



THE CONEJOS COUNTY CITIZEN

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75¢

La Jara Glory Days offering prize money for parade floats

CONTRIBUTED

LA JARA – The 2024 La Jara Glory Days celebration will take place on Saturday, July 27.

Most years, the town strives to add a few more attractions to bring the community together to celebrate life in the little town.

This year, the town received a substantial donation from a generous benefactor, who has requested that they use the funds specifically

to enhance and improve the parade.

To that end, the town would like to invite all business friends, community organizations, clubs, and anyone one else who may be interested, to ignite their float building creativity. They will three categories:

1. Floats
2. Marching Bands/Drill/Dance Teams
3. Clubs, organizations, saddle clubs, 4-H, Scout troops

The top three winners in each category will receive cash prizes (first place will receive \$1,000, second place will receive \$500, and third place will receive \$250). Winners will be selected by a panel of judges.

The annual Art Lopez Memorial Car show (Cars for a Cause) will also take place during the Glory Days event, and the town would encourage all entries in the car show to also participate in the parade and be eligible

to win some of the prize money.

For more information, contact Town Manager Larry Zaragoza at 719-274-0553 or 719-992-4073.

“We hope to increase participation in the parade this year and in the future, however, there is no guarantee that our benefactor will be available in future years to offer the same financial support; therefore, we encourage everyone to take advantage of what we can offer in 2024,” town officials stated.



Crestina Martinez

USDA announces Martinez as Colorado Director for Rural Development

She owns and operates cattle ranch in Southern Colorado

By USDA

DENVER – President Joe Biden on May 29 announced the appointment of Crestina Martinez as the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development State Director in Colorado.

“I am thrilled to begin this journey as the Colorado State Director, filled with excitement, optimism, and a steadfast dedication to serving the rural communities of Colorado. USDA Rural Development boasts a statewide presence with seven offices, a robust legacy of investment, and a talented team. Together, under the Biden-Harris

Please see USDA on Page 6A

NEWS IN BRIEF

Fundraiser for St. Francis of Assisi Church

7 MILE PLAZA – A fundraiser for St. Francis of Assisi Church and Holy Name of Mary Parish will be held from 7 to 11 p.m. on Friday, June 7, at the Rio Grande Council Knight of Columbus Hall, 595 Pine St., Del Norte.

DJ Rock N Rob will be playing music. Food and soft drinks will be available for purchase. Donation of \$10 per person, \$15 per couple and \$5 per child.

Cash prizes for top floats at Stampede parades

MONTE VISTA – The top floats in the 2024 Ski-Hi Stampede parades will receive cash prizes. The Ski-Hi Stampede parades will be on July 12 and 13 in downtown Monte Vista. The theme for this year's parade is “Heroes Among Us.”

Absolute Shine donated \$1,500 that will go to the first-place float; SLV Auto Repair donated \$1,000 that will go to the second-place float; and Pepper Equipment donated \$500 that will go to the third-place float.

Registration forms can be picked up at Finer Blessings, 730 1st Ave., Monte Vista. The Ski-Hi Stampede Committee is organizing the parades.

The 102nd annual Ski-Hi Stampede kicks off with a concert on July 11, featuring Wynonna, followed by three days of PRCA action on July 12, 13 and 14. For more information, visit online www.skihistampede.com.



Photo by John Waters

Colorado Pacific Rio Grande Railroad engines, painted in what has become their trademark blue, sit in the railyards in Alamosa. The railroad was highlighted as a “new” business by San Luis Valley Development Resources in Alamosa during a recent visit from the Office of Economic Development and International Trade.

Colorado Pacific Rio Grande Railroad gaining speed

By PRISCILLA WAGGONER

ALAMOSA — When the auction for the San Luis Rio Grande Railroad happened in 2022, the scene was akin to something in a movie. OmniTRAX, a short line railroad operator out of Denver, had announced in September that they purchased the railroad with a bid of \$5.7 million, although the official auction had not yet been held.

Two months later, Stefan Soloviev, chairman of the Soloviev Group that operates across eight sectors of industry including a very strong presence in agriculture and a short line railroad on the eastern Plains, entered the picture when he placed a bid. Soloviev then stunned everyone by showing up at the auction in person.

Over the next three hours, Soloviev

competed against Big Shoulders Capital and OmniTRAX, ultimately outbidding the two with an 86% increase over OmniTRAX's original bid of \$5.7 million.

William Brandt, bankruptcy trustee who had been managing the railroad, described the bidding as “very spirited”. He then went on to state, “This is great news. A responsible operator for the *Please see RAILROAD on Page 6A*

Two weekends of Round-UP fun coming

CONTRIBUTED

ALAMOSA – The Alamosa Round-UP has been a part of the San Luis Valley's heritage for over 40 years. With multiple days of exciting events, it is the biggest event in Alamosa, and the 2024 version is coming soon.

The 2024 Alamosa Round-UP kicks off June 14 with the Ranch Rodeo. Saturday, June 15, brings the Demolition Derby.

The following weekend, June 20, kicks off with the Mutton Bustin and Local Barrel Race Qualifier, Friday and Saturday nights bring the Professional PRCA Rodeo. Saturday also

includes Cowboy Church at 9 a.m.

Saturday night after the rodeo is the sixth annual Round-UP Concert, featuring professional saddle bronc rider and country music artist Justin Lawrence.

The Alamosa Round-UP is proud to be a part of such a wonderful community. The Alamosa Round-UP is supported by The City of Alamosa, Visit Alamosa, and over 85 local families and businesses. This truly is Alamosa's Round-UP, nominated Top 5 PRCA Rodeo of the Year, and Mountain States Circuit Rodeo of the Year.

Top cowboys and cowgirls from around the country as well as future champions don their hats, chap up and put on a show for the fans.

PRCA Rodeo

The top cowboys and cowgirls in the *Please see ROUND-UP on Page 6A*

Country music artist and professional saddle bronc rider Justin Lawrence will perform in Alamosa as part of the Round-UP rodeo after the arena events on Saturday, June 22.

Courtesy photo



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THE CONEJOS COUNTY CITIZEN

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OBITUARIES

John David Gimlin



John David Gimlin, 51, died in his home in Lakewood, Colo., May 2024. John was born July 11, 1972, in Monte Vista, Colo. He was a graduate of Del Norte High School in 1990. He went on to earn his Bachelor's degree in Journalism from the University of Northern Colorado in 1995. His final year of college John was the editor of the UNC Mirror, the student-run newspaper.

John was a resident of Littleton for many years before moving to Lakewood three years ago. His working career began in the construction industry as a Project Estimator. Later he became a Real Estate Agent and most recently he was an employee of Charter Communications working as a Data Analyst.

John was a golfer, fisherman, outdoor enthusiast, and professional sports fan of all teams Denver/Colorado. Some of his fondest

Gimlin of Greeley, Colo., and his sister, Denise (Anne) Gimlin and brother-in-law Michael Wood, of Nederland, Colo. Other survivors include nieces: Michelle Barrera (Brandon), Cori Gimlin, Carly Erbacher (Mark), and Morgan Lee, and nephews: William Grazier (Christy Walker), Richard Lee Grazier, Captain Jordan Wood (Caroline), and LTJG Shea Wood.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Gerald "Jerry" Gimlin and Dorothy Jordan Gimlin, sister Terry Lee and many cherished aunts and uncles.

A memorial service and reception will be held June 10 at Horan & McConaty, 9998 Grant St., Thornton, Colo., at 10 a.m. Inurnment will be held at the Monte Vista Cemetery in Monte Vista, Colo., at a date to be announced. To keep informed of the date and details of the inurnment email anne.gimlin@gmail.com.

memories were the time spent at the Corset Ranch near Del Norte and with friends Davey Colville, Flavio Quintana, and Mike Gettman. He was a constant supporter of his nephews middle school and high school athletic events.

John is survived by his brother, Bryant Gimlin and sister-in-law Cathy

Tom Sanderson



Born on March 29, 1950, in Del Norte, Colo., Tom Sanderson's spirit left his body on May 13, 2024, with Margaret by his side.

Like his dad, son, daughter, wife and mother-in-law, Tom was a Sargent High School graduate. He went on to earn degrees in computer programming from Mesa State and Business Education from Adams State.

In October of 1972 he married his high school sweetheart, Margaret Chisholm. Two children were born to this union - Ginger Michelle and Kevin Andrew.

Tom was passionate about riding mules in the mountains. He learned the art from his dad who kept him supplied with ponies or horses beginning at age three. His last four-legged friends were his mules, LJ, Clyde and Penny. He enjoyed riding Clyde or Penny on several week-long rides with the Colorado Mule Riders. Tom felt closer to God in nature, in the mountains on one of his mules. He loved to hunt elk with his friends in Wason Park near Creede, Colo., and he enjoyed fishing, particularly at Santa Maria Reservoir where his dad had water rights and where Tom carried on that tradition, hoping to pass that on to his son, Kevin, who passed on at the age of 42 on April 9, 2021.

He and Margaret raised potatoes and small grains in the Sargent Community for 25 years. He was pleased to have raised their children on their farm.

Tom had a soft spot for his three granddaughters. He loved to spend time with "his girls" and just play. He loved kids in general and loved to hold babies!

Tom was a member of Monte Vista Masonic Lodge No. 73 and served two terms as master. He was a 32nd Degree member of the Southern Colorado Consistory and a member of Al Kaly Shriners. He enjoyed being a clown and entertaining the kids. He was a hospital representative for Shriners Hospitals and held offices in the local Sand Dunes Shrine Club multiple times.

He refereed high school football for many years, and women's high school and college basketball for 20 years.

He served on the Colorado Potato Administration Committee, the Colorado Certified Seed Potato Board and on the Monte Vista CO-OP board.

Tom especially enjoyed his work with the Division of Wildlife in Fruita, Colorado where he managed the Horse Thief Canyon State Wildlife Area for five years. He raised crops for wildlife introducing several new crops to the area that attracted even more wildlife than before his arrival there. Deer, quail, turkeys, ducks and geese increased in numbers, and he was delighted to be farming for wildlife. He began instructing Hunters' Education classes there as well.

Both Tom's parents, Clifford and Laura Lee Sanderson, preceded him in death as did his son, Kevin.

He is survived by his wife Margaret of 51 years, his daughter Dr. Ginger (George) Mentz and their three girls, Madeleine Alexis, Anna Catherine and Claire Michelle of Colorado Springs, his sister Betty Brink (Glen Burns) of Eloy, Ariz., as well as many extended family members on Margaret's side of the family.

Contributions can be made to Shriners Hospital for Children, 1275 E Fairfax Rd., Salt Lake City, Utah 84103.

Margaret is deeply grateful for the friends and family who visited or contacted them during this difficult time. She so appreciated the kind, compassionate and efficient care Tom received while at Evergreen Nursing Home where he passed.

Cremation has been chosen, and a Memorial Service will be held June 7, 2024, at 2 p.m. at the Sargent Community Church, 6967 County Road 2 East, Monte Vista, Colo.

To leave online condolences, please visit www.RogersFunerals.com.

Leola Roberts



Longtime Monte Vista resident Leola Roberts, 95, died May 24, 2024, at her home in Monte Vista.

Leola's life began in Monte Vista, Colo., on Sept. 5, 1928, the daughter to Delbert Stillings and Blanche M. Jones Stillings. She married James Roberts on Nov. 6, 1949, at the Christian Church in Monte Vista. They enjoyed over 63 years until his death in 2012.

She was as member of the Order of Easter Star for over 59 years, and a part of Beta Sigma Phi for over 72 years, and a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Leola is survived by her son Edward Roberts of Monte Vista; her sister Lorraine Holland of Dallas, Texas; her granddaughter-in-law Kelly Roberts of Arvada, Colo.; as

well as numerous nieces, nephews, extended family and friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents, her husband, her daughter Nancy Roberts, her grandson Michael Roberts, her siblings: Charles Stillings, Maurice Stillings, Lois Barton, and Cynthia Fischer.

Cremation was chosen and a Memorial Service will be held Friday, Sept. 6, 2024, at the Rogers Family Mortuary, 404 Morris St., Monte Vista. Interment will take place in the Monte Vista Cemetery. Contributions are suggested to Shriners Children's Hospital at <https://donate.lovetotherescue.org>, or to Scottish Rite Foundation of Colorado at <https://scottishritefoundation.org/donations/>

To leave online condolences, words

of comfort, or tributes for Blanche's family, please visit www.RogersFunerals.com.

Stanley Dale Henderson



Stanley Dale "Cowboy" Henderson, 66, died surrounded by family and his loving fur babies Derby, Moose, Clifford and Lucky, at his residence in Del Norte on Saturday, May 25, 2024. He was born on Jan. 26, 1958, in San Antonio, Texas, to Daniel "Byrd" and Beverly Henderson.

His passion was assisting the firefighters of any community he ever lived in, and he taught the art of firefighting at Texas A&M University. Cowboy was a volunteer firefighter for Del Norte Fire Department for 10 years. Prior to Del Norte, he had a combined career of over 30 years as a firefighter. During his career as firefighter, he served in various ranks

including periods serving as Chief of the Seabrook Fire Department in Seabrook, Texas, First Assistant Chief for San Leon Fire Department in San Leon, Texas, and Chief of the Fire Department at Clean Harbors in Deer Park, Texas.

He is survived by his child Nathan Henderson (Brittany), grandson Brad Henderson (Ampel), brother, Rob Henderson (April), sister Laura Denise Brandt, sister Marie McNamara (Shawn) and his mother.

He was preceded in death by his father, and sister Doris Stuart.

A Celebration of Life will be performed at 955 French St. in Del Norte, Colo., on June 29, 2024, at 10:30 a.m.

FULL-TIME SALES
Valley Publishing has an immediate need in advertising sales (full-time). Any sales experience is appreciated but will train. Email resume to General Manager Brian Williams at bwilliams@valleypublishinginc.com

Find us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/ValleyPublishing>

Meet Belinda, a foodie who loves dining out at **The Roast - Craft Coffee & Libations**. With our debit card, she earns reward points on every purchase, including today's delicious smothered burrito. Sign up now to start earning rewards and redeem them for amazing experiences!

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OPINION & EDITORIAL

Let the fun begin

As you know, Miss Trixie and I arrived safe and sound once again in Colorful Colorado and we are glad to be out of that Texas heat and into this nice cool weather.

It didn't take long for Miss Trixie to get us busy with activities and just this past week we were able to score some wild asparagus, make two trips to Amish Country, do a Wal-Mart run and have supper with dear friends.

Not only that but Ol' Dutch crowded in two stints driving the van for Mountain Man Rafting/Narrow Ridge Outdoors, so I had a little money to boot. I really do enjoy that job as it lets me be along the Rio Grande River every day and who can ask for anything more than that?

It is kind of a long story about my love affair with the mighty Rio which all began when I was 6 years old, and our family was driving through South Fork. I took one look at the South Fork River and began to lobby to stay here to fish that stream.

I don't know if my begging and pleading did any good or maybe my dad, Fast Freddy, was just ready to stop for the day but soon we found ourselves in a cabin on the river and I got to fish in that clear stream. My mother's postcard home to the grandparents proudly declared that I had caught six fish my first time using a fly rod.

The rest is history, I suppose, as we began coming here every summer to vacation and cool off. This year marks 61 years that Ol' Dutch has been fishing these wonderful streams and hiking the beautiful forests.

My dream was always to live here in the mountains and so when I retired at 52 years old, I moved here permanently and have not looked back since. That isn't the only milestone being marked this year as Miss Trixie and I celebrate 12 great years together – although she may want to downgrade a few of those to mediocre.

It's been a real blessing to be in such a wonderful place. I encourage you to get outside this summer as much as you can and enjoy God's creation.

And don't forget all the other activities coming up such as Creede Bingo on Monday nights, the South Fork city garage sale, the Creede Ladies Aid sale, the Amish dinners and Amish auction, the Farmers Market in South Fork, Logger days and the list goes on



Trout Republic
by Kevin Kirkpatrick

and on and on.

Ol' Dutch has been fishing quite a bit. I can report that they are biting well and taste wonderful prepared in foil out on the grill. Miss Trixie, Cooper and I have been dining regularly on flakey Rainbow Trout. I hope you wet your line and get some for yourself, too.

I have already mentioned that Mountain Man/NRO was already running raft trips and you really should make it a priority to get over to South Fork and take a guided trip on the Rio.

The water is high, and the rafting is superb so call Mountain Man/Narrow Ridge Outdoors today at (719) 873-0188 and schedule your summer fun while enjoying a 10% discount through the month of June if you mention Trout Republic, Ol' Dutch or Miss Trixie.

They also offer guided kayaking, stand-up paddle boarding, rock climbing and other outdoor pursuits so there is something for everyone to enjoy.

And if that is not enough incentive there is a high likelihood that Miss Trixie and maybe even Ol' Dutch will be driving you to the unloading spot. Then you can gauge for yourself what a long-suffering wonderful person she must be to put up with Ol' Dutch.

Drop a line if you're bored and need recommendations for activity in the area, Miss Trixie just loves to put people into motion. Hope to see you soon enjoying this wonderful state and all this area has to offer.

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

In small towns, bookstores are thriving

"I love to spend my day in a bookstore," said Amy Sweet. She lives in Red Lodge, Montana, and was explaining why she and her husband Brian opened Beartooth Books in her town of 2,300.

"It was part of the life we wanted — to live in a small town, walk to work, and enjoy outdoor adventures and wonderful people."

She's not alone. For many of the same reasons, bookstores have been opening in small Western towns, said Heather Duncan, executive director of the Mountains & Plains Independent Booksellers Association.

Since 2020, more than 100 bookstores have opened in her region, which extends across 14 states ranging from Texas to Montana and from Nebraska to Nevada.

One reason for the phenomenon, said Amy Sweet, is that "people are proud of their town, our local history. It's all a package, and the bookstore gets to be part of that."

The success of such a low-tech enterprise might surprise people. "Lots of first-time customers come in and say, 'I thought bookstores were dying,'" Brian Sweet said.

But he believes that a bookstore is a perfect complement to today's culture. "A bookstore is quiet, peaceful, and yet mentally stimulating," he said. "It's not our devices and incessant TV news."

Bookstores opening in towns, as opposed to cities, is a trend throughout the West, Duncan said. Of her 60 member stores in Colorado, just 17 are in large cities. The rest are in small towns, smaller cities, or suburbs. In the Western Slope town of Paonia, population 1,500, Emily Sinclair opened Paonia Books a year ago. She said she likes exercising her own as well as local taste, and also enjoys inviting Western writers to give talks and sign their new books.

These days, said Duncan, bookstores are becoming more diverse in both ownership and retail model.

"We now have online-only stores, pop-up stores, book buses and bookmobiles," she said. And new store owners are often Black, Indigenous, Hispanic/Latino, or LGBTQ+.

"Diverse-owned stores are approximately 20% of our membership. In the past it would have been around 10%."

Locating a bookstore in a rural community is arguably another aspect of diversity—and a surprising strength.

"Small-town stores had a much better success rate during the pandemic," Duncan said, "due mostly to the support of their communities, as well as lower overhead costs."



Courtesy photo

Beartooth Books

A strong connection to community, however, requires work. "We pick the books one by one," Brian Sweet said. "People are surprised to hear that—some think we just sell whatever shows up. But I pore over publisher catalogs, and in a small store, for every book that I choose, probably 200 don't make the cut."

Bookstores in tourist destinations, such as Back of Beyond in Moab, Utah, have always thrived on deep commu-

nity connections. But the current trend highlights how community is something best appreciated by full-time residents rather than visitors.

Like farmers' markets, micro-breweries, bakeries and outdoor-gear stores, bookstores are places to gather in person with like-minded neighbors,

Amy Sweet said. "Customers in a bookstore are friendly and inquisitive," she said. "They come in to browse and talk about books."

While tech companies are always looking to "scale up" to provide growth, the challenge for many small towns is finding business models that "scale down" to smaller populations. Bookselling provides that model.

But booksellers agree that they're doing a job: "It's business — it's not reading books all day," said Brian Sweet. "But it's a business where people want to support you. Every day," he added,

"people thank us for being open."

Here's a sampling of much-loved bookstores in Western towns under 10,000 people:

Back of Beyond Books, <https://backofbeyondbooks.com/>, Moab, Utah, pop. 5,300

The Mad Dog and the Pilgrim booksellers, <https://www.facebook.com/MadDogandthePilgrimBooks/>, Sweetwater Station, Wyo., population too small to count

Elk River Books, <https://elkriverbooks.com/>, Livingston, Mont., population 8,300

Townie Books, <https://towniebookscb.indielite.org/>, Crested Butte, population 1,681

Reader's Oasis Books, no website, Quartzsite, Ariz., population 2,413

And here's a sampling of bookstores in Western towns under 10,000 that opened in the last three years:

Mountain Shire Books, <https://mountainshirebooks.com/>, Winter Park, population 1,033

CuriosiTea Bookshop, <https://bookshop.org/shop/CuriosiTeaBookshop>, Fairview, Utah, population pop. 1,203

Page Turners, <https://bookshop.org/shop/pageturnersmt>, Fairview, Mont., population 844

Beartooth Books, <https://www.beartoothbookstore.com/>, Red Lodge, Mont., population 2,300

Cobb's Book Nook, <https://cobbsbooknook.company.site/>, Vernal, Utah, population 10,000

John Clayton is a contributor to Writers on the Range, writersontherange.org, an independent nonprofit dedicated to spurring lively conversation about the West. He's the author of the email newsletter Natural Stories.



by John Clayton



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Hope has opened its doors

'Hope in the Valley' now accepting clients

By PRISCILLA WAGGONER

ALAMOSA — In the fall of 2022, the Valley Courier reported that founders Justin Riley, Kim Reed and Paul Reed of "Hope in the Valley," a new treatment and recovery center, had signed the dotted line to purchase the 6,700 square foot building that would ultimately become the site of their facility from Alamosa County.

Last week, less than two years later, an announcement signed and sent out by Kim Reed, also serving as development director, notified the public that they have accomplished what they said they would do.

"It is with great excitement and profound gratitude that we announce the official opening of Hope in the Valley, a new treatment and recovery center dedicated to serving individuals battling addiction and mental health challenges," Kim Reed's announcement reads.

"As of today, our doors are open to providing much-needed support to those in need. At Hope in the Valley, we are proud to offer 10 detox beds for immediate assistance, along with intensive outpatient therapy and partial hospitalization programs.

"While our ribbon-cutting ceremony opening is scheduled for July 11, we are already actively helping those in need. It is truly heartwarming to see the community's overwhelming response, with a waiting list already in place.

"We are honored to announce that Attorney General (Phil) Weiser will be joining us for the ribbon-cutting ceremony on July 11. Until then, we urge anyone who knows someone struggling with addiction to reach out to our facility without delay.



Photo by John Waters

The Hope in the Valley treatment and recovery center in Alamosa.

"Our location behind the sheriff's office in Alamosa, 1317 17th St., Alamosa, serves as a beacon of hope for those seeking help.

"As we embark on this journey, we humbly ask for your prayers, support, and continued assistance in making Hope in the Valley a shining light of hope for the entire San Luis Valley.

"Together, we can make a positive impact and provide much-needed resources to those who need it most.

"Thank you for your unwavering support!"

More information about Hope in the Valley can be found on their website at <https://hopealamosa.org> or by calling 719-206-HOPE (4673).

Medicare Fraud Prevention Week runs the week of June 5

CONTRIBUTED

ALAMOSA — Fraud costs Medicare an estimated \$60 billion per year. It costs Medicare beneficiaries in time, stress, their medical identities, and even their health. It costs families, friends, and caregivers in worry and lost work when helping their loved ones recover from falling victim to Medicare fraud.

"Medicare fraud has a devastating impact on both beneficiaries and the Medicare program," said Michelle

Phillips State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) & Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) Coordinator. "We teach people how to avoid experiencing Medicare fraud. By preventing fraud from happening, this program helps individuals and protects the Medicare program for generations to come."

Learn how to protect yourself and your loved ones by joining the Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) and their partners for Medicare Fraud

Prevention Week which runs the week of June 5, or 6/5, because most people become eligible for Medicare when they turn 65. Learn more about Medicare Fraud Prevention Week at www.smpresource.org.

SMPs help educate and empower people on Medicare in the fight against health care fraud. Your SMP can help you with your questions, concerns, or complaints about potential fraud and abuse issues. It also provides information and educational presentations.

Female inmate at Alamosa County Detention Center found unresponsive in cell

Autopsy rules out foul play

By PRISCILLA WAGGONER

ALAMOSA — During a routine cell check at the Alamosa County Detention Center early Sunday morning, an unresponsive female inmate was found in her cell.

The 41-year-old woman was discovered at 7:19 a.m., at which time deputies and EMS staff performed life-saving measures. Unfortunately, she was pronounced deceased at the scene.

Joe Dzuris, Alamosa County Coroner,

has identified the woman as Erica Ann Martinez. The Valley Courier reached Dzuris when he was returning to Alamosa after an autopsy on Martinez had been completed, the results of which, he says, confirmed there was no foul play.

Alamosa County Sheriff Robert Jackson has contacted the Colorado Bureau of Investigation and requested a thorough investigation of the incident. According to a statement from the Sheriff's Office, this is an ongoing investigation, and no further details will be released at this time.

Medicare Fraud Prevention Week



Actions Everyone Can Take

THE WEEK OF 6/5

- Beneficiaries**
Learn how to read your Medicare statements.
- Caregivers**
Educate yourself and loved ones on how to prevent and detect health care fraud.
- Families**
Talk to loved ones about protecting their Medicare number.
- Partners & Professionals**
Share SMP information on social media. Invite the SMP to speak.
- Health Care Providers**
Talk to patients about health care-related scams.
- Community**
Look out for your older neighbors.

ABOUT SMP

Your local Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) is ready to provide you with the information you need to PROTECT yourself from Medicare fraud, errors, and abuse; DETECT potential fraud, errors, and abuse; and REPORT your concerns.

Contact your SMP in the SLV CO area at 1-719-589-4511.



www.smpresource.org

1-877-808-2468

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GFWC Colorado Local Scholarship

Winners Announced

CONTRIBUTED

SAN LUIS VALLEY — The Colorado Federation of Women's Clubs, a member of the General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC), is pleased to award two scholarships to San Luis Valley students this May.

Kadence McWilliams from Sagua-che County and Jaelyn Jackson from Manassa are the two students who were chosen.

McWilliams attended Moffat High School. She credits her family with instilling a love of animals, especially her grandfather who introduced her to the world of agriculture. She spent many years working at the Monte Vista livestock auction. She plans to become a veterinarian due to her love of and experiences with all sorts of animals. In addition, she played volleyball, basketball and ran track at Moffat High School. She has also been a part

of FFA and the National Honor Society (NHS) as well as volunteering as a referee for pee-wee sports and working in a second-grade classroom.

Jackson attended Centauri High School and was involved in the Student Council and National Honor Society. She was an All-State athlete as a senior, participating in volleyball and basketball. She has been a part of her LDS church's Young Women's group and has volunteered in projects such as picking up trash on highways, serving food at a homeless shelter and assisting the elderly with yard work. As a student council and NHS member, volunteer efforts included holding two blood drives, an elementary school carnival and working at two middle school track meets. Jaelyn plans to study kinesiology at CU Colorado Springs and become a Physical Therapist.

Funding for the scholarships comes from the Minnie L. Harding Education Fund (MLHEF) created in 1902

by Mrs. Harding, a clubwoman living in Canon City. Since that time, many women have been given interest free loans. In 2022, a scholarship fund was developed to help graduating seniors further their education.

A committee made up of Colorado clubwomen manages the fund including three members of the Women's Citizenship Club in Alamosa.

The General Federation of Women's Clubs is one of the oldest national women's organizations dedicated to strengthening communities and enhancing the lives of others through volunteer service.



Kadence McWilliams



Jaelyn Jackson

CWCB elects RG Basin's Coombs as board president

CONTRIBUTED

GRANBY — This morning, during the May board meeting in Granby, the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) elected Nathan Coombs, of the San Luis Valley, as the new board chair and Lorelei Cloud as vice chair during its board meeting on Wednesday, May 15.

"Directors Coombs and Cloud joined as Board members last March, and have made valuable contributions over the last year," said CWCB Director Lauren Ris. "We are excited to see what they do in the next year in these leadership roles—from navigating tough conversations to leading productive brainstorming to listening to viewpoints from across the state."

Board chair appointments are for a one-year term. The 15-member board includes nine representatives from each major Colorado river basin and the Denver metro area who are appointed by the governor and then confirmed by the Colorado State Senate. Board members have experience and expertise in water resource management, water project financing, engineering, water law, farming and ranching. In March 2023, Colorado Governor Jared Polis appointed Coombs and Cloud to the CWCB to represent their respective basins.

Coombs serves as the representative of the Rio Grande Basin and is a fourth-generation farmer from San Luis Valley. He has strived to support the livelihoods

of agricultural water users in the upper Rio Grande Basin through his work as manager of the Conejos Water Conservancy District. Coombs takes over as CWCB Board Chair from Greg Felt, representative of the Arkansas River basin and chair from 2023-24.

"I'm honored to serve as Chair of the CWCB, to bring in my experience working in the challenging landscape of the San Luis Valley and lean on the experiences of the rest of the Board. We face so many water challenges in Colorado, so it's critical we all come together to find creative solutions," said Coombs.

Cloud serves as the representative of the San Miguel-Dolores-San Juan drainage basin and serves as vice chairman of the Southern Ute Indian Tribe. Cloud is the first Tribal council member to join the Board and is a leader in Colorado, bringing critical Tribal voices to the table. The role of CWCB vice chair was formerly held by Robert Sakata before he transitioned into a new role within the Colorado Department of Agriculture.

"In my work representing the southwest, and in my position as a Tribal leader, it's so important to make sure Tribes are always a part of the conversation in Colorado," said Cloud. "In my role as Vice Chair, I look forward to continuing these conversations and seeking out new opportunities for all voices in water to be heard."



Great Sand Dunes is hiring a visitor services intern

STAFF REPORT

SAN LUIS VALLEY — Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve is hiring a full-time seasonal intern starting on June 24 and ending on Oct. 25.

The position is a full-time, sea-

sonal role starting on June 2, and ending on Oct. 25, and includes a \$730 weekly living stipend and eligibility for a \$2,626.27 AmeriCorps Education Award.

The intern will be involved in the daily operations of the park and

gain valuable experience serving alongside National Park Service staff.

For complete position description and to apply, please visit <https://jobs.silkroad.com/ConservationL.../Careers/jobs/4804>

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For more information, email WeCare@riograndehospital.net

RAILROAD

Continued from Page 1A

railroad in the Valley. And given the value that was created in the auction, the creditors and the others will be very thankful. There will be some money to pay bills.”

Several counties, who were owed significant amounts of money for back taxes, were among those creditors.

Within 24 hours of the federal judge approving the bid, Soloviev and Matt Prince, president of CWC Rail and general manager of the Colorado Pacific Rio Grande Railroad, came to the Valley and, along with railroad employees, traveled the length of the railroad, via HyRail truck, up La Veta Pass.

The Soloviev Group took over the railroad in February of 2023 and, in a little more than a year, have already built strong relationships with municipalities.

“The relationship with Colorado Pacific Rio Grande RR has been refreshing,” says Gigi Dennis, city manager for Monte Vista. “Their team meets with the city regularly and we find solutions that are mutually beneficial to both of our needs.”

“Alamosa County has struggled in years past to get cooperation from the railroad to improve some of our crossings that need attention,” says Vern Heersink, Alamosa County commissioner. “The current owners, however, have been very responsive and open to working in partnership with the county to address four crossings this year. Colorado Pacific Rio Grande Railroad is a pleasure to work with, and we’re excited to move forward on something tangible for our community.”

As was proven when Soloviev bought the short line railroad on the eastern plains that became Colorado Pacific, the Colorado Pacific Rio Grande Railroad is clearly holding up their end on making

the railroad a strong, dependable operator in the valley.

“We’ve assembled a fantastic team of hardworking individuals in a variety of positions, including Train Service – meaning engineers and conductors, Maintenance of Way, Mechanical Operations and Management,” Prince says. “Each department relies on the others and without each and every aspect, we would not be able to operate.”

The Colorado Pacific Rio Grande Railroad is also unlike any other freight railroad in a number of ways. “First of all,” Prince says, “the elevation at which we operate is the highest operating freight railroad in North America. The top of La Veta Pass is 9,242 feet above sea level.

“And the grade of the mountain ranges from 2.4-3.4 per cent at our steepest portions of the mountain. This may not seem like a lot, but when pulling a train that is 3,000 tons, the elevation grade is significant.”

(If you’re trying to calculate that in your head, that’s equivalent to pulling six million pounds uphill.)

Currently, CPRG Railroad services customers from Imerys (a perlite facility) and Red Hill Lava (a lava rock mining, production and shipping operation) to Poole Chemical, Wilbur Ellis, Monte Vista Coop and Coors.

They also interchange cars twice a week with the San Luis Central, a short line railroad, whose customers include other fertilizer businesses and agricultural goods such as wheat and potatoes.

When asked where they’re looking to grow, Prince says, “We’re looking to help our current customers in any way we can so that their businesses will grow – that obviously helps us as well. We also hope to see businesses move to the area

that would be interested in rail freight shipping. And we’re also encouraging the return to rail freight shipping for customers who have moved primarily to trucking.”

FREIGHT RAILROAD – CHEAPER, BETTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

“Shipping by freight railroad out of the San Luis Valley makes sense,” Prince says. “When it comes to cost effectiveness, safety and the environment, shipping by rail wins out.”

According to the Association of American Railroads, rail cars can hold three to four truckloads of cargo, meaning a single freight train can haul a load that would otherwise require more than 300 trucks.

Freight trains can also move one ton of goods about 470 miles on a single gallon of gas compared to a truck that gets about 134 miles per gallon of diesel.

There are also significant benefits to the environment as rail emits 75% fewer greenhouse gas emissions than over-the-road shipping.

“LOCAL AND STATE SUPPORT IS VITAL”

“Our goal is to provide a service to members of our community that not many people can provide, and our expertise in the way we operate, even with the challenges we face, is hard to beat,” Prince says.

He recognizes that some commodities aren’t going to be candidates for rail freight shipping. “But those commodities that can be shipped can do so at a fraction of the cost compared to trucking – not to mention taking as many trucks off the road as possible will only benefit the safety of passenger traffic, the environment and cause less wear and tear on

Colorado highways.”

At the same time, Prince says that local support is important and “increased community knowledge and understanding of how we operate” is what allows the railroad to thrive, which, in turn, benefits the community.

“Support at the state level is also vital,” he adds, “so far as regulation, financial assistance and so forth is concerned.”

Since the first tracks were laid in the

west, successful railroads have been crucial to communities, especially those located in more rural parts. The Colorado Pacific Rio Grande Railroad takes that relationship seriously.

“We’re excited to be in the valley,” says Prince, who appears to be so optimistic about the future that he has bought property in the area. “We look forward to serving and being part of the community and helping the Valley grow.”

USDA

Continued from Page 1A

Administration, we will tirelessly strive to expand economic opportunities, bolster infrastructure, and enhance the quality of life for all rural Coloradans,” said Martinez.

Martinez owns and operates a small cattle ranch in Southern Colorado and holds a bachelor’s in Sociology and Spanish from Colorado College and certificates from Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government and the University of Denver’s Daniels College of Business.

Martinez previously served as Director of Strategic Outreach and Advocacy at Xcel Energy where she developed and implemented strategic outreach and advocacy initiatives centered on environmental justice, energy equity, and Tribal relations.

Martinez also has experience as Adams County Director of Long-Term Recovery and Major Initiatives where she led the development of strategies for equitable economic and health recoveries from COVID-19 and as Chief of Staff in the Office of the Colorado Lieutenant Governor where she led policy and legislative strategies, stakeholder outreach, and constituent services.

Before that, Martinez also served as Regional Manager in the Colorado

Department of Local Affairs where she managed local government operations emphasizing rural community and economic development and served as a Costilla County Commissioner.

RD State Directors serve as the chief executive officer of Rural Development in the states and territories and are tasked with carrying out the mission of rural development to the benefit of everyone in rural America. In conjunction with the guidance and support of the National Office, State Directors are responsible for promoting the mission and strategic goals of Rural Development and provide key leadership to develop and support a productive, diverse, and inclusive state workforce.

Under the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA Rural Development provides loans and grants to help expand economic opportunities, create jobs, and improve the quality of life for millions of Americans in rural areas. This assistance supports infrastructure improvements; business development; housing; community facilities such as schools, public safety and health care; and high-speed internet access in rural, tribal and high-poverty areas.

For more information, visit www.rd.usda.gov/co.

ROUND-UP

Continued from Page 1A

sport of professional rodeo make their way to Alamosa to compete in all seven major events of rodeo – Bareback Riding, Steer Wrestling, Tie-Down Roping, Saddle Bronc Riding, Team Roping, Barrel Racing, and Bull Riding. The Alamosa Round-UP is proud

to be a part of the All-American Series, of The Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association.

Over 350 cowboys and cowgirls make their way to beautiful Alamosa each year to compete for over \$45,000 in prize money.

Entries are now open for the Ranch Rodeo (June 14) and the 2024 Mutton Bustin Qualifier (June 20). Local Barrel Race entries will be taken the night of the Barrel Race, 5-6:30 p.m. June 20. Tickets are also available through the website, www.alamosaroundup.com.

Make Your Life a Life That you Love!

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

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

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

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

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

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

The enemy—the devil—wants to steal our joy and destroy our lives. But

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

For more on this topic, order Joyce’s three-part teaching resource **Keys to Loving Your Journey**. You can also contact us to receive our free magazine, *Enjoying Everyday Life*, by calling (800) 727-9673 or visiting www.joycemeyer.org.

Joyce Meyer is a New York Times bestselling author and founder of Joyce Meyer Ministries, Inc. She has authored more than 140 books, including *BATTLEFIELD OF THE MIND* and *OVERCOMING EVERY PROBLEM (FaithWords)*. She hosts the *Enjoying Everyday Life* radio and TV programs, which air on hundreds of stations worldwide. For more information, visit www.joycemeyer.org.

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Crestone Charter grads embody dedication and kindness

By JOHN WATERS

CRESTIONE — Before an audience of about 70 friends and family on May 17, Crestone Charter School graduates Kaley VanWalleghan, and Ziah Knight Pesqueira received their high school diplomas.

The ceremony began with remarks by school director Thomas Cleary, who spoke about “Haters Gonna Hate.”

“The term has staying power and that is why I’m using it and as a graduate, you will need to continue to have staying power as you travel on your journey in life...when confronted, you need to not be flippant, you will need to show caring when confronted by challenges in life. My speech is not about not caring, it is about deeply caring, about doing your best and not worrying about what other people are thinking to the degree that it paralyzes you,” Cleary said.

The ceremony continued with Eden Elderberry with the school Governing Council who offered, “Ziah, you are a light of familiarity and have been a fixture in our town and embody the spirit of Crestone through your dedication and genuine kindness.”

Elderberry continued, “Haley brings a wealth of experience from her adventures beyond our sleepy town enriching our community with bravery and resilience.”



Crestone Charter School graduate Haley VanWalleghan (center) receives her high school diploma on May 17. From left to right are Coach Mike Roberts, Jane Elliot, Robin Chestnut, Sam Goering, and Thomas Cleary.

The graduates then strolled through the audience handing out flowers to “people who have been close to them, and helped nurture their growth over the years.” The two graduates then gave out roses to those of their choice.

Music including, “Fade Into You,” was performed by Phoebe Tieder and Kristen Gushurst, and “Flower of the Universe,” was performed by Aurora



Crestone Charter School graduate Ziah Knight Pesqueira receives his high school diploma on May 17.

always jump in and help. I see you transmit this attitude to other students,” said Chestnut.

Sam Goering, who teaches language arts and social studies presented the diplomas and Cleary honored the graduates with the moving of the tassel.

After the formal ceremonies, all were treated to a late-afternoon luncheon.

The school was founded in 1996 and

in 2012 moved into its current facility and is part of the Moffat Consolidated School District No. 2. The school has 92 students.

Charter schools are tuition-free, public schools that have the flexibility to be innovative, entrepreneurial, and self-governing, and yet are held accountable for student and operational performance.

Photos by John Waters

Mini-grants make small improvements happen in SLV

CONTRIBUTED

ALAMOSA – The San Luis Valley Council of Governments is offering funding to counties and municipalities in the San Luis Valley for small projects that benefit their communities. The funding is available through SLV COG Mini-Grants program and is open to any town, city, or county that is a member of the

San Luis Valley Council of Governments.

Applications and guidelines for the 2024 SLV COG Mini-Grants are available online at www.slvdr.org/slv-cog-mini-grants/. The deadline to apply is June 30.

Since 2016, the program has contributed over \$388,000 assisting with a wide range of projects that have enhanced

communities and provided benefit to public services. Projects funded in recent years include replacing the gazebo in Creede’s town square; a new boiler for the South Fork Visitor Center; lighting for La Jara’s Main Street; playground equipment in Center; and security improvements for the Alamosa County Clerk and Recorder.

Potential projects may receive funding up to \$5,000 and the project cost may not exceed \$20,000. Grants also require a one-to-one cash match and are paid on a reimbursement basis. Counties or municipalities may apply for more than one project.

The SLV COG Mini-Grant program is funded by a grant from the Colorado

Department of Local Affairs’ Energy and Mineral Impact Assistance Program.

Potential applicants may contact Aliyah Garcia with the SLV COG at (719) 589-6099 if they have questions about SLV COG Mini-Grants.

For more information about the San Luis Valley Council of Governments, visit www.slvdr.org.

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First responders urge caution during runoff season

By LYNDISIE FERRELL

SAN LUIS VALLEY – As warmer weather comes to the San Luis Valley, local law enforcement, emergency managers and first responders urge the public to use caution on the rivers in the Valley and to pay attention to swift-water conditions as the runoff season moves toward peak flows.

In an interview with Valley Publishing, Mineral County Sheriff Terry Wetherill, Mineral County Emergency Manager Clint Leggitt and Rio Grande County Emergency Manager Brian Burrell spoke about the coming runoff season and gave some tips on how to be safe while still enjoying the rivers around the Valley.

According to reports from several agencies, runoff levels for the 2024 runoff season are on the lower side but according to local officials, that does not remove the danger of swift water and peak river flows during this spring season. “Depending on the rate of snow melt and any kind of rain on snow event, the water levels in rivers and tributaries can continue to rise though I think we are near the peak for the year. It is still important to use caution while out on the river,” said Mineral County Emergency Manager Leggitt.

As water levels rise, more dangers must be considered when recreators head out on the water. “People need to consider bridges. When a river is at its peak, the height of water rafts and bridges must be considered. It is also important to pay attention to personal safety devices such as life jackets and helmets. If you do go overboard or fall into the river, make sure you know what to do to protect yourself, such as moving into a defensive swimming position,” said Mineral County Sheriff Wetherill.

Though local officials are not expecting a high runoff year, teams



are still working to prepare for an emergency should one arise. At the end of April teams with the Mineral County Search and Rescue conducted swift water training which included training with ropes and mock rescue.

“We advise people who plan to go out on the river to always go in pairs or if fishing alone, to be knowledgeable of how to react in case of an emergency. If you are not experienced, then find someone who is and have them go with you or teach you fundamentals. And please, if you’re out on the river, wear a life jacket,” said Wetherill.

In addition to safety protocols, it is also important to be aware of floating debris. Trees, limbs and other obstacles that can damage rafts or cause someone to lose balance while wading in the river are floating through the water. Undercurrents can be dangerous in deep areas when the river is moving at peak flows.

Anyone wanting to know more about swift water safety can visit www.swiftwatersafetyinstitute.com to learn safety protocols or receive training.



Photos courtesy of Amy Wetherill
Mineral County Search and Rescue teams trained for swift water emergency response at the end of April in preparation for the coming runoff season in the western end of the San Luis Valley.

IN MONTE VISTA

Orlando DeHerrera, DO

Monte Vista Medical Clinic

of Rio Grande Hospital

RioGrandeHospital.org



Welcome, Dr. Orlando DeHerrera, to our Monte Vista Medical Clinic. San Luis Valley native Orlando DeHerrera, DO, is accepting new patients at our Monte Vista Clinic. Born and raised in Antonito, he has been a local favorite with patients and is known for his down-to-earth charm.

Dr. DeHerrera is excited to be practicing with Rio Grande Hospital Clinic in Monte Vista, where he resides with his family. He is actively involved in the community and is happy to get back to his true calling as a primary care provider in the San Luis Valley!



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RGC Search and Rescue aids teens stuck in 'blowdown'

CONTRIBUTED

RIO GRANDE COUNTY — Rio Grande County Search and Rescue aided four teenagers stuck in "blowdown" at Cross Creek on Memorial Day, May 27.

At approximately 6 p.m. on Monday, RGCSAR was contacted regarding four teenagers stuck at Cross Creek.

The teens were traveling on dirt bikes and became stuck in the blowdown without proper gear, water and were running low on fuel, RGCSAR reported.

A specialized team of six RGCSAR members responded by ATV with chainsaws, warm clothes, fuel and water. They removed over 20 trees to clear the trail and bring the teens to safety. The mission ended at approximately 10 p.m.

RGCSAR provided the following tips for going into the back country:

Navigation - That phone or GPS is nice until suddenly it won't charge with your **Please see RGCSR on Page 6**



Photos courtesy of Linette Nye-Schmidt

Rio Grande County Search and Rescue aided four teenagers stuck in 'blowdown' at Cross Creek on Memorial Day, May 27.



Photo courtesy of the Alamosa County Chamber of Commerce

Colorado Gator Farm staff, family members and community well-wishers celebrated the grand opening of the new reptile barn with a ribbon cutting Friday morning. Owner Jay Young is shown in the middle holding a sign.

Colorado Gator Farm celebrates new reptile barn

Officially named the David Lindsey Reptile Center

By **MARIE MCCOLM**

MOSCA — Colorado Gator Farm owner Jay Young was smiling but also flooded with mixed emotions during a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new

reptile barn on Friday, May 24.

He was joined by approximately 20 family and friends, including Alamosa County Commissioner Lori Laske and former Senator Lewis Entz, during the ceremony. The new barn was officially named the David Lindsey Reptile Center.

"The new building will house mostly rescued reptiles, snakes, lizards, tortoises, and some parrots," Young said.

"This has been a lot of hard work and a long road, but life is going to throw things at you, it's up to you how you handle it. All you can do is the best you can, with what you have got, and now we have a new barn."

The new barn replaces the structure that burned down in a devastating fire on April 18, 2023. More than 100 turtles, tortoises, lizards, and snakes **Please see GATOR on Page 6**

Saguache County Museum celebrates 65 years

By **MARIE MCCOLM**

SAGUACHE — The Saguache County Museum opened its doors, with a free admission day on May 26 in celebration of its 65 years of being open.

A parade was hosted in downtown Saguache and featured many floats and vehicles. The Saguache Chamber of Commerce drove an ATV in the parade, with members of the Saguache Art Walk on a trailer in the back, smiling and waving happily.

The Saguache County Ambulance blinked their lights and drove in the parade, followed by a red station wagon which proudly adorned a sign that read



Antique cars were parked in Otto Mears Park during the Saguache County Museum's 65th anniversary celebration on May 26.

"Saguache Senior Citizen's Center," across the passenger side.

The Antique Tractor Club was also a hit in the parade with a barrel train hitched to a tractor.

Grammy's Kitchen had a colorful float in the parade, decked out with balloons and a gentleman wearing a white apron, who smiled and waved at all the people who lined the street for the parade.

There were also a few prancing horses in the parade, and the Garcia brothers of Center also displayed their antique cars in the parade proudly. Two law enforcement trucks blinking their lights were the final entrants of the parade.

In lieu of the museum's celebration, there were also vendors in the middle of town at Otto Mears Park. There were vendors selling handmade jewelry. The Saguache quilting club was also set up at the park, along with an entire canopy filled with goat milk products for sale. The Garcia brothers also set up all their antique cars at the park, they were arranged in a big circle at the park.

The Saguache Museum opened shortly after 10 a.m. and people were eager to visit its different hallways filled with historic items.

Lane Ellis, a resident of Mosca, attended the opening at the museum and stated that it was nice to see something so rich in history, so well



Photos by Marie Mccolm

The Antique Tractor Club pulls a barrel train in the parade on May 26 celebrating the Saguache County Museum's 65th anniversary.

preserved.

"These days there are tours being held online for museums and virtually, it's hard to visit something in person that is so well preserved. My favorite part of this museum is the jail. It's hard to fathom someone being put in that jail, but from what I hear, that is the actual jail, that has been here for 65 years, and it did house criminals," she said with a chuckle. "I am glad I came today; this is a neat part of history that I get to see and enjoy, and you don't get that every day."

The Saguache County Museum began in 1959 as a municipal improvement venture, in celebration of Colorado's Centennial Anniversary. Saguache County had just finished building a brand-new jail, and the old one was set to be demolished. Members of three different clubs who collaborated on the idea for the museum, begged Saguache County not to demolish the jail, so that the site could be used as a "historical place." The establishment was saved and became the Saguache

County Museum. It was collaboratively decided that the little museum would be opened as a celebrated display of history, in Saguache Town Hall.

The museum is celebrating 65 years this year. Volunteers make up the board of directors for the museum. The museum is completely non-profit and is also separate from the Saguache County government.

The museum opens annually on Memorial Day and closes for the season on Labor Day.

Valley-Wide Classified **FREE!** ON LINE! MARKETPLACE

Sell your household items for FREE. Total value of items must be \$50 or less. See details below.



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RATES

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\$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 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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Thursday 5:00 pm
Call 719-852-3531
 or email: rbeutler@valleypublishinginc.com

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05 Notices

For information on meetings for ALANON NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS AND ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS Please visit slvaa.org or call 719-937-5083.

07 Help Wanted

Jr/Sr High School Behavior Interventionist / School Assessment Coordinator, needed at Del Norte Jr/Sr High School for the 2024-2025 school year. We are seeking a hardworking and enthusiastic teaching professional to join our dynamic team. Applicants must have a Colorado Teaching License. Please submit your application, resume and cover letter to: Annie Hardy, Principal at ahardy@urtigers.co or contact Annie at 719-657-4020. Applications can be found online at: urtigers.co. (6-26)

Dairy Queen in Monte Vista is hiring a full-time Assistant Manager to help us continue to grow. Applicants must have previous QSR management experience. Salary based on experience. PTO, Health insurance, and 401K available. Email resumes to MVDairyQueen@gmail.com. (6/19)

WANTED: Saguache County Road and Bridge and Landfill is looking to hire an Assistant Supervisor Starting at \$67,000/year - DOE SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS: Applicants must possess a current Colorado Class "A" Commercial Drivers License CDL with a heavy semi-truck endorsement and a current medical certificate. Applicants should have a high school diploma along with an extensive working knowledge of methods, operating rules, and equipment for road construction and maintenance operations. Prospective employees applying with Saguache County, please note that after a "conditional" offer is made, we may require disclosure of other information personal to the applicant. The prospective employee will also be required to submit and pass a pre-employment drug screening, before being hired. Road &

Bridge and Landfill Assistant Supervisor is a full-time salaried position - qualified candidates will be responsible for assisting the head supervisor with the coordination and supervision of labor, maintenance crews, and equipment while reconstruction, resurfacing, and general county road maintenance are performed. This position is expected to work during road emergencies so you should be available to work nights, weekends, and holidays when needed. This position will assist the head supervisor in reviewing and evaluating employee performance, directing procedures to ensure compliance with established budgets, ensures that all purchases conform to departmental needs and goals. This position is also responsible for assisting the head supervisor with the Landfill department, providing information for reporting, monitoring the gas wells, and assuring compliance with all Colorado Department of Health regulations. This is only part of an extensive list of requirements for this position. In addition to the salaried rate, the County Employee benefit package includes vision, dental, and health insurance coverage, paid time

DISCLAIMER

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.

VALLEY PUBLISHING SEEKS REPORTER IMMEDIATELY

For the Conejos and Costilla areas. Writing and photography experience necessary. Send resume, writing and photography samples to Valley Publishing Inc., P.O. Box 607, Monte Vista, CO 81144 or email bwilliams@valleypublishinginc.com

FULL-TIME SALES

Valley Publishing has an immediate need in advertising sales (full-time). Any sales experience is appreciated but will train. Email resume to **General Manager Brian Williams at bwilliams@valleypublishinginc.com**

ESTIMATED CROP WATER USE

Weather Data from SLV Research Center located on the 9N and Hwy 285

Crop	Date Planted	Daily Crop Water use for Dates Shown (in./day)				Accumulated Water Use (ET) From 5/29 (inches)				
		5/29	5/28	5/27	5/26	2day	3day	4day	5day	7day
Moravian 69	04/05	0.25	0.24	0.22	0.25	0.50	0.72	0.97	1.22	1.67
Moravian 69	05/05	0.14	0.13	0.11	0.12	0.28	0.39	0.51	0.63	0.82
Early Wheat	04/05	0.25	0.24	0.22	0.25	0.50	0.72	0.97	1.22	1.67
Early Wheat	05/05	0.14	0.13	0.11	0.12	0.26	0.37	0.48	0.59	0.77
White Wheat	04/05	0.25	0.24	0.22	0.25	0.50	0.72	0.97	1.22	1.67
White Wheat	05/05	0.14	0.13	0.11	0.12	0.26	0.37	0.48	0.59	0.77
WinterWheat	10/01	0.25	0.24	0.22	0.25	0.50	0.72	0.97	1.22	1.67
Potatoes										
Norkotah	05/05	0.05	0.05	0.04	0.05	0.09	0.14	0.18	0.23	0.32
Centennial	05/05	0.05	0.05	0.04	0.05	0.09	0.14	0.18	0.23	0.32
Nugget	05/05	0.05	0.05	0.04	0.05	0.09	0.14	0.18	0.23	0.32
Alfalfa	Est.	0.29	0.28	0.25	0.29	0.57	0.82	1.11	1.39	1.91
Lawgrass	Est.	0.24	0.23	0.21	0.24	0.47	0.68	0.92	1.16	1.59

For the latest ET information, call 719-754-3494 extension x40 for Center, x36 fro Center #2, and x38 for La Jara. Use the crop maturity and planting data and weather station closest to your own. Find this up June 8d table each day at this web address: <http://aes-slvr.c.colostate.edu/daily-crop-water-use-report/>
 This information is provided by the SLV Research Center (Colorado State University) and the Colorado Potato Certification Service. For info, call 754-3494 x26 or e-mail: andrew.houser@colostate.edu

Managed by Upper Rio Grande Animal Society

www.urgasconouranimalshelter.org

If you are interested in adopting, call 852-3366
 Open Tues.-Fri. 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. & Sat. & Sun. 1:30 - 5 p.m.
 Monday & non-business hours by appointment only
 2825 Sherman Ave. • Monte Vista

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

LOST & FOUND



Found on 5/22, brought to the shelter on 5/28 in the Broyles Bridge area



Found on 5/29 on Covey St in Monte Vista



Our Pyrenees puppies are ready to meet with potential adopters, but not quite ready to meet new fur housemates, for another couple weeks. We have 4 males and 2 females, all full of love and personality! Come meet them today!



Poppy and Allium are still looking for their forever homes as well! 5 month old Boxer Lab mixes with hearts of gold that'll keep you laughing and on your toes! These lovely ladies were born here, and we think it's time they find out what life outside the shelter is, don't you?



Please note adoptions go in order of contact made.
 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.

Valley Wide Classifieds

off, and a generous 401a retirement plan. Applications and a complete job description are available at the Saguache County Road and Bridge Office, 305 3rd Street, PO Box 476, Saguache, CO 81149 - 719-655-2554 or on the Saguache County website - saguachecounty.colorado.gov under the Road and Bridge Department tab. Please fill out and submit both applications: The Saguache County Application and the Drivers-Application. Completed Assistant Supervisor applications - must be made to the attention of Hiring Committee and can be hand-delivered to the Road and Bridge Office located at 305 3rd Street in Saguache, mailed to Saguache County Road and Bridge Hiring Committee - PO Box 476 Saguache, CO 81149, sent by email to mhashbarger@saguachecounty-co.gov, or faxed to 719-655-2543. APPLICATION DEADLINE: Open until a qualified candidate is hired. Saguache County is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

WANTED: Saguache County Road and Bridge and Landfill is looking to hire a Head Supervisor . . . Starting at \$71,000/year - DOE SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS: Applicants are preferred to possess or may be required to possess a current Colorado Class "A" Commercial Drivers License with a heavy semi-truck endorsement and a current medical certificate. Applicants should have a high school diploma along with extensive knowledge of methods, operating rules, and equipment for road construction and maintenance operations. Prospective employees applying with Saguache County, please note that after a "conditional" offer is made, we may require disclosure of other information personal to the applicant. The prospective employee will also be required to submit and pass a pre-employment drug screening, before being hired. The Road & Bridge and Landfill Head Supervisor is a full-time salaried position - qualified candidates will be responsible for the coordination and supervision of labor, maintenance crews, and equipment while reconstructing, resurfacing, and general county road maintenance are performed. This position is expected to work during road emergencies so you should be available to work nights, weekends, and holidays when needed. The Head Supervisor reviews and evaluates employee performance, prepares the annual budget, and monitors all expenditures and revenues. This position is also responsible for the Landfill department, reporting to the State of Colorado Department of Health and the Board of County Commissioners, and assuring compliance with the Colorado Department of Health regulations. This is only part of an extensive list of requirements for this position. In addition to the salaried rate, the County Employee benefit package includes vision, dental, and health insurance coverage, paid time off, and a generous 401a retirement plan. Applications and a complete job description are available at the Saguache County Road and Bridge Office, 305 3rd Street, PO Box 476, Saguache, CO 81149 - 719-655-2554 or on the Saguache County website - saguachecounty.colorado.gov under the Road and Bridge Department tab. Please fill out and submit both applications: The Saguache County Application and the Drivers-Application. Completed Head Supervisor applications - must be made to the attention of Wendi Maez and can be hand-delivered to the administration building located at 505 3rd Street in Saguache, mailed to Saguache County Administrator - Wendi Maez PO Box 100, Saguache, CO 81149, sent by email to wmaez@saguachecounty-co.gov, or faxed to 719-655-2635. APPLICATION DEADLINE: Open until a qualified candidate is hired. Saguache County is an Equal Opportunity Employer. (6-19)

Del Norte High School is seeking a qualified Secondary Business Teacher. We are seeking an experienced, hard-working and enthusiastic teaching professional to join our dynamic, and vibrant team. 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: Annie Hardy at ahardy@urtigers.co or call Mrs. Hardy at (719) 657 - 4020. Applications can be accessed online at www.urtigers.co.

South Fork Annual Town Wide Clean Up & Garage Sale

June 14 & 15 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM

Garage sales will take place on Saturday the 15th. If you'd like to host a sale, contact the South Fork Visitor Center to share your info and be added to the published map at (719) 873-5512. The Town will have large dumpsters available for public use throughout the weekend, located in the Visitor Center parking lot.

Lucky Shoe Ranch



Are you looking for something fun to do this summer?

Join us and learn how to ride horses!

Summer session starts the last week of May, we supply the horses & tack.

Day Camp - July 26th

Discount Days - \$20 lessons on May 31st, June 21st, July 5th, July 19th

Signup via our website!

Scholarships available

719-849-1955

Additional information and bookings are available through our website: <https://www.luckyshoeridingclub.com/>

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- 4H
- Rodeo team
- Day camps
- Drill teams

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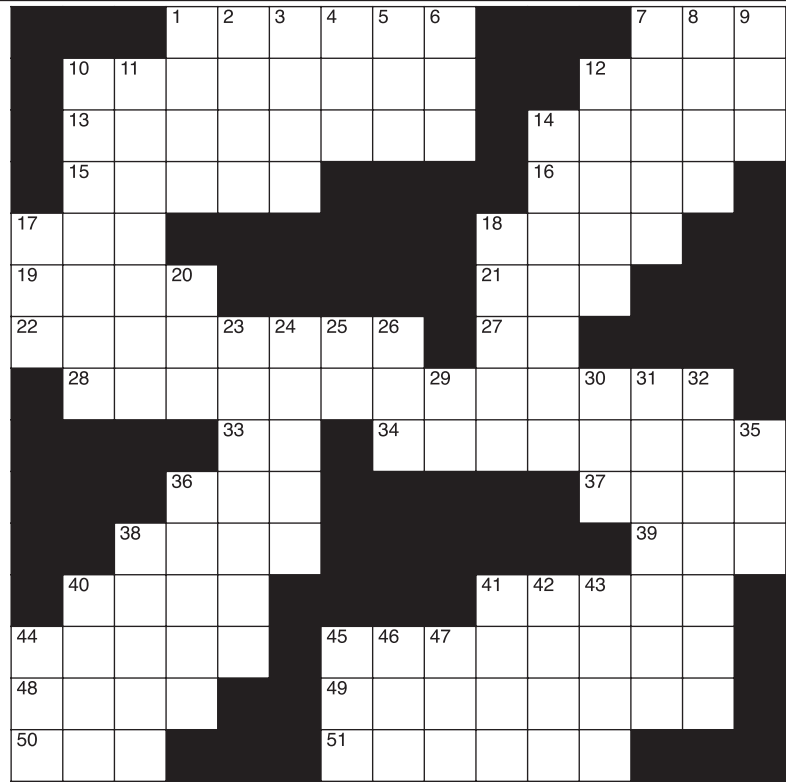
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(719)658-3060 • www.MDSWasteAndRecycle.com

CLUES ACROSS

1. Respiratory disorder
7. Bulgarian mountain peak
10. Group of important people
12. South American nation
13. Amazes
14. ___-Castell, makers of pens
15. Perlman and Seehorn are two
16. Early medieval alphabet
17. Legislator (slang)
18. Tasty crustacean
19. Course of action
21. Airborne (abbr.)
22. Permanent church appointment
27. Larry and Curly's pal
28. Famed American journalist
33. 12th letter of Greek alphabet
34. In a way, vanished
36. Afflict in mind or body
37. Egyptian Sun god
38. Source of the Blue Nile
39. Egyptian unit of weight
40. Be the source of pain
41. Esteemed award ___ d'Or
44. Partner to pains
45. Deep blue
48. No longer living
49. Country in the UK



50. Not even
51. Arizona city
23. Periods of starvation
24. Language of tribe in India
25. Savings account
26. Pitching stat
29. Megabyte
30. Ribonucleic acid
31. A ___ to put your feet
32. The fun part of a week
35. We all have our own
36. Partner to "oohed"
38. African nation
40. Breezed through
41. Sets out
42. Other
43. Not fattening
44. "Much ___ about nothing"
45. Central Time
46. Former EU monetary unit
47. Charles S. Dutton sitcom

CLUES DOWN

1. Wager
2. Classical portico
3. As a result
4. Bird
5. A type of "Squad"
6. Autonomic nervous system
7. Dish with food on a stick
8. City northwest of Provo
9. C. European river
10. One out of jail
11. Henry Clay estate
12. Heathen
14. Refrained
17. Parts per billion (abbr.)
18. "The Stranger" author
20. Not old

Solution to last week's puzzle

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

Join millions of older Americans who are rediscovering the joy of walking

"I'm on the move again with my UPWalker!"

The **UPWalker** is a revolutionary new mobility device that can change your life by changing the way you walk. It enables you to stand upright when you walk- with your spine straight and your eyes looking straight ahead. Your weight is supported by your upper arms and shoulders, some of the strongest parts of your body. Traditional walkers and rollators force you to put the pressure of your body weight on your hands and wrists. You push them in front of you, looking at the ground instead of where you going. The **UPWalker** moves with you, with your body perfectly aligned and your feet free to walk in a normal fashion. Its easy-adjust height system allows it to be the perfect fit/height for anyone from 4'10" to 6'1" and supports up to 300 pounds. The new stand-assist handles enable you to distribute your weight across your arms and shoulders, not your hands and wrists to help reduce back, neck, wrist pain and discomfort. It features comfortable arm pads, hand brakes, a fold-down seat, a backrest and two storage bags. It's built with aircraft-grade aluminum to be sturdy yet lightweight, and its sleek design and oversized wheels make it perfect for tight spots in the house or walking in the yard.

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From the makers of the original UPWalker*

- Stand-Assist Handles
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- Folds Easily
- Adjustable Backrest
- Optimized Center of Gravity
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*Plus, now you can choose between dark luster silver or champagne

Old Way



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Call now Toll-Free
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Please mention promotion code 601943.



Valley Wide Classifieds

JT Timber Falling is hiring log truck drivers. Class A CDL. Starting at \$25/hr (\$37.50/hr Overtime). Great benefits are available. Home every night and based out of Blanca Colorado. Call 719-379-4066 or visit JTTimber.com to apply.

12 Houses for Rent

Remodeled two-bedroom, 1-bath home on a corner lot in Del Norte. Near biking/hiking trailhead. Pets and smokers are not permitted. Please call 719-850-0750. \$875/month. (6-12)

For rent in Del Norte: For use as office or home, a remodeled 1-plus rooms, 3/4 bath unit in a quaint four-plex in Del Norte. Pets and smokers are not permitted. \$700/mo., inclusive of water and sewer. Available June 2. Please call 719-850-0750. (6-19)

24 Garage/Yard Sales

Multi Family Garage sale! Rain or shine! Find us at 9726 S. County RD 3E Monte Vista. June 7 and 8. 8 a.m. 719-852-0500 (6-5)

28 Household Goods

For sale 20.5 cubic feet Kenmore Refrigerator/Freezer. \$225. 719-852-2028
For sale 2 rolling desk chairs. \$20 each. 719-852-2028 (6-5)

36 Miscellaneous

For Sale: Metal Barrels Black, Green, red, and white. Dozens of uses. Convert

to troughs or feeders. Make a Barrel Stove out of them. \$5 a Barrel with Stationary lid. \$25 For removable lid. Call David 719-480-2145 (6-5)

Cash for quality non-fiction books and LP records. Jeff 720-315-9145 (TFN)

Propane Refrigerators Sold Here. Call For Options and Prices. We Also Stock Solar Powered Refrigerators and Freezers. Bontrager's Variety Store, 9726 S. County Road 3E, Monte Vista. (719) 852-0500

STEEL STORAGE CONTAINERS - Sales, Rentals & Modifications! Containers are water & rodent proof. 8' wide, 8'-53' in length. Call for more information and pricing. **Healdworks, Inc. - Your Total Storage Solution!** 719-850-0346 (TFN)

SOLAR PANELS! 400 Watt and Smaller, We Stock Inverters, Charge Controllers, and Batteries in Brand Names of Outback, Magnum, Aims, Rolls, and More. Custom Cables and PV Wire. Bontrager's Variety Store. 9726 S. CR 3E Monte Vista. 719-852-0500.

37 Wanted

Large Vermont Casting or Jotul stove with glass front. Porcelain or black. alpinhigh@gmail.com. (6-26)

65 Professional Services

Let me haul off your old appliances

and recyclable metals for you. Call Chris for prices and to set up a removal 719-395-2071 (6-26)

WE BUY ANTLER: \$16/lb for Elk Grade A and \$11/lb for Deer Grade A. 5 miles west of Del Norte on Hwy 160. 719-657-0942 (TFN)

Let me haul off your old appliances and recyclable metals for you. Call Chris for prices and to set up a removal 719-395-2071 (TFN)

RELIABLE CARPENTRY 40-plus years-experience in carpentry, painting, stucco, tile, drywall, roofing, etc. Drug/Alcohol free. Free Estimates 719-496-7630.

LICENSED PLUMBER does all types of plumbing repairs and plumbing remodels at reasonable rates. Quick service. Call anytime, available weekends and evenings. 719-580-0033 or 719-376-2593. TFN

Need beautiful window blinds at the best prices? Call THE BLIND GUY at 970-799-0388 for a free estimate. (TFN)

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LIVE IN CONCERT
CHRISTIAN COUNTRY
RECORDING ARTIST

LUKE YATES

Tues., June 11, 7 p.m.
Center United Methodist Church,
387 S. Broadway, Center, CO
Admission is free!

www.GospelRoadOnline.com

YOUNG VOICES
OF COLORADO
Octaves ... Above The Rest

Sunday, June 9 ~ 9 a.m.
Center United Methodist Church
Presents : Young Voices, a
Denver Youth Choir!
Please join us for their Concert
and welcome them to the Valley!

San Luis Valley Area Real Estate

Secluded cabin on 20 acres - Gated Community
\$975,000 | MLS #803394
3023 Bear Creek Circle, South Fork, CO

DEE PLUCINSKI
LUXURY HOME BROKER
M: 719-873-5605

28 Acres on the Rio Grande River in South Fork
\$1,550,000 | MLS #807305
27000 US HWY 160 South Fork, CO

DEE PLUCINSKI
LUXURY HOME BROKER
M: 719-873-5605

3 bedroom cabin bordering National Forest
\$398,500 | MLS # 812823
99 Aspen Dr. South Fork, CO

DEE PLUCINSKI
LUXURY HOME BROKER
M: 719-873-5605

Luxury Home on 42 Acres - Borders Natl. Forest
\$899,000 | MLS #807998
4100 Wilderness Canyon Rd. La Garita, CO

DEE PLUCINSKI
LUXURY HOME BROKER
M: 719-873-5605

3 bedroom home on 5 acres near Alamosa
\$369,500 | MLS #810965
532 Lane 8 N. Monte Vista, CO

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SOLAR

Hunting Cabin on 40 Acres - Bordering National Forest
\$239,000 | MLS #812863
1 Bedroom, 1 Bath Del Norte, CO

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Off-Grid Cabin on the CREEK 5.24 Acres
\$279,000 | MLS #809447
7541 Indian Creek Rd. Fort Garland, CO

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Luxury Mountain home on 15 acres in Bear Creek
\$1,399,000 | MLS #813316
682 Bear Creek Circle, South Fork, CO

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All of my properties are detailed in my BLOG
Please scan -->

UNDER CONTRACT

Approximately 160 Acres Farmland
\$400,000 | MLS #810432
05299 County Rd. 12 S. Alamosa, CO

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San Luis Valley Area Real Estate



Incredible Views with this Amazing Property
Approx. 5.720 Acres
\$164,900 | MLS #808491
1685 Bear Creek Circle South Fork, CO

YVONNE HOFFMAN
BROKER | REALTOR®
M: 719-580-1901





Meepier Ranch /Approx. 640 Acres
\$2,150,000 | MLS #810366
00 US HWY 160 South Fork, CO

BRUCE STEFFENS
OWNER | BROKER | REALTOR®
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SOLD

Land with Panoramic Beauty/ Approx. 48.770 Acres
\$100,000 | MLS #796606
Tract 35 Jupiter Road Del Norte, CO

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UNDER CONTRACT

Amazing Country Property/Approx. 40 Acres
\$425,000 | MLS #812961
18801 County Road 11.5 La Jara, CO

TATE HUFFAKER
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M: 719-298-6560





SOLD

2 Bedroom, 6 Bath, approx. 3,280 sq. ft. and 36.34 Acres
\$895,000 | MLS #803698
4617 County Rd. 13 Del Norte, CO

BRUCE STEFFENS
OWNER | BROKER | REALTOR®
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SOLD

Look At The View!/ Approx. 11.140 Acres
\$453,320 | MLS #805636
535 Elk Court, South Fork, CO

YVONNE HOFFMAN
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M: 719-580-1901





SOLD

3 bedroom, 2 bath 2,589 Sq. Ft. on 35.5 acres
\$975,000 | MLS #808345
6680 County Rd. 13 Del Norte, CO

BRUCE STEFFENS
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SOLD

Beautiful Ranch/Home on approx. 3,095 Acres
\$2,200,000 | MLS #810790
19198 county Rd. 15 Del Norte, CO

BRUCE STEFFENS
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Sun House Farm Approx 1,910 Acres with Home
\$12,900,000 | MLS #807640
57075 County Rd C Center, CO

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UNDER CONTRACT

Commercial Lot with Easy Access/ Approx 1.42 Acres
\$79,900 | MLS #813004
24 Riviere Road South Fork, CO

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UNDER CONTRACT

River Island Ranch Approx. 5.270 Acres
\$131,000 | MLS #802486
147 Explorer Way South Fork, CO

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UNDER CONTRACT

Large Warehouse Approx. 6,579 sq. ft. on 1.57 Acres
\$150,000 | MLS #811519
1665 S. County Rd. 4 E. Monte Vista, CO

BRUCE STEFFENS
OWNER | BROKER | REALTOR®
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VITALITY FARMS/ Approx. 160 Acres
\$900,000 | MLS #813009
County Road M & County Road 12 San Luis, CO

TATE HUFFAKER
ASSOC. BROKER | REALTOR®
M: 719-298-6560

BRUCE STEFFENS
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Beautiful Golf Course Lot/Approx. 0.290 Acres
\$55,000 | MLS #810818
66 Fairway Drive South Fork, CO

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PRICE IMPROVEMENT

3 Bedroom, 2 Bath, approx. 1,904 sq. ft. and 50-Acres
\$599,000 | MLS #811695
13725 Rd. 104 S. Alamosa, CO

TATE HUFFAKER
ASSOC. BROKER
M: 719-298-6560





SOLD

3 Bedrooms, 1 Bath, Approx. 1008 Sq. Ft. 0.190 Acres
\$170,000 | MLS #811009
404 Sedillos Road, Manassa, CO

TATE HUFFAKER
ASSOC. BROKER | REALTOR®
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Beautiful River Lots/ Approx. 1.170 Acres
\$239,031/MLS#811448
149 Lots 2&3 Escondida Dr, South Fork, CO

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SOLD

4 Bedroom, 4 Bath, approx. 3,804 sq. ft. and 10.320 Acres
\$1,150,000
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South Fork, Colorado





Photo courtesy of Linette Nye-Schmidt

RGCSR

Continued from Page 1
 solar charger and you have no backup. In addition to your electronic device consider taking a paper map of the area.
Sun Protection - Take a hat, good sunglasses, sunscreen and other protective clothing. No one enjoys a sunburn.

Insulation - Take layers and rain gear, even in the middle of the summer you may wish you had warm, dry clothes.

First Aid - No one wants to get hurt on the trail, but it happens. Be ready for it.

Illumination - Take a flashlight or headlamp and spare batteries.

Fire - Take fire starting tools-materials. While a fire can provide much needed warmth and light in a survival situation, it's crucial to prioritize safety, you don't want to make a bad problem worse causing a forest fire.

Hydration - Take water and ensure everyone in your group does too. Have a plan to purify emergency water if needed.

Nutrition - Even on the shortest trip, take food.

Emergency Shelter - Take an emergency blanket or have a plan for taking shelter if the need arises.

Repair Kit - Whether you're on a dirt bike, in a side by side or ATV. Take a basic repair kit.

GATOR

Continued from Page 1
 died in the fire.

Young stated that it was heartbreaking to lose the building and all the animals that were in it, but so many people had also stepped up to help them. The Gator Farm regrouped and was open not long after the fire and began working on the new barn.

"It was a devastating loss. Some of the animals we had, we had for over 25 years," Young said. "It's hard to just pick up and go on. The outpouring of support from the public was so immense."

Young stated it was not just the financial support that he appreciated; it was more about the love that was given to everyone at the farm during the loss.

"We must have been doing something right to get that much love and support. It was hard to pick up the pieces and go on, but here we are, and we are still doing it. The support from the community has been huge and we couldn't do it without them," he said.

The new facility was dedicated to Dave Lindsey, a man who had worked diligently to help with the construction of the new barn, and became a close friend, "like family," to Young.

According to Young, Lindsey was unfortunately diagnosed with cancer. He fought the cancer for almost two years but passed away the morning of the ribbon-cutting ceremony, according to Young.

"This is in honor of David. He just passed away this morning. I had hoped he would be here today to see this. He fought the good fight against cancer, but it was time for him to be at peace and not suffer anymore."

Young smiled with tears running down his cheeks and said, "He was hoping to be here for the grand opening, too. He's here with us in spirit. It's been a long time coming. Excited about the ribbon cutting, but also wish he could have made it today."

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A new way to save makes Del Norte home

By LYNSIE FERRELL
DEL NORTE — A new thrift store has opened in Del Norte and for people seeking a good deal on gently loved items, The Merc is the place to go.

When customers first walk into the main building of the old hospital in Del Norte, they are greeted with a sight many thrift store lovers want to see – a well-organized, clean store with floor-to-ceiling treasures.

When Sandra Aloisi decided to open her thrift store, she did it because she saw a need and because of all the towns in the San Luis Valley, Del Norte was about the only one that didn't have an affordable option for shopping.

"I saw a need for it in the town. People love thrift stores and going out to find a deal. We have people here who need it, yes. But we also have people who really enjoy shopping without the fear of breaking the bank," said Aloisi.

Aloisi was quick to get in contact with local entrepreneur and the owner of the buildings that used to be the old hospital in Del Norte – Stan Johnson.

"I told him I thought we needed a thrift store. Somewhere people could go for a good deal and not have to always shop at the higher end boutiques. It takes each one to help a community and since we have several in the area, we needed a thrift store to help balance it out," said Aloisi.

It wasn't long before Aloisi opened her doors that she found out just how right she was. Not only does The Merc accept donations, Aloisi will also hand select and even buy items from people looking to sell the things they no longer need or use.

"If someone is moving, I will suggest they try to sell an item on Facebook Marketplace first but if they do not have any luck, then I will offer a fair price. We are a for-profit business, and we work to help the community as much as we can," she said.

Aloisi was also fortunate enough to find a group of women locally to help her daily at the store.

"I have such amazing volunteers. They come in and help with everything and I really could not do this without them," she said.

The Merc is part of a growing strip mall-type building that has everything from the Respawn Arcade and VR Room to antique stores such as The Golden Fleece and a hair salon.

"We are like a family here. We help each other out when we can, and we always tell our customers to go and check out our neighboring businesses. It is very unique and great for the community," she said.

Aloisi sometimes travels to other thrift stores in the state to seek out unique and wonderful items to add to her growing collection.

"The donations we get are really amazing and I am always willing to consider a donation, but I also love going to find other items that people might enjoy whether it's jewelry or clothing," she said.

Aloisi also gives back to the community by providing extra children's clothing to the Del Norte Head Start or making clothing donations to local women shelters and other places in need.

"That's the beauty of this. We get to decide how we give back and how we support our community, so I am always encouraging people to think about what this town needs and then to put together a plan. Even if you fail, at least you can say you tried and you never know. It might work out for the best," she said.

The old hospital is filling up fast but there are still some wonderful rooms that could be filled with all manner of businesses for those who

may be interested.
 "Come on in and see us. I am sure you will find something you love. This really is my happy place," she said.

Sandra Aloisi sits in the sunshine of her back show room of The Merc Gently Loved Thrift Store in Del Norte. Aloisi saw a need for a fun and inviting place for the community to come and not only find treasures, but a deal or two as well.

Photo by Lyndsie Ferrell



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C&TRR season began Memorial Day weekend

CONTRIBUTED

ANTONITO— The Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad's 2024 season opened Memorial Day weekend with departures on Saturday, May 25.

Travel back to the Old West on one of the most authentic rail trips available. Pulled by historic steam locomotive, you will ride in all original Denver and Rio Grande 19th century equipment.

Regular daily passenger service is May 25-Oct. 19, and will run six days a week, Tuesday-Sunday. Daily passenger service includes All Aboard trips that run the full line between Antonito, and Chama, N.M., and Half Limited trips, which travel from either Antonito or Chama to Osier Station and then return to the point of origin.

The Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad is a National Historic Landmark. At 64-miles in length, it is the longest, the highest and most authentic steam railroad in North America, traveling through some of the most spectacular scenery in the Rocky Mountain West.

Owned by the states of Colorado and New Mexico, the train crosses state borders 11 times, zigzagging along canyon walls, burrowing through two tunnels, and steaming over 137-foot Cascade Trestle. All trains steam along through deep forests of aspens and evergreens, across high plains filled with wildflowers, and through a rocky gorge of remarkable geologic formations. Deer, antelope, elk, fox, eagles and even bear are frequently spotted on this family friendly, off-the grid venture.

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

DEPARTING ANTONITO

The excitement begins the moment the train leaves the station in Antonito. Beyond the vast, open San Luis Valley, the imposing peaks of the Rocky Mountains seem to stretch forever. The train quickly covers the flat ground and reaches a series of hills. It crosses Ferguson's Trestle, named for a man who was hung there, then climbs to a lava mesa, a remnant of the mountains' volcanic past. From here, the route winds around wide curves, going up into the mountains.

Eleven State Border Crossings
White-barked, slender aspen trees, which turn yellow-gold in fall, form a light, whispery forest. We'll pass Sublette, N.M., an abandoned railroad town that still provides water for the steam locomotives. Shortly after, the train makes another crossing between Colorado and New Mexico state lines. Can you count all 11?

Rocky and Dramatic
One of the most spectacular parts of the trip starts as the train inches its way along the rim of Toltec Gorge. We'll head through Mud Tunnel, which is supported by wood beams. Around Phantom Curve, named for a spire of rock that casts a ghostly shadow, then through Rock Tunnel is a narrow ledge where the dizzying view is straight down to the rushing Rio de los Pinos. The train roughly follows this river along much of its route.

Reaching New Heights
We'll stop for lunch at the old townsite of Osier. Past Osier, the train first crosses 137-foot-tall Cascade Creek Trestle, the highest on the line. Trees are sparse here and the open mountain scenery is magnificent. Around Tanglefoot Curve, a loop so



Photo by Brian Williams

Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad Engine 488 rumbles across the Cascade Trestle. At 137 feet high, it is the highest bridge on the 64-mile route between Antonito and Chama, N.M., and crosses Cascade Creek.

tight that the train seems almost folded in half, the locomotive steams toward Cumbres Pass. At 10,015 feet elevation, it is the highest pass reached by rail in the United States. There are tall conifers and meadows that bloom with wildflowers in spring and summer. At the summit is an old section house, one of many of the railroad's historic buildings.

Descending Into the Chama Valley
As the steep descent begins, sweeping views of the Chama Valley unfold. The lower elevations are dominated by aspen trees and grassy hills. Just past the area that was once the historic Lobato sheep ranch is the Lobato Trestle. This trestle spans Wolf Creek. Chama, N.M., the end of the rail, is just ahead.

San Luis Valley Area Real Estate

1408 Bear Creek Circle • South Fork

Exceptional Mountain Retreat nestled within the prestigious gated community of Bear Creek, this exquisite home at 1408 Bear Creek Circle offers an unparalleled blend of Elegance, Tranquility, and Natural beauty. With 3,882 square feet of meticulously designed living space, this property is a sanctuary for those seeking rest from the everyday hustle. Interior Features: Entryway with Stained Glass Doors: The grand entrance sets the tone, welcoming you into a large, elegant living room complete with a corner fireplace and an adjacent wet bar—perfect for entertaining guests. Large Custom Kitchen: The heart of this home boasts custom alder wood cabinets, beautiful quartz countertops, and a butler pantry with built-in custom shelving and storage cabinets. The kitchen seamlessly leads to a spacious laundry area flooded with natural light, making laundry a pleasant task. Beautiful Dining Room: Accessible from the kitchen, the dining room opens to a spacious awe-inspiring back deck. Perfect place to enjoy that first cup of morning coffee. Stairway to Loft: Ascend the large staircase to the open loft—an ideal space for a game area and home office. 3 Bedrooms: Master Bedroom (Main Floor): Flooded with ample natural light, the master bedroom provides a cozy ambiance. It features a spacious retreat with a jumbo-sized walk-in closet complete with custom shelving and cabinets. The master bath includes a walk-in shower and spa tub for your in-home spa experience. Additional 1 and a 1/2 Bath are Well-appointed and elegantly designed, the bathrooms provide comfort and convenience. Lower-Level Stairwell: Leads to an intimate family room and two spacious downstairs guest bedrooms. Immaculate 3-Car Garage and 1-Car Workshop: With custom cabinets and work benches a dream come true, providing plenty of room for all your tools and outdoor adventure toys. Outdoor Delights: Bear Creek runs through this property, nature's music to your ears. Mountain Views: Wakes up to awe-inspiring vistas of the surrounding peaks. The ever-changing canvas of sunrises and sunsets will leave you breathless. Wildlife Haven: Immerse yourself in the enchanting wilderness. Mule deer, elk, and even the elusive black bear occasionally grace the property. Year-Round Adventure: Explore hundreds of miles of ATV trails right outside your door. In winter, hit the slopes at Wolf Creek Ski Area, just 30 minutes away. Tranquil Creekside Strolls: Meander along the community walking trails that follow the gentle curves of Bear Creek. Listen to the soothing sounds of water as you unwind. This is more than a home; it's an invitation to embrace the rugged elegance of Colorado's high country. Escape to 1408 Bear Creek Circle and discover a lifestyle where luxury meets wilderness. **MLS# 813472 - \$1,420,000**

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0254 Timberline Trail • South Fork

Discover The Essence of Excellence Mountain Living in this custom-built Masterpiece! Situated on 1.84 sloping acres within the prestigious Rio Grande Club, this 4,466 sq ft home offers unparalleled vistas and modern elegance. Key Features: Inspiring Views: Unsurpassed panoramas stretch north, east, and south, capturing the rugged beauty of the San Juan Mountains. Architectural Marvel: A two-level design seamlessly blends contemporary finishes with a mountain aesthetic. Grand Entryway: Step into the vaulted ceiling living room adorned with Swedish Cope logs and a striking rock gas fireplace. Expansive Deck: Access the large stone rock deck from the living area, where you'll soak in views of the golf course, mountains, and valley below. Gourmet Kitchen: Culinary enthusiasts will appreciate custom cabinets, granite countertops, and top-of-the-line Wolf appliances. Master Suite: The upper-level primary suite boasts a spa-like bathroom and an adjacent study. Lower-Level Comfort: Three additional bedrooms with 9-foot ceilings offer Alderwood doorways and magnificent vistas. Entertainment Haven: The lower level features a spacious game room with a pool table, TV, and workout equipment. Year-Round Comfort: Radiant floor heat and an extra-large 1000-gallon propane tank ensure warmth during chilly days. Outdoor Delight: Enjoy ever-changing mountain views from the adjacent deck or cozy up by the stone mantel gas fireplace. Gas-Burning Fireplace: The lower level sitting area with a mini bar and stunning views is perfect for relaxation and entertaining family and friends. This home includes an adjacent parcel allowing direct access to the national forest from the front of the property so enjoying your favorite outdoor activities are just steps away. The 2-car garage has workshop hot & cold sink an extra - large 76-gallon water heater, water softener. Programmable hot water throughout the home, hot & cold water outside faucet and plenty of room for storage and a workbench. There is a security system monitored by Valley Lock and Security. Land lines in most every room. Century-Link phone highspeed internet and Direct TV. Managed lighting and surround sound throughout the home and the Smart Home allows you to control from anywhere. This home is a Hole in One! One of a kind, designed and built providing that sense of hospitality, openness, beauty, and tranquility. Location Highlights: Rio Grande Club: Overlooking the 11th hole, this exclusive community offers golf, recreation, and natural beauty. Outdoor Paradise: Explore nearby trails, fishing spots, the Rio Grande River, the South Fork River and Wolf Creek Ski area. Don't get any more epitome than this! Check out the Video. Call and schedule your private showing today! **MLS#811509 - \$2,750,000**

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222 La Lomita Circle • South Fork

Perfect 2.0-acre lot to build Your Dream Home. Luxurious Mountain Retreat Awaits: Build Your Dream Home! Nestled amidst the majestic peaks, this pristine lot awaits your architectural vision. Imagine waking up to panoramic vistas that stretch as far as the eye can see—each sunrise painting the sky in hues of amber and rose gold. Welcome to your own private haven, where nature's splendor meets refined living. Breathtaking Views. This parcel of land boasts captivating views in every direction. Gaze upon rolling hills, snow-capped summits, and the meandering Rio Grande River. Whether you're sipping morning coffee or stargazing at night, the scenery will leave you spellbound. Ready for Your Vision. The canvas is blank, awaiting your brushstrokes. With water and sewer readily available, however you will need to secure your water and sewer taps. Picture a modern retreat with floor-to-ceiling windows, seamlessly blending indoor and outdoor spaces. Paved Road Access No rugged trails here—just a smooth, paved road leading to your paradise. Arrive in style. Over Two Acres of Possibility Spread your wings across two gently sloping sprawling acres. Design your oasis—an infinity pool, terraced gardens, or perhaps a meditation pavilion. Outdoor Enthusiast's Paradise For the angler's heart, the Rio Grande River beckons. Cast your line, and reel in memories. Nearby, the National Forest is a playground for hikers, birdwatchers, and seekers of solitude. Your Winter Wonderland Awaits Just 20 miles away, the Wolf Creek Ski Resort cradles you in its snowy embrace. Glide down powdery slopes, cozy up by the fire, savoring the warmth of shared stories. Your Legacy Awaits This isn't just land; it's your legacy in the making. Generations will gather here, creating memories under star-studded skies. Build your dream home refuge—a testament to life well-lived. More pictures coming soon. **MLS#812710 - \$79,900**

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