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Searching for news in Watkins, Bennett, Strasburg, Byers, Deer Trail and Agate

Wednesday, February 19, 2025

Byers water system struggles continue

by **Kathy Smiley**
Staff Writer

BYERS — Occasional disruptions in service in Byers will occur as the water district's improvement project moves forward, but district officials are striving to keep shutdowns to a minimum.

The Byers Water & Sanitation District Board discussed the district's aging infrastructure and the project construction process at its regular business meeting Jan. 13. While board meetings generally occur at the district office, this one was held at the Kelter Library meeting room to accommodate the number of community members in attendance. A

Zoom link was also provided for remote access.

A Jan. 6 full-system water shut down was followed by a Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment (CDPHE) boiling order. At least two planned partial shutdowns occurred the next week.

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CARL STEITZ/For The Scout

Deer Trail students from Tessa Haight's fourth-grade class belt out the National Anthem before the annual basketball games with Byers Feb. 11. Singers are Arihanna Alfano, left, Marielle Mier, Kathryn Manriquez Bustamante, Robbert Lambert, Zoey Orsborn, Hailey Jeffrey, Haight, Izaiah Aragon, Catherine Wailes, AbdiAziz Haji, Karla Gonzalez Barajas, and Manuel Mier.

Longtime area leader dead at 69

by **Steven Vetter**
Managing Editor

WATKINS — After his almost two-decade stint of political advocacy for the I-70 Corridor was cut short by a cancer diagnosis, former Arapahoe County Commissioner and Colorado House District 56 Representative Rod Bockenfeld, 69, succumbed to the disease late last week.

News of Bockenfeld's passing originally circulated the state Capitol Feb. 13, about 1½ years after he announced his diagnosis. On Friday morning, his death was formally acknowledged on the floor of the Colorado House, including messages from House Minority Leader Rose Puglise and the Republican Caucus and the tolling of the Capitol's bells in his honor.

"I wish Godspeed to my predecessor, Rod Bockenfeld," said current HD56 Rep. Chris Richardson, R-Elizabeth, who won last November's election after Bockenfeld did not run again. "He was thought of fondly and with great respect throughout the region. [His wife] Susan let me know that the end was



Bockenfeld

peaceful, pain-free, and he was surrounded by his family."

"Rod Bockenfeld was a great man. He loved the people of eastern Arapahoe County and that part of the I-70 Corridor — the farmers and ranchers, teachers and small businesses," said Arapahoe County District 3 Commissioner Jeff Baker, who replaced Bockenfeld in 2016. "He was a friend and a mentor to me and countless other fiscal conservatives."

Bockenfeld served as county commissioner for the eastern portion of the county from 2004-16 until he was term-limited. Bockenfeld and his wife, Susan, also moved to Watkins, where they resided until his death. He was also a fixture at public events throughout the area, particularly Strasburg Hometown Days, Bennett Days, the Byers Fourth of July parade, and the Deer Trail Rodeo.

"He loved nothing more than driving me around to show me land owned by [you name the constituent] and what their dreams and goals were. What they hoped would be achieved on that land. Who could be trusted and who to be wary of," Baker added. "He stood for principled conservatism. Fiscal

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Strasburg park project back on track

by **Steven Vetter**
Managing Editor

STRASBURG — Just a week after it appeared on the verge of being significantly delayed, the Strasburg Community Park East project appears back on track for completion by the end of the year.

During a Feb. 14 special meeting, the Strasburg Metropolitan Parks & Recreation District board of directors voted 4-0 to approve a contractor for the park to be located on the old electric cooperative equipment yard along the east side of Wagner Street across from the existing Community Park.

Vice president Scott Gerrard, Lonnie Losh, Mitch Swanson and Angie Serna voted in favor while President Cindy Fahey was absent.

Brush-based Buildings by Design's revised bid of \$3,485,921 came in below the project's \$3.5 million budget and the board gave the go-ahead with the hopes of having the work commence the beginning of March.

"They came back with some really positive value-engineering options that didn't include us having to take any pieces of the

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SUBMITTED GRAPHIC

Among the features included in the Community Park East project along the east side of Wagner Street between Colorado and Sunset Avenue in Strasburg is a splash pad similar to the one depicted above.