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The I-70 Scout

The I-70 Scout

Volume 30, Number 42

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

Thursday, September 12, 2024

Byers School seeks \$17 million bond

by **Kathy Smiley**
Staff Writer

BYERS — Byers School District 32J will ask voters to approve a bond Nov. 5 to make improvements to the high school building.

The school board unanimously passed a resolution Sept. 4 to move forward with the ballot proposal.

The question will read: "Shall Byers School District No. 32J debt be increased by \$17.19 million,

with a repayment cost of not to exceed \$32.1 million, and shall District taxes be increased not more than \$1.3 million annually to pay such debt, for the purposes of implementing the first phase of the District's Master Plan.

The resolution states that the \$17.19 million bond will add classroom, academic and support areas to the existing high school; enhance career and technical educa-

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Bennett Days opens with Cops & Bobbers



STEVEN VETTER/The I-70 Scout

Amir Sandoval, 4, practices his casting to kick off Bennett Days weekend Sept. 6 at Cops & Bobbers at the Bennett Regional Park & Open Space fishing pond on the east edge of the Antelope Hills subdivision. The joint event between the Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office and the town of Bennett saw local residents, including youngsters, interact with officers from the sheriff's office. For more Bennett Days coverage, **SEE PAGE 24.**

Transportation matters plague Bennett School

by **Steven Vetter**
Managing Editor

BENNETT — The recent suspension of bus routes for Bennett School students appears partially remedied, at least for now.

"We have three drivers," Bennett Superintendent Robin Purdy told *The I-70 Scout* Sept. 7, the same time she indicated routes might not run again for the third consecutive week. "We transport almost 500 kids outside of city limits and another 200 in town. Was running country routes and then shuttling in-town kids, but can't do it with the drivers we have. We usually drive seven routes and a SPED route."

But, on Sept. 9, Purdy and Transportation Director Bridgette Cumley announced a three-two rotation where "regular" bus routes will alternate every other day, while the SPED route will be in service all four school days.

Under the new schedule, routes 41, 42 and 50 will pick up and drop off students on Monday and Wednesday, while routes 42 and 46 will run Tuesday and Thursday.

The roster of route drivers was reportedly

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State OKs property tax reduction

by **Steven Vetter**
Managing Editor

DENVER — When both houses of the Colorado Legislature approved more immediate property tax relief late last month, questions still arose about what the actual reductions would be.

According to House Bill 1001, which was the lone subject matter of an Aug. 26-29 special legislative session at the capitol, property tax rates for homeowners will be permanently reduced by about 2%, a savings of approximately \$50 for a \$500,000 home with an average tax burden.

Non-residential property owners will see their tax burden reduced by about 7% in the near term, and more in later years; savings projections for commercial properties start at approximately \$800 per \$1 million but, could eventually be as much as \$1,600 annually. But commercial properties still will be taxed at much higher rates than homes.

The final version of the property tax legislation was first approved by the House of Representatives Aug. 28 by a count of 58-3; four members had excused absences during the special session, including District 56 Rep., Rod Bockenfeld, R-Watkins, who is battling cancer. Nay votes were cast by two Democrats and one Republican.

The following day, state senators approved the bill 30-4 with District 21 Sen. Dafna Michaelson Jenet, R-Commerce City, whose area includes eastern Adams and Arapahoe counties, excused. Three of the four dissenting votes were from Democrats.

Gov. Jared Polis formally signed the emergency bill Sept. 4, which also resulted in the withdrawal of two property tax initiatives from the November ballot. Proponents of Ballot Initiatives 50 and 108 agreed to not bring additional property tax proposals forward for at least the next six years.

"Today's vote marks a huge win for Colorado taxpayers who have been hit with 30 percent average property tax increases," said Michael Fields, head of Advance Colorado that led the campaigns for Ballot Initiatives 50 and 108. "For two years, we have said the solution taxpayers need is to cut taxes significantly and then put a cap in place so Colorado can avoid this crisis in the future. This bill gets that job done."

"I believe it to be the best deal that we can do right now for homeowners, seniors, small businesses, for all property owners and, yes, local governments," said District 23 Sen. Barbara Kirkmeyer, R-Brighton, who sits on the legislature's joint budget committee and

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SUBMITTED PHOTO

While picking up trash on the southwest corner of I-70 and Manila Road late last month, a local resident found a part of a semi-automatic firearm. According to the report, an Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office deputy responded to the site at about 12:45 p.m. Aug. 29 and found the lower receiver of an AR-15 interwoven into the perimeter fencing. A sheriff's spokesman said efforts to contact the reporting party were unsuccessful and the piece was booked into evidence.