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The I-70 Scout

Volume 31, Number 28

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

Wednesday, June 11, 2025

ArapCo: Flood warning system holds water



PHOTOS BY DOUGLAS CLAUSSEN/The I-70 Scout

Arapahoe County's new flood-warning system, shown looking north, left photo, and south, worked correctly during heavy rains over the Memorial Day weekend.

by Steven Vetter
Managing Editor

Almost two years after an eastern Arapahoe County resident lost her life when rushing floodwaters swept her car away south of Watkins, the county installed a new local flood-warning system just before the monsoon season ratcheted up.

About a week after several inches of water accumulated along the area of Watkins Road and Sixth Avenue over the Memorial Day weekend, Arapahoe County announced that a recently installed high-water notification system appeared to be operating correctly. The system monitors local water levels and,

when the potential for roadway flooding is high, lighted signs flash to advise motorists of the potential for hydroplaning and other travel concerns. County staff will also receive notification of high-water levels for response purposes, including possible road closure.

"The system was installed (in April) and is solar/battery-operated and senses the depth of flow, triggering notifications," said a June 2 statement from the county. "After the initial setup, the county is now working with (the) Mile High Flood District to finalize the warning system trigger level. Water levels tripped the system at 5 p.m. on May 25 and the storm presented an opportunity to adjust the trig-

ger level to ensure the success of the project."

In addition to 3-4 inches of rain falling in the immediate area May 24-25, additional runoff coming from similar precipitation amounts in Elbert County — especially between Elizabeth and Kiowa — over the same period likely stressed area creek beds and roadway ditches.

Similar weather circumstances occurred in June 2023 when rushing floodwaters pushed several vehicles off of Watkins Road, including one that ended up submerged underneath the roadway with a single female occupant, who died inside.

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AdCo undersheriff suspended as investigation over incident at his Bennett home proceeds

by Steven Vetter
Managing Editor

BRIGHTON — The Adams County undersheriff, who lives north of Bennett, has been on paid leave since late May while under investigation.

"An incident occurred at Undersheriff Paul Gregory's personal residence," a sheriff's office spokesman confirmed with *The I-70 Scout* via e-mail June 2.



But the date of occurrence and specifics of the incident have not been released. In addition, the investigation has been taken over by the Boulder County Sheriff's Office. "Our agency requested that an outside agency complete an investigation to protect the individual(s) involved, our staff, and the integrity of the sheriff's office," said Sgt. Adam Sherman, public information officer. "The Adams County Sheriff's Office takes all incidents involving our employees seriously and will fully cooperate with the

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ISAAC MANAUGH/The I-70 Scout

Rob Pavletic, left, and his son Chatan of Watkins turn on a green laser after assembling the pieces with hot glue at a Deconstruct & Create Summer Tech Art event June 6 at Anythink Bennett library. Guests took apart different technological objects and created their own piece of artwork to take home.

Bennett School struggles with monetary ambivalence

by Steven Vetter
Managing Editor

BENNETT — While the Colorado State Legislature last month provided a road map for funding that school districts across the state can expect next school year, uncertainty still evolves around several revenue streams.

During the first of two May Bennett School Board meetings on May 13, Superintendent Robin Purdy said the primary campus in town is expected to receive between \$14 million and \$15 million.

"With the Long Bill done, we can probably expect around \$22 million, but Sky Ranch will get between \$7.5 million and \$8 million," Purdy said. "Hopefully will have more concrete numbers in the next few weeks."

The biggest revenue uncertainty surrounds federal title funds, which help cover expenses, particularly salaries, with special education and other specialized programs. Recent efforts from President Donald Trump to take away title funding from certain education institutions led to the Colorado state education commissioner not signing the normal federal funding

agreement for title funds; however, because Colorado is a local control state, a large number of Colorado school districts, including Bennett, signed the agreement.

But Purdy expressed fears that title funding could be pulled midstream and, as a result, that revenue has not been added to the 2025-26 budget and that SPED salaries and associated costs are budgeted for next year with "other appropriate cuts made."

Purdy is hopeful that partial reimbursement of off-site SPED programs, including the likes of the Joshua School and Firefly in the metro

area, will still be received next school year via funding through Colorado's Exceptional Children's Education Act (ECEA).

"Last year (2023-24) was about \$1.5 million and we got about \$600,000 back," she said. "This year, we spent closer to \$2 million and waiting to see what we get back. Again, more of a struggle with the uncertainty of what numbers might be."

During a May 21 special meeting, the board approved a final preliminary budget of \$24,770,181 of which

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