

Shorts

Sled dog races cancelled

SOUTH FORK — The Rocky Mountain Sled Dog Club announced on its Facebook page that it was cancelling the sled dog races planned for Feb. 19-20 near South Fork “due to parking and trail concerns.” The club also stated it was looking for a new site for 2023.

Annual ALMA & Friends Concert Feb. 19

ALAMOSA — The annual Alamosa Live Music Association & Friends concert is on Saturday, Feb. 19 at 7 p.m. at Society Hall, 400 Ross Ave., Alamosa. Doors open at 6:30 p.m.

ALMA announced that Palmas will kick off the evening with Nueva Eclectica/Flamenco. The Celtic (K)nots will close out the evening with Celtic and early American folk music.

Admission is free for ALMA 2022 members and \$15 for general admission. No advance tickets are for sale, so come early to grab a seat. Masks required.

SHS hosting benefit dinner for Rice

MONTE VISTA — Sargent High School is hosting a benefit dinner on Feb. 19 for Diana Rice, known affectionately as RiceBob, MommaRice, RiceLady.

She was recently diagnosed with breast cancer and is still fighting leukemia.

Rice will undergo breast removal and several chemo treatments. She will need help with expenses that medical insurance will not cover, such as lodging, food, gas, and any surprise expenses that arise.

The fundraiser dinner consists of ribs, ham and beans, baked potatoes with fixings, and a silent dessert auction. The dessert auction winners will be announced during halftime of the varsity boys basketball game. Sargent is hosting Custer County with tipoff at 1 p.m. on Feb. 19. The fundraiser dinner begins at noon in the SHS Cafeteria.

Dinner cost is a donation.



County Treasurer Trujillo stepping down in March

She is recommending Chief Deputy Treasurer serve remainder of her term

BY MECHEL MEEK
SAGUACHE COUNTY — In an email to the Center Post-Dispatch,

Saguache County Treasurer Connie Trujillo announced she was resigning effective March 7.

Trujillo has been County Treasurer since 1995 and has been re-elected to the position ever since. She could have run for another four-year term this year.

“I, Connie Trujillo, Saguache County Treasurer/Public Trustee have tendered my resignation

effective March 7, 2022. The time has come when I must step down as your Treasurer/Public Trustee.

The decision to step down has not been an easy one and one that I have spent numerous hours making,” Trujillo stated in her email. “Being your Treasurer/Public Trustee has been an amazing experience that will stay in my heart forever. I now have an opportunity in my personal

life to move in another direction in which I am very excited and happy about.”

Trujillo stated she has seen many positive changes over the years.

“Since 1995 when I first took office, we have seen many changes not only in the Treasurers’ Office but in the county as a whole,” Trujillo stated. “We have
Please see TRIJILLO on Page 2A



Photo by Mechel Meek

Center is seeing an influx of grants to help with the town’s revitalization efforts.

Center continues to receive grants toward revitalization efforts

BY MECHEL MEEK

CENTER — The Town of Center announced that it has received several awards and initiatives that have significantly accelerated its stated goals of community building, entrepreneurship and workforce development, reuse and activation of space, and

development vision.

The plan was first created with Downtown Colorado’s Colorado Challenge Accelerator Program in 2018. The Town has continued with its vision of improvements, partnering with the Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA), Kansas State

University’s Technical Assistance to Brownfields Program (KSU TAB), the American Planning Association (APA), and Colorado University’s Denver College of Architecture and Planning.

The Town has been awarded many types of assistance since
Please see GRANTS on Page 2A

Judge grants continuance motion in Los Sauces murder trial

Attorneys claim continuance will ‘expedite’ trial

BY PRISCILLA WAGGONER

ALAMOSA — The four individuals charged in connection with the alleged murder and dismemberment of five people, a series of crimes locally known as the “Los Sauces” case, appeared along with their attorneys in court via Webex on Friday, Feb. 4.

Adre Baroz, Julius Baroz, Francisco Ramirez and C.J. Dominguez were scheduled for their “first appearance” in the case, typically the point in the judicial process when defendants are read the formal charges that have been filed against them. After the charges are read, defendants then enter a plea of guilty or not guilty.

However, before the hearing, David Lipka, defense counsel representing Adre Baroz, filed a motion for continuance, requesting the arraignment be postponed for 60 days. Although Judge Michael Gonzales, was aware of the motion,
Please see TRIAL on Page 2A

Southern Rocky Mountain Ag Conference keynote speaker shares river story

BY PRISCILLA WAGGONER

MONTE VISTA — When it comes to water conflicts, Jim Yahn, long-time manager of North Sterling Irrigation District, has quite a story to tell. For almost 30 years, Yahn has been at the helm, overseeing the diversion and distribution of water to over 350 farmers from the North Sterling and Prewitt Reservoirs that, together, provide irrigation water to approximately 70,000 acres.

That role put Yahn on the frontline of matters 20 years ago when a court ruling resulted in the office of the state engineer shutting down thousands of wells on the South Platte.

Yahn, as the keynote speaker at the 40th Southern Rocky Mountain Agriculture Conference and Trade Show on Feb. 2 in Monte Vista, shared with a large, standing-room-only audience of nearly 500 people the hydrogeological history of the South

Platte, leading up to 2002 when the drought — described as the “crucible” — resulted in surface water users on the opposite side of the fence from groundwater users and augmentation plans filled up the dockets of water court for almost three years.

It was a story that most in the audience knew very well. The situation on the South Platte was the spark that ignited what would become the Rio Grande Water Conservation District’s Subdistrict No. 1 more than a decade later.

But the most compelling part of Yahn’s story
Please see YAHN on Page 2A

Jim Yahn, manager of North Sterling Irrigation District, delivers the keynote address at the Southern Rocky Mountain Agriculture Conference and Trade Show on Feb. 2 in Monte Vista that resonates with the audience.

Photo by Priscilla Waggoner



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GRANTS Continued from Page 1A

the beginning of the revitalization efforts, including the placement of an AmeriCorps VISTA member, a \$114,588 grant through the DOLA Main Street Open for Business (MSBOA) program, \$20,000 from a DOLA planning grant program, \$120,000 through a DOLA Rural Economic Development Initiative grant, assistance with master planning and historic preservation from the national Design and Preservation Rapid Assistance Team (D-PRAT) from the APA, economic redevelopment assistance through KSU TAB, and the Town of Center's Highway 112 streetscape revitalization project was selected as the capstone project by CU Denver's College of Architecture and Planning's Masters in Urban Regional and Planning Program.

The Town will be continuing participation and engagement in the Colorado Challenge Program.

TRUJILLO Continued from Page 1A

embraced the 21st century with computers, technology, websites that contain so much information, collections and distributions by credit cards and ACH. It is hard to remember coming into the office with four other employees and one computer to process over 17,000 tax notices. Now it runs smoothly with three other employees and what I believe to be wonderful customer service."

Trujillo concluded her email by saying she was recommending the County Commissioners appoint

YAHN Continued from Page 1A

was not told so much in acre-feet, case law, or augmentation plans. It was not even told with great drama or flourish. In a quiet voice and simple, straightforward language, Yahn used a single scene to capture a situation where, over the course of years, a community accustomed to abundant water found themselves facing a diminishing supply of water with one group having access to water for irrigation while the other did not.

"So, you had one farmer who irrigated from a reservoir — a reservoir he'd helped to pay for — not having any water to grow a crop looking out and seeing his neighbor growing crops with water pumped from a well."

Yahn didn't describe it further. It wasn't necessary. The silence in the room seemed to suggest the image — what it looked like, what it probably felt like — was clear in everyone's mind.

A situation already loaded with stress that comes hand-in-hand with a scarce supply of water that people rely upon for their livelihoods, was suddenly escalated by decisions made outside of the community of farmers, themselves. Those decisions, as Yahn

"The Town has worked very hard to receive numerous grants and assistance to continue its vision into the future," said Center Town Manager Brian Lujan. "Most importantly, this support is allowing us to make major advances in bringing to life the thriving economic and social community our residents desire, generating local pride that has not been seen in decades and hopefully serving as a blueprint for other rural communities who have suffered from a past of stagnation."

The Colorado Challenge Accelerator Program created by DCI has partnered with 30 communities from various areas in Colorado. The CCA program is designed to consider solutions for specific challenges such as housing, historic building rehabilitation, business attraction, seasonal economies, and other development challenges.

her Chief Deputy Treasurer as her replacement.

"I have asked the Board of County Commissioners to appoint Regina Swartz, Chief Deputy Treasurer, in my position for the remainder of my term," Trujillo stated. "She has been in the office since 2014 and has served as Chief Deputy for 3 of those. She is more than capable of replacing me in all areas of the office. It is my hope that you will also support her as you have supported me."

Trujillo thanked the people of

describes it, "pushed farmers into opposite corners and determined to stand their ground."

Yahn brought the story back to the San Luis Valley, acknowledging that local farmers knew very well of those dynamics.

"We [on the South Platte] didn't have time to work it out ourselves. We were thrown into the middle of the situation. I think...I think your way is better," saying without actually saying the collaborative and collective process that led to the formation of the subdistricts was far preferential to the litigious path farmers on the South Platte were forced to travel.

At the end of his address, Yahn spoke about the nature of small-town communities where people "work together more...helping their neighbors and putting themselves in their neighbors' boots."

He then described himself as a Christian and quoted the two most important commandments. The first is, "Love thy God with all thy heart." The second, which Yahn says he has tried to follow, underscored his message. "Love thy neighbor as thy self."

According to DCI, "DCI's Colorado Challenge Accelerator Program is a team-building accelerator focused on establishing a plan of work and proposal that engages public, private, and non-profit partners to address a significant community challenge over the course of twelve months. The Colorado Challenge Program works to transform the community's challenge into an opportunity, to establish a proposal, financing approach, and team of community partners ready to implement their plan of action." The goal of the improvements to the Town of Center is to improve the quality of life for the residents and revitalize the town, according to officials. The results of the ongoing efforts can be seen in the new ownership of six previously vacant downtown buildings and infrastructure improvements.

Saguache County for allowing her to serve as their Treasurer.

"It has been an amazing experience serving this County that will stay in my heart forever," Trujillo stated. "You, the people of Saguache County are wonderful and unique. As an Elected Official, I could not have asked for a better group of voters and citizens. I wish to publicly thank each one of you as well as my family and friends who have believed in me, supported me, and will continue to support me in this decision."

Among the handful of questions asked at the end, one person asked Yahn to weigh in on the Renewable Water Resources proposal to use American Rescue Plan Act money to secure water in the San Luis Valley for Douglas County.

"I wouldn't like it," he answered. He then added, "There's a right way and a wrong way to do things."

After a brief pause, he answered the question, "I'm opposed to it."

OBITUARIES

Sandra Kay Rose

On Feb. 2, 2022, Sandra Kay Rose beat her fight with multiple sclerosis after 33 years. Calvin Rose, her faithful husband of 42 years, never left her side and she was surrounded by family.

Sandy loved the Lord and served him her entire life. She accepted him as her savior at 9 years old and was baptized at College Heights Baptist Church in Alamosa, Colo.

She was more than happy being the central figure in the lives of her children and being a farmer's wife was the pinnacle of her existence. She touched the lives of so many people and never turned a person who needed help away, especially teenagers.

She is survived by her husband, Calvin Rose Jr., and sister Shirley (Bobby) and brother Frank (Shellie) and sister-in-law Carolyn; her sons Zac and J.C. (Ashley); daughters Cassie (Beau) and Jamy; grandkids Bradley, Korah, Tylere, Colten



(Amber), Sulley (Drakelyn), Colby, Jason, Dominick, Scarlett, Calvin, and Christian and great-grand baby Ampten.

She was preceded in death by her Momma and Daddy, Rowdy and Betty Martin; her sister Jeannie Lorenz and brother Jack Martin, and granddaughter, Ava Rae.

Her celebration of life and graduation to Heaven will be held Saturday, Feb. 12, 2022, at 11:30 a.m. at Connect Church, 1500 N. 10th St., Canon City, Colo. A reception will follow.

Wilson Roger "Bill" Hurd November 4, 1941 – January 21, 2022

Much loved Husband, Father and Grandfather. Bill grew up in Monte Vista, and married his high school sweetheart, Margaret Sweet. Bill was a Marine, and fought in Vietnam as a helicopter pilot, then settled into his career as a United Airlines pilot. He and Margaret raised their two girls on a farm in Oakville, Washington. After raising their daughters, Bill and Margaret moved back to Colorado again from living in Oakville, WA and Kauai, HI. Bill is survived by his wife of 59 years, Margaret Sweet Hurd, his daughters Anna Hurd Struiksma (Dave), Anna Hurd Bachand (Darren), 6 grandchildren



and 3 great grandchildren. #alzheimersawareness

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OPINION & EDITORIAL

Too close to you

This past week, our winter “neck of the woods” had an ice storm. For those of you unfamiliar with such events, an ice storm is when you lose electricity, water, and heat so you can get closer to your other half.

The reason this wonderful opportunity comes around is that normally beautiful trees take on the shape and form of something out of a horror movie and soon the power lines come crashing down. This leaves everyone in a state of perpetual darkness and cold; schools and businesses close plus people must remain in stinky proximity to one another, like it or not.

For those of you in a relationship with a significant other, it suddenly brings to mind the wonderful days of dating when you could not get enough of the other person’s presence. You remember those days when you sought out the other to be together more?

And nothing says together more than being cooped up in an RV with Miss Trixie with no heat, lights or running water. To regress a little bit let me describe the actual storm as it hit our farm. There was Ol’ Dutch sitting in his easy chair perusing the Internet ads for important things like lumber and pickle jars when it hit.

Even Ol’ Dutch who is deaf as a post, could hear the freezing rain hitting the window and Miss Trixie soon came crashing down from the bedroom to announce, “It’s sleeting.”

Soon she retired to her hidey hole on the bed and the peaceful sounds of pit-pat continued. Suddenly a huge crash reverberated through the house as half a tree fell on the roof. This was immediately followed by Miss Trixie crashing down from her throne, bug-eyed with wild hair and announcing, “a tree fell on us.”

Even though Ol’ Dutch is as hard of hearing as an earless mouse, I pretty much heard that branch hit the roof right over my head. This same thing happened over and over as branches continued to fall on us all night long and Miss Trixie kept up her announcements to make sure I was aware of the damage being done. Morning brought about an ice-covered landscape and of course the subsequent loss of electricity, which is always a fun time.

And it also meant that Ol’ Dutch and Miss Trixie were thrown together for even more quality time in close quarters. Now I know what you all are thinking. It’s a good thing Ol’ Dutch is such an amicable and patient man in such circumstances, otherwise Miss Trixie might just wake up in cement overshoes.

But one thing I did start to



Trout Republic
by Kevin Kirkpatrick

notice from my place in the recliner was that every time Miss Trixie came toward my location, I cringed. No, not like “she was gonna hit me with the cast iron skillet type” cringe but more of a “what am I gonna have to go outside in the ice and do now for her” cringe. Try as I may to give her “the look” when she came close, she didn’t seem to get the hint or most likely ignored it having become immune to such avoidance techniques long ago.

The other thing I learned in this time of togetherness is Miss Trixie, like most women, wants a handy man as opposed to a handsy man. The latter was tried on multiple occasions with her, and it didn’t take long to realize that “hands on” meant an entirely different thing to Miss Trixie. Which meant that Ol’ Dutch was soon outside in the ice and cold trying to thaw out water lines, check the propane levels, feed the cows and other such nonsense. All at what I considered the most opportune time to “really” get to know Miss Trixie, maybe even in the Biblical sense. But, alas, it became our own rendition of the Three Bears story as my hands were either too hot or too cold, never being just right.

A lot of people suffered horribly during the storm and subsequent three-day electrical outage, and I must say, Ol’ Dutch and Miss Trixie fared probably better than the rest on that account. We were able to stay warm with the help of a generator and even got a shower at my son’s house, which Miss Trixie needed badly, I must admit.

Thankfully, the warm breezes have returned to Texas and our farm and so this week will find Ol’ Dutch outside picking up limbs joyfully celebrating some time alone.

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

Happy Valentine's Day



LETTERS

Conejos County Clerk Nathan Ruybal announces re-election bid

Editor,
I was appointed by the Conejos County Commissioners in January of 2018, taking over the office from long time Clerk and Recorder Lawrence Gallegos. I then was elected to office November 2018.

I took an oath always uphold the Constitution which I take very seriously, and I would appreciate the support of all Conejos County Citizens to re-elect me for another 4 years as your Clerk and Recorder.

Since taking office, I have run seven successful and secure elections. I applied for and was awarded over \$57,000 in grant money, which I used to upgrade computer and servers for Electronic Recording, and I purchased three new laptops for working remotely. I purchased three new Election Drop Boxes that were placed in Conejos, La Jara and soon to be placed in Romeo. I will also be running both the Primary and General Elections for 2022. I have also been awarded a grant from the

Secretary of State’s office to purchase a new video monitoring system for my office in efforts to upgrade our Election security.

I am truly honored to have a great staff who go above and beyond for me and the citizens of the county every day. Marci Lucero is my Election Clerk, Tamera Casias is my Title Clerk, and Kim Pacheco is my Recording Clerk. We all handle Motor Vehicle transactions daily and if you ever have any questions, call us at 719-376-5422 or email us at any time at nruybal@co.conejos.co.us.

My Staff and I take election and cyber security very seriously. My office offers several different services to the public: We are required to record documents from Elections, Motor Vehicle and Recordings. We remain open and transparent in all aspects of this office. We are always busy, however, my staff and I love to take care of all our citizens and get our jobs done accurately and safely while providing excellent customer service.

Serving the citizens of this great county fills me with significant pride. My family has been living in Conejos County for many generations. My parents taught me to always be kind and helpful to our neighbors and to never forget where I came from. I was born and raised in Conejos County, attending Antonito High School and then Adams State University graduating in 2002 with a bachelor’s degree in Business Administration with an emphasis in Management. I have served as a member of the DRIVES Governance Committee for three years governing many aspects of Motor Vehicle policy and procedures. I am a member of the Supervisory Committee for the Guadalupe Parish Credit Union. I love living in Conejos County where I am either working on my ranch, hiking, fishing, or hunting. There is no other place where I would like to live. I am rooted here in Conejos.

*Nathan Ruybal
Conejos County*

Traumatic visit to Saguache County Assessor’s Office

Editor,
After receiving my recent commercial property tax bill, I went to the Saguache County Assessor’s Office to find out why my new tax bill was \$4,500 after being only \$57 last year. Since there is no business on the property, I thought it was a typo and was meant to be \$450.

After being told the higher amount was correct, I asked about the tax rates (mill levy). Why was the rate so high for a commercial property that doesn’t even have a business on it yet? Everyone in the office just shrugged. One woman stated that it’s high “because Potch [Potch, LLC] sold the properties for so much.”

I asked three questions about the tax rate. Just a shrug as a response to each question and a reference to

Potch, LLC. County Assessor Peter Peterson said it was a special area but couldn’t give me a reason why when I asked.

The cost of this property tax was an extreme shock. The valuation notice that came last summer didn’t give any indication that the dollar increase of my property taxes would be quite so excessive. I could have been saving to pay part of it. Maybe the county assessor can take that into consideration and add a comment line to the valuation notice in the future?

I requested a longer payment plan since I live on Social Security with no other income. The Assessor referred me to the Saguache County Treasurer to discuss a payment plan. They don’t do payment plans. I felt Treasurer Connie Trujillo was rude

and disrespectful toward me. I was very upset and tearful when I left the County building. I felt violated. I cried on and off all afternoon. I am not as tough as I was when I was younger. It should not be this traumatic to do business with the county.

This was a very upsetting experience for me — that the Assessor’s Office couldn’t explain to me why the tax rate was so high! Isn’t that supposed to be part of their knowledge base?

I have since researched and determined that the addition of the Moffat mill levy is why I was taxed at a higher rate than other similar businesses in the county. How nice it would have been for Peterson or his staff to have just explained that to me!

*Lydia Barton
Moffat*

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Attendees enjoy new building at SRM Ag Conference

By LYNSIE FERRELL

MONTE VISTA — As snow fell on the San Luis Valley, visitors to the 40th annual Southern Rocky Mountain Agriculture Conference and Trade Show were met with chilly weather for the second and third days of vendors, seminars, presentations and agricultural education at the Outcalt Event and Conference at SLV Ski Hi Complex.

This was the first time in two years that the conference was held in person and though attendance seemed average, Kyle Brown, Southern Rocky Mountain Agricultural Conference Coordinator said that it was lower than in previous years. It was also the first official event to be held inside the new event and conference center.

“A lot of people were actually surprised that we were hosting the event in person but as far as attendance goes it’s down only a little bit this year and we hope to see that change as we move forward. We are really happy with the new building, and everyone has been enjoying the new conference rooms. It was nice to have this center for the vendors and the seminars,” said Brown.

Wednesday morning, Feb. 2, started with a breakfast served by local SLV Rural Electric Cooperative members and employees. SLVREC Marketing-Sales Coordinator Jennifer Alonzo spoke about the new building and the difference it made at the conference this year.

“Everyone we have talked to has mentioned how great of a venue this

is and the conference rooms are just wonderful. We really enjoyed serving breakfast this morning and have had a good turnout this year,” she said.

Over 90 vendors came this year to showcase their educational and informative booths throughout the main room of the complex.

“This center is probably one of the best things to happen here in the Valley in quite a few years. The building is amazing and will be a huge benefit to the community for many years to come,” said Rio Grande County Commissioner Chairman Gene Glover.

Glover and his fellow commissioners Scott Deacon and John Noffsler were in attendance Wednesday to greet visitors and to thank the committee that was responsible for putting the conference together.

“The committee that worked to put this year’s conference together did an amazing job. The event was very well planned and laid out throughout the entire building, and we were all very impressed with how things went,” said Glover.

Monte Vista High School participated by allowing students to attend the conference and participate in some of the presentations and interact with the vendors. Overall, the conference was considered a welcome success for the Valley and Monte Vista.

Plans for the next event are well underway, and according to CSU San Luis Valley Extension Director Larry Brown, the committee, Colorado State University and other organizations

are looking forward to seeing the conference grow.

“We are anticipating that the conference will be better as we move forward and we are looking forward to the next 40 years,” Brown said.



Photo by Brian Williams

The 40th annual Southern Rocky Mountain Agriculture Conference and Trade Show was held Feb. 1-3 inside the newly named Outcalt Event and Conference at SLV Ski Hi Complex.

Valentines for Veterans request for cards

STAFF REPORT

MONTE VISTA — This year will be the 33rd anniversary of the “Valentines for Vets” Program. It began in 1989 with Ann Landers suggesting valentine cards be sent to Veterans in Veteran Medical Clinics nationwide.

On any given day, there are over 50,000 Veterans hospitalized or living in VA facilities. These men and women served in World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and Persian Gulf Wars and in these areas of armed hostilities — Lebanon, Grenada, Panama, Persian Gulf, Somalia, Afghanistan, Kuwait and Iraq.

“We can never repay these valiant Vets for the sacrifices they and their families have made, but we can do something to insure they know they are remembered,” officials stated.

The staff at the Colorado Veteran Community Living Center at Homelake would like to encourage people to send or drop off a letter,

poster or card to its residents. If you are a teacher, this may lend itself to a class project. Posters, handmade cards or personalized notes would be most welcomed and treasured.

“For our residents, being remembered and appreciated for their part in serving and protecting their country, would truly be a wonderful Valentine gift,” officials stated.

Due to the privacy act regulations, specific resident names cannot be provided by the Homelake facility, but a general card would be welcome.

“Thank you for remembering these most valued residents of the San Luis Valley and may each of you - especially our fellow Veterans, have a wonderful Valentine’s Day,” officials stated.

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

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Center School District staff completes professional development

Vikings sports teams celebrate victories

BY MECHEL MEEK
CENTER — Center Consolidated School District staff participated in a professional development day on Friday, Jan. 21.

According to Superintendent Carrie Zimmerman, “We are fortunate to have the various skills and areas of expertise on our staff. The secondary staff started the morning with Kevin Hagan leading an engaging session on Thinking Strategies and Workshop Model. Mimi Dolan followed with an informative session focused on Project Based Learning. Elementary staff gathered in the library with Stephanie Hensley leading the Informational Writing Session. Gabe Swanson supported that work providing an example of how the compare and contrast structures could be used in a music class. In the afternoon, Kevin Hagan, Alex Magness, and Julio Paez conducted a Promethean Board onboarding session for the new Activ Panels. Staff also had time to work on their curriculums and the Canvas platform. All in all, it was a productive day filled with useful information and strategies to support our staff in their commitment to excellence in all they do every day!”

Center High School Vikings athletes celebrated some January victories in basketball and wrestling. The boys and girls basketball teams earned wins over Monte Vista in tightly contested games. The CHS girls team won 36-33, with Alexis Varela and Alicia Rios leading



Photo courtesy of Center Consolidated School District

Center High School basketball teams narrowly defeated Monte Vista teams in January action.

the way with 16 and 10 points, respectively. The Vikings boys team defeated the Pirates 44-43. Victor Almeida scored five three-

pointers and a total of 27 points leading the Vikings to a victory. The CHS wrestling team battled in the Fight at the Fork at Hotchkiss. Two

Vikings were named champions, Omar Hernandez and Jordan Duran, a third-place finish by Lorenzo Trujillo and three fourth-place

finishes by Martin Palma, Andre Meraz, and Jesus Valadez. Overall, the Vikings wrestlers placed sixth in the Fight at the Fork.

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Upper Rio Grande School District educator nominated for National LifeChanger of the Year award

SUBMITTED ARTICLE

DEL NORTE — Del Norte Middle School counselor Alfonso Casias was nominated for the 2021-2022 National LifeChanger of the Year award. Sponsored by the National Life Group Foundation, LifeChanger of the Year recognizes and rewards K-12 educators and school district employees across the United States who are making a difference in the lives of students by exemplifying excellence, positive influence and leadership.

Casias was nominated by his colleague, Elise Lovato, for going above and beyond to support students, especially throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. He works extremely hard to make sure students' needs are being met and has implemented a social-emotional curriculum with the help of the local behavioral health office. Through this program, students learn about mindfulness, health relationships, and coping skills.

"It has been during these times when I've seen the most change in many of our students who are going through difficult times. When these students are asked who one of the most influential

individuals in their life is, they always mention Mr. Casias. They not only know he'll help them through whatever they are being faced with at that time, but they also know that he will be honest in a caring manner with them," said Lovato.

"I am extremely thankful to not only call Mr. Casias a colleague, but a friend, as well. I feel we need more individuals like him in our lives. With that, I believe he is extremely deserving of this award," said Lovato.

Each school year, LifeChanger of the Year receives hundreds of nominations from all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Eighteen individual LifeChanger of the Year awards will be given during the 2021-2022 school year.

• (1) Grand Prize Winner — will receive \$10,000 to be shared with their school/district.

• (4) Grand Prize Finalists — will receive \$5,000 to be shared with their school/district.

• (10) LifeChanger Award Winners — will receive \$3,000 to be shared with their school/district.

• (1) Spirit Award Winner — This award is given to the nominee whose community demonstrates the most support for their

nomination. The winner will receive \$5,000 to be shared with their school/district.

• (1) Capstone Award Winner — This award is given to a nominee retiring at the end of the 2020-21 school year. The winner will receive \$3,000 to be shared with their school or district.

• (1) Spotlight Award Winner — This award is given to a nominee in a specific discipline each year. For 2021-22, the Spotlight Award will be given to a school nurse. The winner will receive \$5,000 to be shared with their school or district.

Winners are chosen by a selection committee comprised of former winners and education professionals and will be announced in early 2022. Nominees must be K-12 teachers or school district employees. To be considered for an award, nominees must:

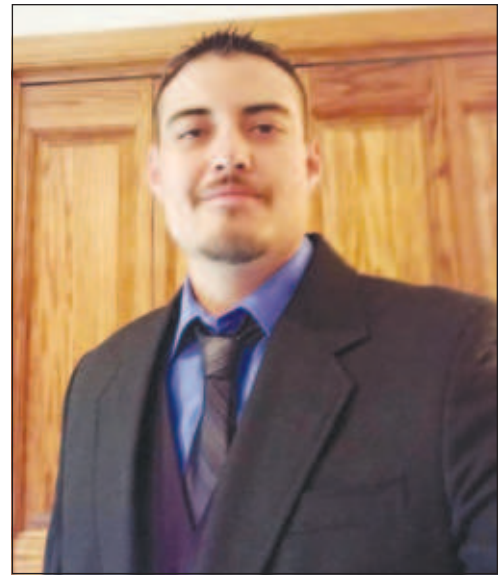
• Make a positive impact in the lives of students

• Enhance their school or district's atmosphere, culture and pride

• Demonstrate exemplary leadership at the school and/or district level

• Possess a proven record of professional excellence

• Show commitment to building a nurturing



environment that supports learning

• Adhere to the highest moral and ethical standards

For more information, visit online www.lifechangeroftheyear.com.

Salazar Rio Grande del Norte Center receives \$250K gift

STAFF REPORT

ALAMOSA — The Denver-based Salazar Family Foundation, founded by Rob and Lola Salazar in 1999, has extended a generous gift of \$250,000 to establish a named endowment for the Salazar Rio Grande del Norte Center at Adams State University.

The Salazar Family Foundation's core mission, to encourage students to achieve their educational goals by supporting organizations that are committed to improving the quality of education and students' access to it, led to the donation.

The Salazar Family Foundation's generous support helps secure the future of the Salazar Center, which works to help Adams State students and the San Luis Valley community meet challenges and develop new opportunities to conserve the land, water, history and culture at the headwaters of the Rio Grande.

Ken Salazar and his family founded the Salazar Rio Grande del Norte Center at Adams State in honor of their parents in 2015.

"Here at the Salazar Center, we work to grow the next generation of conservation leaders and to deepen the engagement between Adams State and the valley's active network of partners and caring community members," said Salazar Center Director Rio de la Vista. "Through our Water Education and Rio Grande Natural Area initiatives, we promote solutions that build upon the thriving spirit of collaboration in the San Luis Valley. This substantial gift from the Salazar Family Foundation will make a world of difference in our ability to build and sustain these programs far into the future."

The Adams State Salazar Center actively offers programs such as the new water studies minor, with courses open for community members to audit; the annual Rio Grande State of the Basin Symposium, scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 26; an on-going series of community water talks; and special programs such as the "Rio Grande Aerial School" with partner EcoFlight, which gives students chances to see the Valley from the air and learn about the way water works in the environment, agriculture, and towns.

The Adams State Salazar Center also works with partners to develop projects to protect and restore habitat, educate about cultural resources, and develop interpretive signage and recreation opportunities for the Rio Grande Natural Area, which encompasses 32 miles along the river south of Alamosa to the New Mexico state line.

"We're extremely grateful the Salazar Family Foundation's mission aligns so well with Adams State," said ASU President Cheryl D. Lovell. "With this major boost, we will work to build upon their contribution to secure the full support needed to sustain and grow the important work of our Salazar Rio Grande del Norte Center. We hope this generous gift inspires others to likewise contribute to the center's unique and timely programs for students and community alike."

For more information about the Salazar Rio Grande del Norte Center, visit adams.edu/about/salazar-center or contact by email at salazarriograndecenter@adams.edu. For information on how to support the Center, contact Karen A. Wibrew, Philanthropy Officer, at 719-587-7165 or kwibrew@adams.edu.



A recent donation from the Salazar Family Foundation to the Adams State University Salazar Rio Grande del Norte Center will ensure continued projects. Pictured, Conservation partners, state and federal agencies and local elected officials on a Salazar Center hosted tour of the Rio Grande Natural Area discuss opportunities for enhancing the river condition, recreation potential, and ways to protect the cultural resources of the area.

Photo by Rio de la Vista

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A CALL FOR NOMINATIONS
CENTER FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
 §1-13.5-501, 1-13.5-1102(3), 32-1-905(2), C.R.S.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN, and, particularly, to the electors of the Center Fire Protection District of Saguache, Rio Grande, and Alamosa Counties, Colorado.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that an election will be held on the 3rd day of May, 2022, between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. At that time, three (3) directors will be elected to serve 3-year terms and two (2) directors will be elected to serve 1-year terms. Eligible electors of the Center Fire Protection District interested in serving on the board of directors may obtain a Self-Nomination and Acceptance form from the District Designated Election Official (DEO):

Kimberlee Schuett
 P. O. Box 845
 Center, CO 81125
 970-396-5396

The Office of the DEO is open on the following days: Tuesday and Wednesdays from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at 360 E. 8th Street, Center Firehouse. Or Request a Self-Nomination form through e-mail: Centerfire1941@gmail.com

The deadline to submit a Self-Nomination and Acceptance is close of business on February 25, 2022, 5:00 p.m. including e-mail requests. (not less than 67 days before the election).

NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN, an application for an absentee ballot shall be filed with the designated election official no later than the close of business on Tuesday preceding the election, April 26, 2022.

CENTER FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
 Kimberlee Schuett
 Designated Election Official

No. 1621 published in the Center Post Dispatch, Thursday, February 10 and 17, 2022.

HVCC appreciates volunteer basketball coaches

SUBMITTED ARTICLE

DELNORTE — Hellocommunity members! Happy February! This month High Valley Community Center has fun new activities planned for our afterschool program, as well as bowling and other fun in the snow for our upcoming Fabulous Fridays.

We only have two weeks left of basketball for the 2021-2022 season! We are incredibly thankful for Felix and Janet Ortiz, Kimberly Fresquez, Joel Rosales,

Yolanda Martines, Joel Estrada, and Brian and Heather Mulcahy for coaching the kiddos this season.

Thanks to you, the kiddos have not only improved their basketball skills but also learned about hard work and teamwork. K-2 co-ed basketball will conclude on Feb. 10 and boys basketball end-of-season tournaments will be on Feb. 12.

This week's after-school theme was, "Creativity." The kids made personalized masks, learned how

to make sushi, and played games. Through creativity, kiddos can learn more about themselves and learn how to express themselves through various avenues.

If you are interested in any of our HVCC programs, we encourage you to stop by our office or give us a call at 719-657-2172. The HVCC staff is always happy to answer your questions and chat about our programs.

A reminder: if your child is quarantined due to COVID, we ask that you please do not send them to HVCC. Thank you for your cooperation. We hope everyone has an enjoyable week!



SLVREC petitions for nomination of director candidate now available

STAFF REPORT

MONTE VISTA — Petitions for the nomination of director candidates for the San Luis Valley Rural Electric Cooperative (SLVREC) are now available. Members can download the petition packet at the below link or pick up from SLVREC's office at 3625 US Hwy 160 W., Monte Vista.

At the June 14, SLVREC Annual Meeting, one director will be elected from Mineral-

Hinsdale Counties, District 6. Completed petitions must include 15 valid SLVREC member signatures and be returned to SLVREC no later than Wednesday, April 27. Call Michelle at 719-852-3538 with any questions.

If you're interested in having a brief bio included on SLVREC's website or in the Newsboy or Annual Report, contact Jennifer Alonzo at 719-852-3538 by April 7.

Two teens injured in a crash in Monte Vista

STAFF REPORT

MONTE VISTA — Two people were injured in a crash Tuesday morning, Feb. 8, on Highway 160, the Colorado State Patrol reported.

CSP was notified at 7:17 a.m. of a two-vehicle crash on Colorado Highway 160 at Pintada View on the west side of Monte Vista.

CSP determined that a 1997 Jeep Wrangler driven by an 18-year-old woman from Monte Vista attempted to turn left onto Highway 160 from Pintada View and failed to yield the right of way to a westbound 2019 Freightliner box truck driven by a 38-year-old woman from Durango.

The Freightliner skidded and struck the Jeep broadside in the intersection, CSP reported. The Jeep rotated clockwise and came to rest in the roadway facing west. The Freightliner came to a stop on the eastbound shoulder facing west.

The driver of the Jeep and a 15-year-old female passenger were transported to San Luis Valley Health Regional Medical Center in Alamosa for their injuries. The driver of the Freightliner was not injured.

Seatbelts were used by all parties involved. The crash is still under investigation.

SoulSpark Learning wins grant to fund caregivers to facilitate support groups

STAFF REPORT

SAN LUIS VALLEY — SoulSpark Learning was awarded \$93,944 of grant funding by The Colorado Health Foundation to expand Soul Power Care Group programming in Saguache, Costilla, Prowers, Baca and Conejos counties.

Soul Power Care Groups support caregivers of pre-K-3 grade youth in growing understanding of human development and learning science research, developing strong relationships and cultivating practices that optimize child development and well-being. The groups engage participant strengths through facilitated discussions and share research-informed strategies to improve child and community care.

Soul Power Care Groups have been refined as a result of SoulSpark Learning's work with families,

children, schools, educators, health professionals and community organizations over the past 15 years. The grant enables SoulSpark Learning to compensate caregivers to become certified and facilitate local groups.

"SoulSpark Learning is thrilled to receive this grant to fund Soul Power Care Groups that connect, nurture, and celebrate caregivers in Saguache County to create meaningful, positive, and long-lasting impact in the lives young children," said Kate Bachtel, SoulSpark Learning's founding director. "Caregivers have invaluable information on what children need to thrive. When

children and supporting adults feel valued and connected, health and achievement improve."

At a time when feelings of stress and anxiety are reaching all-time highs, SoulSpark Learning is eager to partner with dedicated caregivers and educators in Saguache County. Soul Power Care Groups will amplify efforts to accelerate positive change. The first Soul Power Care Group facilitator training will be hosted on Friday, Feb. 18, and Saturday, Feb. 19, and require a four-hour time investment. For more information, email info@soulsparklearning.org or visit online www.soulsparklearning.org. SoulSpark Learning is nonprofit.

How to Pursue Peace in Every Relationship

Relationships are an important part of life. Healthy relationships have the ability to bring us great joy and satisfaction; however, unhealthy ones can make life miserable.

Throughout my life, God's Word has taught me so many great lessons about how to get along with people—something I wasn't very good at for a long time. But the greatest lesson was this: Choose to live in peace with others.

Simply put, it's God's will for us to live in peace and harmony with one another, and His Word offers clear instructions on how to get along with people in our daily lives.

First Peter 3:11 (AMPC) says, "Let him search for peace (harmony; undisturbedness from fears, agitating passions, and moral conflicts) and seek it eagerly. [Do not merely desire peaceful relations with God, with your fellowmen, and with yourself, but pursue, go after them!]"

Notice that this verse says we can't merely desire peaceful relationships—we have to pursue them!

Now, this doesn't mean we won't ever disagree. People are naturally going to have disagreements, and it's okay to disagree if we can do it respectfully. But we must avoid strife.

What is strife? The dictionary defines strife as "bickering, arguing, a heated disagreement, or an angry undercurrent."

Strife is one of the greatest threats to healthy relationships; it has the ability to destroy marriages, personal relationships and even churches. Like a seed, strife can get planted through something we say or do, then eventually grow to become a major problem.

God's Word tells us that it's the "little foxes" that sneak into the vineyard and spoil all the grapes (see Song of Solomon 2:15). I believe this is true when it comes to strife. Left unchecked, even minor disagreements or frustrations can eventually destroy a relationship.

So, how do we keep strife out of our relationships? Here are some practical

tips:

Maintain a Humble Heart

Where there is contention and strife, there is also pride. That's why it is so important for us to practice humility.

We all like to be right—whether it's an argument about a major issue or something trivial. However, humility insists that we give up our "right to be right."

I can't tell you how many times my husband, Dave, and I wasted time arguing about some insignificant issue. And those times I "won," I really lost, because I damaged our relationship and gave up my peace in the process.

I challenge you to adopt an attitude of humility. If you're having an argument, be the first to make peace or apologize... even if you know you are right! It may be painful in the moment, but it will be well worth it in the end.

Let Love Be Your Guide

Strife isn't just a 21st century problem. The apostle Paul wrote to the early Church, encouraging them to avoid strife and stay away from petty arguments.

In Philippians 2:2 (NIV), he writes, "Make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind."

Where there is unity, God pours out His blessings (Psalm 133). And Matthew 18:19 tells us there is power in agreement. However, we can't truly agree and walk in unity if there is bitterness, offense, or unforgiveness in our hearts.

I can put a big smile on my face and say all the right things, but if I'm still purposely harboring all sorts of negative thoughts and feelings about someone, I'm not really walking in love or unity. It's not just the outside that matters—what's going on inside is even more important.

First Corinthians 13:5 (AMPC) says that love "is not touchy or fretful or resentful; it takes no account of the evil done to it." Verse 7 goes on to tell us that love believes the best of every person. I encourage you to truly love the



people in your life. Make a decision to stay unified no matter what tries to get between you. Because, after all, "love never fails" (1 Corinthians 13:8).

Seek the Prince of Peace

The very best relationship advice I can give you is to develop a personal, intimate relationship with Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace. I encourage you to spend regular time with Him through prayer and by reading and studying His Word.

As you do, He will literally change you from the inside out, causing you to think differently and act differently. It is only when we receive His peace and His love that we can truly give it away to others!

I am so grateful for the peace of God in my life. The Lord has not only changed my relationships, but He has changed me. And He will do the same for you.

It is possible to enjoy stable, joyful, fulfilling relationships. And it all begins with a simple decision to pursue peace.

For more on this topic, order Joyce's four-teaching CD resource *Enjoying Successful Relationships*. You can also contact us to receive our free magazine, *Enjoying Everyday Life*, by calling (800) 727-9673 or visiting www.joycemeyer.org.

Joyce Meyer is a *New York Times* bestselling author and founder of *Joyce Meyer Ministries, Inc.* She has authored more than 135 books, including *BATTLEFIELD OF THE MIND* and *THE POWER OF THANK YOU (FaithWords)*. She hosts the *Enjoying Everyday Life* radio and TV programs, which air on hundreds of stations worldwide. For more information, visit www.joycemeyer.org.

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

San Luis Valley Scoreboard Basketball 2021-2022

BOYS BASKETBALL

| | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| Alamosa 55 | Bayfield 41 |
| La Veta 64 | Sargent 27 |
| Center 56 | South Park 25 |
| Crested Butte 53 | Del Norte 39 |
| Sanford 61 | Escalante NM 55 |
| Custer County 66 | Center 45 |
| Centennial 54 | John Mall 39 |
| Creede 70 | Antonito 45 |
| Centauri 60 | Alamosa 29 |
| Sanford 43 | Crested Butte 37 |
| Centauri 41 | Buena Vista 29 |
| Monte Vista 40 | Center 37 |
| Sierra Grande 64 | Cotopaxi 32 |
| Kim/Branson 51 | Centennial 31 |
| Creede 66 | Sangre de Cristo 29 |
| Antonito 49 | Lake City 25 |
| Del Norte 70 | Sargent 17 |

GIRLS BASKETBALL

| | |
|------------------|------------------|
| Alamosa 65 | Bayfield 27 |
| Sargent 52 | La Veta 31 |
| Center 42 | South Park 25 |
| Sanford 62 | Escalante NM 58 |
| Del Norte 52 | Crested Butte 17 |
| Center 37 | Custer County 17 |
| Centennial 47 | John Mall 41 |
| Sargent 55 | Mancos 53 |
| Sanford 49 | Crested Butte 11 |
| Monte Vista 48 | Custer County 21 |
| Centauri 52 | Alamosa 38 |
| Sierra Grande 45 | Cotopaxi 27 |
| Antonito 50 | Lake City 19 |
| Sargent 46 | Del Norte 28 |
| Monte Vista 40 | Center 34 |
| Centauri 51 | Buena Vista 14 |
| Alamosa 61 | Bayfield 8 |

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TRIAL

Continued from Page 1A

the details were not provided in court. Special prosecutor Fred Johnson said he had no objections, adding that he agreed to the continuance as it would expedite the trial and allow for setting a trial date that could be reasonably met, hopefully avoiding further delays.

Johnson also requested of the defense that, if they planned on filing additional motions along that line, his office be given more time to comply.

"It takes at least a week to let victims' families know about the change and to allow them time to respond," Johnson said.

Judge Gonzales granted the motion for continuance, but with a caveat.

Gonzales reminded counsel that Baroz, the first to be charged with the crimes, was taken into custody in November of 2020. While he recognized that additional charges had been filed — due to the identification of human remains that had been discovered — as well as additional defendants named in the case — due to ongoing investigations after Baroz had been taken into custody — some of the delays had been understandable, as had some of the delays on the part of defense as new attorneys were involved in representation.

But, Gonzales said, in the next hearing when all parties appeared in court virtually or otherwise for the arraignment, he would not be granting motions for additional continuances and expected "entry of admission or denial", meaning either attorneys appear with a resolution for their respective client agreed to by both parties or their clients are prepared to enter a not guilty plea that would set the case on track for trial.

On its own, the case is complicated with four defendants charged in connection with five murders and what has been described as a "massive amount of discovery" involved. But sheer logistics of setting dates is also challenging, as was evidenced in Friday's hearing.

Arranging a time when all attorneys involved — which currently includes one special prosecutor for the state and at least five attorneys for the four defendants — took some work but, ultimately, the next hearing was scheduled for April 26 at 1:30 p.m. Judge Gonzales also indicated that continuing via Webex was acceptable, at this time.

Recognizing the scope and size of the case, Robert Willett, former

District Attorney for the 12th Judicial District, requested a special prosecutor be assigned after losing the election to

now District Attorney Alonzo Payne. Johnson was assigned at that time and is handling prosecution while also

continuing in his full-time position as Chief Trial Deputy DA with the DA's office in Boulder.

Discussions among the parties in Friday's hearing suggested that the trial could begin in October.



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Del Norte 'united'



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SAGUACHE COUNTY SHERIFF'S REPORT

The following information was provided by the Saguache County Sheriff's Office for the period between Monday, Jan. 31, 2022, and Sunday, Feb. 6, 2022.

The Sheriff's Department's activity on the road included one abandoned vehicle, six traffic stops, one pursuit, and one traffic complaint. They also patrolled the Town of Saguache three times and the Town of Crestone once, responded to one lockout, conducted two VIN inspections, and assisted two motorists.

In addition, there was one report of harassing phone calls, one report of stolen property, one report of found property, one report of theft, one report of loose livestock, one report of trespassing, one report of harassment, one report of assault, one report of fraud, and one report of suspicious activity.

They also responded to 10 controlled burns, five ambulance calls, two alarms, three civil disputes, and provided information seven times, assisted citizens once, served a warrant, and conducted two welfare checks.

ARRESTS

- A 30-year-old Saguache man was arrested for outstanding warrants.
- A 26-year-old Center woman was arrested for an outstanding warrant.

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Officially the Outcalt Event and Conference at SLV Ski Hi Complex



File photo

The new facility on the east side of town is officially the Outcalt Event and Conference at SLV Ski Hi Complex.

Name celebrates area history and large charitable donation by foundation

STAFF REPORT

MONTEVISTA — Friends of Ski Hi and the City of Monte Vista announced the new facility on the east side of town is officially the Outcalt Event and Conference at SLV Ski Hi Complex.

The news came from the City of Monte Vista on the eve of the 40th Annual Southern Rocky Mountain Agriculture Conference and Tradeshow that will be the first official event held

at the new building.

“The vision of this new facility has been in the works for many years, and timing was right in the last couple of years to make it a reality,” said Karla Shriver, co-chair of Friends of Ski Hi. “It has been amazing to see how the whole San Luis Valley community has stepped up to make it happen along with several other funders including foundations, local governments, and DOLA. This is a facility that will be here for years to come. Friends would like to thank all ALCON and all the subcontractors who worked on it. It truly has been a team effort.”

The people choosing the name wanted **Please see SKI HI on Page 12**

Monte Vista teenager fighting for her life

GoFundMe page set up for student struck with COVID

SUBMITTED ARTICLE

MONTE VISTA — Divine Luv Quintana has been a student at Byron Syring DELTA Center since February of 2018. She started attending Monte Vista School District as a preschool student at Marsh Elementary in 2000.

“Monte Vista School District is proud to have been part of her educational journey,” said Byron Syring Principal Rebekah Sparks Johnson.

Divine, 18, entered her senior year in August of 2021 with determination and passion to reach her goal of becoming a graduate so she could start pursuing her dreams.

In September of 2021, Divine tested positive for COVID-19. She was in the San Luis Valley Health Regional Medical Center in Alamosa for three days and then flown to Children’s Hospital in Colorado Springs. After about a week there, she was flown to Children’s Hospital of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus to provide the additional life-supporting measures she was requiring.

Divine’s COVID turned into COVID pneumonia. Divine’s heart, kidneys, and lungs have begun to fail. She is still on extensive life-supporting measures. Divine is looking at 6 months to a year or more of being in the hospital at Children’s.

One of Divine’s biggest frustrations is that with her lengthy hospital

stay, she thought she may not be able to accomplish her goal of graduating from Byron Syring DELTA Center with her high school diploma. For Divine that will not be the case.

Byron Syring DELTA Center is honored to have partnered with Children’s Hospital of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus to perform a graduation ceremony for Divine.

She will graduate with her high school diploma on Feb. 2, 2022, at 1 p.m.

“The DELTA staff and Monte Vista School District are proud of Divine. We wish her continued healing as she fights toward full recovery and a bright future where she can pursue her dreams beyond secondary school,” Johnson said.

A GoFundMe page has been set up for Divine by her mother, Lucrezia Naranjo-Vigil.

“The funds raised will be used for past, current and future medical bills, food, travel expenses and any other needs that arise,” Naranjo-Vigil stated on the GoFundMe page. “When she is released and can come home. I am going to have to figure out a living situation that is best for her, I am not sure if that means staying in Denver or going back to the valley. With so many uncertainties, the one thing we know for certain is that Divine is a fighter and we will continue to fight with her.”

The page has raised \$4,295 with a goal of \$10,000 as of Feb. 1. To donate visit, www.gofundme.com and search “Medical Help and Support” and look for the page by Lucrezia Vigil.



Courtesy photo

Rock Creek prescribed burn a success

BY LYNSIE FERRELL

RIO GRANDE NATIONAL FOREST — Winter in the San Luis Valley and across the Rio Grande National Forest provides opportune times for forest officials to complete prescribed burn projects when snow and conditions allow. The most recent project took place along the Rock Creek area near the archery shooting range and included the fire mitigation of roughly 500 acres.

Through this process, the area was treated for wildland fire mitigation that

included mastication, hand trimming and a prescribed burn. Goals for the project were to improve big-game winter range areas, re-establish and promote new Aspen growth in overgrown or crowded stands, remove understory that can be a fire hazard and provide a change in fuel continuity between the national forest and private lands.

“When we determine an area that needs mitigation like a prescribed burn, we have a long process that must take place before the project can even get off the ground. As with many things

the forest service does, prescribed burns and mitigation projects require a NEPA process which helps determine that there will be no significant impact to the environment by our proposed actions. Usually, this process can be completed in a year’s time, but it can also vary,” said Rio Grande National Forest acting Fuel Planner Kent Smith.

Smith explained that after the NEPA process is completed, a team of forest officials works together to determine the need or purpose and to come up **Please see BURN on Page 10**

Mountain Valley School Board of Education president is a finalist for Excellence Award

BY MECHEL MEEK

SAGUACHE — Lacy Reed, director of Early Childhood Programs and Board of Education president of Mountain Valley School District, has been chosen as one of three finalists by the Rocky Mountain Early Childhood Conference (RMECC) for its first-ever Excellence Award as a Community Leader in Early Childhood.

According to RMECC, to be nominated for this award the person must be a childcare center teacher,

director, owner, administrator, or a family childcare home teacher or provider who goes above and beyond to elevate the childcare industry, promote quality, advance systems, and provide support to new providers and teachers.

RMECC stated, “To highlight the tireless work of our dedicated early childhood professionals over the last year, the Rocky Mountain Early Childhood Conference is proud to host the first-ever RMECC Excellence Award.” **Please see REED on Page 11**



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Progress



February 9, 2022

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Education continues to progress despite challenges

BY MECHEL MEEK
SAGUACHE COUNTY — 2021 was a year of achievements for the Center Consolidated School District and the Mountain Valley School District and the schools have been making progress in 2022.

Center Schools saw the return to in-person instruction and with this the return of many school activities that had been put on hold, such as sports and volunteer activities.

The Center High School Vikings wrestling team has been attending numerous tournaments, both in our area and in other states. The team has been performing well at the tournaments.

According to the Center Vikings wrestling team regarding last weekend's tournament, which was held at Center Schools, "I want to thank all of our administration, our amazing custodians, table workers, refs, parents, cheerleaders, Mrs. Banning,

our parents, Steve Martinez, John Noriega, Chris Vance, for the effort the hard work they put in for our amazing Kourtney Lake Duals and The Valley Classic!"

The basketball teams have also managed to play in person, with the girls and boys teams performing admirably in various individual and tournament games.

Center Schools were able to hold their coat drive for needy families, and also ordered two new buses to better serve the community. So far in 2022, the district has only returned to remote learning once, for a week, to maintain health and safety for the students.

Center Schools also recognized the work of the Center School Board during School Board Recognition Month, "Too often the efforts of school board members go unrecognized," stated Center Consolidated Schools Superintendent Carrie Zim-

merman.

The Mountain Valley School District is also moving forward in the new year. A career fair that is intended to help students learn about different career paths was postponed to later in the year.

In Colorado, high school students are required to have an Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP) in 9th grade. The career fair will enable students to learn more about local opportunities and types of careers that are available to them within the San Luis Valley.

Also of note, Lacy Reed, Director of Early Childhood Programs and Board of Education President of Mountain Valley School has been chosen as one of three finalists by the Rocky Mountain Early Childhood Conference (RMECC) for their first-ever Excellence Award as a Community Leader in Early Childhood.

According to RMECC, to be



Photo by Mechel Meek

nominated for this award the person must be a childcare center teacher, director, owner, administrator, or a family childcare home teacher or provider who goes above and beyond to elevate the childcare industry, promote quality, advance systems, and provide support to new providers and teachers.

Mountain Valley School District

also needed to return to remote learning, from Jan. 31 to Feb. 3 due to the rise of COVID cases in Saguache.

An upcoming event the school will be hosting is a six-week photography workshop for community members to help all levels of photographers develop their artistic eyes.

On March 11, the school district is set to have a talent show.

Aquaponics program continues to grow at URGSD

BY LYNSIE FERRELL

DEL NORTE — The Aquaponics Program at the Upper Rio Grande School District offers a unique opportunity for students to learn about the world of plants and fish and the contrast of the natural world verses indoor growing processes. Current teacher Nikki Horrocks is helping teach the program and ensure that it continues to grow.

"The room in the new school building is up and running. The program is a combination of aqua culture and hydroponics which is basically raising Halibut and utilizing their waste to grow plants. The nitrogen in fish waste provides nitrates that help plants grow in the indoor setting and is a great way to teach the contrast between indoor and outdoor growing to students," explained Horrocks.

Horrocks said that the program is perfect for the colder climate here in the San Luis Valley and offers the opportunity for plants to grow year-round.

"This is a warm conducive growth climate, and we can look at the parallels from the natural world and aquaponics in the classroom. It really is an amazing program and opportunity for students," said Horrocks. "Plants are removed because they grow old here, not because the seasons change."

The program also offers a chance for Senior students to learn about the correspondence between water quality and sustainable aquaponics. Since 1997, the Upper Rio Grande School District has worked with Western Colorado University to collect water quality data for use in several areas of study and students' further benefit by receiving college credits in the concurrent enrollment program.

"We take samples from the Rio Grande about once a month and collect that data which is then used by several different organizations including Colorado Parks and Wildlife as well as the Colorado Water Quality and Control Commis-



sion. The data we collect is public and is used by several different people and organizations," Horrocks said.

In addition to the Aquaponics course, students can learn about environmental biology and in coming semesters, a geology course, both of which are part of the concurrent enrollment program through Western Colorado University.

"The support for students through these alternating programs is wonderful. It really is a cool partnership with the community, state and local people," Horrocks said.

Horrocks explained that the data collected on water quality in the area is a tier three, case line data that shows where water quality is at any given time and is an indication of the health quality of local water.

"We go and collect the data which we are required to house for the Colorado Water Quality and Control Commission, and it is used for all kinds of different purposes," Horrocks said.

Right now, the students have several different types of plants growing in the classroom, the biggest of which is a dwarf banana tree.

"I try to keep the aquaponic program student driven so students get a budget and they can go buy any type of seed they want. We have a huge jalapeno plant, which I believe is the Jedi Jalapeno. We have done flowers, specifically Zinnias. Sometimes we will harvest these and give flowers out to students for just a pick me up during the day.

"We also harvest the fish and have a fish taco day on occasion, which is really fun," said Horrocks.

Students learn how to clean and filet the fish which is just one more skill learned during the course that can be used in real life situations.

"The students really enjoy being able to participate in the program," she said.



Courtesy photos

The Upper Rio Grande School District is seeing the full fruit of their labor in the new Aquaponics classroom that was included in the new school building. The program offers a unique opportunity for students to learn about the contrast of growing plants indoors versus a natural setting and how fish waste can be used to grow plants of all different kinds. Students also learn about water quality and how to collect data through another portion of the program!

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Forest Specialist Series Offers a Great 2022 Line-up

Land, Water and People

BY GREGG GOODLAND

As I settle in front of my computer screen, I adjust the height of my supersized stand-up desk and think to myself that technology is truly great. It wasn't that many years ago when, if you wanted to learn about something, or meet with people, you had to go somewhere. Now, we can jump online, search countless web pages to find more information than we can possibly consume, make a call to anywhere in the world and see our caller face to face - in real time, or join an endless stream of webinars, trainings, classes, and presentations. All you need is a computer, internet, and the time to attend. I'm not a big tech guru, but I'm learning and have something to offer you all.

I've been preparing to host the next installment of the Forest Specialist Series, a monthly, online engagement session offered by the Rio Grande National Forest and our excellent partners at the San Juan Mountains Association. I've hosted many of these sessions over the past 18 months, yet I still get a little nervous before we admit all the folks that are "waiting in the lobby." I'm nervous because I want to get it right. Like most of us when we are working, we want things to go well. And go well they usually do.

The Forest Specialist Series sessions are designed to be interactive and engaging while offering a level of formal presentation. Frankly, we want to learn lots and have fun with those in attendance while doing it. We've covered fun,

interesting, cute, and important topics including the Canada lynx reintroduction, logging, culturally modified trees, forest colors, bears, recreation activities of many sorts, seasonal road closures, Christmas trees, and more. This year we are offering another great lineup of interesting topics.

I am excited as the attendees enter the meeting room and my nervous pang takes a rapid backseat to the task at hand. I introduce myself, welcome our visitors, explain how the session works. I then introduce that month's "specialist" who will take over and provide their audience with great information through visual aids, all the while displaying their clearly visible passion for their expertise. All this, right in the comfort of your living room, home office, or your woman or man cave.

The next session, scheduled for Wednesday, February 16, 2022, at 5:00pm, will be covering the very interesting topic of Animal Adaptations in Winter. Have you ever wondered how our local wildlife survives the cold and snow? If you've been out on the forest in winter, you know moving through deep snow is hard. How do the critters do it? This talk will be great and I'm excited to learn something new!

We will be hosting a wide variety of topics to pique everyone's interest. Sandhill cranes might

be a topic you'll want to join in on. Perhaps hearing from women in leadership roles in public land management will interest you. I am particularly looking forward to hearing from our field crews later in the year.

Surprisingly, I am normally not privy to the information being presented and have often been enthralled by what I am seeing and hearing. These folks really know their subjects and bring you into their world for an hour.

Perhaps frustratingly, I am not going to tell you what the whole years line up of speakers is right now. Instead, I'm going to encourage you to navigate your computer to the RGNF homepage and find the Forest Specialist Series heading at the bottom, to follow the link to the posted schedule. I'm guessing you'll find more than one topic of interest. And that way, you'll know just where to go to find the topic and link to the sessions. Or you can look for our events on the Rio Grande National Forest Facebook page. Mark your calendar now. I look forward to seeing you online this year.

Here is our homepage: www.fs.usda.gov/main/riogrande/home

Gregg Goodland is the Public Affairs Officer for the Rio Grande National Forest. An avid outdoor enthusiast, you'll find him enjoying all public lands as often as possible.

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Council will receive a \$40 stipend per meeting. Interested applicants please go to www.cityofmontevista.colorado.gov , City Clerk's page, Dept. Forms/Documents and fill out the Planning & Zoning Application and send it to uvance@ci.monte-vista.co.us or 95 West 1st Street Monte Vista, CO. 81144. If you have questions please call 719-852-6171 (3/2)

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Sargent School District is accepting applications for the following position for the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school year. This is a grant funded position and includes a \$1,500 dollar sign on bonus, and flexible scheduling: **TWO K-12 TUTORS.** Benefits include:Health, dental, vision, and life insurance, PERA retirement, paid time off, as well as other optional benefit elections. (2/09)

Sargent School District is accepting applications for the following position for the 2022-2023 school year: ELEMENTARY ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT. Benefits include:Health, dental, vision, and life insurance, PERA retirement, paid time off, as well as other optional benefit elections. Please visit the website for application information www.sargent.k12.co.us or call 719-852-4023. EOE

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The Saguache County Sheriff's Office is accepting applications for Full-Time Dispatch/Jailer. Applicants must be 21 years old and have a high school education or GED. Applicants must be proficient in computers, be able to multi-task, a problem solver and requires working with county

Jail Inmates. Applications must pass a criminal background check as well as a drug Test. Applications may be picked up at the Saguache County Sheriff's Office located at 530 5th St., Saguache, CO. Phone 719-655-2544. The Saguache County Sheriff's Office is an equal opportunity employer. Positions are open until filled. (2/16)

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Senior CONNECTIONS

How to make a bucket list a reality

The idiom “kick the bucket” is a euphemism for passing away that does not paint such a rosy picture if you consider its origins. However, the phrase “bucket list,” though undeniably related to “kick the bucket,” definitely sheds a brighter light on the topic of mortality.

A bucket list is a plan for living life to its fullest and prioritizing opportunities to engage in all sorts of activities. A bucket list can be made at any point in life and is not exclusive to individuals facing their own mortality. Here are some tips for putting bucket list plans into action.

- Stop and think about what you really want to experience in your lifetime. Leave factors like money or proximity out of it. No ideas

are off-limits. This is your opportunity to brainstorm, and nothing is too crazy or silly.

- Write the bucket list in a comfortable or inspiring place, which may help ideas flow more freely. The place might be a cozy nook at a bookstore or a quiet spot on the beach.

- Choose things that are meaningful to you as well as ideas that are frivolous and fun. Make your list a mix of each, and don't take yourself too seriously.

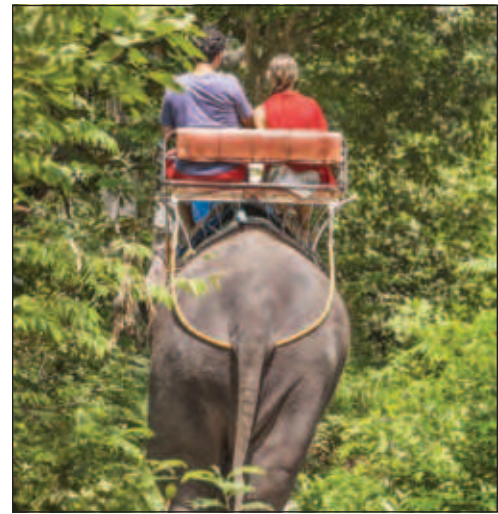
- Divide the bucket list by time. Are there items you can check off in a particular season, such as skiing the Alps? If your bucket list involves moving to a bustling city, determine if you'd like to do that after your children have reached adulthood or if you want to expose them to city life as

youngsters. Categorizing the list by periods of your life can make it easier to prioritize certain activities over others.

- Determine if each bucket list activity will be a solitary or joint pursuit. Various activities are more enjoyable when shared with others, but some you might be more inclined to do alone.

- Set aside a budget for funding bucket list activities. Bucket lists may include some costly activities, so start saving now so money does not stand in your way. Open a savings account specifically for funding bucket list excursions and set up automatic deposits.

Bucket lists can encourage people to live life to the fullest and it's never too early to get started on a list of your own.



Outdoor activities that are perfect for seniors

The great outdoors beckons people of all ages. Fresh air can be hard to resist and the benefits of spending time outdoors are so numerous that it behooves anyone, including seniors, to answer the call of nature.

According to researchers with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service, human beings benefit both physically and psychologically from spending time in nature. Such experiences can reduce stress and help lower heart rates, potentially decreasing individuals' risk for cardiovascular disease. In addition, the Forest Service notes that spending time outside in green spaces has been linked to a lower risk of depression.

Seniors who are retired or even aging empty nesters who are still in the workforce can make great use of their free time by venturing into the great outdoors. The following are a handful of senior-friendly outdoor activities that provide a great reason to get off the couch and take in all that Mother Nature has to offer.

- Hiking: Hiking provides a great workout and an ideal opportunity to spend time in an idyllic setting. The U.S. National Park Service notes that hiking helps individuals build stronger muscles and bones, improves their sense of balance, has a positive effect on heart health, and can decrease the risk of certain respiratory problems.

Hiking is an especially attractive outdoor activity for seniors, as many parks feature trails with varying degrees of difficulty, ensuring there's a trail for seniors whether they're seasoned or novice hikers.

- Water aerobics: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that water-based exercises can be especially helpful individuals with chronic diseases, a category many seniors fall into. The CDC notes that one study published in the journal *Arthritis & Rheumatology* found that improves the use of joints affected by arthritis without worsening symptoms. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services also notes that swimming can lead to improved health for people with diabetes and heart disease. Seniors can reap these benefits by going for a dip in their own backyard pools or a local body of water, such as a lake or ocean. Many swim clubs also offer discounted memberships to seniors, making these another great and affordable way to reap the benefits of swimming.

- Fishing: Of course not all outdoor activities need to make seniors huff and puff. Fishing provides a great reason to get outdoors, and many individuals devoted to fishing report feeling less stressed after a day spent casting for their favorite fish. Individuals who consume what they catch also can benefit by improving their diets, as

the American Heart Association notes that consuming certain types of fish has been linked to a lower risk for heart disease and obesity.

- Volunteering: Local environmental groups often sponsor cleanups at parks and waterfront attractions like beaches and lakes. Volunteering with such organizations is a great way to get outside and give back, and working with like-minded individuals can be a great way for seniors to meet new

people. In addition, a national study sponsored by the Corporation for National and Community Service in 2019 found that 88 percent of Senior Corps volunteers who initially reported a lack of companionship reported a decrease in feelings of isolation after volunteering.

The opportunities for seniors to enjoy the great outdoors are endless. Taking advantage of such chances can benefit seniors in myriad ways.



Life expectancy ranks highest in these countries

Living a long, healthy life has been made possible thanks in part to modern medicine. But the factors behind longevity are more complex than just access to quality health-care. Genetics, lifestyle and even where a person lives can all impact the length of a person's life.

Longevity is often studied so scientists can uncover the secrets to those who seem to have unlocked the fountain of youth. Certain areas of the world boast the longest life spans, and scientists study these areas for clues.

In 2016, the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Survey studied the health of populations around the world. In the criteria, WEF ranked countries in terms of the average life expectancy — indicating where people live the longest. While developed countries certainly made the list, there was some offset in the numbers based

on high rates of mental health issues that may lead to suicide.

Overall, the following countries ranked high in average life expectancy. People interested in living longer may want to adopt some of their citizens' lifestyle habits to live long lives.

- Monaco: The second smallest country in the world boasts quite a high life expectancy, with people living an average of 89.7 years. Nearby France has the lowest obesity rates in the world, possibly helping people to live long, healthy lives.

- Hong Kong: This country off the coast of China has a high longevity rate with people living an average of 84 years. Steamed food, engaging in Tai Chi and drinking tea may contribute to long life.

- Japan: In this Asian nation, people live 83.6 years on average. Again, a healthy diet rich in sea-

food and active lifestyles may be the secret.

- Spain: The Spanish dine on the famed Mediterranean Diet, which is rich in fresh vegetables, fish and healthy fats. Spaniards live on average 83.1 years.

- Switzerland and Italy: Low poverty levels make a good diet more readily available to much of the Swiss and Italian populations. Diverse topography that can push physical exertion also may help those in Switzerland and Italy live to 82.8 and 82.7 years, respectively.

The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency also tracks life expectancy rates for nations around the world. The United States does not crack the top 20. The CIA puts America at number 50 on its list, with people living an average of 78.4 years. The World Bank shows that Canadians fare better than Americans, with an average life span of 82.1 years.

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Penny drive for Rice



Photo courtesy of Sargent Schools

Sargent Elementary School librarian, Diana Rice, better known as RiceBob to her students is experiencing cancer for the second time. She battles leukemia on a daily basis and takes chemotherapy medications weekly. Just recently, she found out that she had breast cancer and will have to have surgery to remove the cancer in early February. Sargent School District came together and had penny wars to raise money for RiceBob. Students from kindergarten through 12th grade raised over \$6,400 to help pay medical bills and travel expenses that insurance won't cover. First graders, pictured with Rice, won the battle.

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Sled Dog races to return to South Fork

BY LYNDIE FERRELL
SOUTH FORK — The Rocky Mountain Sled Dog Club will be hosting a race in South Fork along the Beaver Creek Reservoir thanks to the recent snow that has accumulated in the area. It has been several years since the last time the races could be held in the area and people are eager to watch or participate in the event. Leslie Fields with the Rocky Mountain Sled Dog Club said that the event will be held over two days with combined times on Feb. 19 and 20. This is a perfect opportunity for guests to enjoy a winter near South Fork and to see dogs of all shapes and sizes vying for the finish line.

"We have drivers who lead teams with dogs of all kinds, not just the Huskie breed and races begin at 9 each day. It is going to be really fun," said Fields. The event was made possible with the help of the South Fork Visitor Center and the South Fork Friends Foundation. Fields is anticipating between 15 and 20 drivers this year though, in events past, they had as many as 40 drivers participate.

"We are hoping to generate interest from other local sled dog groups and to bring drivers in from all over," Fields said.

The club was established in 1960-61, making it one of the oldest sled dog clubs in the area. Their most recent event featured 40 drivers at 10,500 feet on top of the Grand Mesa near Grand Junction which was the 16th year for that event.

Fields said there will be a 2-, 4- and 6-mile race for two-, four- and six-dog teams that will race on the groomed trail south of Beaver Creek Reservoir.

"Spectators are welcome to attend and can watch the start and finish of the races. If people want to snowshoe or ski up the trail to see the race further up, we ask that they stay to the side of the trail, so they do not interfere with the race," Fields said.

Along with the team sled dog races, there will also be a category for Skijor races that includes one- or two-dog teams. In this category, the dogs pull their driver on skis. It is one of the more popular attractions, Fields said.

For more information, visit the club's Facebook page under Rocky Mountain Sled Dog Club Followers.

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BURN

Continued from Page 1

with the proposed action. Once this phase is complete the proposed plan is then reviewed by the forest supervisor. Once approved, the team waits for the weather and conditions to be just right. In the meantime, if the project is in what is called a wildland urban interface, as was the case with the Rock Creek project, private landowners and other organizations like the Bureau of Land Management are contacted.

“We started this project in 2019 but because of the COVID pandemic, it had to wait until this year. We did not have any other big challenges with this particular project, and I know that our communication with the public played a huge role in our success. There were days when the smoke was going to be worse than anticipated and we were given the go-ahead by property owners in the area to move forward with the project. In the end, we burned about 800 piles of slash which was the result of our mitigation

process,” Smith said.

Josh Jordan, who was the burn boss for the Rock Creek project, also agreed that the relationship project managers created with the landowners and public in the area were the main reason the project was so successful.

“We follow our burn plan, and we lit a certain number of piles per day so that we could watch and mitigate the spread. It can be hard to have a prescribed burn take place near your home or property, and we like to make sure conditions are right before we proceed and to educate the public on our process to help alleviate those concerns. It is very important to us to be successful,” Jordan said.

Now that the Rock Creek project is in the books, the team will be moving to a new prescribed burn area near Crestone that will be along the Willow Creek Trailhead and another up North Camero Creek near County Road 41G. For more information, visit <https://www.fs.usda.gov>.



Courtesy photos

The Rock Creek Wildland Urban Interface project was designed to reduce fuel loading on the border between Rio Grande National Forest lands and adjacent private lands. By thinning the understory and reducing tree crown spacing, the area has less potential to support a large wildfire and provides better opportunities for a more aggressive attack on a fire, according to RGNF officials. The area was masticated in early 2020 and the slash piles were created by a contract thinning crew in the summer.

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REED

Continued from Page 1



Courtesy photo

Mountain Valley School Board of Education President Lacy Reed is one of three finalists for an Excellence Award from the Rocky Mountain Early Childhood Conference. Reed is also director of Early Childhood Programs.

Awards. The Excellence Awards are an opportunity to showcase the amazing work, innovation, and endless spirit of early childhood professionals! The award ceremony will be held in person at the closing general session of the Rocky Mountain Early Childhood Conference on Saturday, March 12, 2022, and live streamed to our virtual audience. Three finalists from each category will be chosen by the RMECC Steering and Program Committees

and will receive free all-access attendance to the event. The winners of each category will be selected by public vote and announced live at the award ceremony where they will receive their prizes."

The voting will be held via Facebook and will begin on Monday, Feb. 7, at www.facebook.com/RMECC. The winners will be selected by a public vote, and the Mountain Valley School District is asking the community to support Reed by voting.

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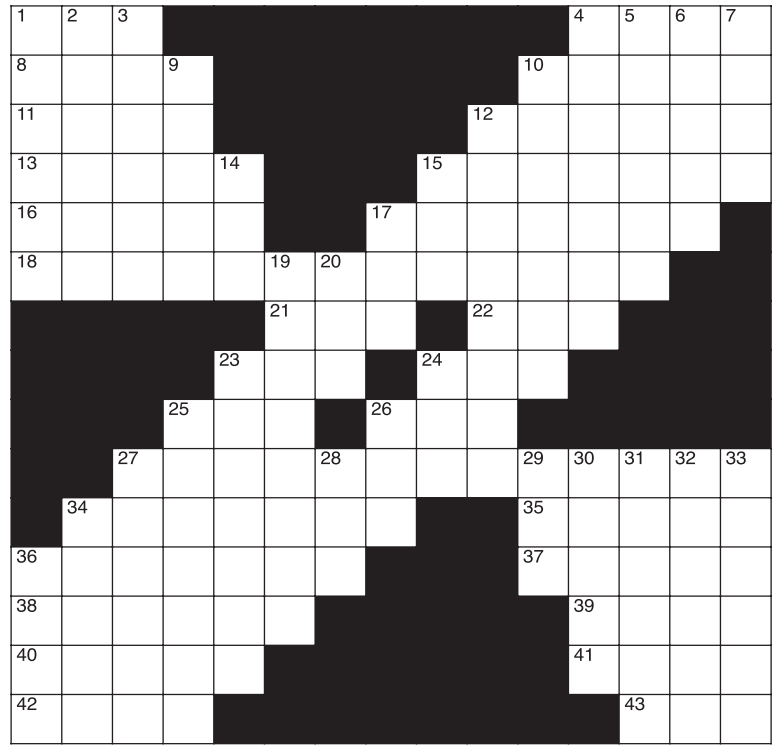
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CLUES ACROSS

1. Adequate yearly progress (abbr.)
4. Silicon Valley's specialty
8. Gather a harvest
10. Famed mathematician
11. No (slang)
12. Students use one
13. Type of molecule
15. Play make-believe
16. Large barrel-like containers
17. Touching
18. Treats allergies
21. Calendar month
22. Single
23. Cease to live
24. Brew
25. What ghosts say
26. Geological time
27. Focus
34. Discomfort
35. A citizen of Iran
36. Trip
37. Imitate
38. Makes happy
39. Double-reed instrument
40. Body parts
41. Transgressions



42. One-time emperor of Russia
43. Time zone

17. Supervises interstate commerce
19. Foolish behaviors
20. Witness

CLUES DOWN

1. Used in treating bruises
2. One who cultivates a small estate
3. One who supports the Pope
4. Annuity
5. Geological period
6. Grab onto tightly
7. Kept
9. Chinese city
10. The most direct route
12. Type of tooth
14. ___ kosh, near Lake Winnebago
15. Popular veggie

23. Gives
24. Expression of creative skill
25. A way to prop up
26. Midway between northeast and east
27. Winter melon
28. Supernatural power
29. Target
30. Threes
31. A type of poetic verse
32. They make some people cry
33. Kindest
34. Forman and Ventimiglia are two
36. A way to liquefy

Solution to last week's puzzle

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

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SKI HI

Continued from Page 1

to celebrate the history of the building and keep Ski Hi in the name, according to the City of Monte Vista.

The large charitable donation from the Ralph Outcalt Foundation warranted his name at front and center. In addition, the complex was promoted as a regional facility and received regional support from many donors so adding SLV (San Luis Valley) will be all-encompassing for anyone using the facility.

The building was a want for the area for years and gained momentum in recent years as fundraising for the multi-million project began in earnest spearheaded by the Friends of Ski Hi.

“The vision behind the new Ski Hi building had been there for a really long time,” Shriver said in an earlier interview, chairperson for the Friends of Ski Hi. “This idea was there as early as 2006,

2007, the only thing that was not, was the funding. The funding really came from grants and community donations and involvement; it really just took off from there.”

On Sept. 4, 2019, Friends of Ski Hi Park presented the idea and preliminary design to the City Council for a multi-purpose Ski Hi building, and other changes to the Ski Hi complex in Monte Vista.

In 2020, the Friends of Ski Hi along with the City of Monte Vista and Alcon Construction, officially announced that the building for the Ski Hi complex had been ordered. The \$8 million project kicked off in 2020 with a local donation campaign early in the year. Within months, over \$772,000 had been raised by the community to go toward the project.

The full demolition of the Ski Hi complex began and was complete in July of 2020 and, the new steel structure frame for the new building came together in January of 2021.

The 54,743 square foot building has two large, carpeted conference rooms. One can be sectioned off into three smaller rooms and the event center. A caterers warming kitchen is also available if food is needed or sold at an event.

Monte Vista Mayor Dale Becker said, “This is a milestone for our community. The building is available for all sorts of celebrations and events. The community should be very proud of what has been accomplished and what will be used for years to come.”

The SLV community is invited to the ribbon-cutting on Feb. 25 from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. with comments at 5:30.

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