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

Wednesday, January 21, 2026

'Burg shooting suspect charged as adult

First-degree murder amongst eight felony counts filed against 17-year-old defendant

by **Steven Vetter**
Managing Editor

BRIGHTON — Despite being only 17 years old, the suspect in a fatal shooting north of Strasburg early Jan. 11 will be charged as an adult.

The 17th Judicial District Attorney's Office announced Jan. 16 that Carlos Padilla-Garcia, 17, is facing eight felony counts, including first-degree murder, for allegedly wounding four, one fatally, during what appears to have been a large-scale "warehouse party"

at 9720 Defoe St. about 12 miles north of Strasburg.

In addition to the murder count, Padilla-Garcia also faces three counts of first-degree attempted murder, three counts of first degree assault, fifth-degree felony menacing, misdemeanor

possession of a handgun by a minor, and four counts of the crime of violence sentence enhancer.

A district attorney's office spokesman on Friday said Padilla-Garcia

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Winds wreak havoc on main thoroughfares, power lines

by **Steven Vetter**
Managing Editor

Strong winds permeated much of the Front Range and Eastern Plains of Colorado Jan. 15-16, but the most significant impacts to the I-70 Corridor occurred on Friday when electric power and highway travel were both snarled or interrupted.

Consistent 35-50 mph winds with gusts of up to 80 mph wreaked havoc on highway traffic as eastbound I-70 between Airpark Road and Flagler was shut down for several hours midday Friday, especially for semis and other high profile and lightweight vehicles on westbound lanes between Kansas and Limon.

While members of the driving public stated their discontent with the highway situation, officials with the Colorado Department of Transportation cited unsafe driving conditions.

"All traffic is being removed at E-470," a CDOT emergency road closure announcement said.

"High-profile, empty and lightweight vehicles are being turned back to Denver. Small vehicles are allowed to continue on east."

According to the Colorado State Patrol, multiple semis were tipped or rolled at the interchange on the west side of Limon and farther east towards the Kansas line, forcing the closure of the interstate. But the westernmost blockade at Airpark Road was also problematic. Accident reports indicated "property damage only with no injuries to occupants."

Friday's roadway snafus impacted multiple I-70 Corridor schools as Strasburg and Byers middle school wrestlers, coaches and staff were stranded at Stratton until the all-clear was received in order to head home and the Byers High School home basketball games against Genoa-Hugo/Karval were postponed. Basketball makeup dates were unknown at press time.

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ISAAC MANAUGH/The I-70 Scout

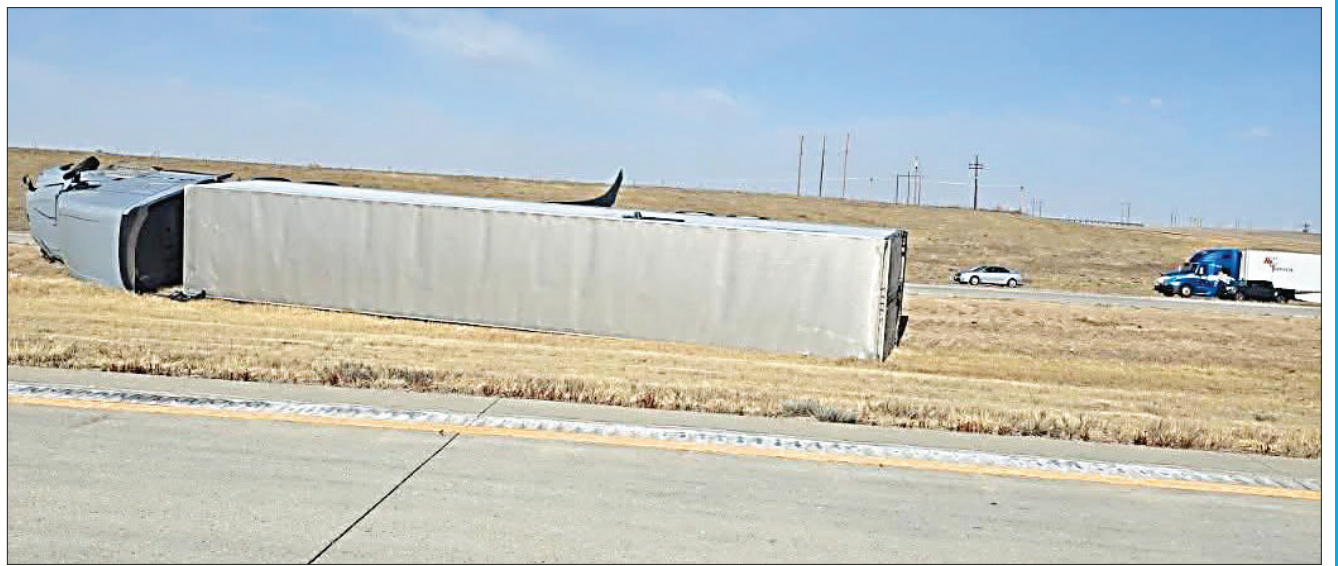


PHOTO COURTESY COLORADO STATE PATROL

Left photo, a tree waves furiously and a flag pole bends significantly under the stress of 50 mph-plus winds a couple miles south of Byers Jan. 16. Right photo, multiple tipped semis, including this one at the I-70 interchange on the west side of Limon helped lead state transportation to issue traffic restrictions and road closures between Airpark Road and the Kansas line for much of Friday afternoon.

Deer Trail School adds two elementary classes midyear

by **Steven Vetter**
Managing Editor

DEER TRAIL — When classes resumed following the holiday break, about half of students from two Deer Trail Elementary grade levels found themselves in a different classroom with a new teacher.

The district is also seeking a new school board member.

Deer Trail Superintendent Mike Jobman told board

of education directors Jan. 12 that the first and second grades were both split into two classes to start the spring semester.

"We had three or four qualified candidates for the two extra teaching positions, so that didn't turn out to be an issue," said Jobman, noting that one of the new positions was filled by a previous teacher at the district. "Had to get a little bit creative on some classroom space, but both new classes

have a room."

The additional elementary classes didn't result in additional students being moved to the detached modular spaces on the south side of campus. Jobman thanked Title 1/Reading Interventionist Rhonda Fischer for her willingness to move into a cordoned off hallway area.

The current classroom setup is similar to last school year when multiple elementary classes had to be split up.

Both first and second grades have approximately 30 students at the start of the new semester.

According to October student count information released by the Colorado Department of Education, Deer Trail Elementary reported 178 total students, up four from 2024-25.

BOARD VACANCY

During December's board meeting, director Steven

Musser cited family obligations as he tendered his resignation, which became effective at the end of the year.

During last week's board meeting, a resolution about the appointment process was approved.

Interested residents of the district are urged to submit a letter of interest to the district office by Jan. 28 with interviews of candidates planned

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