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The I-70 Scout

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

Wednesday, May 6, 2026

AdCo plans local bridge, 'S' curve projects

Commissioners, staff confirm improvements on Calhoun-Byers, Old Victory roads; sheriff fights back

by **Steven Vetter**
Managing Editor

STRASBURG — Unlike previous years when I-70 Corridor residents left local Adams County town halls frustrated with the lack of answers or direction to their concerns, last week's gathering appeared more constructive.

While the headliners for the April 27 "Let's Talk: Neighborhoods and Quality of Life," presentation at Hemphill Middle School in Strasburg were the five county commissioners, recently promoted Director of Public Works Janet Lundquist stole the show with roadway announcements.

"I actually have some good news," she said. "It's pretty recent, but we are in line for funding, \$11 million, for the Calhoun-Byers Road bridge

replacement. That's pretty big news out here."

The dilapidated crossing over West Bijou Creek about five miles northeast of Byers currently has a 15-ton vehicle limit, making it difficult on local farmers and ranchers.

"I can't hardly get my crops taken out of the field because of how bad that bridge, and the road itself, really is," said one Byers farmer, who brought examples of large rocks or chunks of rocks that have been thrown around while driving. "That's unacceptable, plus maintenance has to be more than on a schedule."

In reply, Lundquist said that road and bridge crews do perform emergency grading operations during inclement weather turns or the county

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STEVEN VETTER/The I-70 Scout

Adams County officials announced last week that the Calhoun-Byers Road bridge over West Bijou Creek northeast of Byers will be replaced. The exact time frame for the \$11 million project is uncertain.



STEVEN VETTER/The I-70 Scout

The Deer Trail Players performed their version of "The Addams Family Musical" April 24 at the school auditorium. The musical spin-off of the classic book by Marshall Brickman and Rick Elice follows the trials and travails of the Addams' daughter, Wednesday, as she falls in love with Lucas Beineke, much to the chagrin of mother Morticia; at the same time, the father, Gomez, tries to keep the teenagers' secret about wanting to marry. Above, Wednesday (Riley Williams) seems a little indifferent to her normal fun of electrocuting brother Pugsley (Elliott Musser).

New Bennett SRO introduced

by **Steven Vetter**
Managing Editor

BENNETT — After an almost two-year stretch without a school resource officer, the Bennett School District recently received one and she is officially on the job.

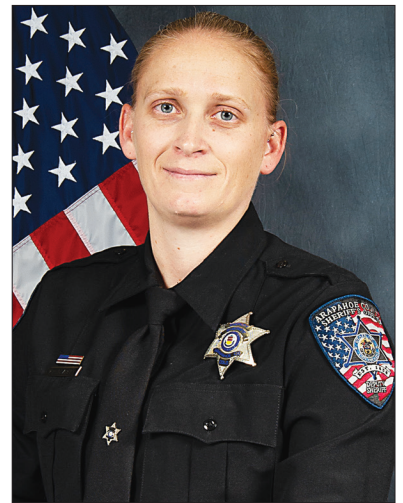
Arapahoe County Sheriff's Deputy Kelly Searle began full-time duties on the Bennett School campus April 28. Searle, an eight-year sheriff's office veteran, will cover the entire campus but will be based out of the high school.

"This assignment reflects [our] continued commitment to public safety in Bennett and the surrounding areas," a county statement said.

Sheriff's Office Public Safety Bureau Chief Ken McKlem added, "SROs provide a level of safety and security that is unmatched in the event of a violent incident at a school by serving as the first line of defense to save lives."

"We're excited to have a new full-time SRO on campus to provide that extra layer of safety," said Bennett School Superintendent Robin Purdy. "[Searle] will also serve as a point of contact for students and staff and help build positive relationships within the school community."

The school has been without an SRO since mid-2024 after the town of Bennett decided to change its law enforcement provider from the Adams to the Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office. Unlike the Adams County yearly arrangement,



• Kelly Searle •

the Arapahoe County Sheriff's office contract did not provide an SRO or similar services to the Bennett School District campus, which is located in the town's city limits. The Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office and the town of Bennett continued their contract this year.

"We had an SRO with no cost to the district from 2016 until the town parted ways with Adams County," Purdy said at January's school board meeting. "We appreciate the opportunity to reestablish this role and look forward to working collaboratively in support of our students and staff."

McKlem added that Searle's appointment follows the recent graduation of new deputies from police academy. Four of 10 new deputies are expected to be stationed east of E-470 this year. Over the next four years, the sheriff's office expects to hire 40 new deputies.

Byers School directors OK salary increase

by **Steven Vetter**
Managing Editor

BYERS — Despite uncertainty surrounding the state budget, particularly education funding, the Byers School Board voted unanimously last week to pay its teachers and staff more for 2026-27.

During an April 27 special meeting, school directors unanimously approved a 3% salary increase for teachers and staff next school

year.

According to Byers Superintendent Tom Turrell, his proposal took into account what he thought could be the worst case scenario from a pair of state budget projections.

"[Since our April 16 board meeting], not seeing anything dramatic/big changes from the School Finance Act," he said. "We could go a little lower, perhaps half, on the raise,

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