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

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'Burg park on track for Xmas completion



STEVEN VETTER/The I-70 Scout

The water park/splash pad portion of the new Community Park East on the northbound side of Wagner Street in Strasburg was tested by the project contractor last week.

by **Steven Vetter**
Managing Editor

STRASBURG — The next jewel in Strasburg's expanding crown of recreational venues remains on track for completion before the end of the year.

During its Sept. 23 meeting, the Strasburg Metropolitan Parks & Recreation District Board of Directors was informed that construction of Community Park East along the northbound lane of Wagner Street in the former electric cooperative equipment yard should be completed around Christmastime, fulfilling a necessary funding requirement for the project.

The rec district has been on a tight time frame for completion because a majority of the grant funding for the \$3.5 million project, especially from Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO),

must be exhausted before the end of the year.

Last week's project progress included testing of the water park/splash pad portion of the site. The new park will also include outdoor sports courts, integrated trails and an amphitheater with an open park seating area.

District Director Angie Graf said that contractor Buildings By Design of Brush has been diligently progressing since severe summer weather passed and improvements along Wagner Street concluded.

"Things are looking good for being done before the end of the year," she added.

Manager of Parks & Recreation Nick Dickens has been meeting with contractors for weekly

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PHOTOS BY STEVEN VETTER/The I-70 Scout

A trio of mini horses — Snowy, Pineapple and Polly — grace the outdoor courtyard of the Anythink Bennett library during a Sept. 27 youth program. Strasburg-based 5 Star Minis Farm provided several of their miniature bundles of joy much to the pleasure of local kids. The event also included numerous educational opportunities about miniature horses. From left photo, Jazleen Gandara, 3, works on a colorful mini horse art project, and Shoshona Oakley, 6, shows off her braiding skills on the mane of Snowy.

Byers school officials await this week's student-count day

by **Steven Vetter**
Managing Editor

BYERS — With the state-mandated October student-count date this Wednesday, Byers School officials are hopeful that enrollment numbers will result in more revenue than originally expected when crafting the 2025-26 budget.

"I know we've had a little bit of shuffling but, if our recent projections hold up, we are looking at plus 13 students in school compared to what we anticipated," said Superintendent Tom Turrell during the Sept. 18 Byers School Board meeting. "Basically that's students we didn't include when building the budget. Each [per-pupil funding unit] is around \$11,000-ish apiece."

According to Turrell, if the increase in enrollment comes to fruition, there might be some revisions

made to staff compensation this school year.

"We could revisit staff raises and make it retroactive," he said, adding that a 1.5% across-the-board increase in base salaries was approved by the board before this school year.

OTHER BUSINESS

During policy discussion, debate about the district's dress code resurfaced with multiple board members wondering how to achieve more compliance, especially when it comes to shorts and skirts.

Board member Donna Sauer alleged that the 5-inch inseam rule in policy is frequently ignored, particularly citing tight spandex athletic shorts.

"It should include athletics and all," she said. "Why have a dress code if you're not going to follow it."

Members of the student advisory committee that

sits in on board meetings indicated they thought the dress code policy was too confusing and sexist because many of the policies appear to focus more on female attire.

Student Payton Dillingham presented the board with a copy of what another Corridor district has implemented.

"Bennett uses a dress philosophy and not a dress code," she said. "Might be easier for students to understand and ultimately to follow."

Dillingham added that Bennett allows each building to implement their own set of dress guidelines and that staff and students are repeatedly urged to use "good judgment."

"Each principal has the authority to determine what is professional appearance," Dillingham said.

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