



Inside this week's Monte Vista Journal

News in Brief

Lexi Heuser book signing on Feb. 1

LA JARA — Author Lexi Heuser will have a book signing at 1:30 p.m. on Feb. 1 at the Conejos Her first published story is titled “The First Adventure.” Heuser is a 2018 graduate of Centauri High School. For more information, call 719-274-5858.

CPAC board seeking representatives

MONTE VISTA — The Colorado Potato Administrative Committee (CPAC) is seeking nominations for the 2025 CPAC Board Elections.

CPAC is looking for representatives to fill the following member and alternate positions: Independent Handler, Seed Grower, Bulk Shipper, Alamosa County, Rio Grande County and Saguache County.

If you're a grower or industry person and are interested in being on the 2025 ballot, contact Jessica Bradshaw at jcrowther@coloradopotato.org or 719-852-3322 to discuss.

The 2025 CPAC Board Elections will take place at the Southern Rocky Mountain Agriculture Conference, at the Outcalt Complex at Ski-Hi, Feb. 4-6, during tradeshow hours. Potato industry members are encouraged to vote.

CAC opens call for entry for 2025 Willow Creek Journal

CREEDE — The Creede Arts Council recently announced that the call for entry for the 2025 Willow Creek Journal is officially open. The Willow Creek Journal is a community-centered annual creative anthology.

“Through the journal, we celebrate and nurture the creativity of artists of all ages,” CAC stated.

The Willow Creek Journal features poetry, prose, photographs, and artwork. The 2025 call for entry and submission instructions can be found online at www.creedeartsCouncil.com/willow-creek-journal.

For more information on the 29th edition of the Willow Creek Journal, contact CAC at creedearts@outlook.com or call 719-658-0312.

The deadline to submit work is March 1.

Pirate PTO organizes Family Sweetheart Dance

BY MARIE MCCOLM
MONTE VISTA — This year just in time for Valentine's Day, the Monte Vista Pirate Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) has put together its first-ever Family Sweetheart Dance. The dance will be an evening of entertainment, complete with dance-offs, different family activities, a live DJ, and, of course, some exciting dancing, on Saturday, Feb.

8, from 6 to 9 p.m. at the Jean Ritchey Central Auditorium next to Bill Metz Elementary.
Monte Vista Pirate PTO paired with the LOR Foundation to sponsor the event. Ingrid Watson, who is the PTO treasurer, spoke about the upcoming event and the excitement behind the event.
“Pirate PTO is partnering with the

LOR Foundation to set up a community family dance for Valentine's Day. We are really excited about it. Even though it is the PTO through the school district, it is open to the entire community. You see a lot of father/daughter dances, things like that but we really wanted to include everybody in this. We wanted to make this a family event, for everyone to come and hang out, and get to do things

with each other and have a good time,” Watson said.
Watson said that it is the hope of the PTO that children of all ages will attend with their families.
The event is free, but donations are always welcome and can be made to the Monte Vista School District Pirate PTO. The auditorium will be decorated.
Please see DANCE on Page 8A



Photo by Lyndsie Ferrell

In July of 2024, the six homes and the Wellness Center were opened to the community for tours.

Empowered health, inspired lives

Wellness Center at Rio Grande Hospital

BY PRISCILLA WAGGONER

ALAMOSA — “Wellness” – the word and the concept – has only been around in the United States for about 40 years. A 2010 article in the New York Times actually attributes its introduction to an episode of 60 Minutes when, in 1979, Dan Rather said, “Wellness, now there's a word you don't hear very often.”

Things have clearly changed in the past four decades. Wellness is now not only a very common word in public discourse; it has morphed into a massive industry that is only growing larger and populated with products ranging from supplements to smart watches to 24-hour fitness centers. Wellness has become a very big deal.

Arlene Harms, CEO of Rio Grande Hospital, came to the concept of well-

ness in a very unusual yet seemingly inevitable way when, in 2016 while at a meeting of the Colorado Hospital Association, she happened to sit in on a talk by a man named Dan Buettner about places in the world that he called blue zones.

“He had been commissioned by National Geographic to go to these places where people lived to be over a hundred years old.”

As she listened to descriptions of the commonalities among these places that, geographically, were thousands of miles apart, she was reminded of similar aspects of life in rural areas and places like Del Norte.

“The need for family,” she said. “A child being taught about purpose in life and raised by four or five adults. In another place, grandparents and great-grandparents danced and told their grandchildren their legacies. Besides diet and exercise, mindfulness was important. Meditation – a time to rest. And people who had practiced a

form of worship together – they actually lived eleven years longer. All of those things just sounded so much like what's found in a rural community.”

She immediately started thinking, “How can we teach our people about this?” especially with the growing prevalence of heart disease, diabetes, and cancer present in the community.

Initially, she thought of a wellness center but then soon transitioned to the idea of a cluster of little temporary cottages. “Places where people could come and stay while maybe they were having a procedure done over a period of time or parents who had a child in the hospital and wanted to be close by,” she said. “And the houses would incorporate all the principles of healthfulness.”

Harms took her idea to the hospital board. “I told them we need to move away from just treating the sick and move toward wellness. We have so much chronic disease in the valley – *Please see WELLNESS on Page 8A*



Courtesy photo

Weston Burkhardt – 2024 recipient of the MVC Dennis Kay Scholarship. Applications for the 2025 scholarship are being accepted.

MVC Education Foundation accepting scholarship applications

Open to MV Coop members and their families

CONTRIBUTED

MONTE VISTA — The Monte Vista Cooperative Dedication to Education Foundation has announced the presentation of two of their annual scholarships. The Dennis Kay Memorial Scholarship (\$6,000) and the Mike Kelly Memorial Scholarship (\$1,000).

The Dennis Kay Memorial Scholarship *Please see MV COOP on Page 6A*

Norovirus, Influenza A and Covid? Oh, my

It's that time of year

BY PRISCILLA WAGGONER

ALAMOSA — Hospitals in the San Luis Valley – specifically, San Luis Valley Regional Medical Center (SLVRMC) in Alamosa and Rio Grande Hospital (RG Hospital) in Del Norte – are reporting a prevalence in illnesses that are common this time of year and are encouraging people to take steps to prevent becoming sick.

The three illnesses health care providers report seeing the most are norovirus, Influenza type A and Covid. All three are highly contagious and come with symptoms that can range from uncomfortable to severe.

As of Wednesday, SLVRMC reported that, while high, the number of cases are plateauing off and RG Hospital reports that cases are still on the rise but expect the numbers to peak soon. But both health care facilities are advising people to use precautions.

Worldwide, norovirus is the leading cause of gastroenteritis with stomach flu-like symptoms including diarrhea, vomiting and fatigue. It can also lead to dehydration and stomach cramps. Other symptoms include fever, headache, and body aches.

Norovirus is spread through contaminated food and water or through contact with an

Please see ILLNESSES on Page 6A

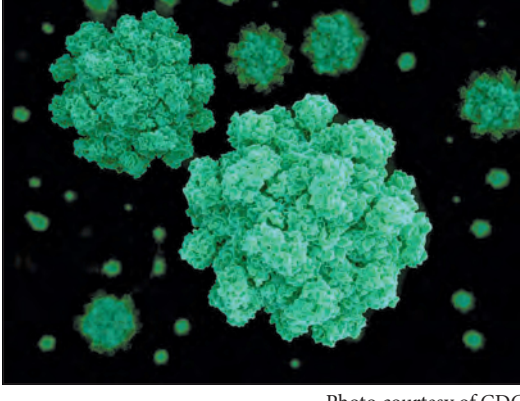


Photo courtesy of CDC

Microscopic image of the norovirus, influenza type A and Covid-19.

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OBITUARIES

Mary Louise 'Mary Lou' Bassett

April 9, 1940 – Nov. 17, 2024

Mary Louise "Mary Lou" Bassett, age 84, passed away peacefully on Nov. 17, 2024, at home in Cibolo, Texas, surrounded by her family.

Mary Lou was born on April 9, 1940 in Des Moines, Iowa, to Walter James "Pat" Malone and Addie Belle Boothe Malone. Mary Lou's parents moved the family to Phillips, Texas when she was 3 and she graduated from Frank Phillips High School.

After high school, she attended Frank Phillips College where she earned a dental assistant certification. Shortly thereafter, her father, who was the Personnel Administrator for Phillips 66 Petroleum Refinery, introduced her to a newly hired engineer, Frank Bassett. In 1961, Frank married Mary Lou in Borger, Texas.

She is survived by her five children, Skip Bassett (Becky), Kathlene Bassett (Khanh), Linda Cannon, Michael Bassett (Anne), Mary Scott (Mark); 11 grandchildren (Bryan, Rachael, Emilee, Alec, Reece, Aiden, Michael, Jr., Mack, Amber, Colton and Kamryn; three great-grandchildren (Melanie, Kade, and Sterling) and a soon to be fourth great-grandchild) and three brothers, Walt Malone, Bill Malone and Mike

Malone.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Frank Bassett, her parents Pat and Addie Belle Malone, sisters Eleanor "Pat" Stiehler and Linda Dodd and brother Robert Malone.

Being married to Frank was quite the adventure for Mary Lou and very different from her childhood in Phillips, Texas. After marrying Frank, they moved to Borger, Texas, where their five children were born. In 1973, they made the decision to move the family to Stavanger, Norway, where Frank worked on the first oil well in the North Sea. Frank's job later took the family to London, England; Bartlesville, Oklahoma; Bountiful, Utah; Kansas City, Kansas; and Lake Jackson, Texas. Through each move, Mary Lou supported the family and ensured her children acclimated well to each new location. They retired to Surprise, Ariz., and then later moved to Richmond Texas to be closer to family. After Frank's passing, Mary Lou relocated to Cibolo, Texas.

Mary Lou loved to play golf, a sport which Frank taught her. She was an amazing cook and a master at baking. Mary Lou loved the holidays and would get excited about the family gatherings.



She also loved her cabin in Creede, Colo., and would spend the summer months in Creede enjoying the wild-life, baking cookies to share with her friends at bingo and enjoying the cooler weather away from the heat of the Texas summers. She also enjoyed traveling with Frank and spending time with her kids and grandkids. She especially loved being able to FaceTime with her great grandkids.

She will be laid to rest next to Frank in Moberly, Mo.

Kirk Rhoton Thompson

April 1, 1946 – Jan. 21, 2025

Kirk Rhoton Thompson, 78, of South Fork, Colo., passed away peacefully on Jan. 21, 2025, in Highland Village, Texas. Kirk was born in Arizona on April 1, 1946, to June Rhoton Thompson and JW (Dub) Thompson.

The family settled in Carrollton, Texas, where he grew up with his siblings, John, Sharon, and Danny. He loved his family, and they cherished their time together at home where he made some of his most cherished memories. After graduating from RL Turner High School in 1964 and later from the University of Texas at Dallas, he dedicated his life to all things literary, teaching English, and helping students foster a love of reading. The impact he made on his students extended far beyond the classroom.

In 1995, Kirk rekindled a relationship with his high school friend, Michal Berry and they married in 2005. The mountains were calling so they packed up their Texas homes and moved to South Fork, Colo., where they resided in their home on the Rio Grande they called Riversong.

He was known to most as "Papa Kirk", especially to his grandkids. One of Papa Kirk and Michal's ("Sita") greatest joy was sharing Riversong with family and friends. Summers were filled with visitors who gathered in their home, enjoying views from every window — whether facing the Palisade Mountains, overlooking the Rio Grande River, or while sipping coffee on the east porch.

Papa Kirk loved seeing the wonder on others faces when wildlife would come to visit, and he cherished the beautiful sunsets and frequent rainbows. He also loved taking hikes in the mountains with his beloved dogs and stopping to journal



his thoughts along the way. For those lucky enough to have been invited to join him on a hike (especially his grandkids), he would share a story or life lesson, made all-the-more special by nature and the surroundings. These were cherished moments for so many of us.

Kirk was preceded in death by his parents, June and JW (Dub) Thompson, his wife, Michal Thompson, his brothers, John Thompson and Danny Thompson.

He is survived by his sister, Sharon Thompson; sister-in-law, Gayle Thompson and family, stepchildren, Sean Stone and wife Kathleen, Shelley Neustupa and husband Brad; his grandchildren, Cameron Neustupa, Cameron Stone, Colby Stone, Caden Stone, and Cody Neustupa, Stevie Qualls and husband Matthew, and he is survived by many lifelong friends.

He was a great Papa Kirk, husband, brother, uncle, stepfather, grandfather, friend, teacher, and writer.

We were all touched and blessed with his poems and writings over the years. Kirk was a prolific writer, journaling nearly every day throughout his life, and

as evidenced by the stacks and stacks of notebooks.

We wanted to share a poem he wrote in 2012 to the love of his life, his wife Michal. Titled, Alive at Sixty-Five and How Time is a river we can stand in, but never in the same time or river,

As it flows to the sea, to the end,
And we can ride the river till the end,
Enjoying the passing scene without ever knowing where it will end,

Or when,
But in the meantime,
As long as we ride tahe river together it will be sweet trip indeed.

And we will, together, watch the grand-kids grow up
And the kids grow old even as we grow older

And enjoy that too, me and you.
Sita and Papa Kirk, together these last 16 years,

From Tara and Ryan to Riversong, and who knows where,
But again, together,
Celebrating these passing years,
And though you are older, I'm trying to catch up,

Getting closer every year
And definitely looking older than you,
But you always were the beautiful one
And still are.

So, take my hand, and together we will ride the river
To the end.

Sharing
Loving
Living out our lives
Together.
Kirk Out

We will carry our memories of you in our hearts forever. Until we see you again.



Photo by John Waters

On the morning of Jan. 23, these Freedom Wagon passengers were utilizing the service on their way to work. From left to right, they are Jordan Gray, Anthony Espinosa, Alex Chavez, Stevie Brown, and Matt Torres.

Freedom Wagon is blazing a trail in Alamosa

BY JOHN WATERS

ALAMOSA — The Freedom Wagon, a project of the Alamosa Church of Christ that began in August 2024, offers free transportation along a route through Alamosa via their blue and black van with their name, Freedom Wagon, on the side.

Stevie Brown, with the church and is one of the shuttle drivers, said the project owes much to Erwin Young with the church. Brown expressed his gratitude, "He is the one who started this whole project."

According to Brown, the service begins at 8 a.m. at the Hope in the Valley and maintains the following scheduled stops hourly.

The schedule used is the times past the hour the shuttle stops to pick up passengers, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Depart Hope in the Valley, 3 (minutes past the hour); Alamosa Combined Courts, 4; SLV Behavioral Health, 5; SLVHAC Tiny Homes, 6; Advantage Treatment, Center, 9; Crossroads Turning Point, 10; La Puente Shelter, 14; Food Bank, 15; Alamosa Public Library, 18 (with

a five-minute break); Alamosa Senior Center, 26; Trinidad State College, 29; Safeway, 31; Adams State University, 34; Sierra Blanca Medical Center, 39; Walmart, 45 with a three-minute break; Porch Light Health, 49; and Tierra Nueva Apartments, 53.

Riders don't need to make a reservation. They simply show up at the stops a few minutes before the shuttle is scheduled, get on, and then get off at their desired destination. As a service, the Church of Christ provides, all rides are free. Brown proudly said the service runs on time, and passengers can pick up a brochure that includes the schedule onboard.

In the morning, I met Brown, who was driving the shuttle that day to the scheduled stop at the Alamosa Public Library; five passengers were on their way to work.

Passengers can contact the shuttle drivers directly by calling 719-588-6084.

The Freedom Wagon is a non-profit; donations are accepted by calling the phone number above.

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OPINION & EDITORIAL

Big hands

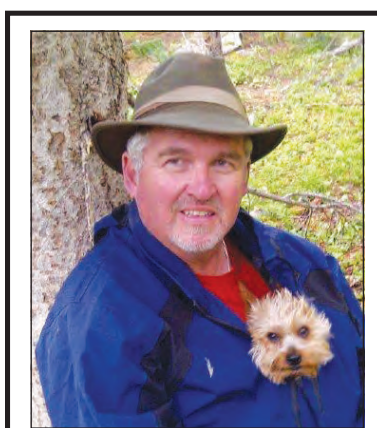
This past week I've really been missing my Dad, Fast Freddy, who passed away earlier this fall. He was 93 and ready for his reward. Those of us left behind when our loved ones die, never are quite ready for them to go. I was reminded of him as Ol' Dutch was on the hunt for some new leather gloves for use on the farm. I like to use deerskin gloves as they seem to outlast good old cowhide ten to one. And when I am working on barbed wire fences, leather is the material of choice to avoid getting poked.

Now you would think it would be a simple task to go to the local farm store and get a pair of new gloves. When I did just that, though, none of them fit these big ole paws. I jammed and I wiggled but no amount of finagling could get a pair on my hands. I can recall wearing XL size gloves and being unable to fit a cotton liner in them earlier in my life. Now, I can barely squeeze on a pair of 2XL. I really wonder what is going on. I do think my poor old hands are swollen quite a bit from working on the house and maybe a tad from the extra tonnage I am carrying around my middle, but I am not sure that's all the reason for it.

Ol' Dutch got to thinking – a dangerous proposition according to Miss Trixie – that my shoe size has also changed through the years. I can vividly recall wearing a size 10½ shoe in high school and now need a 12. My feet aren't the only thing to change. My waist size has changed dramatically since my early days, too. Miss Trixie says that's a result of not being able to keep my mouth shut, except to swallow. I would tell her that's like the pot calling the kettle black but I need some sleep tonight and want to be able to close my eyes without fear of her attacking me.

Scientists say that a person's ears never quit growing which is why old people look like Dumbo flying around the circus when they get elderly. And as bad as that sounds, it's still true.

So maybe my hands have grown more, too. I can recall my Dad having large hands and he always wore the big old cloth gloves with huge fingers. You know the kind. Cheap. And that was



Trout Republic
by Kevin Kirkpatrick

Freddy for sure. They reminded me of the old baseball mitts from the 1930's that had sausage size fingers and didn't even fold up to catch the ball.

When I first started to play baseball in my growing up years, Dad gave me his old baseball glove. I guess he had not kept up on the new designs and thought they were still like the old style ones. Thankfully, someone gave me a newer one so I did not have to suffer the ultimate embarrassment of using that old fat finger leather muff.

While working on the Railroad, I got a little spoiled in the glove department. They provided leather gloves to us free of charge. Therefore, I was never without a pair although they didn't last more than a week at best due to quality. They always came unstitched. Probably one of the top guys' wives owned the glove factory, I would guess.

The ongoing search at least brought back good memories of my Dad and that is always a blessing. Ol' Dutch is hoping that he can find some gloves to fit soon or I may have to wait til summer when this construction nightmare ends at least temporarily. If not, I may have to dig out that old baseball mitt and use it next.

Kevin Kirkpatrick spends his days fishing, hunting, AT'Ving, hiking or making people laugh. His email is Kevin@TroutRepublic.com. Additional news can be found at www.troutrepublic.com or on Twitter at TroutRepublic.



Time to get real about plastic recycling

I'm a dedicated recycler. I fret when I see people throwing garbage in with soda cans and empty water bottles. I've even been known to rescue recyclables from the trash – at my house, for sure, but also in public places if I think nobody's looking.

Granted, the success of recycling plastic is abysmal – the U.S. rate is roughly 7% – but in theory it can be done. So, I was delighted when I learned that Tucson, Ariz., where I live, was starting a pilot program to deal with hard-to-recycle plastics.

These aren't the containers that we can recycle curbside, numbers 1, 2 and 5, or even the bags we can take to stores for recycling. Hard-to-recycle plastics are everything else: caps and lids, food packaging, straws, all those little pieces of plastic too small for machines to deal with and all those other numbers that curbside and stores don't take.

Tucson's pilot program would take all of it, and a company called ByFusion would use steam and compression to press it into blocks – ugly blocks, in my opinion, but useful for making benches, counters, even tiny houses. The blocks would avoid tons of marine debris and carbon dioxide along the way. Count me in!

Within months, participation in the pilot program exceeded expectations. ByFusion couldn't handle all the plastic that was coming in. The city began storing the excess plastic and brought a second company into the loop: Hefty, a plastic-bag manufacturer.

Suddenly, the rules changed. The Hefty ReNew program was a collaboration between Reynolds Consumer Products, a manufacturer of various plastic products, and Dow Chemical Company. Now participants were asked to buy orange Hefty bags to collect their hard-to-recycle plastics. And what would Hefty do with all the

plastic that ByFusion couldn't handle?

Hefty was doing different things with plastic waste in different cities – making plastic lumber in Omaha, burning it for cement kiln fuel and “advanced recycling” in Atlanta. But when I asked a city official about Tucson's plan, I got no response about the fate of our plastic waste.

Meanwhile, the more I learned more about advanced recycling – aka pyrolysis – the less I liked it. Pyrolysis burns plastic to make fuel, and a 2023 report by two nonprofit environmental advocacy groups, Beyond Plastics and the International Pollutants Elimination Network, found that the pyrolysis process was “inefficient, energy-intensive and contributes to climate change.”

Yet Kevin Greene of the nonprofit Sustainable Tucson said there's a good chance a portion of our plastic waste will end up at a pyrolysis plant under construction in Eloy, a small town halfway between Tucson and Phoenix.

Meanwhile, many pro-recycling people are calling plastic recycling in all of its forms a “false solution” that mainly serves to relieve consumer guilt. In September, the California attorney general followed environmental groups in suing ExxonMobil for its “campaign of deception” around plastic recycling – one that has led people to buy more single-use plastics. ExxonMobil has since counter sued.

There's a growing realization that plastic is not so much a waste problem as it is a problem at its source. It creates health impacts in the low-income communities where the plastics are made, along with communities where those plastics are burned.

Until I learned more about pyrolysis, I too had felt relieved of guilt. So relieved, in fact, that in recent months I'd noticed myself making different, though small, consumer choices that left me using



Writers on the Range
By Karen Mockler

more plastic than before, each time thinking, I can orange-bag this!

It turns out that I'm not alone. A 2016 behavioral economics study found that when consumers think their waste might be recycled, they worry less about the amount of trash they generate and produce more of it.

Ideally, we'd do it all: reduce the flow of virgin plastic and deal responsibly with the glut of plastic waste, including pervasive microplastics that we humans have already choked the planet with.

But we don't seem to have the mental bandwidth to do that. Like a growing number of folks, I've concluded that instead of recycling plastic, we need to focus on phasing out its use everywhere we can.

For now, I've got a boxful of orange Hefty bags under my sink – yours if you want them.

Karen Mockler is a contributor to Writers on the Range, writersontherange.org, an independent nonprofit dedicated to spurring lively conversation about Western issues. She is a writer in Tucson, Ariz.

LETTERS POLICY

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

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

to the sender or discarded.

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

Political letters may be limited due to space constraints.

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Sutherland Company Ranch: Conserving a legacy in the Valley

By JOCELYN CATTERSON
Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust

DEL NORTE — The Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust (RiGHT) proudly announces the successful conservation of the historic Sutherland Company Ranch, marking our 60th conservation easement and a major milestone of over 35,000 acres conserved across the San Luis Valley.

Located in Saguache County, the 1,800-acre Sutherland Company Ranch is steeped in history. In the early days of the valley, this ranch played a vital role in the cattle industry. When the railroad extended to Moffat, cattle from across the region were staged at this ranch before being loaded onto trains bound for destinations across the West. Today, the ranch is still actively managed for cattle and hay production under the stewardship of Lynn Sutherland, who has dedicated her life to this land and its history.

With over 1,200 acres of wetlands, the ranch provides critical habitat for wildlife, including migrating Sandhill Cranes, big game species, and the at-risk Horned Lark. Protecting this ranch from increasing development pressures ensures that its vibrant ecosystems and historical legacy remain intact for future generations.

“We are honored to partner with Lynn Sutherland to conserve this unique piece of San Luis

Valley history,” said RiGHT Executive Director, Laura Cusick. “Landowners like Lynn, who have a deep commitment to stewardship and conservation, make our work possible.”

2024 has been a monumental year for RiGHT, as we also celebrate the completion of the Broken Box II Ranch conservation easement. This 160-acre property near Alamosa features rare playa wetlands sustained by artesian wells, providing vital habitat for the Greater Sandhill Crane. Combined with the adjacent easement completed in 2022, this project secures 400 acres of critical habitat and open space. As Jonathan Lopez, the ranch’s owner, reflected, “It feels good looking out over our place in the evening now knowing that it will look just like this in 200 years.”

These projects, along with other easements closed in 2024, have brought RiGHT’s 2024 conservation efforts to a total of 3,765 acres in the San Luis Valley, including 2,177 acres of wetlands and over 15 miles of riparian corridors, contributing to the health of the Rio Grande watershed and the region’s agricultural heritage.

The Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust remains committed to protecting the land, water, and way of life that define the San Luis Valley. To learn more about our work or support future conservation projects, visit www.rightslv.org.



Photo courtesy of Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust

Sutherland Company Ranch.

Trout Unlimited youth scholarships available



CONTRIBUTED

ALMONT — Colorado Trout Unlimited will host the Annual River Conservation and Fly-Fishing Camp for teens aged 14-18 at AEI Basecamp in Almont from June 8-14.

The San Luis Valley Trout Unlimited Chapter (SLVTU) is proud to sponsor two scholarships for local youth to attend this unique camp, covering registration fees and tuition costs.

Since 2006, youth from across Colorado and beyond have gathered

for this week-long program, which blends STEM-based conservation education with hands-on fly-fishing instruction. Campers will gain an in-depth understanding of river ecosystems, engage in conservation projects, and develop fly fishing skills under the guidance of experienced mentors.

This camp offers an immersive experience for teens passionate about the outdoors, fly fishing, and conservation. Participants will form meaningful

connections with peers who share similar interests, building friendships and memories that last a lifetime. The program also introduces campers to the complexities of water management in the West and the balance between conservation and recreation.

For more information or to apply, contact SLVTU Education Coordinator Kevin Milder at slvtroutunlimited@gmail.com. Milder will provide details and a link to the application.

Trout Unlimited is offering two youth scholarships to attend the Annual River Conservation and Fly-Fishing Camp held in June.

Photo courtesy of Trout Unlimited

Have Peace and Keep Calm in Your Daily Life

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, or be stressed-out and 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 like God 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 can calm down and cheer up as you live in Him!

For more on this topic, order Joyce’s four-part teaching resource *Calm, Cool and Collected*. You can also contact us to receive our free magazine, *Enjoying Everyday Life*, by calling (800) 727-9673 or visiting www.joycemeyer.org. Joyce Meyer is a New York Times bestselling author and founder of Joyce Meyer Ministries, Inc. She has authored more than 150 books, including *BATTLEFIELD OF THE MIND* and *OVERCOMING EVERY PROBLEM (FaithWords)*. She hosts the *Enjoying Everyday Life* program, which is broadcast to millions in over 110 languages. For more information, visit 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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Valley-Wide Health Systems matches funds totaling \$600,000 by donating the Heart & Eagle Mobile Unit to The Attainment Network

ALAMOSA — In effort to transform education to workforce, Valley-Wide Health Systems (Valley-Wide) is proud to announce the donation of its Heart & Eagle Mobile Unit to The Attainment Network. The fully equipped mobile unit includes one medical exam room and one dental operatory, which will now support the creation of a new Mobile Learning Lab.

The Mobile Learning Lab will offer career exploration, experiential learning and concurrent enrollment to rural learners. The purpose of transforming the mobile unit into a Mobile Learning Lab is to support any San Luis Valley (SLV) high school student that is interested in Certified Nurse Assistant and Medical Assistant training as well as career exploration.

“We are excited to partner with The Attainment Network in supporting their mission to address the healthcare workforce needs in the San Luis Valley, while expanding hope and opportunity for learners,” said

Jania Arnoldi, President and CEO at Valley-Wide Health Systems. “We are confident that our donation of the mobile unit will provide an opportunity to students who might be interested in the healthcare field as well as providing an opportunity for them to give back to our community later down the road.”

The Attainment Network San Luis Valley Career-Connected Pathways Partnership has been a longstanding advocate for transforming education to workforce systems for learners in healthcare pathways, with the ultimate goal of increasing economic opportunity and health equity for SLV residents.

“The Heart & Eagle Mobile Unit donated by Valley-Wide Health will transform school-to-work opportunities in the Valley,” said Ashley Maestas, Pathways Director at The Attainment Network. “By working hand-in-hand with all 14 school districts in the region, higher education institutions, community organizations, and healthcare employers, we’re

committed to equipping learners with the skills and credentials they need to thrive in high-value healthcare careers. This mobile unit brings that vision to life — providing learners with access to meaningful career opportunities while addressing the Valley’s urgent healthcare workforce needs.”

The Attainment Network will continue to work with local partners like Colorado Workforce Development Council who donated \$16,000 to support the Mobile Lab. It is a commitment of the Attainment Network to ensure the unit is used to its full potential, bringing high-impact learning opportunities to SLV students. The Mobile Learning Lab is housed in the Moffat School District, with a schedule ready to engage students with hands-on learning skills to support their professional growth.

###

About Valley-Wide Health Systems: Valley-Wide Health Systems (Valley-Wide) is committed to providing high-quality, safe, effective

and integrated health care services in a respectful and inclusive manner for all, with special consideration for medically underserved populations.

Established in 1976, Valley-Wide is a private non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation governed by a volunteer community board. Valley-Wide has services sites located throughout rural counties in Southern Colorado. Services include Medical, Dental, and Behavioral Health, along with

multiple special programs. Valley-Wide serves all ages through a family-practice focused approach. Emphasis is placed on assisting the patient and achieving their health outcomes in the most appropriate way.

Fueled by a passion to provide quality health care for all people, Valley-Wide has become a national leader in the health care field and a model for comprehensive, community-based health care.



Courtesy photo

Valley-Wide Health Systems continues to give back to its communities.

San Luis Valley Scoreboard Basketball 2024-2025

BOYS

Creede 59	Moffat 30
Sierra Grande 56	Cotopaxi 34
Sangre de Cristo 50	Centennial 30
Hoehne 53	Center 37
Centauri 58	Monte Vista 41
Bayfield 58	Monte Vista 43
Centauri 74	Ignacio 40
Center 57	Crested Butte 49
Del Norte 38	Custer County 35
Sanford 65	South Park 17
Sierra Grande 67	Creede 18
Centennial 64	Moffat 25
Primero 43	Sangre de Cristo 29
Center 46	Sargent 42
Del Norte 35	Sangre de Cristo 25

GIRLS

Del Norte 53	Sangre de Cristo 11
Sargent 39	Center 26
Sierra Grande 49	Creede 35
Centennial 63	Moffat 23
Center 56	Crested Butte 21
Sanford 46	South Park 16
Del Norte 54	Custer County 13
Centauri 59	Ignacio 18
Primero 42	Sangre de Cristo 36
Centauri 52	Monte Vista 31
Hoehne 59	Center 38
Sierra Grande 35	Cotopaxi 25
Creede 65	Moffat 19

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ILLNESSES

Continued from Page 1A

infected person. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the germs can live on any surface – doorknobs, countertops, tabletops, glassware, etc. – for up to 12 hours and on contaminated carpet for up to 12 days.

The good news? It's preventable by just washing your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Unfortunately, alcohol-based products like hand sanitizer don't work on norovirus, so it's back to scrubbing with soap and water.

If you become sick, don't prepare food or drink for other people for at least 48 hours after the symptoms have passed. And continue to wash your hands because, even if you feel better, norovirus can live in your poop for up to two weeks, so continuing to be diligent about washing hands is important.

Also, many disinfectants don't kill norovirus so wear gloves while cleaning up or washing the clothes of a sick person. To clean surfaces, put five tablespoons of bleach in a gallon of water and let it sit on the surface for five minutes.

Norovirus typically peaks around mid to late January because, as is a common scenario, people gather together during the holidays. A person suddenly feels very sick for one or two days and then feels better. Assuming they just had the stomach flu, they go home and spend time with other people, not realizing they're still highly contagious and spreading norovirus to others.

So, what's the takeaway? It should sound very familiar by now. Prevent getting sick by washing your hands.

According to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Education, cases of Influenza A are also surging in Colorado with a nationwide map showing our state to be in the "high" range of infection.

Flu, or influenza, is a common respiratory virus that can cause mild to severe illness. Anyone can get the flu, but some people are at higher risk of serious complications, including hospitalization and death, including those who are 65 years and older; have certain chronic medical conditions like asthma, diabetes, and heart disease; are pregnant or are younger than 5 years old.

Flu is also very contagious and can spread when someone with the flu coughs, sneezes, or talks and the germs land in your mouth or nose or you touch a surface or object that has the flu virus on it and then touch your mouth, nose or eyes before washing your hands.

People usually begin to feel symptoms two days after being exposed and infected with the virus, but, sometimes, symptoms won't show up for up to four days after being infected.

The symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, head-

aches and feeling really tired. Some people may vomit and have diarrhea, although that's more common in children than adults. Symptoms usually go away after three to seven days but a cough and fatigue could last for more than two weeks.

The best way to prevent flu-related illnesses is to get a flu vaccine every year (it's not too late). To find a provider with flu vaccines, go to vaccines.gov/find-vaccines. Enter your ZIP code, then click "Search."

Anyone who doesn't have health insurance is eligible for a flu vaccine at low or no cost from a provider with publicly funded vaccines. Go to <https://cdphe.colorado.gov/find-free-low-cost-vaccine-provider> to find a provider to meet that need.

And to complete this trifecta (where nobody is a winner), no, Covid-19 has not gone away, and, yes, cases in Colorado are also high right now.

According to <https://cdphe.colorado.gov/viral-respiratory-diseases-report> (Colorado's Viral Respiratory Disease Dashboard), the number of people with influenza is greater than those with Covid-19 but all are higher than at other times of the year because of the scenario mentioned above. (It's not too late to get vaccinated.)

According to coverage by Colorado Public Radio, on Wednesday, Dr. Rachel Herlihy, the state epide-

miologist, was quoted as saying she thought virus levels in Colorado could be high for several weeks. Trends for flu and Covid-19 look like they might be declining but numbers are still high.

"I like to talk about the fact that when we reach the peak of flu season, that's really only the half-way mark," Herlihy said. "There's still lots of influenza out there. We know that COVID remains unpredictable. We're likely to see additional waves of COVID as we move further into the spring and summer, given that we've had a pretty mild season so far."

So, what's the takeaway? "Stay home and away from work or school if you're sick. Wearing a mask prevents the spread of a virus, and hand sanitizing does as well, as does wiping down horizontal surfaces at home.

"If you suspect noroviruses in your household, lots of bleach. Bleach is your friend. Bleach will kill all the respiratory viruses and will kill norovirus."

People are undoubtedly tired of reading about viruses and ways to prevent them after several years when that dominated the conversation. But it's a pretty sure bet that reading about it and taking precautions is a lot more comfortable and quick than the alternative. Just a thought.

And it's not too late to get vaccinated.

MV COOP

Continued from Page 1A

scholarship is a four-year agricultural scholarship meaning prospective recipients must be enrolled in an agricultural related major. The scholarship is renewed automatically at the end of each semester upon proof of full-time enrollment and an accumulative 2.5 grade point average (GPA), in the student's first year and 2.75 the remaining three years. The scholarship is dispersed in \$500 increments at the end of each semester in the student's first two years raising to \$1,000 increments in their third and fourth years and requires consecutive enrollment the entire four years with the exception of the summer semester.

The Mike Kelly Memorial Schol-

arship awards in two installments of \$500 in each semester pending submission of the previous semester's grades and requires a minimum of a 2.5 GPA.

Scholarship applicants must either be a member or immediately related to a Monte Vista Co-Op member, be a high school or equivalent graduate as well as submit to an 'in-person' interview and a transcript of current grades.

Interested parties can pick up an application at the Monte Vista Co-Op Main Office at 1901 E Hwy 160 in Monte Vista or download one at www.mvcoop.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/MVC-Scholarship-Application-2.pdf. Deadline for application is Jan. 31.

**A CALL FOR NOMINATIONS
CENTER FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT**

§1-13.5-501, 1-13.5-1102(3), 32-1-905(2), C.R.S.
To the electors of the Center Fire Protection District of Saguache, Rio Grande, and Alamosa Counties, Colorado.
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that an election will be held on the 6th day of May, 2025, between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. At that time, three (3) directors will be elected to serve four (4) year terms. Eligible electors of the Center Fire Protection District interested in serving on the board of directors may obtain a Self-Nomination and Acceptance form from the District Designated Election Official (DEO):

Kimberlee Schuett
P. O. Box 845
Center, CO 81125
970-396-5396

Request a Self-Nomination form through e-mail: Centerfire1941@gmail.com
The deadline to submit a Self-Nomination and Acceptance is close of business on February 28, 2025, 5:00 p.m. including e-mail requests. (not less than 67 days before the election).
NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN, an application for an absentee ballot shall be filed with the designated election official no later than the close of business on Tuesday preceding the election, April 29, 2025.
CENTER FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT
Kimberlee Schuett
Designated Election Official
No. 4893 published in the Monte Vista Journal, Wednesday, January 29 and February 5, 2025.

**COMBINED NOTICE - PUBLICATION
CRS §38-38-103 FORECLOSURE SALE NO. 24-1125**

To Whom It May Concern: This Notice is given with regard to the following described Deed of Trust:

On October 29, 2024, the undersigned Public Trustee caused the Notice of Election and Demand relating to the Deed of Trust described below to be recorded in the County of Rio Grande records.

Original Grantor(s)	Jacqueline B Gilman		
Original Beneficiary(ies)	United States of America acting through the Rural Housing Service or successor agency, United States Department of Agriculture		
Current Holder of Evidence of Debt	United States of America acting through the Rural Housing Service or successor agency, United States Department of Agriculture		
Date of Deed of Trust	August 03, 2012	County of Recording	Rio Grande
Recording Date of Deed of Trust	August 07, 2012		
Recording Information (Reception No. and/or Book/Page No.)	201200415383	Book:	561 Page: 1100-1106
Original Principal Amount	\$151,000.00		
Outstanding Principal Balance	\$129,828.55		

Pursuant to CRS §38-38-101(4)(i), you are hereby notified that the covenants of the deed of trust have been violated as follows: Failure to pay principal and interest when due together with all other payments provided for in the evidence of debt secured by the deed of trust and other violations thereof.

THE LIEN FORECLOSED MAY NOT BE A FIRST LIEN.
That part of the N 1/2 SE 1/4, Section 14, Township 39 North, Range 7 East, New Mexico Principal Meridian, County of Rio Grande, State of Colorado, described as follows: Commencing at the E 1/4 corner of Section 14; Thence N 89°02'00" W, 2258.70 feet; Thence S 01°01'30" W, 30 feet to the true point of beginning; Thence continuing S 01°01'30" W, 300 feet; Thence N 89°02'00" W, 290 feet to the West line of the SE 1/4 of said Section 14; Thence N 01°01'30" E, 300 feet along the West line of the SE 1/4 Thence S89°02'00" E, 290 feet, more or less, to the true point of beginning.
Purported Common Address: 1308 W. County Road 3 North, Monte Vista, CO 81144.
Purported common address: 1308 W. County Road 3 North, Monte Vista, CO 81144.
THE PROPERTY DESCRIBED HEREIN IS ALL OF THE PROPERTY CURRENTLY ENCUMBERED BY THE LIEN OF THE DEED OF TRUST.

NOTICE OF SALE

The current holder of the Evidence of Debt secured by the Deed of Trust, described herein, has filed Notice of Election and Demand for sale as provided by law and in said Deed of Trust.

THEREFORE, Notice Is Hereby Given that I will at public auction, at 10:00 A.M. on Wednesday, 02/26/2025, at Public Trustee Office, 925 6th St.Rm.103, Del Norte, CO 81132, sell to the highest and best bidder for cash, the said real property and all interest of the said Grantor(s), Grantor(s)' heirs and assigns therein, for the purpose of paying the indebtedness provided in said Evidence of Debt secured by the Deed of Trust, plus attorneys' fees, the expenses of sale and other items allowed by law, and will issue to the purchaser a Certificate of Purchase, all as provided by law.

First Publication 1/8/2025
Last Publication 2/5/2025
Name of Publication Monte Vista Journal

IF THE SALE DATE IS CONTINUED TO A LATER DATE, THE DEADLINE TO FILE A NOTICE OF INTENT TO CURE BY THOSE PARTIES ENTITLED TO CURE MAY ALSO BE EXTENDED;
DATE: 12/31/2024
Caricia Johnston, Public Trustee in and for the County of Rio Grande, State of Colorado

Caricia Johnston

By: Caricia Johnston, Public Trustee
The name, address, business telephone number and bar registration number of the attorney(s) representing the legal holder of the indebtedness is:
Amanda Ferguson #44893
Halliday, Watkins & Mann, P.C. 355 Union Blvd., Suite 250, Lakewood, CO 80228 (303) 274-0155
Attorney File # CO23515
The Attorney above is acting as a debt collector and is attempting to collect a debt. Any information provided may be used for that purpose.

No. 4887 published in the Monte Vista Journal, Wednesday, January 8, 15, 22 and 29 and February 5, 2025.

**COMBINED NOTICE - PUBLICATION
CRS §38-38-103 FORECLOSURE SALE NO. 24-1126**

To Whom It May Concern: This Notice is given with regard to the following described Deed of Trust: On November 7, 2024, the undersigned Public Trustee caused the Notice of Election and Demand relating to the Deed of Trust described below to be recorded in the County of Rio Grande records.

Original Grantor(s)	Randy A Velarde		
Original Beneficiary(ies)	United States of America acting through the Rural Housing Service or successor agency. United States Department of Agriculture		
Current Holder of Evidence of Debt	United States of America acting through the Rural Housing Service or successor agency. United States Department of Agriculture		
Date of Deed of Trust	June 26, 2020		
County of Recording	Rio Grande		
Recording Date of Deed of Trust	June 29, 2020		
Recording Information (Reception No. and/or Book/Page No.)	202000439175	Book:	600 Page: 5684-5691
Re-Recording Date of Deed of Trust			
Re-Recording Information (Reception No. and/or Book/Page No.)	September 30, 2020		
202000440102 Book: 601 Page: 3345-3352			
Original Principal Amount	\$186,600.00		
Outstanding Principal Balance	\$62,663.09		

Pursuant to CRS §38-38-101(4)(i), you are hereby notified that the covenants of the deed of trust have been violated as follows: Failure to pay principal and interest when due together with all other payments provided for in the evidence of debt secured by the deed of trust and other violations thereof.

THE LIEN FORECLOSED MAY NOT BE A FIRST LIEN.
Lot 2, in Block 4, Tierra Del Sol Estate, P.U.D., Filing No. 1, The Plat of which was filed October 3, 2003, Under Reception No. 379886 in the Office of the Clerk and Recorder of Rio Grande County, Colorado, in Rio Grande County Colorado. Purported common address: 740 Tyndall St, Monte Vista, CO 81144.
THE PROPERTY DESCRIBED HEREIN IS ALL OF THE PROPERTY CURRENTLY ENCUMBERED BY THE LIEN OF THE DEED OF TRUST.

NOTICE OF SALE

The current holder of the Evidence of Debt secured by the Deed of Trust, described herein, has filed Notice of Election and Demand for sale as provided by law and in said Deed of Trust.

THEREFORE, Notice Is Hereby Given that I will at public auction, at 10:00 A.M. on Wednesday, 03/12/2025, at Public Trustee Office, 925 6th St.Rm.103, Del Norte, CO 81132, sell to the highest and best bidder for cash, the said real property and all interest of the said Grantor(s), Grantor(s)' heirs and assigns therein, for the purpose of paying the indebtedness provided in said Evidence of Debt secured by the Deed of Trust, plus attorneys' fees, the expenses of sale and other items allowed by law, and will issue to the purchaser a Certificate of Purchase, all as provided by law.

First Publication
Last Publication
Name of Publication 1/15/2025
2/12/2025
Monte Vista Journal

IF THE SALE DATE IS CONTINUED TO A LATER DATE, THE DEADLINE TO FILE A NOTICE OF INTENT TO CURE BY THOSE PARTIES ENTITLED TO CURE MAY ALSO BE EXTENDED;
DATE: 1/8/2025
Caricia Johnston, Public Trustee in and for the County of Rio Grande, State of Colorado

Caricia Johnston

The name, address, business telephone number and bar registration number of the attorney(s) representing the legal holder of the indebtedness is:
Amanda Ferguson #44893
Halliday, Watkins & Mann, P.C. 355 Union Blvd., Suite 250, Lakewood, CO 80228 (303) 274-0155
Attorney File # CO23556/PT#
The Attorney above is acting as a debt collector and is attempting to collect a debt. Any information provided may be used for that purpose.

No. 4889 published in the Monte Vista Journal, Wednesday, January 15, 22 and 29 and February 5 and 12, 2025.

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719-754-3594

WELLNESS Continued from Page 1A

we need to teach people how to not be sick," she said.

The board bought into the idea almost immediately.

Harms brought in people from the University of Colorado and, along with staff and others, held eight-hour sessions discussing how to make this small community of homes imbued with the principles of wellness a reality. "We talked about the environmental part of it, the physical wellness, the whole bit," she said. And when she felt ready, she took the concept to the town board who loved it, as well.

"That was on Monday," she says. "On Thursday, the pandemic hit and the hospital board said no, no. We're not going to think about this right now. We don't even know what we'll look like after this is over."

Harms clearly understood the need for a shift in focus but it didn't stop her from thinking and planning and expanding upon ideas. "I did it because I believe that, in ten years, we're going to be healthier."

Once the pandemic was passed, work on the project resumed and, in July of 2024, the six homes and the Wellness Center were opened to the community for tours and explanations.

The project, which is increasingly expansive and holistic, is guided by four basic principles: diet, exercise, community and mindfulness encapsulated in the overriding vision: "empowered health and inspired lives."

On the grounds of Rio Grande Hospital, there is a cluster of six short term cottages - four decorated and furnished to reflect principles from each of the four different countries around the globe with communities focused on healthfulness - Okinawa, Japan; Sardinia, Italy; Ikara, Greece and Costa Rica - and two cottages that reflect the geography and

landscapes of the valley.

She points to the example of the cottage that mirrors the community in Costa Rica. "Grandparents are such a key part of life there so there's information in the cottage about the importance of relationships." Harms then pauses for a moment. "It is so great to see all of this come to fruition."

The same philosophy is at the heart of the Wellness Center. People are encouraged to walk outside for exercise, as that is where the greatest benefit can be found, and the creation of trails is one of their long-term plans.

But, for those who would prefer to stay inside or those times when the weather is too cold, there is an exercise room, equipped with Nordic equipment and exercise modules loaded on to screens with changing landscapes where a person can imagine working out. There is a space dedicated to mindfulness and meditation with benches for sitting quietly and massage chairs, and a kitchen where cooking classes are offered to staff and community members using ingredients like (edible) lavender. There are also spacious and beautifully decorated rooms for meetings, receptions, family reunions and other functions.

"When building the wellness center, we found a lot of scientific research about healing gardens and the benefit of being outdoors," she said. As a result, one of Harms' most favorite additions is a 32-foot, solar powered growing dome where, next year, fresh, organic vegetables and spices will be grown and made available to staff and members of the community.

"Right now, we have winter vegetables - broccoli, cabbage, collard greens, Brussel sprouts, all coming here in about 3 weeks. We'll give that away to employees and people who are staying in the tiny houses or people from the community who want to come here for food."

People are also encouraged to go into the dome and just sit and soak up the warmth. It can be quite healing, she says.

Harms' plans are numerous and her vision for what can be done without limit, but she is also committed to measuring the impact of these new practices on people's health. In the near future, they will begin collecting data at three-month intervals on people with longer-term studies planned to begin in the next year or two.

"We want to be the beacon of wellness," she says. "It's happening slowly but we're probably the first in Colorado building this for the community that doesn't bring in any revenue. We're probably about ten years early but we're doing it. We're getting it done."



Photo by Lyndsie Ferrell

The front lobby of the Wellness Center at Rio Grande Hospital in Del Norte.



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DANCE Continued from Page 1A

with a Valentine's Day theme, including balloons and disco lights.

"We plan on having cotton candy, snow cones, and finger food snacks. All of that will be free for people to have. We will have photo booths. We will have one where you can get polaroid taken, and we plan to have one set up where you can take your own selfies too. We want people to remember the night. We want it to be memorable," Watson said.

Watson said one thing she thinks will be nice about the dance is that it is family friendly and will be in a nice, contained space.

"Parents can come and let their kids go and have fun, they won't have to worry about where they are and staying on top of them and all that stuff. We really want to bring that family engagement together, in an environment that's comfortable and safe. We want families to be able to come and spend some time together and feel comfortable and just have fun," she said.

Watson said being it is the first year for the event there has been a lot of planning.

"The first year you don't really know what to expect. It's been in our mind, and we have been talking about it for about a year. We came up with the idea for it last year. The last 3 months we have been pinpointing things. We have been working with the LOR Foundation. They have helped with the cost. In planning this event, we wanted to make this a good event, that people would really enjoy, and that we could pass on for another year. We want people who don't attend this year to hear about it and want to attend next year. We are really happy that we were able to partner with the LOR Foundation to make this dream come alive, and we hope to make it a tradition too," she said.

The LOR Foundation donated \$5,000 to the event, and Watson said that really helped with purchasing a lot of nice things for the event that they could use

for years to come.

"We were able to get some fun lights, and a sound system. We are really excited to have these things so that in the future we can use all of this again. The PTO is really excited about the event, and we have had people reach out and ask what it's going to be about, so people are hyped up and pretty excited about it already too," she said.

Watson said thanked the PTO for coming together to make the event possible. The PTO thanked the LOR Foundation for all their help, and Pepsi and Frito Lay, for their donations. The PTO also thanked the school district for the use of the facilities and school security.

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Photo by John Waters

Katie Dokson with History Colorado (center) leads a community group in nominating sites for listing on the State and National Register of Historic Places.

Locals gather for Colorado history

By JOHN WATERS

MONTE VISTA — On Jan. 14, about 25 people attended a meeting at the Monte Vista Church Project as part of the San Luis Valley History for All Initiative, a subset of the Colorado Heritage for All program led by History Colorado.

The gathering, sponsored by History Colorado with funding from the Mellon Foundation, was to seek community input on sites

to be nominated for listing on the state and federal registers of historic sites. Community input is crucial in this process, as it helps historians identify and preserve the historical sites that are most significant to the community.

Katie Dokson, who is History Colorado community engagement manager, led the group, said, "History Colorado has been tasked with an initiative called Colorado

Heritage for all. It is an intentional effort by History Colorado to address the lack of representation of Colorado's diverse communities on the state and national register of historic places. Colorado History for All supports nominations and listing for 150 currently unlisted historic sites in Colorado that tell the story of marginalized communities."

History Colorado surveyed all the **Please see HISTORY on Page 2**

SdCNHA offering History Fair Scholarships for local students

CONTRIBUTED

The mission at the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area is to promote education regarding local histories, traditions, and culture.

"We are excited to offer a unique opportunity and incentive for our local students to engage in these histories. Our youth holds the key to preserving our local history for future generations, and we believe that these scholarship opportunities will engage and encourage our youth to uncover even more histories within the Heritage Area," SdCNHA officials stated.

The Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area (SdCNHA) recently announced that its annual History Fair Scholarships are available to local students who participate in the District History Fair at Adams State University, with projects that relate to themes based on local history,

traditions, and culture.

Students can create documentaries, oral histories, papers, and presentations based on a theme relating to the history of the Heritage Area, encompassing Alamosa, Conejos, and Costilla counties. Previous winners have selected topics such as: Fort Garland, Jack Dempsey, local religion, Chicano Movement, SPMDTU, Agriculture, for example.

"If students qualify, we encourage them to participate in the Adams State History Fair on Jan. 27, with the theme of 'Rights and Responsibility in History,'" officials stated.

SdCNHA will be awarding scholarships for students whose projects include history from the heritage area.

For more information about our local history, visit the website sangreheritage.org or contact SdCNHA at 719-580-9057.



Fans, teams brave cold for Golden Pick Hockey Tournament

STAFF REPORT

CREEDE — The freezing temperatures did not deter hockey players from around the US from traveling to Creede over the weekend for the annual Golden Pick Hockey Tournament.

Burn barrels and bonfires surrounding the ice rinks north of town sent up plumes of smoke and waves of heat that barely kept the chilling temperatures at bay but added to the wonderful winter scene as people and teams gathered to make the best of the long-anticipated weekend.

Players hit the ice Saturday morning at Silver Ice Park and the fun kicked off with 241 players ready to vie for the top spot of the round-robin based games.

This event has been a staple in Creede since its inception in 2011 making this the 14th year. Even the famous Freemon's burgers made an appearance to feed the hungry crowd while 95 games played on in the background. It made for the perfect combination to keep everyone mov-



Photos courtesy of Tommyknocker Tavern

The annual Golden Pick Hockey Tournament League A winners were Puck and Rally.

ing and gliding through the rest of the weekend.

Sunday afternoon the teams had been whittled down to the final two bringing Puck and Rally to **Please see PICK on Page 2**

Fire Noodles rocks Monte

Menu: Asian-themed foods of Thailand and Vietnam

By JOHN WATERS

MONTE VISTA — One of the best barometers of a restaurant is the number of patrons waiting to enjoy the cuisine. On my first visit to Fire Noodles, the takeout food trailer located on Monroe Street in Monte Vista, the line of six cars waiting for their food was a good sign.

Operated by Crestone native Aeon Saltsgaver, a chef trained at the prestigious Culinary Institute of America, and Viviana Catacora, an engineer from Peru, the married couple bring a unique blend of culinary expertise and engineering precision in their food to Monte Vista.

The two opened Fire Noodles in Del Norte in 2022 as an introduction to the local market. After two years of hard work and dedication, they decided to close to save money for their Monte Vista location. The new site opened in December, a testament to their commitment to business.



Photo by John Waters

Fire Noodles in Monte Vista offers takeout of Asian-themed street foods of Thailand and Vietnam. The menu also includes American-style burgers and Spam musubi.

The menu offers a variety of items, including fresh (not fried) spring rolls made of rice paper, butter leaf, carrots, noodles, mint, and cucumber.

On the main menu is the well-known Thai street food, pad Thai,

which consists of rice noodles with cabbage slaw, pickled peppers, onions, radish slaw, peanuts, egg, and a sweet and spicy sauce.

The Crestone Fire Noodle is made with lo mein noodles, cab- **See NOODLES on Page 2**



The annual Golden Pick Hockey Tournament League B winners were Bistro Bucks.

PICK Continued from Page 1

the top spot of League A and the Bistro Bucks earning the top spot of League B.

The tournament brought people in from Colorado, Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, Kentucky, Minnesota

and South Carolina.

Tommyknocker Tavern and Kip's Grill gave a huge shout out to the community for all their support and to the teams for braving the cold and having some fun on ice.

HISTORY

currently listed sites and found that less than 4% were from marginalized communities, including people of color, indigenous people, LGBTQ+, women's history, Latino, Chicano, and Asian American people, according to Dokson.

After introductions the group broke up into smaller groups who were instructed to brainstorm and come up with a list of places to be recommended for listing on the registers and sent to state historians.

Sandy Ortega, a tenth-generation resident of San Luis, beautifully expressed her connection to the past, saying, "I'm here to preserve and embrace and make sure that what my parents, my grandparents, my ancestors taught me that we can somehow teach and make sure that our past is the present into the future. So, I'm the bridge."

When one participant recommended moradas be included on the list, Dokson enlisted Ortega to explain what they are, "A morada is a dwelling place, and it is part of Catholicism, if you will. It was a dwelling place for the Penitente, who were layman, the pillars and the fathers of a community. If something happened, you would then go to the morada and talk with a Penitente and they would help you solve things. They were kind of like Jesus Christ dressed up as cute little soldiers," said Ortega.

Darwin Thompson of Sargent recommended celebrating the Colorado Bicentennial and Monte Vista Centennial in 2026. He also mentioned nominating the sites of the Spanish Trail, Natural Arch, and lime kilns.

The group recommended many sites for listing including the Stations of the Cross sculptures in San Luis, the remaining moradas, Rock Creek Cemetery and Schoolhouse, carboglyphs in Saguache County, La Botica, various agricultural sites, and First Baptist Church in Monte Vista.

The initiative's ambitious goal is to list 150 currently unrecognized historic resources that tell the stories of marginalized communities by the

Continued from Page 1 end of 2026. As part of Colorado Heritage for All and the efforts of the Monte Vista group, History Colorado eagerly seeks community suggestions for properties vital to understanding the history of the Centennial State.

History Colorado is a division of the Colorado Department of Higher Education and a non-profit that has served more than 75,000 students and 500,000 people in Colorado each year. It is a 145-year-old institution that operates 11 museums and historic sites, a free public research center, the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation which provides technical assistance, educational opportunities, and other access to archaeology and historic sites.

NOODLES

Continued from Page 1

shared love of food. "Every time I go to a restaurant, I'm passionate about those with generational recipes. Going to restaurants brought us together, trying new food and doing some creative things. We are both into Asian foods," Catacora said.

Food has been a part of Saltsgaver's life since he was 14 years old. He took an apprenticeship in the kitchen of the Crestone Mountain Zen Center, which serves a completely vegetarian menu which includes vegetables harvested from the on-site garden. The center introduced the young chef to the tastes of Asian food.

"That experience sparked my interest in that type of cuisine at a very young age," said Saltsgaver, who added, "The idea of Asian-inspired street food made fresh to order, and I've always been fascinated with the flavors that come out of Asia. As a chef, I've been able to mix and match things and create my recipes over the years." Catacora said the two have a

This shared passion for food is what drives their commitment to delivering the best culinary experience. Saltsgaver said, "She is my biggest critic, and I am always trying to improve. I hope that translates to good food for the public."

"So far, we've gotten a great response to our food, and we are really happy about it. The next step is to expand, and for now, this is our fixed location," said Catacora.

Fire Noodles is at 219 Monroe St., Monte Vista. Call 719-588-7970 to place take-out orders.

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Del's Diner – good prices, great food and an inspiring story

By PRISCILLA WAGONER
FORT GARLAND — Walking into Del's Diner in Fort Garland is like taking a step back into a warm, welcoming and familiar past.

Floors, tables and booths polished to a gleam. A lunch counter faces the "order up" window off the kitchen where the meals are cooked.

The owner of the diner is the same person doing the cooking of a menu of simple, hearty and satisfying food – the kind of food that made diners so extremely popular for decades.

And, as has always been a characteristic of a good diner, the food at Del's Diner is reasonably priced with a huge burger still costing less than \$10.

For more than 37 years, Del's Diner has been a steady fixture in the landscape. Owned and operated by Olivia and Delfino Martinez, it's located on the eastern side of Fort Garland near the base of La Veta Pass, making it the first restaurant travelers would see coming down the final stretch of La Veta and the last people would see as they headed east to the Front Range.

It was also a cornerstone of the Martinez family with Olivia and Delfino's children and their children's children working there at various times in their lives. The times were not always easy, but the diner always kept going. Even when its namesake, Delfino, passed away, the business kept going.

And then COVID hit, ultimately closing the diner down. Luckily, that's not the end of the story.

Unwilling to let the family business simply fade away, Matthew – Delfino and Olivia's grandson devoted himself to keeping the diner alive with plans to reopen. While other businesses were shuttered, Matthew, who was 20 years old, made improvements to the building, including an addition where the kitchen is now located.

While other young men his age returned to school or jobs they had working for others, Matthew became his own boss, re-opening Del's Diner in March of 2024. And now 21 years old, he's been running the diner ever since, with "100% help" from his girlfriend, Sydney Muñiz.

Being there is something he's known his whole life as he was "always around" the diner when he was a kid. When asked how it is to be the owner, he laughs. "There's a lot more to it than one would think, but business has been pretty good."

Since it opened decades ago, Del's Diner has always been famous for its burgers, and they continue to be today. "Mostly all we sell is burgers, burgers. We sell other food that's really good, too, but that's our specialty. They're popular because they're good and they're big – half pound patties. And the way we cook them, they're fresh, never frozen."

They come different ways, he says, including smothered in red or green chili, earning them the name "the sloppers. Our potatoes are also local. We get them right out of the fields, so they're fresh, fresh. We have to wash them about six times to make sure they're completely clean."

People coming off the pass, especially big city folks, he says, aren't going to get French fries anywhere like they get at Del's Diner.

"Sometimes, it takes them a little while to get used to them because they're used to the frozen ones. But once they get it, they really like



Photo courtesy of Del's Diner

Del's Diner has been a part of the Fort Garland landscape for decades. Located at 19568 Highway 160, it's open 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. every day but Wednesday.

them. That's one reason we stay in their minds, that and the burgers," he says.

Everything served in the diner is homemade, from the patties to the fries to their red and green chili. Everything is also fresh as the people who supply Martinez with vegetables are selling him produce from their own farms in New Mexico.

Del's Diner has also been famous for their pies in the past, something that Martinez plans to continue once the tourism season approaches and business picks back up. "We have someone working here and all she does are the pies." She must be pretty good as Martinez adds that she won a local pie competition.

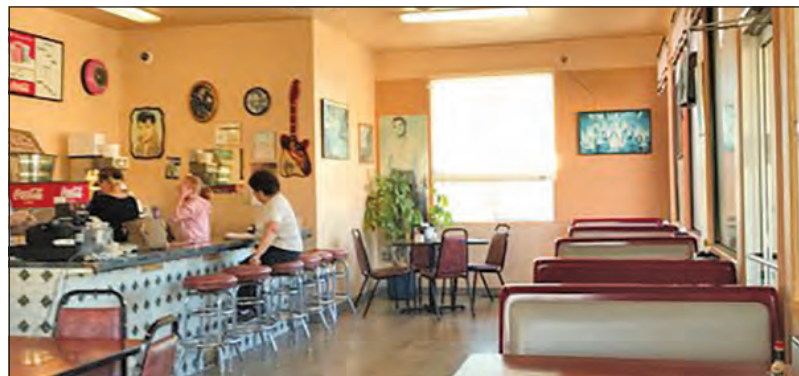
Del's Diner is open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. every day but Wednesday.

They offer a full menu with breakfast served every day until "about 11:30." Because their burgers aren't frozen, anyone ordering takeout doesn't have to wait long for the food to cook. And the French fries are always "hot and fresh."

While franchise restaurants line city and small-town streets with identical menus and identical surroundings, Del's Diner stands out as a reminder of all that is good. A family run business taken over by an ambitious, hardworking, dedicated 21-year-old grandson where the burgers are still enormous, and a \$10 bill will get you a good meal.

Can't beat a deal like that.

Del's Diner is located at 19568 Highway 160 in Fort Garland. Anyone wishing to call ahead can do so by calling 719-379-3357.



Del's Diner in Fort Garland is the real deal, not just in its decor but also in its menu where a fresh (never frozen) half-pound burger still costs less than \$10.

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Courtesy photo

Krista Nadwodny of Del Norte brings baked goodies to the area through her Sincerely, Yours Bakery.

Del Norte bakery brings bagels, cookies and more

By JOHN WATERS

DEL NORTE — Krista Nadwodny recently opened Sincerely, Yours Bakery, which brings an assortment of baked goods to the Del Norte area.

Appetites can now indulge in baked goods such as espresso caramel blondies and New York-style bagels.

“At Sincerely, Yours Bakery, we’re committed to crafting exquisite pastries and treats with an emphasis on quality and authenticity,” said Nadwodny.

The bakery, currently operating out of a licensed commercial kitchen in Del Norte, offers the convenience of online ordering. Customers can place their orders on the bakery’s website, www.sincerelyyoursbakery.com, with a lead-time of four days. The goods can be picked up at the High Valley Community Center at 595 Grand Ave., in Del Norte, or delivered to your doorstep in Del Norte.

“I decided to open this because I’ve always loved baking, and it is my love language for people. When I want to show someone I care for them, I bake for them, and I want to extend to the community. This feels like a love letter to the community,” she said.

Patrons can indulge in the bakery’s rich, decadent flavors of blondies.

“These irresistible treats combine the bold taste of freshly brewed espresso with velvety caramel swirls, finished with a golden, buttery crust. Each bite is a delightful fusion of sweetness and coffee sophistication, perfect for an afternoon pick-me-up or a luxurious dessert,” according to the website. All coffee used in baking is purchased locally from San Juan Roasters.

“I believe in the power of community, so I aim to source local ingredients to create delicious offerings that celebrate the bounty of our region. Each creation is made with care and sincerity, ensuring every flavor tells a story of craftsmanship and passion. My dedication to excellence shines through in every loaf, cookie, and pastry that leaves my ovens.

“At Sincerely, Yours Bakery, our mission is simple: to provide heartfelt, delicious food that brings people together. We’re not just a bakery; we’re part of your community and here to help you celebrate your special moments. We believe in the power of community, and that’s why we source local ingredients to create delicious offerings that celebrate the bounty of our region.”

To place orders, visit: www.sincerelyyoursbakery.com.

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Future of iconic D&RG caboose discussed in work session

By LYNDISIE FERRELL

DELNORTE — The Del Norte Town Board of Trustees hosted a work session on Jan. 16 to discuss with the public and members of the Del Norte Chamber of Commerce the future of the historic Denver and Rio Grande Caboose.

According to records in the Del Norte Prospector, residents of Del Norte worked for many years in the early 2000s to see the caboose restored and fitted to serve as an information center for the Del Norte Chamber of Commerce. Several area organizations helped raise funding through different fundraising events and once funding for the restoration project was collected, the caboose was given to Mr. Davlin who painstakingly worked for years to bring life back to the beloved caboose.

Through the years the ownership of the caboose changed hands and was eventually given to the Del Norte Chamber to be used for an information center. The small caboose was fitted with brochure racks and placed on a parcel of land owned by Haefeli's Honey where it has sat unused for many years.

Many people are unaware of the caboose's popularity among the railroad enthusiast platforms, but through a little bit of research, it was discovered to be on many traveler's bucket lists. People from all over the US venture to town to see the caboose and mark it off of their "must see" lists. Caboose No. 0580 is one of only 80 made during the 1920s and served on the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad in the San Luis Valley. In recent weeks, the caboose has

become a topic of discussion among the Del Norte community after an announcement was made by the Del Norte Chamber that they may be considering selling the historic landmark. In the weeks since, the community has come together to find a way to save the caboose which prompted the work session.

Del Norte Chamber Vice President Lionel Villasenor spoke first, stating that he and the other members of the board were new to the chamber and that they were learning about the caboose.

"We would just like to see it taken care of. It has not been cared for in the last five, 10 years, Villasenor said.

Del Norte Chamber President Paul Fennell followed, stating that he was there to fulfill the chamber's mission which was to meet civic and business

function while driving economic in the community.

"The reason why we are here is to get community feedback. To understand what this needs to be. The preemptive to this discussion was that we received a cash offer from an individual to buy the caboose. We need to ask ourselves, is the asset achieving the goals and mission of our organization or do we need to revisit that and find a means that can accomplish those goals," Fennell said.

During the meeting, several members of the public spoke about the history of the caboose in Del Norte and recalled the massive community effort that took place during the years prior to 2011 to have it restored. Community members also spoke about how often they see visitors stop at the landmark to take pictures

or to just stop and see it on their way through town.

One person stated that he had worked for the Shell gas station across the street for many years and in that time has seen travelers stop on countless occasions to visit the caboose.

By the end of the meeting, it was made clear that the community would like to see the caboose saved. Members of the town spoke, stating that they could move the caboose to a more secure location where it would be on display and used for community purposes such as school fundraisers or other events.

Another work session was scheduled for the monthly Del Norte Chamber meeting which will be held at Trade and Post at 4 p.m. to discuss plans for the caboose. All are encouraged to attend.

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CCSD Preschool receives perfect score in health inspection

By MARIE MCCOLM

CENTER — Janet Sanchez, director of the Center Consolidated School District's Preschool, was all smiles and excited to talk about the award that they received from Environmental Health Program Manager and Inspector Gary Bruder.

"We received an award for no violations in a health inspection. We were also excited to hear him say that he has not had anyone receive a perfect score in about 4 years, in the whole Valley. We are proud of our perfect score," she said.

Sanchez is no stranger to working with children. She was a teacher at the preschool for 27 years, before becoming the director there 9 years ago.

Sanchez said there are some strict rules and criteria that each classroom must adhere to receive a perfect score, and that includes following safety procedures with the kids.

Part of those guidelines include ensuring that everything in the classroom, including toys and other objects the children use, is always sanitized.

"So, Mr. Bruder will go into each classroom, and he will look in the rooms, and talk to the teachers and ask them how they specifically sanitize and disinfect toys in the area that the children are in. He also checks our disinfectant, our Clorox water, to make sure we are making it according to the rules that are laid out on a purple sheet of paper that has been given to us to use," she said.

"We have to have a safe and healthy environment for our children. If we do not maintain this,

then we end up letting sickness in, and we have to shut down, like we did when COVID occurred," she said.

Sanchez said that the teachers take pride in showing their kids how to keep themselves and others safe.

"When we first begin school, the teachers show the kids the safety rules and regulations in the classroom. The teachers show them how to keep themselves safe. Out on the playground the kids get their routines, going in and out, and washing their hands. The teachers show all the kids how to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds to get all the germs off," she said.

Sanchez said that if a child is seen getting sick then the teachers will have the children wear masks to keep the other children safe.

"If they have a fever, we also send the kids home. We ask that the parents keep them home for at least 24 hours. We do try to keep all our kids safe," she said.

Sanchez said that another part of the inspection is that Bruder also checks all the files that she has for the children to ensure that they have everything that they need in them as well.

"In checking everything he found no violations, so we are doing really well," she said.

Sanchez said she was proud of her staff and the teachers for the perfect score they received.

"My staff and teachers are wonderful. They do what they need to do without me having to remind them. They are very educated and willing to learn new things and keep up with everything new too," she said.



Courtesy photo

Center Consolidated School District's Preschool received a perfect score during a health inspection. Pictured here are the preschool staff.

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P	I	L	E	I		P	R	O	M	S		U	S	E	
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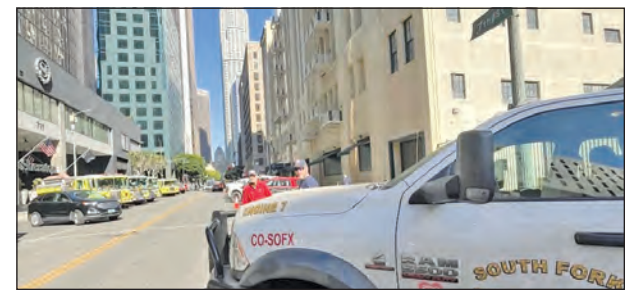
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South Fork Fire Rescue engine still in California



Photos courtesy of South Fork Fire Rescue
 A South Fork Fire Rescue engine remains in Los Angeles, Calif., on a strike team working alongside four other Colorado engines, including Security, Chaffee County, Purgatory, and Stonewall. They have been operating in the Zulu Division, of the Palisade Fire focusing on mop-up efforts in steep and loose terrain. Winds this week are expected to reach 75-100 mph, with humidity as low as 7%. A Red Flag Warning is in effect over the next few days. The team has been working 24-hour shifts, followed by 24 hours on call. 'We're proud of their hard work and dedication in these challenging conditions. Stay safe out there, team,' SFFR officials stated.

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Good stewardship yields good tax credits

By PRISCILLA WAGGONER
ALAMOSA — During his time in office, State Representative Matt Martinez (D-62) has consistently expressed his support for farmers and ranchers. That support was clearly demonstrated by passage of a bill related to agriculture and pertaining to stewardship of the land.

Signed into law in May of 2024 and described by Martinez as “one of his favorite bills”, HB24-1249 creates a state income tax credit for active agricultural stewardship practices.

“I really like this bill because it grants tax credits for being good stewards of the land,” Martinez told the Valley Courier. “By employing one of the practices that support good stewardship of the land, farmers can get at least \$5 per acre and no more than \$75 per acre of land up to a maximum of \$150,000 tax credit in one income year. Farmers can get at least \$10 per acre but not more than \$100 per acre for a maximum tax credit of \$200,000 in one income year for two qualified practices. For engaging in three practices, farmers can get at least \$15 per acre but no more than \$150 per acre not exceed \$300,000 in tax credits.”

To put it more briefly, the more stewardship practices farmers use, he says, the more benefit growers will reap with a bigger tax benefit.

The program will be implemented for income tax years beginning on or after January 1, 2026, but before January 1, 2031. Reminder of this bill is especially important now as farmers and ranchers are making plans for 2025.

As part of the process, the Colorado Department of Agriculture developed a list of accepted practices that incorporate a variety of approaches, including grazing or cropping practices that improve soil health, improve water retention and improve drought resiliency. Other practices create more diverse and beneficial ecosystems while maintaining productivity of the farm or ranch including crop rotation, less

tillage or no tillage, cover crop being integrated, managing livestock grazing, range improvement or compost application.

The program is capped at five years, but Martinez says the hope is that, after engaging in good stewardship, farmers will no longer need to be incentivized by tax credits as the practices themselves will allow them to reap significant benefits.

To claim the credit, a qualified taxpayer must apply to the department of agriculture for a tax credit certificate. The department of agriculture will evaluate the application and issue the certificate if the taxpayer qualifies for the tax credit. If a tax credit certificate is issued, the qualified taxpayer must attach it to the taxpayer’s income tax return and submit it to the department of revenue.

The aggregate amount of tax credits issued in one calendar year cannot exceed \$3 million. After certificates have been issued for credits that exceed an aggregate of \$3 million for all qualified taxpayers during a calendar year, any claims that exceed the amount allowed are placed on a wait list and a certificate is issued for use of the credit in the next income tax year. No more than \$2 million in claims shall be placed on the wait list in any given calendar year.

Only one tax credit certificate may be issued per qualified taxpayer in an income tax year, and the qualified taxpayer claiming the credit may only receive the tax credit for up to three income tax years. No credit may be earned if the qualified taxpayer has received another tax credit, a tax deduction, or a grant related to agricultural land health from any source during the income tax year for which the tax credit is sought.

Representative Ty Winter of Trinidad and Senators Rod Pelton and Dylan Roberts are also listed as prime sponsors on the bill.

Anyone wishing to read the full text of the bill can do so by going to <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb24-1249>.



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HB24-1249 creates a state income tax credit for active agricultural stewardship practices.

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CAC opens call for entry for 2025 Willow Creek Journal

CREEDE — The Creede Arts Council recently announced that the call for entry for the 2025 Willow Creek Journal is officially open. The Willow Creek Journal is a community-centered annual creative anthology.

“Through the journal, we celebrate and nurture the creativity of artists of all ages,” CAC stated.

The Willow Creek Journal features poetry, prose, photographs, and artwork. The 2025 call for entry and submission instructions can be found online at www.creedeartsCouncil.com/willow-creek-journal.

For more information on the 29th edition of the Willow Creek Journal, contact CAC at creedearts@outlook.com or call 719-658-0312.

The deadline to submit work is March 1.



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Southern Rocky Mountain

Agriculture Conference

Education Program & Trade Show

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Outcalt Conference and Event Center at SLV Ski Hi Complex, Monte Vista February 4-6, 2025



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Southern Rocky Mountain Ag Conference Feb. 4-6

STAFF REPORT

MONTE VISTA — The 43rd annual Southern Rocky Mountain Agriculture Conference and Trade Show is just around the corner, scheduled for Feb. 4-6.

The Colorado State University San Luis Valley Area Extension Office, the Monte Vista Chamber of Commerce, and CSU San Luis Valley Research Center host the event that is being held at the Ski-Hi Complex in Monte Vista.

The theme of the conference is “Holding Our Ground, Securing the Future of Our Water, Land, Businesses, and Families.”

CSU SLV Area Extension Office Director Larry Brown is excited about the upcoming ag conference and said, “We believe we have something for everyone, and we hope to see all of you at the conference

There are various workshops available throughout the day with many key speakers.

Feb. 4 will include federal and state legislative updates in the morning, followed by a United Potato Business Summit featuring Potato Consumption with Kim Breshears, A Frozen Potato Processing Update with Dale Lathim, the North American Potato Market Outlook with Ben Eborn, Prices in the Doldrums with Stephen Nicholson, and A Fresh Market Outlook with Mark Klompfen.

Also slated for the opening day are Livestock Producer Workshops, Farm and Ranch Family Health Classes, and Small Farm and Ranch Commercial Garden and Greenhouse Classes, in both Spanish and English.

There will be a social hour along with a United Potato annual meeting and dinner with Lyla Hathaway.

On Feb. 5, the keynote address will be delivered by Rabobank’s Stephen Nicholson. The title of the keynote is Our Challenges and Opportunities: There is Much to Consider. He is the Global Sector Strategist—Grains and Oilseeds for Rabobank.

The afternoon will include Ag Business Succession and Estate Planning Workshop, Revegetation and Alternative Crops information and SLVRC Potato Research and Breeding Updates.

Water is the focus of Feb. 6’s half day of programming and will include updates from the Colorado Division of Water Resources and their partners.

The trade show runs from 8 a.m.



Photos by Brian Williams

ames Henderson, a fifth-generation farmer and rancher and Vice President of the Colorado Farm Bureau, gives the Colorado Legislative Update on Feb. 6, the opening day, of the 2024 Southern Rocky Mountain Agriculture Conference and Trade Show at the Outcalt Event and Conference at SLV Ski-Hi Complex in Monte Vista. The main conference room was standing-room-only for Henderson’s presentation. The conference was Feb. 6-8.



People gathered at tables and perused the vendor booths on the opening day, Feb. 6, of the 2024 Southern Rocky Mountain Agriculture Conference and Tradeshow at the Outcalt Event and Conference at SLV Ski-Hi Complex in Monte Vista.

to 5 p.m. Feb. 4 and 5, and 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Feb. 6.

Registration for the Rocky Mountain Agricultural Conference is open. To preregister, visit online www.agconferencesrm.com or in person at the CSU SLV Extension Office at 1899 US Highway 160 East, Monte Vista. People can register at the conference, but the CSU Extension Office strongly encourages preregistration so there will be enough food for breakfast and lunch at the conference.

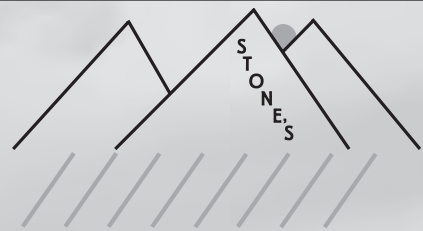


Nearly 100 vendors, including the Monte Vista Coop, were set up inside the Outcalt Event and Conference at SLV Ski-Hi Complex in Monte Vista on Tuesday, Feb. 6, for the Southern Rocky Mountain Agriculture Conference and Trade Show. The conference was Feb. 6-8.



A representative of 1st Choice Irrigation, of Rocky Ford, speaks about the company’s product during the 2024 Southern Rocky Mountain Agriculture Conference and Trade Show on Tuesday, Feb. 6, inside the Outcalt Event and Conference at SLV Ski-Hi Complex in Monte Vista.

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Demonstrations were plentiful at Monte Vista Co-op product show

File photo

Southern Rocky Mountain Agriculture Conference History

STAFF REPORT

SAN LUIS VALLEY — Looking back over the past 40-plus years, the Southern Rocky Mountain Agriculture Conference began as a small, educational conference for local and visiting agricultural leaders.

According to local historians, there were a couple of ag-related educational events and product shows happening at different times in the San Luis Valley that ultimately joined forces to become the Southern Rocky Mountain Agriculture Conference.

An article in the 1982 Monte Vista Journal writes about the formation of the Monte Vista Cooperative in 1949 which later led to the Monte Vista Product Show and the annual Monte Vista Cooperative meeting which took place in the spring of 1982.

During that time, the Monte Vista Cooperative welcomed guest speakers like Current General Manager Doyle Smith and even an appearance by Denver Broncos receiver Steve Watson. The first show included an agricultural history presentation slide show of agriculture in the San Luis Valley which was created by Don Proffer through the Don J. Proffer Production Company.

The two-day event featured contests and prizes, special events for ranchers, farmers and agricultural leaders, merchandise sales, and even a chance for one lucky lady to win \$6,100 to go toward a new kitchen. Guests also attended a pancake dinner and competed in a pie-eating contest.

In the years since the first product show, long-time Monte Vista resident and Monte Vista Agriculture Committee member through the Monte Vista Chamber of Commerce, Karla Shriver, said that the chamber created a committee for the agricultural show that was held at the Adams State University campus and served as an educational seminar and conference for members.

In 1987, Shriver joined the agricultural committee and was later ap-

pointed Chair in 1988 and that was the first year it moved to Monte Vista and became the only agricultural show for the area.

“I became chair of the committee in 1988 which was the first year it was in Monte Vista. Previously it was held in Alamosa at Adams State University for a few years, before moving to Monte Vista. It was primarily educational then — not many vendors. It was moved to Monte Vista as there was no place at the college to display large pieces of equipment and we didn’t have a large space for vendors to display their products for farmers-ranchers to look at,” Shriver said.

At the time, Janice Schnieder was the Monte Vista Chamber of Commerce manager, and the committee did everything from setting it up to taking it down, Shriver said.

“We had a good group of people on the committee,” Shriver said. “We did everything. We set up the booth spaces, tables and chairs, made coffee, did the janitorial duties every morning — sweeping the floor and hauling out the trash whenever needed. The building was completely full of vendors even back then. We also used the McMullen Building for display of large equipment back then, too. That was about the time the bowling alley opened. We had our first social hour at the bowling alley. It was a good party. We never did that again. The money raised by the Agricultural Committee from this event supported the operations of the whole chamber even back then. It still does today for the most part.”

Now, 40-plus years later, the Southern Rocky Mountain Agriculture Conference has grown to something that is looked forward to every year by ranchers and farmers from throughout the state.

This year’s conference is on Feb. 4-6. For more information and a full agenda of the Southern Rocky Mountain Agriculture Conference, visit www.agconferencesrm.com.

Keynote Speaker

**Our Challenges and Opportunities:
There is Much to Consider – Feb. 5 –
11:00 am-12:00 pm**

Stephen Nicholson: Global Sector Strategist—Grains and Oilseeds, Rabo Bank AgriFinance in the RaboResearch Food and Agribusiness group

Stephen’s Bio: Nicholson has more than forty years of experience in cash grain markets, hedging, commodity/ingredient procurement, commodity risk management and commodity analysis. A native of Iowa, he holds a bachelor’s degree in Farm Operations and Agricultural Education and a master’s degree in Agricultural Economics, both from Iowa State University.

Nicholson joined Rabo AgriFinance in 2014 and was the Senior Grains and Oilseeds analyst for North America until being appointed Global Sector Strategist in 2022.

Prior to joining Rabo AgriFinance, Nicholson was Category Manager and Chief Economist with International Food Products, a trader and distributor of food ingredients. Responsibilities included procurement and trading of vegetable oils, corn sweeteners, starches and grain products, along with consulting assignments.

From 2001 to 2007, he was a Senior Economist with Doane Agricultural Services in St. Louis as the oilseed analyst.

Nicholson also has nearly fifteen years of experience in the food and beverage industry. He has served as Senior Buyer at The Earthgrains Company, now part of Bimbo Bakeries USA, in St. Louis. From 1988 to 1997, he was the Senior Commodity Analyst in the Global Procurement and Trading Company at The Coca-Cola Company



in Atlanta. While at Coca-Cola, he was involved in the creation of the first commodity risk management and governance policy framework for the company

Conference Registration February 4 - 6 , 2025

Four Ways To Register:

Pre-register online at www.agconferencesrm.com

Pre-register by mail.

Pre-register at the Extension Office. 1899 US Hwy 160 East, Monte Vista, CO
Register at the door - (We strongly encourage preregistration so there will be enough food for your breakfast and lunch at the conference).

Questions:

Registration & Educational:

Call Jennifer Vandiver at 719-852-7381 or ema ii Jen niter. Va nd iver@ColoState .ed u Trade Show:
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Featured Sessions



FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Feb. 4 – 10-10:25 a.m.

Ashley House: Vice President of Strategy and Advocacy for the Colorado Farm Bureau

Ashley's Bio: Ashley's love of the land and the agricultural industry began on her family's ranch in Live Oak County, Texas. A third-generation rancher, she remains involved in the House's cattle and wildlife management enterprises.

As VP of Strategy and Advocacy at Colorado Farm Bureau, Ashley helps develop internal and external policy initiatives, with a focus on the organization's federal policy interests.

Prior to CFB, Ashley served as the Executive Vice President and CEO for the Washington Cattlemen's Association (WCA) where she managed the association's advocacy, outreach, and educational activities.

As Director of Leader Engagement with Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association, Ashley served as the liaison between the association's 135-member Board, federal agencies, state agencies, and allied industry.

With the Texas Agricultural Land Trust, she worked on early case-making for the Texas Farm and Ranchlands Conservation Program; which resulted in \$2 million in appropriations funding for the purchase of agricultural conservation easements.

She also has a background in agricultural finance, working for three years as a Loan Officer with Lone Star Ag Credit (now AgTrust Farm Credit).

In her spare time, Ashley serves on the College of Fine Arts Board of Visitors for her alma mater, Texas Christian University, and is a volunteer for the TCU Institute of Ranch Management's international activities. She lives in Denver with her dog, Fig, and deeply appreciates Tex-Mex cuisine.



STATE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Feb. 4 – 10:30 a.m.

Tyler Garrett: Director of Government Relations, Rocky Mountain Farmers Union

Tyler's Bio: Tyler Garrett is the Director of Government Relations for Rocky Mountain Farmers Union. Tyler developed a love and appreciation for agriculture at a young age when spending time with his grandparents on their small farm in Oklahoma.

His appreciation for agriculture grew through his time working on his aunt and uncle's cattle and poultry farm from elementary school through college.

He earned a bachelor's degree in Political Science and a master's degree in Public Administration and Nonprofit Studies from the University of Arkansas. He also has a master's degree in Political Science from the University of Colorado Boulder.

With a deep understanding of public policy and our political systems at all levels, Tyler is excited to advance the policy initiatives of family farmers, ranchers, and rural communities in Colorado, New Mexico, and Wyoming.



NPC ISSUE UPDATE

Feb. 4 – 11-11:25 a.m.

Michael R Winkel, CAE: Chief Operating Officer of the National Potato Council

Mike's Bio: Mike Wenkel is the Chief Operating Officer of the National Potato Council where his responsibilities include overseeing the day-to-day operations for the organization as it works to represent the interest of the U.S. potato industry in Washington, D.C.

A native of Michigan, Mike brings over 25 years of organizational experience to the organization including serving as the Executive Director of Michigan Potato Industry Commission (MPIC) for seven years prior to joining NPC; and serving as the Manager of the Membership and Field Services Department with the Michigan Farm Bureau.

He received a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture degree from Michigan State University and a Master's in Business Administration degree from the University of Phoenix and holds designations as a Certified Association Executive and as a Gallup-Certified Strengths Coach. He currently serves as the treasurer of the Minor Crop Farmer Alliance and Vice Chair of the Potato Sustainability Alliance.

Growing up, he was actively involved in 4-H and FFA, is a past President of the Michigan FFA Alumni Association, past Chairman of the Michigan Society of Association Executives and served on the Board of Directors for the Michigan FFA.



MACRO ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

Feb. 4 – 11:30-11:55 a.m.

Tanner Ehmke: Lead Economist - Grain & Oilseeds - Knowledge Exchange Division Co Bank, ACB

Description of Presentation: Brief overview of Macro Economic Outlook 2024

Tanner's Bio: Tanner Ehmke is the Lead Economist for Grains & Oilseeds at CoBank's Knowledge Exchange research team that provides market and

industry outlooks on sectors affecting the rural economy.

Prior to joining CoBank in 2015, Tanner farmed and marketed seed for his family's seed company in western Kansas where his family homesteaded in 1885. He previously was a commodities analyst at AgResource Company in Chicago, a markets reporter for Dow Jones at the Chicago Board of Trade, and an agricultural journalist covering crop production and farm business management.

Tanner holds a bachelor's in Agricultural Economics and a master's in Agricultural Business, both from Kansas State University.

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Additional Sessions

LIVESTOCK DISEASE UPDATE: HPAI and Screechworm - Feb. 4 - 3:30 p.m.

Dr. Kathy Whitman: Veterinary Extension Specialist for Colorado State University
 Kathy's Bio: Veterinary Extension Specialist for Colorado State University. Kathy received her MS in Ruminant Nutrition and DVM from CSU. She completed a Field Services internship at the University of Georgia, and later became an ABVP diplomate specializing in Beef Cattle Practice. Dr. Whitman was in private practice in both Utah and Colorado and was an Assistant Professor with the University of Nebraska at the Great Plains Veterinary Educational Center. In her new role at Colorado State University, Kathy will participate a wide range of activities, working as a liaison between the University and extension, producers, and veterinarians in Colorado. She's recently been involved in HPAI research, emergency management and preparedness, BQA training, Colorado county fair health checks, student teaching, and extension consultation. Engaging with stakeholders within the state of Colorado is a primary goal for Kathy, so please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions, concerns, or information that you feel would be useful to other stakeholders.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD DIRECT MARKETER - Feb. 4 - 1:30 p.m.

Jenny Beiermann: Agriculture & Business Management Specialist for Colorado State University Extension
 Jenny Beiermann's Bio: Jenny Beiermann is an Agriculture and Business Management Economist with Colorado State University Extension in the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics. She received her B.S. degree in Agricultural Business and her M.S. in Agricultural and Applied Economics at the University of Wyoming. Jenny's primary role with CSU is to develop, market, deliver, and evaluate non-credit educational programming and resources relative to risk and risk management for agricultural producers and managers in operations of all sizes. These programs' main goal is to assist producers in making comparative, profitable decisions among strategic financial, production, marketing, legal, and human resources alternatives. Prior to joining CSU Extension in 2016, she worked in the livestock production industry, as well as with a leading Ag tech company, specializing in vertical aquaponics growing systems. Her expertise and professional interests include farm management economics, business management, production economics and enterprise budgeting, and strategic financial planning.

COMET TRAINING - Feb. 4 - 1:30-3 p.m.

JC Carrica: Vice-President & Chief of Healthcare Innovation & Strategy for Valley-Wide Health Systems, Inc.
 JC Carrica's Bio: JC is a 1996 graduate from the University of Southern Colorado, 2009 Graduate of Adams State College, and 2014 Graduate of Creighton University. He has a Doctorate in Interdisciplinary Leadership, a MA in Counseling and is a Certified Addictions Specialist. As a fourth generation Otero County, Colorado resident, he has a special interest in representing those in our agricultural industry. His goal is to break through barriers affecting healthcare access and improve peoples behavioral health. He currently serves as the Vice-President & Chief of Healthcare Innovation & Strategy for Valley-Wide Health Systems, Inc.

EPDs FOR COMMERCIAL COW-CALF PRODUCERS: Understanding Their Usage and How They Make a Difference - Feb. 4 - 2-2:25 p.m.

Chad Russell: Graduate of CSU with Animal Science Degree & Masters from UNL in Animal Breeding and Genetics
 Chad's Bio: I grew up on a Simmental/SimAngus cow/calf operation in Sugar City, CO (Southeastern CO), helping my parents Curt and Susan Russell. Attended many Simmental state, regional, and national level events where I learned more about genetics. Met Dr. Wade Schafer (ASA lead geneticist at the time and current EVP) who described a good way to combine my love for math and animals together was animal genetics. Following this guidance I attended CSU for a degree in Animal Science, and then went to UNL under Dr. Matt Spangler to further my knowledge, where I earned my Masters Degree in Animal Breeding and Genetics and am currently continuing at UNL to get my Doctorate Degree.

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HOW MUCH CAN YOU AFFORD TO BUY OR LEASE A COW? Feb. 4 - 2:30 p.m.

Jeff Tranel: CSU Agricultural & Business Management Economist
 Jeff's Bio: Jeff Tranel is an Agricultural and Business Management Economist at Colorado State University. His professional interests focus on estate and succession planning and managing farm/ranch finances, income taxes, and human resources.

During his 40-year career, Jeff has addressed agricultural audiences and worked with over 10,000 farm families throughout the United States and nine countries. His research, speaking engagements, and authorship focus on helping farm and ranch families better understand and manage their risks. He has coached numerous families through all estate and succession planning phases. Jeff also provides expert testimony for agriculturally related court cases.

Jeff was raised on a commercial and purebred cattle ranch in northwestern Colorado and southcentral Wyoming. He now lives in Pueblo, Colorado with his wife. They have two married sons and one grandson.

TRANSITION TO ORGANIC: Feb. 4 - 3:20 p.m.

Maclaine Sorden: TOPP Specialist, Colorado Department of Agriculture, Organic Inspector with the USDA

Maclaine's Bio: Maclaine Sorden is an experienced professional specializing in organic certification and sustainable agriculture. As a TOPP Specialist at the Colorado Department of Agriculture, he leads educational initiatives and manages stakeholder engagement to support organic farming across Colorado. As an Organic Inspector, he conducts USDA organic inspections, ensuring compliance with national USDA organic standards. With a Master's degree in Sustainable Agriculture from Iowa State University, he has worked both domestically and internationally in the certification industry and is dedicated to advancing organic practices while fostering resilient agricultural communities.

PERSONAL WELLBEING - YOUR PART IN THE BALANCING ACT: Feb. 4 - 3:30 p.m.

Kirsten Wulfsberg: Kirsten Wulfsberg, LPC, is the Regional Behavioral Health Specialist with CSU-E

Kirsten's Bio: Kirsten Wulfsberg, LPC, is the Regional Behavioral Health Specialist with CSU-E, covering the Mountain Region and also represents Colorado AgrAbility Project. For 20 years, Kirsten completed and taught crisis psychiatric assessments (suicide, homicide, psychosis, substance use) in the hospital setting. Kirsten is passionate about helping people gain personal insight and tools to recognize the ups and downs of life (as well as mental health issues) and work towards managing them before they become a crisis. She loves to integrate humor and play into her psychoeducational trainings and the therapeutic work she does through CAAMHPforhealth.org.

ADVANCING AGRICULTURE THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA - Feb. 5 - 9:30-10:25 a.m.

Peterson Brothers Bio: The Peterson Farm Brothers are three brothers from central Kansas who create social media content to promote agriculture. Their videos have received over 250 million views and they have just over 1 million followers on all of their social platforms put together. The brothers grew up and still work on a family farm near Assaria, KS. All 3 attended Kansas State University. Greg graduated in 2013, majoring in Agricultural Communications and Journalism. Nathan graduated in 2016, majoring in Agriculture Technology Management. Kendal graduated in 2018, majoring in Agribusiness. Their goal is still to operate the family farm together, but hope to make a positive impact with their social media content.

SUMMARY OF THE 2024 POTATO SEED CERTIFICATION POST HARVEST TEST - Feb. 5 - 1:30-1:55 p.m.

Andrew Houser: Manager, Colorado Potato Certification Service

Description of Presentation: Brief overview of The Effect PVY Has on Yield and Current PVY Situation in the San Luis Valley

Andrew's Bio: Andrew has been working on potato disease issues at the SLV Research Center for the last 23 years. He received his BS in Botany from Adams State College in 1999, an MS in Horticulture with a plant pathology emphasis in 2008 and his PhD from Colorado State University in 2018. Since 2016, Andrew has served as the Manager for the Colorado Potato Certification Service, which certifies all of the seed potatoes for the State of Colorado. He and his staff work with local potato seed growers to produce high quality seed potatoes.

Andrew still dabbles in some research, focusing on Potato Virus Y management and Powdery Scab resistance. He enjoys elk hunting, woodworking and playing guitar for church. Andrew currently lives outside of Del Norte, CO with his wife (Lori) and his two sons (Tanner and Josiah) and their two dogs (Rocky & Cole).

Session For Youth: TAKING INITIATIVE TO MAKE A POSITIVE IMPACT - for 4-H and FFA Youth - Feb. 5 - 1:30-2:25 p.m.

Peterson Brothers Bio: The Peterson Farm Brothers are three brothers from central Kansas who create social media content to promote agriculture. Their videos have received over 250 million views and they have just over 1 million followers on all of their social platforms put together. The brothers grew up and still work on a family farm near Assaria, KS. All three attended Kansas State University. Greg graduated in 2013, majoring in Agricultural Communications and Journalism. Nathan graduated in 2016, majoring in Agriculture Technology Management. Kendal graduated in 2018, majoring in Agribusiness. Their goal is still to operate the family farm together but hope to make a positive impact with their social media content.

FAMILY DYNAMICS IN ESTATE PLANNING - If you want to lose the farm and ranch, just keep doing what you are doing! - Feb. 5 - 1:30 p.m.

Todd Hagenbuch: County Director and Agriculture Specialist, CSU Extension in Routt County

Todd's Bio: Todd Hagenbuch is the County Director and Agriculture Specialist for CSU Extension in Routt County. As the fourth generation of his family to ranch in Colorado's Yampa Valley, Todd has seen successful and unsuccessful ranch transitions, and the sale of his own family's ranch due to transition issues gives him the personal experience he draws on when working with other farm and ranch families. He is fortunate to help his mom manage the small portion of the ranch that is left in the family, and lives with his wife and two children in Phippsburg.

POTATO TUBER MATURITY TRIAL UPDATE - Feb. 5 - 2-2:25 p.m.

Caroline Gray: Applied Potato Breeder CSU-San Luis Valley

Caroline's Bio: Caroline Gray is the applied potato breeder for Colorado State University. She has worked for the Potato Breeding and Selection Program for thirteen years, located at the San Luis Valley Research Center. Caroline received her M.S. in Plant Breeding and Genetics in 2001, as well as a B.S. in Soils (1998) from Virginia Polytechnic and State University. She worked in the soybean breeding programs at both Virginia Tech and the University of Arkansas before coming to Colorado.

ESTATE PLANNING PANEL - Introductions, Discussions and Moderator - Feb. 5 - 2 p.m.

Todd Hagenbuch: County Director and Agriculture Specialist, CSU Extension in Routt County

Todd's Bio: Todd Hagenbuch is the County Director and Agriculture Specialist for CSU Extension in Routt County. As the fourth generation of his family to ranch in Colorado's

Yampa Valley, Todd has seen successful and unsuccessful ranch transitions, and the sale of his own family's ranch due to transition issues gives him the personal experience he draws on when working with other farm and ranch families. He is fortunate to help his mom manage the small portion of the ranch that is left in the family, and lives with his wife and two children in Phippsburg.

ESTATE PLANNING - It Takes a Team Panel - Feb. 5 - 2 p.m.

Jeff Tranel: CSU Agricultural & Business Management Economist

Jeff's Bio: Jeff Tranel is an Agricultural and Business Management Economist at Colorado State University. His professional interests focus on estate and succession planning and managing farm/ranch finances, income taxes, and human resources.

During his 40-year career, Jeff has addressed agricultural audiences and worked with over 10,000 farm families throughout the United States and nine countries. His research, speaking engagements, and authorship focus on helping farm and ranch families better understand and manage their risks. He has coached numerous families through all estate and succession planning phases. Jeff also provides expert testimony for agriculturally related court cases.

ESTATE PLANNING - It Takes a Team Panel - Feb. 5 - 2 p.m.

Rachael Walke: CPA with 20 Years Accounting Experience

Rachael's Bio: Rachael Walke, CPA, combines over 20 years of accounting expertise with her deep-rooted agricultural experience as a ranch owner. This unique perspective allows her to fully understand the challenges and rewards inherent in the agricultural industry. As a seasoned CPA, Rachael recognizes the vital role strong financial management plays in the success of agricultural businesses. She leverages her comprehensive knowledge of accounting principles alongside the realities of ranch life to deliver invaluable guidance to her clients. Whether navigating complex tax regulations, optimizing cash flow, or managing risk, Rachael is the go-to expert in the industry.

Passionate about helping agricultural businesses thrive, Rachael is dedicated providing her clients with the knowledge and guidance needed to navigate complex tax issues.

ESTATE PLANNING - It Takes a Team Panel - Feb. 5 - 2 p.m.

Michael A. Cohen, CRPC, CBEC: Managing Member Agribusiness Succession Advisors, LLC

Michael's Bio: Mike entered the financial planning industry in 1983. Mike has been recognized by the community and the company for his excellence in client attention, service and detail. Mike is a lifetime member of The Resource Group, an invitation-only, nationwide network of the top financial planners within Osaic FA. Mike is also a member of the Premier Partners Group inside of Osaic FA.

In Mike's 40-year tenure in the industry, he has specialized in complex estate, business continuity and financial independence issues for high net worth clientele. His practice has grown nearly exclusively through the referrals from clients and estate and tax professionals. Today, Mike's practice is focused on the special planning needs of farming and ranching families throughout the United States.

Mike graduated from Colorado College with a bachelor's degree in Economics. In 2010, he earned the designation of Chartered Retirement Planning Counselor or CRPC through the College for Financial Planning. In 2019, Mike earned the designation of Certified Business Exit Consultant (CBEC).

ESTATE PLANNING - It Takes a Team Panel - Feb. 5 - 2 p.m.

Bill Sheets: Senior Director of Development,

Colorado State University

Bill's Bio: William M. "Bill" Sheets is Senior Director of Development for Gift Planning in the Division of Advancement at Colorado State University. Bill received his B.S. in agricultural sciences in 1974 and an M.S. in agricultural economics in 1977 from Purdue University. Bill has been involved in the creation of three companies, working as a real estate manager, real estate appraiser and broker, and consultant to private industry and city and state governments concerning resource management. Bill has held advancement positions with Purdue University, Winrock International, and the University of Kentucky prior to joining the Advancement staff at Colorado State University in 2005. He is past president of the National Agricultural Alumni Development Association, an association of 46 land grant universities, 3 state universities, and 6 not-for-profit organizations associated with agriculture and natural resources.

ESTATE PLANNING - It Takes a Team Panel - Feb. 5 - 2 p.m.

Patrick A. Schilken: Attorney

Patrick's Bio: Patrick A. Schilken is a fourth-generation Colorado Native. He received his undergraduate degree from the University of Northern Colorado and graduated from the University of Denver, College of Law. He is admitted to practice in the States of Colorado and Nebraska, and is member of the Colorado State and Nebraska Bar Associations. He concentrates his practice in probate, farm and ranch transition planning, estate planning and small business entities.

CASTLE RUSSET: Tuber Yield and Quality Response to Nitrogen Fertilization, Seed Spacing, and Economic Returns in the San Luis Valley - Feb. 5 - 2:30-3 p.m.

Dr. Samuel YC Essah: Associate Professor and Extension Specialist at CSU Department of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture

Samuel's Bio: Dr. Samuel YC Essah is Associate Professor and Extension Specialist at Colorado State University, Department of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture, San Luis Valley Research Center. Samuel Essah is the program leader for the Potato Field Management and Whole Plant Physiology program at the San Luis Valley Research Center. Samuel conducts research to develop cultural management guidelines for the successful, sustainable, and economic production of potato cultivars, which optimize their genetic yield and quality potential, while minimizing economic input and environmental degradation. Samuel has contributed to the release of several Colorado potato varieties from the Colorado State University potato breeding and development program. Prior to joining Colorado State University, Samuel was a postdoctoral research fellow at the USDA-ARS plant, soil, and water research lab in Orono, Maine.

Samuel Essah is a member of the Potato Association of America, the European Potato Association, the African Potato Association, American Society for Horticultural Science, American Society of Agronomy, Crop Science Society of America, and life member of the Indian Potato Association.

Dr. Essah is currently Editor-in-Chief of the American Journal of Potato Research.

Samuel was director of the Potato Association of America, director of the Association of African Agricultural Professionals in North America, and senior editor of the American Journal of Potato Research.

Samuel's involvement in international agricultural activities has taken him to countries such as Australia, the Netherlands, Canada, Scotland, Mexico, South Africa, Tanzania, Burkina Faso, and to Ghana several times.

BIOLOGICAL CONTROL OF RUSSIAN KNAPP WEED, PUNCTURE VINE, & BINDWEED - Feb. 5 - 3:20 p.m.

John Kaltenbach: Colorado Department of Agriculture

Jeanine Willett, CCA: - Bio-Ag Consultant Monte Vista Bio-Ag LLC

Please see SESSIONS on Page 8

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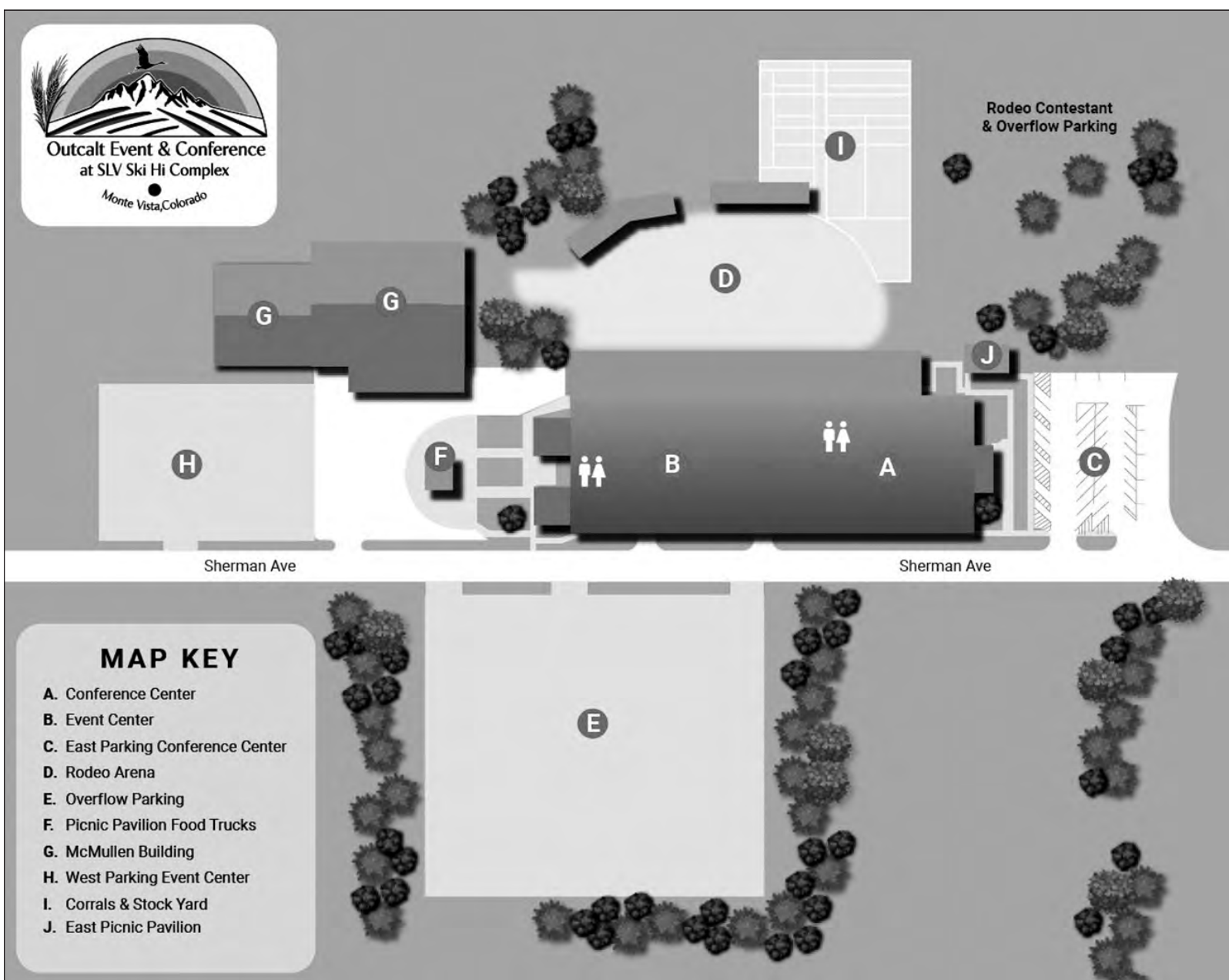
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Ag Conference Schedule

Holding Our Ground — Securing the future of our water, land, businesses, and families

Tuesday, Feb. 4

- 7:30-9:00am BREAKFAST
Sponsored by MONTE VISTA COOP
- 8:00-10:00am Visit Trade Show Vendors
- 9:40am NATIONAL ANTHEM & WELCOME
- 9:45-9:55am Official Conference Opening: Pledge of Allegiance, Introduction of Ag Conference Planning Committee Larry Brown, CSU-SLV Area Ag Business Agent/Director
- 10:00-10:25 am Federal Legislative Update Ashley House, Colorado Farm Bureau
- 10:30-10:55am State Legislative Update Tyler Garrett, Director of Govt. Relations, RMFU
- 11:00-11:25am NPC Issues Update Mike Wenkel, COO NPC
- 11:30-11:55am Macro Economic Outlook Tanner Ehmke, Lead Economist, Co Bank, ACB
- Noon-1:20pm LUNCH Sponsored by FRONTIER BANK & ALAMOSA BANK
- 1:20pm Diamond Sponsor Presentation Plant Nutrient Solutions
- 1:30-5:00pm UNITED POTATO BUSINESS SUMMIT
- 1:30pm Welcome & Opening
- 1:35pm Potato Consumption Kim Breshears, Potatoes USA
- 2:05pm Frozen Potato Processing Update Dale Lathim, PMANA
- 2:35pm North American Potato Market Outlook Ben Eborn, NAPMN
- 3:00 – 3:20pm BREAK
- 3:20pm Prices in the Doldrums Stephan Nicholson, Rabobank
- 3:50pm Tax Update Mic Davis & Kyle Green, Wall, Smith & Bateman
- 4:20pm Fresh Market Outlook Mark Klompfen, United Potato Growers of America
- 1:30 – 5:00pm LIVESTOCK PRODUCER WORKSHOP
- 1:30 – 1:55pm Characteristics of a Good Direct Marketer Jenny Beiermann, Ag Business Mgmt. Economist
- 2:00 – 2:25pm EPD's for the Cow Calf Producer – Understanding Their Usage and How They Make a Difference Chad Russell, Colorado Rancher & Univ. of Nebraska Lincoln Ph.D. Student
- 2:30 – 3:00pm How Much Can You Afford to Buy or Lease a Cow? Jeff Tranel, Regional Ext. Specialist, CSU
- 3:00 – 3:15pm BREAK



- 3:20pm Diamond Sponsor Presentation TBD
- 3:30 – 3:55pm Livestock Disease Update – HPAI & Screwworm Kathy Whitman DVM, CSU State Ext. Veterinarian
- 4:00 – 5:00pm Update on PAP and Feedlot Death Tim Holt DVM, Clinical Sciences, CSU & Curtis Crawford DVM
- 1:30 – 5:00pm FARM & RANCH FAMILY HEALTH
- 1:30 – 3:00pm COMET Training: Do you look after your neighbors as close as your crop or herd? JC Carrica, Valley Wide Health; Kirsten Wulfsberg, Colorado AgrAbility Project
- 3:00 – 3:30pm BREAK
- 3:30 – 5:00pm Personal Well-being – Your Part in the Balancing Act Kirsten Wulfsberg, LPC, CSU Ext. Regional Specialist
- 1:30 – 5:00pm SMALL FARM & RANCH, COMMERCIAL GARDEN, GREENHOUSE IN SPANISH & ENGLISH
- 1:30 – 1:55pm Heritage Seeds / Semilla del Patrimonio Jesus Flores, Manager Rio Grande Farm Park
- 2:00 – 2:25pm Regenerative Ag Practices / Prácticas de Agricultura Regenerativa Regan Velasquez, Farmer/Rancher, CCCD
- 2:30 – 2:55pm Alternative Energy for Greenhouse

Production / Energía Alternativa para la Producción de Invernaderos Hayden Christensen, The Farmstand and Colorado Fresh Farms, Owner

3:00 – 3:15pm BREAK / Separate

3:20 – 3:55pm Transition to Organic / Transición a lo Orgánico Maclaine Sorden, TOPP Specialist, CDA

4:00 – 4:30pm Monitoring Soil Health and Fertility / Monitoreo de la Salud y Fertilidad del Suelo Maya ter Kuile, Cactus Hill Ag Consulting

4:30 – 5:00pm Open Forum Information and Idea Exchange / Foro Abierto de Información e Intercambio de Ideas Maya ter Kuile, Moderator

5:00pm Social Hour with Chef Jason Sponsored by SUNFLOWER BANK & CPAC

6:30pm United Potato Annual Meeting and Dinner Lyla Hathaway

Wednesday, Feb. 5

7:30-9:00am BREAKFAST Sponsored by SLV REC

8:00-10:00am Visit Trade Show Vendors

8:15 – 9:00am DEMO: SLV Community Food & Agriculture Assessment Findings Jae Sanders, LFLP Director

8:30 – 9:15am DEMO – Equipment Demonstration Monte Vista Co-op

9:20am NATIONAL ANTHEM & WELCOME

9:30 – 10:25am Advocating for Agriculture Through Social Media Peterson Farm Brothers, Farm in Central KS.

10:30 – 10:55am CSU Introductions Larry Brown, CSU Ext. & Amy Charkowski, CSU, CAS Assoc. Dean of Research

11:00 – 12:00pm KEYNOTE ADDRESS: There is Much to Consider Stephen Nicholson, EVP Global Sector, Rabobank

Noon-1:20pm LUNCH Sponsored by DEL NORTE BANK

1:20pm Diamond Sponsor Presentation Farm Credit of Southern Colorado

1:30-5:00pm AG BUSINESS SUCCESSION AND ESTATE PLANNING WORKSHOP

1:30 – 1:55pm Family Dynamics: If You Want to Lose the Farm & Ranch – Just keep doing what you are doing! Todd Hagenbuch, Ag Specialist CSU Ext.

2:00 – 3:00pm It Takes A Team – Introduction of Estate Planning Professionals Michael Cohen, Agribusiness Succession Advisors; Rachael Walke, CPA; Bill Sheets, Sr Dir, CSU Gift Planning;

Continued on Page 7

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Ag Conference Schedule

Continued

Patrick Schilken, Attorney; Jeff Tranel, Regional Ext. Specialist, CSU

3:00 – 3:20pm BREAK

3:20 – 3:30pm Diamond Sponsor Presentation TBD

3:30 – 5:00pm Ag Succession and Estate Planning Panel Todd Hagenbuch, Ag Specialist CSU Ext., Moderator

1:30 – 5:00pm REVEGETATION AND ALTERNATIVE CROPS

1:30 – 2:10pm Principles of Revegetation Annie Overlin, Regional Specialist CSU Ext.

2:15 – 2:40pm Identify & Growing Native Grass 101 Madeline Wilson, Ag Prod. Systems Specialist, CSU Ext.

2:45 – 3:00pm Well Buy Out & Revegetation Projects Updates Madeline Wilson, CSU Ext. & Wylie Keller, RG-WCD

3:00 – 3:15pm BREAK

3:20 – 3:55pm Rye Resurgence Project Sara Jones, Producer & Heather Dutton, Mgr., SLVWCD

4:00 – 5:00pm Community Hour: Action Planning for Ag Water Conservation – Public Comment Madeline Wilson, CSU Ext.

1:20pm Diamond Sponsor Presentation TBD

1:30 – 5:00pm SLVRC POTATO RESEARCH & BREEDING UPDATES

1:30 – 1:55pm Summary of the 2024 Potato Seed Certification Post Harvest Test Andrew Houser, Manager, Colo. Potato Certification Service, SLVRC

2:00 – 2:25pm Potato Tuber Maturity Trial Update Caroline Gray, Potato Breeding and Selection, CSU SLVRC

2:30 – 3:00pm Castle Russet: Tuber Yield and Quality Response to Nitrogen Fertilization, Seed Spacing, and Economic Returns in the San Luis Valley Samuel YC Essah, Associate Prof. & CSU Ext. Specialist, SLVRC

3:00 – 3:15pm BREAK

3:20 – 3:30pm Diamond Sponsor Presentation ProFarm

3:30 – 3:55pm SLVRC Potato Pathology Updates – Approaches to Manage Potato Early Die, Powdery Scab and PMTV Mohamad Chikh-Ali, Ph.D. Research Prof., Ext. Specialist, Plant Pathology Program

4:00 – 4:25pm Using Steam to Control Soil Pests Dario Andrew Houser, Manager, Colo. Potato Certification Service, SLVRCcano, SLVRC Assistant Farm Manager



4:30 – 5:00pm Update on the New Requirements to the Seed Potato Law Andrew Houser, Manager, Colo. Potato Certification Service, SLVRC

1:30 – 2:25pm 4-H & FFA Youth – Taking Initiative to Make a Positive Impact Peterson Farm Brothers, Farm in Central KS.

2:30 – 2:55pm Update on Weed Management Armando Ross, RG County Weed Manager

3:00 – 3:15pm BREAK

3:20 – 3:55pm Biologic Control of Russian Knapweed, Puncture Vine and Bindweed Jeannine Willett, Cert. Crop Advisor & John Kaltenbach, CDA Biological Control Specialist

4:00 – 5:00pm Calf and Lamb Survival Birth to Weaning Tim Holt DVM, Clinical Sciences, CSU & Curtis Crawford DVM, Alpine Veterinary Clinic

5:00pm SOCIAL HOUR Sponsored by SAN LUIS VALLEY FEDERAL BANK and A & L COORS

Thursday, Feb. 6

ROOM GUIDE: Conference Room, Blue Room, Orange Room, & Green Room

7:30-9:00am BREAKFAST Sponsored by 1st SOUTHWEST BANK

8:00-10:00am Visit Trade Show

Vendors

8:20am NATIONAL ANTHEM & WELCOME

8:30am Diamond Sponsor Presentation Wilbur Ellis

8:35 – 11:40am Important Water Updates from CDWR and Partners

8:35 – 9:00am 2025 Water Supply Outlook Including Ditch Forecasts Pat McDermott, CDWR

9:05 – 9:30am Measurement on Rivers – The need for better headgates and flumes Jesse Jaminet, CDWR & Daniel Boyes, RG Headwaters Restoration Project

9:35 – 10:00am Well Metering and Certification Kevin Boyle, CDWR

10:05 – 10:40am Update on Aquifer Sustainability Jason Ullmann, State Engineer & Craig Cotten, CDWR

10:45 – 11:40am Ground Water Modeling PANEL: Amber Pacheco and Heather Dutton, Moderator Clinton Phillips, Davis Engineering; Jason Ullmann & Craig Cotten, CDWR and Wylie Keller, RGWCD

11:45 – 12:00pm Closing Comments and Conference Closing Larry Brown, CSU Extension

12:00pm LUNCH Sponsored by FARM CREDIT

1:00pm Commercial & Private Applicator Continuing Education, 7-Core Credits Don Henderson, DP Ag Services

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SESSIONS

Continued from Page 5

John's Bio: John has been with the Colorado Department of Agriculture for 17 years. The last 11 years with the Palisade Insectary Biological Control Program as the director of Front Range operations. The Insectary imports, rears, and establishes new beneficial organisms for control of specific plant and insect pests, and evaluates their effectiveness. He has 35 years of experience working in entomology, including plant pest management, regulation, and control.

Jeannine's Bio: Jeannine Willett, CCA is a Bio Ag Consultant with Monte Vita Bio-Ag LLC. She is retired from Agro Engineering, Inc.

SLVRC POTATO PATHOLOGY UPDATES: Approaches to Manage Potato Early Die, Powdery Scab, and PMTV – Feb. 5 – 3:30 p.m.

Mohamad Chikh-Ali, PH.D: Research Professor/Extension Specialist – Plant Pathology Program – CSU San Luis Valley Center

Description of Presentation: Dr. Chikh-Ali is very excited to work with potato growers and stakeholders in the San Luis Valley to address major diseases impacting potato crops, and help developing integrated management programs. His extension role allows him to learn and disseminate knowledge to potato growers and stakeholders on potato diseases and the best management practices.

Dr. Mohamad Chikh-Ali's Bio: Research Professor and Extension Specialist at the San Luis Valley Research Center at Colorado State University

Dr. Chikh-Ali is the potato pathologist at the San Luis Valley Research Center at Colorado State University. Dr. Chikh-Ali received his master's and PhD degrees in Plant Pathology studying potato viruses from Tokyo University of Agriculture, Japan, in 2006 and 2009, respectively. Upon completing his PhD, he was awarded a postdoctoral fellowship by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science that allowed him to conduct research on plant viruses, mainly potato viruses. Before joining Colorado State University in 2022, Dr. Chikh-Ali worked as a plant virologist at the University of Idaho for almost ten years.

MEASUREMENTS ON RIVERS: The Need for Better Headgates and Glumes – Feb. 6 – 9:05-9:30 a.m.

Jesse Jaminet: Supervisory Hydrographer for the Division of Water Resources in the Rio Grande Basin

Daniel Boyes: Executive Director of Rio Grande Headwaters Restoration Project

Jesse's Bio: Supervisory Hydrographer for the Division of Water Resources in the Rio Grande Basin. He is responsible for all aspects of stream gage operations, infrastructure development and maintenance. He oversees a group of 4 hydrographers that provide accurate data for daily water administration and interstate compact compliance. Jesse grew up in the San Luis Valley, received his B.S. from University of Wyoming in Rangeland Ecology and Watershed Management and has worked for the Division of Water Resources since 2007. Jesse's

hobbies include hunting, fishing, and spending time with family.

Daniel's Bio: Daniel Boyes is the Executive Director of the Rio Grande Headwaters Restoration Project (RGHRP), a nonprofit watershed group based out of Alamosa, CO. RGHRP works with a diverse group of local partners, including private landowners, ditch companies, and state and federal agencies to plan and implement river restoration projects. RGHRP's projects range from large scale irrigation infrastructure improvements on the mainstem Rio Grande to low-tech process-based restoration in the Rio Grande's headwaters. Daniel spends his free time mountain biking and exploring southern Colorado. Before moving to the San Luis Valley, he spent five years working in stream ecology and environmental education across the West.

UPDATE ON AQUIFER SUSTAINABILITY: Feb. 6 – 10:05-10:40 a.m.

Craig Cotten, P.E.: Graduate of CSU with a degree in Civil Engineering

Craig's Bio: Craig is the Division Engineer for Water Division No. 3 of the Colorado Division of Water Resources, where he manages surface and groundwater use in the Rio Grande Basin in Colorado. He is also Colorado's Engineer Adviser to the Rio Grande and Costilla Creek Compacts and has been extensively involved in the current U.S. Supreme Court Case on the Rio Grande Compact. Craig has testified as an expert witness in many Division 3 water case trials and hearings, including in the Division 3 Groundwater Rules and Regulations case. Craig graduated from Colorado State University with a degree in Civil Engineering and has worked for the Division of Water Resources for 34 years.

UPDATE ON AQUIFER SUSTAINABILITY: Feb. 6 – 10:05-10:40 a.m.

Jason Ullmann, P.E.: State Engineer & Director

Jason's Bio: Jason Ullmann was appointed as Colorado's 21st State Engineer in March of 2024. As State Engineer, Jason directs the Division of Water Resources in the performance of its responsibilities, which include administration of water rights in Colorado, ensuring that Colorado meets its obligations under interstate compacts, issuing well permits, performing administrative approvals for water use, administering programs that ensure the safety of dams and the safe construction of water wells, and providing information and education resources to the public. Increasing demand, including protecting water in streams for environmental and recreational uses, paired with decreasing supply, has added to the complexity and challenges that DWR faces in fulfilling this role. Jason is excited to lead DWR's over 270 dedicated staff around Colorado in tackling these challenges. Jason has worked for the Division of Water Resources since 2010, first as the Assistant Division Engineer in Division 4 (Gunnison and San Miguel Basins) for eleven years followed by three years as a Deputy State Engineer. Prior to coming to

the Division of Water Resources, Jason served as City Engineer for the City of Montrose, and before that, worked for consulting firms designing raw water infrastructure for many ditch and reservoir companies throughout Colorado. Jason is a native of Colorado and a graduate of Colorado State University. University. Jason recently relocated to the Front Range from Montrose, where he spent the previous 17 years raising three kids with his wife Jessica.

GROUND WATER MODELING PANEL: Feb. 6 – 10:45-11:40 a.m.

Craig Cotten, P.E.: Graduate of CSU with a degree in Civil Engineering

Craig's Bio: Craig is the Division Engineer for Water Division No. 3 of the Colorado Division of Water Resources, where he manages surface and groundwater use in the Rio Grande Basin in Colorado. He is also Colorado's Engineer Adviser to the Rio Grande and Costilla Creek Compacts and has been extensively involved in the current U.S. Supreme Court Case on the Rio Grande Compact. Craig has testified as an expert witness in many Division 3 water case trials and hearings, including in the Division 3 Groundwater Rules and Regulations case. Craig graduated from Colorado State University with a degree in Civil Engineering and has worked for the Division of Water Resources for 34 years.

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Jason's Bio: Jason Ullmann was appointed as Colorado's 21st State Engineer in March of 2024. As State Engineer, Jason directs the Division of Water Resources in the performance of its responsibilities, which include administration of water rights in Colorado, ensuring that Colorado meets its obligations under interstate compacts, issuing well permits, performing administrative approvals for water use, administering programs that ensure the safety of dams and the safe construction of water wells, and providing information and education resources to the public. Increasing demand, including protecting water in streams for environmental and recreational uses, paired with decreasing supply, has added to the complexity and challenges that DWR faces in fulfilling this role. Jason is excited to lead DWR's over 270 dedicated staff around Colorado in tackling these challenges. Jason has worked for the Division of Water Resources since 2010, first as the Assistant Division Engineer in Division 4 (Gunnison and San Miguel Basins) for eleven years followed by three years as a Deputy State Engineer. Prior to coming to



Chef Jason K. Morse, CEC: Founder of Chef J's BBQ Provisions, National Spokesperson/BBQ Expert — Ace Hardware Corporation

Chef Jason has spent a lifetime behind the grills and smokers and is now able to interact with consumers daily to help them cook better with some of the best grilling and smoking tools on the market. As the Ace Hardware National Spokesperson and BBQ Expert, Chef Jason is proud to call Ace his culinary home. Chef Jason helps make grilling fun, tasty and makes it easy to create barbecue magic in your own backyard. Jason is a Certified Executive Chef and member of the American Culinary Federation. Jason has been featured on the Food Network, National and Local Media segments, was a morning show chef for a Denver Radio station and currently produces the Colorado Department of Agriculture monthly recipes for local Colorado media.

Jason has been published in the Colorado Classique Junior League of

Denver Cookbook, and various local publications. Chef works with many Colorado Agricultural groups like, Colorado Farm Bureau, Colorado Beef Council, Colorado Pork Producers, Colorado Potatoes, Colorado Wool Growers Association and the Colorado Department of Agriculture.

Jason works with and supports groups like the Ace Foundation, Children's Miracle Network Hospitals, The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society and The Colorado FFA Foundation.

Chef Jason attended Johnson and Wales University in Charleston, SC and graduated Summa cum laude and was honored with the Apprenti Cuisinier award for Classic French pastry, among other prestigious culinary honors.

Chef Jason Morse is presenting a potato cooking demonstration on Tuesday, Feb. 4.





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