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The I-70 Scout

Volume 32, Number 2

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

Wednesday, December 10, 2025

Agate supt. rebuts fireable allegations

by **Steven Vetter**
Managing Editor



STEVEN VETTER/The I-70 Scout

Superintendent Melinda Walls speaks during Agate School's Veterans Day program Nov. 11.

AGATE — While not releasing specifics, the Agate School lone administrator said that allegations of her mishandling complaints about inappropriate interaction between secondary and elementary students are a vendetta stemming from a staff member's firing.

"The one thing I will say, is that cameras don't lie," said Agate Superintendent/Principal Melinda Walls in a Dec. 4 interview with *The I-70 Scout*. "People do lie and, in this case, we have video that

can prove it."

Walls, whose job was asked for by one elementary school mother in particular during a heated Nov. 17 Agate School Board meeting, said that the recent termination of a staff member did not sit well with friends of the fired person, including a mother that asked the school board to fire her.

Walls said that the original parental report of a secondary student inappropriately confronting a kindergartner had been addressed and that the mother of the younger student had even sent an e-mail thanking her for the way the situation was handled but,

feelings changed after the firing.

"In less than two days, went from 'thanks for taking care of this' to 'you are a liar,'" she said. "Contrary to popular belief, I deal with trouble, but I'm not looking for it. The problem with the public comment (during the board meeting), it's not held to a truthful standard. That's pretty daunting for the board and myself."

When asked about parents' allegations that proper investigative and reporting channels were not followed, Walls said that the Elbert County Sheriff's Office or Child Protective Services were not con-

tacted but that the district's legal counsel was involved. The five-year superintendent of Agate School said law enforcement was not contacted in an effort to "minimize the embarrassment" to the staff member who lost her job. Walls reiterated that the fired person was not a teacher.

"I acted at every step with our attorney," Walls said. "We've been advised that there is no case here. The statements [the parent] made are not true."

When asked about the administrative chain of

SEE AGATE SUPT. RESPONDS PAGE 6

Chip off the ol' Block!



STEVEN VETTER/The I-70 Scout

Dominic Cutilletta, lead ice sculptor from Englewood-based Colorado Ice Works, intently focuses on the intricacies of his squirrel masterpiece, which he carved during Frost Fest at Anythink Bennett library Dec. 4. **SEE PAGES 12-13**

Revamped Bennett School Board prepares post-election agenda

by **Douglas Claussen**
Publisher & Editor

BENNETT — New school board directors were seated and officers elected at the Nov. 12 meeting of the Bennett Board of Education.

Nancy Barden and Hazel Statkiewicz took the oath of office and officers were elected as follows: Alyssa Pae, president; Darvin Harrell, vice president; Barden, secretary; Brennan Westendorf, treasurer; Barden, BOCES representative; Harrell, legislative liaison; and Statkiewicz, District Accountability Committee representative.

The new board also appointed Superintendent Robin Purdy as Authorized District Representative for all State and Federal Programs; Ramie Dillingham as Secretary to the Board; and Karla Stratton as Treasurer to the Board.

Regular board meetings will continue to occur at 6 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month. However, today's meeting (Dec. 10) will commence at 4:30 p.m. because of a conflict with a Colorado Association of School Board's meeting that evening.

The board approved a mid-year review of progress on the superintendent's annual goals. One goal is to ensure that district and school websites and social media are regularly updated, maintained and publicized as a source of accurate community and district information.

Purdy noted that the schools have become more visible on social media.

"There's a lot more information that's going out in regards to their newsletter, their weekly happenings," she said. "They're making that happen at two-week intervals, one-week

SEE BENNETT BOE PAGE 6

First significant snow wreaks havoc on I-70 travelers

by **Steven Vetter**
Managing Editor

While the I-70 Corridor's first significant snowfall of the season was about half of what the Denver-metro area and Front Range received Dec. 2-3, it was more than enough to wreak havoc on local roadways, particularly I-70.

But serious injuries or deaths were miraculously avoided.

According to the Colorado State Patrol, approximately two handfuls of crashes were responded to between Strasburg and Limon throughout

the day on Wednesday with another seven or eight occurring between Limon and Burlington.

A rough count from the Pulsepoint app indicated 12 separate reports from 1-8 p.m. between the Byers and Sable Altura fire districts.

One of the hotbeds of crash activity was on eastbound I-70 between Manila Road and Watkins, including a chain-reaction event with an Adams County Sheriff deputy's patrol vehicle involved.

SEE DEC. 3 STORM PAGE 8



COURTESY OF COLORADO STATE PATROL

I-70 between Airpark Road and the Kansas state line saw double-digit property-damage crashes and slide-offs in snowy, slick conditions Dec. 3, including a couple handfuls of incidents in the area between Manila Road and Watkins. Above, several cars were involved in a Wednesday afternoon chain reaction crash, including an Adams County Sheriff's patrol vehicle, on westbound I-70 at mile marker 296 near Watkins. The sheriff's deputy escaped without injury.

COMMUNITY CORRAL

Strasburg Rec District offers to post letters to Santa Claus

STRASBURG — Local children are invited to send letters to Santa from Strasburg through Dec. 18.

All letters will be forwarded to the North Pole. No postage is necessary. Santa has promised to respond with a personalized letter.

All letters must include the child's first and last name along with a return address.

Mailboxes will be available until Dec. 18.

Look for the red mailboxes at the Strasburg Recreation Center, 1932 Burton St.; Strasburg Post Office, 56691 E. Colfax Ave.; and Dulce Espresso & Bakery, 56551 E. Colfax Ave.

Bible study at Byers church concentrated on finding joy

BYERS — How a weary world rejoices is the theme for the Advent season at a local church.

The Bible study of this topic will follow worship, which begins at 9:30 a.m., every Sunday from Nov. 30 through Dec. 21, at Byers Community Church, 135 S. Sherman St.

Study books are not required but can be purchased for \$12.

'Buy and dry' practices focus of Morgan County ag seminar

FORT MORGAN — The Morgan Conservation District will host a Buy & Dry Seminar from 7:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Wednesday, Dec. 17, in the Founder's Room at the Morgan Community College, 920 Barlow Road, Fort Morgan.

Participants will learn about the challenges and impacts of "buy and dry" practices where entities, often cities, buy land in agricultural communities to obtain the water rights.

The class will include discussion of the Lower Arkansas River Basin; legal considerations and economics of "buy and dry" practices; Northern Colorado Water Preservation Principles; and an update on the lower South Platte River.

The registration deadline is Monday, Dec. 15. To RSVP, call (970)427-3358

or (720)361-6418 or e-mail to morganconservationdistrict@gmail.com.

Christmas toy giveaway set by Cornerstone Fellowship

This holiday season Cornerstone Fellowship will be collecting new and gently used toys.

The toys will be offered at a "shopping experience" giveaway on Saturday, Dec. 20, to allow parents facing financial difficulties to select gifts for their children. The church is at 460 Third St., Bennett.

New and gently used toys in good condition should be donated without wrapping. Drop-off points are Cornerstone Fellowship and Les Schwab in Bennett; the Strasburg Recreation Center and Magnolia Salon in Strasburg; Los 3 Garcias in Byers; and Lulu's Inn and Sky Ranch Academy in Watkins.

Gov's Residence: Public tours offered of decorated mansion

DENVER — Gov. Jared Polis is inviting Coloradans to join in the holiday cheer with public holiday tours of the Governor's Residence at Boettcher Mansion from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Friday and Saturday, Dec. 12-13.

"I invite you to come tour the historic home adorned in trees, ornaments, and holiday cheer," said Gov. Jared Polis. "Free for all, these holiday tours are the best time of the year to visit Colorado's home."

The Governor's Residence is located at 400 E. Eighth Ave., Denver. Walk-ins are welcome.

Lincoln's assassination topic of Strasburg history lecture

STRASBURG — The Comanche Crossing Historical Society and Museum will host a presentation on Lincoln's Assassination and Impact of the War from 6:30-8 p.m., Thursday, Dec. 11, at the TBK Bank Community Room.

Museum curator Cliff Smith's discussion will feature facts, photos and artifacts of the Lincoln's assassination as well as impact of the war for the nation then and today.

A light snack will be served from

Comfortably Dumb by Bruce Quast



"I've been re-assigned! This season I'm a left turn signal!"

6-6:30 p.m. A free will offering will be accepted to benefit the mission of the Comanche Crossing Historical Society & Museum in Strasburg.

Doors open at 6 p.m. for light snacks and conversations.

A free will offering will be accepted to benefit the mission of the historical society. For more information, call (303)622-4322.

TBK Bank is located at 56641 E. Colfax Ave., Strasburg.

Trip to see Denver Zoo Lights planned by Burg Parks & Rec

STRASBURG — The bus leaves at 5 p.m., Thursday, Dec. 11, on a senior excursion to see the Denver Zoo Lights.

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

S	L	O	B	S		E	R	R		F	L	O	P	
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The cost is \$30. Lunch is additional. Advanced reservations are required due to limited seating. To RSVP, call the rec center at (303)622-4260.

The bus will depart from the Strasburg Recreation Center, 1932 Burton St. The excursion is hosted by the Strasburg Parks & Recreation District and Mountain View Fellowship.

Appearance by Santa Skeeter set for Byers Cowboy Church

BYERS — Santa Skeeter will make an appearance starting at 10 a.m., Sunday, Dec. 21, after the service at visit Living Springs Cowboy Church, 2722 S. County Road 173, Byers.

Skeeter will visit with children and share the reason for the season. A potluck is included and kids will receive a gift about the true meaning of Christmas.

The church is located about 3.5 miles south of Highway 36 and South Bradbury Road.

Soup suppers, Yule services set at 'Burg Lutheran church

STRASBURG — Strasburg Saron Lutheran Church has announced its Advent and Christmas events open to the community.

On Wednesdays, Dec. 13 and 20, the church will host its Advent soup suppers beginning at 6:30 p.m. followed at 7:15 p.m. by evening prayer and a meditation on the book of Matthew.

A candlelight services will begin at 5 p.m. on Christmas Eve, Wednesday, Dec. 24.

Visit from Santa Claus slated for Deer Trail Christmas event

DEER TRAIL — Santa is coming to Deer Trail for a night of fun.

The occasion begins with a parade starting at 5:30 p.m. with Santa arriving around 6:30 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 21, at the Deer Trail Firehouse, 488 First Ave.

Hot chocolate and photos with Santa are free, and gifts will be provided for all the kids.

The event is hosted by the Town of Deer Trail, Deer Trail Volunteer Fire Department, and the Deer Trail Home & School Association.

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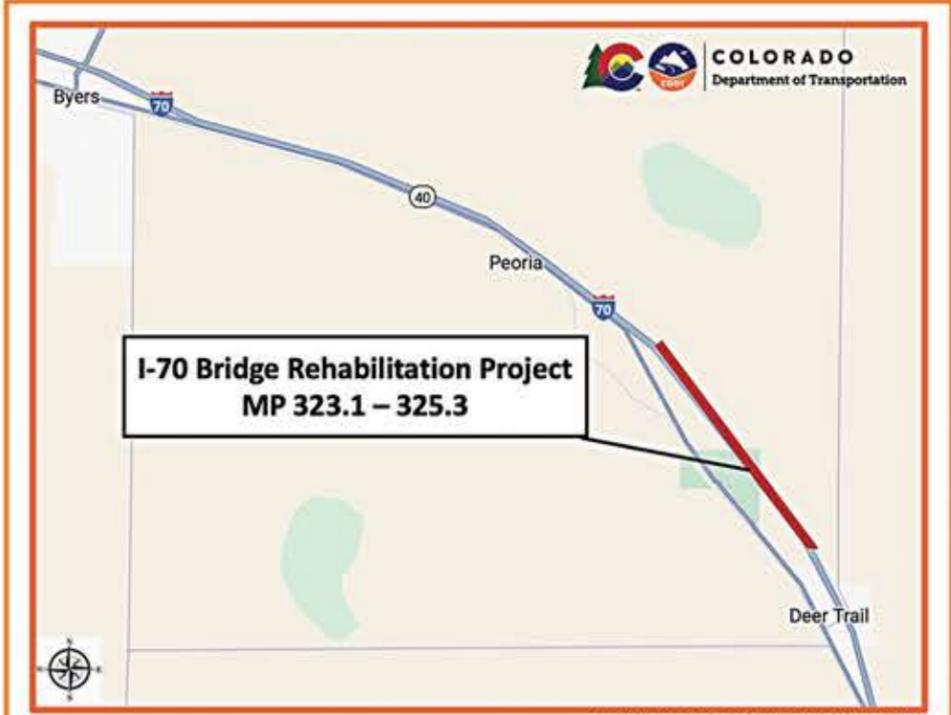
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PHOTOS BY STEVEN VETTER/The I-70 Scout

Sometime between 6 a.m. and 12 p.m. Dec. 4 a pickup ended up high-centered on the guardrail of the inside lane of eastbound I-70 on the western edge of the overpass at Byers. Specifics behind the accident were not available as officials with the Colorado State Patrol and Arapahoe and Adams County sheriff's offices told The I-70 Scout that no reports were filed. Thursday morning, the State Patrol was reportedly on accident alert, which means that if an accident occurs during that time and no injuries or deaths are involved, the parties involved can file a desk report. A spokesperson with the Colorado Department of Transportation said that no exact schedule is known for repairs of the guardrail but that it will be done "as soon as possible." Left photo, the moon rises over the crash scene about 4:45 p.m. Thursday and, right, the wrecked vehicle is still on scene the following morning. The pickup was finally towed from the scene later Friday.



COURTESY COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

After a couple-day hiatus for the Thanksgiving holiday, bridge work on Interstate 70 between mile markers 323-325 immediately east of the Peoria (old dog track) exit resumed to start December and will continue until a three-month interruption in the project occurs at the end of the month. There will be reduced-speed single-lane and shoulder closures on I-70 the rest of this month, followed by a winter shutdown through the end of March 2026. The project is to repair bridge decks of four structures, including new concrete pavement at the bridge approaches, along with girder and column repairs. The project is expected to be completed September 2026. For additional project information, call (303)927-0291; e-mail to i70bridgerehabproject@gmail.com; or go online to <https://www.codot.gov/projects/i70bridgerepairsinarapahoe>. For additional real-time travel conditions and commuter impacts this winter, visit COtrip.org.

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- Salinas Restaurant, Strasburg
- NAPA Auto Parts, Strasburg
- Latinas Salon II (992 S. Abilene St., Aurora)
- Maverick Mercantile, Byers
- Magnolia Salon & Spa, Strasburg
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DECEMBER 17

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PHOTOS BY STEVEN VETTER/The I-70 Scout

Strasburg Metropolitan Parks & Recreation District facilities managers Reid Aslin, left, and Joe Ortiz string up the lights around the Lyons Park Christmas tree Dec. 4, the morning after approximately 2-4 inches of fell across much of the region the previous two days. The job had to be done in preparation of the recreation district's annual Christmas in the Park festivities that took place two nights later. For full coverage of Dec. 6 holiday festivities throughout the I-70 Corridor see upcoming editions of The I-70 Scout and Friday's Eastern Colorado News.

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ArapCo safety action plan on deck

LITTLETON — Arapahoe County Public Works & Development is launching a public engagement initiative to update its Comprehensive Safety Action Plan.

The plan is a strategic effort aimed at enhancing transportation safety for all residents, workers and travelers in unincorporated parts of the county. It will identify locations where safety improvements are most needed and guide future investments in infrastructure to directly benefit the community.

Input is wanted from all road users, including pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders and motorists.

"Safety is at the heart of everything we do in transportation planning and operations," said James Katzer, transportation division manager. "Through this Comprehensive Safety Action Plan, we're taking a proactive approach to identify where the greatest risks exist in unincorporated Arapahoe County and how we can work together with our partners and

community members to make our roads safer for everyone."

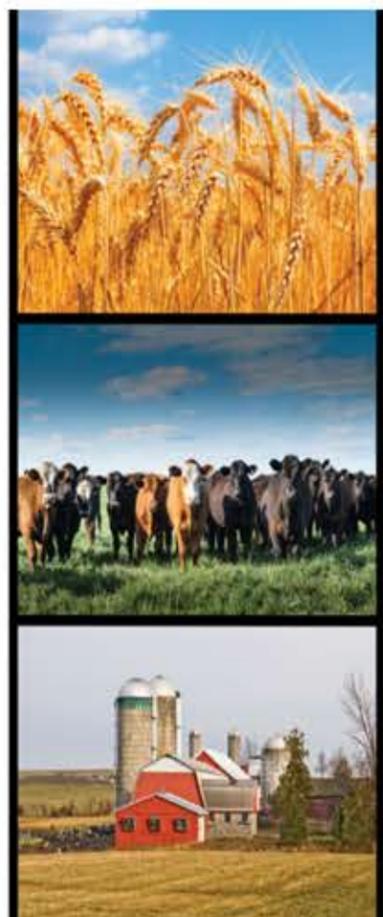
The plan employs a data-driven and community-informed methodology, analyzing crash trends and roadway conditions to identify high-risk areas and prioritize life-saving strategies.

It is grounded in the Safe System Approach, which focuses on designing transportation networks that account for human error and minimize the risk of severe crashes and fatalities.

An online public participation opportunity is underway through Sunday, Dec. 21. Community members are encouraged to visit an interactive online comment map to share feedback about existing transportation safety issues. To participate, visit www.arapahoeco.gov/safetyplan.

Public input will be instrumental in shaping safety improvements and guiding the development of strategies and projects. Additional engagement opportunities will be offered in early 2025.

The initiative is led by Arapahoe County in partnership with the Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office, Colorado Department of Transportation, Colorado State Patrol, and Denver Regional Council of Governments.



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DAVID MAGANZ/For The Scout

STRASBURG — Local museum curator Cliff Smith discusses various types of bullets used in the Civil War at a special presentation hosted by the Comanche Crossing Historical Society & Museum Oct. 23 at TBK Bank. "Overview of Major Battles and Engagements of the Civil War Years" also addressed several key battles as well as challenges for the home front and ordinary Union and Confederate soldiers. Smith's final presentation in his series on the Civil War this year will occur at 6:30 p.m., Thursday, Dec. 11, at TBK Bank. The topic is Lincoln's Assassination and the Impact of the War.

Patriotic org offers \$25K scholarships

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Undergraduate and graduate students studying American history can apply for a \$25,000 scholarship from the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution through Jan. 31. The DAR America 250! Scholarship marks the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of independence. It provides a one-time \$25,000 award to each of 10 students. Students currently majoring in American history in an accredited university or college undergraduate or graduate program in the year 2026 are eligible to apply. Recipients must be U.S. citizens, prove a minimum 3.5 GPA on a 4.0 scale or equivalent, and prepare a one-page online essay on either the founding of the United States

or on the applicant's personal volunteer achievements for community and country. The DAR provides more than 30 scholarships annually for a total of \$250,000 a year, but the organization has never provided a singular scholarship of this size. Students are urged to apply well ahead of the Jan. 31 deadline, as the scholarship application requires transcripts and letters of recommendation that must be submitted by others. Applicants should apply at <https://dar.academicworks.com>. For more information, e-mail to america250scholarship@nsdar.org; visit www.dar.org; or contact Ami Neiberger at (703)887-4877 or ami@MapleAvenuePR.com

New team members join MCC

FORT MORGAN — Three new employees took on their roles at Morgan Community College Nov. 3. Joining the college community are Danielle Gossett, nursing faculty; Dane Weippert, coordinator of the Burlington Regional Center; and Cindy Otenberger, staff accountant. Gossett, an MCC alumna, joins the college as full-time nursing faculty after serving as an adjunct instructor since July 2022. She earned her associate's degree in nursing and Bachelor of Science in nursing at MCC and completed her Master of Science in nursing with distinction from Northern Arizona University. Before transitioning to education full time, Gossett worked in a variety of health care settings, including Kit Carson County Memorial Hospital and St. Anthony North, as an emergency room nurse, house supervisor, and clinical scholar. Her experience in critical care nursing allows her to teach students both practical skills and compassionate, patient-centered care. In 2025, she was recognized as a Nurse Excellence Nominee for her dedication to pa-

tients, colleagues and the profession. Weippert is MCC's new Coordinator of the Burlington Regional Center. He earned his bachelor's degree in biology from Oklahoma Panhandle State University at Goodwell in 2012. Prior to MCC, Weippert spent five years teaching middle and high school in Burlington. Otenberger joins MCC as staff accountant. She earned her associate's degree in business administration and accounting from the Institute of Business & Medical Careers. Since 2008, Otenberger has held accounting and administrative roles at government agencies and private organizations. MCC Executive Director of Human Resources Amada Abbott welcomed the new trio. "Their expertise, professionalism, and dedication to our students and community strengthen our mission to empower learners and support the communities we serve," Abbott said.



Weippert



Gossett



Otenberger

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BENNETT BOE

FROM PAGE 1

intervals, the day of, the day before. Websites are updated and are meeting the requirements for House Bill 21-110, which states all websites must be accessible for everyone."

The website is now also linked to the Sky Ranch charter school and the Sierra School of the Board of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES).

Purdy said she would be placing a monthly full-page ad in *The I-70 Scout* to publicize school highlights. She added that she's trying to get information out in the interests of passing a bond measure.

"We just want to make sure that people understand what we're doing and they can come support the kids," she continued. "And we've had a lot of great things that have come out on Facebook where we're celebrating the kids and that's what we want to do. That's the best part of it, not the newsletters."

Another goal was to improve her visibility throughout the district. Purdy said she has attended more events and has been "wandering purposefully throughout the buildings" and appearing during pick-up and drop-off times "because that's when most of the parents see you. And I like to see what's going on so I can support the principals."

A third aim is to ensure the compliance and accountability of Sky Ranch Academy. Purdy said the academy is improving in terms of producing reports and submitting the correct information regarding matters such as fire drills.

"I'm starting to get the reports in a timely manner because I'm done with waiting and the nonsense that goes on there," she said.

Regarding accountability matters, Purdy said the traditional school must continue to support Sky Ranch until the district can pay for its own charter school management group.

Development of master and strategic plans is a work in progress, Purdy said.

"Now that we've seated our new board, we'll continue to move forward and continue with our meetings," she said. "And you guys will have a decision on whether you want to go after a bond and what you want that to look like. So you've got a lot of



Two new members were sworn in and a new officer slate selected during last month's post-election Bennett School Board meeting. Above, Superintendent Robin Purdy, second from left, stands with the new board consisting of Nancy Barden, left, Alyssa Pae, Brennan Westendorf, Hazel Statkiewicz and Darvin Harrell.

work ahead of you."

She noted that the buildings are in need of repair. "There are several deficiencies, as you've seen in your board packets, just in regards to heating and air conditioning and boilers and what we've been having to do because we can't cobble anymore."

Replacement is not cheap, she added, "sometimes \$30,000, \$40,000, \$50,000. So those will have to be addressed. We can't just continue the way we are. We just don't have enough money and reserves to pay for that."

Building a system of financial checks and balances is the final goal. Purdy said she, Dillingham and

Director of Finance and Purchasing Karly Stratton have spent hours ensuring that the school's revenue is "going in the right pot of money."

"This is our big one with regards to finances while maintaining funding and insurance management," Purdy said.

She added that they were able to put more money in the district's reserve fund.

Within the process, they learned that the school is under-insured because building costs continue to rise, and that the matter has been improved.

AUDIT

Purdy expects that the annual audit process to go smoother this year, and that feedback from the auditor indicates the same. The audit is due Dec. 31.

"But if you remember last year at this time, we hadn't started our audit," she said. "And then, of course, it takes four months to do so. Hopefully we will not be in that place."

ENROLLMENT

Enrollment for the school year, including Sky Ranch, is 1,759.5 students plus 82 preschoolers for a total of 1,841.5, an increase of 79 from the previous month. The numbers include 413 students in high school, 270 in middle school, 278 in intermediate school, and 250 in the elementary.

KEY MEETINGS

Purdy said school representatives recently met with Assistant Fire Chief Caleb Connor with Bennett-Watkins Fire Rescue to improve collaboration between the two districts, and with officials from the Town of Bennett and key personnel from the Arapahoe County Sheriff's Department to debrief in regards to the lockdown that occurred in September. She deemed both meetings a success.

REVENUE

The district has recently received several grant award letters, including notice of \$67,000 through the Real Estate Investment Trust Act.

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Girls Varsity/Boys C-6:00 pm

Boys Varsity/Girls C-7:30 pm

Member **FDIC**

AGATE SUPT. RESPONDS

FROM PAGE 1

command that parental or community complaints or questions are handled through, Walls said that no one else is involved in the process prior to it reaching the board of education. She added that the recent termination occurred with a board member present. Walls also indicated the disgruntled mother has been invited to view video evidence but, as of Dec.4, had not replied.

She also said that the board's immediate response during its Nov. 17 to lock all doors between the secondary and elementary areas of campus and

other interaction restrictions between the two levels was done for precautionary purposes.

"Our school wants to be accommodating," Walls said. "We love these kids and want to educate them [safely]. We've been doing good here. It's sad we've had to interrupt learning some because of addressing stuff that didn't happen."

The school has scheduled its Christmas program at 6:30 p.m., Monday, Dec. 15, which follows the Longhorns' home middle school basketball game at 4 p.m.

NOTICE OF BUDGET

Byers Water and Sanitation District

Notice is hereby given that: a proposed budget has been submitted to Byers Water and Sanitation District Board of Directors for the ensuing year of 2026; a copy of such proposed budget has been filed in the office of Byers Water and Sanitation District, 421 S. Sherman Street, Byers, Colorado, where same is open for public inspection; such proposed budget will be considered at the regular meeting of the Board of Directors to be held at 421 S. Sherman Street, Byers, Colorado on December 15th, 2025 at 7:00 pm. Any interested elector of the Byers Water and Sanitation District may inspect the proposed budget and file or register any objections thereto at any time prior to the final adoption of the budget.

Manager of Byers Water & Sanitation District. Kagen W. Kitzman

LIBRARY NEWS

ANYTHINK BENNETT LIBRARY

495 Seventh St.
(303)405-3231
anythinklibraries.org

Teen Advisory Board: Kids ages 12-17 can attend regular meetings to take an active leadership role in planning and implementing library programs and events. They can also use their voices to advocate for youth services in Bennett. 4:45-6 p.m., Wednesday, Dec. 17.

DAVIES LIBRARY

128 Second Ave., Deer Trail
(303)769-4310
www.arapahoelibraries.org

Scribble and Giggle: Parents and caregivers can bring little ones ages 2-5 for play-based activities to strengthen pre-writing skills. Children who are starting to scribble will have lots of fun. Drop-ins welcome as space allows. 10:30-11:30 a.m., Monday, Dec. 15.

Adult book club: "The Christmas Bookshop" by Jenny Colgan. 6-7 p.m., Monday, Dec. 15.

Winter crafts: Kids and tweens ages 5-12 will join the spirit of the season with winter and snow-themed crafts. All supplies provided. 4:30-5:30 p.m., Wednesday, Dec. 17.

KELVER LIBRARY

585 Main St., Byers
(303)822-9392
www.arapahoelibraries.org

Little Makers Club: Children ages 0-5 and their families will participate in activities related to Arctic animals. Free crafts, toddler-friendly snacks, and a goody bag provided. 10:30-11:30 a.m., Friday, Dec. 12.

Holiday crafts: Adults will create festive, decorative crafts and connect with other members of the Byers community. All supplies provided. 1:30-3 p.m., Wednesday, Dec. 17.

Little Makers Club: Children ages 0-5 and their families will make winter and keepsake ornaments. Free crafts, toddler-friendly snacks, and a goody bag provided. 10:30-11:30 a.m., Friday, Dec. 19.

Arapahoe Libraries plans seasonal e-programming

Arapahoe Libraries will host a series of online programs to spark curiosity and fuel the holiday spirit over winter break.

To learn more and to register, visit arapahoelibraries.org or call (303)542-7279.

Festival of light: Kids ages 5-12 can explore the role of light in traditional Hanukkah, Christmas, Diwali and Kwanzaa celebrations in a by The Jewish Museum in New York. 11-11:45 a.m., Monday, Dec. 22.

Illuminated Manuscripts: Kids ages 9-12 will learn how books were made before the printing press in this live Zoom presentation by the Morgan Library & Museum. Participants will trace the history of books and see some of the finest surviving manuscripts from the Medieval Era and the Renaissance. 1-2 p.m., Tuesday, Dec. 23.

Introduction to Origami: Kids ages 9-12 will learn the art of folding paper with an instructor from the Japanese Culture Center. Each participant should bring four or five sheets of paper. 1-2 p.m., Tuesday, Dec. 30.

Grab & Go: Kids and teens ages 5-12 will attempt to capture the magic of the Northern Lights with a fun, online art project. Registration for the craft kit runs through Monday, Dec. 29, at anythinklibraries.org. Locals can pick up their supplies at Kolver Library. The online workshop runs from 4:30-5:30 p.m., Monday, Jan. 5.

Grab & Go: Adults can bring the beauty of the season indoors with a mason jar oil lamp. Registration for the craft kit runs through Monday, Dec. 29, at anythinklibraries.org. Locals can pick up their supplies at Kolver Library. The online workshop runs from 6-7 p.m., Tuesday, Jan. 6.



APPLY TODAY! ARAPAHOE LIBRARIES BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Apply online by Wednesday, December 17, at 4 pm. Scan the QR code or visit arapahoelibraries.org/board-of-trustees.



ADAMS COUNTY
COLORADO

HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS ADOPTION SPECIAL

Give a shelter pet the gift of a forever home this season. Riverdale Animal Shelter's adoption special runs now through Dec. 24 with \$25 adoption fees for cats and dogs one year older. Some exclusions apply. Scan the QR code to view adoptable pets.



Scan the QR code to see adoptable pets!



Sign Up

FOR DIABETES EDUCATION CLASSES

If taking control of your health is a priority for you in 2026, Adams County Health Department has options for you, including a Diabetes prevention course and a Diabetes management course. New classes begin the second week of January.



Scan the QR code to learn more and sign up!

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ARAPAHOE COUNTY



Veggie Gardening Basics

Learn how to grow your own vegetables at a free class **Dec. 18, 4–5 p.m.** at the Aurora Central Library. Discover tips for soil preparation, fertilizing, planting, frost and hail protection, and proper watering.

Register now at <https://bit.ly/CSUVeggieBasics>



Veterans Coffee Club

Join Arapahoe County Veteran Services in honoring service and community through coffee and conversation among fellow veterans.

Dec. 12 from 8–9 a.m.

DIRT Coffee Patio: 2506 W. Alamo Ave., in Littleton

All veterans are welcome. Events are held the first and third Friday of the month, from 8–9 a.m. Coffee provided by Littleton Elks Lodge.



Happy Holidays

All County offices will be closed **Wednesday, Dec. 24** and **Thursday, Dec. 25** in observance of the Christmas holiday.

arapahoeco.gov

WEEK OF DEC 8

DEC. 3 STORM

FROM PAGE 1

“About 3:30 p.m., the deputy was checking in on a previous crash when a black pickup slid and collided with him. Sounds like going too fast for conditions and came up to fast on the previous wreck,” said a Colorado State Patrol spokesman. “That one was at about the 296 milepost but reports from about the same time had other vehicles all over the road going out to the 299.”

An Adams County Sheriff’s Office spokesman indicated that, while the deputy escaped serious injury, the patrol vehicle he was in at the time was not so lucky.

“The way it got hit, quite a bit of damage to the frame, so probably a total loss,” he said. “Sounds like our deputy was just checking out the previous crash when he was surprised from behind.”

The State Patrol added that, among the worst looking crashes of the day was a box truck that rolled at mile marker 393 near Flagler about 8 p.m. but, again, the driver escaped without serious injury, which was the case for numerous other incidents in that area.

“Had seven or eight more calls come in that night, but all property damage with no serious injuries,” the CSP spokesman said.

The I-70 Corridor stretch between Watkins and Agate saw mostly 2-4 inches of snow fall from Tuesday night through much of Wednesday, compared to 4-6 inches across most of the metro municipalities and up to 8 inches at the base of the foothills. But the saturation rate of the snow around metro Denver was said to be

wetter than what fell further west. CoCoRahs and National Weather Service stats showed 0.1 inch, or slightly more, of moisture for each inch of snow.

“Definitely a wet snow at lower elevations and lighter powder higher up,” the National Weather Service’s Boulder office said. “A lot more moisture to freeze on the surface at lower elevations, especially with sub-freezing temperatures that stuck around much of day.”

In addition to the issues on roadways, air commuters had their own set of headaches.

According to FlightAware data, ground stops throughout the day at Denver International Airport resulted in 1,049 flights delayed and at least 11 canceled because of the snowy conditions.

Many of the delays were related to de-icing aircraft and keeping runways and taxiways clear of snow and ice.

Among the impacted airlines were Southwest, SkyWest, American and United.

The frigid conditions and more-than-expected snow accumulations led Bennett, Strasburg and Byers schools to delay start of classes by two hours Thursday morning.

Deer Trail did not delay Thursday’s classes.

According to Deer Trail Superintendent Mike Jobman, when Byers Superintendent Tom Turrell called about conditions Wednesday night, he said, “I don’t think we got as much snow as everyone else. I didn’t think delaying classes was warranted and things seem to go pretty smoothly.”

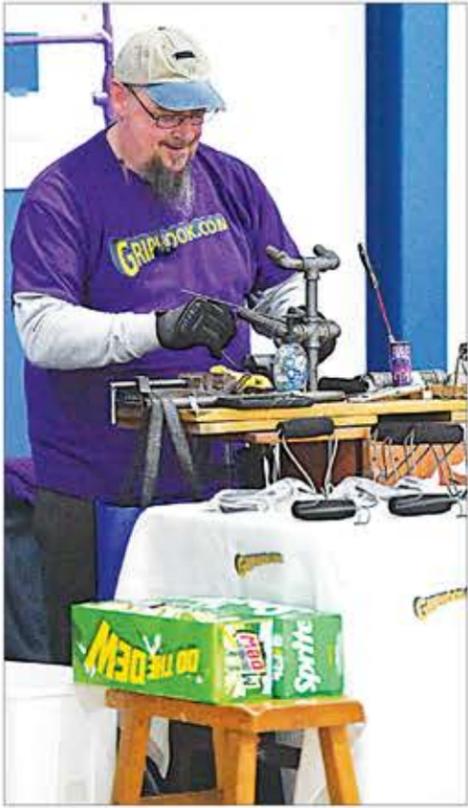
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PHOTOS BY ISAAC MANAUGH/The I-70 Scout

Small Business Saturday was celebrated nationwide, including throughout the I-70 Corridor Nov. 29. Among the local festivities was the local daylong vendor fair and silent auction hosted by the Bennett Park & Recreation District. From left photo, Rich Passarelli demonstrates what he produces from his GripHook enterprise, and Sandy Plaven smells a holiday scent.

CORRIDOR CALENDAR

THURSDAY, DEC. 11

Bennett Fire Protection District Board. 7 p.m., Administrative Office, 355 Fourth St., Bennett.

SATURDAY, DEC. 13

Bennett-Watkins Lions Club. 9 a.m. via Zoom. Call Diane at (303)644-3717.

MONDAY, DEC. 15

East Adams Conservation District Board. 9 a.m., Farm Service Agency office, 133 W. Bijou, Byers.

Byers Fire Rescue. 6 p.m., Firehouse.
Byers Fire Protection District Board. 6:30 p.m., Byers School boardroom.

TUESDAY, DEC. 16

Comanche VIP Seniors luncheon. 11:45 a.m., Strasburg American Legion Hall, 56423 Westview Ave.

Bennett Arts Council. 4 p.m., Bennett Town Hall.

Eastern Colorado Beekeepers. 6:30 p.m. via Zoom. E-mail info@easterncoloradobees.com or visit easterncoloradobees.com for link and location.

Vocal music concert for Bennett grades 6-12. 7 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 17

Bennett Municipal Court. 6 p.m., Town Hall.

EVERY TUESDAY

Toddler Time: Children ages 2-3 listen

to stories, sing songs and enjoy activities that are just right for active toddlers. 9:30-10 a.m., Anythink Bennett library.

Family story time. 10:30-11 a.m., Davies Library, Deer Trail.

EVERY WEDNESDAY

Young at Heart Seniors in Bennett. 12-4 p.m., Bennett Community Center.

Mid-Week Service & Study with worship and Communion. All ages welcome. 6:30 p.m., Holy Spirit Livin,' 1506 Main St., Strasburg. (303)622-4648.

EVERY THURSDAY

Music & Movement: Ages 2-6 can sing, dance and learn to play musical instruments. 9:30-10 a.m., Anythink Bennett library.

Preschool Storytime: Children up to ages 3-6 listen to stories, sing songs and enjoy activities that promote early literacy. 9:30-10 a.m., Anythink Bennett library.

Play & Learn for ages 1-3 and their families. 10-11 a.m., Kelter Library, Byers.

Family story time. 10:30 a.m., Davies Library, Deer Trail.

Coffee, Cookies & Chat for all I-70 Corridor seniors. 11 a.m., Bennett Rec Center.

Gaming Club: Patrons ages 10 and up play video games after school. 4-5:15 p.m., Bennett Anythink library.

Patriot meeting of like-minded individuals to learn about the nation's history, constitution and rights. 6:30 p.m., 1506 Main St., Strasburg (303)622-4648.

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Church Directory

Strasburg Presbyterian Church
56635 Iowa Ave., Strasburg, CO
www.spcusa.us
303-622-4325
• Sunday Worship 10 a.m.

Saron Lutheran Church
1656 Main St. | Strasburg, CO | saronstrasburg.org
Worship 8:30 a.m. In-Person or on Facebook

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Christ Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
Missouri Synod
Sunday Worship at 9:30 a.m.

275 Ash Street, Bennett • 303-644-3044
www.corlems.org

Mt. Tabor Baptist Church
278 S. Sherman St., Byers
303-822-9366 • mttabortbyers.org

Sat., 6:00 p.m. Saturday Service
Sun., 9:00 a.m. Sunday School
Sun., 10-10:30 a.m. Fellowship; 10:30 a.m. Church Awana — Meetings every Tuesday (5:15-7:15 p.m., Dinner served)

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Psalm 119:89 For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.

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Friday, Dec. 19: From 5-8pm
❖ Christmas Eve-Eve Services ❖
Tuesday, Dec. 23: 4:30, 6:00, & 7:30pm
❖ Regular Sunday Services ❖
8:30 & 10:15am
Servicio dominical regular a las 10:15
❖ Sunday Service Livestream ❖
mvcolorado.online.church

Midweek Elementary Gathering - Tuesdays @ 6:30pm
Middle/High School Youth Group - Wednesdays @ 7pm
Find us on Facebook/Instagram: Search "mvcolorado"
mvcolorado.com

Strasburg Orthodox Mission

WEEKLY Vespers
Tuesday, 7 p.m. & Saturday, 7 p.m.

Saron Lutheran Church
(1656 Main St.)
Info: strasburgorthodox.org

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More Colorado voters opt to register unaffiliated in '25

by **Lindsey Toomer**
Colorado Newsline

The number of active voters in Colorado grew by almost 50,000 between January and July of this year, but more voters are opting to be registered as unaffiliated rather than as a Republican or Democrat.

A recent analysis from *The New York Times* found that Democratic voter registration declined in every state from 2020-24, while in many of those states Republican registrations grew. In Colorado — where a voter does not need to be registered with a party to vote in primary elections — both parties have seen further reductions since the start of 2025.

Both parties saw reductions of total membership in the state of less than 1%, but the number of Democratic party voters declined slightly more than Republican voters. Unaffiliated voter registration across Colorado grew by 3.1%, while Democratic registration dropped by 0.9% and Republican registration dropped by 0.77%.

The vast majority of voters who are registering for the first time or updating their registration do so through automatic voter registration at the Division of Motor Vehicles, according to Aly Belknap, executive director of Common Cause Colorado, a pro-democracy organization with branches in about two dozen states. People who register through the DMV are automatically registered unaffiliated, but Belknap said voters can update that to join a party.

Belknap said voters opting to be unaffiliated aligns with “a trend we’ve seen steadily over the last decade” after Colorado opened up its primaries. Over the last three presidential election cycles, the national approval ratings of the Democratic and Republican parties have reached “historic



A sign directs Election Day voters to the ballot drop box and polling center at the La Familia Recreation Center in Denver in November 2024.

lows,” she said.

“I think that’s really a driving force for many Coloradans, as well as many Americans because this is a trend that we’re now seeing nationally, even in states with closed primaries,” Belknap said. “This is I think a driving reason why folks are moving away and deciding to register unaffiliated and forge a path on leading with the issues that matter mostly to them and choosing the candidates accordingly.”

Voters’ trust in government is also at a historic low, Belknap said, which affects peoples’ willingness to engage with democracy and elections.

Unaffiliated voter registrations have been steadily on the rise since last November and peaked at 2,029,337 in July, growing by more than 60,000 voters since the start of the year.

Immediately after the November 2024 election, Republicans saw a slight uptick in registrations in Colorado between the end of November and December, but the number of voters affiliated with the party have

slowly declined each month since. The number of voters registered as Republican hit a high of 943,564 last December but dropped to 936,002 by the end of July.

CONSISTENT ACROSS CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS

The Democratic Party’s high since the November election was at the end of November, when 1,050,789 Colorado voters were registered with the party. Democratic registrations dropped to 1,036,115 in July after gradually declining each month since.

Voters across the country “are feeling disillusioned and apathetic,” according to Andrew Nicla, Colorado Democratic Party communications director, and “the toxic national discourse has left many questioning whether either party is truly fighting for them.”

“These voter registration numbers are a snapshot, not a sealed fate. Colorado Democrats didn’t blow a \$1.2 billion hole in our state budget or cut

health care and food assistance for working families,” Nicla said, referencing the federal tax and spending bill’s effect on Colorado’s budget. “There is a clear contrast between our vision, and the damage done by Colorado Republicans in Congress and in our state.”

Party affiliations are consistent across Colorado’s eight congressional districts, too.

In Colorado’s battleground 8th Congressional District, where Republican U.S. Rep. Gabe Evans defeated former Democratic U.S. Rep. Yadira Caraveo by less than a full percentage point, the number of Democratic-affiliated voters has decreased more than the number of Republican-affiliated voters. Between January and July, the district saw a 0.06% reduction in registered Republican voters compared to a 0.33% reduction in registered Democrats.

A priority over the next 10-15 years will be to implement automatic voter registration through Medicaid, Belknap said, meaning people seeking Medicaid in Colorado would “have the same benefit as folks who are getting a driver’s license.” The Colorado Legislature approved a bill that would have implemented that process in 2019, but the federal government has not made the changes needed to allow it.

While political parties and candidates may not be engaging with voters as much during an off year, Belknap said nonpartisan voter registration organizations are still out within the community registering voters, but not pushing for any particular party. She would “love to see the voter registration numbers continue to increase” going into 2026 when there are more local and national elections on the ballot, both in the spring and fall, she said.



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SPORTS



'Burg hosts benefit games; Indian boys top Kent

Girls rivalry sees Byers upend host red-and-black; contests raise \$ for longtime local coach



PHOTOS BY SCOTT GERRARD/For The Scout

The results didn't count towards records or standings but the pair of exhibition foundation games hosted by Strasburg High School Dec. 2 were both hard-fought, competitive contests with proceeds from the evening benefiting a longtime I-70 Corridor coach battling health issues. In the girls game, Corridor rivals butted heads with Byers overcoming an 8-0 first quarter deficit to come-from-behind for a 52-45 victory over the host red-and-black. In the much-anticipated boys matchup, Strasburg, last year's runner-up in 3A, used a 29-9 third quarter to turn a 41-35 halftime deficit into a 64-50 lead after three quarters and upend last year's 4A state champions from Kent Denver, 82-75. In between contests, four-decade Indian alum and longtime and recently retired Strasburg math teacher and coach Kevin Hempill, above left, spoke to the capacity crowd. All donations from the night of basketball, food and silent auction went to Hempill for medical bill support. Clockwise from above center, Indian freshman Koby Meulhausen attacks the bucket over a Sun Devil defender; senior Nick Glatfelter skies around the bucket; Lady Bulldog Karley Linnebur puts up a contested left-handed layup; Byers' Leyla Saylor and Indian Tatijana Rojahn scramble after a loose ball; and Indian forward Taryn LaForce tries to keep her balance while battling for a rebound.



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Sounds of the season abound at Bennett Schools



The week after Thanksgiving was dotted with a bevy of Bennett Elementary holiday season concerts. Second grade held their performance Dec. 2, the first grade was on Dec. 3 and, on Dec. 4, the kindergartners joined forces with Bennett Intermediate School's Tiger Tones. The final concert of the week also included a surprise, guest performance from the Bennett Marching Tigers, who traipsed around the high school auditorium playing its holiday-themed march. Above, the combined group of almost 100 kindergartners and 54 Tiger Tones from Bennett Intermediate School pack the risers over the final five songs of Thursday evening. All of last week's performances were under the direction of elementary music teacher Lauren Paschoalini. Assistance was provided by third-grade teacher Shannon Parcher-Flores.

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ANYTHINK BENNETT CELEBRATES THE HOLIDAYS WITH FROST FEST



STEVEN VETTER/The I-70 Scout

STEVEN VETTER/The I-70 Scout

ISAAC MANAUGH/The I-70 Scout

Anythink Bennett library hosted Frost Fest Dec. 4 with patrons being treated to hot holiday-themed drinks, a faux snowball fight field, a couple mini equine elves and an in-progress ice sculpture. Left photo, Everett Bliss, 2, throws his snowball at the photographer that he's had enough of. Above, a 500-pound plus squirrel ice sculpture glistens in the sunlight a couple of morning's after ice sculptor Dominic Cutilletta worked his magic Thursday night; the sculpture is available for viewing on the library's lawn until it melts away. Right photo, in addition to wishing for her two front teeth for Christmas, Victory Schultz, 7, collects a cache of snow ball ammo.

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Gavin Fischer



In Loving Memory of Gavin Cole Fischer

5/18/2009 - 11/26/2025

Gavin Cole Fischer passed away on Wednesday, Nov. 26, at the age of 16. Although his life ended far too soon, Gavin strived to live each day to the fullest.

A beloved son, brother, grandson, and friend, Gavin was known for his humor, compassion, and the light he brought to everyone around him. He loved spending time with his family and friends, and although he had many hobbies, his greatest passion was riding his dirt bike, quad, or anything with a motor. His presence filled our hearts with joy and laughter, and his unwavering kindness and quiet courage will never be forgotten.

Born on May 18, 2009, Gavin is cherished by his parents, TJ and Joleen Fischer of Strasburg, Colo., and his sister, Adyson. Gavin will forever be remembered for his warmth, lighthearted personality, unforgettable hugs, and his ability to find joy in even the smallest of moments.

Gavin is survived by his parents, TJ and Joleen Fischer; sister, Adyson Fischer; grandmother, Barbara Armer; grandparents, Dennis and Teri Graham; grandmother, Karen Fischer; aunt, uncles, and cousins: Mark and Brandie Flanders (Kaleb), Richard Fischer (Josie, Emma, Koy), Stan Fischer (Tori, Cassie, Niki, Luke), Curly and Christine Fischer (Kalie, Kara, Corey), Larry Gardner (Jeremy, Meagan, Brileigh, Corey, Katie, Jetlyn), and many close family friends. He was preceded in death by his grandfathers, Charles Armer and Richard Fischer, and his aunt, Carolyn Gardner.

A Celebration of Life will be held at Mountain View Fellowship at 3 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 14, 2025. The church is at 1955 Headlight Road, Strasburg.

Please take a moment to visit Gavin's photo memorial as the family would cherish any additional pictures/videos/memories you have to share:
<https://warpb.in.com/drive/GavinFischerMemorial>



STEVEN VETTER/The I-70 Scout

While the Deer Trail cheerleading squad isn't participating in the Colorado State Spirit Championships they are going to make the trip into the Denver Coliseum this weekend to observe in preparation for taking part in the state-wide competition in future years. This year's roster of five, under the tutelage of head coach Cayla Miller, were in full voice during the annual Eagle Classic at Deer Trail Dec. 5-6. Pictured are, front row from left, Madi Nielson and Jill Armstrong and, back row, Khloe Malson-Howard, Autumn Merz and Riley Williams. For full coverage of the Eagle Classic, including the Deer Trail girls' run to the tourney title, see the Dec. 12 *Eastern Colorado News*.

Good Luck Indians at State Spirit!

Colorado State Spirit Championships
Thursday - Saturday, Dec. 11-13; Denver Coliseum

Strasburg performs its 3A Game Day routine @ 1:36 p.m. Thursday.
Finals at 5:30 p.m.

From Strasburg School District 31j & Strasburg School Athletic Dept.

Photo by Scott Gerrard

Helicopter surveys of deer, elk herds planned on plains

DENVER — Colorado Parks & Wildlife will conduct deer and elk herd classification flights from mid-December through mid-February, weather permitting.

Low-flying helicopters could be seen over the Eastern Plains, Front Range, South Park, and other urban areas. Parks & Wildlife biologists and officers will fly in helicopters to observe deer and elk herds and collect herd size, age and sex information.

The annual aerial surveys are a crucial step in gathering data to scientifically manage Colorado's wildlife populations. Biologists analyze the information in the late winter into early spring, which is used in establishing the hunting license process. CPW also utilizes the data from classification flights to inform population objectives for individual herds as a part of herd management plans.

"The helicopters will spend a brief amount of time in a specific area to count and categorize individual herds," said Julie Stiver, senior wildlife biologist for CPW's Southeast Region. "We will only hover long enough for wildlife biologists to count and determine the sex and age of animals within the herd."

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Good Luck Bulldogs at State Spirit Competition!

— Byers School District 32J & Byers Athletic Department

Thurs.-Sat., Dec. 11-13; Denver Coliseum
Byers @ 2:08 p.m. Thursday • Finals @ 5:30 p.m.

For online broadcast, visit nfhsnetwork.com (subscription fee applies).

Join Santa Skeeter

Sunday, Dec. 21, 2025, @ 10:00 AM

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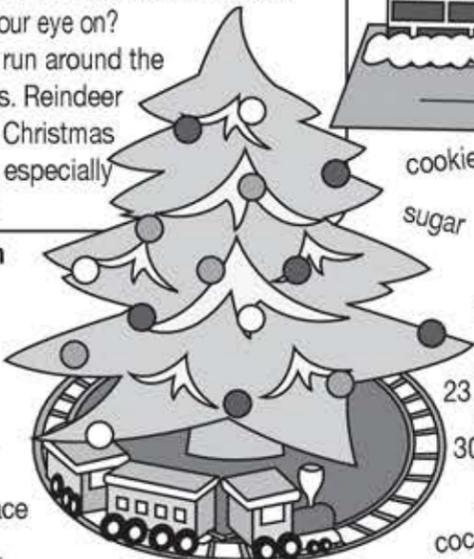
Toys And Joys of Christmas

Do you write to Santa Claus or visit him to tell him what you would like for Christmas? What is the special toy that you have your eye on?

Choo! Choooo! Trains run around the bottom of Christmas trees. Reindeer have red, blinking noses. Christmas toys can bring lots of joy, especially when shared with others.

Read the clues to fill in the crossword puzzle:

- ice _____
- _____ to Santa
- _____ bell
- gingerbread _____
- tin _____
- _____ over a fireplace
- long wooden _____
- Sugar Plum _____
- Model _____ under the tree
- _____ ballet
- _____ on the shelf
- holiday _____
- _____ pull Santa's sleigh
- _____ for naughty kids
- striped candy _____



reindeer, stocking, Pole, house, horse, soldiers, elf, jingle, letter, carrots, sleigh, star, lights, tops, sled, fairy, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, canes, milk, train, Santa, egnog, cocoa, rocking hobby, steaming hot, spinning, North, holiday drink, Sugary with fun shapes, Santa's favorite drink, cubes for the reindeer, on the top of the tree, wind-up, toboggan, Nutcracker, doll

Fill in the blanks to spell the names of Santa's reindeer:

1. Da _ he _
2. _ an _ er
3. Pr _ nc _ r
4. Vi _ e _
5. _ ome _
6. C _ p _ d
7. _ on _ er
8. B _ it _ en
9. _ udol _ h

A Present from Santa Claus

What did Santa leave under the tree? The box is open, now follow the numbered stars to see!

Holiday Toys and Surprises

There are so many kinds of toys and surprises that might be found under the tree. Use the letter bank below and cross off the letters as you fill in the blanks:

- ga _ es and pu _ zles
- _ olls and s _ uffed ani _ als
- con _ truction to _ s
- mo _ els
- spo _ ts equi _ ment
- bik _ s and ridi _ g toys
- ca _ s and truc _ s
- tra_i _ se _ s
- art _ and cra _ ts
- musi _ al instrume _ ts

Letter bank: y m z r m n c s t p s n n d d k r

Property of Santa

Where Are The Toys?

Where might we find the toys? Follow the dots to see where the toys are packed, stuffed or left:

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

THE NOT-SO DUSTY PAGES

20 YEARS AGO DEC. 13, 2005

Investigators have determined the Nov. 30 early-morning fire at the Manila Road Diamond Shamrock gas station and convenience store, just south of I-70, was intentionally set and are asking the public for help in apprehending the person(s) responsible.

The station's owner, Valero Energy, is offering a \$5,000 reward for anyone providing information that helps lead to the arrest and conviction of the people involved.

According to Karl Ditus, investigator with the environmental crimes unit for the Arapahoe Sheriff's Department, the fire was being considered an act of arson.

"Because it is still an active investigation, we can't release any other specifics," Ditus said Dec. 8. "But we have determined the fire appeared to be intentionally set."

15 YEARS AGO DEC. 14, 2010

WATKINS — Preliminary reports of a gunman raiding an I-70 restaurant midday Dec. 11 turned into "much ado about nothing" after the matter was determined to be a case of mistaken identity.

The Adams County Sheriff's Department was first dispatched to LuLu's Inn at approximately 11 a.m. on reports of a man brandishing a gun inside.

Upon arrival, Adams and Arapahoe County deputies and Colorado State Patrol troopers secured a perimeter and awaited the arrival of a SWAT team. In the meantime, a member of the evening's band that was inside the building came out with his hands up and was held by authorities for questioning in a law enforcement vehicle.

A thorough sweep of the building showed no assailants inside and the scene was cleared about two hours later. The search of

the building included robots, canines and snipers in full garb. Bennett and Sable Altura fire departments also secured the perimeter about a half-mile east and west of the site.

An Adams County Sheriff's spokesman said that the reporting party inadvertently thought the band member was carrying a gun.

While the cops didn't confirm what the object was, a second member of that evening's band said he had called the drummer, who said he was carrying in a microphone stand when the bar employee ran outside.

10 YEARS AGO DEC. 15, 2015

BRIGHTON — A suspect in a two plus month investigation of alleged sexual assault on a child from Strasburg was released on bond recently and is scheduled for a court appearance early next month.

According to Adams County Detention Center records, Donald Ray Cox, 22, was booked Dec. 3 and released Dec. 4 after posting a \$20,000 bond.

Cox has been under investigation since late September on allegations he sexually assaulted a Strasburg youth since 2006. According to a Sept. 30 police report, a member of the alleged victim's family said the girl was initially assaulted in early 2006.

According to the family member, Cox was invited to stay with them when he turned 16, and left earlier this year.

"[The victim] told me, that just before Donald turned 18, when she was 11, he started kissing her and telling her that he was her best friend. [The victim] said that it did not really bother her, but that he then started to touch her inappropriately," said Adams County Sheriff Deputy Carol Mai's Sept. 30 incident report.

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5		1		2			6	9
			6	9				
	9				2	4	8	
7			3		8			1
	5	8	9					3
				3	9			
2	3			4		8		5
			5			9		

© StatePoint Media
Fill in the blank squares in the grid, making sure that every row, column and 3-by-3 box includes all digits 1 through 9.
SOLUTION ON PAGE 18

TODAY IN HISTORY

Today is Wednesday, Dec. 10, the 344th day of 2025. There are 21 days left in the year.

TODAY'S HIGHLIGHT

On Dec. 10, 1906, President Theodore Roosevelt became the first American to win a Nobel Prize, winning the Nobel Peace Prize for helping to negotiate peace in the Russo-Japanese War.

ALSO ON THIS DATE:

In 1861, the Confederacy admitted Kentucky as it recognized a pro-Southern shadow state government that was acting without the authority of the pro-Union government in Frankfort.

In 1898, a treaty was signed in Paris officially ending the Spanish-American War.

In 1964, Martin Luther King Jr.

received his Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo, saying he accepted it "with an abiding faith in America and an audacious faith in the future of mankind."

In 1967, singer Otis Redding, 26, and six others were killed when their plane crashed into a Wisconsin lake; trumpeter Ben Cauley, a member of the group the Bar-Kays, was the only survivor.

In 1994, Yasser Arafat, Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Rabin were jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for their efforts to advance the Middle East peace process.

In 2021, a two-day outbreak of tornadoes in the U.S. Midwest and South killed more than 90 people across five states, including 77 in Kentucky. The National Weather Service recorded more than 40

twisters Dec. 10 and Dec. 11.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAYS

Actor Fionnula Flanagan is 84. Actor-singer Gloria Loring is 79. Actor Susan Dey is 73. Jazz musician Diane Schuur is 72. Actor Nia Peeples is 64. TV chef Bobby Flay is 61. Rock musician Meg White (The White Stripes) is 51. Actor Emmanuelle Chriqui is 50.

—Associated Press

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THEME: AT A BAR

- ACROSS**
- Slovenly ones
 - To do this is human?
 - Not flip
 - Mistress or lover, arch.
 - Precedes de Rivoli
 - Lift a hefty load
 - Sheep-like
 - Invoice qty.
 - Republic on Arabian Peninsula
 - *Aromatic additives
 - *Beer with Bloody Mary, e.g.
 - Major Uziel Gal-designed gun
 - Clarified butter
 - Although, for short
 - Distressed cry
 - Bamboozled
 - What a willow did?
 - J in B. J. King
 - Raspberry drupelets
 - Pelvic bones
 - Birch family tree
 - Banned apple spray
 - Impolite dinner sound
 - Left, Latin prefix
 - Dissenting clique
 - a.k.a. chickadee
 - Four seasons
 - Abode for #1 Down
 - Do, re or mi
 - Buddy Holly's "Peggy ___"
 - *Measuring tool at a bar
 - *Not shaken
 - Dough or cabbage
 - "Gross!"
 - Lacking guile
 - "The Day the World ___ Still"
 - Intelligence org.
 - Ruhr's industrial center
 - Job for a body shop
 - Finish
 - Condemn

- DOWN**
- #1 Across, sing.
 - Jeans maker Strauss
 - Leave out
 - Swahili and other languages
 - One of the seven dwarfs
 - Victorian one and Elizabethan one, e.g.
 - *Liquor in Hurricane and Painkiller
 - *Verb related to hangover
 - Fine print add-ons
 - Feeble
 - Above and beyond
 - Mightier than sword
 - Shenzi of "The Lion King"

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- *Spanish dry red wine
- "For ___ a Jolly Good Fellow"
- Seductive stare (2 words)
- *Citrus peel
- Greeting
- Laudanum ingredient
- *Same as rail at a bar
- South American wood sorrels
- Trickeries
- Roleplay
- *Like martini with olive brine
- Queen of Hearts' pastry
- Campbell of "Scream" fame
- Cook in the oven
- Sent a modern message
- Ballerina's support
- Decayed or disintegrated
- Cease-fire
- Use other end of pencil
- Burlap fiber
- Desktop picture
- Small cave
- Herring's cousin
- Microprocessor design, acr.
- "___ and anon"
- Controvert
- Psychedelic drug
- *Liquor in Tom Collins and Gimlet

ANSWERS ON PAGE 2

HOROSCOPE

Neptune Change and Mercury Opposition

In unhealthy groups, people mute themselves to keep the peace or to please a leader. The group may look unified on the surface, but it's weaker because it's missing the full power of its members' individuality. In healthy groups, people feel free to bring their full selves. They trust that their opinions, quirks and talents will be tolerated. Diversity is strength.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Emotional accounting brings surprising profits. Start the day by unloading the stories that weigh you down. When you clear your inner ledger, space opens for decisive action, strategic creation and measurable wins.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You may be put on the spot, but it doesn't mean you should scramble to come up with anything or pretend to be something you're not. Just your truth, plus good manners, is enough. If they need you to put on a big show, they are the ones mistaking performance for connection.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Breaking family patterns is sacred rebellion. It rewrites the DNA of love itself. Celebrate your small daily wins as generational miracles. Also, you may feel like you're overanalyzing sometimes, but the fact that you care to analyze at all? That's remarkable.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You're thinking about change, and much of it's physical. Other plans go better when you feel strong. Training that builds stamina and steadiness builds power, too — the kind that supports every creative, emotional and practical goal you've set.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). When you count your blessings, you feel fortunate. Most of your problems would be considered minimal on a global scale. Knowing someone, somewhere, would relish your worst-case scenario really puts things in perspective.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). The right teacher will be the difference between picking up a skill or not. There are many who know the thing you want to learn, and a bit of shopping around will be well worth the

time, effort and money.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You're feeling impulsive and adventurous, and that's not a bad thing. When you act with joyful abandon instead of fear or hesitation, even your "mistakes" become stories worth telling. Passion purifies folly.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). People relax around decisive energy. It feels like safety and direction. And when action begins, clarity follows. So take a breath, step back, and give your nervous system a moment to settle. Then, on your marks, get set ... go!

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Saying, "Tell me what you think I know" is a helpful directive because sometimes people think you are privy to information you just don't have, and you'll never know where the confusion lies until you ask more questions. You will learn something that sorts out the confusion.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). The gears you've been grinding are finally turning smooth. Don't slow down now; stay in rhythm with the magic you've built. Momentum is a living thing; feed it gratitude and watch it spin gold from your effort.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Rumors will fly. Don't be bothered by any unverified information. While you could pursue further investigation, you could also benefit from staying out of it completely for now. What's important will resurface more fully later, sparing you the work.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Cancel the noise and keep what's really helping you execute your plans and stick with your purpose. Every time you prune a bill, habit or regret, your energy comes back doubled. Simplification is freedom.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (Dec. 10). Welcome to your Year of the Bright Bridge. With kind observations, a sharp mind and ever-improving communication skills, you'll connect worlds — art and commerce, old and new, local and global — and find yourself in the sweet spot where magic meets momentum. More highlights: family peace, creative recognition and prosperity that reflects your growth. Aries and Scorpio adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 6, 19, 27, 38 and 21.

—Horoscopes by Holiday

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Bennett Middle School hosted a pair of "Game of Tiaras" performances Nov. 14, providing audiences with numerous chuckles. Above, The King (Archer Camm), left, and Cinderella (Gabrielle Torres) watch as Prince Charming (Carter Faczak) jumps for joy.



Snow Queen Ellie (Olivia Boh) does a dance to prove why she is the better sister.



From left, Belle (Olivia Stevenson), sits on the throne with a huge smile as she is the last one alive after everyone of the whole cast dies. Dwarf played by Madelynne Travis shoots a bow and arrow at Prince Charming killing him.

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444 E. Front Street, Byers, CO 80103.

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PHOTOS BY STEVEN VETTER/The I-70 Scout

Neal Schlein from the Denver Museum of Miniatures, Dolls and Toys out of Lakewood showed the traditional Native American way to make corn husk dolls during a craft event at Kelver Library in Byers Nov. 20. Above, Chloe Dedionisio figures out the art of evening the arms. Below, Madelyn Weber, 8, receives assistance from a Schlein finger to tie the head of her doll.

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Wednesday, Dec. 17: Meatball sub.
Thursday, Dec. 18: Chicken tenders.



Pastry chef Tino Gierig makes stollen, a traditional Christmas pastry in Dresden, Germany, Nov. 11.

German pastry a Christmas staple

DRESDEN, Germany (AP) — When pastry chef Tino Gierig is asked what the famous Dresden stollen tastes like, his eyes sparkle and his voice rises to an enthusiastic sing-song as he describes the rich delicacy filled with raisins and other dried fruits.

“Stollen tastes like Christmas, like family, like tradition, like hominess, peace, serenity,” the 55-year-old said as he lovingly kneaded his buttery yeast dough before folding in golden raisins in his Dresdner Backhaus bakery.

Bakers in the eastern German city of Dresden have been making stollen for hundreds of years and it is now a treasured Christmas tradition. It is usually cut on the first weekend of Advent — the four-week period leading up to Christmas — and served with coffee and Christmas cookies.

After baking several loaves of stollen in his Dresden bakery in November, Gierig picked off some slightly burned raisins from the top, brushed the pastry with butter, sprinkled granulated sugar on top, and in a final touch dusted it with powdered sugar.

The 55-year-old is precise in his baking, and also particular about how to define his hand-baked Christmas specialty: “It’s a heavy yeast dough, it’s not bread, it’s not cake. It’s a pastry that is only made for the Advent season.”

In Germany the desert is often called Christstollen, and to Gierig it looks “like Christ Child wrapped in swaddling clothes.”

“This kind of baking has a lot to do with symbolism,” Gierig said.

A protected brand

While Gierig’s description sounds like an ode to Christmas baking and the creation of stollen in particular, stollen is also big business with an organization that is dedicated to protecting and promoting the brand.

The Dresden Stollen Protection Association awards a coveted golden quality seal as a certificate of authenticity to bakeries that fulfill certain conditions and which are located in or near Dresden. The products are checked every year to make sure they fulfill all the expectations of the association.

According to the strict rules, stollen must be made with heaps of butter — at least 50% of the flour content — as well as a generous load of golden raisins, candied orange and lemon peel as well as some sweet and bitter almonds. The addition of margarine,

artificial preservatives or artificial flavors is not allowed.

The Dresdner Christstollen is additionally protected by European Union rules that stipulate where and how it needs to be produced, just like Lübecker Marzipan from the northern German city of Lübeck, Schwarzwälder Schinken ham from the Black Forest, or Aachener Printen gingerbread from the western German city of Aachen.

Nonetheless, the bakeries, which have often been run by the same families for many generations, can add their own mix of spices and flavors. They usually include include vanilla and cardamom, and sometimes tonka beans, cinnamon, nutmeg or cloves.

“There are just so many flavors from all over the world in there that have blended together, making it simply a wonderful symbiosis,” Gierig said.

In 2024, more than 5 million loaves were sold, about 20% of which were exported. Austria and Switzerland are the main countries of export, but Gierig says he also sells many stollen online to customers in the United States.

When stored in a dry, dark and cool place, the specialty keeps for many weeks.

A tradition with roots in the Middle Ages

While today’s recipes are fancy in ingredients and elaborate in preparation, Dresden stollen’s medieval origins are humble.

Stollen was first mentioned in a document in 1474 on an invoice from the city’s Christian Bartolomai Hospital, according to the association.

However, at that time, it was not yet considered a Christmas delicacy, but a fasting pastry that consisted only of flour, yeast and water.

Butter was not allowed until Pope Innocent VIII in Rome granted a special request by Elector Ernest of Saxony to lift the butter ban in 1491. From then on, stollen bakers have been also allowed to use more substantial ingredients.

While some of the more exotic spices were hard to get during the Communist decades in East Germany, stollen was among the most coveted delicacies in the country. Even Germans living in post-war capitalist West Germany were always hoping to get an original Dresden stollen package for Christmas from their brethren in the East as none of the stollen made in the west came anywhere close to the original.

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