



The I-70 Scout

Volume 31, Number 24

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

Wednesday, May 14, 2025

'De-Bruced' Strasburg FPD hires new chief

by **Steven Vetter**
Managing Editor

STRASBURG — In addition to selecting its new fire chief, the Strasburg Fire Protection District found out last week that it has joined the ranks of "de-Bruced" special districts statewide.

As of May 8, Scott Smith was announced as the lone finalist for Strasburg Fire Chief and his hiring will become official during the district board meeting on Thursday, May 15. No surprises are expected when Smith is voted on.

Smith is a 39-year veteran firefighter/paramedic who is, most recently, a retired division chief from the Cimarron Hills Fire Department in eastern Colorado Springs where he served the last nine years. Previously, he served 19 years with West Metro Fire and, be-



STEVEN VETTER/The I-70 Scout

Incoming Strasburg Fire Chief Scott Smith, left, and outgoing Chief Pat Conroy pause for a photo during an open house of the new living quarters at the fire station.

fore that, was a volunteer responder.

During a May 10 open house that included tours of the re-

cently completed crew living quarters, Smith met with district staff and Strasburg residents alongside wife, Kassie,

and son, Garrett.

"Looking forward to it. An awesome opportunity in what looks like a very nice area," Smith said. "I wouldn't have shown interest if I didn't know this was a great department and opportunity."

While much of Smith's experience is in more urban areas, he said that he is familiar with the challenges associated with rural areas.

"A lot of experience with mutual aid calls to neighboring jurisdictions, especially rural fire departments, east of Colorado Springs," he added.

Smith, who was one of two candidates to have in-person interviews, will take over for Pat Conroy, who has served as Strasburg fire chief since December 2022. Conroy will remain with the department as division chief and focus more on his duties as fire marshal,

including investigations.

The district reportedly stayed within its budgeted amount of \$30,000 for the chief search, but the national nature of the hunt bumped up the expenses involved.

The second in-person interview was with a candidate from Virginia, which required the district to cover travel expenses. The search was also initially led by an employment consulting firm, which collected the original 21 applications that were whittled down to 17 serious candidates.

TABOR BYPASSED

During the May 6 special district election, residents voted to allow the district to "de-Bruce," allowing it to retain extra property tax revenue not usually allowed un-

SEE STRASBURG FPD PAGE 8

Byers School OKs new audio system

by **Kathy Smiley**
Staff Writer

BYERS — School announcements made over the intercom will come through loud and clear when Byers School is back in session in August.

The Byers School Board approved the purchase of an audio enhancement system May 8. Superintendent Tom Turrell said the current system does not cover the gym and ag shop, which is concerning, especially in emergency situations.

"This is going to solve those issues, and not just in those areas that we don't have coverage," he said, adding that outside areas will also be covered, including the playgrounds, football and baseball fields, and walking path. "We need this. I thought about writing a grant to get this covered, but I feel so strongly about it, I'd really like it to be in place before the start of school, and then maybe we can look for some money to help cover the cost as the year goes on."

Turrell said the school has had an audio enhancement system for many years.

"When I first got here, there were these big white boxes that were up in the corner of the rooms, and wires going all the way around, and speakers that essentially amplified the teacher's voice. If somebody was hearing impaired, it could also communicate in their hearing aids," he said. "Over the years, the mics and stuff for that system wore out the batteries. We

SEE BYER BOE PAGE 16



DAVID MAGDANZ/For The Scout

A resident bird takes advantage of a welcoming, unremoved Christmas wreath on the front door of a house in the Comanche Crossing subdivision on the southwest corner of the Strasburg interchange.

COMMUNITY CORRAL

Student plant sale scheduled at locale southeast of Byers

BYERS — Byers students will host a plant sale from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturday and Sunday, May 24-25, at 3055 S. County Road 201 (Peoria exit 322) between Byers and Deer Trail. Plants will include popular peppers from sweet to hot, tomatoes from cherry to extra large, herbs, bedding plants and flowers, annuals and perennials just in time for the summer bloom. For more information, text Patty at (720)530-0115.

Strasburg Community Church creates cancer support group

STRASBURG — A support group for people afflicted with cancer is forming in Strasburg. Meetings are planned at 6:30 p.m. on the first and third Tuesdays of each month beginning in May (May 6 and 20) at Strasburg Community Church, 56155 Sunset Ave. Attendees will meet in small groups for discussion and support. For additional information, call (720)375-1140 or e-mail to contact@strasburgcommunitychurch.com.

Byers Cemetery closure set for maintenance, upgrades

BYERS — Maintenance and improvements are scheduled at Byers Community Cemetery from May 9-16, making it inaccessible for that period. The upgrades are possible through community donations. The cemetery serves Byers and Strasburg. Donations can be mailed to the Byers Community Cemetery Association (BCCA) at P.O Box 733, Byers, Colo. 80103. For more information, call (303)917-5413.

Lawn care class scheduled for Aurora Central Library

AURORA — Colorado State University Master Gardeners will host “Lawn Care Made Easy” for adults ages 18 and up from 4-6 p.m., Thursday, May 15, in the Central Large Community Room at Aurora Central Library.

Byers recreation, water districts hold elections

Local board races were scarce during May 6 Election Day for Colorado special districts but both the Byers water and recreation districts welcomed voters last Tuesday. Byers Park & Recreation District incumbents JaLee Kitzman, Janet Herman and Wendy Hise all won reelection for the next four years, while newcomer Lindsay Cox will serve a two-year term. Willard “Willy” Elliott was the lone incumbent not reelected and Andy Cox lost his bid to be on the

board. The Byers Water & Sanitation District’s race for three positions was won by all three incumbents — Annette Tarantino, Kelli Morrissey, and Janet Herman. Lindsay Cox and Heath Epperson were the other two candidates. Most other area special districts had a lack of candidates to follow through with board elections. The next round of regularly scheduled special district elections will occur in May 2027.

The class will teach participants how to grow a lush lawn with fewer inputs and less maintenance. Long-time Master Gardener Donnetta Wilhelm will discuss common mistakes homeowners make with lawn maintenance and discuss lawn care best practices to spend less time and use less water and chemicals while growing a healthier lawn. To register, visit <https://auroraco.libnet.info>.

’Burg Comanche VIP Seniors plan monthly potluck May 20

STRASBURG — The Strasburg Seniors Comanche VIP Association’s St. Patrick’s potluck begins at 11:45 a.m., Tuesday, May 20, at the Strasburg Community Center, 56423 Westview Ave. The speaker was undetermined at press time. Watch next week’s edition of *The I-70 Scout* for more information. The group, which provides a social outlet for area seniors, meets at 11:45 a.m. the third Tuesday of each month. For more information, call Mary Humphrey at (303)622-4695.

Health professionals slated for local business luncheon

BYERS — The I-70 Corridor Chamber of Commerce will host its monthly Lunch & Learn from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., Wednesday, May 21, at May Farms in Byers. Representatives from the Lincoln Health Byers Clinic will speak and

sponsor lunch. To RSVP for lunch, call (720)731-1954 or e-mail to officei70ccoc@gmail.com by Friday, May 16. Space is limited.

‘Australian Adventure’ slated for Bennett Lutheran church

BENNETT — Australia is key to one vacation Bible school to run from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., Monday through Friday, June 2-6, at Christ Our Redeemer Lutheran Church. Participants in an “Epic Australian Adventure: An Unforgettable Journey with Jesus” will encounter amazing animals, lush landscapes, stunning sea life, and wondrous wilderness with Jesus as their guide: “I am the way, and the truth, and the life,” John 14:6. The church is located at 275 Ash St. Bennett. For more information and to register, call (303)644-3044.

Bennett office hours slated by Boebert staff members

EATON — Staff from Rep. Lauren Boebert’s office will hold mobile office hours for Arapahoe County residents from 3:30-5 p.m., Tuesday, May 20, at Anythink Library, 495 Seventh St., Bennett. Staff from Boebert’s office can help constituents get answers from federal agencies, like veterans seeking to get care from the Veterans Administration, travelers needing expedited assistance for a passport on short notice, taxpayers harassed by the In-

ternal Revenue Service, and senior citizens having issues with the Social Security Administration or Medicare. Constituents can also express their views on legislative issues or request special congressional commendations from the congresswoman.

Aviation trends, prevention topic of class at CASP fly-in

WATKINS — Colorado Air & Space Port will host a fly-in from 8-11 a.m., Saturday, May 31, at the facility’s terminal, 5200 Front Range Parkway, Watkins. Chapter 301 of the Experminatal Aircraft Association will serve breakfast throughout the event with proceeds benefiting the Young Eagles educational, scholarship and flight experience programs of the chapter. The chapter has flown more than 10,000 Young Eagles ages 8-17 to give them first-hand aviation experience. Nelson Wolfmeier will discuss accident trends and prevention in Colorado. The seminar starts at 9 a.m. in the terminal upstairs conference room. Fuel discounts will be available during the event. For more information, call Leslie Brown at (720)523-7313.

Seat belt enforcement week: More than 1,000 tix written

GOLDEN — The Colorado State Patrol and 57 local law enforcement agencies statewide cited 1,108 drivers during the first seat belt enforcement period of 2025 April 7-13. During the week, the agencies increased patrols and focused on Colorado’s new seat belt and car seat laws. The State Patrol cited 465 drivers, and the local agencies writing the most tickets were the Westminster Police Department (78), Jefferson County Sheriff’s Office (59), and Larimer County Sheriff’s Office (47). “Buckling up is non-negotiable,” said Col. Matthew C. Packard, Colorado State Patrol chief. “Not only does it protect you, but it also keeps others in the vehicle safer.” The odds of a belt-restrained driver sustaining a fatal injury is 137% higher when the passenger behind them is unbuckled, Packard added.

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ARAPAHOE COUNTY




All County facilities will be closed
Monday, May 26, in observance of the Memorial Day holiday.



Property valuations appeal window open through June 9

Arapahoe County property owners recently received their Notification of Valuation statements. If you feel the valuation doesn't accurately reflect the value of your property, you can submit an appeal through the County Assessor's Office.

Visit arapahoeco.gov/assessor to learn how.

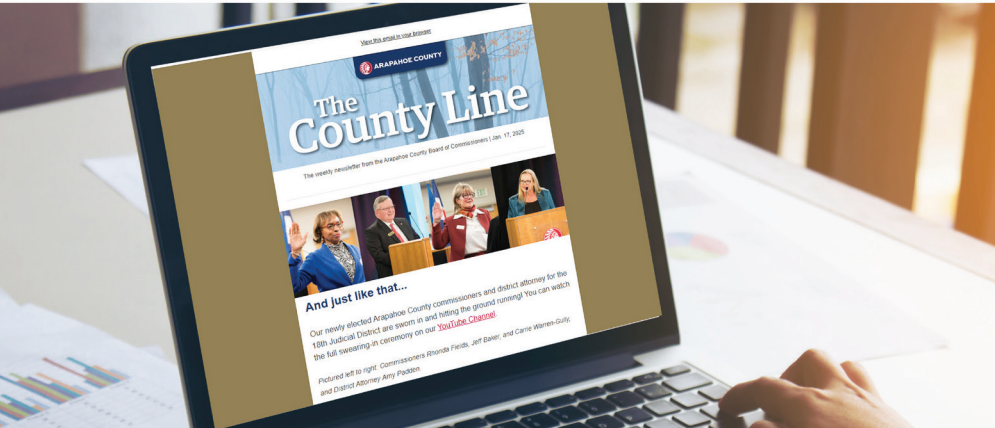




Public Works & Development Play Date at Dove Valley

Join us for Arapahoe County Public Works and Development's Play Date **June 6, 9 a.m.–1 p.m.** at Dove Valley Regional Park, 7900 S. Potomac St., Centennial.


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LUNCH MENUS

- AGATE**

Thursday, May 15: Hot dog, chips.
Monday, May 19: Pizza.
May 20-22: Cook's choice.
- BENNETT**

Thursday, May 15: Hamburger, French fries, sliced pickles, Sidekick Smoothie.
Monday, May 19: Chicken chaquilles, chips, cheddar, tossed salad, banana.
Tuesday, May 20: Cheesy beef steak, seasoned potatoes, mandarin oranges.
Wednesday, May 21: Chef's choice.
Thursday, May 22: Peanut butter and jelly sandwich, chips, fresh baby carrots, fruit cup.

- BYERS**

Wednesday, May 14: Hot turkey and cheese sandwich, Tater Tots, peaches.
Thursday, May 15: Spaghetti with meat sauce, bread sticks, garden salad, pears.
Friday, May 16: Cheeseburgers, French fries, tropical fruit.
Monday, May 19: Chef's choice.
Tuesday, May 20: Chef's choice.
Wednesday, May 21: No lunch.
- STRASBURG**

Thursday, May 15: Cheeseburgers.
Friday, May 16: Hot dogs.
Tuesday, May 20: Corn dogs.
Wednesday, May 21: No lunch.

Church Directory

Strasburg Presbyterian Church

56635 Iowa Ave., Strasburg, CO
www.spcusa.us
303-622-4325
• Sunday Worship 10 a.m.



Saron Lutheran Church

1656 Main St. | Strasburg, CO | saronstrasburg.org
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Sun., 9:00 a.m.	Sunday School
Sun., 10-10:30 a.m.	Fellowship; 10:30 a.m. Church
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Revelation 22:4 And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.



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Info: strasburgorthodox.org



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SPORTS



Corridor athletes ready for state track weekend

by **Steven Vetter**
Managing Editor

The annual Colorado High School Track & Field Championships are scheduled this Thursday through Saturday and a large contingent of I-70 Corridor runners, throwers and jumpers are expected to be among the contenders in numerous events.

One change of note for spectators attending the three days at Jeffco Stadium at Sixth Avenue and Kipling Street in Lakewood is the implementation of paid parking. The fee is \$10 per day.

“All vehicles will enter the Jeffco Stadium lot off of Kipling heading north,” a statement from the Colorado High School Activities Association said. “Parking lots will open one hour before gates open.”

Parking permits and tickets can be purchased online by accessing gofan.co.

Families, friends and fans are urged to get to the stadium early to help navigate traffic delays and lengthy ticket lines.

Thursday’s activity for 1A, 2A and 3A schools gets started at 1:30 p.m. for field events and 2 p.m. for races on the track.

All five classifications participate throughout Friday and Saturday. On Friday, after the National Anthem, the first track event is scheduled for 8:10 a.m. with the opening field events taking place at 8:30 a.m. On Saturday, field events again commence at 8:30 a.m. with the track event to be the 2A boys 110-meter hurdle finals at 9:30 a.m.

While heat information was unavailable at press time, local qualifiers for this weekend’s state meet were known. The top 18 times and distances qualify in 2A and 3A while the top nine make the cut in 1A.

For a full schedule of events, visit chsaanow.com.

BYERS IN 2A BOYS

Leading the green-and-white’s individual contingent will be sophomore sprinter Ben McPherson, who is the lone 2A boys competitor entering this weekend with a 100-meter dash time under 11 seconds; he ran a 10.99 at the Burlington Invitational May 2. McPherson also has the third-best regular season time in the 200-meter dash (22.44), 0.15 seconds behind top-seeded Jonah Ritter of Mancos. McPherson is second-seeded in the 400-meter dash with a time of 49.57, 0.18 seconds behind Peyton’s Caleb Kearse. McPherson also recorded the second-best 2A long jump in the regular season (21-11¼).

Bulldog junior Quincy Eacret is also qualified in the three shortest track events — eighth in the 100-meter dash (11.22 seconds), 12th in the 200 meters (22.83), and fifth in the 400 (50.58).

A third Bulldog, senior Jake Anderson, is ranked ninth in the 400 meters (51.01).

The Eastwood brother duo of senior Cameron and sophomore Caleb will be well represented in



SCOTT GERRARD/For The Scout



ISAAC MANAUGH/The I-70 Scout

Left photo, Lady Tiger Jessica Venneberg is a multi-event qualifier for the Colorado State Track & Field Championships at Jeffco Stadium in Lakewood this Thursday through Saturday. Right photo, Byers’ sprint duo of Quincy Eacret, left, and Ben McPherson are state qualifiers in multiple events — Eacret in the 100- and 200-meter dashes and McPherson in the 100-, 200- and 400-meter dashes and in the long jump. McPherson is the lone 2A boy to run sub-11 seconds in the 100-meter dash during the regular season.

the hurdle events and the high jump — Cameron is ranked sixth in both the 110-meter hurdles (16.00) and high jump (6-1) and 16th in the 300-meter hurdles (43.39), while Caleb had the final qualifying spot in the 110 hurdles (17.20) and was among six with the 11th best high jump (5-11).

The Bulldog 4x200 and 4x400 relay teams also concluded the regular season with the top times — 1:29.20 and 3:26.51. The green-and-white was almost 1½ seconds faster than the second-best time in the 4x200 and almost 2 seconds ahead in the 4x400. The Bulldogs’ best 4x100 time of 44.42 had them sitting second, 0.38 seconds behind top-seeded Holyoke. Byers is the defending state champions in the 4x400.

“A lot of good, hard work has gone into this season, but it doesn’t mean a whole lot if you don’t bring your A game and back it up at state,” said Byers head coach Kameron Weber, himself a state champion during his time at Strasburg. “Now it’s a matter of being as healthy as possible and competing at your best.”

Competitors are allowed to compete in only four events at the state meet, meaning relay teams could be mixed and matched.

LADY BULLDOGS

For the green-clad girls, freshman Sydney Smith has had a strong rookie campaign, including entering the state meet with the eighth-best time in the 100-meter dash (12.84).

Junior Michaela Casey has the 15th best time in the 400 meters.

Senior Hope Linnebur will look to end her high school career on a high note in the hurdle events. She is currently seeded third (46.87) in the 300 meters and 10th in the shorter 100-meter race (16.67). Senior classmate Averie Eymann enters state No. 13 (49.17) in the 300-meter hurdles.

Sophomore Reese West has qualified in the top 18 in three individual races — ninth in the 1,600 meters (5:26.97), 10th in the 3,200 meters (11:53.99), and 14th in the 800 meters (2:27.56).

Entering the high jump in a tie with the 16th best height (4-9) is freshman Grace Shelley.

The Lady Bulldogs have also qualified in the top seven or better in all four relays — second in the 4x400 (4:11.85), fourth in the 4x200 (1:48.93), fifth in the 4x100 (51.50), and seventh in the 4x800

**SEE STATE TRACK PREVIEW
PAGE 6**



STEVEN VETTER/The I-70 Scout

Lady Indian senior Elizabeth Hightower enters this weekend’s state track meet with the third best throws in both the 3A girls discus and shot put.



CARL STEITZ/For The Scout

Byers senior Hope Linnebur has qualified in both 2A girls hurdle events for this weekend’s state track meet, including coming in with the third best time in the 300-meter hurdles.

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NOTICE OF PROPOSED BUDGET BYERS SCHOOL DISTRICT 32J FISCAL YEAR 25-26

Notice is hereby given that the proposed budget has been submitted to the Board of Education of the Byers School District 32J for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025, and has been filed in the office of the superintendent where it is available for inspection. There will be a public hearing on the budget May 16th at 1:00 p.m. in the District Office of the Byers School District. The proposed budget will be considered for adoption at a regular meeting of the Board of Education of the District on June 19, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. The District office is located at 444 E. Front Street. Any person paying school taxes in said district may at any time, prior to the final adoption of the budget, file or register his objections thereof.

BOARD OF EDUCATION
BYERS SCHOOL DISTRICT 32J

Stacy Sondburg, Business Manager
Dated: May 9, 2025



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ISAAC MANAUGH/The I-70 Scout
STEVEN VETTER/The I-70 Scout
Strasburg throwers Preston Mace, left, and Mason Dickens are both qualified for the state track meet in the shot put. Mace enters the weekend seeded fourth, while Dickens is eighth.

STATE TRACK PREVIEW

FROM PAGE 5

(10:30.45). This year's state meet will not include the 800-meter sprint medley.

3A QUALIFIERS
STRASBURG GIRLS

Similar to McPherson for the Byers boys, Lady Indian senior Peighton Marrero will choose from a number of events she has qualified in. The two-time defending state champion in the 2A 400 meters enters this state track meet with the third best time in 3A (57.43) and also concluded the regular season in a tie for sixth in both the 100-meter dash (12.61) and 200 meters (25.76); second in the 300-meter hurdles (45.98); and fourth in the triple jump (34-9½).

Lady Indian sophomore Addison Kent has the eighth-best qualifying time in the 100-meter hurdles (16.36) and is seeded ninth in the 300-meter hurdles (48.27).

For the first time in recent memory, the Strasburg throwing program is well represented in both CH-SAA-sanctioned disciplines. The trio of senior Elizabeth Hightower (126-6) and juniors Taryn LaForce (112-5) and Miah Klump (110-11) enter the discus with seeded third, 11th and 15th, respectively. In the shot put, Hightower (36-4) has the third-longest 3A throw, LaForce (36-3) is fourth, and junior Elizabeth Zobell (33-6) recently jumped up to 16th.

Freshman Laci Zimmerman looks to threaten the upper echelon of high-jumpers, coming in with the fourth-best height (5-3¼).

The Lady Indians also have qualifying times in two relays — fourth in the 4x400 (4:11.45) and eighth in the 4x200 (1:47.73).

INDIAN BOYS

Similar to their girl counterparts, Strasburg's boys program will look to throwers to threaten the gold medal spot on the shot put podium. Senior Preston Mace will enter the event seeded fourth (47-3) while sophomore Mason Dickens is eighth (45-9½).

Junior Cade Hemphill used a strong showing in the Patriot League meet to garner a tie for the 17th-seeded time in the 100-meter dash (11.16).

Junior Will Hauser is tied for the 15th seed in the 300-meter hurdles (41.59).

Sophomore Ayden Dodge, who took home the 2A state high jump title last year, enters this year's 3A competition in a seven-way tie for the 11th-best jump (6-1).

Sophomore Jayden Miller is tied for 16th in the long jump (20-7½).

The Indians also qualified in all four relays — fourth in the 4x400 (3:25.83), eighth in the 4x200 (1:30.93), 14th in the 4x100 (44.11), and 17th in the 4x800.

LADY TIGERS

For Bennett, senior standout Jessica Venneberg can also choose from a wide array of disciplines. Individually, Venneberg took up the 100-meter hurdles for the first time in high school about a month ago and posted 3A's 14th-best qualifying time (16.84). She is also in a seven-way tie for 10th in the high jump (5-1) and 12th in the triple jump (33-10½).

Junior Kaurlie Voorhies has the 11th best long jump (11-4).

The Lady Tigers 4x100 (51.23) and 4x200 (1:49.16) relay teams enter the weekend seeded 13th and 12th, respectively.

LONE TIGER BOY

Bennett freshman Karim Lori is the lone hope for the Bennett boys, entering the triple jump in the 10th seed (42-2¾).

DEER TRAIL IN GIRLS 1A

The Lady Eagles' effort to defend last year's 4x200 relay state title won't be easy as they posted the ninth and final qualifying time (1:53.06).

Individually, junior Megan Donovan is seeded third in both the 100- (12.74) and 200-meter (26.71) dashes. Senior Allen Sanchez-Neal also qualified in the 100-meter dash at No. 7 (13.13).

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Indian squads run roughshod in own Spiller Invitational

by Douglas Claussen
Publisher & Editor

STRASBURG — Two teams of Indians dominated the Dave Spiller Invitational Track Meet at Strasburg May 5, with the girls teams finishing 1-2 and, in the boys meet, the A team was first and the B team third.

The girls teams scored 237 and 95 points, respectively, while the boys tallied 228 and 69.

The meet, which had been postponed due to weather April 19, was largely dominated by smaller teams with many sophomores and freshmen.

The highlight event turned out to be the boys 4x400 relay at the end of the day when Indian senior Nathan Kraft nosed out the Clear Creek anchor for a photo finish victory by three-one-thousandths-of-a-second.

GIRLS

100-meter dash: Fr. Calleygh Hougland, 14.19, 2nd; jr. Hannah Damron, 14.62, fourth; sr. Dakota Strasser, 14.77, fifth; fr. Kaelyn Bailey, 15.11, sixth; fr. Lizeth Hernandez, 15.62, ninth; so. Maria Del Blanco, 16.74, 14th.

200-meter dash: Fr. Laci Zimmerman, 30.82, first; so. Wynne Winter, 31.01, second; fr. Abbygail Ryan, 31.92, fifth; so. Analeah Loya, 32.10, sixth.

400-meter dash: Sr. Peighton Marrero, 1:00.58, first; Hougland, 1:03.50, second; Winter, 1:07.97, fifth; Loya, 1:09.27, sixth; so. Hailey Hawkins, 1:10.63, eighth; fr. Bailey Taylor, 1:23.47, 14th.

800-meter run: So. Maura Kramer, 2:41.38, first; sr. Madelynn Phillips, 2:52.86, second; so. Tatijana Rojahn, 3:01.77, fourth; jr. Mya Hounshell, 3:15.34, eighth; jr. Autumn Kulpa, 3:34.77, 10th; so. Alyssa Schaffer, 3:51.44, 11th.

1,600-meter run: Jr. Megan Lay, 6:55.71, third; so. Naomi Redd, 7:12.85, fourth; jr. Kasianna Christiansan, 7:56.93, fifth;

3,200-meter run: Jr. Mikayla Friedrich, 18:08.57, first.

100-meter hurdles: So. Addison Kent, 50.35, first; Strasser, 20.25, second; Bailey, 21.77, fourth; Taylor, 22.41, fifth.

300-meter hurdles: Kent, 50.35, first; Strasser, 56.39, third.

4x100-meter relay: Relay team: 52.48, first;

4x200-meter relay: Relay team: 1:53.31, first;

800-meter sprint medley relay: Relay team: 2:01.95, first;

4x800-meter relay: Relay team: 11:17.27,

first.

High jump: Zimmerman, 4-10, first;

Long jump: Zimmerman, 15-5, first; sr. Emma Middlemist, 14-4, third; jr. Katie Larsen, 13-5, eighth; sr. Erin Johnson, 12-11, 11th; Del Blanco, 10-6.5, 13th;

Triple jump: Larsen, 27-7, fourth; jr. Elizabeth Zobell, 26-11, fifth; Johnson, 26-7, sixth.

Discus: Sr. Elizabeth Hightower, 120-1, first; jr. Taryn LaForce, 112-5, second; jr. Miah Kklump, 101-2, third; jr. Parker Shuck, 74-8, fifth; Zobell, 74-1, sixth; so. Jazminn Nonic, 72-8, eighth;

Shot put: Hightower, 34-4, first; LaForce, 33-1.5, second; Klump, 31-5, third; Zobell, 30-3.5, fifth; Shuck, 26-6, seventh; Nonic, 23-4.75, 11th.

BYERS

100-meter dash: So. Allison Foose, 15.58, eighth; fr. Madi Matthews, 15.67, 10th; fr. Mia Bejarano, 16.67, 13th.

200-meter dash: Fr. Bella Hagan, 31.42, third; Foose, 33.24, eighth; fr. Karley Linnebur, 39.10, 14th.

400-meter dash: Matthews, 1:14.26, ninth; fr. Brianna Mendoza, 1:18.43, 12th; fr. Grace Thomas, 1:19.31, 13th.

800-meter run: Mendoza, 3:07.84, seventh.

100-meter hurdles: Fr. Kiera Hilbert, 23.19, sixth; fr. Shelby Fricke, 23.36, seventh; fr. Ainsley Sauer, 23.88, eighth.

300-meter hurdles: Sauer, 1:00.97, fourth; Hilbert, 1:05.70, fifth; Fricke, 1:08.07, sixth.

4x100-meter relay: Relay team, 1:00.10, third.

4x200-meter relay: Relay team, 2:10.77, fourth.

800-meter sprint medley relay: Relay team, 2:10.19, third.

High jump: Fr. Olivia Eastwood, 4-3, third; Hagan, 4-1, fourth.

Long jump: Thomas, 10-6.5, 12th; Bejarano, 10-0.5, 14th;

Triple jump: Thomas, 23-7, seventh; Bejarano, 23-0, eighth.

Discus: Fr. Kaci Harris, 67-9, ninth; Hilbert, 66-1, 10th; jr. Isabella Rains, 43-7, 11th.

Shot put: Hilbert, 25-7, eighth; Harris, 23-10.5, 10th; Rains, 20-6.75, 12th.

DEER TRAIL

100-meter dash: Sr. Allena Sanchez-Neal, 14.24, third; fr. Fatuma Hussein, 32.85, seventh.

200-meter dash: Hussein, 15.21, seventh; fr. Kyann Kitzman, 35.13, 10th.

400-meter dash: Jr. Megan Donovan, 1:04.54, third; fr. Madison Nielsen, 1:09.87, seventh.

4x200-meter relay: Relay Team, 1:57.60, second.

Long jump: Kitzman, 13-5.5, seventh.

GIRLS TEAM SCORING

1. Strasburg A 237
2. Strasburg B 95
3. Byers 60
4. Heritage Christian 53
5. Clear Creek 43
- 6-7. Deer Trail, Kiowa 28
8. Elbert 16
9. Lotus School for Excellence 9

BOYS

STRASBURG

100-meter dash: Jr. Cade Hemphill, 12.03, first; so. Ayden Dodge, 12.31, third; jr. Nate Grow, 12.33, fourth; so. Emery Waggoner, 12.93, seventh; sr. Nathan Kraft, 12.97, eighth; jr. Gideon Miner, 13.72, 15th; sr. Sean Aramowicz, 15.24, 19th.

200-meter dash: So. Hiro Hendler, 24.77, first; fr. Emilio Espino, 25.74, second; Waggoner, 26.96, third; so. Brody Hopwood, 27.26, fifth; Milner, 28.51, 10th.

400-meter dash: Kraft, 54.35, first; so. Colton Holloway, 54.57, second; Espino, 55.31, third; fr. Eli Tapparo, seventh; fr. Tyler Wilkerson, 1:01.98, eighth.

800-meter run: So. Noah Dobransky, 2:12.42, second; jr. Dawit James, 2:12.98, third; fr. Miles Nelson, 2:39.35, ninth; fr. Donovan Avita, 2:51.42, 12th.

1,600-meter run: Sr. Garrett Fetty, 6:19.70, 11th.

3,200-meter run: Jr. Israel James, 11.14.83, first;

110-meter hurdles: Jr. Will Hauser, first; sr. Daniel Handy, 18.31, second; jr. Cameron Manahan, 20.06, fourth;

300-meter hurdles: Hauser, 42.54, first; Manahan, 47.55, second;

4x100-meter relay: Relay team, 47.06, first.

4x200-meter relay: Relay team, 1:33.84, first;

4x400-meter relay: Relay team, 3:42.08, first;

4x800-meter relay: Relay team, 8:41.62, first;

High jump: Dodge, 5-11, second; sr. Kameron Gilbert, 5-7, fourth; Hopwood, 5-7, fifth.

Long jump: So. Jayden Miller, 20-7.5, first; Hemphill, 20-2.5, second; jr. Jorge Parra, 19-6.5, third; Holloway, 18-6, fifth; Wilkerson, 12-11, 10th; Aramowicz, 12-2.5, 11th.

Triple jump: Handy, 38-11, second; Parra, 38-5, third; Hauser, 37-5, sixth; Gilbert, 35-11, eighth; Milner 34-5, ninth; Aramowicz, 27-1, 11th.

Discus: Sr. Preston Mace, 122-2, third; so. Mason Dickens, 118-3, fourth; jr. Kevin Murga, 93-7, 10th; Fetty, 88-7, 13th; sr. Leland Taylor, 71-3, 16th; Nonic, 66-1,

20th; so. Michael Kramer, 66-1, 21st; jr. Severin Schweizer, 58-2, 23rd.

Shot put: Mace, 46-4.5, first; Dickens, 40-5.5, second; Nonic, 32-4.75, seventh; Kramer, 32-2, eighth; Taylor, 30-8, 13th; Murga, 26-8.5, 16th; Fetty, 24-6.5, 18th; Schweizer, 17-9.25, 21st.

BYERS

100-meter dash: So. Samuel Linnebur, 13.53, 13th; so. Bryce Brewer, 15.49, 20th; Liam Hilbert, 16.84, 22nd.

200-meter dash: Linnebur, 27.59, sixth; fr. Eli Cary, 28.50, ninth; fr. Hayden Riemenschneider, 29.68, 12th.

400-meter dash: Linnebur, 56.39, fifth; Cary, 1:02.59, ninth.

800-meter run: Jr. Ben Gerhardt, 2:18.24, fourth; jr. Torin Wardall, 2:31.66, eighth; fr. Matthew Wardall, 2:45.53, 10th.

1,600-meter run: T. Wardall, 5:48.69, eighth; Sr. Cayden Wardall, 6:25.28, 12th; sr. Jon Hise, 6:26.96, 13th;

3,200-meter run: Hise, 13:54.55, fifth; M. Wardall, 14:50.69, sixth; C. Wardall, 15:08.59, seventh.

300-meter hurdles: Riemenschneider, 51.70, fourth.

4x800-meter relay: Relay team, 10:12.83, third.

Triple jump: Riemenschneider, 38-4, fourth; Linnebur, 38-0, fifth; Cary, 33-8, 10th;

Discus: Gerhardt, 106-3, seventh; Hilbert, 80-0, 15th; Brewer, 66-7, 19th.

Shot put: Hilbert, 31-10.5, ninth; Brewer, 29-9, 15th.

DEER TRAIL

100-meter dash: Jr. Nevin Musser, 13.44, 12th; fr. Eian Shover, 15.09, 17th; jr. Jackson Burdick, 16.39, 21st.

200-meter dash: Musser, 27.87, seventh.

400-meter dash: Shover, 1:12.28, 13th.

1,600-meter run: Jr. Jayden Mingee, 5:29.20, seventh.

3,200-meter run: Mingee, 12:37.57, third.

Long jump: Musser, 15-9, eighth.

Discus: Jr. Alfonso Quezada, 114-2, fifth; so. Sebastian Anguiano, 90-1, 12th; Burdick, 66-11, 17th; Shover, 59-7, 22nd.

Shot put: Quezada, 31-3.75, 12th; Anguiano, 30-7, 14th; Burdick, 23-5.5, 19th; Shover, 21-11.5, 20th.

BOYS TEAM SCORING

1. Strasburg A 228
2. Clear Creek 83
3. Strasburg B 69
4. Elbert 68
5. Byers 45
6. Kiowa 30
- 7-8. Heritage Christian, Lotus School for Excellence 17
9. Deer Trail 15
10. Dayspring Christian 8

KINDERGARTEN



REGISTRATION IS COMING!

Byers Kindergarten Roundup

The Byers Elementary Kindergarten Roundup/Registration will be **Tuesday, May 20, 2025**, for students new to Byers School District. If your child was enrolled in Byers Preschool Program you do not need to attend the roundup. Please call **Byers Elementary @ (303) 822-5292, ext. 1140**, to make an appointment.

On roundup day you will need to bring your child's birth certificate, immunization records, proof of residency (something with your name and physical address), and your child! Kindergarten students must be **5 years of age by June 1, 2025**.



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AUCTIONEERS NOTE: Gary & Megan Lauer have decided to put their home up for sale and move to Southwest Colorado to be closer to family. They have put up a Great Selection of items that will be offered for sale. This will be excellent opportunity to upgrade to some Like New Livestock Handling Equipment along with other well-kept items including Tools & Household Furnishings. We will also have some Guest Consignments added to this Auction Sale!

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ISAAC MANAUGH/The I-70 Scout

PLAYOFF BOUND — Byers and Bennett baseball teams will be part of the 2A and 3A regional playoffs, respectively, on Saturday, May 17. Where both squads will travel and who they play was unknown at press time and the Colorado High School Activities Association was expected to make the postseason announcements today (May 14). For updated playoff information, visit chsaanow.com or www.i-70scout.com. Above photo, Bulldog Gabe Price slides in safely in Byers' 9-0 win against Crowley County May 7. Below, Tiger third baseman Evan Garner tags out a Wellington base runner in a 4-3 victory May 8. For complete coverage of all local squads, see the May 16 *Eastern Colorado News*.



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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Editor addresses Strasburg sexual assault controversy

Dear Readers:

Everyone makes mistakes and your local newspaper editor is no exception. Last week I made two serious mistakes when I published a story regarding a sexual assault at Hemphill Middle School in Strasburg. Frankly, as I read the sheriff's report, I questioned the mother's perceived failure to act and concerned that the perpetrators would not receive the severe punishment they deserve. In specific terms, I should not have used the term "shockingly" in reference to the mother's decision — that is how I felt, and it crept into the story. I also provided too many details of the crime and they, too, was unneeded. For these two issues, I hereby apologize to the family in particular and the public as a whole for my recklessness. I have a few letters to the editor on hand. A school board meeting was planned Monday — after we went to press and where I planned to attend — and it could alter the dynamics of the matter, making those letters obsolete. I hope everyone understands.

— Douglas Claussen, Publisher & Editor

STRASBURG FPD

FROM PAGE 1

der Colorado's Taxpayers Bill of Rights, more commonly known as TABOR.

Voters approved the waiver of the property tax limit 50-12.

While 66 total voters cast ballots, four were filled out incorrectly and not counted.

The term "de-Brucing" refers to former Colorado State Rep. Douglas Bruce, who was the primary author of the TABOR amendment, which was approved by Colorado voters in 1992.

TABOR requires voter approval for any tax increases and to retain any revenue generated above and beyond a certain level.

Board president Jeff Thain, vice president Tim Phillips, and treasurer Barrett Barkey will all serve another four-year term after not enough candidates filed for this year's election. The seats held by assistant secretaries Rachel Shuck and Mike Donnellon were not up for election but will be for the 2027 special district election.



STEVEN VETTER/The I-70 Scout

A May 10 open house at the Strasburg firehouse included public tours of the recently completed crew quarters on the north side of the existing building and a meet-and-great with fire department staff, including the finalist for Strasburg Fire Chief. The board vote to approve Scott Smith May 15 is not expected to provide any surprises.

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'Burg senior bound for U.S. Naval Academy

by **Kathy Smiley**
Staff Writer

STRASBURG — Just weeks after Strasburg High School's Class of 2025 Valedictorian's stellar high school years are behind her, she will be confidently marching toward a promising future.

Peighton Marrero will head for the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md., in June. She was accepted to the academy after a rigorous application process that included academic, leadership and fitness components as well as a nomination from U.S. Sen. Michael Bennet. She will enter as an officer-in-training with a rank of midshipman and graduate in four years with a commission. Tuition is fully funded by the Navy in exchange for an active-duty service obligation for five years

upon graduation.

Peighton told *The I-70 Scout* May 6 that, when she first began researching college options, her main consideration was a school where she could participate in track and volleyball, but she quickly realized she needed much more.

"I'm not just going somewhere to play sports, but I'm going to go somewhere that will push me athletically, fits me academically, and will be a good fit for me as a person," she said. "When you realize that, you start narrowing down the list of schools pretty fast."

Peighton, who has participated in track, volleyball and basketball throughout her high school years, has had a particularly successful track

SEE MARRERO PAGE 2B



Strasburg senior and 2025 Valedictorian Peighton Marrero, center, signs her letter of intent to attend the U.S. Naval Academy during a May 7 ceremony at the high school with mother, Brandi, and father, Michael, looking on.

Byers graduate receives federal award for his SMARTs



Byers senior Samuel Benesch received a U.S. Department of Defense SMART scholarship, giving him a full ride to the University of Alabama.

by **Kathy Smiley**
Staff Writer

BYERS — An outstanding 2025 Byers High School graduate will be headed south this fall with a full ride scholarship and a guaranteed job after college.

Because of his hard work, determination and academic achievement in high school, Samuel Benesch will study civil engineering at the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa, courtesy of the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD).

The DoD's Science, Mathematics and Research for Transformation (SMART) Scholarship-for-Service program is a combined educational and workforce development opportunity for STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) students. The program offers scholarships for undergraduate, master's, and doctoral students pursuing STEM degrees. Recipients receive full tuition, annual stipends, and internships and guaranteed civilian employment with the Department of Defense after graduation — a service commitment of one year of employment for each year of school required.

Samuel, 18, has attended Byers School for most of his school career. His mother and stepdad are Darcy and Tim Barber. His father, Andrew Benesch, lives in Tennessee. His older sister Katherine graduated from Byers in 2023 and is now attending Baylor University in Texas. His younger sister Molly is in eighth grade at Byers.

When he began researching scholarship oppor-

tunities, Samuel said he was conducting a frustratingly broad search when Katherine suggested searching for scholarships specific to the degree he was seeking.

"And so that's what I did. I entered 'civil engineering scholarships,' and the DoD SMART scholarship was one of the top results," he said.

Samuel said the application process included selection of a sponsoring facility. Sponsoring facilities include Department of Defense labs, military bases and other agencies where scholarship recipients complete internships while working on their degrees and work for after graduation. Each of the more than 150 sponsoring facilities across the United States select their own scholarship recipients and sponsor them from education through employment.

Samuel chose Robins Air Force Base in Georgia for its civil engineering department.

"The sponsoring facilities pick out however many people they want to interview and, after they interview them, they can take however many they want. They normally take four or five a year," Samuel said.

He will work at Robins Air Force Base for at least four years after he graduates.

Scholarships can be used at any college or university in the country.

Samuel said he landed on civil engineering as a career choice because math and science are his best

SEE BENESCH PAGE 8B

MARRERO

FROM PAGE 1B

career — she won the 2A girls 400-meter run state championship in 2023 and 2024.

“I’m primarily a sprinter, so the 400 meters is my primary event,” she said, adding that she also runs the 200-meter dash and 300-meter hurdles. She has been on high-scoring medley teams the last two years as well.

The Naval Academy’s 400-meter track coach took notice and reached out to her, planting the first seed in her mind and encouraging a campus visit.

“And I was like, what’s the deal with this, because I’d never really thought about military academies,” she said. “But the more I looked into it, I the more impressed I was.”

Potential students must submit a preliminary admissions packet before a visit is approved.

“You fill out pretty much everything about yourself, academically, athletically, your extracurriculars — everything that you’ve done for a long time,” she said. “I had to write three or four essays and get four or five different letters of recommendation — from my math teacher, my English teacher, and then various coaches and faculty. And then after that, I had to apply for a Congressional nomination.”

Peighton was interviewed by three people on behalf of Bennet. She was offered a campus visit last September.

“I just fell in love with the campus, the people, and the environment, and I pretty much knew that was the place for me,” she said. “I looked into a couple other places just to make sure I’d researched all opportunities. But when it came down to it, [the Naval Academy] had so much purpose and I knew it would be the best fit for me.”

She added that the students she met on the tour had similar personalities to hers.

“The kids there are so driven,” she said. “They fit me.”

Peighton has Navy veterans in her family, including dad Michael Marre-



ro, who served in the Navy’s Submarine Service for nine years at both the enlisted and officer ranks.

“My dad is super excited, and he is definitely helping me navigate what military life is going to be like,” she said.

Peighton will head to Annapolis at the end of June for six weeks of the Academy’s version of basic training.

“They call it Plebe Summer,” she said. “So, my family drops me off and then I won’t have any contact with anybody for six weeks. It’ll all just be gift packages and letters for six weeks until school starts.”

Peighton is excited about her upcoming experience and, she admitted, a little bit apprehensive.

“I’m definitely a little bit nervous to leave my family and to be away from home; when you’ve grown up in a small town that’s a big shift,” she said. “It’s definitely going to be an adjustment, but it’ll be good. Everybody who’s thrown into that basic training for six weeks is in the same situation. And according to everyone that I talked to on my visit, you kind of find a second family very fast.”

The physical challenges of Plebe Summer are also on Peighton’s mind. She dislocated her shoulder during basketball season — an incident that set her official acceptance to the academy back while she waited for a medical waiver. While she received, and accepted, her official bid to go to the Naval Academy in mid-January, she didn’t get final medical clearance until April.

“I need to put on a little bit more weight this summer and hit the



Peighton Marrero poses for a photo May 6 at Strasburg High School. She is the Class of 2025 Valedictorian and has earned a place in the U.S. Naval Academy.

weight room — really just to make sure everything is good,” Peighton said, adding a comment that shows her confidence and positivity will go a long way to calm her Plebe Summer jitters. “I know myself, and, if thousands of other kids can get through it every single year, I can. I’ve just got to take it one day at a time.”

Peighton will run on the Naval Academy’s NCAA Division 1 track team. She is considering two different paths academically — a major in general science or in quantitative economics.

“I’m leaning towards majoring in quantitative economics and, after I graduate, my plan is to select naval aviation for my five years of service,” she said. “I’ll graduate as an officer and then hopefully start flight school.

That would be Plan A. Plan B would probably be some type of intelligence field — a Naval intel officer.”

Peighton is grateful for the numerous Strasburg High School staff members who mentored her and helped her reach her goals, including basketball coach Merci Ames, volleyball coach Larry Deffenbaugh, and track and field coach, Brandi Marrero — her mother. She is also appreciative for the letters of recommendation she received from AP Calculus teacher Suzanne Davis and English teacher Alex Steitz. She said staff member Ronda Lee helped her fill out multiple military applications.

“Everyone here has been so, so helpful and supportive,” she said. “Anything that I needed, they were right there, ready to help. I feel very blessed for sure.”

She is also grateful to her family. “I think I have the best support system in the world. My parents and stepparents are incredible. My family is so supportive and has always pushed me to be better — to do my best on the court, on the track, and in the classroom. When you’re in an environment like that, you grow a lot and you learn a lot about yourself and about people around you.”

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Congratulations to the

Strasburg Class of 2025

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Sunday, May 18, 12 p.m., High School Big Gym

Senior parade following Homecoming route through Strasburg proper will follow at 2:30 p.m.

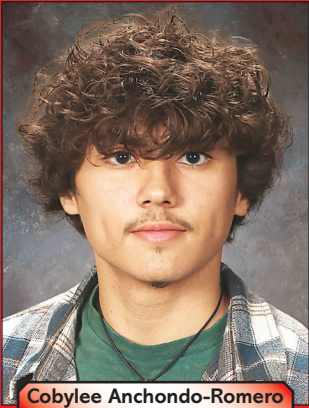
STRASBURG

Valedictorian:
Peighton Marrero

Salutatorian:
Augustine Fahrner



Sierra Aberle



Cobylee Anchondo-Romero



Aidan Anderson



Sean Aramowicz



Tyce Bollers



Jaxson Byrns-Rhodes



Joey Cardenas-Villalobos



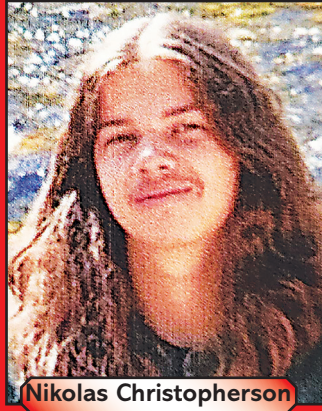
Valeria Cardenas-Chavez



Nicholas Cedillos



Leah Choin



Nikolas Christopherson



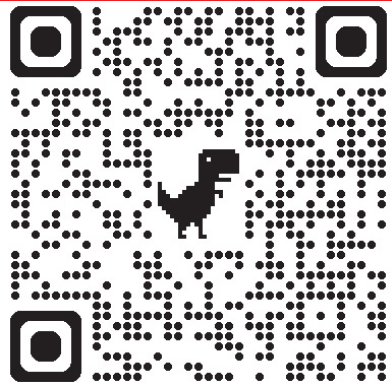
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Natalie Damron



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Timothy Day




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— GRAMMY AND POPPY




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Class of 2025



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S

Sunday, May 18, 12 p.m., High School Big Gym

STRASBURG



Jennifer Escobar Ortiz



Bryanna Escobedo



Melany Escobedo



Augustine Fahrner



Garrett Fetty



Grant Fetty



Jared Flamini



Madison Forbis



Anahera Friedrich



Damien Garcia



Christian Gasca



Chase Gilbert



Kameron Gilbert



Daniel Handy



Alyvia Hart




Get out there and do great things at UNC!

We are so proud of you, Maddie!

Love,
Mom, Dad & Camryn

Congrats Class of '25!
Special Wishes &
Good Luck to
Emma Middlemist!



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Congratulations to the

Strasburg Class of 2025

S

Sunday, May 18, 12 p.m., High School Big Gym

STRASBURG



Cannan Haygood



Itzel Hernandez



Elizabeth Hightower



Lindsey Hobson



Araya Holder



Erin Johnson



Maurice Kadinger



Nathan Kraft



Erica Kramer



Carly Larsen



Taylor Lasecke



Ellie Lawler



Anna Lopez-Vazquez



Jose Lopez



Lamburg Ly

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to all
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Graduates!

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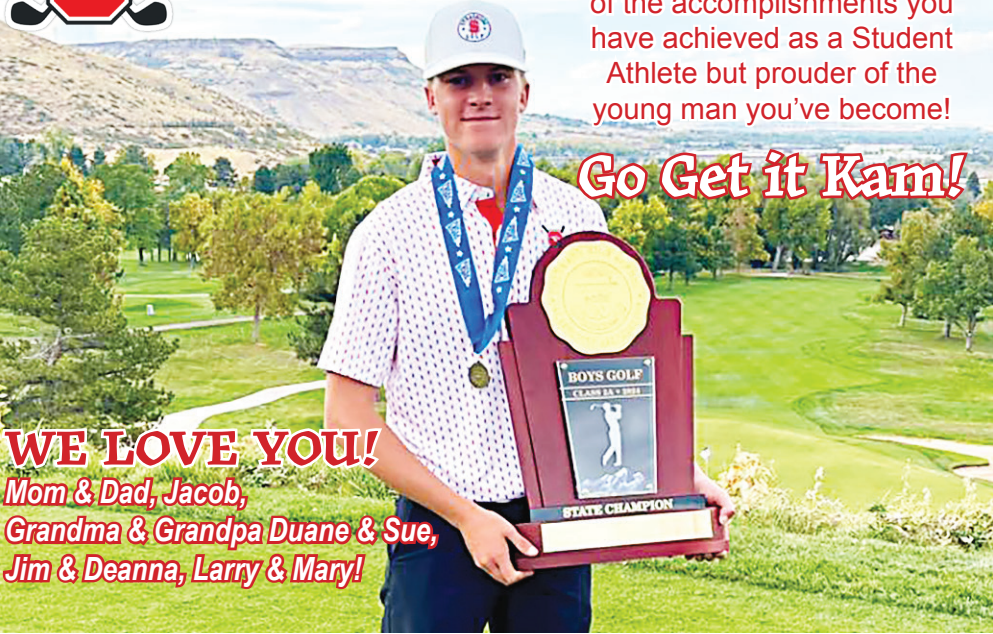
Congratulations Champ!

Your family is incredibly proud
of the accomplishments you
have achieved as a Student
Athlete but prouder of the
young man you’ve become!

Go Get it Kam!

WE LOVE YOU!

Mom & Dad, Jacob,
Grandma & Grandpa Duane & Sue,
Jim & Deanna, Larry & Mary!



S

Congratulations to the

Strasburg Class of 2025

S

Sunday, May 18, 12 p.m., High School Big Gym

STRASBURG

Class Flower:
Indian
Paintbrush

Class Song:
"We are young"
by Fun



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S

Congratulations to the

Strasburg Class of 2025

S

Sunday, May 18, 12 p.m., High School Big Gym

Class Motto:

“Rome wasn’t built in a day, but they
were laying bricks every hour.”
— John Heywood



Amy Saavedra



Avery Seibert



Kevin Serviss



Christian Soto



Layla Steinman



Dakota Strasser



Leland Taylor



Edwin Terrazas Varela



Alyssa Todack



Cristian Villa Gomez



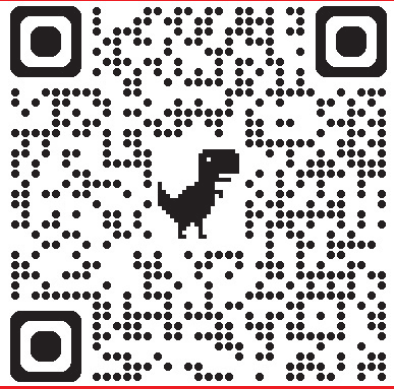
Matthew Wormington



Bryan Yanez



Austin Zamora



Scan QR Code for link to
Graduation Ceremony.

<https://youtube.com/live/B2bl01rAv7o?feature=share>



Congratulations Patrick &
the class of '25

Good Luck in the Colorado Army National
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— Love, Mom & Dad



Congratulations to our beautiful Alyvia!
You are going to do amazing things and
we can't wait to share in your adventure
ahead.
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Kaleb, Levi, and Sadie.

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Congratulations
Seniors!



All the best for
future success.

— Arapahoe County Commissioner Jeff Baker



ISAAC MANAUGH/The I-70 Scout

Strasburg High School and Hemphill Middle School students combined efforts to perform the youth edition of Rodgers and Hammerstein’s classic musical, “Oklahoma,” May 8-9 in the elementary school cafeteria. Cast members include seniors Caleb Collier (as Curly McClain), left, and Erin Johnson (Ellen) who performed for the last time in their high school drama careers.

Congratulations 2025 Seniors!

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Byers School District 32J



KATHY SMILEY/The I-70 Scout

Byers High School presented the hillbilly musical comedy “Fussin’ an’ A-Feudin,’” April 25. The play was set in the backwoods community of Lonesome Polecat, where two families continued a decades-long feud while big-city publishing companies vie for the rights to publish a book about them. Competing publishers Sally Merriwether (Maggie Messer) and Joe Martin (Audrina Solomon) meet on a train to Lonesome Polecat.

BENESCH

FROM PAGE 1B

subjects and, spending summers with his father, who is a carpenter, gave him an appreciation of the building process.

“When I was younger, like 8 or 9, we’d work on small projects for myself, and that was super fun,” he said. “And then once I got older, I started working with him on the job site, and actually got to put beams up in houses, build kitchens out, and do stuff like that. I really like the building aspect, and I like knowing is how people are going to use the space.”

Samuel said he is interested in learning more about how a good design can make construction easier.

“It seems like construction never goes right the first time because [the structure] is poorly designed,” he said. “So, what if I could come in and design it with the construction in mind — not just how the layouts are going to look, but how should we actually build it?”

That question illustrates a point of view Samuel has about learning and life in general —the importance of gaining a depth of understanding of any concept.

“I want to understand everything,” he said. “I try to get information and understand why it’s right.”

In school, Samuel said his focus is not so much on getting the right answer, but on asking the right questions.

“I don’t try to just get the work done to turn it in,” he said. “I always want to know why it was the right answer, and not just get the grade on it.”

Samuel has much to look forward to and some great memories to look back on. His high school years included playing soccer at Bennett and bas-



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SUBMITTED GRAPHIC

Byers senior Samuel Benesh is among this year’s recipients of Department of Defense SMART education program scholarships where awardees receive full tuition, annual stipends, and internships and are guaranteed civilian employment with DoD after graduation. A service commitment of one year of employment for each year of school is required. Benesch is leaving Byers to attend the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa.

ketball at Byers. He was on Student Council, involved in Future Business Leaders of America for four years, and a member of the National Honor Society for two. He taught children’s classes at Mountain View Fellowship in Strasburg.

Samuel said his sixth-grade teacher Connie Butterfield, math teacher Corey Green, and social studies teacher Nathan Phipps have been among his favorites at Byers.

“They were all good teachers and helped me a lot,” he said, adding that Green and Phipps wrote letters of recommendation for him.

Samuel is looking forward to expanding his horizons, taking on new challenges, and meeting new people at the University of Alabama.

“It’s great here, but I’ve been around the same people for 10 years,” he said. “I like that Alabama is a big school and they have good sports teams that will be fun to watch. I’m excited to branch out.”



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Sunday, May 18, 1 p.m., High School New Gym

BYERS



Addison Anderson



Jake Anderson



Samuel Benesch



Dani Boben



Morgin Boben



Lucy Borders



Chas Butterfield



Garrett Crecelius



Adriane Dillingham



Cameron Eastwood



A.J. Engle



Averie Eymann

Class Motto:
“Chase your dreams, but always
know the road that’ll lead you home
again.”

— *Tim McGraw*

Congratulations Graduates!



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future endeavors!



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Byers Class of 2025
Sunday, May 18, 1 p.m., High School New Gym



BYERS



Carson Gaudot



Preston Gaudot



Marshall Hacker



Cody Harris



Jon Hise



Anna Jenkins



Gabriela Kissell



Chance Lewey



Hope Linnebur



Zoey Linnebur



Chase Long



Maddison Markowitz



Shadra Mikita

Class Colors: Hot Pink & Powder Blue

Class Flower: Japanese Cherry Blossom

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For **Bennett & Deer Trail** Senior Sections, See the May 21 Issue of **The I-70 Scout!**



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Byers Class of 2025
Sunday, May 18, 1 p.m., High School New Gym

BYERS



Andrew Mohatt



Maci Olsen



Allie Pelton



Jena Rains



Anthony Reyes



Meadow Robinson



Maria Moreno-Sanchez



Callie Sharp



Joshua Mendoza Vasquez



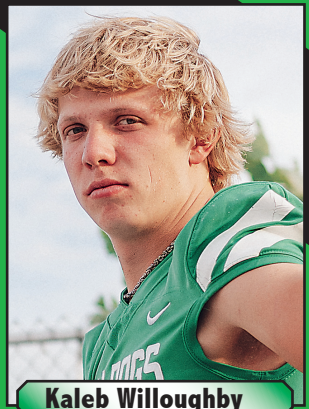
Anna Vetter



Cayden Wardall



Brent West




Kaleb Willoughby



Josh Wingo

Processional
Song:
"Pursuit of
Happiness"
—*Kid Cudi*

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Anna Vetter - Byers High School

Anna Vetter, daughter of Greg and Jodie Vetter, a senior at Byers High School is awarded the \$1500 Traditional Scholarship. Anna plans to attend Colorado State University and will study Agriculture. She looks forward to taking classes at the new Spur campus. Anna lives in Bennett and raises and sells sheep. This gives her the opportunity to show livestock through 4-H at events across the country, including the county fair, the Colorado State Fair, and the National Western Stock Show. Congratulations Anna!




Colton Taylor - Bennett High School

Colton Taylor, a senior at Bennett High School is awarded the \$1000 Traditional Scholarship. Colton will attend Colorado Christian University and will study Biology and minor in Chemistry and Criminal Justice. He hopes to become a forensic scientist after college. Colton is a member of the concert band under Ms. White for the past eight years, specializing in the alto saxophone—a passion that has helped shape his discipline and creativity. He is also active in sports, trying everything from lacrosse to soccer, which taught him teamwork, perseverance, and adaptability. Colton thanks his parents and teachers for their support and guidance. Congratulations Colton!

Congratulations on your Graduation, Rebecca!

Chase your dreams and never give up!

Love, Mom, Grandma and Grandpa






Congratulations to all area graduates!



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CONGRATS

MCC Class of 2025

Arapahoe, CO

Elri Barkhuizen*
Associate of General Studies
Associate of Arts

Arvada, CO

Bridget Langelo***
Physical Therapist Assistant

Aurora, CO

Alemzewd Aemero***
Bachelor of Science Nursing

Solome Buba
Bachelor of Science Nursing

Zipporah Obiero*
Bachelor of Science Nursing

Degnesh Riske**
Bachelor of Science Nursing

Jared Sereti
Practical Nursing

Zubin Siddiqui***
Bachelor of Science Nursing

Bennett, CO

Angelica Cardenas Melendrez
Bachelor of Science Nursing

Andrew Torres
Associate of Arts

Brighton, CO

Justina Graves
Physical Therapist Assistant

Byers, CO

Lily Clark*
Associate of Arts

Deer Trail, CO

Kimberlyn Sosa Gonzalez
Associate of Arts

Honors:

* Cum Laude
** Magna Cum Laude
*** Summa Cum Laude



MORGAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

To see a full list of grads from all areas, visit morgancc.edu/class-of-2025



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Sixth-grader Leela Henderson, left photo, and second-grader Rayne Potter pose with their projects and prizes won at the Deer Trail School Science Fair. Henderson took the grand prize winner with her project on Taste Buds while Potter’s project, “Making the Perfect Slime,” was deemed best in show. The grand prize was chosen by judges from the Student Council, who spoke to each participant. Best in show was determined by voting of the students, families and friends who attended an open house for the fair April 7.

LIBRARY NEWS

ANYTHINK BENNETT LIBRARY

495 Seventh St.
(303)405-3231
anythinklibraries.org

Karaoke Night: The Teen Advisory Board will host a totally tubular 1980s-themed karaoke night for ages 12-18 after the library closes. Prizes will be awarded for the best 80s costumes! Space limited; registration required. Visit anythinklibraries.org to sign up. Snacks and refreshments provided. 6-9 p.m., Friday, May 16.

Coach Adn’s Skill Zone: Kids ages 7-14 can play games, practice drills and learn new sports tricks with athletic coach Adn Jay. Participants can hone their skills at various sports, including basketball, football, soccer, and discs. They will meet at the school playground across the street from the library. Snacks and water provided, and sun protection is advised. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Saturday, May 17.

Artist meet-up: Adults can join the Corridor Creative Arts League for a presentation on how to use and source reference photos when making art. The monthly challenge is to create a piece of art based on the No. 1 song on the artist’s date of birth. 2-3:30 p.m., Saturday, May 17.

mySummer Kickoff Party: Time to Create is the theme of the library’s mySummer kickoff program. Library fans of all ages are encouraged to

dream up new ways to be creative this summer with a variety of activities including journaling, music and dance. They might also be inspired with a live musical performance and drop-in belly dancing lessons. Activities vary by age. No advanced registration necessary. 1-4 p.m., Saturday, May 31.


KELVER LIBRARY
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(303)822-9392
www.arapahoelibraries.org

Little Makers Club: Children ages 0-5 and their care-givers can work on motor skills, literacy and counting and take home a free goody bag to continue learning at home. Crafts and toddler-friendly snacks provided. 10:30-11:30 a.m. Friday, May 16.

Rocky Mountain Quilt Museum: Adults are invited to a presentation of quilts from the 1930s Depression Era. Join us to connect with other members of the Byers community at the library. Presented by the Rocky Mountain Quilt Museum. 1:30-3 p.m., Wednesday, May 21.

DAVIES LIBRARY
128 Second Ave., Deer Trail
(303)769-4310
www.arapahoelibraries.org

Adult book club: “Someone Like You” by Karen Kingsbury. 6-7 p.m., Monday, May 19.




Town of Bennett Community Clean Up Day!

Saturday, June 7, 2025 / 9 - 11:30 a.m.


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Prairie Creeks Class of 2025

Saturday, May 17, 11 a.m., Strasburg High School Big Gym

PRAIRIE CREEKS



Freya Archuleta



Tony Barrios



Tim Brackenbury



Ruben Buenrostro



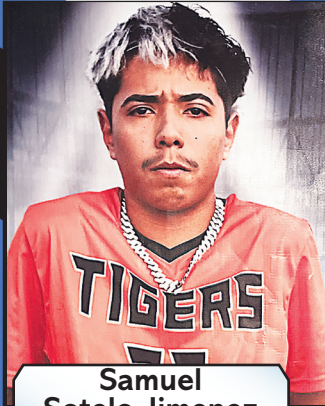
Malyki Burgess



Liz
Ramirez-Hernandez



Noel Hernandez



Samuel
Sotelo-Jimenez



Jaden Johnson



Ernesto
Herrera Marquez



Happy Graduation

"As you graduate, remember the lessons you've learned, the friends you've made, and the dreams you've chased. Your journey is just beginning, and the world is waiting for your unique touch. Congratulations, graduates of the I-70 Corridor! May your future be filled with success, happiness, and endless opportunities."

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Congratulations to the Prairie Creeks Class of 2025

Saturday, May 17, 11 a.m., Strasburg High School Big Gym

PRAIRIE CREEKS



Bristol McIntyre



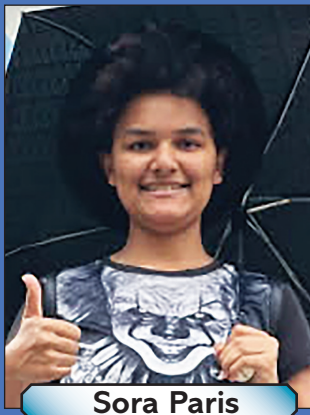
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Favian Morales



Keiley Morris



Sora Paris



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Cil Perdomo



Cristian
DeLaCruz Ramirez



Lance Reed



Merissa Saavedra



Porter Snyder



Arian Strata



Erick
Teran Trevizo



Savannah Young

School Colors:
Royal Blue,
Silver,
and
White.



PHOTOS BY CARL STEITZ/For The Scout

Strasburg Elementary School hosted its spring concert April 24 at Mountain View Fellowship. This spring's performance featured first and third grades the Strasburg Singers. Clockwise from top left, Jeffery Geesaman and Delia Nordloh play rain sticks during "We Are All Connected," a Native American song; Brock Girouard, front, and Penelope Levin, play xylophones for "Who Has Seen the Wind?," and, adorned in her fancy hat and sunglasses, Brailey Johnson plays drums on "We Are All Connected."





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Registration packets can be picked up in the elementary office prior to or the day of.

On the day of Roundup/Registration, you will need to bring your child and all the appropriate paperwork — child's birth certificate, immunization record, proof of residency (something with your name and physical address). Paperwork must be completed for your child to register and be added to a class list. Preschool students must be **3 and 4 years old on or before June 1, 2025**.

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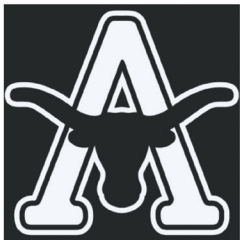


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Congratulations to the
Agate School Class of 2025

Friday, May 16, 11 a.m., Agate School Gym

Agate



Rylee Guhl



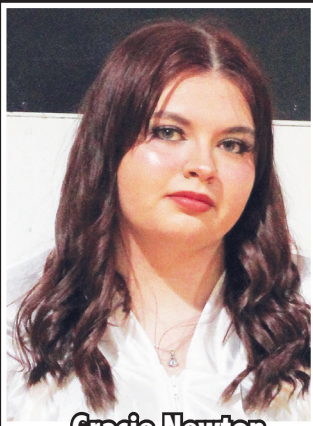
Daira Herrera



Joseph Humbert



Flor Loera



Gracie Newton



C O N G R A T S



Congrats AGATE Class of '25 and all Corridor Seniors



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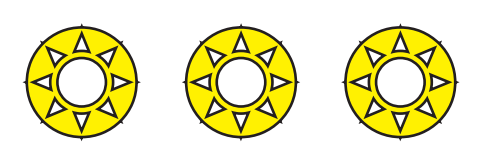
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Competency Docket launched in 17th Judicial District

BRIGHTON — The 17th Judicial District has launched a Competency Docket and Competency Diversion Program addressing the growing number of criminal defendants needing competency restoration services. The innovative docket integrates key provisions of House Bill 24-1355, “Concerning Reducing the Competency Waitlist, and, In Connection Therewith, Creating A Wraparound Care Program and Making and Re-

ducing an Appropriation” and introduces a new competency diversion program for eligible participants. The bill establishes a structured referral process for defendants who are likely to be found incompetent to proceed in court. Unlike traditional diversion programs, the bill redirects individuals into the Bridges Wraparound Care Program with mandated court reviews and data collection. The Competency Court officially began operations April 8 and currently serves defendants in Adams and Broomfield counties. The court meets twice a month and focuses on accelerating access to appropriate services while reducing the burden on the state’s limited inpatient resources. Chief Judge Kyle Seedorf will oversee the Competency Diversion and Competency Docket in Adams County, and Judge Amanda Dewick will oversee Broomfield County. In Colorado, when a defendant is found incompetent to proceed, their case is paused until they are restored to competency. Competency restoration can occur through inpatient treatment at the state hospital or outpatient services if the individual is not in custody. Due to high demand and limited capacity, in-custody defendants often face extended wait times, sometimes up to a year or more, for

Polis appoints new judge for 17th Judicial District

DENVER — Gov. Jared Polis May 7 appointed Michal A. Lord-Blegen to the 17th Judicial District Court effective June 7. Lord-Blegen has been a magistrate in the 17th Judicial District since 2020. Her docket consists of juvenile matters. Previously, she served with the 2nd Judicial District (2016-20); Wohl Stetler Lord-Blegen, PLLC (2012-16); Michal Lord-Blegen (2010-12); and Mitch Baker (2010-11). Lord-Blegen earned her bachelor’s degree from Hood College in Frederick, Md., in 1990, and her juris doctorate from the University of Denver Sturm College of Law in 2009. The appointment fills the vacancy occasioned by the retirement of the Honorable Rayna Gokli.

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Biker errors rise with speed, distraction

GOLDEN — Distracted driving is a dangerous and preventable behavior for all drivers. According to the Centers for Disease Control, every day in the United States, nine people die, and more than 1,000 people are injured in crashes caused by distracted drivers. For motorcyclists in Colorado, distraction was the third most common causal factor for crashes in 2024. “Motorcycle riders know they are vulnerable from other motorists who fail to check their blind spots or drive distracted, but sometimes riders fail to recognize how their speed and inattention can create an equally dangerous situation,” said Col. Matthew C. Packard, Colorado State Patrol chief. “Being alert and driving defensively is a part of the ride.” A distracted rider is like a distract-

ed driver. Neither operator can adequately drive their vehicle or adjust to changing traffic conditions. Distraction degrades lane-keeping ability, speed control, reaction time, situational awareness, and visual scanning. When looking at 2024 citation data from the Colorado State Patrol, troopers issued 310 citations to motorcyclists for improper, reckless or careless driving, which includes distraction — a 5% jump over 2023. The top month was June, followed by August. Warm weather and clear conditions are peak times to ride. In addition, the Colorado State Patrol ranked the most common roads for motorcycle crashes in 2024. The top location was I-25, followed by U.S. Highway 24, and then I-70. The most common day of the week was Saturday from 2-4 p.m. “Those few seconds looking at your navigation system or removing a hand from the wheel to do something on your phone may seem innocent at first, but these actions can lead to an error,” Packard said. “This agency alone investigated 535 at-fault motorcycle crashes last year. We need our riders to drive the posted speed limit and stay focused.”

Multiple agencies sign up for senior resources fair

BYERS — Seniors ages 60 and up who need services might consider attending the East Arapahoe Senior Resource Fair from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Monday, May 19, at May Farms in Byers. Resources are available to the rural I-70 Corridor senior community. Organizations scheduled to attend include Meals on Wheels, Arapahoe Public Health, Benefits in Action, and Developmental Pathways. Family and caregivers are encouraged to attend as well. For more information, call Janet Maupin at (303)880-1324 or Pattie Lindsay at (303)886-0771.



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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

The Not-So Dusty Pages

20 YEARS AGO
MAY 17, 2005

Two suspects have been identified in the Byers burglaries that took place May 7 and 8.

The two suspects will be charged with stealing nearly \$6,000 worth of merchandise and property from the Sinclair Station on Highway 36 and Quint Valley Golf Club.

Both suspects are 17-year-old males. Because they are juveniles, names and photos will not be released, Sheriff Grayson Robinson said.

The two are suspected of being responsible for more than \$13,000 in damages at the Quint Valley Golf Club and \$700 at the Sinclair Station. The suspects gained entry at both places by breaking through a door or glass windows.

Dave Gordley, one of the golf course’s managers, said there was severe damage to the interior and exterior of the clubhouse. Robinson said the two used some device to destroy several golf carts on the property. They will also be charged with criminal damages in addition to theft sometime this week.

15 YEARS AGO
MAY 18, 2010

BENNETT — Bennett Municipal Court activity has increased significantly over the first quarter of 2010 and a second monthly court date is being pondered by town officials.

“The [town hall] is filling to capacity,” said town administrator Stuart McArthur during a May 11 board of trustees meeting. “For example, we had 38 people in February, 29 in March, and 27 in April. The court judge(s) have

indicated a little bit of nervousness with the amount of people in the room and how close they are being seated to them.”

Currently, court convenes the fourth Wednesday of each month. When a second court date might be implemented is not yet know.

McArthur added that court fees and fines to the town so far this tear have totaled approximately \$10,000.

“The good news is there we’ve had lots of cases. The bad news is we’ve had lots of cases,” McArthur quipped.

10 YEARS AGO
MAY 19, 2015

The second-week-of-May spring storm that inundated the I-70 corridor with 5-plus inches of moisture, including between 3-5 inches of snow overnight May 9-10, wreaked havoc for the area’s primary power provider and its customers.

Starting around 9 p.m. Saturday, Intermountain REA crews were fighting the elements to restore power that was lost by a large portion of the I-70 Corridor.

“We had outages from Deer Trail to Bennett,” said IREA Strasburg branch manager Mike LeClair. “It was kind of all through the territory. We had over 2,000 customers affected.”

According to IREA records, outages lasted from around three hours in some areas.

The combination of flooding and windblown wet snow led to the loss of power.

“There was the pole on Highway 36 near May Farms that we had to cut the line open on because of the threat of it going over because of the water load pushing on it,” LeClair said.

TODAY IN HISTORY

Today is Wednesday, May 14, the 134th day of 2025. There are 231 days left in the year.

TODAY’S HIGHLIGHT

On May 14, 1804, the Lewis and Clark expedition, organized to explore the Louisiana Territory as well as the Pacific Northwest, began its journey near

present-day Hartford, Illinois.

ON THIS DATE

In 1607, Jamestown, the first permanent English settlement in North America, was established by members of the Virginia Company.

In 1796, English physician Edward Jenner successfully inocu-

lated 8-year-old James Phipps against smallpox by using cowpox matter. (Smallpox would be declared the first fully eradicated human disease in 1980.)

In 1948, the independent state of Israel was proclaimed in Tel Aviv by David Ben-Gurion, who became its first prime minister.

In 1955, representatives from eight Communist bloc coun-

tries, including the Soviet Union, signed the Warsaw Pact in Poland. (The pact was dissolved in 1991.)

In 1961, Freedom Rider civil rights activists were attacked by violent mobs in Anniston and Birmingham, Alabama.

In 1973, NASA launched Skylab, the first American space sta-

tion, from Kennedy Space Center in Florida.

TODAY’S BIRTHDAYS

Baseball Hall of Famer Tony Pérez is 83. Filmmaker Robert Zemeckis is 74. Musician David Byrne is 73. Actor Tim Roth is 64. Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg is 41. Former NFL tight end Rob Gronkowski is 36.

— Associated Press

STATEPOINT CROSSWORD
THEME: THE 1950s

- ACROSS
- 1. Deals a death blow
 - 5. Large edible mushroom
 - 8. Food safety agency, acr.
 - 11. Auditioner’s hope
 - 12. Closing act
 - 13. *Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, supposedly
 - 15. Corset rod
 - 16. Therefore
 - 17. **"Lord of the Flies" shell
 - 18. *Ed of TV
 - 20. Sty sound
 - 21. Pillow filler
 - 22. Gastrointestinal tract
 - 23. *Pooch on a 1950s skirt
 - 26. Most cautious
 - 30. Go wrong
 - 31. Camels’ relatives
 - 34. Lake north of Cleveland
 - 35. Wide open
 - 37. Kind of conifer
 - 38. Spectrum maker
 - 39. Better than never
 - 40. Portable stairs
 - 42. Headdress
 - 43. Tennis shoe
 - 45. Triage nurse’s measurements
 - 47. Old horse
 - 48. Film director Sergio
 - 50. Band’s work-related trip
 - 52. *Slicked men’s hairstyle
 - 55. Does like a hot dog
 - 56. Rod for a hot rod
 - 57. Winter forecast
 - 59. Be
 - 60. Measurement, abbr.
 - 61. U2 guitarist
 - 62. *Clearasil target
 - 63. Ballpark fig.
 - 64. Wine choice

- DOWN
- 1. Roman goddess of fertility
 - 2. *Domino’s nickname
 - 3. German Mrs.
 - 4. Coiffed
 - 5. Turn pumpkin into Jack-o-Lantern
 - 6. “Pomp and Circumstance” composer
 - 7. Low-ranking worker
 - 8. Certain Scandinavian
 - 9. 52 cards
 - 10. Fireplace mess
 - 12. Beer mug
 - 13. Use elbow grease
 - 14. *First Black nominee of Oscar for

CROSSWORD

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- Best Actor
- 19. City in Northern France
 - 22. Neon or radon, e.g.
 - 23. Church bell sounds
 - 24. Liturgy instrument
 - 25. Speak like Pericles
 - 26. *June Cleaver’s husband
 - 27. “Fear of Flying” author Jong
 - 28. Type of rug
 - 29. Christmas help, pl.
 - 32. Way, way off
 - 33. *___-Century Modern
 - 36. *Charles Schulz creation
 - 38. Newspapers and such
 - 40. Chicken order
 - 41. Calls forth
 - 44. Eroded limestone landscape
 - 46. Movie trailer, e.g.
 - 48. Lumen per square meter, pl.
 - 49. “Bravo! Bravo!”, e.g.
 - 50. Yellow ride
 - 51. The Fonz: “Sit ___ ___!”
 - 52. Female equivalent of sir
 - 53. ___-European language
 - 54. Fireplace fodder
 - 55. *Candy in dispenser
 - 58. Itsy-bitsy

ANSWERS ON PAGE 10

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Fill in the blank squares in the grid, making sure that every row, column and 3-by-3 box includes all digits 1 through 9. SOLUTION ON PAGE 12

HOROSCOPE

The Arc of Emotion

With moods and swing sets, you can’t widen the range without widening it both ways. Today’s passionate lunar trine is a reminder: You can’t soar forward without first feeling the stomach drop of the backward pull. Accept the high-low reality and then consider giving up any struggle or resistance to the backward rush. Why dread what is only setting you up to soar smile-first into the sky?

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). When people are afraid to speak up, the silence leads to flawed outcomes, because valuable insight is being suppressed. Today’s environment is hierarchical and full of unspoken rules. It will take courage, but talk anyway.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). The truth is you are intense. You are funny. You are busy. You’ll feel most at home with people who are serious like you are. If they don’t bring wit, clarity or fire, they don’t get to sit in your front row.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You won’t get special treatment today, but just remember: Those who receive better treatment and premium opportunities may excel in the short term, but the long game is anyone’s to win. Strength, cleverness, skill, strategy — these are all things developed in adversity.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Don’t let anxiety make your choices for you. With your nervous system pushing you to your “safest” option, pause to ask something higher than the fear whether an option would be right for you if you had no fear.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Gratitude rushes in for your full and complex life. You give care, you create, handle logistics, celebrate and yes, you grieve, too. You’ve loved deeply and known all sides of that love, including the bliss and the pain of loss.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Your social talents move the action today. You’ve a keen instinct for connecting people who

will benefit from knowing one another. The vibes where you are make people feel comfortable and like you really care, and you do.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Tell people what you’re up to. It’s unfinished, but you can show enough to stay in the conversation. Hold your spot so that when you’re ready for the big reveal, you won’t be building interest from ground zero.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Every challenge is a teacher. There are people you keep trying with, even though you know they will be difficult. Handling them sharpens your skill and builds your confidence.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Get organized. You’ll soon take your talents and goods to more people, and you may need to travel for this, or at least be lighter on your feet, ready to adapt to many different kinds of situations.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). There’s a way to save your energy and money now. Things have shifted, and you will shift, too. You’ll realize there’s something you can take on yourself instead of paying for. New tools and tech will help with this.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Today’s theme centers on the flow of material items in and out of your life. You’re not interested in excess and have no desire to waste resources. However, such things may happen along the way to an ambitious goal.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Your strongest bonds won’t be built on shared interests but on shared rhythm. You may not have the same taste or passions, but you have a similar way of moving through the world — easy does it.

TODAY’S BIRTHDAY (May. 14). This year brings more lightness and freedom than you’ve had in ages. You’ll leave behind something weighty — an identity, a dynamic, a debt -- and feel 20 pounds lighter in every way. More highlights: You’ll raise your rates, name your worth and be met with a yes. You’ll also shine on camera, start a new tradition and receive a destiny-shifting invitation. Aries and Gemini adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 1, 22, 10, 37 and 9.

— Horoscopes by Holiday



Left photo, seniors Chase Long, Shadra Mikita and Andrew Mohatt attend the May 8 Byers School Board meeting as student representatives. Right, members of the Byers High School Health Certification class — Meadow Robinson, left, Maci Olsen, Addison Anderson and Adriane Dillingham — pose with teacher Tiffeny O'Dell at the meeting.



KATHY SMILEY/Eastern Colorado News

BYERS BOE

FROM PAGE 1

couldn't get new ones, and we needed to upgrade the system. And the upgrades just kept going by the way-side."

Turell added that each area will have its own server/amplifier tied into the intercom system. The \$69,993 price tag will be a one-time expenditure from the general fund.

The board approved the preliminary 2025-26 budget that includes a 1.5% staff salary increase. Business manager Stacy Sondburg noted that the district's cost for insurance will increase by 3%.

Turell said that health insurance costs are increasing across the board but the Byers program is holding the line well.

"I've heard from superintendents across the East Central BOCES, and pretty much everybody is looking at a 16% increase, with the exception of ourselves and Bennett," he said. "We and Bennett have the same broker and have a different insurance model, and it seems to be something that is manageable and has been affordable, not only for us as employers, but for the staff who utilize it and use it, it's very little out of pocket, so it's been very good."

Staff and student handbooks were approved with a few changes after discussion, including clarification on how tardies are recorded in the elementary, whether parents are notified mid-term when a student is getting a D or F in a class, and how the dress code is enforced in the secondary.

The lengthiest discussion concerned cell phone use at school, in which directors expressed various opinions, from a total ban on cell phones, to the importance of having them on hand for emergencies. When discussion concluded, however, the hand-

book section on cell phones was not changed.

That policy states that no cell phones are allowed at the elementary level, junior high students must keep them in their lockers, including at breakfast and lunch, and high school students can carry phones but must follow individual teachers' cell phone policies in their classrooms.

Secondary principal Kelly Boren said he made the decision to keep cell phones out of the hands of junior high schoolers unilaterally after staff input.

"It's about maturity," he said. "Cell phones cause a lot of issues. Most of my discipline involves junior high school kids and freshmen, and it's mostly over cell phones and involve meanness and bullying. I don't even want junior high students checking those phones during passing period."

Turell added that widespread cell phone use during a major emergency will only make the situation worse.

"We don't allow cell phones during a lockdown because they will blow up the communication stream when I need to be talking to first responders," he said. "And if every kid in every class all of a sudden sends out a phone call or a text to mom and dad, all of those lines crash."

He added that the school's responsibility is to the students, and that parents need to trust that.

"This is going to sound bad, they're going to have to remember that our number one job is to protect the kids, not to make the parents feel better at home," he said.

Student representatives to the board meeting were asked their thoughts about a cell phone policy that restricts phones in junior high and allows use with discretion in high school.

Senior Shadra Mikita said that having a cell phone is a privilege given to high schoolers.

"You're growing up and your peers and your teachers are respecting you and trusting you to know when you can or can't be on your phone," she said. "When I was younger, I looked forward to this time. It's just one of those privileges you get, and you know not to take advantage of it."

She added that junior high school students should realize that they'll get more freedom later but "they need to learn and be able to focus now."

Senior Chase Long said that being in high school gave him perspective.

"And I think as I've gotten older, I've understood that when I come to school I have a job to do, and so does the teacher. If I expect the teacher to do their job, they have to expect the same from me. If they don't want me to have my phone out, then I should probably trust them, because I know they always want the best for me. I should want the best for them and not make their job hard every time I go in their classroom."

Senior Andrew Mohatt noted that cell phones are essential in some situations.

"If cell phones are eliminated from junior high, you have to make accommodations for kids that are diabetic that need their cell phones to check their blood sugar and stuff," he said.

Students with special needs are given accommodations. Boren emphasized that students who need to get in touch with a parent during the school day are always given access to a phone in a private area of the office, and parents can get messages to their children by calling the office.

In other business, the board approved the third reading of an updat-

ed policy on district-owned teacher housing, with one change. The policy was updated to gradually raise rent simultaneously with salary increases over the renters' years of employment, which raised concern among long-term residents. The board heard the concerns and added language in the policy to allow case-by-base discretion at year 12.

The board approved a quote from Colorado Greenhouse Builders out of Kiowa for a cedar framed greenhouse to enhance agriculture and science hands-on learning experiences. Grants are being sought to cover some of the \$123,450 price tag. This company is going to build the planter boxes for free. The greenhouse will be located south of the main building and west of the walking path. The location is accessible to water, gas and electricity.

The board heard a presentation by four students in Tiffeny O'Dell's Health Sciences class who recently earned health care certifications and a head start toward their anticipated careers.

Students in the class could earn three certifications: Patient Care Technician (PCT), EKG technician and phlebotomy.

The students, Meadow Robinson, Maci Olsen, Addison Anderson and Adriane Dillingham, each told the board what the class meant to them and what their next career steps will be.

O'Dell was beaming with pride for her students.

"We have a 100% pass rate; every one of these girls passed their PCT test, which is unheard of," she said, adding that their scores were higher than the national average. "They blew it out of the water."

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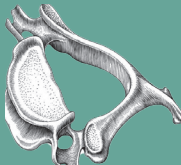


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