wash.

Miss Trixie and said child to whom she had obligated us to entertain, took off like a shot in the dark while Ol' Dutch assumed the position. Head down, eyes scanning the ground and anticipating a neck ache sure to follow later that night. They say it's better to be lucky rather than good and I think that does play a part in a lot of what Ol' Dutch experiences all the time including snagging Miss Trixie in her weakest moment.

But also, years of looking for rocks on the ground does help to develop a trained eye for just what you are looking for. And so was the case, as not 100 feet from the dirt road, Ol' Dutch looked down and saw a beautiful stone arrowhead lying on the ground. Even to me it always seems somewhat miraculous that a person would find a 10,000-year-old hunters tool and when I hold them in my hands, I try and envision just what was going on with them the day they lost it.

Which leads me to the rest of the story as Paul Harvey used to say. Not too long ago, Ol' Dutch received a phone call from his father, Fast Freddy of Dodge City, Kan., fame, to come to Kansas and get some of my family inheritance. Now for some of



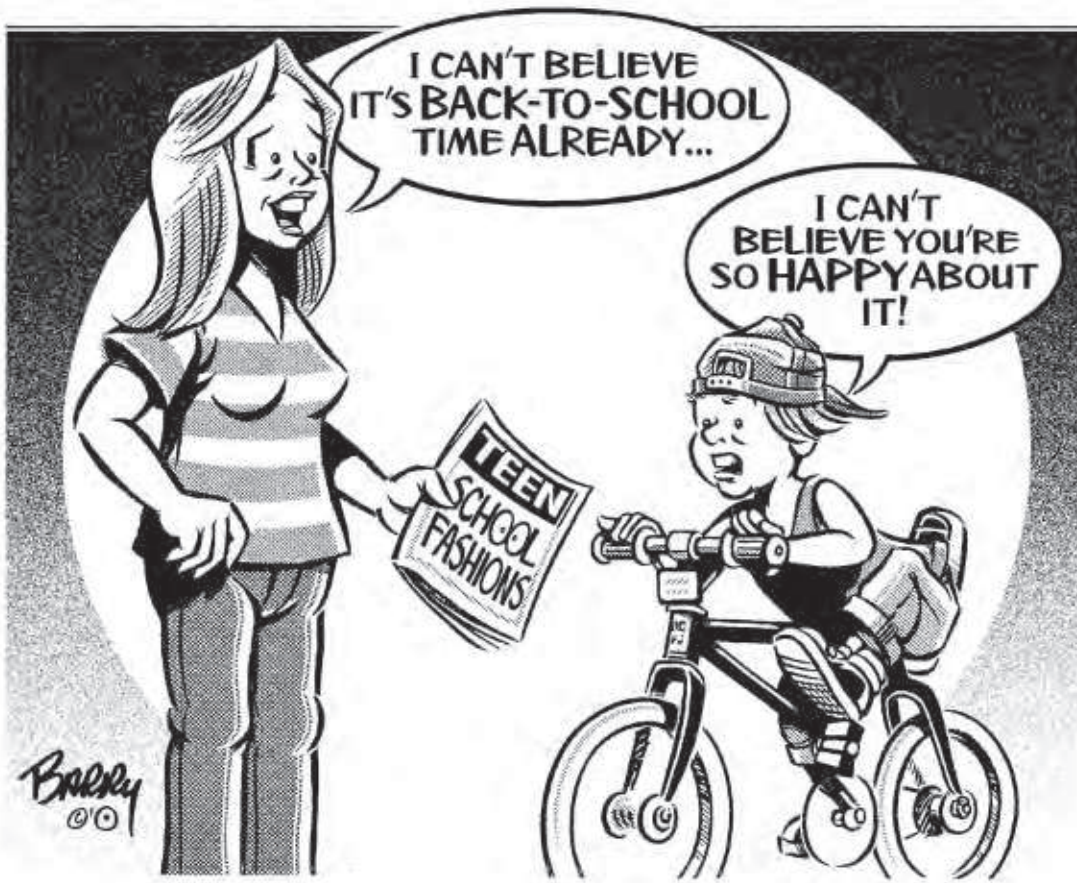
Trout Republic
by Kevin Kirkpatrick

you that would include such things as money which is always welcome but Ol' Dutch is smarter than that as Fast Freddy comes from a long line of Scottish ancestors who are always known for being able to squeeze a dime out of a nickel.

But wanting to see him anyway and curious as to what possible valuable item I might glean from such a visit, I took off for the flatlands and my ancestral digs. Now I am not sure how I became so lucky, but incredibly, my father selected me amongst all my clan to be the next "keeper of the rocks." As I mentioned before I come from a long line of rockhounds and so generations of digging and picking all over the country has yielded a plethora of beautiful specimens all of which must be kept so the dearly departed do not turn over in their graves. And that is why some 2,000 pounds of rocks now reside in my barn, until I can pass them on. Luckily Granddaughter #2 has caught rock fever so Ol' Dutch can rest easy knowing the collection is in safe hands for the next two generations.

If you have never looked for rocks, there is no time like the present to get out there and find some of your own. It's good exercise, good for the soul and a great way to entertain kids who already spend too much time playing video games. And if you hustle, you too can have your own family rock collection to leave to your kids for them to have to store. They'll thank you for it.

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



YOUR NIGHT SKY

BY DARLENE DANKO

Early morning and evening viewing

Don't forget that the Perseid Meteor Shower peaks on Aug. 12. Even though that time is a full moon, it sets close to 4 a.m., so then we can go out and view them.

We've been so cloudy, and I hope that the clouds go away for that day. Even though we had a lot of rain, thunder, and lightning recently, the sky cleared out overnight. So, I hope it continues to do that.

Mercury is visible low in the west after the Sun sets. It will be visible most of this month. You'll just have to look low in the west for Mercury. So, this is an evening viewing.

Jupiter is 2 1/2 times Mars's distance from Earth, but it's 8 times wider than Mars. Plus, its gaseous atmosphere reflects more sunlight than Mars, 50%

vs. 15%. All of that makes Jupiter the second-brightest object in the sky these mornings. Of course, the moon is the brightest. It currently rises at 11 p.m. By the end of this month, it will rise before 9 p.m.

Saturn rises in the east by 9 p.m. It reaches visible opposition on Aug. 14. So, it's visible all night in the south. Mars is visible in the southeast in the morning. Venus is a brilliant morning star. It rises 2 hours before the Sun in the east.

The Studio Tour is coming up this Saturday, Aug. 12. There are three of us in South Fork, and more in Creede. It occurs from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. There will be signs around, but you should first drive up the highway that goes to Creede. Before you go over the bridge there will be a left turn for you to take. That's Ponderosa Drive. A little past the Train Station there will



be a road on the right (Deer Run) that you need to turn onto.

Just be careful that you look at the railroad tracks to make sure there are no railbikes coming. Then you can cross the railroad tracks. The road will turn left and go up a little hill. There are three houses above the hill, and mine is the middle one with a three-car garage. There will be signs there, and my studio is behind the garage, so you have just go around it to the back of the house. There will be three steps to get up to the deck, and then the door to my studio is just on the right. Hope to see you!

LETTER

Lost Valley of the San Juans Property Owners appreciate effort during Plumtaw Fire

Editor,
On behalf of the Lost Valley of the San Juans Property Owners, the Lost Valley Property Owner's Association, and the Mountain Light Lodge and Voice of the Wilderness, we would like to extend our extreme appreciation to all the men and women with the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Wildland Fire Fighters, Mineral County Commissioners, Mineral County Sheriff's Department,

Mineral County Emergency Services, Archuleta County Commissioners, Archuleta County Emergency Services, Archuleta County Sheriff's Department, Archuleta County Road and Bridge, Pagosa Springs Fire District, Pagosa Springs EMS, and other personnel for the phenomenal job of protecting the Lost Valley of the San Juans and the Four Mile Water Shed, during the Plumtaw Fire.

Without the tireless efforts and professionalism of those involved, we

have no doubt our homes would have been destroyed by the Plumtaw Fire. And to the residents of Archuleta and Mineral County, thank you for your kind offers to the residents of the Lost Valley for places to stay during the evacuation and donations of food and drinks. Words are not enough to express our deepest gratitude. Thank you!

*Tamie Hemphill
Lost Valley of the San Juans
Property Owner*

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MUSIC

Continued from Page 1A

anniversary of the festival. Dessain and his crew have produced 251 shows over the decades, featuring almost 50 different presenters. Events have highlighted steel drummers, jugglers, a falconer, and many other acts from all over the world. Dessain mentioned that they are reviving Open Mic Night for students this fall.

Two of the acts sandwiched between original songwriters, aerial acrobatics, drumming, blues, and jazz on Saturday also highlight the school shows. The Taiko Drummers performed mid-afternoon, and a group from Colorado Springs and Brazil showcased Capoeira before ONDA

closed out the night with Latin-infused dance grooves. Capoeira is a Brazilian martial arts practice from the 19th Century, a combination of dance and combat movements.

Crestone's own Malana Ramadei spun for the crowd.

"We started playing music together when she was in sixth grade," Dessain told the crowd before she started her show. "Just letting you know; Malana can really play the trap set drums."

Suspended above the ground, Ramadei's aerial display entailed wrapping herself in fabric while twirling, twisting, and unraveling to the ground. She performed twice

during the festival.

Blue Rooster featured a few more musicians on-stage for their refined renditions of classic rock cover songs. Earlier in the lineup, a trio of bass, guitar, and cello called Rhondavoo shared jazz standards and more. Rhonda Schoenecker played guitar and sang. On cello, Mark Dudrow provided more vocals while Charley Johnson sang and played bass.

The bouncy house throbbed with children throughout the day, and bands took turns on two adjacent stages made possible by generous sponsors. Thanks to Amica's Pizza in Salida, one stage was fully funded.

The Crestone Community Stage received money from Crestone Mercantile, The Crestone Eagle, Joyful Journey Hot Springs Spa, Shumei International Institute, Alamosa Live Music Association, Crestone Creative Trade, Valley Roots Food Hub, Higher Elevation Dispensary, One Eleven Dispensary, Shaman 1214, Harrell Quality Homes, and Shangrilah Colorado LLC.



Photos by Patrick Shea
Homegrown fabric aerialist Malana Ramadei spun for the crowd twice during the Crestone Music Festival on Aug. 6.

Left: Before ONDO closed out the night with Latin-driven dance jazz, Tom Dessain announced nine raffle winners with passes for two to Joyful Journey Hot Springs Spa, Valley View Hot Springs, or Sand Dunes Recreation.

FAIR

Continued from Page 1A

The fair continued Monday with the Open Class and 4-H-FFA Project judging inside the Outcalt Event and Conference Center.

Outside in the Livestock Pavillion the Breeding Beef Show-Dairy Calf Show began shortly after 9 a.m. on Monday, followed by the Breeding Sheep Show, Production Meat Goat Show, Breeding Swine Show and Swine Showmanship.

Tuesday's schedule included the 4-H Fashion Revue from 10 a.m. to noon and the 4-H Fashion Show at 7:30 p.m. indoors; 4-H Working Ranch Horse Show at 9 a.m. in the arena, and the Market Swine Show at 5:30 p.m. in Pavillion.

Wednesday will see the 4-H Gymkhana in the arena at 8 a.m.; the Rabbit Show at 10 a.m. in the McMullen Building; the Market Lamb Show at 5 p.m. in the Pavillion; and the 101st Country Band inside the event center.

The Meat Goat Show and the Market Beef Show are at 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. respectively in the Pavillion on Thursday.

The Junior Livestock Auction takes center stage at 6 p.m. on Friday in the Pavillion, followed by a street dance.

The SLV Fair runs from Aug. 6-13 in Monte Vista. For more information, visit online slvfair.com.



Photos by Brian Williams

Two pigs appear to be sleeping on Monday in the McMullen Building at the San Luis Valley Fair in Monte Vista.



Young horse riders wait their turn on Monday at the San Luis Valley Fair.



Young horse riders put their horses to work during the 4-H Horse Show in the Ski-Hi Complex Arena on Monday of the San Luis Valley Fair.



Vendors were set up inside the Outcalt Event and Conference Center while open class and 4-H-FFA projects were being judged on Monday at the San Luis Valley Fair.

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RG County Emergency Manager gives July updates

By **LYNDSIE FERRELL**

RIO GRANDE COUNTY — Rio Grande County Emergency Manager Art Wittner gave a brief update during the Rio Grande County Commissioner meeting held on July 27. Wittner said right off that July had been busy for his department and that several things were beginning to wrap up along with summer.

Wittner explained that the Hazzard Mitigation Plan that has been in the works for several months now is on schedule. According to Wittner, he spoke during the Emergency Support Function 5 meeting last month and that per suggestions from the vendors at the meeting, sent out a survey to department heads for their feedback on the plan. Wittner said that the survey is showing a 50 percent response for the county and that compared to other county's participation, 50 percent was a good start.

"There will be another survey coming out and it will go strictly to the commissioners, to the sheriff, the first responder entities and to the town managers throughout the county for their completion and hopefully we can have that done by Aug. 15," said Wittner.

The process for the Hazard Mitigation Plan begins at the local

level and works its way through state and federal before it is approved and completed. It identifies local and state hazard risk and how each community would deal with emergencies on the local level before other state and federal resources are brought in during an emergency.

Wittner continued his report stating that there would be an emergency manager retreat in Hinsdale County this year and that Hinsdale was part of the regional emergency management group. The focus for this year's retreat will be Regional Tactical Interoperability Communication plan, also known as the TIC plan.

"In the two years I have been in this position, that has been one of the biggest issues I have dealt with," he said. "Communications during emergencies with feds, state and some local entities. This will be a way for us as a region to formulate a plan, present the plan and get it approved through the state for utilizing channels and finding out what is available to us."

In addition to the retreat, Wittner will also be attending the Local Emergency Preparedness Coalition Conference in September. The conference pertains to Tier One facilities.

According to Wittner, Rio Grande County has 13 Tier One facilities



Photo by Lyndsie Ferrell

Rio Grande County Emergency Manager Art Wittner gave a brief update to Rio Grande County Commissioners during their meeting on July 27 and briefed the board about coming retreats, training and the status of the Hazard Mitigation Plan.

and Tier One facilities are locations that have hazardous materials and that anything over a certain quantity will be considered Tier One. This would include fertilizer and other agricultural chemicals used during ranching and farming operations.

Wittner also said that he was able to get some radios to be used for commissioner communications

during an emergency like the Monte Vista Fire earlier this year and that Conejos County and Colorado Department of Transportation were kind enough to donate radios that they were no longer using. These radios will be used by select county officials, including commissioners, to monitor communications during an emergency.

Wittner ended his report by reminding people to remain vigilant during the fire season, despite recent rain.

"As far as fire danger goes, even though we have been getting a lot of rain, it still isn't enough, so people need to continue to be cautious as we move through the rest of summer," he said.

'Perfect Love' is Women's Conference Theme



SUBMITTED ARTICLE

ALAMOSA — "Perfect Love" is theme of the 33rd Annual Southern Colorado Women's Conference scheduled for Sept. 30 and Oct. 1 at Calvary Bible Chapel, 7160 Brush Lane. The featured speaker will be international speaker and best-selling author Janet Perez-Settles (formerly Eckles) from Orlando, Fla. The theme text for this year's conference is I John 4:18 : "Perfect Love Casts Out Fear."

Perez-Settles was born in Bolivia and came to the United States when she was 12. She has been called "a powerhouse of motivation" as she empowers 1,000's to rise above any setbacks.

Her key-note messages are drawn from her four inspirational books, including her Amazon best-selling No. 1 "Simply Salsa" where she teaches the simplicity of finding joy

even in the midst of chaos.

Her insights were published in the Los Angeles Times and New York Daily News. Her writings appear in 32 "Chicken Soup for the Soul" best-selling titles, Guidepost Magazine and dozens of anthologies and hundreds of magazine articles. Her profound experiences continue to capture the media.

In addition to being featured on the cover of Hispanic Woman magazine, she was interviewed on Fox 35 News, affiliate "Despierta America", 700 Club, Focus on the Family and on dozens of radio and TV networks. Her most valued reward is God's grace. It is His grace that brings her before audiences like you so you can witness proof of God's victorious triumph in the darkest times.

The music will be by singer-songwriter Denise Chaney, who

was raised in Monte Vista, where she met and married her husband, Jarrett. Her parents are Jerry and Betty Cochran. Denise and Jarrett now reside in Pagosa Springs with their son Jackson.

She studied Interior Design and Music at Olivet Nazarene University in Illinois and came back to the San Juan Mountains after graduation. You will truly be blessed by her

music. You can learn more about her work at DeniseChaneyMusic.com.

The conference will include one session Friday night, 7 to 9 p.m. and two sessions on Saturday 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., including a continental breakfast and lunch.

Reservations are essential by Monday, Sept. 26. For ticket information, call Kay Jones at 719-480-2352.

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Naranjo Joins SLV Area Extension Team

SUBMITTED ARTICLE

SAN LUIS VALLEY — Janae Naranjo, a 20-year resident of the San Luis Valley, recently joined the Colorado State University SLV Area Extension team as the new Family and Consumer Science Educator.

“Helping people will always be my passion,” said Naranjo, “and I believe this work is an investment in the lives of others. I believe the power of education is limitless and I jumped at this opportunity to be the new family agent for CSU Extension because I believe I can develop education programs that will directly improve the quality of life of individuals and families in the San Luis Valley.”

Naranjo will be providing educational workshops, seminars, and one-on-one consultations open to all SLV citizens in the areas of family health, family financial management, nutrition, food safety and food preservation.

Naranjo moved to the San Luis Valley after graduating from West Texas A&M University 20 years ago. She is a fifth-generation agriculturalist who grew up on the family ranch in northeastern New Mexico.

“We at CSU believe Janae is a great fit for our SLV Area Extension team and will create great value for Valley residents, not only because of her training and previous career experience, but also because of her

core values,” SLV Area Extension officials stated.

Naranjo said, “Growing up 40 miles in the country required us to cook and budget. My mom gave me a lifelong gift when she passed down family recipes and traditions. She taught me how to cook and plan meals from scratch and how to effectively budget for those meals. More importantly, she taught me the value of preparing meals and sharing fellowship with those around your table. If you show up at my mom and dad’s, you will have a homemade meal and the best glass of iced tea. Mom makes everyone feel like family. Because of this upbringing, I learned the true value of family, which developed into a passion for investing my time in anything that makes individuals, families, and communities flourish.”

Naranjo also grew up in 4-H, primarily showing market steers and swine. She reflects fondly on the positive impact extension programs have had on her own life. She has continued those traditions with her own family. Her two girls love showing swine. Her family can be found in their pig barn during most of their free time.

Naranjo has served the past 16 years as a school counselor in both Del Norte and Sargent school districts.

When asked why she took this position, Naranjo said, “I have



always wanted to help people, and not just help people, but really make a difference. As a mental health counselor and school counselor, I always told myself if I could help just one person and make a difference in one person’s life, it would all be worth it. I will carry that same thought process into my new position and strive to make a truly positive impact on the lives of my neighbors in the San Luis Valley.”

Naranjo can be reached at the SLV Area Extension office by calling 719-852-7381.

SAGUACHE COUNTY SHERIFF’S REPORT

SAGUACHE COUNTY — The following information was provided by the Saguache County Sheriff’s Office for the period between Aug. 1 and Aug. 7, 2022.

Directly helping the community, officers performed four welfare checks, helped two agencies, arranged

four ambulance rides, performed two search and rescue operations, assisted four motorists and citizens, conducted two community relations meetings, and shared information.

In addition to handling one deceased person, staff managed six traffic complaints and stops,

three cases of suspicious activity, three calls about harassment, four burglaries and reports of theft, loose livestock, a sex offense, and eight controlled burns.

Deputies also issued two speeding tickets and another citation for failure to yield to traffic.

NEUFELD

A graduate of Denver Public Schools, Neufeld came to the Valley after she completed her higher education. More than 15 years ago, she married Valley native Brian Neufeld, owner and operator of Neufeld Farms near Hooper. They grow potatoes and barley in Alamosa and Saguache counties. Both of their daughters are students at Haskin Elementary and Skoglund Middle School.

In other Center Viking news, another development program kicks off on Sept. 12. Designed for girls between third and eighth grades, Girls on the Run is a 10-week program that prepares participants for a celebratory

Continued from Page 1A — 5K run at the end of the session.

Through physical running games and coaching, the program also builds life skills and provides social interaction. Participants who join the group will receive training on Mondays and Wednesdays from 4 to 5 p.m. in the gym or on the track. The cost is \$20, and scholarships are available.

With a network of more than 200 councils across 50 states and the District of Columbia, Girls on the Run of the Rockies (<https://girlsontherunrockies.org/>) is part of Girls on the Run International. The first training session at Center Schools is scheduled for Monday, Sept. 12.

MVPD investigating shooting death in Monte Vista

STAFF REPORT

MONTE VISTA — The Monte Vista Police Department is investigating the death of a juvenile woman who died from an apparent gunshot wound.

On Aug. 7, at about 3:30 p.m., MVPD officers were notified of a shooting in the 300 block of Monroe Street in Monte Vista.

When officers arrived on the scene, they found a juvenile female who had sustained a gunshot wound, MVPD reported. Emergency medical services personnel arrived, and the juvenile was pronounced deceased.

Officers secured the scene and were actively interviewing

witnesses and investigating the incident. The Colorado Bureau of Investigation — Crime Scene Investigations and the Rio Grande County Coroner’s Office were assisting with this investigation. The Rio Grande County Coroner will release the name of the deceased when appropriate.

This is an active investigation, and no further information will be released until the investigation is complete, MVPD reported. There is no threat to the community.

Anyone with any information regarding this incident is asked to contact Detective Zeke Sisneros or Sgt. Michael Martinez through State Patrol Dispatch at 719-589-5807.



Valley-Wide Welcomes

John Anderson, LPC

to our
**Edward M. Kennedy
Health Clinic**
925 Second Avenue, Monte Vista

John Anderson, Behavioral Health Provider recently joined our team at the Edward M. Kennedy Health Clinic. John is originally from the Denver Metro area, but moved to the San Luis Valley in 2000. His mission as a provider is to help people work towards change, and show them that they have the capability to make a difference in their own lives. John specializes in working with patients who deal with depression, anxiety, trauma, family systems issues, and addiction, as well as geriatric patients. Outside of work, John enjoys working on his house and cars, traveling, hiking, and fly fishing.

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How Healthy Is Your Heart?

Once a year, I go to the doctor and get a check-up. And every time, one of the things they do is check my heart. A good thorough exam will reveal if there are any problems that need to be addressed before a heart condition arises.

I believe we need to do the same thing with our own hearts, spiritually speaking. Because the truth is, everyone’s heart is in *some* condition. In fact, we have a responsibility to do this as Proverbs 4:23 tells us, “Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it” (NIV). Frequent check-ups will enable us to identify and act on those issues quickly—both physically *and* spiritually.

We can so easily get in the habit of doing life, just going through the motions, even when doing “Christian things,” and not realize that something unhealthy has crept into our heart. Some of those things not only affect us, but they can hurt or negatively impact others as well. The longer an issue, or heart condition, is left unattended, the deeper its roots go. Then it becomes harder and harder to deal with. But the good news is, we can prevent that with God’s help.

Testing and Guarding Your Heart

In order to properly guard your heart, it’s important to understand just what that means. When I talk about the condition of your heart, I’m talking about what’s inside you... whatever it is that makes you do what you do.

For instance, how many times have you said or done something you’re not very proud of and thought, *I can’t believe I did that!* Well, God allows some situations to happen to show us what’s in our heart. It’s like when I get my annual physical, the doctor checks my heart by running certain tests. Those tests are designed to discover if anything

is wrong or confirm that everything is okay.

In much the same way, God tests us to show us what’s in our heart. He doesn’t do it to shame or embarrass us. He just wants us to see what’s going on so we can face our issues, deal with them with the help of the Holy Spirit, and grow stronger in Christ.

Our heart ultimately governs our behavior. So when we say or do something that “surprises” us, if we will get really honest with ourselves (and with God) and think about it, we will discover the root of that action.

God is more interested in our motives—the why behind the what. Matthew 5:8 says, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God” (NIV). He is not looking at our outer actions as closely as He is looking at what motivates them. Because what’s inside us is the root that produces what comes out of us. God is much more concerned that the things we do come from a pure, Holy Spirit-led heart.

Motives Are Like Leaves

The lesson of the fig tree in Matthew chapter 21 gives us a good depiction of motives. At first, I couldn’t understand why Jesus would curse a poor tree just because it only had leaves on it. But then I saw that He knew whenever a fig tree bears leaves, it means there is fruit under them. Jesus was hungry and that fig tree was giving the wrong message!

Sometimes, in the midst of what we’re doing, we need to stop and think about *why* we’re doing it. Is it to be seen...to impress somebody...for the accolades...or is it because we really care?

Get a Check-up

We need to be sure we are doing what we do as unto the Lord and not



for any other purpose. People in this world are spiritually hungry. And as Christians, it’s not enough for us to go around displaying our “leaves,” things that just make us *look* like believers. We must bear “fruit” under those leaves. What is our fruit? It’s love...*loving* people, *helping* them, *giving*; not only our money, but our time, our efforts and ourselves. People need to see love in action.

Having a heart that’s right with God is absolutely the best thing we can do for ourselves. That’s why I encourage you to do a spiritual heart “check-up” on a regular basis: have a meeting with yourself and be honest with yourself about your motives. Work with the Holy Spirit and He will help you keep your heart pure and in good condition so you can show others His love in everything you do.

For more on this topic, order Joyce’s two-teaching resource **Secrets for a Healthy Heart**. 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 135 books, including **BATTLEFIELD OF THE MIND** and **THE POWER OF THANK YOU (FaithWords)**. She hosts the *Enjoying Everyday Life* radio and TV programs, which air on hundreds of stations worldwide. For more information, visit www.joycemeyer.org.

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

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WEISER Continued from Page 1A

and the second, a town hall with members of the public — the message was the same.

Significant damage has been done to the district attorney's office for the 12th Judicial District and rebuilding — not just repairing but reconstructing a functioning office — is going to be a long process.

Unlike the last conversation where the ongoing nature of an investigation limited how much could be discussed in detail, AG Weiser spoke more candidly about the situation.

Some facts were already known. Some were not.

There have been, with very few exceptions, no trials in the last 18 months. The DA's office is currently staffed by one part-time prosecutor.

The LEAD Program, a key component of improving the criminal justice system, is no longer being handled by the DA's office and has been referred to the Center for Restorative Justice.

The Diversion Program is no longer in existence.

And there is currently a backlog of 500 cases in the DA's office, a situation Weiser describes as a "formidable challenge."

Finally, in a stunning piece of information that completely contradicts the former DA's claim that insufficient funding and a lack of prosecutors on staff was responsible for the office's poor performance, AG Weiser said that his office has been offering assistance to the 12th Judicial District since the beginning.

"I'd made it clear during Alonzo Payne's first month in office that one of the jobs I take very seriously is to support rural communities in criminal prosecutions," Weiser said. "You can look around the state — our office is there, helping rural communities with complex cases. We wanted to help here in the Valley but we weren't allowed to. We had to be asked."

That request was never made, despite the number of cases increasing exponentially and the offer of help being available from day one. It was only after taking on the role of special prosecutors that the Office of the Attorney's General was able to step in.

And things are starting to happen. According to Weiser, a team from his office has "stepped up" as have people from other district attorney offices from around the state and people from the Colorado District Attorneys' Council.

As evidence, a trial is being held this week, the first in a long time.

"Our team is working to triage the cases, to find a path for those cases and to be there for victims," Weiser said.

While there was significant public outcry over plea deals agreed to by the DA, especially in highly visible cases, it was the collective voices of victims and the subsequent complaints they filed that lit the spark that ignited the flame that was ultimately responsible for the change that has taken place.

"I can tell you, our team is front and center in being victim-centered," Weiser said. "The right for victims to be heard is a right under law. But it's also a moral right. Part of the criminal justice system is to heal a breach that has happened."

Instead of healing, Weiser said, victims felt mistreated with no acknowledgement of what they suffered or condolences for what they had experienced or attempts to be treated humanely — including people who experienced the murder of a loved one or victims of sexual assault who were "brutally treated" by the DA's office.

"I sat down with victims yesterday, hearing directly what happened to

them, and it's unlike anything I've ever heard before," Weiser said. "It's kind of...hard to really come to grips with what happened here. I'm just so sorry because people were basically re-victimized. They had a terrible loss and then they were mistreated in a process that was supposed to be providing them with a measure of peace and justice."

In terms of preventing future violations of victims' rights, Weiser believes significant steps have already been taken with setting "a framework that will protect victims in the San Luis Valley by having a monitor in place to oversee the conduct of the office."

Weiser also had a meeting with law enforcement in the Valley, describing them as highly professional and who have also stayed committed despite enduring "a situation that is not like any we've ever had in Colorado."

"We've been working with them in a way they said they haven't had that is responsive and highly professional,"

Weiser said. "I think they're feeling a sense of relief. We're also working to improve the operations of the office. So, they recognize this is a new chapter."

But, Weiser emphasized, this is going to take some time.

"When you come into a situation where things have been building up and not dealt with effectively, it takes time to sort and get through that," he said.

The team is now focusing on the "most troubling cases involving victims" and "making sure we're there for them." There is also a focus on determining which cases that were previously unpursued but may warrant prosecution.

Meanwhile, the cases currently assigned to special prosecutors will stay on track.

The other challenge, Weiser said, is determining how many prosecutors the office needs to function effectively and how "to get from here to there."

As far as going forward and

appointing a new district attorney, the governor will soon be announcing the formation of a group to review the situation, call for applications, interview people and hopefully find someone who is appropriate for the job.

"This is an important opportunity for public service, to come into an office that needs good leadership and a way forward," Weiser said.

However, there's a lot of work that's

going to take place, not just over the weeks and months but the years ahead.

"I can make this commitment to the San Luis Valley," Weiser said. "Part of my job is working with public safety in rural communities, and we're committed to working with the next district attorney and beyond to help this community honor victims, protect public safety and improve its criminal justice system. We're here and we're in this for a while."

PUBLIC NOTICES

Saguache County Government is accepting bids for a 14'x40' 12"x11.8# I-Beam office building for the Saguache County Assessor's Office. This office type building will be used to for additional office space for the Saguache County Assessor's office.

This building will require windows, interior and exterior doors, electrical, plumbing, HVAC unit, exhaust fans, cabinets and skirting. It will also require 140 mph wind rating and 30# roof load. For specific specifications of the building please contact Wendi Maez at wmaez@saguachecounty-co.gov.

Bids must be submitted in a sealed envelope with "Saguache County Assessor's Office" written on the front of the envelope which contains the sealed bid. Bids must include proof of liability and workers compensation insurance coverage.

Bids must be submitted to Saguache County Administration, 505 3rd Street, or PO Box 100, Saguache, CO 81149 and must be submitted by Thursday, September 1, 2022 at 3pm.

For further information and you can also call Wendi Maez at 719-655-2231.

No. 1644 published in the Center Post Dispatch, Thursday, August 11, 18 and 25, 2022.

Date of Notice: August 5, 2022

NOTICE OF REVISION IN THE COLORADO P.U.C. NO. – 7 GAS TARIFF

Atmos Energy Corporation ("Atmos Energy")
1555 Blake Street
Denver, Colorado 80202

You are hereby notified that Atmos Energy Corporation (the "Company") has filed with the Colorado Public Utilities Commission ("Commission") an Advice Letter with revised tariff sheets proposing to increase base rates for all of the Company's natural gas sales and transportation services. The annual revenue increase reflects the increase to base rates and the proposed recovery of Rate Case expenses.

The rate increases are proposed to become effective September 5, 2022. The Company is seeking a net increase in annual gas base rate revenues of \$7,681,233 (or 4.57 percent) and a return on equity ("ROE") of 10.95 percent.

TOTAL PROPOSED MONTHLY BILL IMPACTS ON CUSTOMERS

9/5/2022 :

	Current Average Monthly Bill	Proposed Average Monthly Bill	Change	Percentage Change
Residential:				
North	\$ 84.58	\$ 91.11	\$ 6.53	7.7%
Southeast	\$ 70.32	\$ 76.42	\$ 6.10	8.7%
Southwest	\$ 72.21	\$ 78.79	\$ 6.58	9.1%
Small Commercial & Commercial				
North	\$ 429.91	\$ 431.91	\$ 2.00	0.5%
Southeast	\$ 238.63	\$ 240.05	\$ 1.42	0.6%
Southwest	\$ 311.22	\$ 313.04	\$ 1.83	0.6%
Irrigation:				
North	\$ 560.69	\$ 563.33	\$ 2.64	0.5%
Southeast	\$ 713.64	\$ 717.07	\$ 3.43	0.5%
Transportation:				
North	\$ 1,224.68	\$ 1,249.94	\$ 25.26	2.1%
Southeast	\$ 417.93	\$ 426.55	\$ 8.62	2.1%
Southwest	\$ 4,136.32	\$ 4,221.63	\$ 85.31	2.1%

The rates, rules and regulations ultimately authorized may or may not be the same as those proposed and may include rates higher or lower than those proposed or currently in effect. Additionally, the Company proposes to extend the System Safety and Integrity Rider and updates to its Class Cost of Service Methodology.

Copies of the proposed and present tariffs summarized above and as filed with the Commission, are available for examination at the Company's business office located at 1555 Blake Street, Suite 400, Denver, Colorado, 80202 and at the Commission at 1560 Broadway, Suite 250, Denver, Colorado 80202. Customers who have questions may call the Company at 1-888-286-6700 or email the question to Jennifer.Altieri@atmosenergy.com.

Anyone who desires may file written comments or objections to this filing with the Commission. The filing of a written objection by itself will not allow you to participate as a party in any proceeding on the proposed action. The Commission's mailing address is 1560 Broadway, Suite 250, Denver, Colorado, 80202 and their e-mail address is dora_puc_complaints@state.co.us. The Commission will consider all written comments and objections submitted prior to the evidentiary hearing on the filings. If you wish to participate as a party in this matter, you must file written intervention documents in accord with Rule 1401 of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure and of any applicable Commission order.

The Commission may hold a public hearing in addition to an evidentiary hearing on the proposed revisions and if such a hearing is held members of the public may attend and make statements even if they did not file comments, objections, or an intervention. If the filing is uncontested or unopposed, the Commission may determine the matter without a hearing and without further notice.

Anyone desiring information regarding if and when a hearing may be held shall submit a written request to the Commission or contact the External Affairs section of the Commission at its local number of (303) 894-2070 or toll free number (800) 456-0858.

Atmos Energy Corporation
Colorado-Kansas Division
By: Kathleen R. Ocanas
Vice President, Rates & Regulatory



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Rio Grande Hospital brings back Keeping the Dream Alive for 2022

BY LYNDISIE FERRELL DEL NORTE — The Rio Grande Hospital is pleased to welcome back patrons and community supporters after two long years for its annual Keeping the Dream Alive fundraising event. This event was created to say “Thank You” to all the communities that help support the Rio Grande Hospital and give the hospital a chance to share their vision of what the medical future here in Rio Grande County will look like. It is also the only large-scale fundraising event hosted by the hospital throughout the year. This has been a big year of growth for the Rio Grande Hospital and its outlying clinics. Not only did a new clinic recently open its doors in South Fork but plans for a wellness center addition to the main hospital are underway. These two exciting pieces of news were released last year but now with the help and support of all the communities in Rio Grande County, the hospital

can say they are keeping the dream alive. This year’s fundraising event will be hosted in the Upper Rio Grande School District commons areas inside the new school. “We miss seeing our community and can’t wait to share an evening with you again,” said Development and Communications Officer Eva Timberlake. The event is set for the evening of Aug. 13 with dinner at 5:30 p.m. The Mountain View Restaurant will be catering the dinner and it will be served as in years past by Rio Grande Hospital physicians and staff which is both a pleasure for the attending crowd and fun for the clinicians serving guests. The evening will also include a live auction by Brady Stagner. Auction items are still being accepted, call 719-657-3266 to donate items or to make donations. Some items that will be auctioned are a signed pennant

Please see DREAM on Page 2

SLVREC receives nearly \$2M for high-speed internet access

USDA Rural Development awards \$400M nationwide

STAFF REPORT
DENVER — San Luis Valley Rural Electric Cooperative (SLVREC) in Monte Vista was just awarded a \$1,998,448 grant to deploy fiber-to-the-premises services (internet) in rural parts of the San Luis Valley. U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Tom Vilsack announced on Thursday that the Department is investing \$401 million to provide access to high-speed internet for 31,000 rural residents and businesses in 11 states, part of the Biden-Harris Administration’s commitment to investing in rural infrastructure and affordable high-speed internet for all. This announcement includes a group of investments from the ReConnect Program and an award funded through USDA’s Telecommunications Infrastructure Loan and Loan Guarantee program. REC’s subsidiary, Ciello, will use the grant to connect 129 people,

Please see ACCESS on Page 2



Courtesy photo An SLVREC/Ciello lineman is shown installing fiber optics at an SLV home.

Get to know the Pika of our Peaks

Land, Water and People

BY HANNA FAKE

MEEP! That looked like a furry potato scampering across the rocks! While the area surrounding the Rio Grande National Forest does produce many potatoes, they usually aren’t found high in the mountains and San Luis Valley potatoes are not known to be furry! However, the American pika does live high in the rocky alpine of the Rio Grande National Forest. Looking much like a furry potato or even a hamster, these alpine critters are actually a type of rabbit. The little rock rabbits live year-round in the rocky talus slopes of the surrounding mountains. Pika are easier to hear than spot. They have great camouflage, blending in among the rocks and taking shelter in the numerous nooks and crannies when danger approaches. Many animals make chirps, squeaks, peeps, and whistles, including birds, marmots, ground squirrels, and pika. Pika generally have a shorter call that sounds a meep, or beeje. Marmots and ground squirrels’ alarm calls are more whistle like and most often higher pitched. Pika use their call to sound the alarm for danger, to recognize who is around, and to defend their territory from other pika. If you do spot a pika perching on a rock or scampering between them with a mouth full of plants, you will be quick to notice that they

don’t look like a typical rabbit. They have small, rounded ears, a compact body with no visible tail, and smaller back feet than most rabbits. Pika scamper or scurry across the rocks rather than hop because on the uneven surfaces hopping is a little more precarious. All of these differences help them survive in the harsh alpine. For rabbits, their ears are their air conditioning units. Rabbits circulate large amounts of blood through their thin ears helping to cool them down. Jackrabbits in the hot desert have huge ears so they have a pretty powerful AC unit to keep them cool. Living high up on mountains where temperatures can easily dip below freezing in the warmest months and winter temperatures may stay in the negatives for weeks, air conditioning is the last thing you would want! Having little ears tucked close to their body helps pika conserve heat throughout the seasons. This also means that they are very sensitive to high temperatures because they don’t have a good way to cool themselves down. When temperatures reach above 77 degrees Fahrenheit it becomes too hot for a pika. Pika may disappear under the rocks to the cool shade during the heat of the day, however, summer is a short season in the alpine and their time is precious.

Pika don’t hibernate or migrate like many species, or people, that live in areas where winter is snowy and cold, and food is hard to find. Instead, they make hay while the sun shines, literally. To survive the long winters pika collect plants and flowers in large piles and let them dry in the warm sunny weather before tucking them away under overhanging rocks or in their burrows. They make their hay throughout the summer months and know which plants are better to harvest and dry and which are better to consume immediately. Pika forage under the snowpack for remaining vegetation but heavily supplement their winter food with their hay. A littler farmer pika scurrying home through the rocks with a bouquet of grasses and flowers has got to be pretty close to the top on the cuteness scale! A thick coat, little ears, stored food, and a blanket of insulating snow help these little pika scamper through the seasons high in the mountains. However, their sensitivity to heat, a need for insulating snowpacks, and often the inability to move between high

alpine peaks puts them at risk in a warming climate. Pika are an ‘indicator species’ which means if their populations begin to change it indicates a change in their ecosystem. In lower elevation ranges or at the southern end of the range, pika are being pushed to just the very top of mountains where they can still find a suitable climate. Isolated at the top they are on islands which make dispersal and maintaining healthy genetics close to impossible. Here in the Rio Grande, we have a lot of great pika habitat and pika live across mountain sides, ridges, and peaks. Head out and explore our public lands and keep your eyes and ears out for the cutest furry potato you’ve ever seen when you are in rocky areas. Hannah Fake is the San Juan Mountains Association visitor information coordinator for the Rio Grande National Forest. When she is out rambling along ridges of the Rio Grande, she always hopes to get a peak of a perched pika.

HOME LOANS

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Colorado TABOR refunds begin in August

By Marie Mccolm

MONTE VISTA — Phones in two local tax offices have been ringing off the hook as news of another stimulus has been circulating.

Many residents of Monte Vista have called and asked if a new stimulus payment will be coming to them from the State of Colorado. There is a check coming to residents from the State of Colorado, but the check that is coming is not another stimulus check, but a rebate check that is being given to all Colorado residents who filed a state income tax return this year.

The rebate also known as Colorado Cash Back, is made possible by Colorado Taxpayer's Bill of Rights (TABOR). This limits government spending based on inflation and growth in population, and delegates that the government must refund excess revenue that they have acquired, back to the taxpayers in the state.

In May, Governor Jared Polis made it possible for Colorado residents to obtain this rebate this year, rather than waiting until next spring for their rebates.

Beginning in August, the State of Colorado will begin mailing these rebate checks out to eligible Colorado residents. Originally, the amount of the TABOR rebate was \$400 but the amount was increased due to more funds being available, each eligible Colorado resident will now receive a rebate of \$750 for single filers, and \$1,500 for joint filers.

To be eligible to receive a TABOR rebate check the person must be at least 18 years of age as of Dec. 31, 2021; must also have been a full year Colorado resident for 2021; you must also have filed a Colorado state income tax return for tax year 2021 no later than June 30. Exceptions for filing with the State of Colorado will be made to Colorado residents

who have extensions in place. If extensions are fully filed by the Oct. 17, deadline, a TABOR rebate check will be mailed, no later than Jan. 31, 2023.

Other people who qualify for the TABOR rebate are people who have filed a property tax/rent/heat credit rebate, also known as the (PTC) Rebate for tax year 2021. These residents must have also filed their PTC Rebate by June 30 to receive the check.

Colorado will be mailing these rebate checks to your last known



address on file. For taxpayers who used direct deposit as a method of payment, or a prepaid debit card, Colorado will be sending all TABOR rebates to residents by check

only. TABOR rebates will not be directly deposited to bank accounts or cards. For more information on the TABOR Rebate, visit tax.colorado.gov.

ACCESS

eight businesses, one public school and 20 farms to high-speed Internet in unserved and underserved parts of Conejos and Alamosa counties.

"We began providing high-speed fiber optic based broadband internet access to rural areas in the San Luis Valley in 2014," said Loren Howard, CEO of SLVREC/Ciello. "This grant, the second Ciello has received, accelerates Ciello's commitment to bring this crucial utility service to the Valley residents. REC and Ciello are incredibly grateful for this boost in building our fiber network to difficult-to-serve areas."

"Connectivity is critical to economic success in rural America," Vilsack said. "The internet is vital to our growth and continues to act as a catalyst for our prosperity. From the farm to the school, from households to international markets, connectivity drives positive change in our communities."

"The investments I am announcing will help 31,000 people and businesses in large and diverse regions across the country access to new and critical opportunities. Under the leadership of President Biden and Vice President Harris, USDA knows rural America is America's backbone, and prosperity here means prosperity for all."

"Living in the San Luis Valley, I know the need of reliable internet access and being able to engage in remote work, telehealth, e-commerce, and online schooling," said Armando Valdez, USDA Rural Development Colorado State Director. "Internet service strengthens community prosperity by providing connections to a vast number of resources and potential markets."

"This grant will change lives and

Continued from Page 1

provide quality enhancements to our telecommunication infrastructure in a strong rural community in southern Colorado. I am grateful that SLVREC pursued this opportunity. And I am so happy that residents in Conejos and Alamosa counties will be able to tap into these resources and thrive both economically and socially."

As a provider for the Federal Communications Commission's Affordable Connectivity Program, Ciello will serve these socially vulnerable areas in Conejos and Alamosa counties. REC members that live in the Zapata area, along with some REC members along Highway 15 in Conejos County, will experience a lot of benefits from the availability of high-speed fiber broadband service in their areas.

"We are very grateful to have been awarded these funds from the Reconnect3 program," said Ciello's Chief Technology Officer Monroe Johnson. "This is the culmination of a lot of hard work on the part of the management team here at the cooperative, and we look forward to working with everyone involved to bring this project to a successful conclusion."

"Ciello's mission is to bring the best broadband service available anywhere to the communities we serve, and this is a logical extension to all the work that has been completed in the last several years".

The Department will make additional investments for rural high-speed internet later this summer, including ReConnect Program funding from President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which provides a historic \$65 billion investment to expand affordable, high-speed internet to all communities across the U.S.

DREAM

from the 2022 Colorado Avalanche hockey team, an air conditioner from Altitude Appliance, an airplane ride, hotel stays, jewelry, golf, dinners, and more.

All proceeds go toward the improvement of the Rio Grande

Hospital and clinics. Tickets are available for purchase now or at the door the evening of the event. Tickets are available at any of RGH's clinics or the hospital's main desk. For more information, visit riograndehospital.org.

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 8/7 (inches)				
		8/7	8/6	8/5	8/4	2day	3day	4day	5day	7day
		Moravian 69	04/05	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.03
Moravian 69	05/05	0.11	0.14	0.15	0.13	0.25	0.40	0.53	0.67	0.99
Early Wheat	04/05	0.03	0.04	0.05	0.05	0.07	0.12	0.17	0.22	0.35
Early Wheat	05/05	0.13	0.16	0.18	0.16	0.29	0.46	0.62	0.77	1.12
White Wheat	04/05	0.08	0.09	0.10	0.09	0.17	0.27	0.36	0.45	0.67
White Wheat	05/05	0.15	0.17	0.19	0.16	0.32	0.50	0.66	0.82	1.17
WinterWheat	10/01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.07
Potatoes										
Norkotah	05/05	0.14	0.17	0.19	0.16	0.30	0.49	0.65	0.81	1.18
Centennial	05/05	0.15	0.17	0.19	0.16	0.32	0.50	0.66	0.82	1.17
Nugget	05/05	0.14	0.16	0.18	0.15	0.30	0.48	0.63	0.78	1.11
Alfalfa	Est.	0.17	0.19	0.21	0.18	0.36	0.57	0.75	0.93	1.33
Lawnglass	Est.	0.14	0.16	0.18	0.15	0.30	0.48	0.63	0.78	1.11

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 upJune 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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Dr. Thornell helped save my life. I was having constant health problems that were getting worse every day. My diseased teeth and gums were draining me of my energy and it was impossible to stay healthy. After removing all of my bad teeth, Dr. Thornell placed dental implants and I got a new set of teeth in just one day. I am now healthier and feel better than I have in a long time. I also have a great smile. Dr. Thornell you are a life saver! I can't thank you enough.
~ B.Gullette

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Demonstrations • Q&A
Art for Purchase



Saturday, August 13, 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



Courtesy photos

High Valley Community Center wrapped up its summer program last week and will be celebrating a successful season on Thursday, Aug. 4, with their end of summer celebration. The program will take a break before jumping back in once school opens for the 2022-2023 school year.

HVCC summer celebration is Aug. 4

SUBMITTED ARTICLE DEL NORTE— Hello everyone! Happy August! What is everyone doing the last few weeks leading up to school? We hope to see you all out and about for the Covered Wagon festivities and Town's 150th anniversary.

All of us High Valley Community Center would love to welcome you to our end-of-summer celebration on Thursday, Aug. 4. Festivities will be from 2-7 p.m. with an awards ceremony at 5:30 p.m. In true HVCC fashion, there will be lots of delicious food as well as entertainment provided by the Salida Circus and other fun activities. Bring yourselves, friends, and family!

Last week the kids participated in an egg drop challenge, made tie-dyed shirts with Andy McKim, colored carnations and built rollercoasters. The kiddos had a great day swimming at Lathrop State Park for their final field trip of the season.

Don't forget to register for fall sports! Links to register for flag football, volleyball, and tackle football (Rise Above Football) are available on our website, www.TheHVCC.org under the "Sports" heading. Scheduling information will be available at a later date. Make sure to check our website for future updates.

We are always happy to accept new registrations! Registrations are

available on our website under the "Registration" heading. Please note that kiddos participating in HVCC sports must be registered through HVCC in order to be eligible to participate. If your child has not attended HVCC in over a year, please make sure to update your registration as well. Confused? Have more questions? Give us a call at 719-657-2172. We are happy to assist you.

We are also looking for fresh faces to help us with the kiddos! There are many opportunities here at HVCC that range from cooking to after-school support staff. Feel free to acquaint yourself with our website or stop by for a chat if you are curious about our organization.

Our staff will be taking the remaining month of August off to re-group, clean and plan activities for our fall semester programming. We are going to miss the kiddos, but look forward to seeing them when we re-open on Tuesday, Sept. 6. We will have staff around, beginning Aug. 16, if you would like to stop by to say hi or if you would like to give us a call.

Thank you all for your support! As a community center we wouldn't be successful without the support of our fellow community members, and we truly appreciate you. Here's to another wonderful summer in the books!



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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Monte Vista School District
719-852-5996

First day of school is Monday, Aug. 15, 2022

Please see our website for our Reopening Plan or information about our online options
<http://monte.k12.co.us>

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RATES

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To ensure your ad is correct, check it the first day it appears in the paper. If there is an error in your ad, call us right away so we can correct it. If an error appears in your ad, Valley Publishing will credit you with one additional day of advertising.

Our ad policy: Valley Publishing accepts all classified advertising except that which it deems objectionable to its readers. Credit or replacement ads will not be given for early ad cancellation.

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05 Notices

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

07 Help Wanted

Wolf Creek Ski Area is in need of an Accounting Assistant/Accounting Clerk. Duties include clerical tasks, processing reports,

recording transactions and typical Accounts Payable and Payroll duties. Experience with Microsoft Office products is required. Attention to detail and organizational skills are important. **Those with bookkeeping, human resources, or administrative assistance experience are encouraged to apply.** Compensation is hourly and negotiable based on skill set. Reliable transportation and ability to commute to/from Wolf Creek Ski Area throughout the Winter is required. **Year-round position with longer hours during the ski season, and a shorter workweek in the off-season.** Would report to Accounting Supervisor as well as CEO/President. Please email resume to AP@WOLFCREEKSKI.COM or call 970-264-5487. (8/31)

RG BANK is now accepting applications for the position of

FULL TIME TELLER. The job is primarily in Monte Vista, but work in Alamosa is also required at times. Interested parties can see more and download an application at: <https://rgbank.bank/contact-us/#employment> (8/24)

PART-TIME SALES

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Accounting Clerk Full-time, great benefits immediate opening, send resume to: rmsutilities@yahoo.com (8/24)

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South Central Colorado Seniors, Inc. the Local Area Agency on Aging is looking for a Meal Server in Saguache. **MUST HAVE** training and experience in food preparation and nutrition. 3 hours per day, Monday through Friday. This position is responsible

VALLEY PUBLISHING SEEKS REPORTER IMMEDIATELY

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We would like to express our deepest gratitude and appreciation to all those who have contributed to the success of the Upper Rio Grande Animal Society by contributions, donations, volunteering and general support at Conour Animal Shelter.

Visit Our Facebook Page



GOT CLUTTER? CLEAN UP WITH THE CLASSIFIEDS.

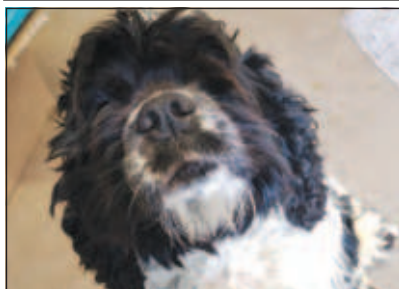
You'll find yourself with money in your pocket and room in your garage when you sell your stuff in the



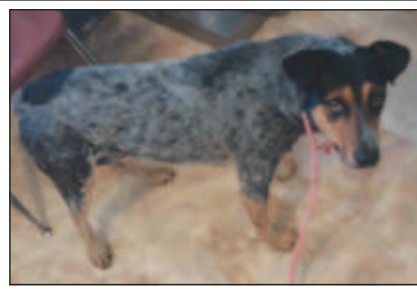
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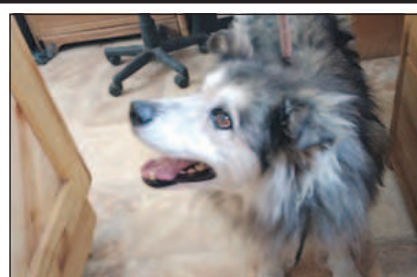
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Found 8/6/22 on Monroe St in Monte Vista

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Please note we are on a first come first serve basis.

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.*

Valley Wide Classifieds

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. Ideal Candidates: Must maintain meal-site according to Food Safety Regulations and be prepared and ready for inspection by State Health Inspector at any time. Will prepare for food delivery; warming of food, thermometer calibrations, etc. Will safely serve meals to incoming consumers at the meal-site and clean the meal-site location to Food Safety Inspection standards. South-Central Colorado Seniors, Inc. is an EOE. 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. (8/31)

17 Real Estate For Sale

153.66 deed acres in grass, 3 shares of Commonwealth Ditch, 350 gpm irrigation well, 2 X 50 gpm wells, totally fenced, corrals with loading chute. 4 miles from Alamosa. \$450,000. Call Bruce at Steffens & Company Realty, Inc 719-580-0770 or 719-873-1700.

35.71 acres between Monte Vista and Alamosa on County Line Road, borders highway, good grass, easy access, power and ready to build on. Priced \$109,000. Call Bruce at Steffens & Company Realty Inc 719-873-1700. (8/24)

7 Quarters with pivots, 9350 GPM well water, 25 Shares of Rio Grande Canal, 3 decrees of

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Please read your ad on the first day of publication. If there are mistakes notify us **IMMEDIATELY**. We will make changes for errors and adjust your credit **but only if we receive notice on the first day the ad is published.** We limit our liability to you in this way and we do not accept liability for any other damages which may result from an error or omission in an ad. All ad copy must be approved by the newspaper which reserves the right to request changes, reject or properly classify an ad. The advertiser and not the newspaper is responsible for the truthful content of the ad. All classified advertising must be pre-paid.

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32 Fuel & Heating

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36 Miscellaneous

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Bernadette Gingrass, Broker Associate
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SOLD

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SOLD

\$658,000 MLS #785486
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 (719)850-1993 • bernadette@steffenscorealty.com

SOLD

\$433,000 MLS #789027
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SOLD

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HIPPY Program helps young children transition for school readiness

By **MARIE MCCOLM**

MONTE VISTA — The HIPPY Program is now open to parents with children ages 3-4. They are encouraged to enroll their children in this educational school readiness program.

HIPPY stands for Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters. It is a free 32-week program. The program focuses on different areas of learning for children, including fine and gross motor skills, science, creative arts, literacy development for the young mind, and social-emotional development for children.

Home visitors from the HIPPY

Program can come to your home either virtually or in person, and with them, they bring a curriculum program, complete with activities that help young children learn.

There are activities for colors, letters, shapes, numbers, and activities that help young children learn the days of the week.

The curriculum that is given by HIPPY is completely hands-on and because reading is a core part of the curriculum, all children who are enrolled in the HIPPY program are also given a new book every three to four weeks.

Coordinator Beverly Martinez Trujillo is excited about this year's

participants.

"We have had some good enrollment this year. I really enjoy working with young children," Trujillo said. "I like to see how the kids respond to the activities they are given, and it's always neat when you see the children comprehending what is being taught to them, it is really a magical thing to see."

HIPPY also supplies some school supplies for children including pencils, a pencil box, glue, scissors, erasers and crayons. The school supplies are a gift from HIPPY, and they are offered all year long to students who are enrolled in the program.

The HIPPY program also encourages family get-togethers with family nights, when parents and their children are invited to attend special activities at a designated place with HIPPY instructors hosting the activities. The program also holds an end-of-the-year graduation for participants.

"I enjoy the family nights also," Trujillo said. "Family nights are special because we get to see

parents and children engaging in activities together, this is something truly exceptional."

The HIPPY program's mission is to provide diverse communities with educational tools to prepare young children for school readiness.

The program is available in Rio Grande, Alamosa, Costilla, and Conejos counties. HIPPY

also provides all agencies that are in the program with English and Spanish resources, based on the needs of the participants in the program.

"We just want to encourage everyone with young children to join our program," Trujillo said. "It really helps kids get ready for school and feel more confident about starting school."

For more information or to enroll a child, contact Trujillo at 719-298-1572.



Instructors for HIPPY.



Courtesy photos

Summer Family night took place in May at the Catholic Parish Hall in Alamosa with HIPPY members and child and parent participants.

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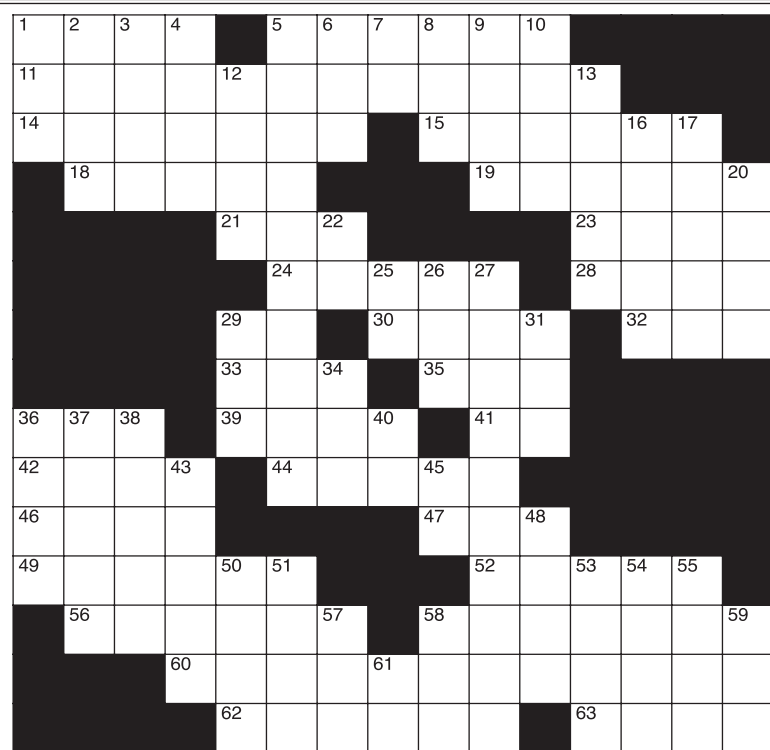
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CLUES ACROSS

1. Constrictors
5. Abounding in rocks
11. Speed
14. German city
15. Lacking sympathy
18. Visionaries
19. Wastes away
21. One precursor to the EU
23. Nursemaid
24. Unconsciousnesses
28. Baby's word for father
29. Equal to 64 US pints (abbr.)
30. Senses of self-importance
32. Midway between south and southwest
33. When you hope to get there
35. Electronic data processing
36. Passports and drivers' licences are two
39. Fishes
41. Air Force
42. Personal computers
44. Ecological community
46. Wings
47. Halfway
49. Cool, calm and collected
52. Jewelled headdress
56. Musical composition
58. ___ Falls
60. Repeating remarks
62. Periods in one's life



CLUES DOWN

1. ___ Humbug!
2. Devices that alert pilots (abbr.)
3. Grocer
4. One point east of southeast
5. Subjects to hostility
6. Work unit
7. Atomic #56
8. British thermal unit
9. "Elusive Butterfly" singer
10. Fastened over animal's neck
12. Device
13. Rechargeable power source
16. Ancient sage
17. Consist of two elements
20. "Pygmalion" writer
22. "The Centennial State" (abbr.)
25. Of I
26. Get older
27. Brotherhoods
29. Buzzing insect
31. Sunscreen rating
34. Brew
36. Leader
37. Indigo bush
38. Burn with a hot liquid
40. Junior's dad
43. Horse mackerels genus
45. Morning
48. Unit of linear measurement (abbr.)
50. Double curve
51. Small, twisted bunch
53. Developed
54. Mars crater
55. Humanistic discipline
57. Word element meaning ear
58. Last or greatest in an indefinitely large series
59. Wood residue
61. It cools your home

Solution to last week's puzzle

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

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Senior CONNECTIONS

How to make new friends after 50

The early years of midlife are a hectic time for many people. Around the time many people reach their late 30s and early 40s, they're balancing the responsibilities of a career and a family. But as people enter their 50s, some of those responsibilities tend to be less significant, leaving more time for recreational pursuits.

Hobbies and other pursuits outside of work are often more fun when enjoyed with friends. People over 50 undoubtedly recognize that it's not always so easy to make new friends, even though it's undeniably beneficial to have supportive relationships into your golden years. A 2017 study from researchers at Michigan State University found that valuing friendships was a stronger predictor of health and happiness among older adults than valuing family. Those results align with an earlier Australian study that found Australians age 70 or older tended to live significantly longer if they had more strong friendships.

Making friends after 50 might not be as simple as it was during your school days, but these strategies can help men and women in midlife build new friendships.

- Identify your interests. Fifty-somethings who have spent the last couple of decades building a career and raising a family can give some serious thought to their interests outside of work or passions they hope



to pursue now that they have more time to commit to such pursuits. The more interested you are in a given activity, the more likely you are to stick with it. And the longer you stick with something, the more likely you are to meet like-minded individuals (i.e., future friends) willing to make similar commitments.

- Utilize social media. In years past, men and women over 50 may not have had any readily available tools to reach out and connect with new people. Social media has made it much easier to build such connections. Even the most obscure passions likely have a social media group of locals devoted to them, and these groups can be great ways to meet new people. A local runner's club may have its own social media

accounts, and local governments and community groups often share information about sports leagues and other groups via social media.

- Sign up for group outings. Communities often sponsor group outings to museums, the theater, sporting events, and other day trips. Signing up for a bus trip to a local museum presents a great opportunity to meet people who share your interests, providing the potential to build lasting friendships built on a foundation of shared interests.

- Broaden your horizons. Just because you're in your 50s doesn't mean your friends have to be. Don't hesitate to invite younger or older acquaintances and colleagues over for dinner or on weekend excursions. Friends come in all shapes, sizes and ages, so you could be missing out if you're not willing to extend a hand in friendship to people of different ages and backgrounds.

Making friends after 50 can be challenging. However, various strategies can help men and women over 50 connect with new people.

How to organize a social club

The early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic taught the world many lessons, not the least of which was how easy it can be to take socializing for granted. Lockdown was a big part of life during the early days of the pandemic, as people were forced to stay home from work and school and remain largely isolated, even from their own friends and family members.

The sense of isolation that many people developed during those early days of the pandemic likely didn't come as a surprise to medical researchers, particularly those who have studied the effects of isolation on aging populations. The National Institute on Aging indicates that social isolation and loneliness are linked to depression as well as a host of other negative health outcomes, including high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, and cognitive decline.

Social clubs can be a great way for adults over 50 to avoid isolation and loneliness. Such clubs can provide opportunities to connect with individuals who share similar interests, laying the foundation for new friendships that can be hard to develop in midlife.

Perhaps the best thing about social clubs is that anyone can start one. These tips can help individuals over 50 start social clubs that appeal to locals who are on the lookout for fun ways to meet new people.

- Think of a hobby unique to your location. One of the best ways to attract other locals is to find a hobby that caters to residents in your area. For example, coastal residents may want to start a local fishing club, while city dwellers may draw more interest starting a club focused on local museums or restaurants.
- Take all comers. Individuals over



50 may aspire to meet people in situations similar to their own, but they should still allow anyone interested in their club to join. Adults in the early stages of midlife (i.e., their thirties and forties) are often too busy with their personal and professional lives to make much time for social clubs, so it's likely that those interested will be 50 or older. But accepting all who are interested can increase the chances of starting a diverse and engaging group.

- Spread the word. Meetup (meetup.com) has been facilitating connections for two decades, making it a great place to start a group for people with shared interests. In addition to utilizing a service like Meetup, founders can spread the word through their social media apps and create fliers to post on public boards at local community centers and libraries.

- Find a public place to get together. It's best to avoid hosting club events and meetings at a private residence, including your own. Instead, prior to starting the club, look around for meeting places, which can include local churches, libraries or community centers. Ask about reserving spaces for meetings and look for places that are accessible for all people, including those with mobility issues.

Starting a social club can be a great way for individuals over 50 to meet new people and explore new or existing passions.

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MV School District participates in Universal Breakfast and Lunch Program

SUBMITTED ARTICLE

MONTE VISTA — The Monte Vista School District is participating in a Universal Breakfast and Lunch Program for the 2022-2023 school year.

Children attending Marsh Elementary, Bill Metz Elementary, Monte Vista Middle School, Monte Vista High School, or Byron Syring DELTA Center, breakfast-lunch will be available to them at no charge. All students enrolled in these schools may participate in the breakfast-

lunch program at no charge to them.

Studies have shown that children who are not hungry perform better in school. By providing breakfast-lunch for all children at no charge, the district is hoping to create a better learning environment for students.

The school breakfast and lunch that is served follows U.S. Department of Agriculture guidelines for healthy school meals. The Universal Meals Program cannot succeed without local support.

All meals will be served to all students at no charge regardless of the eligibility status.

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at 800-877-8339.



Artists open their studios for the Silver Thread Studio Tour on Aug. 13

CREEDE — The Creede Arts Council and area artists are presenting the 18th Annual Silver Thread Studio Tour on Saturday, Aug. 13, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Artists between South Fork and Creede are opening their studios to friends, old and new. People can take a self-guided driving tour along Highway 149, the beautiful Silver Thread Scenic Byway, in the San Juan Mountains of Southern Colorado.

Artist's studios are located from South Fork through historic Creede, and along the route toward the Studios at Bristol.

"Enjoy a beautiful drive through the mountains and the incredible range of artistic talent in our area. Local artists will welcome you into their home studios and galleries, where they will answer questions, share techniques, perform demonstrations, and showcase a variety of works available for purchase," organizers stated.

The Silver Thread Studio Tour will have 16 participating artists this year. The offerings include fiber arts, ceramics, wood, photography, jewelry, painting, sculpture, and fused glass. Many of the artists have national and international recognition in their respective fields.

Map brochures will be available in August at the South Fork and Creede Visitor Centers, as well as The Studios at Bristol. You may also view and print the map brochure from the CAC website at www.creedeartscouncil.com.

Watch for the bright red and yellow signs, banners and windsocks that will guide people from stop to stop. There is no charge for this event. All are welcome during these hours, without reservations.

For more information, contact the CAC office at creedearts@outlook.com.

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Great Sand Dunes celebrating Junior Ranger Day

SUBMITTED ARTICLE

GREAT SAND DUNES NATIONAL PARK — Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve is celebrating Junior Ranger Day on Saturday, Aug. 6. Activities will take place from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the dunefield and at the south entrance to the dunefield from the Dunes Parking Area (follow signs posted in the parking lot).

Participants will have the opportunity to earn patches, pedometers, and t-shirts after completing a variety of activities. Families and children of all ages are welcome and there are no fees or reservations required to participate in the event.

This event is made possible with generous support from the Friends of the Dunes and the staff and volunteers at Great Sand Dunes. The Friends of the Dunes is a non-profit organization committed to supporting research and education at Great Sand Dunes.

An orientation table, prize table and activity stations will be staffed by park staff and Friends of the Dunes board members. This year, Great Sand Dunes has organized

the following activities for kids to participate in:

- Learn about mountain lions, pronghorns, and a variety of insects at the “Animal Olympics” station.
- Stop by the “Artifact Table” station to learn more about artifacts, rocks, and other exciting items that have been found in the park.
- Look for plants, animals, and unique features in the dunes as part of the “Scavenger Hunt”.
- Practice your “Sand Painting” and learn about ways that many cultures connect to their environments.
- To promote physical activity in National Parks, the Friends of the Dunes will provide pedometers for Junior Rangers to participate in “Steps for Stamps” — walk or hike 1,000 steps with a pedometer and earn a stamp.

Junior Rangers will collect a stamp after completing each activity and pick up prizes at the Prize Table.

For more information on Junior Ranger Day and other programs at Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve, visit www.nps.gov/grsa or call the visitor center at 719-378-6395, between 9: a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

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1 "Medicare & You," Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, 2021. 2 "How might my oral and dental health change as I age?"; www.usnews.com, 11/30/2018. 3 American Dental Association, Health Policy Institute, 2018 Survey of Dental Fees, Copyright 2018, American Dental Association.

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