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the Montrose Mirror

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Issue No. 404 Nov. 23 2020

DMEA BOARD VOTES TO INCREASE CEO BASE PAY BY 3 PERCENT; IN 2019 BRONEC EARNED \$525K

By Gail Marvel

MONTROSE-The Nov. 17 Delta Montrose Electric Association (DMEA) Board of Directors meeting, a Zoom webinar, was called to order at 3 p.m. Members who wish to receive log-in information prior to meetings can contact Amy Taylor via e-mail at amy.taylor@dmea.com.

Practicing social distancing, the board and staff participated on computers from offices and homes, where face masks were not required.

Members are afforded an opportunity to speak during Member Comments; however, during the meeting itself microphones of attendees who are not on the board or on staff are muted.

During the meetings the board of directors give verbal summary reports of their

[Continued pg 11](#)



The Delta Montrose Electric Association (DMEA) Board of Director meetings continue to be held virtually. All board members were present for the Nov. 17 meeting; however, two members were present through audio only. Co-Op members who wish to receive log-in information prior to meetings can contact Amy Taylor via e-mail at amy.taylor@dmea.com.

ON THE 'SIDELINES'-NEW FAMILY FRIENDLY SPORTS BAR OPENS



By Paul Arbogast

MONTROSE-If you are a sports fan, or just go out at night in Montrose, you have probably heard that a new sports bar was coming to downtown. That would be Sidelines Sports Bar, at 35 North Uncompahgre Ave.

They are now open for business, with hours covering lunch and dinner, from 10:30 am until midnight. The grand opening was Friday, Nov. 20.

I have talked to the owners, Christine, Adrian, Valerie, and Jeff and they are excited to be open and offer a new family friendly sports bar for the residents of Montrose. The focus is sports, professional, college, and even eventually having tournaments for fun bar sports like cornhole.

[Continued pg 15](#)

Sidelines Sports Bar is now open at 35 North Uncompahgre Ave. in Montrose, from 10:30 am until midnight. Owners are excited to offer a new family friendly sports bar for the residents of Montrose.

in this
issue

[Deb Reimann
Reader Photo Spotlight!](#)

[City returns to
virtual mode!](#)

[Regional News Briefs
Calendar of Events!](#)

[County approves additional funds for
Region 10 business grants!](#)

REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

CITY OFFICES TO CLOSE THANKSGIVING DAY

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE — City of Montrose offices, including City Hall, Municipal Court, Animal Shelter, Visitor Center, City Shop, Montrose Pavilion, and Police Department, will be closed Thursday, Nov. 26 for the Thanksgiving Day holiday.

Police Department offices will be closed; still, officers will be on duty and responding to calls. The Black Canyon Golf Course will also be closed.

Trash and recycling schedules will be adjusted for the holiday. For residences with Thursday, Nov. 26 collection, trash pickup will instead occur on Tuesday, Nov. 24, and Wednesday, Nov. 25.

Residences west of Townsend Ave that are normally on the Thursday route will receive collection services on Tuesday, Nov. 24. Residences east of Townsend Ave that are normally served on Thursday will receive service on Wednesday, Nov. 25.

Recycling collection for customers scheduled for pickup on Thursday, Nov. 26 will instead receive collection service on Friday, Nov. 27.

For more information, contact City Hall at 970.240.1400.

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We encourage contributions and commentary. Content may not necessarily reflect the opinions of the publisher.

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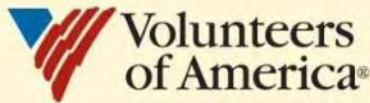
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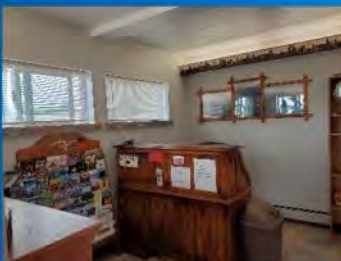
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Please have all messages to Valley Manor by November 23rd, 2020.



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I'm Retiring!

TIFFANY, ETC. IS CLOSING!

It's true! Tiffany, Etc's historic Main Street building has sold! Retirement is the new chapter for Glee Westcott after 38 years as Tiffany, Etc. I hope you have only fond memories of your shopping experience at Tiffany's, and I thank you all! With that being said, our new chapter begins November 23rd at 9 A.M., starting a Total Liquidation Sale!

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COLORADO NEWS BRIEFS

DUI ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS RAMP UP FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON

Special to the Mirror

STATEWIDE — With holiday excitement growing as Thanksgiving approaches, the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), Colorado State Patrol (CSP) and local law enforcement agencies statewide will unite for the Thanksgiving Week high-visibility DUI enforcement period from Nov. 20–30. CDOT encourages all Coloradans to celebrate safely by arranging sober rides and following COVID-19 safety guidelines.

During the Thanksgiving enforcement period last year, 99 statewide agencies arrested 430 impaired drivers.

"One easy way to ensure a happy holiday is to make plans for safe and sober driving before the festivities begin. Don't wait until the party starts and then guess who is the "least drunk" or "least high" person in the room," stated Chief Matthew Packard, Colorado State Patrol. "Impaired decisions are impulsive with no regard to your future or those traveling around you. This holiday season, your Troopers and local law enforcement agencies will have an increased presence on our roadways looking for dangerous and impaired drivers who failed to plan."

The last heightened DUI enforcement period was Halloween weekend, Oct. 29-

Nov. 2. During that period law enforcement arrested 198 impaired drivers, with the Colorado Springs Police Department (18 arrests), Denver Police Department (21 arrests), and El Paso County Sheriff's Office (14 arrests) reporting the highest number of arrests. CSP made 39 arrests. This is a decrease from the 250 arrests made during the same period in 2019.

Enforcement plans and arrest totals for each law enforcement agency can be found at <https://www.codot.gov/safety/traffic-safety-reporting-portal>.

"To prevent the spread of COVID-19, we are asking people to limit social gatherings over the holidays," said Shoshana Lew, executive director of CDOT. "But if people find themselves in a situation in which they are drinking, they should know it is easy to underestimate their level of impairment and plan for a sober ride home no matter how much they have consumed."

CDOT is reminding people to only interact with people from their household this Thanksgiving to help slow the alarming spread of COVID-19. This holiday season is an opportunity to reimagine what togetherness can look like and come up with creative ways to celebrate loved ones while making sure they stay healthy for

many more years to come. Dos and don'ts for Thanksgiving celebrations include: 1) Do cook and eat a special meal with members of your immediate household; 2) Do video chat or talk on the phone with friends and family who don't live with you; 3) Do wear a mask and keep 6 feet of distance from others while grocery shopping; and 4) Don't travel to visit family and friends in other households.

During *The Heat Is On* enforcement periods last year, law enforcement agencies across the state made approximately 7,837 DUI arrests from January through October.

During the same timeframe this year, law enforcement has made 5,773 arrests. Although the number of arrests is fewer, the percentage of impaired driving fatalities has stayed the same — about 30% of all traffic fatalities in Colorado are impairment-related. Everyone across the state must do their part to keep themselves and others on the road safe by never driving impaired.

Following the Thanksgiving enforcement period, CDOT, CSP and local law agencies will conduct the Holiday Parties (Dec. 4-14) and New Year's Eve (Dec. 29-Jan. 2) enforcement periods to keep motorists safe during the holiday season.



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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

BLACK CANYON BOYS & GIRLS CLUB OCTOBER YOUTH OF THE MONTH

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE-The Black Canyon Boys & Girls Club (BCBGC) Youth of the Month for October 2020 was Elijah!

Pictured at right, Elijah is one of our older Club members as a freshman and has started using his time at Club to volunteer. Recently Elijah has really stepped up at Club with helping staff out and being a positive role model for his peers.

A few weeks ago one of the younger member's parents shared with Megan (the Club's Site Director) that Elijah had hung out with her son the day before and absolutely made her son's day! This member sometimes has a hard time making friends and feeling included, but Elijah spent the afternoon playing a game with the member and doing whatever he could to make his day better! As Megan and this parent were talking, the member came to the car and Elijah came running out not once but twice to deliver things the member had left at Club.

Elijah has shown how much he cares about others and how much he can't wait to work at the Club one day! Thanks to Elijah we have seen extra kindness shown in our Club! Way to go Elijah!

For more information on the BCBGC, visit www.bcbgc.org.



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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

USPS OPERATION SANTA GOES NATIONWIDE

Special to the Mirror

COLORADO — Let's face it, this year has been a struggle for so many people in more ways than one. Thoughts of kids, the holidays and wondering how to provide for them may also be weighing heavily on many. But take heart, Santa and the Postal Service are way ahead of you, and are here to help.

The USPS Operation Santa program celebrates its 108th year in 2020 by opening up for nationwide participation. Now, more than ever, the program is needed to help less fortunate kids and families during the holidays.

To participate in the USPS Operation Santa program as a possible recipient of holiday gifts, all you have to do is write a letter, put it in a stamped envelope with a return address, and send it to Santa's official workshop address as seen on the example envelope below. Letters will be accepted Nov. 16 – Dec. 15.



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DMEA BOARD VOTES TO INCREASE CEO BASE PAY From pg 1

monthly meetings and activities; however, neither the co-op membership nor the media have access to the written reports submitted for board approval.

The call to order was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance, the opening meeting prayer, determination of a quorum, and approval of the consent agenda (Membership Report, Minutes from the regular October Board Meeting and Minutes from the November Special Board Meeting.) Although all board members were present, two members did not have video access and participated through audio.

Changes to the agenda included no financial report due to the meeting being held a week early to accommodate the Thanksgiving holiday, part of the CEO report was deemed privileged and moved to executive session, and a vote was needed for Federated Insurance renewal. The agenda was approved as amended.

Board Committee Items

Finance – Audit – Rate Committee (FAR) – Brad Harding, Chair.

Harding said, “On November 10th we met for two-hours and one minute. It was very well attended by all committee members and the board. It was a very important meeting. We discussed the budget for 2021 and beyond. We had 12 key assumptions [use of power, loss of Russell Stover, etc.] and six key risks [COVID, transmission costs, wildfire, Tri State, etc.]. All were talked about and put into a stress test. The good news is, rates can be held steady for the next five to nine years. We spent a lot of time on the Operating Budget. It’s a 32-page PDF that is 90 percent complete.” It was unclear if DMEA anticipated steady rates for the organization from their power supplier, or if end-users could expect steady rates for five to nine years.

Harding continued, “We talked about PPP [Paycheck Protection Program] loan forgiveness, vegetation management, and took a deep dive into organizational charts. Wade [CFO Wade Pynes] drilled down into the property tax issue. Property

taxes are going up. The hydro budget, getting out of Tri State. Legal fees are always tricky, past and present. The pole attachment audit and the cost associated with doing that, the overall labor and how it impacts year over year. The vegetation management [bringing in-house] will change staff and labor. We felt comfortable with the budget and the recommendation from FAR is to accept the Capital Budget and the Operating Budget.”

Pynes said, “There is a full construction plan for fiber. We may have to have amendments because of grant opportunities to build out our fiber.”

The FAR committee offered no public specifics or totals on the budget until Kyle Martinez said, “Can you give us a run down on the budget?”

Pynes said, “The Capital Budget is just over \$15M; \$9.5M on the fiber side, with \$6M in grants. The Operational Budget is \$68M; \$2.3M does not include deferred revenue. Is that what you’re asking?”

Both the 2021 Capital Budget and Operating Budget were approved unanimously.

Engineering – Construction – Renewable Energy Committee – Chris Hauck, Chair.

Hauck said, “We had no meeting.”

Member Relations – Energy Services Committee – Kyle Martinez, Chair.

Martinez said, “We have not met since the last board meeting. The marketing program with Guzman, the ads are very nicely done and out and about.”

Executive Committee – Bill Patterson, Chair.

We met November 4th. We did have significant discussion on the power supply. We need to discuss further in executive session.”

Chief Power Supply Officer Jim Heneghan was asked to give an update to the board on an RFP (Request for Proposal). Vague in his recap, Heneghan said, “We’re working on notification and requirements, but the RFP is about seven days behind. I just got the draft from Guzman and I anticipate it will go out no later than next week. We have a list of several developers. We will

solicit specific developers to contact DMEA. We should have responses, evaluations and summaries by the end of December.”

Jock Fleming said, “Just so you know, my daughter works for a solar developer and I forwarded the RFP to her. She wanted me to forward it to her.” The name of the solar company was not mentioned.

Speaking to Executive Assistant Amy Taylor, DMEA attorney Jeff Hurd said, “Amy, make sure the minutes reflect that Jock sent the RFP to his daughter.”

Further discussion revealed the RFP, which will be sent to only about 10 developers, hopes to attract both large (60 megawatts) and small (20 megawatts) solar projects. It was emphasized that the RFP is still in draft form.

The Executive Committee reviewed and revised Board Policy 102 (Director Responsibilities) and Board Policy 105 (Conflict of Interest). Both policies were approved unanimously as revised.

Safety and Occupational Health Report - Virginia Harman, COO.

Harman said, “There were no injuries and two near-misses. A small tree fire with no structure damage. The second was found to be vandalism in a meter pedestal. No one was injured and there is no one to press charges against. It was near playground equipment. We’ve had forklift training, safety activities, and wildfire mitigation plans. We are reviewing ideas for safety discussions in 2021.”

Financial Report with Variance Report - Wade Pynes, CFO.

The financial report was moved to the December meeting.

CEO Report - Jasen Bronec, CEO.

Bronec said, “I have a couple of sensitive issues for executive session. The city franchise agreement [ballot issue] was approved. There is a great relationship between the city and DMEA. We have the Power Forwarding campaign with Guzman. We are honoring our Veterans, a number work at DMEA. We ran an ad in our local paper honoring our Vets. We

DMEA BOARD VOTES TO INCREASE CEO BASE PAY

From previous pg

closed our offices this week through Thanksgiving week because of concerns with COVID. We've had a couple of instances [cases] in our organization. We will be closed until we feel safe to reopen."

October 2020 SAIDI (Systems Average Interruption Duration Index) Report.

Bronec said, "There was a tick-up through the months of September and October. June 6th high winds caused outages for 11.6 minutes. The October 25th snowstorm there was a lot of outages because of leaves on trees; 8.56 SAIDI minutes. Those two qualify as major event days."

Legal Report (Non-Privileged Legal Report) - Jeff Hurd, Attorney.

Hurd said, "The highlight was the approval of the franchise agreement [with the city]. There was 73 percent [voter] approval. The agreement is for 20-years and begins January 2021. This will kick off the discussion [on franchise agreements] with other cities. We're working on easement issues, rights-of-way, CEO evaluation. We are still doing some clean-up agreements with Tri State. I'll reserve the rest of my report for executive session."

Representative Board Reports

WUES Report (Western United Electrical Association) - Jock Fleming.

Fleming said, "We haven't met since the last DMEA meeting. Nothing to report."

CREA Report (Colorado Rural Electric Association) - Damon Lockhart.

Lockhart said, "I sent out some legislative stuff, nothing to new. The only real change in Colorado is Lauren Boebert [US

Representative-elect]. We had a board meeting on October 30th, passed the budget, and chose the same firm for the annual audit. There will be a six percent increase in our dues, but it's pretty much of a wash in having our dues reduced the last three-quarters."

Bronec ask Lockhart for a recap of CREA's support to Mountain Parks in their fire mitigation efforts.

Lockhart said, "They are doing good work getting poles back up and providing meals."

Other Business

Montrose Mayor Barbara Bynum was formally approved as a trustee on the Operation Round-Up Board.

On the Federated Insurance renewal Bronec said, "Typically we have not brought this before the board. We did not bid this out. We bid it out two-years ago. Federated has been a good partner to work with."

Federated Insurance renewal was approved unanimously, as well as a policy to Liberty Mutual (hydro coverage).

Member Comments:

There were no member comments.

Executive Session:

When the board goes into executive session, virtual attendees must exit the Zoom meeting.

Privileged Legal Report

Privileged part of CEO Report

Power Supply Update

Discussion on Federal Funding

Review Board Self-Assessment Results

Discuss CEO Evaluation/Compensation

Upon returning to the public meeting the

board voted on the CEO Compensation. An email response from Executive Assistant Amy Taylor said, "After the Board left executive session it voted on the CEO compensation package. The directors unanimously agreed to increase Jasen Bronec's 2021 CEO base salary by three percent, and to extend a severance package sunset day by one additional year (to December 23, 2022)."

Editor's note-According to the most recent form 990 filed by DMEA, Bronec's annual compensation in 2019 included a base salary of \$353,606; reportable compensation from other organizations in the amount of \$50,577; and an estimated \$120,734 in other compensation from the organization and related organizations. The next DMEA meeting will be held at 3 p.m. on Dec. 15.

DMEA Board Members

Dist 1 - Bill Patterson, 970-209-1449,

bpatterson@montrose.net

Dist 2 - Kyle Martinez, 970-615-7124,

kyle@touchofcarepcp.com

Dist 3 - Brad Harding, 970-270-3692, bharding@firstcoloradobank.com

Dist 4 - Ken Watson, 970-275-2100, ken-nethrwatson@gmail.com

Dist 5 - Chris Hauck, 970-497-0900,

lch@haucks.cc

Dist 6 - Damon Lockhart, 970-314-1071,

damon.lockhart@dmea.com

Dist 7 - Enno Heuscher, 970-270-

6523, enno.heuscher@dmea.com

Dist 8 - (North Region) Stacia Cannon, 920-

207-8831, stacia.cannon@dmea.com

Dist 9 - (South Region) Jock Fleming, 970-

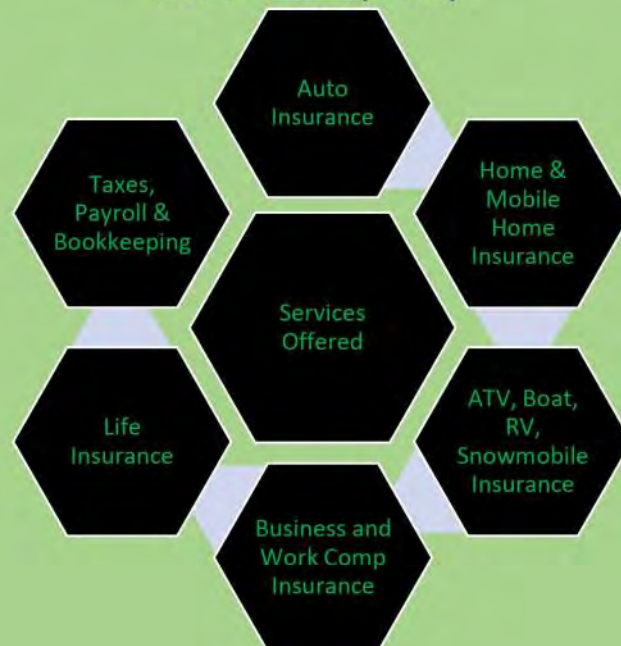
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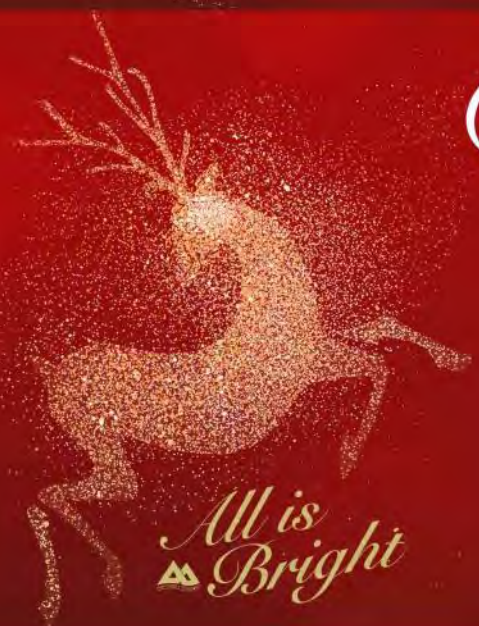
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All is Bright

11.28.20 | 12.5.20 | 12.12.20 | 12.19.20

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CityofMontrose.org/Holidays



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All is Bright

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CityofMontrose.org/Holidays

NEW FAMILY FRIENDLY SPORTS BAR OPENS From pg 1

Beyond the focus on sports, Christine said they are really focusing on being family friendly, being a place where you can bring the kids and enjoy some really good food. The head chef Josue has a good-sized menu with a variety of options for everyone. I personally stopped in and had a Bacon Cheeseburger, and it was fabulous.

Some minor changes in the building seem to make the space more open than it previously was. An open window into the kitchen streamlines service for the servers, as well as lets you see them cooking up your meal. TV's are now on the back side of the bar as well, providing for more space to watch your favorite games with friends and family.

One thing you will notice when you come in is a big wall that is dedicated to all those who have served and are serving us, from Veterans to LEO's and other front line workers who have sacrificed for a better country, state and town. Discounts are available for all of those, as a show of thanks for all they have done and do for us.

The most important thing to me in a restaurant is service, the feeling that you are not just a potential tip, but a desired customer to be taken care of. Sadly, it seems that the level of service all over has declined, but at Sidelines that is not the case. They want every person that walks in to have great service, and from my experience there so far, they are doing a great job with some great servers and bartenders.

As always, times are still hard from all the state-mandated shutdowns and limitations put on businesses, so when you can, get out and support new local small businesses. You can contact them via phone at 970-765-0129, or follow them on Facebook @Sidelines970.



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'DON'T FEAR THE BEAR UNTIL IT IS IN YOUR TENT,' PASTOR TELLS BOCC

Commissioners approve additional funding for Region 10 grants



Pastor Karl Leuthauser of Grace Community Church shared the wisdom of his 21-year-old daughter, who recently solo-hiked the Colorado Trail.

By Caitlin Switzer

MONTROSE-Pastor Karl Leuthauser of Grace Community Church gave the invocation for the Montrose Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) at the regular meeting of Wednesday, Nov. 18. All commissioners were present for the session, which was held in chambers with social distancing measures in place.

Leuthauser shared the wisdom of his 21-year-old daughter, who recently solo-hiked 486 miles of the Colorado Trail. "Don't fear the bear until it is in your tent."

Said Pastor Leuthauser to commissioners, "There's a lot of bears around us right now. As our leaders I want to encourage you and pray for you, and ask that you don't fear the bears until they're upon you...I want to encourage you, do not be afraid...Lord, uphold our leaders. We need them to be strong, we need them to be courageous..."

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

There were no comments from the public on non-agenda items.

COUNTY MANAGER

County Manager Ken Norris had no changes to the meeting agenda.

CONSENT AGENDA

Consent Agenda items were approved as presented, with Resolution Number 51-2020 assigned to Item 5.

GENERAL BUSINESS & ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

Commissioners opened a public hearing on Item D-1, consideration and approval of a variance to the Montrose County Standards and Specifications for Roads and Bridges to allow a second driveway at 18241 Pahgre Road (southwest corner of Kinikin and Pahgre roads).

County Engineer Keith Laube presented background information on the variance application, and said, "...Staff looked at this, and due to the proximity to the intersection--85 feet--we denied the variance for a second access."

BOCC Chair Keith Caddy said, "One thing I see...coming from law enforcement, if you are entering a road that close to an intersection...somebody could be partially pulling out and they wouldn't see that vehicle coming."

"Eighty-five feet is not much room," Caddy said, "and it could create a hazardous situation near that intersection because of that access."

Applicant Martha Countryman spoke. "When we bought that property...that north driveway was the existing driveway."

Though a second, permitted driveway has since been added, she said, the old driveway allows it to function as a circular driveway for greater safety, she said. The

north driveway is now used for RV parking as well.

"What kind of precedent would we set...I just can't in good conscience feel right about allowing this and then stopping someone else from doing it," BOCC Vice Chair Roger Rash said.

Commissioner Sue Hansen asked how the situation came to the County's attention after ten years.

County Engineer Keith Laube said that during the spring of 2020 clay was being tracked on Kinikin Road. "...And then we noticed the north driveway."

Laube shared average daily traffic counts for Kinikin Road (251) and Pahgre (185).

After further discussion, Hansen said, "I can see that there's a safety issue...if I had situated my house as such that I was using a driveway and lived there for ten years and all of a sudden I couldn't use the access I'd be a little upset too. Are there other options that you guys explored or considered or thought about?"

Countryman said, "We would have liked to put a driveway in off of Kinikin, but the county would not issue that."

She offered to place a sign marking the north driveway as "entry only."

Hansen asked Laube again for ideas on making the driveway safer.

"I am just looking for ideas here," Hansen said. "When a citizen comes to the county expecting accurate information and they don't get accurate information...it puts us in a really weird position as it does for the citizen too."

Caddy asked to examine the 2019 plat approved by the county on the overhead projector.

"One thing I can see is this driveway on the plat does not match what's on the ground," Caddy said. "It flat doesn't."

Surveyor Bill Wiley also answered questions. "I can go back and check it...we survey it with GPS; it's pretty hard to get it wrong."

Rash said, "It's obviously not correct, looking at the plat and looking at this photograph..."

Caddy suggested continuing the hearing to allow further research.

Continued next pg

COMMISSIONERS APPROVE ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR REGION 10 GRANTS

From previous pg

Rash asked to see the original plat for the property.

"That would help me make a determination on what's fair."

County Planning & Development Director Steve White said that double driveways are a problem in the county.

Following further discussion, Caddy suggested that commissioners undertake a site visit.

The BOCC voted to continue the hearing and public comment period until 9:30 a.m. on Dec. 16, during the next BOCC meeting. Caddy reminded all to take precautions to prevent the spread of COVID.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

SPECIAL MEETING

The Montrose Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) met for a special meeting at 3:15 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 20. All commissioners were present for the 2.43-minute Zoom session.

CONSENT AGENDA

Consent Agenda items were unanimously approved, including:

-An agreement with River Valley Family Health Center for the distribution of Coronavirus Relief Funding; an unbudgeted expense not to exceed \$100,000.

The County has been allocated unbudgeted revenue to offset this expense through the Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA);

-The First Amendment to an agreement with the Region 10 League for Economic Assistance and Planning (Region 10).

This amendment provides an additional \$200,000 for small business grants.

The amendment brings the total funding committed by Montrose County through this agreement to \$500,000.

The County has been allocated unbudgeted revenue to offset this expense through DOLA.

REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

COVID-19 SPIKES FORCE ORANGE LEVEL ON CDPHE DIAL

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE- Montrose County's COVID-19 case counts are continuing to rise at a rapid pace and have forced a move to orange or high risk on the State of Colorado's COVID-19 dial. This change comes after a move from blue to yellow on Nov. 13. At this time, public health continues to begin additional education campaigns, working with assisted living facilities to ensure safety of staff and residents, and other mitigation efforts to reduce overall case counts.

"We need to remain diligent, dedicated, and determined. We need to continue to do the things we know slows the spread of COVID—maintaining distance, wearing a mask, staying home when sick, even if your symptoms are very mild, and washing hands" said Montrose County Public Health Medical Advisor Dr. Joseph

Adragna, MD, MHA, MGH.

"Sticking to the basics in this fight and not giving up is how we save our lives, our jobs, and our local economy. More cases will lead our community to tighter restrictions per the State of Colorado's COVID-19 dial. If we do not make these changes now, then we face being moved to red in just two weeks."

As a reminder, the dial is an indicator of the overall prevalence of community spread of COVID in a particular county. The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) and the governor's office required this action based on the state's dial framework, which considers the number of cases in a two-week period, percent positivity, and hospitalizations, all of which are trending upward. The new level designation has stricter requirements and will be in effect until cas-

es, percent of tests positive, and hospital demand reduces. Full guidance by level is available here.

"I trust our community to do the right thing," said Commissioner Keith Caddy. "COVID-19 has impacted us all in one way or another, and I want to encourage the public to consider our community members, schools, and local businesses when making decisions that may impact others."

Montrose County Public Health is continuing to closely monitor hospital capacity with local partner Montrose Memorial Hospital. Both the county and hospital remain ready to respond to COVID surges.

This change to the orange dial level will take effect Monday, Nov. 23 at 5 pm. As a reminder, the county is issuing weekday reporting of the COVID dashboard. Please visit montrosecountyjic.com for more information.



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CONVENIENT LOCATIONS ACROSS COLORADO

Continued next pg

REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS



Watch your distance

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RIDGWAY CLOSES TOWN HALL TO PUBLIC, RESCINDS STAGE 1 FIRE RESTRICTIONS

Special to the Mirror

RIDGWAY - At the Nov. 19 Special Meeting of the Ridgway Town Council, the Town Council voted to close Ridgway Town Hall to the public when Ouray County's status on the state's COVID Dial is Level Orange "Safer at Home - High Risk", Level Red "Stay at Home", or Level Purple "Extreme Risk". Ouray County has been in Level Orange since Nov. 16. Town services and operations will continue as normal. Residents are encouraged to visit <https://townofridgway.colorado.gov/> or call 970-626-5308 to learn staff contact information.

The Town Council also voted to rescind "Stage 1" fire restrictions within the Town of Ridgway. The Town Council based their decision on the amount of current fire activity around the state, predicted weather, and current moisture levels.

For questions, please email Preston Neill, Town Manager, at pneill@town.ridgway.co.us.

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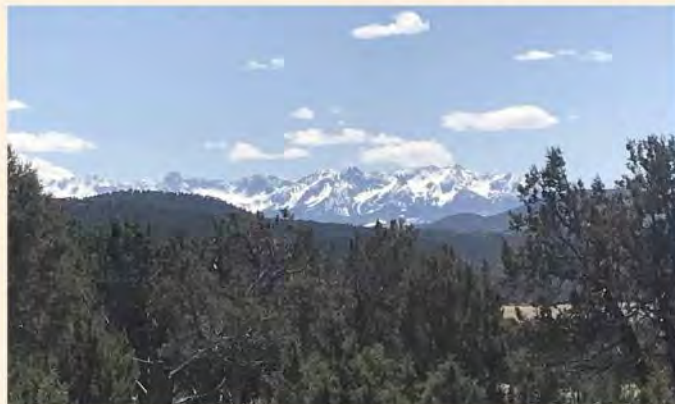
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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT SELLING PERMITS TO CUT CHRISTMAS TREES

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE- The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will be offering permits to cut your own Christmas tree on BLM-administered lands in the Uncompahgre Field Office now through Dec. 24. Permits are valid for piñon pines or junipers and may be purchased in person for \$8 per tree. In an effort to promote forest regeneration and stand health, permits do not authorize the cutting of ponderosa pines.

"During a time when social distancing has become a big consideration, getting outside to cut a tree on your public lands is one holiday tradition that families can still safely enjoy," noted BLM Uncompahgre Field Manager Greg Larson.

To purchase a permit, call ahead to the Montrose Public Lands Center front desk

at (970) 240-5300 and provide the requested information, including the number of permits you wish to purchase (up to five).

Bring cash, credit card, or check to the Montrose Public Lands Center, 2505 South Townsend Avenue, Montrose from Monday through Friday, 8 a.m.- 4:30 p.m. Park in one of the stalls located near the information kiosk and flagpole and call to let the front desk know that you have arrived. A member of the inter-agency visitor services staff will process your payment and deliver your permit without having to leave your car.

Permit holders are reminded to keep your permit with you at all times while cutting and transporting your tree. The BLM recommends taking a handsaw, eye

protection, rope or twine, extra food, water, and blankets when heading out to cut your tree. Tire chains, a shovel, and emergency supplies are also advised. Watch the weather conditions and let someone know where you will be and when to expect you back.

Maps and information about cutting areas will be provided upon purchase of a Christmas tree permit.

For more information about cutting trees on BLM-administered lands in the Uncompahgre Field Office, call (970) 240-5300. For information on obtaining a tree-cutting permit for U.S. Forest Service lands in the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison national forests, visit: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/gmug/home/?cid=stelprdb5345974>.



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OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

LET'S STRIVE TO DECREASE OUR POLARIZATION

Dear House Majority Leader,

As our nation has become increasingly politically divided, and as the founders of our nation imagined a Congress designated for a negotiative process, I would like to propose both a symbolic and helpful step to move things forward. I think that a seated Congress should be arranged either randomly or by some system, not by party, maybe by state or alphabetically. Let's not allow a division by party with a two-sides-of-the-aisle division, as this only emphasizes division rather than negotiation or compromise. As you know, we must at this point, do everything we can to disrupt our national political divide. Let's strive to decrease our polarization as much as possible.

Thanks for everything you do in this regard.

Your loyal citizen,

Wayne Quade, Montrose

MURA BUSINESS SHOULD BE CONDUCTED AS ANY PRUDENT LICENSED FINANCIAL INSTITUTION WOULD REQUIRE

Editor:

I urge readers to revisit the excellent article in the Montrose Mirror posted on November 16, 2020 and titled **"MURA DEVELOPER SEEKS CONTINUED CITY INVESTMENT."**

In my opinion, The Montrose URBAN RE-NEWAL AUTHORITY (MURA) project is based on "PROJECTIONS" and as one city council person stated in the Montrose Press, "a Vision." Neither a Vision nor a Projection constitutes a valid business, finance or marketing plan that is based on facts and validated outcomes.

It is long past time that the MURA board formed a board of experts with real business, finance, and marketing experience to challenge each assertion that the economists at Anderson Analytics and others involved with this project have made. That includes an in-depth analysis of Anderson Analytics reports and work product to include the identity of those whom they had specifically talked to and have them produce actual factual data to back up second party statements, assumptions, and projections.

Stricter standards must include our "Visionary" elected council members that, as MURA board members, authorized the expenditure of millions of dollars in various financial instruments to back the MURA project. In short taxpayer money.

COVID-19 is not an excuse. This project has been in existence since December 20, 2016. COVID-19 is a bump in the road and does not eliminate the need for both a short term and long-term business plan with proper attachments. In my opinion this entire project, from a structure build out point of view, has been grossly overstated.

The first clue of the actual build out projections by the owner may be determined by finding out how many years were originally projected for the Urban Renewal Area to sell out the project's lots and has that time frame, for tax purposes, been extended for tax purposes. Until such time that this entire project can be validated in all respects and a substantial amount of lots sold in advance, the MURA board should strongly consider not putting any more taxpayer funds into the project.

A complete written comprehensive "critical analysis" (as any responsible board or financial institution would require) must accompany all statements, reports, and assumptions made by any person or entity.

A thorough financial statement should include an in-depth analysis of how the current payouts (approaching \$10,000,000) have been used up to this point in time vs. the "pot of gold" we are projected to receive at the end of some future "rainbow" many generations to come.

At the present rate, each lot sold seems to be greased with taxpayers' incentives that in the end, if continued, could amount to tens of millions of more dollars spent with little return to us.

There are numerous questions that must be addressed.

Suggestion: The MURA board, with expert advice, needs to make a list of those questions and then conduct business as any prudent licensed financial institution would require.

Jim Anderson, Montrose

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CITY HEARS FROM ATTORNEYS ON PROPOSED REVISIONS TO MUNICIPAL CODE

By Caitlin Switzer

MONTROSE-Montrose Mayor Barbara Bynum welcomed all to the City's virtual Zoom work session on Monday, Nov. 16, and opened a discussion concerning proposed Revisions to Title 6 of the Municipal Code. All councilors were present for the online session; work sessions can also be viewed on public access cable TV channels 191 and 990.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Assistant City Attorneys Matthew Magliaro and Rachel Allen discussed specific details of the proposed revisions, which update language in the Municipal Code on issues ranging from unlawful entry, window peeping, and trespass to backyard firepits, which are presently only allowed for cooking. A redlined version of the changes is included in the work session packet.

"Thank you both very much," Mayor Bynum said.

City Attorney Stephen Alcorn gave a "synopsis" of the presentation. "Things we're trying to address that we've learned kind of the hard way in court," Alcorn said. "You can't go and disable a park bathroom lock and then move your stuff in and then spend multiple days there. That's what trying to put those restrictions on park buildings, City buildings.

Alcorn said, "You can't get drunk in a bar and go have sex on the sidewalk on Main Street, another thing that we're trying to deal with."

Also, "...Bill and I, for starters, have our fire pits in the backyard," Alcorn said.

"And like everybody else in town we can do it in a responsible manner when the fire department says it's safe to do so.

Right now, we have to have a hot dog handy or a marshmallow handy because we're using the fire to cook food.

"That's just silly," Alcorn said. "Nor have we been enforcing that. We're trying to add a little bit of common sense to the fire pit."

Burning trash is not allowed, as are backyard fires that pose a risk to the neighborhood, he said.



At the City Council virtual work session of Nov. 16, Assistant City Attorneys Matthew Magliaro and Rachel Allen (top left, bottom left) discussed specific details of proposed revisions to the City's Municipal Code.

Montrose Police Chief Blaine Hall thanked the City's legal team for the updates.

"...Boots on the ground, the statutes the way they were written prior...were causing some issues in our ability to really just take care of the issues at hand. I really appreciate our legal team's hard work in making this more in line with Colorado Revised Statutes."

The revisions will come before City Council for final approval in an upcoming meeting.

GENERAL COUNCIL/STAFF DISCUSSION

Bynum and Glaspell mentioned attending a small awards ceremony and volunteering at the Sharing Ministries Food Bank. The food bank has struggled to find volunteers during the COVID-19 restrictions, Bynum said.

Chief Hall said the police department has seen an increase in encounters that result in physical contact. A weekend incident involving a suicidal male was resolved without harm, he said. "...This weekend we had a pretty large fight where two of our officers tried to break up the fight," he said, "and subsequently one of our officers was punched in the side of the head...ultimately we had to use our tasers to end that incident."

A recent investigation involving a sexual predator resulted in an arrest, he said.

"Things definitely haven't slowed down for us..."

Councilor Dave Frank asked whether the officer who was struck in the head needed medical attention.

"He was injured, but he was checked out and he was okay," Hall said, and thanked Frank for asking.

Mayor Bynum asked whether the new officer body cams are helpful.

"I would say they are not just helpful, they are amazing, they are incredible," Hall said. "They are not only great for being able to dispel complaints...they will also be great for prosecution. It's one thing to be able to describe that you're trying to break up a fight and you get punched in the side of the head, and it's another thing to see how violent encounters occur and be able to move forward with prosecution."

City Manager Bill Bell said the City Council will transition back to virtual meetings due to COVID-19, "Probably until January at least," he said. "...We'll just kick it up a notch for safety..."

Further measures will be implemented after Thanksgiving.

Councilor Roy Anderson thanked Bell for being cautious and protecting citizens.

Bynum reminded of the City Council meeting at 6 p.m. the following evening.

REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

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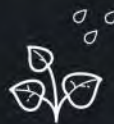
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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

SEND YOUR PACKAGES EARLY THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

Special to the Mirror

COLORADO — It is expected that more holiday gifts and greetings will be sent through the mail this year, as families and friends will hold virtual celebrations instead of opening gifts in person. The Postal Service always encourages customers to send their holiday gifts and cards early. This year is no different.

This has been an extraordinary year of unprecedented challenges given the Covid-19 pandemic and the Postal Service is expecting significant volume increases which are difficult to predict. We thank our customers for their continued support, and we are committed to making sure gifts and cards are delivered on time to celebrate the holidays.

The Postal Service begins planning for peak holiday season every January. To help handle the expected volume increase, the Postal Service has the ability to flex our network to meet the significant volume increases expected this year. This includes making sure the right equipment is available to sort, process and deliver the expected mail and package volumes. We also have 644,000 employees dedicated to ensuring gifts and greetings are delivered in time for the holidays.

Seasonal workers are hired when and where needed, and technology has been expanded to enhance package tracking throughout the USPS processing and transportation networks. Sunday delivery will be expanded beginning Nov. 29 to locations with high package volumes. USPS already delivers packages on Sundays in most major cities. Mail carriers will also deliver packages for an additional fee on Christmas Day in select locations.

Busiest Mailing and Delivery Days

The busiest time of the season peaks two weeks before Christmas, when much of the last-minute shopping starts. Customer traffic is expected to increase beginning Dec. 7, with the week of Dec. 14-21 predicted to be the busiest mailing, shipping and delivery week.

Skip the Trip and Ship Online

Consumers don't have to leave home to ship their packages. In these socially distant times, they can simply visit usps.com or use the [Click-N-Ship](#) feature for help shipping that holiday gift, ordering free Priority Mail boxes, printing shipping labels, purchasing postage and even requesting free next-day Package Pickup. And usps.com is always open.

2020 Holiday Shipping Deadlines

The Postal Service recommends the following mailing and shipping deadlines for expected delivery by Dec. 25 to Air/Army Post Office/Fleet Post Office/Diplomatic Post Office and domestic addresses*:

Dec. 9 — APO/FPO/DPO (ZIP Code 093 only) Priority Mail and First-Class Mail

Dec. 11 — APO/FPO/DPO (all other ZIP Codes) Priority Mail and First-Class Mail services

Dec. 15 — USPS Retail Ground service

Dec. 18 — APO/FPO/DPO (except ZIP Code 093) USPS Priority Mail Express service

Dec. 18 — First-Class Mail service (including greeting cards)

Dec. 18 — First-class packages (up to 15.99 ounces)

Dec. 19 — Priority Mail service

Dec. 23 — Priority Mail Express* service Alaska

Dec. 18 — Alaska to/from Continental U.S. First-Class Mail

Dec. 19 — Alaska to/from Continental U.S.

Priority Mail

Dec. 21 — Alaska to/from Continental U.S. Priority Mail Express

Hawaii

Dec. 15 — Hawaii to/from mainland Priority Mail and First-Class Mail

Dec. 21 — Hawaii to/from mainland Priority Mail Express

*Not a guarantee, unless otherwise noted.

Dates are for estimated delivery before Dec. 25. Actual delivery date may vary depending on origin, destination, Post Office acceptance date and time, and other conditions. Some restrictions apply. For Priority Mail Express shipments mailed Dec. 22 through Dec. 25, the money-back guarantee applies only if the shipment was not delivered, or delivery was not attempted, within two business days.

More tips for a successful holiday mailing and shipping season:

Use free Priority Mail Flat Rate boxes.

They are available at Post Office locations or online at usps.com/freeboxes.

Make it easy with Click-N-Ship. You can create shipping labels and pay for postage online at usps.com/ship.

Schedule a free Package Pickup when the carrier delivers your mail. It's free regardless of the number of packages. Pickups can be scheduled at usps.com/pickup.

Mail and packages that weigh more than 10 ounces or are more than a half-inch thick and using stamps as postage cannot be dropped into a collection box or left for a carrier to pick up. Instead, take them to a local Post Office.

Additional news and information, including all domestic, international and military mailing and shipping deadlines, can be found on the Postal Service Holiday Newsroom at usps.com/holidaynews.

Because your voice carries a lot of weight.

REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

DMEA INSPECTING POWER POLES

Special to the Mirror

REGIONAL-This month, Delta-Montrose Electric Association (DMEA) began inspecting power poles throughout the service territory.

DMEA is contracting with SBS Inspections to conduct the work. Crews are currently working in Delta County.

The inspections are expected to last through the winter.

SBS Inspections may need to enter onto members' properties to complete the inspections. Their vehicles will be marked with DMEA contractor labels.

DMEA asks for its members' cooperation in allowing contractors access to poles located on private property.

The co-op will inspect more than 3,000 poles as part of its power reliability and system maintenance program.

For more information about DMEA's pole inspection process or property access, contact Troy Hall (970) 240-1237 or troy.hall@dmea.com



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CITY RETURNS TO FULL VIRTUAL MODE AS COVID CASES RISE



"You can rest assured that no matter what, our police will continue to work and our trash will continued to be picked up even if we suspend the visitor center (pictured above), for example," Montrose Mayor Barbara Bynum said at the Nov. 16 regular virtual meeting.

By Caitlin Switzer

MONTROSE-Montrose City Council met for a virtual regular meeting at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 17. All Councilors were present via Zoom call. Mayor Barbara Bynum welcomed Youth Council Representative and newly-named Youth Council Mayor Harrison Hall.

"Congratulations on being selected mayor by your peers," Bynum said. Hall led City Council in saying the Pledge of Allegiance.

Montrose Mayor Pro Tem Doug Glaspell had no changes to the meeting agenda.

Council issued a proclamation in support of Small Business Saturday, Nov. 28. After reading the proclamation, Mayor Bynum said, "That proclamation is perhaps as timely as ever, when the pandemic continues to actively affect small businesses in our community. Shopping locally helps support your neighbor, and it makes a huge difference in our economy."

CALL FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments from the public on non-agenda items.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Council voted to approve minutes of the Nov. 2, 2020 special City Council meeting and the Nov. 3, 2020 regular City Council meeting as presented.

2021 BUDGET APPROVAL-ORDINANCE 2514-2ND READING

Council voted unanimously to adopt Ordinance 2514 on Second Reading, providing and appropriating funds for defraying the expenses and liabilities of the City during the fiscal year beginning Jan. 1, 2021; and Resolution 2020-25, adopting the 2021 Municipal Budget. Detailed budget information is included in the meeting packet.

"There have been no changes from the first reading," City Finance Director Shani Wittenberg said, noting that the 2021 budget is the City's largest ever. Budgeted projects involving expenditures of more than \$50K will come before City Council for final approval, Wittenberg said. It was at times difficult to hear Wittenberg's comments as there were audio issues on the Zoom call during her presentation.

Council unanimously approved Resolution 2020-26, repealing and replacing Chapters 3-1, 3-2, and 3-3 of the City of Montrose Regulations Manual and updating the fee schedule. The revisions were reviewed in work session on Nov. 2 and there were no subsequent changes, City Clerk Lisa Del Piccolo said. The biggest changes were to trash and recycle fees.

"If adopted, this revised fee schedule will take effect January 1," she said.

The meeting packet containing redlined budget information was helpful, Councilor Roy Anderson said.

Councilor Dave Frank clarified that the fee increase on trash collection is 72 cents per month.

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT ITEMS

In other business Council voted to approve:

- Ordinance 2511 on second reading, designating the BPOE Lodge Building at 107 S. Cascade Avenue as a City of Montrose Historic Property;

- Ordinance 2515 on second reading, amending the zoning district designation of Lot 5 of the Elder Homestead at Montrose Parcel Number 3767-353-04-005 from R-3, Medium Density District, to R-4, High Density District;

- Ordinance 2516 on second reading, for the annexation of Woodgate Addition No. 4;

- Ordinance 2517 on second reading, zoning Woodgate Addition No. 4 as a B-3 General Commercial District;

- Ordinance 2518 on first reading, amending the zoning district designation of Lot 1 of the Britney Boundary Line Adjustment from R-3A, Medium High-Density District, to RL, Rural Living District; and

- Resolution 2020-27, setting Jan. 5, 2021 as the hearing date for the annexation of the Lynch Addition.

STAFF REPORTS/COUNCIL COMMENTS

Wittenberg presented the Sales, Use & Excise Tax Report and third quarter budget review, which are included in the meeting packet.

Youth Council Mayor Harrison Hall said that youth councilors will focus on a different project each month, and are presently discussing a time capsule project.

"The community is really looking to the youth council's leadership on helping us figure out what should go in a time capsule," Mayor Bynum said, "because you're the only ones who are going to be around in 50 years when they open it." She commended youth councilors for their interest in serving the community.

Assistant City Manager Ann Morgenthaler gave an update on COVID-19 conditions.

CITY RETURNS TO FULL VIRTUAL MODE AS COVID CASES RISE

From previous pg

"...The City of Montrose is working very closely with our county...to get good information from them about the public health conditions..."

Information will be shared on the City's web site and social media platforms, Morgenthaler said.

City Manager Bill Bell said that he would be in and out of the office until Nov. 30. "The team's doing a great job of keeping things together...I'm excited to be able to participate in this council meeting and I'll be back for the work session on November 30."

Glaspell advised all constituents to continue wearing their masks. "Good health to you."

"Wash your hands," Frank said.

Anderson called the City's Small Business Saturday Proclamation "poignant," and urged constituents to buy Montrose bucks from the City. "It's an excellent way to help our small business...it's a great way to do some Christmas shopping...I've tried it myself."

"Members of our community can purchase those Montrose Bucks at our visitor center during their normal business house," Bynum said, noting that the "bucks" now come in card form. "If businesses want to take part in the Montrose Bucks program, "...Our team at the visitor center can sign you up," Bynum said. "Fantastic."

She thanked her fellow councilors for their patience during the virtual meeting and thanked City IT Director Greg Story for his efforts during the pandemic and for helping to keep Council online.

Bynum reminded constituents that city updates can be found at cityofmontrose.org/covid19. "That's where we'll be posting up to date information as it has to with city operations and COVID."

"You can rest assured that no matter what, our police will continue to work and our trash will continued to be picked up even if we suspend the visitor center, for example," Bynum said.

With no further business the meeting was adjourned.



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Montrose**

Victorian Duplex, Both 2 Bed, 1 Ba
2,209 sq. ft. Total | Year Built: 1900

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**2807 Covington Way
Montrose**

Bedrooms: 3 | Bathrooms: 2
1,923 sq. ft. | Year Built: 2005

\$372,000

JUST SOLD!



**3024 Outlook Rd.
Montrose**

Bedrooms: 3 | Bathrooms: 2 Full,
1,726 sq. ft. | Year Built: 2020

\$345,000

JUST SOLD!



**3023 Outlook Rd.
Montrose**

Custom Built & backs to Greenbelt
Bedrooms: 3 | Bathrooms: 2
1,874 sq. ft. | Year Built: 2020

\$418,860

JUST SOLD!



**1500 Gold Creek Dr.
Montrose**

Bedrooms: 3 | Bathrooms: 2
1,640 sq. ft. | Year Built: 2007

\$319,900

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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

WEST END NAMED EDCC SMALL COMMUNITY OF THE YEAR

Special to the Mirror

STATEWIDE-The Economic Development Council of Colorado (EDCC) announced the 2020 EDIE award recipients, recognizing economic development excellence during its Annual Meeting and EDIE Awards Ceremony, held virtually this year. "EDCC is proud to recognize and showcase the organizations and people that contribute to economic vitality in communities all across Colorado," said Michelle Claymore, EDCC Board Chair and Economic Development Director, City of Commerce City.

Small Community of the Year – West End Montrose and San Miguel County, Colorado

The award for 'Small Community of the

Year' was presented to the West End Montrose and San Miguel County for their persistence in preserving their culture and independent spirit. Once built to support the primary mining industries of Uranium and Coal, the West End once again was facing the grim realities of a major employer leaving their community.

With the help from a grant from the Economic Development Administration, the West End Economic Development Corp (WEEDC) was born. Their mission in helping develop the local economy is broken into three focus areas: Small Business Development and Entrepreneurship, Value Added Agriculture and Kitchen MakerSpace, and Outdoor Recreation and

Tourism.

Since 2018, the grant funded a co-working space outfitted with the latest conferencing equipment, two commercial kitchens, a grain mill used to create value-added flour, and a regional Fresh Food Hub. As a product of the infrastructure that has been placed, the West End became a Certified Small Business Community counseling 43 clients through the SBDC in its first year. Eight new businesses have opened in the region, creating approximately 22 new jobs.

And finally, a new branding effort, "Find Your Wild," has launched at westendcolorado.com to help market the area to tourists.

GRAND VALLEY AND PAONIA RANGER DISTRICTS TO CONDUCT PILE BURNING

Special to the Mirror

DELTA-Fire Management Officials from the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison (GMUG) National Forests' Grand Valley and Paonia Ranger Districts have announced plans to burn slash piles over the next few months. Most of the pile burns will occur between November through December, pending favorable weather and appropriate ground and vegetation conditions.

The safety of firefighters, and the public are the most important factors considered when planning prescribed fires. Fire managers have obtained smoke permits from the State of Colorado for each of the planned pile burns. For more information on how prescribed fire smoke may affect your health, please visit <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/wood-smoke-and-health>.

Slash piles were built to remove debris and vegetation (fuels) to help reduce the risk of larger wildfires. The piles are burned in project areas where other means of disposal were not feasible. The public is reminded not to call 911 or emergency services if smoke is visible in specific burn areas. Slash piles are in the following areas:

Project Area	Location	Number and Type Piles
Grand Mesa Timber Sale	Grand Mesa Resort	80 hand piles
Hay Park	Grand Mesa	10 hand piles
Lands End	Lands End Rd	10 hand piles

The Mirror:
Coverage with vision for the future.



REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

OURAY COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH ANNOUNCES COVID-19 OUTBREAK

Special to the Mirror

OURAY-The City of Ouray, in partnership with Ouray County Public Health Agency, is reporting two new confirmed Ouray County cases associated with a confirmed outbreak of COVID-19. Conditions are met for a suspected COVID-19 outbreak when there are two or more individuals in a facility, business or other non-household group who, within a 14-day period:

- Developed symptoms of COVID-19 and have been around someone with COVID-19, OR
- Have symptoms of COVID-19 and tested positive by a serology test, OR
- Have been around someone with COVID-19 and tested positive by a serology test, OR
- Have died and the death certificate lists COVID-19 or SARS-CoV2 as a cause of death or contributing to death with no lab test performed, OR
- One person who meets the above criteria and one person who tested positive by a molecular test

"I want to thank the City of Ouray for cooperating with our team of COVID-19 contact tracers and case investigators" said Ouray County Public Health Director Tanner Kingery. "All cases and close contacts are contacted and assigned a case investigator as per protocol. I am confident in the abilities of the City of Ouray and our investigators to continue to be proactive in mitigating the potential spread of COVID-19 in Ouray County."

Upon notification of the new cases, the City of Ouray immediately suspended operations where appropriate and initiated disinfection procedures of their facility. Testing is being done for staff and results should be returned shortly. Updates are provided on the Ouray County website: ouraycountycogov as well as Ouray County Public Health Agency Facebook page: Facebook.com/OurayCountyPublicHealthAgency

Ways that you can continue to protect yourselves, family members and community members:

- Wash your hands
- Practice social distancing
- Wear a mask
- Avoid crowds



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Medical Oncology
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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

EPA TO PERFORM EMERGENCY RESPONSE ACTION ON TELLURIDE VALLEY FLOOR

Special to the Mirror

DELTA-An Emergency Response action at the Telluride Valley Floor is being taken by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The action is within the floodplain of the San Miguel river just outside of Telluride, Colorado. The effort by the EPA is in coordination with the United States Forest Service (USFS), Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests, Norwood Ranger District starting November 2, 2020 and will last about three weeks depending on weather conditions.

This action will address stabilization of tailings above the bridge at Boomerang Trail. EPA plans on further response ac-

tion at this site in 2021 to address additional tailings downstream. EPA will be utilizing the contractor Environmental Restoration, with offices in Denver and Salt Lake City, for removal activities.

The site is approximately two acres, with the San Miguel River flowing east to west through the location. Fluvial mill tailings deposits exist within the floodplain of the San Miguel River. Mining for a variety of heavy metals occurred in the upper basins for over 100 years beginning in the 1860's. The fluvial tailings resulted from historical mineral processing operations upstream of the site. The tailings were transported by the San Miguel River and its tributaries during normal seasonal flow

and flood events and deposited in downstream areas.

EPA expects minimal disruption to existing trails with potential re-routing around construction areas.

Should this occur, there will be signage and personnel directing recreators around the work activities. Work will be done in the river so there may be a slight discoloration of the water due to heavy equipment.

EPA will ensure precautions are taken to limit any disruption of the water for downstream users.

To learn more about the project please see the Telluride Valley Floor Fact Sheet on our [website](#).



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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

PUBLIC HEALTH ENCOURAGES RESIDENTS TO MAKE A COVID-19 PLAN

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE-Montrose County Public Health is encouraging the public to have a COVID-19 plan for their household. Increased COVID-19 cases have indicated that transmission is occurring within family or residence units and creating a plan may help reduce case numbers. Make a plan, much like emergency preparedness,

encourages residents to think through scenarios involving COVID-19 and helps guide them through some common questions in order to be better prepared.

"Montrose is a strong, resilient and generous community and we take care of each other," said Commissioner Sue Hansen.

"This community-first attitude has helped Montrose County overcome challenges in

the past and this is one small step to ensuring that we will continue to protect our vulnerable and slow the spread of COVID-19. The benefits of having a plan extend beyond just your residence—it will help keep schools and businesses open and ultimately, help protect our community." One of the most important parts of this plan is to find a doctor. Several practices in Montrose County are accepting new patients—including uninsured and underinsured individuals—and many offer sliding fee scales to assist with payments. It's easier to connect with a doctor and fill out paperwork before getting sick rather than in the middle of an illness. Having reliable medical guidance from a physician is key to helping individuals stay healthy.

"Recently the county has moved a level on the state's dial due to the increase of cases, and right now our job is to identify ways to help reduce that spread," said Assistant Public Health Director Allison Howe. "Transmission among families is high—we know it is important to help care for loved ones when sick, but we are encouraging the public to have a plan in place to help keep the rest of the household residents safe. Also, because many households have multiple generations, and it is extremely important to keep our vulnerable populations safe from COVID-19."

For more information and guidance on a plan, as well as daily COVID-19 data, please visit montrosecountyjic.com or watch the Make a Plan video at <https://youtu.be/Y97IzP7xBog>.



Wear your mask

Thank you for doing your part
to keep CO safe!



OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

CITY HAS NOT MET ITS OBLIGATION ON RUSSELL STOVER PROPERTY

Editor:

Recently the City of Montrose sold the 29+ acres under the defunct Russell Stover (RS) factory (which RS had been leasing) to RS as per the agreement in the original lease contract. That transaction appears to be appropriate.

Mr. Laird submitted a CORA request asking for records concerning the Environmental Cleanup of the site.

Specifically the request was for the results of a 'Phase 1' survey. This survey would have gathered information relating to the possibility of chemicals, fuels and industrial wastes having been released into the soil during the lands' industrial use. 'Phase 2' would be a study as to what remediation would be required to CLEAN IT UP had contamination been found.

Such a Phase 1 assessment should have been made through document research and by interviewing former Russell Stover employees and city employees who might have been witness to dumping or spillage during the 50 year lease (either accidental or intentional). Subsequent to the study in Phase 1 a Phase 2 study would be undertaken. Somewhere in this evolution the cleanup costs (often millions of dollars) would have to be pinned on 'someone'. In this case, the 'someone' would be either Russell Stover or the City of Montrose (that means all of us).

The responsible party should have been determined and documented prior to transferring the ownership of the land. It apparently was not.

That is not to say that there is any pollution. But if we do not do the study, how do we know? Mr. Laird's request was simply to let him see that the City's due diligence was, in fact, done. Easy enough to provide if a study was done regardless of the outcome. But it seems that the transparency promised we citizens during the last election cycle is OPAIC indeed. (It is 'non-existent') This might make us won-

der if the Environmental Laws and Regulations of the United States do not apply to the City of Montrose---or just apply to everywhere else in the United States? Therefore the question is: "Was the required Phase 1 evaluation ever done?"

If it was done, were the results negative OR does someone owe the citizens of Montrose A CLEANUP? And just who would that someone be? You see, if there is pollution to the 26 acres it could spread to the adjacent lands or even the river should the soil be disturbed (as in construction or demolition of the RS candy factory or even just ripping up the railroad spur). But the land did not belong to RS when the possible pollution was to have occurred. Nor were there any EPA regulations at the time of the lease signing.

It might have been appropriate to have RS clean it up prior to 'selling' the land to them. That way we, the City of Montrose, still had a 'hammer' with which to get them to clean it up. Now if pollution is found there will, sans a written agreement extant about cleanup, likely be litigation. If our council holds true to form they will suggest we just pay the cleanup (several million dollars) so the suit will go away and all will be cum-by-yah. Of course the worse possibility out of all of this is that we find that RS was responsible and that our civic leaders in trying to snooker RS by selling the 26 acres to them quickly and quietly, just accepted ownership of the mess. Could be. Do you think that their counsel knows the answer?

Should Montrose be liable for the \$3,000,000 or so in cleanup costs perhaps it will slow down their giveaways to every developer that passes through town. But before we let them go on all this we should demand that every city real estate contract be written by a competent firm ensuring that all bases are covered before something is overlooked and we all pay for it. AND have this firm supervise all

bargaining and sales from the git-go! It is long past time that the rank amateurs in city hall be allowed license to screw up our city and leave it to others to clean it up---and to pay for the botch as well.

The City's response to Mr. Laird is that it had no 'documentation in its possession regarding the matter.' If this is true our city government has not met its obligation to discover and clean up a possible environmental mess. If the Phase 1 assessment was done as required then any reasonable person would expect that a report, or at least notes, would easily be found in city files. So, either the study was not done or it is reasonable to believe that the existence of pollution is being hidden from the public. Well, which is it? If the city knowingly transferred polluted land to RS, is that not a violation of federal statutes?

It is time to know. It is time to get responsibility pinned down. It is time handle these kind of matters thoroughly and professionally before they become litigious. It is time to keep our soil and water clean, especially the river where thousands of downstream households get their water. It's time that our council does what it is supposed to do and be TRANSPARENT ABOUT IT.

Now for the punch line, folks! There is at least one individual in Montrose who has first-hand knowledge about this issue.

The city knows who it is. The city has not approached him about what he knows. He is more than willing to elucidate. How do you think I found out?

The city has not asked such questions as: when? where? what? how much? what else is buried on that ground? what was done about it at the time?

All followed up with "Who else knew about this?"

Just what are the penalties for conspiring to hide obvious pollution? Ask a gas station owner. He'll know!

Bill Bennett, Montrose

REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

DELTA COUNTY EXPERIENCING SURGE IN COVID-19

Special to the Mirror

DELTA-Delta County is currently experiencing a surge in COVID-19 cases, and has officially moved to the Yellow / Concern phase of the State of Colorado's COVID-19 status dial.

Delta County is reporting 425 positive cases since the beginning of the pandemic, with 170 active and 251 recovered. We currently have 4 individuals hospitalized and sadly, Delta County Health Department is reporting that a Delta County resident has passed away from COVID-19; a male aged 75-84. This brings our total deaths to date to eight (8). Delta County sends our condolences to the family and asks that the community at large respect their privacy.

"There are questions as to why we didn't move to a more restrictive phase" said Delta County Administrator Robbie LeValley, "Delta County is charged with not only the health and safety of all residents, but the mental and economic welfare of Delta County, as well. We know full well that we will be moving to a more restrictive phase of the dial in the coming days, and wanted to give all Delta County businesses an opportunity to plan and adjust."

Some of the changes, in moving to the Yellow phase are (but aren't limited to): Indoor dining - 50% capacity up to 50 people

Bars that don't serve food must be closed

Offices are limited to 50% capacity, with remote work strongly encouraged

Gyms/indoor recreation is limited to 25% capacity or up to 50 people

Entertainment and indoor events/meetings - 50% capacity up to 100 people with 6ft. of physical distancing between parties

Outdoor events are limited to 50% capacity or 175 people (whichever is fewer)

Childcares may remain open with standard ratios

Click [here](#) for additional information re-

garding the COVID-19 dial.

"It's more important than ever to get tested should you show any symptoms what-so-ever, or have been exposed to an individual who has tested positive" said Delta County Public Health Director Karen O'Brien, "Testing and quarantining/isolating, coupled with making a concerted effort to keep your distance from those outside of your household, wearing a mask and being vigilant on handwashing are key to helping us slow the spread of this virus."

Delta County has two community test sites: Delta County Health Department, located at 255 W. 6th St., in Delta. Tests are by appointment only Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. Call 970-874-2172. You can also get tested at North Fork EMS, located at 110 E. Hotchkiss Avenue, in Hotchkiss.

Appointments are Mondays and Wednesdays only, starting at 9:00a. Call for an appointment at 970-778-7426.

Delta County Memorial Hospital Update Delta County Memorial Hospital's (DCMH) biggest concern is staffing and their workforce, as well as the availability and access to critical-care beds in Delta and around the region.

As our regional and area hospitals become full, there is a very real chance of hospitals transferring overflow patients to other hospitals. Currently, DCMH has limited critical-care beds and may be asked to exchange patients if other hospitals do not have room for a transfer. We are working closely with our regional partners on bed capacities around the Western Slope, albeit our primary focus is still on the residents of Delta County.

In an effort to stop employee to employee spread of infection at the hospital, administration has asked all employees that can work from home to do so. DCMH primary care clinics have increased telehealth visits and continue to see patients

that can be seen in-person by a provider. Providers are working every other day with their cohort or team to avoid cross-contamination.

"Remember, it is important that you do not delay care if you are in need" said Delta County Memorial Hospital's Chief Clinical Officer Jody Roeber, "Your local hospitals and healthcare providers are still open and a safe place to receive care. I would also like to say a huge thank you to everyone who is doing their part in keeping our communities, families, and healthcare workers safe."

Delta County School District Update Delta County School District (DCSD) works closely with the Delta County Health Department to monitor COVID cases within the School District and if needed, to quarantine students, staff, cohorts, and/or schools to maintain the health and safety of their school communities.

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) has specific guidelines for school or district closures that are followed closely. If cases continue to rise within the School District they may have to implement additional mitigation strategies.

Delta County School District's goal is to keep all students in in-person learning because their education is extremely valuable and the impact on our local economy when parents are allowed to continue to work.

The safety and health of our students and staff are of the utmost importance as they navigate this COVID pandemic.

The staff of DCSD has done, and is doing, an amazing job to provide for the educational needs of all students during this pandemic.

COVID-19 Resources

For additional COVID-19 resources, click [here](#) to see Delta County's COVID-19 resource page and [here](#) for the State's COVID-10 resource page.

REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

COVID POSITIVE LEADS TO EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER COHORT QUARANTINE

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE-On Nov. 21, the Montrose County School District (MCSD) COVID-19 Response Team (CRT) received confirmation that a staff member at Early Childhood Center (ECC) tested positive for COVID-19. MCSD has worked with Montrose County Public Health (MCPH) to contact trace any staff and students with whom the individual had prolonged close contact. The CRT determined that eight ECC staff members and 10 ECC students need to seek COVID testing and quaran-

tine through Tuesday, Dec. 1.

Montrose County School District has contacted all individuals affected, prior to public notification, and no other students or staff cohorts are affected at this time.

As our community plans for the Thanksgiving holiday, we urge all families to continue to take the precautions necessary for in-person instruction to continue.

The choices families make, and the consistent mitigation precautions families practice will allow us to continue in-person instruction during this pandemic.

Failure to take necessary COVID precautions may jeopardize our ability to maintain in-person school operations.

Please be mindful of local health conditions. As we enter the winter months and approach cold and flu season, we remind every community member to self-screen for temperature and symptoms prior to leaving the house for school or work, stay home when you are sick, wash your hands often, social distance whenever possible and wear your Personal Protective Equipment (masks) with consistency.

MHS TEMPORARILY TRANSITIONS TO REMOTE INSTRUCTION

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE-On Nov. 16, the Montrose County School District (MCSD) COVID-19 Response Team (CRT) received confirmation that additional individuals at Montrose High School (MHS) tested positive for

COVID-19. As a result of increasing COVID cases, quarantined cohorts, and the subsequent impact on school staffing, MHS will transition to remote instruction and operations Tuesday, Nov. 17; presently, MHS is scheduled to resume in-person

instruction and operations on Monday, Nov. 30 after the conclusion of Thanksgiving Break. All MHS parents, students, and staff have been notified of the temporary remote transition prior to this community communication.

OLATHE MIDDLE HIGH SCHOOL AND EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER QUARANTINE

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE-On Nov. 17, the Montrose County School District (MCSD) COVID-19 Response Team (CRT) received confirmation that a staff member at Olathe Middle High School (OMHS) and a staff member at Early Childhood Center (ECC) tested positive for COVID-19.

MCSD has worked with Montrose County Public Health (MCPH) to contact trace any staff and students with whom the individual had prolonged close contact, and who now need to quarantine and seek testing.

The CRT determined that eight OMHS staff members and 16 OMHS students need to quarantine through Wednesday,

Nov. 25, and seek COVID testing; the CRT determined that eight ECC staff members and 27 ECC students need to quarantine through Sunday, Nov. 22 and seek testing. Montrose County School District has contacted all individuals affected, prior to public notification, and no other students or staff cohorts are affected at this time.

POMONA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND MONTROSE ELEMENTARY AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM COHORTS QUARANTINE

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE-On Nov. 19, the Montrose County School District (MCSD) COVID-19 Response Team (CRT) received confirmation that a student at Pomona Elementary School (PES) who attends the Montrose Elementary After School Program (MEASP) tested positive for COVID-19.

MCSD has worked with Montrose County Public Health (MCPH) to contact trace any staff and students with whom the individual had prolonged close contact, and who now need to quarantine and seek testing.

The CRT determined that five PES staff, two MEASP staff, 19 PES students, two Oak Grove Elementary School (OGES) stu-

dents and two Johnson Elementary School (JES) students need to quarantine through Thursday, Nov. 26, and seek COVID testing. Montrose County School District has contacted all individuals affected, prior to public notification, and no other students or staff cohorts are affected at this time.

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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

MONTROSE EDUCATION FOUNDATION \$10,000 IMPACT GRANT AWARDED



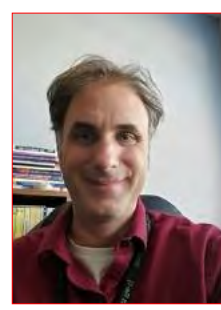
Kathy Gaber
Courtesy photo.

Brian Simpson
Courtesy photo.



Angelique Chavez,
Courtesy photo.

Heidi Voehringer.
Courtesy photo.



John Steele
Courtesy photo.

digital literacy at Centennial Middle School. In 2015 Teresa Brown of Columbine Middle School was the recipient for an afterschool program to provide Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) oppor-

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE-The Montrose Education Foundation Board evaluated the 2020 applications, and they are pleased to announce and congratulate this year's recipients; Kathy Gaber, Brian Simpson, Heidi Voehringer and John Steele for their Certify for Success Program. Honorary input from Angelique Chavez.

The Certify for Success program will be available to all 9-12 grade students and will provide a pathway toward earning industry-recognized certification(s) while they are still in high school. An Industry Certification is an industry recognized third-party or governing board administered assessment, examination or licensure that measures occupational competency and validates a knowledge base and skills that demonstrate mastery in a particular industry.

Certify for Success addresses and supports the needs of all students to prepare for and make thoughtful decisions about their future plans. According to the Colorado Talent Pipeline Report, only 77 out of 100 Colorado 9th graders will graduate on time and of those 77 students, only 44 will enroll in post-secondary training or college of which only 23 will complete their post-secondary education within 6 years and 18 of them will enter the intended employment. Montrose High School is trying to provide our students with opportunities which allow them to explore career pathways early, so they can see viable options and determine their own path

to a successful career.

Our Work-based Learning program's vision is to align student passions with community partners so our students can learn about work, through work, and at the workplace from professionals.

Montrose Education Foundation created the Impact Grant Award in 2011 to support teacher's innovative projects that enhance educational opportunities in the Montrose and Olathe School District. Under the current award guidelines, only Teacher of the Year recipients can apply. Next year the guidelines will be expanded to allow the current year's Teacher of the Year Nominees the opportunity to apply also. MEF is excited about the prospect of receiving more Impactful Ideas annually. Teacher of the Year nomination forms will be available in February 2021 at the Montrose County School District office and at the school's front office.

In 2011, the Award went to Jamie Simo to create a family resource room at Northside Elementary School called "The Helm."

In 2012, it was awarded to Crystal Sabatke-Smith and Chris Thompson to implement the "Re-Inventing Schools Coalition" program at Centennial Middle School.

In 2013, Kathleen Pirani, Heidi Voehringer and Kathy Gaber at Montrose High School received the award for its Post-Secondary and Workforce Readiness Center; "The PoWer Center."

In 2014 the award went to Greg Whitsell to purchase Chromebooks to promote

opportunities to students; "The STEM Center." In 2016 Meghan Washchbusch at Centennial Middle School created a state-of-the-art STEM Lab called "The Creation Center."

In 2017 Brian Simpson was the recipient for his Engineering Design & Development Course, so they could visit every third-grade classroom to inspire and empower their education.

In 2018 Chris Thompson from Centennial Middle School received the award for the "Fantastic Plastic Project" which offers a student-designed and driven 3D print recycle program for all schools.

In 2019 the recipient was Jeff Mitchell of Olathe Middle High School for an aerial drone program called "Olathe's Wings." The Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) have been adopted by the State of Colorado as well as the Montrose County School District. NGSS emphasize application of content learning in meaningful ways to solve problems.

The Montrose Education Foundation is very honored to help support the implementation of these innovative ideas. 2020 \$10,000 Impact Grant Award Recipients

Kathy Gaber, MHS Family/Consumer Ed Teacher

Brian Simpson, MHS Industrial Arts Teacher

Heidi Voehringer, MHS Assistant Principal
John Steele, Secondary Curriculum/GATE/STEM Coordinator

Angelique Chavez, Engagement Center Coordinator



LOCAL AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR PUBLISH NEW BOOK

Special to Art & Sol

MONTROSE-Local author Arlyn Macdonald teamed up with local illustrator Kate Gates to publish a new book entitled, *Celebrate! Ceremonies and Blessings for Individuals, Families, and Spiritual Communities* through Balboa Press.

"The book is a resource for helping people integrate the spiritual back into their lives through blessing ceremonies, such as Greeting the Dawn, Naming Ceremony, Blessings for Children, Women, and Men, and a Healing Ceremony for communities impacted by trauma," said Macdonald. "There is even a chapter to help people create their own ceremonies."

This is the first book Kate Gates has professionally illustrated and she chose circular designs to enhance the cover and each section in the book. "The circle is a symbol of unity and wholeness," she said, "and the designs include symbols that illustrate the different categories, such as holidays and changing of the seasons."

Macdonald has previously published three self-help books based on the ancient Hawaiian philosophy of Huna and is a freelance writer for local publications. "It was a joy to work with an illustrator for this book," she said. "Kate is a wonderful artist, and her illustrations reflect the heart of the ceremonies."

The book is available online at Balboa Press, Amazon, AmazonSmiles, and Barnes & Noble. It will also be in the Hay House catalog after the first of the year. Because of the covid crisis, the book launch has been postponed indefinitely, but locally the books are available from the author. Call 970-252-0908 for more information.



Local author Arlyn Macdonald teamed up with local illustrator Kate Gates to publish a new book entitled, *Celebrate! Ceremonies and Blessings for Individuals, Families, and Spiritual Communities* through Balboa Press. Courtesy photo.

THANK YOU FOR READING.



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COMMUNITY NEWS BRIEFS

SHARE FAVORITE DESSERTS @ VIRTUAL LIBRARY EVENT

Montrose Regional Library

MONTROSE-The winter season is a wonderful time to gather around friends and family to enjoy some tasty treats! Regardless of the holidays you celebrate, you're more than welcome to join us and discuss your favorite desserts for this festive season. All attendees will receive a written record of the recipes discussed.

You could tell us about a recipe you've learned from family, one you've tried yourself, or start on your merry way with one of our delicious books:
-Delia Smith's Winter Collection: Comfort Food by Delia Smith

-Wintersweet: Seasonal Desserts to Warm the Home by Tammy Donroe Inman

Email Taylor at tevans@montroselibrary.org to join this virtual event on Wednesday, Dec. 9, at 6pm.



Wash your hands

Thank you for doing your part
to keep CO safe!



GAIL MARVEL
Montrose Author
& Reporter

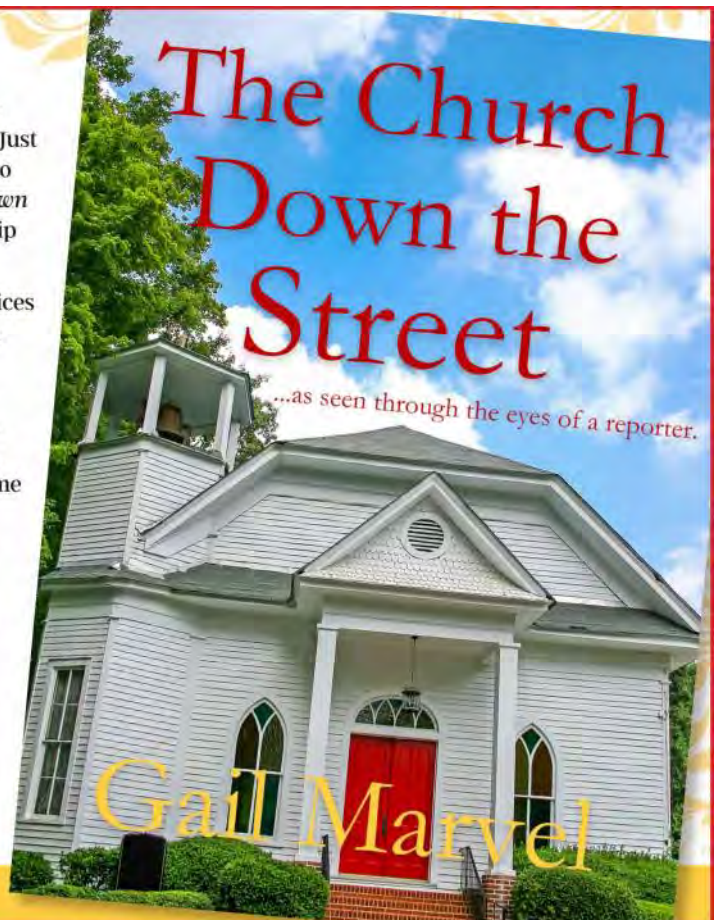
It is human nature to compare ourselves with others, and the church is no different. Just as Paul's Epistles allowed the early church to peer into the lives of each other, *The Church Down the Street* allows readers to peer into the worship services of other churches.

The presence of a reporter in the worship services produced mixed reactions. While many church leaders were grateful for the publicity and exposure for their congregation, others were uneasy. One pastor said, "The minute I saw you

I knew this wasn't my best sermon!" Another pastor said, "We didn't like everything you wrote...but we've made some changes." One elder defended his congregation's lack of friendliness, "Maybe no one spoke to you because of the perfume you were wearing."

Excerpts and anecdotes from approximately 120 church visits are organized in a topical format (Hospitality, Program and Source Material, Music, Meditations and Invitations, and Sermons) and include mainstream denominations, as well as Mormon, Jehovah's Witness, Christian Science, New Age, and Quaker Silent Worship. *The Church Down the Street* is unbiased and reports on the worship experience, not on the denomination.

Available online at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) and [WingedPublications.com](https://www.WingedPublications.com)



FAITH COLUMN: DEACON SPEAKIN' WITH DWIGHT HARP



Anglican Deacon Dwight Harp. Courtesy photo.

So, now where do we go?

That was the question I posed to my boss following the publishing of my last article. Her response was to explore, in a thoughtful way, the holidays. This COVID thing immediately jumped to mind. "How can I/we celebrate?" Masks, social distancing, health restrictions, lock downs and all the ancillary things don't make the holidays easy. I'm certain these and other thoughts flooded her mind too.

Thanksgiving is just around the corner. Gosh!

Most American school children learn that Thanksgiving started when Native Americans and English Pilgrims ate their fill in Plymouth in 1621. True enough, but the two groups fought a vicious war less than 30 years later.

Popular memory largely clings to the image of a hearty harvest celebration, while ignoring the deadly forces that would ultimately drive apart the descendants of that first feast.

The Pilgrims probably considered their sober 1623 Day of Prayer the first 'true' Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving Day is a national holiday in the United States, and Thanksgiving this year occurs on Thursday, Nov. 26. The holiday usually is filled with feasting, football, and family. How will we observe the second largest holiday in the American calendar this year?

We'll explore how important and critical holidays and vacations are later.

The biggest holiday in the world is Christmas and may be the genesis of the word holiday. The word 'holiday' comes from the Old English *haligdaeg* (*halig* "holy"

daeg "day").

Members of the early church would be astonished to think the customs and practices we associate with Christmas are incorporated into a celebration of Christ's birth. Originally a popular annual Roman event called Saturnalia, honoring the Roman Agricultural god Saturn, centuries passed before Christ's name was attached to it. The celebration was absorbed into the early Roman church and given the name,

"Christ Mass,"

A political compromise it was to be sure. Early theologians railed against this morphing of the Roman pagan celebration into a holy day in the new (Christ following) church calendar. That proves politics have been around for a long time. That politicization example might punch a hole in your Christmas spirit. It is not my intent to do so.

Suffice it to say that I look forward to this season eagerly. In my youth, I dreamt of things under the tree. Now I dream of how the coming of our Messiah, The Christ, saves us and nurtures us and brings us joy.

My mind floods when I unlock the memory box of my two trips to Israel. I was reminded by one of my three mentors, the Bishop of Rio Grande Diocese, Dr. Terrance Kelshaw, that Israel is a secular country. He hastily added that it is also the land of the Holy One.

Of the gospel accounts of Jesus' birth I enjoy most the Luken version. Shepherds abiding in the field with their flocks and Joseph and Mary's trip to Jerusalem pretty much puts His birth in the fall of the year associated with one of the harvest festivals.

As I sat on the ground the sheep must have roamed, my mind imagined the sun down and the stars twinkling and the sounds of the herd and the shepherds listening to the angel proclaiming the Good News. I can never read that story the way I did before I walked the land of the Holy One.

Another indelible memory is a choir of

many tour groups singing 'Adeste Fideles' in Bethlehem's Church of the Nativity, in their own languages. That was powerful. All holidays are not created equal. How do you celebrate New Years' Day, Resurrection Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day and, of course, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day? Each one has its own identity in each family. My New Year's Day is different now than it was 50 years ago as is my Christmas Day.

There are other days that evoke marvelous memories. I remember a birthday when my cake was made of Jello and the knife slid off the side as I tried to be a good host and serve all in attendance. Great fun! Anniversaries bring many good memories too. It's not so much what day it is as much as it is who you get to share it with.

Different groups celebrate holidays differently. That's OK. Let me paraphrase Paul's discussion with his audience in his letter to the Roman's on this subject:

"It is wrong for a Christian to celebrate a holiday if it is not celebrated in a way that glorifies God or to celebrate in a way that draws a weak Christian back into ungodliness."

These COVID days make the trip different. The celebrations have to be smaller. The travel may have to be altered. The holidays and vacations are nonetheless important. Don't let your life be controlled by things out of your control. I know that sounds a bit funny, but I'm suggesting you find a way as you observe the restrictions. Make your trip shorter. Have fewer guests at your big meal. If Grandma's house is in lock-down, go to Cousin Jerry's. It's important.

Holidays and vacations make you better physically and mentally and socially. Being away from the daily grind encourages better nerve cell health. Really! Folks who get away from it for a little while are less depressed and anxious.

There are gobs of other holiday and vacation benefits:

- Less stress and accompanying body inflammation
- Less heart disease
- Brighter outlook

Continued next pg

DEACON SPEAKIN' WITH DWIGHT HARP From previous pg

-More goal attaining motivation.
Can travel change your life? Yes!
Traveling gives you a new perspective on everything:
-Meeting new people
-Exposure to different cultures
-Without my Israel trip I'd never known I love falafel.
-New (good and bad) adventures
-Broadening one's comfort zone
When you travel, pack light. Give yourself plenty of opportunities to bring things from your trip back with you.
I cherish a Jerusalem Cross from an Aramaic shop in Jerusalem. I have a tie from Hawaii that brightens my mind each time I wear it. You may want to remember your

travels with a bit of perfume, a scarf or new shoes. Those memories are 'mini' mental vacations.
Smart people say your brain needs a break from constant work. Your body was not built to drive a desk all day.
Vacations/holidays/trips are mental health days. Reboot yourself. Connect with yourself and allow your body to recharge.
My trips to Israel did that in a big way. Not just physically but mentally and spiritually too. You may not have a big trip in your future right now but even small trips are so beneficial. Don't pass them up.
Wherever you go, whatever you do, be sure to take God along with you. There are

numerous Bible passages about your travels:
Isaiah 58:11 says--"The Lord will guide you always; He will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail."
What if I get lost?
Psalm 19: 105 should help--"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."
Plan something special for Thanksgiving. Maybe a trip to Grandma's house in New York is out this year.
Start a new tradition. Pile the family into the car and go to Paonia for an order of take-out.

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SAVE THE DATE! UPCOMING REGIONAL EVENTS

ONGOING-

MONTROSE FARMERS' MARKET is a weekly gathering of vendors selling local fruit, vegetables, meat, crafts, and more. **Date and time:** Saturdays 10 am-1 pm, first three weeks of November and December 2020, every other weekend starting Jan. 9th 2021

Location: Montrose Centennial Plaza and Centennial Meeting Room, 15-99 S Uncompahgre Ave, Montrose, CO 81401

Cost: Free to attend

Curbside service is still available in the winter season!

COMMUNITY BIBLE STUDY-Every Wednesday beginning Sept. 2, 2020, through April, 2021 - Community Bible Study live virtual meetings mornings and evenings: gospel of John. Classes for women and children. Call 720-635-0091 for more information or to register.

MONTROSE ALTRUSA-1st Tuesday of the month Program meeting; 2nd Tuesday of the month committee meeting; 3rd Tuesday of the month Business meeting. Meetings are held at the Hampton Inn conference room at Noon.

MONTHLY-

Nov. 26-26th Annual Friends Thanksgiving Dinner, Takeout and Delivery only. Pre-register at Montrosecommunitydinners.com.

Nov. 28-Small Business Saturday-shop local!

Dec. 9-Have any favorite holiday desserts? The winter season is a wonderful time to gather around friends and family to enjoy some tasty treats! Regardless of the holidays you celebrate, you're more than welcome to join us and discuss your favorite desserts for this festive season. All attendees will receive a written record of the recipes discussed. Email Taylor at tevans@montroselibrary.org to join this virtual event on Wednesday, Dec. 9, at 6pm.



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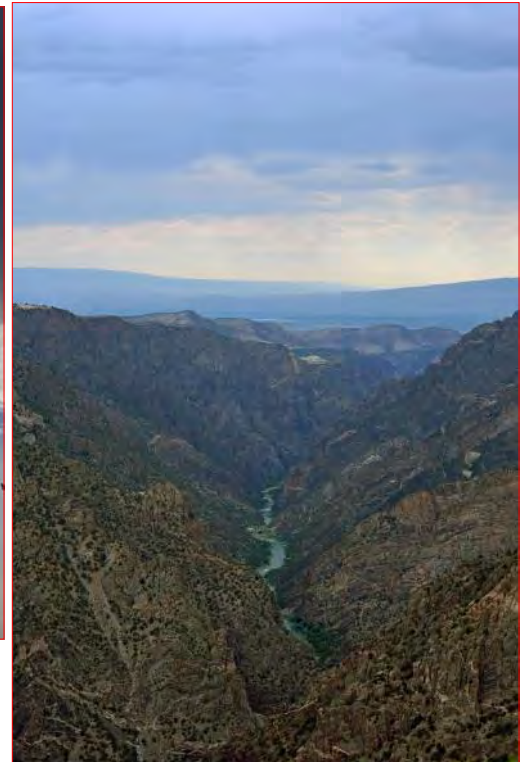
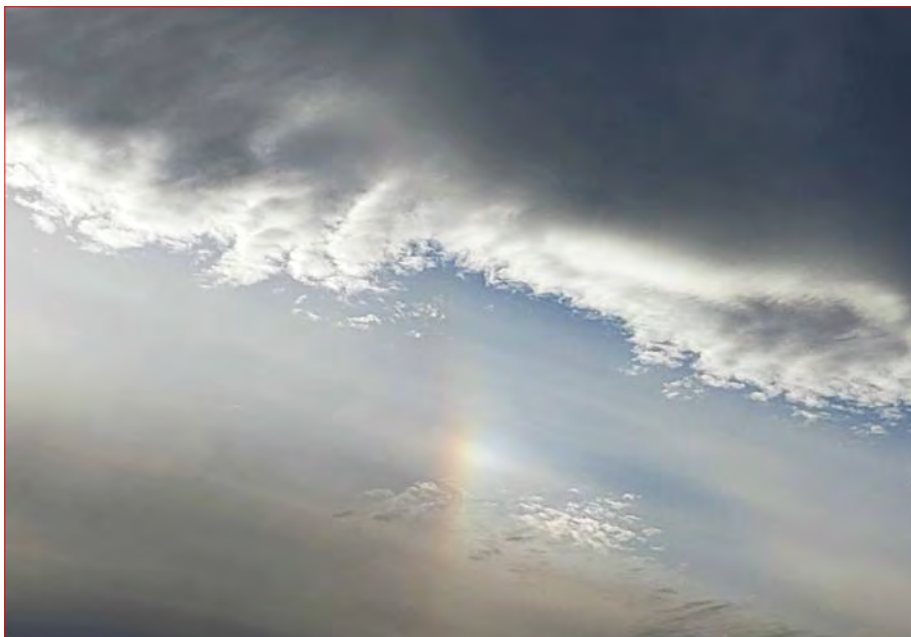
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READER PHOTO SPOTLIGHT: BY DEB REIMANN



Deb shared these photos of a rainbow looking Sun Dog over the Uncompahgre, above, and the Black Canyon of the Gunnison, right. Said Deb, "The Black Canyon of the Gunnison always brings to mind John Muir's quote of rivers: 'The rivers flow not past, but through us, thrilling, tingling, vibrating every fiber and cell of the substance of our bodies making them glide and sing.'"

A photograph of a black bear sitting on a wooden log, holding a tablet computer. The bear is looking at the screen. In the background, there are green mountains and a snow-capped peak under a blue sky with clouds.

*Save a tree –
Read the Mirror!*

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