



The I-70 Scout

Volume 32, Number 12

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Wednesday, February 18, 2026

Bennett School lawman closer to fruition?

by Steven Vetter
Managing Editor

BENNETT — Bennett School officials were recently assured there will be a school resource officer back on campus and, likely, without any cost

to the district; however, how quickly the new person will be on the job remains uncertain.

But recent development have raised hopes for a new SRO before the end of the current school year.

During the Feb. 11 school board

meeting, Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office Public Safety Bureau Chief Ken McKlem said his department is in the process of providing the district with a new SRO, filling the void left about a year-and-a-half ago when the town of Bennett formally shifted its law en-

forcement.

"You guys need an SRO, we're going to get you an SRO," McKlem said. "Public safety is the responsibility of the sheriff's office, not the school dis-

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'The Good, the Bad, and the Silly of LOVE'



PHOTOS BY STEVEN VETTER/The I-70 Scout

Hempill Middle School choir and drama students performed a collection of songs, skits and poetry, including original creations, during their Feb. 12 tribute to Valentine's Day on a stage built in the middle school library. From left photo, Cupid, played by Julie Cardenas, preps her arrow during 'Cupid's Love Talk Show,' and Iris Heiter tosses her shoe at Abigail Nuno Villanueva in disbelief of Nuno Villanueva's interest in fictional movie superhero Megamind.

SUV incinerated in fatal crash

by Steven Vetter
Managing Editor

WATKINS — An overnight SUV crash and resulting fire killed one unidentified occupant near Watkins Feb. 2.

According to the Colorado State Patrol, a Toyota Land Cruiser was eastbound on I-70 near mile marker 293 about a mile east of town when the crash occurred.

"The Land Cruiser drove off the right shoulder and struck two delineator posts and went down an embankment before going airborne and striking the embankment's opposite side," the State Patrol's crash report said. "It went airborne a second time and began rolling, coming to rest at the bottom of a gully. It became engulfed in flames."

Neither the State Patrol nor Arapahoe County Coroner's office has released the name of the deceased.

"Still an unknown occupant," a State Patrol spokesman said last week.

The cause of the accident also remains under investigation.

Traffic along eastbound I-70 was slowed for a couple of hours.

State Patrol troopers remind drivers to remain vigilant when navigating roads, especially at night and during inclement weather.

They added the winter driving season still has at least another six weeks to go.

According to winter crash stats for November 2024 through March 2025, state troopers responded to 11,745 crashes, with the impacts ranging from property damage to death. The best way to minimize risk is to reduce your speed.

"The top causal factor of injury and fatal winter crashes is speeding," said Colorado State Patrol Chief Col. Matthew C. Packard, chief of the Colorado State Patrol. Drivers who fail to slow down are significantly more likely to lose control of their vehicles.

Bennett road bond question now set for April municipal election

by Steven Vetter
Managing Editor

BENNETT — After trustees approved the second reading of Ordinance 809-26, Bennett residents will get their say if they want to allow town officials to procure bond funding for road construction throughout the municipality.

During its Feb. 10 business meeting, the Board of Trustees formally set the ballot title and ballot issue language for a proposed Road Bond question for the April 7, 2026 election. The ordinance satisfies TABOR and state law requirements by authorizing the question to be placed before town voters.

If approved by voters, the ballot measure would allow the town to issue up to \$20 million in debt without increasing existing taxes for transportation infrastructure projects.

The bond question language asks Bennett voters to

approve up to a \$20 million increase in debt to be earmarked for "the purpose of financing the construction, maintenance, repair, replacement, expansion, acquisition, rehabilitation and renovation of existing and planned streets and other street related capital improvements within the town as determined by the board of trustees, ..."

While a project schedule is not part of the ballot language, town officials have indicated that full reconstruction of the town's portion of Kiowa-Bennett Road and improvements to Marketplace Drive are likely to be among the top priorities if the bond question is passed. There is also a likelihood that any efforts to shore up the I-70 Exit 304 bridge will require the town to help cover part of project costs, which bond money could help meet.

During the ballot language setting process, town staff and trustees have reiterated

that no additional taxes will be assessed or collected, noting that Bennett's current 1% sales tax "already generates significant and consistent revenue that could be used to repay bonds."

Town stats indicate that annual sales tax revenue has ranged between \$1 million and \$1.6 million in recent years.

Bennett's early April election also carries a Bennett School District question asking voters to approve conveyance of the Joe Stemo Ball Field to the school for \$1,500.

The stated price is part of the intergovernmental agreement (IGA) between the two entities dating back to 2011.

While the baseball diamond is currently owned by the town, many of the activities on it are school district activities. The school district has indicated a desire to take over the management and over-

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