

Shorts

Special enrollment for Connect for Health Insurance Exchange

STAFF REPORT

Coloradans without health insurance will be able to enroll in coverage through ConnectforHealthCO.com between Feb. 8 and May 15. Re-opening the exchanges is an effort to help uninsured Coloradans connect to affordable coverage, especially those who have lost their jobs during this economic downturn.

Prescribed burn scheduled for Rio Grande SWA

STAFF REPORT

MONTE VISTA — Woodpile burning is scheduled to take place in the coming weeks at the Rio Grande State Wildlife Area depending on weather conditions. The burning of wood debris is a cooperative project of Colorado Parks and Wildlife and the Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control.

Smoke may be visible and could persist for several days as fuels burn out. Crews will be on scene to monitor the progress throughout the process. The main objective of pile burning is to reduce hazardous fuel accumulation to protect public safety.

CPW works closely with other agencies such as the Colorado Air Pollution Control Division, the Division of Fire Prevention and Control and local authorities in developing and implementing any burning project.

For questions or concerns, contact CPW District Wildlife Manager Tyler Cerny at 719-850-6363.

Prescribed fire smoke may affect your health. For more information see www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/wood-smoke-and-health for additional information.



Today: Mostly sunny, with a high near 41. Calm wind becoming west around 5 mph in the afternoon.

Tonight: Increasing clouds, with a low around 16. South southwest wind around 5 mph.

Friday: A 30 percent chance of snow, mainly after 11am. Partly sunny, with a high near 41. South southwest wind 5 to 10 mph.

Friday night: A 20 percent chance of snow before 11pm. Partly cloudy, with a low around 17. West southwest wind 5 to 10 mph.

Saturday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 41. South southwest wind around 5 mph.

Water issues run through Saguache Town Board meeting

By PATRICK SHEA

SAGUACHE — Gathering virtually, the Saguache Town Board passed motions and approved resolutions for water usage, historic preservation, playgrounds and infrastructure during their monthly meeting on Feb. 8.

Patrick Cale provided his

maintenance department update first, noting he is still taking classes to be a certified operator for the water distribution system.

“We did a facility tour with Brett Collier, the new water operator,” Cale said. They also calibrated the sewer system, and Collier will return next week to delve deeper into the sewer.

Cale said they inventoried all the manholes around town to prevent vehicle damage, and future goals for the department include signage, extensive pothole repair and manhole ring upgrades.

Code Enforcement Officer Tina Sanchez followed next with reports of dogs at large and a few noise

complaints. Sanchez said she contacted property owners about noisy tenants and explained that owners ultimately appear in court if noise violations continue.

Town Clerk Iris Garcia opened her update with a recap of sewer and water compliance mitigation

Please see BOARD on Page 2A

Citizens have Coffee with the Chief in Center

By PATRICK SHEA

CENTER — Center Police Chief Dale “Gene” Meek welcomed more than a dozen residents for Coffee with the Chief in the basement of the Center United Methodist Church on Feb. 6. The light fare and conversation turned somber with reports of human trafficking, recent house fires, obstacles recovering addicts face and details surrounding the death of the department’s narcotics dog before Christmas.

Chief Meek described drugs and property crimes as two sides of the same coin, and he said K-9 Officer Maverick changed both dynamics in his short time on the force.

“We hit on a mobile meth lab in the truck of a car,” Meek said.

With a steady presence after that bust, the K-9 Unit drove away significant narcotics business. Even three months after Maverick chewed his way out of his pen and got hit by a truck on Highway 285, Meek said, “Our crime rates are still down.”

Like drugs and crime, Maverick and his spirit fall on two sides of the same commemorative coin. At \$10 apiece, the coins show his likeness and help fund the K-9 Unit. A 10-month-old K-9 officer

Please see COFFEE on Page 8A



Photos by Patrick Shea

Center Police Chief Dale “Gene” Meek welcomed more than a dozen residents to the basement of the Center United Methodist Church for Coffee with the Chief on Feb. 6.



Bridge work began last week, the final steps for completing the Safe Routes to School project in Center.

Rio Grande County moves to Yellow status on COVID dial

By LYNSIE FERRELL

RIO GRANDE COUNTY

— Rio Grande joined countless counties throughout the state this week in a status change on the state’s COVID-19 dial. Almost all counties in Colorado moved to lesser restrictions over the weekend per an order that was announced by Gov. Jared Polis. Rio Grande County and a majority of counties in the San Luis Valley moved to Yellow on the COVID-19 dial beginning Saturday, Feb. 6.

According to the report provided by the Rio Grande County Public Health Department it states that businesses in the county will be able to operate at 50% capacity or host up to 50 people in an establishment, whichever is the lesser number.

The county is currently at 27 active cases which is a large decrease from the previous 50 cases that was reported at the end of January. The county has also completed 716 cumulative doses till date, with total first COVID Vaccine doses at 646 and second doses at 70.

“We continue to collaborate with Rio Grande Hospital to conduct

Please see STATUS on Page 5A

RGNF hosts groundbreaking ceremony at old high school

By LYNSIE FERRELL

DEL NORTE — The Upper Rio Grande School District (URGSD) in partnership with Rio Grande National Forest Service (RGNF) held a groundbreaking ceremony on Thursday, Feb. 4, to mark the beginning of the construction phase of the new RGNF supervisor’s office located in the old Del Norte High School building. The project has been under way for some time now after the RGNF accepted the building as a gift from the URGSD two years ago.

The initiative started after the Del Norte School District was approved for the BEST grant to build a new school. During this time, the current school board and several local individuals started a repurposing committee

Please see RGNF on Page 8A



Photo by Lyndsie Ferrell

RGNF Supervisor Dan Dallas, URGSD Superintendent Chris Burr, Rio Grande Commissioner Gene Glover and Del Norte Mayor Chris Trujillo broke ground at the old Del Norte High School building Thursday, marking the start of construction for the new Rio Grande National Forest Service Supervisor’s Office.

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OBITUARIES

Alice Elaine White June 24, 1941-Jan. 28, 2021

Alice was born in Leadville, Colo., on June 24, 1941, to Delmar J. Brock and Cora LaVergn Hibbs. The silver thread and golden bowl holding her to this earth were broken on Jan. 28. She was absolutely devoted to her family and Christ Jesus. She loved deeply and with abandon.

Alice worked as convenience store clerk for many years. She never met a stranger, all who met her were instantly drawn to her kind and loving spirit.

Above all, she enjoyed love and laughter with family and friends. She lived her life by the promises of God.

She was preceded in death by her loving husband, Kenneth W. Esser, both her father and mother, brother, Joseph Estes and sister, Linda L. Webb.

She is survived by daughters, Theresa (Cliff) Edwards of Monte Vista, Rebecca (Bill) Kolb of Monte Vista, and Anna White of Del Norte, honorary daughter, Mary (Donn) Vigil of Monte Vista, as well as grandchildren, Shannon Hensley, Shelby Richardson, Helen Ross, Kate Larsen, Linda Kolb, and Alice Nye, and honorary grandson, Kris Vigil. She is also survived by many great-grandchildren, nieces and nephews, as well as sisters, Helen Wetmore of Montrose, Colo., and Roxanne



Norvell of Tenn.

2 Timothy 4:7-8 "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day and not only to me but also to all who have loved His appearing."

xCremation was selected and interment will be held graveside at the Del Norte Cemetery at a later date. To express condolences to the family, please visit www.rogersfunerals.com Rogers Family Mortuary in Monte Vista is in care of the arrangements.

Josephine 'Josie' Salazar

Josephine "Josie" Salazar passed away on Feb. 2, 2021.

Josie was born on in Fowler, Colo., on Nov. 19, 1945, to Max and Madeline Maestas.

Josie is survived by her children: Teresa (Fred), Deanna (Randy) and Anthony as well as her two grandsons, Noah and Blake.

She was preceded in death by her beloved husband, Jose "Kiko" Salazar.

Josie also leaves behind a legion of heartbroken nieces, nephews, siblings and friends who will miss her dearly.

Josie completed her education later in life and was a proud alum of Adams State University in Alamosa, Colo. She chose education as her profession and was a dedicated and innovative educator who was happiest when she was interacting with and



teaching children.

A memorial service will be held at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, her family requests that you consider a donation to Adams State University (www.adams.edu/foundation/online-donation/) or perform an act of kindness for your local school in Josie's memory.

HVCC celebrates Fabulous Friday activities

SUBMITTED ARTICLE

Happy new month! With the new month comes a change in our Fabulous Friday activities. All of February, we will be playing outside in the snow. All HVCC kiddos who attend on Fridays will be enjoying snow activities from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. It is going to be chilly, so make sure that children bring their warmest clothes. Lunch and fun activities await the kiddos at HVCC when they return. Snow activities are subject to change every Friday.

Basketball for co-ed K-2 grades and boys' 3-6 grades is coming to a close. Next Thursday, Feb. 11, will be the final session for those groups. Girls' 3-4 and 5-6 grades will start on Feb. 9 and will continue until March 5. Third-fourth grade girls' sessions are Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5-6 p.m. and the 5-6 grade girls' sessions will follow from 6-7 p.m. Information regarding the basketball skill-building sessions is located on the HVCC website.

In closing, we would like to share this week's theme, "Having a Positive Attitude." The kiddos were given positive thoughts to consider such as, "I am smart" and "I am liked." They were also prompted to respond with something positive they knew about themselves.

We are also happy to report this week's group of Breaking News children. Ms. Toni recognized Mariah for being a great helper during the painting activity. Ms. Brisa acknowledged Preston for being very respectful at basketball practice and for leading his team and Ms. Carla was impressed that Damon G. helped clean up all the balls outside without being asked. Thank you, kiddos for demonstrating ethics and good citizenship. Keep up the good work!



CRT planning for shows in 2021

STAFF REPORT

CREEDE — What a year it has been. Nearly 12 months ago, Broadway dimmed its lights and theatres around the world, including Creede Repertory Theatre, rushed to reimagine performing arts in the time of a pandemic.

Looking ahead to summer 2021, CRT is filled with hope and excitement. While the logistics are still being determined, CRT is collaborating with Silver Thread Public Health District and community partners to create a season that protects the health and wellness of company and patrons; complies with government mandates; and meets the safety standards set by Actor's Equity Association (AEA), the union of actors and stage managers.

BOARD

Continued from Page 1A

at the end of 2020 and plans for the system in 2021. Although Collier is not under contract with the town yet, he will return from Salida next week to work on the sewer system. Trustees agreed to schedule a special meeting to address water concerns.

The board approved Garcia's amended bill-payment report, CDOT report and an auditing agreement with Blair and Associates. Trustees also agreed to show support for a statewide drinking water research project and signed a water augmentation participation contract.

The board passed five resolutions to secure funding for projects. They approved a GOCO grant to Alpine Achievers for Generation Wild, a bench in Otto Mears Park,

CRT will not be moving forward with the original 2020 Summer Season lineup ("Grounded," "Fully Committed," "The Roommate," "Annie," "Oklahoma!," and "The Importance of Being Earnest"), looking instead toward a season of small-cast plays, cabarets, and more, in various outdoor locations. The season will open later in the summer than usual and likely run a little longer. Details on shows, dates, and performance locations will be announced in the spring.

CRT is scheduled to hold its usual Educational Programming in 2021, including camps, the KID Show, and Young Audience Outreach Tour in the fall. Details will be announced this spring. In the meantime, check out new online content, including Cozy Corner, Craft Time, and Season 2 of

The Adventures of Sunny & Blue — something new every weekday.

The process of getting back onstage has been frustratingly slow, but CRT hopes to provide a safe space for artists and patrons to enjoy the artistry, passion, and excitement of creating theatre.

"We're doing our part, but there are factors, like volume of cases in our region and availability of tests, outside of our control," CRT officials stated. "You can help us by wearing a mask, distancing, and following other safety protocols to help keep our community healthy and our theatre open. Thank you for all of your support through this difficult year. We say that this is 'your theatre, always,' because through thick and thin this community has always stood by CRT."

For more information, contact CRT at 719-658-2540 or by visiting its website at www.creederep.org.

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In the event the newspaper errors in publishing an obit, corrections will be made and the obit will be rerun. If the errors are on the part of the submitting party, an additional fee will be assessed. Obituaries can be emailed to: bwilliams@valleypublishinginc.com or call 719-852-3531.



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OPINION & EDITORIAL

I've fallen and can't get up!

If there is one thing Ol' Dutch has noticed of late, it's that certain activities bring about a measure of pain and suffering. There has always been some form of discomfort to any physical activity, but these days it seems the thrill of the hunt is often lost in the physical costs thereafter.

I guess there is not a one among us that can do all that we used to do. One old codger told me that "it takes him all night long to do one thing that he used to do over and over, all night long." And that pretty well sums it up for a lot of us.

And it's certainly to be expected as the old body just wears out and slows down and if you are lucky, you get to experience all the aches and pains and doctors visits associated with growing old.

Old men at least find some pleasure in looking at the young nurses in the doctors offices and I assume the old women love on the young doctors so there is at least that to look forward to.

Ol' Dutch has noticed of late just how many ads on television there are directed to the older generations. Everything from soup to nuts seems to be about how to age if not gracefully, at least sufferably. An unending trotting out of ads about Medicare, reverse mortgages, drugs that not only heal you but offer endless side effects, mobility aids, incontinent supplies and other things are strutted across the boob tube daily trying to get me to try their product. There is one advertisement that is on 24-7 and it really has Ol' Dutch riled up. It's the one for the medical assist button. You know the one? It's for older people who live alone and may need help in getting up from the floor or bathtub after falling.

Even Ol' Dutch can see the need for such things at his young age (I gotta get Miss Trixie's eye rolling looked at by the veterinarian) as the times I have fallen in the past few years getting up was not as easy as it was when I played football as a youth.

I can recall those days when we purposefully threw ourselves on the hard turf of a bare city lot and went home scraped and bleeding and were able to do that day after day all summer long. Those were certainly the best days of our lives, I do believe. For if we were to throw ourselves down on a bare dirt surface today not only would we need medical attention but probably would receive psychological assessment as well.



Trout Republic
by Kevin Kirkpatrick

Thankfully, there are these devices that a person can buy and if they do fall down, they no longer have to wait for a deaf spouse to stumble over them in the dark or their child to call some three weeks later to get help.

All they have to do is push that red button and they are connected to an operator who will send an ambulance speeding to the scene and a large bill rushing through the mail for those same services.

I guess it's all good, but I am disgusted at the advertising methods used on the media. Mostly they show some older lady having fallen down the stairs leading to a basement or lying on the floor begging for help.

Two things really bother Ol' Dutch about these scenes. Number one, who would let that old woman have to use a laundry in the basement. I mean where are her kids and if nothing else, what liability does the producer of said advertisement have in letting her go down the stairs alone?

And secondly and last but certainly not least, what kind of sicko lets a poor old lady lie there hurt and crying while they film a commercial. Folks, that is just pathetic and should be criminal.

No one should be made to suffer just for the sake of them making money selling the red buttons.

There seems to be something wrong with Miss Trixie too as she seemingly turns a blind eye to that poor lady's suffering every time the ad comes on but Ol' Dutch would be happy to get that lady a lawyer if someone can just tell me how to contact her.

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



Sonnenberg: CHSAA hurting our youth

I had the opportunity to partake in one of my favorite hometown activities this week: supporting local high school student athletes. Well, sort of. The few parents who were selected to attend the event thoughtfully videoed the events live for the rest of us to watch — thank you, parents.

I also tried to learn a little more about the reasoning for the current dictates placed on high school sports. Rules that allow only two spectators per participant, which means that a family must choose between a parent and a sibling being present to cheer on their student athlete. Very seldom now do grandparents attend, grandparents who used to be the most dedicated fans of our rural students.

What I learned is that CHSAA (Colorado High School Activities Association) is completely off its rocker, with seemingly no rhyme or reason for their decrees.

For example, basketball players must wear masks, which restricts their breathing in this strenuous sport — a clear health hazard, especially for our kids affected with asthma or other respiratory conditions. We know that is not a CDPHE rule, as even they allow both college and professional athletes to compete without these restrictions. We also know that surrounding states such as Nebraska are completely open and place no restrictions on their athletics — their students are unmasked, and their stands are full. Again, we observe a stark difference in red and blue

states' pandemic policies: red states use common sense and compassion for their students' mental and physical health, while here in Colorado Governor Polis and CHSAA force our kids to play "masketball" and ignore the pleas of our high school students for stability and normalcy.

How about wrestling? CHSAA banned tournaments but allow dual matches — which means that two schools can have a competition in the same gym, but not multiple schools. Sounds reasonable, right? Except CHSAA, the big school association, doesn't understand that many of these small schools may only have five or six wrestlers who could participate in tournaments, already limiting the number of participants.

But no team will travel to such a small school for a duel if they only have five wrestlers to compete with. So, several rural schools still come to one community and utilize multiple gyms to wrestle each other all on the same Saturday. But somehow all these wrestlers competing against each other all in one day is different than the forbidden tournament.

What are we doing to our youth and families, our schools and communities?

In rural Colorado, schools are the center of our community. Along the I-25 corridor, one might go to a comedy club or dance hall in the evening. Out in God's country, the community goes to sporting events. When rural schools travel to play

urban schools, there always seem to be more spectators from the visiting rural school side of the gym than the hometown crowd.

If I can sign a liability waiver and then climb on a bucking bull in a public rodeo arena, or better yet sign that release and go play at a trampoline park, why can't we sign the same waiver and attend a sporting event to support our own kids?

Of course, CHSAA would never go for such a common-sense approach. CHSAA's nonsensical decrees are hurting our small-town communities, but rural schools have options if they band together to stand up to this heavy-handed association. Perhaps it is time for us in rural Colorado to use our own God-given common rural senses to create our own association, a Rural Sports Association operated and run by rural schools to make decisions that are best for our schools, students, and communities. Let CHSAA run their big-school policies, and we will operate an association that works for rural Colorado's smaller schools. It certainly can't be that hard if bureaucrats within CHSAA can manage.

Why do schools belong to CHSAA? Surely it isn't just because they crown the state champion in sports. We don't need CHSAA to dictate what our communities and our students need — we can do everything they do ourselves, and the vast majority of rural schools could do it better.

Jerry Sonnenberg, Colorado Senate District 1

CENTER POST-DISPATCH

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STATUS

Continued from Page 1A

as many large vaccination clinics as we can as quickly as possible. As long as we receive adequate shipments of vaccines, we are hoping to host one every Friday in February. When vaccine eligibility opens up to educators and those 65-69 (2-8-21), we need to move from bi-weekly to weekly in order to administer the vaccine," said Rio Grande County Public Health Department Director Dr. Kolawole Bankole.

Last Friday, Feb. 5, the public health department, the Rio Grande

Hospital and other health officials held another mass vaccination clinic and were able to administer a total of 435, with 325 first doses and 110 second doses to people 70 and older.

Dr. Bankole stated in his report that the clinic and the hospital hope to see an increase in vaccine doses coming to the Valley this week.

"What we have coming down the pipeline — as long as everything is confirmed by Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, we are expecting up to 100 first

doses in the pipeline for this coming week," Bankole said.

Health officials are also still working on testing strategies and targeted testing continues at SLV Health, Valley Wide Health

Systems, Rio Grande Hospital and Rio Grande Hospital Clinics.

"Rio Grande Public Health is partnering with Rio Grande Hospital to order the diagnostic COVID tests they need to complete

target testing objectives in coming days," Bankole said.

For more information or to read specific guidelines for Rio Grande County, please visit www.riograndecounty.org



Courtesy photo

The Rio Grande Hospital in partnership with Rio Grande Public Health Department held their second mass vaccination clinic on Friday at the Del Norte Field House. The clinic offered 426 people the opportunity to get vaccinated with the COVID vaccination. Of the 426, 110 received their second dose.

DIAL CHANGES
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State Ground Water Use rules to take effect

By PATRICK SHEA

MONTE VISTA — For two hours, a cascade of Zoom presenters on the final day of the 39th Annual Southern Rocky Mountain Agricultural Conference and Trade Show explained different aspects of the San Luis Valley water situation.

Thursday's, Feb. 4, updates included historical data and projected forecasts, but water users on the call also heard about pressing deadlines. The 2015 Ground Water Use Rules fully take effect on March 15. Some well owners, for example, may not realize how new regulations will affect them this spring.

Colorado Division of Water Resources Division 3 Engineer Craig Cotten shared the most news, sandwiched between Rio Grande Water Conservation District (RGWCD) updates and a final presentation opposing export out of the basin. Presenters shuffled on the fly to accommodate connectivity and stay on schedule.

The participant list on the call showed 68 connections when Amber Pacheco began by noting that RGWCD General Manager Cleave Simpson and the program manager for Subdistricts 4 and 5, Chris Ivers, would not present as scheduled. Ivers was leading a special Subdistrict board meeting at the same time. The program manager for Subdistricts 2, 3 and 6, Pacheco has already been absorbing some of Simpson's duties since he won the Colorado State Senate District 35 seat. She presented his legislative update while he attended committee meetings in Denver. According to Pacheco, draft legislation called the "30 by 30 Resolution to Save Nature" sets a goal of measuring meaningful improvements in conservation across the country before 2030. Pacheco said she was "not familiar with the legislation, so I can't answer many questions. But looking over a short summary, it looks like there may be some potential economic opportunities for producers in the Valley who are looking to participate in conservation efforts."

Pacheco mentioned retiring wells, planting cover crops and conducting soil projects as examples of these efforts, "just to name a few."

Before moving on to updates for Subdistricts 2, 3 and 6, Pacheco encouraged participants to contact the San Luis Valley Ecosystem Council Director Christine Canaly for legislative details — 719-589-1518 or info@slvec.org.

In April, Subdistricts 2 and 3 will complete the second year of Annual Replacement Plans (ARPs). "So far," Pacheco said, "we've successfully replaced all stream depletions to

all river systems as required under our plans." Pacheco added that Subdistrict 6 is currently in its first year, and "they have successfully replaced all their depletions to date."

Subdistricts 3 and 6 operate with sustainability requirements defined in the 2015 Ground Water Use Rules. They are currently within 78% of requirements and look sustainable for a while, although continued drought conditions may threaten the 22% cushion.

Pacheco closed by addressing water users in Subdistricts 2, 3 and 6 who received letters from DWR regarding commercial non-exempt well uses. If they want to become a subdistrict member, they need to contact Pacheco immediately. The customary deadline for receiving subdistrict applications is the first of December for the following year. But the DWR letters mailed in January.

The contract deadline for Subdistricts 4 and 5 is Feb. 15. Although they are no longer soliciting new members, they're looking for wet water sources on San Luis Creek and Saguache Creeks. They are also seeking Well Injury Payments (WIPs or "forbearance") on Kerber Creek and Crestone Creek. Partial and full-year Annual Replacement Plans are due. Plans covering March 15 to April 30 are due on March 1, and the annual plan starting in May is due April 15.

The same deadlines apply to Subdistrict 1 water users, according to Program Manager Marisa Fricke. Fricke celebrated 2020, the year with the highest enrollment in subdistrict history. Of the 399 well owners who received letters from DWR, 300 are in the Subdistrict 1 response area. Fricke encouraged owners to reply before making conclusions. One letter recipient called DWR for clarification and resolved the issue right away. Aerial photographs showed a structure on his land, but he explained it did not cover a well and he was removed from the list.

DWR District Engineer Cotten recapped water history from 1938 to present while showing forecasts for hotter, dryer conditions this year. Throughout his update, he referred to the dry years of 2002, 2018 and 2020.

As of Feb. 3, the Snow Water Equivalent for the Upper Rio Grande looks promising at 107%. But runoff forecasts are low. None reach 100% of average as of Feb. 1, and the San Antonio River meandering into New Mexico and back into Colorado ranks lowest among forecasts at 58%.

Referring to letters some well owners received, Cotten reiterated new groundwater rules about to take effect. Wells permitted for domestic drinking and sanitation only will be subject to the Rio Grande rules,

which means they will have to cover depletions by joining a subdistrict or presenting an augmentation plan. They can contact DWR for more information.

Closing out the water presentations, SLV Water Conservation District Manager Heather Dutton described opposition to the fifth water export proposal from the San Luis Valley. Previous proposals — San Marcos Pipeline, American Water Development Inc. (AWDI), Stockman's Water and Sustainable Water Resources — failed. The current pitch from Renewable Water Resources (RWR) does not include

water court or permit filings to date, although marketing activities continue.

The RWR website (renewablewaterresources.com) provides background and objectives about the proposal. Dutton encouraged people to compare the RWR website with protectsanluisvalleywater.com and the Protect San Luis Valley Water Facebook page to compare data points.

The depth (and salinity) of the water has been disputed since geologist Phil Emery hinted at two billion acre-feet stored in the deposits in 1971. He later explained his miscalculation, but

the billion-acre-foot notion persists. Meanwhile, all the Valley water has already been allocated. Two ditches carry water from the Sangre de Cristo mountains to the Wet Mountain Valley between May and July, approximately 1,063 acre-feet a year. The rest heads downstream.

All the presenters encouraged participants to join Subdistrict meetings and expand research. On the heels of economic development and crop storage discussions earlier in the morning, presenters reiterated the value of two-way communication. Water users understand the issues and can elevate discussions.

Genome editing for potato breeding

By STEPHEN JIRON

MONTE VISTA — As part of Southern Rocky Mountain Agricultural Conference and Trade Show day one presentations, Assistant Professor of Soil and Crop Sciences at Colorado State University Dr. Stephen Pearce, presented on the topic of Genome Editing for Colorado Potato Breeding.

Science has come a long way quickly. Using sophisticated techniques, it's possible to edit the genome of crop species to influence targeted changes to create more hardy and desirable lines in potatoes specifically. But the technology is not restricted to just crop or ranch species, scientists are currently using those same techniques to help battle human genetic conditions.

The story on slicing into the potato began back in 2011 when the potato genome was sequenced. The potato genome is 840 million base pairs long which is no small undertaking. But it is possible using a relatively new tool in the scientific toolbox in CRISPR Cas9.

More specifically, CRISPR technology was adapted from the defense mechanisms of bacteria and other single-celled microorganisms. Said organisms use CRISPR-derived RNA and various Cas proteins, including Cas9, to repel viruses and

other foreign bodies. Primarily, the complex chops up and destroys the DNA of foreign invaders. When these components are used in genome editing they become a cut and paste method that allows for the manipulation of genes.

"You've got this guidance system where you can move enzymes exactly where you want to go according to just a short stretch of DNA that you can attach with this complex. And you take that system out of bacteria and put it into other organisms so that you can make targeted changes in specific parts of the genome that might be beneficial for that organism" said Pearce.

Using agrobacteria, which is known for its ability to transfer short sections of DNA into developing plant tissue, desirable traits are transferred into young fresh plant tissue through infection using CRISPR. The infection will then hopefully transfer the changes into the young cells. From there regeneration is attempted, with a goal of growing the plant from cells. Then if the process was a success, all the cells of the new plant would contain the CRISPR-Cas9.

They are continued to be grown until they become self-sustaining hopefully containing the genome editing.

The final step is checking their work

and making sure that the changes have been made and whether the desired effects are expressed.

An area where the process is already being applied is in the starch biosynthesis pathway of the potato which dictates the mixture of amylose and amylopectin in the tuber. Amylose and amylopectin are natural starches in potatoes, the premier is unbranched or resistant starch meaning it would be an insoluble fiber and the latter would be branched starch or soluble fiber.

According to Pearce, by using CRISPR to change the level of the branched and unbranched starches in the tuber, the viscosity of those products would be affected.

Though the possibilities don't end there, Pearce went on to outline other changes possible with CRISPR.

Another possible change would be to suppress the Polyphenol Oxidase (PPO) enzyme which is responsible for browning in plants which would be a largely consumer-targeted approach.

The method could also be used to battle Potato Virus Y as well as to create herbicide-resistant lines.

There is cause for optimism for those in Pearce's lab as they have been able to successfully edit the potato genome. They are continuing with experiments.

Practical Ways to Live in God's Kingdom

During His ministry on Earth, Jesus' message was, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near" (Matthew 4:17 NIV). And throughout the New Testament, there are scriptures about the Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Heaven.

This kingdom isn't one that we see with our natural eyes, but it's more important than the physical world around us that we do see. That's why the apostle Paul prayed for the Ephesians "that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people" (Ephesians 1:18 NIV).

The eyes of our heart see things by faith in God as we come to believe His Word more than what we see and feel in the natural world around us. And as we believe what God says more strongly than anything else, we begin to experience the promises of God—Kingdom living.

Benefits of Living in the Kingdom of God

One of the most important things we need to believe by our faith in God is the knowledge that He loves us and wants to fill us with "all the fullness of God" (Ephesians 3:17-19). Romans 8 says that "in all things God works for the good of those who love him" (v. 28) and "we are more than conquerors through him who loved us" (v. 37).

Being "more than conquerors" means that we know we've won the battle before it even starts. And when we're walking through it, we have assurance that it's going to end well. When difficult times come in my life, I often say, "This is going to end well." I believe I will know something I didn't know before and I'll be a better person than I was before.

We can encourage ourselves to stay in faith by realizing there is a lot going on in our lives that we can't see. I like to remind myself that just because I may not see anything happening in my circumstances, it doesn't mean nothing is happening. God is always working as I put my faith in Him, and He does a lot before I actually see the results.

Set Your Mind to See with Your Heart

In order to stay in faith and live in the Kingdom of God, we need to keep it in mind more consistently. Colossians 3:2-3 says to "set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God."

Real life is found in Christ, by having a personal relationship with Him, receiving Him as Savior and trusting that as you confess your sin and give Him your heart, you are born again (2 Corinthians 5:17, 21). In Christ, you are a new creation and you have right standing with God. He is not mad at you, and He not only forgives your sins, but He forgets them; He removes them from you "as far as the east is from the west" (Psalm 103:12).

When you really know this in your heart, you can live by faith and experience Kingdom living here on Earth! You can have God's peace that surpasses your understanding and be anxious for nothing in every situation (Philippians 4:6-7). You can be "filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy" (1 Peter 1:8).

You can know that "the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world" (1 John 4:4) and you can do everything He is calling you to do through Christ who strengthens you (Philippians 4:13).



Living by Faith in God's Kingdom

Hebrews 11:1 says faith "is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see." Having faith is easy until you're tempted to give in to doubt and unbelief. A lot of doubt and unbelief comes by paying too much attention to what we see and feel, rather than believing what God says about who He is and what He wants to do in our lives.

I want to encourage you to stir up your faith! Spend time with God in prayer. Study the scriptures in this article and look up others that help you get a better perspective of the life God has planned for you.

Choose to believe that something good is going to happen to you and through you as God works in your life. This is the key to actually living in His Kingdom more than the world around you—by faith!

For more on this topic, order Joyce's three-CD series *The Invisible Kingdom*. You can also contact us to receive our free magazine, *Enjoying Everyday Life*, by calling (800) 727-9673 or visiting www.joycemeyer.org.

Joyce Meyer is a New York Times bestselling author and founder of Joyce Meyer Ministries, Inc. She has authored 120 books, including *BATTLEFIELD OF THE MIND* and her newest devotional *QUIET TIMES WITH GOD (Faith Words)*. She hosts the *Enjoying Everyday Life* radio and TV programs, which air on hundreds of stations worldwide. For more information, visit www.joycemeyer.org.

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Rio Grande Savings and Loan Association changes name

PUBLIC NOTICES

By REBECCA COPLEY
MONTE VISTA — Rio Grande Savings and Loan Association is changing its name to, “RG Bank.”

The establishment has seen a few name changes since it first opened in 1905. When it originally opened it was called, “Monte Vista Building Association.” In 1963 they changed the name to, “Monte Vista Savings and Loan Association.”

In 1974 they became, “Rio Grande Savings and Loan Association.” And now in 2021, they are changing their name again to, “RG Bank, a Savings and Loan Association.”

Which they plan to market as RG Bank.

When asked what prompted this new name change President and CEO Shon Davis answered saying, “Many years ago, a savings and loan operated differently than a bank. Over the years, the rules and regulations have changed and now we can offer products and services that a bank can. We want to send that message, that we can offer products and services you will find at any bank, to our current customers and to the communities we serve.”

Davis also made it clear that this

new name is strictly for marketing purposes.

“This name change is strictly for marketing purposes,” Davis said. “We have not sold. We are not merging. We will remain a mutual form of ownership, there will be no stock issuance.”

Davis also shared that customers will still be able to use their existing checks and debit cards.

“We will be issuing new debit cards with the new name and logo, but do not have confirmation on the date. Until then, the existing cards will work. ACH transactions into and out of their account that are set up will also continue to work,” said Davis.

State rules will require the formal name to be “RG Bank, a Savings and Loan Association,” but the

shortened RG Bank will be used for marketing purposes.

“Our annual Meeting of Members is Feb. 10,” Davis said. “Members have to approve the formal name change at this meeting. Once members approve the name change, we will have to gain State of Colorado approval. However, for marketing purposes, we can begin to use RG Bank quickly and customers and community will begin to see the changes almost immediately.”

Saguache County Sales Tax Grants now available!

The Saguache County Board of Commissioners will be taking Grant Applications for Saguache County Sales Tax Grants until 3:00PM, Friday, February 12, 2021.

To be eligible grant applications must be for either: Emergency Services/Public Health and Safety; Youth and Senior programs, projects, or organizations; or Renewable Energy projects/Business Opportunities and Job Creation.

Grant applications are available on our website at saguachecounty.net/administration -see “sales tax grant applicationform5” or you can contact the Saguache County Administration office at 719-65 5-2231 to request a copy of the grant application.

No. 1588 published in the Center Post Dispatch, Thursday, February 11, 2021.



The new RG Bank logo.

South Fork Chamber rides to promote local businesses

Board took the Pronghorn Shuttle from South Fork to Alamosa

STAFF REPORT
SOUTH FORK — The South Fork Chamber of Commerce Board took a ride on Thursday, Feb. 4, on the new Pronghorn Shuttle from South Fork to Alamosa, with the aim of highlighting the newest Chamber member — The Chaffee Shuttle.

The company’s Pronghorn Shuttle travels from South Fork to Alamosa every Thursday — stopping along the way in Del Norte, Monte Vista, Center, Hooper and Mosca — at a cost of only \$5 per rider.

“It’s a great way to get to any of those towns without having to drive,” said driver Richard Duran. “If you have a doctor’s appointment, need to shop or want to have lunch or even visit a friend, it’s inexpensive and convenient.”

Duran is more like an Uber driver than a bus driver, catering to passenger’s special requests, such as lunch in downtown Alamosa

and then shopping at Walmart or getting dropped off and picked up at a doctor’s office. He provides riders with his cell phone number so they can call for the pick-up location and time.

The Pronghorn Shuttle is one of several routes through the Chaffee Shuttle, which expanded its routes from Salida and Buena Vista to include San Luis Valley towns. The Pronghorn Shuttle is the newest SLV route.

The South Fork Chamber Board — including administrator Suz Phillip, president L. Van Osdol and board members Ruthanne Johnson and Elizabeth Secor — held its February meeting on the shuttle as a way of supporting and learning more about the service, with the bonus of having a day to shop, eat lunch in Alamosa and conduct Chamber business while taking in the stunning San Luis Valley vistas along the drive.

Van Osdol and Secor ended their ride in Monte Vista, while Phillips and Johnson continued to Alamosa.

“We had a blast,” said Johnson, who works as marketing manager

at the Rio Grande Club. “Mr. Duran was a great host, and it was so nice to kick back and enjoy the ride.”

Alamosa highlights included Happy Mountain Antiques, Treasure Alley gift store, Alamosa Home and Mattress and Firedworks Gallery, which offers original artwork by local artists.

Johnson and Phillips ate lunch at the Rubi Slipper and happily discovered the restaurant’s “Adams State University Special” — two tacos and a cup of green chili for \$5.

“The food was delicious,” Johnson said. “We couldn’t have had a better Board meeting, or at least one that was so much fun.”



Courtesy photo Chaffee Shuttle’s Pronghorn route travels from South Fork to Alamosa and stops in between each Thursday. The South Fork Chamber of Commerce Board rode the shuttle on Feb. 4.

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San Luis Valley Scoreboard Basketball 2021-2021

Girls

Centauri 52	Durango 49
Del Norte 46	Hoehne 26
Pagosa Springs 36	Alamosa 17
Center 54	Sierra Grande 50
Pagosa Springs 44	Sargent 20
Centauri 66	Delta 55
Antonito 41	Centennial 40
Sierra Grande 50	Mountain Valley/Moffat 40
Sangre de Cristo 39	Cotopaxi 28
Pagosa Springs 41	Del Norte 30
Alamosa 59	Gunnison 25
Sierra Grande 52	Antonito 39
Cotopaxi 56	Creede 18
Sangre de Cristo 57	Centennial 18
Centauri 59	Rye 57
Center 46	Crested Butte 43
Del Norte 47	South Park 12
Sanford 51	Monte Vista 15
Sargent 52	Trinidad 13
Delta 58	Alamosa 19

Boys

Centauri 54	Durango 46
Del Norte 50	Hoehne 24
Alamosa 41	Pagosa Springs 31
Center 48	Sierra Grande 39
Pagosa Springs 54	Sargent 8
Centauri 55	Delta 37
Antonito 72	Centennial 27
Sangre de Cristo 58	Cotopaxi 47
Sierra Grande 62	Mountain Valley/Moffat 41
Pagosa Springs 38	Del Norte 27
Gunnison 57	Alamosa 39
Sangre de Cristo 59	Centennial 23
Cotopaxi 64	Creede 47
Sierra Grande 52	Antonito 34
Centauri 72	Rye 36
Crested Butte 38	Center 26
Del Norte 49	South Park 33
Sanford 50	Monte Vista 45
Trinidad 37	Sargent 26
Alamosa 54	Delta 50

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COFFEE

Continued from Page 1A

in training named Kit is on schedule to serve narcotics patrol in May.

With the loss of Maverick, Meek is accelerating the program to effectively be one dog ahead in the future. With two fully trained dogs, the unit can continue uninterrupted if one dies or is injured. They can also begin training a third dog and sell another.

Establishing one "imprint," such as narcotics detection, can take about a year and cost between \$1,000 and \$2,000. Secondary imprints for pursuit and other tasks don't require as much time, yet they increase the value of the dog. Fully trained dogs sell for upward of \$15,000.

Meek followed with a recent story of a young Center woman engulfed in human trafficking. When she was

under 18 years old, enticements in Denver drew her from Center, followed by social media posts from California after she became an adult.

A man named "Prince Charming" joined her online invitations, and the enticements were direct enough to lead to his arrest in California. The young woman from Center has been reunited with her mother.

Meek said the need "to belong" drives human trafficking, not an unmarked abduction van. Young boys and girls without food, housing, basic services and a group to which they belong receive enticements that lead to a sense of belonging.

Like a later presentation about recovering addicts interacting with law enforcement, the need to belong can set the foundation

of a relationship built on drugs or prostitution. And like suicide, presenters shared, similar signs show in vulnerable teens.

In accordance with new Colorado law, Center Police Department officers will start wearing new body cameras Chief Meek purchased after comparing technology. Battery packs ensure 12 hours of operation. The units are less than two square inches, capturing a fairly narrow angle and adequate audio.

Meek said the devices are good for keeping everyone honest. He can replay recordings with staff later to review and improve conduct. Also, drivers reportedly update their honesty when they understand that the camera and microphone are in operation.



Photo by Patrick Shea

The Center Police Department's K-9 Unit lost Maverick (pictured on coin) before Christmas after months of service and significant results reducing crime.

RGNF

Continued from Page 1A

dedicated to finding a way to repurpose the old school buildings rather than having them demolished. In this fashion, the school was able to save an exponential amount of money as well as offer some great opportunities to local organizations including the RGNF.

The groundbreaking ceremony kicked off with keynote speaker and Public Affairs Officer Gregg Goodland who welcomed everyone in attendance. Several key players in the project were attending the ceremony by Zoom as well as a small group of individuals who were able to attend in person. "I really appreciate everyone taking their time to come out and help us celebrate this very important milestone for us. This is a groundbreaking ceremony to mark the beginning of the construction phase of our new supervisor's office and our move from Monte Vista to Del Norte," said Goodland.

Goodland welcomed guests from the URGSD including school board President Neal Walters, board member Bridget Kreutzer, Del Norte Chamber representative Will Kreutzer as well as Superintendent Chris Burr. Others that were not in attendance were members from the RGNF including Tom Malecek Former RGNF Deputy Forest Supervisor, Shoshana Cooper Former acting RGNF Deputy Forest Supervisor, Andrew Peterson Lands and Realty Specialist RGNF Patricia Hesch Regional Land Ownership Adjustment Program Manager who all were instrumental in making it possible for the project to finally get off the ground.

Goodland also recognized those who were attending via Zoom which included, Meg Sullivan Forest Engineer, Doug Wise Regional Engineer, Todd Michael Regional Mechanical Engineer, Roger Pritchett Regional Architect and Christina Schofield Contracting Officer.

"It is a really exciting time for us. This is the final phase of construction for our new supervisor's office. Some real big changes are about to start, and people will see some portions of this building getting blown out and remodeled. It will be really cool. I have set up a webpage that will allow people to track the construction as it moves forward and if you haven't seen that yet, please come visit."

Goodland welcomed RGNF Supervisor Dan Dallas to the podium for a few words, "This has been a long, long process to get to this milestone. It has been a complex endeavor to do this. Our agency is accustomed to getting bare land and when we said we were being gifted a building, it came as a shock. There was a bunch of perseverance by a whole bunch of people both within and outside our agency but particularly Chris Burr and the school board for just



Photos by Lyndsie Ferrell

Rio Grande National Forest Service Supervisor Dan Dallas gives his thanks to countless people who made the new Supervisor's Office in Del Norte a reality.

hanging with us."

Burr was the next to speak, "What a wonderful and exciting time for the Del Norte community. This is without question, the second-best groundbreaking that I have attended, the new school being the first. I am happy to speak on behalf of the current school board, and the previous board for working to make this a reality. Neal Walters, Bridget Kreutzer, Veronica

Public Affairs Officer Gregg Goodland welcomed a small crowd of key people to a groundbreaking ceremony in Del Norte last Thursday.

Climey, Keith Brown, Cory Off, Donna Velasquez all played roles to keeping this alive over the years. Thank you all for tireless efforts and faith in this project."

At the end of the ceremony, Del Norte Mayor Chris Trujillo, Chris Burr, Rio Grande District 3 Commissioner Gene Glover and Dan Dallas used shovels to mark the occasion. The remodel is expected to finish in the fall of 2022.

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Supplement to The Monte Vista Journal, Center Post-Dispatch, The Conejos County Citizen, The Mineral County Miner, The South Fork Times, and The Del Norte Prospector.

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Courtesy photos

Pictured on the left is Mike Bickelhaupt, owner of Colorado Ice Works, and on the right, employee Walter Ross. Colorado Ice Works created and donated an ice sculpture to healthcare workers at SLV Health's Regional Medical Center during the Rio Frio Ice Fest on Jan. 29 in Alamosa.

Colorado Ice Works 'thanks' frontline workers

STAFF REPORT
ALAMOSA — Colorado Ice Works, in its delivery of sculptures to the annual Alamosa Rio Frio Ice Fest, wanted to do something "above and beyond," and they created and

donated a beautiful bouquet of flowers suspended in mid-ice with a heartfelt "Thank You" to the frontline healthcare workers at SLV Health's Regional Medical Center.

"The donation came at a perfect

time to boost the morale of our hard-working staff," commented Roberta Bean, Chief Nursing Officer of SLVH, noting that the nurses have been praising this heartwarming gesture.

SLV Health partners with the Ala-

mosa Parks and Recreation each year to sponsor one of the downtown ice sculptures to offer something unique and fun for the whole family each January.

Along with a 5K Rio Frio race, a

bicycle fat tire race has been added to the festivities. Due to careful planning during a pandemic, some of the normally "crowded" events are being held virtually this year, but the sculptures were in place for everyone's enjoyment.

Believe it or not

Do you believe in ghosts? How 'bout angels? Miracles? Taro cards? I grew up believin' in Heaven and all its assorted angelic inhabitants and their counterparts in the singed black hats. Reincarnation wasn't taught in Sunday School but we were encouraged to believe that souls existed. So, with this sort of background it was easy for me to accept ghosts. Especially when I saw the 'ghost of Yankee Bill Summit.'

This experience happened many years ago, but I was a full grown man with a full grown moustache. It was a crisp October and Lee and I had driven to Yankee Bill in northern Nevada. We and the cowboys had worked cows all day. Since we still had another days work we stayed over at the old sheep headquarters high up in those beautiful mountains.

That evening Antonio had cooked up a great Basque supper; friend sweet peppers, spuds,



codfish, dutch oven bread and his special chicken fried steak. We sat around the table in the company of Ten High and Vino Fino, smoking and getting beat at checkers by Juan Garay.

It was cold and a moonless night when we retired. Lee and I took a room right off the dining area. We layed out our rolls on a couple of cots and waited for everyone to hit the sack. The wood floor of this old sheep headquarters carried each footstep like it was next to ya.

Late into the night Lee started talkin' in his sleep and woke me. He rolled over and shut up but someone was standin' over me. I strained to see him by the starlight. He was pullin' his shirt over his head so I couldn't see his face but he had on chinks, boots and big Mexican spurs.

I stared at him hard and I could see the dresser behind him, through him. I sat up to get a better look. I realized I was wide awake. I said, "What are you doin' here?" He didn't answer so I swiped at him. He jumped back but his boots didn't make a sound on the wood floor.

He stayed in the room as long as I stared at him. Finally I lay on my back, closed my eyes and willed myself to sleep.

Now, cowboys are a superstitious lot so I didn't say much next mornin'. I made a few inquiries whether any old buckaroos had died up there. Nobody knew. Nobody but me, I guess. I know. I know 'cause I've seen him... the ghost of Yankee Bill.

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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Upper Rio Grande School joins Valley in allowing spectators at sporting events

By **LYNDSIE FERRELL**

DEL NORTE — The Upper Rio Grande School District (URGSD) announced last week that they will begin allowing up to 50 people inside the gymnasium to watch sporting events effective immediately. According to a statement released by Del Norte High School Athletic Director Richie Madrid, the school will be allowing two people per athlete to come and watch games when playing at home.

“CDPHE has stated that we do not need to include players, coaches, officials, and game workers in the 50-person capacity limit. So, with that being clarified by CDPHE, we will be allowing 50 spectators in the gym for each game. Each player, home and visitor, will be allowed 2 guests. As for Del Norte staff who would like to watch the game, you will be allowed to watch the game from the commons area where we are allowed to have up to 50 people. Games that are played on the main court will continue to be live streamed on the NFHS Network (nfhsnetwork.com). We will continue to keep you updated on any changes to our capacity level as basketball and wrestling season progresses,” wrote Madrid.

This comes as a huge change for the school after the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year when at first it seemed as though the state was not going to allow sporting events for the duration of the school year. Several school officials state-

wide gathered and worked with CDPHE to get approval for sports like volleyball and basketball which only just started a few weeks ago.

“We have had massive struggles working with CDPHE to allow basketball this season, so being able to have spectators in the gym was a big win,” said URGSD Superintendent Chris Burr.

Burr continued to state that the season has been difficult on players due to the mask mandate that requires players to wear masks during games.

“I am a pro-mask advocate as are many in this district but having athletes wear masks while they play sports seems over the top to me,” Burr said. “We will continue to meet state guidelines for the chance to have our students active in sports, but I think that some of the restrictions need to be reconsidered.”

Due to the new school in Del Norte, the URGSD will also be allowing 50 people to watch games from the front commons room located just outside the gym.

“We are very fortunate here at this district because we have room for more than the allotted 50-person limit. Our commons area has a glass wall separating it from the gym so teachers and staff who wish to come and watch games can do so without taking away from the parents, family and friends that are watching the game in the gym,” said Burr.



Contributed photo

The Upper Rio Grade School District is now able to allow spectators at school athletic events up to 50 people.

Some Valley schools are not as fortunate due to the limited space. CDPHE guidelines state that spectators of no more than 50 must be 25 feet away from the nearest player which is triple what is required outside of sporting events when considering the 6-foot rule.

“It’s tough. It’s tough on students, tough on parents, teachers

and staff,” Burr said. “We are trying to follow guidelines, but they change rapidly, and it makes it very hard.”

Monte Vista School District Superintendent Scott Wiedeman is also allowing spectators at sporting events in accordance with state guidelines.

“We are doing alright so far with

basketball this season,” Wiedeman said. “We have a boys game, allow 50 people, clean the gym and then host the girls game. It is a lot of work, but it worth it to be able to offer sports for our students.”

For more information, contact respective schools prior to attending. The URGSD can be reached at 719-657-4040.

Monte Vista Rotary accepting applications for Dick Boyce Memorial Book Scholarship

STAFF REPORT

MONTE VISTA — The Monte Vista Rotary Club is once again offering the Dick Boyce Memorial Book Scholarship to a qualifying high school senior

from either the Monte Vista or Sargent high schools. It is also open to a Monte Vista Rotary member’s child who is a graduating senior attending a high school elsewhere in the San Luis Valley. One scholarship is awarded annually. The application deadline is April 6.

“We strongly encourage all Monte Vista and Sargent high school seniors to apply for this scholarship opportunity,” says Rotary Club President Gene Farish. “We really want to have a strong slate of candidates to choose from.”

This scholarship is designed to pay book fees for a 2021 graduating high school senior who will be attending either Adams State University or Trinidad Jr. College on a full-time basis. More specifically, it will pay book fees for up to and including the sum of \$500 per year for a total of four consecutive years.

It is eligible for Adams State University for four consecutive years or Trinidad Jr. College for two years and then Adams State

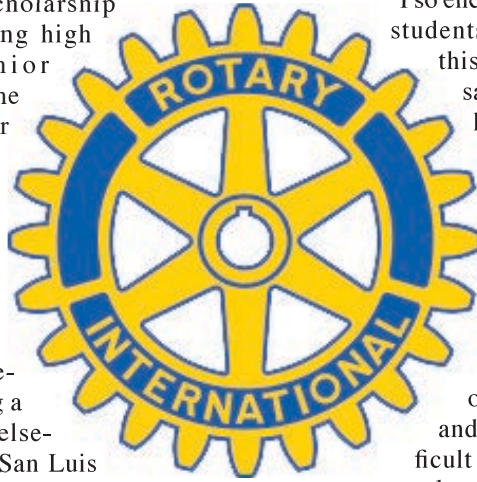
University for the subsequent two years if the student transfers to Adams State University from Trinidad Jr. College.

“I so encourage eligible students to apply for this scholarship,” said Gracie Burkhardt, 2019 scholarship recipient. “This scholarship has financially helped me so much with the purchase of my books, and it is not a difficult application to complete.”

Dick Boyce was a very active Rotarian from the Sargent area who believed in his local community and the education of its youth.

The Monte Vista Rotary is a civic club that has been in existence since 1920, serving the Monte Vista community in many ways. They annually complete two highway clean-ups, a cemetery clean-up, and support financially many other community projects throughout the year. The Ski Hi Stampede BBQ is the club’s largest fundraiser.

For more information, contact either the Monte Vista or Sargent high school councilors or contact Monte Vista Rotary members David Hinkley (852-3442), Diana Paulson (850-2004), Linda Weyers (850-1767), or Karla Shriver (850-5808) or any other Monte Vista Rotarian.



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~ B.Gullette

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Rio Grande Prevention Partners seeks new logo

By LYNDIE FERRELL
RIO GRANDE COUNTY — Rio Grande Prevention Partners (RGPP) is launching a contest to revamp the group's logo and give a facelift to the organization. According to RGPP representative Kathryn Trujillo, the organization is also seeking new members to help spread their message of prevention in Rio Grande County.

According to RGPP, Rio Grande County has received funding since February 2003 from the Persistent Drunk Driving (PDD) Cash Fund, through the Colorado Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division (ADAD) known today as the Division of Behavioral Health.

In receiving this funding, interested key leaders began forming a coalition in March 2003 to address the serious problem of underage drinking in our county. Due to the high rate of juvenile DUIs and underage drinking-related arrests,

the Coalition began to address the conditions that allow and promote high-risk underage drinking.

Beginning with the 2004-2005 funding year, the PDD Project Coordinator began working with residents of Mineral County regarding the dangers and risks of drinking and driving. Funding increased as a result of this collaboration. After an invitation to the county to apply for the Strategic Prevention Framework-State Incentive Grant in early 2006, the Rio Grande County Coalition to Prevent Underage Drinking became the membership foundation of the Rio Grande Prevention Partners representing both counties.

Coalition members consist of representatives of the local and state law enforcement agencies, youth, parents, grandparents, Monte Vista and Del Norte school districts, Rio Grande County Public Health Agency, Monte Vista

Kids Connection, High Valley Community Center, San Luis Valley Behavioral Health, Rio Grande County Commissioner, Monte Vista Journal, Calvary Baptist Church, Early Steps for Childhood Success, and CSU Extension.

The Coalition's 25 members provide alcohol and drug prevention information to the community, such as at the health fairs, presentations to organizations, school boards and faculty, and local government, organizes workshops, and collaborates with schools and agencies at special functions such as pre-prom activities, Red Ribbon Week, and during Alcohol Awareness Month.

The activities of the coalition are designed as a deterrent to underage drinking and other drugs and to increase the perceived risk of the short-term and long-term effects of using alcohol and other drugs.

For more information or to become a new member please visit www.rgpp.org. To submit artwork to be considered for the logo contest please contact Juan at jmaravilla@riograndecounty.org or by calling 719-657-3352.

LOGO CONTEST!

Rio Grande Prevention Partners Needs a New Logo!

\$100 prize for winner in youth (18 & younger) category & adult (19+) category

Due by: February 28th

Contact Juan at jmaravilla@riograndecounty.org or call 719-657-3352 for more information.

925 6th St., Room 101 Del Norte RGPP_20

Mail, Email, or Hand in Your Design to Juan

2nd Annual Steamroller Printmaking Event

STAFF REPORT

CREEDE — The Creede Arts Council is holding its 2nd annual Steamroller Printmaking event Sept. 18. This is an outdoor printmaking event held in Creede during the Crusin' the Canyon Car Show to fulfill the council's non-profit mission to promote the arts and humanities in the community through education, exhibition and performance and to foster local artistic talent.

The Call for Entries opened Feb. 1 with an entry deadline of July 1. The Call for Entries may be found online at <https://creedeartscouncil.com/>. Sixteen entries will be accepted on a first-come, first-serve basis. It is open to artists and woodcarvers.

The entry fee is a non-refundable \$40, \$20 for students (with identi-

fication), and includes the 24-inch x 32-inch x 1/2-inch woodblock. Payment must be made by July 1, via PayPal, cash, or check.

Participants will need to supply their own tools for carving. All works will be offered for sale the day of the event if the artist chooses to do so with 50% going to the artist and 50% to support the Creede Arts Council.

Artists are to create and carve the boards with their own original design. The day of the event, the boards are inked by hand, placed on the street with paper placed over the boards where a Steamroller (Roadbed Compactor) will roll over them pressing the paper onto the board. The resulting outcome is a fine art print.

The Creede Arts Council will be following CDC guidelines the day of the event.

Puzzle Sponsored by MDS Waste & Recycle

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CLUES ACROSS

1. Battered corners: dog-__
6. __ Mater: one's school
10. National capital
14. Frogs and toads order
15. Bathrooms (French)
17. Praise
19. Witch
20. Consume
21. Pork and lamb are two types
22. Rocky peak
23. Women's undergarments
24. From end to end
26. Bed sheets
29. South Sudanese king
31. Dislike immensely
32. Diving seabird
34. Breathe noisily
35. Full of roots
37. Inside
38. Small island in a river
39. Tear into pieces
40. "CSI" actor George
41. Make less dense
43. Derogatory term for a country native
45. Pike and pickerel genus
46. Important in respiration and other biochemical reactions (abbr.)
47. Belgian city
49. "The Joy Luck Club" author
50. Essence of "Aloha"
53. Suggestions
57. One who overindulges
58. Expression
59. Maize dough
60. Make into leather

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14					15				16				
17					18								
19					20			21					
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29	30						31				32	33	
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38				39						40			
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	47	48					49				50	51	52
53						54				55	56		
57										58			
59						60				61			

61. British noblemen

CLUES DOWN

1. One of two or more people or things
2. Small, deerlike water buffalo
3. Part of a ladder
4. Unit of work
5. Patriotic women
6. Fragrant essential oil
7. Aggressive, uncouth man
8. One thousandth of an inch
9. Brisk and cheerful readiness
10. Serving no practical purpose
11. Prevent from going forward
12. Camera part
13. Former CIA
16. Colorless, odorless gas
18. Long division of time
22. Atomic #73
23. Make a bleating sound
24. The kids love him
25. Female condition prior to menstrual period
27. Founder of Sikhism

28. Sudanese swamp
29. He/she can help with your finances
30. Part of the human body
31. Mortar trough
33. Greek island
35. Change pagination
36. Queens hip hop group
37. Precursor to the EU
39. A way to go on
42. Slender marine fish
43. Georgetown's mascot
44. Farm state
46. Military leader (abbr.)
47. Russian river
48. Teams' best pitchers
49. In a more positive way
50. Long French river
51. Reactive structures in organic chemistry
52. Distinctive practices
53. Male gypsy
54. When you hope to get there
55. Men's fashion accessory
56. Journalist Tarbell

Solution to last week's puzzle

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

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03 MEMORIALS
04 LOST & FOUND
05 NOTICES/BAZAARS
06 PERSONALS
EMPLOYMENT
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22 PROPERTY WANTED

MERCHANDISE
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51 BOATS & EQUIPMENT
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54 SNOWMOBILES/ATV'S
55 R.V.'S/CAMPERS
FINANCIAL
56 BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY
57 INVESTMENTS
TRANSPORTATION
58 MOTORCYCLES
59 VEHICLES WANTED
60 CLASSIC CARS
61 4X4'S
62 VANS
63 TRUCKS
64 AUTOS FOR SALE
SERVICES
65 PROFESSIONAL SERVICES
66 CHILD CARE

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05 Notices

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07 Help Wanted

Creede Arts Council seeking part-time Program Coordinator. Administrative and computer skills required. Info at creedeartscouncil.com. Send resume and references to: PO Box 392, Creede, CO 81130 or email to creedearts@outlook.com Deadline: February 20th or until position is filled.(03/03)

Adams State University is looking to hire an Activity Coordinator for our Next 50 Initiative Grant Project. This is a one year, half-time, benefits eligible position with a competitive salary. The primary responsibility of the position is to manage the recruitment, enrollment, development and

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1 _____ **2** _____ **3** _____ **4** _____ **5** _____

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Valley Wide Classifieds

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Census delay could impact Colorado redistricting efforts

STAFF REPORT

DENVER — Colorado is supposed to debut a grand political experiment this year — having a public commission, not elected officials, redraw the state’s Congressional and statehouse boundaries. The process is already threatened by delays out of its control.

In 2018, Colorado voters overwhelmingly approved a new process for setting the districts for state and federal races for the next decade. The goal is to make seats more competitive, get broad public input and inject more fairness and transparency into how political lines are set.

What voters couldn’t have anticipated was that the data Colorado and states across the country need to begin redistricting might not arrive in time to make the new process work.

“We don’t know when we’ll get the data; when we’ll be able to start drawing plans,” said Jeremiah Barry, the staff attorney for Colorado’s Independent Redistricting Commission.

The U.S Census Bureau is well behind schedule. It has been delayed both because of the pandemic and controversial policy changes by the Trump administration. The Bureau has also discovered irregularities in the census records that they need to try and fix. It’s not clear how long that could take.

“If it’s only by a couple of weeks, it probably doesn’t create any problems,” Barry said. “If we’re talking about a delay of a couple of months, then it really backs up into those other constitutional deadlines.”

The commission has reiterated that public hearings are essential to the redistricting process and will still happen, but the schedule will likely be compressed or delayed. The state constitution requires the commissions tasked with drawing congressional districts and state legislative seats to conduct at least three public hearings on the proposed maps in each of the state’s seven congressional districts.

Raising the stakes in all of this is the expectation that Colorado, after a decade of population growth, will gain an 8th Congressional District this year. That means commissioners won’t just be tweaking existing boundaries, but possibly reimagining the entire map and a newly competitive seat.

If the data comes too late, Barry says non-partisan legislative staff would be forced to submit their final plan for the congressional and state legislative districts to the Colorado Supreme Court. But that’s a worst-case scenario.

“We’re not interested in having our plan. I mean, we are staff of the commission,” Barry said. “We want the commission to approve a plan.”

Even as the state waits on the data, some parts of the process are moving ahead as planned. On Monday, a panel of retired judges will randomly select the first six congressional district commissioners — two Democrats, two unaffiliated voters and two Republicans.

Work underway to revive Cuchara Mountain Park

STAFF REPORT

CUCHARA — An old ski lift at Southern Colorado’s Parker-Fitzgerald Cuchara Mountain Park could start running again by summer, making lift-served mountain biking, downhill skiing and more possible.

The original Cuchara ski area, about 30 miles southwest of Walsenburg, first opened in the early 1980s. During the following decades, six different operators tried and failed to make a go of it. Due to unreliable snowfall and other factors, it closed for good in 2001.

Huerfano County bought the defunct base facilities, acreage and one chairlift in 2017 using donated funds. The county and its partners got to work on a master plan with the goal of turning it into a public park.

The plan is to create a year-round recreation and educational facility, according to Huerfano County Administrator Carl Young.

“The vision is the same, to have this thriving hub for the community and something that attracts people to our community and to the county,” he said. “We do want it to be a real community park, something that has benefit to the community beyond just the eco-



Courtesy photo

nom sense.”

Local innkeeper Michael Moore is part of some nonprofit groups behind the project. He said he and others have been hard at work to resurrect the lift, noting that it’s much cheaper to do that than spend millions on a brand-new lift. He said they are also looking at how to use the existing snowmaking infrastructure and water rights.

But he also agreed with Young, that the goal isn’t just about offering downhill skiing.

“We don’t want to be Vail or an Aspen or a Telluride or a Breck-

enridge. We want to keep Cuchara small and nice and neat,” Moore said.

He said people are already sledding, hiking and mountain biking there - going uphill under their power.

An outdoor classroom is also in the works. They’ve already built an 18-hole disc golf course and a special house to attract the many species of bats of the region.

The master plan also calls for the park to be a venue for concerts, stargazing and other cultural events.

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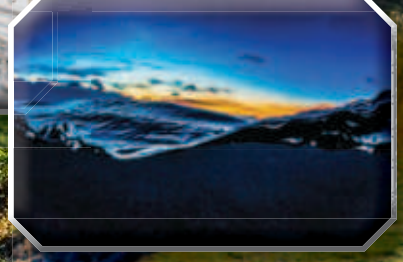
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GOVERNMENT & ENVIRONMENT 2021

SAN LUIS VALLEY PROGRESS



West end of Valley now offers electric charging options

By **LYNDSIE FERRELL**

SAN LUIS VALLEY — In the last year, the San Luis Valley has once again jumped into the technological future and now has four electric vehicle charging stations from Alamosa to Creede and beyond. The electrical charging stations have opened the door to electric vehicle owners to be able to come and enjoy some of the beautiful destinations that were previously difficult to reach due to the lack of charging options in the region and will become a huge benefit to the local communities.

The first charging station to hit the west end of the Valley was installed in Creede in August and has since increased tourism significantly. Electric Vehicle Drivers may now add Creede to their travel destinations. Earlier this year, the City of Creede received a grant from the Colorado Energy Office (CEO) which helped defray the cost of installing a Level 3 Charging Station for electric vehicles.

“CEO is proud of its partnership with the City of Creede through our Charge Ahead Colorado grant program,” said Addison Philips, program manager at the Colorado Energy Office. “City of Creede’s new fast-charging station makes it convenient for EV drivers to visit the city knowing they can quickly and easily recharge their vehicle’s battery and enjoy all that Mineral County has to offer—and Silver Thread Scenic Byway now has one of the most robust EV charging networks of any byway in Colorado.”

The Level 3 Charging Stations, commonly known as DC Fast-Charging Stations, convert alternating current power to direct current power. The converted power is delivered directly to the vehicle’s battery, resulting in a faster charge. The ChargePoint EV Charging Station is located at the Creede/Mineral County Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Center. EV Drivers will be able to learn about Creede and view the Town Model while they “fuel up.”

Farther up the Silver Thread Scenic Byway, EV drivers will find a DC Fast-Charging Station located at the Ice Wall Park. The CEO’s Charge Ahead Colorado Grant also helped fund this station, along with a donation from the Gunnison

County Electric Co-op.

Next, Del Norte followed suit and installed a new charging location in December of 2020 joining the growing list of locations throughout the Valley. The charging station is located at 595 Columbia Ave., a block South of Highway 160, (Grande Avenue), across the street from Del Norte Post Office. A grant from Colorado Energy Office provided funds to help defray equipment and installation costs.

Two charging options are available — DC Fast Charge will charge a fully depleted battery in about 40 minutes. One hour of charging with a Level Two charger will add approximately 25 miles driving range. The DC Fast Charger is designed to provide a vehicle with a relatively short charging time. A traveler will be able to enjoy a meal or walk around town while the vehicle is charging, then be back on the road. The Level Two Charger is designed for a person traveling to perhaps spend the night at a local hotel. Approximately 8 hours of charging will fully charge an electric vehicle.

ChargePoint supplied the charging equipment. Electric vehicle drivers have an app which directs them to electric vehicle charging stations across the United States. Information can also be found at <https://na.chargepoint.com>.



Del Norte charging station.

Photo by Lyndsie Ferrell



The Colorado LEAP program is a federally funded state-supervised, county-administered system and is designed to *assist* with your winter heating costs. The LEAP Program eligibility period runs from **November 1, 2020 through April 30, 2021**

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3. Your **gross** monthly household income is within the guidelines set annually (see below). “Household” means the people who reside with you within your dwelling at which you reside and apply for assistance and for whom you, as applicant, are financially responsible for. The maximum **gross** monthly income is based on 60% of the State Median Income level as listed in the table below.

Household Size	Monthly Gross Income 60% of State Median Income Level
1	\$2,619
2	\$3,425
3	\$4,231
4	\$5,038
5	\$5,844
6	\$6,650
7	\$6,157
8	\$6,801
8	\$6,952

Each additional person \$151

LEAP is designed to help eligible households with winter home heating costs.

LEAP is not intended to pay the entire cost of home heating.

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RISE Grant to benefit Trinidad State's connection to area high schools

STAFF REPORT

TRINIDAD — Six Colorado community colleges and 70 high schools will benefit from the second round of Response, Innovation, and Student Equity (RISE) grants recently announced by Colorado Gov. Jared Polis. The grant totals \$2 million.

Trinidad State's sprawling service area covers about 14,500 square miles in eight counties in Southern Colorado. That's about the same size as Connecticut and New Jersey combined. This grant will allow Trinidad State to buy technology which will better allow college instructors to teach at far away high schools.

College classrooms will be equipped with high resolution screens (at the front and back), an instructor station, and cameras that will allow distant high school students an online experience that is as close to an in-person class as possible.

"We know students at small and geographically isolated high schools don't have the same options as students attending schools that may be 10 or even 20 times larger," said Trinidad State President Dr. Rhonda M. Epper. "These technology improvements will greatly increase the class choices of these students."

Part of the grant will also pay for graduate-level tuition for high

school teachers so they can receive a college-level teaching credential. For an instructor to teach college-level courses, they are required by the college's accrediting agency to possess either a master's degree in the content field or a master's degree in a different field plus 18 graduate-level credits in the content field.

Many high school teachers do not possess this level of education and are just a few courses short of being credentialed to teach at the

college level. Having more graduate-prepared teachers will improve the quality of education available in rural areas and increase the number of qualified instructors available to teach at the college level.

Instructors will also be trained to more effectively use this technology and how to be an effective online teacher.

"Every Colorado student should have access to a quality education and these amazing ideas and innovative programs...will help



improve our schools and build back stronger than before the pandemic," said Governor Polis. "I've spent the majority of my life pushing for innovation and excellence in educa-

tion and these focused investments will make a transformative positive impact on the lives of Colorado's kids and families today and for the future."

Two local churches working together to bring warmth to Monte Vista

STAFF REPORT

MONTE VISTA — Grace and Mercy Bible Fellowship and First Christian Church will be offering free soup and crackers to anyone in the community from 5 to 7 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 9. The event will be held at First Christian Church, 200 Washington St.

"Jesus teaches we are supposed to be involved in our community, and this is one way we are doing that," said Grace and Mercy pastor Larry Foster.

To be compliant with local regulations, the soup will be served "curb-service" style. Orders will be taken from people in their cars and the soup will be delivered to them while they wait in their cars. This way social distancing protocol can be maintained.

There is no charge for the soup. Any donations received at the event will be used for the mission trip to Thailand in November.

"We are hoping to make this a monthly event," said Foster.

For information about the event, contact pastor Foster at 719-628-2498 or pastor@grace-mercy-bible.church.

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Freezing temperatures and protecting pets

BY REBECCA COPLEY

SAN LUIS VALLEY — Winter in the San Luis Valley tends to be a harsh season. Freezing temperatures are the norm, and it is common for temperatures to dip well below zero.

Some years the temperatures have dipped so far below zero that the San Luis Valley has been the coldest spot in the nation. This bitter cold can be dangerous for animals left outside all night. Although they have fur coats it is often not enough to keep out the biting cold. Thankfully, there are many ways that pet owners can help keep their furry friends warm.

It is a good idea to remove snow, ice, salt, and other ice treatment chemicals from their fur and paws. This helps keep them dry and prevents them from ingesting any chemicals found in the ice treatment. You should also check their paw pads for any cracks and make sure there is no redness between their toes. Massaging petroleum jelly into their paw pads before going outdoors can help protect them from salt and chemical agents. Dog booties can also provide extra protection.

Another important pet safety rule is to never leave your animal alone in a car during cold weather. In the winter cars trap frigid air becoming refrigerators on wheels. Also, it is always a good idea to check under the hood of outdoor vehicles before you start them. Outdoor cats often seek refuge from the cold by huddling against still warm engines.

It is also important to make sure you are feeding your animals a little more in the winter and providing them with lots of water. The chilly temperatures will cause them to burn calories faster and make it harder for them to stay hydrated.

Monte Vista Code Enforcement Officer-Community Service Officer Manvuel Lopez shared some of the things he looks for when it comes to keeping pets warm.

“What I look for is if the animal is tethered that they have full access to food and drinkable water, which is not frozen,” Lopez said. “Also, an animal must be provided with some sort of shelter to keep them safe from the weather. This could be a doghouse or an overhang with some means for the animal to escape the snow or whatever weather is current for the season we are currently in.”



Officer Lopez said that there is nothing code specific to leaving animals outside in the winter weather. However, he shared that it may fall under Municipal Code 8-14-20(b) cruelty to animals.

The code states, “A person commits cruelty to animals if he or she knowingly or with criminal negligence overdrives, overloads, overworks, torments, deprives of necessary sustenance, unnecessarily or cruelly beats, carries or confines in or upon any vehicles in a cruel or reckless manner, otherwise mistreats or neglects any animal or causes or procures it to be done, or, having the charge or custody of any animal, fails to provide it with proper food, drink or protection from the weather.”

Officer Lopez explained that if someone is found in violation of this code it is the officer’s discretion whether to issue a citation or warning.

“Every situation is different and with that said every situation is handled differently,” Lopez said. “If an animal is severely neglected due to these circumstances then it is upon myself or MVRPD officers to protect and help the animal currently facing these types of hardships. It also needs to be pointed out that there are situations where animals are naturally adapted to survive harsh conditions. So, the current health of said animal needs to be looked at as well as living conditions.”

Officer Lopez also said that as the current Monte Vista Code Enforcement Officer-Community Service Officer, he wants to try and educate before having to enforce.

“These questions are a great opportunity for just that,” Lopez said. “I would encourage the residents of Monte Vista to reach out to me and ask questions if they are unsure of what may be a violation of Municipal Code.”

Willow Creek Journal call for entries is now open

STAFF REPORT

CREEDE — The Creede Arts Council is accepting entries for the 2021 Willow Creek Journal through March 15.

The Willow Creek Journal is a community-centered annual anthology.

Through the journal, CAC celebrates and nurtures the creativity of

artists of all ages.

Entries are accepted in the following categories — poetry, prose, photographs, and artwork.

CAC accepts submissions by email at creedearts@outlook.com or creedeartscouncil.com.

Questions about the journal can be directed to creedearts@outlook.com or by calling 719-658-0312.



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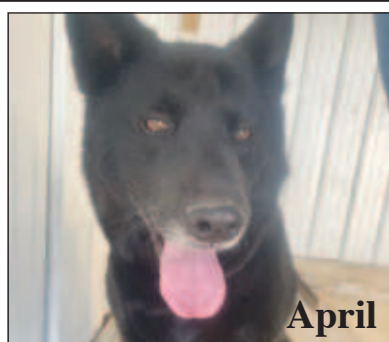
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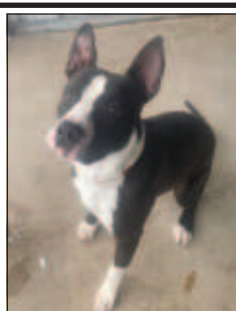
Klaus

Klaus and April are Belgian Shepherds. They have lived their entire lives (7 years) together and we are hoping that we can get them in a home together. They are very friendly and affectionate and looking for someone to allow them to live out their lives in comfort and love. They are playful and curious and would love to meet any other dogs in the home to make sure they get along.

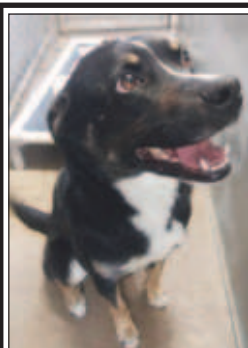
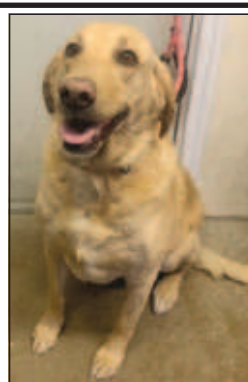


April

Buster is looking for a home that can give him plenty of attention because he is not a fan of being left alone. He is cautious of men at first but opens up quickly and loves to get attention and to be played with. Buster is young and hasn't been taught very many manners but he is eager to learn. If you do have another dog at home, it will be required to bring that dog to the shelter to allow Buster to meet them



Bella is a 8 year old Lab mix who is a little shy but is a typical lab in temperament. She likes to be petted and to lean hard into a person while she stares up into their face with pure infatuation. She is looking for a home to help her enjoy her golden years in comfort and safety.



Riley we believe is an American Bulldog/ Australian Shepherd mix. He is about 2 years old. He is very friendly and affectionate. He has done well with all people he

has met. We feel he has good potential with other dogs with a little work. Riley is currently staying in a foster home so if you are interested in meeting him call the shelter at 719 852 3366.

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MKT-P0108

Wolf Creek Ski Resort strengthens COVID-19 message

By **LYNDSIE FERRELL**

WOLF CREEK — Wolf Creek Ski Resort spent the past year working countless hours to prepare for the 2020-2021 ski season and though the season is more than half over, the resort is continuing its efforts to make sure it can finish strong.

According to reports out of the resort, they have recently had difficulties getting people to comply with state and local COVID-19 guidelines.

“We have had such an awesome season so far. The snow we have received has been nothing less than a blessing for us and it has been a significant driver in how busy we have been. The northern mountains in the state have not received the amount of snow we have and in turn, people are coming from all over to get in some powder days. We just need to remind people that if they feel that they cannot or will not comply with state regulations then perhaps this isn’t the year to come out and ski,” said Wolf Creek Ski Resort owner Rosanne Pitcher.

Pitcher explained that over the last several weeks, just after the Christmas and New Year’s holiday, the resort has seen days where 3,500 people come to enjoy the slopes.

“This is great, and we are so happy that we have the facility and the snow for everyone to enjoy but we need everyone to comply with masks and social distancing,” Pitcher said. “If we are going to stay open and be able to continue

to offer our resort, we need people to remember to comply with mandates. This is a different year for us and so we are going to start being more severe in our efforts to remain open.”

Pitcher stated that the resort had to strengthen its message to people coming to the resort and that efforts could potentially include asking individuals who do not comply to leave the resort.

“You have to wear a mask. You have to social distance while in lines,” she said. “Once people are up on the slopes and spread out it is OK to take the mask off, but in public areas, you have to have one on.”

In addition to dealing with customers that may not want to wear a mask, employees have also shown signs of frustration. The resort offered a stipend to employees to encourage that they purchase new masks and keep up the good work they have done so far this season.

“We are so proud and feel so blessed to be able to be here. We want to keep that going,” Pitcher said.

Over the next several weeks until the end of the ski season, the resort plans to be more aggressive in its campaign to comply with state and local COVID guidelines and ask guests to do the same.

“There are so many other factors that come into play with having this resort open. We are helping the economy in the surrounding communities by bringing in revenue and if we shut down, that goes away,” said Pitcher.



We're all in this together. Please take ownership in your part to keep Wolf Creek Ski Area open. Remember to Mask Up and Practice Social Distancing to keep the ski season going!

Thanks for your cooperation!
Wolf Creek Ski Area

The resort is now preparing for the coming President’s Day and Spring Break holidays when they plan to only allow pre-purchased ticket holders to ensure the safety of guests. The resort will be updating the website to reflect plans on how it will be handling the remainder of the season. For more information or to pre-purchase tickets, visit www.wolfcreekski.com.

Creede Theatre awarded \$20,000 grant

STAFF REPORT

COLORADO SPRINGS — El Pomar Trustees approved a grant allocation to one nonprofit organization in the San Luis Valley region at the Foundation’s December Trustees meeting. Through the Foundation’s grant making process, the Creede Repertory Theatre, Inc. was awarded a regional council grant of \$20,000 for LED lights in the Ruth Theatre.

Founded by Spencer and Julie Penrose in 1937, El Pomar Foundation has an established legacy of general-purpose grant making throughout the state of Colorado. The competitive process remains the Foundation’s primary vehicle for organizations to receive funding, which accepts applications on a rolling basis.

Additionally, over the last 80 years, El Pomar has either developed or been entrusted with

the stewardship of a number of other funds, as well as presenting Trustee merit grants.

In an effort to increase impact and establish connections across the entire state, the Regional Partnerships program was established in 2003. Each of the Foundation’s eleven regional councils advises El Pomar Trustees and recommends grants to help support its communities.

The San Luis Valley Regional Council recommends grants in Alamosa, Conejos, Costilla, Mineral, Rio Grande and Saguache counties. Council members are regional leaders in the business, nonprofit and public sectors and provide first-hand information about current needs in their own communities.

To view a full listing of El Pomar’s funds and grant making areas, visit their website at www.elpomar.org/grant-making/.



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SENIOR Connections



Visiting Angels of SW Colorado Receives 2021 Best of Home Care — Leader in Excellence Award

STAFF REPORT

PAGOSA SPRINGS — Visiting Angels of SW Colorado announced today that it received the distinguished 2021 Best of Home Care — Leader in Excellence Award from Home Care Pulse, the leading firm in quality assurance for home care. The Leader in Excellence Award is the highest recognition awarded by Home Care Pulse and is given to select home care businesses that consistently rank among the highest in 10 or more quality metrics. As a Leader in Excellence, Visiting Angels is now ranked among the top 10% of home care providers participating in the nationwide Home Care Pulse Satisfaction Management Program.

This accomplishment demonstrates Visiting Angel's long-term dedication to excellent care and quality improvement. To qualify for this award, 10% of Visiting Angel's clients and caregivers were interviewed each month by Home

Care Pulse. Over a 12-month period, Visiting Angels received high client and caregiver satisfaction ratings in areas such as caregiver training, compassion of caregivers, communication, scheduling, client/caregiver compatibility, etc. Using feedback from clients and employees, as well as quality benchmarks from Home Care Pulse, the Visiting Angels management team set goals to reach the highest level of excellence possible.

"We once again are so proud of our agency, and what hard work it has taken everyone on the team to receive this award, for four years in a row. We know that it takes our clients, our caregivers, and our management staff to achieve this. We are humbled and so appreciative of the level of service displayed to others," said Visiting Angels COO Michelle Johnson.

The Best of Home Care — Leader in Excellence Award highlights the top-performing home care businesses in the nation. Home Care Pulse believes that by honoring these pro-

viders, families looking for in-home care for a loved one will be able to recognize and choose a trusted home care provider.

"At Home Care Pulse, our mission is to help home care businesses create an experience that goes beyond client and caregiver expectations," said Erik Madsen, CEO of Home Care Pulse. "When we see agencies like Visiting Angels that have made an effort to provide outstanding care and employment experiences, we know we're on the right track. Visiting Angels has worked extremely hard to provide high-quality care and employment, and their work hasn't gone unnoticed. This award allows them to provide proof of quality to potential and new clients and caregivers."

To find out more about Visiting Angles, visit Visitingangles.com/southwestcolorado or call 970-264-5991.

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Healthy eating options for seniors

"Let food be thy medicine" is a quote attributed to Hippocrates, the ancient scholar considered to be the father of modern medicine. The saying relates to the notion that what people put in their bodies can heal and/or prevent certain conditions.

For seniors with medicine cabinets full of over-the-counter and prescription medications, the idea of relying predominantly on food to promote optimal health may be tempting, and various foods can be particularly useful to the 50-and-over demographic.

According to the World Health Organization, poor diet is a major contributor to many of the diseases that affect older people. Poor diet has been connected to the development of diabetes, and degenerative diseases such as osteoporosis also may be linked to the foods ones eat. The National Council for Aging Care says micronutrient deficiency is often a problem among the aging due to factors like lack of variety in diet and reduced food intake. Eating a variety of foods can provide all of the nutrients people need to stay healthy as they get older. Certain foods may be particularly helpful.

• **Brain-friendly foods:** Foods such as avocado, leafy vegetables, sunflower seeds, blueberries, and salmon are good sources of vitamin E, antioxidants, omega-3 fatty acids, and other nutrients that may help ward off dementias like Alzheimer's disease, advises Sonas Home Health Care.

• **Anti-inflammatory foods:** Foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids may help prevent inflammation that can cause cancer and rheumatoid arthritis. Aging.com says foods that are high in



omega-3 fatty acids, like salmon, should be consumed at least twice per week.

• **Fruits and vegetables:** Fresh, canned or frozen produce tend to be high in micronutrients, including a variety of important vitamins that are essential for all components of health. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics advises eating dark green vegetables, such as leafy greens or broccoli, and orange vegetables, such as carrots and sweet potatoes.

• **Energy-boosters:** Choose whole grains that can provide sustained energy by way of healthy carbohydrates over processed grains.

• **Bone-friendly foods:** Calcium-rich foods, such as milk, yogurt and cheese, can prevent calcium from being leached from the bones, which contributes to conditions like osteoporosis.

• **Digestive system-friendly foods:**

The digestive system slows down as the body ages, as the walls of the gastrointestinal tract thicken and digestive contractions that push waste along may slow down and become fewer. Foods rich in fiber can promote proper digestion by moving food through the digestive tract more easily. High-fiber foods also may help naturally reduce blood cholesterol levels.

• **High-iron foods:** Without enough iron in the body, a person may feel tired and lethargic from a reduced production of hemoglobin, which carries oxygen in the blood to the rest of the body. A lack of oxygen in body tissues from anemia can be serious, says the National Council for Aging Care. Tofu, spinach, lentils, pumpkin seeds, and fortified breads and cereals are high in iron.

Smart food choices can help seniors live long and healthy lives. LP203730

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Southern Rocky Mountain Ag Conference and Trade Show held virtually

Presenter says potatoes were powerhouse during pandemic

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

MONTE VISTA — The 39th annual Southern Rocky Mountain Agricultural Conference and Trade Show started its three-day run Tuesday, Feb. 2, on Zoom and at the Ski Hi Complex in Monte Vista.

The annual conference shifted mostly virtual due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The first day's Zoom sessions were centered on potatoes and began at 8 a.m. and continued to about 1 p.m. The San Luis Valley is the second largest fresh potatoes region in the U.S.

John Toasperm, Potatoes USA Chief Marketing Officer, gave an overview of potato sales from March to December of last year during his 30-minute session. His report was mostly positive.

Retail sales soared and continue to do so as people stayed home during the pandemic.

"The thing that was exciting for our industry was that potatoes were the pandemic powerhouse," Toasperm said. "We saw a significant increase in potato purchases. And this was for a number of reasons - comfort, familiarity, storability. Potatoes were the leading vegetable in terms of increases during that period."

Toasperm said there was good growth across the core potatoes led by — russets, reds and yellows.

"Ultimately, Americans still love potatoes," Toasperm said. "The number one vegetable sold in America, potatoes are on 84 percent of all food service menus and when surveyed Americans say that the potato is their favorite vegetable. So, we are in a great place. We need to try to lock in those retail gains but then also regain at foodservice."

Record potato retail sales continued



Photos by Brian Williams

The 39th annual Southern Rocky Mountain Agricultural Conference and Trade Show began its three-day run. Feb. 2-4, at the Ski Hi Complex in Monte Vista. The bulk of the conference was being held virtually and the socially distanced trade show on Tuesday and Wednesday was inside the McMullen Building at the Ski Hi Complex.

from October to December 2020, Toasperm said. All three months saw an increase in both dollar and volume sales, with the largest growth in December. Total store potato sales grew 9.3% in volume and 12.3% in value.

The fresh potato category at retail also showed a record growth of 12% in dollar sales and 8.2% in volume sales. Russets, reds, and yellow potatoes made up most fresh potato sales at retail, which all increased in dollars and volume. Five-pound bags of potatoes continued to make up the majority of volume sales and increased by almost 7%.

Foodservice, which includes sales to restaurants, were the hardest hit sectors for the industry. According to Toasperm, 87,500 restaurants in the U.S. closed permanently between March and December.

While the international market was off overall by 4%, Toasperm pointed out that some significant gains were made in China and Japan.

"We are not in a terrible position and I think we can recover quite quickly this year," he said. "We are already seeing exports recover so that is positive. Things are trending in the right direction."

Toasperm said Potatoes USA conducted a total store study in the fall and that they were wrapping up a presentation that will be available shortly.

While people logged into the virtual sessions, the socially distanced Trade Show was set up inside the McMullen Building of the Ski Hi Complex. The Trade Show was open from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Zoom sessions continued Wednesday and Thursday, Feb. 3 and 4, beginning at 8 a.m. and wrapping up around 1 p.m. each day.

The conference was sponsored by the Colorado State University Extension and the Colorado Ag Experiment Station. The trade show was sponsored by the Monte Vista Chamber of Commerce.

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1104 Expedition drive • South Fork

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• 1 bedroom • 1bathroom • \$74,900

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57 Dennette Lane • South Fork

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