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The I-70 Scout

# The I-70 Scout

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

Wednesday, March 19, 2025

## DT, Byers lose electricity after pole burnt



SUBMITTED PHOTO

A power pole in the middle of a field of corn stalks along the north side of I-70 near Bradbury-Krebs Road caught fire, broke and resulted in about 2,000 CORE Electric Cooperative customers from Byers and Deer Trail losing electricity midday March 14.

by **Steven Vetter**  
Managing Editor

While dropping between quarter- and a third-of-an-inch of precipitation along much of the I-70 Corridor, last Friday's quick-moving spring squall also included strong winds that knocked out power to a couple thousand residences between Byers and Deer Trail.

Just before 11 a.m. March 14, CORE Electric Cooperative received word of a power outage from both Byers and Deer Trail customers.

A search of the power grid found the breach to be just north of I-70 along Bradbury-Krebs Road between Strasburg and Byers.

Upon arrival, the top of a power pole was found burned, the brace dislodged and a power line sagging down towards a field of dry corn stalks below.

"An insulator on our 44kV transmission line failed that resulted in tracking from the energized conductor to the pole, which burned the pole top off," said CORE Ben-

nett Branch Manager Robert Kiess. "Crews immediately patrolled the line, found the problem, and worked to restore power to all members affected."

According to Kiess, the outage lasted 10:55 a.m. to 12:22 p.m. Friday and impacted 1,978 meters in both Byers and Deer Trail.

No fire occurred to the surrounding property.

Kiess said the weather was a causal factor.

"The moisture and wind played a part, yes," he concluded.

### STEPPED-UP FIRE PREVENTION

The day prior to the outage the power cooperative announced preemptive measures to mitigate fire hazards this spring, which could result in additional power interruptions.

"Due to high-risk conditions, CORE's alternate relay settings are now engaged in the Bennett and Sedalia districts, causing lines to de-energize the instant a fault, such as a branch or a tree in the line, is detected," said the

company's March 13 statement, which coincided with an eight-county Red Flag Warning, including Adams, Arapahoe and Elbert counties. "The line will stay de-energized until the cause of the fault is determined to no longer be a fire risk. Alternate relay settings do not preemptively turn off any part of our system, but since these settings do not allow the equipment to self-restore power, there may be sustained outages instead of blinks during this time.

"These settings are essential to reduce the risk of igniting vegetation or other fuels near CORE lines to keep our employees and communities safe."

### OTHER FRIDAY WEATHER IMPACTS

The strong winds of March 14 wreaked havoc on commuters traveling southeastern Colorado as all main arterioles off of I-70 between Limon and the Kansas and Oklahoma state lines were shut down most of the afternoon because of limited, in some cases zero, visibility.

## Byers H<sub>2</sub>O project hits more snags

by **Kathy Smiley**  
Staff Writer

BYERS — Both components of Byers Water & Sanitation District's improvement project are moving forward, but cost increases on one side and permit problems on the other are creating headaches.

The district board discussed project progress March 10. The \$4.2 million water system improvement project has two main components — installing a water line north of the railroad tracks and re-coating the interior of water storage tanks 1 and 2. Other improvements on tanks 1, 2 and 3

have occurred and additional water hydrants and valves will be installed. The project is being managed by consulting engineers GMS, Inc.

Concerning the water line project, GMS engineer Samuel Wood reported that the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) has not approved the installation plans for the portion on Main Street between the railroad and I-70. The original submitted plans showed the line installed inside the roadway.

"We had some back and forth with CDOT and it came down to they want-

**SEE BYERS WSD**  
**PAGE 24**

## Bennett trustees rebuke meeting crashers

by **Shylo Bockenfeld**  
Editorial Assistant

BENNETT — Two versions of a presentation to the Bennett Board of Trustees March 11 show that proposed administrative penalties could be a source of revenue to the town.

During the meeting, which was unceremoniously interrupted by uninvited online content, the board also approved a partial rebate on a pressure-releasing valve, announced the turnaround efficiency for building permits, planned for local expansion,

and discussed outreach efforts.

### MEETING INTERRUPTION

Shortly after the work session began several Zoom users changed their displays to create a hateful and profane array of videos with white supremacist overtones.

The users were removed from the digital platform and the meeting continued as planned. Information Technology staff reportedly adjusted security settings and continues to in-

**SEE BENNETT BOT**  
**PAGE 22**



STEVEN VETTER/The I-70 Scout

Ginger Williams takes aim during a Mother and Son Nerf Battle sponsored by the Deer Trail PTO March 8 at the school gymnasium. **SEE PAGE 4.**