



ECRWSS
Postal Customer

Presorted Standard
U.S. Postage Paid
The I-70 Scout

The I-70 Scout

Volume 31, Number 29

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

Wednesday, June 18, 2025

Sources: 2 Strasburg School staff fired

Supt. cites policy violations in sex assault case response but doesn't confirm releases

by **Steven Vetter**
Managing Editor

STRASBURG — Two of the five Strasburg School District personnel suspended April 11 in relation to a students versus student gang sexual

assault in Hemphill Middle School a couple days earlier have apparently been fired and a third one awaits their fate this week.

Sources close to the situation said the top two middle school administrators were told of their release

during June 12 meetings with Superintendent Kelle Bongard and another executive level staff member; however, Bongard did not fully confirm the report.

"Two employees were found to have violated at least one district policy;

due to confidentiality requirements, we will not share further details regarding personnel status," Bongard said in a June 13 e-mail reply to *The I-70 Scout*. "Two employees have

SEE STRASBURG SCHOOL PAGE 22



JaLee Kitzman clashes cymbals during the "Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed, Something Blue" concert hosted by the High Plains Music Ensemble June 7 at the Bennett School auditorium. **SEE PAGE 13.**

Options for new Bennett-Watkins fire station remain under review

by **Steven Vetter**
Managing Editor

BENNETT — As the west end of the Bennett-Watkins Fire Protection District continues to add more development, the push for a new firehouse remains strong, but finding a more cost-effective option is proving difficult.

During the June 13 fire board meeting, Bennett-Watkins Assistant Fire Chief Caleb Connor told directors that a metal building to serve as the new firehouse in the Sky Ranch subdivision isn't as cost-effective as original estimates might indicate.

"We talked with Morton (Buildings), and while they could meet our needs, it's not their bread and butter and it would require a lot of piece-mealing," Connor said. "The number off the bat sounds good — less than \$2.5 million — but that's just the shell. A lot of third-party work

to be done on-site, (including) all the concrete. You figure \$1 million in civil (engineering) and subbing the rest of the things out, [the expense] goes back up to \$4.5 million quickly. It wasn't quite what we hoped what it was."

Connor indicated that command staff will continue to work with Allred & Associates to develop plans for a the new station.

During its April 10 meeting, the fire board approved a letter of engagement and design services contract not to exceed \$30,000 with Allred for three projects, including another Bennett station and administrative office expansion.

"Really comfortable with their 30 years of specializing in fire houses," Connor said.

In addition to more homes, a new high school is planned for Sky Ranch.

responses totaled 127 in May and that, through June 12, the 634 year-to-date total was 22 ahead of last year's record pace.

"Averaging right around four calls per day, so staying fairly busy," Connor said. "Still think it's mostly a matter of the area continuing to grow in population."

Among the bills paid in May was \$15,000 to the vendor of the annual Bennett Days fireworks show. The town of Bennett will reimburse the fire district at least \$4,000 of that expense.

The board OK'd the engagement letter with The Adams Group for the upcoming audit. The motion included a not-to-exceed amount of \$17,675. Last year's audit cost \$17,100.

Amendments to the district's public records policy were unanimously approved, including a new \$41 per hour research fee.

OTHER BUSINESS

Connor reported that call

Corridor crashes aplenty June 8-12; no fatalities reported

by **Steven Vetter**
Managing Editor

A handful of crashes dotted the Corridor last week, especially in and around Bennett, but none of them involved life-threatening or fatal injuries.

Sunday morning commuters getting off on the I-70 Bennett interchange June 8 saw a strange sight as a crunched grey sedan was on the wrong side of the eastbound off-ramp guard rail. The vehicle went off the left side of the off-ramp, took out signage, and ran up the berm area before hitting and bending the east-to-west portion of the guard rail.

According to Capt. Clint Rushing with the Colorado

State Patrol's Troop 3D Office from Limon, the crash occurred at 3:41 a.m.

"The vehicle was driven by 24-year-old Jonatan Rodriguez of Brighton," Rushing said. "Rodriguez was not injured in the crash and was cited for careless driving."

No road closures were reported but drivers of passing-by vehicles had to avoid debris that was strewn about the off-ramp.

THREE IN UNDER 10 HOURS

Law enforcement and emergency responders had a busy late afternoon and overnight stretch June 11-12.

A little after 4:30 p.m. Wednesday, state troopers

SEE CRASHES PAGE 22



An early morning crash at the Bennett interchange showed both the vehicle and the eastbound off-ramp guard rail both worse for wear June 8. No injuries were reported but the driver was charged with careless driving. **DOUGLAS CLAUSSEN/The I-70 Scout**