



Shorts



Hammel missing for 7 weeks

SAGUACHE COUNTY – Saguache County Sheriff’s office announced that Shayla Janee Hammel has not been seen or heard from for approximately 7 weeks. If you have any information please call Colorado Bureau of Investigation’s tip line at 719-207-0210 or the Saguache County Sheriff’s office at 719-655-2544.

Saguache County group seeks community engagement for kids

BY PATRICK SHEA
CENTER/ZOOM — Gloria Arroyos-Quintana gathered stakeholders from across Saguache County Dec. 17 to discuss four months of analysis for the next phase of their “Communities That Care” initiative.

In addition to comments from CTC Facilitator Arroyos-Quintana, Mountain Valley High School principal Kathy Hill shared her thoughts and suggestions after Moffat School District’s Virginia Drake summarized findings around substance abuse, parental engagement and tactics for mitigating problem behavior.

With 13 participants (including two teenagers), many attendees echoed Hill’s observations that separate projects across towns could be coordinated to minimize costs and elevate collaboration in Saguache County.

Arroyos-Quintana described how the group completed Phase Three. Their programming and strategy assessment identified risk factors and plans for action. At the close of the meeting, Arroyos-Quintana said, “We will go forward to Phase Four” and develop an action plan.

CTC meeting attendees agreed the group could expand representation across demographics, ages and locations in the county. To volunteer and learn more about Communities That Care, contact Virginia Drake in Moffat at (719) 745-0500, ext. 136.

Four days after the meeting, Arroyos-Quintana gathered more input from attendees by distributing a Coalition Report Review Form. Community building takes no vacation.



Center sharing Christmas to 55 families

CENTER - For the sixth consecutive year, Center Schools spread joy, food and gifts through the annual Sharing Christmas event. Susan Banning and transportation staff made sure that

families throughout the community received delivered food and gifts. Banning has orchestrated this outreach for the community since 2014. This year, thanks to generous donations from the

community and hours of effort, Banning and crew provided Christmas meals and gifts to 55 Center families.

Community donors included Del Norte Bank, Warsh Farms, Biel Consulting and

Malouff Farms. The success was a team effort as students and staff contributed time, energy and resources to ensure that everyone in our Center family could enjoy the Christmas holiday.

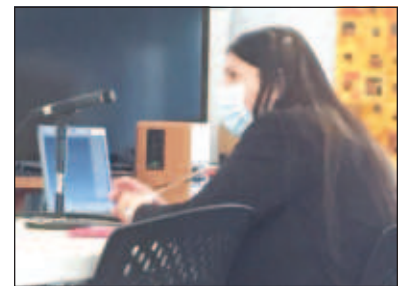
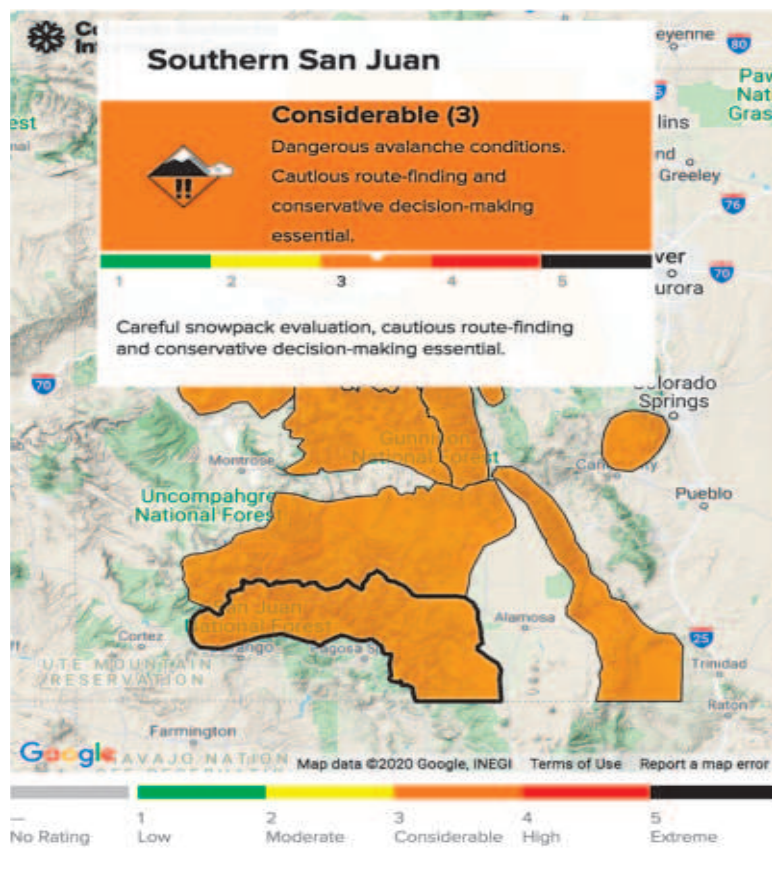
Three Colorado avalanche fatalities, SLV at level orange

BY LYNSIE FERRELL

SANLUIS VALLEY-Avalanche season is well underway on Wolf Creek Pass and in the San Luis Valley. There are several different agencies that help to keep people

See **AVALANCHE** on Page 9A

According to the Colorado Avalanche Information Center on Friday, Dec. 18, a solo skier was caught, buried, and killed in an avalanche in the Gunnison zone. He was skiing on the northeast end of the Anthracite Range in an area locally known as Friendly Finish near Crested Butte. The avalanche occurred on a northeast-facing slope at an elevation of around 10,500 feet. On Saturday, Dec. 19, two backcountry skiers were caught, buried, and killed in an avalanche in the North San Juan Zone. The skiers were in an area locally known as the Battleship, southeast of Ophir Pass which is northwest of Silverton.



After giving two-week’s notice with her resignation letter this week, Ruth Horn updated the board with current Social Services department activities and offered to help continue securing grant funding for projects on a part-time basis.

Saguache County Social Services Director resigns, Whitten retires with accolades

BY PATRICK SHEA

SAGUACHE — The Saguache County commissioners met in the Road and Bridge building Dec. 22 because a second positive COVID-19 case closed the courthouse until Dec. 28.

Please see **HORN** on Page 9A

Vaccines administered to frontline SLV healthcare workers

SAN LUIS VALLEY – SLV Health administered COVID-19 vaccines to its essential staff who have been working tirelessly. SLV Health is following the guidelines of vaccinating frontline healthcare workers in Phase 1, especially those like Tiffanie Hoover, Dr. Carla Christ, and Fallon Crowther who have direct contact with COVID-19 patients,” commented Sadie Spencer, Director of Pharmacy at SLV Health. San Luis Valley Health, in cooperation with the CDC, CDPHE, and local public health officials, have planned and coordinated the vaccine distribution in the early phases. “We appreciate our partners at Alamosa County Public Health. It’s important that we do not waste any of the vaccines available to us, especially

Please see **VACCINES** on Page 11A



San Luis Valley Health Employees Tiffanie Hoover, left, Hospitalist Nurse Practitioner, Carla Christ, MD, along with dozens of other employees, received their COVID-19 vaccines, supplied by the company, Moderna. COVID-19 vaccines administered this week

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OBITUARIES

Please see OBITUARY on Page 4A

Gary Lee Patterson, 69 Oct. 1, 1951 – Dec. 7, 2020



him to a "T."

Life's journey is not to arrive at the grave safely in a well preserved body, but rather to skid in sideways, shouting, "Holy Sh!!... what a ride!" He was preceded in death by his father Lorin Patterson, numerous aunts and uncles and his beloved niece, Heidi. He is survived by his mother Jahaza, his siblings Paula, Bill, June, Pat and Ron, his daughter Wendy, her husband Kevin, grandchildren Kody and Wyatt. The family would like to thank the E.M.T.'s & emergency room staff at Rio Grande Hospital in Del Norte for their heroic efforts. Services will be held at a later date.

Rogers Family Mortuary is in care of the arrangements. To leave words of strength, a good memory or condolences for Gary's family, please visit www.RogersFunerals.com

Judith "Judy" Ann Heersink passed away Thursday, Dec. 17, 2020, in South Fork Colorado. She was born April 4, 1947, in Kirksville, Missouri the daughter of Garnett Lee and Waunita (Wilcox) Downing. Judy met Larry R. Heersink at a birthday party and the two were married less than two months later on Nov. 9, 1978, in Miami, Oklahoma.

Judy attended school in Topeka, Kansas. She was proud to be one of the first classes to graduate from Eisenhower Junior High and following that, she graduated from Highland Park High School. Following her graduation, she worked for a few years at a local hospital as a medical assistant as well as helping with new staff orientation. When the Hospital closed down, she took on her next role as an Environmental Technician for the Kansas Department of Health and

Environment. In 2000 the two retired and moved to South Fork that September. In her younger years, she was a member of the Jobs Daughters and later in her life, she was a member of the Eastern Star Bethlehem Chapter in Monte Vista. Judy enjoyed cooking, had a passion for animals and above all cherished her time spent with Larry traveling and exploring all the beauty around us.

She is survived by her husband Larry R. Heersink, her children, Jeffrey Scott (Stephanie) Heersink and Craig Alan (Lisa) Heersink as well as her grandchildren, Kaitlyn Nicole Heersink, Taylor Ryan Heersink and one brother Gary Lee Downing, as well as numerous extended family. She was preceded in death by her parents.

Cremation was selected and a Memorial service will be held at a later



time. Contributions in her memory are suggested to the South Fork Fire Rescue and the Rio Grande Hospital and may be made in care of the funeral home office.

Rogers Family Mortuary in Monte Vista is in care of the arrangements. To express condolences or words of comfort to the family, please visit www.rogersfunerals.com

David Colin Pryce, 82

South Fork resident David Colin Pryce died Dec. 20, 2020, at his home in South Fork.

David was born in Wales, United Kingdom in Sept. 23, 1928. He married Guri Foss Pryce in 1988 in Guildford, United Kingdom.

David worked for many years and until his retirement as a Project Manager for the Petroleum industry

and worked for several companies including BP and Chevron.

He loved spending time in the mountains of Colorado hiking and riding his ATV. He also enjoyed fishing in the mountain streams and lakes.

David is survived by his wife Guri Foss Pryce; his daughter Sheila and his step-children Thomas and Trine Lill; as well as numerous extended

family and friends.

He is preceded in death by his parents, his sister Chris and his son.

Cremation was chosen and private services will be held at a later date.

Rogers Family Mortuary is in care of the arrangements. To leave online condolences, tributes and words of comfort for David's family, please visit www.RogersFunerals.com

SAGUACHE SHERIFF REPORT

SAGUACHE COUNTY — The following information was provided by the Saguache County Sheriff's Office for the period between Dec. 14 and Dec. 20, 2020.

The Sheriff and staff handled more than 60 unique calls. In addition to 11 controlled burns and three crashes, the department addressed harassment, sexual offenses, fraud, theft, a stolen vehicle and suspicious activity. They also helped with six ambulance rides, welfare checks, citizen assistance, town patrols and the pursuit of a missing person.

According to Sheriff Dan Warwick, the department continues to pursue leads on two separate missing persons cases, a man and a woman. Through public announcements on social media and printed publications, the department seeks assistance from the community while continuing to cooperate with other agencies on the cases.

When the Colorado Bureau of Investigation recently followed up on discoveries of human remains in multiple San Luis Valley counties, the number of missing person reports increased. For friends and family members concerned about a missing

person, the discoveries may prompt a report or increase anxiety for people who already filed reports.

Arrests

- Abhishek Shukla, 27, Denver, speeding and driving under the influence
- Letisia Serna, 35, Center, third-degree assault
- Garrett Hilts, 39, Arapaho, Wyoming, charges pending

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OPINION & EDITORIAL

Local cougars cause stir

The last few weeks, the towns east of Dallas had quite the event which unfolded over multiple viral Facebook posts.

Initially the first posts were community alerts about a neighbor's nephew's best friend who had spotted a cougar roaming around, but as much as Ol' Dutch looked I could never make out the photo of this woman in the grainy trail cam photos. I mean, if there is a floozy flouncing about causing a scene, Ol' Dutch is sure to be interested in that goings on.

But try as I might I could not find anything about some blonde bimbo in tight yoga pants waltzing through the local Macy's or God forbid, the local Kohls. I was wanting to see just what this cougar had to offer and in the interest of newspaper reporting I felt it was almost my sworn duty to find her and report said information to my readers.

Finally, Miss Trixie clued me in that this particular cougar had teeth and claws and preyed on unsuspecting prey. I already knew that from past experience on Match.com but she went on to explain that this was the mountain lion kind of cougar and not the flouncing floozy kind of kitty.

I am not sure if I was disappointed or relieved to find this out as both can be equally dangerous in their own right if run into in a dark alley or bar. Experts agree that a person encountering such a creature should make yourself large, slowly back away and not turn your back on it. That may be true for the kitty cat type of cougar but the other kind you best run as fast as you can if you hope to escape their clutches. Been there done that.

Anyway, it appears that a local town had a mass disappearance of cats and dogs of late and barring their rushing into the sea like lemmings over a cliff, something appeared to be eating them up. They were disappearing faster than Ol' Dutch eating mountain oysters at a Western Buffet.

But almost as rapidly as the eating started, it ended. Much like Ol' Dutch's experience with Match.



Trout Republic
by Kevin Kirkpatrick

com cougars; they soon move on to richer neighborhoods resplendent with fatter cats. (Yes, joke intended.)

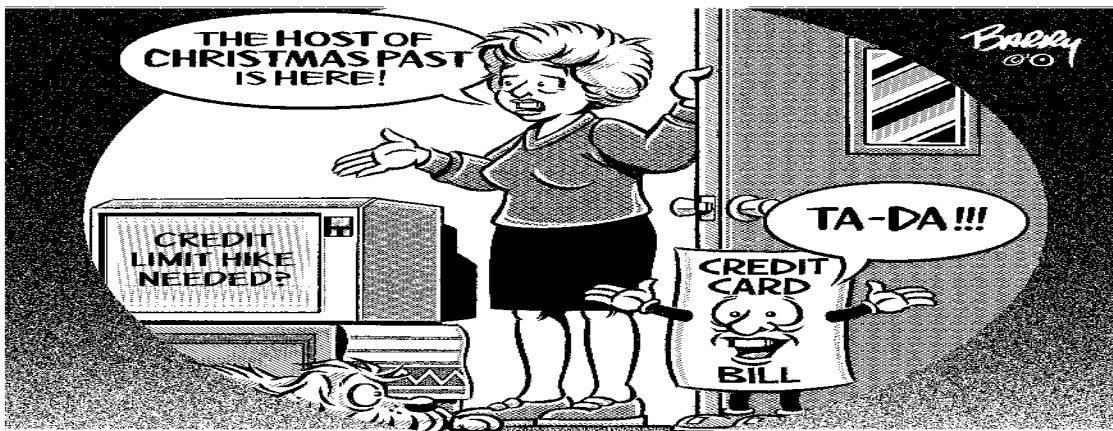
As mountain lions go, this one was persistent and showed itself in several other ZIP codes, chasing new prey and passing by security cameras. It soon found, however that there are some people that won't put up with such nonsense and the cat ended up sprawled across the tailgate of a local rancher's pickup.

When Ol' Dutch first bought his farm here in Texas, I saw two cougars on the property. It was overgrown and wild and they had set up shop here, I guess. They have since moved on like the other cougars I met online and it's a lot safer in both instances for Ol' Dutch.

From reading about cougars online, I found out they will eat about anything including cattle, horses, llamas and asses.

I know that last year I lost a calf and so I can imagine they will kill and devour about anything they can get their claws into. But one thing is for certain. If you fool around with either type of cougar sooner or later you are certain to lose your ass.

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



LETTERS Citizens of SD35

To the editor,

I write to you all today to discuss our latest election cycle. I want to thank all the individuals throughout the State of Colorado who helped with counting the ballots. This is a very important role in our Democratic Republic. I am aware that the Electoral College just made the official Presidential election finalized.

I have seen how people in the country are "protesting" the results because their candidate didn't win. Take it from me, it is not pleasant

when you don't win your campaign; but this is a part of all elections no matter the position. There are winners and there are losers. I have serious concerns that so many people don't believe the election was fair or that it was rigged. My logic is that if it wasn't fair, maybe I won my election. But it was fair and I lost. To state that this happened in some rigged fashion is so destructive to our American tradition of elections. It also casts doubt on those who did win their campaigns, no matter which side of

the aisle they rest. I think we have to be fair with all and not just with a select few when allegations of voter fraud are brought forward.

In closing I want to remind everyone that competitions have winners and losers. That's the nature of this venture. But I am proud of all of those who choose to stick their neck out and place themselves and their families in the occasional, uncomfortable light of campaigns.

*Respectfully, Carlos R. Lopez,
Citizen of Trinidad*

Thank you to all who have shown overwhelming support

Friends of the Monte Vista Fire Department, we would like to say thank you to all who have shown overwhelming support for the Monte Vista Fire Protection District and Monte Vista Fire Department. In the last few months, the great citizens of this community banded together and approved increased funding to support the continuing

service of the fire department. The increase will secure well equipped firefighters to handle the many emergencies that arise within the district as well as providing mutual aid to our neighboring communities. Additionally, the Monte Vista Fire Department held their annual Chili Supper Nov. 14, 2020, using a drive through format. Again, our

friends and neighbors endured a cold evening and showed up in with smiles and donations, making this event one of the most successful to date. The Monte Vista Fire Department's success is a direct result of you, the community, thank you for your continued support!

*Patrick Sullivan, Fire Chief
Monte Vista Fire Department*

Pirate P.R.I.D.E.

To the editor,

As we close a door on the first semester of the 2020-2021 school year, Monte Vista School District would like to thank the community of Monte Vista for your support, patience and camaraderie. We could not have continued to service our students without you!

Although this year has been challenging, there have been so many bright spots throughout our district. In the past month, our preschoolers have continued to make great strides academically and socially, enjoying all that Marsh School has to offer! Meanwhile, the kindergarteners and first graders in Monte Vista spread holiday cheer by creating art for the local care centers. We are so proud of these young people for thinking of others during the holiday season! Over at Bill Metz Elementary

School the student council adopted multiple families to deliver presents for 18 children. During normal years, the student council pays for this venture through fundraising, but due to COVID, they relied on donations from our community and school staff. Your donations made an incredible difference for Monte Vista families, thank you! Monte Vista Middle School is very proud of their students' engagement in school and showing Pirate P.R.I.D.E. even through these unusual times. Science fair is off to a strong start at both the middle school and high school. These young scientists are ready for another amazing year! Last week, Monte Vista High School's Pirate Crew sponsored a hot cocoa social. This was a great opportunity for students to enjoy the company of their peers and teachers. During

the hot cocoa social, students took the time to write kind messages to the high school staff for all of their hard work. This was very meaningful and appreciated! Our DELTA Center wants to say how honored they are to teach students with such resiliency and adaptability. The amount of knowledge acquired by these students demonstrated by their completed work during this difficult time is a true representation of the FIGHT our students and community have.

Thank you again for everyone's support! Take this break to rest, recharge, and find joy in those you care about this holiday season. We are looking forward to seeing our students and staff again on Jan. 5, 2021! Remember, we are stronger together! #PirateStrong

Devon Davey, Monte Vista

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 montevidanews@gmail.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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Shooting claims teen, shuts down Hwy. 160

By KEITH R. CERNY

ALAMOSA— An incident at a home on Main Street that resulted in the death of a 15-year-old male juvenile around noon Monday turned into a chaotic scene later that night as Alamosa Police investigators discovered possible explosive devices in the home.

Areas within 100 feet of the scene at 1318 Main Street were evacuated at the advice of the Pueblo bomb squad, closing U.S. Highway 160 in both directions near Safeway and Starbucks. According to Police Chief Kenny Anderson the bomb squad was en route and hopefully would secure the scene and have the highway (Main and 6th Street)

open within hours.

Anderson said officers responded to a home at 1318 Main (just west of Starbucks) on a report of the incident about noon Monday that resulted in the shooting death of a juvenile. Officers immediately began life saving efforts on the victim who was then transferred to San Luis Valley Health emergency room where the juvenile was pronounced deceased.

The shooting suspect was identified as Isaiah Atencio, 20, who was charged with manslaughter, first degree assault, reckless endangerment, felony menacing and possession of a controlled substance according to a City of Alamosa news release. He is currently being held

at the Alamosa County detention center on a \$60,000 bond.

With the security of the residence and alternative resources assisting, at this time the situation should not be a safety concern to the public, Chief Anderson said. "Please try to avoid the area until we have completed the safety inspection and processing," he said.

Due to this being an active and ongoing investigation no further information will be released at this time. Anyone with additional information related to the incident are asked to contact APD at 589-2548 or Colorado State Patrol dispatch at 589-5807.

Holidays and crime lower this year

By REBECCA COPLEY

MONTE VISTA - Everyone knows that crime doesn't take a break for Christmas. However, this year so far, the Monte Vista Police Department has seen a significant drop in theft/burglary calls for Dec. 1- Dec. 17 compared to 2019. This time last year there were 16 theft/burglary reports, 2 being reported as yard theft. For Dec. of 2020, so far there has only been a total of 5 theft/burglary calls. One of the calls was reported as a yard theft.

According to Monte Vista Police Chief George Dingfelder the department has not seen an increase in particular crimes during this year's holiday season saying, "We have not seen an increase in particular crimes, in fact officers have only taken 47 reports this month, compared to 73 reports last year at the same time."

Dingfelder also explaining that a report can be anything from a theft, to burglary, vehicle crash, assault or just an information report; it is not just one particular crime. Their calls

for service for 2020 have in general also trended 100 to 200 less calls for service per month with December looking like it will follow suit.

Although it is good news to hear that there have been less theft/burglary reports for the 2020 holiday season it is important to remember to stay vigilant and safe. Remember to watch for suspicious activity and call law enforcement if you witness any suspicious parties. Having security cameras in place can also

help a lot in protecting yourself and your neighbors. If you do call the police you should be ready to provide your contact information, suspicious party's description and directions of travel. For emergencies (an immediate threat to life, whether accidental, criminal or medical) call 911. For other non-emergencies call police dispatch at (719) 852-5111. It should be noted this article was written Dec. 17 and data may have changed by the time of publication.



OBITUARY

Donald "Don" Wayne Droll Sr., 90

Donald "Don" Wayne Droll Sr. was born March 5, 1930, in Washington County, Iowa, the son of Lawrence and Agnes (Wulf) Droll. He served in the United States Army Reserves from 1948 to 1952. Don worked in multiple areas of construction, farming, law enforcement and was a locksmith for many years. He enjoyed stock car racing, repairing cars, helping others wherever he could, camping, fishing, hunting and basking in the Colorado sunshine. He worked hard his entire life, but also took time to enjoy aviation related activities whenever possible. In his final weeks he enjoyed his precious moments, back in Iowa, under the diligent care of daughter, Kristi, and the watchful eyes of his new little buddy, Buster. Don died Saturday, Dec. 19, 2020, in Trenton, Iowa at the age of 90 years.

He is survived by his children: Karla (Jamie) Friend of Tacoma, WA, Kristi Brock of Trenton, IA,

Don (Lynn) Droll, Jr. of Peyton, CO, Kathy Droll of Solon, IA and Roxanne Droll of Iowa City, IA; eight grandchildren: Curtis Cousins and Brent White both of Muscatine, IA, Courtney White of Washington, IA, Daniel (Kaitlyn) Droll of Tucson, AZ, Megan Droll of Mt. Home, ID, Laci Droll of Keota, Chynna Friend and Jaden Friend both of Tacoma, WA; and a sister Marilyn Lewis. He was preceded by his parents; two sons: Marvin and Jeff Droll; two brothers: Bud and Marvin Droll and four sisters Norma Kallaus, JoAnn Thom, Marie Ballou and Mabel Wood.

Funeral service will be held at 1 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 23, 2020, at Powell Funeral Home in Keota, with Rev. Dr. James Dotson officiating. The service will also be livestreamed on the Powell Funeral Home Facebook page. Burial will be at Keota Cemetery. Visitation will be from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m. Wednesday at the funeral home. Mask usage and



social distancing are required at the visitation and service.

A general memorial has been established. Powell Funeral Home and Cremation Service in Keota is caring for Donald and his family. Tributes may be made at www.powellfuneralhomes.com.

High school winter sports practices to begin Jan. 18

COLORADO— The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment has approved variances to allow for high school sports practices to begin Jan. 18, weeks after the department announced they would not consider variances for sports until at least Jan. 25.

Ice hockey, skiing, girls' swimming, wrestling, basketball and competitive spirit have been approved to begin competition as early as Jan. 25.

The CDPHE's announcement to delay the start of high school sports forced the Colorado High School Activities Association to revise its sports calendar, with a proposed start to Season B pushed to Feb. 1 and delayed the remaining sports seasons as a result. It is not immediately clear how the new start date will affect the remaining sports seasons. CHSAA has not released a new revised calendar.

According to a release sent by

CHSAA on Monday afternoon, the calendar shift was a result of "collaborative negotiations" that "align with Gov. Polis' announcement to prioritize in-person or hybrid learning models," the release said.

"The conversations with CDPHE and the Governor's COVID Response Team to resume Season B sports have been intentional and assertive," said CHSAA commissioner Rhonda Blanford-Green. "Though it has taken many late nights and weekends, we are thrilled that our student-athletes, member schools and local school communities have a resolution. Educationally based athletics are a vital extension of the classroom."

Virtual meetings with athletic directors to advise on the variances and implementation for each sport will begin Jan. 4, according to the release. CHSAA has not made the new variances and guidelines public at this time.

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Sargent November Elementary Students of the Month Back Row: Teagan Chapman Shaw, Kaylee Voss, Cali Wolfe, Jaylee Rodriguez, Shyann O'cana and Emily Capron Front Row: Quinn Plane, Maicee Schmittel, Kinsley Price, Zoey Barlow, Kayla Loman and Cason Sease

Sargent School District reports

Greg King, High School Athletic director gave an update on CHSAA and the sports schedules. Mrs. Hefner and three fourth grade students came to the meeting and gave a recorder performance.

2021 Mill Levies Certified - The total General Fund mill levy is 28.731 mills and Board Redemption is 8.904 mills, for a total of 37.635. The district's gross assessed valuation is \$1,302,826.56.

Requisitions - Sargent was awarded the Safe Schools Reopening Grant for \$48,570. With the funds we can

purchase the following requisitions. Approval was given for to Computer Lab Consulting for \$14,994.00 for 60 Chromebooks, and for \$22,000 to ATS Rocky Mountain for HVAC repairs.

Other Items - Also approved were financial reports for November, minutes of the previous meeting, one student work study agreement, and a list of policy revisions were reviewed for a first reading.

Next Meeting - The next regular meeting of the board will be held on Monday, January 25th at 6:30 p.m.

in the high school library. A work session will be held on January 14th at 1:00 p.m.



Sargent Academic Booster Club Jr. High and High School November Students of the Month. 7th Grade: Amelia Ford , 8th Grade Tanner Kenison , 9th Grade Brooke Hoffstaetter, 10th Grade Megan Peterson, 11th Grade Mary Willis, 12th Grade: Chris Brandt

YOUR NIGHT SKY

Amazing Meteor Shower

BY DARLENE DANKO

On the night of Dec. 13 did you get to see the Geminid meteor shower? While we were watching TV in the evening, I turned off all the houselights at 8:50 p.m. to adjust our eyes to the darkness. I was actually planning to go out on the deck to view them, until I saw the temperature had dropped to 11. So I decided to stay in and look out the window.

The back of our house faces NE, so I thought I'd be able to view them in the evening. I went into our bedroom and raised the shade and rested on my knees at 9:15. Shortly a long bright meteor flashed by. I watched for 30 minutes and saw 12 meteors. There may have been more, but I had to get up twice to do things.

Then I went to bed at 10, and woke up at 1:35 a.m. I got up and looked out our window. The sky was still clear, so I put on my bathrobe and slippers, and went upstairs to the loft. Normally I go out on the deck, but it was a little too cold for me to do that. Even standing by the door was cold. In just a few minutes a long bright meteor went shooting across the sky, followed by 2 smaller meteors. In a few minutes I saw another small one and then in a few more minutes

2 small meteors appeared in the south. I waited a few more minutes but didn't see any more. I'm sure that if I had viewed from out on the deck, I would've seen a massive amount of them. But the 18 that I saw were wonderful. So, I went back to bed and slept a little longer than I usually do. I was happy to see 18 beautiful meteors! Now it's snowing, so I doubt that we'll be able to see any more tonight.

The Quadrantid meteor shower occurs from Dec. 28 to Jan. 12, with the peak Jan. 3. Unfortunately, the half-moon will shine from 10 p.m. through the night and morning. Even though there are 120 meteors per hour at the peak, only the brightest ones will be visible. But it is a strong shower. It lies in Bootes which rises after midnight. The best time to view them is close to 5:30 a.m. So look in the ENE at that time, and I'm sure you'll see some, unless it's snowing.

Now that winter has arrived, the nights are longer and the days are shorter. So, it's good for sky viewing when it's not snowing. You just have to deal with the cold. This is the time when I stop doing weekly articles for a few months. So I'll be doing every other week. I hope you all stay healthy, and have a wonderful Christmas!



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Merry Christmas!

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Thank you for caring for us!
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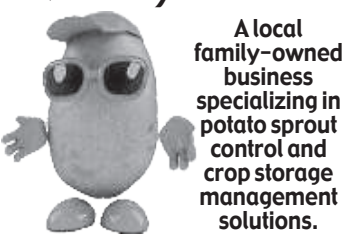
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Thinking of Our Troops & Veterans at Christmastime

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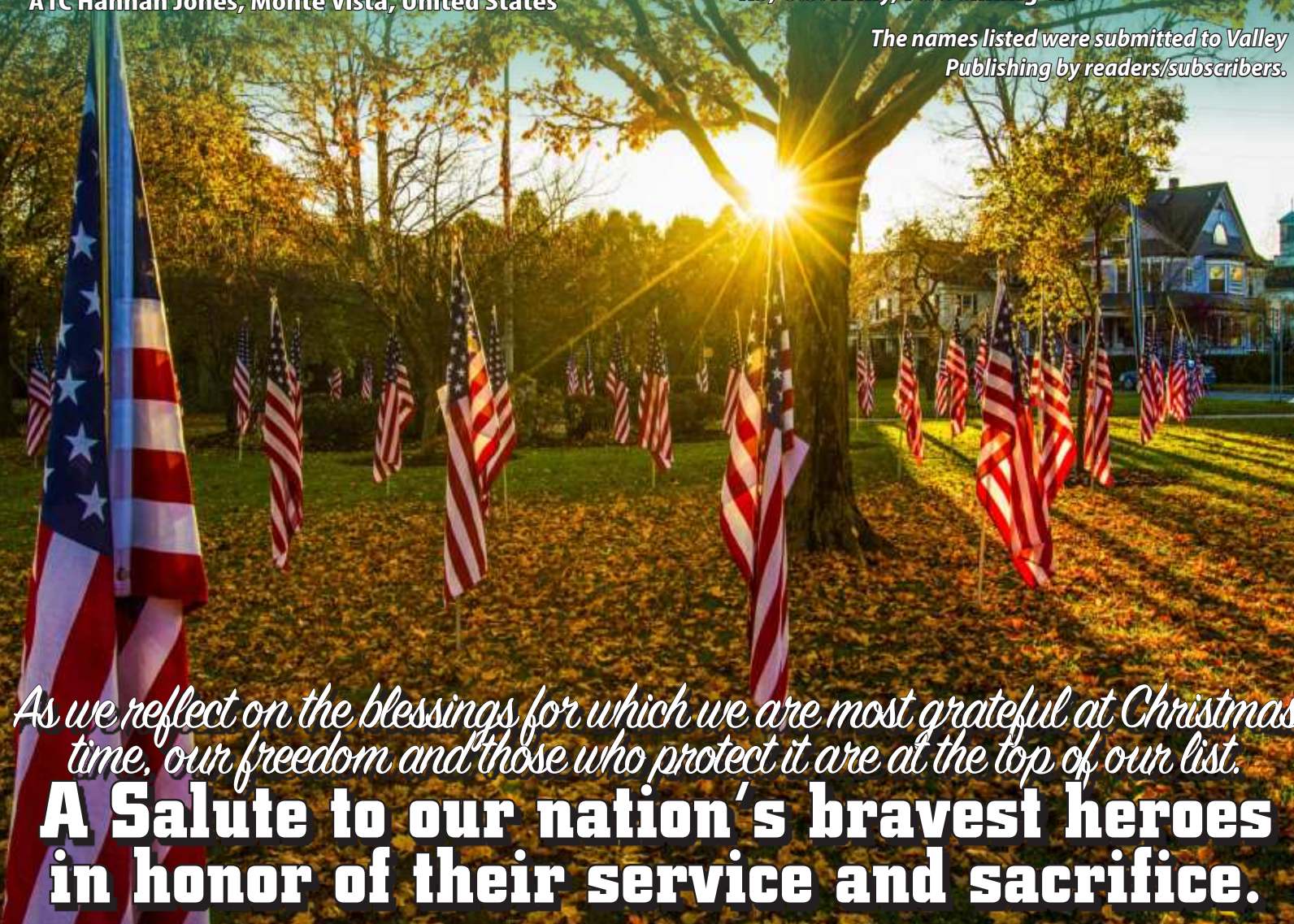
- Major Josh Wenta, Monte Vista, USAF, Stationed in San Antonio, TX
- Logan Thompson, Alamosa, United States Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, CO
- Sgt. Julio Madrid Jr., San Luis, ARNG
- LCpl Trysten M Ogden, Monte Vista, USMC Stationed at KBay Oahu, HI
- LCpl Nicolas Peiper, Monte Vista, USMC, Stationed at Camp Pendleton CA
- LCpl Zachary Navarro, Monte Vista, USMC, Stationed at Camp Pendleton CA
- A1C Hannah Jones, Monte Vista, United States

- Air Force Academy, 10th Security Forces Squadron, Colorado Springs, Colorado
- CTR E5, David Joseph Samora III, Monte Vista, US Navy, Stationed in Hawaii
- Specialist Tyler Avila, Monte Vista, US Army, Stationed at Fort Carson, Colorado Springs CO
- Staff Sergeant Roberto Munoz, Creede, USAF Sergeant Lance Munoz, Creede, US Army
- Staff Sergeant Amos Riggs, Del Norte, US Army, Stationed in Fairbanks, AK
- PFC, Josh Thompson, Monte Vista, Grad of Sargent HS, U.S. Army, Ft. Benning GA

The names listed were submitted to Valley Publishing by readers/subscribers.

As we reflect on the blessings for which we are most grateful at Christmas time, our freedom and those who protect it are at the top of our list.

A Salute to our nation's bravest heroes in honor of their service and sacrifice.





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Wreaths Across America Day at Homelake

MONTE VISTA - Each December on National Wreaths Across America Day, the mission to Remember, Honor and Teach is carried out at more than 2,100 locations across the United States, at sea and abroad. The Homelake Veterans Cemetery has participated with Wreaths Across America for 13 years. Our community answered the call this year to remember our fallen, honor those who served and teach younger generations the value of freedom. Enough wreaths were sponsored to ensure that the more than 1,500 veteran headstones in the Homelake Veterans Cemetery received a wreath.

Due to the Veterans Community Living Center at Homelake's ongoing efforts to continue to keep safe the veterans who live at Homelake, their staff who care for them and their community at large, Homelake's staff placed the wreaths this year and recorded the ceremony for the community.

Pam Self, Homelake's Admissions and Marketing Director welcomed the Homelake staff who volunteered to place wreaths and those who joined virtually from home. A moment of silence was given to remember the fallen, prisoners of war, those missing in action and to honor who have served and are still serving in the armed services.

Melanie Squire, Homelake's Activities Director was the keynote speaker for the ceremony. "We are all proud to be Americans that live in a free society made up of many people, from many walks of life. The freedoms we enjoy today have not come without a price. Lying here before us and in cemeteries throughout this nation are men and women who gave their lives so that can live in freedom and without fear. We can worship as we see fit. We can raise our children to believe as we do. We are free to vote for the leaders of our choosing. And, we have the right to succeed and we have the right to fail at whatever endeavor we wish to pursue," she shared. "Today, more than ever, we reflect on our nation's veterans and active duty service members who have had and continue to fight to protect the innocent and oppressed. This nation has always been the first to stand up for the freedom of people from around the world. Many of you watching at home have answered that call and served your country well. We are here today to say Thank You and we are honored to know you," said Squire. She concluded her address by sharing that, "Today, we show a united front of gratitude and respect across the United States of America as we remember the fallen, honor those who serve and their families, and teach the

next generation the value of freedom. Six wreaths representing each branch of the armed forces were then placed by Homelake staff. The seventh wreath represented the many servicemen and women from all branches of the military whose last known status was either prisoner of war or missing in action. "These individuals have never returned to their families and homes. We shall not forget you," Self said after the wreath was placed.

Self reminded the attendees that, "We are not here today to decorate graves. We are here to remember not their deaths, but their lives. Each wreath is a gift of appreciation form a grateful America." Self concluded the ceremony by sharing, "As a nation standing together, we can defeat terrorism, hatred and injustice. Thanks to our Veterans, we have the freedom to do just that."



*One Part Joy One Part Faith
One Part Love One Part Peace*



Here's hoping your holiday season comes together beautifully!

Thanks for making our year complete with your visits. We wish you "sew" much happiness at Christmas and always. Merry Christmas and best wishes!

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County businesses receive needed CARES grant funding

By LYNDIE FERRELL

RIO GRANDE COUNTY - Rio Grande County announced Monday that businesses throughout the county have received financial aid from COVID relief funding that was issued earlier this year. Many businesses throughout the region were facing difficulties due to the pandemic and this grant quickly became a lifeline.

At the beginning of November, Rio Grande County Commissioners announced the creation of a small business grant opportunity for businesses in Rio Grande County. Originally, the county set aside \$300,000 of the total \$966,000 the county received to help local business that have been struggling due to COVID-19 but ended up awarding just over \$600,000 to several businesses within the county. "We really hope this will help some of these businesses who have been struggling," said Rio Grande County Commissioner John Noffske.

A committee was formed to help select the grant winners from local business owners and county officials. The team of individuals including Interim County Administrator Judy Egbert, the First Southwest Community Fund, Upper Rio Grande Economic Development (URGED) and other key players have worked countless hours to streamline the grant process and get much needed financial help where it was most needed.

Owner of Two Rivers BBQ Tyler Schmidt made his plight public three weeks ago, making

it clear that local businesses were struggling to do the right thing and keep employees while trying to wade through the ever-changing COVID regulations that were being passed down by state Public Health officials. Schmidt was among the many businesses who received funding that will now help his business survive.

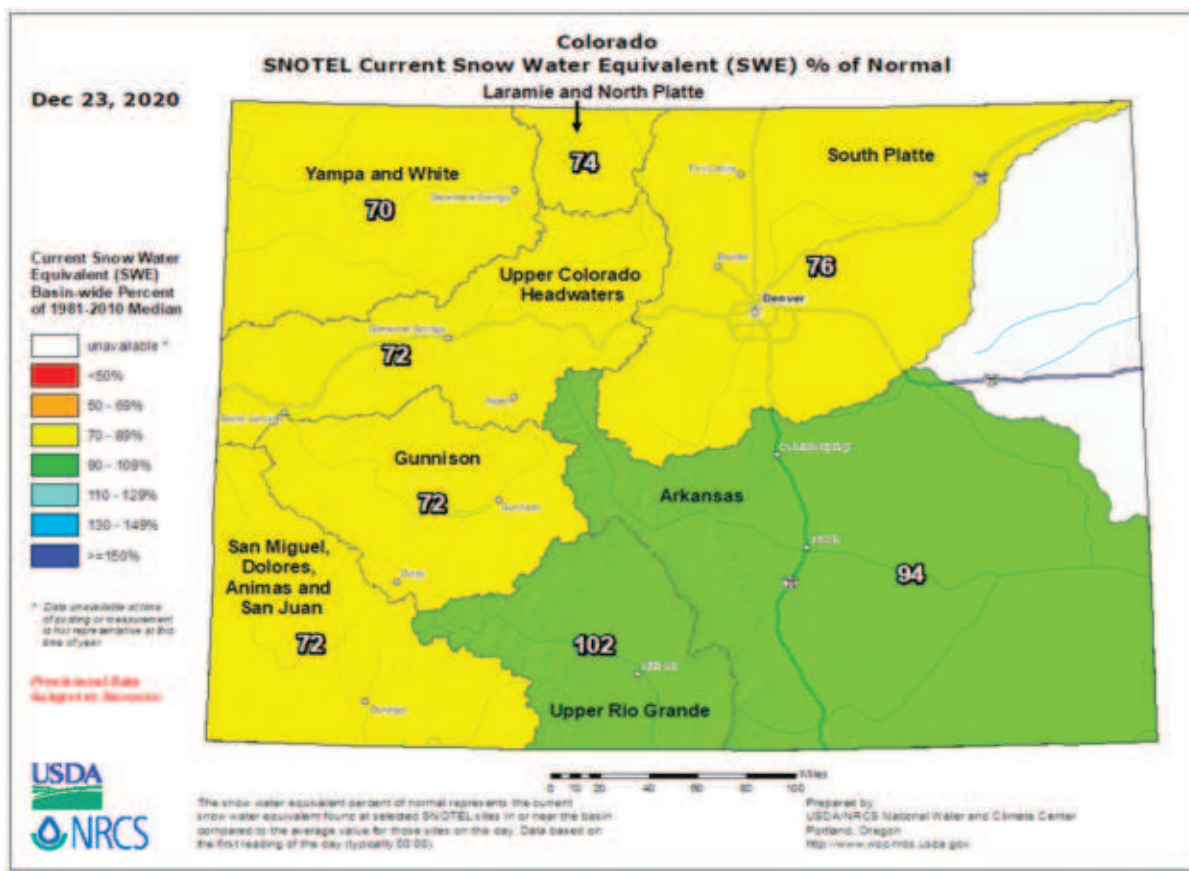
Schmidt stated, "I am very thankful for the help and I will be putting it to good use, which is to keep my employees employed. If we can remain open and maintain at this rate of business, we are hopeful that we can hang on until spring when things begin to pick up."

Rio Grande County Administrator Judy Egbert stated, "We were able to get everything distributed to our grant seekers last week and we were very thankful to be able to issue funding before the holidays."

Grant recipients in Rio Grande County included: 1874 Distilling Ltd., Ace Towing., Banner Art Studio, Best Western Movie Manor, Boogie's Restaurant LLC., Conour Animal Shelter, Conour Animal Shelter, Edgar B's Cuts Formation Ag, Formation Ag, Hookten Harmony, JM Services, JM Services, Mellow Moon Lodge, Monte Vista Chamber of Commerce, Monte Vista Eye Care, Monte Vista Country Club, Mountain Lighthouse and Gallery, Ofelia's Taqueria LLC, Rain Brews, Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust, Sandhill Inn & Suites, Southern Colorado Computer Services, Stretch's Barber Shop,

Strohmayers Funeral Home, The Spruce Lodge, The Sunflour Café, Three Barrel Brewing, Tri County Seniors, Tumbleweed Bread, Two Rivers BBQ, Valley Publishing Inc. and Windsor Hotel and Restaurant. Grant amounts awarded ranged from \$1,000 to \$40,000.

A huge thank you goes out to Rio Grande County for making this possible and to the businesses who continue to serve Rio Grande County in the midst of this pandemic.



MERRY CHRISTMAS

*From the staff of Rio Grande Hospital,
we wish you and your family a
Happy & Healthy Holiday*

riograndehospital.org

Rio Grande HOSPITAL & CLINICS
a non-profit organization

HORN

Continued from Page 1A

The closure caused predictable inconvenience, but according to issues raised during the public comment period, the closure cost money too because the state charged late fees on payments to the county. Commissioners agreed to investigate how they can reimburse citizens the fees controlled by the state.

The board approved all mill levies across the county. This includes towns, schools, water districts, ambulance districts and more. However, Bonanza did not certify for the county, and Moffat's certification arrived eight days late.

Before department heads provided their reports, Ruth Horn, Saguache County Social Services Director, updated the board with news about her deputies and allowed them to respond to her resignation letter. Horn agreed to continue steering grant funding to the county part-time after her final two weeks.

Housing Director Evan Samora said the 12 units in Blue Water Hacienda and 16 Puerto Del Norte Haciendas units are full. In August, a renter signed a lease for one of the units but has not occupied it yet.

During his report, Sheriff Dan Warwick noted three cases (homicide and two missing persons). "We're spending a lot of time on these

issues, and we're making headway." Warwick also explained a dilemma for a deputy who will lose vacation time that's not feasible to take. Warwick requested payment instead because he lacks staff to cover shifts. Commissioner Jason Anderson recommended the time off instead because the intense work requires relief. Warwick agreed but cited the current staffing issues. The board voted to approve payout in this case, a pandemic-driven exception.

Warwick added that the era of legalized marijuana makes it more difficult to find qualified candidates. Jason Anderson asked if removing marijuana from the forbidden list was a good idea. Warwick noted how the job requires operating heavy machinery and sound judgment, so he said he would not favor loosening that requirement.

Warwick concluded his report by introducing Craig Tomaski from the Northern Saguache Fire Protection District. Tomaski requested funding to improve the firehouse in Crestone to accommodate Search and Rescue operations. Tomaski said they rescued more than 50 people out of Crestone this year. The lack of space and accommodations added to the rescue challenge, so the proposed project would entail expanding the facility.

In addition to providing weather-safe, secure storage for search and rescue equipment, the project would add running water, a bathroom and a kitchen. They need to increase the size of the building from 1,920 to 2,400 square feet to store equipment that has cost the county money over the years. Ropes, for example, were exposed to the elements, weakened and required replacement.

Crestone residents are uniquely protective. Tomaski said the town triples the national average for volunteers who perform search and rescue operations and volunteer to put out other local fires. Warwick added that improved facilities improve recruitment too.

Tomaski noted a current \$91,645 shortfall in a total budget of \$168,150. Commissioners said they would "look for the money," and Tomaski said they hope to start work in April.

"We're going to build this building regardless," Tomaski noted, listing volunteers from the community who already committed labor and materials.

After a break, the board approved a physician advisor for the county, appointed Joel Weston to the northern Saguache County Library District, agreed to send a letter of support for the Dark Sky Designation

in Crestone, discussed the Saguache County Ambulance District license and designated March 31, 2021 as the eleventh employee holiday of next year. March 31 is Cesar Chavez Day. Chavez was the cofounder of the National Farm Workers' Association - now the United Farm Workers.

After 16 years of service in the Clerk and Recorder's Office, Jane Whitten retired from her position as a remote office clerk. Whitten, who worked every election, will remain in the Valley on her Centennial Farm. Scheduled twice to receive

a commemorative plaque honoring her commitment to the county. Whitten could not be present. But her coworkers provided a chorus of commentary: "Jane, throughout your 16 years of service, you have been not only a co-worker and mentor, but a friend to many." "Look back on your years with pride." "You're one of those colleagues we do not forget - unique in your kind and difficult to replace." "So much of you will be left behind in the hearts of us all." "The trouble with retirement is, you never get a day off." "We will miss you!"

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AVALANCHE

Continued from Page 1A

as safe as possible. It is important to understand when and where to be extra cautious. Wolf Creek Ski Resort Owner Rosanne Pitcher gave insight to snow science and how the resort works closely with Colorado Avalanche Information Center (CAIC) to keep skiers as safe as possible.

"It is an exact science. We were fortunate this year to have early season wet snow which helped fill in some of our slide areas. Wet snow is better when it comes to avalanches. It is the dry snow that can come later that we are concerned about." Pitcher stated that though risk is minimal within the resort boundaries, the real risk comes when individuals venture out into the backcountry.

"We are constantly monitoring our area within the resort and about seven miles around the main perimeter. Beyond that though we do not have much information which is where the CAIC comes in. Anyone traveling outside of the resort's boundaries should really pay attention to what the CAIC says about conditions and don't go if you don't know."

Just in the last few weeks, the Gunnison Country Times and Durango herald have reported a total of three deaths due to avalanches in the southwest region of Colorado so far this year. The shocking part of all three deaths was the fact that the three men were experienced skiers and in the case of Jeff "Schnoid" Schneider, he was an experienced ski patroller and trained to identify avalanche dangers.

"We have several protocols in place to keep skiers safe but ultimately it is up to everyone to be cautious and to know your limits. People who are experienced outdoor enthusiasts carry avalanche beacons and probes and know what to look for in the back country, but even then, it can become a dangerous incident," continued Pitcher.

Wolf Creek Ski resort is not the only agency that works to keep people safe during avalanche season. The Colorado Department

of Transportation (CDOT) is another organization that works throughout the winter to identify dangers to the road on Wolf Creek and try to mitigate avalanches as much as possible.

Three years ago, a large slide closed down Highway 160 on the west side of Wolf Creek Pass for nearly two days while CDOT crews worked to clear debris from the roadway. The steep, high peaks all along the pass are the perfect locations for potential avalanche dangers but are closely monitored by CDOT officials.

"Currently on both the east and west sides of the Wolf Creek pass, the avalanche threat to the highway is limited to small bank slips with very minimal impacts on the roadway. With the help of CAIC (Colorado Avalanche Information Center) forecasters we will continue to monitor known slide paths and bar ditches, particularly if we receive any significant snowstorms that will increase the chances of slides. Should the avalanche conditions escalate, crews will be ready to respond, conducting avalanche control operations," stated CDOT Communications Manager Lisa Schwantes.

Swantes continued to state, "As a reminder to the traveling public, when avalanche mitigation is needed, CDOT will close the highway, crews will trigger avalanches, plows and heavy equipment will clear any snow that may make it to the roadway, we can then open the highway safely for travel. The whole point of our avalanche mitigation program is to eliminate the risk of natural slides!

More broadly, we can't stress enough how important it is for folks to really do their homework before heading out on road trips, whether they are heading into the mountains to enjoy the backcountry or traversing over a mountain pass to get from one community to another. Know before you go!

1. Check weather forecasts on your favorite weather app.
2. Check road conditions at www.COTrip.org.
3. Check avalanche conditions in the backcountry at www.avalanche.state.co.us."

Always know before you go and stay safe while enjoying the winter wonderland many of us call home!

DISTRICT COURT, SAGUACHE COUNTY, COLORADO	
Court Address: 501 4 th Street PO Box 197 Saguache, CO 81149 Phone Number: (719) 655-2522	
In the Matter of the Estate of:	
TRAN ROBERT ELLIS, also known as TRAN R. ELLIS and TRAN ELLIS	
Deceased	
Attorney: Peter J. Enichen 885 Arapahoe Avenue, Boulder, CO 80302 Phone Number: 303-544-6000 Email: Peter@Enichenlaw.com Atty. Reg. #: 18784	Case Number: 2020PR30016 Division: C Courtroom
NOTICE TO CREDITORS BY PUBLICATION PURSUANT TO §15-12-801, C.R.S.	

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Estate of TRAN ROBERT ELLIS, also known as TRAN R. ELLIS and TRAN ELLIS, Deceased
Case Number 2020PR30016
All persons having claims against the above-named estate are required to present them to the Personal Representative or to the District Court of Saguache County, Colorado on or before April 24, 2021, or the claims may be forever barred.

Constance Crosby, Personal Representative
c/o Enichen Law Office, LLC
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Boulder, CO 80302

No. 1585 published in the Center Post Dispatch, Thursday, December 24, 2020 and January 7 and 14, 2021.

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Happy Holidays

Due to the Christmas Holiday falling on a Friday this year, trash will be collected early for Thursday and Friday Customers ONLY the week of Christmas.

There will be no trash collection on Friday December 25th.

City of Creede Thursday customers: Please have your trash ready for collection the morning of December 23rd (Wednesday)

City of Creede Thursday customers: Please have your recycling ready for collection the morning of December 24th (Thursday)

Mineral County Residents: Please have your recycling ready for collection the morning of December 24th (Thursday)

Friday trash customers: Please have your trash ready for collection on December 24th (Thursday)

The week of New Years there will be NO CHANGE to your pick up schedules.

Trash and Recycle will be collected on regular schedules.

Trash WILL be collected Friday - New Years Day

If you have any questions please contact our office:

Call 719.658.3060
www.mds-wasteandrecycle.com



Wolf Creek Ski area snowfall 135"

WOLF CREEK - Wolf Creek Ski Area's Winter COVID-19 Operating Plan has been approved by the Silver Thread Health District. Please read and make yourself familiar with these guidelines.

Wolf Creek received 6" of fresh snow from the last seven days bringing the all-natural snow depth to 59" at the midway. Wolf Creek's latest storm has brought the year-to-date snowfall total to 135"! Conditions are Powder/Packed Powder with extensive grooming throughout the mountain.

Alberta, Charity Jane, Treasure Stoke, Bonanza, Elma, Raven, Nova and Lynx Lifts are operating from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Skiers and boarders have access to 100% of the mountain. The Horseshoe Bowl Snowcat Shuttle is operating and is free with the purchase of a lift ticket. Capacity will be limited and riders are required to wear a mask/face covering.

Pre-purchasing lift tickets is preferred and can be done by visiting <https://estore.wolfcreekski.com/eStore/Content/Commerce/Products/DisplayProducts.aspx?ProductGroupCode=1> Purchases must be made at least two days in advance (i.e., if you want to ski Saturday, purchase by midnight Thursday). Pre-purchased lift tickets will be picked up at Will Call. Please have your driver's license available; the tickets will be under the purchasers last name.

Lift tickets can also be purchased the morning of at the Ticket Office with a credit card depending on availability. Please note cash will not be accepted at the Ticket Office.

The main day lodge (Wolf Creek Lodge) and Prospect Grill food service is operating with a very limited menu from 8:30 a.m. - 3 p.m. daily; all seating is outdoors . It is recommended that you bring your



NEW SNOW:	0"
STORM TOTAL	0"
SNOWFALL YTD	135"
FULL SNOW REPORT	WEATHER

own snacks, lunch and water.

Ski and Snowboard Rentals are available as well as Treasure and Noel Sports.

Lift tickets are at regular rates for the season and apply every day of the season except during Peak Rate Dates. Regular Lift ticket rates will be \$80 for adults, \$50 for seniors and \$41 for children. SuperSaver Season Passes are invalid Dec. 19-31; Jan. 1-3, 9-10, 16-17, 23, 30-31; Feb. 6-7, 13-14, 20-21, 27; March 7-18

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Merry Christmas!

well... THAT WAS CRAZY!

happy 2021 (finally)

The Saguache County Clerk and Recorder's Office
Dominique, Jane, Desiree, Ben, Rebecca & Trish

With Our Thanks, Merry Christmas!

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

Best wishes from our home to yours!

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VACCINES

Continued from Page 1A

at the beginning, when the quantities are limited,” commented Spencer. Moderna is a two-part vaccine and the booster shots will be available to these health care workers in 28 days.

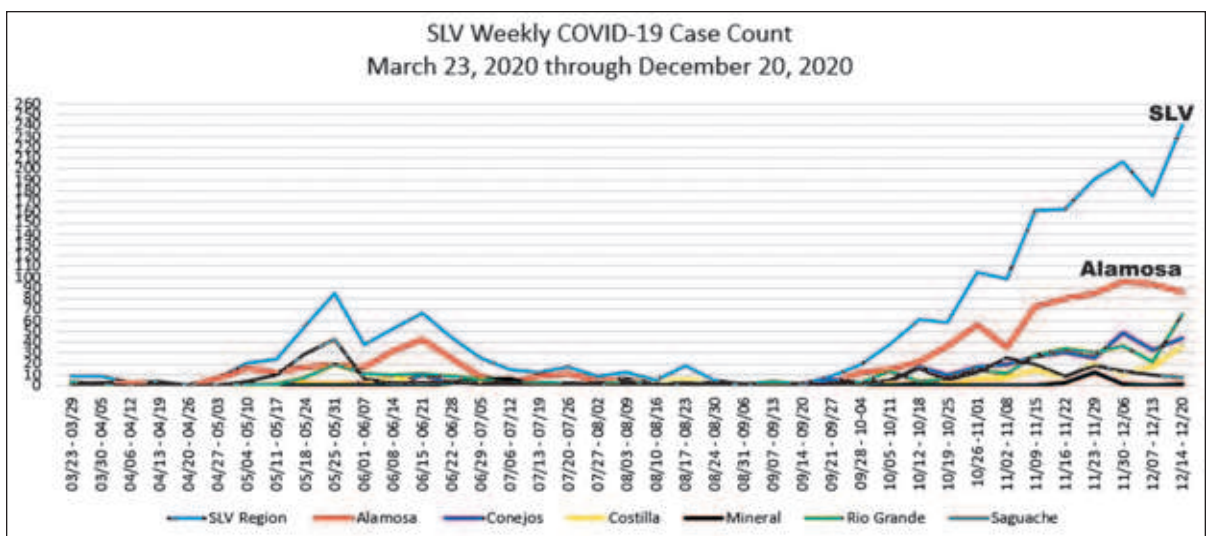
More information about the next phases of vaccine distributions will be forthcoming. SLVPHP stated there are some concerns about side effects. Some people may experience symptoms such as pain and redness at the injection site, fatigue, headache, muscle pain, or fever for 1-2 days after receiving the vaccine. A misconception is that the shot gives you a mild case of the actual illness you are being vaccinated against. This is not true. The symptoms are a normal result of your body’s immune system responding and building up defenses needed to fight the virus in the future. It is important that you also receive the second dose of the vaccine as scheduled for full protection.

Vaccine providers will screen for potential allergies. They will also monitor recipients for 15-30 minutes after vaccination as a precaution. “Because this is a new vaccine, researchers will be learning more about rare side effects, if any, over the next year. To identify side effects that happen only very rarely (e.g., once in 50,000 doses), hundreds of thousands of people need to be vaccinated and followed over time.

SLVPHP announced Tuesday, Dec. 22, that “currently in the Colorado COVID-19 framework, Phase 1A for vaccination includes health care workers who have direct contact with COVID-19 patients for 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period, and staff and residents of long term care facilities. Vaccinations in hospitals and long term care facilities

will not be administered by public health, as other arrangements have been made for those high priority vaccinations. Colorado’s Phase 1B currently includes moderate risk health care workers and responders. As local public health agencies await initial limited shipments of Moderna vaccines, they are coordinating with agencies and organizations in these early categories to administer vaccinations. If you believe you are in one of these categories, check with your employer for more information. Federal recommendations for vaccination phases were updated over the weekend. We anticipate the Governor to release updated guidelines for Colorado Wednesday, Dec. 23. Local public health agencies will be focused on Phase 1B through the winter as vaccines are made available to the San Luis Valley.”

Colorado’s <https://covid19.colorado.gov/vaccine> website stated, “Scientists have developed several possible vaccines to provide immunity to COVID-19. The pharmaceutical companies Pfizer and Moderna have applied for an Emergency Use Authorization with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The FDA authorized the Pfizer vaccine for emergency use on December 11, and Colorado received the first shipment of the vaccine on December 14. The FDA authorized the Moderna vaccine for emergency use on December 18. The companies report that both vaccines are around 95% effective. The initial supply of vaccines will be very limited and will be distributed in a swift, fair, and efficient way. To slow the spread for everyone, we need to prioritize the highest risk health care workers and Coloradans who are most at risk for



getting severely sick or even dying of COVID-19.

Until the vaccine is widely available, we will all need to continue to follow critical public health protocols. Please wear a mask in public, maintain at least 6 feet of distance from others, avoid gatherings, wash your hands often, and stay home when you are sick”

If you have questions about COVID-19 vaccinations, see Colorado’s vaccination information page at <https://covid19.colorado.gov/vaccine> or call (719) 480-8719.

Wednesday, Dec. 16, COVID-19 active cases in the SLV were 282. Thursday, Dec. 17, active cases in the Valley had jumped by 49 to 331.

Wednesday, Dec. 23, the Colorado statewide seven-day positivity test rate dropped from 8.97% to 7.33% the past week. San Luis Valley Public Health Partnership (SLVPHP) reported Wednesday, Dec. 23, that the SLV two-week positivity rate had increased from 4.32% to 5.62% during the past week. The Colorado and World Health Organization two-week positivity goal

is 5% or lower.

On Tuesday, Dec. 22 Rio Grande, Conejos, and Mineral counties continued to be at level “Orange” on the state’s COVID-19 dial. Alamosa and Costilla counties remain at level “Red” and Saguache County remains at level “Yellow.”

According to the CDPHE, COVID-19 dial dashboard Wednesday, Dec. 23, counties in the SLV were up and down with their positivity test rates. Rio Grande County saw the highest increase in active COVID-19 cases increasing from 36 to 80 active cases in less than one week with a positivity rate increase from 2.1% to 3.0%. Costilla County decreased from a positivity rate of 14.9% to 12.6%. Conejos County is decreased slightly from 6.0% to 5.3%, Saguache County dropped from 5.3% to 4.4%, Alamosa County once again increased week over week from 6.7% to 7.4%, and Mineral County remained at level green on all positions of the state’s COVID-19 dial with one new active case.

According to the SLVPHP there

were 256 known active cases in the SLV Wednesday, Dec. 23. “Active cases” means that the cases are confirmed positive for COVID-19 and are currently being supported by Public Health during their isolation period. Active cases by county were as follows as of Wednesday, Dec. 23:

- Alamosa: 135
- Conejos: 26
- Costilla: 11
- Mineral: 1
- Rio Grande: 80
- Saguache: 3

According to the Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center Monday, Dec. 21, Colorado continues to have a lower seven-day positivity moving average test rate of 7.76% which is lower than all neighboring states. Wyoming decreased in positive test rates going to 13.4% to 8.2% over the past week. Other neighboring positivity rates over the past week Dec. 21 showed Kansas had a COVID-19 positivity rate of 37.7%, Utah 18.0%, Arizona 14.3%, Nebraska 9.2% and Oklahoma 20.8%.



“I love my family, but I can’t tell who has COVID. I step up by wearing a mask and keeping my distance even around them.”

Ptarmigan populations strong in the Colorado Rockies, but biologists have long-term concerns

COLORADO - Conservation biologists at Colorado Parks and Wildlife are charged with keeping a close eye on sensitive wildlife – animals that sometimes are classified as “species of greatest conservation need” by the agency. One of those species is the Southern White-tailed Ptarmigan.

CPW biologists become alerted when a conservation organization asks the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to place an animal on the federal endangered species list. If that animal’s range includes Colorado, a team of CPW biologists put together a plan to study the species to determine how it’s doing here and to present the research to the federal agency for review. The process can take several years.

Recently, a Colorado study of the Southern White-tailed Ptarmigan was used by the USFWS to decide that the iconic bird does not need special protections under the federal Endangered Species Act. The study showed that populations of ptarmigan are holding steady throughout the mountains of Colorado.

“We have widespread distribution of ptarmigan across the state in suitable habitat,” said Amy Seglund, a conservation biologist based in Montrose who coordinated the study. “Not much has changed in their distribution across the alpine ecosystem since they were first studied in the 1960s and 1970s by CPW agency biologists.”

But even with the positive assessment, Seglund said a close eye must be kept on the species because of continuing pressure from climate change and human activity in their alpine habitat.

In 2010, a conservation group sent a petition to the USFWS asking that the bird be added to the endangered species list. To help determine if the request was valid, CPW started initial field work in 2011 to evaluate distribution. More formal population assessment took place from 2013-2017.

The full CPW report on the bird’s status was completed in 2018 and the USFWS issued its “not warranted for listing” conclusion Dec. 2.

“We follow rigorous scientific protocols in our species conservation assessments” said David Klute, CPW’s species conservation unit supervisor. “This study took on a statewide focus and the report was peer reviewed to guarantee its integrity. The ‘not warranted’ decision by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recognized the thoroughness of our work and the quality of the information it provided.”

Ptarmigan live year-round from about 9,500 feet elevation and above, so studying these well camouflaged birds is challenging to say the least. Basically, this is how the research method works: Seglund examined previous studies to identify locations the bird occupied. Next, using geographic information, she identified all of the bird’s potential habitat which in Colorado is, essentially, all the millions of acres above timberline.

Using a computer program, 60 sites were selected randomly and field staff went to those locations to look for birds. Some sites were in easy-to-reach alpine basins while others were deep in the wilderness that required field staff to make multiple-day excursions. Each survey location measured 4 kilometers by 5 kilometers.

“Most of the sites required us to navigate steep terrain, it certainly got us in shape,” Seglund said.

At the sites, because the birds are so well camouflaged, the researchers played a recording of male birds and chick calls to help detect the ptarmigan. Seeing birds indicated occupancy. To get more thorough population data, they trapped and placed tiny leg bands on 637 birds. Fortunately, Seglund said, ptarmigan are relatively easy to trap because they stay in place when approached, relying on their camouflage for cover. They also can tolerate being handled by humans.

Leg bands provided researchers an opportunity to evaluate abundance of ptarmigan. The bands also helped Seglund assess whether birds returned to the same breeding sites each year and selected the same mate.

Radio transmitters were placed on 126 birds over the course of the study which allowed field staff to find females later on their nests. There they could see how many eggs the hens had produced, how many hatched and track how many chicks survived. The transmitters also allowed the researchers to determine annual and seasonal survival rates of individuals.

It’s a tough go to make a living above timberline, so not many chicks survive less than one in nests that average 5.46 eggs. They are most often picked off by predators or sometimes killed in big weather events when they are not in close contact with their mothers. At about 10-14 days old the chicks can fly. If they make it to that age they have a good chance of surviving to become an adult bird and begin to breed.

The field work was rigorous and covered not only several years but also required multiple visits to the same site: Each was checked three times over the course of the breeding cycle from nesting to brood-rearing to fledging of the young. Aerial surveys were used during winter to assess survival of radio-collared birds. “I was surprised how many birds we found at many of the sites, they’re a very resilient species,” Seglund said.

Yet, despite the solid and widely dispersed populations, Seglund is concerned about the increasing dangers the birds face. One of those is the pressure of human recreation. While they seem to tolerate some human activity, the birds are less capable of handling constant recreational pressure. In the uber-popular Ice Lakes area near Silverton, the ptarmigan disappeared during the course of the study from the narrow alpine meadow through which dozens of hikers pass each day during the warm months.

The other concern: increasing temperatures on the alpine tundra that are accompanying climate change. Ptarmigan are well-known for turning white during the winter and taking shelter beneath the snow. During summer their plumage becomes a mottled brown so they can blend into the landscape. During the warm months they can be found near persistent snowfields foraging and taking snow baths. What they need most during the summer is the moisture and cool temperatures that historically have accompanied the monsoons. But during the last few years the monsoons have been absent, temperatures on the tundra have soared and Seglund worries that the birds are having difficulty handling the heat.



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SLV positivity rates continue to increase

Rio Grande County's active cases increase by 31

BY TREY SPAULDING

SAN LUIS VALLEY—Wednesday, Dec. 16, COVID-19 active cases in the SLV were 282. Thursday, Dec. 17, active cases in the Valley had jumped by 49 to 331.

Monday, Dec. 21, the Colorado statewide seven-day positivity test rate dropped from 8.97% to 7.76% the past week. San Luis Valley Public Health Partnership (SLVPH) reported Dec. 21 that the SLV two-week positivity rate had increased from 4.32% to 5.62% during the past week. The Colorado and World Health Organization two-week positivity goal is 5% or lower.

On Dec. 21 Rio Grande, Conejos, and Mineral counties continue

to be at level “Orange” on the state’s COVID-19 dial. Alamosa and Costilla counties remain at level “Red” and Saguache County remains at level “Yellow.”

According to the CDPHE, COVID-19 dial dashboard Monday, Dec. 21, counties in the SLV were up and down with their positivity rates. Rio Grande County saw the highest increase in active COVID-19 cases increasing from 36 to 67 active cases in less than one week with a positivity rate increase from 2.1% to 3.0%. Costilla County decreased from a positivity rate of 14.9% to 12.8%. Conejos County increased slightly from 6.0% to 6.1%, Saguache County dropped from 5.3% to 3.9%, Alamosa County once again increased week over week from 6.7% to 7.6%, and Mineral County remained at level green on all positions of the state’s COVID-19 dial with one new active case.

According to the SLVPH there **Please see UPDATE on Page 2**

It’s A Wrap: Pet-Safe DIY Toys and Treats

The holiday season is a time to show appreciation to our loved ones, both people and pets. Handmade toys and treats are a wonderful way to do so and allow owners to avoid busy stores during the pandemic, to ensure their gift is pet-safe, and to add a personalized DIY touch.

Courtney Markley, a veterinary student ambassador at the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences, offers some ideas for pet-safe holiday fun that can be found around your home.

Pet-Approved Treats

While the roast Fido may reach for during your holiday dinner can cause gastrointestinal issues, pet owners can provide safe and tasty treats as alternatives that hit the spot for their pooch. Markley offers up two holiday recipes that dog owners can make from pantry staples:

Holiday Ice Cream Treats for Dogs

1. Blend together 3 ripe bananas, 32 oz plain yogurt, and 1 cup peanut butter.
 2. Pour mixture into holiday shaped ice cube trays.
 3. Freeze.
- “Rub coconut oil on the ice cube



tray before adding the mixture to make getting them out easier,” Markley recommends.

Peanut Butter Holiday Cookies for Dogs

1. Grease a cookie sheet with coconut oil.
2. Mix together 1 cup flour (or wheat flour), ½ cup oats, 1 egg, 1/3 cup peanut butter, 1 mashed banana, and 1 tablespoon honey.
3. In a separate cup, lightly beat 1

- egg white.
4. Roll out the dough to ¼ inch thick on a floured surface.
5. Use holiday cookie cutters to cut into desired shapes.
6. Place on cookie sheet and brush with the egg white.
7. Bake at 300 degrees until golden and firm, about 35 minutes.

Terrific Toys

For a more permanent gift, pet **Please see PETS on Page 2**

The Last Burro

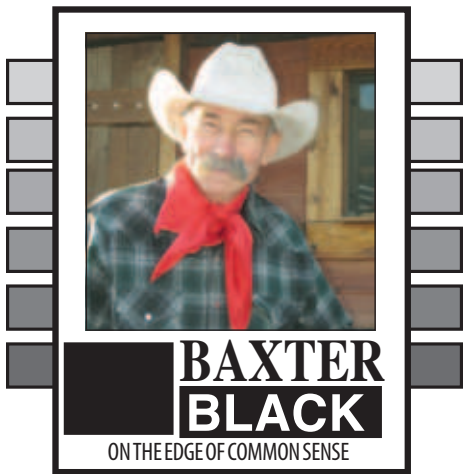
He was the last burro left in the dusty corral.

His two companions had been sold by the man. They were younger, stronger and finer looking even by burro standards, which are quite high. They were worth more and brought more money which was what the man needed.

Pickin’s were slim. Every evening the man would stake the last burro out down below the spring to graze. During the day he went with the man and packed mud or water or rocks or wood.

One morning the man fed him a small bowl of grain. This continued for several days until the morning the man brushed him down, bobbed his tail and trimmed his long whiskers. Next thing he knew, the burro was blanketed and fit with a pack saddle. Two panyards were hung over the frame and a thick pad was laid between the forks.

The burro watched with his wise burro eyes as the man led the woman out to the hitch rail and gently lifted her up on his pack saddle. The man shouldered his own pack, picked up his walkin’ stick and clucked to the burro.



The burro was old but he carried the load as easily as an old man milks a goat. From memory... automatic. As he walked down the road he passed his two younger, stronger companions. They were hitched to a water wheel and strained in their harness as they walked round and round. ‘Better this than that’, thought the last burro.

They walked all day. It was the cool season, his hooves were hard as iron. The woman balanced well.

The second day the woman got off and walked a while. The man tied his pack on the saddle and they walked on. As the days went by the woman got off more often and they’d stop to rest for a while.

They arrived in a town late one night. The man went in a house. The woman waited. Momentarily the man returned and led the burro around back to the stable. The burro was glad to get the saddle off. He was watered, tied in a far corner and fed some grass hay.

The burro watched as the man put a blanket in one of the stalls and laid the woman down. Time passed. Later in the night the woman walked out carrying a man-child and laid him in a hay manger.

The burro slept, as old men do, with one ear cocked. He saw the sheepmen come, he heard the singing. He’d heard it before. The burro had worked the sheep camps.

Next morning the man fed and watered the burro and left. While he was gone the woman picked up the man-child and brought him to the burro. She raised one of his tiny hands and stroked the burro’s soft nose. She, herself, patted the burro’s neck.

On the trip back home the woman and

man-child rode on the burro’s back.

As the years went by the woman would bring the growing man-child out to the corral and hold him up or set him on the burro’s back. She would talk man-talk to the child. And when the burro got too old to work the man-child would come and stroke his nose and give him a handful of grain.

One day the burro could no longer get up. He became frightened. The woman and the grown young man came to the corral and held his head in their laps. They patted his rough coat and stroked his soft nose. Eventually the burro closed his eyes. He felt a teardrop on his face. It was the last thing he ever felt.

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



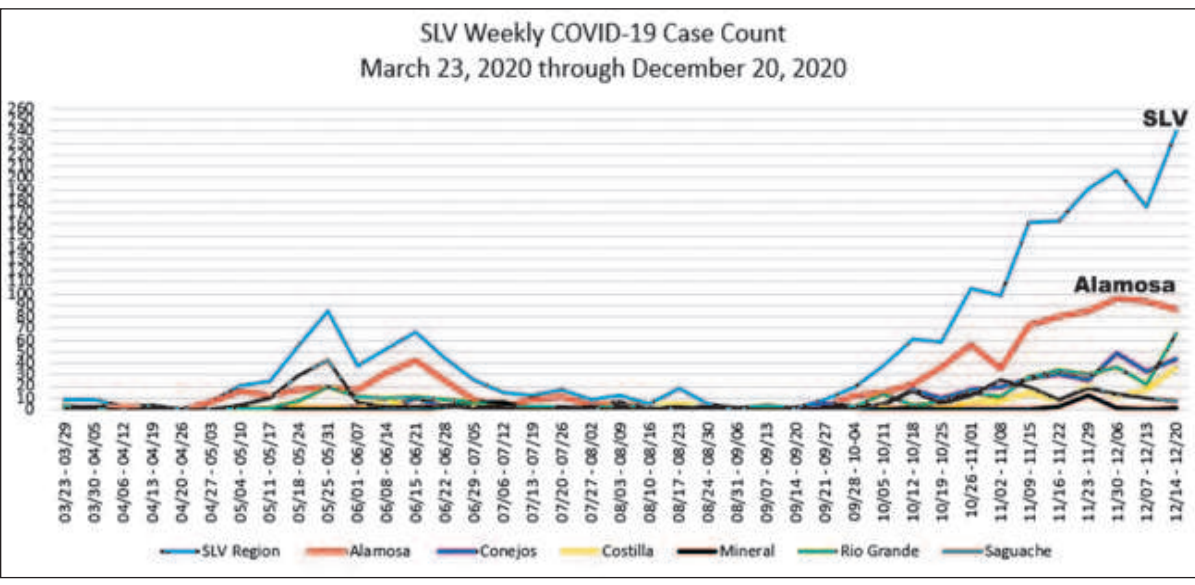
COVID Continued from Page 1

were 282 known active cases in the SLV Monday, Dec. 21. "Active cases" means that the cases are confirmed positive for COVID-19 and are currently being supported by Public Health during their isolation period. Active cases by county were as follows as of Monday, Dec. 21:

- Alamosa: 157
- Conejos: 19
- Costilla: 25
- Mineral: 1
- Rio Grande: 67

Saguache: 8

According to the Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center Monday, Dec. 21, Colorado continues to have a lower seven-day positivity moving average test rate of 7.76% which is lower than all neighboring states. Wyoming decreased in positive test rates going to 13.4% to 8.2% over the past week. Other neighboring positivity rates over the past week Dec. 21 showed Kansas had a COVID-19 positivity rate of 37.7%, Utah 18.0%, Arizona 14.3%, Nebraska 9.2% and Oklahoma 20.8%.



PETS Continued from Page 1

owners can make low-cost, but high-fun, toys out of common household items. For dogs, Markley says all pet owners need to make a festive toy is a holiday themed sock and a tennis ball.

"Place an old tennis ball inside a holiday sock and tie a knot in the sock just above the ball," she said. "These toys are fun to throw long distances and for tug of war!"

Cat owners can also get in on the fun. For a simple, but effective, toy, pet owners can decorate empty toilet paper rolls with a holiday theme and cut fringe on the edge of the roll or shapes out of the middle.

"If you have an old mitten or a mitten that's missing its mate, you can pour cat nip into the glove and hand sew it closed with a simple stitching pattern," Markley said. Your feline friend won't be able to keep their paws off it!

Keepsakes For Pet Parents

Owners also can make a holiday decoration for themselves to remember the merry season spent with their pet. Markley offers a recipe for a simple salt dough that can be stamped with your pet's paw and baked to harden.

Pawprint Ornaments

1. Mix together 2 cups flour, 1 cup salt, and 1 cup of water by hand until a dough is formed.
2. Roll out the dough to ½ inch thick and smooth out the top.
3. Use cookie cutters or free hand a design in the dough into whatever shape you desire.
4. Gently and firmly press your pet's paw into the dough until you can see the impression of the paw on the dough.
5. Important: thoroughly rinse the paw to remove any dough that may have stuck to it. Alternative: use your own fingers to create a paw shape in the dough.
6. Use a straw to create a hole at the top for the ribbon.
7. Bake at 250 degrees for about 2 hours until it is hardened.
8. Cool overnight and then deco-

rate with paint, markers, or whatever you have available.

9. Attach a ribbon through the hole to hang it.

It is important that owners do not allow their pet to eat the dough or the baked ornament because the quantity

of salt will make them sick. There is plenty of holiday fun to be found at home this season. Using common household items and a bit of creativity, pet owners can help their animals have a happy holiday without ever needing to brave the cold!



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GOCO commits \$1.9 million in funding to SLV Generation Wild

SANLUIS VALLEY - The GOCO board recently committed \$1,934,500 in Generation Wild funding to the City of Alamosa and the San Luis Valley Generation Wild (SLVGW) coalition for the group's work to get kids outside. The coalition will use the funding to serve residents of the San Luis Valley including the six counties of Alamosa, Mineral, Conejos, Rio Grande, Saguache and Creede, engaging youth and families in culturally relevant outdoor experiences.

The funding is part of GOCO's Generation Wild program, previously known as the Inspire Initiative, which launched in 2015 to support community-based coalitions in breaking down barriers to the outdoors through new places to play, outdoor programs and activities, and employment opportunities in the outdoors. To date, GOCO has committed \$40.4 million to the program, including \$25 million in grants the past five years and an additional \$15.4 million in new funding commitments to 10 coalitions. In addition, GOCO has previously invested a \$4 million grant from the Colorado Health Foundation, a \$75,000 grant for rural communities from the Boettcher Foundation, and a \$50,000 donation from DaVita in the movement.

The urban and rural coalitions are elevating the youth voice and creating equitable access to the outdoors across Colorado. Collectively, more than 470 organiza-

tions, including local governments, schools, health-based organizations and youth-serving nonprofits, have run 2,140 programs and impacted 40,000 youth.

Since 2016, in partnership with the City of Alamosa and the Towns of Antonito, Creede and Saguache, two coalitions, Recreation Inspires Opportunity (Alamosa RIO!) and San Luis Valley Inspire, have worked to connect Valley youth to the outdoors. The coalitions, which have now merged to streamline program opportunities for all ages and across all counties, formed strategic partnerships with community-based organizations to offer a range of outdoor programs to meet the needs of youth, from kindergarten to high-school ages.

They also created new pathways-to-employment opportunities for youth and young adults through internships, scholarships and youth counselor positions, encouraging the next generation to consider careers in the outdoors and environmental education.

The new GOCO funding will allow the coalition to bolster community outreach efforts and provide diverse programming that aligns with the cultures, values and goals of the community. The funding will enhance the coordination of the backyard-to-backcountry outdoor programs and address transportation barriers for under-resourced and under-represented youth to participate in them.

Previous GOCO grants to SLVGW included an \$83,890 planning grant for SLV Inspire in 2015 and \$20,000 in planning dollars for Alamosa RIO! in 2017, which helped the groups identify local barriers to the outdoors and create solutions for meaningful, sustainable change. In the two years that followed, SLV Inspire and Alamosa RIO! received implementation grants for \$1 million and \$868,805, respectively, to put plans into action. In addition to supporting programs, internships and jobs, the implementation grants helped the coalitions complete site improvement projects, including upgrading Friends Park at Boys & Girls Club of the SLV and improving Oxbow Trails near Alamosa and Wilderness Trails for a better recreation experience.

The San Luis Valley coalition's vision is to have a vibrant, healthy and active outdoor community cared for by all.



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There will be no trash collection on Friday December 25th.

City of Creede Thursday customers: Please have your trash ready for collection the morning of December 23rd (Wednesday)

City of Creede Thursday customers: Please have your recycling ready for collection the morning of December 24th (Thursday)

Mineral County Residents: Please have your recycling ready for collection the morning of December 24th (Thursday)

Friday trash customers: Please have your trash ready for collection on December 24th (Thursday)

The week of New Years there will be NO CHANGE to your pick up schedules.

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RATES

15 Words or less for 4 weeks - 4 publications
\$19.50 + 95¢ each additional word.

Garage Sale Ads: 15 Words or less for 1 week
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Free ads: Lost & Found • Non Commercial items Sold for \$50 or less • Any Item or Animal being given away. (Limited to private party only, 2 ads per person, 4 weeks.)

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To place your ad in person come to the office at 835 First Ave. in Monte Vista, or call (719) 852-3531. Business hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. You may also fax your classified to (719) 852-3387 or email at montevisitaclass@gmail.com

Check your ad the first day:
To ensure your ad is correct, check it the first day it appears in the paper. If there is an error in your ad, call us right away so we can correct it. If an error appears in your ad, Valley Publishing will credit you with one additional day of advertising.

Our ad policy: Valley Publishing accepts all classified advertising except that which it deems objectionable to its readers. Credit or replacement ads will not be given for early ad cancellation.

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04 Lost and Found

Black Lab is 11 months old his name is Heinz 57. Missing from La Garita Ranchette. Has green Collar and has all his shots. 719-221-4690. (12/25)

05 Notices

Deer voucher wanted for 2021. Willing to pay going rate. Not a broker, this is for myself and possibly wife. Call or text Curran at 320-291-9297. (01/03)

WE BUY ANTLER: Special Holiday Prices: Elk Grade A \$13/lb. Deer Grade A \$11/lb. 5 miles west of Del Norte on Hwy 160. 719-657-0942

07 Help Wanted

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 RE-**

SPONSIBILITIES: 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 opinions 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@saguachecounty-co.gov. (01/21)

Looking for a new Career? We have an immediate opening for an ADVERTISING SALES REPRESENTATIVE. Duties include calling on area businesses to sell display advertisements, selling and managing online advertisements,

meeting daily sales goals and other duties as needed. Potential earnings of \$23,000-\$30,000+ with competitive benefits package. If you're goal-oriented, motivated, and a self-starter with high ambitions of a successful and enjoyable career, send your resume to Managing Editor, Trey Spaulding, at Valley Publishing, P.O. Box 607, Monte Vista, CO 81144 or email to tspaulding@valleypublishinginc.com (12/30)

Rio Grande County Department of Social Services is seeking an Employment Benefits Unit Case Manager. Position provides a full range of ongoing case management services to clients. Requirements are a High School Diploma

or GED, in addition to one to three months related experience and/or training, or equivalent combination of education and experience. Must have computer skills, including word processing, spreadsheet applications, and various data entry programs. \$15.36-15.96/hour DOE. Background check and pre-employment drug testing, including testing for marijuana is required. Applications are available online at www.riograndecounty.org or pick up and submit to Human Resources, 925 6th Street, Room 200, Del Norte, CO 81132. (12/24)

Upper Rio Grande School District is looking for an energetic and experienced candidate to

serve as the district's Instrumental Music Teacher. Along with conducting our high school and middle school band programs, this position will also oversee the development of our elementary instrumental music appreciation program. Applicants must have a bachelor's degree or higher in Music or Music Education. The applicant must also possess or be able to obtain an appropriate Colorado teaching license. Please submit your application, resume, and cover letter to: Aaron Horrocks, Jr/Sr High Principal at ahorrocks@urtigers.com or Amy Duda, Elementary Principal at aduda@urtigers.com. Applications can be picked up at the

Conour *Managed by Upper Rio Grande Animal Society*

www.urgasconouranimalshelter.org

If you are interested in adopting, call 852-3366
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We would like to express our deepest gratitude and appreciation to all those who have contributed to the success of the Upper Rio Grande Animal Society by contributions, donations, volunteering and general support at Conour Animal Shelter.

Visit Our Facebook Page

Thank you all so much for all your ongoing support & donations!

Our furry friends and staff appreciate you very much!

Sweets is a 2 year old Pit Bull mix. She is a very hyper and friendly dog. She is great with all people including kids. She has some potential with other dogs, but she's a little picky. She is very loving and affectionate gal.

Gorda is a 3 year old Shepherd mix. She is very friendly with all people including kids. She is full of energy and is very playful and affectionate. She has potential to get along with larger dogs, but absolutely no small dogs or animals.

Guapo is a 2 year old Shepherd mix. He has lots of energy and is playful, and affectionate. He does well with all people and kids. He has potential with other dogs but we still need to test him. He is a very smart dog and is good at escaping his kennels.



All breeds & ages of animals are a "best guess" and are not guaranteed to be accurate. Adoption fee includes: neuter/spay, vaccinations, de-worming and micro-chipping. This ad space donated by Valley Publishing Inc.

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The Del Norte Jr/Sr High School is seeking a qualified Secondary Social Studies Teacher. Applicants must have a bachelor's degree or higher and possess or be able to obtain a Colorado Teaching License with a Secondary Social Studies endorsement. Please submit your application, resume and cover letter to: Aaron Horrocks at ahorrocks@urtigers.co or contact Aaron at (719) 657 - 4020. Applications can be accessed online at www.urtigers.co (12/30)

10 Apartments for Rent Del Norte: Furnished 1 Bedroom/1 Bath. Very Nice! Single Adult, Non-smoker, No pets. Utilities and Dish Included. \$625.00 Mo./\$625.00 Deposit. 719-850-2738 (12/24)

2 bedroom/1 bath recently remodeled in Monte Vista. \$650/deposit, \$650/month. Call (719)852-2096. (12/30 TFN)

17 Real Estate For Sale PERFECT SMALL FARM: 59 acres with center pivot, new 60X120 steel shop, 2 1/2 shares of Rio Grande Canal, 2000 GPM well, 2 miles from Center. Priced to Sell, Call Bruce at Steffens & Company Realty, Inc. 719-580-0770. (TFN)

11 circles in Center area with excellent potato ground, excellent wells and water rights, high production, sandy soil, 2 homes, shop, potato storage, first time ever on market and sold as full unit. Call Bruce at Steffens & Company Realty, LLC 719-580-0770. Serious inquires only (TFN)

125-150 cow/calf ranch 1154 acres with top water rights, production, 1.2 miles of Rio Grande River and 1/2 mile of Conejos River. \$1,750,000. Call Bruce at Steffens & Company Realty, Inc 719-580-0770 (TFN)

Pastureland, 397 acres in north of Monte Vista Airport on County Line Road with good grass and location. Also contains a huge amount of gravel on the property \$525,000.00 call Bruce at Steffens & Company Realty, Inc 719-580-0770. (TFN)

26 Antiques Antique Wagon with 4 Original Wooden Spokewheels. Will Make a beautiful bed of petunias \$250 Call 719-274-5511. (01/06)

36 Miscellaneous New 3/4HP 220V HZ50 Electric Motor Vacuum Pump Flow Rate 6CFM \$200 call 719-274-5511. (01/06)

For Sale: Skid Steer (Mustang) 3306 hours Good condition

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Please read your ad on the first day of publication. If there are mistakes notify us **IMMEDIATELY**. We will make changes for errors and adjust your credit **but only if we receive notice on the first day the ad is published.** We limit our liability to you in this way and we do not accept liability for any other damages which may result from an error or omission in an ad. All ad copy must be approved by the newspaper which reserves the right to request changes, reject or properly classify an ad. The advertiser and not the newspaper is responsible for the truthful content of the ad. All classified advertising must be pre-paid.

\$2,000. Suzuki VStrom 2004, 6,000mi Good condition \$2,000. Craftsman Riding Lawnmower 2017T1600 42" Very good condition \$600. Please Call 727-563-4012. (12/23)

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Wanted: small utility trailer Call Derek 719-580-7846. (12/25)

FALL SALE! 240 Watt Solar Panels Only \$.59 Per Watt! Bontragers Variety Store 9726 S. County Road 3 E Monte Vista Co 81144. (12/25)

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38 Machinery, Tools, and Equipment

For Sale: All Items Are Brand New: Dewalt Table Saw, Battery

Operated Framing Nail Gun, and A Standard Size Refrigerator. Also have 250 Used Cinder blocks. Please call 719-937-3868 for pricing. (12/31)

40 Auto Part 4-Near New BF Goodrich Allterrain Tires 265/70R17 \$800.00. Call 719-588-6820. (12/31)

55 RVs & Campers Pull Camper Trailer in Alamosa 16-FT Nomad Self-Contained \$5,000.00 Call 719-298-7517 or 720-217-7886. (12/23)

59 Vehicles Wanted CASH ON THE SPOT FOR JUNK CARS & TRUCKS: We pickup, no title ok. 719-937-7935.

(TFN2-21)

65 Professional Services CERTIFIED HOT TUB CARE AND MAINTENANCE, Drinking water samples taken 719-850-0075 (12/31)

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San Luis Valley Regional Landfill making strides in reusing mulch

RIO GRANDE COUNTY- The San Luis Valley Regional Solid Waste Authority's (SLVRSWA) Landfill Manager, Jim Clare, recently presented to the Monte Vista Chamber of Commerce on the interesting progress the landfill has made in disposing of tree branches/green waste as well as tires.

Through a partnership because of an early major snowstorm between the SLVRSWA, Rio Grande County, the City of Monte Vista and the Town of South Fork, the landfill recently utilized a KOMPT-ECH green waste shredder, brought there from Salt Lake City Utah, to break down the tree branches and other similar yard waste from the storm into several hundred tons of mulch. The landfill had 5,100 cubic yards of green waste before it was turned into the mulch, which they are using for alternative daily cover (ADC) for the waste brought to the landfill to save some of the soil used in burying the waste for larger scale efforts.

The products contributed to the efforts from South Fork and Monte Vista had to be shredded twice in order to get it to a usable size, but it was worth the extra effort as the Town of South Fork now has mulch for landscaping and beautification projects and the City of Monte Vista has mulch to offer residents for free for their gardening/landscaping as well. The Town of South Fork will be selling their portion of the mulch as a fundraiser and Rio Grande County will be using their portion for soil stabilization in some of their dirt projects for county roads.

Additionally, if there is still mulch that cannot be utilized by local municipalities and residents, Clare has a connection through Pleasant Lumber to sell the remaining mulch to a dealer in Pueblo for landscaping and composting.

The landfill also recently began a traditional endeavor of shredding

tires which numbers in the amount of around 7500 tires. Current tire shredding methods used at the landfill can't break down the rubber and remove the metal required for it to be sold for playgrounds and similar landscaping material, but the shredded tire material is proving useful as additional ADC for the landfill's regular operations. This is essential to keeping the waste at the landfill contained against the Valley's winds and other conditions and preserves soil for future use along with meeting state regulations.

Puzzle Sponsored by MDS Waste & Recycle



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SUDOKU

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

Level: Beginner

Fun By The Numbers

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

Here's How It Works:

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

Solution to last week's puzzle

		U	S	S	R		O	C	A	L	A					
	S	A	M	A	R	A		U	P	L	I	F	T			
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	E	D	D	A	S					S	A	N	G			

Business Showcase

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C&TSRR converting Locomotive 489 to oil firing

ANTONITO - The historic Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad announced that one of its coal-fired steam locomotives will be converted to operate on an oil-based fuel to diversify its fleet and to ensure it is prepared to safely function in a continually evolving operating environment.

The Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad (C&TS) and its predecessor, the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad, operated trains on the line with coal-fired steam locomotives since the 1880s. Recent environmental changes sometimes result in a dryer climate and are creating a more challenging operating environment with very dry or windy periods encountered more frequently. The railroad is committed to protecting the incredible landscape and scenery it has the privilege operating in. Slowing or stopping operations for any more than a short period of time would be financially challenging to the railroad, its employees and the communities which rely upon it as one of the region's main economic drivers.

To better maintain operational

continuity in varying weather conditions, the railroad will convert one of its steam locomotives, 'Locomotive 489,' from coal to oil firing. "We plan to have the #489 ready for use in this upcoming 2021 operating season. We have not forgotten, nor will we ever forget, the importance of our historical DNA and the critical role the C&TS plays in preserving the most authentic steam railroading experience available anywhere, now and for future generations. We will strive to always have the best examples of operating coal-fired steam locomotives in service when conditions permit," said Interim CEO Eric Mason.

It's unlikely that many guests will notice a big difference in the experience given steam is still the workhorse behind making these historic engines work. Oil fuel is also a historic method of supplying the energy required to generate steam, and although this was not the case on the historic Denver and Rio Grande, it does not significantly or permanently alter this historic locomotive, noted Stathi Pappas, Head of Special Projects, and Marvin Casias, Head of Railroad Operations.



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Age 8

Hezron Sisneros
Age 4

Monique Cisneros
Age 10

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Beautiful Home on the Range!
 3 bedroom • 3 bathroom • 1,808 sq. ft. • \$449,000
 This meticulous, comfortable, well-maintained ranch style log home is located on 6 + acres with reach out and touch mountain views and moments from the Rio Grande National Forest. Open Great Room, Living, Dining, and Kitchen with wood floors and a beautiful stone fireplace. Wonderful split floor plan with a Master Bedroom on one side of the home and guest rooms on the other. Attached cement floor two car garage large enough for storage of four-wheelers, fishing gear, tools, and more. Large deck out back and fireplace ring sitting area, large covered front porch.
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 Stunning views in all directions with huge windows, luxurious master suite, rock propane fireplace, high-end Jenn Air appliances, custom cabinetry, large stone patio for entertaining, 2-car garage and so much more! Rio Grande Club Membership and Home Furnishings negotiable. MLS #767109
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SOLD

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 852 Soaring Eagle Lane • South Fork
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SOLD

New Listing! Charming Family Home, Priced to Sell!
 4 bedroom • 2 bath • 1,850 sq. ft. • \$215,000
 Comfortable family home with large balcony to enjoy your mountain views! Nice kitchen, stone fireplace, wood-burning stove and beautiful bathrooms! MLS #758665
 198 Elm Drive • South Fork
Bernadette Gingrass • Steffens & CO. Realty
 (719)850-1993 • bernadette@steffenscorealty.com

UNDER CONTRACT

Finely Crafted Mountain Home!
 • 2 Bedroom • 2 Bathroom • 2-car Garage • 1,388 sq. ft. • \$389,900
 Delightful Ranch Style Mountain Home with 2 car garage and an additional detached cement floor garage/workshop. Nice size kitchen with custom cabinets containing large lazy Susans, Large Pantry and lots of storage. Open dining and large living area with large Sunny Bay window and beautiful mountain views. This kitchen is complete with refrigerator, cookstove, dishwasher and trash compactor. Large Laundry room with tons of storage. Living room with wood burning stove and additional heat source and home is well insulated throughout. Off the living room entry is a wonderful sitting porch. Perfect place to have that morning cup of coffee and watch the mule deer and wild turkeys!
 MLS#772014 • 193 Whispering Pines Drive
Bernadette Gingrass • Steffens & CO. Realty
 (719)850-1993 • bernadette@steffenscorealty.com

UNDER CONTRACT

Majestic Mountain Home in Beaver Mountain Estates!
 • 5 bedrooms 5 bathrooms • 2,912 sq. ft. • 3-car heated garage • \$745,900
A beautiful home with charm and elegance in Beaver Mountain Estates!
 This Home borders the national forest with beautiful mountain views from the wrap around front deck and outdoor propane fireplace with additional large rear covered porch. Large living room with Lennox propane fireplace and ETF electrical heating that can heat the home and dining area with custom light fixture with dining seating 10 for all your entertaining. Custom Kitchen with two sinks and two dishwashers for quick clean up after entertaining with beautiful Knotty Alder wood cabinets and new refrigerator and microwave. This home is beautifully hand troweled on ceilings/walls with tall ceilings and tall solid wood interior doors and Pella double-hung windows for easy cleaning. This home comes mostly furnished with additional tools and the following equipment in the garage including snow blower, air compressor, battery chargers all this and more with beautiful mountain views with Rocky Mountain Elk and other wildlife right out your back door.
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Everything you could want from mountain living!
 4 bedrooms • 4.5 baths • 4,504 sq. ft.
 • 6 acres • \$888,000
SOLD
 Custom-built home in River Island Ranch with a built in theater, 5 car heated garage and 2 car separate garage, screened-in porch, safe room, wet bar and much more! The yard has a sprinkler system and a fire pit, perfect for entertaining! POA includes access to fishing on the Rio Grande, road maintenance and snow removal. MLS #765728
 104 Explorer Way • South Fork
Bernadette Gingrass
Steffens & CO. Realty
 (719)850-1993
 bernadette@steffenscorealty.com



"I step up because my community needs me to."

Wear your mask and keep your distance.

**STEP UP
 COLORADO**



covid19.colorado.gov