



The I-70 Scout

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

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'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-

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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

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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.