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## News in Brief

### Insect identification workshop May 7

**MONTE VISTA** — Kate Crumley, sales agronomist with Wilbur-Ellis for the Monte Vista and Delta branches, will conduct a workshop that will incorporate general insect identification, integrated pest management, and how to select a pesticide or method of control.

The workshop will be on May 7 at 5:30 p.m. at the San Luis Valley Extension office, 1899 E. Highway 160, Monte Vista.

There is no charge for the workshop. For more information and to register contact Carol Pastore, Colorado Master Gardener, Colorado State University – Extension San Luis Valley Area, by calling 719-850-1535 or 719-852-2795.

### Sharon Adams Memorial Dedication

**MONTE VISTA** — The Sharon Adams Memorial Dedication ceremony is planned for 5:30 p.m. on May 1 at the west main entrance of Sargent High School.

A community baked potato dinner will follow in the school cafeteria from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Suggested donation is \$10 per person and supports Sargent Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA). Live music will be provided by Celtic Knotz, including Kerry Adams.

### Creede throws to support Mineral County FCE

**CREEDE** — Mineral County FCE has received Creede throws. They are \$55 each and are forest green and off white. They are available at Holy Moses Gift Shop in Creede.

## MV shows appreciation for Chief Dingfelder

*He is moving on to be next Alamosa Police Department chief*

**By MARIE MCCOLM**  
**MONTE VISTA** — A farewell party was held for Monte Vista Police Department Chief George Dingfelder on Wednesday April 24, at City Hall. Dingfelder will be the next Alamosa Police Department Chief.

At least 40 people attended the event, including city staff and MVPD officers. The party was laid out with a special table that had a picture of Dingfelder, along with refreshments including cookies, and drinks for attendees to enjoy.

There was also a long oblong table with a white cover, just inside the entrance of one of the rooms. The cover on the table had a message and a picture on it — “George Dingfelder, with appreciation and best wishes, The City of Monte Vista.” People could sign and or leave a message for Dingfelder on the cover as he moves to APD.

City Manager Gigi Dennis spoke at the event.

“I just want to thank you all for com-  
*Please see CHIEF on Page 2A*

**Monte Vista Mayor Dale Becker signs the cover at the farewell party for Monte Vista Police Department Chief George Dingfelder.**

Photo by Marie Mccolm



## Mock accident provides awareness to MVHS students

**By MARIE MCCOLM**  
**MONTE VISTA** — Ahead of prom, Monte Vista High School students got a close look at the consequences of a drunken-driving crash via a mock accident.

With national data showing that DUI crashes increase for high school students during prom season, MVHS showed its students up close what can happen if they try to drive while under the influence.

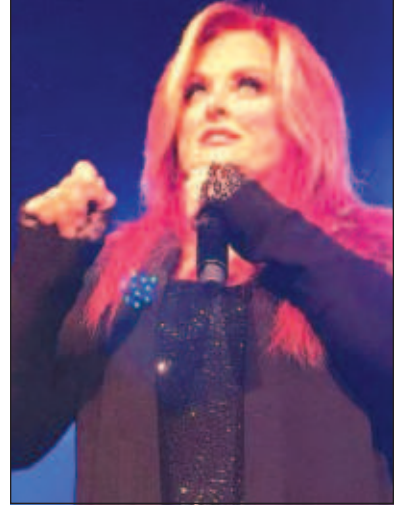
Monte Vista High School Student Council co-sponsors Melissa Harlan and Kyle Behrman and Monte Vista Student Council, Monte Vista After-Prom, San Luis Valley Prom, San Luis Valley RETAC, Colorado Recycling, the Monte Vista Police Department, Monte Vista EMS, and the Rio Grande County Coroner  
*Please see AWARENESS on Page 7A*



Photos by Marie Mccolm  
A police officer checks a young teen during a mock drunken-driving crash scenario at Monte Vista High School.



A mock drunken-driving accident demonstration was held at Monte Vista High School for juniors and seniors ahead of the prom.



## Wynonna to headline Stampede concert

### STAFF REPORT

**MONTE VISTA** — Longtime country artist and multiple-award winner Wynonna Judd will be the featured act for the Ski Hi Stampede concert on Thursday, July 11, as the 100-year plus event moves up a week earlier than normal.

Up-and-coming artist Max Mc-Nown will be the guest artist.

*Please see CONCERT on Page 2A*

## St. Francis of Assisi Church seeking donations for restoration

**By MARIE MCCOLM**  
**7 MILE PLAZA** — The 7 Mile Plaza community elders along with other people, are asking for the public's help to restore the historic St. Francis of Assisi Mission Church. The church needs a new roof and adobe walls.

The church was founded in 1881. The church is nestled on a green hill in 7 Mile Plaza and is also near a historic cemetery. In 1881, Juan Pio Valdez donated property to put the church on it. A cemetery and school were also added to the property, in collaboration with Pio Valdez and

the community. According to the website, in the 1930s the church was standing room only, with many people in attendance for the grand services held there.

Over the years, there have been many religious groups and leaders that have visited the church while it was open. There was also a grand  
*Please see DONATIONS on Page 2A*

**The 7 Mile Plaza community elders and others are asking for the public's help to restore the historic St. Francis of Assisi Mission Church.**

Photo by Marie Mccolm



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# OBITUARY

## Rebecca Anne Scott Johnson

Rebecca Anne Scott Johnson, at the age of 95, (Sept. 20, 1928 - April 25, 2024), passed from her earthly home at Brookdale Assisted Living in Brighton, Colo., to her eternal heavenly home, after suffering from congestive heart failure.

Anne was born in Washington, Georgia to Leon Harold Booker and Annie Rachel Butler Booker. She had one older sibling, Leon Harold Booker, Jr. At the age of four her family moved to Texas County, Okla., near Guymon in the panhandle of Oklahoma. She not only lived through the Depression but also the Dust Bowl.

She and her brother rode double on a horse to a one-room schoolhouse during their early elementary school years, and later she graduated from Guymon High School at the age of 16. After high school, she attended business school and junior college in Hutchinson, Kan.

In 1948 she married her high school sweetheart, Clyde Eugene "Gene" Scott. They had two children, Mary Anne and David. In 1958, they moved from Guymon to Center, Colo. During their marriage, she helped on the potato and barley farm, was an actively involved sports mom, and also worked a number of years at the Center Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation office.

She and Gene built a cabin at Pearl Lakes Trout Club near Creede, Colo., in 1969, and it became a special place



near her son. She made many special friends at the Wexford. While there she learned to play pool and became quite an accomplished player. Even after moving to Brookdale Assisted Living in Brighton, Colo., she stayed in touch by texting and FaceTiming her family and friends on a regular basis.

Anne traveled to many foreign locations during her lifetime including Tahiti, London, Greece, Egypt, Turkey, and the Holy Land.

She was a loving mom, grandmother, great grandmother and great, great grandmother, and was affectionately called Granny Great.

She is survived by her daughter and son-in-law, Mary Anne and Richard Stone, and her son David Scott, as well as her four Grandchildren Mike Scott (Kristie), Amy Scott, Kevin Stone (Natalie), and Matt Stone (Shannon), Great-Grandchildren Meghan Scott, Ashley Garetson (Jared), Anthony Scott, Cody and Lucas Muirhead, Ethan and Elizabeth Stone, Lucy Willing (Luke), Lily and Carolanne Birchfield, Nolan and Lucy Stone, and Great-Great-Grandson, Jettson Garetson. She is also survived by five nieces, a nephew and their families.

Anne loved the Lord, acknowledged His faithfulness, and looked forward to her home-going. Her ashes will be buried near her husband, Gene Scott, in Canon City, Colo., at Lakeside Cemetery.

for the whole family to enjoy. Many happy years of fishing, hiking and snowmobiling were spent there. She was a great fisherwoman and passed her love of fishing on to all her grandchildren.

In 1984 she and Gene retired to Fountain Hills, Ariz. Due to his deteriorating health they moved to Canon City, Colo., in 1990 to be closer to family. After his passing, she became reacquainted with a high school classmate, Tom Randol. They married and lived in Meridian, Idaho until his death. She later married Harry Johnson, whom she also outlived.

In 2015, she moved to Pagosa Springs to be near her daughter. Then in 2019 she relocated to Loveland, Colo., to live at the Wexford, an independent senior living facility, and be

## DONATIONS

Continued from Page 1A

alter that was brought in from Spain in the 1940s and installed in the church. Although many people do not know this, Juan Pio Valdez and his wife Nestora are buried under the church's grand altar.

The church is also commonly known as Los Valdez's, due to the generous donation by Pio Valdez, of the property.

The church enjoyed many years of worship, but over the years the little church has been forgotten as people who lived in 7 Mile Plaza have grown and moved away. Due to the lack of attention and attendance, the church needs attention to remain a church.

There are steps currently be-

ing taken to restore the church. Virginia Simmons and a group of professionals have requested that the church be registered as a Colorado historical place. The request was approved, and the church is being listed as a Colorado Historical site.

As a historical site, many people see how the church was used for many years for masses, baptisms, gatherings, and communion. Though closed, the church is still used for funerals, but upon request only.

Elders of the 7 Mile community, and others are reaching out to the surrounding communities and all organizations who would be willing

to donate money to help restore the church.

Contributions will help restore and reopen the church for the community and preserve a historical landmark.

To make a donation, email Deborah Romero at armarolo@hotmail.com or call 303-552-8321, or mail donations to PO Box 590, Monte Vista, CO 81144. Sign check or money order to the San Juan Catholic Community and reference in the memo line, St. Francis of Assisi Mission Church.

To donate with a credit card, visit the church's Gofundme page at Please Help Repair Our Mission Church Los Valdeses.

## CONCERT

Continued from Page 1A

Tickets will be available soon at [skihistampede.com](http://skihistampede.com).

Wynonna is one of the most widely recognized and awarded female country musicians in history. In all, she has had 19 No. 1 singles, including those with The Judds. Her solo albums and singles are all credited to — and performed under — the singular stage name, Wynonna.

She first rose to fame in the 1980s

alongside her mother, Naomi, in their mother-daughter country music duo, The Judds. They released seven albums on Curb Records, in addition to 26 singles, of which 14 were No. 1 hits.

In 2023, Wynonna was named the best country music artist, picking up the "country champion" award at the "People's Choice Country Awards".

McNown is a singer-songwriter

from Bend, Ore. His soulful music attracted international attention on TikTok and other social media platforms, which built an engaging and committed fanbase.

His powerful lyrics and resonant vocals led to collaborations with renowned producers and songwriters and the opportunity to audition in front of Katy Perry, Lionel Richie, and Luke Bryan during the 2023 season of "American Idol."



Monte Vista Police Department Chief George Dingfelder speaks with Monte Vista City Councilman Loren Howard and his wife during the farewell party for Dingfelder, who is moving to be the Alamosa Police Department chief.

Photo by Marie McColm

## CHIEF

Continued from Page 1A

ing on behalf of Chief Dingfelder. Chief you probably have one of the most difficult positions in the city. You and your team are really the face of the city. If there is a conflict, the good, the bad, and the ugly, you guys are there," she said, adding that Chief Dingfelder has brought so much "class" to the city.

"Your officers have all elevated to the standards that you have set, and Monte Vista is better for it. It has been a real pleasure to work with you. The warmth that you have brought to the community, has been much appreciated," she said.

Chief Dingfelder took a moment and with a heartfelt voice expressed his sincere appreciation to the city, his officers, and the community.

"Obviously, this is kind of bittersweet for me. First off, I want to thank the council. Most important," Dingfelder said, motioning to the group of police officers in attendance, "I want to thank this group right over here. They are a phenomenal group of officers. For whatever reason it is, I did 25 years as a state patrol, I came here four years ago, but this group right here I am going to miss them a lot more. I think it's because we have been so close. We have been through a lot. We have had some real tragedies that we have been through together for the last few years. It took us awhile to get this group together being shorthanded and what not, but this group of officers is phenomenal."

Dingfelder thanked Public Works. He appreciated that Public Works has always been a team with the city and worked hard together with the city. Dingfelder also thanked Dennis for being such a wonderful boss.

"I will say this, I have had some really great bosses over the years, between military and state patrol, and I would say that Gigi is one of the top two. Gigi is one of the two best bosses I have ever had, and just a phenomenal person. I

know the city is going to be in a good spot no matter who the chief is."

Chief Dingfelder also thanked Records and Evidence Manager Irene Arellano for helping run the department so well.

"She really runs everything," he said. "I just sign stuff."

Dingfelder expressed his gratitude by saying there were so many people he wanted to thank from the city. He also gave a special thank you to Mayor Dale Becker.

"He's been a great friend, and always willing to listen. When I was thinking about this way back four or five years ago. I called him a few times. I knew Dale pretty well. He's like yeah, I think you should do it, so thank you Mayor for taking the chance on me," he said.

Dingfelder also thanked his wife, Stephanie Dingfelder stating that she expressed that this would be another "adventure," for them. "I hope this will be my last job," Dingfelder said with a chuckle.

Dingfelder also gave a special thank you to Bobby Pino, father of two Monte Vista police officers.

"When I started here in 1995 as a brand-new trooper, Bobby was the Jail Administrator, and he absolutely became one of my closest friends. Bobby thank you for all you do and allowing me to work with your sons," he said.

Pino smiled and said, "Thank you for building what you have built this far, and I know that it will carry on because you have a good group of guys and gals here. I appreciate you."

Dingfelder also thanked the community for thinking of him and attending his farewell.

"It's not like I am dying or leaving, I am only going 17 miles away," he said with a smile. "If you're in Alamosa, you know I like to talk, and I like coffee. So, if you're in Alamosa, come by the PD and stop in and visit."

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# Spring has sprung

As many of you already know, Miss Trixie and Ol' Dutch have been busy this year with building a new house. It's a labor of love for sure as most of the work is being done by Yours Truly, the old mountain man himself. And of course, that means that progress on some days can be measured in small increments but the slow and steady wins the race they say. I sure hope so.

Recently warmer weather has accompanied our efforts, but it does have its drawbacks as evidenced by this past week's tornado activities. Generally speaking, it takes hotter days to spawn those demons from Hell and we went from nice 60-degree days to 80 seemingly overnight and will be pushing 100 sooner than you think.

The warm weather does bring about a change in people's activities, of course. The Big Box stores have potted plants for sale by the millions, kids are playing outdoor sports, and boats are being sold to naive buyers who have yet to learn the two best days when buying a boat is the day you buy it and the day you sell it.

No matter where you look there are families with children of every age and description. I can't help but think that just some short years ago these same parents were carefree and fun-loving youngsters themselves. They decided, though, that lugging around diaper bags, strollers, and car seats would be more "fun." And not to be outdone by their friends, they all seem to be purchasing plastic wagons to carry the plethora of things needed on a typical family outing.

Attending a soccer match the sidelines look like a tailgating party with all the chairs, coats, food, balls and ruggats in their red wagons all gathered in a circle like the pioneers of old. And Ol' Dutch can only sit and smile at the harried look on the parents' faces as they try and keep it all together one more Saturday.

Ol' Dutch and Miss Trixie can feel at least a little of their frustrations as we have had to try and find a way to attend soccer games, volleyball games and horse shows in different towns on the same day in the midst of Dallas-level traffic. Often, it's a race to the next spot to hopefully get there in time to see the next grand play.

So, I can sense that same frustration in the lives of young parents as they have to split up as a couple to try and make it all work. God help the ones that have



**Trout Republic**  
by Kevin Kirkpatrick

four or five kids as I have no idea how they make that all work.

All this pressure often boils over at the games and these once sane parents can be seen pulling their hair out individually and as a couple. You can tell they have given up on maintaining sanity when they simply hand money over to the baby of the family for concessions in copious quantities just to shut them up.

Another place I often see families or at least some families is at the big lumber stores like Lowes and Home Depot. For it is here that you will find the dads with the kids and mom is nowhere in sight. I finally figured out this is because the mother has "had enough" and told the dad to "take these kids and get them out of this house." The kids are generally well-behaved as they know they have "hit the wall" as far as being mischievous with their mothers all week and dad is not going to put up with that nonsense.

And to their credit the moms do get hit with most of the work with the kids all week and their dad has learned that aged old saying "happy wife, happy life" to be true. Good luck to all of you that have to balance kids' activities against work and schedules this Spring and Summer. And if you are a dad, grab those ruggats and get them out from under foot around the house. These times will not last forever. It will just seem like it.

*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.*

# OPINION & EDITORIAL

## A candy bar fueled the Iron Horse Bicycle Classic

By DAVE MARSTON

If you don't know much about the Iron Horse bike race that begins in the town of Durango in southwestern Colorado, know that it is brutal, pitting cyclists against a narrow-gauge train that takes an easy route up a valley.

Riders, though, must climb a curvy route of 47 miles over two passes, both more than 10,000 feet high, as the road threads its way through the rugged San Juan Mountains.

Winners finish about two and a half hours, the train chugs in an hour later.

An enduring race legacy belongs to one man, Ed Zink, who died five years ago. He spent decades running the race or being involved through its nonprofit board from 1972-2019. Though the race is now 52 years old, attracts 3,000 riders and has a big budget and staff, its beginnings were entirely local.

In 1971, two brothers named Mayer thought it would be fun to pit bicycles against the local train, where Jim Mayer worked as a brakeman for the Durango and Silverton Railroad. Jim's brother, Tom, bet his brother he could beat the train riding his bicycle. He did just that, winning a candy bar.

The next year the brothers teamed up with Zink, a born organizer, to start what became an annual race during the Memorial Day weekend.

For the next 30 years, said Patty Zink, the race was a bootstrap operation. Her husband "and his kids and employees at our Mountain Bike Specialists store led the volunteering, food and cleanup. It's fabulous that it's thrived and now is the second oldest bike race in the United States."

"Zink worked so hard organizing the race, he didn't get to ride in it until

2006 when he was 59," said Gaige Sippy, who took over as director in 2007, until 2022.

Sippy said to this day, there has always been at least one Zink family member and often 10 volunteers helping out along the route of the race,

More recently, the race has featured the remarkable Mara Abbott, an Olympian biker who's also the winningest Iron Horse rider. She's beaten thousands of men six times.

In a TEDx Talk, she recounted almost winning an Olympic race until running out of gas with just a few hundred yards to the finish. At that point, she said, three cyclists passed her, leaving her "with the privilege of a broken heart."

Sippy credits Abbott and local Durango legend Ned Overend, who owns the second most wins, with inspiring legions of riders to take on the mountain passes.

But before Abbott and Overend and the race's national reputation, there was Zink. He kept the race going until it became an institution that helped define Durango, a sports-loving town.

Many locals recall Zink as a man who loved to get good things going. An example was his founding of the easier Quarter Horse Bike Race, where riders only grind out 25 miles uphill to the Purgatory ski area. Once the shorter race was established, Zink let someone else lead the event.

Zink was also early to the idea of mountain biking having its own home. Sippy recalls him saying, "We're always trying to fit in, riding on trails sharing with other folks. It would be great if cycling had its own stadium."

Back in 1990, it was because of



Courtesy Patty Zink  
**Ed Zink on his steel-framed bike 1985.**

Zink's work that the Mountain Bike World Championships came to Durango. It was early days for mountain biking — just a decade after riders on homemade Klunker bikes started traversing old mining trails.

Marc Katz, founder of a big park for mountain bikes and other sports that's underway close to town, said he deeply feels Zink's loss. "I had many chats with Ed Zink along the way. I am sad he isn't around to talk with now that we're getting this thing done."

*Dave Marston is the publisher of Writers on the Range, writersontherange.org, an independent nonprofit that seeks to spur lively conversation about the West. He lives in Durango.*

## Sexual trauma and mental health: concepts to consider

By JENN MCCOY, MSW

Sexual assault, unwanted sexual contact, rape, molestation, sexual violence...these are just a few words that can be used as signifiers of sexual trauma. What do you notice about your body, mind and heart's response to these words? Is there a tightening in your chest? A dropping sensation in your stomach? Perhaps a resistance to acknowledge these words at all...a desire to read these words no further, an aversion to allow these concepts to sit with you too deeply...or potentially criticisms towards the writer who so boldly positioned them in the opening line to a newspaper article.

Whatever your response to these words may be, reflect on how impactful the acts these words symbolize may be. If the word itself can generate a felt bodily

response, consider the intensity of the experience. Chances are, you or someone close to you, does have an experience of sexual trauma; according to the Center for Disease Control, "Over half of women and almost 1 in 3 men have experienced sexual violence involving physical contact during their lifetimes." Often, the devastation of these experiences transcend the assault itself; increasing one's chances of struggles with anxiety, depression, trust, intimacy, and many other areas of healthy human functioning. And the body's response to mental health struggles such as these hold potential to manifest in physical health, as illustrated by a quote from trauma expert, Dr. Bessel Van Der Kolk, "After trauma the world is experienced with a different nervous system. The survivor's energy now becomes focused on suppressing inner chaos... These attempts to maintain control over

unbearable physiological reactions can result in a whole range of physical symptoms, including fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue, and other autoimmune diseases." Research linking trauma and subsequent mental health struggles to somatic symptoms and ailments is abounding; the Adverse Childhood Experiences study that began in 1995 was one of the first to explore this concept. Since then, the field of mental and behavioral health has been excavating understandings of trauma, stressors, the nervous system, interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships, and so much more to inform human health and well-being.

With a public health issue this far-reaching, it can become overwhelming or seemingly impossible to consider the thought of conjuring change. While a society where sexual violence is extinguished may be a vision seen through

rose colored glasses, your thoughts, feelings and behaviors can embody the spirit of this aspiration. The power that is propagated through compassion and connection is not to be underestimated; Dr. Peter Levine has explained, "Trauma is not what happens to us, but what we hold inside in the absence of an empathetic witness." The power of showing up for another through connection and compassion is further supported by author and psychotherapist Jennifer Nurick, LPC, as she shares, "we can learn to self-regulate as adults, but this is only part of the process. The other part is the healing that happens in a two-person system, relationally" and the inspirational Brene Brown, PhD, LMFW who tells us, "by responding with empathy and compassion, the healing results affect us all."

The message hopefully conveyed, is to

hold space for two truths; the intensity of sexual assault can be significant on the body and mind, and the impact can be countered with the power of humans who demonstrate empathy and care for others' experiences without judgement. It's easy to deviate attention from difficult subjects such as sex and violence, particularly the two together, but avoiding will likely increase shame, disconnect and suffering. In alignment with the nature of this article, it is befitting to end with a quote. Dr. Gabor Mate provides the insight, "All of western medicine is built on getting rid of pain, which is not the same as healing. Healing is actually the capacity to hold pain." As we reframe the impact of sexual assault on mental health as a community issue rather than an individual's issue, we hold the burden together and lighten the weight of such heavy happenings.

**THE Monte Vista JOURNAL**

THE MONTE VISTA JOURNAL (USPS 360-660) Published weekly (every Wednesday) by Valley Publishing. (719) 852-3531 at 835 First Ave., Monte Vista, Colorado 81144-1423. Established in 1888 and consolidated with the Monte Vista Tribune and San Luis Valley Graphic. Box 607, Monte Vista, Colo. 81144  
Main office, Want ads and Subscriptions: (719) 852-3531  
Periodical postage paid at Monte Vista, Colo., 81144  
POSTMASTER: Send change of address to P.O. Box 607, Monte Vista, Colo. 81144  
Subscriptions: \$45 one year in the San Luis Valley; \$40 one year seniors (65 and older) in the San Luis Valley; and \$55 one year out of the San Luis Valley. (719) 852-3531  
San Luis Valley Publishing, LLC

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# Cinco de Mayo Street Festival to benefit MV Food Bank

By MARIE MCCOLM

**MONTE VISTA** — The OptiMystics Citizens Action Network is again bringing to Monte Vista one of the spiciest events in the Valley. The Monte Vista Cinco de Mayo Street Festival will be held on Saturday, May 4, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

The OptiMystics have decided to help the local Monte Vista Emergency Food Bank with the event. All proceeds above the cost of executing the event will be donated to the food bank this year.

OptiMystics President Adam Lock is ecstatic about the event.

“It just makes sense, this is the day where people can come out, have a great time, enjoy the live music and all the festivities. We are excited to offer this huge event once again to the town. We are hoping to draw an even bigger crowd this year than last year, and we are definitely ready for it,” he said.

In the past the street festival has drawn 1,500 to 2,000 people. OptiMystics Vice President Mark Renshaw said that the idea of thousands of people coming to an event like this is both amazing and fulfilling.

“To think that in only 4 years, the Cinco De Mayo Street Festival has grown this much. I hope we can continue to grow every year and put on a street festival everyone can really enjoy,” he said.

This year, just like years prior, there is a great lineup of events. There will be hip-shaking music provided by DJ Pete Garcia until 3 p.m. From 3 to 6 p.m., UZ Band of Taos, N.M., will be playing live. This award-winning band is known for their variation in music and is sure to keep the crowd swaying to the music until the end of the festival.

There will be a car show hosted by the Stars and Strikes Bowling Alley. People’s choice will once again determine who wins best of show and other awards that will be given out. Rocky Mountain Memorabilia is donating plaques for the car show. There will also be a cruise to the Veterans Community Living Center at Homelake for the residents there. The drive will take place at 2 p.m.

Cornhole can be played from 1 to 6 p.m. on Adams Street. The game is being brought to everyone by the Monte Vista Recreation

Department.

There will also be live demonstrations by the Novel Nomad belly dancers at 5 p.m., for all to enjoy, and the Monte Vista Youth Mini Cheerleaders are scheduled to perform at 1 p.m.

New this year is a canine costume contest. People are encouraged to dress up their canines in Cinco de Mayo apparel. There will be prizes given in three separate weight categories. The contest takes place in front of Muddy Paws on Adams Street at 11 a.m. All entry fees for the event will also be donated to the Monte Vista Ambulance Service.

Also new this year, is the chihuahua and small breed dog races. The races will begin at 12 p.m. on Second Avenue, in front of the Pivot Public House, which is also hosting the event. There will be prizes for the winner. All entry fees will be donated to Conour Animal Shelter.

There will also be cultural talks about Cinco de Mayo at the Vali 3 Theater at 2 p.m.

Vendors will be set up all over the designated areas for the event, which will be from the 100 block of Adams Street down Second Avenue and east of Adams to Jefferson Street. An event map will be available on the OptiMystics website.

The OptiMystics announced that all the food vendor spots were taken. Craft vendors are still welcome to register on the website.

Some local businesses will also be getting into the spirit by offering local discounts and fun, the day of the event.

Lock is grateful for the support from the community.

“I am ecstatic that so many local businesses and groups have stepped up this year to assist with putting this event on for the community,” he said. “This not only defrays some of the cost for the event but gets so many other entities and people involved in this special event. This is a day to celebrate culture, community, and most importantly unity

“Special thanks to the LOR Foundation, and all of the other businesses, supporters, and people who have stepped up to help and be such a big part of this amazing event. Everyone is deeply appreciated. What this all means is that in the end, we can donate even more to help support our local Monte Vista Emergency Food Bank.”



The Monte Vista Cinco de Mayo Street Festival will be held on Saturday, May 4, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Courtesy photos



Between 1,500 and 2,000 attend the Monte Vista Cinco de Mayo Street Festival in years past. This year’s event is set for May 4 in downtown Monte Vista.

## Wearing Love

“Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony” (Colossians 3:14 NLT).

Love is the highest level of spiritual warfare. We are to “wear” it like a garment, or armor. That’s why it’s so important to learn to love like the Bible says to—on purpose. But there are so many angry, wounded, unhappy people in the world. Angry people cannot love others because basically, they just don’t love themselves... and you can’t give away something you don’t have.

Don’t get me wrong, I understand there are numerous reasons for people’s pain. A lot of times people have been mistreated, many from their childhood into adult life. I’ve shared my story openly about how my father abused me sexually from a very early age. I grew to believe that it must be my fault—that there was something wrong with me that made him do that. I became ashamed, embarrassed and angry about my life. I didn’t like myself, much less love myself.

How I felt about myself certainly became a major part of how I acted and treated others. Even though I gave my life to Jesus when I was very young, it was years before I began to comprehend the power of God’s love. So, I understand the fact that hurting people hurt people.

What I had to learn—and most of us have got to learn—is to love self. You need to first receive God’s love and then learn to love yourself in a balanced way before you can truly love your neighbor as yourself. So, learn to love what God loves—YOU!

God’s love will change you. It will make you a happier, kinder, more generous person.

I’m reminded of a story about a young boy who came to his mother and presented her with his “bill” for chores he’d done around the house that week. For cutting the grass, his charge was \$5; for cleaning his room, \$1; for running to the store, 50¢; \$1 for taking out the garbage; \$5 for a good report card; and on he went until he gave her the grand total of \$14.75.

The mother looked at the bill, turned the paper over to the backside and began to write. For the nine months I carried you while you were growing inside me, NO CHARGE; for all the nights I sat up with

you, doctored, and prayed for you, NO CHARGE; for all the trying times and the tears you’ve caused through the years, NO CHARGE; for all the nights that were filled with dread and all the worries I knew were ahead, NO CHARGE; for the toys, the food, the clothes and even for wiping your nose, NO CHARGE. She finally said to him, “Son, when you add it all up, the cost of my love is NO CHARGE!”

The boy finished reading what his mother had written, and with tears in his eyes, he turned the paper back over and wrote across his bill: PAID IN FULL.

The moral of this story is true love is free. Real love is not something we can “charge” people for. We must not try to make someone pay for our love: “If you’re nice to me, I’ll love you.” “If you do things for me, I’ll do things for you.” That’s not the kind of love of God calls us to. To love like God does, we have to make up our mind that we’re going to do it on purpose.

And many times, that will mean choosing to love, regardless of how we feel about a person. There will be times we will be called to love difficult people or people who have hurt us in some way. We must learn to look beyond the person, or what they did to hurt us, to what the enemy is using them to do. Because as long as we are angry or hating someone for what they’ve done, we will be the one who is being tormented.

I know I said real love is free. But there is a cost involved for the one who loves. It’s called sacrifice. As I’ve studied love in God’s Word over the years, I’ve learned that it is definitely something we must do on purpose, and if we will make the sacrifice to “put on” love and walk in it, our feelings will catch up.

A minister once told a story about a wife who wanted to divorce her husband. She said she hated him, not only wanted to divorce him, but she wanted to hurt him as much as he’d hurt her. The minister suggested she try something before she went through with the divorce. He told her to go home and “act” as if she really loved her husband. He told her to tell him she loved him, to praise him for every good thing she could think of, to go out of her way (sacrifice) to be as kind and generous to him as she possibly could, to spare no effort to please him, to make him believe in her undying love for him. Then,



he told her, drop the bomb and tell him she was getting a divorce. That would really hurt him.

She willingly followed the plan with enthusiasm, playing the part of an adoring wife, acting as if she loved him while thinking how much it would hurt when she told him she was getting a divorce. But she never called the minister back to report. So when he called her after two months to find out if she was ready to get her divorce, the woman replied, “Divorce? No, never! I’ve discovered that I really do love him!”

Now, I’m not advocating that preacher’s advice; we must follow the Holy Spirit’s lead in each situation. But the point is, God does amazing things in a person—or in yourself—when you walk in love toward them...especially when it’s difficult. The bottom line is giving real love is free. But let it cost you the small sacrifice of your time and effort. Because that place of sacrifice will be the place of your breakthrough.

When you put on love and walk in love toward others in obedience to God, you will be fighting the highest form of spiritual warfare. And there will be absolutely nothing or nobody able to keep you from being blessed!

For more on this topic, order Joyce’s four-part teaching resource *Winning Life’s Battles*. 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 (Faith Words)*. She hosts the *Enjoying Everyday Life* radio and TV programs, which air on hundreds of stations worldwide. For more information, visit [www.joycemeyer.org](http://www.joycemeyer.org).

Please note: The views and opinions expressed throughout this publication and/or website are those of the respective authors and do not necessarily reflect those of Joyce Meyer Ministries.

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# Celebrating Colorado's cultural heritage through folk and traditional arts projects

CONTRIBUTED

DENVER — The Colorado Creative Industries (CCI) Division of the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT) announced that 21 artists and art organizations across Colorado have been awarded Folk and Traditional Arts Project Grants.

These grants will help preserve, celebrate and document the local artistic traditions and heritage of unique Colorado communities.

“By celebrating Colorado's folk and traditional arts, we preserve values and traditions that are passed from generation to generation,” said OEDIT Director, Eve Lieberman. “The recipients announced today will help carry on the diversity, culture and heritage of Colorado communities, offering all of us the opportunity to realize the rich history our state holds.”

The Folk and Traditional Arts Project Grants seek to enhance community well-being, cultural identity, economic vitality, and sense of place especially in areas that are often underrepresented in the contemporary art space. Funds will support the creation, presentation, or teaching of folk and traditional arts, and or the documentation of folk or traditional arts and cultural heritage through community archiving, oral histories, photojournalism, video or other creative works.

Among the recipients, the Spanish Peaks Community Foundation will use the grant funds to publish a cookbook of recipes and stories representing Huerfano County. As part of the grant's preservation efforts, all funded projects will be archived in the State Archives and made accessible to the public through History Colorado.

“Folk and traditional art is a vital and ever evolving artistic tradition that reflects the cultural life of a community. We are so pleased to see renewed interest nationwide in preserving these traditions and are proud to celebrate Colorado's many unique communities,” said



Image courtesy of The Range La Sierra

Colcha embroidery by Josephine Lobato.

CCI Director, Josh Blanchard.

The Folk and Traditional Arts Grant was developed in response to a two-year planning process with a stakeholder group engaged in Colorado's folk arts. A total of \$61,940 is being awarded to 21 artists and art organizations, funded in part by a partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).

The recipients include:

**Alamosa County**

- Adobe de Oro - Ballet Folklórico - \$3,000 - Semillas de la Tierra, the San Luis Valley's oldest Ballet Folklórico dance group, will offer a public performance and celebration.

- Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area - Hispanic Folk Dances - \$3,000 - For the production of a short documentary on the history of local folk dances and music within the San Luis Valley. The film will feature Los Vecinos Bailadores, a group of retired community members who practice and perform the Hispanic dances that have been staples of the community since Hispanics first settled in the San Luis Valley in the mid-nineteenth century.

**Costilla County**

- Dana Maestas - Documentary project - \$3,300 - «The Heritage Project - Recuerdos: Remembrances of Indo-Hispano Elders

of the Rio Culebra Villages” is an oral history project documenting interviews of approximately five to ten ancianos (elders) living in the San Luis de la Culebra villages of southern Colorado.

**Huerfano County**

- Spanish Peaks Community Foundation - Community Cookbook - \$3,000 - Creation and publication of a community cookbook highlighting the rich legacy that food represents in the folk and traditional arts of Huerfano County.

**Saguache County**

- HEART of Saguache - Colcha Embroidery - \$3,000 - Free colcha embroidery workshop in Saguache, provided by the San Luis Valley Colcha Embroidery Project, a collaboration between HEART of Saguache, The Range, and artists in the San Luis Valley.



Graphic courtesy of City of Alamosa

## SLV fallen peace officers memorial on May 15

Respect, honor and remember

By PRISCILLA WAGGONER

ALAMOSA — Continuing with a tradition that is now in its 18th year, the city of Alamosa is holding a memorial service honoring peace officers of the San Luis Valley who have lost their lives in the line of duty.

In recognition of National Peace Officers Memorial week from May 12 to 18, the service in Alamosa will be held on Wednesday, May 15, at 5:30 p.m. in front of the Alamosa Safety Complex, 425 4th St.

The memorial service will be preceded by a procession of lights with officers instructed to meet at 3110 1st St. at 5 p.m. A dinner will follow the service.

“We would like to take this opportunity to invite law enforcement and the public, as well, to join us during this time to recognize and honor all of the Fallen Police Officers in the San Luis Valley, as well as those officers across the state and nationwide who have fallen in the line of duty,” reads the press release from the city.

According to the National Law En-

forcement Officers Memorial Fund, there were 136 law enforcement officers in federal, state, county, municipal, military, tribal and campus agencies across the nation who lost their lives in 2023, representing a 39% decrease from the 224 officers who died in the line of duty in 2022.

The organization's website also states that, of those 136 law enforcement officers who died in 2023, 47 were firearms-related fatalities. That is a 25% decrease from the 63 officers killed by gunfire the previous year, but firearms-related fatalities are still the leading cause of death.

“There is no such thing as ‘good news’ when reporting even a single officer being killed in the line-of-duty,” states National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund CEO Bill Alexander on the organization's website. “Yet we are encouraged to see fewer overall officer deaths across all major categories in 2023. Using and reporting on this data allows us to highlight the continuing dangers faced by our law enforcement professionals, particularly the number of officers who are shot and killed each year.”

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# RG Community Trust gains on affordable housing goals

CONTRIBUTED

**DEL NORTE** — It has already been a busy year for the Rio Grande Community Trust (RGCT), a nonprofit formed in 2022 with a mission to sustain vibrant, durable communities in the San Luis Valley by creating homes that remain permanently affordable.

As part of this mission, RGCT is partnering with the Sawmill Meadow Village Housing Development in South Fork, which will create 30 affordable workforce housing units in the area, immediately addressing the need identified in the 2021 SLV Housing Needs Assessment. To ensure that the first 10 homeownership units remain affordable in perpetuity, RGCT will steward the deed restrictions. As homeowners buy the land and homes at Sawmill Meadow, these deed restrictions will ensure future

buyers also have access to affordable homeownership.

“We started RGCT because we love the San Luis Valley and want living here to be affordable for everyone. We know that many people who are the backbone of our communities are at risk of being left behind and pushed out of the SLV,” says Martha Williamson, co-founder and president of RGCT. “We are thrilled to carry forward the work of Sawmill Meadow, the Town of South Fork, and the San Luis Valley Housing Coalition as our first opportunity to make perpetually affordable homeownership a reality.”

The Sawmill Meadow development has been in motion since 2022, with construction on the first 10 homes beginning in late 2023. Matt Dorsett, the lead developer on the project, expects those units to be available by

mid-summer 2024.

“The right people have come to the table to make this happen,” Dorsett says. “RGCT has brought their expertise and resources to the project to help ensure affordability is preserved and get this project across the finish line.”

As this opportunity to execute on its mission opened, the means to make it so converged. In February, Wolf Creek Ski Area made a generous \$100,000 philanthropic pledge. RGCT is over the moon at this donation, which is instrumental to the nonprofit scaling its efforts going forward. Using the support from Wolf Creek, as well as funding from other sources, RGCT will use the community land trust model to create more affordable homeownership opportunities throughout the

San Luis Valley.

“In the changing and dynamic world that we are all living in, it is of the utmost importance to stay grounded. When I was made aware of a grassroots attempt to help residents of the San Luis Valley continue to be able to afford and live in the Valley with the possibility of raising their families, gaining equity, and improving their financial security, the path was clear that supporting this fledgling program was worth it,” says Davey Pitcher, president and CEO of Wolf Creek Ski Area. “Wolf Creek Ski Area is a seasonal weather dependent business, if all goes well and we have another successful winter, and the Rio Grande Community Trust continues to gain momentum we plan on continuing our support for many years to come.”

Formed in 2022, the nonprofit Rio Grande Community Trust (RGCT) supports the San Luis Valley remaining a place where people can afford to live and work for decades to come. RGCT stewards deed restrictions or purchases land, works with builders and developers to build or rehab houses and work directly with buyers to create a path to ownership that ensures properties remain within reach in the long term. RGCT also purchases commercial real estate and leases it to community businesses who would not otherwise be able to set up shop in the towns that so dearly need them.

For more information on the Sawmill Meadow project or to submit your interest in one of the affordable homeownership units, visit: <https://sawmillmeadowvillage.com>.

# Historic investment in agriculture, CDA approved in state budget

By COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

**BROOMFIELD** — On Monday, Governor Jared Polis signed the Long Bill, sponsored by the Joint Budget Committee, which commits significant investments into programs and staff supporting agriculture across Colorado.

The state budget for Fiscal Year 2024/2025 includes a 13 percent increase in funding to the Department of Agriculture, to build out and add support to existing programs working to improve our state’s agricultural industry. Funding included in the Long Bill will support farmer-driven conservation efforts, emergency preparedness, renewable energy adaptation, and more.

“The state budget includes funding to expand CDA programs that are directly benefiting producers, developing new leaders in agriculture, and helping use water wisely across Colorado,” said Commissioner of Agriculture Kate Greenberg. “This budget package is a result of countless con-

versations with ag communities and is reflective of some of the biggest needs we have heard from the field. These resources will be making their way back to these communities to support resilience, stewardship, and a vibrant future for Colorado agriculture.”

Funding included in the state budget will help CDA advance:

Next Generation Agricultural Leadership and Agriculture Workforce Development Programs, which help fund hands-on internships at Colorado agricultural businesses for people interested in gaining real world experience in agriculture and which provide funding to organizations that train and develop future leaders in all areas of agriculture.

Wolf Conflict Mitigation, to support producers implementing non-lethal predator control measures and conflict reduction practices.

Agricultural Drought and Climate Resilience Office (ADCRO), to accelerate how quickly

Colorado agri businesses adopt or expand green energy generation and to support a suite of on-farm resilience practices and renewable energy projects.

Creation of a new Division of Animal Welfare, to increase oversight of the Bureau of Animal Protection and Pet Animal Care Facilities Act Program; expand proactive education and outreach; and create additional capacity for the State Veterinarian to support animal health efforts.

Agricultural Workforce Services Program, to increase coordination, outreach, and support to agricultural employers and workers to address agricultural labor issues.

Agricultural Emergency Management program, which engages directly with Colorado’s rural agricultural communities to facilitate a comprehensive approach to disaster preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation.

Over the past several years, Colorado has been

leading the way toward a more resilient future, and agriculture has been a large part of that movement. These programs have been critical in supporting the priorities for the Department, which are expanding water-resilient agriculture, supporting future generations of agriculturalists, developing local food systems, and advancing animal health and welfare.

In addition to the daily regulatory work of the agency, CDA has been expanding the work of the Conservation and Markets divisions to grow programs that prepare Colorado’s agricultural communities for the future. Initiatives such as the Colorado Soil Health program help small and medium-sized producers expand their climate smart practices and access emerging markets for food grown with these practices. In the Markets Division, programs such as Colorado Proud and International Markets will be leading the way to promote Colorado products among consumers in our state and across the world.

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# AWARENESS Continued from Page 1A

collaborated on the demonstration. The event began on Thursday, April 25, in the Monte Vista High School gymnasium. All junior and senior students were called over the loudspeaker at the school and asked to enter the gymnasium for the presentation.

Harlan introduced many of the people who would be speaking and providing presentations to the students.

"This is all a lot of work. I want to thank everyone for being here. We are going to start out in the gym, and then we are going to move out to the mock accident. I know there are going to be times when you may want to laugh at all of this, but remember people really die, this is a real thing. Please be respectful," Harlan said.

A Colorado State Patrol addressed everyone stating that he wanted all the kids to have fun over the weekend at prom.

"We want you to have fun, but when you drink and drive, you're not only putting yourselves at risk, you're putting other people that are with you in the car at risk also. Even if your just drinking 3 to 1 beer, you are still impaired, especially being under the age of 21."

The students were then invited to participate in a demonstration event held by law enforcement. Students were asked to walk down from the bleachers and put on goggles that would make their eyes see everything as if they were intoxicated. At least 12 students stepped down and put goggles on.

Students tried to toss rings on cones while wearing the goggles, and a few students did mock sobriety testing with officers asking them to walk

a straight line, heel to toe without losing their balance. Students failed the test by walking outside of the lines.

After the goggles presentation it was announced that there would be a movie, on the giant projector, that had been placed in the middle of the gym. Students were told that if the movie was too much for them, they could leave, or look away at any time during the film.

The film was about 25 minutes long and showed actual footage from car accidents where deceased people were pulled out of the accidents in different ways. Many of the deceased were dismembered, and some had various empty bottles of alcohol in their vehicles that were being pulled out of the wreckage.

After the movie presentation it was announced that a video had been put together by student council members as an introduction to the mock accident that students would be going out to see. In the video that was shown, classmates of all the students watching could be seen preparing for prom, talking about how their nights would go, where they were going to eat, and how they would get together. There were two different crowds of classmates in the video. Students watched as one crowd of classmates was in one car, talking about their dinner and on their way to prom, while the other crowd of classmates was in another car, toasting and drinking alcoholic beverages, while the driver laughed and drank right along with them. In the scenario video the cars crashed into each other because the intoxicated vehicle moved into the wrong lane while both vehicles were driving.

All the students in the gym were then called out of the gym, to see

the mock car accident outside. As the students walked towards the accident behind the school in a grassy area, EMS could be seen, along with police officers arriving on site, with their lights turned on, as the accident was an emergency, being depicted.

Outside one car was completely turned over, with obvious blood stains on the door, and a deceased girl lying under the car, hugging the ground, with serious fatal injuries all over her face.

Classmates that were inside the vehicles began to run out and check everyone outside and inside of the cars to see if they were OK. The classmates were screaming and shouting at each other, "Is everyone OK, omg she's not breathing. Help. Help." One guy that left the car, attempted emergency efforts to help his friend who was laying outside of the vehicle in her red prom dress, with her head bleeding, but it was determined by EMS that the girl was deceased. The coroner arrived, and three classmates were pronounced deceased and taken on stretchers and covered up.

Everyone watching the mock accident could be seen really looking at the accident, and many students who had walked out initially laughing and smiling, were suddenly noticeably quiet and looking towards the accident.

Alexia Rivera a student who planned to attend prom over the weekend, and watched the mock accident, stated, "It was very scary to watch my friends, so tragic." When asked if it would help her to make good decisions over the weekend she stated, "Definitely, it will help me to keep others safe, too."

Student Oakley Sisneros stated that although he was not planning

to attend prom, the demonstration was a real eye-opener for him. "It's pretty nerve wracking seeing my classmate, underneath a car." When asked what he thought about seeing his classmates in the mock accident he stated, "I just wish they would have made better decisions. I hope they all stay safe this weekend."

Harlan stated that she felt the demonstration went well, "The kids at first think it's a big joke, but it is a sobering sight to see. When you get out there and see that, it's your friends, and think that something like that could happen and does happen on occasion. The kids said that it was upsetting, and it made them think."

Harlan stated that if she could send one message to the kids for the weekend she would say, "Go and have

fun but be responsible, be careful, and make good choices."

After the demonstration SLV Prom through a government grant, gave SLV After Prom \$1,000 for providing the mock demonstration for the kids, and because the juniors and seniors chose to sign posters and pledge not to drink on prom night.

**NOTICE OF ACCEPTING BIDS**  
 The Center Fire Protection District is accepting bids for a 1995 International tanker truck, sold as is. Bids shall be a minimum of \$2,500. Sealed bids will be accepted until 5:00 p.m. on May 10, 2024. Bids may be mailed to Center Fire Protection District, P.O. Box 845, Center, CO 81125. Bids will be opened at the Board's regular meeting on May 14, 2024. To view the above truck, please call John Anderson at 719-588-8005 for an appointment. The District reserves the right to reject any and all bids.  
**No. 4821 published in the Monte Vista Journal, Wednesday, May 1 and 8, 2024.**

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<b>No. 4822 published in the Monte Vista Journal, Wednesday, May 1, 8 and 15, 2024.</b>			

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# SLV man sentenced to 12 years for extortion, forgery, retaliating against judges

CONTRIBUTED

DENVER — A San Luis Valley man with recent ties to Gunnison County was sentenced earlier this week to 12 years in the Department of Corrections for committing extortion and threatening several judges, law enforcement officers, prosecutors, attorneys, and citizens in Gunnison, Montrose, and Alamosa counties over a two-year period.

Last month, a jury found Brett Andrew Nelson guilty on 20 of 24 counts brought against him by the statewide grand jury in April 2022.

According to the office of the Attorney General, who announced the sentencing in a press release on Wednesday, Nelson lived in a rural area north of Alamosa. No additional information, such as where Nelson specifically lived or when,

was available.

“Brett Nelson’s actions undermined the integrity of our legal system and endangered the safety of several Coloradans who were doing their job,” said Attorney General Phil Weiser, whose office prosecuted the case. “This conviction and sentencing advances the rule of law and protects public safety.”

State prosecutors presented evidence that, starting in 2018, Nelson used sovereign citizen-like tactics by starting to submit numerous fraudulent documents such as powers of attorney and default judgments against public officials and individuals involved in criminal and domestic relations cases where he was a defendant.

Nelson also filed documents containing threats directed at judges and lodged announcements of liens

on several judges’ properties in an attempt to influence case outcomes. In efforts to dismiss cases in which he was involved, he submitted powers of attorney, granting him authority to represent judges.

Other evidence presented at the trial demonstrated how Nelson submitted fraudulent quitclaim deeds on multiple properties, aiming to transfer ownership to himself. The properties belonged to various individuals involved in Nelson’s criminal and domestic relations cases, including victims and law enforcement officers. Nelson also filed false default judgments against individuals connected to his legal matters, including the mother of his child.

Nelson’s case went to trial in Gunnison County District Court. The jury returned a verdict after five hours of deliberations.

# Autopsy reveals Morphey died by homicide

STAFF REPORT

SALIDA — The autopsy report of Suzanne Morphey is complete and determined her death to be “Homicide by undetermined means in the setting of butorphanol, azaperone, and medetomidine intoxication,” according to a statement released by the Colorado Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

According to the National Institutes of Health Library of Medicine, butorphanol is a synthetic opioid painkiller, azaperone is a sedative used as a tranquilizer for pigs and elephants, and medetomidine is used by veterinarians to sedate and provide pain relief for dogs.

“The Colorado Bureau of Investigation and our law enforcement partners understand and appreciate the public interest surrounding this case,” said CBI Director Chris Schaefer. “The investigative team assembled to work this case continues to follow the evidence and only the evidence as we seek justice for Suzanne’s death.”

Last September, Morphey’s remains were found near the town of Moffat in Saguache County while investigators were conducting an



Suzanne Morphey

investigation unrelated to her death. She went missing in May 2020. Saguache County is in the 12th Judicial District. The investigative team will continue to consult with Twelfth Judicial District Attorney Anne Kelly.

The autopsy report was shared with the Morphey family as soon as the coroner received it.

No further information can be shared now, as this remains an active investigation.

Anyone with information can call the Morphey Tip Line at 719-312-7530 or email [cdps\\_suzannemorphey\\_tipline@state.co.us](mailto:cdps_suzannemorphey_tipline@state.co.us).

## 20th Annual Silver Thread Studio Tour Seeking Participants

The Creede Arts Council is proud to be hosting the annual Silver Thread Studio Tour on Saturday, August 17th from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. and is seeking artists from South Fork and Creede to participate. The Studio Tour showcases artists in the area – from emerging artists to those with national recognition. Previous venues have included private homes, studios, and art galleries where artists may exhibit their work.

Artists will share ideas, answer questions, and/or perform demonstrations for the public. Artwork will be showcased and available for purchase. All types of artists across mediums are encouraged to apply.

Artist locations must be between South Fork and Creede, ending at The Studios at Bristol. To download an application visit [www.creedeartsCouncil.com/silver-thread-studio-tour](http://www.creedeartsCouncil.com/silver-thread-studio-tour). For questions or more information, e-mail [creedearts@outlook.com](mailto:creedearts@outlook.com) or call the CAC at (719) 658 - 0312. The application deadline is June 1st, 2024.

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## CAC opens Call for Entry for Annual Mountain Shootout

CREEDE — The 2024 Mountain Shoot Out Call for Entry is now open. The deadline for entry is May 26.

CAC will have its traditional opening reception on June 14 at 5 p.m. at the Creede-Mineral County Visitor Center. The



photographs will be displayed in the Visitor Center through Sept. 15.

This year's judge, Cheré Waters, will select first through third place awards and two Honorable Mentions. Visitors will vote for their favorite photo, and the winner will receive the

People's Choice Award. The winning photo will be purchased by the CAC, framed, and displayed at the Creede & Mineral County Visitor Center.

For more information and to download the call for entry form, visit the website at <https://creedeartscouncil.com/mountain-shootout-photography-exhibit>.



Shake Russell



Jana Pochop



Erin Ivey



HOWLIN' DOG MUSIC GROUP



Nicole Haworth



Megan Clarisse Cave



Lisa Kori Chung



Michael O'Connor



Photos by Lyndsie Ferrell

Izzy Gonzales, Keith Pierce and Rylie Dominguez are only a few of the cast for the Upper Rio Grande School District's Del Norte Theatre's production of the classic 'Momma Mia,' which will open April 25 at the Del Norte High School Theatre.

## URGSD Theatre Group brings classic to the stage

By LYNDISIE FERRELL

DEL NORTE — For the past few years, the Upper Rio Grande School District (URGSD) Trades and Theatre Instructor Bill Sauvigne has been bringing the joy of theatre back to the stage in Del Norte and this spring's

performance of "Momma Mia" is not to be missed.

Though the theatre class is not part of the everyday curriculum at URGSD, Sauvigne and his students have made it a part of their everyday lives, dedicating time and attention to the production.

"We wanted to take the theatre program from dinner theatre to Broadway, so we started doing things differently. We wanted to do bigger plays, try to build the program up," said Sauvigne. "When we chose this play,

*Please see THEATRE on Page 2*

## Six months in, seven grants awarded

*Howlin' Dog Music Group is making it happen*

By PRISCILLA WAGGONER

ALAMOSA — Just six months after introducing themselves and their purpose to the public, Howlin' Dog Music Group (HDMG) — the Alamosa based, one-of-a-kind non-profit devoted to "keeping music alive," and helping highly gifted artists get their music out into the world — has just completed their first grant cycle. Seven artists coming from Colorado, New Mexico and Texas were recently awarded grants ranging from \$2,500 to \$3,000.

"The artists will be using the grant funding to record music," says Teri McCartney, who manages operations for the non-profit and is one of its co-founders. "Some will be recording here [at Howlin' Dog Studios] and others in recording studios in other places. The awards aren't enough to completely fund a recording, but they give the artists a pretty good start."

The grant recipients are separated

into three categories — Developing, Professional/Working and Legacy — but their profiles reveal a very diverse group of artists, ranging from those in the first stages of their careers to a seasoned, well-known artist who defines the word legendary. And each comes with a very unique story to tell.

Nicole Haworth, a Taos native, uses her lyrics to speak of her life. "I live nestled among the old growth trees, 8,000ft above the seas..."

Megan Clarisse Cave of Denver whose diagnosis of breast cancer at the age of 37 "propelled me even farther into music. I just really started to feel like it's now or never."

Lisa Kori Chung of Santa Fe whose discovery of the travails of her ancestors who immigrated to the U.S. inspired her album, "Daughter of the West", based on imagining if the music of Chinese and Japanese workers naturally became part of the mix of influences of American music.

Michael O'Connor of Texas who's been performing for almost 40 of the 60 years he's been alive, including as a lead guitarist with Ray Wylie Hubbard, Slaid Cleaves, Susan Gibson and dozens

*Please see GRANTS on Page 6*

## Monte Inked raises awareness, tattoos for a cause

By MARIE MCCOLM

ALAMOSA — On Saturday, April 20, at the Adams State University Student Union Building Court, Monte Inked tattooed for Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

The tattooing was approved by the Adams State board. The owner of Monte Inked LLC, Yolie Trujillo, was excited and pleased with the flash sale.

"We were so honored to have students, faculty members, and staff come down and receive tattoos from us," she said. "Today we did well over 100 tattoos at the university. It was a good turnout. This was the first of what we hope will be many. They like to do things like this at the college. This month was Sexual Assault Awareness month. We combined it with Suicide Awareness and Mental Health Awareness. We did like the semi colons, a lot

of my body my rules, type of stuff. We love to support causes, and this is a cause that we really wanted to support. We were very honored to do it."

Trujillo, who has been a tattoo artist for over 12 years and owned and operated Monte Inked LLC for over 3 years now, was excited when Adams State contacted her about 2 months ago.

"The college knows that we do a lot of these types of things at the shop," Trujillo said. "Every year, we do Mental Health Awareness. So, when we were contacted, we were super excited about doing this event. To be approved

*Please see INKED on Page 7*

Monte Inked set up shop at Adams State University on April 20 and tattooed for Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

Courtesy photo





# Alamosa commissioners address violence in Sexual Assault Awareness Month Proclamation

CONTRIBUTED

ALAMOSA — On April 10, the Alamosa County Board of County Commissioners issued a proclamation in recognition of the trauma caused by sexual assault. On hand to receive the proclamation were Tu Casa employees, an organization that provides social services, including assistance to victims of sexual assault and child sexual abuse.

The proclamation read in part, "Throughout Alamosa County, Colorado, in recognition of Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) we call attention to the fact that sexual violence is widespread and impacts every person in every community. SAAM aims to raise public awareness about sexual abuse, harassment, and as-

sault and educate communities about how to be involved in prevention. "This year's SAAM campaign theme, Building Connected Communities, calls on each of us to work together to prevent sexual abuse, harassment, and assault. We believe when anyone experiences sexual violence, every community member is affected. We must strive to build more connected, respectful, and inclusive communities to promote our collective well-being and protect against the risk of sexual violence. We believe all of our communities will be safer and stronger by making them more equitable for people of all gender identities and sexual orientations, races and ethnic backgrounds, ages, faiths, and abilities."

# THEATRE

Continued from Page 1

we knew everyone knows 'Momma Mia.' It has good name recognition. We would love to see more than just our local community members."

Students that participate in the program work countless hours during their free time to put together each production the theatre group has done.

"These students come after sports in the evenings and sometimes dedicate their personal time to the show. It's amazing how dedicated they are. At one point, I thought of retiring, but it was this group of students that kept me here. We really have become like a family," said Sauvigne.

One of the students who will be playing the character Donna in the coming production spoke about what she enjoyed when it came to the theatre group.

"I like being here with the people I know. We can be who we are and not worry about anything. We are like a family and that is what I love," said Izzy Gonzales.

Senior Keith Pierce who will be playing the character Bill had the same reaction when asked about what brings him back to class day after day.

"We just accept everyone here and for a school that is mostly athletic based, it's nice to have something different to focus on. We have some science clubs but outside of that, this is the only thing we can do that is not sports related," Pierce said.

The theatre group brings in other classes such as the choir and woodshop.

"We have the choir students come and help be people in the background, and we work with the woodshop students to create our sets and set designs. It really is an entire production from start to finish that brings in several of the other teachers and their students," explained Sauvigne.

Even though not all the students were in favor of a production like "Momma Mia," they still enjoyed the process of putting it together.

"It wasn't my first choice as a play, but I have had a lot of fun putting it together with the people I know and we really just have a great time," said Rylie Dominguez who will be playing the character Sophie.

This production will be performed on April 25 and 26 at 7 p.m. in the Del Norte High School Theatre, 950 French St., Del Norte.

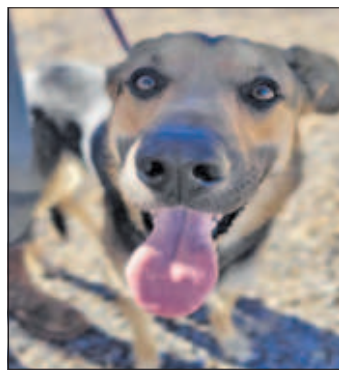
Synopsis of the play - On the eve of her wedding, a young woman's quest to discover the identity of her father brings three men from her mother's past back to the island they last visited 20 years ago. Non-stop laughs and explosive dance numbers, along with the magic of ABBA's hit songs including, "Super Trouper," "Dancing Queen," "Knowing Me, Knowing You," "Take a Chance on Me," "Thank You for the Music," "Money, Money, Money," "The Winner Takes It All," and "SOS," combine to make this sunny, funny show a trip down the aisle you'll never forget.

Tickets are available at [www.showtix4u.com/event-details/83242](http://www.showtix4u.com/event-details/83242).

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All Dee's properties are detailed in her blog.



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# San Luis Valley Area Real Estate

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### 193 Whispering Pines Drive • South Fork

Charming Mountain Retreat with Breathtaking Views Nestled in the picturesque town of South Fork CO, this finely finished Ranch Style Mountain home is a delightful blend of rugged elegance. With 2 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms, this home provides ample room for relaxation and rejuvenation. The open living area boasts a large Sunny Bay window, allowing natural light to flood the space and framing panoramic Mountain Views. The heart of this home is the well-appointed kitchen, including convenient lazy Susan storage. You'll find all the essentials: a refrigerator, cookstove, dishwasher. Perfect kitchen for entertaining your friends and family. Gather around the wood-burning stove in the living room, where warmth and comfort await. The home's insulation ensures a snug retreat during chilly mountain evenings. Step onto the inviting front sitting porch, sip your morning coffee, and observe the local wildlife. Mule deer and wild turkeys frequently visit the serene Ponderosa Valley Estates. A large laundry room with abundant storage, a wash sink, and a washer and dryer adds convenience to daily living. Park your vehicles in the 2-car garage and utilize the detached cement floor garage/workshop with water supply and 110/220 power for all your mountain toys or hobbies. This home is ready for you to make it your own—whether it's your dream residence, a home away from home, or a vacation rental. Explore nearby activities such as skiing, four-wheeling, hiking, and gold medal fly fishing. The Rio Grande River is just moments away. Enjoy the convenience of paved roads, city water sewer system, and your very own well and large .83-acre lot. Priced at \$479,500 this property offers an exceptional opportunity to embrace mountain living. Schedule your private showing today and embark on Your Mountain Adventure in this beautiful, tranquil Ponderosa Valley Estates neighborhood! Don't wait, call and schedule today! **MLS#810774 - \$479,500**



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# Del Norte community invited to adopt a tree

By LYNDISIE FERRELL

**DEL NORTE** — The Town of Del Norte recently announced that it was awarded funding through the Colorado Tree Coalition (CTC) in the amount of \$3,000 and is inviting homeowners to come and adopt a tree through this free program.

According to a press release issued by the town, “The CTC awarded \$113,463 in grants to 29 organizations in 2023. These grant projects allowed recipients to plant and manage trees in the community forests across Colorado. Grants are made possible through the Colorado State Forest Service, the Xcel Energy Foundation, Colorado Public-Radio and out CTC members and supporters.”

The town will be using half of

the funding to continue work on their tree trimming program and the other half to purchase 12 trees of varying types. According to the town, they will be buying 12, 15-gallon trees such as Maple, Hackberry, no thorn Honey Locust, Kentucky Coffee Trees and more.

Through the Adopt-a-Tree Program, homeowners around Del Norte can come into the town, fill out an application and choose the tree they would like to plant. Homeowners who are awarded the tree will need to commit to caring for the tree as long as they own their home. The best part about the program is that the Town of Del Norte will come dig the hole and plant the tree for homeowners! And it is all free!

Trees must be planted either on

the front of the property or on the green belt facing the street.

“The Adopt-a-Tree project’s goal is to plant a variety of tree species throughout the town’s neighborhoods to increase tree diversity, shade and beauty. Qualified homeowners must commit to their tree’s ongoing care which will include watering, fertilizing and trimming the tree as necessary.”

Through the program, the town hopes to plant four of the trees purchased on April 25 in honor of Arbor Day which is April 26 this year. Homeowners can visit the Del Norte Town Hall, 140 Spruce St., during business hours, which are Monday through Thursday from 7 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. or call 719-657-2708, for more information.

# GRANTS

more. “I show up on time, in tune. I love making music,” he writes.

Erin Ivey of Austin, who had the entire upper lobe of her left lung just a few months ago, is now learning to sing again with a new voice and a new perspective and has found that playing Native American wooden flute music makes sounds that heal body and soul.

Jana Pochop of Albuquerque is working with friends so that each new single of her music will be produced with its own artwork and video.

And finally, Shake Russell of Spring, Texas, well-known and much beloved by followers, tells his story in a straightforward way. “I came to Texas in 1972 with John Vandiver and The Ewing Street Times, played with him for a few years, then started my own bands. I have been playing and writing music in Texas for 52 years now.” Russell, who’s been the subject of numerous accolades including being inducted into the Texas Music Hall of Fame, recently had his newest song recorded by Miranda Lambert.

From its inception, HDMG has been both visionary and practical. No other group, non-profit or otherwise, is solely devoted to providing support to artists so that, eventually and with a lot of hard work, those artists may actually be able to work at doing what they love. Those who are on the board and guiding these efforts understand – first hand – what’s involved. They recognize it’s a lofty goal.

At the same time, they realize that there is “power in the collective,” and have created a model where, for just \$25 a month, “patrons,” can know they’re doing their part in making sure troubadours will continue into the future.

To date, HDMG already has 73 patrons, not counting those individuals making one time donations that range from smaller amounts to donations in the thousands. They’re hoping to have 100 patrons by the fall, which would make a second grant cycle possible this year.

And in exchange for their support, patrons will receive MP3s of the recordings the grant recipients produce.

By awarding these grants to artists across such a broad spectrum of experience, HDMG is doing precisely what the group of professional artists, experts in the music business and supporters of up and coming artists intended to do: offer a helping hand to artists who are trying to negotiate, “an ever-changing landscape that requires new methods and capabilities,” to be able to continue to work and share their music with the thousands of new and long-time listeners.

Seven grants after just being around for six months? Looks like a sign of real good things to come.

Continued from Page 1

Anyone with questions or the interest in becoming a patron are encouraged to go to HDMG’s website [www.howlingdogmusicgroup.org/](http://www.howlingdogmusicgroup.org/) where contact information can be found by scrolling to the bottom of the page.

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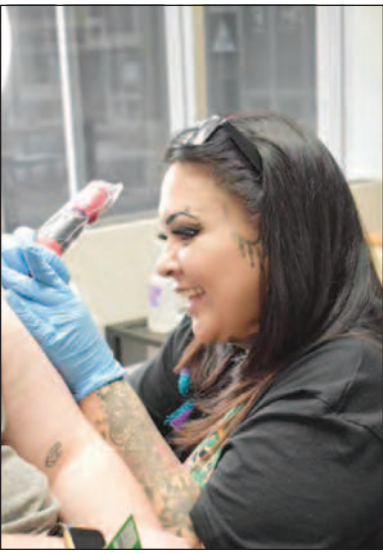
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Courtesy photo

The owner of Monte Inked LLC, Yolie Trujillo, pictured, said they did more than 100 tattoos.

# INKED

Continued from Page 1 —  
by the Adams State Board is huge to us. We heard that this is the first time ever that a tattoo shop has been approved to be on campus and tattoo, so it was exciting.”

Trujillo stated that Monte Inked LLC is very supportive of different causes.

“Last year we did over 300 tattoos for Mental Health Awareness,” she said. “We do self-harm cover-ups for about half off, if not more. I do gang affiliated tattoo cover ups for free. We also cover up scars for women who have had breast cancer and had to have mastectomies. We cover those for free. We are definitely a shop who really cares about people, and different causes.”

Trujillo said that people should not be forced to walk around with things they are uncomfortable with.

“I wanted to have a tattoo shop that not only creates beautiful art for people, but also helps people,” she said. “Sometimes it’s not all about money, it’s about helping people and making people feel good about themselves. We have always told our clients, if they ever need a place to come hang out, diffuse, if they ever even just need someone to talk to, we remind people that they are not alone. We want people to come down, hang out, talk, we are here for people. We love our jobs, but we love and care about people too.”

Trujillo first became interested in tattooing when she was younger. She has always been an artist but wanted to tattoo when she saw how beautiful it looked. She stated her biggest inspiration for tattooing is her sister. Trujillo is grateful to be doing what she loves because she stated that for her it’s a passion and it never feels like work. She stated that the group at her shop is more like family than co-workers.

“I have an amazing crew of over 15 people who all work at the shop that are like family. We try to treat everyone that comes to see us the same way too. We love the community of Monte Vista and love what we do,” she said.

Trujillo feels passionate about being able to tattoo for Sexual Awareness Month, at Adams State College. She stated her and her crew felt very fulfilled by being able to provide so many people with tattoos that would hopefully help them feel empowered by what they have gone through.

“We care about the cause, and we care about people. We look forward to going to many more future events,” she said.

Trujillo stated that for anyone who had missed the sale at the college that they are holding a \$20 flash sale this weekend for the same cause at her shop that is open to everyone.

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# USDA Forest Service invests more than \$232M to support schools, roads, other services

**By USDA**  
**WASHINGTON** — The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service today announced it is issuing more than \$232 million to support public schools, roads and other municipal services through the agency's Secure Rural Schools program, including \$12,574,121 for Colorado.

The program was reauthorized for fiscal years 2021 through 2023 through President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Fiscal year 2023 funds will be paid to 745 eligible counties in 41 states and Puerto Rico.

"National forests and grasslands cover more than 193 million acres, including across rural counties that are important partners in helping sustainably manage resources," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "Thanks to President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Secure Rural Schools program is able to contribute to the economic vitality and well-being of the communities intertwined with our forests."

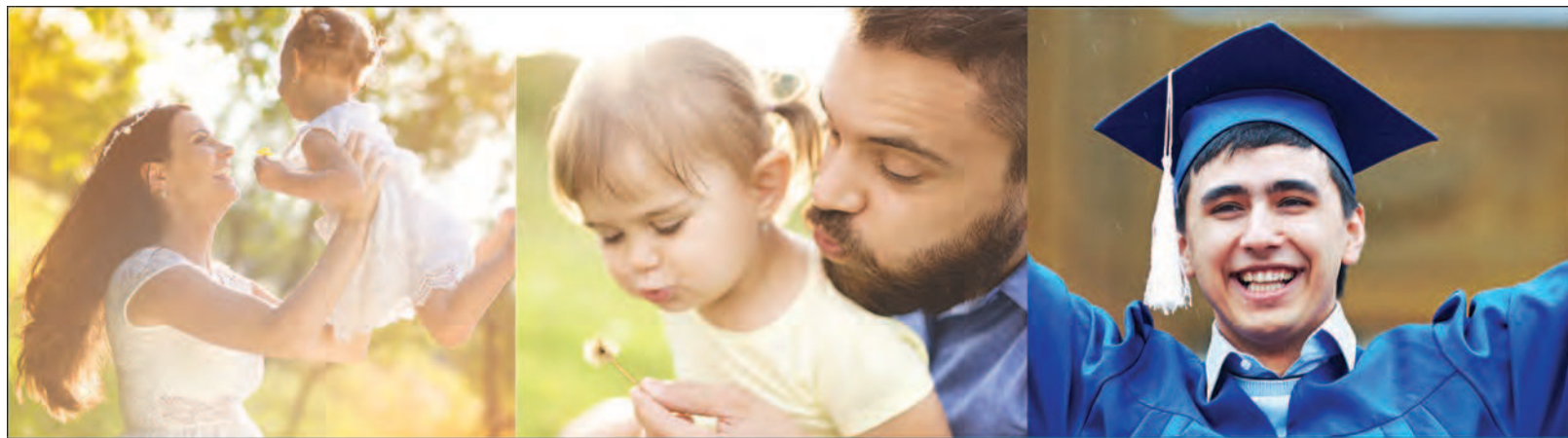
"The Secure Rural Schools program is just one of the ways the Forest Service supports communities nationwide," said Forest Service Chief Randy Moore. "This funding aids schools and roads, reimburses counties for national forest emergency services, and assists in creating community wildfire protection plans—all critical programs designed to enhance the quality of life in these communities."

payments, the Forest Service is using Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act funding to

improve forest conditions, support local economies and create jobs by investing in forest restoration projects, road and trail

maintenance, recreation opportunities and wood innovation development. Over the past 10 years, the Forest

Service has distributed \$2.4 billion through the Secure Rural Schools program.



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# San Luis Valley Area Real Estate

**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**  
 OWNER | BROKER | REALTOR®  
 M: 719-580-0770

**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®  
 M: 719-580-0770

River Island Ranch Approx. 5.27 Acres  
 \$131,000 | MLS #802486  
 147 Explorer Way South Fork, CO

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

Approx. 1.170 Acres on the South Fork River  
 \$239,000 | MLS #811448  
 149 Lots 2 & 3 Escondida Dr. South Fork, CO

**AUNDREA LILLARD**  
 ASSOC. BROKER | REALTOR®  
 M: 706-622-0799

**PRICE REDUCED**

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

**BRUCE STEFFENS**  
 OWNER | BROKER | REALTOR®  
 M: 719-580-0770

3 Bedroom, 2 Bath, approx. 1,904 sq. ft. and 50-Acres  
 \$625,000 | MLS #811695  
 13725 Rd. 104 S. Alamosa, CO

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

**Steffens & Co. Realty, Inc.**  
 719-873-1700  
 SteffensRealty@Go.Jade.org  
 30636 W. US HWY 160  
 South Fork, Colorado

**UNDER CONTRACT**

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

**BRUCE STEFFENS**  
 OWNER | BROKER | REALTOR®  
 M: 719-580-0770

**UNDER CONTRACT**

4 Bedroom, 4 Bath, approx. 3,804 sq. ft. and 10.320 Acres  
 \$1,150,000  
 3372 Bear Creek Circle, South Fork, CO

**AUNDREA LILLARD**  
 ASSOC. BROKER | REALTOR®  
 M: 706-622-0799

**UNDER CONTRACT**

Large Warehouse Approx. 6,579 sq. ft. on 1.57 Acres  
 \$150,000 | MLS #811519  
 1666 S. County Rd. 4 E. Monte Vista, CO

**BRUCE STEFFENS**  
 OWNER | BROKER | REALTOR®  
 M: 719-580-0770

Amazing Opportunity/Car Wash for Sale!  
 \$225,000 | MLS #809144  
 219 Main Street Antonito, CO

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

5 Bedroom, 4 Bath, approx. 4,572 sq. ft., and 160 Acres  
 \$975,000 | MLS #804903  
 4036 County Rd. Z Capulin, CO

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