



The I-70 Scout

Volume 32, Number 18 Searching for news in Watkins, Bennett, Strasburg, Byers, Deer Trail and Agate Wednesday, April 1, 2026

Arson suspect arrested in fire near 'Burg

by **Steven Vetter**
Managing Editor

STRASBURG — A residential fire a few miles south of Strasburg last week has been deemed arson and a suspect is in custody.

At about 8 a.m. March 24, the Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office and Strasburg and Byers fire departments were dispatched to the southwest corner of

June's Country Gardens in the 1200 block of South County Road 157 on a report that a modular unit was on fire. Bennett, Deer Trail, Sable Altura and South Metro fire departments were also called to lend fire suppression support.

According to Strasburg Fire Chief Scott Smith, the blaze was mostly contained to the inside of the home and no neighboring structures were

threatened, but no more information on the inferno was made available because of the ensuing sheriff's investigation.

"Regarding the March 24 incident, the fire has been classified as arson," a sheriff's office spokesperson said March 27. "[Local fire jurisdictions] also responded; however, as this is a criminal case, our office is taking the lead. There is no ongoing threat to lo-

cal public safety."

Deputies arrested Sheryl Aceves, 45, on a charge of first-degree arson. According to a March 29 inmate search of the sheriff's office website, Aceves remains in custody on \$25,000 bond. Aceves was scheduled to appear March 30 in Courtroom 302 of Arapahoe County District Court.

The fire was extinguished quickly and the scene cleared by 12 p.m.

Trustees split but OK Kiowa-Bennett Road vote leading up to street bond question

by **Steven Vetter**
Managing Editor

BENNETT — With Bennett's municipal election, including its road construction bond question, to be contested Tuesday, April 7, trustees narrowly approved moving forward with design services for the pending reconstruction of Kiowa-Bennett Road despite a wide disparity in bids.

During the March 24 trustees meeting, the last one before residents cast their ballots, the board voted 4-3 to move forward with a design/engineering contract with Atkins Realis though the firm's bid was more than \$450,000 more than what opposing bidder Martin/Martin submitted. The winning bid was approximately \$590,000 with Martin/Martin's proposal was closer to \$135,000.

While Mayor Whitney Oakley and trustees Larry Vittum, Denice Smith and Steve Dambroski voted in favor of the contract, including roadway design, drainage improvements and safety and ride quality aspects of the thoroughfare, Mayor Pro Tem Kevin Barden and trustees Donna Sus and Royce Pindell

dissented.

Barden, a longtime manager in the construction industry, took exception to the wide gap between the two bids that town staff received.

"First of all, very disappointing we didn't get more bids/response on this project," he said. "Second, I've had a lot of dealings with Martin/Martin and have never been treated wrong or unfairly or led astray. I'm fairly sure there's a happy medium that could be reached between the two bids we could come to. That difference is a heck of a lot of money."

Sus agreed with Barden, reiterating the need to gather up more bids for the project.

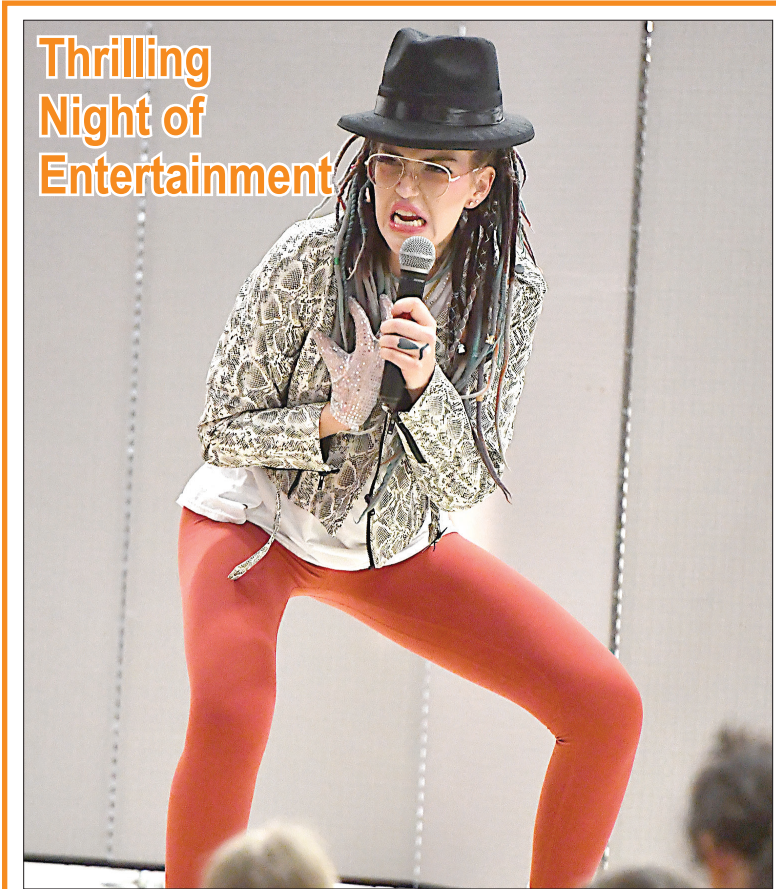
Pindell said the cost disparity was too much to overlook.

After originally stating his intent to vote against staff recommendation to move forward with the bid from Atkins Realis, Vittum did an about face after town engineer Dan Giroux stated that the preferred bid more fully met the scope of work that was stated

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Saiilah Bell, 4, helps spread out some of the 10,000 candy-filled eggs prior to the Mountain View Fellowship Easter Egg Hunt March 28. **SEE PAGE 6.**



Bennett Elementary specials teacher Madison Moody channels her inner Michael Jackson during her lip-sync version of "Thriller" during the schools Not So Talented: Teacher Talent Show Night fundraiser March 26. **SEE PAGE 7.**

Byers secondary principal named

by **Steven Vetter**
Managing Editor

BYERS — Byers middle- and high-school students will have a new principal roaming the halls next school year but it will still be a familiar face to most of them.

During its March 26 meeting, the Byers School Board unanimously approved math teacher Corey Green as its new secondary principal for the 2026-27 school year.

"We had a nine-member hiring committee and interviews were conducted Feb. 24," said Byers Superintendent Tom Turrell, who has been serving as middle and high school principal since middle of the first semester this school year. "We ended up having two very good in-house candidates surface to the top and we decided, upon

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Byers secondary math teacher and new 2026-27 secondary principal Corey Green fires the T-shirt cannon during this past fall's Homecoming Week.