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

Wednesday, August 20, 2025

3 'Burg students disciplined in MS fracas

Investigation: Half of juvenile assault suspects violated school policy last spring; 2 not returning to school

by **Shylo Bockenfeld**
Steven Vetter
The I-70 Scout

STRASBURG — The investigation into last spring's students versus student gang assault at Hemphill Middle School was recently concluded with three students found in violation of Strasburg School District policy, in-

cluding two that will not return for the 2025-26 school year.

"There were six students who were under investigation for a possible policy violation. Three of them were cleared of any wrongdoing relating to that policy, and the remaining three, after review, were found to have likely violated policy AC-R3," said Strasburg Superintendent Kelle Bon-

gard during the Aug. 11 school board meeting. "Of those three, two of the students will not be returning to the district and appropriate consequences have been applied, according to our district-wide discipline matrix."

The extent of punishment for the third student was not made public.

Policy AC-R3 contains the district's commitment to maintaining a learn-

ing environment free from sexual harassment and the expectation that those who make reports will be free from retaliation.

"I also publicly want to address any concerns or rumors that are circulating around Strasburg 31J," Bongard added. "I must admit that, despite

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Strasburg Celebrates 'Hometown Icons'



PHOTOS BY ISAAC MANAUGH/The I-70 Scout

The multi-faceted entry from Strasburg Auto Parts took top honors as Overall Winner of the Strasburg Hometown Days parade Aug. 9. This year's three-plus days of activities, dedicated to honoring the community's iconic characters and places, celebrated the 155th anniversary of the "joining of the rails" about a mile east of Strasburg on Aug. 15, 1870. **SEE PAGES 11-13.**

Byers water, sewer rate bumps on tap

by **Kathy Smiley**
Staff Writer

BYERS — Water and sewer rates will increase for users in the Byers Water & Sanitation District this fall, but residents will still pay less than those who live in neighboring districts.

The district board discussed the increase Aug. 11. Notice of the increase will be published and customers will receive letters in the mail. The board will vote on the measure at its Sept. 8 meeting, with the increase going into effect in October.

The residential base rate for the first 5,000 gallons will increase from \$30 to \$35 for water and \$30 to \$35 for sewer. Water usage over 5,000 gallons will increase from \$2.50 to \$4 for each additional 1,000 gallons. Commercial and out-of-district rates will also increase.

The Byers Water & Sanitation District hasn't raised its rates for 10 years. Director Annette Tarranto prepared a comparison chart that showed Byers' rates are below those of Deer Trail, Bennett and other comparable water districts, and will remain so after the increase goes into effect.

"People need to understand that the district's costs have increased along with everyone else's," said district manager Kagen Kitzman. "The costs of electricity, gas, chlorine — everything has gone up."

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Town of Bennett kiboshes school's campus travel fix

by **Steven Vetter**
Managing Editor

BENNETT — Despite comments to the contrary from officials with both jurisdictions over the previous couple of months, communications and the relationship between the town of Bennett and the Bennett School District still appear disjointed.

Most recently, the drop-off and pick-up plan posted by the school district for the second day of classes Aug. 12 was nipped in the bud that same night by Bennett Town Administrator Trish Stiles, who

told the board of trustees that school officials did not ask the town's permission.

"We were contacted by the fire district about the closure of the roadways," said Stiles, who also noted that previous approval of the school's traffic plans by Adams County Sheriff Gene Claps is null-and-void since the town shifted law enforcement services to Arapahoe County last year. "They're our streets. We had no idea until this evening."

Stiles' comments appeared to catch trustee and school

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DT School expansion project still incomplete

by **Steven Vetter**
Managing Editor

DEER TRAIL — Even though three outdoor modular classroom units are housing students for the second consecutive school year, the Deer Trail School campus expansion project is still incomplete and district officials are very unhappy.

During a sometimes bombastic Aug. 11 Deer Trail School Board meeting, at least two directors vehemently voiced their displeasure with the general contractor in charge of the lingering project entailing the installation of three

modular classroom units from Cherry Creek School District and a new football stadium concession stand with bathroom facilities to help accommodate students and staff relocated outside the primary school building.

"Totally unacceptable. I can count on one hand the number of times I've seen someone over the summer working out there. We have safety issues and need to get something done," said an irate board vice president Steven Musser, directing his anger at general contractor Perry Thomas with Royal Highlands Construc-

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STEVEN VETTER/The I-70 Scout

Concrete laid last summer is already cracking and separating at the site of the Deer Trail School expansion project.