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

Thursday, December 5, 2024

Post-holiday fire totals Byers building

by **Steven Vetter**
Managing Editor

BYERS — No one was seriously injured or killed but a longstanding machine shop and its contents were destroyed during a late morning commercial building fire the day after Thanksgiving on the southeast edge of Byers.

Byers Fire Rescue and seven neighboring fire departments were dispatched to the 600 block of Pleasant Avenue about 10:30 a.m. Nov. 29 after neighbors reported a fire in one of two commercial buildings on the site. Upon arrival, the large steel building was found fully involved in flames and smoke.

“We took a defensive posture, meaning it was initially fought from the outside,” said Strasburg Fire Chief and lead fire investigator Pat Conroy. “The real challenge

was the volume of fire that was initially faced. There was large equipment and the typical flammable and combustible materials that are present in this type of building all along the I-70 Corridor.”

Neighbors as far as several blocks away reported hearing multiple explosions — in most cases a burst of three pops — that emanated from the burning building. Acetylene bottles, other welding materials, vehicles, and other machinery were among the contents torched and lost.

While the building and everything inside is considered a total loss — preliminarily estimated at “north of a million dollars,” according to Conroy — damage to equipment and materials outside of the structure was minimal and no neighboring structures, including

**SEE BYERS FIRE
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COURTESY ARAPAHOE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Firefighters and apparatus from seven local and neighboring fire departments joined forces to fight a commercial metal building fire on the southeast corner of Byers Nov. 29.

*Scents of
the Season!*



ISAAC MANAUGH/The I-70 Scout

Crystal Richie smells the holiday joy as she picks out her favorite candle from one of the many vendors in attendance at the Small Business Saturday event hosted by the Bennett Park & Recreation District Nov. 30. **SEE PAGE 7.**

Bennett town board renews contract with ArapCo Sheriff

by **Kathy Smiley**
Staff Writer

BENNETT — The Town of Bennett Board of Trustees enthusiastically approved a 2025 contract for policing services with the Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office Nov. 26.

The \$313,070 contract retains the same level of service the town currently receives and includes two full-time deputies and a half-time detective. The Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office has served the town of Bennett since May 1 of this year after negotiations broke down with the Ad-

ams County Sheriff's Office, which had served Bennett for decades.

The contract states that compensation for the base law enforcement services will be calculated as the actual cost to the county for the designated personnel, including all salaries, benefits, equipment and other direct and indirect costs, and \$313,070 is the base sum for the estimated annual costs for 2025. The base sum does not include overtime hours or victim advocate services as needed, which will be billed separately on a quarterly basis.

Town Manager Trish Stiles said the decision to partner with Arapahoe County is proving to be sound.

“This decision was made to enhance the quality, professionalism and responsiveness of law enforcement services for the community,” she said in her staff report on the contract. “While the initial transition presented challenges, the partnership has proven to be highly effective and beneficial for the town.”

Notable changes since **SEE BENNETT BOT
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STEVEN VETTER/The I-70 Scout

The Bennett Public Safety Building, formally opened earlier this fall along Palmer Avenue immediately west of the Fourth Street interchange, includes an office for the Arapahoe County Sheriff's deputies that patrol and investigators of incidents that occur in and around the town. Town trustees recently approved renewing the law enforcement contract with Arapahoe County after it switched from Adams County early this year. The Public Safety building, which was funded by Colorado Department of Local Affairs grant money, was the previous location of Bennett Public Works, which was moved to the north edge of town.