

Shorts

Four people seriously injured in single-vehicle accident

CONEJOS COUNTY — Four people seriously injured in roll-over accident on March 27 on Conejos County Road 28, just south of Conejos County Road W, Colorado State Patrol reported.

At approximately 2:25 p.m. on Sunday, CSP responded to a single-vehicle crash on Conejos County Road 28, just south of Conejos County Road W.

Investigation revealed that the vehicle, a white 2004 Chevrolet Tahoe, was traveling north on CCR 28 at a high rate of speed. The vehicle was oversteered entering a left-hand curve and began to rotate counterclockwise. The vehicle was over corrected and began to rotate clockwise as it drove off the left side of the road. The vehicle tripped and went airborne over a fence, rolling 1/2 time, and came to rest on its roof in a field.

The driver and two passengers were ejected during the crash. Four of the seven occupants were transported to Denver area hospitals with serious injuries. The remaining three occupants suffered only minor injuries.

The incident is still under investigation.

Two people flown to Denver hospitals following crash

MINERAL COUNTY — Two people were flown to Denver hospitals following a single-vehicle accident on March 27 on US Highway 160 near milepost 179.3 in Mineral County, Colorado State Patrol reported.

At approximately 6:05 a.m., CSP responded to a one-vehicle crash on US Highway 160 near milepost 179.3. The driver and passenger of the vehicle were extricated and flown to Denver area hospitals.

Investigation revealed that the vehicle, a tan 2002 Ford Ranger, was traveling west on US Highway 160 when it drove off the right side of the road in a left-hand curve. The vehicle was steered to the left and began to rotate counterclockwise. The vehicle struck the rock embankment with the passenger side and rolled 1/4 times onto its passenger side facing east.

The incident is still under investigation.

• Compiled by CPD staff

Yoakam headlining Stampede

Tickets on sale now for 100th anniversary concert on July 21

STAFF REPORT

MONTE VISTA — The SLV Ski-Hi Stampede recently announced that Dwight Yoakam will be headlining the 100th anniversary concert on Thursday, July 21, at the Ski Hi Complex. Tickets are currently on sale at the Ski Hi Stampede website, www.SkiHiStampede.com.

The Josh Abbott Band is opening for Yoakam.

The Ski-Hi Stampede is celebrating its 100th anniversary, July 22-24. It is Colorado's oldest pro rodeo. It began in 1919, but two years were deducted because of World War II, when no events were held. The first rodeo was held Aug. 11-13, 1919, and was called the Ski-Hi Stampede.

Yoakam has sold more than 25 million albums worldwide, and he is a 21-time nominated, multiple

Grammy Award winner. He has 12 gold albums and nine platinum or multi-platinum albums, with five of those albums topping Billboard's Country Albums chart and another 14 landing in the Top 10. Nearly 40 of Yoakam's singles have charted on Billboard, with 14 peaking in the Top 10.

Yoakam is a recipient of the *Please see CONCERT on Page 2A*



Photo by Mechel Meek

Center Police Department received funding from Saguache County that will be used to purchase equipment to modernize the department's reporting system.

CPD receives tech funding

BY MECHEL MEEK

CENTER — The Center Police Department has announced that it has received funding from the Saguache County Sheriff's Office through the Public Safety Tax, which was approved by the Saguache County Commissioners.

The funding will be used by CPD to purchase equipment to modernize the police reporting system.

According to CPD Chief Dale Meek, "This equipment makes officers more efficient. All reports, accidents, criminal and citations, can

be written digitally in the vehicles without going to the office. The smart devices have cameras so photos can be taken and instantaneously uploaded into reports. Software is all accessible through cloud-based programs allowing supervisors to view and approve reports anywhere. This mobile report writing platform will make officers more efficient and it motivates them to do more. A final note on that, it reduces the amount of time needed to process data to make ourselves S.B. 217 compliant."

Another benefit to the upgraded system is the ability to track crime trends and share information with other law enforcement agencies which will benefit Center and the San Luis Valley by allowing law enforcement to focus on current criminal activity and trends.

Most larger law enforcement departments in urban areas use similar systems to help with report writing and crime trends and this system is a significant step forward in a rural community such as Center.

Center to hold election for 3 Trustees

BY MECHEL MEEK

CENTER — On April 5, registered voters of the Town of Center will vote on three open positions for the Board of Trustees.

A meet-the-candidates session was held on March 8 at Town Hall, which allowed citizens to ask the candidates questions.

Six people are running for three seats — Bernadette Arellano, Richard Barela, Miriam Gonzalez, Bill McClure, James Sanchez, and Herman Sisneros.

Three candidates responded to the Center Post-Dispatch's request for information regarding their candidacy.

Candidate Gonzales responded with, "My name is Miriam Gonzales. I've been a resident of Center for 12 years. I previously worked for the Center Head Start for 11 years. I currently still drive for Center Consolidated Schools and work at the dental office located here in Center. I have had the privilege to meet the community, engage with children of various ages, communicate with parents, and the community. Being bilingual has helped me accomplish a lot because my goal is to hear all voices and take into consideration

Please see TRUSTEE on Page 2A

Great Sand Dunes has free programs, events during 'We Love Our National Park' celebration

STAFF REPORT

MOSCA — To honor the Great Sand Dunes National Park, and to celebrate being the Gateway Community, Visit Alamosa will launch the second annual, month-long "We Love Our National Park Celebration" on April 1.

Each year in April since 1991, National Parks across the country celebrate National Park Week with special programs, events, and free days. This year, National Park

Week is April 16-24, which makes April a time to celebrate and honor the national park's dedication to conserving world-class resources while also showing appreciation to the community that promotes and supports their national park.

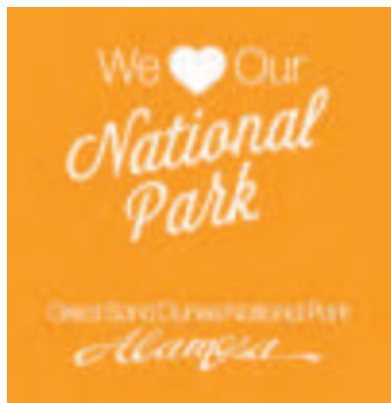
Great Sand Dunes has planned events and programs to align with Visit Alamosa's campaign, "We Love Our National Park."

Visit Alamosa will feature posters and flags displayed downtown and

offer digital promotions and stickers for visitors to Alamosa during the month of April.

The month's long celebration will kick-off on April 1 with live music, a local food vendor, solar scope viewings, and information tables staffed by the Sangre de Cristo Heritage Area, and Great Sand Dunes rangers, all at the Alamosa Welcome Center from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Later that evening during Alamosa's First

Please see DUNES on Page 2A



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TRUSTEE

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what the needs and wants for our town are from all members and residents of Center. I have big goals for the town of Center to grow and expand. My hopes are to involve more of the youth in our town. Hear opinions and make a change. We often can speak from a resident view on what we want but I want to actually make a change in my town. Especially because I come from a hometown in México that has expanded and has tourism and that's what I would hope to bring to Center. More businesses and tourism. Working with children, I understand how important it is to set a good example for the younger ones to look up to and be involved in the future as well in the town hall and community. Which is what I am aiming for as well, to set a good example."

Candidate Sanchez responded with, "I'm running for town board first and foremost to represent the fine people of Center. The town is facing important issues affecting its people and as a representative, I will talk to citizens and hear what they want done. As a board member, we should not vote for what's right for us by what's best for the entire population of Center. I would like to see the North 90 development move forward at a faster pace. There have been many great ideas presented by the people which I would like to make

possible. A board member is given a tremendous responsibility by the voters and we have to give 110%. I'm very proud and excited about the direction the town is headed and I would work my hardest if elected to move, kick and keep the ball rolling toward the right direction. I thank all the Center Voters who will support me and will represent all voters and all people if they voted or not. I have taken my duties very seriously including my 25 years as Center's Municipal Judge and as Center's Postmaster. I have served as a town board member and also served on the town utility board. I'm currently a member of the Tierra Nueva Housing Development a member for 15 years, a past member of the Colorado State Veterans Center at Home Lake. I'm a military veteran and served fighting for our country in Vietnam. I would be honored in serving as your Center town board member."

Candidate Arellano responded with, "Allow me to introduce myself to everyone. My name is Bernadette Duran and I am running for Town Board for the Town of Center. I decided to run for this post due to the passion I have for our town and my desire to bring Center back to its hometown feel. I believe there have been great strides made but, I feel there are still a few improvements that need work. The biggest issue we

are facing in our community is the drug epidemic. I give credit to Chief Meek and his officers for the great work they are doing to reduce drug activity. I feel the police department needs as much support from the town in order to continue with their work. I also feel that we as a community are lacking many other needs. Our youth need some form of recreation. When there is nothing to do, many of our young ones tend to get into trouble because of boredom. We also need to work on cleaning up our town. Certain parts of Town have become an eyesore. Driving around you see various things such as furniture, yard debris and trash that are strewn about many of the yards. We need to attract people to our town, not have them turned away by the things that homeowners should be disposing of. Another thing that I want to be part of is the North 90 and the growth of Center. We need additional housing and I can vouch for this need as I manage two apartment complexes here in Center. I became manager of Casa de Cortez and Valle Vista Apartments in January of 2021. When I got hired, I made a commitment to help 'clean up' the complexes. Since that time, I have seen a change. I can promise that if I am elected, I will put the same amount of passion, dedication and love into the wonderful Town of Center."

DUNES

Continued from Page 1A

Friday event, stop by the park's information table along main street from 5 to 7 p.m. along main street or attend presentations by Friends of the Dunes President Lucy Adams and Great Sand Dunes Public Information Officer Kathy Faz at the San Luis Valley Museum at 5:30 and 7 p.m.

"Great Sand Dunes is honored to be a part of a community that appreciates their national park to a degree that they would designate an entire month towards celebrating it," said Park Superintendent Pamela Rice. "The City of Alamosa has shown support since before the establishment of the Great Sand Dunes National

Monument and continues to promote and value the positive benefits it can bring to a community. We look forward to celebrating during April and look forward to welcoming visitors to their national park this year."

Throughout the month, free ranger programs will be offered at the park visitor center at 10:30 a.m. on most weekends. Rangers will lead a guided BARK Ranger hike at the Blanca Vista Park in Alamosa on Saturday, April 23 from 1-2 p.m. Daily programs at the park visitor center are planned during National Park Week, April 16-24. To kick off

National Park Week, entrance fees will be waived on Saturday, April 16.

April is an opportunity to picnic at the Mosca Creek picnic area, splash in Medano Creek, spend the night in Pinon Flats Campground, or rent a sand sled or sand board.

For a full schedule of events during the month of April and more information on visiting Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve, including camping, hiking, Medano Creek conditions, Medano Pass Primitive Road conditions, visitor center hours, and other park news, visit www.nps.gov/grsa.

CONCERT

Continued from Page 1A

Artist of the Year award from the Americana Music Association, the most prestigious award offered by the organization.

A staple in the Texas music scene since forming in 2006 at Lubbock's Texas Tech University, the Josh Abbott Band has weathered many storms including divorces, burying their fathers, the Route 91 Harvest shooting and a pandemic. Josh Abbott Band consists of drummer and founding member Eddie Villanueva, who joined in 2008 after Abbott and

banjo player Austin Davis had been performing at open mic nights together and realized they needed to add more musicians to the group. Guitarist Caleb Keeter came on board in 2010 while keys player David Fralin joined the band in 2015 before bassist Jimmy Hartman entered the fold in 2018.

The concert kicks off the Stampede and is followed by amateur and professional rodeo action July 22-24 and a parade in downtown Monte Vista on July 23. The event includes nightly dances and a carnival.

OBITUARY

Ralph Glenn Nash July 26, 1930 — March 23, 2022

Ralph passed away peacefully at St. Mary's Hospital on March 23, 2022, of respiratory failure.

He was the fourth of nine children of Glenn and Irena (Martin) Nash. He grew up on a small, irrigated ranch near Del Norte, Colo., and graduated from Del Norte High School in 1948. He attended Adams State College, Alamosa, Colo., farmed with his parents for two years, and served in the U.S. Air Force as an electronics technician. He served one year in Denver, two years in Florida, and nine months in Germany.

Ralph married Janette I. Teeters on June 9, 1957. He obtained his B.S. degree from Colorado State University, and taught General Agriculture and Shop at Center, Colo., for one year. He obtained his M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in Soil Science from Colorado State University. He was a recipient of a National Defense Graduate Fellowship.

Dr. Nash was an Agricultural Analyst for the CIA for two years, Washington, D.C.; Research Soil Scientist with U.S. Department of Agriculture at Beltsville, MD, for 25 years, and Study Director with BioAnalytical Services, Harristown, IL. Dr. Nash was the author or co-author of more than 120 research papers, book chapters, abstracts of presentations, and senior editor of one scientific book — many Ralph G. Nash or R.G. Nash publications can be found on the internet.

Dr. Nash was nationally and internationally known in the field of Environmental Fate of Pesticides. During his employment, he was an active member of several scientific societies — Chemical, Soil, Agronomy, Weed, and others.

Ralph was the author, senior author, or compiler of seven family genealogies and history books.

In retirement, he was a 21-year



volunteer at the Paleontology Laboratory, Museums of Western Colorado, and an active member of a Home Owners Association.

Ralph served as a member and was active in several churches. He was an active Elder in three Presbyterian Churches and member and or chairman of church committees. His hobbies included reading history, especially WWII, religion, and current events, and researching and publishing family history and genealogies.

Ralph is survived by Janette, his wife; daughters, Sherrie Nash, DVM (Robert Willems), Harlowton, Mont., and Cynthia Nash, Md., (Gregory Brazell), Whitewater, Kan.; son, Bradley Nash (Sharon), Vesuvius, Va.; seven grandchildren; four great-grandchildren; sisters, Myrtle Henry, of Denver, Colo., and Clare Rasmussen, of Grand Junction, Colo.; brothers, Darrel Nash, PhD, of Bowie, Md., and Wayne Nash of Del Norte, Colo., and many nieces and nephews.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to First Presbyterian Church or Museums of Western Colorado.

Graveside services will be held at a later date in Del Norte, Colo.

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OPINION & EDITORIAL

Fallen and can't get up

I guess there is no greater fear when people grow old than falling and not being able to get up. And who can imagine lying somewhere, maybe cold, waiting for someone to come along and find you there. That would be horrible.

Now in Ol' Dutch's case, I think I could probably survive a good 90 days living off the food I have in storage — around my middle — but might get a tad thirsty by then, too.

I have Miss Trixie who checks on me all the time now and when asked why she does she says, "I wanted to make sure you weren't dead." I am not sure what she would do about that but it's nice to be loved at least.

We all know the advertising promo that became famous for using the phrase "I've fallen and can't get up" which came about sometime in the 1980s. And remarkably it's still noticeable today as a trademark of Life Alert, a company that provides emergency help to the elderly at the touch of a button worn conveniently around one's neck.

I do get a little frustrated and somewhat aggravated with their advertising on the television, however, as that poor old lady who falls down the stairs just keeps doing it over and over. I even yell at her when it comes on TV hoping she will finally learn but she is stubborn as the dickens.

And there is also the lady who falls in the basement trying to do her laundry. I used to feel sorry for her but of late I have been telling her that it serves her right to go down there in the first place. She never learns.

One thing I have noticed as I age is I am not as steady on my feet as I once was and so I do understand the fears about falling with the elderly. Some of the problems with Ol' Dutch is he is a tad top-heavy now and things built that way are a lot easier to topple, for sure.

Just the other night Ol' Dutch had his own little scare with falling. Having taken Mr. Cooper, the Yorkie, out for his midnight rounds, we were returning to the house, and I had mounted the stairs to come in when I lost one camo house shoe on the top step.

No use asking how I could lose a shoe but let us just say it may have not been properly attached to my dogs. Instead of stopping and taking my time to recover said shoe, I tried to backstep and get it.

This resulted in what is known as "tipping the scales of balance" and Ol' Dutch suddenly fell over backward



Trout Republic
by Kevin Kirkpatrick

off the porch.

They always say that your life flashes in front of your eyes when you are about to die and no, this did not happen so I knew I would live through it. However, I also knew that this was gonna hurt.

Taking a clue from my many years of gymnastics experience which is solely made up of watching the Olympics every four years, I was able to turn and get one foot on the deck three feet down.

And from that start, I vaulted myself into the yard which I knew had to be softer than the deck itself. Now how a person can have the presence of mind to do all that in a split second I do not know but I do recall all the thoughts that went through my mind from the initial "Oh! Oh!" to "wow that hurt."

Needless to say, I did not stick the landing like most gymnasts, but I survived it albeit with a headache, broken tooth, and more.

Checking myself out for catastrophic injuries and finding none I called for Miss Trixie to come to help me but all I got in reply was some deep snores coming from the bedroom. Mr. Cooper the Yorkie and Bob the Cat simply sat on the porch, ears erect, and looked at me like Olympic judges at the summer games.

No score was given, and I think I saw them look at one another and make some snide comments about technique and lack of conditioning on Ol' Dutch's part.

Never, fear, Ol' Dutch managed to get his bruised and battered body to bed on his own. Miss Trixie, for her part, never roused. Maybe I should look into one of those fancy things call-for-help buttons after all.

Kevin Kirkpatrick and his Yorkie, Cooper, fish, hunt, ATV or hike daily. His email is Kevin@TroutRepublic.com.

Building back, building up, and investing in our rural economy

BY ARMANDO VALDEZ
State Director USDA-Rural Development

Living in rural Colorado is a special opportunity that few get to experience. The attraction of the Front Range includes its conveniences and bright lights. However, the attractions of the rural parts of Colorado include the bright stars at night, livestock serenades, open panoramic views, and peaceful spaces. This country boy could not ask for more.

I was born and raised on a farm and ranch right here in the beautiful San Luis Valley near Capulin. Being raised in this environment instilled in me a passion for rural prosperity. I still call this farm and ranch my home because I want my children to encounter the transformation that only a cold, windy morning while feeding cattle and sheep can offer.

A couple of weeks ago, President Joe Biden used his first State of the Union address to talk about where our country has been and where we are going. The President mentioned a lot we can be proud of, and even more to look forward to, especially in rural America.

The President's address to the nation inspired thoughts of rural Colorado. What does this mean for us and at this time? The country has faced deep challenges over the past year, and the people of rural America know this better than anyone.

Yet, rural communities are resilient, and as the success of rural America goes, so goes the rest of the country. We are in a unique timeframe which rural Colorado must capitalize on. There are a generational amount of resources available which can support

our rural communities invest in our rural economy and build up our rural infrastructure for the next generations. That's why the progress we have made in rural Colorado over the past year is a good sign for everyone.

By investing in water infrastructure, broadband, rural business opportunities and the American food supply chain, USDA is helping communities build a foundation for sustained economic growth.

On March 16, I had the fortunate opportunity to visit one of these infrastructure investments in Antonito, Colorado. Like many small towns, Antonito is facing the challenge of updating its waste-water treatment facility. USDA, DOLA (CO), and the Town of Antonito teamed up to invest in this new infrastructure project which will serve the Antonito community for decades. This is a model project, and a template for other small communities, of a true collective effort between funders, engineers, contractors, and municipality.

Infrastructure projects are key rural investment options. And, so are investments in our local agriculture and livestock industries. Through the Food Supply Chain Guaranteed Loan Program and the Meat and Poultry Processing Expansion Program, we're answering the President's call to create more resilient, diverse and secure supply chains.

Promoting competition in the processing sector will lead to fairer prices for farmers, greater value for workers, and more affordable and healthier food produced closer to home for families.

Now is the time for these investments to create jobs and

economic opportunities in our rural areas. Rural investments help grow the economy from the bottom up and middle out like the President talked about. Investing in our local communities contributes to a circular economy where the resources and wealth we build in rural Colorado stay right here in Colorado.

Economic investments are just the beginning. In the State of the Union, President Biden committed to replace poisonous lead pipes — so every child — and every American — has clean water to drink at home and at school, and provide affordable high-speed internet for every American — rural, urban, suburban, and tribal communities.

The Biden-Harris Administration's plan for the rural economy is to make investments now and build it up from the middle out to produce historic wins for everyone to participate, no matter their zip code.

As rural residents, we are always optimistic. We know that our best days lie ahead. I was taught at a young age that "next year" is going to be a good year. The excitement of "next year" motivated me to invest my time now to ensure good years.

By giving everyone a fair shot and providing equitable access to federal resources, we can do our part to build up our rural economy. That means implementing ideas to make more things at home, on the farm, at the ranch. That means strengthening our supply chains and lowering costs for working families. That means giving people opportunities to make a good living without having to leave the communities they know and love.

For a lot of us, that means staying in and strengthening rural Colorado.

YOUR NIGHT SKY

BY DARLENE DANKO

Spring Sky

Now that spring is here the winter stars are in the west, and new stars are rising in the east. There are only three bright stars in the spring which also form the Spring Triangle. They are Regulus, Arcturus and Spica. The three constellations they are part of are Leo the Lion, Bootes the Bear Driver and Virgo the Maiden.

The Spring Triangle is easy to find. It's an asterism that covers a large part of the southeast sky in the spring. Arcturus is in Bootes, Spica is the hand of Virgo and of course Regulus is the heart of Leo the Lion.

Regulus is the highest up of the stars which makes it the first star to rise and set in the Triangle. It's in the SE and is a blue-white star. Arcturus is the next to appear followed closely by Spica. When you look up in the SE,

Regulus is two-thirds of the way up in the sky with Arcturus way down on its lower left and Spica far to the right of Arcturus. Regulus and Spica are along the ecliptic where the moon, Sun and planets travel alone.

Bootes is a kite shaped constellation. When it first appears in the spring it looks like a wide necktie hanging in the sky. It's called the Bear Driver because it appears to be chasing Ursa Major, the Big Bear constellation that the Big Dipper is part of. There is a faint constellation between them called Canes Veratici that's supposed to be Bootes 2 dogs helping him chase the bear. You need a clear dark sky to see it.

Ursa Major circles the North Star and Bootes follows him through the year. To find Bootes, first find the Big Dipper. Then follow the line of the handle that points over to Arcturus. "Follow the Arc to Arcturus". It's high in the SE May and June.



Arcturus is the fourth-brightest star in the entire sky. It's orange in color which tells us that it's cooler than our Sun. It's about 37 LY from us, so it's one of our closest stars. It's an orange giant 25 times the diameter of our Sun and 170 times brighter.

Since the new Moon is on April 1, this is a great time for sky viewing. Because we're now on Daylight Savings Time, you'll just have to look a little later in the evening. In the morning you'll be able to see the planets. Venus is still bright, and Saturn and Mars are close by in the ESE.

LETTERS POLICY

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

author and include a phone number and address where the author can be reached (these are not for publication).

Political letters may be limited due to space constraints.



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Mountainfilm on Tour coming to Monte Vista April 8

SUBMITTED ARTICLE

MONTE VISTA — Mountainfilm on Tour brings a selection of culturally rich, adventure-packed and incredibly inspiring documentary films curated from the Mountainfilm festival in Telluride.

The tour will visit Monte Vista at the Vali 3 Theater on Friday, April 8 with films that explore themes connected to Mountainfilm's mission of using the power of film, art and ideas to inspire audiences to create a better world. There is also a virtual program option the following weekend from April 15-17.

Mountainfilm on Tour in Monte Vista is hosted by the Monte Vista Chamber of Commerce in partnership with San Luis Valley Great Outdoors.

This will be the third year the Monte Vista Chamber of Commerce



has brought Mountainfilm on Tour to the San Luis Valley. While hosting an inspiring collection of films, the show is also an opportunity to raise funds to support the work of San Luis

Valley Great Outdoors (SLV GO!), a local nonprofit.

SLV GO!'s mission is to provide visitors and residents with accessible and inclusive outdoor

recreation opportunities that balance conservation, connect communities, improve wellness, encourage stewardship, and contribute to the economic vitality of the region.

The Monte Vista Chamber of Commerce and SLV GO! will welcome guests on April 8 at Rain Brews beginning at 4:30 p.m. for a silent auction fundraiser, drinks, and appetizers while learning more about the current and future work of SLV GO!

Silent auction items include local artwork, gift certificates for local eateries, outdoor gear, hot spring passes, and more. The Vali 3 Theater opens its doors at 6:30 and the show kicks off at 7 p.m.

Tickets for Mountainfilm on Tour in Monte Vista can be purchased online at www.mountainfilm.org/tour. Tickets will also be available at the door of the Vali 3 Theater the

day of the event. Tickets for both the live and virtual showing are \$15 and support the work of SLV GO! For a sneak peak, see the complete playlist at www.mountainfilm.org/tour/schedule.

Mountainfilm is a documentary film festival that showcases stories about environmental, cultural, climbing, political and social justice issues. Mountainfilm is held every Memorial Day weekend in Telluride.

Along with exceptional documentaries, the festival goes beyond the film medium by bringing together world-class athletes, change makers and visionary artists for a multi-dimensional celebration of indomitable spirit. Mountainfilm's mission is to use the power of film, art and ideas to inspire audiences to create a better world.

To learn more about Mountainfilm, visit www.mountainfilm.org.

Weyers wins Lockhart painted crane



Courtesy photo

Friends of Ski Hi Co-chairs Karla Shriver and Kathy Woods present the Tom Lockhart painted crane to the lucky winner Leah Weyers, of Monte Vista. The crane, part of the Monte Vista Chamber 2021 crane project, was sponsored by Shriver and Woods. The fundraiser raised approximately \$2,000 for the building of the Outcalt Event and Conference at SLV Ski Hi Complex.

San Luis Valley Health prepares for Community Health Needs Assessment

SUBMITTED ARTICLE

ALAMOSA — Every three years San Luis Valley Health completes a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA).

Planning and preparations for the 2022 CHNA is currently underway. While the CHNA is a federal requirement of the IRS for non-profit hospitals to demonstrate their value by addressing the unmet health needs of communities served, SLVH also uses the information to help guide strategic priorities to improve its services.

"The timing of this needs assessment is important as SLVH begins its work to set our strategic priorities for the next year. It's a direct way for SLVH to respond to the various patient populations we serve," said Christine Hettinger-Hunt,

Chief Operating Officer.

SLVH will work with the Colorado Health Institute to facilitate discussions with key stakeholders from San Luis Valley counties to review evidence-based health care research and data, identify health needs, and then prioritize those needs.

SLVH will also collect health surveys from Valley residents to provide input on top areas of concern. Based on community feedback, SLVH then determines how to use its capacity and resources to respond to identified needs.

SLVH conducted its last CHNA in 2019 and identified Access to Care; Chronic Disease Management; Mental Health Prevention and Improvement; Substance Abuse

Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery; and Poverty Mitigation as top priorities.

San Luis Valley residents are encouraged to participate in the 2022 process by completing a community health survey, following the links below to give input:

- English: <https://forms.gle/59TCbUqRSVaFbD6Y6>
- Spanish: <https://forms.gle/FKGGUod2nFx2bsmp6>

Survey responses are confidential and need to be returned by April 22 to help inform priorities.

Survey participants will be entered into a drawing for a \$50 gift card.

If you have questions about this survey, contact Hettinger-Hunt at 719-587-1243 or Donna Wehe at 719-587-1209.

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Teresa Jones, bilingual Behavioral Health Provider recently joined our team in Center. She was born and raised in Jalapa, Veracruz in Mexico, and came to the San Luis Valley in 1989; she married and raised two children here. Teresa has trained in Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) treatment and other modalities. She believes every patient should be treated with the utmost respect, dignity, dedication and commitment as if they were a family member or friend. Outside of the clinic, Teresa loves spending time with her family and friends and says that dark chocolate is life!

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RGC Department of Public Health designates Public Health Week

BY LYNDIE FERRELL
RIO GRANDE COUNTY — During the Rio Grande County Board of Health meeting on March 16, Rio Grande Public Health Department Director Dr. Kolawole Bankole asked Rio Grande County Commissioners serving as the Board of Health to adopt a proclamation designating April 4-10 as National Public Health Week.

The theme for this year's National Public Health Week is "Public Health is where you are." Dr. Bankole explained the reason behind the need to celebrate National Public Health Week and answered questions from commissioners throughout the discussion.

"Public health professionals are heroes. They have given all of their time and have been everywhere. They keep our community healthy

and have sacrificed and dealt with people who were not appreciative of the hours that they put in. The American Public Health Association said this year that Public Health is where you are. It is what you make of it," said Dr. Bankole.

The proclamation serves as an announcement of a National Public Health Appreciation Week for the time and effort public health professionals have put in making sure that local communities stay safe and healthy. Throughout the last two years, nurses, medical professionals and public health officials have worked countless hours into making sure communities stayed safe and healthy through programs that included COVID prevention, tobacco prevention, general vaccination and so much more.

The proclamation stated, "Since 1995, the American Public Health Association, through its sponsorship of National Public Health Week, has educated the public, policymakers and public health professionals about issues important to improving the public's health; and U.S. life expectancy dropped from 2014 to 2017 in the longest sustained decline since the Great Recession and only in 2018 began to increase again; U.S life expectancy then dropped again in 2020 by a full year, which is the largest drop in life expectancy since 1943.

"We want to make sure that people can help themselves and that there is a public health celebration week. Lend a helping hand to your neighbor, help someone with what they may need. Keep yourself healthy, make

sure you get out and exercise, make sure you don't smoke and do all the good things that make you happy," stated Dr. Bankole.

The proclamation continued to state, "There is a significant difference in health status, such as obesity, poor mental health and drug use, among people living in rural areas compared with people living in urban areas, and this variance increases because rural residents are often more likely to face social determinants that negatively impact health, such as poverty, transportation barriers and lack of economic opportunity; and a person's health status can differ drastically by zip code due to differences in the built environment, environmental quality, community context, access to healthy food, access to education and access

to health care."

Dr. Bankole ended the discussion by stating, "Public health is where we are. We are on the National Public Health website right there will all the other places that are celebrating. We did not celebrate it last year; it is time to celebrate our achievements here and what we have done. We need to celebrate the Board of Health too, for making the right decisions through all of this and for every day of the week."

Commissioners severing as the Board of Health will be working with Rio Grande Department of Public Health to make the week of April 4-10 a week of celebration and acknowledgment of public health professionals and to celebrate the healthy communities within Rio Grande County.

CRT events for 'young learners'

STAFF REPORT
CREEDE — Two events targeting "early learners" will be offered on Friday, April 1 at the Ruth Humphreys Brown theatre here.

Local author Cindy Harris will open the event with a reading of her new book, "Shine On the One I Love," at 10:30 a.m., followed by a performance of "Ms. Joy," devised and directed by Brittini Shambaugh-Addison.

Harris' book follows a mother watching her daughter grow into a beautiful young lady as their military family travels the countryside and discovers the luminous wonders of the moon and a variety of trees. "I see the moon," traditionally sung through three generations, reminds them that no matter where they are, or how far

apart, viewing the moon reflects their love for one another."

The book will be released from the publisher later this summer. Copies will be available at the CRT gift shop.

"Ms. Joy" isn't particularly joyful. She has a set routine that she sticks to every day. There is a time and place for everything until one day she receives a surprise visit from an unexpected canine friend, and he turns her routine upside down.

Running approximately 25 minutes, the story targets the theatre's youngest learners (ages 5 and under) told through clowning, puppetry and sound. It teaches students the power of play, friendship and laughter.

Following the production, Harris, Addison and other performers will be available for a "chat back."

SAGUACHE COUNTY SHERIFF'S REPORT

SAGUACHE COUNTY — The following information was provided by the Saguache County Sheriff's Office for the period between Monday, March 21, 2022, and Sunday, March 27, 2022.

The Sheriff's Department's activity on the road included 11 traffic stops, two crashes with property damage, one injury crash, one stolen vehicle report, and two traffic complaints. They also patrolled the Town of Saguache six times, conducted one VIN inspection, and assisted a motorist.

In addition, there was one report of harassing phone calls, one report of suicidal subject, two protection order violation reports, one report of theft, two reports of suspicious activity, and one warrant check.

They also responded to three civil disputes, three ambulance calls, six animal problem reports, one alarm, two welfare checks, five citizen assists, 12 controlled burns, one search and rescue call, provided information 11 times, and assisted nearby agencies once.

ARRESTS

- A 58-year-old Moffat man was arrested on outstanding warrants out of Saguache and Denver.
- A 30-year-old Center man was arrested on an outstanding warrant out of Saguache.
- A 50-year-old Center woman was arrested on an outstanding warrant out of Saguache.
- A 49-year-old Center woman was arrested on suspicion of computer

crime, theft, computer crime with prior convictions, and theft charges.

- A 35-year-old Monte Vista man was arrested on suspicion of unlawful distribution/manufacturing/dispensing/sale/possession of controlled substance, operating an uninsured motor vehicle on public roadway and operating a vehicle with defective head lamps charges.
- A 43-year-old Center man was arrested on suspicion of unlawful possession of a controlled substance, violation of a protection order, failing to present evidence of insurance on request, and operating an uninsured motor vehicle on public roadway charges.
- A 38-year-old Saguache woman was arrested on an outstanding warrant.

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CPW: Spring fishing forecast looks bright

By LYNDISIE FERRELL

SANLUIS VALLEY — Spring is in the air and as ice begins to melt off the surfaces of local waters, Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) prepares for the coming fish stocking season. Though winter's fishing was up to par, CPW Aquatic Biologist Estevan Vigil was optimistic about the coming spring and summer season. "First off, I think it is important to note that ice fishing this past year was pretty good. The lakes and reservoirs on the western side of the Valley were full of anglers and the few times I went out I was more than successful. With that being said, now, with spring on the horizon, it is time to be cautious of the ice. Warmer temperatures in the day and cooler temps at night make the ice weak and dangerous," said Vigil.

Vigil and local officials urge anyone heading out on the ice to fish this time of year to be extremely cautious as conditions can change and be precarious. Once waters in the western end of the San Luis Valley begin to open, it is an optimal time to head out and fish just before the spring runoff causes the conditions to worsen with rising water levels and colder water temperatures.

Beginning in April, CPW will begin its annual stocking schedule which will begin with Beaver Creek Reservoir just outside of South Fork. "We are really excited that we will be stocking Beaver Creek with Kokanee Salmon again this year," Vigil said. "The fish go in small and are allowed to grow. We start the first few weeks of April. We will also stock Rainbow Trout beginning in May and Brown Trout in July. We will continue this schedule every two weeks until September."

Big Meadows Reservoir located just up Highway 160 toward Wolf Creek Pass will be filled with



Photo By Lyndisie Ferrell

Rivers and reservoirs are beginning to melt with warmer springtime temperatures which marks the beginning of spring season fishing in the western end of the San Luis Valley. Colorado Parks and Wildlife recently spoke about their fish stocking schedule.

naturally producing Brook Trout as it is every year. "Big Meadows is an area favorite, and people really have a great time fishing the natural Brook Trout," Vigil said. "The best time to go at Big Meadows is early in the morning. We will also be stocking 10-inch Rainbow Trout from mid-May until September."

Shaw Creek is another small lake that local and visiting anglers like to fish throughout the spring and

summer seasons. This lake will be home to Cutbow Trout which is a highbred species of Rainbow and Cutthroat Trout.

"Cutbows are really fun to catch, and people say they are delicious to eat," Vigil said. "The fish is really very similar to Rainbow, and we begin to stock those in Shaw Creek in July. They are about 4 inches when we introduce them to the lake, but they grow rather quickly."

Rio Honda Reservoir up northeast of Creede will remain drained for another year. The dam repair project that began two years ago is still underway and Vigil anticipates that it will be another two to three years before the reservoir will be full again.

A little further south of Rio Hondo is the Road Canyon Reservoir which is one of the busiest fishing locations around Creede. According to Vigil, the reservoir provides optimal fishing early in the summer before weeds overrun the lake. In April CPW stocks Road Canyon with 3-inch Brook trout, 3-inch Rainbow Trout and 10-inch Rainbows again in June.

"Road Canyon is a really great place to go fishing and people do really like the easy access and the area," Vigil said.

Continental Reservoir is another fishing destination near Creede where anglers can begin to catch early-season Brook Trout, Splake and Cutbow Trout. All the species in Continental are put in small and allowed to grow so later in the summer season is the prime time to catch larger fish.

Rio Grande Reservoir is still recovering from dam repair that was completed in recent years. The lake is still filling with spring runoff and CPW is currently working to re-establish the fishery. This year the reservoir will be stocked with Rainbow and Splake in June and July. The fish go in at 10-inches and are allowed to grow.

Directions to all locations in this article can be found at <https://cpw.state.co.us/fishing>.

Notice of Accepting Bids

The Center Fire Protection District is accepting bids for two trucks. One is a 1983 Ford F800, 800 gallon pumper truck. The second is a 1969, Jeep, 2 1/2 ton Brush truck, 1,200 gallon. Bids shall be a minimum of \$5,000 per truck. Sealed bids will be accepted until 5:00 p.m. on April 8, 2022. Bids can be mailed to P.O. Box 845, Center, CO 81125. Bids will be opened at the Board's regular meeting on April 12, 2022. To view the above trucks, please call John Anderson at 719-588-8005 for an appointment. The District reserves the right to reject any and all bids.

No. 1630 published in the Center Post Dispatch, Thursday, March 24 and 31 and April 7, 2022.

The Saguache County Planning Commission will hold a Work Session at the Saguache County Road and Bridge Meeting Room located at 305 - 3rd Street, Saguache, Colorado, on the following date:

THURSDAY, MARCH 31ST, 2022 at 2 PM

to hear anyone/group (please have one spokesperson for each group) to hear their presentation regarding the proposed changes to the Saguache County Land Development Code. Please call the Saguache County Land Use Office if you would like to be set on the Work Session agenda for your presentation, 719-655-2321 or email atorrez@saguachecounty-co.gov. Depending on the number of presentations, will determine the allotted time per presentation. If you do not ask to be put on the work session agenda, you will not be able to do a presentation.

To view the current proposed changes, you may contact the Saguache County Land Use Department - PO Box 326, Saguache, CO 81149 or atorrez@saguachecounty-co.gov, or by calling 719-655-2321 or you may also view the changes on our website at www.saguachecounty-colorado.gov.

If you would like to comment on the current proposed changes, written comments will be accepted until Monday, March 28th, 2022 at 3pm, and may be sent to Saguache County Land Use Department at PO Box 326, Saguache, CO 81149 or email to atorrez@saguachecounty-co.gov.

No. 1627 published in the Center Post Dispatch, Thursday, March 3, 10, 17, 24 and 31, 2022.

Habitat for Humanity is accepting applications

STAFF REPORT

ALAMOSA — Habitat for Humanity is accepting applications for homeownership in Alamosa.

Habitat for Humanity is an international housing ministry serving low-income households

who have been unable to receive a traditional home loan through conventional lending sources.

For an application, stop by the Habitat Store at 507 Main St. in Alamosa, email audrey@slvhabitat.org or call Habitat at 719-589-8688.

Make Your Marriage Better Today!

I think most people would agree that a good marriage isn't going to just "happen." It's going to require some give and take. And more than anything, having a great relationship means being committed to doing things *God's way*.

For instance, I've found one major way to improve my marriage is to adopt an attitude of *giving* rather than *getting* (see Acts 20:35). Our natural inclination is to focus on ourselves. We have a tendency to think, *What can you do for me? or How can you make me happy?*

If you enter marriage with the mindset that your spouse should make you happy all the time, you're setting yourself up for disaster. However, if you make the choice to be a blessing to your spouse—if you set your mind to thinking, *I want to give...what can I do to be good to them?*—then you'll not only strengthen your marriage, but you will also become extremely happy!

I admit, I used to be an incredibly selfish person. To be honest, I just plain wanted my way, and I got upset when I didn't get it. In fact, I can still remember many mornings when I would lie in bed just thinking about how I was going to get Dave to do what I wanted to do that day. I was wrapped up in myself—thinking all about what I wanted and what others could do for me.

Well, one morning, as I lay there formulating my plan for how I was going to get everything I wanted, the Holy Spirit got my attention and spoke something to my heart that I will never forget.

The Lord said to me, "Joyce, sometimes you remind Me of a little toy robot that someone winds up every morning. Then, after you're fully wound up, you walk around all day long saying, 'What about me? What about me? What about me? What about me? What about me? What about me?'"

That got my attention! Over time, as I sought the Lord's help, He helped me, little by little, to change and be less selfish.

One great way to be good to your spouse is to take the time to learn what they like and dislike. For instance, I've learned that Dave really values spending quality time together. So, even though I'm more of a multi-tasker, I've learned to give Dave my undivided attention when he wants to sit and tell me something.

Likewise, Dave has made an effort to learn what I like. Many times, he will choose to do all the dishes at night just because he knows how much it blesses me. It may seem like a little thing, but it goes a long way toward sustaining a healthy relationship!

This principle comes from Acts 20:35 (AMPC), which says, *It is more blessed [and brings greater joy] to give than to receive.*

For many years, I could quote this Scripture, but I obviously didn't believe it because I spent my time trying to make myself happy rather than be a blessing to others. But God has taught me that we don't even know what "happy" is until we forget about ourselves, start focusing on others, and become generous givers in every way.

I'll never forget several years ago when I was planning a birthday party for Dave. I spent one entire day in particular running errands, making plans, and consuming myself with how I could make it a great event. By the time his birthday arrived, I was absolutely filled with joy and couldn't wait to see his reaction. I actually think I enjoyed his birthday more than he did! Why? *Because I got my mind off myself and focused on being good to someone else.*

It's so important to remember that you can never out-give God. Even if you feel right now like you're doing all the giving and your spouse is doing all the taking, be assured that *God* will always take care of you and bless your



obedience to His Word.

Galatians 6:7 (AMPC) gives us a wonderful promise from God. It says, "Do not be deceived...whatever a man sows, this and this only is what he will reap." I love this! When we make a decision to be givers and spend our time focusing on how we can be good to others, God says He will find ways to bless and take care of us.

I want to encourage you to take action to improve your marriage in practical ways. For the next week or so, take just a minute or two each morning to "set" your mind in the direction of *giving* instead of *getting*. Purposely think of something you can do for your spouse that will be a blessing to them.

As you do—as you choose to take time to make their life better—I believe you'll begin to experience more happiness yourself...and truly have a marriage you both enjoy.

For more on this topic, order Joyce's teaching resource **Marriage**. 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.

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Mayoral recall, Trustee elections and sales tax allocation on Crestone ballot

BY MECHEL MEEK
CRESTONE — On Tuesday, April 5, the Town of Crestone will be holding its regular election and a special recall election.

The regular election will be held for four Trustee positions and a ballot issue titled “Reallocation of a Portion of Dedicated Sales Tax to a Special Reserve Fund for Water and Sewer Capital Improvements.”

The recall election asks voters two questions, whether to recall Mayor Kairina Danforth and a question to elect one candidate as follows: Carl O. Cole., according to the Town of Crestone. If the recall is passed, then votes on the second question will be tabulated. Danforth has been mayor for 10 years.

According to the Colorado Secretary of State, “If a recall petition is found to have a sufficient number

of valid signatures, the question of whether to recall the officeholder is placed on the ballot. Below the recall question on the ballot, recall successor candidates will be listed as choices for voters, the officeholder being recalled cannot be a successor candidate.”

Ballots in this election will be held as a Mail Ballot Election, which were mailed to registered voters on March 16. All registered voters should have received their ballot by mail and the ballot must be received by the Crestone Town Clerk by 7 p.m. on April 5.

Ballots can be submitted by mail, or in person at Crestone Town Hall.

Five candidates are running for the four Trustee positions. They are as follows; Ginny Ducale, Stephen J. Hume, Adam Kinney, Kizzen N. Laki, and Daya Scheide.

Center events for April include C-Town Classic and Custom Car Show, Easter Egg Hunt and Movie Night

BY MECHEL MEEK
CENTER — Several events will be happening in April in the town of Center.

According to Keith Brockhurst, VISTA Volunteer for the Town of Center, “The C-Town Classic and Custom Car Show will be held in Center at Center Community Park on April 9, 2022, starting at 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.”

The entry fee is \$20 per car, and all proceeds will be donated to the Downtown Entrepreneur Project.

The Town of Center is known for

its car shows and this early spring show is sure to draw crowds who are restless for a fun activity after a long and cold winter.

A community-wide Easter Egg Hunt will be hosted by Center United Methodist Church on April 16 and starts at 2 p.m., with crafts, food, drinks and prizes.

On April 21, at 6 p.m., the Center United Methodist Church will also be hosting Movie Night, featuring Disney’s “Encanto.”

This event is free and is sponsored by Faith Adventures.



Photo courtesy of Adams State University

Prospective CSU/ASU mechanical engineering students visit the Adams State campus during Discover Day on March 5. The program recently received federal funding.

Mechanical engineering program on Adams State campus receives federal funding

STAFF REPORT
ALAMOSA — The Colorado State University/Adams State University mechanical engineering program has received federal support. US Senators for Colorado Michael Bennet and John Hickenlooper secured \$1.1 million to help launch the new degree.

Matt Nehring, director of the Adams State School of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics, said the federal funds will primarily be spent on lab renovation and lab equipment in Porter Hall, the Adams State STEM building.

“We have committed to replicating all components of the CSU Mechanical Engineering curriculum so that students on the Adams State campus will have the same

educational experiences as their Fort Collins counterparts,” Nehring said.

Christian Puttlitz, head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering at CSU, agrees.

“The goal of the program is to replicate the experiential learning mechanical engineering experience that students have on the Fort Collins campus,” Puttlitz said. “At the core of this experience is the world-class labs and equipment CSU students use and have access to for their engineering projects.”

The federal dollars will ensure the Adams State facilities match the CSU-Fort Collins mechanical engineering labs and equipment and therefore provide an equal academic experience for students at the rural institution.

Starting in Fall 2022, students can

enroll in the Bachelor of Science in mechanical engineering program on the Adams State campus. The first two years of the program will be taught by Adams State faculty, and the second half, which includes the senior design capstone project, will be taught by CSU faculty in-person on the Alamosa campus. Adams State will also offer an associate’s degree linked to the successful completion of the two years of lower-division courses.

The funding was part of a \$121 million for Colorado projects in the Fiscal Year 2022 omnibus funding bill.

“This investment will help meet the needs of rural students and strengthens the local economy,” Bennet said.

For more information on the CSU/ASU mechanical engineering degree, visit adams.edu/csume.

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SLV Health adds new CT scan machine

By DONNA WEHE
SLV Health

ALAMOSA — The new CT scan machine at the SLV Health Regional Medical Center is capable of quicker scans with lower doses of radiation.

Janet McGinnis, SLVH RMC Director of Imaging, talked about how excited the Emergency Department providers have been with the new machine's capability and quick results.

"The ED providers are telling me how much this has improved efficiencies for emergency patients," said McGinnis. "In addition to that, the machine is capable of some new features such as calcium scoring and state-of-the-art cardiac imaging. Anytime we add upgraded equipment like this, we can keep our patients from having to travel outside of the Valley. We have remodeled the area to create a more comfortable and safe environment. Our providers are raving about the results and our team is proud to bring this upgrade to our community."

A computerized tomography (CT) scan combines a series of X-ray images taken from different angles around a person's body and uses computer processing to create cross-sectional images (slices) of the bones, blood vessels, and soft tissues inside their body. CT scan images provide more detailed information than plain X-rays do.

A CT scan has many uses, but it's particularly well-suited to quickly examine people who may have internal injuries from car accidents or other types of traumas. A CT scan can be used to visualize nearly all parts of the body and is used to diagnose disease or injury as well as to plan medical, surgical, or radiation treatment.

The upgrade and remodel project



Photos courtesy of SLV Health
San Luis Valley Health has a new CT scan machine at the Regional Medical Center in Alamosa.

began in October 2021 and was completed in February. Patients used the mobile unit from Front Range Mobile Imaging during construction. A crane was used to remove the old machine and drop in the new one through the roof. The machine weighs more than 2,000 tons.

Superintendent Steve Watkins with Phipps Construction was the lead on the project and worked closely with SLVH Project Manager Jim Fleming. More than a dozen contractors contributed to this project.




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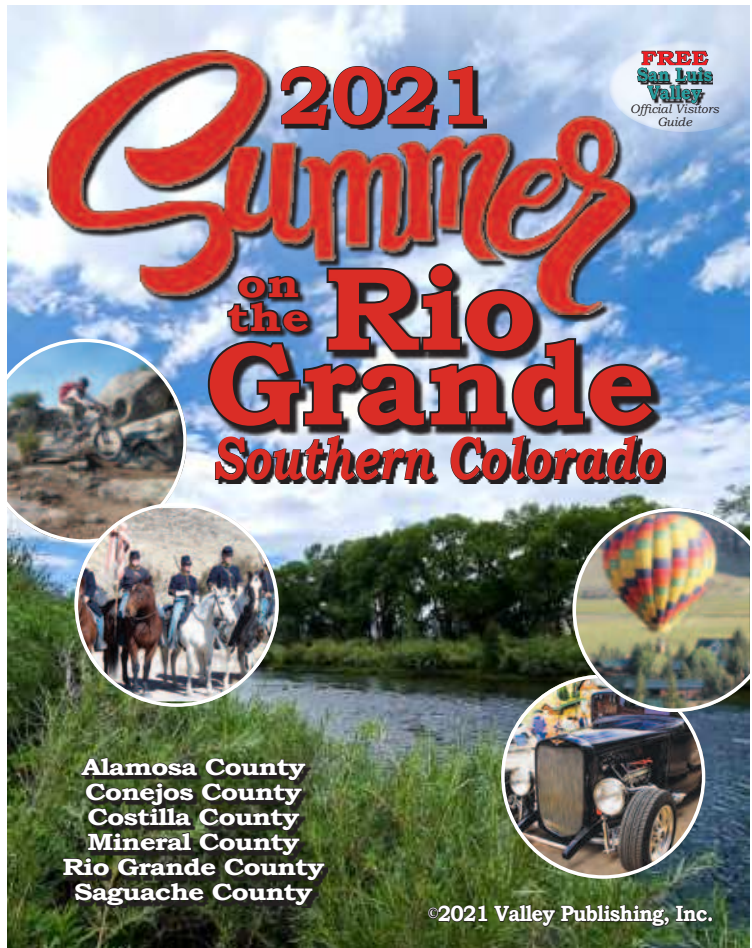
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Photo courtesy of Adams State University

Adams State University is addressing the nationwide shortage of public health officials by offering a new bachelor's degree in public health starting fall of 2022. Pictured, working with Alamosa County Public Health, Adams State nursing students help at testing sites during the COVID pandemic in 2020.

A degree in public health is now available at ASU

BY GARRETT CARROLL
Adams State University

ALAMOSA — Adams State University will launch a Bachelor of Arts in Public Health this fall. The program aims to address the front-facing aspects of public health and will benefit students, professors, and community members alike.

Margaret Doell, ASU associate vice president for academic

affairs, explained that the degree program has been a community effort.

"This has been in the works for three years. It was an effort to fill a need in the community," said Doell. "We've been working on this for quite some time with a variety of local health organizations including San Luis Valley Health, Valley-Wide Health Ser-

Please see ASU on Page 7



Photo by Priscilla Waggoner

Amanda Atencio, Clay Burleson, Adam Robins, Armando Valdez and crew members with Robins Construction.

'A rural success story'

Antonito gets new wastewater treatment plant

BY PRISCILLA WAGGONER

ANTONITO — When the Town of Antonito was told by Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) that the water in the lagoons it used to treat its wastewater was exceeding safe parameters in several areas, it became clear that the town needed to get a more modern, effective method of treatment.

There was just one major problem. Wastewater treatment plants are an expensive investment with a price tag that runs in the millions. And while that may be somewhat feasible in larger

cities, a \$4 million to \$5 million price tag for a project in a town with about 800 residents is a significant chunk of change.

It is not an unfamiliar story. Inspectors, employed by large, governmental agencies officed in Denver hundreds of miles away, show up in small, rural towns where they discover a problem that prompts an edict being issued requiring the small town to take huge, expensive steps to rectify, despite lacking the resources to do so. But even in these situations that keep mayors and comptrollers up at night, success stories do happen.

One such story happened in Antonito where local officials connected with funding agencies and hired local companies to get the job done. The result? Problem solved. CDPHE sat-

isfied. Local businesses hired. And, most importantly, well-being assured for the citizens of Antonito.

And it is precisely that kind of success story that prompted Armando Valdez, President Joe Biden appointee as state director for USDA Rural Development Center, to gather Antonito Mayor Mike Trujillo, Adam Robins with Robins Construction, Amanda Atencio and Clay Burleson with Atencio Engineering and Tineel Baroz, USDA Community Programs Loan Specialist in USDA's Alamosa Office, to tell Antonito's tale.

According to Mayor Trujillo, Antonito has been investing in foundational infrastructure projects, including a clean drinking water project that was completed several years

Please see SUCCESS on Page 2

Rural Trauma Team delivers exceptional training

CONTRIBUTED ARTICLE

LA JARA — The Rural Trauma Team Development Course (RTTDC) has been developed by the ad hoc Rural Trauma Committee of the American College of Surgeons Committee on Trauma to help rural hospitals with the development of their trauma teams.

San Luis Valley Health (SLVH) hosted the education course at Conejos County Hospital (CCH) on March 10.

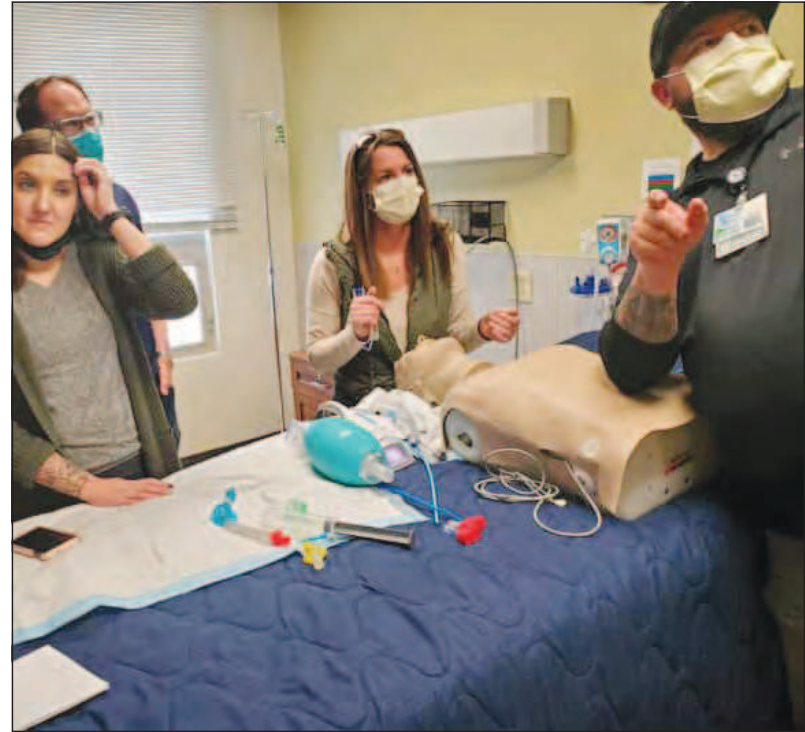
The goal of the course is to improve the quality of care in their community by developing a timely, organized, rational response to the care of the trauma patient and a team approach that addresses the common problems in the initial assessment and stabilization of the injured.

It is the purpose of RTTDC to increase the efficiency of resource

Please see TRAUMA on Page 3



Photos courtesy San Luis Valley Health



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SUCCESS

Continued from Page 1

ago. The eight-year-long wastewater treatment plant project was another much-needed step toward meeting the town's needs.

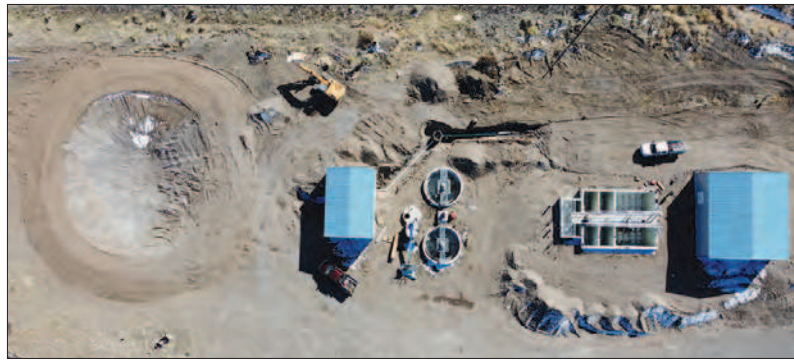
As described by Atencio, civil engineer with Atencio Engineering, on Sept. 3, 2013, CDPHE served the Town of Antonito a notice of violation regarding the town's failure to comply with wastewater permit effluent limitations. Weekly and monthly average 5-day Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD5) effluent parameters and Ammonia as Nitrogen (TAN) parameters were exceeded several times over the years.

Due to the non-compliance, CDPHE required the town to retain an engineer to evaluate various options for the town. In November of 2014, an engineering report recommended a specific type of mechanical treatment plant, due to the inability to guarantee effluent limits will be met in the future with the existing lagoons.

"The new system made the most sense in the long term," says Atencio. "So, we looked at maintenance requirements, impact on user rates, projecting growth for the next 20 years. We also did a lot of due diligence in discussion with a lot of people from the town."

By the time all required elements were factored in, the cost of the project was \$3.5 million, which is where state and federal agencies stepped in to support the project. The Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) awarded \$1 million for the project, the USDA awarded a grant for \$1,833,000 plus a loan for the remaining \$1,751,000 at the lowest rates and longest term available.

After hiring Robins Construction of Antonito to be the general contractor and Atencio Engineering to supervise the project, the project got the green



Drone image of project courtesy of Atencio Engineering

light in September of 2020.

Several key existing problems were addressed as the project progressed. Along the sewer lines, there were "legs" where the original clay pipes had broken over time. Those clay pipes were replaced with PVC that would prevent leakage and seepage into the ground.

Also, a problem with pumps at the lift stations had become expensive, especially with the onset of the pandemic. As it turns out, "flushable" wipes may not be quite so flushable when it comes to wastewater treatment as, on numerous occasions, wipes got tangled up in the pumps, causing the pumps to shut down and, in some cases, break.

"People used a lot of wipes during the pandemic," Atencio says. "Not just in Antonito, but everywhere."

While it may have been possible to educate the entirety of people living and visiting in Antonito to not always believe what is written on the package, a better alternative was to install a "grinder," which takes materials and grinds it down to the point that it can be collected and removed from the system without causing damage to the pumps.

In fairness to wipes enthusiasts, other items have ended up in the

pumps, too, including a pair of jeans and a mop head. But that is a different story for a different day.

As the project is in its last stages of construction, passersby will see two relatively compact steel buildings constructed on the site where the lagoons are located, with one placed slightly higher than the other for the purposes of letting gravity do its job.

Inside those buildings, modern technology is doing its job with the water, which, after going through the system and being "cleaned," is returned to the river.

"USDA has a strong fiduciary duty to use money wisely and create a positive impact," Valdez says. "And this project is a perfect example of what is possible. This project is good for the people and good for the environment. Its successful completion may also help bridge that gap of understanding between rural and urban communities with a greater understanding of the need for foundational infrastructure in our smaller communities."

Valdez went on to praise the "circular notion of state and federal tax dollars being used to benefit rural communities with the things they need to become stronger in the future. It's a rural success story that needs to be told," he says.

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Photos courtesy San Luis Valley Health

TRAUMA Continued from Page 1

utilization and improve the level of care provided to the injured patient in the rural setting. There were over 20 participants at Conejos County Hospital in La Jara. Teams attended from CCH, SLVH's Regional Medical Center, and Rio Grande Hospital. Attendees included

nurses, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), and providers. Centura Trauma Outreach provides the curriculum. Instruction was provided by Dr. Charles Mains, St. Anthony's Trauma Medical Director; Mike Archuleta, Centura's Trauma Outreach Coordinator; Carla Christ,

MD, SLVH General Surgeon; Laura Edgerley-Gibb, MD, Innova Emergency Department (ED) provider at RMC; Sam Slade, DO, Innova ED medical director and provider at CCH and RMC; Darrick Garcia, RN, BSN, SLVH EMS Director; and Julie Ramstetter, BSN, RN, TCRN, Trauma Services Director for SLVH. The education was a combination of lectures and hands-on skills and scenarios training.



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This bid request will also require the installation of a sewage disposal system and solar system for electric. For specific specifications of the building please contact Wendi Maez at wmaez@saguachecounty-co.gov or Randy Arredondo at raredondo@saguachecounty-co.gov. Bids must be submitted in a sealed envelope with "Saguache County Landfill 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, April 14, 2022 at 3pm. For further information you can also call Wendi Maez at 719-655-2231 or Randy Arredondo at 719-655-2554.(4/13)

Saguache County Government is accepting bids for a 60'x26' equipment shop in the Town of Sargent. This shop will be used to house Road and Bridge equipment with a monolithic 6000 PSI concrete pad. For specific specifications of

the building please contact Wendi Maez at wmaez@saguachecounty-co.gov or Randy Arredondo at raredondo@saguachecounty-co.gov. Bids must be submitted in a sealed envelope with "Road and Bridge Sargents shop" written on the front of the envelope which contains the sealed bid. Bids must include proof of liability and proof of 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, April 14, 2022 at 3pm. For further information you can also call Wendi Maez at 719-655-2231 or Randy Arredondo at 719-655-2554.(4/13)

If you believe in: the oneness of humanity, equality of men and women, elimination of prejudice, harmony of science and religion; contact BahaiFaithFriends@gmail.com for Zoomlink Casual conversation, every Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m.(3/30)

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

07 Help Wanted

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Benjamin is one of our bigger boys at almost 70 pounds with plenty of fur and energy! We believe he is a Collie mix, and is best as the only dog. Haven't found a person he hasn't liked yet though! Benjamin is a very strong guy so he needs a harness on his walks, for the comfort of you both! Come down and meet him today!

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Regina is about 2 and a half years old, and is a Shepherd and Ridgeback mix who's been here for a little while now. She does great with other dogs, seems unbothered by cats and absolutely loves children! She is always either carrying around a stuffed animal or a tennis ball, so she's always ready to play! Come by and meet her today!

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for a closely related field. To view the job vacancy announcement and apply, click link: <https://jobs.colostate.edu/postings/101138>. **For full consideration, all materials must be RECEIVED no later than 11:59 PM Mountain Time on Sunday, April 10, 2022.** For questions regarding the job vacancy, responsibilities, and salary, please contact Laura Griffin, Pueblo County FCS Agent and search committee chair at 719-583-6566 or laura.griffin@colostate.edu. **We are committed to increasing the diversity of our staff and providing culturally responsive programs and services.** Therefore, we encourage responses from people of all backgrounds and abilities. We invite you to review Colorado State University's Principles of Community that guide our mission and vision of access, teaching, service, and engagement. CSU is an EO/EA/AA employer and conducts background checks on all final candidates. (4/6)

The San Luis Valley Irrigation District is accepting applications for a temporary ditch rider for the 2022 water season. Must have a Colorado driver's license. For more information or to submit an application please call: 719-754-2254 or email: robert@slvid.org. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. (4/6)

Driveline is Hiring in our area. For more information visit www.driveline.com/careers (3/30)

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ASU hires Rosengrant as Vice President for Community Engagement and Communication

STAFF REPORT
ALAMOSA — Bruce Rosengrant was hired to the newly created post of Adams State University Vice President for Community Engagement and Communication.
 Rosengrant most recently served as the Vice Chancellor for Advancement and Executive Director of the Fayetteville State University Foundation in North Carolina.
 In his role at Adams State, Rosengrant will oversee Marketing-Public Relations, Alumni Relations, the Adams State Foundation, Events Management, the Salazar Rio Grande del Norte Center, and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.
 “We are thrilled to have Mr. Rosen-

grant join Adams State at such an important time,” noted President Cheryl D. Lovell. “This key assignment will strategically align the university for future growth and strengthen and build our key internal and external relationships and partnerships.”
 With 30 years of experience in higher education, Rosengrant served as chief development officer at the University of Southern Mississippi where



he implemented and guided a \$150 million capital campaign initiative. Rosengrant also held senior-director level development and external relations positions at Columbia University and Washington State University. Additionally, he has served as director of development at DePaul University, the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and the Penn State Dickinson School of Law.
 “I look forward to working with President Lovell,” Rosengrant said. “Adams State is fortunate to have strong leadership not only in the President’s office but with the executive team. Equally, the leadership among the faculty and staff is highly engaged and a big reason I chose to take on this role. Our alumni

and friends should be proud of what’s happening in Alamosa.”
 Rosengrant will move to Colorado with his wife, Lauren, daughter, Sadie, a high school sophomore and son, Dan, who is in third grade.

ASU Continued from Page 1

services, and Alamosa County Public Health.”
 Alongside the degree will be four new courses specifically in public health. The four courses will cover rural public health, social determinants of health, foundations in public health, and a public health capstone course. The rest of the curriculum will consist of an array of courses in business, kinesiology, health care, and social sciences.
 The university will also be adding additional faculty for this position.
 “Assuming it becomes a solid degree with good enrollment, we’ll look at adding a permanent faculty member with experience in public health, and we’ll also develop projects with local public health organizations,” said Doell.
 Terry Dupler, ASU director of the School of Kinesiology and Health Sciences, described the necessity for

creating this degree program.
 “ASU decided to start the public health program to help address a shortage of employees in the health arena,” Dupler said. “The COVID pandemic has made it clear there is a shortage of public health officials and employees not only in Colorado but across the United States.”
 The degree program will also open up the option for students to transfer to a master’s program in public health, said Dupler.
 Doell indicated that the degree program will prepare students for a variety of career paths.
 “Preparing people to be actively engaged in promoting health with the public, it could be anything ranging from a contract tracer for pandemics to someone who works in diabetic counseling,” Doell said. “It’s really a degree with a broad choice of careers.”

Dupler says the degree will benefit students by providing another avenue for health care work.
 “We have degree programs on campus now for students who want to pursue some health professions,” Dupler said. “This new degree will benefit the campus by increasing the offerings for incoming students, with the potential for increasing student enrollments within the undergraduate student population.”

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		8			4			
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				4		1		
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	C	R	E	S	T	S		S	S	B					
S	E	R	A	G	L	I	O		S	A	C	O			
E	L	E	P	H	A	N	T		S	A	L	A	D		
M	E	E	T	S					I	M	A	M			
P	I	G						S	R	B	M				
A	P	I	O					A	L	A					
T	R	A	C	H	O	M	A		Y	O					
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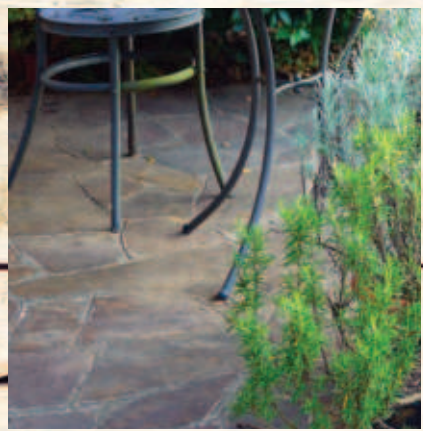
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Lawn & Garden

How to pick the right trees for your property

Trees benefit a landscape by serving both aesthetic and utilitarian functions. A home surrounded by healthy green trees can be a sight to behold, and those same trees can benefit surrounding plants and wildlife at the same time.

As appealing as trees are, not all trees and landscapes make for the perfect match. The Arbor Day Foundation notes the importance of planning when designing a landscape. Planning ensures the trees homeowners ultimately choose for their properties will grow well in the soil and moisture present in their yards.

Careful consideration of a handful of variables can help homeowners determine which trees will make the best fit for their properties.

- **Height:** Homeowners must consider the projected height of a tree before planting it. Avoid trees that will bump into anything when fully grown, as that can adversely affect surrounding greenery and pose a safety hazard. The ADF's tree sizing guide can be accessed at <https://www.arborday.org/trees/rightTreeAndPlace/size.cfm> and serves as an invaluable resource for homeowners who want to plant new trees around their properties.

- **Canopy spread:** Trees grow out as well as up, so it's important to consider their potential width at maturity as well. The ADF sizing guide can help homeowners get an idea of how wide a

tree is likely to be at maturity. Trees that spread out quite a bit don't necessarily need to be avoided, but it's important that they're planted far enough apart so they don't adversely affect surrounding plants. In addition, wide trees that are planted too close together can make the landscape appear crowded, taking something away from its aesthetic appeal.

- **Growth rate:** Growth rate is an important variable because it can affect how quickly homeowners will see changes in their landscapes. Homeowners who want to plant for privacy can consider trees with quick growth rates or purchase more mature trees that are already near full growth. Those who are not in need of instant transformation can try trees with slower growth rates, which the ADF notes typically live longer than fast-growing species.

- **Requirements:** Different trees require different amounts of sun and moisture and different soil components to thrive. Homeowners can have their soil tested to determine which trees will thrive in it. Local garden centers can be a great resource for homeowners who want insight as to which trees will thrive in their local climates.

Trees serve many functions on a property. Choosing the right trees for a landscape requires careful consideration of a host of variables.



Courtesy photo



Courtesy photo

Popular insect repellent plant

Homeowners choose plants for their properties based on a number of variables. Some may be into growing their own foods, while others desire their gardens to be an awe-inspiring mélange of bright colors and alluring scents. There's no wrong reason to plant a fresh garden, but some plants offer extra benefits, such as repelling insects.

Insects can be a nuisance and a threat to individuals' overall health. According to the American Academy of Family Physicians, insect-borne diseases are viral and bacterial illnesses that develop from insect bites. Mosquitoes, sand flies and fleas are some examples of insects that can pass on disease. Fever, chills, headache, and muscle soreness are just a few of the more common symptoms linked to insect-borne diseases.

The good news for avid gardeners is that certain plants can help repel insects and provide the additional benefits like fresh food and aesthetic appeal that so many people love.

- **Basil:** The aroma of fresh basil is enough to compel any gardener to make a place for it in their garden. But there's more to fresh basil than its scent, as the Farmers Almanac notes it can be used to repel mosquitoes and moths.

- **Lavender:** Fleas, flies, mosquitoes, and moths are not fans of this aromatic and colorful member of the mint family. Bees tend to be drawn to lavender, a durable plant that

many garden centers recommend in areas prone to drought or hot summers without much precipitation.

- **Mint:** Mint is another plant that is instantly recognizable for its aroma. But mint lovers may not realize that it's also great for keeping ants at bay. Mint also can be used to repel mosquitoes, but gardeners with no experience planting mint should plant it in pots. That's because the Farmers Almanac notes mint is an especially aggressive spreader that can quickly take over a garden. Separating mint in pots can prevent it from bullying its way into other plants' domains.

- **Lemongrass:** Lemongrass is a tropical grass that's so fragrant it's often used in perfumes. Lemongrass contains citronella, which many people associate with repelling mosquitoes. A potted lemongrass plant can repel these unwanted guests, keeping them away from decks, porches and/or patios all summer long.

- **Chrysanthemums:** The Farmers' Almanac® recommends using chrysanthemums, which repel a range of insects from bedbugs to fleas to ants, as border plants around a home. That's because they contain the natural insecticide pyrethrin, which can serve as something of an insect-repelling boundary around a home.

Insects are unwanted guests around a home each spring, summer and fall. Certain plants can help repel insects and serve as an eco-friendly alternative to insecticides.

The buzz about bees

Warm weather and extra hours of sunlight spark flowering trees and plants to bloom anew. This is the time of year when the air is sweet with the aroma of blossoms and the familiar hum of insects can be heard all around.

Not all "bugs" are the same this time of year. While you probably won't want ants invading your backyard grill fest, the presence of bees nearby can be a good thing — even if those curious yellow-and-black critters get a little close for comfort from time to time. That's because almost 90 percent of wild plants and 75 percent of the leading global crops depend on animal pollination, indicates the World Wildlife Federation.

Bees are remarkable creatures in small packages. The following are some bee facts to buzz about, courtesy of the WWF, Save the Bees™, NASA, and the Texas A&M University Honey Bee Information Site.

- There are roughly 20,000 species of bees around the world. Most of them are solitary bees.

- Bees have five eyes. Two of the eyes are large compound eyes with hexagonal facets. The other three are small, simple eyes.

- Honeybees have a move called the "waggle dance." It is a clever way of communicating to tell them where to go to find the best sources of food.

- Bees can carry up to 122 times their body weight in pollen and nectar.

- Bumblebees leave footprint scents behind. They are able to distinguish between their own scents, the scent of a relative and the scent of a stranger as they look for food. They also can avoid flowers already visited.

- Should a queen bee perish, the hive workers will select a new young larva and feed it a special food called "royal jelly."



Courtesy photo

The larva will develop into a fertile queen.

- Bees flap their wings 190 to 200 times per second. They can fly up to 15 miles per hour.

- Female bees can sting; males do not. Losing the stinger will cause the bee to die. The honeybee only can sting once because its stinger is barbed. Bumblebees and hornets can sting multiple times because they have smooth stingers.

- It can require nectar from two million flowers to make one pound of honey.

- Many bees are not aggressive. Simply moving away from them can prevent a person from being stung. Generally, bumblebees and honey bees will only sting by accident or if a nest is being disrupted.

- Wasps are different from bees in that they are mostly known to be predators. They eat other insects and often food that people eat, which is why wasps are more likely to be found around your cookout. Bees tend to be covered in hair, while wasps (which include yellow jackets) are smooth.

Bees are remarkable creatures and should be celebrated as the weather warms up.

Did you know?

Homeowners should give due consideration to whether or not plants are considered invasive species before introducing new plants on their properties. According to the National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration, invasive species of plants can lead to the extinction of native plants and animals. Invasive plant species also can reduce biodiversity and cause significant

fundamental disruptions to local ecosystems. Though non-native plants are often cherished for their unique looks, homeowners planting new gardens or supplementing existing gardens with new plants are urged to plant only native species. Such an approach benefits plants and also local wildlife that depends on native plant species for food and cover.

Lawn & Garden

Learn the basics of container gardening

Gardening is a rewarding hobby that has been linked to health benefits like reduced stress and improved mental well-being. Gardening also can lead to an inviting home landscape full of attractive blooms and/or delicious foods.

Backyard gardens have long been planted after clearing a plot of land, tilling and amending the soil, and planting rows of favorite crops. However, gardening can be less labor-intensive and even more successful when people consider the many benefits of container gardening.

What is container gardening?

As its name implies, container gardening is growing plants inside of containers. These containers can be flower pots, rectangular deck boxes or even large raised garden beds.



Courtesy photo

Pros to container gardening

One of the advantages of container gardening is that plants can be moved in and out of sunlight to ensure the right growing conditions. This isn't as easily achieved when gardens are stationary. Also, beginner gardeners may be more able to control soil conditions inside of a small container rather than a vast ground-based garden, which will require a good deal of manual labor. Pots and boxes also can be grouped together to create eye-popping displays, usually at lower costs than the sheer volume of plants that would be needed to fill out an expansive landscape.

Cons to container gardening

Container garden plants will not have direct access to the ground, so they need gardeners to create the ideal growing conditions. Developing the right care formula can be challenging. The home and garden resource The Spruce says that drainage is an important factor in container gardening, and most containers do not offer enough drainage holes. If water cannot escape the soil, the roots of the plants can rot and die. It's not enough to add stones or gravel to the bottom of containers. Drill additional holes in the bottom (1/2-inch in diameter for small or medium-sized pots; one inch in diameter for larger

pots). Also, be sure to check on soil moisture so that watering can be adjusted. During hot stretches, plants may need to be watered more frequently.

Plan for plants that play well

Grouping plants together can create visually stunning combinations. However, it is important to choose plants that require the same amount of light and moisture. Look at plant tags when visiting the garden center and select complementary plants, or ask a store employee. Mixing different plant shapes, colors and leaf textures, as well as plants of various heights, can help containers look filled out.

Feed plants accordingly

Plants need nutrition to thrive in containers. Quality potting mixes will contain fertilizers, but nutrition will wane over time. Every couple of weeks, container plants will need either fresh potting mix or granular fertilizer added to feed them. Oregon State University Extension Services suggests using a slow-release fertilizer or worm castings several times throughout the season.

Container gardening is a great way to add plants to smaller patios, reduce the workload involved in maintaining expansive gardens, and customize conditions for optimal growth.



Courtesy photo

Use hardiness zones for thriving veggie gardens

Vegetables need a certain number of growing days with ideal conditions in order to mature and produce a viable yield. These conditions vary depending on the vegetables being grown, with plants thriving in key zones across the country. The gardening resource Fine Gardening says certain vegetable varieties are specially bred for, or may be best suited to, certain climates. Knowing which vegetables are ideal for where you live can give your garden the best chances for success.

The first step is reviewing the USDA Hardiness Zone Map to determine your specific climate zone. Canada also has a Plant Hardiness Zone map. These maps are based on the extreme minimum temperatures in the zones, and can be a useful tool in determining which plants will thrive where you live.

Additional variables to consider include the amount of precipitation the area gets, average humidity, maximum temperatures, and soil conditions. Here's a look at the best produce for certain regions of the country based on hardiness zones.

Zones 1 and 2

Located in Alaska, the northern continental United States, high mountains, and the upper latitudes of Canada, this zone features long, cold winters and the shortest growing season (April to September). The best plants will be those that require short intervals between planting and harvest, like asparagus, lettuce, kale, broccoli, and vine tomatoes.

Zones 3 and 4

This zone encompasses the uppermost United States and cool mountain regions, as well as wide swaths of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec. The growing season in zones 3 and 4 lasts from April to October. Vine

tomatoes, broccoli, kale, lettuces, spinach, strawberries, sweet peas, pole beans, and potatoes are some of the plants that will do well in these zones.

Zones 5 and 6

Zones 5 and 6 encompass much of the continental United States, the southernmost Canadian provinces and coastal Nova Scotia. The growing season in zones 5 and 6 starts in March and can extend into October. Try melons, squashes, corn, strawberries, lettuce and other greens, and tomatoes in these zones.

Zones 7 & 8

With a growing season from March to November, these zones are marked by long, hot summers and mild winters, conditions common to the southwest and many southern states. Corn, tomatoes, melons, collard greens, carrots, and others are good choices for this region.

Zones 9 and 10

These zones include the deep South of the United States, Florida, southern California, and much of the Gulf coast. The growing season is quite long, ranging from February to November. In addition to much of the previously mentioned produce, plants like peppers, citrus, yams, peaches, figs and bananas have the best chances of success in these zones.

Zones 11 to 13

These are the most tropical zones and are found in Hawaii and Puerto Rico. Growing seasons in zones 11 to 13 extend year-round. Only plants that require the coldest temperatures (sub-40 F) will not do well here.

Knowing the hardiness zone can help gardeners choose the best plants for their gardens.



Courtesy photo

What to plant when privacy is a priority

A backyard oasis can feel like an even more welcoming retreat when the area is private. Homeowners and their families often find that a backyard is most relaxing when they cannot hear or see their neighbors, and creating such an environment can be as simple as planting some privacy trees.

Fencing is an option when homeowners are looking to make their backyards more private. But HomeAdvisor reports that the average cost to install a privacy fence is just under \$3,000, and those costs can be considerably higher depending on where homeowners live and how big a fence they need. Privacy trees can be considerably less expensive, and homeowners can spread out those costs by planting over time, an option that's not possible when installing fencing.

When planting privacy trees, homeowners can consider these varieties that can do the job while also providing some aesthetic appeal.

• Emerald arborvitae: The Arbor Day Foundation® notes that the emerald arborvitae is unique among arborvitae because it maintains its green color even in the coldest months of the year. The emerald arborvitae can grow to between 10- and 15-foot-tall and spread as wide as four feet at maturity. The tree features a pyramid shape and is considered slow-growing at less than 12 inches of growth per year. The ADF reports that full sun and partial shade are best for this tree.

• Carolinacherry laurel: Carolinacherry laurels are popular choices for privacy seekers. The Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center notes the trees can grow

very tall and boast a pyramidal shape. The Carolina cherry laurel require sun and thrive in moist, well-drained soils. Parents with young children should know that the leaves of this family of plant contain hydrocyanic acid and should never be eaten.

• Boxwood: The ADF notes that boxwoods are renowned for their use in formal gardens. That can make them an ideal option for homeowners seeking a traditional garden aesthetic in their backyards. Boxwood trees can grow up to 20 feet tall, but they can vary greatly in height. Homeowners purchasing them as privacy trees should speak with their local gardening center to ensure they're getting boxwoods that will provide ample privacy. Though they still have aesthetic appeal, smaller boxwoods may only reach a foot tall. Boxwoods vary considerably in terms of their growth rate, so homeowners should inquire about this as well before purchasing and planting any trees.

• Privet: Privets are dense privacy hedges that grow very quickly, with the ADF reporting they can grow up to three feet per year. Privets may reach 12 feet in height and spread as wide as six feet at maturity. Privets tolerate shearing well, which can make them ideal privacy options for those looking for a formal appearance. Privets require full sun for uniform growth. Privets are considered invasive in many areas of North America, so homeowners should consult their local garden center prior to planting.

The right privacy trees can be just what homeowners need to turn their backyards into relaxing respites.

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Real Estate

What to know about refinancing a mortgage

Historically low interest rates have made now a good time to be a homeowner. According to the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation, also known as Freddie Mac, the average interest rate on a 30-year fixed-rate mortgage in mid-September 2021 was 2.86. Just ten years earlier, the average rate was 4.09. That's a significant dip, and one that's saving today's homeowners tens of thousands of dollars over the life of their mortgages.

Interest rates dipped during the pandemic and have remained low ever since. That's unlikely to last forever, which has given many homeowners a sense of urgency regarding refinancing. Refinancing can be financially advantageous, but there are some things homeowners should know prior to contacting their lenders.

Refinancing does not always save money over the long haul

It's hard to blame homeowners who jump at the chance to refinance their mortgages. Refinancing is often associated with significantly lower monthly payments, and such savings can be used to finance home improvements, pay for tuition or build retirement nest eggs. However, homeowners won't necessarily save money over the long haul if they're refinancing an existing 30-year mortgage with another 30-year mortgage.

The mortgage experts at Mortgage Calculator note that a Change Terms mortgage refinance is characterized by a shift to a loan charging a lower interest rate. The initial savings with such a refinance are undeniable, but changing from one 30-year to another 30-year restarts the mortgage clock, which can add years to the time homeowners will be repaying their debt. As a result, homeowners may end up paying more interest over time than they might have had they just kept their initial mortgage. Homeowners interested in a Change Terms refinance may want to look into switching from a 30-year to a 15-year mortgage. A shorter term mortgage will increase the monthly payment, but the



Courtesy photo

loan will reach maturity much faster, greatly reducing the amount of interest homeowners will pay over the life of the mortgage.

Refinancing can be costly

Lower monthly payments might be the number that catches homeowners' eyes as they look to refinance, but it's important that homeowners recognize that refinancing is not free. In fact, the personal finance experts at Kiplinger note that refinancing incurs many of the same costs that homeowners had to pay when they signed their initial mortgage papers. That includes fees, taxes and appraisal costs. These costs are sometimes paid up front, but they also might be rolled into the loan balance. In the latter instance, homeowners could be paying interest on their refinancing costs. Homeowners who are refinancing solely because of lower interest rates should know that some lenders raise interest rates to compensate for refinancing costs. That can negate the savings and end up costing homeowners more money than the original mortgage.

Refinancing is an option for homeowners who want to save money. Homeowners can speak with a financial advisor to determine if this is the best way to save money over the long haul or if refinancing will ultimately cost them more over the life of the mortgage.

Determine if it's time to downsize

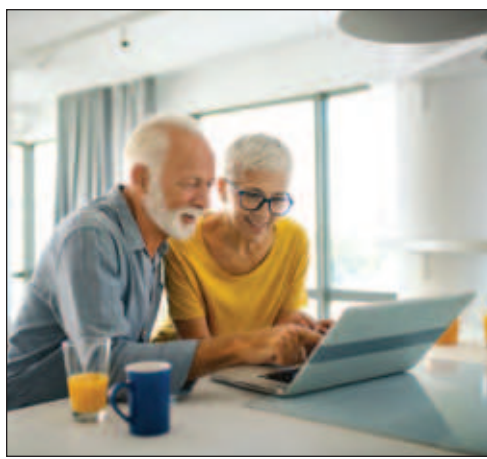
Individuals work hard to save enough money to purchase their homes. And the hard work doesn't end there. Once homeowners settle into a new home, they may set their sights on renovations that suit their individual needs. And even when buyers find a home that needs no such work, maintenance requires homeowners' utmost attention.

All that hard work is perhaps one reason why seniors may be a little reluctant to downsize as they advance through their golden years. In addition to the sweat equity homeowners put into their homes, all the memories they've made within their walls can make it harder to put a home on the market.

Downsizing is a difficult decision that's unique to each homeowner. Seniors who aren't quite certain if downsizing is right for them can consider three key factors to make a decision that's in their best interests.

- **Cost:** Perhaps no variable affects senior homeowners' decisions to downsize their homes as much as cost. No one wants to outlive their money, and downsizing to a smaller home can help seniors reduce their monthly expenses by a significant margin. Even homeowners who have long since paid off their mortgages can save substantial amounts of money by downsizing to a smaller home or even an apartment or condominium. Lower property taxes, reduced insurance premiums and the need to pay for fewer repairs are just some of the ways downsizing can save seniors money.

- **Space:** Many people love the extra space that single-family homes provide. But seniors can take a walk through their homes and see how many rooms they still use on a consistent basis. If much of the home is unused, seniors



Courtesy photo

can probably downsize without adversely affecting their daily lives.

- **Market:** The real estate market is another factor to consider when deciding if the time is right to downsize. A seller's market can help seniors get the biggest return on their real estate investment, potentially helping them make up for meager retirement savings. For example, home prices skyrocketed across the country during the COVID-19 pandemic, making that a great time for sellers to put their homes on the market. Seniors selling to downsize may capitalize on such spikes since they won't be looking to turn around and buy larger, equally expensive homes once they sell their current place. If the market is down and seniors can withstand the work and cost a little longer, it may be best to wait until things bounce back in sellers' favor.

Downsizing requires careful consideration of a host of variables. No two situations are the same, so seniors should exercise due diligence to determine if downsizing is right for them.



Courtesy photo

Factors to consider before investing in real estate

The appreciation of real estate over time has long made owning a home or an investment property a sound financial strategy.

Prospective home buyers spend considerable time looking for a property they're hoping to call home. Various factors, including property taxes and the reputation of local schools, may be considered as homeowners decide where to look for a new home. That vetting process is equally important, albeit slightly different, when buyers are consider investing in properties they don't intend to live in.

Real estate can be a great way to diversify an investment portfolio and earn extra income. Before shopping for an investment property, novice investors may want to consider certain factors to determine if real estate is the best investment vehicle for them.

Rental potential and the local labor force

Location is a significant factor to consider when investing in real estate, but recent shifts in how and where people work could change the real estate investment landscape. A 2020 Gartner, Inc., survey of more than 300 financial executives and leaders in the finance industry found that roughly 25 percent will move at least one out of every five of their on-site workers to permanently remote positions in the years ahead. Economists note that this shift to remote working could be among the more lasting trends to emerge from the pandemic. Before investing in real estate, prospective investors should examine local trends to see if more and more locals are working remotely, and whether or not that's affecting the market for rentals.

To flip or not to flip

Flipping properties gained popularity in the second decade of this century, but figures from the property database curator ATTOM Data Solutions indicates that returns on investments in flipped properties declined for the third straight year in 2020. Though flipping can still yield a strong return, investors may not realize the returns on flipped properties that they might have realized as recently as five years ago. Potential investors should conduct some research regarding real estate market trends, including flipping data where available, to make the most informed decision possible.

Condition of the property

Product shortages were another trend to emerge during the pandemic, and disruptions to the supply chain will not necessarily go away anytime soon. In addition, the cost of various products associated with home improvements, including lumber, skyrocketed during the pandemic. The National Association of Home Builders noted that while lumber prices declined in 2021, the price of lumber packages quoted to builders remained high. That means real estate investors who invest in properties that will need work could be forced to pay a lot to fix these properties. And ongoing supply chain issues could extend the time it takes to renovate a property. Investors must be able to bear these costs and lag times to make the most off their real estate investments.

Investment properties can be a great way to diversify a portfolio. Potential investors must consider a host of factors to determine if real estate is an investment they want to make.

Did you know?

According to the real estate research firm CoreLogic, annual home price growth during the pandemic was the most the group had ever seen in its 45 years of tracking home prices. Since the World Health Organization first declared a pandemic in March of 2020, home prices have risen dramatically. CoreLogic reports that median home prices across the United States increased by 18 percent between July 2020 and July 2021. The increase was even more significant in Canada, where data from the Canadian Real Estate Association

indicated home prices had risen by more than 38 percent between 2020 and 2021. Such increases were welcome news for individuals who already owned their homes, but many individuals who did not found themselves priced out of the market. The good news for potential home buyers is that median home prices are not expected to increase as much in 2022 as they have since the onset of the pandemic. In fact, CoreLogic forecasted a 2.7 percent appreciation between July 2021 and July 2022.



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New Construction

Gorgeous trends in green home design

(MS) — An eco-friendly home offers many benefits. Besides reducing your carbon footprint and being better for the environment, you can save lots of money on your energy bills in the long run. Plus, many of the latest trends are simply beautiful. Here are some to consider for your next home or remodel:

Bamboo materials: Bamboo is a renewable resource that can be harvested gently, without disturbing the surrounding environment. It's also a great alternative to hardwood, since it can regenerate faster than trees. The timeless material is very popular for flooring and can also be used for bathroom and kitchen cabinets. When buying this material for your home, look for a high-quality, sustainable producer since cheaper versions can be less sturdy.

Passive house: Go beyond efficient appliances with an entire house that uses little-to-no energy. Derived from the German Passivhaus, passive house is a movement that refers to a design process that creates buildings that have a small ecological footprint and require little heating or cooling. Use the philosophy to guide decisions for your home — from adding solar panels on your roof to boosting your insulation.

Reclaimed pieces: One of the quickest and easiest ways to have a positive environmental impact is buying as little new as possible. The next time you need a piece of furniture, create something rustic by recycling or upcycling an



Courtesy photo

old or vintage item with a new coat of paint or a fresh wood stain. If you're planning a demolition, try deconstruction instead — "un-build" the structure and find elements you can

salvage or reclaim, like exposed brick and wood beams.

Water conservation: With more parts of the world experiencing drought, saving water is one of the top concerns for environmentalists. Wasting water is also expensive and leads to higher utility bills. Upgrading your home with water conservation features can go a long way, and most are designed to look sleek and minimalist. Opt for low-flow showerheads, toilets and sink fixtures.

Insulated concrete forms: Many homeowners

now prefer to build with insulated concrete forms (ICFs) because the material offers better energy efficiency and performance than traditional wood. Homes built with Nudura ICFs also provide better fire protection and can help you save as much as 60 percent on heating and cooling costs. Your home is less likely to contain cold areas as the insulation is continuous around the entire house.

Find more information about the benefits of building with eco-friendly ICFS at nudura.com.

Choice for staying put or moving on

Many home improvement television series showcase people deciding whether to improve upon their current homes to make them into the houses of their dreams or to put "for sale" signs in their lawns and move on to something new.

The question of whether to move or stay put depends on various factors. Such factors may include emotional attachment to a home, the current economic climate and the cost of real estate. Current data points to a greater propensity for people to invest and improve upon their current properties rather than trading up for something new.

According to information collected by John Burns Real Estate Consulting, the percentage of homeowners moving up to their next home is the lowest in 25 years. Many are opting to make starter homes permanent by expanding them and repairing homes for the long haul.

The National Association of Realtors said that, between 1987 and 2008, home buyers stayed in their homes an average of six years before selling. Since 2010, however, NAR says the average expected length of time people will stay in their homes before selling is now 15 years.

Part of what's fueling this permanency is that many home buyers were able to acquire rock-bottom mortgage interest rates shortly after the 2008 recession. As a result, they're not inclined to walk away from those rates, even if doing so means getting more house. Also, a low inventory of available houses has stymied repeat buying for many people.

Those factors and others have led many homeowners to invest in renovations instead. The experts at Bankrate say realistic budgeting and comparing renovation project costs against mortgages and interests rates can further help individuals decide whether to remain in their current homes or move out. Very often a smarter layout and more efficient floor plan can make meaningful differences in spaces. Renovations and redesigns can make sense and often are less expensive and disruptive than moving.



Courtesy photo

Many people now opt to stay in their homes and improve their properties rather than move out.

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Remodel & Repair

Improving a home's curb appeal

(MS) — An attractive front entrance area gives a home curb appeal that invites both guests and potential home buyers. Upgrading a home's exterior can be as simple as painting or as complex as installing new windows or adding a patio.

Inspiration for a curb appeal "makeover" that reflects the owner's budget and decorating choices are easy to find online. Stop by the nearest Woodcraft store for tools and supplies, along with helpful advice from the staff, or visit Woodcraft.com to shop and read how-to blogs and articles.

One of the easiest and quickest ways to boost curb appeal is to paint (and repair if needed) a home's front door, molding and trim. Painting garage doors, porches, shutters, doorsteps, flower boxes, furniture, mailboxes/stands, and window trim are other potential projects, as is changing the front door hardware.

For front door and shutter painting inspiration, visit these informational blogs on Woodcraft.com: Front Door Klein Blue Redo (<http://bit.ly/2zSVV9J>) and To Thine Own Self Be Blue (<http://bit.ly/2EkUsvR>).

Repair & Paint

Woodcraft offers these products and ideas for more repairing and painting.

- General Finishes Milk Paint is a premium interior/exterior mineral-based paint premixed in more than two dozen colors. It is so durable it does not require a topcoat. However, Woodcraft Product Development Manager Kent Harpool suggests using General Finishes Exterior 450 as a sealer for exterior uses. The 450 is fortified with UV absorbers to stabilize the finish and built-in mildewcide to retard mold and mildew growth.

- Krud Kutter TSP Substitute will clean and

degloss almost any surface prior to painting so that paint adheres better.

- System Three Sculptwood Epoxy Putty is a two-part epoxy putty that can be used indoors or out. Mold it, shape it or use it to repair carvings, antique picture frames or even windowsills. Be sure to add a coat of General Finishes Exterior 450 to seal your work.

- Titebond III Ultimate Wood Glue is waterproof, yet it cleans up with water. It allows eight minutes of open assembly time and offers an application temperature as low as 47 F.

- HOMERIGHT Super Finish Max and Finish Max Fine Finish HVLP Sprayers spray most solvent or water-based products — latex paint, milk paint, chalk paint, furniture paint, stains, and finishes. The Finish Max is ideal for small- to medium-sized projects, while the Super Finish Max is more powerful and covers a wider range of projects and thicker paints and varnishes with less thinning required.

- HOMERIGHT Spray Shelters are good for furniture projects (large shelter), as well as smaller accessories (small shelter).

Remove, Replace & Build

Replacing windows, gutters and downspouts; adding molding to a door; building — outdoor furniture, a unique mailbox and stand, or flower containers; and adding or expanding a patio area/porch require a large investment of time and money. Look for these products to help with these replacement and building projects.

- Lightweight and quiet, yet easily portable, the Rolair AB5 Air Buddy, 1/2 HPC Compressor is a durable companion for your weekend projects.

- Use the GREX Green Buddy 18-gauge, 2" Brad Nailer for trim and moldings, light wood assembly, window beading, scribe molding, and door and window casings.



Courtesy photo

General Finishes Klein Blue Milk Paint gives this home's front door and shutters a brand new curbside appearance.

- For precision sawing, efficient sanding, power cutting, accurate filing, scraping, cleaning and polishing, and more, consider the Fein MultiMaster Start Q with a pinless Starlock mounting system and easy snap-in accessories.
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sion directly to your project work area when you choose the portable SawStop Jobsite Saw with Cart.

To learn more about these and other products, stop in your local Woodcraft store, call (800) 535-4482 or visit www.woodcraft.com.

Options for funding your next home improvement project

Before starting a home improvement project, either on one's own or with the assistance of a professional contractor, homeowners must first consider the costs involved. According to the home improvement resource HomeAdvisor, more than one-third of homeowners do not understand what hiring a professional will cost, and then cannot successfully budget and secure financing once they have set their sights on a renovation project.

HomeAdvisor says that some of the more popular projects, such as remodeling a kitchen or bathroom or building a deck, can cost, on average, \$19,920, \$9,274 and \$6,919, respectively.

Homeowners may find that the more expensive renovations require them to secure some type of financing. Those who have never before sought such financing may want to consider these options.

1. Cash-out refinancing: With cash-out refinancing, a person will begin the mortgage process anew with the intention of paying off the current mortgage balance, and then taking out additional funds for other purposes. Cash-out refinancing is a way to tap into a home's existing equity for use on improvements or other expenses, such as college tuition.

2. Home equity line of credit: The financial experts at Bankrate indicate that a HELOC works like a credit card, with the house as collateral. There is a credit limit, and borrowers can spend up to that limit. The interest rate may or may not be fixed. However, the interest may be tax-deductible if the financing is used to improve, buy or build a home.

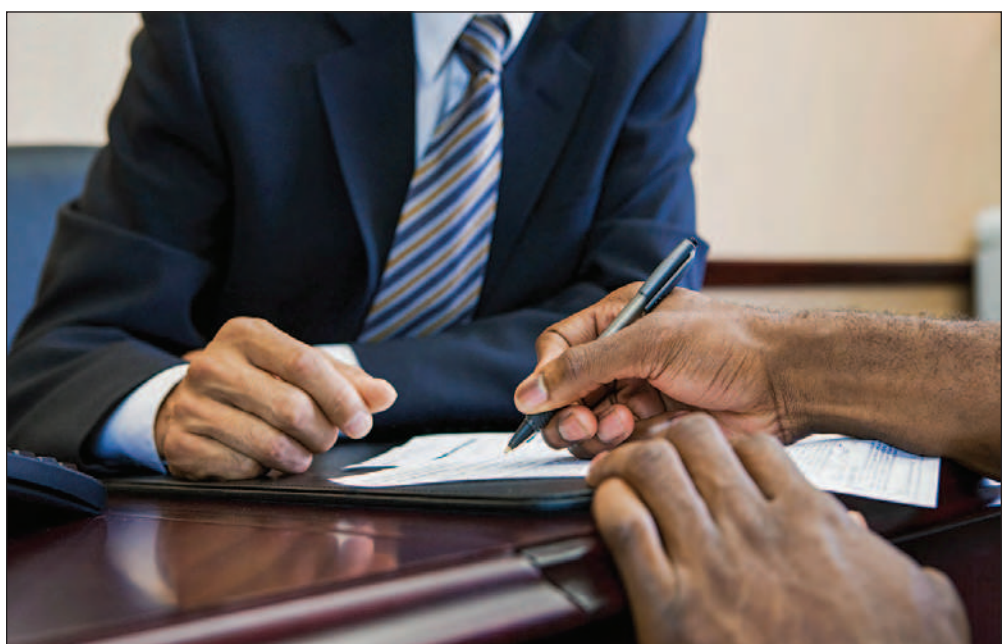
3. Home equity loan: Individuals also can borrow against equity in their homes with a fixed interest rate through a home equity loan. Most lenders will calculate 80 percent of the home value and subtract a homeowner's mortgage balance to figure out how much can be borrowed, according to the financial advisory site The Simple Dollar.

4. Personal loan: Homeowners can shop around at various financial institutions for competitive personal loans to be used for home improvement purposes. Funds may be approved within one business day, which can be ideal for those who want to begin their improvements soon.

5. Personal line of credit: A personal line of credit allows borrowers to borrow only the money needed at the time, and offers a variable interest rate that is generally lower than fixed loan rates. Again, like a credit card, PLOC gives a person a maximum borrowing amount and is ideal for ongoing purchases.

6. Credit cards: In a pinch, credit cards can be used to finance improvements, but they do come with the cost of very high interest rates if the balance is not paid in full by the time the bill comes due. However, for funding smaller projects and maximizing rewards points through home improvement retailers or specific credit card company promotions, credit cards can be a way to earn various perks in addition to the benefit of improving a home.

Homeowners looking to finance their next improvements should speak to a financial advisor and shop around for the best types of funding for them.



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Did you know?

Investing in a home renovation project not only requires money, but also time and patience. While contractors, architects and designers can estimate how long a project may take, it is impossible to anticipate all of the scenarios that can affect that estimated timeline. Information from the real estate firm Keller Williams indicates an average kitchen remodel involving installation of new countertops, cabinets, appliances, and floors

can take three to six months. But if ductwork, plumbing or wiring must be addressed, the job may take longer. A midline bathroom remodel may take two to three months. Adding a room to a house can take a month or two. The home improvement resource Renovation Junkies offers similar estimates, with the average home renovation taking between four and eight months. Homeowners need to consider time when planning their home projects.

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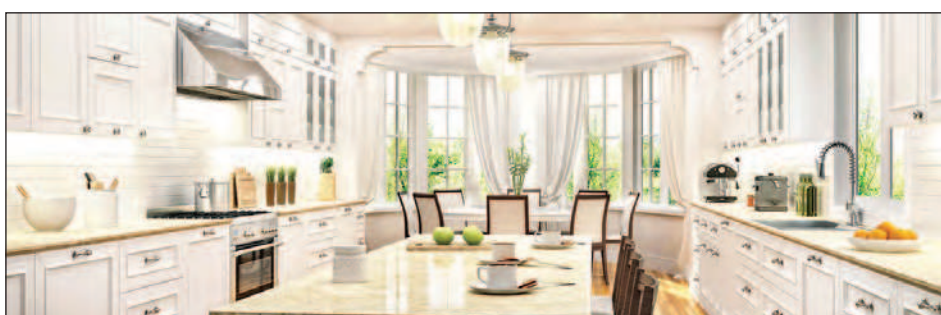
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Remodel & Repair



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Signs it is time to overhaul your kitchen

Remodeling a kitchen adds value to a home. Remodeling Magazine's "Cost vs. Value Report" indicates mid-range kitchen remodels cost about \$66,000, and homeowners can expect to recover about 60 to 80 percent of that cost at resale.

Homeowners may wonder if remodeling their kitchens is worth the investment. But homeowners should not just consider cost, but also the current conditions of their kitchens when deciding if a renovation project is the right move to make. These signs indicate it may be time to renovate a kitchen.

- **Breakers are triggered:** If the lights go dark from a tripped circuit breaker every time you try to microwave and run the toaster oven at the same time, your wiring is likely not up to the task of handling the workload and could be out of date. A kitchen remodel will assess wiring load needs and an electric overhaul may be necessary.

- **Lack of storage:** One of the biggest hassles homeowners encounter in their kitchens is a lack of storage space. If making a meal involves a Jenga-like stacking and rearranging of kitchen tools, or if an avalanche occurs whenever you search for an item, you might need more storage. A carefully planned redesign can achieve this, even in a smaller kitchen.

- **Outdated appliances:** Even if your appliances are not avocado green or mustard yellow relics of the 1970s, they might still need to be replaced. According to CRD Design, appliances are only expected to last

around 10 to 15 years. If appliances have become unsafe or energy hogs, it could be time for a remodel.

- **Family is expanding (or shrinking):** Kitchens often are the heart of a home. They need to meet the needs of the family that resides in that home. A remodel can add space as needed. On the flip side, when a couple becomes empty nesters, kitchens can be redesigned and downsized to reflect their new needs and desires, such as the addition of a wine chiller or espresso station.

- **Poor lighting:** Task lighting is essential in a kitchen, but older homes may not be equipped with lighting where it's most needed. A carefully designed remodel can improve lighting with under-cabinet lights, pendants, overhead lighting, and even natural light to make the space attractive and more functional.

- **Frequent run-ins:** The notion that you can have too many cooks in the kitchen refers to having too many people trying to pitch in or offer their opinions. However, it also can apply to when too many people are gathering in a small space. Redesigning a kitchen can improve the efficiency of a space and make the room feel larger.

- **Aesthetic appeal:** Many kitchen remodels have been inspired by unsightly kitchens. Cosmetic changes can lead to big improvements.

Kitchen renovations can add instant appeal and help address issues that tend to plague outdated rooms.

Save time and money with material alternatives

Home renovations are big business. The home renovation resource Home Advisor states that the national average cost of remodeling multiple rooms in a home was \$41,784 in 2018.

While homeowners cannot change the size of rooms to save money, they can manipulate the materials used to keep expenses down. Many products on the market today are designed to replicate the look of more costly materials without the higher price tags. User-friendly DIY products also can help corral costs by cutting down on labor expenses.



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Resilient flooring

Resilient flooring is manufactured to mimic the look of hardwood, tile, stone, and other materials. According to Armstrong Flooring, specialized manufacturing processes and coatings create a product that resists stains, dents, moisture, and scratches. Most resilient products are made up of several layers to create stability and absorb sound. These products tend to be less expensive than the materials they replicate.

Laminate countertops

Much like resilient flooring, laminate countertops are inexpensive, low-maintenance and durable alternatives to stone and solid-surface countertops. They come in many different styles that can look like granite or marble. Homeowners also can consider solid surface materials, tile, concrete, and wood block when looking for cost-efficient countertop materials.

Shower kits

Bathroom renovations can increase the overall value of a home. But some homeowners do not have the time or money to do a complete bathroom remodel. Replacing an old vanity with a newer one and replacing an outdated tub/shower combination can improve the functionality of a space without breaking the bank. Shower kits and stalls enable homeowners to renovate bathrooms with less hassle than creating a tile- or stone-based shower enclosure. Kit pieces drop in place and may only require minor plumbing work. Certain kits can be installed directly over dated showers for a quick remodel turnaround.

Cabinet refacing

Homeowners who want to keep the layout of a kitchen intact but simply update its look can turn to cabinet refacing. The Kitchen Magic renovation company says refacing or resurfacing uses quality wood or laminate veneer to change the color and appearance of the exterior of cabinets without having to remove the existing cabinet frames. New doors, drawers and hardware will complete the transformation at a fraction of the cost of a new cabinet build.

Low-cost materials can keep renovation budgets in check and still produce beautiful results.

Home inspections 101

The process of buying a home can be unlike any experience prospective buyers have ever had. After finding a home they like and coming to an agreement on a sale price with the seller, buyers can expect to add many items to their to-do list. One of the first things to jot down on that list is scheduling a home inspection.

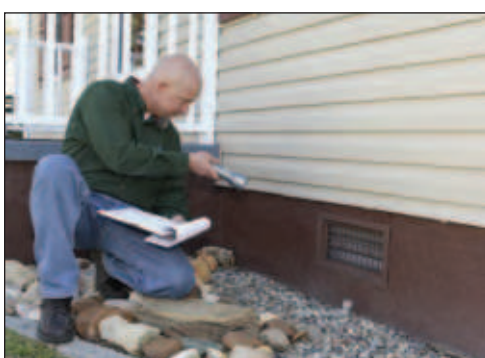
Home inspections are a vital part of the home buying process. Such inspections can protect buyers as they're on the cusp of making what will likely be the most significant investment of their lives. Understanding the home inspection process can help buyers during an exciting yet potentially nerve-wracking time in their lives.

What is a home inspection?

The American Society of Home Inspectors defines a home inspection as an objective visual examination of the physical structure and systems of a house. Inspectors will conduct visual examinations from the roof to the foundation of the home. Additional structures on the property, such as sheds or detached outdoor living areas, are not typically included in the examination.

What do inspectors examine?

The ASHI notes that inspectors will examine the condition of various parts of the home. The heating system, central air conditioning unit, interior plumbing and electrical systems, roof (though inspectors will not climb onto the roof), attic and insulation will be examined. Inspectors also will examine walls, ceilings, floors, windows, doors, the foundation of the home, basement (or crawl space), and structural components.



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Can a home fail inspection?

Homes cannot fail home inspections, which are just assessments of a home's existing condition. Municipal inspections are separate inspections conducted by government agencies to verify that a property is in compliance with local codes. Home inspectors will provide detailed reports describing the condition of a home and indicate if any repairs are in order.

Do I really need a home inspection?

A home inspection is a vital component that can help buyers make the most informed decision possible. Forgoing an inspection can leave buyers vulnerable to potentially costly repairs and issues with a home that might have been detected with a proper home inspection. In addition, some lenders insist that buyers have home inspections conducted before they will allow them to borrow money.

Home inspections can protect home buyers as they prepare to make the most significant financial investment of their lives. More information about inspections can be found at www.homeinspector.org.

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Interior Design

Benefits to open concept floor plans

The way a home is designed can say a lot of things about it. In fact, many real estate professionals and contractors can determine when a home was built based on the design of its interior. For example, homes with sunken living rooms were likely built sometime in the 1960s and 1970s.

Open concept living rooms are one trend that might one day make people nostalgic for the early 21st century. Many of today's home buyers want homes with open concept floor plans, which can give homes a more spacious feel, perhaps even creating the illusion that a home is bigger than it really is.

Home buyers who have never before enjoyed open concept floor plans can consider these benefits to these wildly popular layouts.

Entertainment

Many people who live in homes with open concept floor plans cite their convenience when entertaining as one of their biggest assets. In an open concept home, guests don't have to be corralled into a single room in the home. Instead, hosts and their guests can roam freely from room to room because there are no walls

dividing common areas. This can make gatherings feel less cramped than in homes with more traditional floor plans.

Safety

The safety of open concept floor plans may be most applicable to parents of young children. Open concept floor plans allow parents to keep an eye on their children while cooking dinner, working from home or tending to other chores around the house. Since there are no walls to divide rooms in open concept homes, parents don't have to wonder what their curious kids are up to because they can see them at all times.

Flexibility

Open concept floor plans give homeowners more flexibility. For example, homes with more traditional floor plans may have designated spaces for dining areas. These spaces don't leave much room to work with and may not be valued by homeowners who don't often host dinners at home. As a result, such rooms may just be wasted square footage. With an open concept floor plan, homeowners have the flexibility to make dining areas as big or small as they see



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fit and can even adjust the rooms on the fly on those occasions when people are coming over.

Open concept floor plans continue to be popular among home buyers and might prove to be the most lasting home design trend of the early 21st century.

Factors to consider before converting attic

At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, many homeowners suddenly found themselves in need of more usable square footage in their homes. Required to work from home due to social distancing recommendations, millions of working professionals suddenly found themselves setting up shop at kitchen tables or islands, in alcoves, garages, or even walk-in closets. Those makeshift offices were never supposed to be permanent, but as companies loosen workplace policies and embrace full remote or hybrid working arrangements, professionals are seeking more permanent home office solutions.

Home additions are a possibility for homeowners who need more usable square footage, but add-ons may not be the right option for everyone. If adding on won't work, homeowners may want to look up ... at their attics.

Attics with ample space can make for ideal home offices, as they're away from the hustle and bustle of a home's main floor. That can make it easier to concentrate when everyone is in the house and reduce the likelihood that video calls with colleagues and clients will be interrupted by kids and pets.

Attic conversions are not always possible, and the following are three important factors homeowners may need to consider before they can go forward with such projects.

1. Dimensions: Both the renovation experts at This Old House and the real estate experts at UpNest indicate that at least half of a finished attic must be a minimum of seven feet high and seven feet wide and 70 square feet. Requirements may differ depending on where homeowners live, but that 7-7-70 guideline is generally the minimum requirement. An attic that fails to meet such requirements won't necessarily be a lost cause, but it might be costly to make adjustments that ultimately align with local codes.

2. Access: Access is another aspect that must adhere to local safety guidelines. Many attics are accessible only through pulldown ladders, but that will have to change if homeowners repurpose their attic spaces. A staircase that complies with local laws will need to be installed, and contractors can work with homeowners to build that and estimate the cost. Homeowners who simply want to put desks in their attics without going with full-fledged conversions are urged to adhere to local access requirements anyway, as they're intended to ensure residents can safely escape attics in the case of a fire or another emergency.



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Accessibility is an important variable to consider as homeowners try to determine if they can convert their attics into a livable space.

3. Climate control: Attics are converted to provide residents with more livable space. Converted space is only livable if the climate within the attic can be controlled so it's cool in the summer and warm in the winter. An existing HVAC unit needs to efficiently heat and cool an extra room. If it can't, bills might spike because the rest of the home likely won't be as comfortable, forcing homeowners to adjust thermostats to offset that discomfort. That also could affect the unit's life expectancy. Before going forward with an attic renovation, homeowners should contact HVAC professionals to determine if attic spaces can be serviced with the existing units and ductwork, or if an alternative arrangement must be worked out to make the spaces livable.

Attic conversions can be great ways to make existing spaces more livable. Homeowners considering such projects should pay attention to three important variables as they try to determine if attic conversions will work for them.

Gray is here to stay in home designs

Decorating a home in neutral tones has long been recommended as a way to sell a home quickly. But the color gray also provides a blank canvas for homeowners who have no intention of putting their homes on the market anytime soon.

Beige and white have long been go-to colors for neutral living spaces. But many interior decorators now look to gray as the neutral color of choice.

Design experts advise that gray has a broad range. Gray can include everything from silver to charcoal to a dusty cloud. According to the trendsetters at Glidden Paints, gray coordinates well with other colors. Plus, the neutral appeal of gray boasts a timeless quality.

Gray is not a clear-cut color that's simply a 50-50 blend of white and black. Gray has subtle nuances that can lean toward blues, greens, taupes, and more depending on the lighting and surrounding furnishings. That means that homeowners who are ready to replace their furniture or accessories need not necessarily repaint if they've previously decorated in shades of gray.

Individuals need only replace small items to produce a big effect in rooms where gray is dominant. Because gray is so neutral, it works with soft, calming colors in various pastels,



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but equally as well with bright reds, yellow and oranges, according to Scott Bodenner, a Brooklyn-based textile designer.

Gray also is a predominant color in natural stones used throughout homes in entryways, bathrooms and kitchens. It can make design sense to maintain continuity throughout by dabbling in gray elsewhere.

Designers have shown how gray does not have to be cold, industrial or gloomy. It can be sophisticated in just about any room of the house. More designers are now leaning toward warmer variations of gray, such as taupes and blends dubbed "greige," that are beautiful but not as stark as pure gray.

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