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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 26, 2025

## Power outages last 23 hours over 3 days

Xcel says blown fuses at Watkins substation zapped network serving Watkins, Bennett west of County Road 129

by **Steven Vetter**  
Managing Editor

What led to a series of at least three power outages along the western edge of the I-70 Corridor early last week remains mostly a mystery.

Residents west of Brick Center Road on the Arapahoe County side of I-70 and Penrith Road on the Adams County side first reported service interrup-

tion from approximately 12 p.m. to 7 p.m. March 17 with a longer outage lasting from approximately 9 p.m. Tuesday until about 11 a.m. the following morning. A third outage reportedly lasted from about 2:15 to 4 p.m. Wednesday.

An Xcel Energy spokesperson was vague on her replies when asked for explanations about the series of outages except to say that the middle interruption impacted about 1,200 customers in parts

of the Denver, Aurora, Watkins and Bennett ZIP codes.

“It was caused by a number of blown fuses in the area of 48th Avenue and Imboden Road,” the power company spokesperson said Wednesday, citing 1,179 customers were impacted. “Crews were able to restore power at 10:51 this morning.”

Whether sustained strong winds were behind any or all of the outages was not released at press time.



Bennett Middle School presents its version of the youth musical “Peter Pan Jr.” March 13-14 at the school’s auditorium. Above, Capt. Hook, played by Adrian Sanchez, and Smee, played by Shaelyn Krieger, sing “I Gotta Crow.”

## As 75th year nears, Byers FPD tackles growth and expansion

by **Kathy Smiley**  
Staff Writer

BYERS — The “Byers Community Volunteer Fire Department” was established in December 1949, and the resulting Byers Fire Protection District No. 9 will recognize its 75th anniversary sometime this year.

The fire department has gone through several name changes over the course of its history, and discussion at the March 17 district board meeting centered around the need to update the official name and to provide documentation to meet new ambulance licensing requirements.

EMS Division Chief MacKenzie Schledorn-Rudden asked if directors remembered filing articles of incorporation or a business declaration as a nonprofit provider of emergency services with

the state. Chief Mike Dishner added that the Wildland Fire Management Section of the Colorado Division of Fire Prevention & Control also requires an official name change.

The information will be updated.

According to an article in the Jan. 5, 1950, edition of the Eastern Colorado News, a meeting held at the Byers American Legion Hall on Dec. 30, 1949, established the department, elected officers, and made plans to procure a fire truck.

The truck, carrying an 800-gallon tank “will operate in conjunction with the ones at Strasburg and Deer Trail, thereby providing this entire area with prompt, efficient fire-fighting apparatus,” the article reported.

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## ‘End in sight’ for occupation of new Strasburg FPD quarters

by **Steven Vetter**  
Managing Editor

STRASBURG — As call volumes continue to ratchet up, Strasburg’s current fire chief is looking forward to more comfortable accommodations for his current roster of first responders as well as continuing to fill vacancies.

“The end is in sight,” said Strasburg Fire Chief Pat Conroy during the March 10 fire board meeting when discussing the pending occupancy of the new crew quarters.

In addition to completing the installation of lower level cabinets, Conroy and board member Barrett Barkey reported that an unplanned drain in one of the bedrooms must also be remedied. An original certificate of occupancy date of April 10 appears unlikely but move-in by the beginning of May seems realistic.

An open-to-the-public grand opening for the new facility, which has tak-

en several years to come to fruition, is tentatively set for the second weekend of May.

The new during-shift living arrangements are a welcome sight for career staff which continues to see its workload increase, especially within Strasburg district boundaries.

During his chief’s report, Conroy noted that while the total call volume for January and February of 191 responses was 7% ahead of last year, the jump within district was even more significant.

“Up 20.8% from the first two months last year, just within our own boundaries, he said. “Appears to be just the nature of our continued growth.”

In February, 63 of 91 responses were in-district and, of those, 32 were EMS calls that resulted in 23 patient transports. About two-thirds of the total calls were EMS with only two fire responses — an accidental house fire in Deer Trail and one outside rubbish fire.



A grand opening of the new crew quarters, above, at the Strasburg Firehouse is tentatively set for the second weekend in May.

Conroy said efforts to fill the entire department roster continues, including efforts to fill a pair of full-time paramedic positions.

“Neither of our applicants worked out,” he said. “I’m in discussion with

one of our part-time paramedics to take over full-time, so we will, hopefully, have one filled shortly. We will be better with one filled. Really trying

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