



# THE CONEJOS COUNTY CITIZEN

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75¢

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Ribbon cutting for Genesis Wellspring is April 18

**MONTE VISTA** — The Monte Vista Chamber of Commerce is having a ribbon cutting for Genesis Wellspring at 12 p.m. on April 18, at 133 Adams St.

Genesis Wellspring Ltd is an alternative and holistic health wellness center.

The nonprofit provides board certified (ANMCB) natural health care, education, testing, bulk herbal apothecary, homeopathics, supplements and tools for wellness for adults and children.

### Annual Variety Show set for April 13 in Creede

**CREEDE** — The Creede Arts Council's 29th Annual Variety Show is at 7 p.m. on Saturday, April 13, at the Ruth Humphrey's Brown Theatre. Talented local people, both new to the show and returning performers, will delight the audience with an eclectic mixture of music and dance.

Creede favorites Richie Ormsby, Caldera and the Monday Night Jam Band will perform along with other familiar performers and some new talent.

The CAC will also hold a silent auction of non-performance-oriented talents from residents and items from local businesses. Winners of the silent auction must pay for the items at the end of the show.

To make a reservation, contact 719-658-2333. Reservations will not be accepted after 3 p.m. on April 13. Tickets will be available at the door, starting at 6:15 p.m. on April 13; \$10 for adults and \$5 for students. CAC accepts cash, checks, and credit cards. Reservations are recommended.

### Keenan makes Dean's List

**TACOMA, WASH.** — Liss Keenan, of Alamosa, made the fall 2023 Dean's List at the University of Puget Sound for achieving at least a 3.7 grade-point average, completing all of their enrolled courses without withdrawals, and having no incomplete grades.

## CSU Extension grateful for CPAC's support

*Donations still being accepted*



Photo courtesy of Mollie Wells, Area Specialist 4-H Youth Development

Staff at SLV CSU Extension accepting \$25,000 donation from CPAC.

**CONTRIBUTED**

**MONTE VISTA** — On March 21 at the monthly Colorado Potato Administrative Committee (CPAC) meeting led by the executive director Jim Ehrlich, the San Luis Valley Colorado State University Extension Foundation was gifted \$25,000. This donation is going toward the Endowment Fund being used for the hiring of

*Please see SUPPORT on Page 2A*

## Alamosa Home announces new ownership

*Sold to local owners  
putting the 'home' in  
Alamosa Home*

"I started and branded Alamosa Home after discovering the vibrant town of Alamosa and its surrounding communities. It's been a wonderful nine years, but my future lies in Taos. The store is deserving of local stewards who can take it to the next level," she said.

Operating from a historic 1880-era former Masonic Building at the corner

*Please see SOLD on Page 2A*

**Alamosa Home founder Mary Domito, right, is celebrating with new store owners, from left, Tyler and Erin Keck, and Hunter Jack. Jack is a lifelong resident of the SLV and comes from a five-generation family here.**

Courtesy photo



**CONTRIBUTED**

**ALAMOSA** — Mary Domito, on Friday, announced that she has sold Alamosa Home, and the furniture store is under new ownership. Domito founded Alamosa Home, located in downtown Alamosa in 2015, and has sold the business to co-owners, Hunter Jack, Chief Operating Officer, and Erin Keck, Chief Marketing Officer.

Domito recently expanded her Taos Lifestyle operation and moved into a 24,000-foot space in Taos, N.M., and commented on the sale.

## State Troopers cracking down on impaired drivers

*Surge enforcement  
set for San Luis  
Valley Region*

includes the counties of Alamosa, Costilla, Conejos, Rio Grande, and Saguache. The enforcement event will occur from Friday, April 12, through Sunday, April 14.

This region has experienced 65 fatal crashes and an additional 235 serious injury crashes over the past five years. Most of these incidents occurred late Friday and into Saturday nights. The leading causal factor for these crashes is impaired driving.

*Please see DRIVERS on Page 2A*



Photo courtesy CDPS

Trooper stands on the side of the road.

**CONTRIBUTED**

**COLORADO** — The Colorado State Patrol will conduct saturation patrols through the San Luis Valley area, which

## Local artist selected to showcase talent at new RGH wellness center

**BY LYNDISIE FERRELL**

**DELNORTE** — Rio Grande Hospital recently announced that it had selected a local artist to add a touch of artistic flair to the new wellness center for its grand opening this summer.

Artist Casey McCoy grew up in the Alamosa area and knew from a young age that he was destined to be an artist.

"I was always drawn to art. Whether it was painting, sketching, or working on digital artwork, I was just always happier when I was working on something," said McCoy.

In his earlier years, his passion for art almost cost him, but as he grew older, he

*Please see ARTIST on Page 6A*



Courtesy photo

Local artist Casey McCoy has been selected to showcase his talent as a drywall artist in the new Rio Grande Hospital wellness center.



Casey McCoy

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# 2024 Summerfest on the Rio – seeking food and craft vendors

CONTRIBUTED

**ALAMOSA** — Alamosa’s iconic “Welcome to summer in the San Luis Valley” is back for 2024 from Friday, May 31, to Sunday, June 2. Yes, Sunday is back.

This annual festival provides extensive arts and craft talents, food, musical entertainment for the entire family and many activities for kids. Situated along the winding Rio Grande in the beautiful and spacious Cole Park, the festival is known for its music, family fun, and culinary delights.

Arts and crafts as well as food vendor applications are being accepted now. The deadline for vendors to apply is Monday, April 15, for food and Saturday, May 25, for arts, crafts and information booths.

“Summerfest is a great way to show off your goods and have fun with your business,” organizers stated.



Reasonable sponsorship opportunities are available as well. Go to [www.summerfestontherio.com](http://www.summerfestontherio.com), for more information.

We are also looking for community-minded people to volunteer for a couple of hours during the festival to help sell and pour beverages. This small but valuable commit-

ment helps keep the festival free to attendees by avoiding staffing costs.

“Plus, giving back to the community feels good too; you may even get a few drink tickets,” organizers stated.

To sign up or for more information, contact [info@summerfestontherio.org](mailto:info@summerfestontherio.org).

## SOLD

Continued from Page 1A

of Main and San Juan streets, Alamosa Home serves six counties in the San Luis Valley. The store is recognized for its fine furnishings, mattresses, bedding, lighting, and rugs. Its popular ‘Kid’s Cave,’ specializes in designing creative bedrooms for children.

New owners, Jack and Keck, are excited to realize their dream of owning a business in their hometown and becoming more involved with the community. Keck will continue her work as the CEO of the Alamosa Chamber of Commerce and will oversee marketing for Alamosa Home. Jack, a former sales manager for Delmar Carpet One in Alamosa, is well-versed in sales and customer service. Jack’s family has been in Alamosa for five generations and will bring the “home,” to Alamosa Home.

“I am excited about this opportunity to build on the legacy Mary has created here in Alamosa,” said Jack. “Alamosa Home provides an opportunity for growth and a way to become more involved with the communities of the San Luis Valley.

Alamosa Home’s line of quality furnishings, industry-leading brands, and dedicated customer service will continue without interruption. Kelly Geddes, store manager with a nine-year tenure at Alamosa Home, will help to ensure the transition is smooth and seamless. Domito will be available as a consultant if needed.

In addition to maintaining the continuity of products and services that Alamosa Home is known for, Jack commented on the new owner’s visions for the future.

“There is a lot of opportunity for growth. We want to explore the commercial space as well as provide furniture for families with second homes in our area. We’re excited to expand on the store’s successful foundation,” Jack said.

**About Alamosa Home**  
Alamosa Home is located at 630 Main St., Alamosa. The store specializes in industry-leading furniture, rugs, mattresses, and bedding including Kingsdown, La-Z-Boy, Stressless, Taos Lifestyle’s Double-M, Wesley Allen, and more. Alamosa Home serves the residents of Alamosa and surrounding areas of the San Luis Valley offering delivery and financing. Store hours are Monday-Friday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, call 719-589-2030 or visit [alamosahome.com](http://alamosahome.com).

## SUPPORT

Continued from Page 1A

the second 4-H youth specialist and 4-H programing.

“CPAC is a huge supporter of the SLV 4-H program that helps promote leadership and life skills education for our SLV youth,” officials stated.

Beginning in 2021, the SLV Extension office has been in a rebuilding period. After years of instability and a reduction of staff, Larry Brown has stepped into the leadership role to rebuild the extension in the San Luis Valley.

In just two short years, the full-time staff has doubled, now operating with a Director/Ag Specialist, a Youth Development/4-H Specialist, a Family and Consumer Science Specialist, a Juntos 4-H Specialist, and office administrator. The newest addition, made possible by 3 years of funding from the Outcalt Foundation, is a second 4-H Specialist.

The team’s focus now is to secure permanent funding for a second 4-H agent. Historically in the San Luis Valley Area Extension Program there have been two full-time Youth Development/4-H Specialists on staff.

Serving the youth of six counties can be overwhelming for even two Specialists. Because of limited funding, it has been twelve years since we had two Youth Development/ 4-H Specialists. In those 12 years they have had a single specialist on staff for six years and the other six years they did not have a Youth Development/4-H Specialist, at all. The enrollment and quality of the program has suffered

due to inadequate staffing.

“We are extremely grateful and appreciative of all who have generously jumped on board and contributed to the project. Once our funding in the endowment fund is secured, this community driven project will leave a lasting legacy for our youth,”

officials stated.

Donations are still being accepted at the SLV CSU Extension Office. You can drop them off at 1899 E Highway 160, Monte Vista, or mail donations to: PO Box 30 Monte Vista, Co 81144. For more information, contact the Extension Office at 719-852-7381.

## DRIVERS

Continued from Page 1A

State troopers will be dedicated to the detection and apprehension of drivers who may be impaired by or otherwise under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or a combination of these substances.

“We will also be increasing enforcement on excessive speed and a lower tolerance on those driving over the limit; both regarding alcohol and speed,” officials stated.

The agencies participating in the surge of enforcement include the statewide DUI team with the

Colorado State Patrol and Troop 5B.

If you encounter a suspected impaired driver, the driver should be avoided by getting out of the way. Contact the Colorado State Patrol after you pull over by calling \*CSP (\*277), 9-1-1 or 719-589-5807. Be prepared to provide the following information: vehicle description, license plate number, location and direction of travel, driver description, and the driving behavior being demonstrated. All emergency calls can be made to 9-1-1.

## OBITUARIES

### Jeffrey John Gonzales

Jeffrey John Gonzales, a self-employed Carpenter known for his loving, competitive, outgoing, and fun personality, passed away on April 1, 2024, in Pueblo, Colo. He was born on Nov. 22, 1979, in Del Norte, Colo.

Jeffrey’s proudest accomplishment was his son Lukas with whom he shared a special bond and cherished spending time together. A true outdoorsman, Jeffrey enjoyed the simplicity of nature through fishing and hunting, finding peace and joy in the great outdoors.

Jeffrey was preceded in death by his paternal grandfather Andrew Gonzales, paternal grandmother Marcella Martinez, maternal grandfather Jack VanBibber as well as his uncle and Godfather John VanBibber.

His legacy continues through his surviving family and friends. He is survived by his beloved son Lukas Gonzales; loving father Larry Gonzales; caring mother Jeri Gonzales; grandmother Margaret VanBibber; brother Kris (Jess) Gonzales; sisters Jana (Tim) Kehr and Leesa (Matt) Gonzales; nieces Andrea, Harlee, Cali and Khloe; nephews Jaxxon, Andrew; Aadin and Uriah and God-daughters Janessa DiCamillo and Eyvori Jacquez as well as a numerous aunts, uncles, cousins and extended family - all of whom will carry his memory with love and affection.

To those who had the privilege of knowing him even briefly or being touched by his warmth and spirit, Jeffrey John Gonzales leaves



behind a legacy of love, strength, and an unwavering zest for life that will forever be remembered and cherished. May he rest in peace.

Cremation was selected and a Vigil Service with Recitation of the Rosary will be held at 11 a.m. on Saturday, April 13, 2024, at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Monte Vista immediately followed by a Memorial Mass beginning at 11:30 a.m.

To express words of comfort or share memories with the family, view a video tribute or to live stream the service, please visit [www.mvmortuary.com](http://www.mvmortuary.com)

Mountain Valley Mortuary is assisting the family.

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# OPINION & EDITORIAL

## Total eclipse of the heart

This month finds Ol' Dutch and Miss Trixie still in Texas building on the house, going to grandkids' ball games, selling cattle and yes, you guessed it, seeing the total eclipse of the Sun.

I read somewhere last week there was going to be an eclipse of "the sin" and got all excited thinking a new wave of morality was coming around finally. Alas, people prefer sinning, I do believe.

The Ponderosa where we abide our winters in Texas is smack dab in the middle of the full eclipse set to occur today. As I am writing this on Monday and you won't get it until Thursday, it will be too late for you to come down to see it. Others, however, did.

It's the most amazing thing to Ol' Dutch that things that were once tidbits of interest are now blown up by the news media into a gargantuan event. It's been advertised so much and for so long that people were making hotel reservations last fall to be here for the four minutes of darkness.

Not only that but local governments went into a tizzy and shut down schools and other facilities and called in extra emergency responders in a panic that hundreds of thousands of Sun worshippers were going to flood into their small towns.

Because we are the highest point in the county, Miss Trixie was thinking about renting out viewing spots here at the farm. Viewers would have the opportunity to be closest to the Sun in all of Hunt County. Selfishly, though, we're keeping it between us, Cooper and the cows.

It's been such a huge lead up to this eclipse that yesterday we even saw a guy out in the country practicing his camera set up for today. Now that's dedication. Or insanity, I am not sure which.

Alas, there are kids out of school, people off work, governments in a panic and emergency responders sitting around just waiting for a mass panic to set in later today.

Now Ol' Dutch has long been a believer in the "smoke and mirrors" theory that governments use to keep us occupied while they are up to something else behind our backs. And I can't help to think this is just another one of those sleight of hand moves by them.

For while everyone is waiting around for the sun to go dark like



**Trout Republic**  
by Kevin Kirkpatrick

it does every day at sundown, they are up to some shenanigans that they do not want you to know about. I guarantee you that someone is getting rich off of our tax dollars somewhere while people stand around like Chicken Little looking up at the sky.

The blessed event is supposed to happen about 1 p.m. and here we sit in Texas with overcast skies which will prevent seeing the Sun go dark at least today. But, we are still being told to be outside looking up as the skies are to clear suddenly at the moment of best viewing.

And not to be outdone, the retailers rushed special viewing glasses out to the mindless public but anyone that would trust their eyesight to a cardboard pair of glasses with plastic lenses that cost about 29 cents to produce needs to line up for a mental evaluation, too. Remember that this marketing is being done to a people who are now 29 boosters into shots for COVID.

In lieu of a real miraculous event similar in scope to the Resurrection and clearing skies, we are not going to see anything but darkness. One writer covering the dark day asked people where they will be when the Sun goes dark and all I could think to say was "in the dark." Been there, done that. It ain't that great.

If you missed the experience, you can still tune up Bonnie Tyler singing her 1983 hit song, "Total Eclipse of the Heart" with me and sit in the dark and reminisce about better days.

*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.*



Courtesy photo

Public Affairs Officer for the Rio Grande National Forest Gregg Goodland writes about why we should respect the spring road closures.

## Why we should respect the spring road closures

I've worked for the Forest Service for over 30 years. There are several aspects of managing your public lands that have been very flexible and have changed, sometimes even drastically over my career, in terms of how the agency operates. Thankfully though, many things remain the same and are fairly predictable. A few that immediately come to mind include, logging, grazing, and recreation. As trees mature and become valuable, we'll seek to use those trees for wood products. The changes to that are when we will log and where we will log. As for the grazing, we'll turn the sheep and cattle onto the forest each year with possible adjustments for the changing conditions brought on by drought or other environmental and human factors. Finally, the many recreation uses will happen without fail, and many of those we can set our calendars by. In fact, our calendars are set with many action points that are designed to help us manage the forest resources and are based on that timeless change of seasons that we individuals value as part of our yearly lives.

It happens every year around this same time. In fact, our target date is March 15 each year. With the groans of many avid forest users, we close the gates or barricade roads to keep motorized traffic off. The intent is the same every year. Allow the roads to dry out and remain viable as an indefinite transportation corridor through the forest. Here's how it works.

The melting snowpack has been slowly saturating the ground below. Dirt road surfaces that are soaking wet are easily damaged by heavy vehicles. Tires can create endless ruts in the soft mud that will channel water down along the road surface preventing the waters' escape into the ditches. This can result in two

aspects of negative impacts to our natural resource. First, if left unchecked, the ruts will channel increasingly more water into them, and they will become more resistant to drying. The ruts are likely to grow deeper and possibly pull all vehicle tires into them, further increasing the depth of the rut and its determination to keep you there overnight.

Rutted roads can increase the speed that water exits the roadbed. The faster the water flows, the more opportunity it has to transport the sediment that was once the nice road surface, down into the ditches. Ditches are designed to move water away from the road. However, faster moving water can carry the sediment into nearby waterways.

You might be led to think that the water is off the road. Mission accomplished. The problem is that the fast-flowing water carried all that sediment with it and the clean stream becomes cloudy, which leads to water quality deteriorating. Just like us, the fish and other aquatic life in those waters very much appreciate having clean water. Poor water quality can result in meager reproductive cycles for the fish and all the cool insects that live in the water. The fine silt also has the potential to cover and suffocate those critters and any eggs that may be placed in a gravel bed. A quality gravel bed allows the smaller species to access the oxygen from the water yet remain relatively protected from predators.



**Land Water and People**  
By Gregg Goodland

As spring progresses, the roads will eventually dry. That is one of those sure things I mentioned. About four years ago, mother nature decided that the spring should last an extra 6 weeks to a month. Roads stayed closed due to late-season snow and early rains that kept vast swaths of the forest wet and rather dangerous to drive a vehicle on.

But, alas, even that spring gave way to summer, the roads dried and we could return to using them for our extensive recreational activities as well as logging operations.

This year, I've heard distressing reports of selfish individuals driving around our gates and barricades. Please understand that the closures are not enacted as a means to arbitrarily restrict people from public lands. Rather, the closures stand as a testament to the agency's commitment to provide the best land stewardship we can. Also understand that the roads are closed to motorized vehicles, but you can always access those areas on foot. I urge you to respect those spring closures. Park at the bottom and walk in. Or wait. It will only be a few weeks and the roads will be dry and re-opened.

*Gregg Goodland is the Public Affairs Officer for the Rio Grande National Forest. As an avid outdoor enthusiast, he encourages individual stewardship and responsible use of our public lands.*



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**CITIZEN**

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# Cold water presents danger, life jackets can help save lives

By COLORADO PARKS AND WILDLIFE

RIDGWAY, Colo. – Colorado’s lakes and reservoirs are opening to more recreation with the arrival of spring, but cold water temperatures can present a serious risk. Wearing a personal floatation device can save lives.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife rangers have already responded to multiple incidents this spring involving paddlesports recreationists falling into the water.

One kayaker died and another was hospitalized last Saturday after they fell into the water at Chatfield Reservoir. Two kayakers who fell into the water at Ridgway Reservoir the weekend before were rescued after they spent 15 minutes in the water.

In both cases, water temperatures were in the low 40 degrees, and all four kayakers in these two incidents were not wearing life jackets at the time they went into the water.

“Our lakes and reservoirs, while especially inviting in the spring after a long winter, can quickly become perilous without the proper precautions,” said Ridgway State Park Manager Johnathon Freeborn. “The recent incidents on our waters serve as a stern reminder of nature’s unpredictability and the vital importance of wearing a personal floatation device. A PFD is more than a piece of safety equipment; it’s what stands between you and tragedy. Wear a life jacket — it could save your life.”

The instinctive reaction when a

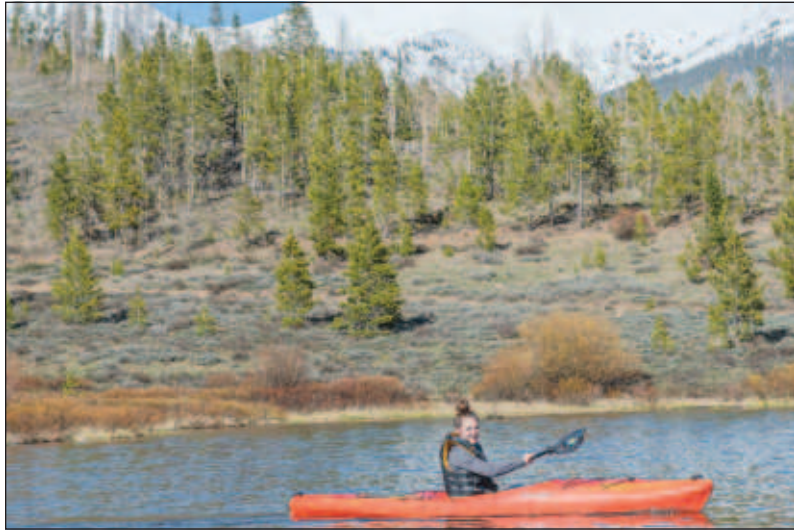


Photo by Dustin Dorskocil/CPW

**A paddler wisely wears a life jacket while kayaking at State Forest State Park.**

person hits cold water is to gasp, which can lead to inhalation of water. Hypothermia can set in quickly, and use of arms and legs to swim can be quickly impaired as blood flow is directed to a person’s core. This can all lead to unconsciousness or swimming failures as muscles become numb.

Wearing a life jacket will keep your head above water and support your body should your swimming ability fail or you become unconscious.

“It can be deceiving when we start getting warm-weather days and it’s nice outside, but everyone recreating on the water should be aware the water is still really cold and remains cold until at least mid-summer here in Colorado,” said Scott Rist, Park Manager of Crawford, Paonia and Sweitzer Lake State Parks. “Having

the proper gear and a life jacket on is imperative for anyone recreating on the water.”

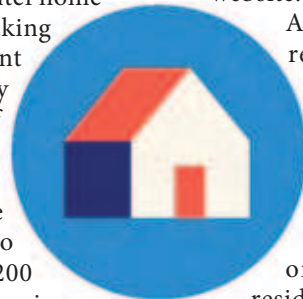
Windy conditions can exacerbate danger on the water for paddlers. Getting blown off course can happen quickly, and returning to shore can be difficult going into a headwind or when facing waves. That can lead to paddlers expending a lot of energy to navigate and maintain balance. When a paddler loses balance and goes into the water, it can also be easy to become separated from a kayak or paddleboard. “There are several cell phone apps that will tell you hourly wind predictions,” Rist said. “Knowing when conditions are going to change can be the difference between life and death. The user has a responsibility to know before you go.”

## Eligible Coloradans encouraged to apply for Colorado’s Low-income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP) by April 30 deadline

By COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

DENVER — April 30 is the last day to apply for Colorado’s Low-income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP). LEAP helps eligible individuals and families pay a portion of winter home heating costs by making a one-time payment directly to the utility company on behalf of each LEAP-eligible household. This season, eligible families can expect to receive between \$200 to \$1,000 in energy assistance,

recently.” To qualify for LEAP, Coloradans may have an income of up to 60 percent of the state median income. This equates to a household income of less than \$71,112 a year for a family of four. For a further breakdown of income requirements, visit the LEAP website.



# LEAP

fuel, household income and other factors.

“It’s not too late for Coloradans to apply for LEAP,” says Theresa Kullen, LEAP manager. “The extra money that LEAP provides to help pay home energy bills can make a difference for the nearly 500,000 Coloradans who have reported finding it very difficult to pay basic household expenses

Additionally, LEAP recipients must pay home heating costs directly to a utility company or landlord as part of their rent and have at least one U.S. citizen or permanent legal resident of the U.S. living in the household.

To access the LEAP application, visit [cdhs.colorado.gov/leap](https://cdhs.colorado.gov/leap). Online applications are processed through the Colorado PEAK system. You can also call the HEAT HELP line at 1-866-HEAT-HELP (1-866-432-8435) to receive an application via mail or email or visit your local county department of human services office to pick up or drop off an application.

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# Teddy Bear Clinic: positive associations for foster kids and doc visits

CONTRIBUTED

ALAMOSA — Did you know that stuffed animals get boo-boos too? When they do, they go to the Hope and Home Teddy Bear Clinic.

When children enter the foster care system, they do so with a history of hurt, brokenness, and distrust of people. Many children in foster care can recall the day they had to visit a doctor to have their health and well-being assessed — sometimes including documentation of injuries or evidence of neglect. Can you imagine how traumatic this would be to a young child who feels alone in the world? Enter, the Teddy Bear Clinic.

Hope and Home's "Teddy Bear Clinic" is all about helping children create positive associations with the medical community. Foster children bring their favorite stuffed animal in for a wellness check, which includes a general workup, an eye exam and a dental cleaning. In some cases, a "stuffy" in really bad shape may require a visit to the triage unit for MRI's, X-ray's, and surgery.

We are happy to sew up a bear in need of more stuffing, glue on a new eyeball, or provide a bandage or two for a "scraped knee." While all this may be make-believe, the healing and catharsis a child experiences is real.

Getting to meet real doctors and nurses and comfort their stuffed animal through each station of the Teddy Bear Clinic is deeply therapeutic for children who have only known fear and confusion in the context of a doctor's visit. We would like to say a huge thanks to SLV Health for sponsoring this transformative event both



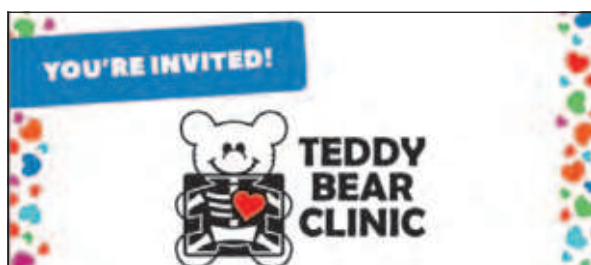
Courtesy photo

A Teddy Bear Clinic is scheduled for April 20 at Hope and Home in Alamosa.

financially and through volunteerism.

While The Teddy Bear Clinic is designed for children in foster care, any child can come. It will take place on Saturday, April 20, from 10 a.m.-12 p.m. at Hope and Home, 605 3rd St., Alamosa.

If you have ever considered becoming



ing a foster parent, this event would be a great opportunity to meet some local professionals and get more information. To RSVP, email Annie Reed, at areed@hopeandhome.org.

## CPW, Dept. of Ag provide information on range riders, budget proposals to state legislature to assist ranchers, livestock owners

By COLORADO PARKS AND WILDLIFE

DENVER — Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) and the Department of Agriculture (CDA) provided information today on range riders and budget proposals to the state legislature to assist ranchers and livestock owners. CDA and CPW are working on a plan to get on-the-ground assistance within the next two weeks with range riders.

CDA's budget request to the legislature includes funding to hire range riders, who are boots-on-the-ground support to livestock producers to help protect herds from wolves. A human presence like a range rider can help detect wolves and deploy non-lethal deterrents to avoid depredation of livestock. While this request for range riders is pending at the legislature, CDA and CPW are deploying other available resources to provide immediate support and are working on a plan to deploy on the ground assistance through range riders this month.

Additionally, CPW and CDA are working closely with the herd owner and producers in Grand County to coordinate an immediate response to the depredation incident from April 2. The state agencies, which work together through a Memorandum of Understanding, have been building the capacity to anticipate and prepare for any predator livestock incidents and are working towards deploying range riders to help with non-lethal deterrence.

A dedicated Wolf Depredation Compensation cash fund has

\$175,000, provided from the state's General Fund, in its balance and will receive \$350,000 additional General Funds per fiscal year to keep a healthy balance in the fund on an ongoing basis. For the current fiscal year, CPW has spending authority for up to \$175,000 from this fund to compensate livestock owners for wolf depredation. CPW requested increased ongoing spending authority of up to \$525,000 per year beginning FY 24-25 in the department's budget proposal, which is currently being considered by the General Assembly as part of the Long Bill.

CDA has a \$580,936 General Fund request included in the Long Bill under consideration by the state legislature in FY 2024-25 and \$424,647 General Fund ongoing to provide non-lethal wolf depredation assistance, including range riding and supplies to Colorado's farmers and ranchers through a network of three wildlife managers.

When a depredation is confirmed, livestock producers will be eligible for fair market value compensation if a claim is submitted. CPW provides reimbursement for damages caused by gray wolves to livestock defined in C.R.S. 33-2-105.8 and animals used for guard/herding purposes and may provide conflict minimization materials under its Gray Wolf Compensation and Conflict Minimization Program. Following the recent incident in Grand County, CPW staff will continue contacting producers in the area, and encouraging the use of appropriate non-lethal deterrents available through the agency.

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# ARTIST Continued from Page 1A

realized he could pursue his passion and make a living while doing it.

"I almost didn't graduate high school. I spent more time drawing than I did schoolwork. So, after some of my previous jobs, I decided to try and pursue my art full-time," he said.

McCoy's mother was the person who turned him toward his current medium after seeing an artist work with dry wall on Pinterest.

"My mom came to me one day and said I needed to see this artist on Pinterest and after watching him work, I knew that this was the type of art I wanted to do," he said.

McCoy began picking up jobs working with drywall to create his drywall art and after a rough first year, began his artistic career.

"I had a rough first year and learned a lot of first lessons. Now, I can do what I love and support my family at the same time," McCoy said.

McCoy was contacted by Rio Grande Hospital and commissioned to work on a piece for the new wellness center and while coming up with ideas for his art, he became more aware of how important health and wellness is for everyone.

"I hope someday I can share what it is like for me to look at a blank wall and just see what wants to come out of the drywall. My imagination takes off and while working with Rio Grande Hospital CEO Arlene Harms, I began to see how I could capture the openness of health and wellbeing. I am thrilled and honored to be part of what this center represents," he said.

Harms shared her vision of the wellness center with McCoy and how it was based on "Blue Zones" the epitome of longer living.

"There are healthy lifestyle choices like eating better, exercise and movement, and belonging to a tribe," he said. "Let's take a minute

and just look at what it means to belong to a tribe. We don't think about how important it is to belong. Finding your own group of people that are your support group throughout this life. Not saying being alone is a bad thing, but being alone for long periods of time can lead to depression and suicidal thoughts. How important it is to be a part of something where you can share goals, achievements, or issues you're facing, and have the support group cheering you and help problem solve. Since starting my small business, I've developed my own support group, and they are just as much of this dream job as I am."

As McCoy's vision began to take hold, he used his experience in life to help mold the finished piece.

"I'm a man of faith and a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This church has over 300 temples, some that are built, and some announced for building. I've only been to three of them, but inside this wonderful craftsmanship is beautiful artwork and symbolism. So, with my project for Arlene and this wellness center, I wanted to replicate that same beautiful art style and symbolism. To tell a bigger story than what's just seen," he said.

Viewers will notice when they first look at the wall, there will be a young woman meditating in a yoga exercise. However, unlike the traditional yoga meditation pose, where the hands are closed or face down on her lap, McCoy had her head look upward with her hands open. He initially made this change because he wanted to show the symbolism that this young lady is being open and ready to receive inspiration, revelation, guidance, direction, and change.

This little gesture has a big meaning behind it. McCoy has placed all



Courtesy photo  
**Casey McCoy's artwork captures the essence of health and wellbeing, and he hopes to inspire those who utilize the new wellness center at Rio Grande Hospital to seek help and guidance on their journey to healthier living.**

sorts of symbolisms throughout this art piece, and he thinks it will be interesting to see what viewers will notice the first time, second time, or third time seeing his finished work.

"I am putting my whole heart into this, and I'm honored to be involved with this," he said. "Part of the reason I go to my church is because of the good standards and life lessons it teaches and the tribe I have there. How great to be creating something special here. My only hope is that my art can spark inspiration into others or help them change or just feel the love that I've placed into this piece. I don't know who is going to view this project, but I do know I'm grateful to share my gifts and talents with others."

## The #1 Key to Having Peace

Peace is an amazing gift God offers us. I know what it's like to live without peace—upset most of the time, anxious, fearful, and worried. It's miserable! Since I've discovered how to live with God's peace, I will do anything I need to do to have it.

We have to understand the value of peace if we're going to have it. Because if you think it's really no big deal to lose your temper, worry, be stressed-out or upset all the time, you won't do what you need to do to live with peace.

I think it's interesting that one of the last things Jesus told His disciples before His crucifixion was about peace. John 14:27 (AMP) says, "Peace I leave with you; My [perfect] peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid. [Let My perfect peace calm you in every circumstance and give you courage and strength for every challenge.]"

In John 20:19, "Peace to you!" is the first thing Jesus said to His disciples after His resurrection. Verse 21 says, "Then Jesus said to them again, 'Peace to you...'" Notice the word "again." He must have wanted them to realize how important it was to maintain their peace.

Take a moment to think about how much peace you have. Do you worry, get upset or feel stressed-out often? Many people do...but that's not the way God wants us to live.

A lot of Christians pray for God to give them peace, but they need to realize that as believers in Christ, they already have His peace. We need to pray for God to help us learn how to walk in peace.

Philippians 4:6-7 (AMP) says: "Do not be anxious or worried about anything, but in everything [every circumstance and situation] by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, continue to make your [specific] requests known to God. And the peace

of God [that peace which reassures the heart, that peace] which transcends all understanding, [that peace which] stands guard over your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus [is yours]."

We can learn a lot about how to pray powerful, effective prayers by studying Scripture. Instead of praying for peace, notice that in Philippians the apostle Paul is encouraging believers to trust God in every circumstance so they can have His peace as they go through challenges.

If we don't have peace and we want it, we have to be ready to make some changes. The world around us probably isn't going to change, so we need to change our approach to life. We need to make a conscious decision to trust God in every area of our lives, every day.

We're called believers, and that's what we're supposed to do: Believe God! When we trust Him, we enter His rest and can enjoy our lives.

Years ago, I remember when God helped me to learn this lesson as I studied James 4. In verses 1-4, we see what causes quarrels, strife and discontentment. Verse 2 (NLT) says, "You want what you don't have, so you scheme and kill to get it. You are jealous of what others have, but you can't get it, so you fight and wage war to take it away from them. Yet you don't have what you want because you don't ask God for it."

Wow! This is basically saying, "You want something, so you strive to get it your way or make it happen on your own, but it doesn't work. If you would just ask Me, I would help you." It's important to point out here that God won't just give us anything we ask for. He loves us and wants what's best for us, and when we ask for things that are in His plan and purpose for us, He will give them to us.

I used to think I wanted a lot of things that ended up making me



miserable after I managed to get them. But once I started giving up my will and asking God to do what He wants to do in my life, I experienced peace and contentment that I'd never known before.

It was so freeing for me to give up trying to run my own life and instead focus on seeking God and trusting Him to give me what He wants me to have. Psalm 37:4 (AMP) says, "Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires and petitions of your heart."

I want to strongly encourage you today to purposely choose to seek God and delight yourself in Him before anyone or anything else in your life. He is the Source of love, joy and peace. And you'll live in peace as you live in Him!

For more on this topic, order Joyce's four-part teaching resource **How to Attack Anxiety**. You can also contact us to receive our free magazine, *Enjoying Everyday Life*, by calling (800) 727-9673 or visiting [www.joycemeyer.org](http://www.joycemeyer.org).

Joyce Meyer is a New York Times bestselling author and founder of Joyce Meyer Ministries, Inc. She has authored more than 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](http://www.joycemeyer.org).

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Courtesy photo

Del Norte High School students competed in the Colorado Envirothon Competition on March 4-5 in Denver and Team 1 finished in second place. DNHS students pictured from left to right, are Kathleen Bell, Kaitlyn Kaufman-Brigham, Autumn Becenti, Keith Pierce, Piper Cavaletto, Corbin Horrocks and Nikki Horrocks.

# DNHS students compete in Colorado Envirothon Competition

## CONTRIBUTED

**DELNORTE** — Eleven Del Norte High School students competed in the Colorado Envirothon Competition on March 4-5 at the Colorado State University Spur Campus in Denver. Of the 13 teams in attendance, Del Norte High School was represented by three teams with Team 1 taking home second place.

During the competition, student teams were tasked with developing solutions for a real-world scenario about renewable energy in Boulder.

Students were given three hours to research the scenario and prepare a 15-minute oral presentation to showcase their solutions and how they would affect natural resources and social and cultural considerations.

Following the presentation portion of the competition, student teams rotated through tests on aquatic ecology, forestry, soils and land use, wildlife, and renewable energy to demonstrate their knowledge of each area.

The Del Norte High School teams attended workshops with local experts throughout the fall and winter to prepare for the competition. The hands-on learning workshops were coordinated and facilitated by the Rio Grande Watershed Conservation and Education Initiative (RGWCEI) and included presentations from the Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS), United States For-

est Service (USFS), Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), and the 4UR Ranch. Envirothon teams from the San Luis Valley are often sponsored by their local conservation district to attend the state competition.

“Thank you to the Rio Grande Conservation District for sponsoring the three Del Norte teams,” school officials stated.

Envirothon is the largest international high school environmental education competition. Students incorporate STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) principles with hands-on learning and field experiences that foster student learning in aquatic ecology, forestry, soils and land use, wildlife, and a current environmental issue that changes each year.

Students are challenged to develop critical thinking skills to create inventive solutions to complex local and global environmental and natural resource issues and are equipped with the knowledge and skills to educate others, inspire action in their local communities, and promote a lifelong commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainability.

If your school is interested in starting an Envirothon team, reach out to Hannah Thill at 719-315-1214, hannah@rgwcei.org or Mattea Freel at 719-754-3400 ext. 3022, centercd1@gmail.com, riograndecd@gmail.com.



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**NOTICE OF SHERIFF'S SALE**  
(For Publication in The Conejos County Citizen)

**NOTICE OF SHERIFF'S SALE.** DISTRICT COURT, CONEJOS COUNTY, COLORADO, 6683 CO Rd. 13 Conejos, CO 81129; Court Phone: 719-476-5465; Case No.: 22CV30010; Div.: 202. Plaintiff: Valerie Morales and Amy Regnier v. Defendants: Darlene Letey.

**PLEASE TAKE NOTICE** that by virtue of a Writ of Execution issued on October 25, 2023 by the District Court for the County of Conejos in Case No. 22CV30010 directing and commanding me to make the sum of \$138,436.30, plus additional interest, attorneys' fees, and costs, to satisfy the amount of a certain Judgment obtained against Judgment Debtor Darlene Letey, and in favor of Judgment Creditor, Amy Regnier. I have levied upon the following real property to satisfy the Judgment in the aforementioned action; Lot 3, Block 12, Manassa Parcel No. 2, County of Conejos, State of Colorado, (Assessor's Parcel No. 586724212003).

The lien foreclosed may not be a first lien. YOU MAY HAVE AN INTEREST IN THE PROPERTY BEING FORECLOSED OR HAVE CERTAIN RIGHTS OR SUFFER CERTAIN LIABILITIES PURSUANT TO COLORADO STATUTES AS A RESULT OF SAID FORECLOSURE. YOU MAY HAVE THE RIGHT TO REDEEM SAID REAL PROPERTY OR YOU MAY HAVE THE RIGHT TO CURE THE AMOUNTS DUE TO THE HOLDER OF THE JUDGMENT. STATUTES, AS SUCH STATUTES ARE PRESENTLY CONSTITUTED, WHICH MAY AFFECT YOUR RIGHTS, ARE: C.R.S. §§ 38-37-108; 38-38-103; 38-38-104; 38-38-301; 38-38-302; 38-38-304; 38-38-305; and 38-38-306.

**THEREFORE,** According to said command, I shall expose said real property for sale, at Public Auction to the highest and best bidder for cash, May 22, 2024 at 9:00 am 4044 County Rd 65 Antonito CO **Garth Crowther**, Sheriff of the County of Conejos, State of Colorado. Attorney for Plaintiff: Samuel J. Scheurich, #46270, The Burnham Law Firm, P.C., 12737 E. Euclid Drive, Centennial, Colorado 80111, Phone: 303.990.5308; Fax: 303.200.7330; Email: sam@burnhamlaw.com.

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# Governor Polis, Colorado Energy Office announce \$21M to expand EV charging network

*Awardees include locations in Alamosa, Ft. Garland, South Fork and Monte Vista*

**By COLORADO ENERGY OFFICE**

**DENVER** — Governor Jared Polis and the Colorado Energy Office (CEO) announced \$21 million in grant awards Thursday through the Direct-Current Fast-Charging (DCFC) Plazas program. Funded through the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Program, part of President Biden's Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, and the state's Community Access Enterprise (CAE), these grants create 290 new fast charger ports at 46 different sites across the state, expanding Coloradans access to fast, affordable, and reliable EV chargers. This will increase Colorado's existing public fast-charger network of more than 1,000 ports by about 28%.

"Colorado is leading the way in the shift to electric vehicles by making them more affordable and ensuring that driving them across our beautiful state is just as easy as driving a gas-powered car," said Gov. Polis. "We're grateful to have additional dollars to pair with state funds to accelerate our efforts to become the number one state for electric cars, bikes, and buses."

"Addressing greenhouse gas pollution from transportation is a top priority in our efforts to meet the state's climate goals," said CEO Executive Director Will Toor. "This grant program is a key piece of that puzzle, ensuring Colorado builds enough public electric vehicle charging infrastructure to support 940,000 light-duty EVs on Colorado roads by 2030."

Awardees will install chargers in locations across the state, including Cañon City, Littleton, Dolores, Silverton, Yuma, and Fort Garland. Like the first round of NEVI-supported grant awards, announced in August 2023, these awards aim to fill charging gaps along Colorado's federally designated alternative fuel corridors — a requirement for NEVI funding. CEO also awarded CAE funding for projects in communities without adequate electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure.

To ensure the air quality benefits of electric transportation reach those who are most affected by transpor-

tation-related air pollution, CEO prioritized projects in disproportionately impacted communities. These investments will not only facilitate statewide travel in an electric vehicle, but will also help improve air quality and meet charging needs in communities that currently lack access to fast and reliable EV charging.

"Colorado is building one of the most comprehensive EV charging networks in the country," said Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) Executive Director Shoshana Lew. "We believe that nearly every Coloradan will have access to DC fast-charging within a matter of years."

With more than 100,000 EVs registered in Colorado, and the pace of adoption growing, the expansion of the charging network is necessary to meet consumer demand. As of February, there were direct-current (DC) fast chargers located within 30 miles of 78% of the state's geographic area.

Grant awardees include charging station operators, fuel providers, convenience stores, and local governments. CEO will provide funding to support the following EV-charging infrastructure projects:

- 7-Eleven: Aurora, Colorado Springs
- Apro LLC. (dba United Pacific): Colorado Springs, Littleton
- Circle K Stores, Inc.: Brighton, Denver, Durango, Greenwood Village, Pueblo
- EvGateway: Alamosa, Clifton, Dolores, Lakewood, South Fork
- Francis Energy Charging, LLC: Montrose
- Helios Charging Inc.: Monte Vista, Silverton
- Jule (dba eCAMION USA Inc.): Fort Garland, Holyoke, Yuma
- Love's Travel Stops & Country Stores, Inc: Burlington, Cañon City, Fountain, Pueblo, Walsenburg
- Phillips 66 Company: Colorado Springs (X2), Grand Junction
- Pilot Travel Centers LLC: Limon
- Tesla, Inc.: Arvada, Aurora, Bennett, Brush, Carbondale, Denver, Frisco, Glenwood Springs, Greeley, Gunnison, La Junta, Lakewood, Longmont, Parker, Sterling, Wheat Ridge
- Town of Avon: Avon

CEO expects many of the chargers supported by the current round of DCFC Plazas awards to become available by the end of 2025, and anticipates continuing to offer two DCFC Plazas funding rounds per year, with the next opportunity expected to open later this year.

## Grant funding provides free diapers, wipes and creams



Courier photo by John Waters

Lindsay Meredith, Pauline Palacios, and Silvia Martinez with the Early Childhood Council of the San Luis Valley hand out free diapers during the Easter event at Adams State University on March 30. Meredith, who is the Chief Operating Officer at the council, said the organization recently received a grant of nearly \$200,000 to provide free diapers, wipes and creams. For more information on the Early Childhood Council of the San Luis Valley, visit their website at [www.eccslv.org](http://www.eccslv.org).



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## Smokey the Bear visits the Baca Grande Library

By MARIE MCCOLM

CRESTONE — The Baca Grande Library hosted an open house celebrating their new Saturday hours and introduced their special guest for the celebration, Smokey the Bear.

Approximately 25 people, half of which were children, attended the celebration. Children played in the bouncy house that was set up outside of the library.

Administrative Co-Director for the Saguache County Libraries, Amy Garoutte was outside near the bouncy house, smiling as she directed the children to go inside so that they could meet Smokey the Bear.

Rio Grande National Forest Public Affairs Officer Gregg Goodland read a book to the children. The kids gathered on a large carpet in a circle and were excited as they listened to Goodland read and tell them about Smokey the Bear.

“Smokey was a real bear. He was rescued from a fire as a young cub,” he said.

Goodland said Smokey was in a fire as a small bear and was severely burned. Smokey grew up to help others understand how to prevent fires.

Goodland explained all of Smokey Bears’ important fire safety rules to



Photo by Marie Mccolm

Special guest Smokey the Bear visited the Baca Grande Library to help the library celebrate its new Saturday hours. Children learned about fire safety and met Smokey the Bear.



Great Blue Heron



Blue-gray Gnatcatcher

Photos by Evert Brown

## Bird walks organized by Friends of SLV Wildlife Refuges

CONTRIBUTED

SAN LUIS VALLEY — Each spring, many birds come to the San Luis Valley and spend the summer nesting here to raise their brood. Members of the Friends of the San Luis Valley National Wildlife Refuges have organized a schedule of spring bird walks.

They are open to the public and free. No need to sign up. Simply come to the designated place on the designated day arriving by 8 a.m. ready to hike. Dress for the weather and wear suitable footwear. Hats are helpful. Bring binoculars, a camera, water and snacks, and sun and insect protection. All walks will end about noon.

- April 20 — Spring Migration Meet at refuge headquarters, Alamosa Refuge
- April 27 — Spring Migration

Meet at parking lot of Malm Trail in Alamosa

- May 11 — Spring Migration Meet at parking lot of Malm Trail in Alamosa

- May 18 — Spring Migration Meet at Monte Vista Refuge Visitor Center parking lot

- June 29 — Nesting season Meet at parking lot of Malm Trail in Alamosa

- July 13 — Water birds Meet at Monte Vista Refuge Visitor Center parking lot

Directions

- Monte Vista Refuge Visitor Center. From Monte Vista, drive south on State Highway 15 for 6 miles to the refuge’s entrance. Turn east into the refuge.

- Alamosa Refuge Headquarters. From the junction of Highways 17 and 160, drive east on Highway 160

Please see WALKS on Page 3



Courtesy of Adams State University

The McDaniel Collection was welcomed into Adams State’s McDaniel Hall in a January 24 ceremony. From left: Ed Crowther, Ph.D., president of the ASU Foundation Board; Adams State President David Tandberg, Ph.D.; and Adams State Board of Trustees Chair Duane Bussey.

## McDaniel Collection installed at ASU

By ADAMS STATE UNIVERSITY

ALAMOSA — Adams State University and the Adams State Foundation honored the late Dr. John McDaniel with an installation ceremony commemorating The McDaniel Collection, Jan. 24. The collection includes some 260 volumes of the nearly 50,000 that comprised McDaniel’s personal library.

“This collection is a tribute to the mind and heart of a splendid professor and generous benefactor of Adams State University,” said Ed Crowther, Please see McDANIEL on Page 7

## Coming to America — The journey to asylum

By PRISCILLA WAGGONER

ALAMOSA — A single mother with two children is living in Venezuela. She goes to the open market where she buys enough food to last her family for a few days, if she’s careful.

She pays the American equivalent of \$1 for a head of broccoli, \$2 for some tomatoes and onions and \$2 for a few eggs. In a country where the minimum monthly wage is the equivalent of \$5.40, she has \$.40 left over for electricity, water and phone service.

A monthly wage of \$5.40 is less than one-tenth of the \$57 per month the United Nations has set as the threshold of extreme poverty. And with inflation soaring out of control, bolivars (currency in Venezuela) will be worth even less next month.

The young woman works at three different jobs every day to support her tiny family, but she worries for the safety of her children. They’re left alone much of the time or watched by neighbors and family members. She worries that they’re

Please see JOURNEY on Page 2



Courtesy of LC

A small family smiles at the camera, hopeful for the future. They are in an encampment on the Mexico - United States border waiting for the opportunity to enter the United States and apply for asylum. Photo taken over Easter weekend, 2023.

# JOURNEY Continued from Page 1

so vulnerable.

But all of this is secondary to the latest and largest threat that has entered her life. A member of El Trend de Aragua, the most powerful and violent gang in Venezuela, has visited her house — twice.

The first time, he offered her money — even the false promise of a house of her own — in exchange for something she would never consider. When she refused, he said if she did not give him what he wanted, she would be killed as an example to others. The member of El Tren de Aragua is demanding the unthinkable: give him one of her children to be raised as a guerilla and indoctrinated into the gang.

She can't go to the police; they're paid by the gang to do nothing. Even worse, they would tell the gang she tried to report them, which would mean instant death — not just in revenge but, again, as a message to others.

She thinks of moving to another city, another state, even across the country but she knows it's useless. El Tren de Aragua would find her — her actions cannot encourage others to do the same thing. She has only one choice, only one place to go where she will be safe and can work to support her children. She must go to the United States and ask for protection.

"This is one of the stories I hear over and over from some of my clients," says Charles Nicholas, an immigration lawyer with a practice in Denver who has contacts in the San Luis Valley. Nicholas — who specializes in representing people from El Salvador, Ecuador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Venezuela — agreed to be interviewed to provide some general insight into understanding the basic factors impacting the influx of people applying for asylum in the United States.

"They'll leave their extended families," he continues, "their homes, their culture, the food, the only life they've ever known to come to the United States. They have to. If they stay, they must either give up one of their children or be victims of violence. They have no choice but to leave. The things some of my clients have experienced in their home country is unimaginable for us here in the United States."

The young woman and her children are now facing a journey where, like thousands of others, they will walk almost 3,000 miles, traveling through seven different countries and crossing the Darién Gap, a 70 mile stretch of

jungle that connects Central America to Panama. Once considered an area that only the most prepared should travel, the Darién Gap is remote, roadless, mountainous and dangerous because of the mud during the nine month rainy season, the snakes that inhabit the jungle and the robbers along the route.

Not all of his clients are similar to the young woman. "I have at least two clients who are lawyers, several police officers who were cops and were calling out the system for its corruption or clients who were in the military. In some countries, the difference between police and military isn't that distinguishable.

"But they're being told to do things that are wrong. They saw that the last guy who refused was murdered, so they gather up their family and make a very dangerous trip to come here — a trip where a great risk involved. They're vulnerable and exposed and may be robbed or assaulted or worse along the way, but they come because they literally cannot stay where they are."

Once they arrive at the southern border, different challenges await.

"Immigration law is complicated," he says.

Someone seeking asylum is coming to the U.S. for protection from persecution in their home country. To be granted asylum and allowed to live and work in the U.S., a person must be able to prove they have been persecuted on the basis of their race, religion, nationality, political opinion or for being a member of a particular social group.

As Nicholas explains, it is 100% legal for a person to apply for asylum. It's been a part of federal law governing the United States since 1972. But applicants can only apply for asylum if they are physically in the U.S. — they have to come here to apply.

Because many of the countries people are fleeing are authoritarian dictatorships or extremely corrupt, the vast majority of people seeking asylum do not have documentation to enter the country. Consequently, they are detained, charged with Unlawful Entry — a civil, not criminal, charge.

"That is as far as some people go. If they have a criminal record, fraudulent documents or prior removals, they'll be kept in detention and then returned to their country."

But those with no problems that make them inadmissible proceed in the process and are then interviewed to see if they have "credible fear" and qualify under one of the classes.

If the answer is no, they'll be detained and sent back to their country. If the answer is yes, the person will be released and given a court date to appear before a judge, sometimes with a cell phone or ankle monitor.

"Those are removal proceedings with an immigration judge to make a determination if the person is removable, which they are — presumptively — because they entered without documentation. At that point, the only course of action is asylum, and those proceedings can take years."

About six or seven months after they have submitted an application, people will receive a work permit card, in a separate mail, a social security card so that they can work. At that point, they'll pay taxes and must abide by the same laws as everyone else until their case goes before an immigration judge. During that time, as long as they don't commit a crime and check in with ICE as required, they cannot be removed from the country.

"The term 'illegal' isn't accurate and it's been used to paint this picture of criminality in people. You leave Venezuela because it's not safe for your family. You come to the United States and apply for asylum. Are you an 'illegal alien'? No. You're exercising your right to seek asylum under the 1980 Refugee Act that says a country can't send someone back to a country they came from where they might be subject to persecution and torture.

"Common sense needs to drive immigration policy. Not us and them. Not politics. There's no open border policy. That's just politics. There's an immigration system that's really dysfunctional. Everyone can agree on that. The system isn't working.

"Until we can see everyone as human beings with the same needs and wants and hopes and fears, it's going to be really hard for common sense to be applied, which is what we really need."

Charles Nicholas can be reached at [www.charlesnicholas.com](http://www.charlesnicholas.com).



Courtesy of L.C.

A mother and child wait to enter the United States in a camp on the Mexican side of the border with the United States.

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Draco

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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.

# Adams State engineers a new path for students

By JOHN WATERS

ALAMOSA — Adams State University faculty and staff held an open house in the Engineering Manufacturing Education Center facility that enables students in the San Luis Valley to complete an undergraduate degree in mechanical engineering without leaving Alamosa. The university has partnered with Colorado State University in the program.

Ken Marquez, who is the project director at the EMAC said the facility cost \$1.4 million to construct and boasts \$5 million worth of cutting-edge equipment. Those expenses were covered by a \$5.0 million Title Three U.S. Department of Education HSI—STEM (Hispanic Serving Institution, Science Technology Engineering Mathematics) grant. The funds cover five years of expenses for the university.

The facility includes a jet engine that according to Matt Nehring, Ph.D. and Department Chair of Engineering and Computer Science at ASU, enables students to, “Learn about the thermodynamic processes. It is great when we fire it up and it is very impressive. We make real measurements on the thrust it generates and what are the thermodynamic processes.” Nehring added the EMAC has other engines

## WALKS

Continued from Page 1

for about 3 miles to El Rancho Lane. Turn right (south) on El Rancho and drive south, over the railroad tracks. The refuge headquarters is on the left (east) just inside the main gate.

- Malm Trail parking lot. In Alamosa, follow 12th Street east to the Alamosa Recycling Center. Then drive about 1,000 feet on South River Road watching for a turnoff to the left into a parking lot. The street number is 8210 S. River Road, Alamosa.

### Walk leaders

- Tim Armstrong — Retired Adams State University Biologist.
- Suzanne Beauchaine — Manager of the Alamosa and Monte Vista National Wildlife Refuges.
- Mike Blenden — Retired Project Leader of the San Luis Valley National Wildlife Refuges.
- Evert Brown — Retired University of Wyoming/Casper College Biology Professor, Bald Eagle Watch.
- Lisa Clements — Project leader for the Monte Vista Winter Bird Count.
- John Rawinski — San Luis Valley “go to” guy for answers to bird questions.

For more information, call Evert Brown at 307-315-8003.

## SMOKEY

Continued from Page 1

the kids and also pretended to start a fire and had the children help him put it out.

Goodland then told the children to turn around and in walked Smokey the Bear. Smokey was greeted happily by the children. He gave the children a thumbs up and the children gave him hugs and high fives.

The children colored pictures of Smokey the Bear and ate cake with Smokey, before finishing outside in the bouncy house.

The library also promoted the Smokey the Bear reading challenge with literature and books on Smokey the Bear. The challenge is set to go on through May 31.



Photo by John Waters

Alamosa State University undergraduate student Dain Romero is enrolled in the Mechanical Engineering program at the school.

to conduct similar tests.


Dain Romero, a student from Antonito who is in his second year in

the program, said of the program, “It is really math-heavy and very satisfying to learn all of this new technology. To



Ken Marquez (left) and Sara Noller with Adams State University stand at a CNC Mill (computer numerical control) in the Adams State University/CSU Engineering Manufacturing Education Center (EMEC).



bridge the gap between the theoretical and the physical world is really cool. As you can see, it is high-tech and interesting to see how all of these machines work.” Romero said that after graduation he is interested in robotics.



Valley-Wide Welcomes  
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to  
Convenient Care  
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Vanessa strives to assist patients in obtaining their health goals through education and promoting preventative healthcare, accountability, and autonomy. Early in her career, Vanessa recognized how many ailments and illnesses could be mitigated through education, moving our bodies and screenings. She has previous experience working as an RN in a high risk Labor and Delivery Unit, a Maternal Fetal Medicine Unit, and an Intensive care unit. Vanessa was born and raised in rural Idaho. When her husband began graduate school, she moved to Aurora, CO, and in 2013, they moved to Alamosa. Outside of the clinic, Vanessa enjoys reading, weightlifting, exploring the outdoors and spending time with her husband and beautiful baby. She is also a volunteer member of the Alamosa Homeless Coalition board.

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## CLASSIFIED INDEX

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**  
01 TICKETS  
02 CARD OF THANKS  
03 MEMORIALS  
04 LOST & FOUND  
05 NOTICES/BAZAARS  
06 PERSONALS  
**EMPLOYMENT**  
07 HELP WANTED  
08 WORK WANTED  
09 EMPLOYMENT SERVICES  
**FOR RENT**  
10 APARTMENTS  
11 ROOMS  
12 HOUSES  
13 MOBILE HOMES  
14 BUSINESS PROPERTY  
15 WANTED TO RENT  
16 VACATION  
**REAL ESTATE**  
17 REAL ESTATE  
18 LOTS & ACREAGE  
19 FARM & FARMLAND  
20 BUSINESS PROPERTY  
21 MOBILE HOMES  
22 PROPERTY WANTED

**MERCHANDISE**  
23 LAWN & GARDEN  
24 GARAGE SALES  
25 AUCTIONS  
26 ANTIQUES  
27 APPLIANCES  
28 HOUSEHOLD GOODS  
29 MUSICAL ITEMS  
30 ELECTRONICS/COMPUTERS  
31 HEALTH  
32 FUEL & HEATING  
33 BUILDING MATERIALS  
34 OFFICE EQUIPMENT  
35 HEAVY EQUIPMENT  
36 MISCELLANEOUS  
37 WANTED  
38 MACHINERY, TOOLS & EQUIPMENT  
39 SPORTING GOODS  
40 AUTO PARTS  
**FARMER MARKET**  
41 FARM EQUIPMENT  
42 FEED & SEED  
43 FARM PRODUCTS  
44 FARM SERVICES

**ANIMALS**  
45 ANIMAL BREEDING  
46 PASTURE FOR RENT  
47 HORSES & CATTLE  
48 PETS & SUPPLIES  
49 ANIMAL CARE  
50 LIVESTOCK  
**RECREATIONAL**  
51 BOATS & EQUIPMENT  
52 CAMPING EQUIPMENT  
53 TRAILERS  
54 SNOWMOBILES/ATV'S  
55 R.V.'S/CAMPERS  
**FINANCIAL**  
56 BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY  
57 INVESTMENTS  
**TRANSPORTATION**  
58 MOTORCYCLES  
59 VEHICLES WANTED  
60 CLASSIC CARS  
61 4X4'S  
62 VANS  
63 TRUCKS  
64 AUTOS FOR SALE  
**SERVICES**  
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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

**Water/Sewer Operator Part-Time Pay based on experience Job Title: Water and Sewer Operator** Job Description: The Water and Sewer Operator plays a vital role in ensuring the efficient and safe operation of the town's water and sewer systems. Responsibilities include monitoring, maintaining, and repairing water treatment and distribution systems, as well as sewer collection and treatment facilities. To apply, submit a resume to townofromeo@gmail.com or come in during office hours Tuesday or Thursday 9 to 3 for application. You can call 719-843-5785 for more information.

**Job Title: Part-Time Maintenance Technician/Parks and Recreation Technician Part-Time Hourly 15-**

**20 hours Pay rate: \$14.42/hour** Job Description: We are seeking a skilled and dedicated Part-Time Maintenance Technician/Parks and Recreation Technician to join our team in maintaining and enhancing the beauty and functionality of our town's parks and recreational areas. As a vital member of our community, you will be responsible for ensuring the upkeep, safety, and cleanliness of our parks, playgrounds, and town buildings and facilities. To apply, submit a resume to townofromeo@gmail.com or come in during office hours Tuesday or Thursday 9 to 3 for application. You can call 719-843-5785 for more information. (4-17)

**Deputy Clerk Part-Time Hourly 15-20 hours Tuesday-Thursday and some Fridays Pay Rate: \$14.42** Position Overview/ Job Description: We are seeking a diligent and organized individual to join our team as a Part-Time Deputy Clerk for our small town. The Deputy Clerk will work closely with the Town Clerk and other

municipal staff to ensure the efficient operation of administrative tasks and provide support in various municipal functions. This position offers an excellent opportunity for someone who is detail-oriented, community-focused, and eager to contribute to the smooth functioning of local government.

To apply, submit a resume to townofromeo@gmail.com or come in during office hours Tuesday or Thursday 9 to 3 for application. You can call 719-843-5785 for more information. (4-17)

**Mechanic: JT Timber Falling is hiring a full-time heavy equipment and truck mechanic in Blanca, CO.** \$25-\$45/hr depending on experience. Monday - Friday schedule. Benefits are available. Call 719-379-4066 or visit jt timber.com to apply. (5-1)

**The City of Monte Vista is accepting applications for Kids Connection Summer Program Leaders.** Duties include, planning, scheduling, and implementing youth program activities.

\$15 per hour. Job Description and applications are available at <http://www.cityofmontevista.colorado.gov> or City of Monte Vista, Human Resources, 95 West First Ave, Monte Vista, Co. 81144

**CSU-San Luis Valley Research Center is seeking temporary hourly employees to work M-F 8:00am to 4:30pm** 30 to 40 hours per week. Aids in the preparation of research field experiments and crops. Provides planting, irrigating, cultivating, harvesting, storing crops and various tasks important to the re-

search initiatives at this station. Please apply at <https://jobs.colostate.edu/postings/141377> or contact Sharon at (719) 754-3594 x17 (4-24)

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# San Luis Valley Area Real Estate

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# Valley Wide Classifieds

The position is seasonal, full time with a hourly rate range of \$14.42 to \$17.00. Please send your resume or application to postmaster@truelocalbank.com by April 12, 2024. Application is available at TrueLocalBank.com/careers or call 719-657-3376 and ask for Dawn. EOE.

**The SLV Landfill is accepting applications** for a Full-Time Administrative Assistant/Scale Operator. Working in front office by waiting on customers, weighing loads, processing credit card transactions. Fill in for the Office Manager as needed. Must work in all types of weather and be able to work a fluctuating schedule altering Saturday's. Position open until filled. \$16.00 per hour, 40 hours week. Applications can be emailed to Kim at officemanager@slvlandfill.com or returned at the office. Download the application at slvlandfill.com.

**Half-Time Tiger Connection Coach** (attendance & family connection) needed at Del Norte Elementary School. This will be a 2 year part time classified position paid for with the Stronger Connections Grant. For more information please contact Principal Amy Duda at 719-657-4050 or aduda@urtigers.co. Applications may be picked up at the

District Office or online at: [urtigers.co](http://urtigers.co).

**Jr. High Cheer Coach needed at Del Norte Jr. High School.** Experience as a coach is preferred. Please contact Gilbert "Gibbs" Sanchez, Athletic Director, at: [gsanchez@urtigers.co](mailto:gsanchez@urtigers.co), 719-657-4020; or Annie Hardy, Principal, at: [ahardy@urtigers.co](mailto:ahardy@urtigers.co), 719-657-4020. Applications may be found on our website; [www.urtigers.co](http://www.urtigers.co). (4-10)

### 11 Rooms

**For rent two-bedroom, 1-bath downstairs** \$550. 1145 French St., Del Norte. No pets. 719-849-1942 (4-10)

### 17 Real Estate For Sale

**Thinking of buying or selling your home or land this year,** call Yvonne Hoffman, 719-580-1901, Broker Associate Steffens & Co Realty Inc. (TFN)

### 23 Lawn and Garden

**Free trees.** Crabapple, Chinese elm, aspen. 3-6 feet. Saturday, April 13, 9 a.m. to noon. 219 Dunham St., Monte Vista. Bring a shovel. No early birds please. (4-10)

### 32 Fuel & Heating

**Firewood For Sale.** Call or text Mark 662-361-7530 Located in Saguache.

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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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**2 Bedroom, 6 Bath, approx. 3,280 sq. ft. and 36.34 Acres**  
 \$895,000 | MLS #803698  
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**Beautiful Ranch/Home on approx. 3,095 Acres**  
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 19198 county Rd. 15 Del Norte, CO

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

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**5 Bedroom, 4 Bath, approx. 4,572 sq.ft., and 160 Acres**  
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**YVONNE HOFFMAN**  
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**Approx. 143.68 Acres with Residence**  
 \$550,000 | MLS #808905  
 23227 Co. Rd. J.2. San Luis, CO

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**River Island Ranch Approx. 5.270 Acres**  
 \$131,000 | MLS #802486  
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**3 Bedroom, 2 Bath, approx. 1,904 sq. ft. and 50-Acres**  
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# Valley Wide Classifieds

## 36 Miscellaneous

For sale Cherokee men's boots, size 12, hiking-working, leather upper. Almost like new. \$50. 719-256-4058. (5-1)

Spring sale! Solar panels! 300 watt to 400 watt, regular and bifacial. Call for price! 719-852-0500. (4-17)

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

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## 38 Machinery, Tools, Equipment

Wanted - Shopsmith woodworking machine. 2-inch-thick hardwood planks - cherry, walnut, maple, etc. 719-256-5663. (5-1)

For sale Great Plains solid Stand 12ft drill, 3 point and press wheels. 719-480-9492 (4-10)

## 40 Auto Part

Chevy 4-speed transmission. 719-850-2027 (4-17)

## 41 Farm Equipment

For Sale PROAG auto align Bale skoop 125r bale stacker. Will haul 12 3x3s, 6 3x4s or 4 4x4s. 719-480-9492

## 44 Farm Services

Attention Farmer and Ranches: Seal your leaking livestock tanks, ponds & reservoirs with bentonite. Spring Special 10% OFF. Rio Grande Bentonite. 719-580-6652 (5-29)

## 65 Professional Services

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# New book hits shelves at RG County Museum

**STAFF REPORT**

**DEL NORTE** — After years of dedicated work, Del Norte native Vernon P. Casias captured his memories in print and published his first book titled "Hell Gate and Beyond" which hit shelves at the Rio Grande County Museum the last week of March.

In this book, Casias writes about his time growing up in the San Luis Valley and at 88 years old, unravels his memories, his Spanish heritage and more.

"I was always so proud of my Spanish ethnicity, and I wanted to share that with someone. One of the main reasons I wrote this book was because a lot of our heritage is being lost and I want to help keep it alive. I hope that I can encourage others to come forward and share their memories and traditions too," said Casias.

Throughout his life, Casias met one challenge after another, beginning with the loss of his father at age 9. During this time, Casias was going down the wrong path, but it did not take him long to find the right path again while growing up in Del Norte.

"It wasn't long before I graduated high school and then went on to pursue a military career. It was during my service that I found a calling for helping people in need," he said.

Casias served in the Airforce during the Korean Conflict and was given top-secret crypto clearance as a trained cryptographer assigned to strategic air command. It was late that he pursued his passion for helping people when he graduated from college with B.S. in Behavioral Science and then graduate school with a degree in Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling.

In his book Casias delves into the

origins of the Valley, highlighting his personal heritage from the area including Hells Gate or La Puerta de el Inferno.

"One of the first settlers in El Canero Creek was my 4th generation Grandfather Juan Antonio Espinosa and his wife Maria Rita Teodora Quintana. At this time Colorado had not been settled except for the San Luis settlement," writes Casias.

From childhood memories of Del Norte and the San Luis Valley to his time serving in the Airforce, Casias captivates readers with his stories. The small book is just the perfect length to get a glimpse into what life was like for one person growing up during a time where the San Luis Valley was undergoing constant change whether it was pending war, droughts, or visits from unlikely guests.

"Hell Gate and Beyond" is a unique look at what it was to be a Spanish

heritage family in the San Luis Valley and even touches on the mysterious side of growing up in this area. Casias addresses some of his Spanish traditions while looking into some of the mysteries that surround Del Norte and neighboring communities.

Casias writes, "In my lifetime I can only think of one possible mysterious supernatural experience. It happened in Del Norte in the 1950s in a two-bedroom cinderblock house my brother had built for my mother to rent out which was next to our house..."

Casias now calls New Mexico his home but travels to the area often to see family. He hopes to begin work on a second book which will include more memories from his life here in the Valley. Copies of "Hell Gate and Beyond" are available at the Rio Grande County Museum in Del Norte.



Courtesy photo of Vernon Casias, author of 'Hell Gate and Beyond' spent the last several years looking into his Spanish heritage and is thrilled to announce that his stories of growing up in the San Luis Valley are now available for all to share.

## 2024 irrigation season start dates

The Division 3 Engineer of the Colorado Division of Water Resources announced that the irrigation season began on April 1, for surface and groundwater irrigation structures for all areas of the San Luis Valley.

This announcement is to comply with the State Engineer's Rules and Regulations regarding the setting of an irrigation season in Division 3. For more information, contact the Division of Water Resources at 719-589-6683.

## National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center grand opening

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently announced the grand opening of the San Luis Valley National Wildlife Refuge Complex Visitor Center will be from 4 to 7 p.m. on Friday, April 19. It is located east

of the city of Alamosa on Alamosa National Wildlife Refuge at 7824 El Rancho Lane.

Meet refuge staff and Friends of the San Luis Valley Refuges. The Friends will provide light refreshments. They

will be on hand to talk about the refuges, answer questions, and from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. there will be a guided bird walk.

For more information, call Suzanne Beauchaine at 719-588-3473.

## SLV Spay and Neuter April schedule

**SANLUIS VALLEY** — The mobile clinic at SLV Spay and Neuter will be in Fort Garland on April 5 and 6. The clinic will be in Moffat on April 13 and

in Antonito on April 19 and 20. The cost for cats is \$60 and \$85 for dogs. To book an appointment, visit [www.slvna.org](http://www.slvna.org).

## MCDANIEL Continued from Page 1

Ph.D., president of the Foundation Board and emeritus professor of history. McDaniel joined the Adams State faculty in 1967 and remained excited about history, politics, and teaching his students for 40 years. He passed away on May 2, 2023.

Former students of McDaniel attended the ceremony, along with Adams State President David Tandberg, Ph.D., Adams State Board of Trustees Chair Duane

Bussey, Foundation staff, and Crowther.

Crowther explained the collection is more a memorial than a research compendium. "These books were selected as representative of McDaniel's various interests, including the history of the Gilded Age, the United States Presidency, the Kennedy Era, literature, and opera."

The collection is housed on the first floor of McDaniel Hall, south-east side.



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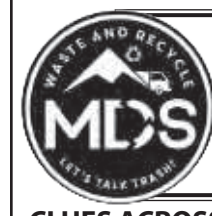
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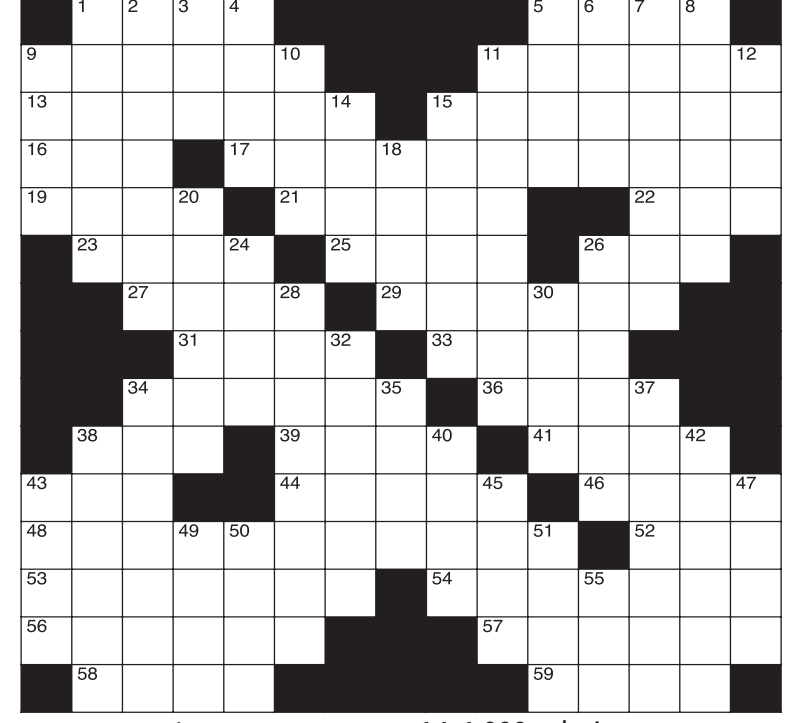
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**CLUES ACROSS**

- Male children
- Robert Wagner series "Hart to ..."
- Unfolded
- Digestive disease
- Wednesday
- Malignant tumor
- Conscientious investment strategy (abbr.)
- Slowed
- Letter of the Semitic abjads
- Weights of cars without fuel
- Former CIA
- Asian country
- Instead
- Ancient Egyptian King
- Privies
- Shopping trips
- Paradoxical anecdote
- It's on the table
- Ancient Persia ruler
- Small American rail
- File extension
- Days (Spanish)
- Everyone has one
- South American plant
- About ilium
- Vanished American hoopster Bison
- A type of breakfast
- Uncooked

**Solution to last week's puzzle**

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



- Examined
- Christian recluse
- Strong posts
- Some are for pasta
- Skinny
- School-based organizations
- 1,000 calories
- What one does overnight
- Dwarf planet
- Pipe
- Black powdery substance
- Set of four
- Canned fishes
- North Carolina college
- Secured
- A disgraceful event
- Physical suffering
- The home of the free
- Some are boys
- Satisfy
- Makes very happy
- South American plants
- Modes of transportation
- Female sheep
- Type of torch
- Piece of merchandise
- Jump over
- Wife of Amun

**CLUES DOWN**

- Ringlet
- Type of complex
- Midway between north and northwest
- It becomes something bigger
- German courtesy title
- Genus of birds
- Marked by public disorder
- Least aggressive
- Russian city
- Insect repellent
- Interruptions
- Scoundrels

# Presentation of 'The Woolly West' a huge success

By LYNDISIE FERRELL

**DEL NORTE** — Keynote speaker Dr. Andrew Gulliford addressed a full house at the Rio Grande County Museum on Friday, March 29, for his presentation on his recently published book "The Woolly West." The book takes a detailed look into the history of sheep herders in the Valley and surrounding southwest including firsthand accounts from sheep herders.

Gulliford opened by stating that he began his research for the book with a sincere fascination with the operations of sheep herders and it was not long before he found himself in a world that was unique, artistic, and full of devotion.

"It was something that was almost forgotten, something secret but at the same time right there in front for everyone to see," said Gulliford as he began to explain the importance of sheep herding throughout the American West. "I created a new word; sheepscape. And I became very intimate with sheepscape throughout the process of writing this book."

With a little help from his wife, Gulliford attacked his research for his book with passion and increasing fascination with the diversity of sheep herding throughout southwestern Colorado and beyond. The book captivates readers with not only accurate history of the lives of sheep herders and the violent relationships they had with cattlemen as ranching

took on new forms throughout history, but also with the firsthand accounts from shepherders and how they lived among their flocks.

Gulliford spent hours, days and even weeks on end looking for the infamous sheep herder artwork known as arborglyphs that graced the surface of thousands of trees deep within Aspen groves in mountains around the southwest portion of Colorado.

These trees served as not only guides for fellow herders, but as canvases for works of art that are baffling for the public eye to behold. From risqué portraits of human forms to cartoons meant to lighten the burden of being alone for months, sheep herder artwork transforms the basis of the job into something much more personal.

In addition to the arborglyphs, Gulliford also came across monuments he thinks were made by sheep herders as a way to mark locations or to serve as beacons during severe weather so that lost herders could find their way. Stacked rocks that rise towards the sky can be found in several sheepscape locations and are accompanied by the arborglyphs in many cases.

The book gives insight into the San Luis Valley's origins and provides a peek at what life was like for sheep herders throughout the West.

Gulliford's book can be found online at Texas A&M University Press at this address [www.tamupress.com/book/9781623499303/the-woolly-west/](http://www.tamupress.com/book/9781623499303/the-woolly-west/).



Dr. Andrew Gulliford greeted a full house at the Rio Grande County Museum on March 29 to discuss his book "The Woolly West." Gulliford captivated the audience with his stories and insight into the research he did for his publication stating that he found a passion and fascination with sheep herders throughout history.

Photos by Lyndsie Ferrell



## San Luis Valley Area Real Estate




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All Dee's properties are detailed in her blog.

