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The I-70 Scout

Volume 32, Number 4

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Wednesday, December 24, 2025

ArapCo bumps sheriff's eastern coverage



STEVEN VETTER/The I-70 Scout

Arapahoe County District 3 Commissioner Jeff Baker announces 2026 priorities for eastern unincorporated areas during a Dec. 2 open house at the Byers American Legion Hall Dec. 2.

by Steven Vetter
Managing Editor

When the new year rolls around, residents in the eastern half of Arapahoe County can expect to see an increased police presence thanks to last year's passage of county ballot question 1A.

Part of the \$667 million 2026 budget approved by Arapahoe County commissioners Dec. 9 includes a significant public safety bump, particularly the addition of sheriff's deputies.

"Over the next four years, we're proposing 40 new deputies for unincorporated areas," said Patrol Operations Capt. Kevin Heaton during a county open house hosted by District 3 Commissioner Jeff Baker at the Byers American Legion Hall Dec. 2. "That's adding 10 additional deputies next year — four for patrol to come out east."

The additional eastern patrol units would be for areas basically east of E-470.

"Pretty big area to cover and with the growth out there, certainly there's a need," Heaton added.

Deputy Jason Presley added that the additional manpower will be in addition to the extra patrols that have been part of the sheriff's office contract with the town of Bennett.

"Already have seen better responses and call coverage because of the Bennett contract, but should be even better starting next year," said Presley, noting that, as of the start of December, there were

7,114 calls for service, including about 850 medical assists, to the eastern half of the county so far this year. "Again, Gun Club to Deer Trail and even further east, so a lot of area to cover and that's for all kinds of calls."

While a lot of crime categories continue to rise, Presley noted one noticeable decline.

"Thirty-six auto thefts out here, which is down tremendously since 2021," he said. "That's pretty good after leading the state/nation over the past four years. Twenty stolen vehicles recovered out here."

Sheriff's office officials added that "chop shops" have been popping up throughout eastern portions of the county and urge residents to contact deputies or dispatch if suspicious activity is noted.

Baker noted that the law enforcement budget request wasn't too scrutinized by the rest of the board of commissioners, a step in the right direction when it comes to providing service for the area.

Whether the future patrol personnel increases will include similar distribution across the county was uncertain.

EASTERN ROADWAYS

The other primary budget item addressed during Baker's presentation was the allocation of almost \$12 million to repair/maintain roads in eastern un-

SEE ARAPCO PRIORITIES

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White Christmas unlikely

Unseasonable winter leads to burn bans

by Steven Vetter
Managing Editor

As of press time last weekend, a white Christmas was unlikely across the lower elevations of Colorado, including the Front Range and areas further east.

In fact, thoughts of continued unseasonably warm, dry and windy conditions will likely have fire and other emergency personnel on edge as they sit down at the holiday

dinner table.

Local high temperatures are expected to be in the high 40s to mid-60s, with some areas thought to reach 70 degrees.

"A persistent westerly wind pattern is keeping moisture west of the Continental Divide and contributing to the warm temperatures on the eastern plains," the National Weather Service's Boulder office projected. "A 10-15% chance of

SEE CHRISTMAS WEATHER

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STEVEN VETTER/The I-70 Scout

While much of the I-70 Corridor missed out on the gusty winds of up to 100 mph that were reported by areas to the west last Wednesday and Friday, one trampoline casualty was spotted in a Strasburg alley the morning of Dec. 18.



CARL STEITZ/The I-70 Scout

Festive lights can be found throughout the various I-70 Corridor communities, with some of the more extensive displays to be found at Cordella Estates (above), the northern edge of Bennett on Fourth through Sixth streets, and Blackstone Ranch, Coyote Ridge and Wolf Creek Run subdivisions on the north edge of Strasburg.

COMMUNITY CORRAL

Free monthly lunch on tap for local veterans, seniors

BENNETT — Free lunches for I-70 Corridor military veterans and senior citizens age 65 and older will resume in January.

The next meal, served by a group of local volunteers, is scheduled at 12 p.m., Friday, Jan. 16. Veterans and seniors from all along the I-70 Corridor are invited.

The meals are usually served on the second Friday of each month at the Bennett VFW Hall.

For more information, call Flora Goodnight at (303)549-2589.

Birth, death certificates price increases to \$25 on January 1

LITTLETON — The New Year will see a fee increase to residents seeking birth and death certificates in Arapahoe County and statewide.

The Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment's Vital Records Office has issued a new fee schedule. Effective Jan. 1, the cost of the certificates will rise to \$25 for the first copy and \$20 for each additional copy on the same order.

Certified birth and death certificates are legal documents printed on forgery-resistant safety paper with watermarks, raised engraving, background security patterns, and a unique certificate identification number.

Only certain individuals, with proof of eligibility, can be provided with these vital records.

Applications with the required documentation can be e-mailed to VitalRecords@arapahoegov.com. For more information, visit arapahoeco.gov/health or call (303)734-4300.

Big address signs offered at cost by Strasburg FPD

STRASBURG — The Strasburg Fire Protection District is offering address signs at cost.

The price is \$40 for each reflective 6- by 30-inch sign. The signs are available in green or blue with 4-inch white numbers.

According to a release, the signs significantly help the emergency crews find an address in a faster and safer

manner, especially at night when the addresses on the front of a house are not lit.

To have a sign made, contact the Strasburg Fire Protection District at (303)622-4444, ext. 1.

Credit cards are not accepted.

Byers Legion Post 160 seeks new members and new ideas

BYERS — American Legion Post 160 in Byers wants to expand its membership and its outreach into the community.

All military personnel are eligible for the American Legion. Sons, grandsons and great-grandsons can join the Sons of the Legion; the Auxiliary welcomes spouses, daughters and granddaughters.

The post is asking Legion members, active duty military, and retired veterans to provide feedback on building a productive post that supports veterans and the community in sustaining Byers' ideals and unique culture.

"We want to see our Legion Hall ... providing a locale where we can meet and foster the bonds of our farm town culture," a release states.

For more information, call Cmdr. Dale Ness at (303)594-6501 or financial advisor Teresa Seggerman at (303)253-1475, or e-mail to Byers160@outlook.com.

CO Nat'l Guard official retires after four decades of service

CENTENNIAL — The Colorado National Guard said farewell to a key official Dec. 6 at a retirement ceremony at Buckley Space Force Base, Aurora, Colorado.

The event honored CONG Director of Joint Staff U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. Michael J. Bruno, who was responsible for leading responses to domestic events as directed by the governor. He has served in the military in various capacity since he enlisted in the Nebraska Air National Guard in May 1985. He transferred to the Colorado Air National Guard in May 1991 and attained the rank of master sergeant.

His awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit and the Meritorious Service Medal with five oak leaf clusters.



STEVEN VETTER/The I-70 Scout

The Dec. 8 Strasburg School Board meeting consisted mostly of end-of-year housekeeping items along with the swearing in of new or re-elected board members and approval of the officer team for the next couple of years. Above photo, outgoing board member Daymon Johnson, center, receives a token of thanks for his four years on the board. Johnson was first elected to the board in November 2021. Pictured alongside are board members Mary O'Malley, left, Michael Marrero, Diana Elliott and Gema Gomez. Below, Gomez and Courtney Vance take the oath of office. Vance, a first-time board member, and Gomez, who was appointed to the board to fill a resignation-based vacancy, were the top two vote-getters out of three candidates that ran in the November election. Officers for the next two years are Marrero as president, Elliott as first vice president, O'Malley second vice president, Gomez treasurer and Vance as secretary.



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The I-70 Scout

Published weekly by the I-70 Publishing Company, Inc.

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NORAD continues decades-long tradition of tracking Santa

by Colleen Slevin
Associated Press

PETERSON SPACE FORCE BASE (AP) — Sometimes kids drop the phone after hearing Santa won't show up if they're not asleep. Others who call the NORAD Tracks Santa hotline wonder if St. Nick will be able to find them.

Adults who also remain devoted to the jolly figure said to deliver presents around the world are checking up on his journey. For 70 years, that's been the tradition at the North American Aerospace Defense Command — a joint United States and Canadian operation charged with monitoring the skies for threats since the Cold War.

More than 1,000 volunteers will be taking calls to 1-877-HI-NORAD on Christmas Eve from 4 a.m. to midnight Mountain Standard Time. For the first time this year, Santa seekers can place a call through the program's website, which organizers say will be easier for people outside North America.

The website allows people to follow Santa's journey in nine languages, including English and Japanese.

Last year, about 380,000 calls came into a hangar festooned with Christmas decorations at Peterson Space Force Base in Colorado Springs — the home of NORAD.

While Santa is no threat,



PHOTOS BY THOMAS PAUL/North American Aerospace Defense Command via AP

Volunteers take phone calls from children asking where Santa is and when he will deliver presents to their house, during the annual NORAD Tracks Santa Operation, at the North American Aerospace Defense Command, or NORAD, at Peterson Air Force Base, in Colorado Springs, Colo., on Tuesday, Dec. 24, 2024.

the same combination of radar, satellites and jets that help NORAD carry out its mission throughout the year make it capable of tracking the progress of Santa starting from the international date line over the Pacific Ocean, said Col. Kelly Frushour, a NORAD spokesperson.

Rudolph's nose gives off a heat signature similar to a missile that is picked up by NORAD's satellites, she said.

'FASTER THAN STARLIGHT'

Last year, Frushour said one girl was upset after hearing Santa was on his way to the International Space Station, where two astronauts were stranded.

"Thankfully, by the time the call was over, Santa Claus had moved on to another destination and the child was reassured that Santa was not trapped in space and was go-

ing to make it to her house later that evening," Frushour said.

A special needs man named Henry who calls every year once asked if the jet pilot escorting Santa through North America could put a note in the plane letting Santa know he was in bed and ready for him to come, said Michelle Martin, a NORAD staffer and Marine veteran.

She said she explained that Santa travels "faster than starlight."

"I don't know that our pilot can catch up with him fast enough. He just waves and he goes," she recalled saying.

A TRADITION STARTED BY MISTAKE

The tradition started in 1955 when NORAD's predecessor, the Continental Air Defense Command, was on the lookout for any sign of a possible nu-

clear attack from the then-Soviet Union. NORAD says a child mistakenly called the combat operations center and asked to speak to Santa Claus. The commander on duty, Air Force Col. Harry Shoup didn't want to disappoint the child, so he ordered staffers to start tracking Santa and take calls from children.

The story goes that the first phone call was either the result of a misprint or a misdial of a number included in a Sears advertisement in the Colorado Springs newspaper encouraging children to call Santa.

The legend developed into the first call coming into a dedicated hotline that connected the command with a general in case of an attack. In 2015, The Atlantic magazine doubted the flood of calls to the secret line, saying a call to a public phone line was more

probable and noting that Shoup had a flair for public relations.

In a 1999 interview with The Associated Press, Shoup recalled playing along once he figured out what was happening, telling the first caller, "Ho, ho, ho, I am Santa."

"The crew was looking at me like I had lost it," he recalled.

He said he told his staff what was happening and told them to play along, too.

It's not clear what day the first call came in, but by Dec. 23 of that first year, The Associated Press reported that CONAD was tracking Santa.

CONAD soon became North American Aerospace Defense Command. It used to operate inside nearby Cheyenne Mountain. A network of tunnels had been blasted out of the mountain's hard granite so NORAD officers could survive a nuclear attack.

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ARAPAHOE COUNTY



Happy Holidays

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



Clerk & Recorder New Hours

Beginning in 2026, all four branches of the Clerk and Recorder's Office will change their opening time from 7 to 8 a.m. The Office will continue to close at 4 p.m. Service levels will be unchanged, as all services are available by appointment only.



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arapahoeco.gov WEEK OF DEC. 22

ARAPCO PRIORITIES FROM PAGE 1

incorporated Arapahoe County. "Twenty miles of graveling and another 52 miles of paved roads out here in 2026," said Road & Bridge Division Manager Eric McKinnon. "Looking at \$11.8 million out here alone." In addition, McKinnon said staffing is improving and should allow for more expeditious handling of repairs and maintenance work. "We had 14 vacancies to start 2025," he said. "Right now we're down to five and that's looking to go down as well." Arapahoe County's 1A funding comes from voter approval in November 2024 to lift TABOR (Taxpayer's Bill of Rights) spending limits, providing extra revenue for essential services like roads, public safety, housing, and human/mental health services. "We're adding flexibility and preventing budget cuts while building reserves for the future," a county statement said. A resident advisory committee oversees this funding to ensure it aligns with voter intent. "The 2026 budget showing major investments in infrastructure and community support services," Baker concluded.



STEVEN VETTER/The I-70 Scout
Arapahoe County Road & Bridge Division Manager Eric McKinnon tells residents of eastern unincorporated Arapahoe County plans for stepped up roadway maintenance and repairs in 2026 during an open house at the Byers American Legion Dec. 2.

LIBRARY NEWS

KELVER LIBRARY
585 Main St., Byers
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www.arapahoelibraries.org

Little Makers Club: Children ages 0-5 and their families will participate in glow-in-the-dark New Year's Eve activities. Free crafts, toddler-friendly snacks, and a goody bag provided. 10:30-11:30 a.m., Friday, Dec. 26.

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 Kelter 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 Kelter Library. The online workshop runs from 6-7 p.m., Tuesday, Jan. 6.

Penguin painting workshop: Kids and tweens are invited to a whimsical pen-

guin painting workshop. They'll follow easy, step-by-step instructions to create a wintery canvas to take home and display. 4:30-5:30 p.m., Tuesday, Jan. 6.

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.

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.

Balto: A History of Humans, Huskies and Health in Alaska. Children ages 5-12 will discover the story of Balto, the heroic husky who raced to save the town of Nome, Alaska, during a diphtheria outbreak in 1925 in this live Zoom presentation by the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. The kids will see real gear and learn what it takes to race the Iditarod today. 11 a.m. to 12 p.m., Monday, Jan. 5.




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Arapahoe County approves \$667M budget for 2026

Commissioners prioritize strategic investments — roads, safety, housing, health — to create stability

LITTLETON — The 2026 Recommended Budget adopted by the Arapahoe County Board of Commissioners Dec. 9 invests approximately \$670 million in Arapahoe County essential services — roads, safety, housing and health — while building reserves to protect against future uncertainties.

With voter approval of Issue 1A in November 2024, the county has more flexibility to meet today's service demands while planning for tomorrow. The total budget package, according to a release, balances immediate investments with future stability, keeping communities safe, resilient, and thriving, even as state and federal revenues tighten.

THE BIG PICTURE

\$667.5 MILLION TOTAL BUDGET

- Prioritizes essential county services such as infrastructure and road maintenance, public safety, housing and protective services.
- Adds 63 new positions across multiple departments, particularly in public safety.
- Invests more than \$125 million over the next five years to help address deferred maintenance and improve county roads, facilities and systems.
- Increases Social Services Fund mill levy to appropriate an additional \$2.1 million annually.

"Even with funding concerns at the state and federal levels, Arapahoe County commissioners made a promise to invest locally in the programs and services that make a difference in our residents' lives," said Commissioner Leslie Summey, board chair. "This budget prioritizes public safety and human services, expands work force investments, brings stability to our infrastructure, and helps future-proof the budget in the years ahead."

Budget priorities were influenced by the county's strategic plan, which guides how to deliver services, invest public resources, and plan for long-

term success. The budget strongly supports the plan's four focus areas.

FOUR FOCUS AREAS

SAFE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

The budget prioritizes the safety and well-being of the county's most vulnerable residents. The board increased the district attorney's budget by 22% over the last year, which will enhance support for domestic violence victims and strengthen the office's ability to seek justice for all cases within the 18th Judicial District. The budget also strengthens public health protections through expanded environmental health oversight and increased vaccine clinics to keep our community healthy.

To deliver these enhanced services effectively, the budget includes strategic staffing additions at offices for the sheriff, district attorney and coroner. The personnel investments will help ensure that the county has the capacity to respond promptly to public safety needs, provide thorough case support for victims and decedents, and maintain the quality of services residents depend on.

ECONOMIC RESILIENCE AND STABILITY

Approximately \$6 million will deepen the county's current work to advance affordable housing projects, provide rental assistance, and provide navigation services to the homeless.

Full funding for the county's Aid to Agencies program was restored and increased by \$1 million, and contributions to local economic development agencies were secured. A \$2.1 million increase in the county match to the Social Services Fund will cover anticipated growth in expenditures and the continuation of safety-net programs to help families during financial stress.

SUSTAINABLE GROWTH AND INFRASTRUCTURE

To tackle the long list of road and capital improvement projects, commissioners significantly increased

funding for roads and bridges while also increasing investments in facilities. Funding came from two sources.

First, the shift of the Specific Ownership Tax (from vehicle registrations) from the General Fund to the Road & Bridge Fund will directly support road maintenance and repair.

Second, \$26.6 million is dedicated for capital projects, covering almost all the priority needs identified for 2026. Funds to increase staffing in Public Works & Development will help shorten application times, as well as help Open Spaces more effectively manage and preserve land assets.

WORKFORCE AND COMMUNITY PROSPERITY

Building a thriving community and strong work force means providing access to education and job training, affordable housing, and childcare support for working families. Increases to social services funding and affordable housing will support family stability while staff additions in human services and public health will help remove barriers to residents accessing support.

The adopted budget adds staff across departments to respond to service demand, supporting public sector work force growth and retention.

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

One of commissioners' biggest concerns was getting the county on solid financial footing — especially important as property tax revenue is expected to dip by \$2.5 million in 2027.

To offset revenue loss, the board increased the county's Reserve Fund to 15%, identified projects for one-time cash infusion, and made a modest adjustment to the Social Services mill levy to ensure matching federal funding.

Commissioners tied new and continuing projects to the county's strategic plan and performance management system to demonstrate how funding impacts services.

HONORING A PROMISE TO TAXPAYERS

In 2024, commissioners warned of service cuts as revenue lagged and as federal and state contributions shrunk. That's why the board placed Issue 1A on the November 2024 ballot to release the county from revenue limits imposed by the Taxpayer's Bill of Rights.

An overwhelming majority of voters approved the measure, and a Resident Advisory Committee was formed to monitor progress. Commissioners vowed to invest the additional funds in programs and services that impact residents the most and develop a new budget process with guardrails. That process helped refine and clarify new and ongoing requests:

- County leaders now draw a sharper distinction between ongoing funding to sustain services and one-time funding for big projects, technology upgrades, election costs and more.
- The already rigorous threshold for vehicle and equipment approval has been strengthened to ensure only critical needs are met.
- Departments refined their prioritization process; most high-priority capital projects are funded while some medium-priority projects were held back for further evaluation.

The Resident Advisory Committee met with Commissioners Nov. 4 and unanimously endorsed Issue 1A funding proposals in the 2026 recommended budget and affirmed its alignment with the voter-approved measure.

Commissioners also held a public hearing Oct. 28 and formally adopted the Recommended Budget at the Dec. 9 business meeting.

Arapahoe County's 2026 adopted budget, made possible by voter approval of Issue 1A, invests in services that touch residents daily — roads, safety, housing, health and human services — while building reserves to protect against future revenue dips.



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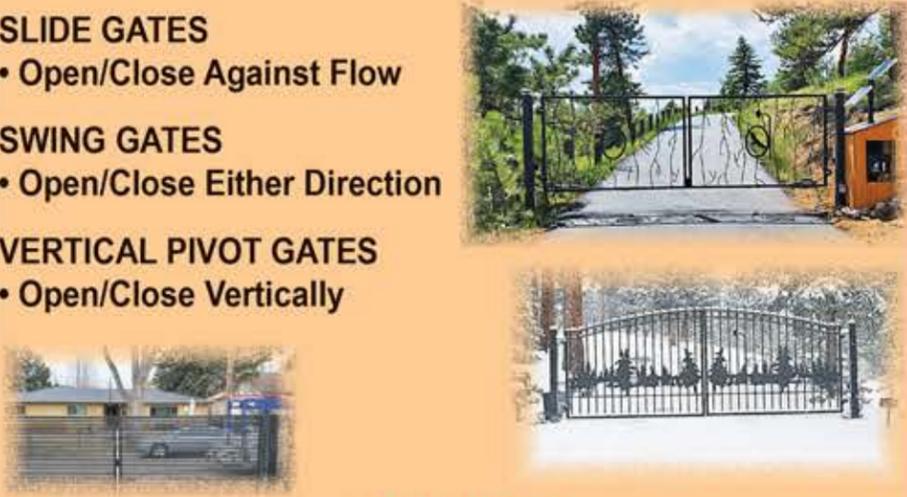
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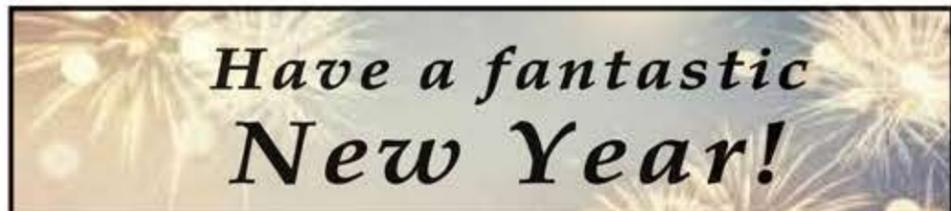




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CHASE WOODRUFF/Colorado Newline

A small group of activists demonstrated against Key Lime Air outside Centennial Airport last month. The Denver City Council, citing the airline's work for ICE, on Monday denied a lease for the company at Denver International Airport.

Denver City Council pans airline's lease request

by Sara Wilson
 Colorado Newline

DENVER — Denver City Council voted against a resolution Dec. 15 that would have allowed Key Lime Air to lease ground space at Denver International Airport over concerns about the airline's immigration enforcement flights in recent months.

The resolution would have created a lease for 1,200 feet of space at the airport for Key Lime Air, which also operates as Denver Air Connection. The space would include an area to store items like snow removal equipment, employee parking and an office trailer, according to the proposed lease agreement. Without the lease, the company can still use the common area of a cargo apron.

"When we're talking about the values of our city, and we stand up here and say time after time that we sup-

port our immigrant community and that we are a welcoming city — I cannot support a corporation that does not prescribe to that," Council member Serena Gonzales-Gutierrez said.

Two of Key Lime's airplanes have been used for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement flights to shuffle detained immigrants around the country, primarily to ICE's hubs in Texas and Louisiana, as first reported by Newline. During the time period analyzed by Newline, neither of those planes landed in Colorado. There have been 122 outbound immigration enforcement flights out of Denver this year, according to the most recent ICE Flight Monitor report from Human Rights Watch, though there is little information about which airport those flights are leaving from.

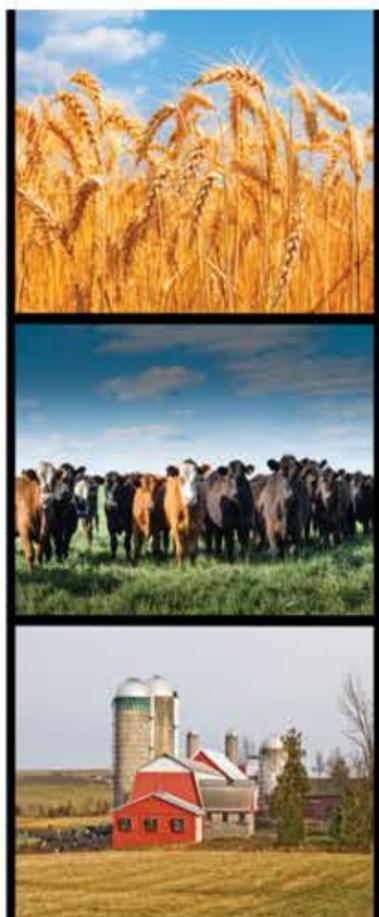
Key Lime Air is headquartered at Centennial Airport in Arapahoe County. It has also operated at Denver International Airport since 2006 as a cargo feeder airline, according to George Karayiannakis, the airport's senior vice president of airline and commercial affairs.

The airport could stand to lose Federal Aviation Administration grants because of its denial of the lease, which Council member Kevin Flynn cited as his reason for voting in favor of the resolution.

"Voting it down means they won't be paying us. They'll be using it for free," he said. "We can't kick Key (Lime) Air out of the airport, but we can make them pay to use the piece of concrete that they want to use. Voting this down means they use the common use area for free."

Flynn was the single vote in favor of the resolution.

"This is where the rubber starts to hit the road, when we start to talk about, what are we going to do in Denver, about what's happening at the federal level," Council member Sarah Parady said. "I have no interest in supporting this deportation machine. And if an aviation grant is what's on the line there, it's very clear to me where the city should stand on that."



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SPORTS



Bennett gets split on Indians' home court



Lady Tiger Aileen Duran (4) tips the ball away from Strasburg's Wynne Winter during the annual Corridor rivalry Dec. 16.

Tiger girls ride 14-0 start to victory

by Steven Vetter
Managing Editor

STRASBURG — For the first time in 10 contests since the 2012-13 season, the Bennett Lady Tigers got the best of Strasburg, 47-37 on the Lady Indians' home court Dec. 16.

The visitors scored the first 14 points and didn't allow the Indians to score until about three minutes left in the first quarter. A 14-6 Tiger lead after the first eight minutes was extended to 27-16 at halftime. Another Bennett run in the third quarter put the visitors up 35-16 and while Strasburg outscored the Tigers 21-12 the rest of the way, the outcome wasn't much in doubt.

"Defense continues to play well," said Bennett head coach Mike Rios. "Starting to get a lot more contributions across the roster, especially from our sophomore starters and number six and seven off the bench. Building some confidence in our young squad."

"Struggling with holding onto the ball and can't get many shots to fall," lamented Strasburg head coach Merci Ames. "Both free-throws and



Bennett's Mattie Robledo ties up possession with Lady Indian Tatijana Rojahn Dec. 16.

missed layups hurt us." The Indians shot 23% from the field and went 7-of-21 from the free-throw line.

Bennett junior Emilee Veneberg hit four of her squad's six three-pointers and was 5-of-8 from the charity to stripe to help her en route to a game-high 23 points. Junior Josie Ladd added 9 points while recording a game-high seven steals on defense.

SEE GB BENNETT @ 'BURG PAGE 12

Strasburg boys dominate visiting orange-and-black

by Steven Vetter
Managing Editor

STRASBURG — In a case of an experienced, veteran squad with state title aspirations facing a new set of first-year starters, the Strasburg boys dominated visiting Bennett, 89-23, in their annual I-70 Corridor rivalry Dec. 16.

The Indians also concluded the pre-break portion of their schedule undefeated with a second consecutive taming of Tigers, 76-39 at Sterling Dec. 18.

Tuesday's local matchup was put out of reach early as the hosts ran out 28-3 after the first quarter and were up 52-7 at half. A 27-8 third quarter was followed up by a 10-8 tally over the final eight minutes.

"We've been focusing on trying to have better starts this season, trying to make first halves less stressful than they need to be," said Strasburg head coach Kyle Bollers. "I thought we came out really solid defensively. Our pressure was relentless and turned into a lot of easy baskets for us. Really pleased how seriously the boys took their responsibility for the rivalry. Really please with our boys' mental approach to the game."

"Still a lot of learning to do, a lot of guys still figuring the speed of the varsity level out," said first-year Bennett head coach Andrew Thornton, who is currently playing five new starters compared to last year.

Bennett's lone returning starter from last year's Sweet 16 team, senior Austin Stiers, is expected to be back on the hardwood next month after suffering an ankle injury over the opening weekend of the



Indian Nick Glatfelter rejects a shot attempt of Bennett's Avant Dickens.

season.

All five of Strasburg's starters reached double-digit points, led by junior guard Brody Hopwood with 23. Five other Indians came off the bench with 2 or 3 points apiece.

The victors shot 57% from the field, including 10-of-24 from three-point range, and were 5-of-12 from the free-throw line.

Bennett stats were unavailable at press time.

The Tigers concluded the

pre-Christmas part of its calendar 3-5 overall.

BENNETT @ STRASBURG

STRASBURG
Points: Brody Hopwood 23; Cade Hemphill 18; Nick Glatfelter 14; Cam Manahan 11; Colton Holloway 10; Ayden Dodge, Eli Carbahal, Gideon Milner 3; Levi Hart, Dalton Velasco 2.
Rebounds: Manahan 6; Hopwood 5; Glatfelter 4; Dodge, Hemphill 3; Froy Morales, Holloway, Carbahal, Milner, Velasco 2; Hart, Kolby Meulhausen 1.
Assists: Glatfelter 6; Dodge, Hemphill 3; Manahan, Holloway, Milner, Velasco 2; Hopwood, Hart, Meulhausen, Carbahal 1.
Steals: Holloway 6; Hemphill 5; Hopwood, Glatfelter, Manahan, Milner, Velasco 2; Hart, Meulhausen, Carbahal 1.
Blocks: Glatfelter 3; Manahan, Velasco 1.

STRASBURG @ STERLING

Despite the 37-point SEE BENNETT @ 'BURG PAGE 10

Bulldogs end pre-Christmas schedule undefeated, No. 1 in 2A



Bulldogs Gabe Price, left, and Conrad Cichos battle for a rebound against Dayspring Christian Dec. 13.

by Douglas Claussen
Publisher & Editor

The top-ranked team in 2A boys basketball kept rolling with sound defeats of Lyons on the road and Dayspring Christian at home Dec. 12-13.

Byers also clobbered visiting Kiowa Dec. 19 to end its pre-Christmas schedule at 6-0 — the first time Byers has entered the break undefeated in the 22 years that Jeremy Kerns has coached the Bulldogs.

Byers whipped all three foes by 25 points or more.

"I'm happy. I'm not satisfied," Kerns said. "I don't think we're anywhere near where we should be, but I'm happy that I'm seeing steps in the right direction and we're winning games at the same time."

The win over Kiowa was the 300th of Kerns' career.

"It was a cool night to get to spend

with my family and all of my players, coaches, former players and the community of Byers," he said after the game. "When I won my 100th and 200th, we were on the road, so happy that one of them finally came at home."

Further information on the Kiowa game was not available at press time. For coverage, see the Dec. 26 edition of the *Eastern Colorado News*.

@ LYONS

The Lions gave Byers the best of the three contests, but the Bulldogs improved as the game proceeded in the 69-44 victory.

Kerns described the contest as three games in one. "There's the first quarter where it just felt like we got thoroughly outplayed, second quarter where we figured things out,

SEE BB BYERS

PAGE 8

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Carl Steitz/For The Scout
Bulldog Devin Mohatt battles for a rebound against a pair of Dayspring Christian Eagles Dec. 13.

BB BYERS **FROM PAGE 7**

and then, the second half, we really just took off.”

Lyons led 19-14 and 27-24 after each of the first two quarters. Kerns said the opponents had a pair of quick guards that challenged his players on both ends of the floor.

“We were trying to run our ball-screen offense and they did a great job defending it,” Kerns said.

The Lions also befuddled Byers’ man-to-man defense as they built a 10- to 12-point advantage during the first period.

“Right before half, we switched into running more of our zone traps and then, offensively, we started trying to run where we were throwing it to the wing and running some curl cuts and (we) thought we found a little something there, Kerns said.”



Carl Steitz/For The Scout
Bulldog Quincy Eacret attacks the basket against Dayspring Christian.

Following the adjustments, Byers outscored the Lions by 9 points in the third quarter to lead 47-41, then blew the game wide open. The Bulldogs defense took hold, forcing an estimated 10 turnovers at half court to annihilate the opponents by a 22-3 margin, even though Byers stalled the final three minutes of the game.

“So, for the first five minutes of the quarter, we really just jumped on them,” Kerns said. “I bet we had six or seven steals for layups, to the point of where it was almost like their team was seeing ghosts with the way we were running our trap.”

Senior Quincy Eacret and junior James Maes were the chief thieves with six steals apiece as the Bulldogs collectively had 20.

“You know how it is. Basketball is a game of adjustments and, when you’re the team that falls behind and you can make that adjustment, it’s always nice when it pays off.”

Sophomore Conrad Cichos had a well-rounded game with 23 points, five assists, eight rebounds and five steals. Eacret and Maes also hit double digits with 20 and 14 points each and senior Devin Mohatt grabbed nine of the team’s 34 rebounds to lead Byers in that department.

The Bulldogs made 10-of-15 free throw attempts — a considerable improvement from the previous week.

the start. Concerns that Byers would play down to the level of the Eagles, 2-3 at press time, were allayed early as the Bulldogs led 31-7 and 46-19 after each of the first two quarters in the 65-36 victory.

[The boys] came out and smelled the blood right from the beginning and got the fast break game going for sure,” Kerns said.

Kerns inserted his starters to open the third period to push the lead to 35 points to force a running clock under the mercy rule.

“From that point on, it was the bottom of the bench,” he said.

Maes was top scorer with 17 points and top facilitator with five assists, Cichos and Eacret both hit the boards for seven rebounds each, and Cichos and his brother, Matthew Cichos, had two steals apiece.

DAYSPRING CHRISTIAN

Points: Maes 17; Eacret 15; Mohatt 10; M. Cichos 6; C. Cichos 4; Linnebur 4; Curry 3; Price 2; Gerhardt 2.
Rebounds: C. Cichos 7; Eacret 7; Mohatt 6; Ebert 5; Maes 4; M. Cichos 3; Linnebur 2; Eastwood 1; Price 1; Gerhardt 1.
Assists: Maes 5; C. Cichos 2; Maes 1; Eacret 2; Ebert 1, Price 1; Eastwood 1; M. Cichos 1; Linnebur 1.
Steals: C. Cichos 2; M. Cichos 2; Maes 1; Eacret 1; Price 1; Ebert 1; Mohatt 1; Linnebur 1.

ELBERT

The green-and-white was scheduled to play Elbert on its home floor Dec. 16, but the game was postponed due to an emergency. Byers is the top-ranked team in Class 2A while Elbert is No. 1 in 1A.

The game will be rescheduled at an undetermined date in January.

@ LYONS

Points: Maes 17; Eacret 15; Mohatt 10; M. Cichos 6; C. Cichos 4; Linnebur 4; Curry 3; Price 2; Gerhardt 2.
Rebounds: C. Cichos 7; Eacret 7; Mohatt 6; Ebert 5; Maes 4; M. Cichos 3; Linnebur 2; Eastwood 1; Price 1; Gerhardt 1.
Assists: Maes 5; C. Cichos 2; Maes 1; Eacret 2; Ebert 1, Price 1; Eastwood 1; M. Cichos 1; Linnebur 1.
Steals: C. Cichos 2; M. Cichos 2; Maes 1; Eacret 1; Price 1; Ebert 1; Mohatt 1; Linnebur 1.

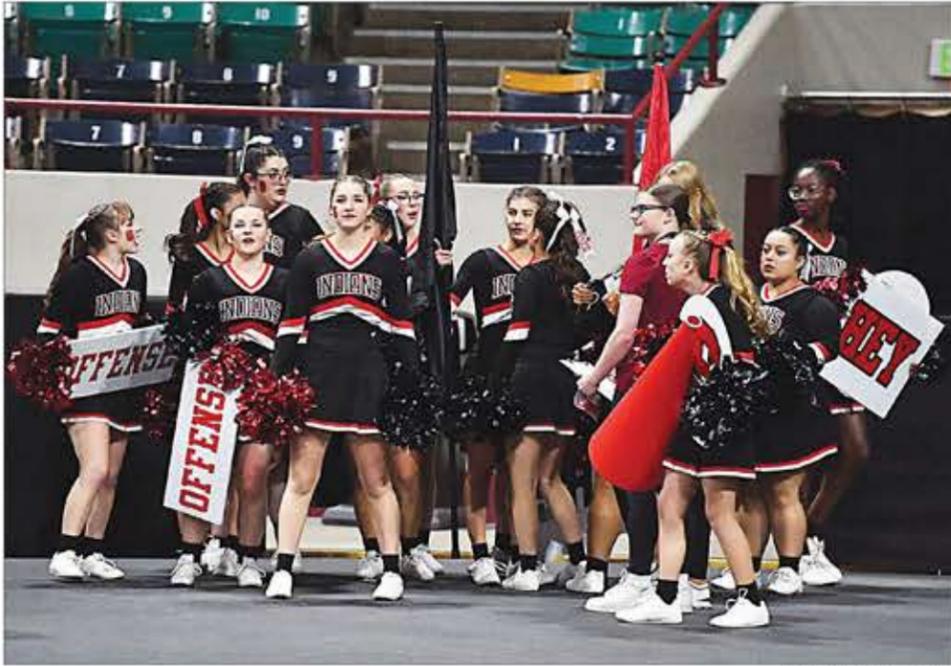
DAYSPRING CHRISTIAN

The game itself was lopsided from

COMING UP

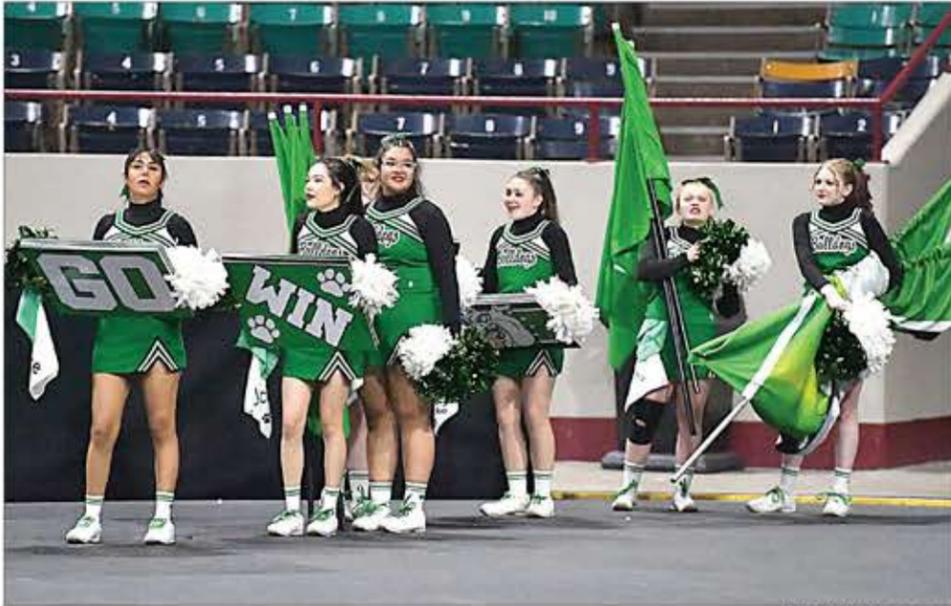
Jan. 6: @Wiggins.

Corridor well represented at state cheerleading meet



ISAAC MANAUGH/For The Scout

The Colorado High School State Spirit Championships were held Dec. 11-13 at the Denver Coliseum. Strasburg, Byers and Bennett were among the 33 squads to compete in the 2A/3A Game Day division semifinals on Thursday. The top nine preliminary performances qualified for the evening's finals competition. Strasburg just missed the cut, finishing 10th, while Byers was 15th and Bennett 32nd in the preliminaries. Above, Strasburg, coached by Stephanie Peabody and Alaina Franklin, enters the competition floor represented by (no particular order) Lily Aldana Hernandez, Jordan Garcia, Yamie Coronel Munoz, Aislynn Safe, Elena Reyes, Lea Sir-Vandewerken, Emmory Owens, Noemi Vendramin, Alyssa Schaffer, Maddie Roberts, Princess Enriquez Enriquez, Nele Rasmussen, Arlett Rojo, Aisha Mocniak and Brianna Sutton. For the third consecutive year, the 2A/3A Game Day competition was won by Bennett's Frontier League rival Arrupe Jesuit.



ISAAC MANAUGH/For The Scout

Above, Byers cheerleaders (in no particular order) Daisy Clark, Peyton Dillingham, Shelby Frick, Pamela Valle Luna, Lilah McQuate, Pachelle Rojas, Alexandra Pearson, Durisa Salomon, Hyacinth Beck and Jacqueline Marin ready themselves before their 2A/3A Game Day performance. The green-and-white are coached by Megan Jackson, Chandra Sanders and Lindsey Hoke.



ISAAC MANAUGH/For The Scout

Coaches Kristy Stiers and Rebecca Scheuster led the Bennett Tigers, above, consisting of (in no particular order) Alexandra Arnold, Ariel Trigano, Aubrey Ragon, Brailynn Aranda Bell, Katelynn Rios-Montez, Lizzett Salas-Tellez, Lucero Cardena-Amaro, Monica Madera, Mya Corbin, Nathalie Gonzales, Regina Cleto, Shaylee Roth, Shelby Stiers and Teighan Musick. For more State Spirit coverage, see the Dec. 26 edition of the *Eastern Colorado News*.

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BB BENNETT @ 'BURG

FROM PAGE 7

victory in a tough road environment, Bollers was less than impressed with his squad's first three quarters of play— Strasburg was down 16-13 after the first quarter before rallying for a 33-21 halftime lead and being up 52-34 entering the fourth.

"We were sloppy and didn't really kick it into gear until a 9-0 run in the final 1:30 of the third quarter," Bollers said. "I thought we played most of the first three quarters on Sterling's terms, not ours. Not pleased that they dictated the pace. We took too many long shots but once we got back to things that can allow us to score 20 points in three minutes, we really rolled late. Defensively, a much better job in the second half, especially securing rebounds and getting out and running."

While the Indians shot 57% from the two-point range, they were 9-of-29 (31%) from the three-point arc and 9-of-15 from the charity stripe.

Hopwood again paced the Indians with 21 points on 8-of-14 shooting from the field. Senior wing Cade Hemphill added 19 points, and classmate and forward Nick Glatfelter was one rebound short of a double-double with 14 points and nine while recording a team-high in assists with five.

Defensively, Sterling was forced into almost 30 turnovers. The visitors recorded 18 steals with Hopwood, Hemphill, senior Froy Morales and junior starting point guard Colton Holloway having three apiece.

The 4-0 Indians are top-ranked in most coaches/writers polls and are No. 2 in the Seeding Index from the Colorado High School Activities Association.

Strasburg's post-break schedule includes a grueling trio of road trips the first week back and then three games against upper-echelon Patriot League squads the following week.

"Pretty good gauntlet to test us coming back," Bollers said.

STRASBURG @ STERLING
Points: Hopwood 21; Hemphill 19; Glatfelter 14; Holloway, Jayden Miller 6; Morales 4; Miller 3; Manahan 2; Velasco 1.



Indians Colton Holloway, left, and Gideon Milner attack the bucket against Tiger Brayden Schmalz during the annual Strasburg-Bennett rivalry matchup Dec. 16.

Rebounds: Glatfelter 9; Dodge 6; Hopwood 4; Manahan, Holloway, Miller 3; Miles, Hemphill, Velasco 1.
Assists: Glatfelter 5; Hemphill 4; Hopwood, Manahan, Holloway 3.
Steals: Hopwood, Hemphill, Morales, Holloway 3; Glatfelter 2; Dodge, Miller, Manahan, Miller 1.
Blocks: Glatfelter 3; Manahan, Miller 1.

BENNETT TIGER TIP-OFF

During their annual three-day round-robin Dec. 11-13, the Tigers went 2-1.

A come-from-behind 54-38 victory over Rocky Ford Thursday and a dominating 61-19 win over Ellicott on Saturday were sandwiched around a 67-30 Friday loss to Fort Morgan.

ROCKY FORD

Opening night saw the visiting Meloneers with a 26-19 halftime lead and up 29-19 with 7:15 left in the third when Thornton's troops scored 29 of the next 31 points to take a 48-31 advantage into the final quarter.

"I think the boys took what we talked about at halftime to heart," Thornton said. "Much better job on defense and converting that into some easier offense in the third quarter."

Bennett shot 37% from the field, but were 15-of-34 (44%) from two-point range, and was 12-of-17 at the free-throw line.



PHOTOS BY SCOTT GERRARD/For The Scout

Junior Daniel Rodriguez reached double-digit points with 11, followed by four other Tigers with 7-9 points apiece.

Defensively, active hands resulted in 18 Bennett steals, led by senior guard Juan Santoyo with six and Rodriguez with five.

ROCKY FORD @ BENNETT

Points: Daniel Rodriguez 11; Carter Jarman 9; Juan Santoyo, Brayden Schmalz 8; Owen Hayes 7; Alfredo Duran 5; MacFroman 4; Elias Pulido 2.
Rebounds: Schmalz 8; Santoyo 7; Jarman 5; Hayes 3; Froman, Rodriguez 2.
Steals: Santoyo 6; Rodriguez 5; Jarman 3; Duran 2; Hayes, Schmalz 1.

ELLCOTT

"Our best overall game for a full four quarters," said Thornton of his squad's victory over the Thunderhawks. "Started out strong and carried it through to the end. Really good response from the previous night (loss to Fort Morgan)."

After jumping out 12-4 in the first eight minutes a defensive shutout in the second quarter sent the Tigers into the locker rooms up 28-4. Stingy defense continued after halftime as Bennett took the final two quarters 12-7 and 21-8, respectively.

The Tigers shot 69% from two-point range and 47% overall. The orange-

and-black also protected the ball well, committing only nine turnovers.

Junior guard Carter Jarman had his coming out party for the Tigers, scoring 21 points on 9-of-10 shooting, including 3-of-4 from behind the three-point line. Eight other Tigers tallied anywhere between 2 and 8 points each.

It was a group effort on the boards as 10 Tigers corralled 33 rebounds.

"Hopefully, we can get back to remembering how we played that night and what was successful," Thornton said.

ELLCOTT @ BENNETT

Points: Jarman 21; Pulido 8; Duran 7; Rodriguez, Loya 6; Garner 5; Schmalz 4; Santoyo, Froman 2.
Rebounds: Hayes 6; Jarman, Rodriguez, Duran, Pulido 4; Santoyo, Froman, Schmalz 3; Loya, Salvador Corado 1.
Assists: Jarman, Santoyo, Hayes 3; Rodriguez, Schmalz 1.
Steals: Schmalz 2; Hayes 1.
Blocks: Schmalz 2; Hayes, Froman 1.

FORT MORGAN

The 4A top 10-ranked Mustangs held Bennett to single-digits over all four quarters, having end of quarter leads of 14-5, 29-14 and 55-22.

Fort Morgan shot 50% from the field compared to 27% for the hosts. Bennett also lost the rebounding battle 34-24 with the Mustangs collecting 15 offensive rebounds.

While four Fort Morgan players reached double-digit points, only senior Alfredo Duran got out of single-digits for Bennett with 10.

Entering the holiday break, Bennett is currently at No. 35 in the CHSAA postseason index, three spots out of a playoff berth. Upon returning to the court next month, Bennett has three games Jan. 6-9, including a pair of Frontier League matchups to start the stretch.

FORT MORGAN @ BENNETT

Points: Duran 10; Santoyo, Pulido 4; Jarman, Evan Garner 3; Rodriguez, Ricardo Loya, Schmalz 2.
Rebounds: Jarman, Rodriguez 6; Santoyo 4; Schmalz 3; Hayes, Pulido 2; Duran 1.
Steals: Santoyo 3; Jarman 2.
Blocks: Schmalz 2; Jarman, Pulido 1.

COMING UP — STRASBURG

Jan. 6: @ Peyton.

COMING UP — BENNETT

Jan. 6: @ Pinnacle

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CARL STEITZ/For The Scout

From left photo, Lady Bulldog Sydney Smith drives around a Dayspring Christian defender Dec. 13 while teammate Leyla Saylor battles for the rebound with an Eagle player

Lady Bulldogs split against northern nonconference foes

by **Steven Vetter**
Managing Editor

The Byers Lady Bulldogs split a pair of nonconference contests against northern Colorado foes.

After riding a strong defensive effort to a 55-32 win at Lyons Dec. 12, the green-and-white had a disappointing second-half collapse in a 59-58 overtime defeat to visiting Dayspring Christian.

"We're 4-2 entering the break, which I think is a good place for us to be, especially with our heaviest part of the schedule coming up right after we get back," said Byers head coach Chris Cary, "but boy would have been nice to have gotten that Dayspring game. Hopefully that's not one we're looking back at come playoff seeding time."

@ LYONS

Friday night's road game saw Byers' stingy defense hold the host Lions to single-digits over the first three quarters and to 27% shooting for the night. The Bulldogs jumped out 15-4 after the first eight minutes and led 24-13 at halftime and 40-21 entering the final quarter.

"Really played well on defense, collapsed around them and very active around the ball," Cary said. "Probably would have liked a little more spread on the score earlier in the game, but if we continue to play defense like that, we should be in pretty good shape."

Offensively, the green-and-white shot 22-of-39 (56%) from two-point range, but was only 1-of-11 from behind the arc and 8-of-17 from the free-throw line. The Bulldogs also record-

ed assists on 15 of 23 made buckets.

"Got to finish better close in to the basket, and that includes making our free throws," Cary said. "But starting to do a better job of finding the open teammate for a better, more open shot."

Nine Bulldogs scratched the scoring column with sophomores Leyla Saylor and Sydney Smith both reaching double-digits — 14 and 12 points, respectively. In addition to a team-high five assists, junior guard Madi Olsen led the visitors with nine rebounds, six on the offensive end. As a team, 11 of the Bulldogs' 31 boards were offensive.

Byers' 13 steals included four from Smith and three from senior Abi Green.

"Really good effort across the board," Cary said. "Finally making some headway on figuring who our No. 7-9 kids are going to be. A lot more comfortable with the rotation at the moment."

BYERS @ LYONS

Points (55): Leyla Saylor 14; Sydney Smith 12; Madi Olsen 9; Abi Green 8; Danica Lancaster, Taiya Eymann 3; Kaci Harris, Tina Gichos, Karley Linnebur 2.

Rebounds (31): Olsen 9; Eymann 6; Smith 4; Green 3; Lancaster, Saylor, Linnebur 2; Harris, Gichos, Kerns 1.

Assists (15): Olsen 5; Lancaster 3; Smith, Eymann 2; Green, Saylor, Linnebur 1.

Steals (13): Smith 4; Green 3; Olsen, Eymann 2; Lancaster, Linnebur 1.

DAYSPRING CHRISTIAN

Just as the Lady Bulldogs appeared to be hitting their stride, the last quarter-and-a-half of Saturday's game against the visiting Eagles reared its ugly head.

The green-and-white had a 19-13

first quarter lead and entered halftime with a 29-25 advantage. Cary's troops appeared to take control out of the locker rooms, going up double-digits, but by the end of the third quarter, Byers was up only 43-38. Dayspring maintained the momentum over the final eight minutes and had a 56-55 lead when a foul sent the Bulldogs to the free-throw line with a chance to win in the final seconds. Only one of two free throws were made to send the game into overtime, which Dayspring won 3-2.

"Missed opportunities — that's probably the best title for that game. Had the lead up to 10 twice and didn't execute things at the end — turnovers, missed lay-ups, missed free throws," Cary said. "If we just tighten things up at the end, the whole thing probably looks different. Hopefully a game we learn from and grow from."

The hosts went 38% from the field, but were only 12-of-21 from the free-throw line.

Saylor, Olsen and junior Taiya Eymann all reached double-digits in points with 17, 14 and 12, respectively. Olsen recorded team highs with six assists and seven steals.

As a team, Byers committed 27 turnovers.

The Bulldogs concluded the pre-holiday portion of their schedule ranked No. 9 in the Colorado High School Activities Association's seeding index for playoff determination.

"Still feel pretty good about things, especially being in the top 10 right now," Cary said. "But we'll see where we stand when we get back from break."

For coverage of the Lady Bulldogs' Dec. 19 home victory over Kiowa, see the Dec. 26 *Eastern Colorado News*.

The Lady Bulldogs' first three games in January are against No. 6 3A Wiggins, 2A top-ranked Simla and 3A No. 1 Denver Christian.

DAYSPRING CHRISTIAN @ BYERS

Points (58): Saylor 17; Olsen 14; Eymann 12; Kerns 8; Lancaster, Harris 3; Smith 1.

Rebounds (32): Green 7; Saylor, Smith 6; Olsen, Kerns 3; Lancaster, Gichos, Eymann 2; Harris 1.

Assists (14): Olsen 6; Eymann 3; Lancaster 2; Harris, Gichos, Kerns 1.

Steals (12): Olsen 7; Green 2; Lancaster, Saylor, Kerns 1.

Blocks (2): Lancaster, Kerns 1.

COMING UP

Jan. 6: @Wiggins.

Jan. 9: @ Simla.

Jan. 13: Denver Christian.

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2026

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PHOTOS BY STEVEN VETTER/The I-70 Scout

From left photo, Lady Indian Chloe Fields tries to find a shooting opening against the defense of Bennett's Emma Jordan, left, and Mya Robledo, and Taryn LaForce scores two over Jordan.

GB BENNETT @ 'BURG

FROM PAGE 7

While eight Indians scratched the scoring column, senior center Taryn LaForce was the only to reach double-digits with 12 points.

Strasburg won the rebounding battle by a landslide, 53-19, but couldn't reap the benefits of 26 offensive boards. LaForce recorded a double-double with 13 rebounds, nine on the offensive end.

"Too many misses around the basket," reiterated Ames.

Bennett concluded its pre-Christmas part of the schedule 5-2 overall.

STRASBURG @ STERLING

In their second battle against Tigers of the week, the Lady Indians fell 57-26 at Sterling Dec. 18.

The red-and-black was within shouting distance, 13-7, after the first eight minutes, but an 18-0 second-quarter shutout at the hands of the hosts had Strasburg down 31-7 at half. It was a deficit the Indians could not overcome.

Poor shooting again plagued the Indians, who went 9-of-47 (19%) from

the field and 7-of-16 from the free-throw line.

The Indians finished the 2025 portion of this season 1-4.

COMING UP — STRASBURG

Jan. 6: St. Mary's Academy.

Jan. 8: @ Woodland Park.

COMING UP — BENNETT

Jan. 6: @ Pinnacle

Jan. 8: Alameda

BENNETT @ STRASBURG

Points (47): Emilee Verneberg 23; Josie Ladd 9; Aileen Duran 5; Mattie Robledo 4; Mya Robledo, Emma Jordan, Mady Bavouset 2.

Rebounds (19): Duran 5; Verneberg 4; Ladd 3; Ma. Robledo, My. Robledo, Bavouset 2; Jordan 1.

Assists (5): Ma. Robledo 3; Duran, Verneberg 1.

Steals (18): Ladd 7; Duran, Ma. Robledo 3; Jordan, Bavouset 2; Verneberg 1.

STRASBURG

Points (37): Taryn LaForce 12; Addi Kent, Kyle Blaise 5; Chloe Fields, Tatjana Rojahn 4; Wynne Winter 2; Emilee Cardenas, Mikayla Friedrich 1.

Rebounds (53): LaForce 13; Rojahn 12; Fields 9; Winter, Cardenas 2; Blaise, Friedrich 3; Rylee Tiffany, McKenna Garcia 2; Kent 1.

Assists (5): Kent, Winter 2; LaForce 1.

Steals (11): Winter 4; Kent, LaForce 2; Cardenas, Blaise, Paloma Rodriguez 1.

Blocks (1): LaForce 1.

STRASBURG @ STERLING

Points (26): LaForce 8; Winter, Cardenas 6; Rylee Tiffany, Fields 2; Kent, Garcia 1.

Rebounds (32): LaForce 9; Winter, Tiffany, Rojahn 4; Fields, Friedrich 3; Kent, Cardenas 2; Garcia 1.

Assists (3): Kent, Garcia, Rojahn 1.

Steals (6): Kent, Winter 2; Rojahn, LaForce 1.

Blocks (2): Kent, Winter 1.

Lady Indians go 1-1 at Simla Invitational

by **Douglas Claussen**
 Publisher & Editor

SIMLA — The Lady Indians basketball team won its first game of the season with an easy 48-25 triumph at the Simla Invitational Basketball Tournament.

Against the Lady Chargers Dec. 12, Strasburg scored early and often, posting leads of 17-7 and 53-25 after each of the first two quarters and won the game 48-25.

"It was good to see our improvement," said Strasburg head coach Merci Ames. "We came out and were aggressive and took care of the ball. We were able to take advantage of our speed and height."

Strasburg also faced the tournament hosts, the No. 2 Simla Lady Cubs, losing 56-8 in the championship game Dec. 13. Simla is the top-ranked team in 2A, according to CHSAA.

The Indians never got rolling, trailing 28-0, 43-2 and 54-4 after each of the first three quarters.

"We were unable to effectively break their press and Simla is very good," Ames said. "Simla was able to take advantage of our inexperience and really jump up in score. We were a little more effective in second half and will use this to build off of for next week."



JAMIE LYNN BOWKER/MidHigh Prep Report

Lady Indian Rylee Tiffany defends a Simla player Dec. 13.

CROWLEY COUNTY vs. STRASBURG @ SIMLA

Points (48): LaForce 16; Kent 12; Winter 8; Fields 4; Tiffany 2; Garcia 2; Blaise 2; Rodriguez 2.

Rebounds (31): LaForce 10; Rojahn 6; Tiffany 5; Fields 4; Winter 3; Rodriguez 3.

Assists (11): Kent 3; Winter 6; Garcia 1; LaForce 1.

Steals (17): Kent 7; Winter 3; Tiffany 2; Garcia 1; Fields 1; Rojahn 2; Rodriguez 3.

Blocks (1): LaForce 1; Kent 1.

STRASBURG @ SIMLA

Points (8): LaForce 4; Rojahn 2; Rodriguez 2.

Rebounds (21): LaForce 7; Rojahn 4; Fields 4; Kent 1; Winter 1; Tiffany 1; Garcia 1; Cardenas 1; Friedrich 1.

Assists (2): Kent 1; Rojahn 1.

Steals (8): Winter 2; LaForce 2; Cardenas 1; Fields 1; Rojahn 1; Rodriguez 1.

Blocks (3): LaForce 1; Kent 1; Cardenas 1.

COMING UP

Jan. 6: St. Mary's Academy.



PHOTOS BY ALYSSA STEMBO/For The Scout

Bennett School District hosted its secondary band concert Dec. 10 with both middle and high school ensembles performing. The evening also included the Bennett Marching Tigers dotting the aisles of the high school auditorium during their Christmas promenade. Clockwise from top left, Colton Anders plays his clarinet; the trio of Kolton Barden, Ryan Bavouset and Bentlee Raymond play their brass; Sophia Arnold plays flute; JJ Daza Saldana, Alejandro Flores, and Justin Canales make up a trio; and the Marching Tigers entertain with not only their music but brightly adorned instruments.

**ARAPAHOE COUNTY
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
CASE NO. PP23-002, RANCH AT WATKIN FARMS
FILING NO. 1 / PRELIMINARY PLAT**

PROPOSAL: The applicant, Strategic Land Solutions, Inc., is seeking approval to subdivide a 36.74-acre parcel into 11 lots and one tract. Lots 1 through 11 will be developed for single-family residential, and Tract A will be used for a detention pond. The residential lot sizes range from 2.41 to 4.5 acres, which adheres to the minimum 2.41-acre lot size in the RR-B zone district. Access to the subject property is from the E. Colfax Service Road.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on January 13, 2026, at 9:30 A.M., or as soon thereafter as the calendar of the Arapahoe County Board of County Commissioners permits, a public hearing will be held; at which, all interested persons will be given an opportunity to be heard concerning the above-described Case No. PP23-002, Ranch at Watkins Farm Filing No. 1 / Preliminary Plat. The public hearing will be held at 5334 S Prince St., East Hearing Room, Littleton, CO 80120, with the option to participate remotely. The agenda will typically be posted by the Friday afternoon preceding the hearing and can be viewed on our website at <https://arapahoe.legistar.com/Calendar>. You can also listen to, or speak at, the meeting by calling 1-855-436-3656. To join the speaking queue, press *3 on the telephone keypad.

More information about this proposal is available at the offices of the Arapahoe County Public Works and Development Department, Planning Division, 6924 S Lima St., Centennial CO 80112, by calling 720-874-6650, or by emailing planning@arapahoegov.com during regular business hours (8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday).

Joan Lopez, Clerk to the Board

Published in *The I-70 Scout* on Wednesday, Dec. 24, 2025, and *Eastern Colorado News* on Friday, Dec. 26, 2025.

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Sounds of the Season in abundance at Strasburg Secondary concert



PHOTOS BY CARL STEITZ/For The Scout

Strasburg High School and Hemphill Middle School hosted their joint Robots, Reindeer and Guitar Riffs winter concert at Mountain View Fellowship Dec. 9. The full night of activity included middle school choir and band, high school band and guitar students from both the middle and high schools. The choir portion was under the direction of Tami Hart, while first-year band instructor John Ricks took charge of the band and guitar performances. Above from left photo, the high school wind symphony and concert band get situated and the middle school band takes direction from Ricks.

With our most sincere *Gratitude & Joy* we wish you

Merry Christmas & Happy Holidays!

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 Dec. 25 - Closed All Day Christmas
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 Jan. 1 - Closed New Year's Day

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PHOTOS BY CARL STEITZ/For The Scout

Clockwise from above photo, new Strasburg secondary school band director John Ricks presents a group of middle school guitar students following one of their songs, and sixth-graders Iris Heiter and Sadie Hart introduce choir selections.

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!!
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Ronald Hamilton



Ronald Oliver Hamilton was born in a sod home in Ellsworth, Neb., May 23, 1930. He served his country in the Korean War as a crew chief for a B29 bomber. He came home and married Mary Loosvelt. They were together for 63½ years before God called her home in 2017. Ron and Mary moved to Strasburg in 1964 and lived there until 2013. He worked for Braniff Airlines for 28 years and made many lifelong friends. After Braniff, he ran the Corner Market Grocery Store and Feed Store in Strasburg and retired to run the food bank. He is survived by son Greg, daughter Debra (Shaun) Oppenheimer, sister Ila Samson, sister-in-law Sandra Loosvelt and many beloved nieces and nephews. In 2021 Ron met a lovely lady, Kay. They formed a bond and took care of each other. The good Lord called him home when his heart could no longer keep up with his determination Dec. 3, 2025. Services will be at 1 p.m., Friday, March 20, 2026, at the Joy Lutheran Church, 7051 Parker Hills Ct., Parker, Colo. Interment will be later that day at Fort Logan Cemetery.

DT School hosts 'The Littlest Christmas Tree'



PHOTOS BY STEVEN VETTER/The I-70 Scout

Deer Trail first- and second-graders combined efforts on their performance of "The Littlest Christmas Tree" Dec. 15. Above, The Littlest Christmas Tree, played by Kara Hamner, gets decorated by a bevy of forest critters. Below, the Wood Cutter, played by Maverick Goddard reads his part with assistance provided by second-grade teacher Nicole Rogan. The approximately 50 aspiring actors and singers were under the direction of music instructor Dawn Heck.

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Merry Christmas!

THE I-70 SCOUT & EASTERN COLORADO NEWS



PHOTOS BY ISAAC MANAUGH/The I-70 Scout

The Town of Bennett distributed toys and other holiday cheer at town hall Dec. 13. Guests filled out a slip with desired gifts for the little ones this Christmas. Orders were filled by a combination of town official and staff and volunteers. From left to right, Bennett Finance Director Danette Ruvalcaba and 1-year-old daughter, Osette, pack toys into a bag from the wish list; Trustee Royce Pindell has on his best festive shirt as he helps pick out gifts; and Adams County Commissioner Emma Pinter carries a bag full of toys to the Bennett Town Hall curb.

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ARAPAHOE COUNTY

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

CASE NO. UASI25-002, DENVER PIPELINE EXPANSION PROJECT [MAGELLAN] / USE BY SPECIAL REVIEW (USR)

PROPOSAL: The applicant, Perennial Environmental Services, on behalf of the owner, Magellan Pipeline Company, L.P. (Magellan), seeks approval for a Use by Special Review to install 33 miles of new buried pipeline (10 and 16 inches) with above-ground remote monitoring valves and trap facilities. The pipeline enters Arapahoe County near South Barlet Road and East County Line Road in the southeastern part of the county. It then continues northwest to East Colfax and North Hayesmouth Road, where it enters Adams County. The pipeline's destination is Denver International Airport (DIA). The proposed pipeline crosses 121 parcels in Arapahoe County and is estimated to affect about 360 acres.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on January 13, 2026, at 9:30 A.M., or as soon thereafter as the calendar of the Arapahoe County Board of County Commissioners permits, a public hearing will be held, at which all interested persons will be given an opportunity to be heard concerning the above-described Case No.UASI25-002, Denver Pipeline Expansion Project [Magellan] / Use by Special Review (USR). The public hearing will be held at 5334 S Prince St., East Hearing Room, Littleton, CO 80120, with the option to participate remotely. The agenda will typically be posted by Friday afternoon preceding the hearing and can be viewed on our website at <https://arapahoe.legistar.com/Calendar>. You can also listen to, or speak at, the meeting by calling 1-855-436-3656. To join the speaking queue, press *3 on the telephone keypad.

More information about this proposal is available at the offices of the Arapahoe County Public Works and Development Department, Planning Division, 6924 S Lima St., Centennial CO 80112 by calling 720-874-6650 or by emailing planning@arapahoegov.com during regular business hours (8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday).

Joan Lopez, Clerk to the Board

Published in *The I-70 Scout* on Wednesday, Dec. 24, 2025, and *Eastern Colorado News* on Friday, Dec. 26, 2025.

Graduated income tax proposal submitted for Colo's '26 ballot

by Sara Wilson
Colorado Newsline

A coalition of liberal groups in Colorado want to ask voters in 2026 whether higher earners in the state should pay more in income taxes to raise billions more in revenue.

The group, dubbed Protect Colorado's Future, submitted ballot measure language Dec. 3 for a constitutional amendment that would raise the income tax rate for Coloradans making at least \$500,000.

"A graduated income tax is just common sense: 98% of us get a tax cut, and the folks doing really well chip in a fair share to keep our schools strong, our health care system solid, and our communities thriving. That's how we build a Colorado where everyone gets ahead, not just the lucky few," Kathy White, executive director of the Colorado Fiscal Institute, said in a statement.

Colorado's income tax is currently at 4.4%. The measure would bump that rate to 4.6% for people making at least \$600,000 and increase it as people earn more, to a 9.2% rate for people making at least \$10 million per year. People earning less than \$250,000 per year would see a slight income tax reduction.

The proposal is what's known as a graduated income tax rate, in which people pay a higher percentage as their income increases. Twenty-seven states and Washington D.C. use a similar system. Colorado is one of 14

states with a flat income tax.

Colorado is also subject to the Taxpayer's Bill of Rights, which caps annual state spending according to inflation and population growth. Colorado can retain and spend tax revenue up to that limit only, even if it collects more and even if costs for government services balloon.

"For more than three decades, an upside-down tax code has hurt Colorado's schools, health care, child care and the environment," said Chris deGruy Kennedy, head of the left-leaning Bell Policy Center. "The cruel cuts to health care and the absurd corporate tax giveaways in the federal budget bill have pushed Colorado over the edge, and only the voters of Colorado have the power to make the wealthy pay their fair share and restore funding to critical state priorities."

The recent federal spending cut and tax break bill slashed Colorado's expected tax revenue for the current fiscal year by about \$1.2 billion and will increase the state's financial obligation for Medicaid and nutrition assistance programs in future years.

To place the constitutional amendment on the ballot, the coalition would need to get at least 125,000 petition signatures, including from at least 2% of the voters in each of the state's 35 state Senate districts.

Conservative activists are pursuing other ballot measures that would cut the income tax rate across the board. Voters approved rate cuts in 2020 and 2022.



DAVID MAGDANZ/For The Scout

A Eurasian collared dove sits atop street signs at an intersection on the south end of Strasburg one chilly fall day. Eurasian collared doves are considered invasive species in Colorado and can be hunted year-round without bag limits — a year-round hunting opportunity.

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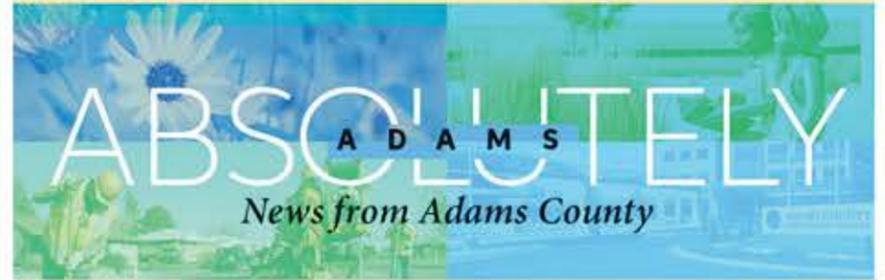
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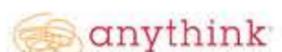


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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

THE NOT-SO DUSTY PAGES

20 YEARS AGO DEC. 27, 2005

Initial plans for an expansive air and land transportation hub and industrial development in Adams County — sandwiched between Front Range

Airport (FRA) to the north and I-70 to the south have been filed and construction could start before the end of 2006.

On Nov. 30, the Colorado Springs-based Schuck Corporation submitted a framework development plan (FDP) to Aurora officials mapping out regional roads and earmarking 275 million square feet of land for office, industrial and commercial development as part of its TransPort project.

Bill Schuck, president and CEO of Schuck Corp., indicated the TransPort project could result in \$10 billion in development and create upwards of 38,000 jobs.

"TransPort would integrate rail, air and road transportation and be an attraction to a variety of businesses interested in shipping and receiving cargo to and from the area," Schuck said. "This is probably going to be as significant a job creator as Denver has seen in quite some time. What we are envisioning is an inland port that is best described as being a regional distribution center."

According to the development plan, approximately 1,000 acres will be set aside for biotech businesses with another 1,500 acres to host general industrial and corporate aviation companies. A housing development will not be part of the TransPort project, according to Schuck: Schuck is being joined on the project by Front Range Airport and the Union Pacific Railroad. Union Pacific has said it hopes to relocate most of its rail operations from downtown Denver to the TransPort region.

A Minneapolis investment company that manages \$1.9 billion in assets, is reported to be an investor in the development.

15 YEARS AGO DEC. 28, 2010

BENNETT — The Bennett Recreation District is under new direction and setting its sights on making its new facility a Corridor-wide

community hub.

Personnel changes were made Dec. 6 when the Bennett Park & Recreation District board accepted the resignation-of director Jeff Ratajczak and hired Chris Raines as interim director — a six-month position.

Raines outlined her goals at the Dec. 20 board meeting. "It's important to me that the rec center is here for the whole 1-70 Corridor community," she said, noting that she has introduced herself to many businesses in Bennett and Strasburg, and will do the same in Watkins and Byers, in an effort to build relationships.

Raines also wants to work closely with other local recreation districts.

"I stopped in at the Strasburg rec center," she said. "I let them know that I'm interested in complimenting each other, not so much competing against each other. They are excited to do so. I think it could be a great relationship."

10 YEARS AGO DEC. 29, 2015

BRIGHTON — Holiday hopes of finding new homes for approximately six dozen pooches removed from their previous home north of Strasburg earlier this month reportedly came to fruition the day before Christmas Eve.

The placement of the physically and mentally stable enough setter-type dogs was announced Dec. 23, six days after they were first confiscated from Robert Attleson's non-profit All Setter Rescue at 9990 Defoe Street about 10 miles north/northeast of Strasburg.

"We are so grateful for the rapid response and are happy to report that most of our partner shelters have also adopted out almost every one of the dogs removed from the home near Strasburg," said Adams County Animal Shelter and Adoption Center Director Stephanie Wilde.

Some of the dogs with complex medical issues were placed with other rescue groups.

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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 22

TODAY IN HISTORY

Today is Wednesday, Dec. 24, the 358th day of 2025. There are seven days left in the year. This is Christmas Eve.

TODAY'S HIGHLIGHT

On Dec. 24, 1914, during World War I, impromptu Christmas truces began to take hold along parts of the Western Front, principally between British and Ger-

man soldiers but also involving French troops.

ALSO ON THIS DATE:

In 1814, the United States and Britain signed the Treaty of Ghent, which would end the War of 1812 following ratification by both the British Parliament and the U.S. Senate.

In 1851, fire devastated the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., destroying about 35,000 volumes.

In 1865, several veterans of the Confederate Army formed a private social club in Pulaski, Tennessee, that was the original version of the Ku Klux Klan.

In 1913, 73 people, most of

them children, died in a crush of panic after a false cry of "Fire!" during a Christmas party for striking miners and their families at the Italian Hall in Calumet, Mich.

In 1943, President Franklin D. Roosevelt appointed Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower supreme commander of Allied forces in Eu-

rope.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAYS

Immunologist Dr. Anthony Fauci is 85. Filmmaker Lee Daniels is 66. Basketball Hall of Fame coach Jay Wright is 64. Singer Ricky Martin is 54. TV host Ryan Seacrest is 51. NFL wide receiver Davante Adams is 33

— Associated Press

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- ACROSS**
- Hot Springs and such
 - ___ Bell and ___ Barker
 - Wharton degree, acr.
 - Artist's inspiration
 - "Move head to show attention"
 - Angry growl
 - Shamu, e.g.
 - Diva's number
 - Put on fancy dress (2 words)
 - "Making facial expression showing pain"
 - Mine passage
 - Single-handedly
 - Assistance
 - Made according to specifications
 - Economizes
 - Biochemistry acr.
 - Aerie baby
 - Genesis skipper
 - Leaves out
 - "Some look up and to the right when telling one"
 - Watcher
 - "The Forsyte ___" by John Galsworthy
 - Forty winks
 - Fraternity letter T
 - "Said 'easy peasy' with fingers"
 - Like a weight lifter, usually
 - Weasel-related onomatopoeia
 - Undo laces
 - Helicopter sound
 - "Showing low self-esteem or boredom"
 - 100 centimes
 - Purl partner
 - From square one
 - Frustration, in a comic book
 - "At ___, soldier!"
 - Don't go
 - Dashboard acr.
 - Like Willie Winkie
 - Frustrated driver's recourse
- DOWN**
- Urban haze
 - Make like a cat
 - Ascus, pl.
 - Same as sea moss (2 words)
 - Rice wine
 - Dress with a flare
 - Rudolph, when older
 - Famous Christmas guests
 - Like some champagnes
 - High mountain
 - Toyota truck model
 - Part of flight
 - "Showing agreement"
 - Healing plants
 - Be in a cast
 - "Show anger with arms"
 - Unnerve
 - Eurasian antelope
 - "___ but not heard"
 - Much, in Italy
 - Song of praise
 - "I don't know" move
 - "One's smiling because one's ___"
 - Intoxicated
 - "Showing impatience with fingers"
 - Like retina and brain connecting nerve
 - Large edible mushroom
 - Keen
 - Nice place for a rocking chair
 - Reuse ideas
 - Forearm bones
 - Hustle and bustle sound
 - Sandwich alternative
 - Stay out of its way!
 - Place at angle
 - Gung-ho about something
 - Close by
 - Gwyneth, for short
 - Opposite of #54 Down

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ANSWERS ON PAGE 25

HOROSCOPE

Holiday Anticipation

Two square aspects ramp up feelings of anticipation on the eve of Christmas, a reminder that every event lives in three places — the past, the present and the future. But we experience these events in reverse. Christmas still lives in the future, but the joy of imagining it is available right now. Let the anticipation brighten the whole experience.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). When to speak and when the unspoken says more. When to open and when to close the door. When rhyming's good and when it's a bad call. Your timing is stellar. You'll sense these "whens" one and all.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Life offers a buffet of possibilities, so with whom shall you "dine?" Seek the company of people who need your help, because helping will feel good. Other contenders: the cheerful people who have an attractive attitude and/or interesting takes.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). The force we call "destruction" has a negative reputation because people forget that it's half of the force we call "creation." Today, you'll dismantle the fixture that's been stressing you out, clearing space for something functional, lovely and far more reflective of the real you.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Today's luck comes from defining "luck" well or, to put a finer point on it, specifically. Because there is no universality to good fortune. What gives you a dollop of joy? Remember it, wish for it, look for it, and you'll experience it.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Like a magician using clever sleight-of-hand, you'll dabble in a bit of harmless misdirection today, all to charm, entertain and delight your audience. You're after their bright, surprised smiles, and you'll get them.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Mood fluctuation is totally normal given all you're doing now. When the pace of life takes a lot of energy, you may not have a ton left for self-care. Do try and offer yourself tenderness and as much leeway as possible.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). People around you are more tuned into you than you think.

You'll get the evidence of that today. It may influence your future behavior, knowing someone is listening, watching and caring about what you do next. Maybe this feels like love.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). What you need is out there, waving its little arms, saying, "Hey! Over here!" The funny part? It might look nothing like what you ordered. Stay open. The right thing's en route, even if it's wearing a disguise.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). There's not a creature alive who thrives in bondage. You don't like feeling controlled, even if the one controlling you is you. If your rules are too strict, you'll rebel. What if you let go of the discipline today? What if you did what you naturally want to do?

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Everyone seems to have an agenda today — something they're subtly aiming for, like a mood, a moment or a feeling. Most do it unconsciously. Not you. You know exactly what you want. Guide the action toward it, and enjoy the results.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Love wears many disguises. It can even look like debate, challenge or people on opposite sides of the room. Beneath each is the same impulse: to meet someone where they are, whether through engagement, contrast or by giving them space while you admire from a distance.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). There's a clown in every class, and today you're that holiday jester, lighting the room with really charming comic relief. Your playful timing hits just right, and you also know when to bow out and let the room glow on its own.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (Dec. 24). Welcome to your Year of Wild Becoming. You'll shed old versions of yourself with surprising ease and step into something truer, braver and more you. Your courage inspires others, and doors open because of it. Financial abundance reflects this inner transformation. More highlights: a creative project that takes off, friendships forged in spontaneous adventures, and love that sees you completely. Pisces and Virgo adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 6, 14, 22, 31 and 47.

— Horoscopes by Holiday

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Above Normal Temperatures Continue

Posted: 12/21, 5:26 PM

Key Points/Overview

- Above normal temperatures will continue through Christmas Day
- A few record highs possible on Monday
- Dry conditions expected through Wednesday with snow possible in the Mountains by Christmas Day
- Elevated to critical fire weather conditions for the lower foothills and South Park Monday

	12/22 Mon		12/23 Tue		12/24 Wed		12/25 Thu		Maximum
	6am	12pm	6am	12pm	6am	12pm	6am	12pm	
Boulder	65	71	66	70	62	66	59	61	71
Breckenridge	48	51	39	46	31	39	27	34	51
Castle Rock	67	70	64	67	61	65	59	62	70
Denver	66	72	62	66	60	64	56	61	72
Estes Park	55	58	51	54	48	51	45	52	58
Evergreen	63	66	54	56	49	51	45	52	66
Fort Collins	59	68	55	62	54	61	50	58	68
Ft. Morgan	57	70	54	59	50	56	44	51	70
Greeley	56	64	53	58	49	54	43	51	64
Julesburg	62	71	52	59	51	58	48	54	71
Kremming	47	52	41	47	40	47	38	44	52
Limon	67	72	61	66	64	67	62	65	72
Longmont	64	70	57	62	55	62	51	58	70
Sterling	56	71	52	58	51	57	46	53	71
Walden	49	52	40	43	35	38	27	31	52

PHOTO COURTESY OF NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

In its Dec. 21 forecast for Christmas week, the National Weather Service indicated it's unlikely that the Front Range or areas of eastern Colorado will receive snow for the holiday.

CHRISTMAS WEATHER FROM PAGE 1

snow on Christmas Eve and, maybe 20% on Christmas Day, but water temperatures suggest any moisture will be minimal or mixed. Very low chance of an official 'White Christmas' (one inch or more of snow on the ground)."

At the end of last week, a number of area jurisdictions bumped up burn restrictions to Level 2 — no outdoor fires, including, but not limited to, campfires, fires in constructed, permanent fire pits or fire grates within developed camp and picnic grounds and recreation sites; charcoal-fueled fires, warming fires, fires in outdoor wood-burning stoves (chimney sparks or embers); and the prescribed burning of fence lines, fence rows, fields, farmlands, range lands, wild lands, trash, and debris.

"It's the most restrictive," said the Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office in its Dec. 15 announcement. "While the winds have subsided, we have very low humidity, and very dry surface fuels. Fire danger remains high."

The town of Bennett and fire districts all along the I-70 Corridor have issued similar burn bans. Even in the case of less restrictions, fire departments ask all residents to contact their local jurisdiction for a burn permit.

"Let all the commotion and damage that occurred recently in Yuma County be a lesson to the entire eastern part of the state," a Corridor fire district official said. "We kind of lucked out in missing out on the extremely strong winds that hit much of eastern Colorado, but the danger is still very real. Pretty much a tinderbox that can ignite with the slightest provocation."

Last Wednesday's Yuma County fires ended up burning about 14,050 acres, much smaller than the originally estimated damage of 40,000 acres. The three primary burn sites were considered fully extinguished by midday Thursday. The largest of the burn areas was approximately 12,000 acres about 20 miles south of Eckley, a small town between Yuma and Wray. Another 2,000 acres was burned in what was called the County Road L Fire.

The unseasonably warm, dry winter included the area's second-latest first snowfall on record when 2-6 inches fell Dec. 3-4. The latest first snowfall on record occurred Dec. 10, 2021. The previous second-latest snowfall was recorded Nov. 21, 1934.

"Fall 2025 was one of Colorado's warmest, favoring rain over snow and leading to a 'snow drought' in some areas," the NWS said.

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East Central BOCES is seeking qualified applicants for the position of Executive Director, beginning July 1, 2026, on a 231-day contract.
Application Deadline: January 1, 2026

Preferred Qualifications:

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- Valid Colorado Administrator License
- Knowledge and/or experience with BOCES operations
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- Familiarity with Federal Programs (Titles I-IV, Perkins)
- Demonstrated ability to build and sustain cooperative relationships

Key Skills:

- BOCES operations and rural education policy knowledge
- Strong written and verbal communication
- Team-building and staff development
- Budget management (\$17 million)
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- Legislative advocacy for rural districts
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Residency Requirement: Must live in or be willing to relocate within the E.C. BOCES service area.

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Do not contact BOCES district administrators or board members directly.

Required Application Materials:

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- Unofficial College Transcript
- Copy of Current Administrator License

Jason Westfall, Executive Director, ECBOCES
P.O. Box 910, 820 Second Street, Limon, CO 80828
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Applications can be sent to:

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444 E. Front Street
Byers CO, 80103
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(303) 822-9592 fax
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The I-70 Scout is seeking part-time help processing newspapers Tuesday mornings. Must be 18 or older. Strong hands, ability to stand several hours and computer literacy required. Please apply in person Monday-Thursday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., 1522 Main St., Strasburg. Ask for Lu-Anne. 1/7c

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Comfortably Dumb by Bruce Quast



"My dad works at the bowling alley."

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R	N	A		E	A	G	L	E	T		N	O	A	H
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7 children adopted in Adams Co.

BRIGHTON — Seven children in Adams County were welcomed into five families for a new start on National Adoption Day Nov. 21.

The Human Services Department and the 17th Judicial District hosted the adoptive families at the Justice Center for a special celebration at the Justice Center.

“Today, we celebrated the extraordinary love, resilience and hope that can bring children and families together,” said Commissioner Lynn Baca, chair of the Board of Commissioners. “Every child deserves a safe and nurturing home, and every forever family reminds us of the power of community.”

National Adoption Day exists to draw special attention to the more than 100,000 U.S. children in foster care waiting for permanent and loving families. From its inception in 2000, this annual, one-day event has cele-

brated more than 90,000 adoptions. Adams County joined more than 400 communities nationwide in celebrating adoptions from foster care. The county projects a total of 55 adoptions will be finalized by the end of 2025 — 29 are kin adoptions and 26 are foster adoptions.

The decline in the total adoption number from previous years has occurred for a good reason. Colorado recently shifted to a “kin-first” foster care system, which prioritizes placing children with relatives or family friends because it leads to better outcomes including reduced trauma, improved stability, and stronger emotional and cultural connections. Due to the shift, the number of kinship foster care certifications has increased by nearly 40%.

Families can learn more about fostering, kinship fostering, and adoption by visiting adamscountyco.gov.



Judge Emily Lieberman presides over adoption proceedings in Adams County Family Court Nov. 21. SUBMITTED PHOTO

CORRIDOR CALENDAR

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 Recreation Center.

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More hurricane-force winds anticipated throughout Colorado

by Mead Gruver
Associated Press

FORT COLLINS, Colo. (AP) — Crews were mopping up last week but still bracing for more after hurricane-force wind downed power lines and fanned wildfires along the Colorado Front Range and onto the Great Plains.

Wind that in places topped 100 mph late Dec. 17 arrived after Xcel Energy protectively cut off power through many of its Eastern Colorado service areas. The goal was to prevent downed lines from starting fires — and power lines were indeed blown down in several areas.

By the afternoon of Dec. 18, power was about 60% restored to the almost 700 miles of power lines the utility de-energized. Some 37,000 Xcel customers on the Front Range and into the Rocky Mountains were still without power.

Another round of outages was expected Dec. 19, but with a forecast for even stronger winds over a longer period.

While crews worked to restore power to customers already affected, even longer outages were likely Friday, the head of Xcel Energy-Colorado cautioned in a news conference.

“The power will not come back on the moment the wind event ends because we have to inspect the lines,” said the utility’s president, Robert Kenney.

In central Denver, the power was out overnight, furniture was blown off apartment balconies, at least one apartment window was blown out and the ground was littered with blown-down branches Thursday.

Winds on Wednesday afternoon and into Thursday fanned wildfires of still-undetermined cause in eastern Colorado, burning at least 14,000 acres (5,700 hectares) in Yuma County, local emergency management officials said in a Facebook post.

An evening grass fire on the south side of Cheyenne, Wyo., prompted a neighborhood’s evacuation for several hours Dec. 17. No structures burned, however.

Powerful gusts Dec. 18 prompted closures of Interstates 25 and 80 in southeastern Wyoming to lightweight, high-profile vehicles though not other traffic. Unladen tractor-trailers whose drivers ignore such warnings are often seen blown over on the windy state’s highways, prompting jokes that the trucks are just taking a rest.

“If your commercial hauler is in need of a good night’s sleep we would highly recommend the windblown plains of I-80, I-25, or I-90,” the Wyoming Highway Patrol joked on Facebook, adding: “For the low, low cost of a Driving on Closed Roads Citation (\$1,000+).”

High winds and red flag fire warnings were in effect, meanwhile, across much of Kansas Dec. 18. Blowing dust reduced visibility so much that a



Power poles along U.S. Highway 93 near Golden, Colo., snapped in half during a strong wind storm on Wednesday, Dec. 17, 2025.

stretch of I-70 near the state’s western line with Colorado closed, the Kansas Department of Transportation said in a news release.

The release urged motorists to consider delaying non-essential travel.

In the Pacific Northwest, heavy rain continued falling along with snow in the mountains. Rivers in Washington had fallen since recent flooding inundated communities, damaged roads and prompted more than 600 res-

cues. Elsewhere, a blizzard was bringing as much as 8 inches of snow to northern North Dakota and Minnesota before it heads into Wisconsin and other areas eastward.

Heather Hollingsworth in Kansas City; Christopher Weber in Los Angeles; Gene Johnson in Seattle; Jack Dura in Bismarck, N.D.; and David Zalubowski in Denver contributed.

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What's UP @ Byers School District?

For more info, <https://www.byers32j.k12.co.us>



SENIORS' CHECK LIST

- Complete FAFSA/CASFA & apply for local scholarships. Deadlines are approaching!
 - Check college application portals to make sure required documents have been received.
 - Grad requirements: Monitor credits, required classes, and senior responsibilities.
 - Update **résumés,** reach out to recruiters and/or explore training programs.
 - Watch e-mail for updates from colleges, scholarship committees, and your school.
- **For students headed to the work force, your resume is paramount! Having activities and leadership roles will make the difference between you and the other applicants.

JUNIORS: WHAT TO BE DOING THIS TIME OF YEAR!

PLAN: Now is a good time to begin your college search. It is not too early to schedule campus visits. Many colleges have specific dates for juniors in the spring, or you can opt for an individual campus visit. Most of the college websites have a tab for "visit campus." We will be happy to call the college for you to arrange a visit or answer any questions you have about the process. Campus visits are by far the best way to choose the right postsecondary "fit." Enjoy your visits, ask questions, and keep notes on each campus. If you don't think you're headed for the college route, that's fine! Over the past years, Byers High School has offered career field trips to places all over the metro area and Eastern Colorado. We recommend signing up for these trips. We've been upgrading our classes and graduation plan to incorporate more opportunities for students to get hands-on training and are always looking for more ideas.

SCORES AND TESTING: You can start planning and preparing for the SAT which you will take this spring. The SAT will be held at Byers, and it is **FREE**. You can always take it again but if you plan and prepare for a good SAT score the first time, you are more likely to get into your school of choice next fall.

ACTIVITIES: Being a leader shows you have worked hard and are dedicated to an activity, particularly volunteerism and community service. Colleges and future bosses like leaders so start your academic résumé noting all your activities and leadership positions beginning with your freshman year. We will complete résumés during Senior Seminar but if you can start one now, even better. We always tell students that your resume is a work in progress, so update it often.



CHOOSE YOUR OWN WINTER BREAK READING ADVENTURE

Help your child keep their reading skills strong through fun, everyday adventures.



Adventure in Everyday Moments

Your adventure can begin anywhere, whether you're in the car, at the dinner table, or getting ready for bed. Singing, playing, and talking with your child not only builds reading skills but also strengthens your bond.

Adventure in the Library

School may be closed, but your local library is open. Check out books, games, and toys, attend events, or simply find a cozy spot to read. It's a perfect destination when you're looking for something to do.

Adventure in Creativity

Your adventure can spark imagination. After reading together, invite your child to draw their favorite scene, act out the story, or imagine a different ending. Creative play helps kids understand and remember what they read.

Adventure in Your Language

Your adventure sounds like home. Read, sing, and talk in whatever language feels most natural to your family. Every language strengthens your child's brain and builds bridges to learning new ones.

Try These Ideas:

- Listen to audiobooks from Unleash Literacy and stop every once in a while to talk about your favorite parts.
- Share moments of your day as stories. You can even create one together, one sentence at a time.
- Play "I Spy" with letter sounds or rhymes whenever you are.
- Read one of your favorite books in a new place, like a fort, the porch, or under the covers.

Find more family reading adventures and resources at ReadLearnLeadCO.org



¡EJJA SU PROPIA AVENTURA DE LECTURA DURANTE LAS VACACIONES DE INVIERNO

Ayude a su hijo/a a reforzar sus habilidades de lectura a través de aventuras divertidas de todos los días.



Aventura en los momentos de todos los días

Su aventura puede comenzar en cualquier lugar: en el coche, en la mesa durante la cena o antes de dormir. Cantar, jugar y conversar con su hijo/a no solo fortalece sus habilidades de lectura, sino también su vínculo emocional.

Aventura en la biblioteca

La escuela puede estar cerrada, pero su biblioteca local está abierta. Pida prestados libros, juegos y juguetes, asista a eventos o simplemente busque un rincón acogedor para leer. Es el destino perfecto cuando busca algo divertido que hacer.

Aventura para usar la creatividad

Su aventura puede despertar la imaginación. Después de leer juntos/as, invite a su hijo/a a dibujar su escena favorita, representar la historia o imaginar un final diferente. El juego creativo ayuda a los niños/as a comprender y recordar mejor lo que leen.

Aventura en su idioma

Que su aventura tenga el sonido de su hogar. Lea, canta y conversa en el idioma que sea más natural para su familia. Cada idioma fortalece el cerebro de su hijo/a y crea puentes para aprender otros nuevos.

Pruebe estas ideas:

- Escuche audiolibros de Unleash Literacy y deténgase de vez en cuando para hablar sobre sus partes favoritas.
- Comparta momentos de su día como si fueran historias. Incluso pueden crear una pupulsa, una oración a la vez.
- Aunque a "I Spy" con sonidos de letras o rima, dondequiera que esté.
- Lea uno de sus libros favoritos en un lugar nuevo, como cama de cobijas, el porche o debajo de las sábanas.

Encuentre más aventuras y recursos de lectura familiar en www.leeaprendeavanzaco.org

January Events

District-Wide of Note

- Mon., Jan. 5** — NO SCHOOL: IN-SERVICE DAY.
- Tues., Jan. 6 (WELCOME BACK!)** — CLASSES RESUME.
- Tues., Jan. 19** — NO SCHOOL: MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY.
- Thurs., Jan. 28** — Elementary Science Fair Projects Due (Parent viewing from 5-7 p.m.)

Secondary Athletics

- Sat., Jan. 3** — HS Wrestling @ Bennett, 9 a.m.
- Tues., Jan. 6** — HS Basketball @ Wiggins, 4 p.m.
- Wed., Jan. 7** — JH Girls Basketball vs Wiggins, 4 p.m.
- Thurs., Jan. 8** — HS Wrestling Dual @ Burlington, 6 p.m.
- Fri., Jan. 9** — HS Basketball @ Simla, 4:30 p.m.
- Sat., Jan. 10** — HS Wrestling @ Wiggins, 9 a.m.
- Mon., Jan. 12** — JH Wrestling @ Wiggins, 12 p.m.
- Tues., Jan. 13** — HS Basketball vs Denver Christian, 4 p.m.

Fri., Jan. 16 — HS Basketball vs Genoa-Hugo, 3 p.m.
JH Wrestling @ Stratton, 10 a.m.

Sat., Jan. 17 — JH Girls Basketball Home Tournament, 9 a.m.
HS Wrestling at Eads, 10:00 a.m.

Tues., Jan. 20 — JH Girls Basketball vs Limon.
JH Wrestling @ Burlington, 10 a.m.

Thurs., Jan. 22 — HS Home Wrestling Triangular, 5 p.m.

Fri., Jan. 23 — HS Basketball @ Flagler, 4 p.m.

Sat., Jan. 24 — HS Wrestling @ La Junta, 9 a.m.
HS Basketball vs. Calhan, 1 p.m.
JH Girls Basketball @ Strasburg Tourney, 9 a.m.

Mon., Jan. 26 — JH Wrestling @ Strasburg, 10 a.m.

Tues., Jan. 27 — JH Girls Basketball @ Burlington, 4 p.m.

Thurs., Jan. 29 — HS Basketball @ Arickaree, 4 p.m. (Girls vs Hi-Plains)

Fri., Jan. 31 — HS Basketball @ Burlington, 1 p.m.
HS Wrestling @ Stratton, 9 a.m.