



# The I-70 Scout

Volume 31, Number 25      Searching for news in Watkins, Bennett, Strasburg, Byers, Deer Trail and Agate      Wednesday, May 21, 2025

## 'Burg sex assault under Title IX review

Students still in school. Differences between staff and student discipline measures remain unclear

by **Steven Vetter**  
Managing Editor

STRASBURG — While a federal sex discrimination and harassment law has been cited for Strasburg middle school students remaining in class since an early April assault between students, why Hemphill Middle School staff and coaches remain on administrative leave remains unannounced.

In front of a packed audience during the May 12 Strasburg School Board meeting, Superintendent Kelle Bongard reported that back-to-back incidents April 8-9 have fallen under Title IX and that the legislation does not allow disciplinary actions to be levied until the federal investigation is concluded. But, while students involved are allowed to still attend classes and participate in extracurricular activities, a handful of middle school administrators and coaches have been on paid administrative leave since April 11.

Whether a separate district staff disciplinary policy was used to suspend the staff members is unknown despite public comment that included a question inquiring about the inconsistencies between student and staff attendance.

In follow-up comments late last week, Bongard acknowledged public unrest regarding the situation but reiterated privacy concerns when not answering questions about the varying disciplinary decisions.

“Please understand that the district is unable to share details regarding any ongoing investigations, as doing so would violate privacy laws and confi-

dentiality protocols,” she stated in a May 17 e-mail response. “Any information beyond what we have already provided would inadvertently disclose more than we are legally permitted to share. My sincere hope is for the community to know that I am committed to fully adhering to district policies and prioritizing student safety above all else.

“I am genuinely saddened by the mistrust that has developed between some members of the community and the school district. Please know that I will continue to work tirelessly to rebuild that trust for as long as I am given the opportunity to do so.”

As the meeting commenced, school board president Michael Marrero reiterated, “We take our responsibilities for confidentiality seriously, within applicable laws and regulations. Once the investigation is complete, we’ll take the appropriate action.”

During the board meeting, Bongard did confirm that a third-party external investigator and decision-maker has been assigned the investigation, which has an undetermined timeline.

During discussion about Title IX, the board approved reverting back from the 2024 version of the law to 2020 because of an administrative change at the federal level.

Despite public calls for more transparency, family members of students involved asked for the investigation to run its course and also reported that the school district has been supportive through the process.

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STEVEN VETTER/The I-70 Scout

Strasburg Northern Arapaho Partnership (SNAP) Council student leaders Will Hauser, left, and Dakota Strasser present the Strasburg School Board with a final land acknowledgment agreement between the school and the Northern Arapaho Tribe from the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming. According to Strasser, the outgoing SNAP President, the agreement will help the school further its efforts to educate students about Strasburg’s Native American history and strengthen the bond between the two entities. Strasburg has had a partnership in place with the Northern Arapaho since 2016, which allows the school to retain its Indian mascot. Hauser is the group’s incoming president for 2025-26.



DOUGLAS CLAUSSEN/The I-70 Scout

## Tornadoes demolish homes, solar farm near Bennett



PHOTOS BY STEVEN VETTER/The I-70 Scout

At approximately 1 p.m. May 18, tornadoes touched down, wreaking havoc west of Bennett. While the first funnels reportedly touched down around Manila Road south of I-70, storm activity moved northeast with most of the preliminary damage occurring from Highway 36 and Harback Road west of town and moving in a northeasterly pattern to 88th Avenue east of Highway 79. At press time Sunday afternoon, preliminary reports from local fire districts and the Adams and Arapahoe County Sheriff’s offices indicated that at least 10 homes were directly hit but that there were no injuries. The solar farm at the intersection of Highway 36 and Harback Road received significant damage and power lines were downed along much of 38th Avenue. Clockwise from left photo, one of the first funnels to touch down was along Manila Road south of I-70; one of the homes ripped apart was on the north side of 38th Avenue between Harback and Penrith Roads; a broken CORE Cooperative power pole sags along the south side of 38th Avenue; and solar panels are mangled near Harback Road and 38th Avenue. For full coverage of Sunday’s storms, see the May 23 *Eastern Colorado News*.



STEVEN VETTER/The I-70 Scout

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.

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.

‘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.

Clark, Sonnenberg named to key ag positions

WASHINGTON D.C. — U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins May 2 announced the latest slate of presidential appointments for key Farm Service Agency and Rural Development State Director roles for Colorado and other states. “When America’s farming communities prosper, the entire nation thrives,” Rollins said. Sallie Clark, who now serves as the State Director for Rural Development in Colorado, was appointed State Director. Clark has also served as the Senior Advisor for Government & Military Engagement in

Bennett. For more information and to register, call (303)644-3044.

Libertarians plan convention at the Wild Animal Sanctuary

LITTLETON — The 2025 Libertarian Party Colorado State Convention will be held Saturday, May 31, at the Wild Animal Sanctuary, 2229 County Road 53, Keenesburg. Credentialing will start at 8:15 a.m. with business following at 9 a.m. Party members must register at least 90 days in advance. People in attendance, including friends and family can enjoy the animal exhibits at a discounted price of \$20. For more information including lunch tickets, visit lpcolorado.org.

Bennett area foundation plans vendor and craft fair on June 14

BENNETT — The Hearts, Hands & Hope Foundation will host a vendor and craft fair from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, June 14, at the east parking lot at Bennett High School, 600 Eighth St. Check-in for participants is at 7 a.m. Booth fees are \$50 for a 10x10 space or \$75 for two spaces. The foundation does not want Mary Kay products, permanent jewelry, laser engravings, 3D printing, Pampered Chef, goat soaps, beaded items, tumblers, freeze dried items, Red Aspen Nails, Color Street, Mia Bella Candles, Scentsy, or crocheted items.

the Mayor’s Office of Community Affairs at Colorado Springs, overseeing public policy, military engagement, and the Sister Cities International program.

Jerry Sonnenberg was appointed as State Executive Director for the Farm Service Agency in Colorado. In 2022, Sonnenberg was elected as a county commissioner after 16 years of service in the Colorado legislature, eventually as President Pro Tem of the Senate. He is a fourth-generation farmer and rancher on his families Centennial Farm.

All vendors must pay at time of registration. Registration forms submitted without payment will not be added. Vendors can call in advance to ensure they are not duplicated.

For more information or to register, call (303)641-3927.

New food bank plans initial dispersal at Bennett church

BENNETT — The new I-70 Street Reach Food Bank will host its first distribution day from 9:30 a.m. to 12 p.m., Saturday, May 24, at Cornerstone Fellowship Church, Boxes distributed on a first come, first served basis. Thereafter, distributions will occur on the second and fourth Saturdays of each month. The church is located at 460 Third St., Bennett.

Cottage food safety focus of CSU Extension courses

LITTLETON — Starting a home-made food business can bring in extra income and inject one’s favorite recipes into the world. By finishing a Colorado State University Extension online cottage food safety training, home cooks will earn food safety certification and gain knowledge and resources needed to successfully launch a home-based food business. A Cottage Food Safety Statewide Online Training course will be held

from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Friday, June 6. The \$50 courses are three to four hours long and can be completed online. The event is sponsored by CSU Extension offices in Arapahoe and Jefferson counties. For more information, visit arapahoe.extension.colostate.edu.

CO Agricultural Commission: Area cattleman reappointed

DENVER — A Watkins man was reappointed to the State Agricultural Commission May 16 by Gov. Jared Polis. Nick Trainor of Watkins was re-named as an at-large representative. David Blach of Yuma, Simon Martinez of Dolores, and Amanda Weaver of Wheat Ridge were also appointed or reappointed to the commission. In addition, Marc Arnusch of Keenesburg was reappointed to the Colorado Ground Water Commission as a resident agriculturalist representing the Lost Creek Basin.

David Keefer of Wray was reappointed and Clay Kinnison of Grover appointed to represent the High Plains and Upper Crow Creek basins, respectively.

Business orgs set open house on Arapahoe enterprise zone

STRASBURG — New state tax credits for businesses along the I-70 Corridor will be explained at a free open house from 5:30-6:30 p.m., Saturday, June 10, at Shooter’s Bar & Grill in Byers. Last fall Arapahoe County extended a state enterprise zone to include Deer Trail, Byers and Strasburg. Businesses there are now eligible for eight state tax credits for jobs created, employees trained, and investments made meant to spur job creation and growth. Counselors from Arapahoe and Adams counties will describe the credits. Grothe Financial Services will explain the accounting steps. The event is hosted by the I-70 Regional Economic Advancement Partnership and the I-70 Corridor Chamber of Commerce. For more information, call Kip at (303)204-0479.

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**Publisher & Editor**  
Douglas Claussen • [dclaussen@i-70scout.com](mailto:dclaussen@i-70scout.com)

**Office Manager**  
LuAnne Stegner • [lstegner@i-70scout.com](mailto:lstegner@i-70scout.com)

**Managing Editor**  
Steven Vetter • [svetter@i-70scout.com](mailto:svetter@i-70scout.com)

**Staff Writers**  
Kathy Smiley

**Advertising**  
[advertising@i-70scout.com](mailto:advertising@i-70scout.com)

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## Baker named to state human services post

DENVER — The Senate Health & Human Services Committee April 24 confirmed Arapahoe County District 3 Commissioner Jeff Baker to the State Board of Human Services.

“My commitment is to ensure exceptional, compassionate support for those who rely on human services across our state,” Baker said.



Baker

The State Board of Human Services consists of nine appointed members who establish rules and policies for the Colorado Department of Human Services.

Statutorily, the board oversees the rules and programs administered by the CDHS.

Three board members must currently serve as county commissioners. The others must include one person with a disability and a family or ad-

vocacy group member related to persons with disabilities.

Baker has served as a county commissioner since January 2017 after a 20+-year career as an Arapahoe County civil servant.

Before becoming a commissioner, Baker worked for Arapahoe County Human Services for five years and with Facilities & Fleet Management for 13 years.

He also spent five years as a crime scene investigator for the Aurora Police Department.

Baker has also served in the U.S. Army as a military police officer and criminal investigation special agent focused on crimes against children. He was deployed to Iraq in support of Desert Shield and Desert Storm in 1991.

Baker holds a master’s degree in public administration concentrated in local government from the University of Colorado.

## New committee formed to help ArapCo allocate add’l funding under Issue 1A

LITTLETON — The Arapahoe County Board of Commissioners April 22 ratified the newly established Resident Advisory Committee, and the members include a Deer Trail resident.

Roberta “Robbin” Schincke of Deer Trail will represent Commissioner District 3, which includes all of eastern Arapahoe County, on the RAC for a term that expires April 21, 2028. Danielle Young-Kombo of Aurora will also represent District 3 for a term ending April 21, 2027.

The RAC ensures transparency and accountability of funds approved by voters in 2024 as part of Issue 1A, which allowed the county to retain tax money above and beyond limits established by the Taxpayer Bills of Rights (TABOR) in 1994.

The committee will oversee the investment process and provide direction to county commissioners and staff.

“The RAC will be a key conduit between the county and our resident stakeholders, ensuring we are good stewards of these taxpayer-approved funds and helping us to reach resi-

dents through open communication,” said Leslie Summey, District 4 commissioner and board chair.

The RAC is comprised of 10 members, five of whom will represent individual commissioner districts and five who will represent the county as a whole. Members represent the diverse geography, demographics, perspectives and age groups of the county.

Members will serve initial terms staggered to ensure continuity of service.

Thereafter, the commissioners can reappoint members to serve up to two additional three-year terms.

The RAC will begin with a deep dive into the County Strategic Plan and the essential services funded by 1A. The committee will then ensure that the funds are used in alignment with their intended purpose.

Other members for various terms are Phillip A. McCart II and Janet Becker-Wold for District 1; Andrew Lantzy and Lula Guilbert for District 2; Vera Idam and Maya Wheeler for District 4; and Kirk Manzanarez and Edee Summers for District 5.

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# What is in Colorado's budget for education?

by Jason Gonzales  
Chalkbeat

Colorado lawmakers approved a state budget for next year that has more money for colleges, universities, and K-12 schools. But the increase is less than what was promised or requested.

Lawmakers finalized the \$43.9 billion spending plan for the 2025-26 year earlier this week after months of debate about how to close a \$1.2 billion spending shortfall. The shortfall was caused by increased costs for programs such as Medicaid and voter-approved caps on state spending.

Lawmakers had promised more funding for K-12 schools through a school finance formula rewrite last year. But the shortfall means the increase will be about \$16 million less than originally expected.

Colleges and universities will also get far less than higher education leaders requested. Instead, lawmakers will allow them more flexibility in raising tuition rates to cover expenses.

The budget also provides increases for the state's early childhood initiatives.

Gov. Jared Polis signed the budget bill into law April 28.

Jason Gonzales is a reporter covering higher education and the Colorado legislature. Contact him at [jgonzales@chalkbeat.org](mailto:jgonzales@chalkbeat.org)

LIBRARY NEWS

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**Adult book club:** "The Eye of the Needle" by Ken Follett. 11 a.m. to 12 p.m., Friday, May 23. 5/21

**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. 5/28

Parks & Wildlife seeks input for 10-year plan

DENVER — Colorado Parks & Wildlife is developing a 10-year strategic plan to guide its work from 2026-36.

The agency is working in close collaboration with consultants Prosono and The Equity Project to gather input from staff, stakeholders, the public and tribal partners.

Parks & Wildlife encourages the public to submit feedback to inform the plan. Feedback is being collected anonymously through May 26 at [EngageCPW.org](http://EngageCPW.org).

CPW's current Strategic Plan was adopted in 2015. While it has guided the agency's efforts well, the world has changed significantly in 10 years. The 2026 Strategic Plan will serve as a road map to address current and future challenges and opportunities, enhance service to the public, and strengthen the agency's commitment to stewardship of parks and wildlife resources balanced with outdoor recreation opportunities.

# Bison make remarkable comeback over the last century

by **Amanda Horvath**  
KUNC

After facing extinction in the late 1800s, nearly half a million bison, known as buffalo in some cultures, live in North America today. Most of the animals live in conservation or commercial herds, while wild buffalo account for about 20,000 to 30,000 of that number.

Legislators in Colorado are working to protect wild bison in the state. Senate Bill 25-053 would classify bison as big game wildlife, making it illegal to hunt them without permission.

“In recent years, wild bison have crossed into Colorado and have been poached,” said Sen. Jessie Danielson, D-Jefferson County, a co-sponsor of the legislation. “Though it is not a prevalent problem, it is a significant issue to a great number of Coloradans.”

Prior to the discovery of gold in Colorado in 1858, millions of buffalo roamed the West. It was also home to at least 49 American Indian tribes, many of whom followed the migration of bison.

“Most important part about who we are as a people — we’re buffalo people. That buffalo is absolutely sacred to us,” said Rick Williams when speaking with Rocky Moun-

tain PBS for, “Colorado Experience: Return of the Buffalo.”

Williams is a historian, community leader, and a member of Oglala Lakota and Northern Cheyenne tribes. Many indigenous tribes relied on bison for food and supplies.

“We reached the zenith of our existence on the earth because of the buffalo. And once people started coming into our land, it started to destroy that relationship by destroying the buffalo,” Williams said.

As the gold rush spurred movement west, the federal government created policies to clear the land of animals and people who would inhibit the development and establishment of a European lifestyle, like raising livestock. These policies included eradicating American Indians as well as buffalo, wolves and other animals from the landscape.

Dead bison stacked up in the thousands in the West by the late 19th century.

“People would just come out and kill as many [buffalo] as they could and just leave them laying there,” Williams said. “There are reports of men coming out and shooting 100 buffalo in one day and doing nothing but taking their tongues.”



AMANDA HORVATH/Rocky Mountain PBS

A herd of bison runs through a field in Eastern Colorado. A bill awaiting the governor’s signature would extend anti-poaching protections to wild herds.

As settlers slaughtered the buffalo, many tribes lost a key to their way of life. At the same time, the federal government broke treaties, established reservations and Indian boarding schools, and separated Native Americans from their homelands.

“When you take the history of how buffalo/bison were eradicated to eradicate American Indians,” said Raven Payment, “protecting bison is just helping right that wrong.”

Payment is from the Anishinaabe tribe and the former co-chair of the American Indian Commission in Den-

ver. She often advocates for bills in Colorado’s legislature that aim to assist the state’s American Indians, despite the discomfort that comes from walking into the Capitol building.

“They’re looking at all these portraits and these memorials of almost all men, who historically tried to eradicate our ancestors,” Payment said.

Payment sees the bill to protect bison as a form of atonement and reconciliation.

“For these legislators who are sitting in this building among these portraits to undo that horrible legacy of

these men,” she said, “I think speaks volumes to this is another step forward to say, ‘This wasn’t right, but now we’re going to try to do better.’”

Senate Bill 53 originated from the American Indian Affairs Interim Study Committee, a new committee in the legislature that formed late last legislative session. The committee’s purpose is to address issues significant to American Indian communities and includes Danielson. Payment is confident the

**SEE BISON**  
**PAGE 6**



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# ARAPAHOE COUNTY

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



**Beauty and the Bees**  
Join Arapahoe County CSU Extension Horticulture Specialist Lisa Mason for a free talk about bees and pollinators, **May 1, 2–3 p.m.** at Centennial YMCA Center of Generations. Lisa manages the Native Bee Watch, a citizen science program that monitors native bees. Learn what you can do in your own yard to support pollinators and bees.

Email **COG@denverymca.org** to register.

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WEEK OF MAY 19

**BISON**

**FROM PAGE 5**

legislation will be signed into law.  
“It is backed by the native community, both Tribal Councils of the Southern Ute and the Ute Mountain Ute, as well as conservation organizations, and the broader Colorado community,” Danielson said.  
When she can, Payment will take time to visit Daniels Park, a Denver Mountain Park in Douglas County. This park is where the city of Denver keeps one half of its conservation bison herd; the other half is in a park in Genesee.  
Daniels Park is also home to Tall

Bull Memorial Grounds, a Native American site reserved for ceremonies or other activities.  
Daniels Park is a place where Payment feels the bonds to the past and present.  
“Native people are reaffirming their rights and relearning and taking back their culture and their language,” she said. “It’s very much a reconnection for me to understand that [bison] is a relative to these lands.”  
The bison bill was sent to Polis May 6 but had not been signed as of May 18.

# 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**  
**Worship 8:30 a.m.** In-Person or on Facebook  
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**Christ Our Redeemer Lutheran Church**  
Missouri Synod  
**Sunday Worship at 9:30 a.m.**  
275 Ash Street, Bennett • 303-644-3044  
www.corlcms.org

**Mt. Tabor Baptist Church**  
278 S. Sherman St., Byers  
303-822-9366 • mttaborbyers.org  
Sat., 6:00 p.m. .... Saturday Service  
Sun., 9:00 a.m. .... Sunday School  
Sun., 10-10:30 a.m. .... Fellowship; 10:30 a.m. .... Church  
Awana ..... No meetings until restarting on Aug. 26



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**LivingSpringsCowboyChurchByers.org**  
**719-659-8848**

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1955 Headlight Road in Strasburg  
**Sunday Service Livestream at**  
**https://www.mvfcOLORADO.online.church**  
Midweek Elementary Gathering - Tuesdays @ 6:30pm  
Middle/High School Youth Group - Wednesdays @ 7pm  
Find us on Facebook/Instagram: Search “mvfcOLORADO”  
**mvfcOLORADO.com**  
**303.622.9600**

**Strasburg Orthodox Mission**  
**Every Sunday:**  
• Lauds at 10AM •  
Strasburg American Legion  
(56423 Westview Ave.)  
**Tuesday, 7PM:**  
• Vespers & Study •  
Saron Lutheran Church  
(1656 Main St.)  
**Info: strasburgorthodox.org**

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— Douglas Claussen, Publisher & Editor

# Concert lineup for AdCo Fair includes Tyler Braden, The Band Perry

BRIGHTON — Rising country star Tyler Braden and Grammy Award-winning group The Band Perry will headline performances for the annual fair at the United Power Grandstand, Adams County reported May 1.

At 8 p.m., Wednesday, July 30, Braden will take the stage joined by special guest Bayker Blankenship. At 8 p.m., Saturday, Aug. 2, The Band Perry will headline with special guest Adrien Nunez.

Braden has the gritty powerhouse vocal, expressive pen, and conviction-packed delivery worthy of a headliner. A former firefighter from Slapout, Ala. He hit his stride with Warner Music Nashville's "Neon Grave," featuring his breakout No. 1 SiriusXM hit "Try Losing One." In 2024, his viral anthem "Devil You Know" exploded with over 60 million streams and 45,000 TikTok creates. After wrapping up a sold-out headline tour, Braden is

now heading overseas with Brothers Osborne for their "Might As Well Be Us" world tour. He's previously shared the stage with Luke Bryan, Brooks & Dunn, Chris Stapleton, and more.

The Band Perry — Kimberly Perry, Reid Perry and Johnny Costello — return for a new chapter in their 15th year as a band. The trio made waves with their 9X Platinum, genre-crossing smash "If I Die Young," followed by a string of No. 1s including "All Your Life" and "Better Dig Two." The Band Perry has sold millions of albums with more than a billion global streams.

Blankenship, 19, from Livingston, Tenn., has quickly become one of country's brightest new voices. His debut hit "Maxed Out" went viral with more than 100,000 TikTok creates, reached No. 2 on the Spotify viral charts, and had more than 40 million streams. His debut EP "Younger Years,"

released July 2024, clocked in excess of 4 million streams in its first week — he's far more than a one-hit wonder.

Nunez went from college basketball star to viral content creator to a rising force in country music. Known for his signature red glasses and viral reaction videos, the Brooklyn, N.Y., native first made waves supporting fellow artists like Shaboozey's "A Bar Song (Topsy)." Now he's stepping into the spotlight himself. His debut single "LOW ROAD" has racked up millions of streams and cemented his spot as one to watch with tour dates already set for 2025 with Myles Smith and Luke Bryan.

Tickets for both concerts are now available at [adamscountyfair.com](https://adamscountyfair.com).

Concert-goers can use the free shuttle service when visiting the fair. Visit [adamscountyfair.com](https://adamscountyfair.com) for more information.





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Strasburg High School construction class students recently put the final touches on a handmade shed. The 9' x 12' structure with a loft, electrical hookups and lights is also a class fundraiser. The school district is accepting seal bids through June 15. The minimum bid is \$3,500. The first-year class, which was based out of the district's bus barn, was taught by Kevin Hemphill with assistance from local contractor Nick Willard. Local supporter Mitch Swanson also assisted with the electrical portion of the project.

### STRASBURG BOE

### FROM PAGE 1

“The students have shown more grace and empathy than the adults, especially on social media,” one parent said. “The lack of understanding is disheartening. There are answers you are not entitled to.”

A second parent added, “Instead of questioning the board, let’s have the important conversations between parents and students. The school has acted on guidance we provided.”

While the school district’s review into last month’s incidents continue, the law enforcement investigation has been closed without charges being pressed.

While Title IX is most commonly known for overseeing equity of athletic activities between girls and boys, it also includes an investigatory arm for sex-based harassment and sexual violence and discrimination based on pregnancy or parental status.

#### STAFF VACANCIES

Among personnel items approved was another handful-plus of staff not returning for 2025-26. According to Bongard and outgoing Human Resource Director Connie Crego, the staff vacancy rate reached about 18%, which they said was a “normal average.” Elementary and middle school vacancies are mostly filled with more positions still open in the high school.

#### NEW CURRICULUM

More than \$308,000 was approved for curriculum starting next school year. Almost \$196,000 for Benchmark Curriculum in the elementary will be paid using the current budget year and next year.

In the middle school, a pair of language arts curriculum was approved for \$35,000.

New high school curriculum, including a mandatory language arts core class from HMH, costs almost \$78,000.

#### OTHER BIZ

- In budget discussion, Finance Manager Nancy Taylor said the district is expected to receive a 4.3% bump in revenue — \$412 more per student but enrollment is estimated to see a downturn.
- The preliminary salary schedule with a 2.5% base salary increase and a slightly different bonus set-up was approved.
- Taylor said a projected 52% in medical insurance premiums has resulted in the district moving to an Individual Coverage Health Reimbursement Arrangement (ICHRA), which allows employees to select their own plan and be reimbursed for their expenses.
- Bongard said efforts are underway to improve the rate of parent responses to end-of-year satisfaction surveys and that dis-enrollment surveys will be distributed to students and families that are leaving the district.
- The next regularly scheduled board meeting is at 6 p.m., Monday, June 9, at the Central Services Building, 2102 Wagner St.

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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor:

We are writing to you today to address the recent front page article that was published in reference to a sexual assault case at Hemphill Middle School. This is completely outrageous and irresponsible.

Journalists are tasked with gathering information and reporting that information to the public. This is an important job as many people consume what is written, in our community, at *The I-70 Scout*. It is the responsibility of the paper to write articles that accurately inform the public, hold the powers to be accountable through transparency, and keep the community involved. It is also the responsibility of the paper to adhere to a set of moral standards and ethics — which did not happen in the sexual assault article.

You have further victimized minor children involved in an active investigation by publishing graphic details that did not need to be reported. When writing about violent and sexual crimes it is the duty of a journalist to consider accuracy, avoid sensationalism, minimize harm, protect privacy and confidentiality, and avoid exploitation.

This is a perfect example of “just because you can, doesn’t mean you should.” Just because you can access a “report” doesn’t mean that you should write a summary and report it to the public. In the future, it would be in the best interest of all of *The I-70 Scout* consumers if you adhered to these journalism ethics.

There is no defense for this irresponsible and outrageous publication. No good is going to come from publishing this article. It has us questioning the accuracy and ethics of the newspaper. We are wondering what kind of perverted and demented mind it takes to publish and exploit, in such graphic detail, a minor child. Report and fight the fight you want to fight — however, it is imperative that you do so without causing lasting consequences.

The wounds that you have caused can’t be reversed — so, to prevent further harm we demand that you make a public apology and retract the article from all online sources immediately. Further, it would be in the best interest of the community to review your morals and ethics and make a statement of action that you will be taking to never make this grave error again.

— Rob & Meghan Loveless, Strasburg

Dear Editor:

I am proud of you!

I know in there is mix of outraged readers and I am sure you are getting your share of “hate mail” for publishing the truth about the Strasburg school incident. I just wanted to say [that] I personally am very proud of you and believe the public should know exactly how graphic the assault was. These small towns have a history of burying and covering up terrible things and I am glad that you [wrote] this article. I am a little saddened on the bad light you put the Mom in, as the information I have collected doesn’t give me the same result by any means. I also hope that you will cover the next board meeting.

Thank you for shining a light on this.

— Jennifer Burke, Strasburg

Dear Editor:

I am writing to express my absolute outrage and deep disappointment over *The I-70 Scout*’s recent decision to publish and discuss details of an ongoing investigation involving a minor. Your coverage was not only shockingly irresponsible but a disturbing breach of journalistic ethics and basic human decency.

To publish identifying or suggestive details while an investigation involving a child is still active is indefensible. Children are among the most vulnerable in our society and they deserve to be protected from the harsh and permanent judgment of public exposure — especially during traumatic and uncertain times.

Your article showed a reckless disregard for the well-being of the minor involved, their family, and the integrity of the investigative process. The tone and content of your reporting prioritized sensationalism over sensitivity, discretion and ethical standards. The fact that *The I-70 Scout* would exploit such a sensitive matter involving a child for the sake of engagement or readership is appalling.

Let me be clear: This is not an issue of poor taste — this is a violation of a child’s right to privacy and safety. You have caused harm, not just to the individuals involved, but to the credibility of your publication and to the trust of the community you serve.

I demand that *The I-70 Scout* issue a public apology to the affected parties, immediately remove or redact any content that could further identify or harm the minor, and conduct a thorough review of your editorial standards and oversight. If no meaningful corrective action is taken, I will pursue this matter with journalistic oversight bodies, legal authorities, and child advocacy groups.

This situation demands accountability. I urge you to act with the seriousness and urgency it deserves.

— Kelly Vance, Bennett

Dear Editor:

I am writing to express my complete disappointment and utter disapproval of the sexual assault article in the newspaper.

In all of the years I was a victim advocate for Adams County Sheriff’s Office, and all of the sexual assaults along our I-70 Corridor, I never remember such vivid details being published, ever.

Being a 13-year-old in itself is difficult. Now the boy and his family are trying to

navigate an additional situation that has been thrust upon them.

There is still an ongoing investigation through the Department of Education Title IX. The parents have the ability to pause charges being filed through the Adams County Sheriff’s Office. They are waiting to get all of the facts before moving forward. Not partial facts, not implications. They want to have the full picture. When the investigation is complete, the Title IX investigator will have the ability to administer and recommend charges and other consequences.

Again, the parents are waiting for final results, recommendations and procedures. They want to get it right. They need all of the pertinent information so they can make decisions that are best for their child. Their child, not the child of public opinion. The parents are very aware that charges through Adams County Sheriff’s Office can be made for another year. There’s no hurry to get it wrong, they want to get it right despite the time involved.

Can you imagine trying to be patient, waiting for all of the facts to come out while being crucified on social media?

It’s absurd, unfair and sad that this family is being revictimized by those that are uninformed and righteousness and think they know everything they need to know to judge.

Do you realize that the 13-year-old assault victim saw the headline and read it? Now he knows that kids at school, teachers, friends, family and community members know the details of the assault. How could your paper do that to a 13-year-old? Shameful.

If you think family is not upset by this, think they don’t have the fortitude to do what is needed, you are wrong. This family has the love and strength to carry this to the end, while providing for the needs of their son and younger daughter.

They are owed an apology for the fire fueled by your story. They didn’t deserve that. They didn’t deserve any of it.

— Debbie Vance, Watkins

Dear Editor:

It was with a great deal of sadness and anger that I read the story of the young man that was sexually assaulted at his school.

My first responses were for the victim and what an awful situation this was. I hope he is given the support he needs to heal from this.

I was also angry and sad that your paper thought it appropriate to publish all the details of the assault. No victim should have to have the details of their assault in a newspaper. In a small school district like Strasburg, everyone will now know what this young man suffered. I imagine this further victimized him and may make his road to recovery more difficult.

In the future, I hope you will be more considerate of the feelings of any victim of a crime, especially sexual assault, as you report the event.

— Christine Harms, Colorado Office of School Safety

Dear Editor:

I’m going to be 70 in December. Over those years, I’ve had several experiences and training in child sexual assault and sexual exploitation of minors. Starting with me, I was molested by a neighbor boy that was much older than I was. I was 5 at the time, and I never told anyone what happened to me, much less who the perpetrator was. When I was 35, my mother whispered in my ear the name of the perpetrator and hinted at what had happened.

My mother was a phenomenal person. She was trained as a psychiatric nurse and spent 45 years in that profession, except for one year in 1972 as an Army nurse at Fitzsimmons Army Hospital. She is no stranger to trauma of every sort. I’ve had many discussions with her, and she has augmented my education in psychology. I do have a degree in the subject.

Over the years, I married and had seven children. I also had to deal with the trauma in my in-laws and a very unpleasant task it was. My seven children were all raised in Bennett Schools and graduated from Bennett. The youngest two graduated from Byers. Of my five sons, one became a police officer and had a brilliant career. He became a member of the SWAT team and later a homicide detective. He also worked on a joint local and federal task force fighting human trafficking. We, too, have had discussions on sexual assault, and my son also added to my education on the subject.

The recent events at Hemphill Middle School have deeply troubled me on several levels. It is troubling to my family and my friends, along with my neighbors and the local people in places of responsibility in our community.

I offer this analogy to help mend things. It’s like a surgeon cutting out a cancer. He has to inflict some pain and create a scar but, in the long run, the cancer was eradicated and the patient is better off. In my opinion, the best way to deal with this situation is for everyone involved to take some time to reflect on their own actions and check if they have behaved properly, according to their individual responsibilities, and admit any errors they find in themselves and exhibit patience in giving others time to search their souls and their shortcomings.

We make mistakes as young people, adults, parents, and people in authority. The trick is to openly admit them and not repeat them.

— Dirk Rasmussen, Bennett

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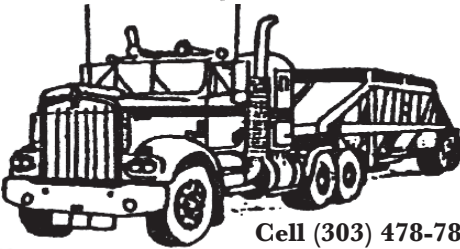
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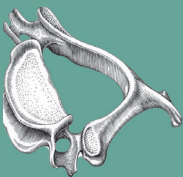
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# CONGRATULATIONS TO THE GRADUATES OF 2025!

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STEVEN VETTER/The I-70 Scout

High school boys choir members Isaiah Jiminez, left, Forrest Smith, Damien Wise, Alexander O'Neill, Colten Reams, Wesley Conklin, Aaron Driggs, and Caden Reams request via song that attendees turn off their phones during the Bennett High Secondary Spring Prism Concert May 6. Part of the evening included music directors Valerie White and Allyse Brennan thanking the 23 seniors who will graduate May 23.



ALYSSA STEMIO/For The Scout

Bennett Schools inducted its 2025 Hall of Fame class April 25. Among the class of 10 are, pictured from left, Bob Read, Century Era Athlete; Marty Behrens, Silver Era Athlete; Jan Lash, Distinguished Alumni; Brady Schmidt, Silver Era Athlete; Del Moler, Meritorious Service; Connie Hamilton, Distinguished Alumni; Joshua Miller, Modern Era Athlete; and Craig Doering, Meritorious Service. Not pictured are Exemplary Military Service honorees Neik Esseck and Dylan Eberhard, who are both currently deployed.



Celebrating 27 Years of Dedication in Education: Honoring Reanna West

In the realm of education, there are individuals who illuminate the path for countless students, and Reanna West is a shining example of such a leader. With 27 years of service in education, Reanna has been a beacon of hope and inspiration for students, parents, and colleagues alike. Her journey as a teacher, special education professional, and coach has touched the lives of thousands of children and young adults, fostering an environment where every learner feels valued and empowered.

Reanna’s classroom was more than just a place of learning; it was a nurturing environment where creativity flourished and individuality was celebrated. Her unwavering commitment to special education ensured that every child received the support and encouragement they needed to thrive regardless of their challenges. Beginning her career at Mapleton Public Schools, following in her mom’s footsteps, Reanna was an 18-year-old eager to make a difference. Twenty-seven years later, Reanna’s advocacy extends beyond her students, inspiring fellow educators to embrace their careers and champion for every child in their care.

To know, Reanna is to love her! She’s like a breath of sunshine even in the darkest of days. Her siblings refer to her as Poppy (Princess Poppy from Trolls), as it is nearly impossible to even force a negative thought or comment out of her. This woman has an unremarkable zest for life. There’s always something to look forward to, or as she would say, “the good news is...”

Alongside her successful career has been her passion for her family and friends. For the majority of her career, she has made it a priority to be in her kids’ school system. She attends every event, has a huge communal snack drawer in her classroom, remains close friends with colleagues from other schools, and enthusiastically supports her husband’s business ambitions.

As she sets to retire from the public school system, Reanna West’s legacy is one of passion, dedication, and triumph—a testament to the profound impact an educator can have. Here’s to celebrating her remarkable journey and the countless lives she has transformed along the way! We are so proud of you, Reanna, we can’t wait to see what your next chapter has in store for you and us. Love all your peeps.



**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](https://morgancc.edu/class-of-2025)



# The Staff Of The I-70 Scout & Eastern Colorado News



## Congratulates the Class Of 2025.

“The horizon leans forward, offering you  
space to place new steps of change.”

— *Maya Angelou*





Congratulations to the

Bennett Class of 2025

Friday, May 23, 7 p.m., Paul Read Field

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Celebratory  
Fireworks  
Display  
to follow  
at approx.  
8:15-8:30 p.m.



Diego Aguilar



Perla Borunda Aguirre



Yanni Alvarez



Airiana Anderson



Isabella Arnold



Nycol Solis Avila



Daniel Gonzalez Banuelos



Xavia Barlow



Gage Bayne



Ava Black



Kanyah Brown



Hadasa Burgos



Valentin Melendrez Cardenas



Angelia Castilleja



Luis Perez Castillo



Devon Chapman



Wesley Conklin



Felicity Corado

Class Colors:  
Orange,  
Black &  
Silver


Congratulations  
Seniors!




All the best for  
future success.

— Arapahoe County Commissioner Jeff Baker

Congratulations Graduates!




DREAM BIG!!!  
Good Luck in your  
future endeavors!



Bennett Park & Recreation District  
455 S. 1st Street • 303-644-5040

Congratulations  
I-70 Corridor Grads!



from: Claussen Chiropractic

Ben Claussen, D.C. • 303-622-4200  
1517 Main St. Strasburg, CO

Congratulations  
to all area graduates!



Roggen  
Elevator

303-644-3251



# Congratulations to the Bennett Class of 2025

Friday, May 23, 7 p.m., Paul Read Field

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Dean Corbin



Vivi Cranwill



Kylie Croft



Gavin Darnell



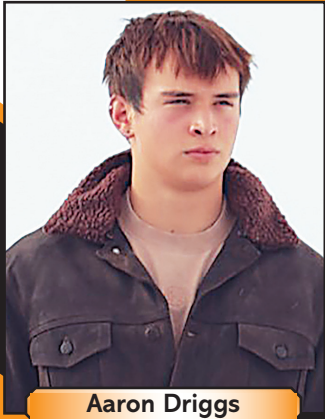
Dominic Saldana Daza



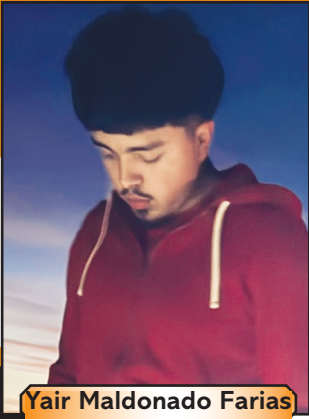
Cristobal De La  
Torre De Reza



Logan Dorris



Aaron Driggs



Yair Maldonado Farias



Wyatt Farley



Rojelio Monrreal Faudoa



Junior Flores



Ethan Francis



Kimberly Delval Gallegos



Veronica Mota Garcia

Bennett Class of 2025

**ROAR With Pride!**

**Focus on Your Future With the  
Eyes of a Tiger!**



# Congratulations to the Bennett Class of 2025

Friday, May 23, 7 p.m., Paul Read Field

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Daniela Garcia




Joseph Gilmor



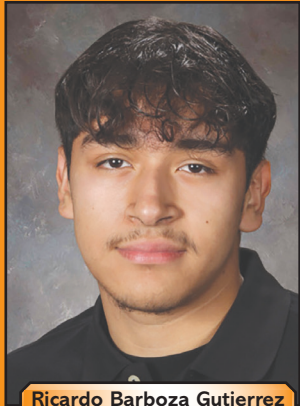
Richard Gomez



Lacie Gonzales



Jose Granillo



Ricardo Barboza Gutierrez



Robert Harris




Brody Hawes



Maddison Hawkins



Tyrone Haymore III




Maximiliano Soto Herrera



Madeline Hilyard



Jason Hong



Kayden Hucksoil



Rafael Huizar Ibarra

*Congratulations Graduates!*  
*You did it!*

**The Musketeers  
Veterinary Practice**  
550 E Colfax Ave, Unit A, in Bennett • 303-644-4MVP



CONGRATS CLASS OF  
**2025**

FROM THE  
DIRECTORS AND  
EMPLOYEES OF  
EASTERN SLOPE  
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## Roll On Class of '25!

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(includes mounting & balancing)  
Proof of graduation required




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# Be well always, Graduates!



**MARLA MADRID, LCSW**  
190 1st Street  
Bennett, CO 80102  
**303-644-4240**



**ATLAS**  
COUNSELING & CONSULTING



Congratulations to the

Bennett Class of 2025

Friday, May 23, 7 p.m., Paul Read Field

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Class Flower:  
Tiger Lily



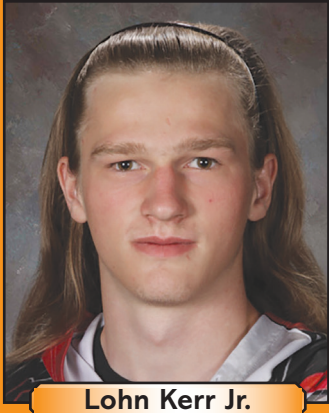
Jayden Ivory



Isaiah Jiminez



Aeryn Johnson



Lohn Kerr Jr.



Elijah Lamb



Danielle Lamberty



Chloe Larson



Diego Madera



Hailey Mahana



Hunter Manship



Nereli Coronado Martinez



Alonzo McNellis

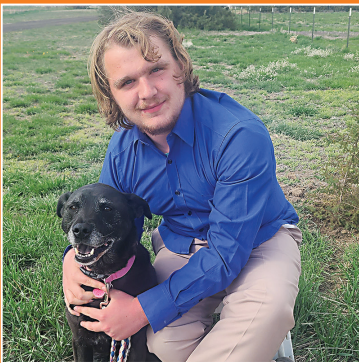


Emilio McNellis



Annalisa Millholland

Congratulations Robbie!!  
We are so proud of you!!  
We can't wait to see  
where life takes you.  
Keep reaching for the stars!  
— Love, Mom, Dad,  
Joey and Katelyn



CONGRATULATIONS  
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8:00am - 5:00pm Sat.  
8:00am - 1:00pm Sun.

Congratulations Corridor Grads!



Good Luck Class of 2025

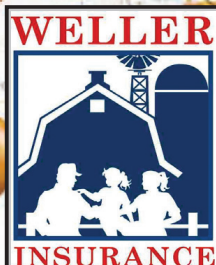
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Heating and Air Conditioning  
303-622-24HR (2447)

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Comprehensive A/C Tune-Up

Good Luck Graduates!

from:



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www.wellerinsuranceagency.com

Congratulations Class of  
2025 Graduates!



Good Luck in Your Endeavors  
Denver, East Strasburg KOA

303-622-9274 • 1312 Monroe St Strasburg CO 80136

Congratulations  
Corridor Seniors!



Lance Grothe, CPA, CFP®  
690 E. Colfax Ave. Bennett  
303-644-4600



Congratulations to the

Bennett Class of 2025

Friday, May 23, 7 p.m., Paul Read Field

BENNETT

**Class Motto:**  
“Take pride in how far you’ve come. Have faith in how far you can go. But don’t forget to enjoy the journey.”  
— *Michael Josephson*



Maribel Reyes Moreno



Tessa Mosher



Marayha Perez Munoz



Brailyn Neade



Alexander O'Neill



Naomi Ocon



Dane Ortiz



Alberto Rodriguez Parra



Brooke Patterson



Atiana Perez



Nadia Perez



Hailey Philipsen




Marely De La Rosa Ramos

Congrats &  
Good Luck to  
I-70 Corridor  
Classes of 2025!



*Maddison Hawkins*  
We are so proud of you.  
Congratulations on this  
steppingstone in life.  
We can't wait to see what  
the future holds for you.  
(Dream big.)  
— Love, Dad, Mom, and Carson




Congratulations to the Class of 2025!

# KOHRS

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[www.KohrsOrtho.com](http://www.KohrsOrtho.com)



Vivi,  
You high key slayed high school.



No cap,  
you ate  
that up.

WLY,  
Mom & Dad

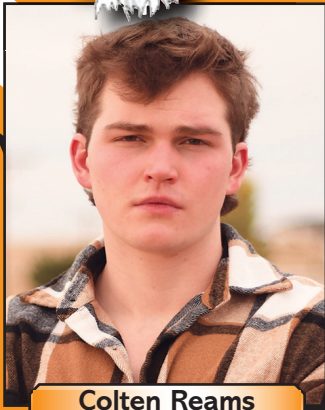


Congratulations to the

# Bennett Class of 2025

Friday, May 23, 7 p.m., Paul Read Field

BENNETT



Colten Reams



Ramon Velazquez Reyes



Nayely Rocha



Cindy Rodriguez



Katelynn Russo



Harli Sabo



Kaleb Sanchez



Benjamin Santos



Olivia Schroeder



Santiago Simental



Ryan Sims



Forrest Smith



Owen Stiers



Colton Taylor



Laine Taylor

## Congratulations Graduates



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2025 Grads!  
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# CONGRATULATIONS I-70 CORRIDOR GRADUATES!

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★ **TACK**

★ **APPAREL**

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# Congrats to all 2025 Grads!

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56151 E. COLFAX AVE.





Congratulations to the

Bennett Class of 2025

Friday, May 23, 7 p.m., Paul Read Field

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Raquel Thorpe



Kyra Turner



Natalin Deras Valle



Marelin Ramirez Vazquez



Jessica Venneberg



Caiden Wenzel



Elizabeth Westendorf



Justin Wilson



Matthew Wiser



Josilen Zamarripa

Class Song:

“Good Old Days”

— Macklemore



Celebratory Fireworks Display

to follow at approx. 8:15-8:30 p.m.

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."

From:

FNB Bank

A State Chartered Bank - Member FDIC

1076 South 1st Street Bennett, CO 80102 ~ (303)644-5100 ~ [www.fnb.com](http://www.fnb.com)



Congratulations to the  
**Deer Trail Class of 2025**  
Saturday, May 24, 10 a.m., Deer Trail School Gymnasium

DEER TRAIL



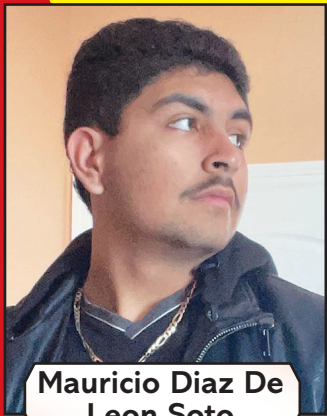
Contessa Armstrong



Elvin Castro



Valeria Cisneros Nevarez



Mauricio Diaz De Leon Soto



Kooper Eldringhoff



Ivan Gomez



Jaden Gudenkauf



Mahamud Hussein



Koltin Kitzman

Co-Valedictorians  
**Jaden Gudenkauf**  
&  
**Koltin Kitzman**



**Congratulations To All The Corridor Graduates!**

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graduates



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— Nora Ephron

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**Our Hats Are Off to You GRADUATES!**

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**CONGRATULATIONS CORRIDOR GRADUATES!**





Bijou Telephone Co-op



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Congratulations to the  
**Deer Trail Class of 2025**  
*Saturday, May 24, 10 a.m., Deer Trail School Gymnasium*

DEER TRAIL



Raul Manriquez  
Bustamante Jr



Julian Meza Singletary



Christopher  
Velazquez Moreno

**Class  
Flower:  
Vanilla Bean**



Joselyn Moreno



Valentino Puente



Taylor Reis

**Class  
Colors:  
Navy &  
White**



Lasini Samate



Allena Sanchez Neal



Leannah Virgil

**Class Song:  
“Rocketeer”  
—Far East Movement**

**Congrats Seniors!**  
*Good Luck In Everything You Do!*

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Master Card VISA

Tania Stephens, Broker/Owner  
Adrian Castillo Monga, Agent

Look East Realty

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Bennett, CO 80102

**Class of 2025**  
**CONGRATULATIONS**

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[www.DenverRailings.com](http://www.DenverRailings.com)  
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**Congrats GRAD**

**DT Class of '25**  
**Soar to New Highs!**

FROM DEER TRAIL SCHOOL/DISTRICT 26J

# Good Luck I-70 Corridor Grads!

from your friends at



## LOTTMAN OIL CO

COLORADO • ARKANSAS  
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SUBMITTED PHOTOS

From left photo, the rodeo event of calf roping and horticulture were among the bevy of agricultural topics that elementary students and high school FFA members interacted with during Barnyard Day at Bennett School District April 23.

## Congrats Danielle on your Corridor Legacy!

Your courage and neverending effort paid off!

## Good Luck @CU-Colorado Springs!

We are proud of you and your accomplishments!

— Love, Mom & Dad



## Congratulations Corridor Grads!

## Stay Focused on Your Future!

From your Friends @



### EYEVENUE



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STEVEN VETTER/The I-70 Scout

The saxophone quartet of D.J. Wiser, left, Vivi Cranwill, Ayden Reynolds and Justin Wilson entertain a packed auditorium during the Bennett High School Spring Prism Concert May 6 with their rendition of the comical, quirky “Feeding the Giraffe,” by Eric Bernhardt. The rotating spring feast of music included the high school wind symphony, jazz band and choir under the direction of directors Valerie White and Allyse Brennan.

# Congrats GRADS!

from

## LINCOLN HEALTH





## Your HOMETOWN Primary Care Clinic



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Bennett High School senior Angelia Castilleja participated as a percussionist in the 2025 Colorado All-State Symphonic Band for juniors and seniors at the University of Colorado at Greeley April 3-5. She auditioned in November with 78 other percussionists and was awarded the fourth chair, meaning she's the fourth-best percussionist in the state per the judges. Under the direction of Dr. Allan McMurray, the band performed five pieces of prolific concert band music. The 105-piece Colorado All-State Symphonic Band was founded in 1952 by Wayman Walker, band director at UNC. Castilleja was the only student from the I-70 Corridor to make the all-state band this year.



SPORTS



Byers, Strasburg bring home state track gold



PHOTOS BY ISAAC MANAUGH/The I-70 Scout

**BACK-TO-BACK CHAMPS** — The Byers Bulldogs finished fourth in the 2A boys team standings during the Colorado State Track & Field Championships May 15-17 at Jeffco Stadium in Lakewood, including defending last year’s state title in the 4x400-meter relay in the last event on Championship Saturday. From left photo, junior Quincy Eacret shoots out of the block during Saturday’s final, senior Jake Anderson receives the baton from classmate Cameron Eastwood during the second exchange, and sophomore anchor Ben McPherson celebrates after coming across the line ahead of second-place North Fork. The Bulldogs entered Saturday with the fourth-fastest time with sophomore Gus Malcolm running the lead leg. For full state track meet coverage, see the May 23 issue of the *Eastern Colorado News*.



ISAAC MANAUGH/The I-70 Scout

**LADY INDIAN 3-PEAT** — Strasburg senior Peighton Marrero celebrates her third consecutive 400-meter title at the state track meet May 17 with a hug from Brush’s Michelle Headley. This year’s title occurred in Class 3A after back-to-back 2A titles in 2023 and 2024. Marrero, who reached the state podium four times to conclude her high school career, helped the Lady Indians to seventh place in the team standings. For full state meet coverage, see the May 23 *Eastern Colorado News*.

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Memorial Day is a time for us to remember and share memories of the people who have fought and given up their lives for our country. We remember them when we hold events in their hometowns, plant flowers and watch military jets fly over. It's also a good time to honor our living veterans. They tell stories about their military service and share their medals. We also honor them when we raise flags at their homes when they come home. **Use the clues to fill in the holiday puzzle.**

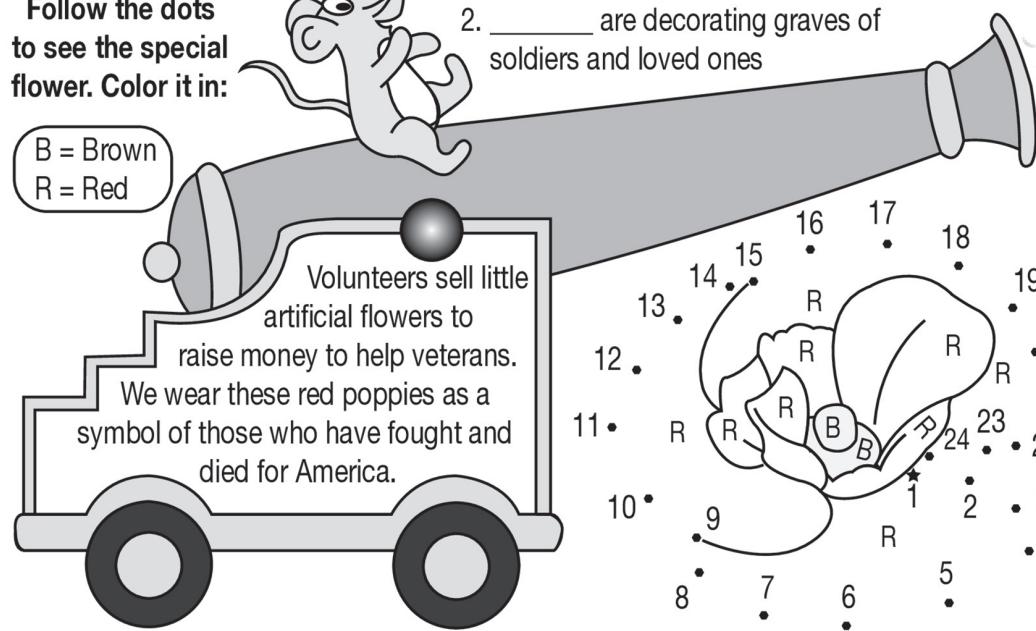
## In Support...

Follow the dots  
to see the special  
flower. Color it in:

B = Brown  
R = Red

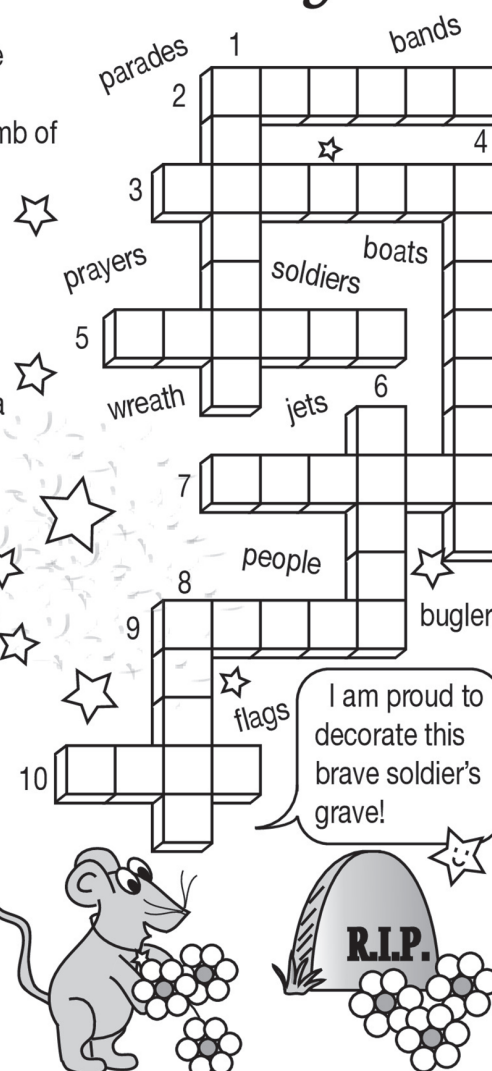
Volunteers sell little artificial flowers to raise money to help veterans. We wear these red poppies as a symbol of those who have fought and died for America.

1. people in \_\_\_\_\_ are marching to the cemetery for memorial events
2. \_\_\_\_\_ are decorating graves of soldiers and loved ones



On Memorial Day . . .

3. \_\_\_\_\_ are being said for peace
4. \_\_\_\_\_ are firing salutes
5. a \_\_\_\_\_ is being laid at the Tomb of the Unknowns (service people) in Arlington National Cemetery
6. \_\_\_\_\_ are flying at half-mast
7. a \_\_\_\_\_ is sounding Taps
8. little \_\_\_\_\_ filled with flowers are being set upon the waters to honor those who have died at sea



## How We Remember...

There are many ways in which we honor people and keep memories alive!

**Match the ways below. Then, find and circle the words in the puzzle:**

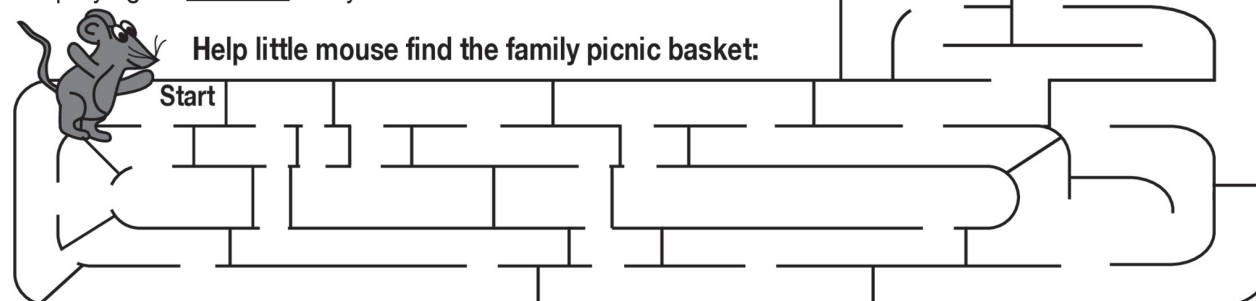
1. displaying \_\_\_\_\_ A. parades  
2. marching in \_\_\_\_\_ B. flags  
3. decorating service people's \_\_\_\_\_ C. salutes  
4. flying \_\_\_\_\_ at half-mast D. medals  
5. firing 21-gun \_\_\_\_\_ E. graves

1. reading a serviceperson's \_\_\_\_\_
  2. listening to \_\_\_\_\_
  3. playing "Taps" on a \_\_\_\_\_
  4. watching a \_\_\_\_\_ explaining war events
  5. praying for \_\_\_\_\_ everywhere
- A. peace
  - B. film
  - C. bugle
  - D. speeches
  - E. letters



N I O K N V G T R F V C D K P O K M H G V C S Q  
L D F R T Y U P O L K M J H N G F S L A D E M A  
E P U H G F R W O A D V F D C S J P O Y E G K C  
T K G R E S A L U T E S K H D S E H C E E P S D  
T I Y H N K C P L F R S A C V F W B G J H U M A  
E M B C F I L M V H E G E Z S E D A R A P N G E  
R M K G T F E S D C F V G G K J U Y H B G T R C  
S N I J H U Y G V T F C A K J F R G B H T Y N A  
V S E V A R G N O Y S L B U T R E L G U B K V E  
P U T R D F H K L N F K H J U T F D P L A P  
U Y T R W O V C H G I O P K M L N H

**Help little mouse find the family picnic basket:**

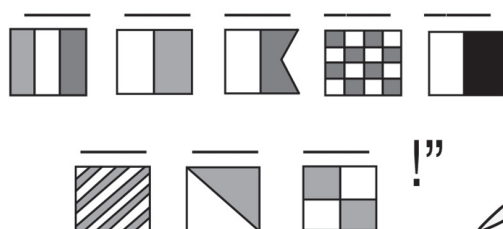


## Respectful Signals

## Respectful Signals

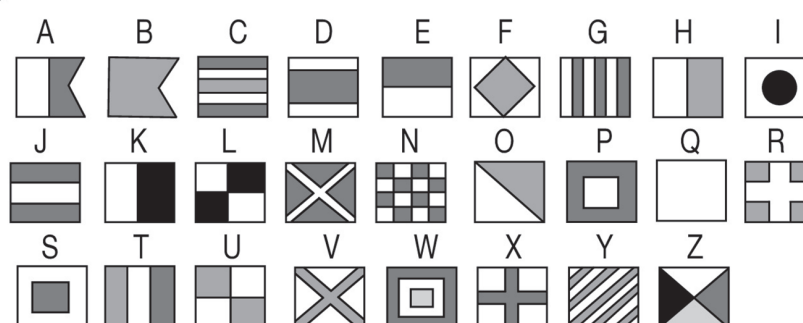
When we gather to listen to a bugler sounding Taps, or when we watch the wreath being laid at the Tomb of the Unknowns (soldiers and other service people) in Arlington National Cemetery, we are saying,

“We remember you and we...



## Signal Flags

Each of these flags stands for a letter of the alphabet. **Study them to fill in the blanks:**



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Accountant/Bookkeeper  
303-907-5332

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

The Not-So Dusty Pages

20 YEARS AGO  
MAY 24, 2005

According to the Arapahoe County Sheriff’s Office, roadways in Deer Trail were closed and power was out because of a driver under the influence of alcohol May 14. Arapahoe County Sheriff’s Office Deputy Richard Haight responded to a report of a roll over accident in Deer Trail. Upon arrival, he discovered a vehicle that had swerved off the road and rolled over. The car knocked down some power lines when it left the roadway causing a power outage in the immediate area. IREA responded to repair the power lines. Around 5:30 a.m. road were reopened and power was restored. The Arapahoe County Sheriff’s Office Accident Investigation Team responded to the scene to conduct the accident investigation. The investigation and interviews concluded that the male juvenile was on his way home from a party when he tried to pass a car and lost control of the car he was driving. Police reports state the juvenile admitted to consuming alcohol at the party. He was advised of the Express Consent Law and elected to take a blood test. He was issued a summons for reckless driving, DUI, and underage consumption.

15 YEARS AGO  
MAY 25, 2010

WATKINS — The I-70 Corridor is a prime area for prospective manufacturing business ad distribution to a Front Range economic development specialist.

“I truly see tremendous underutilized opportunities out here,” Said Metro Denver Economic Development official Laura Brandt during the I-70 corridor Regional Economic Advancement Partnership board meeting May 13 at Front Range Airport. “Especially when you see all the transportation opportunities with rail, I-70 and Front Range. I’m looking forward to the day TransPort say ‘OK we are ready to get going.’” Brandt’s group is the primary business recruiting entity for the six-county Front Range region. Included in their success stories is the large Danish wide energy company Vestas, which has plants in Brighton and Windsor.

10 YEARS AGO  
MAY 26, 2015

STRASBURG — A local deputy with Strasburg ties is the 17th Judicial district 2015 Peace Officer of the year. Adam County Sheriff’s Deputy Michael Donnellon received the award May 1 at the annual 17th Judicial District Law day Ceremony at the Adams County Fairgrounds. Representatives from each law enforcement agency in Adams and Broomfield counties were in attendance along with members of the courts, District Attorney’s Office and Colorado Bar Association. Donnelley grew up in Strasburg, graduated from Strasburg High School, and still has family ties and friends there. He went into law enforcement in 2007. “I was a Brighton cop for three years and a Milliken cop for three years,” he told The I-70 Scout May 8, adding that he started his career with the Adams County Sheriff’s Office in November 2012.

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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 18

TODAY IN HISTORY

Today is Wednesday, May 21, the 141st day of 2025. There are 224 days left in the year.

TODAY’S HIGHLIGHT

On May 21, 1881, the American Red Cross was founded by nurse and educator Clara Barton in Washington D.C.

ON THIS DATE

In 1924, 14-year-old Bobby Franks was murdered in a “thrill killing” carried out by University of Chicago students Nathan Leopold Jr. and Richard Loeb (Bobby’s distant cousin). In 1927, Charles A. Lindbergh landed his Spirit of St. Louis mono-plane near Paris, completing the

first solo airplane flight across the Atlantic Ocean in 33 1/2 hours. In 1932, Amelia Earhart became the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean as she landed in Northern Ireland, about 15 hours after leaving Newfoundland. In 1941, a German U-boat sank the American merchant steamship SS Robin Moor in the South Atlan-

tic after the ship’s passengers and crew were allowed to board life-boats. In 1955, Chuck Berry recorded his first single, “Maybellene,” for Chess Records in Chicago. In 1972, Michelangelo’s Pieta, in St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican, was damaged by a hammer-wielding man. (The sculpture went back on display 10 months later after

its damaged elements were reconstructed.) **TODAY’S BIRTHDAYS** Singer Ronald Isley (The Isley Brothers) is 84. Actor Mr. T is 73. Nick Cassavetes is 66. Actor Lisa Edelstein is 59. Country musician Cody Johnson is 38. NFL quarterback Josh Allen is 29. — Associated Press

STATEPOINT CROSSWORD

THEME: ON BROADWAY

ACROSS

1. Benatar and Morita

5. Certain tray contents

8. In custody

12. \*Main character in “Shrek the Musical,” based on 2001 flick

13. Soreness

14. Wore (2 words)

15. Street in Anytown, USA

16. Burn to a crisp

17. Opposite of alpha

18. \*Musical with most Tony Awards, with The

20. Grape holder

21. Entertain

22. \_\_\_ Aviv

23. Unrhymed Japanese poem, pl.

26. Snakebirds

30. Opposite of hence

31. Shooting star

34. Milk’s favorite cookie

35. Zoroaster follower

37. A Beatle bride

38. Mix-up

39. Type of cotton

40. \*\_\_\_ Lloyd Webber

42. Dog command

43. Inference of similarity

45. 4th letter of Hebrew alphabet

47. “But I heard him exclaim, \_\_\_ he drove out of sight...”

48. Pool table fabric

50. Altar location

52. \*Last year’s Tony Award winner for Best Musical, with The

56. Santa Anna’s target

57. To, archaic

58. Small cave

59. Cocaine-producing plant, pl.

60. Diagnostic test

61. Biblical Isaac’s firstborn

62. Not quite an adult

63. Craggy peak

64. Tear

DOWN

1. Circumstance’s partner

2. Lab gel

3. Domingo, Pavarotti and Carreras, e.g.

4. “Where the Wild Things Are” author

5. Plural of #13 Across

6. Social media button

7. Not his

8. \*Musical with most Tony nominations

9. Barbara of “I Dream of Jeannie”

10. \*Private box

11. Double helix-shaped structure

13. Emile Zola’s “J’\_\_\_\_!”

CROSSWORD

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14. What helicopter parents do

19. Savory taste sensation

22. Black gunk

23. Tapa, alt. sp.

24. “Encore!”

25. \_\_\_ Jean, a.k.a. Marilyn Monroe

26. Don’t let this hit you on the way out

27. Use the other end of a pencil

28. Re-equip

29. \*Rodgers’ and Hammerstein’s “\_\_\_ Pacific”

32. \*Award nickname, short for Antoinette

33. Finish line

36. \*Arthur Miller’s “Death of a \_\_\_”

38. Swaziland native

40. \*”\_\_\_ of Aquarius,” song from “Hair”

41. a.k.a. the Wizard of Menlo Park

44. Plural of #34 Across

46. Late actor Heath

48. Social dice game

49. Rose oil

50. Medicinal house plant

51. Tempo

52. Give a boot

53. Gaelic

54. Multicolored horse

55. Wall support

56. \*Part of a play

ANSWERS ON PAGE 17

HOROSCOPE

Gemini Season Opening

On the first full day of the solar journey through the sign of the twins, an empathetic Pisces moon reminds us that what feels singular is actually shared. No matter how novel today’s situation may seem, it’s actually happening to thousands of others, too. Furthermore, all can be handled with common fixes. So breathe easy. The situation may seem unusual, but it’s not unmanageable. **GEMINI (May 21-June 21).** You’re in the process of lifestyle upgrades including an environment that deeply supports you and who you are becoming. This has many steps and stages, including the most fun one: dreaming it. Think big, as you are bringing this into being. **CANCER (June 22-July 22).** Green spaces and all that grows and lives wild will give you back what’s been missing. Spend time in nature, and let curiosity guide your attention. Simply observing the world around you will refuel your energy and refresh your perspective. **LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).** Winning isn’t always your main goal. You’d often rather be kind, fair or strategic than grab a trophy. You’ll size up today’s opponent with grace, deciding whether this is your moment to rise or your moment to lift someone else. Both are victories. **VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).** You have an aura of power. Some would even say you are intimidating. An associate might be white-knuckled because of having to report to you. Try and put people at ease because that’s when they’ll do their best work. **LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).** Being valued for who you are — your personality, your energy, your soul — is far better than being valued only for what you do (help, provide, perform, fix). This week, you’ll receive love based on mutual care, not just convenience. **SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).** You sense a responsibility isn’t yours to carry. Step away

and watch to see if the rightful owner steps up. And if they don’t? That’s your answer, too. Either way, you’ll be glad you took the time to understand instead of jumping to the fix. **SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).** Today brings fun intellectual challenge and game-changing concepts that light up your mind even before you fully understand them. But talking it through with friends, mentors and even opponents will be half the fun. **CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).** You’ll feel connected to the bigger picture, aware that your role — however small it may seem — is essential to how it all fits together. You’ll give your best knowing that you’re helping to write the story of the world. **AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).** Just because someone’s loud or confident doesn’t mean they’re wise. Check credentials. Save your energy for the guidance that’s rooted in experience and real results. **PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).** Those who believe in serendipity often find it, but even skeptics get swept up sometimes. Today brings a moment so uncanny, so precisely timed, it’ll feel like the universe had you in mind all along. **ARIES (March 21-April 19).** You don’t have to wait for a special occasion or anyone else’s invitation. Move like you mean it, dress like you’ve got somewhere to be, and make plans that thrill you. The more joy you give yourself, the more life rises to meet you. **TAURUS (April 20-May 20).** Your subconscious is steering the ship more than your conscious mind wants to admit today. **TODAY’S BIRTHDAY (May. 21).** You’ll switch tracks without fear, guided by an inner whisper that proves more accurate than any GPS. Your bold pivots and sparkling curiosity land you in money, adoration and accolades. More highlights: A new skill unlocks a passion project, romance burns hotter with clarity, and a past mistake becomes a doorway to brilliance. Virgo and Sagittarius adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 16, 5, 12, 38 and 23.

— Horoscopes by Holiday

# Strasburg man seeks votes in ‘Favorite Chef’ contest

by **Kathy Smiley**  
Staff Writer

STRASBURG — A Strasburg man is involved in a contest for “favorite chef” status, and we all have a chance to vote for him.

Christopher Sturgeon is participating in the online Favorite Chef competition, a national voting-based cooking fundraiser for the James Beard Foundation. The winner receives a \$25,000 grand prize, a two-page feature in Taste of Home magazine, and a cooking experience with celebrity chef Carla Hall.

Sturgeon, 31, is much more than an aspiring chef. He is a registered nurse in the burn ICU at Swedish Medical Center. He also fights on the local mixed martial arts circuit for DCO MMA & Fitness, a mixed martial arts studio in Denver.

Sturgeon has lived in Colorado for 25 years.

“My dad was in the Army, so I spent the first five or six years of my life moving base to base along the east coast,” he told The I-70 Scout May 13, adding that his family then settled in Sterling.

He and his wife, Kayla Hood, moved to Strasburg three years ago.

“My wife grew up in Strasburg and graduated from Strasburg High School in 2010,” he said. “We moved back this direction to be closer to family and, of course, close to major hospitals.”

The couple is expecting their first child, a boy, in June.



Christopher Sturgeon of Strasburg is an ICU nurse, a martial arts fighter, a soon-to-be father, and a contestant in an online contest for “favorite chef” status.

Sturgeon said he finds joy in cooking.

“I started cooking early in life for my siblings when my parents were at work,” he wrote on his bio for the competition. “I didn’t want to just feed them ramen or easy mac, so I learned how to make complex dishes. Now I feed my friends, coworkers and

fight team. It’s how I show my love.” Sturgeon’s favorite dish to make is steak.

“Recently I’ve been playing with steak marsala,” he notes on his bio. “No one can touch me on the grill or the smoker, so we have a lot of barbecues at our house. I’ve taken over as the man in charge of Thanksgiving for my families, and I love smoking a prime rib for everyone.”

Contestants were asked to share what they would do with the \$25,000 if they win. Sturgeon said that, while he would love to invest in a food truck to share his culinary creations with a wider audience, at this point in his life he doesn’t want to take on what could be a risky venture.

“I would use the money to support my wife and son and continue my current career as a registered nurse,” he said. “I want to see my family succeed, so perhaps I would use the money to pursue my doctorate in nursing while still cooking out of joy and love.”

The competition began March 31 with approximately 5,000 chefs. Sturgeon was one of around 48 contestants remaining in the competition by mid-May. Finalists will be the 12 competitors who have the highest number of votes during the last week of May and into the first week of June. The competition will conclude on June 5, and the grand prize winner will be announced by July 3.

To help Chris Sturgeon become the next Favorite Chef, vote at <https://favchef.com/2025/chris-sturgeon>. Free votes can be cast once every 24

hours. Multiple votes are counted when a donation is made — one vote per dollar donated.

“The James Beard Foundation provides awards, grants and scholarships to chefs and restaurants nationally seeking to better the culinary arts world,” Sturgeon said.

The foundation’s mission is to promote inclusivity and sustainability and to lead the culinary industry towards a new standard of excellence.

Sturgeon is in fourth place in his quarterfinal group of 12 competitors.

“The competitors in each group battle it out in each round via community voting and donations,” he said. “The person who finishes first in each group will advance to the semi-finals, and so on. My original preliminary group was 60 individuals, and the remaining competitors are in the top 1% of all competitors.”

As a quarterfinalist, Sturgeon has an additional opportunity to win a prize.

“I have the chance to impress the three celebrity chef hosts by presenting a dish to each of them based on their set criteria,” he said.

Each expert will handpick one standout talent to win a “once-in-a-lifetime culinary experience,” according to the Favorite Chef website.

Chris Sturgeon is a worthy competitor and the community has the opportunity to support one of its own by casting free votes or making a donation to a good cause. For more information on the contest and the James Beard Foundation, visit [favechef.com](https://favechef.com) or [Facebook.com/FavChef](https://Facebook.com/FavChef).

## The Gift Shop

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**Friday, June 13**  
10 am-3 pm

**DAVIES LIBRARY**  
128 2nd Ave., Deer Trail

No reservations needed. For more information, scan the QR code or visit [arapahoelibraries.org/events](https://arapahoelibraries.org/events)

## AdCo releases disaster recovery plan

BRIGHTON — Adams County has created a Long-Term Recovery and Resiliency Strategic Plan to strengthen the county’s ability to anticipate, respond to, and recover from disruptions, such as natural disasters, health crises, and economic challenges.

Coordinated by the county’s Office of Strategic Partnerships & Resilient Communities (SPARC), this plan unites existing projects, programs and partnerships into a single coordinated framework, helping identify available resources, addressing service gaps, and ensuring essential services remain operational during emergencies.

It also focuses on improving internal systems and building strong relationships with local agencies, schools, businesses and nonprofits so the network of resources available to residents and businesses in an emergency is expanded.

“While we hope we can avoid any scenarios that would necessitate the use of this plan, we realize we have to be prepared so we can instantly spring into action if the need arises,” said Commissioner Lynn Baca, board chair.

Building on existing initiatives across the county, the Long-Term Re-

covery and Resiliency Plan examines responses to a variety of scenarios.

With increasing danger from natural hazards such as extreme temperatures, wildfire, drought, floods and severe storms, the need for preparation amidst natural and human-caused disasters has become increasingly critical to ensure lives and livelihoods are protected, risks are mitigated, and community members thrive, according to a release.

The plan emphasizes around five core areas: data utilization; organizational capacity; communication, education and awareness; stakeholder engagement; and funding and finance.

Within these areas, the plan includes a clear road map for building long-term resilience across county operations and the broader community.

“The safety and well-being of our residents is always our top priority,” Baca said. “This detailed plan shows that commitment to our community and ensures we have a deliberate course of action to follow to recovery if any of these unfortunate events occur within Adams County.”

For additional information, visit [sparc.adcogov.org/resiliency](https://sparc.adcogov.org/resiliency).

## Happy 70th Anniversary Peggy & Daryl Brumage