

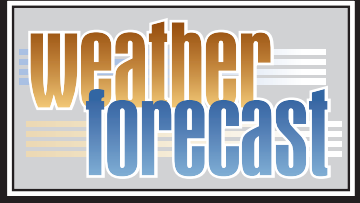
Shorts

MV Coop Education Foundation opens scholarship application process

MONTE VISTA — The Monte Vista Coop Dedication to Education Foundation is accepting scholarship applications.

The scholarships are in honor of the Coop's founding members and in remembrance of Dennis Kay and Mike Kelley, former employees who wholeheartedly believed in supporting young people. The Monte Vista Coop Dedication to Education Foundation was instituted to establish scholarships to assist students with financial support to the college of their choice.

Visit the Monte Vista Coop website, www.mvcoop.com to download a scholarship application or stop by the Monte Vista Coop main office to pick one up. The deadline to apply is Jan. 31. For more information, call Brenda Cooper at 719-852-5181 Ext. 1049.



Today: Mostly sunny, with a high near 34. Wind chill values between -10 and zero. North northwest wind around 5 mph becoming calm.

Tonight: Partly cloudy, with a low around 4. Wind chill values between -5 and zero. North northwest wind around 5 mph becoming west after midnight.

Friday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 38. West wind 5 to 10 mph becoming south in the morning.

Friday night: A 30 percent chance of snow showers. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 11. Southwest wind 5 to 10 mph becoming west northwest after midnight.

Saturday: Sunny, with a high near 35. West wind around 10 mph.

Saturday night: Mostly clear, with a low around 2. Northwest wind around 10 mph.

Sunday: Sunny, with a high near 33. West northwest wind around 5 mph becoming south southeast in the morning.

Sunday night: Mostly clear, with a low around 4. West northwest wind around 5 mph.

Monday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 35. West northwest wind around 5 mph becoming south in the morning.

Monday night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 8. West wind around 5 mph.

Tuesday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 38. Southwest wind around 5 mph.

Center Town Board approves smoke, carbon monoxide detector project

BY PATRICK SHEA

CENTER — The Center Town Board finalized a half-dozen issues during back-to-back meetings on Tuesday, Jan. 26, none more pressing than fire-related motions.

The board approved additional charitable funds for the family of 13-year-old Lisbeth Lino, who died in a house fire on Jan. 20. With the goal of purchasing alarms for Center residents who don't have functioning carbon monoxide and

Please see **BOARD** on Page 2A



Courtesy photo

The Center Town Board made decisions to enhance resident safety and improve services on Jan. 26.



Courtesy photo

Near the end of Lisbeth Lino's favorite song amplified behind the Center school complex, students released white and purple balloons to commemorate her death from a fire on Jan. 20

Students remember classmate who died in Center fire

Community provides support for family following tragedy

BY PATRICK SHEA

CENTER — When a house fire

took the life of 13-year-old Lisbeth Lino on Jan. 20, first responders arrived within 90 seconds, followed immediately by more law enforcement, volunteer firefighters and a flood of compassion from the community.

Over the lunch hour on Monday, Jan. 25, students honored Lisbeth's passing with an idea of their own, a simultaneous release of purple and white balloons.

"It all came from the kids. It was See **REMEMBER** on Page 7A

Baca POA shows public-private partnership

BY PATRICK SHEA

CRESTONE — Volunteer board members and residents gathered for the Baca Grande Property Owners Association meeting on Jan. 21 to discuss financial issues and hear about a 2.7-mile trail under development for Crestone-area students.

Baca Grande POA Executive Director Kevin Flewell started the Zoom meeting with detailed financial explanations. But the most interesting money discussion followed Burt Wadman's Safe Route to Schools update. Wadman, chair of the Eastern San Luis Valley Trails Coalition,

concluded his presentation with a suggestion for the board to donate the final \$500 required to receive matching funds.

The trail will connect Camino Baca Grande to the Crestone Charter School, crossing Baca Grande Open Space, Crestone land and Charter School property. Saguache County is administering the project and will maintain the trail in perpetuity, Wadman said. Like many big grant-funded projects, the Safe Routes to School partnership accelerates with match-funding to prove commitment. The Colorado Department of

Transportation (CDOT) is managing the \$500,000 federal grant. Since the project started in 2018, the Eastern San Luis Valley Trails Coalition has raised \$584,000, according to Wadman. Saguache County has pitched in \$40,000.

"We're now \$500 short of the full match amount required for the grant," Wadman repeated. "On behalf of the trails coalition, we would like to suggest to your board, as a show of solidarity, if you could contribute \$500, we would have the full amount. We think that would mean a lot to the commissioners."

State adds new data metrics to vaccine dashboard

STAFF REPORT

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) announced on Friday, Jan. 22, the vaccine data dashboard will include additional metrics. The dashboard will include vaccine administration by race-ethnicity, age group, and sex.

The data available for race and ethnicity represents 78% of individuals receiving one or more doses because providers have not historically been required to report that data on all patients to the Colorado Immunization Information System (CIIS).

The state has now asked providers to collect race/ethnicity data when administering the vaccine, if the patient willingly gives the information. CDPHE will issue a public health order, providing further specificity about data collection as soon as next week. The goal of the data collection is to use it to inform an equitable vaccine distribution process and ensure accountability.

"Our commitment to providing public information in the form of data

Please see **VACCINE** on Page 6A

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OBITUARIES

Alex Espinoza

Alex Espinoza, 74, passed away on Jan. 19, 2021, after a long battle with COVID-19. He was born on Sept. 3, 1946 to Adonais and Guadalupe Espinoza in Romeo, Colo.

In 1976, he met his future wife Joyce and they wed in 1979. They had one daughter together, Courtney Anne Espinoza.

Alex was a musician having his own band in the 70's and 80's, named the Sonics. He played a variety of music on the guitar, but his passion was Spanish music. He loved corridos and rancheras.

During his retirement, he enjoyed activities such as chopping wood, cooking, and spending days with his beloved Chihuahua, Bella. He was a devoted Catholic and heavily practiced his faith.

Alex is survived by his wife Joyce Espinoza, his daughters, Courtney Espinoza, Barbara Ulibarri and Karen Gomez, son Christopher Gomez, his siblings, Gilberto Espinoza, Benny Espinoza, Laurinda Quirova, Gloria Duran, Eneida Runge, Yvette Benavidas, June Salazar, Sharon Lucero and Lisa Pohl as well as numerous nieces, nephews and extended family.

Alex was preceded in death by his parents, his brother Charles Espinoza, his sister Dorothy Duran and his oldest son Lawrence Espinoza.

Due to COVID-19, a private family service will be held at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Alamosa and burial will follow in the San Luis Valley Cemetery in Monte



Vista. Contributions are suggested to La Puente and may be made in care of the funeral home office. To express condolences, visit www.rogersfunerals.com.

Max Jay Capron

Our beloved Max Jay Capron passed away on Dec. 21, 2020 in Del Norte, Colo., at the age of 98 years old. Max was born on his grandmother's homestead near Springfield, Colo. on July 16, 1922.

Max grew up in Gunnison, Colo. He served in the US Navy during World War II as a signalman on the USS Chester. He married Lois Elna Woods in La Junta on July 16, 1946.

After he graduated from Colorado State College (now CSU), he worked as a landscape architect. Truly, thousands of trees in the Denver area can be attributed to his career of over six decades.

Max and Lois raised three sons, Gary, Bryce, and Scott in Arvada, Colo.

He was a founding member of Trinity Presbyterian Church where he sang in the choir and served as a leader in many roles.

He is survived by his sons Bryce and Scott, his brother Wayne Capron, and his sister Patricia Friesen. Max is also survived by five grandchildren, four great-grandchildren and many more extended family members.

The memorial service will be at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Arvada, Colo., later this year when it is safe to gather. Memorial donations can be offered to Trinity Presbyterian Church. To express condolences, visit www.rogerfunerals.com.

Rogers Family Mortuary in Monte Vista is in care of the arrangements.



Patricia Louise Smedly

Patricia Louise Smedly was born June 23, 1929, to Covert and Mabel Shuler in Springfield, Colo.

She married her high school sweetheart, Howard Smedly on Sept. 4, 1949, in Del Norte, Colo.

During Pat's busy life she enjoyed her membership in the Order of Eastern Star and service as Mother Advisor for Rainbow for Girls and loved her work as Founding Director of the Monte Vista Emergency Food Bank.

She also enjoyed her years of planning summer reading programs at the Carnegie Public Library in Monte Vista, volunteering in elementary school classrooms and her membership and involvement at the Monte Vista United Methodist Church.

Patricia died Jan. 5, 2021, in Grand Junction, Colo.

Howard preceded her in death, as did her sister, Betty Jayne.

Pat is survived by her sister, Shirley Ricketts, daughters Cheri Van Valkenburgh (Sam) and Lynda Foster (Paul). Also by grandchildren Shaun Howell (Regina), Megan



Lopez (Erik), Marcy Foster Melin (Scott), 10 great-grandchildren and three great-great-grandchildren all who will dearly miss their Nana.

A Memorial Service will be held at a later date when family and friends may gather to celebrate Patricia's life. Those who wish may contribute to a memorial fund at the Monte Vista Emergency Food Bank, P.O. Box 844, Monte Vista, CO 81144.

OBITUARY POLICY

Valley Publishing charges a flat fee of \$30 for each obituary published. Pending arrangements or death notices run for no charge.

This charge affects funeral homes, as well as family or other representatives, that directly place obituaries. All paid obituaries will continue to be published on our

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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 for more information.

BOARD

Continued from Page 1A

smoke detectors, the board approved the project and directed administrators to continue pricing units.

During the board's working session, they examined snow removal tactics and formulated a plan to make the most of both employees responsible for the job. Changes start by notifying staff as soon as snow forecasts come out and starting removal at 4:30 a.m. New no-parking signs along Worth Street will forbid parking year-round between 2 and 6 a.m. Staff will also bid on a four-wheeler to give options for clearing sidewalks and roads. The primary focus starts

in the business district downtown, followed by surrounding streets and other areas. Heavy snow requires repeat visits with the blades to keep the heart of town clear.

The board approved the accounts payable balance report, a wage scale analysis for town jobs and a contract for software services so they can control policy document updates online themselves.

The Lino family lost everything on Jan. 20. The community responded with clothes, furniture and funds. The board approved money for a housing down payment, although the amount is yet to be determined

for Lisbeth's mother, Marivel Lino Lamas, a single mother with two young boys.

The board will meet again on Feb. 9 to go over goals and other items tabled for future discussion.

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Thank you to the community members who helped the Humphreys crew with the century old tradition of putting up 18" blocks of ice.

~ The Brown Family

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OPINION & EDITORIAL

Who is that masked man?

Long ago and in a world that seems so far away, a man emerged on the big screen riding a horse named Silver to rescue not only damsels in distress but also town folk besought by all kinds of troubles.

This man was different from his cowboy actor predecessors as he wore a mask and had an Indian sidekick instead of shooting said segments of the population.

He also wore the tiny mask to hide his identity but as much as it fooled all those people back then, I still believe I could pick him out of a lineup any day of the week.

His debut was in 1949, some 30 years after the still famous Zorro burst on the scene in 1919 with a mask and a sword to rescue Californians from the evil Government of that time. Of course, the actors who portrayed these characters were handsome devils and I often wonder if the mask helped their looks as much as the masks of today do for some of the people I know.

The darned pandemic sure has caused a mess in this country and indeed around the entire world and now we all are wearing masks albeit no one is rescuing damsels, crime-stricken cities, nor California from their over-taxing alcalde.

Someone said the other day that almost a year into donning said contraptions they are so in tune with muffled speaking they can even understand Charlie Brown's teacher who only said "wah-wah-wah" when she talked.

For people like Ol' Dutch, the addition of a mask to an already hard-to-hear world has just about finished us off. No matter where I go to interact with people, I am now living in a world that does sound a lot like Charlie's teacher. Without being able to see people's lips, it's just a mumbling jumble of noise that I try to decipher best I can.

I can recall one incident where I almost got sent to the rock prison in Canon City. Miss Trixie and I had spent the day across the border in Mexico and although we did not see Zorro as I had hoped we did see Mexican troops with guns. Sergeant Garcia was missing but still the overbearing oppressive flavor was there to enjoy.

Coming back across that Rio Grande, I presented my passport to the officer at the desk, and he asked that I show him what was in my bags. I simply said "No, thank you" and walked away. This only dawned on me later and I stopped mid-step when I realized what he had said. Welcome to Miss Trixie's world.

And yes, I have some hearing aids, but they seem to break quite often and really only work if Ol' Dutch can read your lips at the same time. And most of you know that Ol' Dutch is quite the expert at reading lips as evidenced



Trout Republic
by Kevin Kirkpatrick

by his success with the ladies. Poor Miss Trixie really does need to get that eye-rolling condition examined by a medical professional.

But now with the addition of masks it's almost impossible to send me out in public alone which Miss Trixie says is about normal anyway. But what does she know?

I can usually drag her along wherever I go, and she handles all the talking and answering and honestly that's not all bad. That leaves Ol' Dutch alone to peruse the greater things in life such as spring fishing, elk season vouchers, cow in heat cycles and sales at Harbor Freight. You know, the important stuff.

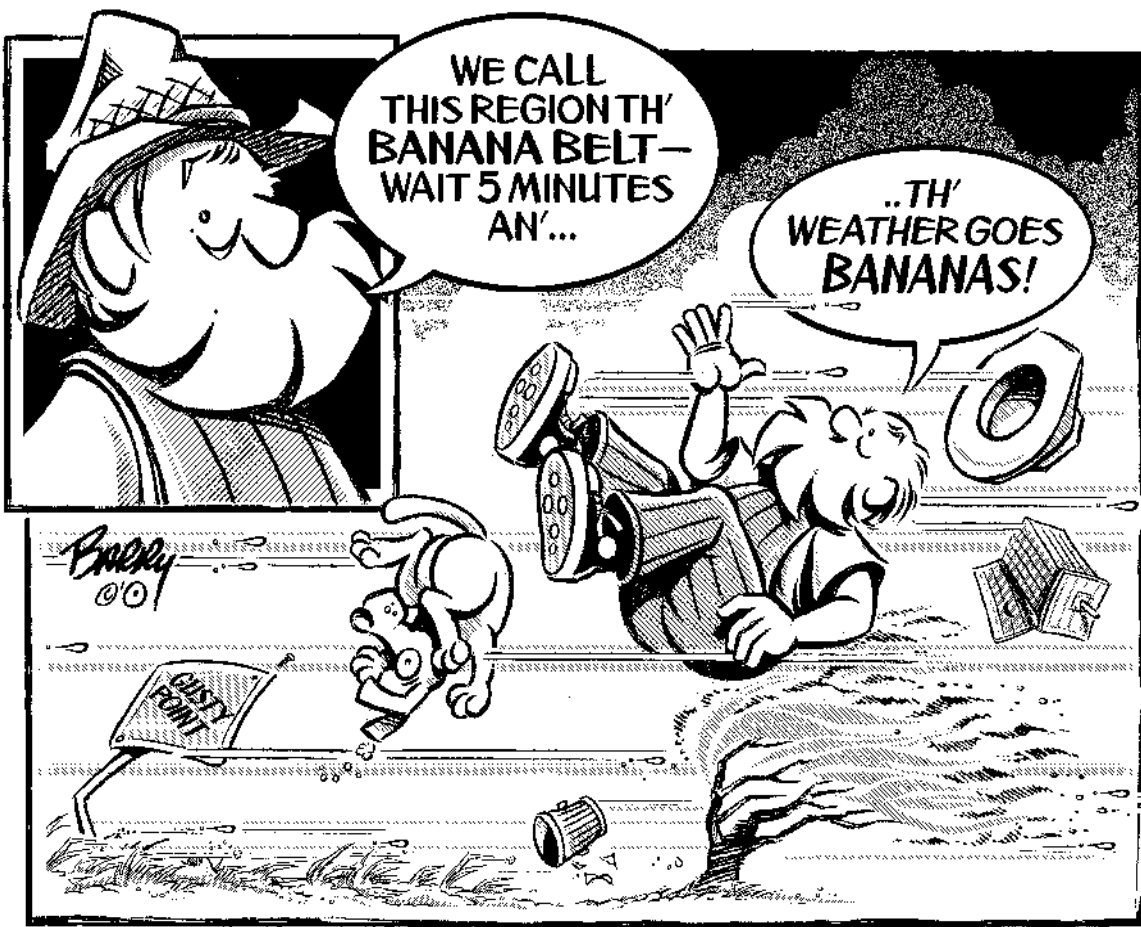
I do believe that I am not alone in this silent world and wish that the officials who get on television to announce something vital to our survival like higher taxes, more regulations and other lies would take off that mask so we can read their lips.

So here we are folks, living in a revolving Halloween dress up Groundhog Day that seemingly will never end. For we go to sleep and wake anew masked and muffled which pretty well takes out people like Ol' Dutch from understanding a word that is being spoken around them.

The upside to this is that at least now when the politicians all lie to me at least I do not know what they say and so later cannot blame them for the rising debt, wars, inflation, costs of goods and services and their criminal actions.

Whoever said "Silence is golden" certainly must have been hard of hearing too and found that bowing out of an already crazy society isn't all bad. In fact, the actual quote says, "speech is silver, and silence is golden." Think about that the next time Washington is yakking on and on and on.

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.



YOUR NIGHT SKY

Save the Dark Skies

By DARLENE DANKO

On Jan. 17 the Sunday Denver Post had an interesting "Save the Dark Skies" article that was 2.5 pages long.

"There's a growing push to preserve celestial views over rural Colorado as artificial light spills out of cities." "Night skies never gained the federal legal protection congress established in the 1970's to limit human degradation of the air, land and water." These were some of the important things they wrote.

Colorado used to have wonderful night skies with our high elevation and dry air. But artificial lights are taking that away from us. Community campaigns in SW Colorado and the San Luis Valley are working to correct that. Fortunately, we're still in a dark sky area. Governor Jared Polis backs that effort.

The International Dark Sky Association is based in Arizona

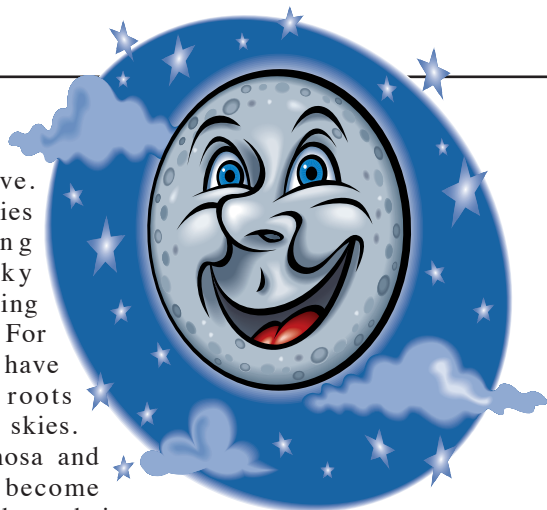
where I used to live. It guides communities through lighting overhauls and sky quality meter measuring to verify darkness. For two decades officials have encouraged grass roots action to save starry skies. Unfortunately, Alamosa and Monte Vista have become heavily lit hot spots due to being larger towns.

Saving the starry skies is a worthwhile good for environmental, social and fiscal reasons. Some businesses and residents have replaced old lights with shielded fixtures that direct dim light downward. This has been going on in south-west Colorado.

In Creede dark sky proponents are considering all of Mineral County as a dark sky preserve. Tompkins Hardware and Lumber clerks help homeowners find dark

sky friendly fixtures that they carry. So it's a place you might want to visit, to see what they have that you can use.

I'm sure some of you read this article and found it interesting. I kept it all. I love dark skies, and South Fork is lucky to have them. I will continue to write my Night Sky article for as long as I can, and I love going out at night to look at our beautiful clear night sky. "Views of the Night Sky can sooth the soul."



LETTERS POLICY

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

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

be returned to the sender or discarded.

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

Political letters may be limited due to space constraints.

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Saguache and San Luis Creek conservation legacy grows

STAFF REPORT
MOFFAT — The Colorado Cattlemen’s Agricultural Land Trust (CCALT) is announced on Jan. 22 the completion of another conservation project in the San Luis Valley. The 2,300-acre Saguache Creek Ranch outside of Moffat is now conserved. The project was made possible with leadership from landowners Dale and Andrea Gerstberger and with support from Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) and the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA), a program administered by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

The Gerstbergers purchased Saguache Creek Ranch in 2014 after moving from Kansas to Colorado. As fourth-generation ranchers, Dale and Andrea didn’t waste any time re-establishing their agricultural operation in the Centennial State. Today, the lush hay meadows on Saguache Creek Ranch support their cow-calf operation.

The family was introduced to conservation easements through their neighbor John Werner. His property borders the Gerstberger’s ranch, and Werner has been a supporter of CCALT since conserving his property in 2014.

With the addition of Saguache Creek Ranch, there is now a contiguous block of conserved land along the eastern boundary of Werner’s property and an additional 2.3 miles of Saguache Creek, and 3.5 miles of the North Branch of Saguache Creek conserved in the San Luis Valley.

“The Saguache Creek corridor is

an inspiring conservation success story, with nearly the whole stretch of river perpetually conserved from where it flows off public lands, through the town of Saguache, and now for several miles south of town as it merges with the North Branch. This landscape-scale conservation outcome would most certainly not be the success it is today without tremendous support from partners like GOCO and the USFWS, which have invested heavily in the area over the past 25 years,” said Brad Cory, CCALT conservation manager.

With over 1,840 acres of dense wetlands, Saguache Creek Ranch is a rarity in Colorado, where wetlands cover only 2% of the state. The ranch is prime habitat for Sandhill Cranes, a state species of special concern.

Ducks Unlimited has identified the San Luis Valley as the most important breeding area in the state for migratory birds, including Sandhill Cranes, which migrate annually through the area in the spring and fall.

Additionally, the ranch offers habitat for big game species such as elk and pronghorn, which utilize the lower elevation ranchland on the valley floor as winter range.

“Congratulations to the project partners for this impressive milestone in the San Luis Valley conservation movement,” said Chris Castilian, GOCO executive director. “And our sincere gratitude to Dale and Andrea Gerstberger for their generosity of spirit in thinking long-term about Colorado’s lands, people, and wildlife.”

The Gerstbergers turned to



Courtesy photo

The 2,300-acre Saguache Creek Ranch outside of Moffat is now conserved.

conservation due to mounting threat from development and increasing financial pressures related to the current drought and their recent purchase of the property. Conservation of the property will alleviate some of those pressures and allow the Gerstberger family to continue their long ranching tradition. Conservation will also ensure that the scenic views and wildlife habitat associated with the ranch will remain pristine.

Saguache Commissioners tackle airport and water issues

BY PATRICK SHEA
SAGUACHE — Attendees and presenters from both sides of the Continental Divide listened to Saguache County Commissioners discuss water issues, airport improvements and affordable housing in Crestone.

A pilot and aviation enthusiast, Jed Ellithorpe presented ideas to fix hangars at Leach Airport and possibly improve revenue for the county. Ellithorpe noted three new hangars at Astronaut Kent Rominger Airport north of Del Norte and lease agreements to build three more. At a market price around \$100,000 per hangar, Ellithorpe said efforts to renovate at Leach Airport can save costs and possibly generate revenue by

selling revamped structures. The meeting turned to water issues in the sky, on the surface, underground and in the legislature. Representing Subdistrict 5, Chris Ivers and Clinton Phillips described a trenching project they hope to complete before April 1. The request to dig along county right-of-way routes comes during the final design stages before a hard deadline at the start of irrigation season.

At 30 inches wide and 8 feet deep, the trench is designed to minimize asphalt replacement along the route starting south of CR47.5 and north of CR48X. Heading north and west along CR48X, the trench will cross the highway onto CR46 and

ultimately end at the main branch of Saguache Creek. At its origin, the pipe widens from 10 inches to 15 and concludes with an 18-inch diameter for a maximum flow of 2,700 gallons per minute.

Power, gas, Internet data and other pipes snake underground, and Ivers assured the board that crews will locate these services to finalize the design.

Commissioners requested more detail about the route. They also recognized potential conflicts with Colorado House Bill 1041, the Areas and Activities of State Interest Act signed in 1974. Ivers and the board will investigate this more and engage attorneys during

Please see ISSUES on Page 6A

CLIPS FROM THE CLERK

Personalized License Plate Recall Process

BY TRISH GILBERT
Saguache County Clerk-Recorder
 There are situations when a personalized plate configuration has been approved and issued but must be recalled at a later date. The possible reasons for a recall may be one or more of the following situations:

- The configuration that was issued conflicts with regular license plate configurations.
- There are two active vehicle registration records with the same personalized plate configuration. The recall will be directed to the individual who most recently requested the personalized license plate configuration in question.

- There are two active vehicle registration records with the same personalized license plate configuration for the same vehicle owner. This may occur if the vehicle owner had the personalized license plates remade for a different type of vehicle (e.g., from motorcycle format to passenger format) and then obtained the registrations for both plate formats.
- The issued personalized license plate configuration has been determined to be offensive.

Colorado law states that any personalized license plate, which is offensive to the general public, cannot be issued, therefore, a written complaint regarding a particular configuration falls into this category. Letters of complaint are received by the Department from indi-

viduals who have seen a license plate with a configuration that offends them.

All written complaints regarding “offensive” plates are reviewed by a three-member panel. Upon the decision of this panel, the plate will be recalled for being offensive. The owner of this plate may submit a written statement that specifies the reasons they feel the plate should not be considered offensive. This statement needs to be directed to Department of Revenue Vehicle Services Section - ASU, P.O. Box 173350, Denver, CO 80217-3350.



COVID Testing Events:



Thursday, Feb. 4
 Saguache County Sheriff’s Office, 9-11 am

Thursday, Feb. 4
 Crestone Fire Station, 2-5 pm

Friday, Feb. 5
 Moffat School, 9-11 am

Friday, Feb. 5
 Center School, 2-5 pm

Pre-registration is recommended.

Visit: SaguacheCounty.net for more information.



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Helping historic mining structures stay upright

BY LYNDISIE FERRELL
MINERAL COUNTY — A drive on the Bachelor Loop outside of Creede invariably leads to the moment where onlookers first lay their eyes on the Nelson Tunnel/Commodore Superfund site structures — ore houses, adits, cribbing and workshops. They stand perched atop scree fields, tower over the dusty road, and nestled between volcanic cliffs. Mouths fall open, cameras click, and folks ask themselves how on Earth such beautiful structures can still be standing.

The sight has become emblematic of the rich mining history of Creede, where miners extracted metals for almost 100 years through ingenuity and grit. In fact, not only are the buildings representative of the mining boom in Creede but also mining in the state of Colorado. Eric Twitty, a mining historian, archaeologist, and author who has worked in Colorado for over 25 years, believes that the site is an incredibly rare and unique look at Colorado mining history because so many details are still intact.

Whereas most old mining sites are either taken apart and used elsewhere or vandalized, the Nelson Tunnel/Commodore site experienced several boom and bust cycles, remaining in operation for decades. Equipment was reused, buildings repurposed, creating a site with several layers of history. One explosive example is the dynamite thawing shack which still stands a hundred yards to the south of the mid-level sorting house. Yes, you read that correctly, a dynamite thawing house. Before TNT was reformulated to have a lower freezing temperature, it froze at around 50 degrees Fahrenheit. In order to blast through tunnels, workers had to thaw the TNT with heating elements. What a job!

Unfortunately, these iconic buildings, the stolid subjects of so many photographs, are becoming increasingly fragile. In fact, Twitty estimates that the mid-level ore sorting house that dates back to around 1900 may fall down in the next couple of years.

This Fall, Twitty and Erica Warzel, a historic preservation specialist and owner of Clerestory Preservation, discussed the fragility of the site, its historic importance, and the push to save the structures from a fate sealed in

talus slopes. The two have paved the way for the historic structures to be placed on the National Register of Historic Places, which would simultaneously place it on the State Register.

The National Register looks for sites that have historical significance and site integrity. In that respect, the Nelson site is the crown jewel of mining in Colorado. Preserving the structures, however, won't be accomplished by a National Historic designation alone, which is expected to occur in summer 2021. Designation opens the door for funding opportunities, but as Twitty explained, some structures need immediate attention.

After hearing Twitty's and Warzel's plea for action, representatives from Mineral County, Headwaters Alliance, Rio Grande National Forest, Colorado Department of Health and Environment, EPA, and Colorado Division of Mining Reclamation and Safety discussed ways to fund emergency measures such as getting a roof over the mid-level ore house and constructing reinforcements to prevent collapse.

Eventually, the County plans to restore the entire site, preserving one of the most iconic examples of mining history in all of Colorado with the help of grants and donations.

"There are still a lot of puzzle pieces that have to fit together before all of this can be finalized but each of the three County Commissioners are committed to making this venture a reality because they see the urgent, vital and imperative nature of preserving these beloved structures," said Mineral County Administrator Janelle Kukuk.

The project will be costly and time-consuming, but as part of the identity of Creede and Colorado, it has long-term cultural and historic benefits. For now, the site remains in a precarious situation. Someday soon, on the other hand, onlookers may be asking themselves how people built and worked in such beautiful buildings as opposed to wondering if it's the last time they'll ever see them standing.

For more information, contact Development and Engagement Coordinator Alex Handloff, at the Headwaters Alliance at coordinator@headwatersalliance.org.



Folks meet at the Nelson Tunnel to talk about historic structures, Fall 2020.

Courtesy photo

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Starting January 18th we will temporarily be closed on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. We found ourselves in need of an extra day each week to catch our breath. We will resume normal hours again in March. Sorry for any inconvenience and THANKS for your support! - KMS Staff

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CPW: Special SLV elk hunt now filled

STAFF REPORT

MONTE VISTA — The drawing for licenses for a special elk hunt on the Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuge in the San Luis Valley is complete and all hunting spots are filled at this time, according to Colorado Parks and Wildlife.

More than 1,500 people applied

for a license. The hunters selected in the drawing are being notified.

All those who applied remain on the list and will be called if there's an opening to fill.

Those selected who are unable to hunt should call the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Monte Vista office at 719-587-6900, as soon as possible.

ISSUES

Continued from Page 6A

a working session before the next board meeting.

Noting the threat of shutting off more than 200 wells on April 1, Ivers said they considered four or five options, but the time crunch forced them to choose the one they preferred the least. By the close of the discussion, commissioners and presenters referred to the project as "well-to-well augmentation."

Pressure from the state is forcing water users to reroute tactics and resources as much as the unseen water flowing in every direction underground.

Presenting next, Kathleen Curry discussed the Gunnison Basin Roundtable. This includes everything from the upper Gunnison River off Cochetopa Pass down to Grand Junction. The group includes 32 members, and Curry has been the chair for three years. She's also the Saguache County representative.

Out of 20 priority projects for the roundtable, Curry is pushing two Saguache County challenges for a reservoir and ditch on the west side. "We primarily fund infrastructure," Curry said. But roundtable funding comes from severance taxes, which were very low from 2020. At the same time, dead timber on Cochetopa Pass resembles other troubled forests in the state, so forest health has become another focus for projects.

Curry noted another concern. Lake Powell levels "continue to tank," and a minimum depth of 3,525 feet for running hydroelectric power operations is the ground floor. Commissioner Tom McCracken said Lake Powell was getting close down to 3,566, and Blue Mesa Reservoir in Colorado is only 46% full.

"It's pretty nerve-wracking," Curry concurred.

Also, the restrictions established in 2007 are not followed equally by member states. The 10-year average in the upper basin is well above compliance levels but lower-basin states like California,

Arizona and Nevada have been overusing their allocations for many years, according to officials. Curry put faith in renegotiating the 2007 guidelines this year for a more equitable distribution of responsibility.

Peggy Godfrey and Bill McClure presented the next water topic, a Rio Grande Water Conservation District appointee update. Saguache County includes water in multiple subdistricts. Subdistrict 1 members filed a second lawsuit in 2020 about unreasonably high fee increases. Meanwhile, members in Subdistricts 4 and 5 are managing well injury payments and other issues that arise with over-appropriated water. Like the proposal to pipe water along county right-of-way routes, the well-to-well augmentation plan amounts to "robbing Peter to pay Paul," according to an unidentified voice on the Zoom call.

Representing the west slope again, Rebie Hazard updated the board with news from the Colorado River Water District and Gunnison River Water District.

"You probably realize," Hazard told commissioners, "that the majority of our water goes to the Front Range (64%)."

Sandwiched between water topics, Kirsten Schreiber described the Crestone Peak Community Housing "Living Wisdom" project.

The goal since the idea emerged a decade ago is to provide affording senior housing in Crestone, ages 55 and older. Schreiber submitted her grant update to commissioners before the meeting (and thanked them for their support).

As the March deadline to present the plan to the Crestone Town Board approaches, Schreiber said 43 people signed up for an estimated 20 units. Developed by Indiedwell from Pueblo (indiedwell.com), the structure models will range from 350 to 650 square feet. The group hopes to break ground before the close of 2021.

VACCINE

Continued from Page 1A

continues, especially during this historic moment in the pandemic with limited supplies, as vaccines are distributed right off the conveyor belt. To be as equitable as possible, we must make decisions based on data and be intentional in assuring that no one is left behind. In time, everyone who wants a vaccine will be able to get one—regardless of their zip code, income, insurance status, or race and ethnicity," said Jill Hunsaker Ryan, Executive Director, CDPHE and Co-Chair of COVID-19 Vaccine Equity Taskforce.

"Equity doesn't happen by accident. We have to be deliberate about achieving it. The Vaccine Equity Task Force and the administration as a whole are dedicated to equitably distributing the vaccine, and we've brought together the top equity and community experts in the state to get it done. This virus has disparately devastated our communities of color. This is our opportunity to get it right and get historically marginalized communities life-saving vaccines," said Rick Palacio, Strategic Advisor to Governor Jared Polis and Co-Chair of COVID-19 Vaccine Equity Taskforce.

The state has several strategies to achieve greater equity in vaccine distribution, acknowledging that the pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on historically marginalized populations. Some of the strategies include:

- Partnering with counties to host community clinics in Center, San Luis, Aurora, Pueblo, Alamosa, Rifle, Glenwood Springs, Denver, Lake County, Clear Creek County, and Park County. The state will continue to plan more.

- Establishing community partnerships with the goal of reaching communities of color. For example, CXDPHE has worked with Salud, an organization that operates 13 clinics in underserved communities around the state.

- Coordinating with transportation providers to assist Coloradans with mobility barriers or without personal

vehicles.

- Ensuring that the ability to present a photo ID is not a barrier to getting vaccinated.

- Facilitating the Champions for Vaccine Equity program to provide information to communities of color about the safety and efficacy of vaccines, plus utilizing Promotoras, service providers, and crisis counselors to support vaccine literacy.

- Running a vaccine media marketing campaign featuring medical professionals from diverse backgrounds and engaging influencers and local public health agencies to help get the word out to hard-to-reach communities.

- Having a goal of a community-based clinic that has vaccines available in 50% of the top 50 census tracts for high density of low income and minority communities.

- Establishing a COVID-19 Vaccine Outreach Team to ensure CDPHE is meeting goals.

The race/ethnicity categories in the data visualization align with those used by the U.S. Census, which is standard for intake forms used by healthcare providers.

SAN LUIS VALLEY COVID-19 UPDATE

Colorado is still focused on COVID-19 vaccinations for those age 70 and above, high- and moderate-risk healthcare workers and first responders. It is estimated they will expand to other groups around March 1, contingent on vaccine availability and state and federal guidelines.

If you have vaccination questions, you may find the information you need at <https://covid19.colorado.gov/vaccine-faq>.

Some people have recently asked about vaccines for immunocompromised individuals. They may still receive the COVID-19 vaccine if they have no contraindications. However, they should talk with their doctor about vaccine safety profile and effectiveness in immunocompromised populations,

as well as the potential for reduced immune responses and the need to continue to follow all current guidance to protect themselves against COVID-19 infection.

People living with HIV, cancer, other immunocompromising conditions, or who take immunosuppressive medications or therapies might be at increased risk for severe COVID-19. There is currently not enough data to establish vaccine safety and efficacy in these groups.

People with stable HIV infection were included in phase 2/3 clinical trials, though data specific to this group are not yet available. The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are mRNA vaccines and do not contain live virus. As of Tuesday, Jan. 26, there were 125 known active cases of COVID-19 in the San Luis Valley.

- Alamosa County — 49
- Conejos County — 17
- Costilla County — 4
- Mineral County — 5
- Rio Grande County — 47
- Saguache County — 3

More information about SLV active case counts, dial status, capacity restrictions at each level, as well as other San Luis Valley COVID information, can be found on the SLV Public Health Partnership website at www.slvphp.com/slv-regional-covid-dial/.

RESOURCES

To pursue testing for COVID-19 through regular testing providers call:

- Rio Grande Hospital 719-657-4990

- SLV Health Respiratory Clinic 719-589-3000 ext. 9

- Valley-Wide Health Systems 719-589-3658 ext. 4 (M-F), 719-589-2562 (Sa/Su)

The Colorado Spirit Crisis Counseling Program (CCP) offers community-based crisis counseling, help with disaster coping strategies, education, and more. Get information at www.slvbhg.org/services-and-programs/coloradospirit/ or call 719-587-5673.

Decisions, Decisions!

One of the greatest gifts the Lord has given us is the power to choose. In fact, every day we are faced with literally hundreds of choices. The question is, are we making the right ones?

Think about your own life for a moment. When you have a decision to make, do you normally go with the flow, doing whatever feels right...or do you pray for wisdom and ask the Lord for insight?

I love Proverbs 3:5-6. It says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight" (NIV).

If you are anything like me, you know how easy it is to lean "on your own understanding." However, just because something might sound good, feel good, and look like the right thing to do, it doesn't mean it's God's best for you or necessarily the right direction to take.

Let me give you an example. Early in my ministry, I had the idea to do a local TV talk show in St. Louis. We got a group of ladies together who were well educated in the Bible, and we rented some studio space at a local TV station to do the taping.

I was trying to do an interview show, but every time I asked a question, I'd answer it myself! I just couldn't quiet down long enough to let anybody else respond.

Obviously, this didn't work because it was my plan, not God's. In six months we received one piece of mail!

A few years later, the Lord directed us to go on TV and we didn't have a clue what we were doing. We rented a banquet room where the ceiling was too low and some of the tiles were caving in. We placed a podium on a stage, and for a backdrop we took this blue thing that looked like a shower curtain and strung it up on a pole behind me.

It looked ridiculous, but the very first day my program aired, we received 125

calls! That was the beginning of our television ministry, which continued to expand and now airs throughout two-thirds of the world.

Proverbs 3:7 says, "Do not be wise in your own eyes." I believe God is telling us, "Don't think you can run your life and do a good job without My help and direction."

Sure, we can come up with some good ideas on our own, but many times we settle for good when God wants to give us great.

It seems many Christians struggle with making decisions because they're afraid they won't hear from God. However, the Lord longs to give us direction, and He desires to speak to us in so many ways...

First and foremost, He has given us His Word. The Bible tells us that God's Word is alive, active and powerful (see Hebrews 4:12). In fact, John 1:14 says this about Jesus, "The Word became flesh."

So, when we read and study the Bible, we're not just reading a good book; we are actually spending time with God Himself. And the Bible is our instruction book for life!

The Lord can also speak to us through our conscience, other people, and even the world around us. But one of the main ways the Lord will direct us is through peace. Colossians 3:15 says, "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace."

This is saying that just as the umpire in a ball game decides if the ball or player is "in" or "out," similarly, peace is the umpire that decides if something in our lives should be in or out.

There have been times when I have been invited to speak at a conference or special event, and I have really wanted to accept. However, I didn't have peace about doing it, so I decided to decline.

Now, I may not always know why I shouldn't go, but I have learned



(sometimes the hard way) that God knows things I don't.

I encourage you to let the peace in your heart decide with finality every question that arises in your mind. If you are getting ready to make a major decision, ask the Lord for His guidance. Remember, when you acknowledge Him in all your ways, He will direct your path (Proverbs 3:6).

If you aren't used to praying about decisions, it may seem awkward at first. But the more you seek the Lord and ask for help, the easier it gets...and the more sensitive you will become to His presence and direction.

Don't settle for "good enough." God has a great plan for your future, and as you seek Him for guidance, He will be faithful to lead you in every single decision you make.

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

Joyce Meyer is a New York Times bestselling author and founder of Joyce Meyer Ministries, Inc. She has authored more than 100 books, including BATTLEFIELD OF THE MIND and her newest devotional QUIET TIMES WITH GOD (FaithWords). She hosts the Enjoying Everyday Life radio and TV programs, which air on hundreds of stations worldwide. For more information, visit www.joycemeyer.org.

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REMEMBER

Continued from Page 1A

their idea,” Skoglund Middle School Principal Luis Murillo said. “It was a group of seventh-grade students who decided to come in on Thursday, and they gave us the idea to do this. This has nothing to do with the adults. It’s about whoever was touched by Lisbeth.”

Superintendent Carrie Zimmerman brought in counseling help for everyone in the building the morning after the fire. Lisbeth’s brothers are in the first and fourth grades, and Zimmerman said teachers work in both schools.

Beyond the campus, Murillo said, “We’re such a small, tight-knit community, it affects everyone.”

Murillo released two versions of a video — Spanish and English — immediately after the fire. He announced the bad news and directed viewers to resources for emotional support over the weekend and for the next week. On Monday, the students stayed with their cohort groups for “listening circles” where they could talk about any emotion they felt and

BACA

Continued from Page 1A

“We had approximately \$115,000 in the operating account. We had approximately \$536,000 in the reserve. The accounts receivable reads approximately \$483,000.”

Flewell said the nearly half-million-dollar figure includes all payments owed to the association — unpaid fees and fines, past due assessments (90 days and older) and other amounts like reimbursable legal fees.

Saguache County boosted the balance by \$15,000 with CARES Act money to manage a firewood program. Also outside the budget, a check for \$23,000 covered one of three national call-outs for local firefighters. Reimbursement checks for two other call-outs and a Colorado state request are reportedly in the mail.

Camper Village storage income and an insurance claim for water damage at the stables accounted for another \$35,000 for the association, as of November 30. But other anticipated income fell in 2020. The initial Emergency Services projection of \$128,000 stood at \$18,000 at the start of December, a significant drop. Facility rental income for the hall and Camper Village ideally reaches \$65,000 by the end of the year, yet it was only \$17,000.

On the other side of the balance sheet, Flewell said they were “slightly unfavorable to budget” at 93% of operating expenses as of Nov. 30. The sweet spot is 92%, and the year-end numbers need crunching before balancing 2020. Custodial services exceeded budget, for example, as staff applied extra elbow grease in offices and maintenance facilities to comply with COVID-19 health requirements.

Following his financial presentation, Flewell noted 10 governing document revisions in progress and anticipates 25 to 30 similar updates throughout the year as the board reviews policy inventory. Meanwhile, staff are taking asset inventory for all equipment in all departments, another task expected to take much of 2021 to complete.

Discussion of land use issues, Flewell counted 331 lot ownership transfers in 2020, an annual total roughly twice as high as 2018 and 2019. This includes all lot sales — undeveloped, tap fees paid or fully occupied.

Baca Grande POA members and others interested in regular meetings

discuss the tragedy.

Zimmerman said she arranged for more substitutes to relieve teachers, and she appreciates the support received from neighboring school districts. Victim’s Advocates from Rio Grande and Saguache counties stepped up too.

On Jan. 21, Police Chief Dale Meek answered questions while a line of community members dropped off boxes and storage totes filled with supplies. The Lino family lost everything, so the seventh-grade class also created a GoFundMe online drive. As of Jan. 25, 230 donors pitched in \$16,545 to help with funeral expenses and rebuilding.

Since January 2019, one of the five structure fires in Center was an act of arson. But the other four were older buildings that shared the same vulnerabilities as Lisbeth’s house. A fire that burned a wood home on Torres Street two months ago spread from an aging fireplace, and the Lino house was a 1960s mobile home with additions to the structure.

As Chief Meek explained, “Two in two months is too much. The only reason we didn’t lose an entire family on Torres Street was because a dog was barking.”

Neither household was equipped with functioning smoke alarms or carbon monoxide detectors, according to Meek. Despite immediate efforts to resuscitate Lisbeth when first responders removed her from the home, the ultimate cause of death was carbon monoxide poisoning.

“We will never be able to prevent fires,” Chief Meek said. “But warnings and alarms will reduce the potential for the loss of life.”

After working through a multi-agency debrief session, Chief Meek and Fire Chief Russell Brown agreed to push prevention. Councilmember Bill McClure suggested supplying the town of Center with fire and carbon monoxide detectors. The process would entail door-to-door visits to ask residents if they have detection devices and tested them recently. The door-to-door strategy worked before.

“When COVID first hit,” Chief Meek recalled, “nobody knew what ‘isolate’ meant. They thought, ‘I’ve been exposed to the disease, so I’ll go home and stay with the family.’ Well, guess who’s going and coming from the house? The family.”

Spearheaded by Principal Murillo, COVID-19 education beyond the campus went door-to-door.

“He’s bilingual. He got out in the community. He had a team,” Meek recalled. “First, they did everything over the phone. After that, they went door-to-door. Through a brief, 15-minute conversation, you can

attack the problem through education. It’s the same thing with this whole fire-smoke thing. We have to educate the community.”

Meanwhile, the community has provided education in compassion and support. Lisbeth’s seventh-grade peers orchestrated a ceremony without prompting from adults. The Lino family had a place to stay the next day. People donated clothing, furniture and thousands of dollars during tight times for everyone.

As Meek expressed, “it demonstrates the tremendous heart and soul of our community.”

PUBLIC NOTICE

Colorado Gators Inc., 9187 Pyrite Circle, Mosca, Co, 81146, (719) 580-2306, has filed an application for a Construction Materials (112) Reclamation Permit with the Colorado Mined Land Reclamation Board under provisions of the Colorado Mined Land Reclamation Act. The proposed mine is known as Mystic Soil, and is located at or near Section 22, Township 41N, Range 10E, 6th Prime Meridian.

The proposed date of commencement is Spring 2021, and the proposed date of completion is, Fall 2032. The proposed future use of the land is industrial/commercial and rangeland.

Additional information and tentative decision date may be obtained from the Division of Reclamation, Mining, and Safety, 1313 Sherman Street, Room 215, Denver, Colorado 80203, (303) 866-3567, or at the Saguache County Clerk and Recorder’s office; 501 4th St. Saguache, CO, 81149, or the above-named applicant. A complete copy of the application is available at the above-named County Clerk and Recorder’s office and at the Division’s office.

Comments concerning the application and exhibits must be in writing and must be received by the Division of Reclamation, Mining, and Safety by 4:00 p.m. 10 days after the publication of this notice.

Please note that under the provisions of C.R.S. 34-32-101 et seq. Comments related to noise, truck traffic, hours of operation, visual impacts, effects on property values and other social or economic concerns are issues not subject to this Office’s jurisdiction. These subjects, and similar ones, are typically addressed by your local governments, rather than the Division of Reclamation, Mining, and Safety or the Mined Land Reclamation Board. No. 1587 published in the Center Post Dispatch, Thursday, January 14, 21 and 28 and February 4, 2021.

can read notices posted at the Baca Grande Fire Department, 16670 Camino Baca Grande, and the POA Office, 68575 County Road T. The

POA website, <https://bacapoa.org/>, provides information for the general public and private access for lot owners.

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Rio Grande agencies come together for COVID-19 vaccination clinic

STAFF REPORT
DEL NORTE — Rio Grande Hospital and Rio Grande County Public Health realized a need in the community and quickly found a solution. Both Rio Grande County Public Health and Rio Grande Hospital had doses of COVID-19 vaccine along with waiting lists with over 600 people on their combined lists.

Rio Grande County Public Health was willing to share vaccine doses with Rio Grande Hospital during a mass vaccination clinic but needed help organizing the event. Rio Grande Hospital Chief Nursing Officer and the team then went to work.

The Del Norte Fire Department was contacted and donated a large space for the event and provided five volunteers. They also donated tables, chairs, and ensured the building was ready for use as well as plowing snow off the parking areas to ensure safety.

The United States Forest Service assisted with traffic control, parking, patient assistance and brought 15 volunteers.

Trinidad State Junior College assisted with patient screening and vaccinations with 30 students and three instructors.

Rio Grande County Public Health staff brought vaccines and entered all vaccines in real-time into the Colorado Immunization Information System with two volunteers.

All three local EMS agencies in the county sent staff to assist with vaccinations.

Del Norte Emergency Medical Services, Monta Vista Emergency Medical Services, and South Fork Fire and Rescue brought an additional seven volunteers in total.

Rio Grande County Social Services sent staff to assist with registrations and directed flow with four volunteers present.

San Luis Valley Behavioral Health sent staff to assist with monitoring with three staff available.

Two semi-retired physicians assisted with patient flow and monitoring.

The Del Norte Police Department and the Colorado State Patrol assisted with any security issues or concerns as patients moved about the facility.

Rio Grande Hospital staff sent 15 volunteers to register patients, draw up vaccines, administer vaccines, screen patients, direct patient flow, organize all necessary supplies, and lunch.

Rio Grande Hospital Clinic staff and Rio Grande County Public Health staff called and scheduled all 300 individuals in the 70-year-old and older population to attend.

Rocky the service dog and his

handlers visited and helped comfort patients as they were monitored.

Over 88 volunteers throughout the day assisted with over 300 COVID-19 vaccinations. The event came together in less than five days under the direction of Candice Allen, Rio Grande Hospital Chief Nursing Officer.

For information on a future COVID-19 vaccination clinic, call 719-657-2418 and asked to be placed on the list or visit www.riograndehospital.org and click on the COVID-19 Vaccine Sign Up Form in the yellow box.



Courtesy photos

More than 300 people were vaccinated for COVID-19 at the clinic in Del Norte.



Local EMS partners pictured left to right, A.J. Fresquez, DNEMS, Stefan Ortega, MVEMS, Tammy Hanynic, DNEMS, Shannon Goldsberry, Linette Schmidt, and Woody SFFR, assisted with the COVID-19 vaccination clinic in Del Norte.



Right: A local United States Forest Service Wildland Fire Unit assisted with the COVID-19 vaccination clinic in Del Norte.

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SAGUACHE COUNTY SHERIFF REPORT

SAGUACHE COUNTY — The following information was provided by the Saguache County Sheriff's Office for the period between Jan. 21 and Jan. 24.

The Sheriff's Office fielded a few dozen calls during the week, many on the roadways for nine speeding tickets and moving violations since Jan. 16. People engaged in criminal mischief, harassment and trespassing accounted for four calls. Staff monitored five controlled burns, handled a civil dispute and helped with three ambulance rides.

- Arrests**
- Arturo Felix, 71, Saguache, fugitive of justice.
 - Aurelio Rodriguez, 39, Bullhead City (AZ), failure to appear.
 - Alberto Chaparro, 42, Center, failure to comply.



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Headwaters Alliance continues work toward Dark Sky Designation

BY LYNSIE FERRELL
MINERAL COUNTY-For almost a year the Headwaters Alliance in partnership with Mineral County, the City of Creede and the Mineral County and Creede Chamber of Commerce have been working toward a Dark Sky Designation. There are many reasons why this area in southwestern Colorado is deemed unique and one is the fact that it is a place that has little to no light pollution.

“Becoming a Dark Sky region is a process, one that takes time and dedication to the preservation of one of the darkest places in the state. There are several components to the designation application that



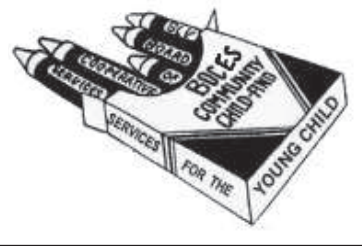
Courtesy photo

Please see DARK SKY on Page 6



BOCES Child Find addresses child development

If you have concerns about your **0-5 year old child's development** (if not yet in Preschool/Head Start) call SLV BOCES Child Find! Our purpose is to locate, identify and evaluate children who may have delays in speech, motor, cognitive or social development. If a significant delay is identified, families are connected with appropriate free services to address delays. Refer your child online at slvboces.org, click on Child Find and then ONLINE REFERRAL. For children in school please bring your concerns to your child's teacher. Questions – call 719 587 5428



Martin joins Rural Health Services Council



Konnie Martin

Courtesy photo

ALAMOSA – The American Hospital Association (AHA) Board of Trustees welcomes Konnie Martin, Chief Executive Officer, San Luis Valley Health, as an advisory member to the Rural Health Services Council. Martin will begin her three-year term January 1, 2021.

The Rural Health Services Council plays an important role of actively advising the AHA on advocacy positions, public policy issues and rural member service strategies. Members of the AHA Board value Konnie's willingness to serve and have expressed their appreciation for her expertise in rural health issues.

Martin is completing a recent leadership role as Board Chair for the Colorado Hospital Association. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics, Computer Science and Business from the University of Arkansas at Monticello. She completed the Advanced Leadership Training Program (ALTP) at the Regional Institute for Health and Environmental Leadership (RIHEL), the CDC-founded regional leadership institute for Colorado; the UCLA/Johnson & Johnson Health Care Executive Program (HCEP); and the AHA Health Care System Transformation Fellowship. Her classroom includes the lessons she learns every day from her staff, community, and family.

If Herefords were black

If Herefords were black and Angus were red would breeders of Herefords breed Angus instead?
 I mean, would the people who bred Herefords first
 be now breeding Angus if things were reversed.
 Or would they be loyal to red, white and true
 To color of cowlick be always true blue?
 If such were the case would they dis all the
 blacks,
 Tell jokes about prolapse, compare them
 to Yaks
 More suited for saddle or wearin' a yoke
 Than stubbornly breeding until they go
 broke.
 And those of the Aberdeen Angus cartel,
 would they tout maternal endowments, as

well,
 Promoting their native resistance to thorns,
 while cursing as mutants those not sprout-
 ing horns.
 Just draggin' their sheath through the cheat-
 grass and burrs
 like leaky ol' bass boats nobody insures.
 Debate would rage on like it does anyway
 if South had worn blue or the North had
 worn gray,
 Or if Henry Ford had been Hank Chevrolet
 You'd still be a Ford man... or would you,
 today?
 So if Herefords were black and Angus were
 red
 would breeders of Herefords breed Angus
 instead?

The question begs deep philosophical
 thought
 but don't get disgruntled or get overwrought
 The breeders of purebreds run true to the
 grain
 And efforts to change them would just be
 in vain
 And not 'cause they think other cattle are bad
 "I'm stickin' with this one, 'cause that's what
 Dad had."
 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

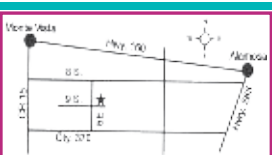


Cow Pie, Hey, Cowboy, Wanna Get Lucky? and Dunny and the Duck. Baxter Black can be contacted via e-mail at: vikki@baxterblack.com



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 Monte Vista



2020 Wildlife Rehabilitation Grant Awards will support rehabilitation efforts across Colorado

DENVER – Ten recipients of Colorado Parks and Wildlife’s third annual Wildlife Rehabilitation Grants have been announced. The grants are offered by CPW to support wildlife rehabilitation efforts across the state.

“These ten grants reach across the state,” said CPW Director Dan Prenzl. “They include investments to expand rehabilitation facilities for the long-term and funding to help keep existing facilities open to meet public demand.”

“We had more than \$48,000 in funding requests but only \$16,200 in funding available,” said Jim Guthrie, Program Coordinator for the Wildlife Rehabilitation Grants Program. “There’s a big need out there. A lot of Colorado rehabbers run on shoestring budgets. They put in tremendous personal effort for the love of helping animals recover from accidents or injury.”

“The rehabilitation of Colorado’s wildlife species often happens quietly, by a relatively few number of qualified and licensed professionals around the state,” said John Gale, Chair of the Wildlife Rehabilitation Grants Board. “They provide critical services across a diversity of species - large and small - often at great personal expense. Colorado’s grant program provides important support to wildlife rehabilitators, increasing resources and allowing them to help more animals.”

The work supported through this year’s Wildlife Rehabilitation Grants includes:

- Flight cages and equipment to overwinter bats at the Colorado Bat- CREW facility in Conifer
- Continued construction of a new rehabilitation facility at the SonFlower Ranch in Brighton
- Food and medical supplies at the Rocky Mountain WildHeart center in Colorado Springs
- Veterinary and medical



expenses at the Rocky Mountain Raptor center in Fort Collins

The grant program was created through House Bill 17-1250. Funding for the grant program comes primarily from the nongame tax check-off program, along with fines from nongame wildlife based offenses and interest income. For the first \$250,000 raised annually, 10 percent is allocated to the Wildlife Rehabilitation Grant Program, which aims to provide funding specifically for wildlife rehabilitation centers. For many rehabbers, this kind of funding fills a critical gap.

“On behalf of my fellow committee members and Colorado

Parks and Wildlife professionals,” said Gale, “I want to extend our appreciation to Colorado taxpayers for their generous donations and continued investment in this highly successful grant program.”

Applications for Wildlife Rehabilitation Grant Awards are due each year in early November. For more information on the grant program and application materials, please visit the Wildlife Rehabilitation Grants page.

2020 Wildlife Rehabilitation Grant Awards

Rocky Mountain Wild- Heart – Colorado Springs
Food, supplies, medical supplies

Grant Award: \$2,000
Lynette Carson – Beulah Raccoon enclosure

Grant Award: \$3,000
Colorado BatCREW - Conifer Flight cages and equipment to overwinter bats

Grant Award: \$2,000
Emily Davenport - Sedalia Lead testing equipment

Grant Award: \$2,000
North Park Wildlife Rehabilitation

Food, medical supplies, veterinary services, travel, caging materials
Grant Award: \$1,200
Wild Bird Rescue – Englewood Facility operations – rent, food, medical supplies

Grant Award: \$2,000
Shellee Lawson – Bailey Food and supplies
Grant Award: \$1,000
Rocky Mountain Raptor Program – Fort Collins
Veterinary and medical supply expenses

Grant Award: \$1,000
SonFlower Ranch Wildlife Rehabilitation - Brighton
Concrete floors for caging and new building

Grant Award: \$1,000
Bill Main – Colorado Springs Food, medical supplies, veterinary services
Grant Award: \$1,000
Total grant awards: \$16,200

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High Valley Community Center is back in session

DEL NORTE- High Valley is happy to report that their first week back to regular programming went well. Our theme of the week in our Overcoming Obstacles series was “empathy.” This is an effort to help the children identify emotions and respond appropriately. A star example of empathy showcased this week was between Noah and Isaac. Both boys had a disagreement, but they listened to one another’s point of view and were able to resolve their conflict themselves.

Fabulous Fridays resumed Jan. 15. Each Friday in January, the High Valley crew will be taking small groups of kiddos to the Stars and Strikes Bowling Alley in Monte Vista. There will be two separate sessions; 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. and 1 p.m. – 3 p.m. Children interested in attending must complete a registration form via the High Valley website. Once all the time slots are

filled, parents are welcome to call High Valley at 719-657-2172 to place their child on a waitlist. Parents must register their children each week to be included in the Friday bowling field trips. Did your child not make the waitlist? No problem! All children are welcome to hang out at High Valley Fridays from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. Lunch and fun activities will be provided.

We have also begun registration for youth basketball! Registration forms can be found on our website under the “Sports” section. Currently, we will be focused on skill building exercises and we aim to host scrimmages and games in the future. More information regarding games will be determined later. These skill-building sessions will take place in the Middle School Gym on Oak Street. High Valley will transport the kiddos to and from the gym EXCEPT FOR the 6-7 p.m. sessions.

We will transport the kids in the 6-7 p.m. sessions from High Valley to the gym, but we ask that you please pick up your child from the Middle School Gym as High Valley will be closed by 7 p.m. From Jan. 19 through Feb. 11 there will be K-2 coed basketball Wednesdays from 5-6 p.m., 3-4 grade boys’ basketball Tuesdays/Thursdays from 5-6 p.m. and 5-6 grade bboy’s basketball Tuesdays/Thursdays from 6-7 p.m. The girls’ sessions will take place Feb. 9 through March 5. 3-4 grade girls’ sessions will take place Tuesdays/Thursdays from 5-6 p.m. and 5-6 grade girls will practice from 6-7 p.m. Due to uncertain times, our schedules are subject to change, but we will make sure to spread the word if any changes occur. If you have questions, visit the High Valley Community Center website, or give us a call. We are happy to answer all your questions!



Rio Grande Water Conservation District Board rejects proposal

BY PATRICK SHEA

SAN LUIS VALLEY - More than 40 people attended the Rio Grande Water Conservation District (RGWCD) quarterly board meeting Jan. 19 to hear updates from managers, approvals from the board and detailed discussions of water export issues.

Before the meeting, John Mattingly shared his buy-and-bank proposal with board members and sought their reactions. For almost an hour, the board listened to Mattingly and identified different flaws in the idea.

“This is not really a water export proposal,” Mattingly said. “It’s a bank-and-withdraw. Given that the Valley could use some assistance in restoring the sustainability of the aquifer, it seems to me that there’s enough capital and there’s enough will on the eastern slope to be a partner with the Valley in that restoration project.”

Board member Cory Off spoke first against the proposal. He said he felt hopeful that the commission would explore the motivations of people who want to export water out of the Valley, something he thinks will help prepare the board for the future. But the concept itself sounded incomplete to him.

Offering views from the southern end of the basin, Armando Valdez favored studying the banking concept within the subdistricts. But he added, “I have fears that if we ever facilitate water banking and taking water outside of the basin that opens up a whole new level of flow that we don’t currently have right now. And I would not want to be part of that kind of proposal.”

Mike Kruse followed by challenging Mattingly’s characteristic of agricultural economics. “I disagree with your premise, John that the water has a higher value in the city and that somehow we should participate in that higher value from the city and bring it back here. I think the water has its right value here.”

Board Secretary Dwight Martin said, “I want to express my opposition to Mr. Mattingly’s proposal. I think it’s introducing the camel’s nose under the tent. Trying to explore exportation of the water out of the Valley is a real mistake.”

Cleave Simpson followed with an explanation of conservation efforts. “We’ve really been active for almost two years working with the conservation community. We can create a buy-and-bank, but the bank is to leave it in the aquifer. The conservation community is very

interested in providing capital.”

“I see several flaws that would lead to me stating opposition,” Zeke Ward noted next. Ward described the economic cycles in agriculture and noted the gap between the high water value for municipal use and relative low value for food production. Ward also said, “With COVID, we’re already seeing people wanting to migrate away from large metropolitan districts, which is going to change the demand.”

Bill McClure also noted new land purchases from out-of-state organizations.

David Robinson said, “I believe the flaw in your quite well thought-out presentation is that moving water out of basins is very much like pregnancy. You don’t get there halfway. Once the process has started, it continues.”

Later, Robinson recounted the history of the foreign capital that funded the Valley’s first canals. He also provided the full history of Crowley County’s water woes. The sequence started with the state’s sugar beet boom that went bust in the 1970s. A cattle rancher from Oklahoma tried using the land, changed his mind and finally sold water rights to municipalities.

“I see there’s a tremendous amount of resistance to this,” Mattingly said. “I appreciate your patience.”

For the second hour of the meeting, the board approved reports and appointments, starting with Simpson’s financial report. Simpson also received approval for a storage lease agreement with the SLV Irrigation District (using Rio Grande Reservoir). After a long discussion, the board approved a conflict-of-interest policy and later approved manager appointments for Subdistrict 6.

Marisa Fricke presented the manager’s report for Subdistrict 1, highlighting the well permit program that grew from 11 to 30 in the subdistrict. “The board is always thinking of new programs, and this one really hit the sweet spot. Being that there’s 30 wells interested in selling to the subdistrict shows that the community understands the rock and the hard place.”

Amber Pacheco followed with updates from Subdistricts 2, 3 and 6. Preliminary reports are due at the end of February so the final annual report will be ready by the July 1 deadline.

During the Subdistrict 4 update, Chris Ivers said, “We’re working on contracting the last of the hold-outs. A couple key contracts we’re trying

to get are the town of Moffat, we have a nice draft from Crestone that we’re about ready to sign, and the KV Estates.” Ivers said they’re still

focused on Well Injury Payments, although some surface rights owners told him “flat out that they will not sign contracts with us. So, we are looking

for sources of wet water to be able to make replacements.”

The board will gather again April 20 for the next RGWCD meeting.

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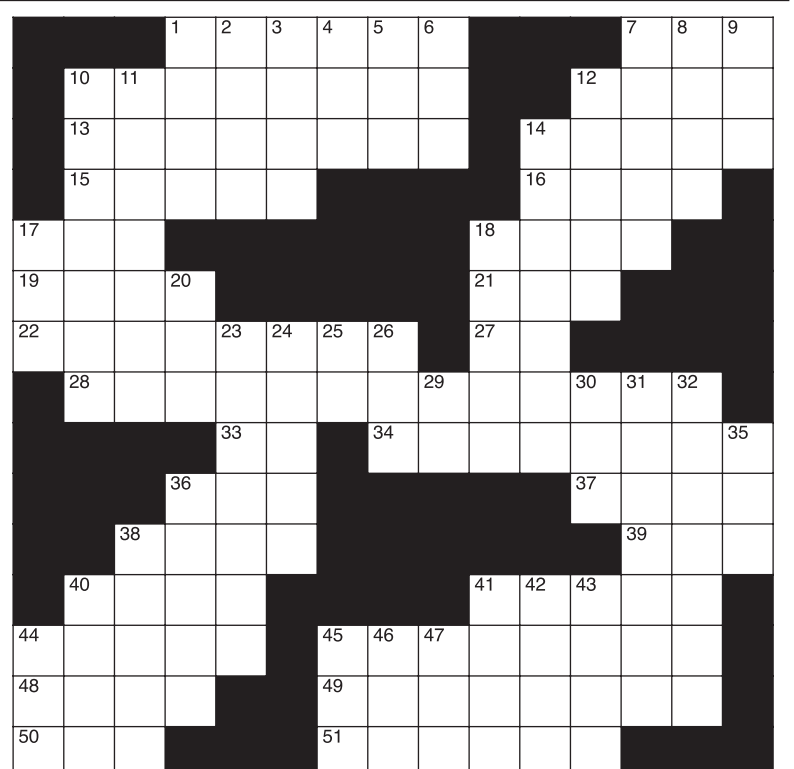
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CLUES ACROSS

1. Lunar crater
7. Upstate NY airport (abbr.)
10. Fruit
12. Seventh avatar of Vishnu
13. Organism that grows without air
14. Heals
15. A book has one
16. Open
17. Twitch
18. Plant of the mint family
19. Soon
21. Witch
22. Long, mournful complaint
27. Killer clown film
28. Keeps us occupied
33. Influential lawyer
34. Formation of concepts
36. Insecticide
37. Swiss river
38. Actress Lucy
39. Unit of g-force
40. Can repel attackers
41. Essential oil used as perfume
44. Cut into small pieces
45. Mexican agricultural worker
48. Best pitchers
49. Benign tumors
50. Danish krone

Solution to last week's puzzle

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



51. Looms above

CLUES DOWN

1. Make a map of
2. Cain and ___
3. Dried-up
4. Corporate exec (abbr.)
5. Trading floor hand gesture
6. Strongly alkaline solution
7. Yemen capital
8. Military leader (abbr.)
9. Maintains possession of
10. Afternoon show
11. Imaginary being
12. Rearrange
14. Holy person or sage
17. ___ Mahal
18. Backbone
20. Brooklyn hoopster
23. Intervened

24. Extremely angry

25. Indicates position
26. Chinese surname
29. Potato state
30. When you think you’ll get there
31. ___ Falls
32. Bullfighters
35. Born of
36. Small fishes
38. “Father of chemical warfare”
40. Waste matter
41. Skin disease
42. Scandinavian mythological god
43. ___ and haws
44. Villain
45. Tell on
46. Difficulty
47. Not old

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- 02 CARD OF THANKS
- 03 MEMORIALS
- 04 LOST & FOUND
- 05 NOTICES/BAZAARS
- 06 PERSONALS

EMPLOYMENT

- 07 HELP WANTED
- 08 WORK WANTED
- 09 EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

FOR RENT

- 10 APARTMENTS
- 11 ROOMS
- 12 HOUSES
- 13 MOBILE HOMES
- 14 BUSINESS PROPERTY
- 15 WANTED TO RENT
- 16 VACATION

REAL ESTATE

- 17 REAL ESTATE
- 18 LOTS & ACREAGE
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- 65 PROFESSIONAL SERVICES
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07 Help Wanted

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Saguache County Department of Social Services is now accepting applications for the position of Income Maintenance Technician. Position determines eligibility and benefit delivery for Medicaid, Food assistance, Colorado Works, and other income assistance programs. No degree or specialized training

necessary, but includes a great opportunity for State training. Bilingual ability is preferred and given consideration, but not required. Starting salary is minimum \$26,000 per year and full benefits, depending on experience. Applications and complete job descriptions are available at 605 Christy Ave., Saguache, Colorado, by visiting the Saguache County website at Saguache County.net or by calling (719) 655-2537 and requesting one be mailed. Completed applications must be received by Saguache County Administration no later than 3:00 pm. on February 15, 2021. Saguache is an Equal Opportunity Employer. (1/27)

Saguache County is currently accepting RFP's for a new Saguache GENERAL PURPOSE OF POSITION: Serves as the County's Chief Legal Officer and Legal Counsel to the Board of County Commissioners. Performs a variety of complex high level administrative, technical, professional work in advising and representing Board of County Commissioners and Elected Officials (upon direction from Board of County Commissioners), and Department Heads; conduct civil lawsuits; prepare legal documents and correspondence; conduct legal research and assist various entities and committees supported or appointed by the Board of County Commissioners. **MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS:** Currently licensed to practice law in the State of Colorado and the United States Court of Appeals. Ability to independently perform listed responsibilities with a minimum of supervision. **ESSENTIAL POSITION FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES:** Researches and applies knowledge of federal and state statutes and regulations relating to county government, contracts, employment civil rights, land use, environment, finance and general law. Prepares briefs, pleadings, contracts, and other legal documents and correspondence; operate computer, analyze and render opin-


ions regarding comprehensive legal issues/documents; and negotiates on the County's behalf. Represents the legal and business interests of the County, makes presentations in various types of litigation and administrative hearings, including child and adult protection and child support matters when working with Social Services. Represents the County and Department of Social Services in trials, appeals and administrative proceedings in courts and in State administrative agencies statewide. This is a full-time position with benefits included. All interested parties should submit a proposal in a **sealed envelope with "COUNTY ATTORNEY"**

on the envelope by January 15, 2021 at 3:00 PM to: Saguache County, Attention: Wendi Maez, County Administrator, PO Box 100, Saguache, CO 81149. For questions please contact Wendi Maez, County Administrator at 719-655-2231 or you may email your questions to wmaez@sagua-

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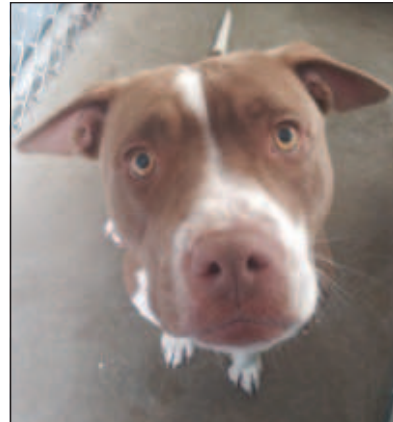
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Winston is a 7.5 year old, Chihuahua mix. He is a very quiet and calm fella. He tends to be a lap dog, and is very affectionate. He does well with all people and kids, but is a bit shy at first. He does great with other dogs.

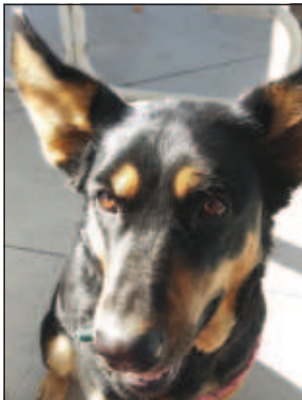


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Golden Pick Hockey Tournament with near-record teams

By **LYNDSIE FERRELL**

CREEDE- The Silver Ice Park located north of Creede was full of people this past weekend for the annual Golden Pick Hockey Tournament. Visitors from all over the place came to participate in the tournament or to watch the action taking place on the ice. According to reports from several people, the event saw a near record number of teams that signed up for the tournament and that made for one epic weekend. “We typically have about 28 teams and this year 15 signed up. Considering the COVID restrictions, we were really happy with that number,” said Brian Brittain owner of Tommyknocker Tavern.

The ice ponds were glistening in the early morning sun as it peeked over the high caldera cliffs surrounding Silver Ice Park and teams hit the ice ready for some good old fashion competition. Saturday bloomed bright and clear with scattered cloud cover throughout the day. Visitors set up along the banks of the ponds where



bonfires roared.

“It is just really nice to have something to do and to get outside even if you’re not participating in the tournament,” said one spectator who cheered on the games. From the bonfires to the brief breaks in games while event coordinator Kip Nagy brought out the infamous Zamboni machine, the weekend was a huge success.

Sunday was windy and cold as a pending snowstorm made its way over the San Juan Mountains, but it did nothing to deter people from

coming to enjoy a day outside. Sunday marked the end of the tournament with the following winners, A-league winners were Kip’s Minnesota, B-league winners were Wapiti Warriors with Check Republic “pretty much winning as well.” Brittain also wanted to give a shout out to Ruggy who was recognized as MVP this year.

After a year of uncertainty, the 2021 Golden Pick Hockey Tournament was exactly what people needed and everyone in attendance enjoyed the event. This one will go down in the books. Here’s to next year!



Courtesy photos

Team A winners: Kip’s Minnesota Courtesy of Brian Brittain

DARK SKY

Continued from Page 1

have to be completed before we submit it to the International Dark Sky Association including light measurements over a course of time,” said Headwaters Alliance Development and Engagement Coordinator Alex Handloff.

In an article written by Handloff in October of last year, Handloff highlighted other communities within the state that have been designated Dark Sky locations, “In 2015, Westcliffe-SilverCliff was designated a Dark Sky Community by the International Dark Sky Association. Four years later, Norwood was also designated a Dark Sky Community, followed by Ridgway just one year later in 2020. In 2015, Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park became a Dark Sky Park, followed by the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve in 2019.

Following in the footsteps of these communities and public lands in Colorado, the Slumgullion Center near Lake City was officially designated a Dark Sky Park just a few weeks ago. After years of hard work, the Lake Fork Valley Conservancy’s application was accepted by the International Dark Sky Association, preserving 58 acres of land on a piece of the eponymous Slumgullion Earthflow that extends from Slumgullion Pass into Lake City. It is only the second private property to become a Dark Sky Park.”

Handloff explained that the designation that they are seeking in Mineral County will be one of the largest Dark Sky locations in the country, estimating that when the application is finished and approved, it will be the second largest in the state. “Dark Sky Designation is a tremendous resource that is in danger of disappearing at any given time. Mineral County is one of the darkest

places in the state and we want to preserve it.”

There are several benefits to a Dark Sky Designation which include wildlife hunting, breeding and feeding habits. Handloff highlighted this fact in his article to Valley Publishing in October explaining that areas with less light pollution ensure wildlife, amphibian and insect populations benefit immensely. Wildlife is not the only ones who benefit either. It has been proven that people living near Dark Sky locations sleep better, encourage power efficiency and the designation helps bring in commerce to local communities.

“It’s more than just star gazing but star gazing is definitely one of the benefits. People come from all over to enjoy the sights and experience the nights as it can only be experienced in a Dark Sky location. Those coming to star gaze come and stay the night bringing commerce to the area. It also encourages stewardship ethic, bringing in the cities, counties and towns who do their part in minimizing light pollution.”

By the end of the application process, Headwaters is seeking to designate most of Mineral County with the help of several different entities. “It will be up to us to maintain light quality, provide environmental education to the public and to help encourage minimal lighting in areas, with no lighting at all in the core. Being a Dark Sky location is a rarity for now, but hopefully we will see more and more locations as time goes on.”

Handloff is continuing his work to measure light quality and the skies around Mineral County in preparation of completing the application. He hopes to have it submitted in the coming year.

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Salazar Rio Grande del Norte Center director honored by CU

ALAMOSA — Rio de la Vista, director of the Salazar Rio Grande del Norte Center at Adams State University, will receive the Distinguished Service Award from the University of Colorado on Saturday, Jan. 16.

"I am truly grateful for this recognition from my alma mater and the Regents, and for the friends and colleagues who nominated me and those who wrote generous letters of support," said de la Vista. "My hope is that it will highlight the work of the Salazar Rio Grande del Norte Center at Adams State University, along with the essential importance of the land and water conservation and education work that so many of us are doing. Our sights are set on a more resilient, healthy Colorado and the opportunity to engage new generations of conservation leaders to carry on this vital work."

"The chance to spend my life engaged in caring for the Rio Grande, the San Luis Valley, and the Colorado I love, and in the company of such creative, committed and inspiring colleagues as all of you, continues to uplift and carry me through the challenges of these uncertain times."

De la Vista has worked in the fields of land and water conservation, environmental health and regenerative agriculture, in Colorado, across the West and internationally since earning her degree in Journalism at CU and her work with John Denver's Windstar Foundation in the 1980's. Her dedication to restorative land management and conservation brought her to the San Luis Valley in 1999 to

serve with the Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust. During this time and with wide ranging partners, she helped to conserve over 26,000 acres of working lands and wetlands along the Rio Grande and its tributaries in the San Luis Valley. In 2011, she was honored with the National Wetlands Award for Land Stewardship by the Environmental Law Institute in Washington D.C.

De la Vista came to Adams State in 2018 to serve as the first director of the Center, to "help grow the next generation of conservation leaders." In this role, she is working to further the two key initiatives of the Salazar Rio Grande del Norte Center, addressing the Rio Grande Natural Area and expanding and enhancing water education on campus and with the community. In addition to hosting the annual Rio Grande State of the Basin Symposium on the Valley's water issues, the Salazar Center is working with Adams State faculty to develop a new and innovative minor degree in water to start in Fall 2021.

CU will present the Distinguished Service Award during a virtual ceremony of its 2020 Commencement Regent Awards.

The award recognizes her "lifetime of education and problem solving" through which she "has become a trusted broker of agreements between ranchers, scientists, politicians and funders."

She is being honored for the "scope, scale and excellence of her visionary environmental work and leadership"

throughout her career.

ABOUT THE RIO GRANDE DEL NORTE CENTER:

The Salazar Rio Grande del Norte Center was launched in 2018 thanks to a generous donation from the Salazar Family, in memory of their parents, Emma and Henry Salazar.

The vision of the center is to engage and advance the conservation, restoration and understanding of the land, water and historic and cultural attributes at the headwaters of the Rio Grande in the San Luis Valley. The Salazar Center works to promote and support innovative stewardship, strengthen connections between the region's natural resources and its diverse cultures and heritage, and enhance related economic development for the community and career opportunities for students. A core strategy of the Salazar Center's Rio Grande Natural Area Initiative and Water Education Initiative is to deepen the engagement between Adams State University's faculty and students and the region's active network of conservation organizations, agencies, districts and



De la Vista

Courtesy photo



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CPW warns vehicles to slow down while traveling

BY LINDSIE FERRELL

SOUTH FORK- It is no secret to those who reside in the South Fork area that local wildlife make it their home during the winter months. Now, this can be both a blessing and a disaster at the same time depending on how the situation is perceived. On one hand, it is a joy to see deer and other local wildlife in close proximity to town as is the case in many San Luis Valley communities but it also comes with the risk of injury or even death when in a vehicle traveling at high speeds.

Throughout the winter months, deer come down from the high country in search of food as well as slightly warmer temperatures. Once hunting season comes to its final close, these animals drift toward what are considered wintering areas which can be found on Google Maps at this link <https://cpw.state.co.us/learn/Pages/KMZ-Maps.aspx>. South Fork is one of the largest wintering areas in the South Fork region and that in and of itself is why so many frequent the area.

According to Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) District Wildlife Manager Jeremy Gallegos, "CPW has identified a mule deer migration corridor just east of South Fork and mapped pretty much from Del Norte to South Fork as highway crossings. There are also multiple migratory patterns identified in and around South Fork, that are

routes that deer often take as they are moving within winter range and winter concentration areas."

Because of this, Highway 160, just east of South Fork can be dangerous to drive during certain times of the day and travelers in the area need to use extra caution. "These daily movements are what people need to be mindful of as many of the deer that cross Highway 160 are doing so twice a day. In the evening, many cross and spend the night in the fields along the river. The following morning, they cross back, and spend the day in the Pinon/Juniper foothills on the south side of Highway 160. These daily movements often coincide when people are driving to and from work, presenting the unfortunate opportunity for deer to get hit on the highway."

The only thing anyone can do to avoid an accident with a local mule deer in the South Fork area is SLOW DOWN! It is all too often the case in deer collisions that vehicles are traveling at a high rate of speed (even the 65 MPH speed limit) during the early morning or evening twilight hours and do not have time to react to a deer jumping out into the road or casually walking out just in time to meet a vehicle.

This time of year, often heralds dangerous roads due to snow as well as local wildlife and travelers are urged to slow down and be cautious of both.

"Another item to keep in mind is the breeding season for mule deer. The peak of the rut is usually early December, and bucks don't have watching out for traffic on their mind! These bucks are constantly on the move in search of females, presenting a higher probability of getting hit on the highway."

Gallegos gives one last piece of advice for traveling in any Colorado area when deer or other wildlife may be present, "the No. 1 preventative measure? - slow down. When someone is traveling with me, they watch out for deer with me as I drive if we are in between Del Norte and South Fork. They often spot the deer

before I do since they can concentrate on that. If traveling alone, don't let yourself get distracted while driving. Pay attention to signs and message boards - there's a reason they are there, and it's for your safety (and the safety of some critters, too)." Be safe out there and stay deer aware!



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