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

Wednesday, April 22, 2026

Bennett denies developer's debt request

Trustees vote 4-2 against Kiowa Creek Preserve's amended request for additional \$100M

by **Steven Vetter**
Managing Editor

BENNETT — A proposed subdivision on the northeast edge of Bennett might have hit a significant snag after trustees voted last week to deny a service plan amendment to quadrupled the debt service for infrastructure development and regional improvements.

During their April 14 meeting, the Bennett Board of Trustees voted 4-2 against a resolution that would have increased the debt limit by almost \$100 million for “public improvements and regional improvements” through three Kiowa Creek Preserve metropolitan districts.

Originally, the service plan for Kiowa Creek Metropolitan District Nos. 1-3 of \$29 million was approved by the town board in October 2022. The amended service plan request last week was for a total of \$130 million.

When asked why the steep increase in debt funding was necessary, a developer consultant said the original proposal didn't include all necessary improvements.

“The previous engineers only accounted for the on-site collector road and ponds located off of said collector. Those were the only public improvements captured at the time,” the new consultant said. “None of the in-tract development was involved. It did not take into account major infrastructure, such as sewer, sanitary lines, water, things like that are of benefit to the entire community.”

The “whereas” portion of the proposed resolution added, “due to construction costs that have dramatically increased and an error in the list of public infrastructure prepared by a previous engineer, Kiowa Creek Metropolitan District Nos. 1-3 (collectively, the “Districts”) determined that the total debt limit (as defined in the original service plan) needs to be increased to allow the districts to

adequately finance public infrastructure.”

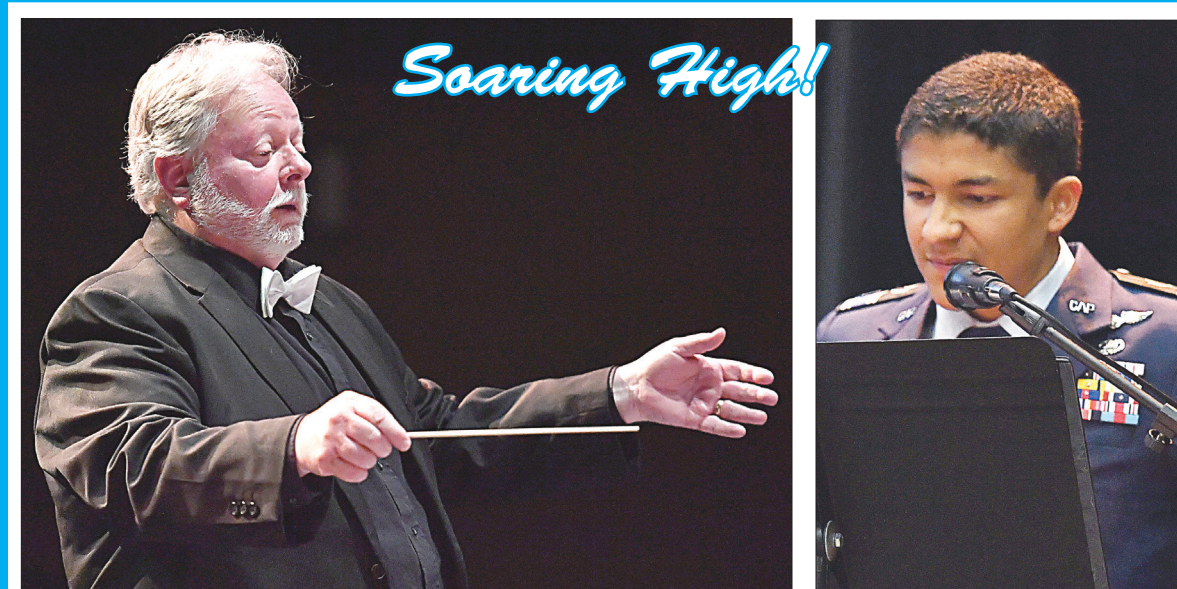
Votes against the request were cast by Mayor Whitney Oakley, Mayor Pro Tem Kevin Barden and trustees Donna Sus and Larry Vittum. Voting in favor of the request were Royce Pindell and Steve Dambroski. Trustee Denice Smith was absent.

In his comments before the vote, Vittum said developments like Kiowa Creek Preserve and similar subdivisions will morph Bennett into “Aurora Junior.”

“I realize it's not our debt we're taking on but do want to make sure we have a thriving development down the road and not one that is dilapidated and problematic,” Oakley added.

When asked by Oakley what a failed vote might mean, the developer's consultant said, “If not approved, it impacts the business decision. Realistically, with the increase of construction costs over

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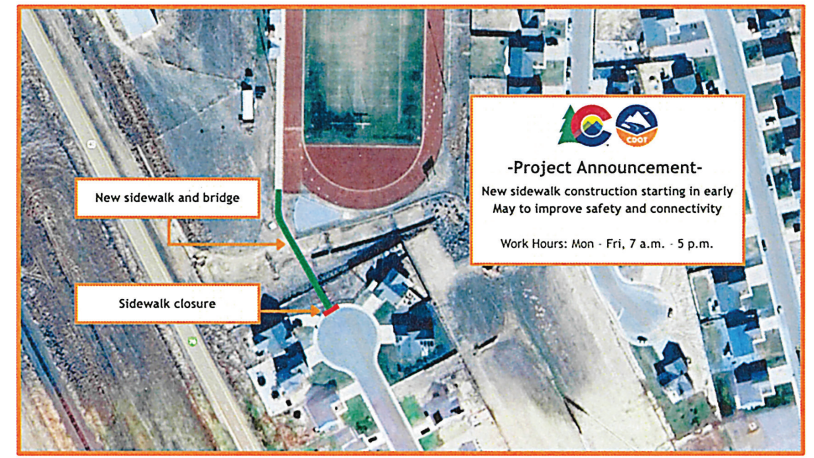


Soaring High!

PHOTOS BY STEVEN VETTER/The I-70 Scout

The High Plains Music Ensemble performed its “Flights of Fancy” concert and the Bennett High School auditorium April 11. The performance was preceded by a history of flight presentation by Colorado Civil Air Patrol Chaplain Lane McGhee. From left photo, director Kurt Elliott puts his group of local musicians through their paces during “Those Magnificent Men in their Flying Machines,” and Civil Air Patrol Cadet Maj. Shawn Nelson orates a portion of “High Flight.”

SEE PAGE 8.



-Project Announcement-
New sidewalk construction starting in early May to improve safety and connectivity
Work Hours: Mon - Fri, 7 a.m. - 5 p.m.

SUBMITTED MAP

The Colorado Department of Transportation has pushed back its start date for the new pedestrian bridge on the south edge of the Deer Trail School campus until the first week of next month. The project is expected to conclude before the end of June.

Take two: DT School reopens elementary principal search

by **Steven Vetter**
Managing Editor

DEER TRAIL — Hopes that a new Deer Trail Elementary principal might be known before the end of the school year appear unlikely after the first search proved to be unfruitful.

“We took four candidates through the application/hiring process — including interviews last week — and nothing panned out,” said Deer Trail Superintendent Mike Jobman of the at the April 13 school board meeting. “Unfortunately, we need to go to a round two and, hopefully, we come up with that ‘diamond in the rough’ that didn't get their name in the first time. We're reposting the position this week and see how that goes.”

The administration opening

occurred after Seandra Humbert tendered her resignation before the March 2 board meeting.

Humbert has been in charge of the elementary portion of the classroom wing since the district moved to the current two-principal setup a few years ago.

BRIDGE TIME FRAME UPDATE

After hearing for several months that construction of a new pedestrian bridge on the south edge of campus would start this month, the Colorado Department of Transportation has pushed back the project by roughly two weeks. The delay will allow Deer Trail to host a large secondary school track meet unimpeded on April 30.

According to the CDOT
**SEE DEER TRAIL BOE
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Area fire concerns remain high

by **Steven Vetter**
Managing Editor

Despite this past Friday's quick-moving spring storm that dropped about a quarter-inch of moisture across much of the I-70 Corridor, wildfire concerns have not been allayed.

The two days following the April 17 precipitation event, I-70 Corridor fire departments were already back at it, responding to reports of grass fires.

Byers Fire personnel were dispatched to a confirmed vegetation fire in the 7500 block of South Arapahoe County Road 177 about 12 miles south of the community about 4:15 p.m. the following day. Later April 18, another outside fire was reported at about 10 p.m. on East 38th Avenue a couple miles north of town in Adams County.

Saturday afternoon's fire response required support from Deer Trail, Strasburg, Bennett, Sable Altura and Buckley fire depart-



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Firefighters mop up hot spots from a grass fire that charred about 90 acres along East Stanford Place east of Price Road north of Deer Trail April 13.

ments. Approximately 20 apparatus were dispatched to the scene, but multiple units were canceled en route.

The blaze was reportedly contained before 5 p.m. with approximately one acre burned.

“No doubt the ground was still wet enough

**SEE FIRE CONCERNS
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