

Shorts

ALMA Presents Marbin at Society Hall on January 14

ALAMOSA — The Alamosa Live Music Association announced Marbin will be performing at Society Hall on Friday, Jan. 14, 2022, at 7 p.m. Admission is \$5 for ALMA 2022 members and \$15 for general admission. No advance tickets are for sale. Masks required for entry to the concert.

Marbin is a progressive jazz-rock band based in Chicago. With a do-it-yourself approach, Marbin started touring extensively in 2011, bringing their original instrumental music to every part of the United States. Through word of mouth, Marbin has gained hundreds of thousands of devoted fans all over the world and has sold tens of thousands of albums. Marbin regularly plays in clubs all over the US and in jam and jazz festivals around the world.

Marbin will be offering a free musical workshop at Society Hall at 2 p.m. that same day. In the workshop, Marbin is going to explore their process of improvising, composing, and arranging. From the way they use Solkattu (Indian Solfege) to enrich their rhythmic vocabulary, to the unique harmonic system they apply when improvising over various structures and styles. Marbin will also share their expertise in the field of music business and explain, with many fun stories and anecdotes, how they built a fusion band into a viable business over the course of a decade.

For more info on Marbin, go to www.marbinmusic.com/.

Creede Arts Council opens call for entries for 2022 Willow Creek Journal

CREEDE — The Creede Arts Council is excited to announce that the call for entries will open on Jan. 3, 2022, for the 2022 Willow Creek Journal.

CAC accepts poetry, prose, photographs, and artwork. CAC accepts submissions by email on its website. See the 2022 Call for Entries at <https://creedeartscouncil.com/willow-creek-journal> with details and requirements for submission. The Willow Creek Journal is a community-centered annual anthology. Through the journal, CAC celebrates and nurtures the creativity of artists of all ages. Samples of previously accepted work can be viewed on its website. Submissions will be accepted through Feb. 28, 2022.

If you have questions, contact CAC at creedearts@outlook.com or go to their website to submit work <https://creedeartscouncil.com/willow-creek-journal>.

O'Neil recognized with Conservation Excellence Award



Patrick O'Neil

By JOHN WATERS

BROOMFIELD — Commissioner of Agriculture Kate Greenberg recently announced the recipients of the 2021 Award for Conservation Excellence, which recognizes individuals in Conservation Districts who have demonstrated excellence and leadership for Colorado's conservation community. This year's honorees are Patrick O'Neil from the Mosca-Hooper Conservation District, and Katlin Miller from the Middle Park Conservation District.

"Conservation work is critical to protecting Colorado's natural and working lands that support our state's agricultural sector," said

Commissioner of Agriculture Kate Greenberg. "Katlin and Patrick have shown that when landowners, conservation districts, and state agencies work together, we can create opportunities for farmers and ranchers to engage in conservation practices while protecting their businesses and their bottom line."

O'Neil, a supervisor with the Mosca-Hooper Conservation District (MSCD), was honored with the Award for Conservation Excellence for contributing extensive expertise to CDA's development of the Soil Health Initiative. A soil scientist and owner of Soil Health Services, PBC in the San Luis Valley, O'Neil participated in

nearly every Colorado Collaborative for Healthy Soils committee meeting to develop a soil health initiative that's appropriate for conservation districts to deliver to their constituent farmers and ranchers.

"We're facing hard times with drought, topsy-turvy input and market prices, the necessity of aquifer recovery, and the need to build back soil health," said O'Neil. "Collaborations with many different agricultural and conservation groups have been vital to this work. I'm very grateful for the recognition from Commissioner Greenberg and from the Colorado Department of

Please see O'NEIL on Page 2A

Crestone-Moffat Giving Tree continues to help children

STAFF REPORT

CRESTONE — The Giving Tree began as a way to provide winter clothing and boots to needy children in the area. It has been Elaine Johnson's commitment for the past 12 years to serve the community, starting with 30 children back in 2010.

Thanks to many generous donations the Giving Tree has

grown, to include over 200 children in recent holiday seasons.

With Johnson's guidance and dedication, the legacy of giving has opened the door for current elves: Patte Smith, Jacque Sprock, Geri Dean, Rachael Kellum, and Christine Gingrich, to continue this tradition.

The community, even those who are needy themselves, fills the jar of donations in hopes of creating

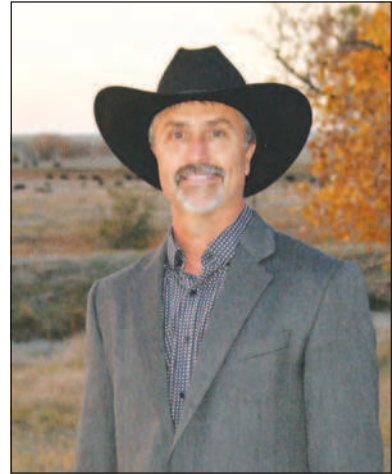
the magic of the season for local children. It is true giving because they never know which child has benefitted from their actions.

"We would also like to acknowledge donations from Neighbors Helping Neighbors, Eileen G. Kerr Foundation, The Center Kiwanis," organizers stated. "The Crestone/Moffat Giving Tree truly represents the best of our community."



Courtesy photos

Thanks to many generous donations the Crestone-Moffat Giving Tree has grown, to include over 200 children in recent holiday seasons.



Jim Yahn

Yahn to keynote So. Rocky Mountain Ag Conference

By PRISCILLA WAGGONER

SAN LUIS VALLEY — When it comes to diminishing water supplies, Jim Yahn knows what he is talking about, especially related to working with an over-appropriated system, well curtailment and the impact on a community when wells are shut off.

The similarity to circumstances in the San Luis Valley makes what Yahn has to say relevant. And that is precisely why, after hearing

Please see YAHN on Page 2A

Career fair to be held for Mountain Valley students

By MECHEL MEEK

SAGUACHE — A community career fair is scheduled on Jan. 27 for the middle and high school students at Mountain Valley School.

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

Around 70 students are expected to attend this career fair. Local businesses, governments, organizations and various people from the community will explain job requirements, salary, education and why their various occupations are important to the community.

"Thank you for helping our students gain information so that they can better make plans for their future and learn about local job opportunities," said Emily Heuer, counselor for Mountain Valley School District.

According to the State of Colorado, ICAP is a multi-year process that intentionally guides students and families in the exploration of career, academic and postsecondary opportunities. With the support of adults, students develop awareness, knowledge, attitudes, and skills to create their pathways to Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR). ICAP helps students discover what their interests are and how to achieve success in life after high school.

Photo courtesy of Mountain Valley School District

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YOUR NIGHT SKY

BY DARLENE DANKO



Bright Winter Stars

Since the full moon is on Jan. 17, tonight is a good time to go out and look at the stars. The new moon was 4 days ago, so it will still be small and not interfere with your viewing. Obviously, the only problem will be if the sky is cloudy. But if it's snowing, I will be very happy!

Taking center stage in the winter sky is Orion the Hunter, my favorite constellation! The most obvious part of him is the short string of three bright stars that make up his belt. He appears southeast in the early evening, then rises high in the south.

Stars in constellations only appear close together when viewed from Earth and are usually quite far apart. Orion's two brightest stars, Betelgeuse, and Rigel are 522 and 773 light-years from us. A light-year is 5,878 billion miles and is how far it takes light to travel in one year. The three stars in the belt are giant stars in our Milky Way spiral arm, so in that respect, you could say they're close to each other.

Betelgeuse is the ninth brightest star

in the sky and is at the upper left of Orion. It's a red giant with a diameter larger than Earth's orbit around the Sun, and a mass 20 times larger than the Sun. I have a hard time envisioning anything that big. It's considered to be a young star, but because of its giant size is expected to undergo a supermassive explosion. Because of its distance, that may have already occurred, and we just can't see it yet.

Rigel, at Orion's lower right, is considered to be his brightest star. Because Betelgeuse varies in magnitude (brightness) from 0.0 to 1.3, it can outshine Rigel, but that only occasionally happens. Rigel is a blue, white supergiant that is 17 solar masses and 57,000 times as bright as the Sun. Only its distance keeps it from being the brightest star in the sky.

Have you ever wondered why stars seem so much brighter in the winter? In the summer, Earth's tilt faces us toward the center of the Milky Way, whose center is 25,000-28,000 light-years away from us. So, we're gazing through massive galactic dust at the combined light of billions of stars. That's why the

Milky Way is a big bright fuzzy patch of light in the summer.

In the winter, the part of Earth we're in is facing out into the spiral arm of the Milky Way that our solar system lives in. We're looking away from the center, across some 25,000 light-years of the Milky Way, and out beyond toward deep space. The Milky Way is pale because we don't see the multi-billion-star haze; but without the haze and galactic dust, the stars we do see are clear and bright.

The Orion Arm we live in is only a minor spiral arm in our galaxy some 3,500 light-years across, and 10,000 light-years in length. We're located close to the inner rim about halfway along the length. Some of the Orion constellation stars reside within this arm which was named for Orion. The Orion Arm is a spur between the Sagittarius and Perseus Arms.

SAGUACHE COUNTY SHERIFF'S REPORT

SAGUACHE COUNTY — The following information was provided by the Saguache County Sheriff's Office for the period between Monday, Dec. 27, 2021, and Sunday, Jan. 2, 2022.

The Sheriff's Department's activity on the road included four crashes with property damage, 15 traffic stops and four traffic complaints. They also patrolled the Town of Saguache six times and the Town of Crestone once, assisted a motorist four times, conducted one VIN inspection, and responded to two lockout calls.

In addition, there were two reports of suspicious activity, two harassment reports, two assault reports, five alarm reports, one burglary report, one theft report, two fraud reports, and three civil dispute reports.

They also responded to four

controlled burns, one structure fire, one utility problem (gas leak), provided information three times, assisted nearby agencies once, and conducted two welfare checks.

ARRESTS

• A 39-year-old Center man was arrested on criminal mischief (\$20,000 to \$99,999), second-degree burglary and theft (\$750 to \$1,999.99) charges.

• A 53-year-old Crestone man was arrested on outstanding warrants and sexual assault-submit-force-threat-other charges.

• A 39-year-old Center man was arrested sexual assault on a child by one in position of trust and false imprisonment charges.

A 29-year-old Saguache man was arrested on criminal mischief, false imprisonment, domestic violence summons and complaint and child abuse charges.

RG Hospital releases latest Community Health Needs Assessment

STAFF REPORT

DEL NORTE — Rio Grande Hospital released its 2022-2024 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) Report last week.

CHNA is required by hospitals to complete every three years. It is meant to prioritize the significant health needs of the community. The CHNA documents are reported to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), hospitals are required to make their CHNA available to the public.

Due to the reduction in the number of individuals who are uninsured in the United States, the IRS, as directed by the Affordable Care Act, implemented CHNA to broaden the hospital's focus in providing sufficient and more impactful to the community health

well-being.

During the last several months, Rio Grande Hospital (RGH) encouraged the community to take part in three meetings and a survey to help determine the community's significant health needs.

However, the data has been collected for much longer. RGH invited staff, community partners, and community members to the meetings. They were also asked to share and complete the survey. This comprehensive approach helps RGH listen to various groups in the community.

The needs compiled were reviewed and a plan was put in place. The CHNA plan and many statistics can be found on the RGH's website link, riograndehospital.org/chna.

O'NEIL

Continued from Page 1A

Agriculture. I look forward to the work that lies ahead to connect soil health with aquifer recharge, and to foster a more functional water cycle."

Leveraging funding through numerous public and private grants, O'Neill and the MSCD developed projects focused on soil health and unconfined aquifer recharge. Together, and in collaboration with local farmers and the Soil Carbon Coalition, they developed a vermicompost operation to produce high-fungal compost for inoculation of agriculture fields. O'Neill also

worked on the San Luis Valley Aquifer Targeted Recharge Project, a multi-year plan to identify best practices for unconfined aquifer recharge and improved ground water resources. As a board member of the Rio Grande Watershed Conservation & Education Initiative, O'Neill is dedicated to teaching others about conservation and has taught soil science at local high school soil health workshops.

Miller, the District Manager for the Middle Park Conservation District (MPCD), was recognized for her

quick and decisive response during and after the East Troublesome Fire of 2020, second-largest fire in Colorado history. Her actions proved that determination, resourcefulness and partnerships are keys to success in helping landowners in the aftermath of a catastrophic event.

The Commissioner's Award for Conservation Excellence is awarded annually to a single individual involved in conservation district work. No award was given in 2020 due to the pandemic, so two honorees were selected in 2021.

YAHN

Continued from Page 1A

him speak at the 2021 Colorado Water Congress in August, Rio Grande Water Conservation District General Manager Cleave Simpson and Subdistrict No. 1 Program Manager Marisa Fricke asked Yahn to speak at the upcoming Southern Rocky Mountain Ag Conference.

Luckily for all, Yahn said yes. Yahn is the manager of the North Sterling and Prewitt Reservoirs — a position he has held for more than 29 years — where he is responsible for overseeing the diversion and distribution of water to more than 350 farmers. The reservoirs are a source of irrigation water for approximately 70,000 acres.

It is also a position that put him on the frontline of matters when the office of the state engineer shut down thousands of wells on the South Platte in 2002, a decision that played a significant role in the formation of Subdistrict No. 1 locally.

"It was difficult to see farmers have wells shut down [and have division amongst themselves], have good farm ground dried up, and spend millions of dollars collectively to fully augment their well pumping [if they could find water]," Yahn says.

Yahn was appointed by the Governor to the Colorado Water Conservation Board to serve as the South Platte Director in 2016 where he served for five years, including one year as chairperson. Yahn has also been a member of the South Platte Basin Roundtable since its inception in 2005, serving as chair from 2009-2012. He currently serves as the roundtable's representative to the Interbasin Compact Committee.

A registered professional engineer, Yahn received his Bachelor's in Agricultural Engineering from Colorado State University. Before his employment with the North Sterling and Prewitt Reservoirs, he worked as a private consulting

engineer in Fort Collins. He is a native of Colorado and grew up on a family ranch, that used water from the North Sterling Reservoir System.

The 40th annual Southern Rocky Mountain Agriculture Conference and Tradeshow is scheduled for Feb. 1-3 at the Ski Hi Park in Monte Vista, offering three days of educational presentations and demonstrations. Visit www.ageonferensrm.com, for more information.

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OPINION & EDITORIAL

The art of saying goodbye

The Holiday Seasons are now behind us with Christmas and New Year's mere disappearing memories in the rear-view mirror of life.

OI' Dutch believes that Christmas is quite possibly the greatest time to enter a party or gathering as you'll most likely be bearing gifts, which are always welcomed. And the host will make some exclamation like "oh you shouldn't have" which creates a warm feeling in the arriver's heart.

It's a wonderful time of the year according to Andy Williams and we are glad to see everyone once again at such gatherings. Well, almost everyone as there is always the brother-in-law who chain smokes, the sister who got her 4th divorce, and, of course, Uncle Rudolph who wants to show you his scar from the latest surgery for gallstones.

As they say, however, all good things must come to an end and the gathering soon begins to break up as people head for home.

First, of course, are the young couples with children still at home as they have to rush away to relieve some babysitter keeping their kids on an hourly rate.

Then it's the younger crowd who follow shortly as they have other parties to attend that will last long into the night and next morning and tell us we should be thankful for their cursory attendance at our dull event.

Next to leave are the working class as they are used to getting to bed early and up with the chickens and so they have already begun to flag and tire.

And of course, the last. The retirees who long ago gave up the rat race of work and toil and now are trying to live as much as they can before their number is called up in the sky by the Big Guy.

OI' Dutch is one of the latter, I fear, and I came by that naturally as my father Fast Freddy was a pastor and we always were the first to show and the last to go at church events waiting on folks to come to their senses and go home so we could lock the doors behind them.

And to make matters worse Miss Trixie has those same tendencies so much in fact that the pastor of our local church finally gave her a key to "lock the door behind us."

Today marks the end of our combat duty keeping the grandkids over a five-day stretch. And I can



Trout Republic
by Kevin Kirkpatrick

remember just how happy we were to get to my son's house for said time of sure-to-be joyous fun.

But just now Miss Trixie came in the door of the office where I am writing this and announced that the reserve troops, the parents of these darlings, have left the ski slopes and are headed home and OI' Dutch found himself already plotting his escape.

Now it's not that it was a bad time, it's just that having kids is for the young not only at heart but of body as bed hopping, dog barking and watching the "girl has a horse and loves it" shows has run its course.

And I can tell you that when son number one gets home, gone will be the long goodbyes that are normal for our visits here and OI' Dutch will be lined up like a sprinter for the Olympics ready to leave once they arrive.

A dash will be made for the door and the short drive home to a comfy recliner and a memory foam bed that hopefully remembers me after so long a time away.

And if I am lucky, Miss Trixie will have been able to break away from her long-winded soliloquy of how was your trip? Did you like the new snow? What kind of gas mileage did you get? conversations with my kids in time to catch a ride home with OI' Dutch.

And the happiest thought of all just came through my mind as I realized that OI' Dutch brought his vehicle this time. There is a God in Heaven so it appears. Goodbyes don't have to be so long, after all.

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.



LETTER Veterans Center at Homelake thankful for wreaths

Editor,
The Colorado Veterans Community Living Center at Homelake is privileged to take this time to thank the many individuals, families and organizations that donated to make Wreaths Across America, held at the Homelake Veterans Cemetery on Dec. 18, 2021, such a beautiful day. Once again, this year, every grave in the Homelake Veterans Cemetery had a wreath placed on it. These generous donors made enough sponsorship to have a wreath placed on over 1,600 graves.

The Homelake Veterans Cemetery was one of the 3,136 participating locations across our nation and the volunteers who came to help place the wreaths were part of the millions

of Americans who gathered as one nation to Remember the fallen, Honor those that serve and their families and to Teach the next generation the value of freedom.

Each live, balsam wreath is a gift of respect and appreciation, sponsored by many incredible private citizens and organizations throughout the San Luis Valley and beyond. The wreaths were placed on the graves by volunteers as a small gesture of our gratitude for the freedoms Americans enjoy today. Wreaths Across America believes the tradition represents a living memorial that honors veterans, active-duty military, and their families. Volunteers were asked to say the name of the veteran out loud

when placing a wreath to ensure their memory lives on.

Thank you to Gene Farish, Lyle Dye, Gene Gowens, Ron Martinez, Ron Kern, Loren Howard, Jack Rudder and David Hinkley for placing the remembrance wreaths in honor of each branch of the military and for all prisoners of war and those missing in action.

Thank you to the Monte Vista Journal and Marie Mccolm, for the outstanding news coverage and photographs.

*Pam Self
Admissions and Marketing Director
Colorado Veterans Community
Living Center at Homelake
Wreaths Across America
Location Coordinator*

LETTERS POLICY

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

All letters must be signed by the author and include a phone number and address where the author can be reached (these are not for publication). Letters forwarded from other organizations or sent to staff and not for print must be designated as such. Letters over 300 words and without contact information will

be returned to the sender or discarded.

We will accept one letter per person, per subject, per four issues. We reserve the right to reject letters for reasons we believe are appropriate. Please send letters to Letter to the Editor c/o Valley Publishing, PO Box 607, Monte Vista, CO 81144 or e-mail to bwilliams@valleypublishinginc.com (Attention: Letter to the Editor). Deadline for letters is 5 p.m. Friday.

Political letters may be limited due to space constraints.

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CPW celebrates 125 years of conservation in Colorado

STAFF REPORT

DENVER — Colorado Parks and Wildlife is celebrating its 125th anniversary in 2022 by telling the agency's long history of wildlife conservation and outdoor recreation in a series of stories, videos, podcasts and community events over the coming 12 months. The series will start in January with a look at the founding of CPW's ancestor agency — the Department of Forestry, Game and Fish — in 1897 including the work leading up to it before Colorado was even a state into the modern era.

"This 125th anniversary is an opportunity to shine a spotlight on Colorado Parks and Wildlife's mission of perpetuating the wildlife resources of the state and providing quality parks," CPW Director Dan Prenzlou said. "Through a year of celebrating our past, present and future, we'll show our dedication to educating and inspiring future generations to become stewards of our natural resources."



competing on the landscape.

- CPW's dedicated staff has helped restore the endangered black-footed ferret, bald eagles, lynx, Peregrine falcons, the Preble's meadow jumping mouse, greenback cutthroat trout, boreal toads, Gunnison's sage grouse, moose, Rio Grande and Colorado river cutthroat trout, and many other critical fish and wildlife species.
- A profile of Annie Metcalf, Colorado's first woman game warden. She was appointed a deputy game warden in 1898 in Routt County. She wasn't afraid of mountain lions, but she dreaded cows.

- The story of her modern successors, starting with Susan Smith, the first woman appointed a District Wildlife Manager in Vail in February 1975.

- The evolution of roadside parks and state recreation areas into our first state park, Lathrop near Walsenburg, on June 9, 1961, and our current roster of 43 state parks that offer world class outdoor recreation.

The present
CPW will be hosting events and receptions at state parks and offices around Colorado this year. Sign up for CPW's eNewsletters and keep your eye on your inbox for events near you.

The future
CPW will soon be opening our 43rd state park at Sweetwater Lake, crafting a management plan for the restoration of gray wolves and introducing a Keep Colorado Wild Pass in 2023 that can be purchased during the Colorado vehicle registration or renewal process.

The past
Using Colorado Outdoors Online, the CPW website, social media channels and traditional outlets, CPW will publish a series of stories describing the history of the past 125 years of state park and wildlife conservation in Colorado, such as:

- CPW's terrestrial and aquatic biologists and researchers whose groundbreaking work has led the fight against chronic wasting disease in moose, elk and deer, combatted whirling disease in fish, expanded our understanding of the genetics of various species and helped the agency become a leader in balancing the carrying capacity of habitat with the various wildlife species

Surprise celebration for Willow Park Ranch foreman

Courtesy photo
Skip Patterson, a long-time South Fork resident, retired as ranch foreman in Willow Park Ranch in December of 2021. Patterson was raised in the metroplex area and came to the San Luis Valley as postmaster in Creede many years ago. He moved to Willow Park Ranch 20-plus years ago where he was a good neighbor, board member and finally serving as ranch foreman since 2014. Many friends and supporters surprised Skip recently with an appreciation dinner at Ramon's. Patterson was recognized for his many great years of service; plowing the roads year-round, helping with security, working with wranglers on the summer cattle herd, as well as just being a phone call away when needed. Stories were remembered fondly by many 'flat lander' attendees being pulled out of ditches. He was presented with toasts, stories, a recognition plaque and contributions from many owners wishing him a happy retirement. The celebration took Patterson by surprise, and he was overwhelmed by the well wishes and support. Good news, Patterson will be staying in SF enjoying his snow skiing passion and is evaluating Portugal as an area to enjoy pre and post skiing season.



COVID on the rise in Saguache County

By MECHEL MEEK

SAGUACHE COUNTY — As of Monday, Jan. 3, the number of acute COVID cases in Saguache County was at 12 persons.

According to Saguache County Public Health Director Mona Lovato, "12 acute cases are reported in the Colorado Electronic Disease Reporting System, with one death in the past week."

Vaccination clinics for January are Jan. 5 at Public Health in Center from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., and Jan. 12 at the Community Building in Saguache from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The state vaccination bus will be in the area on Jan. 7 at the Alamosa Walmart from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Jan. 8 at the ASU Library from 9 a.m. to 5



Photo courtesy of Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

The state vaccination bus will be at several San Luis Valley locations in January.

p.m., Jan. 9 at the ASU Library from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Jan. 12 at Friday Health Plans from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The state bus will be parked in the parking lots of the given locations. An appointment is recommended for the state bus locations but is not required, although they do

have a limit for walk-ups. You can book an appointment for the state vaccine bus online at the Colorado Department of Public Health website.

If you are not near these areas, the state website has a list of future clinics throughout Colorado.

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Motorway makes way for greenscape, artwork and RV parking

By PRISCILLA WAGGONER

ALAMOSA — The end of 2021 marks, in some people’s minds, the end of an era as the Rio Grande Motorway building on 6th Street was razed to the ground.

Built in 1944, the large, red brick building with its massive doors and adobe-style facade was originally constructed to do maintenance work on buses and was not, as some thought, associated with the Rio Grande Railroad. Also, unlike the historic train depot next door that now houses the Colorado Welcome Center, the Rio Grande Motorway building was never designated as a historic site, which removed any obstacles to its destruction.

The property is owned by the Local Marketing District which oversees the expenditure of revenue generated by a lodging tax. According to Kale Mortensen, whose position as executive director of the Alamosa Convention and Visitors Bureau includes his involvement in the project, the Local Marketing District’s plans include “a little bit of greenscape” and the ability to host artwork.

Toward that end, the Local Marketing District is currently working with the Women’s Citizenship Club, which is fundraising to bring in a sculpture depicting cranes in flight created by internationally recognized artist and San Luis Valley native Jocelyn Russell.

Mortensen says that, as they have discovered at the Welcome Center, there is also a significant need for parking for RVs — “no connects, no dumping, just a place for RVs to park while they visit the Welcome Center, learn about the area, or go downtown to shop or eat.” He estimates the property, which equals about six-tenths of an acre, will accommodate up to eight RVs.

The Local Marketing District hopes to send out a request for proposal (RFP) for planning and design in early January or February with, hopefully, development of the property beginning in the fall of 2022.

Demolition of the building had not always been the plan. In 2018, an RFP was sent out, resulting in “a lot of great ideas.” But, finding funding was problematic, given the scope of work that needed to be done to the structure that had outdated electrical work and a plumbing system that had been disconnected for years. None of the proposed projects came to fruition.

The Local Marketing District was also limited from funding any project themselves by legal limits on how tax revenue generated from the lodging tax can be used.

That led to the group’s decision in 2019 to send out an RFP for demolition of the building, a process that was delayed for more than a year by COVID.

The group is hoping that by tearing down the building that had stood vacant for a long time and repurposing the property to be both functional and dynamic, the overall appeal of Sixth Street will be enhanced.



Photo by Keith R. Cerny.

Demolition of the Motorway.



Photo courtesy of Kale Mortensen

The Rio Grande Motorway building.



Courtesy photo

Bronze cranes sculpture and Jocelyn Russell.

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Twenty minutes with Heidi Ganahl, candidate for Republican nomination for governor

BY PRISCILLA WAGGONER

ALAMOSA — For the second time since she declared her candidacy to be the Republican nominee taking on Gov. Jared Polis, Heidi Ganahl visited Alamosa. The first time, Ganahl's intention was to introduce herself to the locals. This time, she was here, along with her 9-year-old, to attend the Alamosa GOP Christmas party.

"I really like the people in the San Luis Valley," she says. "They really stick together and work for solutions."

It was a brief conversation as, according to Lexi Swearingen, Ganahl's communication director, Ganahl had "a ton of appointments." But the dialogue was long enough to get a glimpse into who Ganahl is and what she sees as the priorities for the San Luis Valley and the state.

Heidi Ganahl, 55, was born in Orange County and moved to Monument at the age of twelve, a decision made by her father, a "reserve police officer", who "didn't like the direction California was going" at the time.

In 2017, Ganahl assumed her role as a member-at-large on the Board of Regents for the University of Colorado, a position she won in the general election of 2016 with a term that expires in 2023.

Ganahl is an entrepreneur who garnered both fame and fortune as the founder and former owner of Camp Bow Wow, a highly successful "doggy daycare" and pet care franchise with locations across the United States and Canada. Ganahl also launched its sister charity — Bow Wow Buddies — which has allegedly rehomed more than 10,000 pups and, through the Bow Wow franchises, raised over a million dollars for animal health causes.

Entrepreneurialism is in Ganahl's blood. Along with her daughter, she also built a company named SheFactor, a digital and live community whose goal is to empower young women to pursue "a life they love."

Ganahl also founded "Moms Fight Back", a charity created to help mothers deal with issues such as teen suicide, sexual assault and domestic violence.

"Moms Fight Back" was followed by the creation of "Fight Back Foundation" which focuses on encouraging entrepreneurs to start businesses focused on solving tough issues among children.

When asked specifically about the role of private business in addressing youth issues, Ganahl stated, "I think everybody should be involved in the problems facing our kids — moms,



businesses, government, everybody should be shouting from the rooftops that we have a serious problem with our kids. We've got to address this issue — and not just for kids. Mental health is very big for me."

She stated she's working on "a five-point plan" that will be released in the near future.

When asked about the priorities she sees as paramount in the San Luis Valley, Ganahl listed water, protecting farmers and ranchers, mental health, education and crime.

Unlike Polis who "does work through boards and commissions", Ganahl wants to "simplify processes" that do not involve "80 pages of rules and guidelines" but are, instead, simply worded actionable goals that provide guidance to local communities to implement on their own.

She's critical of Governor Polis' handling of the pandemic, particularly in regards to "a lack of transparency in some of the numbers and what's actually going on."

She's also critical of the "one-size-fits-all approach". According to Ganahl, "A school in Sterling or Alamosa is going to handle a situation like the pandemic more effectively with parents being more involved, especially when there's a lack of internet."

Ganahl has a broad base of ideas and potential solutions to the problems she sees facing the state, but before she can take on Polis in 2022, she first has to win the support of the Republican Party in Colorado, a large segment of which has veered to the right around the issue of the validity of the 2020 election.

Ganahl was somewhat reluctant to directly answer the question, other than to say that "Joe Biden is our president and it's time to move on from that conversation."

Yet, she also recognized the validity

of concern some voters have about "ballot harvesting" and "election integrity."

But, she says, "as a candidate running for governor, I'm not going to comment on other states' voting processes. But, in Colorado, we should all work together so that everyone feels comfortable with the voting process."

"I'm running as a Coloradan," she says, "and I trust the people to understand the issues that are important to our state."

'Under the Sea' is theme of Rio Frio Ice Fest

STAFF REPORT

ALAMOSA — "Under the Sea" is the theme of the 13th annual Rio Frio Ice Fest scheduled for Jan. 28-30, 2022. Ice sculpting, a variety of other events and the unique Rio Frio 5k race on the frozen Rio Grande are among the highlights.

A complete schedule of weekend activities can be found at www.riofrioice.com, and registration is now open for the 5K there as well.

Organized by the City of Alamosa Parks and Recreation, Alamosa County Chamber of Commerce and "Visit Alamosa," the ice fest committee has adopted a "beach party" theme for the last several years, leading to this year's theme, "Under the Sea."

Ice sculptures downtown will feature things one would expect to see under the sea.

Activities will begin Friday, Jan. 28 at 6 p.m. with race packet pickup and registration at Milagros Coffee House and a luminaria-lit cross country skiing event at Blanca Vista Park just north of town if snow is available.

Saturday's full day of events include race packet pickup and

registration at the Alamosa Senior Center from 8-9:30 a.m. followed by the 5k start at 10 a.m. in the adjoining Cole Park.

Ice carving demonstrations begin at noon downtown and the information tent will be manned from 12-3 p.m. at Main and San Juan Avenue. An "augmented virtual reality activity" is planned from 12-5 p.m., details of which will be announced later.

Weather permitting, a disc golf tournament to be called the SOCO Ice Bowl, will be from 12-2 p.m. at the disc golf course north of town.

Race awards will be presented at 1 p.m. on San Juan, followed by the Kiwanis annual costume contest from 2-3 p.m. and "Grub and Pub" from 3-7 p.m.

Capping Saturday's activities will be the ever popular "fire and ice" bonfire on San Juan as well.

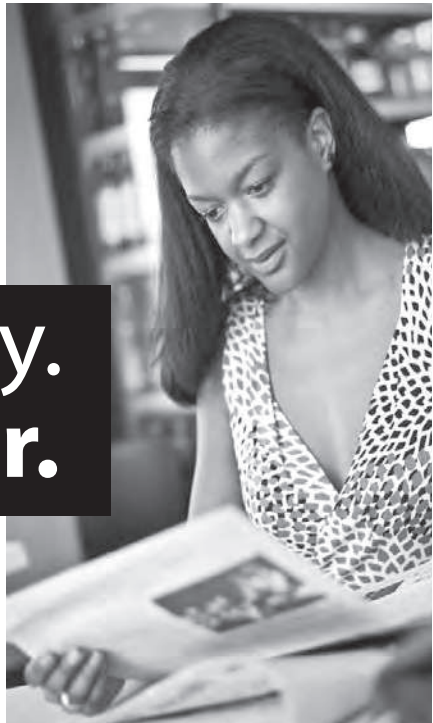
A mountain bike ride is planned for Sunday at 10 a.m. at Blanca Vista Park, followed by the polar plunge and ice carousel at noon, conditions permitting.

For more details, go to www.riofrioice.com.

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CDOT talks adverse weather road closures

By **LYNDSIE FERRELL**

WOLF CREEK PASS — Dreams of a white Christmas came true over the holiday weekend in the higher elevations surrounding the San Luis Valley and some weekend travelers found themselves stuck on one side of their destination or another as passes like Wolf Creek were closed to travel on Sunday, Dec. 26, due to adverse weather conditions.

Colorado Department of Transportation Southwest Regional Communications Manager Lisa Schwantes spoke about the closure and what steps are taken when roads become too difficult to travel during winter storms such as the one that hit Wolf Creek Pass Saturday night.

“High winds and low visibility are only part of what can close roads down across the state,”

Schwantes said. “This was the case Sunday morning when the decision to close Highway 160, Wolf Creek Pass was made. Blowing snow and icy road conditions prompt a safety closure and work crews have to wait until conditions are safe before they can begin work on the roads.”

Wolf Creek Pass was closed due to the weather at 11:11 a.m. Sunday morning until almost 5 p.m. that same day.

“The high winds obstruct vision, and our safest decision is to close the road until conditions improve,” Schwantes said. “During this time, we also pull work crews until conditions improve, and then it can be a short time while they work on the roads before we can make the decision to reopen. On Sunday, these conditions continued to deteriorate, and we had to make the call to keep people safe.”

The road closure did not impede travel to and from the Wolf Creek Ski Resort as most of the holiday skiers were able to enjoy the winter storm during the time of the closure and not have to worry about coming or going while the resort remained open.

“As things improved, we were pleased that everything worked out the way it did,” Schwantes said.

Other reasons the pass may close include road maintenance and avalanche mitigation.

“We may see additional closures in days to come with another storm on the horizon,” Schwantes said. “We will typically close the pass for avalanche mitigation early in the morning and have roads

open in time for travelers to make their way over the pass by mid-day. Of course, this isn’t always the case, but we do try to have things open in a timely manner.”

Schwantes ended by encouraging travelers to be aware of the weather prior to travel and to always go prepared for emergency closure.

“We always want to encourage people to pack extra blankets, clothes, emergency supplies and to check weather conditions and road conditions before they leave. It is always better to be prepared in case of an emergency road closure than to be stuck with nothing,” she said.

For current weather and road conditions, visit Cotrip.org.



Help with heating bills and energy efficiency is available for Coloradans

By **MECHEL MEEK**

CENTER — With the advent of cold temperatures across the San Luis Valley, there comes an increase in heating costs for people.

Heating gas, both propane and natural gas, has seen increases over the past year. Diesel fuel and electricity have also increased in cost. This raises the question for many people in the San Luis Valley as to what they can do to keep up with this increase.

Retail propane gas prices have risen 78% across Colorado since January of 2021. The price for retail propane in January 2021 was \$1.88 a gallon, and it has increased to \$2.56 a gallon in December 2021. This is far outside the normal increase for propane, between January 2020 and December 2020 the retail propane price increased only \$0.03.

The costs for wholesale natural gas, which is sold to municipalities such as Center, have risen 52.5% in the last year. The retail price for a gallon of diesel fuel has risen 70% since January of 2021, from \$2.58 a gallon to \$3.68. While not as common as heating with natural gas or propane, some consumers use diesel heaters to heat their homes or workshops. These heaters have been becoming more common as they are considered more efficient than other sources, however, with the increase in diesel prices they do not lower costs a significant amount.

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, an independent statistic and analysis company, electricity rates have also increased throughout Colorado, increasing 89.9% since October 2020.

With these increases, many people have been asking what can be done to help them pay their bills. The state of Colorado has a resource for people who are struggling to pay their heating costs. While there are qualification standards, people who live in the San Luis Valley may qualify for some type of assistance.

According to Energy Outreach Colorado, if you meet their income qualifications you can apply for

assistance. In Saguache, Mineral, Alamosa, Conejos, Costilla and Rio Grande counties, a family of four who are making less than \$58,800 a year would qualify for assistance from this program. The program is run through local partner agencies which will help applicants through the process, locally this agency is La Puente in Alamosa. They can be reached at 1-800-HEAT-HELP (1-800-432-8435). There are also programs available for those who need help repairing their heating system.

“If you are without heat, we can help you. Through our Crisis Intervention Program (CIP), we coordinate emergency repair and/or replacement of your heating system. While we don’t provide routine maintenance, we will help to get your heat back on when it goes out. The services we provide include repair of failed furnaces or boilers, replacement of failed heating systems, and snow removal to facilitate fuel delivery in rural areas. Qualifications for this service are: Your primary heating source isn’t working and you qualify and are approved for low-income energy assistance (LEAP),” EOC stated.

According to Energy Outreach Colorado, the CIP program can be reached at 1-855-4-MYHEAT (1-855-469-4328). If you are needing to make your home more energy-efficient or need weatherization you can contact the Energy Resource Center which offers free energy efficiency evaluations and upgrades to income-qualified residents of Alamosa, Boulder, Broomfield, Cheyenne, Conejos, Costilla, Denver, Douglas, El Paso, Elbert, Fremont, Gilpin, Jefferson, Kit Carson, Larimer, Lincoln, Mineral, Rio Grande, Saguache, Teller, and Weld counties. If you qualify for the income-qualified Energy Assistance Program (LEAP), or receive Supplemental Security Income, or receive SNAP benefits or TANF, you automatically qualify for free assistance from the Energy Resource Center.

Funding opportunity for farmers through local soil health program

Application deadline Jan. 15

By **PRISCILLA WAGGONER**

ALAMOSA — The Mosca-Hooper Conservation District is accepting applications for producers interested in participating in a grant opportunity with the Colorado Saving Tomorrow’s Agricultural Resources (STAR) Program.

STAR, created by conservation districts for conservation districts, is a practice-based rating system that assigns points for cropping, tillage, nutrient application and other best management practices based upon a 10-minute form that producers fill out about each field. As a result, the farmer or rancher receives a STAR rating from 1-5 stars that help them understand how well they are doing in promoting soil health.

At its core, the purpose of STAR is to create a new way for conservation districts to interact with landowners about the health of their soil, structuring and guiding those conversations

with common, mutually understood language around the crucial five soil health principles.

Toward that goal, the Mosca-Hooper Conservation District applied for and received grant funding to provide 5-7 producers with technical assistance, guidance in filling out a STAR Field Form, and assistance collecting a soil sample for a free soil health test.

To those producers who apply and are selected, Mosca-Hooper Conservation District will distribute incentive payments of up to \$10,000 to each participating producer for implementing soil health practices, matched with an equal investment from the producer themselves. The investment the farmer makes in labor, materials, land use value and irrigation can all serve as an in-kind match to cover the equal investment requirement.

There is also \$25,000 in grant funding available for the purchase of equipment related to soil health, including but not limited to conservation tillage, seed drills and compost extractors.

Patrick O’Neill, Supervisor with Mosca-Hooper Conservation District, is the contact person for the grant opportunity and one of the most knowledgeable and strongest advocates for soil health in the San Luis Valley, encourages anyone interested to apply.

The timeline for the grant application is relatively short, with a deadline of Jan. 15. The Mosca-Hooper Conservation District will finalize selection for the program by late January 2022.

Anyone interested in participating in the program or learning more of the details should contact Patrick O’Neill at patrick@soilhealthservices.com or by calling Patrick directly at 719-588-0836.

Funding for this grant opportunity was made possible by the passage of the Soil Health Program, legislation sponsored by Colorado State Senator Cleave Simpson and passed by the Colorado legislature earlier this year. The program is administered through the Colorado Department of Agriculture.

Live by Faith One Step at a Time

Faith in God is a foundational principle of the Bible. It’s the key to experiencing the promises we find in God’s Word. For example, Jesus tells us in John 10:10 that the enemy “comes only to steal and kill and destroy,” and that He came so we can “have life, and have it to the full” (NIV).

Being a Christian is not about a “brand” of religion; it’s all about having abundant life through a personal, intimate relationship with God. That’s a life we can enjoy!

But we can’t have this life unless we know what the Bible says and receive it by faith.

Romans 12:3 (NKJV) says that “God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.” Every person has faith; the question is what are you putting your faith in?

Is your faith in yourself, your friends, or the government? Who, or what, do you really trust to make your life work out the way it should?

When a person puts their faith in Christ for salvation, they trust that Jesus has done everything that needs to be done for them to be forgiven of their sin and make them right with God. Ephesians 2:8-9 (NIV) says, “For it is by grace you have been saved through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.”

The same way we’re saved—believing and trusting in what Christ has done—is the same way we’re supposed to live: by faith!

So how do we live by faith, or release our faith, to experience the promises of God?

I remember when I was going to church every week but I didn’t have any idea about the blessings God had for me as a believer in Christ. I wasn’t benefitting from any of them because I didn’t know what they were, and I didn’t have a clue that I could release my faith to have them.

But when I began to seriously study

God’s Word, I discovered what was available to me through Christ and how to release my faith to receive what He wants to give me. That’s when God began to do amazing things in my life: healing my soul from the horrible abuse in my past; restoring my hope that I could have a great life, not a second-rate plan because I was “damaged goods”; and taking me from miserable and full of self-pity to having real joy and peace in my soul.

The key to effectively releasing your faith is basing your faith on God’s Word. That’s why it’s so important to diligently study the Bible. It’s absolutely full of all the blessings Jesus bought and paid for with His blood. We need to devour the Bible and remind ourselves every day of how much God has done for us.

For example, Jeremiah 29:11 says God has “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” (NIV). God loves you and He has a good plan for you...but it’s not just going to happen on its own. You have to release your faith to have it.

Faith is a powerful force in your spirit, and when you use it, that’s when things happen. You have to do something, say something, pray something—take some kind of action based on what you believe God has put in your heart.

Many years ago, when I felt like God wanted me to begin teaching a Bible study, I didn’t have any idea how to do it. But I had a deep desire to help people and teach them God’s Word.

My initial reaction was, “Who is going to come? Nobody knows me...nobody cares what I have to say. And I don’t know how to teach!” The Lord spoke to my heart and said, “I do.” So my first step was to say, “Okay, I’ll do it.” My next step was to invite some people...and oddly enough, they said yes!

Those were steps of faith for me. I could have been so afraid of failure, my weaknesses and inability, that I wouldn’t



even try. I had to “step out and find out” if this was really God’s direction for me.

That first Bible study consisted of 12 people; that group grew to 25, and as I continued, it eventually led us to start the ministry we have today.

I want to encourage you not to settle for a passive existence ruled by fear of failure, change, rejection or anything else. Instead, be determined to have everything God has for you.

Pray about the desires in your heart, or ask God to show you what He has planned for you. When you have an idea, pray for specific wisdom to take a step...to take action based on your faith in God.

If you really want to have the life God has for you, you will have to take a chance—you’ll have to step out and find out. Choose to put your faith in God because that’s when amazing things will begin to happen for you!

For more on this topic, order Joyce’s two-teaching CD series *What Is Faith and How Does It Work?* 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 *AUTHENTICALLY, UNIQUELY 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.

Saguache County Board of Commissioners Seeks Saguache County Planning Commission Members
Saguache County Board of Commissioners are seeking members and alternates from:
Town of Saguache surrounding area – member and alternate
La Garita/Center area – member and alternate
Town of Center and surrounding area - alternate
Cochetopa area – Member and alternate
Moffat and surrounding area – alternate
Hooper and surrounding area – alternate
Villa Grove and surrounding area - alternate
At Large for All of Saguache County – alternate
Crestone and surrounding area - alternate

The representative must be a property owner or property manager and reside in the area they are interested in representing. Regular member terms are for three years and the alternate terms are for one year.

Saguache County Planning Commission meets on the last Thursday of each month in the Road and Bridge meeting room. The Planning Commission may also have work sessions throughout each month to work on the Saguache County Master Plan and different items. If you are interested, please send a brief letter of interest stating qualifications and interest to: Saguache County Land Use, Attn: Amber Wilson, PO Box 326, Saguache, CO 81149 prior to Friday, January 7, 2021. Should you have any questions please call Amber Wilson at 719-655-2321.

No. 1616 published in the Center Post Dispatch, Thursday, December 9, 16, 23 and 30, 2021 and January 6, 2022.

A Show-Stopping Performance raises funds for Cancer Services

By LYNDSEY WILLIAMS

ALAMOSA — After a year's hiatus, the Sandie Wehe Studio Singers' put on a show-stopping performance for their annual holiday concert on Dec. 21. This year's theme was Mistletoe Magic and proceeds from the performance benefitted the San Luis Valley Health Foundation's efforts to expand cancer services in the San Luis Valley.

The evening began with an elegant VIP reception with hors d'oeuvres, desserts, and a hot cocoa bar. Fans and supporters of the Studio Singers enjoyed a spirited pre-show performance as they mingled and dined with one another.

Over 100 attendees filled the auditorium at Ortega Middle School to enjoy an energized performance of holiday classics such as "We Three Kings" and "Hark! The Harold Angels Sing" as well as modern numbers such as "White Winter Hymnal" and the "Snow Theme" from Super Mario Brothers. For the first time ever, attendees were able to livestream the event from anywhere in the country.

The event raised over \$10,000 which will allow the hospital to acquire a telemetry unit that will cut the time patients spend receiving treatment in half. Lightshine Music was gracious enough to donate their time running sound for the event and OMS donated the use of space which allowed all proceeds to go towards cancer services.

Sandie Wehe is teaching her students more than music. She is teaching them about philanthropy and about the true meaning of Christmas. Over the years, her students perform, selflessly, by giving their time and talents, not only to SLV Health's Foundation but throughout the community, such as long-term care centers. She and each studio singer and their family members are much appreciated for their generosity.



Photos courtesy of Wehe Music Studio



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Lifestyles

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Photos by Linda Relyea

Adams State students pick up their diplomas and cross the stage in the historic Richardson Hall Auditorium.

ASU graduates will continue their journeys well prepared

STAFF REPORT

ALAMOSA — Armando Valdez exuded positive energy and shared encouraging advice at the Adams State University Fall Commencement Ceremony on Saturday, Dec. 18.

“Today’s cheer is for you, your hard-work, your leadership, and your followership in your journey of learning, growth, enhancement and refinement,” Valdez said.

Assistant Professor of Marketing Valdez capped his tenure at the University as the commencement speaker before continuing his professional career as the State Director of the United States Department of Agriculture-Rural Development for Colorado. He spoke to the students about their responsibilities to share their new skills and knowledge to support family and community.

“Part of your responsibilities are to be ambassadors to the world on behalf of Adams State University,” Valdez said. “Take this as additional confidence in your talents, skill sets, ideas, creative approaches, logical and analytical evaluations, and your ability to help others and cultivate relationships.”

Valdez spoke from his background in business and as a farm and ranch owner encouraged the Class of 2021 to be strategic, conceptual, and entrepreneurial.

“Being entrepreneurial is not exclusive to business functions,” he said. “It is about idea implementa-

tion. Be creative, develop ideas and work on action plans to put your ideas into tangible outcomes which benefit you and others. It is okay to be a dreamer. Dreamers offer progress and lead to the evolution of our collective success. We all need creative dreaming, but find ways to make your dreams a reality. Focus on big dreams, and big ambitions...it is your pursuit and ambition that matters.”

He sent the newest Adams State graduates off to continue their exciting journey, “which will lead to fulfillment and contribution.”

Welcoming the graduating class
Please see ASU on Page 2



San Luis Valley native Armando Valdez was the Adams State Fall 2021 Commencement Ceremony speaker.

Golden Pick Ice Hockey Tournament Jan. 15-16

BY LYNSIE FERRELL

CREEDE — With 2022 just around the corner, now is the time to mark the calendars and make plans to attend the 15th annual Golden Pick Hockey Tournament in Creede. Now that the weather has finally decided to bring winter to the small mountain town, the Silver Ice Ponds are being prepared for the coming event and open to everyone who wants to ice skate for free.

Tommyknocker Tavern in partnership with Kip’s Grill will be hosting the annual Golden Pick Hockey Tournament at Silver Ice Park underneath the steep caldera cliffs of Creede. The tournament is set for Jan. 15 and 16 with teams coming in from all over southwestern Colorado. Some parts of the event will be subject to state and local COVID guidelines.

The event began years ago with two business owners from the Creede area wanting to have some friendly fun among residents during the slow winter months and has turned into one of the largest pond



Photo by Lyndsie Ferrell

The 15th annual Creede Golden Pick Hockey Tournament is set to hit the ice on Jan. 15 and 16.

hockey tournaments in southwestern Colorado. Tommyknocker Tavern and Kip’s Grill came together with a few people at the beginning and allowed it to grow into a full-on hockey event.

Several years ago, while visiting a neighboring bar that Kip Nagy,

owner of Kip’s Grill, happened to come across a friend that owned a production company called Pride of Gypsies. After hearing about the picturesque Creede scenery, the company decided to come and film a series of commercials for **Please see PICK on Page 3**

MVS students raising funds for trip to Europe in 2023

SUBMITTED ARTICLE

SAGUACHE — Mountain Valley School students — also known as “The Travelers” are fundraising for a trip to Germany, France and Switzerland in March of 2023.

Twenty percent of MVS students have committed to the “Adventure Awaits” trip. To cover the cost, The Travelers need to raise \$75,000.

The Mountain Valley School District in Saguache has the third-highest childhood poverty rate in the state. Due to the limited resources and financial stability of many of the families in the district, opportunities for students are limited, organizers stated. They have raised about \$13,000.

“We know none of this would be possible without the support of all of our generous donors and fundraising efforts,” MVS officials stated. “There was a lot of wood to stack and leaves to rake around Saguache, and the bake sale was a huge success, too.”

The Travelers have several fundraisers scheduled for the start of 2022. They will be hosting a free community dinner on Jan. 5 from 5:30 to 7 p.m. at the Mountain Valley School.

“We will be playing Bully Prevention Bingo and

giving away prizes from local businesses and other donated items,” organizers stated. Masks are currently a requirement at MVS until Jan. 18.

The Travelers will also be hosting a 4-on-4 volleyball tournament on

Jan. 15 starting at 10 a.m. Call 719-221-9942, to register a team, \$40 per team. Must be 18 and older to play. First place will receive a movie and pizza from The Village Pub and Cozy Castle Cinema in Saguache. Second place will win a soak pass from Joyful Journey Hot Springs.

While in Europe, students will explore the Notre Dame Cathedral, Arc De Triomphe, Eiffel Tower, Louvre in France, ride the TGV train to Switzerland to explore Lucerne and eat authentic Swiss Fondue during an evening full of Swiss traditions in the form of yodeling, and folk dances.

They will finish the trip with a stop in Germany to learn more about the Dachau Concentration Camp and tour the Olympic Stadium.

Monetary donations can be mailed to Mountain Val-

Please see EUROPE on Page 3



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ASU Continued from Page 1

and guests, Adams State President Cheryl D. Lovell remarked on the significance of ending the 100-year anniversary of the University in Richardson Hall Auditorium.

"The very foundation of Adams State began in this one building, named in honor of the first president, Ira Richardson," Lovell said.

The intimate space filled with cheers as students crossed the stage to receive their diploma. Among them, Mathew Burcin, molecular and cellular biology major, delivered the class message. An Eagle Scout, Burcin graduated with highest honors in three-and-a-half years. He compared a tough climb up Mt. Whitney, the tallest mountain in the continental United States, with his academic journey at Adams State.

"Now my story of climbing Whitney serves to represent our academic story, you all get to hike to the top with me," Burcin said. During his analogy, he recalled getting closer to the top.

"...We can see where we began but that mountain top is still quite a distance away. The semester is coming to a close and we make the final push up the mountain, see the top, touch it, and let out a sign of relief," Burcin said.

Burcin inspired the audience to continue their great story.

"...Every moment you wanted to

quit, you ignored, kept hiking and accomplished an incredible feat," he said. "You learned a lot, matured, and now have the skills to conquer the next mountains you face... As our time here at Adams State University comes to an end, many more and greater mountains are to come. But we are prepared now, we have the tools for success. All our hardships and challenges strengthened us. We are certified mountaineers."



Photos by Linda Relyea
Mathew Burcin, 2021 cellular and molecular biology major, aptly surmised a hike up Mt. Whitney with the journey from incoming freshmen to graduating seniors.



Few noticed the near-freezing temperatures as they gathered after the commencement ceremony on the front lawn of Richardson Hall to reunite with flowers, hugs and smiles for the class of 2021.



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Adams State Applied Sport Psychology Program in Top 20

ALAMOSA – Recent events involving top-level, world-class athletes, such as Simone Biles and Naomi Osaka, withdrawing from competitions, have brought attention to the issue of mental health and performance in athletes, and Adams State University seems well equipped to take on that issue, as the school's online Master of Science degree in Applied Sport Psychology program recently earned designation as one of Sports Degrees Online's "Best 20 Sport Psychology Master's Programs for 2022," coming in at #18.

with the intention of helping "the thousands of passionate athletes who didn't make it to the top tier," pursue careers in areas like injury recovery, strength and conditioning, or sports analytics, according to their "about us" page.

Adams State's degree is an "intriguing option," according to Dr. Matthew Jones, assistant professor at Southern Illinois Univ. Evansville, who reviewed the programs. The program benefits from its connections to the Adams State's kinesiology department, which also offers coaching, exercise science, and sport administration master's programs, according to Jones.

The applied sport psychology curriculum also offers an impressive number of Association for Applied Sport Psychology qualifying courses, making the process of becoming a Certified Mental Performance Consultant "very straightforward," Jones wrote. Students also have the choice to take courses related to coaching or sports

administration. "This current ranking as a top program, paired with Adams State's recent rankings as the No. 1 most affordable sport psychology program the last couple of years, demonstrates the quality and affordability of the program" according to Brian Zuleger Ph.D., CMPC, associate professor

of sport psychology and graduate program coordinator for applied sport psychology in Adams State's School of Kinesiology and Health Sciences. The website based the ratings on factors such as *program flexibility, internship opportunities, AASP preparation, and financial aid availability, according to Jones.*

EUROPE

Continued from Page 1

ley School, Adventure Awaits, 403 Pitkin Ave., Saguache, CO 81149.

- Upcoming Fundraisers
- Jan. 18 — Beekeeping Class taught by Joel Johnson at MVS. Cost by donation
 - Feb. 2 — Free Community Dinner Spaghetti, 5-7 p.m. at MVS.
 - Feb. 11 — Talent Show and Silent Auction. Be sure to sign up to share your talent. 5:30 p.m. Silent Auction; 6 p.m. Talent Show. Concessions will be available.

Trip organizers thanked the following businesses and individu-

als for their support: The Village Pub, Pizza, and Spiritz; SJ Coleman Enterprises; Salida Mountain Sports; Arby's of Alamosa; Ihop of Alamosa; Sand Dunes Recreations; Northern Saguache County Public Library; The American Legion Garcia Post; Saguache Town Market; SLV REC Electric/Ciello; The Reeds at Cattails; Big Valley Hobby Town; Gunni Lash Lounge; the Harrisons; the Luijits; the Olivers; the Garouttes; the Woorelys; the Leachmans; the Garcias; the Grosses; and the Henriksons.

PICK

Continued from Page 1

Carhartt. After filming was completed, a shed that was built for prop purposes was donated by Carhartt to be used as the warming hut during the hockey tournament. The shed now has a permanent home next to the lower pond.

In the years since, the ponds above town have gone from mere recreational ponds to becoming a designated city park, suitably named for Creede's unique mining history as Silver Ice Park. The City of Creede adopted the ponds during a series of meetings in 2015 and helped with funding that purchased several lights that now line the outer edges of the ponds to allow for late-night skating. The ponds are lined with burn

barrels to keep players warm and bleachers for fans to come and enjoy the two days of friendly hockey fun. The ponds are located at 8,900 feet elevation which adds an additional challenge to the tournament and its players. The views surrounding the rinks add an incentive to those who travel to take part in the hockey tournament.

The tournament consists of two levels of competition and is set to ensure that each participating team gets to play at least one playoff game. The tournament is a round-robin format with three-on-three team play. Registration is now open. Visit www.creedehockey.wordpress.com, to sign up.



Photo by Lyndsie Ferrell

Nielsen Library helps North Conejos students research history at ASU

STAFF REPORT

ALAMOSA — About 80 students and their teachers from the North Conejos School District conducted research on Dec. 1, as they prepared for National History Day competitions at the Adams State University Nielsen Library.

This was the first time since Fall 2019 the library had hosted an on-site visit, where students worked with print and other tangible collections to further their research, according to Library Director Jeffrey Bullington.

The students were very respectful of the university masking policy, and "did a great job of cleaning up as they left. They put chairs back in place everywhere and they brought books

to the carts so we could get them back to their proper places" among other things, Bullington said.

Bullington credited Donna Mae Keyes and her colleagues from North Conejos schools for helping students prepare for their site visit, working with them on-site, and keeping them focused and engaged.

Bullington also thanked library staff, including Mary Walsh, who helped students access materials in Special Collections and Archives and supported students the entire time, providing directional support and additional research. Amanda Langdon also helped guide and support students. Melissa Tuioti-Mariner and her circulation students gathered, sorted, and re-shelved

the materials students used.

The visit was similar to what the library had done pre-COVID when teachers in area school districts would contact Nielsen Library to schedule similar visits, Bullington said. The library also had traditionally coordinated with the State History Day Office for teacher education workshops as well as student research visits. Those activities stopped because of COVID, according to Bullington, but he wants the library and partners to build them back up.

"Debate and Diplomacy in History: Successes, Failures, Consequences" is the 2022 theme for National History Day. Bullington is looking forward to serving as a judge at the regional competition on Jan. 29, 2022.

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Rio Grande Hospital launches new MA program

By **LYNDSIE FERRELL**

DEL NORTE — Rio Grande Hospital recently announced it was launching a new program that will help people earn a Medical Assistant license.

The program is expected to last six weeks and offer training and certification for people looking to gain their Medical Assistant license. The course will include medical billing coding, clerical training with practitioners and certification at the end of the course.

“Rio Grande Hospital is in the same boat as a lot of the medical field. It has been difficult to obtain applicants and to keep employees throughout the last several years and more so in the most recent years. This was a chance to try to maintain interest in the medical field and offer a full-time position as well as to be paid while attending school. It is a great opportunity, and we are excited to see how it goes,” said RGH representative and program coordinator Jannelle Gallegos.

According to Gallegos, “The Certified Medical Assistant Trainee Program is a hands-on, six-week on-the-job training program that prepares students to take the Certified Clinical Medical Assistant (CCMA) exam through the National Healthcare Association. Trainees will be hired by Rio Grande Hospital while

completing their Medical Assistant training through self-driven online courses offered by US Career Institute.”

Once the program begins, students will have a year to complete their clinicals and will work alongside Medical Assistants in the field to complete on-the-job requirements needed for certification.

“After Medical Assistants complete the course, we will give them a 24-month contract and a full-time position with a practitioner. We hope

this will encourage some to continue school or stay on with us after the contract is complete,” Gallegos said.

Medical Assistants help with a wide range of daily duties in the hospital and surrounding clinics throughout the Valley. Often referred to as MAs they help check in and out patients, take temperature, weight and complete EKGs for their practitioners as well as administer shots and take samples.

“Honestly they can do pretty much everything as a nurse does besides

the more complicated medical procedures and they help with clerical duties around the office, including medical billing and insurance,” continued Gallegos.

This will be phase one of the program, and the hospital hopes to add more programs similar to this. Gallegos said the hospital is currently working out details with Trinidad State Junior College to launch a potential CAN program that would also include paid positions and on-the-job training.

Students who participate will be required to complete 40-hour work-weeks with the program which will most likely be broken down into classes and then on-the-job training according to Gallegos.

“The first of the week will be dedicated to classes and lessons. The second part will most likely be dedicated to on-the-job training which helps cover all the bases,” she said.

For more information, contact Gallegos at 719-657-4114 or email at jennelleg@riograndehospital.net.

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ALMA Presents Marbin at Society Hall on January 14,

ALAMOSA — The Alamosa Live Music Association announced Marbin will be performing at Society Hall on Friday, Jan. 14, 2022, at 7 p.m. Admission is \$5 for ALMA 2022 members and \$15 for general admission. No advance tickets are for sale. Masks required for entry to the concert.

Marbin is a progressive jazz-rock band based in Chicago. With a do-it-yourself approach, Marbin started touring extensively in 2011, bringing their original instrumental music to every part of the United States. Through word of mouth, Marbin has gained hundreds of thousands of devoted fans all over the world and has sold tens of thousands of albums. Marbin regularly plays in clubs all over the US and in jam and jazz festivals around the world.

Marbin will be offering a free musical workshop at Society Hall at 2 p.m. that same day. In the workshop, Marbin is going to explore their process of improvising, composing, and arranging. From the way they use Solkattu (Indian Solfege) to enrich their rhythmical vocabulary, to the unique harmonic system they apply when improvising over various structures and styles. Marbin will also share their expertise in the field of music business and explain, with many fun stories and anecdotes, how they built a fusion band into a viable business over the course of a decade.

For more info on Marbin, go to www.marbinmusic.com/.

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MVHS Students give special gifts to Homelake residents

By **MARIE MCCOLM**

MONTE VISTA — Residents of the Colorado Veterans Community Living Center at Homelake sat in the main common area awaiting a bus of Monte Vista High School students bringing them special gifts on Thursday, Dec. 23.

The residents were excited to see the bus pull up to the community living center and the students pour out of the bus. Many of the residents smiled and thanked the students as they were handed a jewelry box.

“We made about 150 boxes to give out here, so there is definitely enough for everybody here,” said the students’ teacher Aaron Woodke.

Members of the Monte Vista High School shop class created unique jewelry boxes made from aspen wood for the residents at the Community Living Center.

“The kids have worked very hard on this project, and this is just a start,” Woodke said.

Woodke said that he knows there are other nursing homes in town, and emergency personal and other members that help the community, and he would like to expand the project to more people, but they will need some help.

“If anybody would like to help us with this project, and provide support to the kids, they can contact the school,” Woodke said.

Woodke explained how each student



in the shop class made the commitment to take shop for the next two years as part of a certification program.

“This is just a token of what they are doing,” Woodke said. “We are proud to distribute these to the residents here today.”

Colorado Veterans Community Living Center at Homelake Admissions and Marketing Director Pam Self was with the residents as the teens were distributing the jewelry boxes.

With tears in her eyes, Self said, “This is extremely wonderful. Anytime we have opportunities to have intergenerational, you know not only does it mean a lot to our residents, but I think it’s very important for the kids to have that opportunity, especially this time of year, to do something for those who have given to our country. So, this is an awesome way for them to give back.”



Photos by Marie McColm

Members of the Monte Vista High School shop class created unique jewelry boxes made from aspen wood for the residents at the Community Living Center. On Dec. 24, the students hand-delivered the boxes to the residents.

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



Tavin is about 7 months old, and is a Black Lab. He is definitely going to be a big boy, but he'll be full of love! Tavin is very playful, great with kids, and likes other dogs as well. He's a bit of a digger, but we think a little practice will take care of that. Come visit him today!



Noodle is a Bull Terrier mix, going on 8 months old. She is very energetic, true to her breed and very vocal when she wants to be. Noodle needs lots of exercise and a home that understands her breed. She needs a meet and greet with any other animals in the house, but she's good with kids. Can she come home with you?



Midgee is about 7 months old and is a Staffordshire Terrier mix. She's your typical playful puppy looking for a wonderful home. She is a very talkative young lady who loves to play. Midgee gets along with dogs of all sizes, she just forgets her own size! Please come by and see her today!



Xena is a lovely young girl, about 2 and a half years old with all the love and energy your house can hold! She loves to play, gets along well with new people and does good with other dogs. She is a big girl so she has a heavy play style. She's been with us about 6 months now, and we're hoping her special people are soon to find her!




Meet **Chase**. He's about 2 years old, and is a Black Lab mix. Chase is the perfect family dog. He loves everyone he meets, he's just a little choosy on who his dog friends are, definitely prefers calmer dogs. Great with kids, very calm and smart fellow, and he's looking for his forever home!

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

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This 2500 sq. ft. building is located at 102 North Main St., in the thick of tourist traffic, in historic Creede, Colorado. The building is divided into two separate and operating retail spaces, but a common interior door could make this a large operating space. 1. Elk Country Boutique on the corner of the building is a T-shirt Shop. 2. Creede Olive Oil Shop. Both businesses draw visitors as they walk the town shopping for unique gifts. Utilities include electric, pellet stove, Creede water & sewage, and phone. Each business has its own electrical meter and is paid for by that tenant. 1. Elk Country Boutique T-shirt Shop has an extremely high recap rate but will need to be kept as a T-shirt shop to obtain maximum income on the building. 2. Creede Olive Oil shop rents for \$1300 per month year-round. The estimated total recap rate based on the above description is 15% to 20% annual return on investment. This historic building is located on Main Street in Creede, Colorado, and is a thriving business. Creede is a major vacation destination and sportsmen's dream paradise. \$692,000 MLS #774985 • 102 N Main Street • Creede

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