

Water district enters stage one drought

By Josh Pike
Staff Writer

On April 22, the Pagosa Area Water and Sanitation District (PAWSD) entered stage one drought under its drought mitigation plan, imposing new restrictions on irrigation and rate multipliers for high water use.

The district’s drought plan calls for

it to enter stage one drought if snow water equivalent (SWE) at the Upper San Juan U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service SNOwpack TELemetry Network (SNOTEL) site reaches zero between April 17 and May 1.

SWE fell to zero on April 22, triggering stage one drought, according to See Drought A9

Prescribed burn planned for Brockover Mesa Thursday, April 23

U.S. Forest Service

If conditions allow, the U.S. Forest Service will conduct a prescribed burn near Pagosa Springs this Thursday, April 23.

The planned burn will cover approximately 1,365 acres on Brockover Mesa (Turkey Springs area) northwest of Pagosa Springs.

Beginning mid-morning, smoke will be widely visible in the surrounding area, including Hatcher Lake, U.S. 160, as well as Bayfield and Ignacio.

Residents should expect to see

more smoke from this burn than previous Brockover prescribed fires because the unit size is much larger.

Additionally, a helicopter will be used for aerial ignitions, covering more terrain quicker than firefighters on the ground lighting by hand.

The wind forecast for Thursday should help carry the smoke up into higher parts of the atmosphere, although smoke may settle into low-lying areas near the burn overnight Thursday and into Friday.

Updates will be post on Facebook and on Inciweb at <https://bit.ly/48cPnmt>.



SUN photos/Clayton Chaney

Post-flood work on the San Juan River through downtown Pagosa Springs on Friday, April 17, didn’t stop boaters looking to enjoy time on the river. Work to remove debris continues throughout the area following the October 2025 floods.



SUN photo/Randi Pierce

Construction personnel examine U.S. 160 near the former county courthouse on Wednesday, April 22. On Monday, April 27, crews will begin the excavation, utility work and paving of the area near the corner. Traffic will be configured in a one-lane, alternating pattern and delays are expected. This operation is anticipated to take about two weeks.

Commissioners hear concerns about Public Works Department offices

By Clayton Chaney
Staff Writer

Archuleta County’s newly hired director of development, Eva Kruse, spoke to the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) during a work session on Tuesday, April 21, in regard to the current workplace conditions at the Public Works Department office located at 1122 U.S. 84.

The matter was initially brought up by Commissioner John Ranson during the “other items of mutual interest” portion of the work session’s agenda.

Ranson commented that he’s been saying “not now” to the county moving forward with having a new administration building constructed that would house the majority of the

See Offices A12

Town council to fill vacancy

By Derek Kutzer
Staff Writer

The Town of Pagosa Springs, pursuant to the town charter, put out a public notice that there’s currently one vacancy on the town council, a seven-person governmental body, per the charter.

The open seat is an at-large seat that was formerly held by Matt De-

Guisse, who did not seek re-election for the seat.

The nomination petitions were due by Jan. 26, with no candidates applying to run for the seat by the election deadline.

Therefore, the council must now appoint someone to the seat, per the town charter.

The town’s notice on the matter

See Vacancy A10

Commissioners briefed on wildfire resiliency code exemption options

By Clayton Chaney
Staff Writer

During its work session on Tuesday, April 21, the Archuleta County Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) heard from Bill Trimarco in regard to two pathways in which property owners may become exempt from the recently adopted Colorado Wildfire Resiliency Code (CWRC), which the BoCC adopted on March 17 and will begin enforcing on July 1.

Trimarco explained that when dealing with wildfires, the big thing now is being able to separate forest fires from structure fires.

“Forest fires are always gonna hap-

pen,” he said, explaining that the “real damage” happens when the fire moves from a forest area into a developed area with homes and other infrastructure.

Trimarco commented that forest fires can’t be stopped from happening, but that communities can be proactive in keeping forest fires from taking out homes.

He explained that building codes became a method more than 100 years ago in preventing massive city fires from breaking out and burning down entire cities, and now the idea is to apply the same method with wildfires.

Trimarco acknowledged that with that, there are some “covenants” coming from the state that everyone may

not agree on, “but I will say they are definitely a step in the right direction.”

He was critical of the CWRC for being too much of a “one-size-fits-all” approach, noting that the code needs to be adjustable.

Trimarco mentioned that under the CWRC there are currently two ways that property owners could become exempt from the code.

The first way is through creating a local hazard map.

He explained that the state set up the CWRC based on its map that assesses things like fire probability and intensity of an area.

He noted that local weather patterns, types of fuels in the area, tree

canopies, topography and fire occurrence determine the vulnerability of a property.

Under the CWRC there are three levels: low (green), moderate (orange) and high (red).

Trimarco noted that all of Archuleta is in either an orange or red zone.

He explained that there are multiple steps for residents to go through if they want to change the CWRC map, which involve working with a geographic information systems analyst, developing a fire behavior model, and working with a calibration specialist and the local fire authority.

He mentioned that what he’s been

See Options A10

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Opinion

The Pagosa Springs SUN

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OUR VIEW

It was only a matter of time

Following weeks of voluntary drought restrictions, customers of the Pagosa Area Water and Sanitation District (PAWSD) are now under mandatory drought restrictions.

It was only a matter of time.

It's no secret Colorado has been at record-low snowpack levels this year, and we've watched the snow water equivalency numbers for Wolf Creek Pass dwindle to zero far too soon.

River levels, while lower than typical, are thankfully not at record lows — at least not currently.

The water levels and severe and extreme drought conditions in Archuleta County combined with windy days and a less-than-ideal wildfire season outlook across the country should be taken seriously.

The AccuWeather 2026 U.S. Wildfire Forecast predicts 5.5 million to 8 million acres of land will burn across the country this year, compared to the historical average of 7 million acres.

While the forecast notes there may be an overall dip in the number of fires compared to last year, the ones that ignite are "more likely to grow rapidly and burn more land," as well as increasing the risk of widespread smoke and air quality issues.

Never mind the financial impacts of fighting large-scale fires, especially ones that occur near homes and other values.

"Expanding drought, combined with heat, wind, and dry vegetation, is a dangerous combination," said AccuWeather Lead Long-Range Expert Paul Pastelok. "Similar to the benchmark wildfire season of 2020, conditions later this year could support any fires that ignite to spread faster, grow larger, and become more difficult to contain. Larger and more intense wildfires can also lead to widespread smoke impacts across the central and eastern United States, as millions of people experienced in 2023."

We're definitely not facing a great combination of factors, and it's past time for action, both in preparing for fire and being mindful of our water usage. We appreciate that PAWSD's updated drought management plan is more responsive to seasonal triggers instead of waiting for conditions to worsen.

While we're certainly doing our rain dances for this weekend and a potentially good monsoon season and winter helped by El Niño, we'll be continuing to work to make the space around us more defensible

and watch our water usage to help protect the local supply.

We hope you'll join us in these efforts.

There are numerous resources available with myriad tips for conserving water ranging from ensuring the tap is turned off while you're brushing your teeth and ensuring fixtures are not leaking and more.

PAWSD lists the following voluntary conservation tips on its website:

- Water grass and landscapes early in the morning or late in the evening to prevent water being lost to evaporation.
- Water deeply and less frequently to encourage healthy root growth.
- Consider installing drip irrigation for landscapes.
- Use a broom or rake to clean hard surfaces instead of water.
- Ensure your washing machine and dishwasher are filled to capacity before running the load.

The PAWSD website also notes a typical home with water-efficient fixtures can save approximately 30,000 gallons of water per year.

Lets work together now to make things a bit less stressful for us all later this year.

Randi Pierce

LEGACIES

By Shari Pierce

100 years ago

Taken from SUN files of
April 23, 1926

Forest fire facts for San Juan Forest for the past five years.

Total number of fires, 83 (35 of these, or 42%, were held to less than one-quarter acre.)

Total number man-caused (49% of total), 41.

Total number law-enforcement cases initiated, 14.

Total number fires from natural causes (mostly lightning), 42.

Total cost of fire fighting, \$1538 (Average only \$313 per year)

The very good record, for a country like the San Juan where the fire danger is great, shown by the above figures, is due not only to the fire fighting organization of the Forest Service, but also, and in a large measure, to the excellent co-operation of National Forest users and other residents of the community.

The average length of time between discovery of fire and arrival of Ranger at fire (including time of reporting, getting away, and travel) is less than one hour.

S.D. Anderson, Acting Forest Supervisor.

75 years ago

Taken from SUN files of
April 27, 1951

The Archuleta County local Board number 51 has issued a call for 15 young men to go to Denver for the pre-introduction physicals this month. They leave Thursday, April 26 and are as follows:

John S. Archuleta, Pagosa; Orlando A. Griego, Lumberton, N.M.; Antonio J. Martinez, Arboles; Joe S. Trujillo, Pagosa; Diego A. Gallegos, Arboles; Joe U. Lister, Pagosa; Waldo Romero, Pagosa; Dan D. Lopez, Arboles; Teodoro M. Gomez, Arboles; Edwin McNeely, Metter, Georgia; Baylor Quintana, Los Angeles, Calif.; Isaac D. Rivera, Allison; Charlie F. Montoya, Chromo, Colo.; Joe B. Talamante, Lumberton, N.M.; and John F. Gurule, Arboles, Colorado.

This is one of the biggest draft calls to be issued from this county during the present crisis.

In addition to the draftees, there are several volunteers going in the same bunch.

The Allison teachers have called for volunteers in the neighborhood to assist in cleaning up the Allison school grounds. There is quite an accumulation of old tin cans, trash and what have you to mar the appearance of the grounds as well as presenting a menace to the children who play there.

50 years ago

Taken from SUN files of
April 22, 1976

Herman Riggs is our new Food and Beverage Manager and Ken Bennett's assistant. The Riggs have been living in Louisville, Kentucky for six years where Herman was the President of a restaurant property group called Finish Line, Inc. During this time he was also a Consultant for Hickory House, Inc. Jan Riggs is originally from Minnesota. She has worked as a counselor and a social worker. Jan and Herman have two children, Trae, who is four, and Brian who is a year old. Among their hobbies are flying, fishing, and learning to play bridge. It is a pleasure to welcome this fine family to our community. Be sure to introduce yourself to Herman at the Lodge so he can get acquainted with you.

Bud Brown, manager of Wolf Creek Ski Area, said this week that the area was closed for the season. He reports a record number of skiers at Wolf Creek this winter.

Mr. Brown also said that snow conditions were still excellent at the time the area closed. However, the number of skiers had dropped below the minimum needed to keep the area operating.

25 years ago

Taken from SUN files of
April 26, 2001

A smoke-darkened horizon during the next month or so may not be cause for panic, according to information released by the Pagosa Ranger District Forest Service office.

The office is planning a number of controlled burns in this area over the next few weeks. Exact timing of the burns is not known in advance, since the signal to ignite will not be given until weather conditions are deemed appropriate at the specific time.

Burns contemplated include about 1,100 acres in the Lower Valle Seco area approximately 15 miles south of town; about 900 acres in the Mule Mountain area west of town not far from the Piedra River, approximately 1,100 acres in the Fawn Gulch area northeast of town; about 1,100 acres in the Lefthand Canyon area southeast of town near the road to the Upper Blanco Basin; about 3,100 acres on Benson Creek southeast of town; about 50 acres on Confar Hill south of town; and approximately 1,700 acres in the Kenney Flats area about 14 miles southeast of town and east of U.S. 84.



From the April 18, 1968, Pagosa SUN — **HEAD START HELP** – This group of Job Corpsmen, under the direction of Henry Snow (light coveralls) installed playground equipment for children in the Head Start program. The equipment was installed just north of the Parish Hall the first of the week where it will be convenient for the children. This is one of the many public service projects performed around the community by the Job Corps.

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4/15	53	24	0.01	NA	NA	NA
4/16	58	24	0.00	NA	NA	NA
4/17	48	21	0.00	NA	NA	NA
4/18	58	15	0.00	NA	NA	NA
4/19	65	22	0.00	NA	NA	NA
4/20	70	28	0.00	NA	NA	NA

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Letters

Letters to the Editor are printed as received and are not edited for grammar or punctuation, but may have been edited for content or style.

Letters to the Editor are opinions and information in them has not been verified for accuracy.

The opinions of letter writers do not necessarily represent those of the paper.

Future of our water

Dear Editor:
I want to share some urgent truths and ask a few important questions about the future of our water — the lifeblood of our town.

Snowpack's Vanishing Act

As of April 2026, our mountain snowpack — the natural reservoir feeding our rivers and taps — is at record lows. Climatologist Russ Schumacher says snowpack should be peaking now, but it's nearly gone. Andy Mueller, water manager for the Colorado River Water Conservation District, warns we have no buffer left — we're in a crisis.

Why Snowpack Matters More Than Rain

Snowpack is nature's slow-release water bank, melting gradually to sustain streams, farms, and homes through dry months. Unlike rain, which often runs off quickly, snow stores water frozen, allowing steady recharge. This slow melt is critical for our water supply.

Fire, No Snow, and Dry Streams

Wildfire risk is rising faster than expected, and many monitoring sites that never lost snow by April 1st now show none. This is a glaring warning sign for our water future.

Reservoirs Drying Up and Drought Deepening

Reservoirs are at historic lows. Snow water equivalent is less than 70% of normal here, and less than half in the Four Corners region. The situation is dire.

Early Warmth, Dryness, and What It Means for Us

This year's combo of early warmth and dryness is especially troubling. Snowpack peaked a month early and held only half its usual water — like setting out on a road trip with half a tank of gas, way too soon.

The Worst Year Ever

This is the worst snowpack year in recorded history. Half of Colorado is in extreme drought. This spring is literally changing the landscape.

Water Stress, Aging Pipes, and More

Water stress here isn't just less snow. It's overused aquifers, drought, rising temps, and aging infrastructure all colliding. Our governors agree: we must prepare (with water storage) not just for this year, but for dry years ahead.

Drilling for Water? Not So Fast

Drilling groundwater in mountain towns is tricky. Our fractured rocks don't hold water well — wells can quickly drain the little groundwater we have. Overpumping harms streams, degrades water quality, and risks land sinking. Pumping more isn't a fix; it's a gamble.

To Make Matters Worse: Data Centers

Massive data centers gulp water like small towns. By 2028, U.S. data centers could use as much water as 18.5 million households. That's a huge strain on an already thirsty West.

The Climate Question

Climate change is here. The planet is warming — period. Whether humans caused it or not doesn't change the fact that it's happening fast, and we can't rely on old weather patterns anymore. We must adapt — and quickly.

A Word to the PAWSD Board

Your actions should adapt just like the changing climate.

Robbing our children and grandchildren of reliable water isn't an option.

Two questions:

1. Why is PAWSD suing to block building a reservoir? Experts and governors say we need it.

2. How much of my water bill funds this frivolous lawsuit?

Christa Chagra

Re: 'More of the same'

Dear Editor:

This letter is in response to Ernie O'Toole's recent submission regarding Republican County Commissioner candidate Randy Betts. Unfortunately, Mr. O'Toole's opinion utterly whiffs and follows the typical mass lunacy of media narratives. I'll disclose that Trump did not get my vote in 2024, nor did Harris. Those options were both subpar in my opinion, but we all should vote for someone.

Mr. O'Toole misses every fundamental point about local government. National politics are irrelevant to local government, especially the day-to-day duties of a County Commissioner, and focusing on them attempts to hide the real issues facing Archuleta County. It is nothing but vicious deflection (OR worse, ignorance).

The duties of a County Commissioner do not include things like foreign policy, managing federal agencies, or dictating national cultural battles. Their role is to focus on LOCAL practical, non-partisan issues such as maintaining county roads, managing the budget, approving land use, and supporting emergency services. When a pothole needs filling, I can assure you that Mr. Bett's views on a president are completely irrelevant.

Mr. O'Toole claims that a person's vote for a national candidate is a predictor of their ability to lead locally. Swing and a miss on that one. The best commissioners focus on the immediate needs of their county rather than national ideological battles. Those are nothing but a distraction. In fact, nationalizing local races is a trend that often slows down effective local governance by prioritizing political posturing over practical solutions. It's the typical rhetoric and virtue signaling both parties constantly push.

We need a commissioner who understands topics like land use planning, fiscal responsibility, and the specific needs of Archuleta County citizens, not someone focused on engaging in national partisan politics.

We should judge Mr. Betts on his local platform, his understanding of our county's infrastructure, and his commitment to our community, not on his vote for a president.

As someone who worked next door to Randy (at the time, I was in Planning, Randy was the building inspector), I can attest that there are no candidates currently better suited to help lead Archuleta County. Randy Betts is the best option we have.

Sincerely,
Justin Griffin

Support for Nicole Pitcher

Dear Editor:

I am writing to support Nicole Pitcher for the LaPlata Electric Board. In a short time on the LPEA board of directors, Nicole has become a strong and knowledgeable leader who has guided LPEA through the complex transition from a highly restrictive power supplier to a place where LPEA is now independent and able to secure energy sources that are cheaper, cleaner and much more locally generated. With Nicole at the helm, LPEA is focusing again on the principles that originally made Electric Coops successful in bringing electricity to rural America: local decision-making and nearby power sources. This transition to a truly independent Electric Cooperative has already yielded the benefits of lower rates. Had LPEA remained with its former supplier, your local electric rates would have gone up significantly, instead, LPEA was able to hold rates flat through the remainder of 2026. You can expect this same difference for years to come.

I spent nine years serving on the LPEA board, dedicating much of that time to efforts aimed at making this transition a reality. Years of negotiations and legal battles preceded Nicoles' time on the board of directors, but under her leadership, LPEA finally got out of the highly restrictive power supply contract we lived under and landed in a place where we can tap into all the innovations happening in the power generation industry. Nicole serves as President of the Board, and her steady and thoughtful leadership brought all sides of the political spectrum together to make decisions that are in all our best interest. Let's return Nicole and her proven competence to the LPEA

■ See Letters A4

U.S. 160 reconstruction information

Week of April 27-May 2

Work activity

• Major traffic impact: On Monday, April 27, crews will begin the excavation, utility work and paving of the dogleg, near the corner with the former courthouse, on U.S. 160. Traffic will be configured in a one-lane, alternating pattern and delays are expected. This operation is anticipated to take about two weeks.

• The project team has closed South 2nd Street to work on the subgrade and complete concrete paving at this location. This closure will be in place until Friday, May 1. Access to South 2nd Street is still open by using Hot Springs Boulevard to Hermosa Street.

• Lewis Street: On Wednesday, April 22, nighttime work on U.S. 160 at Lewis Street began from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. for trenching operations. Traffic control for this operation will be down to one-lane, alternating traffic on Lewis.

• The intersection closure at Lewis Street and U.S. 160 remains in place. Please utilize 4th, 7th and 8th streets as an alternative to access businesses along Lewis Street. With the access closure, left-turn signals have been extended at the 4th Street intersection; look for the green left-turn arrow at the northwest corner of 4th and Pagosa Street (U.S. 160).

• Pedestrian crossings: With the new traffic shift there are several locations that no longer have pedestrian barriers where the sidewalks, curb and gutter have been completed. Please pay attention when traversing the roadway and use identified crossings.

• The Lewis Street access closure will be in place until late May/early June.

• Access to North 5th Street and businesses north of the intersection is available via 4th Street.

• Why will the Lewis Street intersection take several months to complete? Where Lewis Street intersects U.S. 160 is one of the most difficult intersections the project team is working on. The underground utility work includes demolition and replacement of the geothermal, water and sewer lines from the bottom up. The Lewis Street intersection will then be built back with new ADA-accessible curb and gutter and concrete paving.

Pagosa Springs Middle School information

The Lewis Street and U.S. 160 intersection closure significantly impacts drop-off and pick-up traffic at Pagosa Springs Middle School.

Traffic and drop-off changes during closure

• The designated drop-off location on Lewis Street has move from the middle school stairs to the stairs near the district office, closer to the 3rd Street intersection.

• Please use 2nd and 4th streets for student drop-off and pick-up. Please use extra caution at 4th Street and Lewis Street, as many students walk through this intersection.

• Avoid 3rd Street, which is the designated bus route.

How you can help reduce congestion and keep



Photo courtesy Colorado Department of Transportation

The complicated utility infrastructure the U.S. 160 reconstruction team encounters daily is seen. This is at the intersection of U.S. 160 and Lewis Street.

students safe

• Ride the bus. We strongly encourage students who are able to take the bus.

• Carpool with another family to reduce the number of vehicles near campus.

• Students walking to school should use the crosswalk at 2nd Street.

• Please be mindful of school buses and help keep bus routes clear so students can arrive safely and on time.

• Stop before crosswalks, follow all traffic signals and put phones away while driving.

We know this closure may create some inconvenience, and we sincerely appreciate your patience and partnership in helping keep students safe.

Stay informed and connect with the project

• Call the project information line: (970) 335-9230.

• Email the project team: Pagosa160reconstruction@gmail.com.

• Visit the project website: www.codot.gov/projects/us160pagosasprings.

• Subscribe to project updates: subscription.codtrip.org.

Information provided by Colorado Department of Transportation

Letters

The SUN welcomes letters from readers.

Please submit your letter electronically in a format that can be copied and pasted to editor@pagosasun.com or via the form at www.PagosaSUN.com. Letters must not be in all capitals.

All letters must:

- be 500 words or less
- include the actual first and last name of the author
- include the author's address and daytime phone number
- be received by The SUN by noon on Tuesday (deadline may move up due to a holiday)

Letters will be limited to two per month per letter writer.

Letters quoting other people must contain proper attribution.

Letters from letter-writing campaigns may not be printed.

There is no guarantee letters will be published.

Poetry, anonymous letters, letters that are libelous or in poor taste, or that attack a private citizen or business will not be published.

If necessary, only one letter pertaining to a candidate or political issue will be printed in each edition up to three weeks prior to the election.

The SUN generally does not edit letters, but reserves the right to do so.

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Commissioners approve grant agreement for flood repair

By Clayton Chaney
Staff Writer

During the meeting held by the Archuleta County Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) on Tuesday, April 7, the board unanimously approved a grant agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to provide technical and financial assistance to the county for the Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) program No. 5097 for the implementation of recovery measures, with the county sponsoring an amount not to exceed \$106,295.

“The EWP Program offers technical and financial assistance to help local communities relieve imminent threats to life and property caused by floods, fires, windstorms and other natural disasters that impair a watershed,” the program’s website explains.

Public Works Director Mike Torres presented the matter to the BoCC, noting that it was not discussed earlier in the day at the BoCC’s work session.

Torres explained that the request is for a “sponsored cost,” describing it as “pretty much” a local match.

He noted the ask is for 25 percent of the project’s construction costs.

County Manager Longinos Gonzalez explained that this aspect of the agreement is only for the county’s supported part of the project, dealing with river restructuring along County Road 500.

He noted that the state will provide a 12.5 percent match, as well, and that the county would get reimbursed for those costs.

Gonzalez clarified that this portion of the project is only dealing with county land and not any private residences.

Torres explained that the total construction cost for the project is \$827,362, with 75 percent of that being funded by the NRCS, at an amount of \$620,521.50, leaving 25 percent of the project costing \$206,840.50.

“So, that’s if all the projects were to be funded,” Torres said, explaining that the county is not going to fund that much and that his request is capped at \$106,295.

Gonzalez also clarified that by the BoCC approving the agreement, the county is still not obligating those funds at this time.

Torres explained that a lot of work has been done in communicating with the Southern Ute Indian Tribe and the Bureau of Reclamation in order to get everyone on the same page about what is being done with this project.

Torres commented that the issue on County Road 500 has been a prob-

lem “for years.”

He also explained that the county budgeted \$1.3 million for capital outlay projects this year, and that with the Pines Drive resurfacing project coming in way under budget, there is an additional \$500,000 that could be put toward this project, “just because it’s in such dire need.”

County Attorney Cathleen Giovannini explained that the ask is for \$106,295, but that it is almost certain the state is going to reimburse 12.5 percent of the county’s costs.

Torres noted that if the state grants come through, that would leave the county’s cost for the County Road 500 project at roughly \$52,000.

He also mentioned there are other projects throughout the NRCS, but that the only one being referenced during the meeting is the County Road 500 project to build up the riverbank.

clayton@pagosasun.com

Letters

■ Continued from A3 board.

Bob Lynch

Support for James Lane

Dear Editor:

James Lane is the candidate for LPEA director for whom I would vote if I lived in Archuleta County.

James is smart, tireless at work, and dedicated to community. He’s well educated for the work that needs to be done at LPEA cooperative.

He knows his district — the people, the land, the services and what it takes to keep it all ticking along in harmony. His roots run deep; he honors the attitudes that have kept Archuleta strong. James is not in for the trendy or the clever politics.

I’ve known James since he was a kid, and I’ve always respected him. He has intense curiosity and matching ability to find constructive solutions.

LPEA ballots should be in your mailbox or your Hub account just after April 20. Watch for ‘em; they are not junk mail! How you vote is tied straight to your power bill.

Please vote for James Lane.

Ann McCoy-Harold
Ignacio, Colo.

Support for Nicole Pitcher

Dear Editor:

It is difficult to read about someone you care about being publicly maligned—especially when she is not only your daughter-in-law, but also a truly exceptional person we are fortunate to have in our family and community.

Nicole has served our community since she first moved here 17 years ago. Most recently, she has served as President of the LPEA Board, where she and her fellow board members have made decisions that will positively impact generations to come. I’m writing in the hope that you will re-elect her.

Her opponent and his supporters—many from outside the area—

are misleading the community about high prices. The reality is that Tri-State drove those high costs and will continue to do so for the co-ops that remain with them. Thanks to Nicole and her fellow board members, LPEA is no longer bound by that contract.

In fact, as of April 1, LPEA’s wholesale energy rates have decreased by 22%. She will continue working as your advocate to bring rates down.

That is not all she has accomplished. Under her leadership, alongside the dedicated LPEA staff, the organization has implemented significant infrastructure improvements in Pagosa, including approved plans for a new substation, additional transmission lines to improve reliability, and expanded wildfire mitigation and resilience efforts.

In a recent debate, her opponent repeatedly acknowledged Nicole’s work and her strong advocacy for Archuleta County. Yet he continues to circulate misleading emails and social media posts—often amplified by individuals who do not even live in the district.

That kind of betrayal and misinformation does not reflect who we are as a community. Please vote to re-elect Nicole so she can continue working to lower rates while keeping our energy infrastructure strong and reliable.

Jann Pitcher

Support for James Lane

Dear Editor:

In a recent LPEA candidate forum, candidate Nicole Pitcher stated that LPEA could do commodities trading in electricity. Echoing our LPEA CEO who said “buy low and sale high.” This is the fourth mention of LPEA doing commodities trading on the electricity market by a board member or our CEO. In my opinion this is incredibly irresponsible. It reminds me of the commercials for money to day trade on the stock market as a path to wealth. Far more people trade their way to bankruptcy than wealth.

Commodities trading is not the

purpose of our cooperative. That our board and CEO entertain the notion of gambling with our money shows how out of touch LPEA leadership is from the members. This is another example of our board’s failure of fiduciary duty.

Please consider voting for James Lane. Our cooperative needs voices of fiscal responsibility who respect their fiduciary duty to members.

John Purser
Durango, Colo.

Support for James Lane

Dear Editor:

I first met James Lane roughly fifteen years ago when he was working as a systems integrator and later supporting BP operations in Durango, Colorado. It took very little time to recognize that James was someone exceptional. A man of deep technical competence, genuine integrity, and quiet strength as both a father and a husband.

What sets James apart is something you feel immediately in conversation with him. He has a rare ability to move naturally from warm, personal connection into thoughtful business discussion with a grace that puts everyone at ease. He breaks down barriers without anyone realizing they were there, creating a space built on trust and honesty where both sides of the table feel heard and valued.

In every conversation I have had with James over the years, I have felt his respect, his warmth, and his sincere curiosity about how he might help. That is an uncommon quality in any setting, and it is exactly the kind of quality our public institutions need more of.

James’s faith and loyalty to his family, his friends, and his community are not things he talks about, they are things he lives. He carries the same steady commitment into every relationship, whether personal or professional.

I have watched him do it consistently for more than a decade, and it

has never wavered.

I believe James would serve his community with the same care, honesty, and dedication he brings to his family and to every person fortunate enough to call him a friend. He would be a strong and trustworthy voice on the LPEA board and a genuine advocate for the people and place he loves.

Sean Smiley
Golden, Colo.

Indifference and accountability

Dear Editor:

There was a time in this country when public service carried a clear expectation: competence, accountability, and a willingness to answer for one’s actions. Today, that expectation feels increasingly absent.

Across all levels of government, we see decisions that raise serious questions—about judgment, preparedness, and responsibility. Yet what is most troubling is not any single decision but the growing sense that these concerns are met with indifference. Mistakes are explained away. Accountability is delayed or avoided. And the public, left watching from the sidelines, is expected to accept this as the new normal.

In a healthy democracy, citizens need not agree on every issue, but they should agree on this: those entrusted with authority must be capable of exercising it. When those standards slip—and are met with silence rather than scrutiny—something essential begins to erode.

This is not about party, ideology, or personality. It is about standards. It is about expecting those in positions of power to demonstrate the competence their roles require—and insisting on accountability when they do not.

If we lose that expectation, we risk losing far more than any single policy debate. We risk becoming a nation that shrugs when it should question and stays quiet when it should speak out.

Respectfully,
Russ Widener

Please Join Us For the Aspen House
Ground Breaking Friday, May 1st at 5:30pm

GROUND BREAKING



Home is Where the Heart is

ASPEN HOUSE ~ 2079 Vista Boulevard
The Wilderness Journeys shuttle will be available from Our Community Eats, Boss Hoggs, First Southwest Bank, and Veterans Memorial Park, along with street parking on Vista Blvd. (East Side).

Please RSVP to Keena Carstensen at admin@aspenhousepagosa.org

Wear Denim with a Purpose

ON 4-29-26 TO TAKE A STAND AGAINST SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Denim Day is an annual event uniting communities to take a stand against sexual violence. This **Denim Day**, every pair of jeans becomes a statement, every donation becomes hope, and every piece of denim becomes a promise to survivors: **You Are Seen. You Are Believed. You Matter.**

Help and resources available at riseaboveviolence.org

Denim Day is part of Sexual Assault Awareness Month

Give to support local survivors

Every \$5 donation becomes hope

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Rise Above
LEADING THE WAY TO END VIOLENCE

NEARLY 1 IN 3 COLORADANS HAVE EXPERIENCED SEXUALLY VIOLENT CRIMES
It's time to take a stand. **Together We Rise**

RISE ABOVE VIOLENCE MOVIE FUNDRAISER EVENT

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29TH -- 6PM
LIBERTY THEATRE - 418 PAGOSA ST

Tickets \$20 - available online
www.riseaboveviolence.org

This fundraiser event is part of Sexual Assault Awareness Month and in conjunction with Denim Day. Find out more by visiting the website above.



Scan for Tickets

Nathan Robert Schlosser

Nathan Robert Schlosser, age 40, of Pagosa Springs, Colo., passed away on April 11, 2026. He was born on Jan. 6, 1986.

Nathan will be remembered for his kind heart, generous spirit and the quiet way he made the world a better place just by being in it. He had a truly beautiful soul — one that shined through in everything he did and in the way he treated others.

He was the kind of person who would give someone the shirt off his back without hesitation. He never



Obituary

asked for anything in return and found joy in helping those around him. His compassion and selflessness left a lasting impact on everyone lucky enough to know him.

Nathan found peace and happiness in the simple things in life. He loved fishing, going on long drives and hunting grouse — moments where he could be outdoors and feel free. Those times brought him comfort and joy, and they will remain cherished memories for his loved ones.

He is survived by his wife, Sara

Benzel; his two sons, Tallon and Korbin Schlosser; his mother and stepfather, Michele and Mark Tully; his father, Paul Schlosser; his sister, Kara Schlosser, and her husband, Danny Hull; along with many extended family members and friends who will miss him deeply.

Nathan will be deeply missed by his family, friends and all whose lives he touched. Though he is no longer with us, the love, kindness and warmth he shared will continue to live on in the hearts of those who knew him.

Thanks Fundraiser

Jason Hands sincerely thanks our community for donations to ensure quality of life, i.e. nutrients, used car and burial. All folks donating the BBQ, music, serving baked/home goods and volunteers, we thank you. Donations can be made at <https://gofund.me/9052b7a2e>.

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Business

Chamber planning trio of upcoming events

By Sandy Douthey
Pagosa Springs Area Chamber of Commerce

The Pagosa Springs Chamber of Commerce is bringing the community together this spring with a trio of events designed to connect local businesses, spark meaningful conversation and celebrate one of the area's favorite traditions.

The season kicks off with the next Business Happy Hour on April 23 from 5 to 7 p.m. at Patria Pagosa, 920 San Juan St., hosted by Bank of the San Juans and Patria Pagosa.

This casual networking event continues to draw a strong crowd of local professionals, offering an easy and welcoming way to build relation-

ships, share ideas and stay connected to the local business community. Two complimentary refreshments and door prizes will be included with your \$10 entry fee.

The Chamber and the Pagosa Springs Community Development Center will host the Beyond the Bottom Line forum on April 29 at the Ross Aragon Community Center at 451 Hot Springs Blvd.

This event will focus on the bigger picture of doing business in Archuleta County, with discussion centered on topics such as workforce development, economic sustainability and long-term community vitality.

Featured speakers include Pagosa's own Melissa Lee and Matt Gordon with the Colorado Depart-

ment of Local Affairs, who will offer insight into business ownership and the different tools that can help with efficiency.

The forum begins at 9:30 a.m., with a light breakfast at 8:30 a.m. Advance registration is encouraged at <https://member.pagosachamber.com/ap/Events/Register/IzFnw39fjC5Cw>.

Rounding out the lineup is the 17th annual Pagosa Springs Car Show June 12-13, taking place at Yamaguchi Park from 5 to 8 p.m. on June 12 and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on June 13.

A long-standing community favorite, the Car Show will feature a wide variety of classic cars, custom builds and vintage vehicles. Attendees can enjoy live music by Brooks i Band and DJ JP, food vendors and

awards for standout entries.

We will have a cornhole tournament and an 1/25 model car show for the first time this year. Check out all of the fun activities at <https://member.pagosachamber.com/event-calendar/Details/17th-annual-pagosa-springs-car-show-1665245?sourceTypeId=Website>.

You do not want to miss out on the fun. Registration for Car Show participants is live at <https://carshowpro.com/events/view/2931>, and spectators are invited to attend free of charge.

For more information on these events or to get involved, contact the Pagosa Springs Area Chamber of Commerce at (970) 264-2360, visit pagosachamber.com or stop by the office at 105 Hot Springs Blvd.

Main Street's Kathleen McFadden honored at Colorado Downtown Excellence Awards

Downtown Colorado Inc.

Since 2003, Downtown Colorado Inc. (DCI) has presented awards to outstanding projects and people throughout the state who demonstrate creativity in the face of challenges, unlikely and enduring partnerships, and commitment to advancing downtown initiatives within their local communities.

On April 2, DCI honored 12 communities — from small towns to large cities — along with five exceptional individuals, with the Colorado Downtown Excellence Awards.

Among this year's winners is Kathleen McFadden, Pagosa Springs

Main Street coordinator and Pagosa Springs Community Development Corporation administrative manager.

The Colorado Downtown Excellence Awards celebrate outstanding achievements in six key categories: Partnership, Place, Plans, Projects, Pop-Up Innovation, and Person — Vikki Mattox Downtowner of the Year.

These categories highlight the many ways local leaders and communities are advancing vibrant downtowns and commercial districts across Colorado.

McFadden was one of four winners chosen to receive the Vicki Mattox Downtowner of the Year award.

The Vicki Mattox Downtowner of

the Year Awards recognize individuals who have shown exemplary commitment to their local downtown and community. The winners encourage ongoing collaboration and teamwork benefiting the community.

McFadden is a transformational leader bringing clarity, strategy and unity to Pagosa Springs. She is known for turning community input into shared vision and real momentum. She led inclusive engagement around U.S. 160 with transparency and trust. She connects organizations, voices and ideas to build stronger outcomes and inspires pride, ownership and a bold future for downtown Pagosa Springs.

For more information on the

awards, visit downtowncoloradoinc.org/dtexcellenceawards.

About DCI

Established in 1982 as the Colorado Community Revitalization Association, DCI is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit membership organization that aims to build better communities by assisting downtowns, commercial districts and town centers in Colorado.

Organization members represent downtown organizations, local governments, development and improvement districts, consultants, individuals, and others involved in downtown and community development.

PAWSD approves previously offered fee waivers for workforce housing

By Josh Pike
Staff Writer

At its April 9 meeting, the Pagosa Area Water and Sanitation District (PAWSD) Board of Directors approved an exemption from the district's affordable housing policy requirements for five homes constructed by the Pagosa Springs Community Development Corporation (PSCDC) in 2024.

The board previously heard a presentation from PSCDC Executive Director Emily Lashbrooke about the homes at its March 12 meeting, which the district previously provided capital investment fee (CIF) waivers for but which were sold to persons whose income was above the 80 percent area median income (AMI) threshold for such waivers outlined in PAWSD's affordable housing policy.

This interpretation of PAWSD's affordable housing policy is debated by the PSCDC, with Lashbrooke claiming that she understood the policy to mean that any housing in the 80s in terms of percent of AMI could receive a waiver.

Following a sometimes heated discussion where PAWSD board

members expressed frustration with the way information about the homes was presented to them and with how many pages of documents they were expected to read, the board tabled the issue to receive additional information from the PSCDC that would clarify the income levels of homeowners and which homes were sold to which owner.

The board also agreed, in general terms, that it would be willing to make an exception and grant waivers to these homes instead of working to claw back the funding even though it disagreed with the interpretation of the policy under which these homes, whose owners are all in the 80 to 90 percent range of AMI, would be covered.

At the April 9 meeting, PAWSD Programs Manager Renee Lewis explained that the board had an opportunity to review the deeds for each property and that she confirmed the owner listed on each deed was the owner listed on the Archuleta County assessor's website.

She added that the district also received from Lashbrooke letters containing third-party verifications of the income of each homeowner, with those verifications completed

by Jennifer Kermode of Kermode Consulting.

Lewis explained that, if the board was willing to accept Kermode as an approved third-party income verifier, the waivers would comply with the board's policy.

However, she noted that the policy requires the board to approve any third-party income verifier that is not the Archuleta County Housing Authority.

PAWSD board member Glenn Walsh asked if authorizing Kermode as an income verifier would also involve accepting that the board is making an exception for the properties, which are over the 80 percent AMI threshold.

Lewis stated that this would be correct and, in a followup comment, added that the board could approve this in one motion or in two separate motions.

PAWSD board member Bill Hudson moved to accept Kermode's income analysis and to grant the PSCDC the waivers previously offered in 2024.

PAWSD board chairman Gene Tautges asked if Hudson meant to only accept Kermode's analysis on these properties or to approve her as a verifier

for other projects in the future.

Hudson stated that he was only moving to approve her analysis in this specific case.

The board then voted unanimously to approve Kermode's analysis and to grant the waivers.

josh@pagosasun.com

Town to allocate funds to help with tap fees for workforce housing

By Derek Kutzer
Staff Writer

On April 9, the Pagosa Springs Town Council approved allocating \$55,000 from the town's workforce housing account to support water and sewer tap fees for five homes presently under construction by the Pagosa Springs Community Development Corporation (PSCDC).

PSCDC Executive Director Emily Lashbrooke identified a \$150,000 shortfall in funding for tap fees for the homes in the Trails subdivision after the Pagosa Area Water and Sanitation District (PAWSD) board denied tap fee waivers for the homes.

Lashbrooke explained that "getting the tap fees waived" would help to "unlock \$675,000 in grant funds, because I can actually build affordably."

She added, "If I don't get my tap fees covered then I can't draw on the grants and I cannot build for under 120 percent [area median income]."

According to the PSCDC's website, "these homes are designed for households earning 80%-100% of Area Median Income (AMI). Often called the 'missing middle,' this includes many working families who earn too much to qualify for traditional subsidized housing but not enough to purchase market-rate homes in Pagosa Springs."

Lashbrooke added that the county pitched in and allocated an additional \$40,000 to help with the water and sewer tap fees for the homes.

She explained that, in total, the PSCDC would be about \$5,000 short if the town allocated \$50,000, which led council member Gary Williams to suggest that the town should allocate

\$55,000 instead of the amount being asked for.

Lashbrooke noted the new homes are "being drywalled this week."

Council member Brooks Lindner noted that he fully supported the council stepping up "to fill that gap."

"I fully support that we are able to do this for the CDC, because the CDC is making it happen," Lindner said.

"We continued to build all winter and the houses are too far along for us to modify the financial plan, so we just have to cover these fees," Lashbrooke said.

She added, "Moving forward, though, we are going to move to a

modular product" that should lower the overall cost of building.

When a motion was made to approve and allocate \$55,000 from the town's workforce housing fund to help the PSCDC with water and sewer tap fees for homes presently under construction, it was seconded and approved unanimously by the council.

"I can't tell you how much it means to have your support ... we've worked really hard to unlock affordable and workforce housing in the community, and we've made great strides, but this really helps a lot, and I can't thank you enough," Lashbrooke said.

derek@pagosasun.com

NOTICE OF TOWN COUNCIL VACANCY

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to Section 2.8 of the Pagosa Springs Town Charter, that as of April 6, 2026, there is one vacancy on the Pagosa Springs Town Council. The council seat is an at large seat. During a public meeting to be held on May 19th, 2026 at 5:00 pm, at Town Hall 551 Hot Springs Blvd, the Council will consider the appointment of one new Council Member to fill the vacancy.

NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that any elector of the Town of Pagosa Springs interested in serving on the Town Council may submit a completed application, found on the town website, with the Administrative Assistant, Traci Bishop, at Town Hall 551 Hot Springs Blvd or PO Box 1859 Pagosa Springs, CO 81147, on or before May 13, 2026.

For town boundaries, eligibility, or more info call 970-264-4151 or visit www.pagosasprings.co.gov

NATIONAL DAY of Prayer

You are invited to Stop & Pray
Thursday, May 7
9am-6pm

We will have the church open and prayer stations set up to guide you through a personal time of prayer for our nation and world.

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A heartfelt thank you to Nancy Haines, former owner and dear friend, and to Elise Mariner, our business broker with Transworld, for helping us make this transition possible.

We look forward to growing with our community.

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Education



Photos courtesy Pagosa Peak Open School

William Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream" will hit the stage of the Pagosa Springs High School auditorium April 23 (Shakespeare's birthday) at 6:30 p.m., April 24 at 6:30 p.m. and April 26 at 2 p.m. Tickets will be \$10 for adults and \$5 for children.

'A Midsummer Night's Dream' to hit the stage this week

By Alison Beach
Pagosa Peak Open School

One of William Shakespeare's most beloved and popular comedies, "A Midsummer Night's Dream," is coming to Pagosa Springs this week via a cleverly adapted script and a young cast of local thespians in elementary and middle school.

The story intertwines the lives of four young lovers — Hermia, Lysander, Helena and Demetrius — with the magical realm of fairies, ruled by King Oberon and Queen Titania. The story begins with Duke Theseus preparing for his wedding to Hippolyta, while Hermia defies her parent's wishes to marry Demetrius and instead elopes with Lysander.

As they escape to the forest, they encounter Puck, a mischievous fairy who uses a magical flower to manipulate their affections, leading to comic misunderstandings. At the same time, a group of amateur actors, including one particularly overdramatic and foolish man, Nick Bottom, rehearse a play in the same forest. The result is a chaotic, merry mix-up.

For many of these young actors, this adaptation of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" is their first experience portraying Shakespeare's story on stage.

Helena (Rayleen/seventh grade), Hermia (Quinn, seventh grade), Puck (Joanna, fourth grade), Nick Bottom (Kit, eighth grade), and Titania (Lotus, eighth grade) discuss their experience with this play:

- What made you excited (or nervous) about being part of this play?

Joanna: I am nervous and excited because I have a big part.

Quinn: I am a theater person and I've always enjoyed acting on the stage.

Rayleen: I felt really nervous at first, but I really do enjoy acting and being creative.

Lotus: Seeing all the roles and different characters with their personalities, and how they interact. knowing that I was going to be apart of it all made me really excited.

Kit: I enjoy being in plays, and 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' was the first play I ever did, so it was fun to revisit it with my new perspective from all the other plays I have been in.

- Which character are you playing,

and what do you like most about them?

Joanna: I am Puck, and I like being a bad guy.

Quinn: I am playing Hermia and I really like the fact that I have a bigger part in the play.

Rayleen: I am playing Helena and I enjoy that I can be very dramatic with my lines.

Lotus: Titania, I love how bold yet ditsy she can be at times, she's just so expressive and is such a fun part play.

Kit: I am playing Nick Bottom the Weaver. My favorite part is that I get to be very big and boisterous.

- What has been the funniest or most memorable moment during rehearsals?

Joanna: When Kit forgot two of the other actors' names.

Quinn: I like hanging out with my friends, and all the funny quotes that come with it.

Rayleen: I like being with friends and making jokes together.

Lotus: All of us trying not to laugh when someone messes up, or says something really funny.

- What's been the biggest challenge in getting ready for the performance?

Joanna: Speaking so the audience can understand me.

Quinn: Memorizing all of my lines.

Rayleen: Probably memorizing my lines.

Lotus: Probably remembering all the lines because of how different yet similar the language is to how we talk today, but once I got it I was fine and really enjoyed the acting of my character.

Kit: The biggest challenge had been memorizing so that I can play the best version of Bottom that I can.

- Why should other students and families come to see the show?

Joanna: Because it's hilarious.

Hermia: It will be fun for your whole family, and you'll get a laugh out of it.

Helena: It is really fun to watch, and you will definitely laugh at the jokes, also seeing all of our hard work is really cool, too.

Lotus: Everyone who is part of the play (big or small roles) all worked so, so hard to understand the language, and play their characters perfectly. It really is such a treat to see everyone work together with the finished product.

Kit: People should come to the play because I'm in it and because everyone in the play has worked very hard to put it on.

Performances will be in the Pagosa Springs High School auditorium April 23 (Shakespeare's birthday) at 6:30 p.m., April 24 at 6:30 p.m. and April 26 at 2 p.m. Tickets will be \$10 for adults and \$5 for children.

The show runs approximately 75 min with no intermission.

You can purchase tickets at www.paypal.com/ncp/payment/7YKH-BHLCJA6V4.

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- Prioritize county infrastructure.
- Bring decisions back to locals.
- Clear standards.
- Residents before personal interests.

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PAID FOR BY RANDY BETTS CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE, 2026.

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The Pagosa Springs SUN

970-264-2100

School district shines light on volunteers

Archuleta School District

In recognition of National Volunteer Week, Archuleta School District extends its sincere thanks to the many volunteers who support our students, staff and schools. Their time, energy and dedication help create a strong, connected learning community.

Volunteers play an important role in our schools, whether assisting in classrooms, supporting events or serving on school and district accountability committees. These contributions make a meaningful difference for students and staff alike.

Community members interested in volunteering are encouraged to reach out to their local school to learn about current opportunities, or visit www.mypagosaschools.com.

Thank you to all who help make our schools a place where students and staff can thrive.

Following are a couple of the district's dedicated volunteers.

Eric Johnson

Eric Johnson has been volunteering at Pagosa Springs Elementary School for the past two years, getting involved when his children entered kindergarten. Since then, he's become a familiar and valued presence in classrooms, supporting teachers in whatever ways are most helpful, from reading with students and practicing sight words to assembling materials and helping with projects.

Johnson also recently joined the District Accountability Committee (DAC) and School Accountability Committee (SAC) to engage in broader conversations about district priorities and provide feedback.

After retiring from the military, Johnson was inspired to spend more time involved in his children's education.



Eric Johnson

"The education of our kids is very important," he shared, noting that his sister's experience as an educator also influenced his decision to volunteer.

What keeps him coming back? "The awesome kids."

One moment that stands out to him is helping a student master sight words and seeing the pride on their face as they gained confidence.

First-grade teacher Tiffany Kinne shared, "He comes to read with my students on Wednesdays. He also presented to my class about his heritage, and his family helped assemble the second half of our decodables this year — which was a major help!"

Johnson's advice for others: do what you can, big or small.

"All of our time is limited, but it makes a difference. The kids really enjoy seeing other adults at school," he said.

Fun fact: Johnson recently started paragliding — and even got to learn



Dee McPeck

alongside one of our teachers, Iris Frye.

Dee McPeck

Dee McPeck has been volunteering with Archuleta School District since the formation of the Master Plan Advisory Committee (MPAC). She first became involved after attending a community meeting to better understand the condition of our school facilities and the challenges facing the district.

What stood out most to McPeck was that the first MPAC meeting brought together a diverse group of community members united around a shared goal: improving our schools for Pagosa's students. She values both the flexibility of volunteering and the opportunity to contribute in a meaningful way.

"I love seeing a project be adopted by interested people, unfold and grow into something successful," she shared.

Results of statewide survey show improvement in educator perceptions of working and learning conditions

Colorado Department of Education

The Colorado Department of Education has released the results of the 2026 Teaching and Learning Conditions Colorado (TLCC) survey.

Based on responses from more than 42,000 teachers and school-based staff (a 48.1 percent response rate), participants feel more positive about their school environments and their choices to join the profession compared to the 2024 survey administration.

The TLCC survey takes place every two years and collects perceptions on teaching and learning conditions in their schools. It was open to teachers, education support professionals (including positions such as teacher assistants and paraprofessionals), school leaders and special service providers (such as psychologists and social workers). The results are used to support school, district and state improvement planning, and inform research and policy-making.

Colorado Education Commissioner Dr. Susana Córdova said, "Supporting educators means recognizing what they need to be effective and stay in the profession. Time to plan, collaborate, connect with families and grow as professionals is essential to educator retention, strong teaching conditions and improved student success across Colorado."

This year's results show steady improvements in several areas com-

pared to prior administrations of the survey, including responses related to time for planning, professional climate and support for students:

- 87 percent said their schools are good places to work (+1 percentage point from 2024, +2 percentage points from 2022);

- 90 percent said their schools are good environments for student learning (+2 percentage points from 2024, +1 percentage point from 2022); and

- 85 percent said their schools are led by effective teams (+4 percentage points from 2024, +3 percentage points from 2022).

The survey included a new question asking about participants' satisfaction with choosing their profession, and 89 percent of respondents indicated being satisfied with their choices.

Nevertheless, respondents reported some longstanding challenges remain, even though some areas have better responses than over the past two survey administrations:

- 68 percent of respondents say they have enough time to engage in professional learning (+3 percentage points from 2024, +11 from 2022);

- 64 percent of educators say they have adequate preparation time (+3 percentage points from 2024, +5 percentage points from 2022);

- 60 percent of respondents say they have enough time to effectively implement new initiatives (+7 percentage points from 2024, +10 per-

centage points from 2022); and

- 44 percent of respondents say they are being adequately compensated (-1 percentage point from 2024, +8 percentage points from 2022).

Additionally, the 2026 TLCC survey asked participants about their experiences working with artificial intelligence (AI) in their roles: 54 percent of all respondents said they were comfortable with its use, 40 percent of school leaders report having clear guidelines for student use of AI, and 32 percent of respondents say they felt prepared for future changes involving AI integration in schools.

The results also show that relationships remain central to educator retention. Educators cited connections with colleagues (89 percent), school leadership (76 percent) and a shared school mission (74 percent) as the top reasons they stay in their roles, with compensation playing a smaller role (52 percent).

Kevin Vick, Colorado Education Association president, said, "This survey confirms what we hear every day: teachers value strong relationships, supportive leadership and meaningful time to do their work well. We must continue investing in these areas so all educators can thrive and students succeed."

Statewide trend reports and all publicly available state, district and school-level data — inclusive of prior year data — are available at www.tlccsurvey.org.

State labor department and iAging partner to launch older worker survey

Colorado Department of Labor and Employment

The Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE), in conjunction with Workforce Colorado, other workforce organizations and the nonprofit iAging, is conducting a comprehensive survey to gain insight from workers and job seekers aged 50 and over.

Respondents are asked to share their experiences with work, job transitions and career changes. The unique survey aims to strengthen understanding of this valuable, growing demographic; evaluate how well current policies and programs support older workers; and identify areas for improvement.

Coloradans aged 50-plus can take the Older Adult Survey at <https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/8699370/Older-Adult-Survey-Colorado-2> to help shape future workforce support programs and opportunities across the state. Survey respondents will be entered into drawings to win gift cards.

"We are so fortunate in Colorado to have a strong community of people aged 50 and older who remain active and interested in participating in the

work and volunteer force in our state," said Kelly Folks, director of the Division of Employment and Training for Colorado. "It's important that support and policies are in place to elevate the valuable experience of this vital group. The survey is designed to assist in determining what is working and what needs to change."

According to CDLE's Office of Labor Market Information, 674,800 workers aged 55 and older are actively working or looking for work in Colorado. There are another 27,500 workers aged 55 and older that are not actively looking for work, but state that they want a job now. Adding this group to workers aged 55 and older who are

unemployed gives us approximately 48,600 workers aged 55 and older, representing a potential untapped talent pool of older workers.

"With people living longer and birth rates declining over the last 40-plus years, a thriving economy depends on ensuring older adults find a place in the Colorado workforce, which makes participation in the survey more important than ever," said iAging CEO Karen Brown, a nonprofit assisting with survey distribution and analysis.

This workforce survey is being conducted by iAging; the CDLE; and its affiliated partners, contractors and consultants. All participant information is confidential.



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McPeck is motivated by the importance of ensuring students have safe, functional spaces to learn and grow — something she believes the entire community can take pride in.

Her advice for others: Find something you care about and get involved. "Everyone has skills and experiences to share, and your involvement can make a bigger difference than you imagine," she said.

Fun fact: McPeck admits she's afraid of heights — but that hasn't stopped her from jumping out of helicopters and tackling multi-pitch climbs alongside her husband of 57 years.



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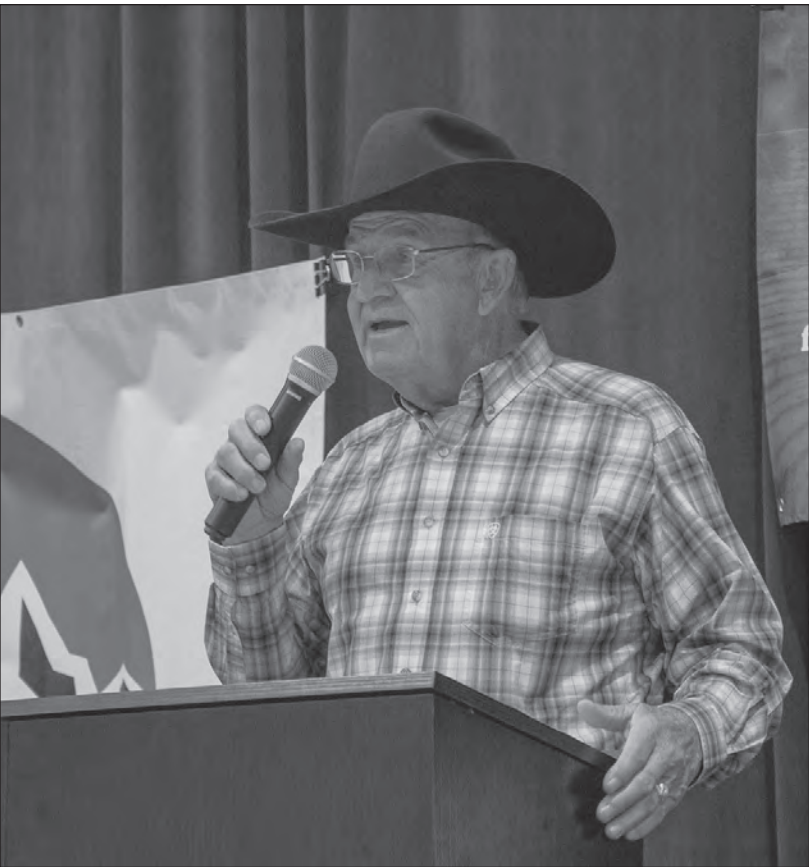
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Build Pagosa auction

Photos courtesy Nathaniel Nichols, Build Pagosa
Attendees of the Build Pagosa annual dinner and auction support career and technical education while having a good time on Friday, April 17. Organizers report more than \$60,000 was raised.



PAWSD approves updated drought plan

By Josh Pike
Staff Writer

At an April 9 meeting, the Pagosa Area Water and Sanitation District (PAWSD) Board of Directors approved revisions to the district's drought management plan.

District Engineer Justin Ramsey opened discussion of the plan, which he explained was a complete rewrite of the previous plan and was adopted in 2020 with a stipulation that it be reexamined in 2026.

He added that the district also had to implement the plan in 2025 due to dry conditions, which gave additional insights into how the plan functions.

He explained that he recently reconvened the committee that drafted the plan, including PAWSD board members, water experts in the community, business owners and other community members.

Ramsey stated that, although there were some changes recommended to the plan, it has, overall, been highly successful.

He explained that the drought stages outlined in the plan are entered based on triggers, which are different depending on the time of year.

Early in the year, he stated, the triggers are the snowpack in the mountains, measured by the amount of snow water equivalent (SWE) at the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service SNOwpack TELemetry Network (also commonly known as SNOTEL) station on Wolf Creek Pass and the date when the district's water supply is cut off on Four Mile Creek due to other senior water users diverting water.

If specific SWE levels or a call on Four Mile do not occur by specific dates in the spring, the plan shifts to a different set of drought triggers based on water levels in Lake Hatcher (one of PAWSD's primary reservoirs), water flows in the San Juan River and the drought stage for Archuleta County designated by the National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS).

He explained that the amount of water in Lake Hatcher is weighted the most heavily, with flows in the San Juan being the next most influential factor and drought designation being the least.

He added that the different drought stages come with different drought surcharges and water rate adjustments.

In response to a question from a board member, Ramsey stated that the drought plan would have also have to be updated if PAWSD completes a pipeline connecting Hatcher to Stevens Reservoir, which would change the dynamics of water in Hatcher.

He explained that the first drought stage (voluntary drought) aims to cut water use by 10 percent, while the most severe drought stage (stage

four) is intended to cut water use by 50 percent.

Ramsey stated that the drought plan focuses on reducing water use for irrigation since this makes up much of the additional water use in the summer.

To do this, he indicated that the plan limits irrigation by reducing times when irrigation of lawns is allowed, going from every other day in early drought stages to once a week or never in more severe drought stages.

Ramsey explained that the previous drought plan before 2020 focused on total water supply without considering whether or not that water was usable by PAWSD or connecting water levels to the time of year they are occurring in.

He explained that the current plan focuses on reducing water consumption early to prevent the district from entering deeper drought stages or facing water supply problems.

Ramsey then explained the impacts of the various stages in the 2020 drought plan on rates, stating that voluntary and stage one drought have no rate impacts, stage two features a two times rate multiplier for water use above 4,000 gallons per month, and stages three and four feature the same rate multiplier as stage two and an additional surcharge.

He added that the rate multipliers are not applied in stage two to commercial users since they have less ability to reduce the amount of water they use, but that the additional surcharges for stages three and four are applied to them.

Ramsey also stated that the surcharges are calculated based on the amount of revenue PAWSD expects to lose due to reduced water usage during a drought and that it would increase in the 2026 update due to revisions of those calculations.

He stated that the plan was effective in reducing water use in 2025, especially once the district entered drought stage two and the rate multipliers kicked in.

However, he indicated that the drought plan did not kick in quickly enough once snowpack levels dropped, which he noted are a key source of water supply for the district, and that he would recommend shifting the drought trigger points for snowpack earlier in the year to ensure it reduces water use.

He added that the drought plan committee also recommended putting on a 1.25 times rate multiplier for water above 5,000 gallons per month for stage one drought to help reduce water use and prevent a large increase in rates from stage one to two.

He indicated that this rate multiplier would not apply to commercial users.

Ramsey stated the biggest complaint about the drought plan in 2025 was a lack of communication about the drought stages and that PAWSD

is working to remedy this by circulating a newsletter about drought conditions, placing it on the PAWSD website and doing other communication efforts.

Following more discussion of the outreach efforts, Ramsey turned to discussing the intersection between entering drought stages and the billing cycle.

He explained that, in the previous drought plan, entering a drought stage beyond voluntary required a board vote, but that the district had difficulty since it cannot add multipliers and other charges in the middle of the billing cycle.

To address this, Ramsey stated that the updated plan would only apply water use multipliers and surcharges to the next billing cycle after a drought stage is entered, although restrictions on irrigation times would begin immediately.

He also indicated that the new plan would allow waivers from the irrigation day requirements, which would allow customers to be exempted from the restrictions on watering times at the discretion of the district manager if they had a good reason to be exempted, such as newly installed landscaping.

Ramsey added that the waivers were added to the plan in response to a situation involving newly planted trees at Pagosa Peak Open School in 2025 that were installed when the school was not aware of potential oncoming drought restrictions and which the school received an irrigation restriction waiver for.

Ramsey explained that the district received 27 written complaints last year concerning the drought, most of which focused on the complainant not knowing about the rate multipliers or the drought conditions.

He added that there were also complaints about the drought plan not placing rate multipliers on commercial users, which Ramsey stated he understood, but that he felt the reasoning for not imposing rate multipliers on commercial users was justified.

PAWSD board member Bill Hudson asked the board for its thoughts on commercial users not being charged a rate multiplier in drought stages one and two while residents are charged.

"Don't we want to all kick in and solve the problem?" Hudson said.

PAWSD board chairman Gene Taugtes replied that this rule was intended to reflect that commercial users experience more negative impacts given these increases impact their livelihood while watering a resident's lawn does not.

Hudson countered that he is concerned about residents being charged more to shower or brush their teeth while commercial users are making a profit and not being charged.

Ramsey stated that the rate multi-

pliers are formatted in such a way that basic activities like showers should still be possible for the resident without additional multipliers.

PAWSD board member Bruce Jones, who served on the plan update committee, added that not charging commercial users is also a recognition that they cannot control how much water they use since they cannot control their number of customers.

"That makes sense," Hudson said.

PAWSD board member Glenn Walsh added that businesses also likely face additional negative impacts in times of drought.

Following more discussion of details of the drought plan, Ramsey presented the changes proposed for the updated drought plan.

These included moving up the trigger dates for low SWE levels in the spring up one week for drought stages one and two, adding a rate multiplier for stage one drought, increasing communications about drought levels, changing the timing of billing drought impacted rates and adding a waiver process for irrigation timing restrictions.

Ramsey then explained the current drought conditions to the board, which were covered in the April 16 and April 23 issues of The SUN.

Jones proposed that the board move to give staff permission to move into deeper drought stages until a week before the end of April without additional board permission.

After Walsh recommended that staff should be allowed to enter drought stages one and two without board approval, Ramsey suggested that this should be allowed only for entering drought stages early in the season due to SWE levels.

Jones then moved to accept the changes to the plan and to allow staff to move into drought stages one or two according to the plan in the near future.

Jones also expressed his appreciation for Ramsey's attention to detail with the plan, a sentiment that was echoed by other board members.

Following more discussion of the current drought conditions and the drought stages, the board unanimously voted to accept Jones' motion and adopt the updated drought plan.

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Drought

■ Continued from front

to PAWSD District Engineer Justin Ramsey.

During drought stage one, irrigation is permitted only between 6 p.m. and 9 a.m., and residential customers who use more than 5,000 gallons of water a month will have a 1.25 times rate multiplier applied to their water

bills.

According to the PAWSD website, the imposition of this multiplier will begin to impact customer bills received in May, although the irrigation restrictions will start immediately.

The plan notes that gardens may be hand watered using a hose or drip

irrigation.

The drought plan also encourages restaurants to conserve water by only serving water to customers at their request, and hotels are encouraged to replace towels and bed linens only for new guests and at the request of existing guests.

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County to continue hosting community forums, discuss County Road 700

By Clayton Chaney
Staff Writer

Over the past few months, Archuleta County commissioners have hosted community forums intended to provide the public with opportunities to give feedback on various projects and plans going on in the county.

The next community forum is currently scheduled for May 27 at the TARA Community Center in Arboles, which will be hosted by Commissioner Veronica Medina.

During a work session held by the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) on Tuesday, April 21, Commissioner John Ranson asked about the possibility of continuing to host community forums.

He mentioned that there's been an interest from residents in the Aspen Springs area to have a community forum there.

County Manager Longinos Gonzalez explained that the plan is to host one more "close out" forum following the one scheduled for May 27.

Medina commented that the feedback from the community at these forums has been "amazing," and that having another one in Aspen Springs would be a "great" idea.

Gonzalez also suggested that the

county could host quarterly forums going forward to continue to engage with the community.

He mentioned that while the county is starting to work on its strategic plan, "we have to have better community engagement."

Gonzalez also indicated that the BoCC will have a discussion during its work session on May 5 in regard to next steps with the strategic plan.

County Road 700

Also during the April 21 work session, Ranson brought up the condition of County Road 700.

"We spend so much money on roads in the [Pagosa Lakes Property Owners Association] subdivision, which is great, but these other main roads are really suffering," he said.

Ranson mentioned that he used to live on a dirt road in the county, for 10 years, "and I've never seen anything like what we experienced" driving up County Road 700 last week.

He noted the Road and Bridge Department crews were working on getting the road smoothed out.

Commissioner Warren Brown commented, "For my money, I think that we should seriously look at that road for paving."

He commented that the increase in the number of people moving out

to that area "has been exponential."

Brown also noted that the county has maintenance crews working on that road "quite often," every 90 days or so.

Brown described the current situation as an "endless cycle" that won't be resolved "unless it's paved better."

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La Plata Electric Association outlines safety strategies this fire season

La Plata Electric Association

As southwest Colorado heads into what forecasters expect to be a high-risk fire season, La Plata Electric Association (LPEA) is implementing a coordinated set of operational, technological and community-focused strategies to reduce wildfire risk while continuing to provide safe and reliable electric service to its member-owners.

“As your co-op, we’re focused on how we can reduce fire risk every single day in our operations,” said LPEA CEO Chris Hansen. “We need each homeowner, business and every member in our co-op to take the risk seriously and work to mitigate their own properties.”

Vegetation management across 2,000 miles of line

LPEA maintains approximately 2,000 miles of overhead line, and keeping trees and branches clear of power lines is among the cooperative’s most important and most challenging wildfire prevention tools. Three dedicated crews cycle through the entire system on a two- to three-year schedule, often climbing trees in terrain that doesn’t allow for truck access. “Keeping branches and trees back

is crucial,” said Jerry Sutherlin, LPEA’s vice president of distribution operations. “Whenever tree branches touch power lines, they have the potential of creating sparks, and sparks in a dry climate create fire.”

Smarter technology, safer grid

LPEA has partnered with Firescape to deploy machine learning models that assess wildfire risk across the cooperative’s service territory on an hourly basis. The platform helps LPEA pinpoint where risk is highest and when, allowing crews and resources to be deployed where they’re needed most.

The cooperative is also implementing enhanced grid protection protocols during periods of high fire danger.

Known in the industry as “fire settings,” these configurations reduce or eliminate the automatic restoration of power after a fault is detected. Members may experience more outages when fire settings are in effect, but this significantly reduces the chance that a power line could ignite a fire.

“We have the ability to set up substations and reclosers with more sen-

sitive settings,” said Sutherlin. “A lot of work happens behind the scenes to reduce the risk before members ever see the impact of it.”

Public safety power shutoff preparedness

LPEA has also been developing and refining protocols for public safety power shutoffs, a wildfire mitigation tool that can be used by utility companies to limit the risk of wildfire ignition due to downed equipment or debris.

During periods of extreme fire danger, characterized by high winds, low humidity and dry vegetation, LPEA may need to preemptively shut off power in targeted areas to protect public safety, homes, businesses and critical infrastructure. The program is designed to improve advance notice when conditions allow and help communities prepare before, during and after an outage.

LPEA is working closely with local emergency management agencies, fire departments and community organizations to continue to develop and support a coordinated response.

Partnering with the community

LPEA has also directed its 2026 community sponsorship program toward supporting wildfire mitigation and preparedness.

Its first sponsorship recipient has been Wildfire Adapted Partners (WAP), a nonprofit serving a five-county region in southwest Colorado.

WAP helps homeowners reduce wildfire risk on their own properties through site assessments, a network of roughly 140 volunteer neighborhood ambassadors and a chipper rebate program that reimburses homeowners up to 50 percent of the cost of vegetation clearing.

What members can do right now

LPEA is encouraging all members to take two simple steps before fire season gets underway:

- Sign up for alerts. Members can be notified of outages and conditions affecting their area.

- Confirm contact information is up to date. Accurate phone numbers and email addresses allow LPEA to reach members quickly and effectively.

Members can learn more at lpea.coop/updateinfo.

Options

■ Continued from front

told by the Division of Fire Prevention and Control is that if going the map route for an exemption, it would be helpful if there was another map of the area within the Community Wildfire Protection Plan, meaning the local area has a different map than what the CWRC is using.

“In our case, we don’t,” he said, noting that developing a new map may cost up to \$1 million and would have to be redone every three years.

“It’s an option — doesn’t look like a real good one to me,” Trimarco said.

The second pathway for exemption Trimarco discussed is the process being referred to as “ground truthing,” which he explained is done on a parcel-by-parcel basis.

He noted that the property owner (or authorized representative), a qualified wildfire professional and the local building official would all need to be involved in this process.

Trimarco mentioned that to get an exemption, property owners will need to show that they have a “better” situation than what is depicted by the CWRC map.

He mentioned that it may be difficult to get a property moved to the “low” category with any trees being on the property.

“Our entire county, everything is in the moderate or high right now,” he said.

He then explained that to go through the ground-truthing process, an owner would submit a request to the local building department and then the building official would engage with a wildfire professional “to go out and do

a very in-depth report.”

In response to a question from Commissioner John Ranson, Trimarco indicated that the cost for getting one of these reports done may run around \$500.

Trimarco mentioned that the “real tricky” part of this process is that not only does the entire parcel have to meet certain requirements, there also has to be a 300-foot “buffer” around the parcel, meaning that neighboring properties would have to meet the requirements as well.

“Any of the places I’ve seen in this county would have a real hard time meeting that low requirement,” Trimarco said.

Ranson also asked if one of these studies might help property owners in getting insurance.

Trimarco responded that getting a “clean bill of health” doesn’t seem to make a real difference to insurance companies at this point, but that is part of the reason why the CWRC is being pushed by the state.

Trimarco also commented that he’s not a big fan of rules, but that it might be a step in the right direction “if they’re ones that will help us function as a society and keep our losses down, and allow people to get insurance.”

He mentioned that, nowadays, any homeowner with a mortgage is required to have insurance on their property, “and they’re having a hard time.”

He added, “It is really hard to get insurance here.”

Commissioner Veronica Medina explained that the state does not have an exact answer for when the CWRC map would be updated if owners do go

through the ground-truthing process to reclassify their property.

“I don’t know if ground truthing is really going to be something that, one, that our constituents should even do and have the expense, because it may not have any effect on their current insurance,” Medina said, noting that it could help in the long run, but as of now the state has no real plan on updating the map.

Commissioner Warren Brown commented that the insurance commission is “incredibly” powerful at the state level and that it can be rather random or arbitrary when the commission designates a fire zone.

“There’s really no rhyme or reason,” he said, adding that fire mitigation work is “certainly important” and that it does make a difference in preventing infrastructure losses.

Trimarco also explained that the state has hired two professional development educators to work with jurisdictions and inform communities about the CWRC and their options.

He noted that the “big thing” with the ground-truthing process is that “it basically runs through the building inspector.”

“It does look pretty complicated,” he added.

Trimarco explained that a workshop is being planned for May 9 at the Colorado State University Extension Office with the Archuleta County sheriff, Pagosa Fire Protection District chief and himself to inform constituents on the matter.

Medina commented that “It’s definitely a hot topic,” as people are reaching out with questions and wanting

Local League of Women Voters chapter to hear about wildfire

By Florence Hall

League of Women Voters of Archuleta County

Due to the historical lack of moisture this winter, local concern about wildfires is seriously heightened.

You are cordially invited to join the League of Women Voters of Archuleta at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, April 27, at

the Community United Methodist Church, 434 Lewis St. — entering the meetup room through the north side door — to hear wildfire specialist Bill Trimarco’s presentation about wildfire.

Trimarco represents Wildfire Adaptive Partnership, which is a local nonprofit organization with many facets. It is strongly dedicated to help-

Letters of interest requested for opioid settlement funding

Southwest Opioid Response District

The Southwest Opioid Response District (SWORD) Council is accepting letters of interest (LOI) for its upcoming funding cycle.

Only organizations within Archuleta, Dolores, La Plata, Montezuma and San Juan counties are eligible to receive funds.

Eligible applicants include nonprofits, public health agencies, first responders and other organizations addressing opioid use disorder.

All projects must aim to serve persons with opioid use disorder, but may

also include co-occurring substance use disorder or mental health conditions.

LOI submissions must align with specific approved uses to address identified service gaps and barriers. These identified service gaps and barriers include: peer recovery supports, recovery housing, transportation, reimburse for treatment services, mobile interventions/mobile medication assisted treatment (MAT), workforce development, justice-involved connections to treatment and pre-trial services, MAT and peers in jails, prevention, emergency department

ing citizens understand wildfire risk and to teaching them how to reduce that risk.

Its goals are to help us protect our property, prepare for and plan for an emergency, and to lend support following a fire disaster.

We look forward to seeing you and enjoying your active participation at this most timely assembly.

and MAT warm hand-offs, and crisis stabilization.

Projects that meet approved uses and SWORD Council priorities will be invited to submit full applications.

Letters of interest must be received by June 30. The grant application period is expected to begin in August, with funds anticipated to disburse before the end of the calendar year.

Only eligible proposals who have submitted an LOI will be invited to apply. The LOI submission form will be posted at www.region9.org/sword.

For more information, email west.claire@outlook.com.

Vacancy

■ Continued from front

states that the candidate will be chosen to fill the vacancy at the May 19 town council meeting.

The notice also states that any potential candidate may submit an application, found on the town’s website, on or before May 13.

Potential candidates must be a resident of and live within the boundary limits of the Town of Pagosa Springs.

Any questions about town boundaries, eligibility or general information can be found at www.pagosaprices.co.gov or by calling (970) 264-4151.

derek@pagosasun.com

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Outdoors

Colorado Department of Agriculture issues Invasive Pest Alert for Asian jumping worms

Colorado Department of Agriculture

Gardening season is arriving much earlier than usual this year, and the Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA) wants to alert residents about a new aggressive, invasive species found in Colorado.

Last October, the CDA confirmed the presence of the Asian jumping worm in the Hilltop neighborhood of Denver. The worms are an annual species, but their cocoons (about the size of a mustard seed) survive the winter and are easily spread in soil, mulch and on equipment.

The CDA is encouraging vigilance to prevent the spread of this invasive pest.

Since there are currently no effective eradication methods for this pest, the CDA is launching a public education campaign to emphasize prevention and prompt reporting to slow the spread of this pest.

The CDA is asking nurseries, landscaping contractors and landowners to be on the lookout for any signs of the invasive jumping worms and report any suspected sightings.

“Preventing any spread of the jumping worm in Colorado is critical to protecting our state’s healthy soil and native plants,” said Wondirad Gebru, director of the Plants Division at the CDA. “Since there are no effective eradication methods, we are asking gardeners and landscapers to be vigilant, inspect their materials and report any possible sightings to our agency.”

While many earthworms are beneficial to the soil, adding nutrients for plants and helping with soil aeration, the jumping worm poses a significant ecological and economic threat. It lives on the soil surface, rapidly consuming organic matter and leaf litter, which strips the soil of the critical layer needed to support native plants, wildflowers and forest ecosystems.

The jumping worms’ hyperactivity degrades the soil structure, can harm plant roots and accelerate soil drying. This creates a “nutrient-poor paradox” where nutrients are present but unavailable to plants. This can further exacerbate drought conditions, which the state is already in.

Prevention

There are no effective eradication methods for the jumping worm. The CDA urges all residents and industry professionals to adopt the following best practices for prevention:

- Do not move soil: Avoid moving soil, compost or potted plants from your yard if you suspect an infestation.

- Inspect materials: Always carefully inspect all potted plants and soil before moving, sharing or bringing them into your garden. Consider purchasing bare-root stock when possible.

- Check compost sources: When purchasing bulk mulch or compost, ensure it has been heat-treated to at least 130 degrees F for three days by a reputable producer to kill the cocoons.

Reporting

The public’s help is critical to track the spread of the pest. If you suspect an infestation, please report it to the CDA using the Jumping Worm Reporting Form at <https://bit.ly/4mKbNl8>.

For more information, please visit the CDA’s jumping worm website, <https://ag.colorado.gov/plants/pest-survey/asian-jumping-worm>.

What is the Asian jumping worm?

The Asian jumping worm, also known as the “crazy worm” or “snake worm,” is an invasive earthworm species (Amynthas spp. and Metaphire spp.) that is rapidly spreading across the United States.

- Identification: They are long, red-to-brown colored worms that

thrash and move erratically with a violent, snake-like motion when disturbed. A key difference from native earthworms is the clitellum (the band around the body): on the Asian jumping worm, it is milky white to light gray, flush with the body, and completely encircles it.

- Signs of infestation: The most telltale sign is a very uniform, granular soil texture on the surface, often described as looking like “coffee grounds,” which are their castings (feces).

Protecting Colorado’s plants

Protecting Colorado’s environment, from agricultural crops to forests, is a shared responsibility.

Through the Pest Survey program, the CDA works with growers and forest managers to mitigate the risk of invasive species in our state. Part of our risk-mitigation strategy involves communicating invasive pest detections to the public.

Early detection is key to stopping invasive species in their tracks before they form established populations. By working together as a community, we can ensure the security of Colorado’s good supply and natural systems.

Pagosa Wetlands Partners recruiting volunteers

By Linda Mozer

Pagosa Wetlands Partnership

Spring is here, and wetland tours will be starting for the summer.

This year, we are planning to add a few workshops we hope you will enjoy attending.

Our plans include a bat walk in the evening, cattails and all their uses, and a flute presentation.

See how the river overcame the

banks and redesigned the adjacent area. The flooding extended to the inside upper pond on the Riverwalk near the 6th Street bridge. Much sand was deposited on the riverbank and inland near the upper pond. The wetlands absorbed the extra water as expected, preventing further destruction along the walkway and inland property. The altered bank removed many areas birds nested in, as they were protected with vegetation and

shrubs in the riparian section next to the river.

Questions remain as to where the birds have relocated and how the animals, plants and macroinvertebrates have fared.

As the new season approaches, we are recruiting more volunteers to add to our program as guides. Join us for a satisfying experience regarding the conservation, history and sharing of Pagosa’s unique

wetlands with our local and visitor populations.

We will be at the Earth Day celebration in Centennial Park on April 26 at the native garden by the geothermal domes. Join us at our booth for more information. There will also be sign-up sheets for the extra programs.

Send an email to pagosawetlands@gmail.com if unable to attend the Earth Day event.

April 2026 declared Dig Safely Month to mark 40th anniversary of Colorado 811

State of Colorado

Gov. Jared Polis has declared April 2026 as “Dig Safely Month” in Colorado.

This annual observance highlights the critical importance of safe digging practices and marks the 40th anniversary of Colorado 811, the state’s one-call notification system.

The annual tradition celebrated at the start of spring serves as a crucial reminder for all excavators, contractors and property owners that state law requires them to contact 811 before starting any digging project.

“Before everyone starts their warm-weather projects around the house, it’s important to remember to protect yourself, your home, your neighbors and critical underground infrastructure by first contacting 811,” said Mahesh Albuquerque, director of the Division of Oil and Public Safety at the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE). “We’ve seen the impact safe digging initiatives can have on communities thanks to our oversight of the Underground Damage Prevention Safety Commission, and this annual tradition reinforces our commitment to reducing preventable damage.”

The Underground Damage Prevention Safety Commission within the CDLE’s Division of Oil and Public Safety develops best practices and reviews alleged violations of the One-Call Law.

The Damage Prevention Fund grew to more than \$336,626 in 2025, supporting community support and safety initiatives. The fund’s second round of grant applications is currently open, offering \$20,000 to efforts that encourage and educate the public on safe digging practices. Applications must be submitted via Bidnet by April 24 to be considered.

Colorado 811, established in 1986, is the fast, easy and comprehensive way to ensure that underground utilities are properly marked before any excavation begins. The key message remains: “Know what’s below, contact 811 before you dig.”

“Damages to underground utility lines cost the U.S. approximately \$30 billion per year. The leading cause of damages and accidents is not contacting 811 service to have underground utility lines marked before excavation. Even shallow, small

projects — such as planting shrubs, installing mailboxes or building fences — can strike utility lines located just inches below the surface. Underground lines can shift or become shallow over time, making contacting 811 necessary for all excavation even if you think the location of lines are known from previous projects,” said Claudia Randall, executive director of Colorado 811. “Striking a utility line can cause dangerous or fatal situations, including electrical shock or gas explosions. Always contact 811 at least three days before you plan to start digging to prevent injury or damage to underground lines. It’s free. It’s fast. And it’s the law.”

Despite decades of outreach, accidental utility strikes continue to pose serious risks to public safety and infrastructure.

According to the most recently updated state data:

- 43 percent of 911 center service disruptions in 2025 were caused by accidental cuts of telecommunications lines, which could be avoided by contacting 811.

- Approximately 60% of damage to gas pipelines in Colorado is due to excavation activities, highlighting the extreme risk of digging without a locate request.

- In 2024, there were 198 underground utility facility damages in Colorado. No notification to 811 accounted for 21 percent of reported damages in 2024, a consistent trend since 2018.

“Digging before knowing the location of underground pipes and cables can cause serious injuries and disrupt critical infrastructure that we rely on for telecommunications and energy. Contacting 811 before you dig can save time, prevent environmental or property damage and costly repairs,” said Public Utilities Commission Director

Rebecca White. “Dig Safely Month is a great reminder to keep yourself and the public safe before breaking ground on any project.”

What can you do?

Call 811 or visit colorado811.org a minimum of three business days before starting any excavation project.

Colorado 811 will notify the public utilities in your dig area, who will send a locator to mark the location of the public underground utility lines. Colorado 811 does not locate private utility lines such as sprinkler system lines or electric fences.

The 811 service is completely free. Markings will be placed via paint or flags. The following colors indicate what type of public utility is below:

- Red = electric.
- Yellow = gas.
- Blue = potable water.
- Orange = communication lines such as cable TV or internet.
- Purple = reclaimed water, irrigation and slurry lines.
- Green = sewers and drain lines.
- White = proposed excavation.
- Pink = temporary survey markings.

Mandatory best practices for digging

All parties involved in excavation must adhere to mandatory practices to avoid violations, which include:

- Respect the tolerance zone: No mechanical excavation is permitted within the defined tolerance zone (typically 18 inches horizontally from each side of the facility mark).
- Mandatory potholing: Hand digging or vacuum excavation (potholing) must be used to physically expose the facility before proceeding with mechanical means in the area of the utility.





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Photo courtesy Colorado Department of Transportation

Orange cones are draped with black ribbons and vests — each representing a Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) worker who lost their life in a roadway incident — at a CDOT Work Zone Safety Awareness event in Durango on Monday. Since 1929, 64 employees have lost their lives in roadway incidents. Transportation Commissioner Barbara McLachlan spoke to regional CDOT workers at the event.

Safe actions in work zones can save lives

By Barbara McLachlan
SUN Columnist

Imagine sitting, working at your office desk, but cars are whizzing by just a few feet away.

For someone who works on road construction, zooming traffic is experienced routinely. Their “office” is located on or near busy highways and for much of their day they are exposed to the high-risk danger of fast-moving traffic.

From a worker’s perspective, work zone safety is not about following abstract rules. Following road safety is about that worker going home to their family at the end of their shift.

Since taking on the role of transportation commissioner for District 8, I have found myself driving more frequently across the region and throughout the state to attend various transportation-related meetings. Serving in this position has made me become more aware of what’s happening on our roads.

Did you know the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) manages as many as 200 construction projects annually? Maintenance work

and repairs are performed across the state daily.

I now pay closer attention to the road work activity I encounter. Signs warn me that the speed limit is lowered. Flaggers wave at vehicles, directing them to slow down or change lanes. I now notice it is only a row of plastic cones standing between my vehicle and the workers’ construction area.

The harsh dangers of road work have been amplified for me. I now have a better understanding that safety precautions are set in place not only for highway workers, but for the safety of the traveling public. The laws are there to improve safety for all — road workers, drivers, bicyclists, pedestrians and law enforcement. Lowered speed limits mean that motorists must slow down. Slower speeds can help a driver’s reaction time. Driving at a lower speed can help someone stop for an unexpected truck pulling out or a worker stepping into a travel lane. And, be aware: The fines are doubled when speeding in a work zone.

Distracted driving is not an option. It is illegal to hold your phone while

driving. Put the phone down and give the road, work zone and workers your undivided attention. The slightest distraction could cause a crash. Workers have said it is unnerving and terrifying to see a driver go by looking down at their phone.

Follow signs and flagging personnel. The signage and flaggers’ guidance must be followed. Drivers should be patient. You may not be able to see why traffic is stopped, but the flaggers are in radio contact with the work crews to know when it is safe to travel through a work zone. The work zone must be clear of moving equipment or hazardous work activity so that traffic can flow safely through the construction area.

My interactions and conversations with transportation employees have also changed my perspective about road work and construction. I’ve been at CDOT events where I have met and talked with maintenance workers, traffic personnel and engineers. They have explained their projects. They have provided details about their work. And I see that they take pride in their careers and their public service. These personal en-

counters have shown me that these team members are unique, hard-working individuals with families and communities they care about. And, it makes me care more about their safety.

CDOT joins other departments of transportation across the nation recognizing the importance of work zone safety. National Work Zone Awareness Week is an annual campaign observed during the month of April. This year’s theme, “Safe Actions Save Lives,” urges every driver to slow down, stay alert and protect crews working on or next to roads.

This is the bottom line: Every cone, barrel and sign is designed to protect workers. But the cone zone is only effective and safe if drivers respect them. Those who work on our roads are husbands, fathers, brothers, wives, daughters and friends.

I urge the public to care about their safety. I challenge all drivers to show just how much they care with their actions behind the wheel. Our safe actions will save lives. And, at the end of the day, these workers deserve to go home to their families.

Offices

■ Continued from front

county’s employees, noting that he’d like to wait and see what happens with ballot elections this fall.

“But, that being said, I would sure like to throw out — we’ve got to find a solution for their trailer,” Ranson said in regard to the trailer that development services employees are currently working in.

He mentioned that he “knew it was bad,” but was unaware there is no running water or bathrooms available, and that employees are using towels by windows to keep water from leaking in.

“They have nowhere to meet with people,” Ranson added.

He then mentioned that if the county were to start the process of building a new administration building today, it would still take roughly three years before its completion and could have county employees move into it.

He also commented on the sentiment the BoCC has expressed about keeping “good people” employed with the county.

“We’re not gonna keep good people if we are situated in offices like that,” he said.

Ranson went on to say that he does not like bringing problems forward without having a solution.

“But, I’d sure like to start looking at an alternative for their offices,” he said, suggesting the county could rent more office space in the main part of town as a temporary solution.

“We just gotta get them out of there and get them in a decent spot,” Ranson said.

Commissioner Warren Brown asked for clarification on if there were no restrooms available that day at the Public Works offices, to which Kruse explained there were no restrooms available that morning.

She noted that there is only one male and one female restroom at the facility, and that the female restroom was being used for another purpose for roughly two hours that morning, forcing staff to drive to Tractor Supply to use restroom facilities.

Kruse commented that she was unaware of the female restroom being used for another purpose that day.

She then spoke about Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compli-

ance with the Development Services office trailer, explaining that staff usually helps elderly constituents up and down the stairs.

“It’s not ideal for site plans,” Kruse said, explaining there is really no place for staff to sit down and review documents with constituents for an extended period of time.

“The trailer is not ideal,” she said, noting the two of the Development Services staff cannot be housed in the trailer due to allergies and mold.

Kruse noted the office trailer was intended to be a temporary thing, but that the county has been using it for at least two or three years now.

Brown commented that it has been every bit of that long.

Kruse stated that between mold, mildew, rodents and rain, “it’s not an ideal situation.”

Commissioner Veronica Medina stated that she was “appalled” to learn about this, indicating she was unaware of these kinds of issues at the trailer office, asking why no one has said anything before now.

Kruse noted that it was supposed to be a temporary thing, but at this point she would hate to think the county may still be there once winter rolls around again.

“I’ve never worked in a place where I had to wear, literally, work boots to go to the office,” Kruse said, explaining that when the restrooms are available, staff have to cross a muddy parking lot to get to it.

Ranson interjected, commenting that the county preaches economic development, “and if somebody walked into that as their first visit into our community to invest billions of dollars.”

Kruse mentioned that she has met with multiple people looking to invest in the community, and that once they get here there is really no place for them to sit down and review documents with staff.

“There just isn’t any more office space in the building,” she said.

“If nothing else, I’d like to look for a new location,” Ranson said, suggesting renting more space in town, along with looking at more long-term solutions.

Brown commented that the issue is “not new,” recalling his experience working for the sheriff’s depart-

ment in trailers with no heat and in cramped spaces.

“It is appalling to me the way that we have chosen and continue to choose to do business,” he said.

Brown went on to talk about separating needs from wants, describing plans for a new administration building as a need.

He explained that he is an advocate for a new administration building not for the sake of liking or wanting to take on debt, but rather to address the two most important parts of taking care of county employees and residents.

“That’s what it is about,” he said, noting the county needs to find better temporary accommodations, but that is not going to stop the genuine need the county has for a new administration building.

Brown gave kudos to county staff for “sticking with us,” noting that, “it’s not less than miserable, many days, depending on the weather condition.”

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Pirates perform well at Durango meet

By Jack Sellner
Staff Writer

The Pagosa Springs High School (PSHS) Pirate track and field team traveled to Durango on Saturday, April 18, for the Ron Keller Invitational.

“The Durango meet is always big and with so many entries in each event, it takes a long time,” wrote coach Connie O’Donnell in an email to The SUN. “However, the meet is well run and we seem to continue to perform well there.”

While there were plenty of personal records at the meet, O’Donnell noted that a strong head wind definitely deterred many athletes from achieving their personal bests, especially in the 100-meter races.

After not competing for a month, Creede Dozier was back in action in Durango. He placed fourth in the 100-meter dash and first in both horizontal jumps.

“It’s a relief to see that his lack of competition did not really have any negative effects on his performance,” wrote O’Donnell.

It was a great day for the distance runners as well, notes assistant coach Tim Taylor.

“Both the younger and older distance runners are literally rewriting the lists for the top 10 performances in PSHS history,” wrote Taylor in an email to the SUN. “They understand the importance of effort put into the daily workouts, which clearly is benefiting their race times during the meets—particularly the last two weekends.”

Freshman Lily DeClark and sophomore Weston Sweet continue to impress, notes Taylor.

The hurdling squad led by Jeremiah Jones and Zyan Souza on the boys’ side and Annaliese Hinger on the girls’ side had a great meet as well, notes assistant coach Nik Paniagua.

“The hurdling squad delivered a weekend full of promise, highlighted by resilience, steady progress, and a breakout performance from the program’s youngest talent,” wrote Paniagua in an email to the SUN.

Dozier placed fourth in the boys’ 100 with a time of 11:58 seconds. Truman Vasek placed 11th with a time of 11:79 seconds, Johnny Baker placed 17th with a time of 12.09 seconds, Alex Pacheco placed 19th with a time of 12.17 seconds, Jacob Castaneda placed 28th with a time of 12.37 seconds, Jammer Grigsby placed 29th with a time of 12.46 seconds, Garrett Mote placed 35th with a time of 12.58 seconds, Xavier Sanchez placed 36th with a time of 12.59 seconds, Jerry Su placed 45th with a time of 12.84 seconds, Vincent Fish placed 48th with a time of 12.91 seconds, Connor Kirkham placed 72nd with a time of 14.25 seconds and South Dozier placed 80th with a time of 14.75 seconds.

Pacheco placed seventh in the boys’ 200-meter dash with a time of 25.07 seconds, Vasek placed eighth with a time of 25.29 seconds, Koen Pitcher placed 15th with a time of 25.80, Sanchez placed 17th with a time of 25.96, Gage Sams placed 20th with a time of 26.34 seconds and Kirkham placed 45th with a time of 29.26 seconds.

Xander Forster placed 40th in the boys’ 400-meter dash with a time of one minute, 9.35 seconds.

Rylan Ash placed fifth in the boys’ 800-meter run with a time of 2:07.15, Sweet placed 11th with a time of 2:16.10, Connor Thomas placed 13th with a time of 2:18.14, Kieran Kurz placed 30th with a time of 2:34.56, Isaac Hanto placed 34th with a time of 2:39.96, Eli Nehring placed 38th with a time of 2:48.92 and Forster placed 42nd with a time of 3:05.84.

Ash won the boys’ 3,200-meter run

with a time of 10:05.14, Thomas placed 12th with a time of 11:02.27, Sweet placed 12th with a personal-best time of 11:06.00, Kurz placed 16th with a personal-best time of 11:49.79, and Hanto placed 23rd with a time of 12:36.08.

Jones placed third in the boys’ 110-meter hurdles with a time of 17.15 seconds, Souza placed 11th with a personal-best time of 20.35 seconds, and Fish placed 12th with a time of 20.96 seconds.

Jones placed sixth in the boys’ 300-meter hurdles with a time of 46.07 seconds and Souza placed 13th with a personal-best time of 48.79 seconds.

“Both the younger and older distance runners are literally rewriting the lists for the top 10 performances in PSHS history. They understand the importance of effort put into the daily workouts, which clearly is benefiting their race times during the meets—particularly the last two weekends.”

Assistant coach Tim Taylor

“Jones faced adversity in both of his events but still showed why he remains a consistent force,” wrote Paniagua. “In the 110-meter hurdles, Jones clipped a hurdle late in the race, costing him valuable momentum. Later, in the 300-meter hurdles, he suffered a fall coming out of the turn. Even so, his times continue to hold steady, and his form suggests personal records are well within reach as the season progresses.”

The boys’ 4x100-meter relay team placed second with a time of 44.03 seconds.

The boys’ 4x400-meter relay team placed third with a time of 3:42.71.

Sams placed fourth in the boys’ high jump with a jump of 6 feet, 1 inch. Pitcher placed sixth with a jump of 5-9, Vasek placed ninth with a jump of 5-9 and Milo Deitemeyer placed 11th with a jump of 5-7.

Creede Dozier won the boys’ long jump with a jump of 21-2, Jeremiah Dean placed third with a jump of 20-4, Mazur placed seventh with a jump of 19-0.75, Baker placed 11th with a jump of 17-7.5, Sanchez placed 16th with a jump of 16-11.75, Chatwin Pickering placed 17th with a jump of 16-10.25, Pacheco placed 19th with a jump of 16-6.5, Fish placed 20th with a jump of 16-2.5 and Forster placed 35th with a jump of 13-1.

Creede Dozier won the boys’ triple jump, as well, logging a total distance of 42 feet. Jones placed second with a distance of 39-11 and Deitemeyer placed fourth with a distance of 27-2.5.

Emile Schneider placed second in the boys’ discuss with a throw of 134-2, Aidan Vega placed sixth with a throw of 121-5, James Beaudry placed 39th with a throw of 69-5, Quintin Cheykaychi placed 40th with a throw of 68-2 and South Dozier placed 43rd

with a throw of 66-6.

Vega placed fourth in the boys’ shot put with a throw of 36-10.5, Schneider placed eighth with a throw of 35-4.5, South Dozier placed 35th with a throw of 25-8, Cheykaychi placed 36th with a throw of 25-7 and Beaudry placed 44th with a throw of 22-2.5.

On the girls’ side, Lexi Campbell placed fifth in the girls’ 100 with a time of 13.57 seconds. Abigail Foss placed 17th with a time of 14.08 seconds, Molly Washburn placed 19th with a time of 14.22 seconds, Ahrianna Martinez placed 20th with a time of 14.34 seconds, Amber Snarr placed 26th with a time of 14.54 seconds, Bentley Briscoe placed 35th with a time of 15.08 seconds, Brynn Looper placed 37th with a time of 15.14 seconds, Katie Baker placed 38th with a time of 15.18 seconds, Darria Fiorenza placed 39th with a time of 15.19 seconds, Nevaeh Evans placed 48th with a time of 15.55 seconds, Hannah Stretton placed 53rd with a time of 15.73 seconds, Mikaila Anderson placed 68th with a time of 16.86 seconds, Kylie Coleman placed 69th with a time of 16.90 seconds, Italia Pereyra placed 75th with a time of 17.97 seconds and Samantha Abraham placed 77th with a time of 19.11 seconds.

Nina Wood placed fifth in the girls’ 200 with a time of 28.23 seconds, Foss placed eighth with a time of 29.03 seconds, Washburn placed 10th with a time of 29.31 seconds, Martinez placed 13th with a time of 29.61 seconds, Snarr placed 20th with a time of 30.37 seconds, Katie Baker placed 25th with a time of 30.99 seconds, Looper placed 36th with a time of 31.14 seconds, Fiorenza placed 31st with a time of 31.73 seconds, Quinn Howard placed 39th with a time of 32.91 seconds, Coleman placed 44th with a time of 34.18 seconds, Anderson placed 53rd with a time of 35.73 seconds, Pereyra placed 56th with a time of 36.74 seconds and Abraham placed 58th with a time of 42.88 seconds.

Lucia Rivera placed 17th in the girls’ 800 with a time of 2:59.28, and Dawson Iverson placed 33rd with a time of 3:46.71.

Madi Stretton placed eighth in the girls’ 1,600-meter run with a time of 6:00.49, DeClark placed ninth with a time of 6:04.56 and Clara Kurz placed 16th with a time of 6:26.30.

Stretton placed seventh in the girls’ 3,200 with a time of 12:44.06, DeClark placed 10th with a personal-best time of 12:59.27 and Rivera placed 12th with a time of 14:31.64.

“Lily, even as a freshman, has already demonstrated her racing prowess,” wrote Taylor. “Lily has exceptional focus and desire for success.”

Hinger placed 16th in the girls’ 100-meter hurdles with a time of 20.88 seconds.

Hinger placed 14th in the girls’ 300 hurdles with a personal-best time of 56.48 seconds.

The girls’ 4x100 team placed third with a time of 52.92 seconds.

The girls’ 4x200-meter relay team placed second with a time of 1:51.77.

The girls’ 4x400 team placed fourth with a time of 4:38.16.

Veda Deitemeyer placed third in the girls’ high jump with a jump of 4-9 and Iverson placed 11th with a jump of 4-3.

Wood won the girls’ long jump with a jump of 15-8.75, Avery Book took seventh with a jump of 14-4.25, Katie Baker placed ninth with a jump of 13-8.5, Looper placed 16th with a jump of 12-7.5, Howard placed 18th

with a jump of 12-4, Hannah Stretton placed 20th with a jump of 11-4.5 and Evans placed 26th with a jump of 9-7.75.

Campbell placed second in the girls’ triple jump with a distance of 32-11.75, Madi Stretton placed 11th with a distance of 28-2 and Corinna Galabota placed 13th with a distance of 27-8.

Liana Vega placed third in the girls’ discus with a throw of 98-1, Makaela Denton placed seventh with a throw of 80-3, Paisley Lister placed 16th with a throw of 71-6, Raleigh Iverson placed 20th with a throw of 69-2.5 and Charlie Barraza-Haymaker placed 28th with a throw of 64-2.5.

Liana Vega placed fourth in the girls’ shot put with a throw of 29-9, Raleigh Iverson placed 16th with a throw of 23-4, Barraza-Haymaker placed 23rd with a throw of 20-10, Lister placed 26th with a throw of 19-11 and Denton placed 35th with a throw of 18-4.25.

O’Donnell noted that she is still switching around relay teams in order to find the perfect combinations for success.

This weekend, the athletes will head to Alamosa for the Intermountain League meet on Friday, April 24.

“Alamosa is notoriously windy, but we are hoping for a warm day to be able to compete,” wrote O’Donnell. “Hopefully, we will continue to improve our marks.”

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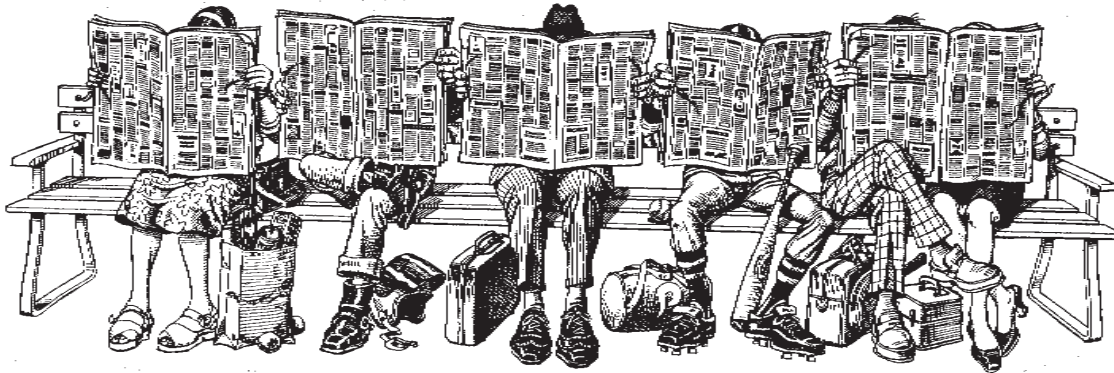
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Triple Impact
Student-Athlete
of the Week
Xyra Belarmino
Soccer



Comments from coach Dyan Rice: “Xyra Belarmino is a dynamic soccer player, possessing both power and finesse. Xyra has found her place as an impenetrable wall on defense, plus she finds time to score a few goals. In addition to the skills Xyra joined the team with, she has definitely grown athletically by pushing her endurance and vocally by encouraging her teammates to

improve. Not only does Xyra excel in soccer, but she recently added cross country to her sports repertoire, holds a 4.0 GPA including AP and Honors classes, and is a responsible, dedicated student who sets high standards for herself. I’m excited to nominate Xyra Belarmino as Triple Impact Athlete for Girls Soccer Spring 2026!”

BASEBALL



SUN photo/Randi Pierce

Pirate Zach Pouyer avoids a tag at first during the team's doubleheader against the Montezuma-Cortez Panthers on Saturday, April 18. The Pirates fell in both halves of the doubleheader.

Pirates looking to rebound against Centauri

By Jack Sellner
Staff Writer

The Pagosa Springs High School Pirate baseball team was swept in its doubleheader against Montezuma-Cortez, losing their third and fourth games in a row.

The Pirates hosted the No. 5 Panthers on Saturday, April 18, for back-to-back games. Pagosa Springs lost the first game 11-1 and the second game 15-1.

"We just didn't hit again," said coach Jon Wells. "I think we hit .136 over the two games [and] struck out 17 times. And when we do that, we're not going to beat good teams."

The Pirates scored just two runs in two games a week after scoring just two runs total in their doubleheader against Alamosa.

In the first game, the Pirates had just one hit and committed three errors.

They scored their lone run early and, after three innings, the score was 2-1.

The Panthers were able to break it open with two in the fourth, four in the fifth and three in seventh, all while holding the Pirates scoreless.

Zach Pouyer had the Pirates lone hit, finishing the game 1-for-2. Dylan Dempster scored the team's only run after reaching on error. Kaeden Iguchi drove Dempster in, finishing with the Pirates' one RBI.

Taylor Wells started for the Pirates, giving up eight runs (three earned) on seven hits while walking five and striking out three. In relief, Sebastian Gonzalez and Jonathan Moncada combined to give up three runs (zero earned) on four hits while walking two and striking out one.

The Pirates finished with five hits and committed two errors in game two.

Going into the home half of the third the Pirates were down 5-0, but scored a run to cut the deficit to four.

That would be the last run they would score, and the Panthers tacked on one in the fourth, two in the fifth and seven in the sixth.

Kasen Limebrook finished the game 2-for-3, Taylor Wells went 1-for-3 with a double, Gonzalez went 1-for-3 and Moncada went 1-for-3.

Pouyer scored the team's only run. He was driven in by Aaron Sowle.

Iguchi started on the mound, giving up eight runs (six earned) on 11

hits while walking four and striking out two in five innings. In relief, Moncada and Braylon Landry allowed seven earned runs on four hits combined, walking three.

"I think the boys are probably just putting too much pressure on themselves," said Jon Wells. "They felt as though coming into Alamosa and Cortez, two good teams that have been winning games and stuff, that they are trying to do too much at the plate."

Jon Wells explained he feels that even though the pitchers were able to compete in three- to four-inning stretches, they still aren't where they need to be in terms of throwing strikes.

"I think we were at 56 percent strikes, but what still is troublesome is that we had 14 walks, five hit by pitches," said Jon Wells. "So, we put 19 free base runners on the bases. And then I think from those 14 walks, eight of them ended up scoring."

This weekend, the Pirates will head to Centauri for another doubleheader on Saturday, April 25 beginning at 11 a.m.

The Falcons are 8-4 and ranked 27th in 3A.

The Pirates, who are now 8-7, are ranked 26th.

Jon Wells indicated he has talked a lot about the three areas — pitching, defense and hitting — with his team and emphasized that, without all three, it is very hard to win baseball games.

"Centauri is a good team as well, and we're going to need all three areas to be successful in order to win both those games," he said. "And I do think we can win both those games, but it's just a matter of if the boys come out and execute."

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Photo courtesy Rugby's Rescue House

Rugby's Rescue partnered with D Snips from Durango for a free spay and neuter clinic April 18 and 19 at Rugby's Rescue. Volunteers spayed and neutered 60 dogs and 12 cats thanks to Dr. Emily Hays. The effort was possible due to a grant from the Animal Assistance Foundation.

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ARTS & LIFE

Earth Day Celebration

10 a.m. • Sunday, April 26 • Centennial Park



Photo courtesy Southwest Organization for Sustainability



On Sunday, April 26, the Southwest Organization for Sustainability will host the annual Earth Day celebration in Centennial Park.

Earth Day celebration set for Sunday

By **Pauline Benetti**
Southwest Organization for Sustainability

Why celebrate Earth Day?
It is amazing given the gravity of the consequences that we need to be reminded, but it is true. Business as usual is too easily and comfortably slipped into. There is no Planet B, at least not in the short run and not without a lot of science. And in the meantime, life on Planet A is becoming increasingly punishing. So, we celebrate Earth Day as a yearly (at least) reminder that we must change our ways both with individual and collective acts to avoid what may feel inevitable.
Regarding individual acts, how many of the following acts can we each check off?
Energy:

- Change all your light bulbs to LED.
 - Plug large electronics into a smart power strip.
 - Get an energy audit.
 - Check weatherproofing on windows and doors.
- Water:
- Switch to reusable water bottles.
 - Install a low-flow showerhead.
 - Install a toilet buddy.
 - Recycle gray water.
- Food:
- Compost your food and yard waste.
 - Grow your own food.
 - Shop for food at your local farmers market.
- Waste:
- Recycle glass, metal, plastic and paper.
- See Celebration on next page

Live Performers

Thursday
The Pagosa Bar: Karaoke, 8 p.m.

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Celebration

■ continued from previous page

- Deny all plastic bags.
- Shop at our local thrift stores.
- Purchase a sustainable toothbrush.
- Bring empty containers to the household refillery at the farmers market.
- Switch from paper towels to reusable rags.
- Switch to recycled paper or bamboo paper toilet paper.

Ecology: Use native birdseed in your feeder.

- Install a solitary beehive "hotel."
- Plant native plants.

This would be a good list for the refrigerator door.

Unfortunately, we all know that even if we can check off all the items, it's not enough; there remain the collective acts — the ones that governments and nations move on, or don't. And we know that government responds to the voice of "We the People" if there are enough of us speaking.

So, Earth Day reminds us that "We the People" must speak and that involves not allowing business as usual to take over; it involves action and involvement; it involves our time and our passion. We must ask, "Am I engaged in the work of saving Planet A?" It's a possibly uncomfortable question, but one we are reminded of, at least on a yearly basis, when we celebrate Earth Day.

So, this year we will celebrate Earth Day on Sunday, April 26, with the coming together of an amazing number of organizations and businesses and individuals in a show of solidarity and support for the tremendous task before us.

Come see how these Earth Day participants each in their own way also participate in the solution. Find us in Centennial Park radiating out in both directions from the Geothermal Greenhouse Partnership site along the Riverwalk.

Visit booths manned by your friends and neighbors with giveaways, information, invitations and fun handouts; participate in the opening ceremony (bring drums)

WHIPS to hold monthly luncheon April 28

By Nancy Ford

Women Helping in Pagosa Springs

WHIPS, Women Helping in Pagosa Springs, will have their monthly luncheon on Tuesday, April 28, at 11:30 a.m. at Shang Hai Restaurant.

The cost is \$20, and all women are welcome. We must have you RSVP to (970) 946-1895 by Sunday evening, April 26.

and the community tea gathering; bring your bike and take off with the DUST2 town ride; walk the wetlands with an expert guide and see what you have not noticed before; enjoy a plethora of local bands from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. including an open mic period; and, finally, select from several food serving sources.

Kids, come dressed in an Earth Day-inspired costume and join in fun activities, which include solar car races, kite flying and chalk art

creating.

Note: Should the weather suddenly become a serious problem (rain or snow), our alternate location is the Pagosa Lakes Property Owners Association Clubhouse at 230 Port Ave. If you are uncertain, please check the SOS website for a notice — sospagosa.org. For more information, email sworgsus@gmail.com.

We are planning on a fine day for this community gathering and inviting all Pagosa to turn out for it.

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Artemis fever? Join Saturday’s moongaze

By Dena Laterza
Pagosa Sidewalk Astronomers

People all over the world were filled with excitement as NASA sent astronauts back to explore the moon for the first time since 1972. Crowds flocked to witness the launch of the first crewed spacecraft to the moon in more than 50 years.

The mission had extensive media coverage, including behind-the-scenes looks at the astronauts and the technology. If you want to experience something similar to what the astronauts saw, come to our “Artemis Fever” Moongaze and view the moon through our high-magnification telescope. We will be at South Pagosa Park on 8th Street at 8:45 p.m. on Saturday, April 25. We will try to answer any questions you have about the Artemis program.

Back to the historic mission: The spacecraft performed a flyby, observing roughly 20 percent of the far side of the moon for the first time with the

unaided eye. The journey left them awestruck.

In the live coverage, they kept describing the experience as awe-inspiring, beautiful and, above all, impossible to fully describe with words.

Those of us back on Earth got to follow along with the breathtaking photos they sent back, but it’s an experience and perspective that very few people in the world can truly share.

The crew captured images of the moon under various lighting conditions, saw an “Earthset” and a stunning view of the moon eclipsing the sun. This historic, diverse team includes the first woman, person of color and non-U.S. citizen to travel to deep space. Artemis II made history by traveling the farthest distance from Earth that any humans have ever gone.

But, a flyby was not the only mission for the scientists. They were testing new technologies and operations such as the ability to protect against

high radiation events and testing the spacecraft’s manual piloting capability.

All crewed missions to space end with the high-stakes re-entry into Earth’s atmosphere. The capsule must survive temperatures of more than 5,000 degrees.

NASA astronauts Reid Wiseman, Victor Glover and Christina Koch, and CSA (Canadian Space Agency) astronaut Jeremy Hansen splashed down at 8:07 p.m. EDT on April 10 off the coast of San Diego, completing a nearly 10-day journey that took them 252,756 miles from home.

Public engagement remained high throughout the mission, from launch to the successful return of the crew. The overall vision for Artemis and NASA aims not only to return humans to the moon within two years, but also to build a permanent lunar base and eventually go to Mars.

We definitely have the “fever” and can’t wait until the Artemis III mission scheduled for 2027.

Americana Project Guest Artist Concert to feature Mojo Birds April 29

By Bob Hemenger
Pagosa Springs High School

This year’s annual Americana Project Guest Artist Concert will be held in the Pagosa Springs High School auditorium on Wednesday, April 29, at 7 p.m.

Students from the class will open the show with a great mix of covers and original songs. This year’s special guest is the band Mojo Birds. Their sound is a mix of roots, rock, soul and Afro-Peruvian mojo. Inspired by the likes of The Band and a touch of Al Green, these Birds are sure to get you tapping your toes.

The Americana Project was established in 2008 to provide an outlet for students who love music but may not participate in traditional music programs like band or choir.

With the help of grant funding and a dedicated group of educators, administrators and community members, Pagosa Springs High School partnered with Brad Tisdell to mentor the local team on how to successfully implement the program. Tisdell is the originator of the Americana Project in Sisters, Ore. A key focus from the beginning was community involvement, and the project quickly gained

local support.

During a time when many school districts across the country were cutting arts programs due to economic challenges, the Archuleta school board made a clear and courageous decision to protect and invest in the arts. This support made it possible to launch the Americana Project and to sustain it through the years.

Christine Funk, a local community member, played an essential role early on, organizing fundraisers to help purchase instruments and equipment.

Each year, the program invests in bringing a professional musician or group to both perform and mentor the students.

Over the years, the Americana Project has welcomed an impressive list of guest artists, including: Victor Wooten, Pete Kartsounes, KJ Denhert, Sway Wild, Anna Tivel and Jeffrey Martin, Bo DePena, Joe Craven, Joseph Wooten, Thom Chacon, Caleb Hawley, Jaden Carlson Trio, Elder Grown, Good Time Travelers, Beth Wood, Songs of the Fall, Nathaniel Talbot, Vicki Genfan, Gary Morris, Ariella, and Patrice Pike.

The class continues to thrive as an elective course that uses music,

performance and songwriting to encourage self-expression, build confidence and give students a chance to connect through creativity.

Tickets for this incredible evening of music are \$20 for adults, \$15 for students/seniors, and 12 and under are free. Tickets are only available at the door. The doors will open at 6:30 p.m. Please help us spread the word, and let’s celebrate music in the public schools.

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MOVIE FUNDRAISER EVENT

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Tickets \$20 - available online
www.riseaboveviolence.org

This fundraiser event is part of Sexual Assault Awareness Month and in conjunction with Denim Day. Find out more by visiting the website above.

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Aspen House groundbreaking celebration planned for May 1

By Keena Carstensen
Aspen House

A dream that has been quietly growing in our community for more than 10 years is finally becoming a reality.

On May 1, Tim Brown will bring in the big equipment and we will officially break ground on Aspen House — a home built with love, determination, and the support of this incredible community.

We would love to invite our com-

munity to share this monumental moment with us on Friday, May 1, at 5:30 p.m. at our lot, 2079 Vista Blvd., as the first shovels — and excavator scoops — of dirt are lifted for the official groundbreaking of Aspen House.

We will be on hand to answer questions about the building and the future of Aspen House, and, of course, we will have sweet treats to help celebrate this exciting milestone together.

Parking on Vista Boulevard is very limited, please park on the east side and do not block the right of way.

Please consider using our shuttle starting at 4:30 p.m. to safely reach the site by 5:30 p.m. for the celebration. Shuttle pickups will run every 15 minutes from the Our Community Eats parking lot, Boss Hoggs, First Southwest Bank and Veterans Memorial Park.

Please RSVP to Keena Carstensen at admin@aspenhousepagosa.org so we can plan accordingly for the event.

We are truly excited to share this moment with everyone who has so passionately supported Aspen House and helped bring this dream to life.

Pagosa Unitarian Universalist Fellowship to participate in Earth Day celebration

Pagosa Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

The Pagosa Unitarian Universalist (UU) Fellowship will engage in Action Sunday this week. In staying with our theme of earth-related attention, the UU Fellowship will join the community at Centennial Park for the local Earth Day celebration.

There will be no services at the fellowship.

As a welcoming faith community, we honor the interdependent web of all existence.

This Sunday, April 26, we take part in the annual, family-friendly event. As part of the wider event, an opening ceremony, beginning with a drum circle, will take place around 9:40 a.m. at the amphitheater.

We hope to see you there as we

take action to live our values of caring for our planet. Come share in the joy and beauty of the community and land we inhabit, and, with gratitude and reverence, acknowledge those stewards who came before us.

The UU Fellowship meets for worship services the first and third Sundays of the month, and offers small group ministry the second and fourth Sundays, all beginning at 10:30 a.m.

Our Community Hub is home to several other gatherings and are open to all.

Weekly Tara Meditation practice is Sundays from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Qi Gong Practice takes place on Mondays at 1 p.m.

The Wise and Wakeful Circle is held the second and fourth Saturdays at 10 a.m.

You can find us in Greenbriar Plaza, 301 N. Pagosa Blvd., Unit B-15, on the north side facing Pagosa Peak. We also offer Zoom services the first and third Sundays of the month. Find our current newsletter at PagosaUU.org for the link to join on Zoom and further information.

PAGOSA COMMUNITY INITIATIVE
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Denim Day is an annual event uniting communities to take a stand against sexual violence. This **Denim Day**, every pair of jeans becomes a statement, every donation becomes hope, and every piece of denim becomes a promise to survivors:
You Are Seen.
You Are Believed.
You Matter.

Help and resources available at riseaboveviolence.org

Denim Day is part of Sexual Assault Awareness Month

Give to support local survivors



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Photo courtesy Rise Above Violence

Employees wear denim and proudly show their support of survivors in the community.

Honoring survivors with action: Denim Day and movie night set for April 29

Rise Above Violence

April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month, and Pagosa Springs is answering with visible action. On Wednesday, April 29, our community will come together for Denim Day and a special movie fundraiser at the Liberty Theatre. These two simple ways show sexual assault survivors they are seen, believed and supported. Denim Day began as a worldwide response to victim-blaming and the harmful idea that clothing can invite violence. Here in Pagosa, wearing jeans is more than a fashion choice; it's a public promise to stand with survivors. On April 29, pull on your denim and consider giving \$5 to

■ See Honoring on next page

NATIONAL DAY of Prayer

You are invited to Stop & Pray
Thursday, May 7
9am-6pm

We will have the church open and prayer stations set up to guide you through a personal time of prayer for our nation and world. Come at any time and stay as long as you want.



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NOTICE OF TOWN COUNCIL VACANCY

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to Section 2.8 of the Pagosa Springs Town Charter, that as of April 6, 2026, there is one vacancy on the Pagosa Springs Town Council. The council seat is an at large seat. During a public meeting to be held on May 19th, 2026 at 5:00 pm, at Town Hall 551 Hot Springs Blvd, the Council will consider the appointment of one new Council Member to fill the vacancy.

NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that any elector of the Town of Pagosa Springs interested in serving on the Town Council may submit a completed application, found on the town website, with the Administrative Assistant, Traci Bishop, at Town Hall 551 Hot Springs Blvd or PO Box 1859 Pagosa Springs, CO 81147, on or before May 13, 2026.

For town boundaries, eligibility, or more info call 970-264-4151 or visit www.pagosasprings.co.gov

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Spiritual Experiences Group to be at Earth Day celebration

By Laurah Brock Young

Spiritual Experiences Group of Pagosa Springs

Would you like to learn more about Eckankar, the path of spiritual freedom?

Would you like to attend a fun and holistic educational event?

Eckankar, the sponsor of the Spiritual Experiences Group of Pagosa Springs, will be hosting a booth at the Earth Day celebration in Centennial Park and along the Riverwalk on Sunday, April 26, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

We would enjoy chatting with you. We will be giving out free "Eck Wis-

dom" books on topics such as past lives, dreams and inner guidance, and our booth will have a wisdom wheel that you can spin for a playful way to receive spiritual insights.

We hope to see you at Earth Day.

To learn more about Eckankar, visit www.eckankar.org or eckankar-colorado.org.

Honoring

■ continued from previous page

Rise Above Violence. Your donation helps fund local services that make a real difference: a 24/7 crisis line, immediate support after an assault, counseling, legal advocacy and prevention programs in our schools and community. These are the resources that help neighbors and friends find safety, healing and hope.

That evening, the Liberty Theatre will host a screening of "North Country" at 6 p.m. Tickets are \$20 and available at www.riseaboveviolence.org.

The film, inspired by true events, follows a single mother who faces severe harassment at work and helps

spark one of the first major class-action workplace sexual harassment lawsuits in the United States.

"North Country" shows how speaking up, backing one another and refusing to accept a culture of silence can lead to lasting change. Watching it together as a town reminds survivors here that Pagosa Springs values dignity, respect and accountability.

Wearing denim and attending the movie work hand in hand. When you wear jeans, you make support visible. When you donate, you keep critical services available right here at home. When you show up for the film, you deepen under-

standing and strengthen our community's ability to prevent harm and respond with care. Each action says the same thing in a different way: We listen, we believe and we stand with survivors.

So, on Wednesday, April 29, wear your denim, donate \$5 to Rise Above Violence, then join your neighbors at 6 p.m. for "North Country" at the Liberty Theatre.

Get your tickets at www.riseaboveviolence.org and find out more about Denim Day efforts. Together, we can turn awareness into action and keep Pagosa a place where safety and respect are the standard — not the exception.

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Photo courtesy Anna Katherine Snow

The prom royalty court for the Pagosa Community Initiative’s fourth annual Second Chance Prom pose for a photo ahead of the May 16 event. Voting for prom king and queen is open at www.givebutter.com/PCIProm2026, and tickets for the event are on sale now.

PCI’s Second Chance Prom to offer glamorous ‘Night in Hollywood’

By Carrie Blue-White
Pagosa Community Initiative

Get ready for a dazzling evening of fun, glamour and community spirit at the Pagosa Community Initiative’s (PCI) fourth annual Second Chance Prom.

This beloved fundraiser, PCI’s biggest event of the year, transforms the Ross Aragon Community Center into your second chance at prom.

Join us on the red carpet for a sparkling “Night in Hollywood” on May 16 at 7 p.m. at 451 Hot Springs Blvd.

Open to all community members 21 and older, this isn’t just a party—it’s a chance to dance, connect and support Archuleta County’s trusted family resource center. PCI

delivers essential services like child care, mental health support, youth programs and family resources that strengthen families from the ground up.

Vote for your favorite among five local couples competing for prom queen and king. Cast your vote at www.givebutter.com/PCIProm2026 and help crown the royalty of the night. Our partners this year are: Kevin and Sunshine Blue, Kim and Allen Domingo, Kevin and Julia Wood, Carli and Adam Luhrs, and Kari and Scott Burkett.

“Prom is more than a night of celebration,” said Carrie Blue-White, PCI’s board chair. “Our goal this year is \$45,000, which will go towards vital resources for youth and families in Archuleta County like

free after-school child care, mental health, parent education, emergency funds for families and other family resources.”

Whether you’re volunteering, donating or strutting your stuff on the dance floor, Second Chance Prom celebrates community resilience and generosity.

Tickets and details are at the Givebutter website mentioned above or on the PCI website: www.pagosa-communityinitiative.org. Mark your calendars and join the fun benefiting a worthy organization in Archuleta County.

Curious about PCI? Contact our executive director, Rebecca Tenpenny, at director@pagosacommunityinitiative.org or (970) 585-6461. We are here to help.

SpiritFire Inspirational Living Center announces upcoming events

By Shayla McClure
SpiritFire Inspirational Living Center

Save the date for the following activities at the SpiritFire Inspirational Living Center:

- May 1, 6 p.m.: Full Moon Drumming Circle. Join us at Xanadu for a flower moon celebration. A \$10 donation will be collected. Contact (970) 510-0309 to reserve your spot.
- May 10, 11 a.m.: Mother’s Day potluck and celebration Sunday service at Xanadu.

• May 17, 11 a.m.: Vietnam Veterans Giveback Day. Service with refreshments after. Veterans, sign up for your free treatments by contacting (970) 510-0309.

About us

The SpiritFire Inspirational Living Center is a 501(c)(3). We are an all-inclusive community honoring all lifestyles, cultures and religious paths to the Divine. We are the “Good Vibe Tribe” who practices Science of Mind principles of posi-

tive thinking.

The vision of SpiritFire Inspirational Living Center is to empower each participating member to become their “best self.” Our mission is to create a world that works for everyone through self empowerment and awareness of the creator’s divinity.

SpiritFire Inspirational Living Center events are held at Xanadu private retreat. Obtain information by joining us, emailing pagosacommunitynewthought@gmail.com or texting/calling (970) 510-0309.

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End of Life Education to meet April 30

By Joan Mieritz
End of Life Education

End of Life Education is for everyone.

The next program for End of Life Education will be presented on Thursday, April 30, beginning at 1 p.m. at the Community United Methodist Church at 434 Lewis St. beside the large parking lot.

Use the side door right off the parking lot, which takes you first into the kitchen and then the large fellowship hall. Usually, the front doors to the church sanctuary are locked if no staff is around.

Our speaker will be Brad Hunt, our Archuleta County coroner. There also are assistant coroners.

State laws have changed and a coroner must be more involved with every death case in each county.

We tried to have a different coroner come to speak with us several years ago, but he had to cancel at the last minute due to the emergency nature of his work. Hunt promised me that we will be his No. 1 priority on Thursday, April 30, from 1:15 to 2:15 p.m. It might turn out to be the most important thing you do on that day also.

If you ever need to work with him, it can be beneficial to have met him and know what to expect. He is diligent and caring. He will share with us the nature of his work and spend time answering all our questions about end of life.

We will find out by Monday, April 27, if the emergency medical response team will be doing informal training (not for certification) on resuscitation, possibly at 2:15 p.m. on April 30, also. The team was supposed to be there at 2 p.m., as advertised on Thursday, April 23, but communication was not perfect about the delay from 1 to 2:15 p.m. They will be bringing large dolls or dummies for everyone to practice on. If they do not come, there will be another possibility later.

The emergency medical response team for Archuleta County recently added a new staff member, Andrew Spangler, who is focusing almost solely on education. He will be speaking as often as possible to the public.

His comments are often for senior citizens, but he will also include material for the general public, sharing what they need to know about emergency education. That is why

everyone is invited to attend. Knowledge about an emergency medical program is beneficial to everyone.

Did you know that every law enforcement car in Archuleta County carries an emergency defibrillator for resuscitation? And there are several at public buildings around town, like the library, schools and the community center. That is valuable information to keep in mind.

We are fortunate to live in a culture that values human life. But, there is also a cultural understanding that we are not doing as well with — that life has an end point. Even stars die, to be born again as new stars. It is a process where life keeps recycling itself. Many people who come to these programs are striving to accept the reality of how life happens. This is something that our culture in America needs to work on.

We have so much that we need to learn. On May 21 we will have a speaker who we've had in the past because new information is being developed in the area of natural funerals.

Last year, Karis Meskimen presented the new ideas of green burials, natural burials, human composting and water cremation. Many of the newest ideas were started in other states and then are first presented in Denver and/or suburbs. Meskimen did a great job of sharing new methods of handling our bodies that are much better for the environment.

We have not yet spent much important time on Colorado laws that aid a person at the end of their life to shorten time of possible great pain or serious discomfort by personally taking a "home-delivered" "cocktail." The process needs to be doctor-monitored and must follow our state laws precisely.

The time for presenting this information has not been determined. We will need to set a special time for these meetings other than our regular meeting days and time. It should be set up by next Monday. The doctors involved in this process are very busy, but it will happen.

These are emotionally challenging programs, but with caring and sensitive people working together, we can handle almost anything. You may get to practice asking for help. We have several medical doctors and several counselors who have been part of End of Life Education. Plus, there are many other amazingly caring people

at our meetings.

We hope to see you there for an important learning experience and something that you will find to be most helpful. We almost always find that we are more capable and stronger than we ever thought we were. We will be learning a great deal at each of these programs and will become better stronger people.

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A heartfelt thank you to Nancy Haines, former owner and dear friend, and to Elise Mariner, our business broker with Transworld, for helping us make this transition possible.

We look forward to growing with our community.

San Juan Stargazers to continue focus on recent discoveries

By Joan Mieritz
San Juan Stargazers

James Webb Space Telescope discoveries will be the main program topic for the San Juan Stargazers' monthly meetings except when we have guest speakers. Tom Hanchet, from Apollo mission control, will speak in June.

Our first James Webb Space Telescope discoveries program was on April 2, and it deserved many, many superlatives.

Joan Mieritz selected a 40-minute film created by and presented by the European Space Agency as a "Christmas gift" to Europe on Dec. 25, 2025.

It showed the movement of the telescope as it was lining up to photograph 30 new discoveries. For 40 minutes, we slowly traveled through deep space.

In preparing the program I got to watch the film eight times with never a boring moment. As each celestial site was in perfect view, its name silently appeared on the screen. Many of these sites have never been seen before and were not named, so no one knew about them.

A few of the sites had been photo-

graphed by the Hubble Space Telescope. With those, the amazement was the extraordinary improvement in what could be seen and distinguished because of the infrared equipment.

When the 40 minutes was over, there were so many questions, but also silence in absolute wonder with what we had just seen. We couldn't decide if we should talk about the most recent site or go back to the beginning or just sit there speechless.

We slowly started with questions, but everyone was overwhelmed.

The next meeting of the San Juan Stargazers will be at the Community United Methodist Church at 434 Lewis St. There is a parking lot and convenient side door into the kitchen. The main front doors to the sanctuary remain locked. The meeting will be on Thursday, May 7, and will begin at 6 p.m. with our social hour for visiting and snacks.

At 7 p.m., our program will begin. We will continue where we ended on April 2. The plan is to study four or five sites at a time using the many books that Mieritz has, ones the club has recently purchased or many James Webb websites available.

There is so much information from the James Webb, and it is committed to sharing everything discovered to the general public. Mieritz made the comment a few years ago that James Webb discoveries would help keep her alive for extra years to see all the discoveries. She is totally enjoying this project and will do the best job possible to have interactive teaching and learning.

We will travel through deep space with all its wonder, flowing from one amazing sight to the next. When we've traveled enough then we will study together the various sights we have seen. Some scenes are totally new, but many have never been seen with the Webb's infrared telescope and camera. We may compare the views from the Hubble with the views from the Webb. We will study what makes each location significant and unique. There will be time for sharing information, questions, discussions, breaks and surprises.

The room is large and has a big TV. We will move from the tables to chairs in front of the screen and it will be dark. I'm hoping it will be exciting and, of course, educational.

■ See Stargazers on next page



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Archuleta Food Summit a step toward a stronger local food system

Healthy Archuleta

The 2026 Archuleta Food Summit was more than a gathering; it was a powerful step forward in building a stronger, more-connected local food system.

We extend heartfelt thanks to all who made the day possible. Your time, energy and commitment brought this vision to life.

From the opening session to the closing conversations, the day reflected what's possible when a community comes together.

Attendees explored how local food systems drive economic opportunity, workforce pathways and long-term resilience, followed by an immersive Food Hub and Food Hall experience with interactive stations across three zones: agriculture and growing, business and infrastructure, and community and education.

The event also featured a farm-to-

table lunch, facilitated community discussions and recognition of local food system champions.

The presence of families, children and youth added a meaningful inter-generational dimension, making the gathering truly distinctive.

We specifically want to commend the middle school and San Juan Mountain School students; their participation in the Healthy Archuleta Youth Prevention program resulted in educational tobacco prevention posters that significantly enriched the event.

From creative garden art to profound community dialogue, the summit highlighted a shared commitment to lifelong learning and collective progress.

We are profoundly grateful for the leadership and active participation of our community members. Their dedicated involvement serves as a compelling reminder that our

community's future is exceptionally bright and guided by capable hands.

What became clear throughout the day is this: The food hub is no longer just an idea; it is a community-driven movement. As we listened, shared and engaged, the path forward took shape. The food hub will play a critical role in advancing our local food system, supporting producers, increasing access to local food and strengthening our rural economy.

This work continues, and there are many ways to stay connected and help shape what comes next:

- Learn more about the food hub at www.foodcoalition4archuleta.org/community-food-hub.html.
- Get involved and take the next step at www.foodcoalition4archuleta.org/support-the-food-hub-efforts.html.

Whether you join a committee, become an ambassador, share your ideas or simply stay connected, your voice matters. Because the future of Archuleta County isn't something we wait for; it's something we build together.

Stargazers

■ continued from previous page

since it is some of the newest information available about our amazing universe. It should be as great of an experience as possible but, there are limitations since we're in a building on Earth. You do have to contribute your imagination and enthusiasm to put the frosting on the cake.

Join the Stargazers

If you would like to join the San Juan Stargazers, you will also receive a regular hard copy of Reflector Magazine, which is the publication of the National Astronomical League of which you automatically become a member when joining the club.

Make sure that we have your mailing address to get the magazine. The Astronomical League makes it so we do not just belong to a small-

town-sized club, but to a national astronomy club with thousands of members and wonderful active opportunities and competitions, awards and rewards.

To join both groups and get an excellent magazine, check at the meeting or go to our website. Also ask about our new "Service" membership.

You can join the club at any of our meetings or on our website. Check out our continuously changing website, sanjuanstargazers.org, with new information and spectacular photos.

We hope to see you for this exciting and educational program. We can be your connection to our extraordinary universe, and we want to help you learn as much as possible so you are appropriately amazed.

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Library investing in teens

By Judy Brennan and
Barbara Brattin
PREVIEW Columnists

As we prepare to open our new library addition, we’re especially excited to introduce a dedicated space just for teens.

Why does that matter?

Teens need room to grow into themselves — spaces that support independence, creativity, meaningful peer connections and a sense of ownership. In the past, our teen area was shared with infants and young children, which made it challenging to create an environment where teens could truly connect, explore and develop their independence.

Adolescence is a time of major transformation — emotionally, mentally and socially. It’s when young people begin asking one of life’s most important questions: Who am I? The answer unfolds gradually, shaped by their experiences, relationships and evolving sense of self. During this stage, friendships, identity, belonging and dreams for the future take center stage.

The Ruby Sisson Library’s new teen space is designed to support that journey. It offers a place where teens can continue discovering who they are — outside of home, school and work — while building confidence and resilience along the way. Our goal is to create an environment where teens feel welcomed, empowered and at home.

To make this vision a reality, we need your help. We’re seeking comfortable seating and computers to fully equip the space. Will you consider contributing to help bring this important community resource to life?

Contact Katie Dobbins with the Ruby Sisson Library Foundation at (970) 264-2102 or foundation@pagosalibrary.org. Ready to make a gift online? Donate on our home page, www.pagosalibrary.org.

Thank you.

Thank you, Town of Pagosa Springs

We are grateful to the Town of Pagosa Springs, its staff and elected officials for their tremendous support during this construction process. Their good advice has been instrumental in our success, and they have generously waived multiple fees to help us afford this expansion.

Local benefactor purchases appliances for new library

We continue to be amazed at the generosity of our community in getting this expansion and remodel completed.

This month, a former board member took us on a shopping spree to purchase all new appliances for the library. What a lovely gift. Huge thanks also go out to Brian Hart for

Library News

providing our appliances at wholesale prices. Brian, your commitment to community is heartwarming.

This week we’re fundraising for carpet

Have you seen the tired, worn-out carpet in our current library space? We need a refresh, and the price tag is \$100,000.

Anything you can contribute will help us reach our goal. Easily donate online at pagosalibrary.org, drop off a check at the library or drop some change into the jar at the front desk. Together we can. We are grateful for you.

Construction update

Have you noticed the beautiful blue building coming to life? Behind those gorgeous exterior walls are new rooms with lovely cabinetry, countertops for computing, fresh drywall and paint, and tiled floors. May will be a busy month as flooring and lighting will be installed.

June marks a big transition as we switch from the old side to the new side. We’ll transfer service to the new section while the old section gets a facelift.

In late August, the two portions will be combined into one big, beautiful building. Our grand opening is tentatively set for Labor Day weekend.

Follow us on Facebook for periodic pictures of progress.

Get ready for Summer Reading

It won’t be long till we kick off Summer Reading 2026. This year’s theme is “READ WILD!” and features books filled with action and adventure, plus lots of fun field trips and activities for all ages.

Collecting for local food banks

Are you heading out for the summer? Are you moving away? If you have an extra can or two of food you can share, or some dried food in sturdy packaging, please bring it to the library. Our local agencies will pick up and distribute the food where it’s needed.

GED adds citizenship classes

Join our test prep classes for the U.S. Citizenship test on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2 to 4 p.m. at St. Patrick’s Episcopal Church on South Pagosa Boulevard.

Colorado Parks Passes for checkout

It’s almost summer, and it’s time

to get outside. The Ruby Sisson Library has free Colorado Parks passes for checkout that include a backpack with nature guides, binoculars and fun activities. Reserve yours today.

Meet us out in the community

Now that we have much less space for our operations and no meeting rooms during construction, several of our regular activities and special events are happening in other locations.

Please check the listings in this column and on your library’s website, pagosalibrary.org, for location changes throughout the construction. If no other location is mentioned, the activity will stay at your library.

Activities calendars

Pick up monthly calendars at the library or check the website, www.pagosalibrary.org/events-calendar, so you don’t miss any of the free programs, events and activities available to you and your family.

Online author talks

Join us live or catch the presentation later. Reserve your spot at library.org/pagosalibrary.

Thursday, April 30, at 5 p.m. will be “On Writing Beloved Characters and Powerful Portrayals of Resilience in Virtual Conversation” with Jason Reynolds, award-winning and New York Times bestselling author.

May 7 at 5 p.m. will feature “On Courage, Turmoil, and the Transformative Power of Love” with Marjan Kamali, bestselling author of “The

■ See Library on next page



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A symphony of kindness: Seniors take in San Juan Symphony rehearsal

By Ricardo Martinez
PREVIEW Columnist

Archuleta Seniors Inc. (ASI), extends its sincere gratitude to those who generously sponsored a memorable senior trip on April 10 to a San Juan Symphony rehearsal.

Thirteen local seniors enjoyed a full day of activities, beginning with a delightful lunch in Durango, where they were warmly welcomed and treated with exceptional care. The group then visited a retailer, where staff once again created a friendly and inviting atmosphere, making the

Senior News

who provided a brief history of the symphony and guided a tour of the facility.

Seniors were also introduced to Music Director Dr. Thomas Heu-

■ See Senior on next page

seniors feel truly valued throughout the experience.

The highlight of the trip was a visit to the San Juan Symphony rehearsal at Fort Lewis College.

The group was greeted by Operations Manager Laura Argotsinger,

Library

■ continued from previous page
Lion Women of Tehran.”

Conversational Spanish

Our popular Conversational Spanish group continues on Mondays from 4 to 5 p.m. at St. Patrick's Episcopal Church at 225 S. Pagosa Blvd. This is a great opportunity to practice your Spanish in a free, friendly group setting. No minimum skill level is needed.

Family storytime

Wednesdays from 10 to 11 a.m., join a free educational hour of reading, singing and free play to build early literacy skills.

Elementary school tutoring

Free after-school tutoring for first through third grades takes place on Wednesdays from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Registration is required because of limited space, so call your library now at (970) 264-2209 to enroll your child.

This invaluable tutoring involves one-on-one and small-group help for math, literacy, writing and spelling.

Note that because of construction at the library these sessions will take place at the elementary school.

Writers Guild

Thursdays from 9 to 11 a.m., Ruby's Writers Guild welcomes writers looking for support, guidance, resources and camaraderie with other writers at this free gathering.

During construction the group will meet at the Pagosa Senior Center, 451 Hot Springs Blvd. Enter through the left side of the building.

Tech Time

Free in-person slots are available from 2 to 4 p.m. on Thursdays. Taylor helps with basic questions relating to computers, smartphones and tablets, and also provides assistance in accessing the library's online resources. No appointment is needed, but please bring your device's charger and passwords with you.

New books collections

brimming with interesting titles

For a full list of new titles and to reserve your copy, go to www.pagosalibrary.org and choose “Search the Catalog” at the top of the screen.

Don't forget, if there is a waiting list for the book, it may be available now as an e-book or e-audiobook on CloudLibrary or Libby.

New books for your health

- “No-Nonsense Skincare: An Expert Guide to Healthier Skin” is by Erum Ilyas, M.D.

- “The IVF Blueprint: Everything You Need to Know About In-Vitro Fertilization, Egg Freezing, and Embryo Transfer” is by Abby Eblen, M.D.

- “Mayo Guide to Gut Health” is by Sahil Khanna, M.B.B.S.

Immersed in the spiritual

- “To See Beyond,” by former war correspondent Anna Badkhen, probes the ways we ward off despair as she imagines the language we need for survival.

- “The Meaning of Your Life: Finding Purpose in an Age of Emptiness” is by social scientist Arthur Brooks.

- “The Glorians: Visitations from the Holy Ordinary” is from Utah author Terry Tempest Williams.

Walks on the wild side

- “My Life with Wolves: How I Became the Storyteller for the Yellowstone Packs” is by Rick McIntyre.

- “The Peregrine Falcon: The Epic Life and Times of the World's Fastest Creature” is by Jim Wright.

- “Nature Speak: Signs, Omens, and Messages in Nature” and “Animal Wise: Understanding the Language of Animal Messengers and Companions” are by Ted Andrews.

New fiction

- “The Counting Game” by Sinead Nolan is described as “a chilling blend of mystery and dark folklore.”

- “Yesteryear” by Caro Claire Burke is described as a “clever excavation of motherhood and faith.”

- “Guilt” is a new mystery from Edgar Award finalist Keigo Higashino.

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“I must keep alive in myself the desire for my true country, which I shall not find until after death; I must never let it get snowed under or turned aside; I must make it the main object of life to press on to that other country and to help others do the same.” - C.S. Lewis.

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Senior

■ **continued from previous page** ser, who shared insights about the orchestra’s 40th season, themed “Legacy in Harmony,” and took time to answer questions and explain the music being performed.

The day concluded with the group watching a live rehearsal, witnessing the musicians bring the performance to life.

The trip was a resounding success, leaving many seniors already looking forward to the next adventure.

Senior Conversations

The very popular Senior Conversations with local Bill Salmansohn takes place on Mondays from 1:15 to 2:15 p.m. at the Archuleta Senior Center.

Salmonsohn brings to the conversations a variety of topics designed to stimulate discussions within a safe and comfortable environment as we explore our well-being and shared experiences.

This is a unique opportunity to connect with others in the Archuleta community, fostering sharing and friendships.

Snacks will be provided. Afterward, hosted by Robin Williams, stay for a get-together created for those who wish to continue the conversation. This opportunity is typically from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m., following Senior Conversations. The group occasionally reconvenes as an informal gathering at various local restaurants.

Stretching and mobility weekly class

Community members are invited to attend free weekly classes every Tuesday from 10 to 11 a.m. at the Senior Center at 451 Hot Springs Blvd., in the back of the Ross Aragon Community Center.

The stretching and mobility classes for adults age 55 or better are designed to help build balance in the body through functional exercises that aim to improve mobility and flexibility.

Participants will have the opportunity to enjoy a variety of techniques that can help enhance overall movement efficiency.

Though not necessary, a mat is recommended for this class.

The program is instructed by local ballet dance instructor Dee Pitchon, who will provide modifications to ensure the safety and effectiveness of the exercises.

American mahjong

American mahjong is played using a set of tiles and the current year score card. Play includes groups of three or four players and follows a pattern of division exchange and display of tiles.

Bring your card and come to play or watch and learn from 1:15 to 3:45 p.m. Tuesdays at the Senior Center.

Bridge

The game of bridge is held on

Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 1:15 p.m.

Bridge is a four-player card game with partners sitting opposite each other around a table. It is a trick-taking card game using a standard 52-card deck. Come alone or bring a partner.

Hand and foot card game

Whether you are new to hand and foot or interested in learning, please join us most Tuesdays at 1:15 p.m. at the Senior Center.

This card game involves four rounds, with the final round reached sometime between two and three hours later. Plan to stay and meet some new friends or catch up with those you have missed.

No experience is necessary, so come willing to learn.

Emotional freedom

On the second Thursday of the month from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m., join the “Tappers,” who practice a self-regulation technique to relieve symptoms of anxiety, depression, insomnia and more.

Everything you need to get started is included in this fun, engaging, supportive class taught by Judith Newman, LPC.

Mindful drawing

Mindful drawing is an easy-to-learn, relaxing and fun way to create beautiful images by drawing structured patterns. Join our friendly instructor, Roberta Strickland.

Classes are every Wednesday from 1:30 to 3 p.m. in the Senior Center.

This activity is open to all ages. Help us create an intergenerational community. For those under 18 and/or with disabilities, you are welcome to join us, but we kindly ask you to please bring an adult chaperone with you.

Mexican train dominoes

Mexican train dominoes meets on Wednesdays at 1:15 p.m. at the Senior Center.

Ruby’s Writers Guild

The Ruby’s Writers Guild meets on Thursdays from 8:45 to 10:30 a.m. The guild is an informal group that meets to support writers of all genres and experiences. It supports writers through friendly critique, resources, discussion, and literary and cultural activities. Bring your secret idea drafts or completed manuscripts. Come join the group.

Tai chi chih

Tai chi classes are on Thursdays from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. in the Senior Center.

Tai chi chih is not a martial art, but rather a tool for self-healing. Softness, flow and effortlessness are the guiding principles in this meditative practice. The 19 movements and one pose are designed to stimulate, circulate and balance the vital energy

■ **See Senior on next page**

The Weekly Crossword

by Margie E. Burke

ACROSS

- 1 Turning point?
- 5 Unruly crowds
- 9 ____ in the right direction: 2 wds.
- 14 Part of the Corn Belt
- 15 On ____ (without a contract)
- 16 Mecca native
- 17 Burt of 1960's "Elmer Gantry"
- 19 Clean completely
- 20 Items on to-do lists
- 21 Seismic source
- 23 Caviar fish
- 25 Outspoken
- 26 Lucky charm
- 29 Out of shape?
- 30 Where Switz. is
- 33 Penalty
- 35 Beheaded Boleyn
- 36 Begged
- 37 Peter, pumpkin-wise
- 38 Portion out
- 39 Cleanse
- 40 Etcher's fluid
- 42 OH to MA direction
- 43 Kind of curve
- 44 Thanksgiving fare
- 45 Regarding birth
- 47 Depend (on)
- 48 Sponsorship
- 51 Works, as a field
- 55 Buyer's proposal
- 56 Wistful for the past
- 58 Smelled awful
- 59 Icicle former
- 60 Hogwarts librarian Pince
- 61 Puts a stop to
- 62 Fax button
- 63 Equinox mo.

DOWN

- 1 Scottish garb

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12	13
14					15					16				
17					18					19				
20						21			22					
				23		24			25					
26	27	28					29				30	31	32	
33						34				35				
36					37					38				
39					40					41				
42				43					44					
		45	46				47							
48	49						50			51		52	53	54
55						56			57					
58						59				60				
61						62				63				

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- 2 Weather tracking org.
- 3 Admits, with "up"
- 4 Fall off the wagon, perhaps
- 5 Publisher's pile: Abbr.
- 6 Chose
- 7 Microwave sound
- 8 Copyist of old
- 9 ____ ratio (TV spec)
- 10 Spa feature
- 11 High-collar top
- 12 Result of honing
- 13 Fishing spot
- 18 Contents of some urns
- 22 Penitent
- 24 Plato was one
- 26 Eden fruit
- 27 Disney's Chinese warrior
- 28 Humdrum
- 29 Midler of music
- 31 Loosen a knot
- 32 Oboe-sounding
- 34 Views from isles, often
- 35 Lilylike flower
- 41 Mea ____
- 43 Baby birds?
- 46 "____ we all?"
- 47 Varnish ingredient
- 48 Luxurious
- 49 Shaving lotion brand
- 50 1990s VP
- 52 Grimm villain
- 53 Spineless sort
- 54 "Beat it!"
- 57 Covered in Cottonelle, say

Answers to Previous Crossword:

N	A	P	A		O	P	T	E	D		E	A	T	S
O	P	E	C		C	R	A	Z	E		P	O	U	T
P	E	R	T		T	E	R	R	A	F	I	R	M	A
E	X	P	I	R	E	D		A	N	I	S	T	O	N
		L	O	O	T	E	D			R	O	A	R	S
E	V	E	N	S		F	U	E	L	E	D			
T	E	X		E	D	I	B	L	E		I	N	K	Y
S	T	E	P	S	O	N		E	V	A	C	U	E	E
Y	O	D	A		P	E	N	C	I	L		M	E	L
			C	R	E	D	I	T		O	D	E	L	L
S	E	P	I	A			P	R	E	F	E	R		
T	R	U	F	F	L	E		O	A	T	C	A	K	E
A	N	T	I	T	O	X	I	N	S		I	T	E	M
H	I	T	S		K	A	T	I	E		D	O	N	T
L	E	S	T		I	M	A	C	S		E	R	O	S

Senior

■ continued from previous page
that is inherent in all of us.

Bingo

Join us for bingo on Fridays, April 24, May 8 and May 22, at 1:30 p.m.

Participation is free, and all we ask is you bring yourself and a friend for an hour of joyful fellowship. We will provide prizes for all winners, and snacks will also be provided.

No RSVP is required; just show up.

All ages are welcome, but we ask those 18 and younger to come with an adult chaperone. Seats are first come, first served.

Scrapbooking and crafters club

The Pagosa Springs Scrapbooking and Crafters Club continues to hold monthly meetings the second Saturday of each month from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Community Center, 451 Hot Springs Blvd., within the dining hall in the Senior Center.

This creative tradition has been happening since 2005, and we invite all creative individuals to come and share ideas, connect with new and old friends, learn/share creative techniques, share supplies and indulge in a potluck lunch together. Bring your scrapbooking projects — or any crafting project that you may want to work on with the group.

Help us create an intergenerational community. Those ages 18 and older are welcome. For those youth age 17 and younger, we kindly request an adult chaperone accompany them.

If you would like to be added to the mailing list, please send your request to copenhavercreative@gmail.com and you will receive notification each month of the upcoming meeting, along with handy tips and tricks for scrapbooking and more.

Share lunch Monday through Friday

Join local elders, their friends, family and community at the Community Cafe, also known as the Silver Fox's Den, in person for delicious meals Mondays through Fridays at the Community Center between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. Grab 'N' Go pickup via our convenient portico is also available all week.

To reserve your meal for the day, please make your reservation via text or phone call to (970) 264-2167 by 8:45 a.m. weekdays. Please say whether it is dine-in or Grab 'N' Go.

Our dining hall is open to all ages and welcomes you all with kindness and warmth. We provide hot/cold meals for anyone in the community interested in a nutritious and delicious meal. For those 60 or older we request a suggested donation of \$6, but no one will be turned away. There is a \$10.50 charge for guests under the age of 60.

Meals include a main course, side dish, fruit/dessert, garden salad plus beverage.

Community Cafe menu

Call or text (970) 264-2167 before 8:45 a.m. Please note that occasionally the menu must be changed on short notice.

Thursday, April 23 — Chicken tortilla soup with crispy tortilla strips and cotija cheese, garden salad, fruit, cookies, and milk.

Friday, April 24 — Beef meatloaf, baby baked potatoes, garden salad, cherry cheesecake and milk.

Monday, April 27 — Tuna salad on avocado, macaroni salad, broccoli salad, garden salad, fruit, dessert bar and milk.

Tuesday, April 28 — Eggplant Parmigiana, mushrooms and squash sautee, dinner roll, garden salad, fruit, vanilla yogurt, and milk.

Wednesday, April 29 — Chicken and broccoli crepes, wilted spinach and onions, garden salad, ambrosia fruit salad, and milk.

Thursday, April 30 — Teriyaki pork ribs, coconut rice, gingered carrots, garden salad, fruit, chai pudding and milk.

Friday, May 1 — Shrimp scampi over linguine, garlic bread, garden salad, fruit and milk.

Meals on Wheels

We deliver fresh Meals on Wheels five days a week (and provide frozen Meals on Wheels for weekends) to homebound Archuleta County residents. The meals are delivered by our wonderful volunteers. Call or text us at (970) 264-2167 for how to sign up for the program.

Text reservations

Don't forget that we offer a convenient texting service for you to communicate with us. Text us at (970) 264-2167. When texting, please include your name, phone number and the days you want a meal. If you are canceling a reservation, please include your name, phone number and the days you want to cancel.

Mountain Express Transit senior paratransit services

Seniors over the age of 60 can be verified to receive services through discounted paratransit services, free bus rides and pickup at your home to bring you to the Senior Center for lunch. To become eligible, there is a form to complete.

Older adults needing a ride to a local food pantry can contact the Mountain Express Transit (MET) to schedule a ride with its paratransit service.

Call the Archuleta County MET at (970) 264-2250 for information.

Medicare assistance by appointment

For anyone who needs help enrolling and navigating Medicare plans, the San Juan Basin Area Agency on Aging helps with parts A, B and D. They can also help you with fraud concerns and troubleshooting any

billing issues you may be having. By appointment only. Please call the Medicare line at (970) 403-6759 for an appointment and where to meet.

Board vacancies

The ASI Board of Directors has positions open. Terms are three

■ See Senior on page 17

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PAGOSA SCENE . . .

ARCHULETA FOOD SUMMIT

Photos courtesy Healthy Archuleta

Scene ... learning about local food opportunities, sharing ideas and building solutions at the Archuleta Food Summit on Saturday, April 18, at Pagosa Springs High School.



Senior

■ continued from page 15

years with an option to renew for an additional term.

Potential candidates should be at least 21 years of age or older and must have a passion for adult and

aging services.

Please stop by our offices at 451 Hot Springs Blvd. to pick up an application or call (970) 264-2167 for more information.

For more information about ASI,

please visit www.psseniors.org.

Support the Senior Center

New, starting in 2026, small donations can be deducted without itemizing your tax return. It is the Permanent Universal Charitable Deduction.

Here's what this means: For tax years beginning after Dec. 31, 2025, those who do not itemize can deduct up to \$1,000 for individual tax filing and \$2,000 for married couples filing jointly.

The goal of this provision is to recognize and encourage charitable giving across all income levels, potentially boosting donations from middle-income households who may not itemize their deductions. This change has the potential to significantly impact charitable giving patterns by incentivizing a broader base of donors.

You may mail your donation to ASI, P.O. Box 3444, Pagosa Springs, CO 81147, or please visit our website: www.psseniors.org/ (donation button).

Donation checks can be written to: Archuleta Seniors Inc.

Another way to donate: Are you 70.5 years old or better? Do you have an IRA from which you need to take a distribution? Did you know you can make charitable donations directly from your IRA without paying taxes on the distribution, up to \$100,000 per year? The donation from the account would be payable to ASI and sent to P.O. Box 344, Pagosa Springs, CO 81147. This gift option is called the IRA charitable rollover or qualified charitable distribution.



Photo courtesy Byron Greco

This week's Bird of the Week, compliments of the Weminuche Audubon Society and Audubon Rockies, is the least sandpiper.

The most diverse group of shorebirds is the sandpiper family. Sandpipers vary in size and feeding styles but share common characteristics including long bodies, narrow wings and slender, sensitive bills. When probing in the mud or sand, nerve endings packed at the tip of a sandpiper's bill allow it to sense hidden prey. Taste buds inside the bill tip determine if the hidden find is food to be extracted and eaten.

Aptly named, the least sandpiper is the smallest shorebird in the world, weighing only about 1 ounce and measuring 5 to 6 inches long. This shorebird is sparrow-sized and dwarfed by a killdeer that shares its space. In spring breeding plumage it has brown speckled upperparts and white underparts, and its dark bill is slightly decurved. Its yellowish-green legs can distinguish it from other small shorebirds that have dark legs.

Small sandpipers, lumped together as "peeps," are notoriously difficult to identify. Good binoculars, spotting scopes and cameras with long zoom are most often a must in trying to tell one from another. Even if you can't give them a name, you can still have fun watching them.

The least sandpiper is common on inland mudflats and wet, grassy areas. It picks up tiny food items from the ground surface or probes in the mud. On inland areas, it feeds heavily on insects and in coastal mudflats it adds crustaceans, mollusks and marine worms. It supplements its diet with seeds of marsh grasses.

This tiny shorebird migrates to the extreme northern regions of North America, where it nests on the tundra, in sedge meadows and northern bogs from Alaska east across northern Canada. Both sexes share incubation duties with the male doing most toward the end. The female may even leave before all of the eggs hatch, but the male stays at least until the young birds can fly when they are only 14-16 days old.

Winter finds these sandpipers along the coasts, in areas of southern states and through the northern half of South America. Eastern populations likely fly nonstop over the ocean at distances up to 2,500 miles to wintering grounds, an incredible feat hard to imagine such a small bird accomplishing twice yearly.

For information on events, visit www.weminucheaudubon.org and www.facebook.com/weminucheaudubon/.

Bird of the Week

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Preview Calendar

All events listed in The PREVIEW Calendar are free of charge unless otherwise noted.

Thursday, April 23

Ruby’s Writers Guild. 8:45-10:45 a.m., Senior Center. Ruby’s Writers Guild welcomes writers who are looking for opportunities, support and camaraderie with other writers. Members provide support, resources and guidance for each other.

Tai Chi Chih. 1:30-2:30 p.m., Senior Center.

Tech Time. 2-4 p.m., Sisson Library. Taylor will answer basic questions related to computers, smartphones, tablets, etc., and provide assistance with accessing any of the library’s online resources. Bring your device charger and passwords.

Pagosa Springs Varsity Girls’ Soccer. 4 p.m., Golden Peaks Stadium. Pagosa Springs vs. Ignacio.

Saturday, April 25

GriefShare. 10-11:30 a.m., Centerpoint Church, 2750 Cornerstone Drive. A 13-week program to assist with the healing process, regardless of how long it is since your loved one passed. Register and learn more at www.griefshare.org.

Knitters Circle. 1-3 p.m., Natural Grocers back room, 775 San Juan St. Any type and experience level of needleworker is welcome.

‘Artemis Fever’ Moongaze. 8:45 p.m., South Pagosa Park. View the moon through the Pagosa Sidewalk Astronomers’ high-magnification telescope.

Sunday, April 26

Earth Day Celebration. 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Centennial Park.

DUST2 Critical Mass Ride. 10 a.m., Centennial Park. A family-friendly ride celebrating Earth Day, community, healthy transportation and biking together safely.

Monday, April 27

Women’s Fellowship. 9-11 a.m., Pope John Paul II Catholic Church classrooms, 353 S. Pagosa Blvd.

Line Dancing. 9:30-11 a.m., PLPOA Clubhouse, 230 Port Ave. Beginners meet at 9:30 a.m. and the advance group meets at 10:15 a.m. If you haven’t attended before, please call Beverly at (970) 264-2064 for more information.

Archuleta County Democratic Club. 11:30 a.m., Uncle’s Bar and Social Club.

Senior Conversations. 1:15 p.m., Senior Center.

American Sign Language Class. 4-5 p.m., Pagosa Bible Church, 209 Harman Park Drive. Learn and practice ASL skills in a group setting. No minimum skill level is required. Drop-ins are welcome.

League of Women Voters of Archuleta County. 5:30 p.m., Commu-

nity United Methodist Church, 434 Lewis St.

Tuesday, April 28

Coffee and Kiddos Playgroup. 10-11 a.m., Aspire Medical Services and Education, 602 S. 8th St. For those with kids ages birth to 3 years old.

Pagosa Springs Stitchers. 10 a.m.-noon, Community United Methodist Church, 434 Lewis St. Bring your current stitching project and a snack/drink if you wish, and enjoy the fellowship of other stitchers. All are welcome.

Veterans for Veterans of Archuleta County. 10 a.m., Pagosa Bible Church, 209 Harman Park Drive. Veterans and family members are invited to share experiences with vets of all ages. Find out about the latest in vets benefits, vets news and community-focused events. Contact (970) 880-8387 for more details.

WHIPS (Women Helping in Pagosa Springs). 11:30 a.m., Shang Hai Restaurant. The cost is \$20. All women are welcome. An RSVP to (970) 946-1895 is required by Sunday, April 26.

Bridge. 1:15 p.m., Senior Center.

Mahjong. 1:15 p.m., Senior Center.

Teen Advisory Board. 4-5 p.m., Sisson Library. Be a voice at your library. Build leadership skills, mentor others and plan programs that interest you. Snacks will be provided.

Pagosa Springs Varsity Girls’ Soccer. 4 p.m., Golden Peaks Stadium. Pagosa Springs vs. Bayfield.

Men’s Fellowship. 6 p.m., Pope John Paul II Catholic Church classrooms, 353 S. Pagosa Blvd.

Wednesday, April 29

Kids Kare. 9:30-11:30 a.m., Pagosa Bible Church, 209 Harman Park Drive. A weekly club for 3- to 5-year-olds where the Bible is taught with songs, stories, object lessons, games and more.

Family Storytime. 10-11 a.m., Sisson Library. Join for an educational hour of reading, singing and free play while building early literacy skills together. For all ages. Call (970) 264-2209 for more information.

Bridge. 1:15 p.m., Senior Center.

Mexican Train Dominoes. 1:15 p.m., Senior Center.

Mindful Drawing. 1:30 p.m., Senior Center.

Elementary Tutoring. 3:30-4:30 p.m., Pagosa Springs Elementary School, 141 S. 10th St. For grades 1-3. Elementary school children are tutored in reading and math. Registration required. Call (970) 264-2209 for more information. A Sisson Library program.

Rise Above Violence Film Event: ‘North Country.’ 6 p.m., Liberty Theatre. A fundraiser for Rise Above Violence. For more information and tickets, visit RiseAboveViolence.org.

lence.org.

Americana Project Guest Artist Concert. 7 p.m., Pagosa Springs High School auditorium. Students from the Americana Project will open for Mojo Birds. Tickets are \$20 for adults, \$15 for students/seniors, and free for those 12 and under. Tickets will be available at the door.

■ See Calendar on next page

HUD Publisher's Notice



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All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Fair Housing act which makes it illegal to advertise "any preference limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin, or an intention, to make such preference, limitation or discrimination." Familial status includes children under the age of 18 living with parents or legal custodians, pregnant women and people securing custody of children under 18.

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SUDOKU

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

Level: Advanced

Here’s How It Works:

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

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

ANSWER:

Fun By The Numbers

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

Preview Calendar

■ continued from previous page

Thursday, April 30

Ruby's Writers Guild. 8:45-10:45 a.m., Senior Center. Ruby's Writers Guild welcomes writers who are looking for opportunities, support and camaraderie with other writers. Members provide support, resources and guidance for each other.

End of Life Education. 1 p.m., Community United Methodist Church, 434 Lewis St.

Tai Chi Chih. 1:30-2:30 p.m., Senior Center.

Tech Time. 2-4 p.m., Sisson Library. Taylor will answer basic questions related to computers, smartphones, tablets, etc., and provide assistance with accessing any of the library's online resources. Bring your device charger and passwords.

Pagosa Springs Varsity Girls' Soccer. 4 p.m., Golden Peaks Stadium. Pagosa Springs vs. Del Norte.

Online Author Talk. 5 p.m., virtual. "On Writing Beloved Characters and Powerful Portrayals of Resilience in Virtual Conversation" with bestselling author Jason Reynolds. Go to the library's website, www.pagosalibrary.org, to watch nationally renowned authors giving hour-long presentations live via Zoom or view the recording later.

Friday, May 1

Aspen House Groundbreaking. 5:30 p.m., 2079 Vista Blvd. RSVP to admin@aspenhousepagosa.org.

Saturday, May 2

Pagosa Springs High School Varsity Track and Field. 9 a.m., Golden Peaks Stadium. Terry Alley Invitational.

Suppermom 5K. 10 a.m., Yamaguchi Park. A fundraiser for Aspire Medical Services and Education. For more information, visit www.aspirepagosa.org.

GriefShare. 10-11:30 a.m., Centerpoint Church, 2750 Cornerstone Drive. A 13-week program to assist with the healing process, regardless of how long it is since your loved one passed. Register and learn more at www.griefshare.org.

LEGO Play. 11 a.m.-noon, Sisson Library. For kids 6-11 years old. Bring your own or use the library's LEGOs to free build. Contact the library at (970) 264-2209 for further information.

Pagosa Springs Dance Academy Recital. 2 p.m. The matinee will feature 24 unique numbers performed by dancers of all ages. Tickets can be purchased at the door or at www.pagosadanceacademy.com.

Pagosa Springs Dance Academy Recital. 2 p.m. The evening performance will feature 34 numbers across all dance genres. Tickets can be purchased at the door or at www.pagosadanceacademy.com.

Monday, May 4

Women's Fellowship. 9-11 a.m., Pope John Paul II Catholic Church classrooms, 353 S. Pagosa Blvd.

Senior Conversations. 1:15 p.m., Senior Center.

American Sign Language Class. 4-5 p.m., Pagosa Bible Church, 209 Harman Park Drive. Learn and practice ASL skills in a group setting. No minimum skill level is required. Drop-ins are welcome.

Conversational Spanish. 4-5 p.m., St. Patrick's Episcopal Church, 225 S. Pagosa Blvd. Practice your Spanish conversation skills in a group setting. No minimum skill level required. A Sisson Library program.

Tuesday, May 5

Veterans for Veterans of Archuleta County. 9 a.m., Pagosa Bible Church, 209 Harman Park Drive. Veterans and family members are invited to share experiences with vets of all ages. Find out about the latest in vets benefits, vets news and community-focused events. Contact (970) 880-8387 for more details.

Coffee and Kiddos Playgroup. 10-11 a.m., Aspire Medical Services and Education, 602 S. 8th St. For those with kids ages birth to 3 years old.

Pagosa Springs Stitchers. 10 a.m.-noon, Community United Methodist Church, 434 Lewis St. Bring your current stitching project and a snack/drink if you wish, and enjoy the fellowship of other stitchers. All are welcome.

Bridge. 1:15 p.m., Senior Center.

Mahjong. 1:15 p.m., Senior Center.

Citizenship Class. 2-4 p.m., St. Patrick's Episcopal Church, 225 S. Pagosa Blvd. This Sisson Library program helps immigrants and people preparing for citizenship with classes, training materials, tutoring, informational resources and ways to connect to the community.

Tween Book Club. 4-5 p.m., Sisson Library. Join to adventure into the world of books. Snacks will be provided.

Wednesday, May 6

Family Storytime. 10-11 a.m., Sisson Library. Join for an educational hour of reading, singing and free play while building early literacy skills together. For all ages. Call (970) 264-2209 for more information.

Bridge. 1:15 p.m., Senior Center.

Mexican Train Dominoes. 1:15 p.m., Senior Center.

Mindful Drawing. 1:30 p.m., Senior Center.

Elementary Tutoring. 3:30-4:30 p.m., Pagosa Springs Elementary School, 141 S. 10th St. For grades 1-3. Elementary school children are tutored in reading and math. Registration required. Call (970) 264-2209 for more information. A

■ See Calendar on page 21



LEMONS ARE TRULY A SUPERFOOD



"We are living in a world today where lemonade is made from artificial flavors and furniture polish is made from real lemons." The above quote is taken from today's excerpt. Discover the power of lemons and put them to work for you today. Lemons are acidic to the taste, but are alkaline-forming in the body. In fact they are one of the most alkaline-forming foods; this makes them great for balancing a highly acidic condition in the body. Lemons are a favorite all over the world and an essential food in kitchens everywhere. 6 Health Benefits of Lemons:

Lemons are alkalizing for the body: Lemons are acidic to begin with but they are alkaline-forming on body fluids helping to restore balance to the body's pH.

Lemons are rich in vitamin C and flavonoids that work against infections like the flu and colds.

Your liver loves lemons: "The lemon is a wonderful stimulant to the liver and is a dissolvent of uric acid and other poisons, liquefies the bile," says Jethro Kloss in his book *Back to Eden*. Fresh lemon juice added to a large glass of water in the morning is a great liver detoxifier.

Cleans your bowels: Lemons increase peristalsis in the bowels, helping to create a bowel movement thus eliminating waste and helping with regularity. Add the juice of one lemon to warm water and drink first thing in the morning.

Scurvy is treated by giving one to two ounces of lemon juice diluted with water every two to four hours. In 1747, a naval surgeon named James Lind cured scurvy with fresh lemons. To this day, the British Navy requires ships to carry enough lemons so that every sailor could have one ounce of juice a day. In the past, lemons were replaced with limes; this is where the English got their nickname "limeys." Watch this video: "Scurvy Pirates and the Lemon of Love"

The citric acid in lemon juice helps to dissolve gallstones, calcium deposits, and kidney stones.

Source: "16 Health Benefits of Lemons." By Diana Herrington.

Bonus Tip: Visit <http://www.AmazingFacts.org> for spiritual refreshment every week!

"And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow every tree for food, whose leaf shall not wither, neither shall the fruit thereof fail: it shall bring forth new fruit every month, because the waters thereof issue out of the sanctuary; and the fruit thereof shall be for food, and the leaf thereof for healing." Ezekiel 47:12 ASV

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WORD SEARCH

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N	B	M	G	Y	Q	I	Q	E	P	O	E	M	I	T	R	E	V	O	Y
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H	C	U	D	G	L	N	A	U	D	O	R	O	B	D	L	M	Q	M	T
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M	A	R	H	E	M	F	I	T	N	E	S	S	B	F	S	P	T	O	O
E	U	T	E	E	A	V	G	N	I	N	I	A	R	T	U	R	I	C	A
B	A	I	N	R	S	T	A	D	I	U	M	V	L	E	N	L	Q	T	T
R	C	T	Y	H	I	R	O	S	T	E	R	D	A	V	I	A	C	E	C

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

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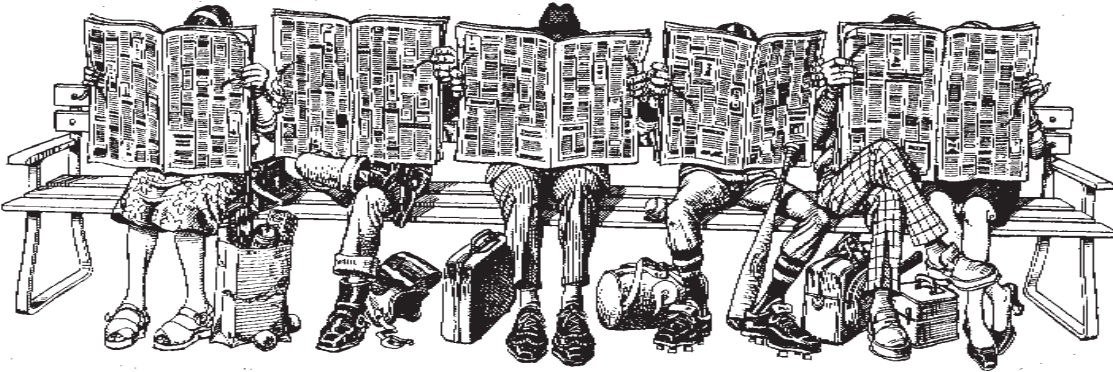
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Preview Calendar

■ continued from page 19

Sisson Library program.

Thursday, May 7

Ruby's Writers Guild. 8:45-10:45 a.m., Senior Center. Ruby's Writers Guild welcomes writers who are looking for opportunities, support and camaraderie with other writers. Members provide support, resources and guidance for each other.

Tai Chi Chih. 1:30-2:30 p.m., Senior Center.

Tech Time. 2-4 p.m., Sisson Library. Taylor will answer basic questions related to computers, smartphones, tablets, etc., and provide assistance with accessing any of the library's online resources. Bring your device charger and passwords.

Citizenship Class. 2-4 p.m., St. Patrick's Episcopal Church, 225 S. Pagosa Blvd. This Sisson Library program helps immigrants and people preparing for citizenship with classes, training materials, tutoring, informational resources and ways to connect to the community.

Online Author Talk. 5 p.m., virtual. "On Courage, Turmoil, and the Transformative Power of Love" with Marjan Kamali, author of "The Lion Women of Tehran." Go to the library's website, www.pagosalibrary.org, to watch live via Zoom or view the recording later.

San Juan Stargazers. 6 p.m., Community United Methodist Church, 434 Lewis St. Social time will begin at 6 p.m., followed by an educational presentation at 7 p.m.

Archuleta School District Combined Band Concert. 6:30 p.m., Pagosa Springs High School auditorium. The concert will feature the Pagosa Springs Middle School and Pagosa Springs High School bands.

Friday, May 8

Baby Storytime. 10-11 a.m., Sisson Library. Join for stories, songs and giggles. Stay and play after storytime. Call (970) 264-2209 for more information.

Girls, Grit and Grime Bicycle Clinic. 2:30-5:30 p.m., Yamaguchi Park. A free clinic for girls hosted by DUST2. Sign up at www.dust2pagosa.org/girlsonbikes. Call coach Dawn at (909) 855-7140 with any questions.

Archuleta School District Combined Choral Concert. 6:30 p.m., Pagosa Springs High School auditorium. The concert will feature the Pagosa Springs High School Concert Choir, the Pagosa Springs Middle School fifth- and seventh-grade choirs, and a fourth-grade honor ensemble.

Saturday, May 9

Be Prepared for an Emergency Workshop. 9 a.m., CSU Extension building, 344 U.S. 84. Learn how to prepare for emergencies and

protect your land.

GriefShare. 10-11:30 a.m., Centerpoint Church, 2750 Cornerstone Drive. A 13-week program to assist with the healing process, regardless of how long it is since your loved one passed. Register and learn more at www.griefshare.org.

Pagosa Springs Scrapbook and Crafters Club. 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Senior Center dining room. Bring your creative and scrapbooking projects and share time with other crafters. Bring a dish to share for the potluck lunch.

Knitters Circle. 1-3 p.m., Natural Grocers back room, 775 San Juan St. Any type and experience level of needleworker is welcome.

Monday, May 11

Women's Fellowship. 9-11 a.m., Pope John Paul II Catholic Church classrooms, 353 S. Pagosa Blvd.

Senior Conversations. 1:15 p.m., Senior Center.

American Sign Language Class. 4-5 p.m., Pagosa Bible Church, 209 Harman Park Drive. Learn and practice ASL skills in a group setting. No minimum skill level is required. Drop-ins are welcome.

Conversational Spanish. 4-5 p.m., St. Patrick's Episcopal Church, 225 S. Pagosa Blvd. Practice your Spanish conversation skills in a group setting. No minimum skill level required. A Sisson Library program.

Tuesday, May 12

Coffee and Kiddos Playgroup. 10-11 a.m., Aspire Medical Services and Education, 602 S. 8th St. For those with kids ages birth to 3 years old.

Pagosa Springs Stitchers. 10 a.m.-noon, Community United Methodist Church, 434 Lewis St. Bring your current stitching project and a snack/drink if you wish, and enjoy the fellowship of other stitchers. All are welcome.

Veterans for Veterans of Archuleta County. 10 a.m., Pagosa Bible Church, 209 Harman Park Drive. Veterans and family members are invited to share experiences with vets of all ages. Find out about the latest in vets benefits, vets news and community-focused events. Contact (970) 880-8387 for more details.

Bridge. 1:15 p.m., Senior Center.

Mahjong. 1:15 p.m., Senior Center.

Ruby's Book Club. 2-3 p.m., Archuleta County Transit Center, 83 Harman Park Drive. Join to discuss a historical Colorado biography by Salida author Tracy Beach.

Citizenship Class. 2-4 p.m., St. Patrick's Episcopal Church, 225 S. Pagosa Blvd. This Sisson Library

program helps immigrants and people preparing for citizenship with classes, training materials, tutoring, informational resources and ways to connect to the community.

Preschool Pasta Art. 4-5 p.m., Sisson Library. Children ages 3-5 can make necklaces out of uncooked

pasta with the help of librarian Saira and their caregivers.

Submit your calendar items to editor@pagosasun.com; mail them to The Pagosa Springs SUN, P.O. Box 9, Pagosa Springs, CO 81147; or deliver them to The SUN office by noon Monday.

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‘True story’: a tribute to a writing buddy

By Betty Slade
PREVIEW Columnist

On April 3, Gary Woods went home to be with the Lord. He left an enormous hole in our hearts. This article is a tribute to our writing buddy.

With his colorful language, one Monday morning, he came to our writers’ group and threw a sack of dried buffalo manure on the table in front of one of our writers. She was writing a story about a covered wagon traveling across the prairie in the 1800s. He wanted her to see what she was writing about.

An excellent writer, having lived in Washington, D.C., before coming to Pagosa, he wrote descriptive spy novels. Hopefully, they will be published one day.

One morning, he read his “Story From The Heart.” He surprised us with his tender side. This tough guy had been in the presence of God and we have no doubt he is with Jesus today. This is an abridged version of his story.

‘True story’

By Gary Woods

I had always known there is a greater being than myself. I derived that knowledge through nature. When I was a kid, my parents had me baptized, took me to Sunday school; and as I grew older, I was made to suffer through the ordeal of “church.” I remember the highlights of those teachings — the 23rd Psalm, John 3:16 and the biggies of “The Rules”: Don’t lie, cheat, steal or kill. I didn’t know the Bible very well. I still don’t for that matter. But, hey, I was a Christian, or thought I was; after all, I was a good guy.

I don’t remember how “good luck” worked out for me as a kid. Things just seemed to work out for me. I always seemed to come out on the other side unscathed. The fact is I had very good fortune in my life and therein is half the problem. People took notice and pointed out the fact that I was very lucky. My family and I had a pet name for it. We called it my “little white cloud.”

I’m a passionate bowhunter. On Oct. 12, 2004, I was in pursuit of that passion and, as I had done thousands of times before, I left our house to go hunting.

Two or three days before, my wife asked if I was carrying my cellphone when I was hunting. I told her no, I didn’t need to call anyone while I was hunting. She had a little different perspective and asked, “What happens if I have to call you?” I started packing my cellphone.

The sun was already up the morning of Oct. 12, 2004. It was 7:30 in the morning when I left our house. I was a smoker in those days and I was hurrying right along when I had the thought, I think I’ll smoke a cigarette before I get to my deer stand. Don’t want to stink up the area around my deer stand and spook the deer.



While I was talking to them, in mid-sentence, things started to grow dim and my sight started to close down to a small opening of light. I heard the monitor change from the steady, rhythmic beep-beep, beep-beep, to beep-beeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee ...

I finished the last cigarette I’ll ever smoke and bent over to pick up my pack and bow. The pack felt as though it weighed a ton and I couldn’t pick up my bow at all. I did not feel well. I hurt from the top of my legs up to my teeth. Being of the “6-foot-tall-and-bulletproof” nature, I had never experienced this sensation before. Then it dawned on me, at 7:45 a.m., on the morning of Oct. 12, 2004, I was having a heart attack. In the woods. Alone.

I had my cellphone. How very fortuitous. After calling my wife at work, she was able to find me out in the woods even though I was dressed in camo. After much misunderstanding, eventually the 911 operator understood where I was and got an ambulance close (within about a quarter mile) to my location.

Before I was put on a MedEvac helicopter flight to the much larger hospital in Washington, D.C., I was lying on a table in the emergency room at the local county hospital. I was talking with my wife and my dad who were standing beside me and, just like the TV hospital shows, I could hear the heart monitor behind me going beep-beep, beep-beep, beep-beep.

While I was talking to them, in mid-sentence, things started to grow dim and my sight started to close down to a small opening of light. I heard the monitor change from the steady, rhythmic beep-beep, beep-beep, to beep-beeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee ...

This was not a good sign. I remember a scurry of activity in the

room. Then my own perspective changed. I was no longer lying on the table. I was rising above the table, looking down on myself lying on the table, along with the scurry of activity going on in the room, including a nurse pushing both my wife and my dad out of the room. I continued to rise. Something had drastically changed.

I had a couple of realizations or epiphanies, if you will. If this was death, it didn’t hurt. It was ever so easy to slip from life to death. I felt no pain. One might think that there would be a feeling of loneliness or sorrow. I felt neither. I felt no fear. In fact, I felt as though everything was really OK. Peaceful. As one might imagine, I had questions, but before a question was fully formed in my own head, it was answered. It felt as though I had some form of universal knowledge and I knew everything.

I saw no one at first, but all of a sudden I was hearing, feeling, sensing, knowing, understanding, being given information; but, this was not in a verbal conversation form. I was informed, “All this (at which point there was a sweeping gesture of an arm from behind my right shoulder that indicated across the river) can be yours.” I understood that across the river was better than this side of the river. I was instructed to, “Share this experience.”

At this point, I realized and fully understood the source of my “little white cloud” and His proper name: Emmanuel.

It was external of me. It was overpowering. I could not ignore it. I would not have been able to stick my fingers in my ears and sing to drown it out. It was an impending flood of information, language and feelings all at the same time. The closest I can describe it is it is as if the ground shook.

At that point, I started slipping down the bank, the sand giving way under me. Thinking that it was a bad thing to get wet in the river, I began to push back with all fours. I was kicking and flailing with all my might to get back up to the edge of the grass.

As I made it to the grassy edge, there was a sudden jolt and again something happened. I was back on the table in the emergency room at the local hospital. The entire episode lasted 15 to 20 minutes, which is another curiosity concerning the sense of time. My wife, afterward, informed me the real clock time that elapsed was only about four minutes while I was flatlined.

I sound like one of those Jesus freaks. Guess I am one. “Well, now, isn’t that just special?”

Final brushstroke: Gary Woods is with us in spirit. His time had come and he was ready. He was ready to cross the river.

Views expressed do not necessarily represent those of The SUN.

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Weed management: Read the label

By Ethan Proud and
Cindi Galabota
PREVIEW Columnists

When you spot a weed in your yard, it can be tempting to grab some chemical and start spraying.

Before you get to that point, it is important to decide if you need to use chemicals.

If it's a handful of annual weeds in your garden, then hand-pulling will do just fine. If it's a single musk thistle rosette, a spade or the toe of your boot will also do the trick. Even small or new populations of perennial weeds like yellow toadflax and oxeye daisy can be pulled due to their shallow root system, though with these remember to keep an eye on the spot for future resprouts (also bag and dispose of all plant parts, and do not put them in your compost).

If you've determined the problem is large enough that it makes sense both economically and will save you time to spray, then there is one more step before you are off on your mission: You must read the product label. The label is a legal document for how the herbicide can be applied and includes information such as personal protective equipment, first aid measures, rates for application and environmental precautions.

First and foremost, when using an herbicide, you must be aware of how to keep yourself, others on your property, neighbors and the environment safe. Some herbicides like 2,4-D should not be applied in high temperatures due to the possibility of volatilization where the chemical evaporates and can move off-site and can damage other sensitive species and your neighbor's vegetable garden could become off target damage. If your property is along a waterway, select a product that can be used up to the water's edge or you will need to include a buffer in your treatment zone and use a different control measure near the water.

For slow-acting herbicides like glyphosate or metsulfuron methyl, it is important to know how long these chemicals take to work and what the symptoms of damage are. These chemicals can take up to 10 days before it is evident that they are working, and a retreatment is not necessary. Using the correct rate will also increase the efficacy of the application. Newer herbicides have lower use rates, and more is not better. Broadleaf herbicides may damage grasses if the rate is greatly increased.

When applying herbicides, calibrate your equipment so you know the rate of output. This will ensure that you are applying the correct amount of herbicide. Proper calibration saves you money, time and ensures that your weeds will be controlled. There are many videos of calibration online, and the Archuleta County Weed and Pest Department has worksheets that can be used to calibrate your equipment.

Extension Viewpoints

If you need further assistance, call the office and we can either schedule a site visit or help you out over the phone.

When applying pesticides, understand that not every herbicide can be used on every property or site.

Many products are labeled for either pastureland and/or turf. Your neighbor or friend may use a different product than will be appropriate for your property.

For example, aminopyralid is not labeled for application in manicured turf and is very effective on thistle, but should not be applied close to ornamental plantings. In these cases, triclopyr would be a better alternative and is labelled for application in turf.

Swirling around the internet is a plethora of publications hailing the use of household salt and household vinegar for their weed killing properties. However, neither of these products are labeled for managing weeds and may have detrimental effects on the environment. Horticultural vinegar can be purchased, which will have use sites on the label as well as directions for use just like a synthetic herbicide.

When using organic herbicides, you may need to use the same personal protective equipment as when applying synthetic herbicides. Chemical-resistant gloves are always a good idea, as well as safety glasses if

damage to the eyes is a concern.

Horticultural vinegar can be effective at controlling annual weeds in driveways, cracks in concrete, patios, etc., but it is nonselective and may damage other plants around the site of application. It is also a contact herbicide and will only damage the part of the plant that it is applied to. It will not damage the root system. Depending on your target weed species, vinegar may not be an effective choice.

However, your control choices are ultimately up to you and there is more than one way to kill a weed. If you prefer to manage your property without using synthetic herbicides, it doesn't mean that you need to use an organic herbicide.

We will explore other control methods in other articles throughout this season, but if you are dying to know now, feel free to email, call or schedule a property visit.

To close out this article, remember to read the label. It won't just keep you, the public and the environment safe — it's the law.

Archuleta County Weed and Pest is your local resource for managing noxious weed populations and controlling other pests.

Email list

Do you want to be added to our email distribution list to learn about upcoming programs and the latest resources? Email cindi.galabota@colostate.edu to be added to our list.

Or, to learn more about the many programs, resources and services offered by Colorado State University (CSU) Extension, visit <https://extension.colostate.edu>.

■ See Viewpoints on page 25



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“How they say that in...”

- English: Brain
- Spanish: Cerebro
- Italian: Cervello
- French: Cerveau
- German: Gehirn

What’s the Difference?
Find the four differences between the two pictures.

A



B



Answers: 1. Notebook on the desk 2. Backpack on the chair 3. Missing teacher 4. Bulletin board on the right side

THIS DAY IN HISTORY



- 1500: Portuguese navigator Pedro Alvares Cabral lands in Brazil.
- 1864: The U.S. Congress passes the Coinage Act of 1864.
- 1970: The first Earth Day is celebrated.

NEW WORD
STIMMING

repetitive actions or movements that help regulate emotions

Did You Know?

April is recognized as National Autism Acceptance Month.



Get the PICTURE?



Can you guess what the bigger picture is?

Answer: Puzzle pieces

Master the calm with daily stress relief strategies

Special to The PREVIEW

The speed of the modern world seems to be perpetually set to turbo, and that can be stressful.

Stress can quickly transition from something that provides a temporary boost in motivation to a chronic problem.

While it's not always possible to tame the fast-forward nature of life, building a daily routine that serves to buffer the mind and the body from an onslaught of stress can benefit a person's overall health.

The American Institute of Stress reports that Gallup's Global Emotions Report (2023) found about 49 percent of Americans experience significant

daily stress, a particularly high rate among high-income nations.

Statistics Canada reports more than one in four people in Canada report high to severe daily stress levels, with rates rising to 30 to 36 percent among those age 35 to 54.

The Mayo Clinic advises that chronic stress puts health at risk. Stress hormones can disrupt almost all of the body's processes.

It's possible to lower cortisol levels and reclaim a life that is less battered by stress. Here is an easy guide anyone can follow:

- Ease into the day. Many people start the morning with an alarm clock, checking emails or social media, or turning on the news. A

barrage of information and stimuli can trigger an immediate spike in stress hormones. Instead of waking up and getting riled up, avoid screens or stressful information come the first half hour of the day. Replace screen-related activities with more mindful ones like stretching, sitting out in the sun enjoying nature or even journaling.

- Learn breathing techniques. Stress fires up the nervous system and slowing down breaths can combat stress. Various breathing techniques are designed to usher in calm and clarity. One of them is the 4-7-8 technique, offers the Cleveland Clinic. With this method, you inhale for four seconds, hold for seven and then exhale slowly for eight.

- Eat the right foods. High-sugar snacks are a go-to when people are

eating to combat stress. But these snacks cause insulin to spike followed by crashes that can mimic the feelings of anxiety. Instead, choose foods that won't cause insulin spikes, but rather help regulate the stress response. Magnesium is known to help promote calm, according to the National Institutes of Health, and foods like spinach, almonds and dark chocolate are rich in magnesium.

- Get moving more. Exercise is a great way to metabolize excessive stress hormones that build up during a long day. The general guidelines of 30 minutes of moderate-intensity movement a day will increase the heart rate enough to trigger the release of endorphins, which are the body's mood elevators and feel-good chemicals.

- Write things down. Stress can materialize when you feel you are going to forget something or have too much on your list. Writing tasks down gets them out of your brain so they aren't on a constant loop. According to Michael Scullin, director of the Sleep Neuroscience and Cognition Laboratory at Baylor University, a group of people who wrote down a to-do list of tasks they had to complete fell asleep nine minutes faster than a group that did not make such a list. This "cognitive offloading" is a physical action to relieve a mental load, and it can reduce stress.

These stress-busting tips are coping mechanisms for daily life. They don't have to be done all at once; pick one morning habit and one evening habit to start with the first week and progress from there as you adapt.

Viewpoints

■ continued from page 23

Seed potatoes, seed onions for sale

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Be Prepared for an Emergency workshop

Learn how to prepare for emergencies and protect your land at the Be Prepared for an Emergency workshop with Cindi Galabota, CSU Extension director; Lacy Capre, Archuleta County Public Health outreach specialist; and friends.

The workshop will be at 9 a.m. on May 9 at the CSU Extension Building at 344 U.S. 84. This free workshop will cover the best practices for preparing for and recovery from an emergency.

Learn to can dandelion jelly

Not sure what to do with all those dandelions? Turn them into food. Learn up-to-date canning recom-

mendations, food safety preservation practices, high-altitude adjustments and more on May 15 at 5:30 p.m. at the CSU Extension office. The cost is \$25 per person for one jar of jelly. Call (970) 264-5931 to register today.

CPR and first aid classes

CPR and first aid certification classes are offered every other month at the CSU Extension building, generally on the third Monday and Wednesday from 6 to 10 p.m. The cost for the classes is \$80 for combined CPR/first aid and \$55 for CPR, first aid or recertification. Call the Extension office at (970) 264-5931 to register.

Check out the online option on our website, archuleta.extension.colostate.edu.

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Make cooking for a crowd more manageable

Special to The PREVIEW

Milestone moments like graduations, birthdays and wedding anniversaries are worthy of celebration. When such celebrations feature a significant number of family and friends, it's customary to host a gathering at home.

Celebrations held at private residences tend to be less formal and lengthy affairs. Such gatherings also require hosts to decide which foods to serve and who will prepare them.

Cooking for a crowd can be a tall task, but there's plenty of ways to make the job more manageable:

- Choose simple fare. A home-cooked gourmet meal might suffice for a more intimate gathering, but main courses that can be prepared in bulk and without too much prep work are ideal when cooking for a crowd. If the celebrating will take place outdoors and hosts plan to grill, simpler fare like hamburgers can do the trick, as the only prep work required is to slice some tomatoes and onions and wash some lettuce. If the party is indoors, consider large pasta dishes like baked ziti that can be prepared in bulk without too many ingredients.

- Outsource the sides. Another way to simplify cooking for a crowd is to ask guests to bring side dishes. A potluck-style meal takes a lot of the pressure off hosts' shoulders and ensures there will be plenty of food for all and lots of time for hosts to mingle.

- Do as much prep work as possible before the first guest arrives. Slicing vegetables, organizing ingredients and additional prep work can be done the night before the party. These important tasks are time-consuming and can exhaust hosts before guests even arrive if they're left until the last minute. When prep work is done in advance of the big day, hosts can devote some extra time to setting up and cleaning up before guests arrive.

- Know your measurements before going to the grocery store. Even if you know a recipe like the back of your hand, chances are you're not as familiar with making an item for a particularly large crowd. Calculating how much more of each ingredient you'll need when you go from cooking for four to cooking for 20 can be time-consuming. Waiting to do such calculations also can lead to ingredient shortages that can delay cooking times. Calculate recipes for the crowd when making your shopping list so you only need to make one trip to the store.

Cooking for a crowd can be challenging. But a few tricks of the trade can make feeding a crowd a lot more manageable.

PAGOSA SPRINGS REAL ESTATE & RELOCATION GUIDE



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Overview

Each issue of the Pagosa Springs Real Estate and Relocation Guide is thoughtfully created with local and regional partners to provide the information and data people want to know if they are looking to relocate to our community and/or start a business here. It is chock full of guidance for new and current residents on topics such as Business and Economy, Education, Real Estate and Construction, Health Care Resources and Leisure.

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Impactful events in U.S. history

Special to The PREVIEW

As the United States celebrates its 250th anniversary, millions of Americans will reflect on the nation's history.

American history includes a great many impactful events that changed the country forever.

The following are some events of note as the United States of America celebrates 250 years of nationhood:

- The Louisiana Purchase (1803): Soaring prices have been the norm in the real estate market in recent years, but it was once possible to procure 530 million acres of North American territory for \$15 million. That's precisely what happened in 1803 when the U.S. and France completed the Louisiana Purchase. According to the Office of the Historian of the U.S. Department of State, President Thomas Jefferson sent James Monroe to France to work alongside U.S. Minister to France Robert Livingston in an effort to purchase New Orleans and West Florida for \$10 million. But the emissaries were surprised when Napoleon Bonaparte offered the whole territory of Louisiana to the U.S. for \$15 million. Native Americans still inhabited much of the area that was part of the sale, but the transaction included the entirety of what is now Louisiana, Missouri, Arkansas, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska and Oklahoma, as

well as portions of present-day Kansas, Colorado, Wyoming, Montana and Minnesota.

- Monroe addresses Congress (December 1823): During his annual message to Congress in late 1823, Monroe included a warning to European powers that they should not interfere in affairs in the Americas. According to The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, the powers that be in the United States were wary of European intervention in Florida, the Pacific Northwest and Latin America. The result was a statement from Monroe, later referred to as the Monroe Doctrine, announcing that the Western Hemisphere was closed to further colonization by European nations. Monroe also noted that the U.S. would not interfere in the internal affairs of nations in Europe.

- Sinking of the Lusitania (1915): Though the Lusitania was a British-owned ship, the U.S. Library of Congress notes its passengers included more than 120 Americans on May 7, 1915, the day the luxury ocean liner was torpedoed by a German U-boat. History.com notes the Imperial German Embassy in Washington, D.C., placed ads in American newspapers reminding Americans that Germany and Britain were at war and that ships flying the flag of Great Britain were vulnerable to attack. Despite

the warnings, Americans still boarded the Lusitania, and the sinking of the ship strained relations between the neutral United States and Germany. Anti-German sentiments began to rise in the U.S. after the sinking of the ship, and such sentiments remained even as the U.S. maintained its neutral status into 1917. The final straw, and one that called to mind the sinking of the Lusitania nearly two years prior, was the interception of the Zimmerman telegram, which revealed German intentions to return to submarine warfare and target all ships, including those carrying American passengers.

- Wall Street crashes on Black Monday (1929): The stock market crash that began in October 1929 marked an end to the financial boom of the 1920s that the Federal Reserve notes had begun in August 1921 and lasted until September 1929. On what's become known to historians as Black Monday (Oct. 28, 1929), the Dow Jones Industrial Average declined by nearly 13 percent, a fall that preceded an almost 12 percent decline on the following day. By the summer of 1932, the Dow had fallen to its lowest value of the 20th century and 89 percent below its peak. Black Monday marked the beginning of the Great Depression, and the Federal Reserve notes the Dow did not return to its pre-crash heights until 1954.

Classifieds

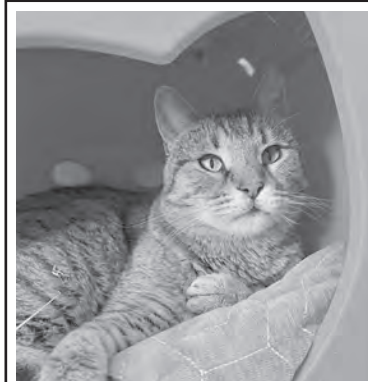
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Classified Deadline: Tuesday 10 a.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT

SERVICES

SERVICES

SERVICES

SERVICES

THERE IS A SOLUTION GROUP of Alcoholics Anonymous meets Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays, 5:30-6:30p.m., Pagosa Bible Church, 209 Harman Park Drive. Questions? Diamond: (970)264-1073. Charlotte: (970)903-9690. More resources: www.aa.org, www.aa-westerncolorado.com, (970)245-9649, (888)333-9649 (24 hrs.).

PERSONALS

FREE. CONFIDENTIAL. HELP. 24-hour domestic violence and sexual assault helpline. (970) 264-9075.

SERVICES

ASPENGLow LANDSCAPING/ YARD MAINTENANCE/ YARD CLEANUP. Mowing, trimming, raking and tree trimming. Tractor available for planting and landscaping. (970)946-2061.

CHIMNEY CLEANING -dryer vent cleaning- 25+ years. Courteous reliable service. Free quotes. Arlie's Chimney Sweep. (970)731-2543.

CLEAN CUT CONSTRUCTION. (970)585-4578. Offering handyman services. Yard maintenance, interior /exterior painting and staining, dry wall install and repair, carpentry and much more.

CUSTOM PICTURE FRAMING. Reasonable prices. Linda Lerno, (970)731-0658 or (970)507-0176.

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DRIVEWAY SEALING — 7 -year product. Prep, pressure wash, crack seal and touch up. Free estimates, local and trusted. **INTEGRATED** Home Services, LLC. Call /text, (970)731-3558.

JUNK AND SCRAP METAL REMOVAL. We do fencing and dirt work and we pick up junk cars. Tony Acosta, (719)849-0054.

KITCHEN DEEP CLEANS now offered by Pagosa Sparkles. Group of high standard cleaners. Window cleaning also available. Text/ call KIM. (970)946-6446.

KRITTER GITTERS, SKUNK AND BAT Busters. We specialize in capturing and removing unwanted rodents and varmints. We don't trap pigs. 50 years experience, lifetime resident. Dan Snow (719)849-8873.

LOCAL MOVING SERVICES. Reasonable and reliable. (970)946-2061.

METAL ROOF MAINTENANCE- featuring roof screw replacement. Stop the leaks by changing out worn out screws with new screws and fresh washers. Call Arlies Chimney Sweep (970)731-2543.

NEED HELP DECLUTTERING OR ORGANIZING? Help moving in, moving out, whatever's on your list. Marlene, (719)850-3055.

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Maintenance

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RICHARD DECLARK ELECTRICAL is available for all your electrical services from remodels to new construction. I have been in Pagosa for 15 years, no job too small or too large. (970)903-1456.

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Classified Deadline: Tuesday 10 a.m.

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SERVICES

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HELP WANTED

HELP WANTED

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ARE YOU INTERESTED in making a difference in your neighborhood and community? Community Connections, Inc. seeks southwest Colorado residents (living in Archuleta, Dolores, La Plata, Montezuma, and San Juan County) to serve as Community Ambassadors for Southwest Colorado Cares, a new program of Community Connections. At this time, we have 5 openings for this position, one for each of the counties listed above. This is a hybrid position, part-time up to 7 hours per week, with flexibility in schedule. It is hourly and non-exempt. Hourly wage is \$20 plus travel reimbursement. Interested candidates should apply at <https://www.communityconnections-co.org/careers>. Applications will be accepted until 5p.m. on April 22, 2026.

ARE YOU INTERESTED in making a difference in your neighborhood and community? Community Connections, Inc. is seeking qualified candidates to serve as Care Coordinator for Southwest Colorado Cares, a new program of Community Connections. At this time, we have 2 openings for this position. This is a hybrid position, full-time with flexibility in schedule. It is hourly and non-exempt. Hourly wage is \$25.49 with full benefits. Interested candidates should apply at <https://www.communityconnectionsco.org/careers> and upload a resume and cover letter. Applications will be accepted until 5p.m. on April 22, 2026.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES. Front office administrative assistant or chair side procedural assistant positions available for immediate hire. Will train if necessary for these valuable positions. Flexible hours, full time or part time available. Great pay with room for advancement. Please send your resume today to pdimplants@yahoo.com.

CDL DRIVER /YARD ASSOCIATE. Ponderosa Lumber is hiring a CDL Driver / Yard Associate. This is a full-time position. Duties include deliveries, loading /unloading trucks, and helping customers. Requires the ability to drive a stick shift and have a Class B endorsement. We offer paid time off, medical, dental, vision, prescription, 401(k) and Profit Sharing. Please apply at Ponderosa Lumber 2435 Eagle Dr. (970)731-4111.

COLORADO DREAM HOMES is expanding our crew. Hiring framing, concrete and general laborers. Paid holidays, end of the year bonuses, paid time off. 8 a.m. -5 p.m. schedule, year round work. Send resumes to coloradodreamhomesinc@gmail.com or swing by our office at 2283 Eagle Drive to fill out an application. Pay DOE. \$20+ per hour.

We are looking for reliable, motivated additions to our team!



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DENTAL ASSISTANT WANTED. We will train you. We work hard and make a great living serving our patients. We are blessed to have weekends and holidays off, beautiful facility, modern equipment, excellent pay, 401k, Get the satisfaction of helping people. E-mail resume to office@pagosasmiles.com.

EXPERIENCED EQUIPMENT OPERATOR WANTED. Looking for a seasoned equipment operator. Great pay, flexible hours. If you've got the seat time and the know-how, we want to talk. (970)946-3966.

FULL -TIME GROUNDS KEEPER /MAINTENANCE Healing Waters Resort and Spa. Hours will include evening and weekend hours, along with a mandatory early -morning pool cleaning rotation. Looking for someone who is handy with tools — or has the willingness to learn; who doesn't mind sweeping, raking, and shoveling; and who is self -motivated. If this is you we'd love to talk! Download application thru the Employment Link at www.pshotsprings.com, stop by 140 Hot Springs Blvd, or email resume to sales@pshotsprings.com, Attention Maintenance Position. Employees and immediate family soak for FREE. Apply today.

FYZICAL THERAPY AND BALANCE CENTERS is looking for a Client Care Specialist to join our local team. Pay is \$16 -20 per hour. To apply please send your resume to Tressie McMichael at tressie.mcmichael@fyzical.com or feel free to stop by the clinic to drop off a resume and say hello.

JAND J ENTERPRISES is looking for friendly and enthusiastic people who are eager to help customers navigate the wide world of cannabis. We offer paid sick leave, product sampling, employee discounts, sales bonuses and comprehensive on-site training! Must be 21 years of age. A Marijuana Enforcement Division badge is required to start work. E-mail your resume to employment@jandjinc.net or check us out on Indeed.com.

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HELP WANTED

HELP WANTED

HELP WANTED

FOR SALE

PETS



ELITE RECYCLING AND DISPOSAL, a division of Bruin Waste Management, LLC is a rapidly growing organization with services expanding the Western Slope of Colorado.

We currently have a **Route Truck Helper/ Tipper** position open. The starting rate for this position is \$19/hour. Helpers ride on the trucks and empty trash carts and dumpsters. A valid driver's license is a plus, as helpers do a variety of tasks including cart delivery, shop cleaning, light mechanical and washing trucks and carts.

We offer a competitive benefits package including a matching 401k Plan with opportunities to earn safety bonuses.

We are committed to first-class service, where safety and people are our top priority!

Applications can be picked up at 250 Industrial Circle in Pagosa Springs, Colorado or call our office at (970)731-2012 or email ctanner@elite-recycling.com to request one.



ELITE RECYCLING AND DISPOSAL, a division of Bruin Waste Management, LLC is a rapidly growing organization with services expanding the Western Slope of Colorado.

We currently have a **Class B CDL Driver Trash Recycle Route Driver** position open. Pay based on experience and includes a sign-on bonus of \$500 payable after 6 months of accident-free employment.

We offer a competitive benefits package including a matching 401k Plan with opportunities to earn safety bonuses. Must be able to pass a pre-employment drug test.

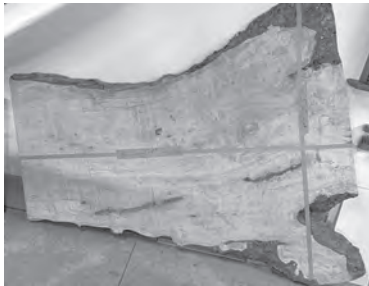
We are committed to first-class service, where safety and people are our top priority!

Applications can be picked up at 250 Industrial Circle in Pagosa Springs, Colorado or call our office at (970)731-2012 or email ctanner@elite-recycling.com to request one.

THE SOUTHWEST OPIOID RESPONSE DISTRICT (SWORD) is seeking a full-time contractor to support the SWORD Council meetings and opioid settlement activities. Requires proven skills in the coordination of multiple projects, communication, grant oversight, and strong written and verbal communication skills. Passion and knowledge about the opioid crisis is just as important as work experience. Position includes telework flexibility with travel between communities required and mileage is reimbursed. Hourly compensation starts at \$35-40/hr based on experience. Please contact allyson@region9edd.org for a Scope of Work. Resume, references, and cover letter must be submitted by 5p.m. on Friday, May 1st.

WE ARE LOOKING for an office assistant to join our lively, fast-paced team. Excellent phone and customer service skills, and attention to detail required. Responsibilities include answering calls, handling routine correspondence, assisting with bookkeeping tasks, processing invoices, and scheduling. Experience with QuickBooks is beneficial. Interested applicants can pick up an application at Mountain Home Security, 301 N Pagosa Blvd Unit B-3, weekdays from 9a.m. to 4p.m.

Table Slab



Live edges. 2-3/4" thick, 74" long, 65" wide. More pictures available via email or text. \$700

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YARD SALES

ESTATE SALE. Saturday, April 25, 8a.m. sharp. Household, kitchen, couches, bed, old rocking chairs, clothes, small grill, gardening. 137 Wilderness. AEHPOS 2.0.

GARAGE SALE. April 25 and 26. 8a.m. to 1p.m. Household and yard items. 218 Shadow Place.

GOT STUFF? Let us help. C.K Estate Sales now booking for this coming summer. Call or email for a free consultation today. (970)946-3331 or ckstatesales.co@gmail.com.

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1,243 SQUARE FOOT WAREHOUSE. \$1,250 per month plus electric. One block off Highway 160, 17 minutes from downtown. Former recording studio and woodworking shop. Perfect for creatives, makers or storage. 6 -month lease minimum. Ready for your vision. (970)946-2728.

COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS FOR LEASE. 1501 W. Hwy 160 #1 and #2. (970)398-5290.

LARGE COMMERCIAL -INDUSTRIAL LOTS in Cloman Park- 1.12 and 1.27 acre lots zoned industrial. Ideal for contractors, storage, etc. Utilities located in the street. Tenant to verify end use with Archuleta County. Call Team Pagosa (970)731-8599.

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NORTH PAGOSA MARATHON is hiring a full-time cashier nights and weekends. Competitive wages. Please apply in person at 30 N. Pagosa Blvd.

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PAGOSA BAR IS LOOKING FOR experienced cooks for our new food truck. Please submit resume in person or email: cwpagosabar@gmail.com.

PAGOSA LIQUOR IS HIRING a full-time cashier. Please come and apply in person at 30 N. Pagosa Blvd.

RELIABLE, HONEST AND CAPABLE HANDYMAN needed for property management company. Call Team Pagosa, (970)731-8599, or send info to pam@teampagosa.com.

ROOF LABORER NEEDED with some construction experience. Will train. \$20-\$25/ hour to start. (970)749-0830.

THE COLORADO GARDEN COMPANY seeks Garden Center Associate. Contact Marie at (970)303-9467 or bring resume in person to apply.

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BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY

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SMALL CRANE BUSINESS FOR SALE. National Crane truck, business, client list, and all attachments come with business. Inquire at (970)903-2381.

THE COLORADO GARDEN COMPANY offers bar space for juice or beverage concept. Contact Ayax at (970)946-0405 to discuss opportunity.

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2008 OUTBACKER TRAILER, \$15,000; rototiller, \$500; generator, \$500; horse saddles, blankets, etc., chairs, small tools. Call Gary, (970)398-9223.

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LOST



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WAREHOUSES /WORKSHOPS available to rent. Cloman Park new build 1100 sq.ft. \$1,300. Has bathrooms and loft space Contact: (720)470-2653.

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Classifieds

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Classified Deadline: Tuesday 10 a.m.

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HOMES FOR SALE

HOMES FOR SALE

HOMES FOR SALE

HOMES FOR SALE

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OWNERS, WE ARE BOOKED UP AND NEED MORE VACATION RENTAL PROPERTIES! Call us today for lowest commission and highest customer service. All you have to do is wait for your rent check to come in. We do the rest! Rocky Mountain Realty & Rentals (970)507-1192.

LONG TERM RENTALS AVAILABLE. Call Team Pagosa (970)731-8599, 117 Navajo Trail Dr., pagosaspringsrealty.com.

LOOKING FOR SOMEONE who would like to live out of town. Peace and quiet, clean, 1 bedroom, large loft, fenced yard, heated with wood stove and an efficient ETS heating unit, washer /dryer, large deck, no smoking. \$1,500 /month, first month rent, security deposit and half of last month's rent. Will take a pet. Available May 1. Please leave a message, (970)731-2010.

LOVELY NEWLY REMODELED 3 bedroom 2 bath 2 car garage home on wooded lot. \$2800 /month Call Team Pagosa, (970)731-8599, or visit the website teampagosa.com.

NEWLY REMODELED 2 BEDROOM in four plex, Pagosa Lake views, covered deck, 800 sq. ft., W/D, dishwasher, 5 minute walk to lake, most utilities paid, \$1,450. Call John (720)960-4910 or Lee (970)946-3856.

ON BEAUTIFUL PAGOSA LAKE: 2 bedroom, 2 bath, furnished upstairs unit. No garage. \$1,500 per month, plus utilities and deposit. No pets and no smoking. (817)565-7656.

ROOM WITH SEPARATE BATH for rent about 3 miles from town. Call (970)946-9024 for details.

SHERPA REAL ESTATE is now managing long-term rentals. Clear communication from a name you already trust. Ready to rent your home? Call now to get started (970)444-2570. Visit our website <https://www.sherparealestate.com/rentals> or stop by one of our two locations.

SPACIOUS 3 BEDROOM APARTMENT in downtown with beautiful views. Rent \$1348. Large floor plan, affordable living through tax credit program. Income and eligibility requirements apply. Hickory Ridge Apartments, hickoryridge@pagosacreek.com.

SWEET, REMODELED TWO -BEDROOM, three-quarter bath home close to everything downtown. Small pet with approval and monthly pet rent. Both bedrooms have natural gas fireplaces. Washer /dryer included. Water /sewer included in rent if under \$100 /month. Available around May 1st. Visit teampagosa.com to view the property or call (970)731-8599 to schedule a viewing. \$1,795 /month.

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HOME FOR SALE. 3 bedroom, 2-1/2 bath, 2060 sq. ft., freshly painted inside and out. New appliances, granite countertops, 970 sq. ft. workshop. Appointment only, (970)403-6356.

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EXCEPTIONAL DOWNTOWN BUILDING LOTS and development potential. River, huge divide views, location. Nothing like it. Call (970)398-9136, or builder7@fastmail.com.

FOR SALE BY OWNER: Harman Park 1.5 plus acres with highway frontage, \$325K; Aspen Springs 1.5 plus acres with highway frontage, \$65K; West Golf with sewer and water taps paid and installed, \$70K. All OBO. Holly (970)946-0037.

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