

# CENTER POST-DISPATCH

Volume 120, Number 51

Thursday, December 23, 2021

75¢

**Valley Publishing**  
**HOLIDAY DEADLINES!**  
**December 29 & 30:** Display, Classified & Legal Advertising - Wed., Dec. 22 • 5 p.m.  
 Lifestyles - Wed., Dec. 22 • 5 p.m.  
 Editorial - Thurs., Dec. 23 • 5 p.m.  
**January 5 & 6:** Display, Classified & Legal Advertising - Wed., Dec. 29 • 5 p.m.  
 Lifestyles - Wed., Dec. 29 • 5 p.m.  
 Editorial - Thurs., Dec. 30 • 5 p.m.  
**Our office will be closed on Dec. 24th & Dec. 31st**

## Center Trustees approve budget for 2022

**BY MECHEL MEEK**  
**CENTER** — Town of Center Trustees held a public meeting to finalize the budget and receive public comment on Tuesday, Dec. 14. Trustee Bill McClure and Mayor Pro-tem Mary McClure were not present.  
*Please see BUDGET on Page 6A*



Town of Center Trustees approved the budget for 2022 at their meeting on Dec. 14. Photo by Mechel Meek

## Shorts



### Centauri senior missing

**LA JARA** — A 17-year-old senior at Centauri High School has been reported missing from her home south of Alamosa since Dec. 16. Anyone knowing the whereabouts of Kamilla 'Kami' Erickson is asked to contact 970-875-4367 or 970-846-5387 or contact police dispatch at 719-589-5807.

## Christmas Parade in Center brings family fun



**BY MECHEL MEEK**  
**CENTER** — The Town of Center held its annual Christmas Parade through the downtown district on Saturday, Dec. 18. It was a sunny but cool day and many people participated and watched the decorated cars, and floats filled with holiday themes. The Christmas Parade awarded cash prizes to the top three entries — first place \$100, second place \$75 and third place \$50. The parade started at the north end of Worth Street and proceeded to Casa Blanca Park. Santa Claus was a special guest at the parade.  
*Please see PARADE on Page 5A*

The Town of Center held its annual Christmas Parade through the downtown district on Saturday, Dec. 18. Photos by Rose Marie DeHerrera

## Retail sales skyrocket in SLV

*Study shows 164% increase from 2019 to 2021*  
**VALLEY** — Federal stimulus money is believed to have caused a 164 percent increase in retail sales and lowered the unemployment rates in the San Luis Valley for the period of January through September, 2019-2021. "The largest increases were in 2020 and 2021 during the pandemic," according to Hew Hallock, director of research for the San Luis Valley Development Resource Group. "Like all across the country, folks in the Valley spent the stimulus dollars they received — big time," Hallock said. "The money came through several sources including direct payments to each citizen, increased unemployment benefits, unemployment benefits for self-employed and farmers, as well as business support programs like..."  
*Please see SALES on Page 6A*

### MVPD receives advanced intervention training

**STAFF REPORT**  
**MONTE VISTA** — The Monte Vista Police Department joined 10 other agencies in Colorado and is the first in the San Luis Valley to receive advanced intervention training. Recent police reform measures require officers to intervene if a fellow officer is acting outside the scope of their authority. The MVPD recently trained every officer on Active Bystandership for Law Enforcement (ABLE) which teaches officers practical skills to prevent misconduct, reduce officer mistakes and promotes health and wellness. ABLE gives officers the tools they need to overcome inhibitors to intervene in one situation.  
*Please see TRAINING on Page 2A*

## Center community gives recognition to Center PD officer

**BY MECHEL MEEK**  
**CENTER** — On Tuesday, Dec. 14, during the regular Center Town Council meeting, Center Police Department Chief Dale Meek announced that Officer Deanna Lopez was leaving the department to move to the East Coast. Chief Meek said, "She has done an excellent job as a police officer, and she has been an asset for us both here and at the schools." Officer Lopez received a plaque commending her time with the Center Police Department. The plaque commemorated her time, dedication and commitment to working in and with the Center community and the department. Several members of the Town Council also thanked her for her work with the town and wished her success. Lopez was also awarded a plaque from the Center Consolidated School District.  
*Please see LOPEZ on Page 2A*



Center Police Department Officer Deanna Lopez received plaques from the Town of Center and the Center Consolidated School District. Photo by Mechel Meek



Right: Officer Deanna Lopez Photo courtesy of Center Police Department

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# OBITUARIES

## Kathryn Jane Prins

Kathryn Jane Prins, or Kate as she was known to her family and friends, passed away on Nov. 26, 2021, at the age of 67.

Kate was born in Windom, Minn., to Leon Sorensen and Carol Hofstad Sorensen in 1954. She graduated from Storden Jeffers High School in 1972 and attended Northwestern Bible College. Kate married Bruce Prins in 1974 at Storden Baptist Church. They lived in Storden, Minn., until 1981 when they moved with their daughters Amber and Candice to Alamosa, Colo., and then in 2019 relocated to Colorado Springs, Colo.

Kate was a loving and giving person who enjoyed many things including camping, gardening, painting, sewing, baking, and especially singing with her husband Bruce in church. She was a cherished wife, devoted mother, and adored grandmother. Kate loved caring for children throughout her life, including her daycare kids, grandchildren, and all her daughters' friends who affectionately called her "Momma Kate". She also enjoyed her work at Monte Vista Eye Care, where she enjoyed caring for her patients and working with her coworkers. Kate was immensely proud of her family, loved

her friends, and leaves behind beautiful memories. All whom loved her dearly will never forget her charm, grace, and undying love and caring for them. Her life was a living example of Ephesians 4:32 – "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as God also forgave you in Christ."

Kate is survived by her husband Bruce, her children: Amber (Chris) Crown and Candice (Dana) Wright; her grandchildren: Craig Crown, Austen (Halie) Velasquez, Rhys Velasquez, Lillian Wright, Emerson Wright, and Meredith Wright; her stepmother Ruth Sorensen, and her brother Jim (Wilma) Sorensen, as well as numerous other extended family.

She was preceded in death by her parents Leon and Carol Sorensen and father-in-law Robert Prins.

A celebration of Kate's life will be held at 10 a.m., Saturday, Jan. 8, 2021, at Heart of the Springs Church (2726 N. Union Blvd., Colorado Springs CO 80909). The service will be streamed live online at [hotschurch.org](http://hotschurch.org) and will be available for viewing afterward on [vimeo.com/hotschurch](http://vimeo.com/hotschurch).

There will also be a memorial service for Kate held at 10 a.m., Saturday,



Jan. 22, 2021, at Alamosa Christian Reformed Church (1861 County Rd. 10 S, Alamosa, CO 81101).

The family would like to thank everyone for their support and prayers. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations may be made in memory of Kathryn Jane Prins, to MD Anderson Cancer Center, online (<http://mdacc.convio.net/goto/kathrynprins>) or mailed to MD Anderson Cancer Center, P.O. Box 4470, Houston, TX 77210-4470. Please include "Kathryn Jane Prins/fecr21 / P2P1450160" on the check or money order.

Condolences may be sent to Bruce Prins at 2510 Parkview Blvd., Colorado Springs CO 80906.

## Norah Grace Dooley Korn

Norah Grace Dooley Korn was born to Alma Lucile Wintz and John Loran Dooley on Dec. 14, 1932, in Creede, Colo., and passed away Nov. 17, 2021, at her home in Kalispell, Mont.

So here was an extremely friendly Irish lass full of energy, vitality, humor and a bit of rascality within what might be termed a hard-working mining and ranching culture. Her presence while growing up was so notable to the residents that years later when she married at the Creed Community Church in 1958 literally the whole town showed up to celebrate her wedding and especially her reception. They all remembered and wanted once again to be involved in the fun and action of this special, exuberant youth.

Even those still living today often remember and smile as both the Wintz and Dooley families are still very much a part of the community.

Norah's father died when she was age 2 so she and her two older brothers, Gene and Floyd, all grew up helping their mother do the chores to support the family. They helped raise and butcher chickens and rabbits, take the milk cow back and forth to pasture, process milk and butter for sale, haul water by the barrel in a one-horse cart from the community well to their \$15 home up the hill, and cut and split wood and haul coal for heat.

Any avenue of work was acceptable and necessary like hiring out to work on a local dude ranch or recreation business or help in maintenance and cleaning the vacation homes of the affluent Denver mining crowd. Waitressing to the hunting and fishing crowd at the

small hotel restaurant for good tips was also a big part of life as she grew older.

After high school, she and several girl friends (Husselkus, Swinehart, etc.) ventured to Denver. Norah began employment as a nanny and household servant to several well-established Denver businessman's families and began employment as a switchboard operator at the telephone company with her eyes always riveted to the "job of a lifetime" as a stewardess for United Airlines. She easily passed the requirements but only by relaxing her knees to get under the maximum height allowed.

A few years later, she transferred from San Francisco to Seattle on a whim to explore horizons and one day was assigned to work a red-eye flight from Seattle to Chicago and met and later married a passenger on that night flight. That's another story.

After several years in Seattle, Norah with Jim moved back to his former home in Montana to live and raise their family in a small mountain town rather than a big metropolitan city. Her Irish spunk fit right in as she raised her four children and gave every room in the house her special touch. She encouraged all activity and joined in to the delight of her children. Everyone sought her fun-loving and uplifting personality.

As time moved on, she used her natural talent in visual ability and color sense to paint a great quantity of artwork in floral paintings, landscapes, and many tole painted household objects all leaving a cherished legacy to her family.

She leaves behind in this life her husband of more than 63 years, James H. Korn, four children and spouses, Kevin James Korn, Jeffrey John Korn, and twin daughters, Kristy Ann Wolf, and Kerry Kathleen Douge, the memories of nine grandchildren, five great-grandchildren, and many fond nieces and nephews to take on, within the providence of God, what her life in Christ promises.

Services were held Dec. 2, 2021, at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Kalispell, Mont., followed by interment at C. E. Conrad Memorial Cemetery and a Family Reception to honor her remembrance.

## TRAINING

another's actions.

ABLE was launched in June 2020 but is built upon decades of research, field studies, and on-the-ground experience. Administered through Georgetown University Law Center's Innovative Policing Program, ABLE is founded upon the scholarship and research of Dr. Evin Staub, professor emeritus, U. Mass Amherst, who worked hand in hand with other experts and the New Orleans Police Department to develop the first peer intervention program for law enforcement.

## LOPEZ

Continued from Page 1A  
from the Center Consolidated School District, thanking her for her work with the students. She served at the Center Schools as the school resource officer. During her time as the SRO, Lopez was

## Austin Fernando (Ford) Romero

On Dec. 7, 2021, Austin Fernando (Ford) Romero entered the gates of heaven. Austin was born Jan. 27, 1948, in Arroyo Seco, N.M., the oldest son of Juan I and Manuelita (Sanchez) Romero.

Austin attended elementary and middle schools in small rural towns in New Mexico and Colorado and graduated high school from Sargent High School in 1966. After graduation, he served in the U.S. Army for 3 years, spending 2 years in Germany where he was able to travel and see a lot of Europe. He was also a member of the National Guard SLV Medical Unit.

He married the love of his life, Patricia Hegan on Feb. 14, 1971. They spent 50 years together. He was a Master Electrician and was well known for his excellent work. He knew the Valley the back of his hand and would always comment about all the houses and sprinklers he had wired.

His spare time was spent playing his guitar, banjo and mandolin and was learning how to play hymns on his resonator which he jokingly called his respirator. He did not get to play his guitar which was a gift from his wife for their 50th anniversary.

He played his guitar while his wife played the piano at church. He made a joyful noise to his Lord and Savior who he had known since the age of 10. He read the entire Bible several times throughout his life and loved the book of Psalms.

He was not blessed with children, so his dogs became his children, especially his collies.

He enjoyed hunting, fishing, and photography. With his illness in the past 4 years, his comment was always, "God is in control, so I



have nothing to be worried about." In the last few weeks of his life, he said he wished he could go to sleep and wake up healed. Well Brother you got your wish as you woke up in our Savior's arms.

He was preceded in death by a younger sister and brother, who died in infancy, his parents, aunts, uncles, and beloved cousin Archie.

He is survived by his wife Patricia, brother Steve (Toni) of Monte Vista, Colo., his sister Bernice (Frank) Martinez of Brighton, Colo., his beloved-dog Rowdy, and his much-loved younger self-adopted brother JJ Hostetter.

A special thank you to Joe and Maria Lopez for all the help they have provided over many years, a better friend is hard to find.

Cremation was chosen and burial will be in Arroyo Hondo, N.M., with full military honors at a later date. Services were held at 10 a.m. on Thursday, Dec. 16, at Church of the Nazarene.

Arrangements have been placed in the care of Romero Funeral Home of Monte Vista.

Continued from Page 1A

Other national problems, such as drunk driving, mistakes in surgery and pilot error have been successfully mitigated using bystandership techniques. A survey of New Orleans officers showed officers who received bystandership training are more likely to intervene in another officer's action.

The Monte Vista Police Department received their initial training from instructors with the Pueblo Police Department and will now get several officers trained to be instructors in ABLE.

For more information on ABLE,

often seen interacting with the students, attending school functions and was a safe person that the children could go to, to discuss their lives and problems, the district said.

visit [https://cops.usdoj.gov/html/dispatch/09-2021/ABLE\\_Intervention.html](https://cops.usdoj.gov/html/dispatch/09-2021/ABLE_Intervention.html).

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# OPINION & EDITORIAL

## Christmas gift giving made easy

By the time most of you read this, you will be long into the Christmas present buying process and more into the opening phase.

As I am writing this on the 20th of the month, Ol' Dutch is just starting to think about getting some gifts for his family. And while you might cringe at the idea of such late present chasing by any sane person, this is actually really early for me to start.

It's a wonder any of my kids or grandkids get a present at all with that kind of track record but no one around me has ever suffered on Christmas morning. Somehow it all gets done.

This means Miss Trixie shops and constantly is haranguing me to okay this purchase or that purchase in the cart on Amazon. Which I have to say is much easier than me actually doing any of that myself. And is exactly how I planned it.

However, it does fall to me to try and get my two kids Bubs and Cricket presents and of course their spouses Tinkerbell and Captain need something too, the lousy marrying (and much beloved) freeloaders that they are.

Most dads, if they are smart like me, fall back to the ever needed and desired gifts of money. Even though I have tried to impress upon each child that "the love of money is the root of all evil," they still have a desire for the filthy lucre of mammon from old dad.

I actually found a gift for number one son Bubs this year and even went and got it by myself. I know, right? They say the Christmas season is one of miracles and Miss Trixie witnessed one herself in that simple act of purchasing power.

And to go along with it I had to make something out of steel and welded away this past week and even painted said finished product which is huge for Ol' Dutch. I normally leave things to the "antique provincial rust motif" as I feel it brings more value at the next garage sale. Or something like that.

But this year I went all out and did it up right and it looks pretty good for a beginning welder if I must say so myself. And say it I must as no one else is going to say that once they see it.

It's the thought that counts, they say, so I hope there are good thoughts all around that effort as I burned two holes in my shirt and one in my hand plus got bit by four fire ants while welding that masterpiece. It was a fun time.



**Trout Republic**  
by Kevin Kirkpatrick

Just last week we visited the grandkids and their mother, Tinkerbell, had them cleaning up their rooms and toys. As since there was some reluctance on their part to start the process Ol' Dutch went in to supervise the efforts.

I was not prepared for the sight that met my eyes: plastic horses, little people, farm animals, and corrals. Bits and pieces of every shape and color and size imaginable were scattered out on the floor for sorting and hopefully disposal.

There were little plastic saddles to which there was no horse, horses for which there were no saddles, and enough ears of play corn, carrots, and other plastic feedstock to feed a plethora of fake livestock. And a bushel basket full of parts and pieces that none of us could even identify.

It was right then and there that Ol' Dutch made up his mind that he would no longer contribute to such madness and buy those kinds of toys. And I righteously laid the law down for Miss Trixie that no matter what those girls want, Grandpa was not buying such nonsensical items.

Of course, Miss Trixie understood my position and reasoning which is why I love her so. Her obedience to my wishes is just one of her saving graces and you all know that Ol' Dutch rules the roost like a big old bull goose.

This is why there are new plastic horses and riders wrapped prettily under the tree as we speak.

Merry Christmas to all my readers out there. May you find peace in your hearts this season and may God bless you and your family in the year ahead.

*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.*

## Holiday Coat Drive helps communities



Photo courtesy of SLVH

**Cheryl Ditmars, of Weiss Cleaners, and Breanna Dunn, San Luis Valley Health Admin Assistant, display some of the donated coats for the annual Holiday Coat Drive. Donate new or gently used coats, gloves, hats or scarves on or before Dec. 27, to Weiss Dry Cleaners in Alamosa. Dan from Weiss Cleaners donates the cleaning and packaging of each item before they are distributed by SLVH to those in need in the community.**

## YOUR NIGHT SKY

BY DARLENE DANKO

### New Year

Even though we haven't had much snow, the clouds managed to block out the peak dates of December's meteor showers. One thing I have noticed is that the sky is always crystal clear after a storm moves out.

On the 14th I got up at 3:30 a.m. to see if I could find any Geminid meteors and was amazed at what I saw! I went upstairs and opened the door to look out in the southwest. The sky was beautiful, and everything was visible. I did that for 20 minutes, and I saw 20 Geminid meteors. Since it was so cold, I only stayed out for that long, or I'm sure I would've seen a lot more.

The Ursid meteor Shower runs from December 19-26 and peaks on the December solstice of 21. So even though it's now Dec. 23, you could still look for them. They occur between the Big and Little Dipper in the northeast.

The Quadrantid meteor shower is always the first of the year. It usually peaks at 50-100 per hour, but unlike other meteor showers, this one only happens in a brief period of a few hours.

Fortunately, they're predicted to peak on Jan. 4, and the new moon is on the 2nd, so it will be a great time to view them. They originate in the Big Dipper. The best time to view them is around 3 a.m. in the northeast.

Jan. 4 is also when Earth is closest to the Sun for the year. Since the Earth's orbit is mostly circular, being closer to the Sun doesn't make a difference to our temperatures, even though we'll be 3 million miles closer than we'll be in July. It's the Earth's tilt that causes the seasons. Currently, we're tilted away from the Sun while the southern hemisphere is tilted toward the Sun, which is why it's winter here and summer down there.

Comet Lovejoy is coming this way from the southern hemisphere. If this sounds familiar to you, it's because this is the fifth comet discovered by Australian amateur astronomer Terry Lovejoy. This one is Lovejoy Q2. Currently, it's visible with binoculars but is expected to soon be visible with unaided vision.

This Lovejoy has an orbit of 11,500 years, and its orbit is steeply inclined to the plane of our solar system. So, it's climbing up high in the sky. Currently,



it's visible to the lower right of Orion mid-evening in the southeast to early morning in the west.

On Jan. 7 it will be closest to Earth and is becoming brighter each night. Right now, you can look before dawn. While you're looking for the Quadrantid meteors, see if you can find Lovejoy. By Jan. 9, you should be able to look around 8 p.m. before the moon rises. By then, it will be to the right of Orion, about level with his belt. Just look for a star with a tail.

Planets are still visible again in the evening. Venus and Mercury will be paired together low in the southwest with Mercury just below Venus. They'll be visible about 45 minutes after sunset. Now that winter is here, I'm going to change to doing my article every other week for a few months. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and have a wonderful 2022!

## League of Women Voters in San Luis Valley

**SUBMITTED ARTICLE**  
**MONTE VISTA** — The League of Women Voters is in the San Luis Valley. Started in 2019 in Monte Vista and Alamosa by a small group of women, it has expanded to include members in three San Luis Valley counties.

Started in 1920, shortly before women gained the right to vote via the 19th Amendment to the US Constitution, the League of Women Voters (LWV) celebrated its Centennial Anniversary last year.

During its 100 years of existence, the LWV has so far registered and educated hundreds of voters, has served as a

non-governmental organization (NGO) under the auspices of the United Nations, has been a major force behind the push for ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment, and has sponsored the first televised presidential debate in 1960. For that last item, the LWV received an Emmy award for Outstanding Achievement in Broadcast Journalism.

The League of Women Voters encourages informed and active participation in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. The League does not endorse individual candidates for office. Though its name would give

one the impression it is open only to women, as of 1973 its charter was amended to include men.

The local group's activities include monthly meetings, currently virtual, periodic special programs, and registering voters in 2019-20. The group looks forward to hosting in-person meetings once the pandemic abates.

If you would like to be involved with the group, help register voters, develop programs, meet like-minded people, and stand up for democracy, email lwvslv@yahoo.com, call Wanda Hawman at 505-506-6077, or Marianna Young at 719-480-3220.

# CENTER POST-DISPATCH

THE CENTER POST-DISPATCH (USPS 775-900) Published weekly (every Thursday) by Valley Publishing. (719) 852-3531 at 835 First Ave., Monte Vista, Colorado 81144-1423. Official newspaper of the Town of Center, and a legal newspaper in Saguache County.  
Box 607, Monte Vista, Colo. 81144  
Main office, Want ads and Subscriptions: (719) 852-3531  
Periodical postage paid at Monte Vista, Colo., 81144  
POSTMASTER: Send change of address to P.O. Box 607, Monte Vista, Colo. 81144  
Subscriptions: \$45 one year in the San Luis Valley; \$40 one year seniors (65 and older) in the San Luis Valley; and \$55 one year out of the San Luis Valley. (719) 852-3531  
News Media Corporation website: <http://www.newsmediacorporation.com>

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# RG County considers purchase of land by DN airport

By **LYNDSIE FERRELL**

**RIO GRANDE COUNTY** — After several conversations, the Rio Grande County Board of County Commissioners has decided to pursue the potential purchase of a 30-acre parcel of land near the Kent Rominger Airport located north of Del Norte.

Though the process to purchase the land is in the beginning stages, the board has agreed to do more research on what it would take to purchase the land and to look at potential funding options.

Rio Grande County Attorney Nany Lake said, “The property in question has a lot of infrastructure and water availability that makes it very attractive to Rio Grande County for future development as an industrial park for services to the airport. It is approved for purchase at an enticing price and has been under consideration for several years. The timing (with a new plan for the airport being drafted currently) and the availability of the property just seems right.”

Lake added that the county finance department is looking into the possibility of using American Rescue Plan funds for the purchase because it falls under the water infrastructure portion of the approved funding use recommendations, though a final decision remains undecided at this time.

One concern raised by commissioners during discussion pertaining to purchasing the land was how much water can be pumped by the current well — about 15 gallons per minute — which wouldn’t be sufficient for industrial use. Another concern was that the land was currently zoned as residential by the Rio Grande County Assessor’s Office.

Rio Grande County Administrator Craig Barraclough said that some of the potential benefits of purchasing the property include it being a location for a new jail.

“My understanding is that the main value of the property is the existing water well and electric power already installed at these parcels,” he said.

“Possible uses I’ve heard is for an industrial park or even a new jail. Benefits, of course, being an increase in the tax base, and that if it was used for an industrial area, it would be away from residential areas; and the benefit from the area being a site for a new jail would be that it’s more secure

than a residential area.” Commissioners discussed the land purchase in an executive session on Dec. 8 and decided to do more research pertaining to funding options.

Rio Grande County Commissioners recently honored county employees

Louise Colville and Valarie Maestas for their years of service. Colville is the Director of the Rio Grande County Museum and has been with the county for over 11 years. Maestas works in the Department of Social Services and has been with the county for 15 years.



Courtesy of Rio Grande County

Rio Grande County Commissioners Scott Deacon, Gene Glover and John Noffsger honored county employees Louise Colville and Valarie Maestas for their years of service. Colville is the Director of the Rio Grande County Museum and has been with the county for over 11 years. Maestas works in the Department of Social Services and has been with the county for 15 years.

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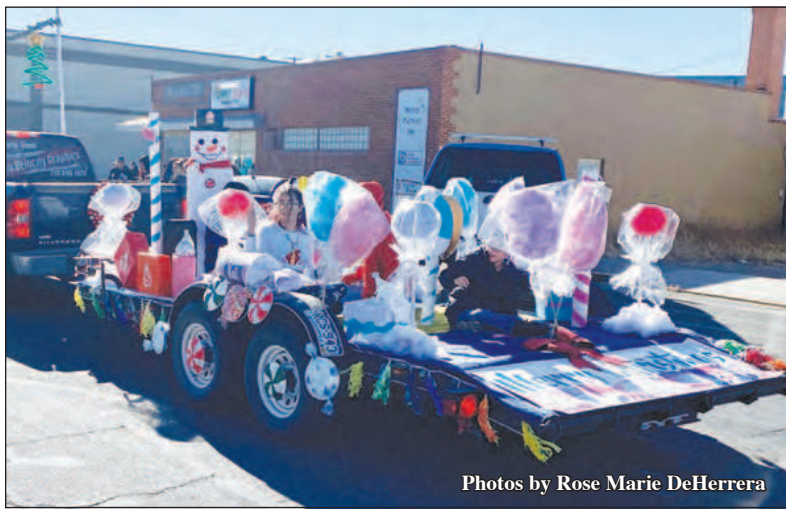


# PARADE

Continued from Page 1A

the park, to the delight of people in attendance.

According to the Town of Center, "The prize winners were in first place was Candyland by Tim Chacon, second place was Mickey Mouse and Dogs by Herman Sisneros, and third place was Red Convertible by Robin James."



Photos by Rose Marie DeHerrera



# HVCC looks back at 2021

**SUBMITTED ARTICLE**  
**DEL NORTE** — Hello community members! High Valley Community Center is in disbelief that it is our last week of 2021 programming! We had a challenging but rewarding year and we would not have been able to do it without your support. Looking back at the 2021 school year, we made many great memories with the HVCC kiddos including bowling, sledding, cooking, learning new circus skills, volunteering in the community, various HVCC sports, a weekend trip to Denver with the junior staff members, and many more.

gratitude trees to bring awareness to the things that they are grateful for in their lives. The kiddos also made homemade ornaments and bouncy balls. Our final Fabulous Friday of 2021 happens to be one of the best Fridays of the year! The kids shop for their loved ones, wrap the gifts, and go out to lunch afterward. The kids always enjoy giving to others and personally selecting gifts for those they care about. In the spirit of giving, we hope you consider donating to HVCC this holiday season. Your donations translate into a fresh meal each night, program supplies for our after-school activities, or even equipment for our various sports programs. All donations are tax-deductible. We thank you for your consideration.

The theme of the week was, "Gratitude." The kiddos made



Photo courtesy of HVCC  
**High Valley Community Center students finished the week with fun activities before their winter break. Students will be returning after the new year.**

HVCC's Encore Program for individuals in the 50-plus community is accepting additional members. We provide four free meals each week as well as activities on Wednesdays and Thursdays. It is free to participate and eligible members are welcome to join at any time. Please contact HVCC at 719-657-2172 to join or if you have any questions. A reminder to parents and guardians, we will be closed from Dec. 21 until Jan. 11. From all of us at HVCC, we wish you Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year!

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# SAGUACHE COUNTY SHERIFF'S REPORT

**SAGUACHE COUNTY** — The following information was provided by the Saguache County Sheriff's Office for the period between Dec. 13, 2021, and Sunday, Dec. 19, 2021.

The Sheriff's Department's activity on the road included one injury crash, two crashes with property damage, two traffic stops and one stolen vehicle. They also patrolled the Town of Saguache five times, assisted a motorist, conducted one VIN inspection, responded to a report of debris in the roadway, responded to a locked-out motorist,

In addition, there was one report of suspicious activity, one report of trespassing, two reports of theft, responded to five alarms, two reports of assault, two reports of fraud, one missing person report, two animal problem reports, two reports of property damage, and one noise complaint.

They also responded to six controlled burns, one fire (other), provided information six times, assisted nearby agencies twice, responded to three ambulance calls, conducted a welfare check.

### ARRESTS

- A 43-year-old Saguache woman was arrested on an outstanding warrant.
- A 37-year-old Durango man was arrested on an outstanding warrant.
- A 60-year-old Crestone man was arrested on sexual assault, unlawful sexual contact victim does not consent, assault, false imprisonment and obstruction of telephone service charges.
- A 27-year-old Moffat man was arrested on an outstanding warrant.
- A 50-year-old Center woman was arrested on domestic violence and menacing with a deadly weapon charges.

# SALES

 Continued from Page 1A

PPE. These sales are brick-and-mortar sales, as well as internet sales."

He noted that internet sellers began collecting state and local sales tax in 2019, which enabled the state to begin tracking internet sales.

Retail sales in the SLV vaulted to \$1,139,350,526 in the period of Jan.-Sept. 2021, up from \$930,540,000 in 2020 and \$430,679,000 in 2019.

Costilla County saw the largest percentage of increase for the period, up 265 percent, with Saguache County (241%), Conejos County (217%) and Rio Grande (214%) not far behind. Mineral County had a 121 percent increase, while Alamosa jumped 119 percent with the Valley's largest total of retail sales for the period in 2021 at \$484,418,700.

The largest increase in spendable income over the research period came in taxable goods over

services, Hallock said, based on suggestions from Chris Akers, economist for the Colorado State Demography office. He noted a large spike in spending on goods beginning in January 2020, surpassing spending on services by May 2020 and continuing through September 2021.

Hallock said Akers also pointed out that lower income levels in the SLV could have led to more spending on goods rather than saving it or paying off debt.

Another observation from Akers, unlike resort towns that have lots of bars, restaurants and hotels, communities in the Valley were spared the effects of early shutdowns and largely avoided the recession. A different source said this may not say anything about recovery but more about how areas managed, according to Hallock.

Akers said he expected sales of goods to slow going into 2022 and 2023.

Hallock's research found that the spending spree helped boost the local economy and avoid a recession. Second quarter unemployment rates dropped in each county in the Valley from 2020-2021.

"It kept workers working," Hallock said.

The largest decrease for that



period in the SLV came in Costilla County where unemployment dropped from 6.6 percent to 4.6 percent. Mineral County dropped from 4.8 to 3.5 percent while Saguache dropped from 5.6 to 4.4. Other counties saw Alamosa drop from 5.5 to 4.3, Conejos from 4.3 to 3.6 and Rio Grande from 5.2 to 4.5.

Colorado's unemployment rate overall for the same period fell from 6.9 to 5.4 percent.

Hallock said he own observation is there is still a lot of available funding for businesses.

"With the first infrastructure bill enacted, more will be coming along," he said. "The next couple of years will tell how well the Valley and other rural communities fare."

# BUDGET

 Continued from Page 1A

available to attend the meeting.

Trustees had been discussing the budget for several months in executive sessions. According to State regulations, the budget is due to the State by Dec. 31.

The budget was lined out to those in attendance and the floor was opened to public comment. No one in attendance spoke during the public comment period in regards to the proposed budget.

The 2022 budget was passed unanimously.

The Town of Center is responsible for providing all public services, such as police, municipal courts, parks, streets, utilities, economic development and other similar services.

Town Manager Brian Lujan said, "I wanted to note that under the general fund, the water fund and the economic development fund includes grant revenue, which is more than our usual sales tax revenue. This is grant money that we have currently."

Next on the agenda was the Center Police Department report.

"We have had six trafficking arrests in the last two weeks," Chief Dale Meek said. "We have the tools to combat these types of crime. We have had a couple of search warrants that have been successful. We are looking at seizing one vehicle that was involved in the transport of drugs. These are not arrests of users, these are high-level trafficking arrests."

Chief Meek also discussed a K-9 opportunity for the Town and CPD.

A breeder is willing to donate a dog for CPD to train, which will then be donated to a Colorado police agency that is in need of a K-9. CPD is currently putting together a committee that will decide which agency should receive the donated K-9 by assessing their need through the use of an essay and their local community support.

CPD will donate the time and training of the K-9. The chief explained that this donation will be used to advertise and showcase to other law enforcement agencies what CPD can offer in regards to training and certifying K-9's.

The Public Utilities Department's report was delivered by David Mehaffie. Residential water meters were supposed to be program-ready on Dec. 15, when test readings began. The commercial meters have been found to have dead batteries in some units and there are issues reading

those units. Mehaffie stated that there are about 25 commercial meters that need batteries replaced. The utilities department is expecting to start test readings of the new water meters in the beginning of the new year, with billing to begin according to usage after successful testing.

"We are putting in all new water meters and it has been difficult to find all the old meters and getting everything upgraded," said Lujan.

Davis Engineering staked out markers on the North 90 annex, to layout the proposed streets and alleyways for the property. These markers are for visualization purposes according to Lujan, as the layout may change many times before implementation.

The Town Manager report stated

that the work of the overall town improvement plan is starting to come together.

"2021 is going to be the most successful so far since I have been here, we are moving the town forward and that is thanks to the council," Lujan said. There will be three open trustee seats in 2022 for the Town. The designated election official will be Town Manager Lujan. Starting on Jan. 4, 2022, anyone wanting to run for Town Trustee can pick up a petition that must be turned in by Jan. 24, 2022. Each candidate must have at least 10 valid signatures on a petition to run for Town Trustee. More information can be obtained at the Town Hall.

Town Hall will be closed from noon on Dec. 30 to Jan. 3, 2022.

**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, 2022. 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.

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Hanover 51	Moffat 43
Centennial 46	La Veta 35
Colorado Springs Christian 42	Sanford 38
Del Norte 52	Lake County 16
Soroco 50	Center 31
Sierra Grande 45	John Mall 19
Sanford 61	Peyton 37
Hoehne 40	Del Norte 37
Monte Vista 53	Steamboat Springs 30
Center 29	Hayden 17
Centauri 45	Summit 30
Westminster 43	Alamosa 38
Westminster 44	Centauri 36
Alamosa 48	Summit 32

### BOYS BASKETBALL

Salida 67	Center 31
Weld Central 41	Monte Vista 27
Centennial 45	Antonito 18
Center 55	Calhan 23
Trinidad 67	Sangre de Cristo 17
Hanover 60	Moffat 25
Monte Vista 52	Dolores Huerta 30
Alamosa 54	Crested Butte 31
Del Norte 65	Hoehne 41
Sierra Grande 60	Hayden 24
Centauri 56	Gunnison 22
Sanford 42	Peyton 40
Manzanola 46	Moffat 37
Moffat 73	Cripple Creek-Victor 19
Centauri 49	Crested Butte 37
La Veta 75	Sangre de Cristo 17
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Del Norte 65	Lake County 55
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# Marshall receives 11 years for shooting Pruitt

By PRISCILLA WAGGONER

ALAMOSA — Attorney and former Alamosa resident James Marshall was sentenced to 11 years in the state prison for shooting Danny Pruitt in the back of the head during a local Black Lives Matter protest in June of 2020.

Pruitt, of Alamosa, survived the shooting but sustained a traumatic brain injury, resulting in permanent damage.

The sentencing ends a case that has been controversial from day one when a local defense attorney went to a peaceful protest armed with a 9 mm Glock, that he used to shoot Pruitt through the back window of his truck allegedly in defense of others, including his wife.

The judicial proceedings that followed Marshall's arrest "took on a life of its own," says defense counsel Randy Canney, with multiple continuances as counsel attempted to reach a resolution. Ultimately, in an eleventh-hour deal, a resolution was reached even as potential jurors, who had been summoned for jury duty in the case, were gathering in the hallway.

The specifics of the plea deal sparked more controversy when it was learned that all charges directly related to the shooting were dismissed, including second-degree attempted murder, assault with a deadly weapon, second-degree assault resulting in serious bodily injury and reckless endangerment, three of which carried a sentence enhancer that increased the maximum sentencing allowed.

In their place, Marshall was only charged with tampering with a deceased human body, also a third-degree felony but one that does not have a sentence enhancer for being a crime of violence, does not reflect that a deadly weapon was used in the crime and required a "waiver of factual basis" in the charges in order to be considered by the court.

Proceedings were further delayed when it was revealed that Pruitt had

encountered legal difficulties with the Costilla County Sheriff's Office and defense counsel requested the 12th Judicial District Attorney's Office provide them with court documents.

That was the backdrop of the case when Marshall appeared for sentencing on Tuesday, Dec. 7.

DA Alonzo Payne's first witness was Sam Coffman, an investigator with the DA's office, who summarized for the judge the events of the shooting based on videos he had watched from three different businesses located in view of the crime scene.

In his testimony, that lasted less than a few minutes, Coffman included three details that condemned Marshall's conduct. Coffman said that Pruitt pulled up to the intersection. Marshall went to the side of the truck. Three protesters got out of the way of Pruitt's vehicle. There were no protesters in front of the truck and Mariah Marshall was behind Pruitt's truck when Marshall fired a shot into the back window of Pruitt's truck. Pruitt's truck rolled into the intersection before coming to a stop.

At that point, Marshall took off running past his wife, leaving her behind him. Marshall did not check on the other protesters or his wife or attempted to render aid to Pruitt. Protesters rendered aid to Pruitt while "Mr. Marshall was the first one off the scene," Coffman said.

Matthew Beresky, an attorney with Rocky Mountain Victim Rights Center representing Pruitt to make sure that his victim's rights were being observed, read a statement to the court.

Beresky described what Pruitt suffered from being shot, including a 17-day induced coma followed by having to relearn basic activities like standing, taking a shower, brushing his teeth and hair. The bullet that is still in his brain has permanently impaired his short-term memory, attention span, speech, ability to control emotions and other cognitive functions.

Beresky condemned the plea

agreement, stating that it "offends the very concept of justice and does not reflect the nature of the crime or its effect," adding that "allowing James Marshall to plead guilty to abuse of a corpse disregards the fact that Mr. Pruitt is a living human being" and stripped Pruitt of his rights.

At that point, Beresky turned his attention to DA Payne's handling of the case, stating Payne had little to no contact while Pruitt was going through "an agonizing time" and made no attempt to learn how to understand or work with a brain injured victim, including sending several notices to Pruitt without ascertaining if Pruitt had the ability to read, write or understand what was being said.

Beresky described Pruitt as being victimized twice — first by Marshall and then by the DA's office that failed to treat him with consideration or respect.

On behalf of Pruitt, Beresky asked that the plea deal be vacated and either more appropriate charges be filed or the case go to trial. If that did not happen, he requested that the maximum sentence be employed.

Pruitt then took the stand and made a short statement, saying it has been a long road of recovery and he should not have had to stay in the area to make sure Marshall was prosecuted.

"James Marshall shot me, ran away and hid in the trunk of a car. He should be jailed today and not released," Pruitt said.

Those were the only witnesses called by DA Payne.

Defense counsel called five witnesses to testify — a childhood friend, three colleagues from law school and a Colorado University law professor who allowed Marshall and his wife to live on her land for several months after the shooting.

Each witness described Marshall in the same general terms — as a good, compassionate man who loved his wife deeply, was concerned for her welfare and was devoted to representing "people who have no voice" in the

criminal justice system.

A former prosecutor in Logan and Washington County testified that Marshall had told him he intended to pay Pruitt full restitution for what he had suffered. He then went on to make the case that, the longer Marshall is in jail and unable to be gainfully employed, the longer Pruitt will have to wait to receive that restitution.

Marshall then made a statement to the court that lasted more than 30 minutes. It was the first time he had spoken in court other than perfunctory answers.

Marshall spoke at length about his culpability, his regret for having injured Pruitt, his intention to pay restitution and his fervent wish he could "undo" what he had done. He said he wished Pruitt could forgive him, but he did not expect it to happen.

At one point, Pruitt, who was sitting in the front row, made a comment, which prompted a request from the judge to be respectful. Pruitt also rose from his chair and left the courtroom on several occasions.

Marshall also explained his history with guns, citing "a friend of a friend" who was stabbed near to where he lived in Ohio. Although he took responsibility for what he did, he suggested that Pruitt had initiated the situation with his "malicious grin" and pointing in his direction.

He also described the ways he "had been punished," which included not being able to practice law in the last 18 months.

"At least, Mr. Pruitt will have closure after today," he said. Marshall also indicated that a decision was made that his law license was going to be suspended for three years.

After a brief recess, Judge Gilbert Martinez said that he had not seen the

video since "the DA did not present that to the court or admit it into evidence."

That resulted in Martinez having to confer with Payne, in court, that Marshall's wife was standing behind the truck when Marshall shot Pruitt. Payne confirmed this detail.

Martinez then went through in succinct but thorough detail what went into his decision, stating that Marshall being an attorney did not factor into his decision.

"This is a case where a good man did a bad thing," Martinez said. "Is there undue risk that the defendant will commit a crime again? No. But would a minimum sentence unduly diminish the seriousness of the crime and respect for the law? Yes, it would."

The only statement that Martinez took issue with was Marshall saying that sentencing would bring closure to Pruitt.

"No, he won't get that. He will live with this for the rest of his life," Judge Martinez said.

Martinez sentenced Marshall to 11 years in the Colorado Department of Correction, which was one year short of the maximum sentence, plus credit for the two days Marshall had served in jail. He then instructed that Marshall be immediately taken into custody and transferred to a detention facility.

After the hearing, Canney said that Marshall was disappointed in the outcome. He also said that they "definitely" plan to file a motion to reconsider the sentence.

Because Marshall did not plead guilty to a crime of violence, the chances are good that his sentence will be reduced by 50 percent to about 5 and a half years with potentially less time served if there are no incidents while he is in prison.

## Tow Keys to Enjoying Your Life Every Day

How do you feel about your life? Would you say you love it? Or do you just get through each day, enduring the things you don't want to do, putting up with the things that frustrate you, wishing you had someone else's life? Do you believe you will finally be happy someday...when you have this or that?

People often say things like: "I'll be happy when I have a different job." "I'll be happy when I'm married." "I'll be so glad when the weekend gets here!" "I'd be so happy if I had children." And then after the children come... "I'll be so happy when these kids are finally grown and out of the house!"

It's a mistake for us to go through life thinking we can't be happy until we have something we want or our circumstance changes. The truth is we'll always find something to be unhappy about until we learn to be happy in the Lord.

I know about this from personal experience. I got a very bad start in life, and it made me a miserable, angry, insecure person who didn't trust anybody because I believed if I didn't take care of myself, nobody else would. And that caused me to be very selfish and self-centered.

But God didn't create us to live selfish lives, spending all our time trying to get what we want. He put a desire in us to have pleasure, but we will never really experience His blessings — His peace, joy, love, and all the good things He wants to give us — if we live with a "What about me?!" mentality.

John 10:10 (AMP) says, "The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance [to the full, till it overflows]."

The enemy — the devil — wants to steal our joy and destroy our lives. But Jesus came and died on the cross to

give us abundant life, "to the full, till it overflows"! And it's a tragedy when born-again Christians don't enjoy their lives because they have a "barely getting by, hanging on till Jesus comes to get me" mentality.

If you're unhappy and want to enjoy your life, I want to give you two keys to help you get there.

The first key is to **make an attitude adjustment.**

Having a negative, critical attitude and feeling sorry for ourselves sours everything. We all have things we could complain about, but it doesn't do any good, so we're just wasting our time and energy when we give in to it.

Make a determined decision to have a more thankful attitude in your day-to-day life. Thank God for the good things you can think of right now, and actively look for more things to add to the list each day. This will help you stay focused on God's goodness.

Another way to improve your attitude is to get your mind off yourself and think about others more. Ask God how you can be a blessing and help make someone else's life better. When we're paying attention to others, it's easy to find something we can do, whether it's giving an encouraging word or compliment, a random act of kindness, or a hug. There's really no end to the ways we can show God's love to someone around us.

The second key is to **have a proper perspective.**

Loving or hating a thing often comes down to how you look at it. It's possible you can have more joy in your life simply by looking at it from a different perspective.

Whatever you focus on, that is what you're going to get. If you focus on trouble long enough, that's all you'll expect, and it will likely develop.



What we choose to focus on gets larger in our lives. If we don't have a proper perspective of it from God's point of view, it will grow and get out of balance. For example, in marriage, people sometimes get so focused on the things they don't like about their spouse that they totally forget all the good things they love about them.

I know life is not easy, and we all have to deal with hardship at times. But when you're struggling, realize that although you have some trouble, things could be worse.

I certainly don't mean to make light of a serious issue you're facing; my purpose with this point is to help you keep your perspective based on God's Word and His promises. Because when you choose to trust Him in every circumstance, He will always be bigger than your problems!

For more on this topic, order Joyce's three-teaching CD series Joy and Enjoyment. You can also contact us to receive our free magazine, Enjoying Everyday Life, by calling (800) 727-9673 or visiting [www.joycemeyer.org](http://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](http://www.joycemeyer.org).

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# Here's to our Hometown Heroes

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## TSJC forms first community college eSports team in Colorado

BY MARGARET SANDERSON

"I grew up hearing about tournaments and professional players, but I never thought a team like this would be formed in Alamosa, so close to home," said Bryan Flores, 22, whose gamer tag (eSports' nickname) is "bflo." ESports is a multiplayer video game competition in front of spectators.

Flores was 5 years old when he emigrated from Mexico to the United States with his parents. He has been playing video games since he was 6.

"It's a big part of my life, so it's really cool to be a part of it now," he said. Flores came to Trinidad State to run track and was delighted that eSports competitions were beginning at the college.

**Esports Trivia**

- The earliest known video game competition took place in 1972 at Stanford University for the game Spacewar.
- Since 2013 universities and colleges in the United States such as Robert Morris University Illinois and the University of Pikeville have recognized esports players as varsity level athletes and offer athletic scholarships.
- By 2019 at least 10 countries were offering undergraduate or graduate eSports academic degree programs.
- In 2018 the multilevel 30,000 square foot HyperX Esports Arena was built in Las Vegas at the Luxor.
- Esports tournaments are almost always conducted in front of a live audience with referees who ensure game rules are followed.
- In the last decade, Danish player Johan Sundstein has won more than \$7-million in eSports competitions.

When he competes at the college, Flores brings his own mouse and keyboard which he is most accustomed to using. His favorite video game is Call of Duty – Gunfight. In competitions with other colleges, he teams up with Carlos Gonzalez. Flores is one of 21 students now involved in eSports at Trinidad State.

"Vice President James Kynor helped me develop the proposal, which establishes Trinidad State as the first community college in Colorado with a collegiate eSports team," said Serena ("Sully") Sullivan who was hired in 2020 to upgrade the college's computer programs. Fund-



Photo courtesy of TSJC

ing came from a grant from the estate of Ralph Outcalt, a prominent local businessman who was a strong proponent of education.

"If you would have told me 20 years ago that people would get paid to play video games, I wouldn't have believed it, but here we are," said Sullivan.

According to the International Journal of eSports between 2010 and 2019, the number of eSports players who earned cash prizes rose from 3,435 to more than 27,700, while the cumulative cash prizes distributed each year increased from \$6.3 million to \$235 million over the same period. And millions of spectators are watching.

Sullivan came to Trinidad State to share her extensive

**Please see eSPORTS on Page 2**



Photo by Amy Kucera

Starting in the fall of 2022, Adams State University in partnership with Colorado State University will offer a four-year mechanical engineering degree on the Adams State campus. Pictured, Matt Nehring, Ph.D., helps students in his first-year seminar class with electronic boards.

## Become an engineer without leaving home

*CSU, Adams State offer engineering degree in Alamosa*

BY ANNE MANNING  
CSU Science Writer

ALAMOSA — Providing clear pathways to higher education for students is one of Colorado State University's most cherished values.

Another plank in that goal is being met, thanks to a newly signed partnership between CSU and Adams State University, a public institution

located in the heart of Southern Colorado.

Starting in Fall 2022, students in the San Luis Valley can enroll in an accredited bachelor's degree program from CSU's Department of Mechanical Engineering, being offered in its entirety on the Adams State campus in Alamosa.

The partnership gives San Luis Valley students the chance to earn a Walter Scott Jr. College of Engineering degree at their local institution, opening new doors for them and attracting a larger swath of students to

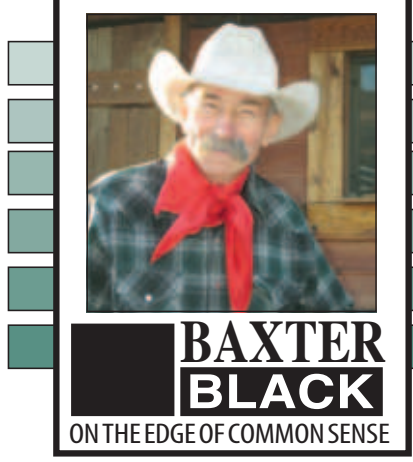
**See ENGINEER on Page 3**

## Faith in Christmas

It's Christmas time, when we celebrate the birth of Christ. In the U.S., surveys show that more than 80% of us believe in God. That's more people than have lawyers, drive foreign cars, believe DNA is absolute proof of a criminal act, own a home, have been divorced, or watch Oprah!

How can such a high percentage of a highly educated, well-read, technologically and scientifically knowledgeable people believe in an omnipotent being? Where inside of us is the biological process that allows faith to exist? Not just to exist but to flourish. How do you define the words soul, love, compassion, conscience, guilt or sorrow without going outside the parameters of scientific definition?

To choose to believe only what is scientifically provable is to assume, I guess, that all human behavior can be traced to the basic instincts of territoriality, reproduction of species, and survival. That a conscience is a highly refined sophisticated mechanism that



somehow helps keep peace in the herd, insures that each member gets her share of the kill, and that each dog in the pack gets a place in the pecking order.

If Earth is truly just a long series of accidental chemical bondings and adaptation

to the environment, and God has no hand in it, then those animal rights folks who say a rat is a dog is a baby, are right. Human existence on earth would have no significance, no more than dinosaurs, rocks, oxygen, stars, wars, or renal dialysis. As Bertrand Russell, an atheist, once said, "Unless one assumes a God, any discussion of life's purpose is meaningless."

One of the dilemmas that deep thinkers have, is the need to explain the biological, physical, neural or meteorological mechanisms that allow something to happen. Miracles are hard for them to swallow. There must be some earthly explanation that the Dead Sea parted, Lazarus rose from the dead, and Jesus turned water to wine.

It is necessary for them to write off Jesus feeding the multitude. To conclude the Bible is more fiction than fact. That Christmas is just a benign commercial day off.

But for the vast majority of Americans,

Christmas is the recognition of something bigger than ourselves. It also strengthens our beliefs and reminds us that Jesus was born to change the world and that He has. Our entire concept of God exists by faith. It's not complicated. When I'm asked if I believe Christ was born of a virgin, I say, of course! If I can believe in something so all mighty, all-powerful and unbelievable as God, I can surely believe Jesus was His son.

Merry Christmas, and God bless you.

*Baxter Black, former large animal veterinarian and irregular commentator on National Public Radio, is America's best-selling cowboy poet. He is a frequent performer at national stock shows and rodeos as well as in many smaller local events. He is author of several books, including Cactus Tracks, Croutons on a Cow Pie, Hey, Cowboy, Wanna Get Lucky? and Dunny and the Duck. Baxter Black can be contacted via e-mail at: vikki@baxterblack.com*

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# eSPORTS

Continued from Page 1

computer knowledge and to create new opportunities for students. As Director for Technology Program Development and Instruction as well as eSports Head Coach, she works from the Valley Campus in Alamosa.

Since she came to the college, along with her son and her Corgi last August, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) has approved the Computer Science Degree she submitted along with the following certificates: Cloud Practitioner, Systems Administration, Cybersecurity, Technology in Agriculture, Database Administrator and Computer Applications Specialist. All college courses must be approved by the HLC. Sullivan is also resurrecting the Computer Information System (CIS) previously offered at the college. All this supports eSports.

"All networks will eventually be cloud-based," said Sullivan, "which means with internet access, a person can work from anywhere in the world."

The cloud refers to a secure internet information storage system that allows remote access. Giant "server farms" filled with computers and electronic storage which can be accessed via the internet from homes or businesses anywhere in the world make the cloud possible.

"With about a 30 percent shortfall in technical careers, there are more jobs than trained professionals," she said. "Pretty much every career field will require some kind of technology whether it's basic office skills like creating Microsoft word documents, to building a network and securing it. For those living in this remote rural area who want to stay here, the cloud may offer that opportunity."

Kynor added, "The digital literacy of the Valley is critically important, to not only building up the skill sets for existing businesses, but also to develop

a work force that may be attractive for new business coming in."

With help from three students, Sullivan spent the summer transforming the north end of the college on the second floor into a state-of-the-art gaming lab with dark walls and lighting conducive to gaming.

Along with the computer stations, the lab features a viewing center with two couches arranged in an L-shape where the gamers can sit as a group and discuss performances while viewing a 72-inch flat screen monitor. Up to 15 gamers will be able to compete at one time with an almost unlimited number of spots on the team. Gamers can also compete from anywhere, provided they have a good internet connection.

Twitch.tv is the platform used to live stream competitions. Supporters can watch competitions live at [www.twitch.tv/trinidadstate](http://www.twitch.tv/trinidadstate).

Sullivan created two categories of players, the collegiate players who must be enrolled at Trinidad State with a minimum of 12 credit hours, and competitors who must be taking at least six credit hours. Both must maintain a 2.0 GPA (Grade Point Average) or higher.

"I wanted to make sure that we could still keep it open to as many students as possible," said Sullivan.

When Sullivan sees a student with one of her eSports information cards, she asks if they are interested in playing. That's how she recruited Collin Lopez (19), who was born and raised in Alamosa. Years ago, his dad taught him how to play. His favorite game is Spiderman. He teams up with three others to play Call of Duty – Cold War, for the college. His gamer tag is "Trent2002."

Lopez tried to start an eSports team at Alamosa High School, but it didn't last. He credits eSports at Trinidad State for helping him to socialize.

"I'm not a very social person," he said. "It has taken this whole semester for me to start talking to Carlos and Bryan. I've met more people here (Trinidad State). I like it here. I like all the teachers. They understand and want to help you and see you succeed. It's pretty great and esports is fun."

Lopez wants to teach high school history.

Currently the seven-member team competes with only two-year colleges, but because there are no other such teams formed in Colorado yet, they have been playing two-year colleges in Montana, Washington, California, Florida and Nebraska to name a few.

Carlos Gonzalez, who moved to the area about seven years ago, is studying auto mechanics.

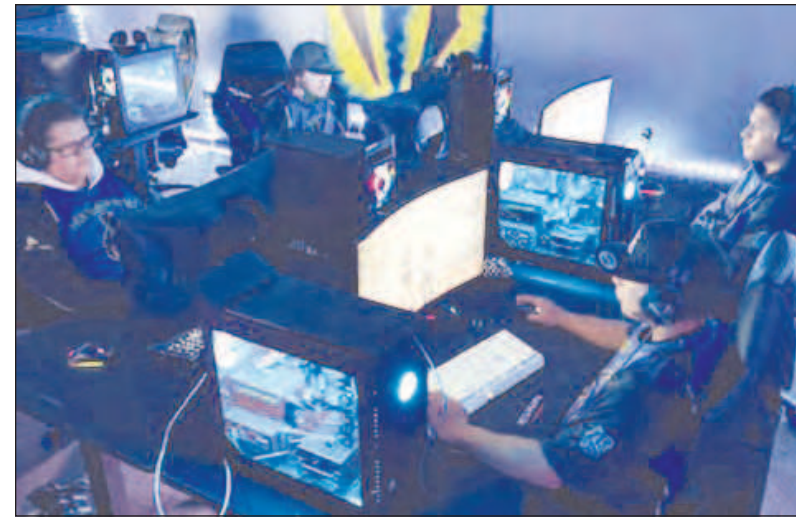
"Esports college more fun," he said. "It's a great experience for entering college for the first time."

His favorite game is Call of Duty – Cold War and his gamer tag is A-A-Ron-O-o.

In traditional sports like basketball and football, there is one game to learn with one set of rules; but, because eSports offers so many different games with different rules and strategies as well as different numbers of players, Sullivan's team has chosen to begin this adventure with a few of the more popular games: Call of Duty – Gunfight, Cold War, Warzone, NBA2K, and Apex Legends.

Some are concerned about the violence in video games, but one of Sullivan's former instructors, who worked at the Airforce Academy and formed their eSports team, used their eSports competitions to teach teamwork and communication building in stressful situations, along with military strategy.

"I've noticed a lot more teamwork and communication going on," said Sullivan. "Hand-eye coordination,



Photos courtesy of TSJC

problem solving, and communication improve with eSports."

Flores, who plans to complete his associate degree and then move on to a four-year school and major in Sociology or possibly Computer Science, said a big part of his coming to Trinidad State was the lower tuition costs, the friendly open-minded teachers and the smaller classes. When he began college in Oklahoma, he said he felt

like an outsider as the only Mexican in his class.

"But here at Trinidad State," he said, "the teachers accept you for who you are, and your background doesn't matter. Coming to Trinidad State is one of the best decisions I have made, mostly because of the people I've met."

For more information, email [serena.sullivan@trinidadstate.edu](mailto:serena.sullivan@trinidadstate.edu) or call 719-589-7262.

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# Adams State ag students dominate discussion

BY MIKE CLIFFORD

**ALAMOSA** — Adams State University students from the campus chapter of the Collegiate Farm Bureau finished strong at the state discussion meet in Denver, Nov. 19-21.

Mattea Klein earned first place, Chasey Blach took second, and Wyatt Barton brought home fourth in the statewide competition. Christian Santistevan, Taylor Lewis and Katy Delsaso also traveled to Denver.

All will attend the national American Farm Bureau Federation convention in February, with Klein competing in the national discussion meet.

A discussion meet gives students the chance to actively participate in a simulated committee meeting, such as ranchers or farmers might attend in real life, where they exchange ideas, learn about agricultural issues and work to develop consensus and solve problems, according to the farm bureau website.

Klein, a senior seeking a bachelor's degree with an emphasis in agribusiness while also working on her Master of Business Administra-

tion degree, said the discussion meet is her favorite part of the collegiate farm bureau conference.

"We are all different people with different ideas and it's interesting to see that all come together during the discussions," Klein said.

According to Blach, a junior elementary education major with an agricultural business minor, he "was completely prepared for the discussion meet" because of discussions about ideas and concepts in Adams State classes.

Barton, who majors in business administration with an emphasis in agribusiness, said his amazing advisor at Adams State, Zena Buser, Ph.D., professor of business, and a community "that is willing to dedicate their time and resources to help" were factors in the team's accomplishments.

Santistevan, a junior agribusiness major, said, after graduation, he wants to continue his passion in agriculture by "emphasizing the importance of farmers and ranchers to everyone in society."

Lewis gave credit to "peers that



Photo courtesy of Adams State University

**Business students represented Adams State at the State Collegiate Farm Bureau Meet. Pictured, left to right, Mattea Klein, Katie Dalsaso, Wyatt Barton, Christian Santistevan, Chasey Black, and Taylor Lewis.**

have competed in the past" who worked with the students for the success of the team. Lewis is a sophomore with a double-major in business

administration with an emphasis in agriculture and digital marketing.

Luis Valley "were very well represented" at the events, according to Buser.

Overall, Adams State and the San Buser.

## ENGINEER

Continued from Page 1

become part of the Ram engineering community.

The program, signed by both universities earlier this year, is being offered to provide new opportunities to historically underserved students in rural Colorado. Adams State enrolls a large number of Pell Grant-eligible and first-generation students and is a Hispanic-serving institution whose student body is 38% Hispanic.

Science, technology, engineering and math disciplines also continue to lag in their reach among Hispanic populations. With mechanical engineering the most popular undergraduate engineering major in the U.S., demand for such a program is high.

"There are lots of students in the San Luis Valley who, because of family or financial situations, can't leave the Valley to come up to Fort Collins and get their engineering degree," said Christian Puttlitz, CSU department head and professor of mechanical engineering. "So, we're bringing it to them."

Puttlitz added, "Given the earning potential of someone who gets a mechanical engineering degree, this could be a life-changer for not only the current generation, but many generations going forward."

Rams in Alamosa

According to the agreement, the first two years of the CSU degree program will be taught by Adams State faculty, and the second half, which includes the senior design capstone project, will be taught by CSU faculty located at the Alamosa campus. Adams State will also offer an associate's degree linked to the successful completion of the two years of lower-division courses.

It became clear several years ago to Adams State leadership that the school needed to develop an on-campus engineering program to continue offering viable STEM pathways and recruit more students who are talented in those areas, explained Matt Nehring, professor of physics and interim director of the School of Science, Mathematics, and Technology at Adams State. In recognition of the need, the state Department of Education recently awarded Adams State a Title III grant to help partially fund the new collaboration with CSU.

the two institutions have devised are numerous for Adams State, Nehring said. It allows the school to offer a sought-after, accredited degree without having to start a program from scratch, capitalizing instead on the experience and success of CSU engineering.

The program will be naturally tailored for area-specific needs, with smaller class sizes, minimal commute and local faculty. But most importantly, the mechanical engineering degree will offer a bright career path for students from the six-county San Luis Valley, some of which are among the poorest counties in Colorado. For that reason, local school districts and industry are as excited about the partnership as the two schools are, Nehring said.

Attracting engineers

Loren Howard, president of the San Luis Valley Rural Electric Cooperative, said such a program is badly needed for his area and a welcome addition to his community. His organization provides electricity to the area's rural residents, and attracting employees is a perpetual challenge — doubly so for positions that require advanced education. For many years, the cooperative has hired engineering interns in the hopes of retaining them after graduation.

"Having an engineering program locally at Adams State, combined with CSU's reputation for quality engineering education, will provide an excellent opportunity for us to attract future engineers," Howard said.

Anthony Marchese, associate dean for academic and student affairs in the Walter Scott Jr. College of Engineering, was one of the first people at the table more than two years ago to start the conversation on the partnership, and he was quick to credit Puttlitz, Nehring and other colleagues at Adams State, as well as Toni-Lee Viney, manager of undergraduate programs in CSU mechanical engineering, for bringing the agreement into the end zone.

The partnership follows a model that's been successful at other institutions across the state, Marchese said, and this has resulted in a growing number of students who can access previously out-of-reach educational

opportunities. Bringing a CSU degree program to students in Alamosa gives those students more choices about their future — something Marchese is particularly proud to have helped catalyze.

"Some students will excel in one environment, while others may excel in a different one," he said, "And now, more Colorado students have multiple choices available to them."

More information on the CSU degree program at Adams State at [adams.edu/csume](http://adams.edu/csume).

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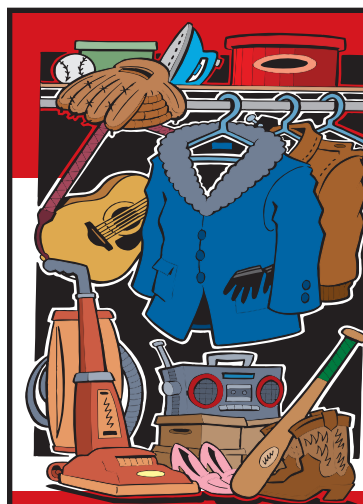
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Midgee is a little over 6 months old, and is a female Staffie mix. She's an absolute sweet-heart looking for her forever home. Midgee has plenty of energy which makes her want to talk to you, and play all day. She's good with most

dogs especially ones close to her size. She's very excitable, and is still working on her manners, but is a great girl to have around!



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*Merry Christmas and Good Luck!*

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- Contest open to children ages 10 and under. Relatives of newspaper employees or contest sponsors are not eligible to win.
- Contestants may use crayons, colored pencils or markers. Adults may assist in completing the contest entry form, but not in the coloring.
- Limit one entry per child. Entries will not be returned.
- All entries must be postmarked by Jan. 5, 2022.
- Submissions are considered property of this newspaper.
- Decision of the judges is final.
- Winners will be announced in the Jan. 12, 2022 issues.

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# HVCC has jam-packed week

## SUBMITTED ARTICLE

Hi, community members! High Valley Community Center hopes you are doing your best snow dance to encourage some much-needed snowfall! We had a great week here at HVCC and are looking forward to celebrating the last week of 2021 programming next week.

Good news! The basketball season for K-2 co-ed, boys 3-4 and 5-6 grade

teams will begin the week of Dec. 13. Basketball games will begin after the holiday break on Jan. 11. Parents and guardians, we strongly encourage you to sign up for the Procure App as that is our main form of communication for all sports-related announcements. If you have questions, please contact the HVCC office at 719-657-2172 or email us at hvcc@thehvcc.org. We are happy to assist you!

This past week's afterschool theme was, "Setting Goals." One of the activities was to create an individualized vision board that served as a visual aid for the kiddos to envision their goals and apply an action plan. Goal-setting sandwiches prompted the kids to reflect on successes and encouraged them to create new attainable goals for the future.

HVCC's Encore Program is accepting additional members! We provide a number of services to our 50-plus community, including four free meals each week and great activities on Wednesdays and Thursdays. If you are interested in our program or know someone who would like to join, please contact HVCC.

We have one more week left of the program for 2021! Our last Fabulous Friday is our Christmas shopping day complete with gift wrapping and lunch at the Colorado Grille. We hope your kiddos can join in on the fun!

Have a great week, everyone!



Photos courtesy of HVCC

High Valley Community Center students are setting goals and hitting the basketball courts just before the holiday break. Students are also gearing up for the annual Christmas shopping adventure where students get to buy gifts for family and friends.

## Free COVID at-home rapid testing kits available

STATE — In an effort to aid Colorado residents and school-aged children, the state has recently announced that it will also be providing free-over-the-counter COVID-19 rapid test kits, directly to people at home.

The program will use Abbott BinaxNOW rapid antigen tests that show results within 15 minutes of taking the test. The program has been designed to allow parents, guardians, and caregivers a way to test their children at home.

While the program is geared toward helping parents and school-aged children, all Coloradans are welcome to sign up for the Rapid At-Home COVID-19 testing program kits.

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment has an individual enrollment form on its website for the kits. The kits will be mailed free of charge and contain four tests each. Multiple kits for the rapid testing can be ordered separately and are also free of charge.

For more information on the rapid test kits, visit the CDPHE COVID website at covid19.colorado.gov.



 Valley-Wide Health Systems, Inc.  
1-833-350-1113

# With Our Thanks, Merry Christmas!

The greatest gifts are the people who bring warmth to our hearts and smiles to our faces. Thank you for brightening our days. We hope the holiday season and the coming year deliver all of the wonderful things you deserve and more.  
*Best wishes from our home to yours!*



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# Over \$7.2 million in preservation grants awarded across Colorado

*Organizations in Conejos and Saguache counties receive funding from History Colorado*

**STAFF REPORT**

**DENVER** — History Colorado announce Wednesday, Dec. 8, a newly completed State Historical Fund (SHF) grant round that provides more than \$7.2 million in grant funding for preservation efforts across the state, including organizations in Conejos and Saguache counties.

These awards leverage \$4 million in matching funding provided by grant applicants and their community partners to exceed a total of \$11 million in initial impact funding. Every \$1 million spent on historic preservation in Colorado leads to \$1.03 million in additional spending, 14 new jobs, and \$636,700 in increased household incomes across the state.

Beyond significant economic stimulus, SHF awards provide important social and community benefits by enhancing environmental sustainability, fostering community pride and resilience, and protecting priceless cultural resources.

To ensure the benefits of preservation are accessible to as many Coloradans as possible, new considerations for diversity, equity, and inclusion informed the evaluation process for every application received in this grant round.

Following an effort to better align the grantmaking process with History Colorado's Grounding Virtues, a new section of the SHF application asked applicants to discuss how their prospective grant project was created with, by, and for the benefit of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities.

Projects serving these communities also benefited from new, lower cash-match requirements, reducing or eliminating additional fundraising burdens for those seeking grants. This first grant round with the new evaluation metrics resulted in \$3.4 million in SHF awards that will specifically benefit BIPOC groups across the state.

These improvements take place amid stark inequities in historic preservation in Colorado and nationally. As of 2020, only 8 percent of the properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places relate to underrepresented communities and/or women nationwide, according to the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Only 2 percent relate explicitly to Black history.

Here in Colorado, of the approximately 1,500 properties in this state listed by the National Register, less than five percent are directly related to the history of women, LGBTQ+, and historically underserved BIPOC communities.

"We have witnessed the powerful benefits catalyzed by our State Historical Fund across Colorado," said Dawn DiPrince, History Colorado Executive Director and State Historic Preservation Officer. "I am proud of the steps History Colorado is taking to ensure that the power of preservation is realized by all of our Colorado communities. This work is essential to building a vibrant and equitable Colorado future."

SLV highlights from this grant round include:

• **Sociedad Protección Mutua De Trabajadores Unidos (SPMDTU);**

**\$250,000, Antonito** — SPMDTU is one of the oldest Hispanic/Hispano civil rights organizations in the United States. The organization was founded in Antonito in 1900. SPMDTU was started to fight discrimination in mining and railroad industries and to protect Hispano property rights. The work to revitalize this National Register includes roof restoration and structural stabilization in order to keep the building in use for community events and celebrations.

• **Garcia Ranch (Potato Barn); \$218,521, Conejos** — structural stabilization

• **Gotthelf & Mayer Mercantile Building — Saguache County Comprehensive Health; \$250,000, Saguache** — clinic exterior and interior rehabilitation

• **Saguache Hotel; \$177,227, Saguache** — window, door, and porch restoration and rehabilitation

Highlights from across the state:

• **Civil Rights Context; \$86,600, Fort Collins** — This initial context

on the civil rights movement in Fort Collins will document the history and places of various civil rights movements for historically excluded groups in Fort Collins, including, but not limited to, Latinx residents, Native Americans, Asian American and Pacific Islanders, Black/African Americans, people with disabilities, residents who identify as LGBTQIA+, and women. This work will help to identify future preservation needs and educational materials for Fort Collins.

• **Montrose Potato Growers; \$250,000, Montrose** — The 1908 Montrose Potato Growers, a National Register building, has long played a critical role in the community as an agricultural hub. After being vacant, the building is now being used by High Oasis, LLC in collaboration with the City of Montrose, which will adapt the building to be used as a distillery. Funding provided for this project will focus on the exterior of the building.

• **Peoples Presbyterian Church; \$104,923, Denver** — The Peoples Presbyterian Church has served a predominantly African American congregation for more than 65 years. The church building, a National Register site, is a great example of Mission-inspired architecture and is located between Whittier and Skyland/North City Park neighborhoods in Northeast Denver. The awarded work will address needed repairs to the roof and associated masonry. This is a continuation of work that follows a recent porch restoration project. Rehabilitation of People's Presbyterian will allow the building to continue as a community hub for years to come.

• **American Legion Hall; \$236,918, Eads** — This American Legion Hall, a National Register site, project is spearheaded by Kiowa County, which will now move onto a second phase of revitalization of this community building. It will address the exterior and interior of the building to bring it one step closer to seeing renewed life as the center for large community gatherings. Community centers play an important role in the social and cultural life of rural communities. Projects like this add to the vitality and resilience of rural Colorado.

Since 1981, historic preservation projects in Colorado have created over 27,000 jobs and generated a total of nearly \$3.9 billion in direct and indirect economic impacts, add-



Courtesy photo

**Sociedad Protección Mutua De Trabajadores Unidos (SPMDTU) of Antonito received funding from History Colorado totaling \$250,000 that will go toward roof restoration and structural stabilization in order to keep the building in use for community events and celebrations.**

ing \$2.2 billion to Colorado's GDP. The SHF estimates it will award at least \$500,000 in its next mini-grant round targeted at smaller statewide preservation projects. Individuals

and organizations are encouraged to view important dates and guidelines for the next round, learn how to submit a Letter of Intent, and apply for grants before the Feb. 1 deadline via

historycolorado.org/state-historical-fund. A full list of projects funded through this round as well as other projects previously funded by the SHF can be found on the website.

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2			8			6	4	1
	8	1	4					
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7								
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Level: Beginner

### Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

### Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

### Solution to last week's puzzle

T	A	L	C			R	F	D		E	R	A				
A	L	O	H	A		A	R	E		E	B	A	N			
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Courtesy photos

Edward M. Kennedy Health Clinic nurse Jordan Kreps received the Annual Award for Employee Recognition on Saturday, Dec. 11, from Valley-Wide Health Systems.

# Nurse receives special award from Edward M. Kennedy Health Clinic

**BY MARIE MCCOLM**  
**MONTE VISTA** — In a ceremony held on Saturday, Dec. 11, Jordan Kreps, a nurse for the Monte Vista Edward M. Kennedy Health Clinic, received an Annual Award for Employee Recognition.

Kreps, who has been with the clinic just under two years, was excited to receive the award.

“It was very unexpected,” said Kreps. “It was tough to keep my emotions to myself.”

The Edward M. Kennedy Health Clinic is part of a group of clinics established under Valley-Wide Health Systems. Valley-Wide is a community, private non-profit based agency, governed by an elective community board, and was established in 1976.

Valley-Wide has multiple principal health care deliverance sites, that are located in Southern Colorado and the Edward M. Kennedy Health Clinic is one of these sites.

Named after Edward M. Kennedy, the clinic offers full services, with a family practice focus approach inclusive with primary, acute, and chronic medical care for people of all ages.

The mission of Valley-Wide Health Systems is to provide

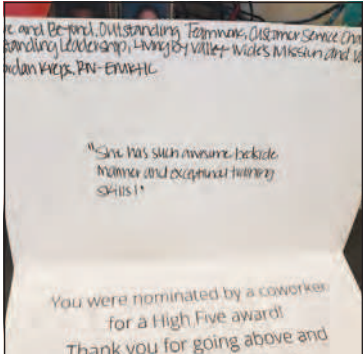
high-quality, safe, effective and integrated health care services, in a respectful and inclusive manner for all, with special consideration for medically underserved populations.

Kreps, who finished school in 2019 and began working for Valley-Wide Health Systems in March of 2020, is proud to be a part of this mission.

“I love the challenge my job brings, and I enjoy learning new things on the job every day,” Kreps said. “One of my favorite parts of my job is helping patients and forming relationships with patients, no day is ever the same. March of 2022 will be my second anniversary at the health care clinic, and I couldn’t be happier.”

A week prior to receiving the Annual Award for Employee Recognition from the Edward M. Kennedy Health Clinic, Kreps also received a high-five award at work, along with a \$50 gift card.

“I really want to thank all of my family and friends for supporting me,” Kreps said. “I also want to thank Yvette O’Brien, she was my instructor in school and my team at the Edward M. Kennedy Health Care Clinic.”



# Time to get flu vaccine

## STAFF REPORT

**ALAMOSA** — “Now is the time to get your flu vaccine,” stated Lynette Grant, SLV Health’s Infection Prevention Practitioner.

Grant has seen what contagious diseases can do to patients with her nursing experience. She has a Bachelor’s in Business Administration from Adams State and an associate’s degree in nursing.

She worked on medical-surgical units in several hospitals in Nashville. When she moved to the San Luis Valley several years ago, she was a public health nurse and director. Then she worked in long-term care and has learned quite a bit about COVID and other infectious diseases.

Dec. 5-11 was National Influenza Vaccine Week.

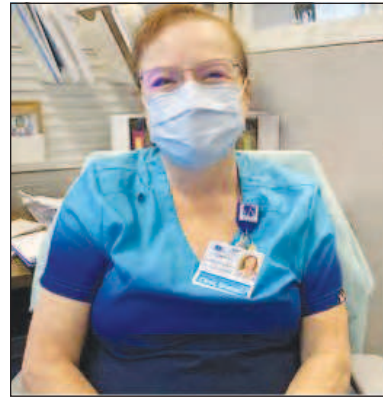
“We are already seeing flu in the San Luis Valley with hospitalizations,” remarked Grant. In recognition of National Influenza Vaccination Week, San Luis Valley Health proclaims December as the month to recognize the importance and value of all vaccines to keep our population safe from serious diseases.

From measles and polio to influenza and COVID and everything in between, vaccines have been proven to save lives for centuries. In 1798, the first smallpox vaccine was developed. Diseases such as rabies, tetanus, diphtheria, typhoid, tuberculosis and more, wreaked havoc on various populations until vaccines were

developed.

“As a reminder, the flu vaccine can often help reduce the severity of illness in people who get vaccinated but still may get sick. Getting vaccinated also reduces the risk of flu-associated hospitalizations,” explained Grant.

Flu shots are widely available in the San Luis Valley. To get your flu vaccine at SLV Health, call the clinic closest to you, at 719-589-3000.



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# Valdez is Adams State Fall Commencement Speaker

**STAFF REPORT**

**ALAMOSA** — Armando Valdez, recently appointed State Director of Director of the United States Department of Agriculture-Rural Development for Colorado, is the Adams State University Fall Commencement Speaker. The ceremony begins at 10 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 18, in Richardson Hall Auditorium. Adams State will award 147 associate degrees and 88 bachelor's degrees.

In 2006, Valdez started his dream job at Adams State as assistant professor of management. After 15 years in the School of Business, he leaves with mixed feelings.

"Teaching in a small rural college has a greater impact for our community than a larger university has for its community," Valdez said. "Adams State provides opportunities which would not exist without the presence of ASU, not only for educational opportunities, but for community engagement with arts, sciences, sports, cultural exposure, and economic development."

He admires Adams State students for their intelligence, resilience, empathy, and openness to diversity.

"We have amazing students at Adams State who strive to find that pathway which will change their lives and the lives of their families," he said.

Valdez took an active leadership role in the School of Business. He created and served as the director of the health care administration program and was integral in the



**Armando Valdez**

development of the agribusiness program. He was instrumental in developing the latest water studies program on campus in partnership with the Adams State Salazar Rio Grande Center del Norte.

During his tenure, Valdez received the Presidential Teacher Award in 2010; the Student Engagement in Teaching Award in 2008 and 2015; and the Excellence in Advisement Award in 2013.

A native of the San Luis Valley, Valdez operates the family farm and ranch, Valdez Land and Livestock, LLC, with his wife and children. Valdez is a 16<sup>th</sup>-generation American, who can trace his roots back to northern New Mexico, in the early 1600s. His family first arrived in southern Conejos County in the 1860s.

"I am very proud of our family history," he said.

Mathew Burcin, of Escondido,



**Mathew Burcin**

Calif., delivered the message from the Class of 2021. Burcin, a cellular molecular biology major, first came to Adams State on a soccer scholarship.

"The professors have always been very supportive and available to help. It is why I did so well. They know me and conveyed a sense of belonging," Burcin said.

Chair Michele Lueck will deliver a greeting from the Board of Trustees and William Lipke, D.M.A., and Matthew Valverde, D.M.A. will perform "Sin tu Amor" by Miguel Sandoval (1903-1953) as the special music.

Due to Plachy Hall renovations, the ceremony will be held in the Richardson Hall Auditorium. Students receiving a degree must reserve tickets for guests. The ceremony will also be livestreamed at [adams.edu/live](http://adams.edu/live).



Photo courtesy of Caroline Gray of the SLV Research Center  
**The San Luis Valley Research Center held a Potato Post Harvest Storage Workshop on Thursday, Dec. 9.**

## SLV Research Center Holds Potato Storage and Quality Workshop

**BY MECHEL MEEK**

**CENTER** — The San Luis Valley Research Center held a Potato Post Harvest Storage Workshop on Thursday, Dec. 9.

Dr. Sastry Jayanty of Colorado State University, San Luis Valley Research Center, Department of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture said, "I organized a workshop on maintaining tuber quality aspects during long-term storage."

Jayanty explained that the workshop topics also discussed warehouse best practices, and how to improve storage to reduce rejections by distribution centers.

The half-day workshop started

with a welcome speech, followed by a presentation by Jayanty on maintaining quality during the warehousing of potato stock.

Next on the agenda was a presentation by Jason Tillman, of Monte Vista Potato Growers, about potato warehouse challenges and opportunities.

After a short coffee break, Dr. Mike Thornton, of the University of Idaho, spoke about the Idaho Potato Quality Project.

Next up was seed storage considerations by Steven McKechnie, of Agro Engineering, and the final presentation was by Jimmy Ridgway, of Yara North America, who spoke about calcium.

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## Centura Health and SLV Health partner to enhance cardiology services in SLV

**STAFF REPORT**  
**ALAMOSA** — Centura Health and San Luis Valley Health are partnering to enhance access to cardiac care in the San Luis Valley. San Luis Valley Health became a clinical affiliate of Centura in 2010 with the goal of improving access to specialty care for the Alamosa community with a specific goal of keeping care local.

Through this partnership, Centura will be recruiting additional cardiology providers who will join Dr. J. Lee Grigsby in Alamosa to support the ongoing and growing need for cardiology services in the southern part of Colorado.

“An important driver of the success of this initiative will be the common ground shared in the mission and vision of both SLV Health and Centura,” said Konnie Martin, SLVH CEO. “At SLV Health, our vision is to provide trusted healthcare as a partner with the patient for the best outcomes possible. Centura’s Vision is every community, every neighborhood, every life – whole and healthy. Those align very well and demonstrate our shared commitment to improving the overall health and access to services in the Valley. This collaborative approach to enhancing our cardiology services will allow us to grow our services and continue to provide them for the long term.”



## Center Food Bank at New Location, open to All

**CENTER** — The Center Food Bank has moved and is open Monday through Thursday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Center Social Services Office, 220 Worth St. According to the Center Food Bank, “Everyone is welcome to receive food assistance at the Center Food Bank, no application is required.”

# RG Bank supports Ski Hi Project

*New donation brings total support to \$55,000*

**STAFF REPORT**

**MONTE VISTA** — The Board of Directors of RG Bank approved an additional \$5,000 donation to the Ski Hi Project in Monte Vista. This new donation will help the Friends of Ski Hi purchase furniture, fixtures and equipment for the conference center and kitchen in the new Ski Hi Complex. RG BANK donated \$50,000 toward

the building construction previously.

“Friends of Ski Hi want to thank RG Bank for their generous contribution for the purchase of furniture, fixtures, and equipment. We are in the final stages of completing the construction of the building and are now going into a phase to purchase needed equipment and furniture for the building. Friends would also like to thank RG Bank for their initial donation over a year ago to get the construction of the building started. The whole San Luis Valley community has been awesome in making this project become a reality,” said Karla Shriver,

co-chair Friends of Ski Hi. “We all should be very proud of this magnificent building for the community to use now and in the future.”

RG Bank is headquartered in Monte Vista, with branches in Alamosa and Pagosa Springs. Bank President and CEO Shon Davis says the bank is growing and is evolving to better meet the needs of the customers and communities RG BANK serves.

“I believe RG BANK’s investment in the Ski Hi Complex is a great investment in and for the communities and customers we serve,” said Davis.

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# San Luis Valley Area Real Estate



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**FOR SALE**

Custom built, impeccable quality, full log home located just minutes from the town of South Fork, Colorado. The 4443 sq. ft. home and 1015 sq. ft. bunkhouse provides a total sq. ft. of 5458. Features in the home include a massive rock fireplace, 3 bedrooms, 3-1/2 bathrooms, loft that boasts a futon plus two-window beds, office, playroom, and a large living room for you to enjoy with family and friends. The wrap around deck will allow you to experience world-class high mountain views. Above the garage is a custom log guest quarters with a spectacular kitchen, bath, large living room, and bedroom combined into one unit. Bear Creek subdivision offers controlled access through a gated entrance. MLS #738155

**107 Marmot Lane • South Fork**  
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**FOR SALE** Organic Peddler Casita Bonita Inn located in Del Norte, Colorado DEEDED ACREAGE: 47 Acres +/- Almost 3 full lots IMPROVEMENTS: Currently there are a total of 4 great rental units on the property with a historic small log cabin that provides a lot of possibilities. 1. 648 sq. ft. Cozy 1 Bedroom Casita includes a living room, bath, and kitchen. 2. 920 sq. ft. Log cabin has an open floor plan with one bedroom, bath, and kitchen. 3. 2240 sq. ft. Building has been remodeled into 2 separate rental units: \*\*The beautiful Cordwood unit is 861 sq. ft. with one bedroom, bath, living room, gourmet kitchen, gas fireplace, and fabulous attached courtyard. \*\*The Historical adobe 1556 sq. ft. home has 3 bedrooms, one bath, full kitchen, living room, and nice front yard. 4. 168 sq. ft. historic log cabin that can be remodeled into an additional rental unit. The views are panoramic in all directions providing a peaceful atmosphere. ACCESS: Year-round off U.S. Hwy 160. ZONING: Residential/Commercial **\$690,000** MLS # 770529 14475 US 160 • Del Norte

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**High Visibility Commercial lot on Hwy 160 Frontage Road.** Water and Sewer taps available. Lot is across the Hwy 160 from the Post Office and the New Dollar General Store. Great Business location. **\$89,500** MLS#777698

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**FOR SALE** 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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**Charming home on Oversized Lot!** This nice 2 bedroom home sits on an oversized lot, so there is plenty of room to add on if you wanted. Has good space, and some updates. Has been a rental, so great for the investor looking for a rental investment. Some outbuildings, and established yard. Call today for more details. **\$153,000** MLS#786169

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**SOLD**



**Nice building spot with spectacular views!** **\$17,500** MLS#786767

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# Recap of Romero boys racing in 2021

**SUBMITTED ARTICLE**

**ALAMOSA** — Another supercross racing season has come to an end for the Romero boys of Alamosa. The season was one of the most-appreciated seasons the boys have ever raced, after the last season was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Easton Romero was at the top of this game and was gearing up for the upcoming National KTM Challenge Race last season. He had the honor of being selected out of a large group of talented competitors nationwide to race this particular challenge, when he received the devastating news that the whole supercross and motocross world was no longer going to be in operation.

Everything came to a screeching halt due to the pandemic. Easton missed out on this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity because he aged out by the time the race world was back in full swing again. This particular race

is only for 8 year olds and Easton had his birthday and turned 9 during all the craziness.

Despite the challenges and disappointments of the non-existent race season last year, the Romero boys stayed positive and looked forward to the next season when they could get back on the track and make things happen once again.

That has finally happened, and the boys have definitely appreciated this race season. They both were able to remain competitive and absolutely enjoyed every race in this year's season.

On Nov. 13, the boys and their family attended the year end RMRA Banquet in Denver, where they brought home several trophies again this year.

Easton pulled in a third-place trophy in his 65cc 7-9 year old class as well as a fourth-place trophy in his Open 65cc 7-11 year old class. Easton faced a few bumps in his road

this season, but he definitely still has a fire burning in his heart for racing and continues to push hard and develop as a strong racer with each race and challenge he faces.

Stetson Romero has not shown any signs of time off the track, as he was able to pull in a second-place trophy in his Open Mini 85cc 9-13 year old class as well as a third-place

trophy in his Senior Mini 85cc 12-15 year old class. Stetson raced very well this season. He looked fast and on point and seemed to be pushing with that "all or nothing attitude" at every race.

Both boys continue to amaze their family and friends with their talent, drive, determination, perseverance, hard work, great attitudes and un-

beatable personalities. Everyone is proud of them and love seeing them live out their dreams.

Stetson and Easton thanked their family, friends, and sponsors for all their support. Their sponsors include Gibson Service Station, Spy Optics, Dunlop Tires, ODI Grips, Acerbis USA, Slick Products, LC 70, and Shamrock S Ranch.



Courtesy photo

Stetson and Easton Romero were happy to be competing in supercross and motocross races again in 2021, after competitions were cancelled in 2020 due to COVID-19.

## SLVH Foundation seeks gently used medical equipment

**ALAMOSA** — San Luis Valley Health Foundation is asking for gently used wheelchairs, crutches, walkers and or other medical equipment. With the supply chains still being affected by

COVID-19 any help with donations would be greatly appreciated. For questions or to make pick up or drop off arrangements, contact Kelly Gurule with the SLVH Foundation at 719-587-5707.

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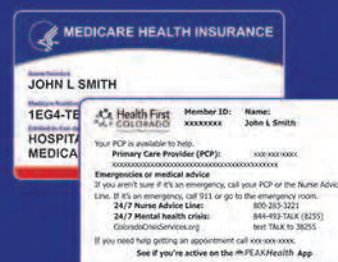
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# Winter on the Rio Grande 2021

*Valley Publishing*  
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**A Guide to Winter Recreation  
in Colorado's San Luis Valley**

## Winter destinations in San Luis Valley

**SANLUIS VALLEY** — During the winter months and holiday season it's easy to get cooped up indoors. The chilly temperatures can keep a person tethered to their couch like a hibernating bear waiting for spring. As the winter months drag on it's common to catch cabin fever. But have no fear, the San Luis Valley offers many exciting outdoor opportunities even in the winter.

The Great Sand Dunes National Park isn't just fun in the warmer months but offers loads of winter entertainment and breathtaking views. Home to the largest sand dune in North America piled at 750 ft., the dunes provide a wonderful place to go sledding. During the summer months only, sand boards work well on the grainy sand. But in the winter when the sand is covered with snow you can slide down on sand boards, plastic sleds, foam, and anything else with a slick bottom.

Another great reason to visit the sand dunes in the winter is the cooler temperatures that can make it easier to hike up the dunes. In the summer the dunes can become so hot that they burn your feet and make for an exhausting sweltering hike. Winter at the dunes is even a great time to bring your dogs as their unprotected feet will not burn walking on the sand. Also, the winter months bring fewer crowds to the dunes allowing you to enjoy the peaceful natural surroundings.

Zapata Falls, which is near the Great Sand Dunes Park, can also provide an amazing winter hike. In the winter, the falls freeze into a remarkable sculpture of ice. Although it should be noted that this hike can be dangerous and is not the best hike for beginners. The ice and snow can make conditions very



slippery and in places the ice can be thin so be careful. Hikers should know the risks and take precautions. Making sure to take their time ensuring that their foot hold is good, and they should dress appropriately for the winter conditions.

If you're feeling like more adventure, the Colorado Gator farm located near Mosca is open year-round. You can hold a baby alligator, see snakes, turtles, and other scaly creatures. You can even take your life into your own hands and sign up to take one of their gator wrestling classes which according to their website are not for the faint of heart. Complete the class and receive your very own "Certificate of Insanity."

If you're looking for a winter escape, the Sand Dunes Recreation swimming pool in Hooper offers a winter paradise. Take a dip in their wonderful geo-thermal hot springs with their big lap pool hovering at a warm 98 degrees. For an additional admission fee, you can also enjoy their 21 and over green house. Their green house has four different hot tubs which are all naturally heated with geothermal hot water. The tubs range in temperature with 98 degrees on the

low end and 110 degrees in the hottest tub. There is also a sauna and throughout the green house tropical exotic plants are grown year-round. Beer and wine are also served in the green house along with a small plates menu. Food can also be ordered from their Mile Deep Grille.

Besides swimming, the Sand Dunes Recreation area also has a golf simulator so

you can enjoy the sport when the courses are snow-covered. They also have massages available by appointment, giving you a wonderful way to relax. The pool has an adjacent RV campground that is open year-round and even tent sites for the very brave and well bundled. If you rather go glamping, they also have cabins and house options you can book ahead of time.





# Wolf Creek open full-time for 2021-22 season

BY LYNDISIE FERRELL

**WOLF CREEK** — Snow dancers across the San Luis Valley rejoiced the weekend of Dec. 11 when a much-wished-for-winter-storm hit the San Juan Mountains and brought a staggering 34 inches to the slopes of Wolf Creek Ski Area.

After a dry Fall, the resort was only open for the weekends up until after the Thanksgiving holiday and once the snow started to fall, the crew celebrated.

According to Wolf Creek Ski Resort Owner Roseann Haidorfer-Pitcher the snow that fell over the weekend was exactly what they needed.

“At first, we anticipated that this storm would produce a dry snow which wouldn’t last long if the weather turned warm, but we were pleasantly surprised as the snow began to fall, and it was wet. It filled in everything; it was so exciting to go through the storm,” she said.

Haidorfer-Pitcher said that the resort had ordered new snow-making equipment in August in hopes of being more prepared for a dry season but that the equipment was delayed in the shipping process.

“We had ordered three more snow machines that used pumps to make the snow,” Haidorfer-Pitcher said. “It would have been nice to have it at the beginning of the season, but the equipment was delayed and showed up after the storm. It was frustrating but the natural snowfall was the best.”

Other resorts throughout the state have larger snow-making machines but Wolf Creek relies heavily on natural snowfall.

“Other areas have more snow-making capabilities than we do and though we have tried to bring in more equipment at the end of the day we rely on Mother Nature for most of our snow. She did not disappoint this time,” laughed Haidorfer-Pitcher.



Courtesy of Wolf Creek Ski Area

**Wolf Creek Ski Area received 34 inches of fresh snow the weekend of Dec. 11 and had over 2,800 skiers hit the slopes that same weekend. The winter storm dropped much-needed moisture and allowed the resort to open full-time for the 2021-2022 ski season.**

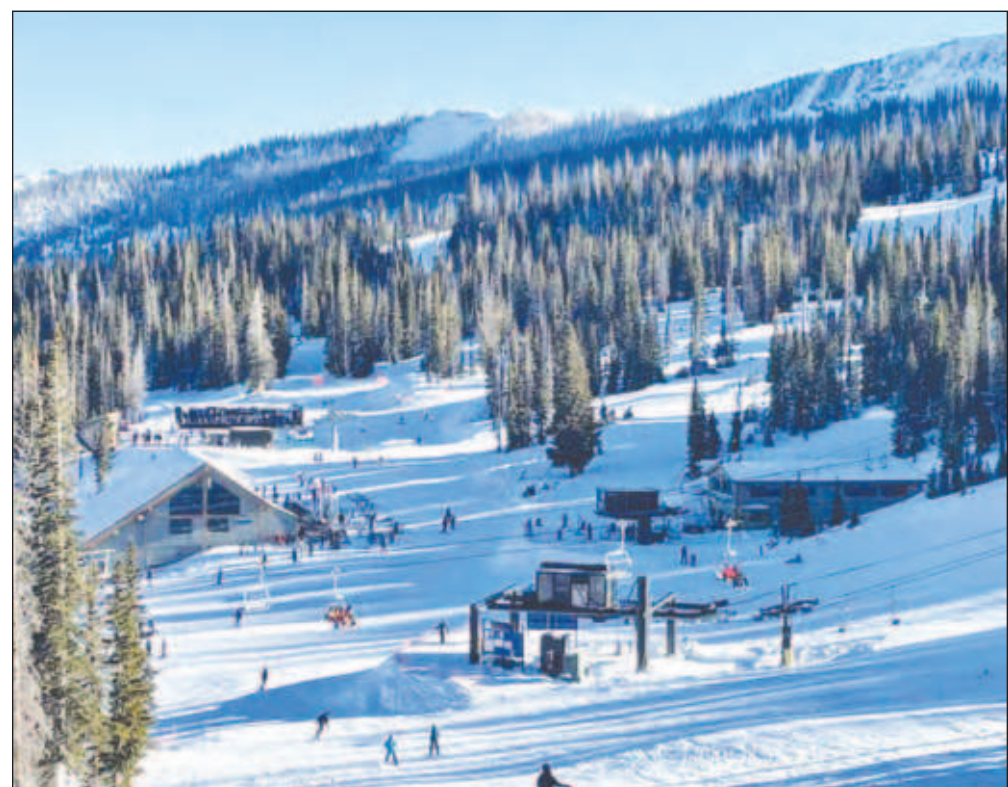
Haidorfer-Pitcher also gave a huge shout-out to everyone who did a snow dance just before the storm.

“It was great to see all the people on social media doing a snow dance for Wolf Creek,” she said. “We absolutely enjoyed seeing the videos and I guess it worked.”

The resort went from 25 percent open to full-time in a matter of hours on Friday.

“By Saturday morning, we woke up and there were just over 1,600 skiers that day. Sunday, we logged just over 1,200 skiers and our season is off to a great start,” she said.

Another storm was in the forecast for later this week and could add to the 72-inch base.



## Snowmobile trails abound around South Fork

**SOUTH FORK** — If your idea of an exciting time involves fast machines roaring through heaps of snow, check out our 255 miles of groomed trails with innumerable off-trail opportunities on wide-open ridges, rolling parks and steep climbs. The South Fork area offers access to some of Colorado’s most scenic wintertime vistas (at 12,000-plus feet) will take your breath away. It is recommended to consult local sources concerning



directions and trail conditions before riding. Most of the trails follow Forest Service roads and can be used in the winter by snowmobiles and cross-country skiers.

Some of the trails in the South Fork area:

### **PB1 - Willow Park/Del Norte Peak**

Parks and valleys are plentiful to play in and at close observation you will possibly see a variety of wildlife. Restroom and picnic tables available. Loops with PB2-Beaver Creek/Cross Creek Elevation: 8,250- 12,400ft.

### **PB2 - Beaver Creek/Cross Creek**

Parking is at far end of the reservoir, with restrooms. There is a possible 23-mile loop on FSR 359 for experienced riders only. Intercepts with PB1 for a 90-mile loop. Elevation: 8,700 - 11,500 ft.

### **PB3 - Fox Mountain/Park Creek Road**

Trailhead is 3 miles up Park Creek Road 380. 8 miles to the end of the trail, large meadows at the top to play, return on same route. Elevation: 11,530 ft.

### **PB4 - Pass Creek/Tucker Ponds**

The trail is 13 miles, with meadows to play in at 7 miles. Several side trips that are not groomed. After the big meadow at 7 miles, the remaining 6 miles have side hills and is a steep winding trail not for beginners. Elevation: 9,200 - 11,380 ft.

### **PB5 - Big Meadows**

Parking just off the highway. The first stop is 2 miles in at the lake, good ice fishing, then continues for 13 more miles, mostly trail riding, some side trails, and a few meadows. Elevation: 11,600 ft.

## READY TO SCHEDULE YOUR LOCAL APPRECIATION DAYS?



### **Rates:**

Adults \$60, Seniors \$41 & Children \$31

### **Dates:**

November: 10, 17, 29, 30

December: 1, 2, 6-9

January: 19, United Way Day (\$71)

February: 2, 9, 13

March: 6, 30

April: 3



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## South Fork is a winter outdoor-enthusiast destination

**SOUTH FORK**— South Fork is at the center of over 250 miles of trails that can be accessed through several Forest Service roads leading into the backcountry. Many of the trails that have immediate access from town or just beyond are groomed and cared for all year long.

Snowmobiling is one of the more popular activities in the area due to easy access to trails throughout the region. Places like Beaver Creek and Cross Creek offer about 23 miles of passable trails for more experienced riders and offers views of the San Juan Mountains along Forest Service Road 359.

Fox Mountain and Park Creek trails are a great way to get out in the backcountry on Park Creek Road 380. This trail leads to large open meadows that are a snowmobiler's winter playland with plenty of room to reach high speeds and while gliding over "powder."

The area offers miles of cross-country skiing trails that offer spectacular views and a chance to see abundant wildlife. Local organizations like the Powder Busters and Silver Thread Outdoor Club host weekly outings to these trails which they also

groomed throughout the winter. A free trail map is located at the South Fork Visitor Center for those who wish to learn where these hidden outings are located.

Other activities also include ice fishing at the many reservoirs in the area like Beaver Creek which is easily accessible during winter months. Other ice fishing locations include Tucker Ponds and Big Meadows Reservoir which require either snowshoes, cross-country skiing or snowmobiles to gain access, but the trip is worth the effort with lakes offering abundant fish.



# Know the symptoms of altitude sickness

According to WebMD, any time you go above 8,000 feet, you can be at risk for altitude sickness. The altitude of South Fork is 8,209 feet and Creede is situated at 8,799 feet. Sometimes called "mountain sickness," altitude sickness is a group of symptoms that can strike if you walk or climb to a higher elevation, or altitude, too quickly. The pressure of the air that surrounds you is called barometric pressure. When you go to higher altitudes, this pressure drops and there is less oxygen available.

If you live in a place that's located at a moderately high altitude, you get used to the air pressure. But if you travel to a place at a higher altitude than you're used to, your body will need time to adjust to the change in pressure.

Symptoms of altitude sickness may include headache, dizziness, nausea, vomiting fatigue and loss of energy, shortness of breath, problems sleeping and loss of appetite. Symptoms usually come on within 12 to 24 hours of reaching a higher elevation and then get better within a day or two as your body adjusts to the change in altitude.

If you have a more moderate case of altitude sickness, your symptoms might feel more intense and not improve with over-the-counter medications. Instead of feeling better as time goes on, you'll start to feel worse. You'll have more shortness of breath and fatigue. You may also have: Loss of coordination and trouble walking, a severe headache that doesn't get better with medication and a tightening in your chest.

If you develop a severe form of altitude sickness you might experience confusion, shortness of breath even at rest, inability to walk, a cough that produces a white or pink frothy substance, coma.

You'll want to climb to higher altitudes gradually. Going slowly helps your lungs get more air through deeper breaths and allows more of your red blood cells to carry oxygen to different parts of your body.

Some of the basic guidelines for altitude acclimatization are:

Start your journey below 10,000 feet. If you have to fly or drive somewhere that's higher up, stop at one destination that's lower for at least a full day before going any higher.

If you walk, hike, or climb over 10,000 feet, only go up an additional 1,000 feet per day. For every 3,000 feet you climb, rest at least a day at that height.

"Climb high and sleep low": If you have to climb over 1,000 feet in a day, make sure you come back down to a lower altitude to sleep.

Drink 3-4 quarts of water every day and make sure about 70% of your calories are coming from carbs.

Don't use tobacco, alcohol, or other medications, such as sleeping pills.

Know how to identify the first signs of altitude sickness. Immediately move to a lower elevation if you start to develop these symptoms.



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# 'Golden Pick' Tommyknocker Pond Hockey Tournament is Jan. 15-16

CREEDE — The 2022 “Golden Pick” Tommyknocker Pond Hockey Tournament is scheduled for Jan. 15 and 16, according to the tournament’s web page

This tournament will bring back childhood memories of afternoon hockey games played against friends. This annual tournament has been a huge hit, bringing the locals out to cheer on teams from all over Colorado, New Mexico, Michigan, and Texas.

The 3-on-3 round robin format ensures that everyone plays at least 2-3 games (plus tourney play), local restaurants ensure that everyone eats well, and the Tommyknocker Tavern hosts live music for evening entertainment. And hopefully this year: The Creede Repertory Theatre will be putting on a performance of their improv show, Boomtown!

Creede has two ponds just north of town that serve as the host site for this tournament. The ponds are at 8,900 feet, making this one of the highest pond hockey tournaments on earth.

Updated facilities include a warming hut, and a new Zamboni shed constructed by Carhartt and Jason Mamoa’s Pride of Gypsies back in February 2015. You will be skating beneath 800 ft. canyon walls with wildlife roaming nearby. Bonfires burn near the ponds all day, and our warming hut offers food and drinks.

Registration is from 7:30-8:30 a.m. on Saturday, Jan. 15. The first game begins at 9 a.m. each day.

For more information, visit <https://creedepondhockey.wordpress.com>.



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