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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, February 5, 2025

## Arapahoe adds 362 acres to Bijou Basin



by **Kathy Smiley**  
Staff Writer

**BYERS** — Arapahoe County has acquired an additional 362 acres near Byers — expanding its portfolio of protected land.

The land is located at the northwest border of Bijou Basin Open Space near Byers. Arapahoe County completed the recent acquisition in late January, purchasing the property from the Colorado State University Research Foundation.

“They reached out to us and wondered if we would be interested in acquiring it and we said ‘Yes, let’s talk,’” Arapahoe County Commissioner Jeff Baker told *The I-70 Scout* Jan. 31.

Baker added he wasn’t involved in the negotiations but was pleased when he received notice of the closing Jan. 27.

“The property has historically been leased for cattle grazing and the county’s preliminary plan is to continue the practice,” he said.

The newly acquired acreage consists of dry grassland and a small riparian corridor. In addition to preserving agricultural production, conservation of the area preserves scenic views and provides wildlife habitat for pronghorn, mule deer, and other animals and birds.

The land acquisition supports Arapahoe County Open Space’s 2021 Master Plan focused on identi-

fying critical conservation opportunities throughout the county. The purchase was funded by the Open Space Sales and Use Tax — a quarter-cent tax that was permanently reauthorized by voters in 2021.

Bijou Basin Open Space, now 3,012 acres with the acquisition, is located about five miles south of Byers at the junction of Quincy Avenue (CR30) and Bradbury Road (CR173). It is part of a larger mass of more than 15,500 acres of protected land in the West Bijou Creek area. This area includes the county’s 939-acre Mule Gulch Open Space; a 1,470-acre conservation easement held by the Colorado Cattleman’s Agricultural Land Trust; and several privately owned properties protected by conservation easements.

The Bijou Basin property is currently closed to the public and is being used for cattle grazing and dry land farming. The county is actively engaged in a master planning process for Bijou Basin Open Space; however, a portion of it is expected to be opened in the future for passive recreation use, such as hiking and wildlife viewing.

The Arapahoe County website notes that, once the Bijou Basin Master Plan is implemented and portions of the land opens to the public, “residents will be able to explore acres of rolling hills tucked

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Another 362 acres have been included to the boundaries of the Bijou Basin Open Space, shown in October 2024.

## Local sheriffs: State statute doesn’t allow cooperation with ICE

by **Steven Vetter**  
Managing Editor

As President Donald Trump’s administration ramps up arrests and deportation of illegal immigrants, particularly those that have committed crimes, both county sheriffs whose agencies cover the I-70 Corridor said they will not and cannot legally assist in those efforts.

In both cases, the Adams and Arapahoe County sheriff’s offices said last week they must uphold the laws of Colorado, specifically HB23-1100, which diverges significantly from federal law regarding immigrations and Customs Enforcement. Under state statute, Colorado law enforcement agencies are prohibited from detaining individuals based solely on an ICE detainer request; such detainees do not constitute a judicial warrant.

“We are dedicated to protecting our communities and will not participate in immigration enforcement or ‘roundups,’” said a statement from the Adams County Sheriff’s Office Jan. 29. “We are focused on fostering trust within our communities and upholding our values of dependability, collaboration, compassion and unity.

“We want to assure the community that we will not jeopardize our schools, churches, or communities by conducting federal immigration en-

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PHOTOS BY STEVEN VETTER/The I-70 Scout

A quick moving storm that rolled through much of the eastern half of Colorado early Jan. 30 dropped more snow the further east it went. While 2-3 inches fell in and around Watkins, Bennett and Strasburg and Byers, accumulations of 5 inches or more were reported in areas east of the Peoria interchange with I-70. Above, a state plow driver assesses the snowfall on the westbound on-ramp to I-70 at Deer Trail about 8 a.m. Thursday. Below, a well-known gaggle of local wild turkeys trot down snow-packed Fourth Avenue in Deer Trail the next morning.



## Pedestrian seriously injured after struck by pickup in Bennett

by **Steven Vetter**  
Managing Editor

**BENNETT** — As of this past weekend, a metro-Denver man is fighting for his life after he was struck by a pickup in Bennett Jan. 29.

At about 9:15 p.m. Wednesday, Colorado State Patrol troopers and Bennett-Watkins Fire/Rescue personnel were dispatched to the intersection of Highway 79, aka South First Street, and Bennett Avenue on reports of a crash involving a vehicle and a pedestrian.

Upon arrival, a Toyota Tacoma pickup was found facing north parked in the northbound lane just north of the intersection, while an adult male was lying on the north edge of the intersection.

“The vehicle was traveling northbound just south of the intersection with Bennett Avenue and the pedestrian crossing west to east in the crosswalk on the south side of the intersection,” a State Patrol spokesman said. “The vehicle’s front bumper struck the pedestrian.”

The pedestrian, a 34-year-old man from Lakewood, was transported to a Denver hospital with life-threatening injuries. At press time, his injury status was unchanged.

“It’s still being considered an injury crash. No update to being fatal,” the

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