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© Issue No. 616 Dec. 16 2024



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# the Montrose Mirror

## RE-1J BOARD VOTES 5 TO 2 TO DENY MCA CHARTER APPLICATION, Board Votes to move forward with purchase of Co-op property as enrollment numbers drop

By Caitlin Switzer

MONTROSE-At the end of a lengthy board meeting followed by an Executive Session on Tuesday, Dec. 10, the Montrose County School District RE-1J Board of Education voted 5 to 2 to approve [Resolution 20-2024](#), denying the application for the Montrose Classical Academy (MCA). Two directors, Neisha Balleck and Ted Valerio, voted against Resolution 20-2024.

In other business, the Board of Education also voted unanimously to allow RE-1J Superintendent Carrie Stephenson to move forward with the acquisition of the Producers Co-op property at 644 and 500 South Rio Grande Avenue, "to support future district operations and strategic growth." The proposed purchase price for the property is \$400,000. Also, the October Count was presented by Finance Director Emily Imus; both overall enrollment and per pupil funding are down.

[Continued pg 32](#)



The Montrose County School District RE-1J Board of Education voted unanimously on Dec. 10 to allow RE-1J Superintendent Carrie Stephenson to move forward with the acquisition of the Producers Co-op property at 644 and 500 South Rio Grande Avenue. Mirror staff photo.

## COUNTY APPROVES CMU HEALTHCARE EDUCATION ACCOUNT, CONTINUES HEARING ON AMENDMENT TO ZONING REGS REGARDING USE STANDARDS FOR POWER GENERATION FACILITIES

By Caitlin Switzer

MONTROSE-BOCC Chair Roger Rash called the meeting to order, and Commissioner Sue Hansen led in saying the Pledge of Allegiance at the regular Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) meeting of Dec. 11. All commissioners were present.

Delivering the invocation was Pastor Curt Mudget of Cedar Creek Church, "Heavenly Father...you are Lord over all, and we are accountable to you...may faith in you grow in us, and may this season reflect some new and different opportunities for us all...we also pray for Roger and Keith, that they would finish well their service, thank you for their years of serving our community..."

### PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Brad Switzer spoke during the public comment period. Switzer said that he rode his bike that morning as he does most mornings,

[Continued pg 19](#)



Local bicyclist Brad Switzer asked the BOCC for additional signs reminding drivers to maintain a three-foot distance from bicycles. Meeting screenshot.

# UPDATED GUIDELINES FOR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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**Dear Readers:**

We appreciate your letters! We like reading and hearing opinions from all perspectives. We are sharing herewith our updated guidelines: In the past we have had one rule, to be implemented at the editor's discretion. We are now including two more suggested "Rules" for letter writers.

**RULE 1.** The Dead Horse Rule has been in place from the start of the *Mirror*. This is somewhat self-explanatory, but there are times when something has been said so many times it can run afoul of the "Dead Horse Rule," in which case we will inform the writer.

**RULE 2.** While there are always exceptions, a letter can often say what needs to be said in one page or less. Our pages are 8.5 X 11, we use a 10 pt Calibri font; letters that are roughly 800 words fit well within this suggested guideline.

**RULE 3.** Please limit repetitive mud-slinging to avoid bumping up against Rule 1. Also, in the case of those writing to intentionally discredit a public official or candidate for public office, please provide a link to the source of your allegation if possible. Unsourced, unproven allegations are not credible, and could in fact be untruths.

Finally, opinions expressed in letters and commentary are those of the authors themselves, and do not reflect the views of the *Montrose Mirror* or editorial staff.

Thank you,  
*Caitlin Switzer,*  
*Montrose Mirror Editor*

# THE MONTROSE MIRROR

Published every Monday since 2010 in Montrose, Colorado to a readership of over 20,000 residents of Western Colorado.

We encourage contributions and commentary. Submitted content may not necessarily reflect the opinion of the publisher.

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# Pre-Teen Art Club

## December 19—4:30 PM

Join us in the Library Meeting Room to create felt snowflake decorations!



This club is designed for ages 8 to 12.

Participants must be able to listen to instruction and work with their peers. Projects will include detailed instructions and require patience and fine motor skills to complete.

No registration is required.

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# MONTROSE BOTANICAL GARDENS: GARDEN OF LIGHTS



Santa enjoyed a quiet moment in his tipi's entrance, just moments before the Gardens' gates opened. Courtesy photo ©2024 J.P. Cencer.



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# REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

## MONTROSE COMMUNITY BAND TO PLAY HOLIDAY CONCERT

*Special to the Mirror*

**MONTROSE**-On Dec 22-3 pm. Enjoy a Free Holiday Concert: Winter Wonderland! Join the Montrose Community Band at the Montrose Pavilion. Christmas is time for joy and memories. Let us entertain you with fond memories, musical pictures, and old favorites.



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This Charming Custom-Built Builder's Home is a stunning example of custom craftsmanship, designed with both style and functionality in mind. From its inviting front porch to its thoughtfully designed interior, with cozy fireplace as the focal point, this residence offers all you need for comfortable, modern living. The inviting front covered porch adds classic charm and provides a welcoming entryway. The covered back porch offers the perfect evening retreat to be enjoyed year round. The efficient gourmet kitchen features high-quality cabinetry with soft-close drawers, and pull out shelves. Granite countertops and a range hood add elegance and durability, and a convenient pot filler at the gas range makes cooking a breeze. Open living area with soaring ceilings:



Presented by  
**Leslie Gore** | Broker Associate

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# REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

## DELTA HEALTH BECOMES A CERTIFIED APPLICATION ASSISTANCE SITE: A NEW ERA IN COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE

*Special to the Mirror*

DELTA— Delta Health is now a Certified Application Assistance Site (CAAS), and can assist Colorado citizens in applying for medical benefits. This is a great service for the community since Open Enrollment began in October and will go until January 15, 2025.

“This significant achievement marks a new era in community healthcare, where Delta Health is now officially recognized and authorized to assist Colorado citizens in applying for medical benefits,” said

Layne Fehlhaber, Delta Health Patient Access Manager. “This development is not just a recognition of the hard work and dedication of Delta Health’s staff, but also a crucial step towards expanding healthcare access to the most vulnerable members of the community.”

Getting both patients and community members signed up for Medicaid is a top priority for Delta Health.

“Delta Health’s commitment to becoming a Certified Application Assistance Site is driven by the desire to help relieve the

financial burden of healthcare, for our community members,” said Jonathan Cohee, MHA, OT, and Delta Health Chief Executive Officer. “This initiative is central to our vision of providing compassionate, quality healthcare that our community can trust, regardless of his or her financial situation.”

To ensure each application is properly processed and counted for quarterly reporting, all applicants must go through the Financial Counselor’s office. Delta Health’s Financial Counselor, Angeles Mendez, plays a pivotal role in guiding patients through the application process, ensuring they understand their eligibility and the benefits available to them.

• Appointment are available Monday through Wednesday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

• Schedule an appointment by calling 970.874.7681 or by emailing [Mmendez@deltahospital.org](mailto:Mmendez@deltahospital.org).

As a CAAS, Delta Health can help individuals apply for a variety of programs including:

- Medicaid
- Food Stamps (SNAP)
- Medicare Premiums Assistance
- The Buying Program
- Home Health Services
- Adult Services
- CHP+ (Child Health Plan Plus)
- Omnisalud
- ACA (Affordable Care Act) plans through Connect for Health Colorado

Delta Health’s CAAS status also ensures it is listed on the official map of approved sites in Colorado, enhancing its visibility and credibility. This recognition helps maintain the hospital’s 340B status, a federal program that allows hospitals serving low-income populations to purchase medications at reduced prices, further supporting our commitment to patient care.

For more information, visit <https://deltahealthco.org/financial-assistance/> or <https://deltahealthco.org/billing/>. You can also call email [mendez@deltahospital.org](mailto:mendez@deltahospital.org).

### FACTS & FICTION



Is it true the City of Montrose is providing a new platform for locals to stay informed and engaged with all of the great things happening here in Montrose?

Yes... “Montrose Lifestyle” is a digital magazine for Montrosians, neighbors, visitors, businesses, and other stakeholders, a digital city square, and an action catalyst for personal and professional success, relocation, and visitation. The City has partnered with [Montroselifestyle.com](http://Montroselifestyle.com) to provide current and timely community information, a community calendar, a community job board, a podcast, an online marketplace for “Made in Montrose” products, and so much more. It is a new campaign and it is a work in progress. As you move through our new platform, please reach out anytime to offer suggestions or to ask any clarifying questions. We are really trying to create a system of communication for locals to hear from locals, but in a safe, positive and comfortable environment. There will be no place at [Montroselifestyle.com](http://Montroselifestyle.com) for negativity and chaotic misinformation. We are so excited about this new project and we hope you are too!

We have a few hundred followers so far, but we would love to cross the 1,000 mark before the end of January. If you want to be “in the know” on all city projects and want to learn the “why” behind the many things going on in Montrose, you will want to sign up for our Montrose Lifestyle website and newsletter. Please visit: [montroselifestyle.com](http://montroselifestyle.com) and click on subscribe to get started. Have a wonderful holiday season!

Questions? Call Bill Bell, City Manager at 970-901-8580



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# REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

## MONTROSE REGIONAL HEALTH NAMED BEST-IN-CLASS EMPLOYER BY GALLAGHER

*Special to the Mirror*

MONTROSE— Montrose Regional Health has been recognized as a Best-in-Class Employer in Gallagher’s 2024 U.S. Benefits Strategy & Benchmarking Survey. This award represents the second time the

organization has received this distinction. “We are deeply honored to once again receive this award,” said Erin Skees, Chief Human Resources Officer for Montrose Regional Health. “This recognition reflects the unwavering dedication of our Human

Resources team, who have embraced a holistic approach to enhancing our organizational structures, workplace policies, and total rewards. By inclusively engaging and motivating our caregivers, we continue to build a culture where everyone thrives.”

This recognition demonstrates Montrose Regional Health’s dedication to its caregivers by implementing effective strategies for managing employees, benefits, and HR programs. Montrose Regional Health was selected for its comprehensive approach to strategically investing in benefits, compensation and the employee experience – all aimed at supporting the health, financial confidence and career growth of caregivers while maintaining a sustainable cost structure.

As a U.S. Best-in-Class Employer, Montrose Regional Health earned points based on its performance in several key areas:

- Extent of wellbeing strategy
- Turnover rate for full-time equivalents (FTEs)
- Completion of a workforce engagement survey
- Use of an HR technology strategy and its level of sophistication
- Difference in healthcare costs over the prior year
- Planning horizons for the benefits and compensation strategies

“Montrose Regional Health recognizes the crucial link between people’s wellbeing and organizational success,” said William F. Ziebell, CEO of Gallagher’s Benefits & HR Consulting Division. “When employees enjoy their work, appreciate their benefits and feel connected, the organization thrives — boosting positivity, retention, performance and overall prosperity. That proactive people strategy helps make Montrose Regional Health a Best-in-Class Employer.”



**Montrose Regional Health Named a U.S. Best-in-Class Employer by Gallagher. Courtesy image.**



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Order before noon on Tuesday, December 24th at [montrosecommunitydinners.com/delivery](https://montrosecommunitydinners.com/delivery) or call the Delivery Request line at 970-318-6759

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# COLORADO NEWS BRIEFS

## COLORADO SPRINGS NURSE PRACTITIONER AGREES TO PAY \$90K TO RESOLVE ALLEGATIONS OF IMPROPER PRESCRIBING OF CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES

*Special to the Mirror*

DENVER—The United States Attorney’s Office for the District of Colorado announced that Monica Preston, N.P., has agreed to pay \$90,000 to resolve allegations that she unlawfully prescribed controlled substances, including dangerous opioids and drug combinations, in violation of the Controlled Substances Act and False Claims Act.

The United States alleges that Ms. Preston, while working as a Nurse Practitioner at the now-defunct Colorado Institute for Pain Management in Colorado Springs, wrote prescriptions for controlled sub-

stances that were in dosages, at frequencies, and in combinations with other controlled substances that were outside the course of her professional practice, were not reasonable and necessary, and were not for a legitimate medical purpose. The United States alleges that Ms. Preston’s conduct departed from well-established prescribing guidelines and that she also fraudulently represented to the Center for Medicare Services that improper prescriptions were reasonable and necessary. The United States alleges that this conduct violated the Controlled Substances Act and the False Claims Act.

As part of the settlement, Ms. Preston agreed to pay \$90,000 in damages and civil penalties. Ms. Preston also agreed to permanently forgo holding a Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) registration, which will prevent her from prescribing any controlled substances in the future.

“Nurse practitioners entrusted with prescribing authority must be careful not to ignore red flags that suggest that the opioids they prescribe are being misused or abused,” said Acting U.S. Attorney Matt Kirsch. “When nurse practitioners do not adhere to well-established prescribing guidelines or falsely represent that improper prescriptions were reasonable and necessary, we will hold them accountable.”

“The DEA is proud to relentlessly pursue practitioners not acting in their patients’ best interests,” said DEA Rocky Mountain Field Division Special Agent in Charge Jonathan Pullen. “Our investigators – along with other federal partners – worked diligently on this case, and as a result, Ms. Preston will never again be allowed to legally prescribe opioids or other controlled substances.”

“Medical providers who write prescriptions for controlled substances, including powerful opioids and dangerous drug combinations, that are outside the course of professional practice endanger the safety and wellbeing of patients and communities,” said Special Agent in Charge Linda T. Hanley of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General (HHS OIG). “This settlement highlights HHS-OIG’s commitment to work closely with our state and federal partners to protect federal health care programs and the people served by those programs.”

The claims against Ms. Preston are allegations, and in agreeing to settle this matter, she did not admit to any liability.

This matter was investigated by the DEA’s Rocky Mountain Division and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Office of Inspector General and was handled by Assistant United States Attorney Katherine Ross.

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# COLORADO NEWS BRIEFS

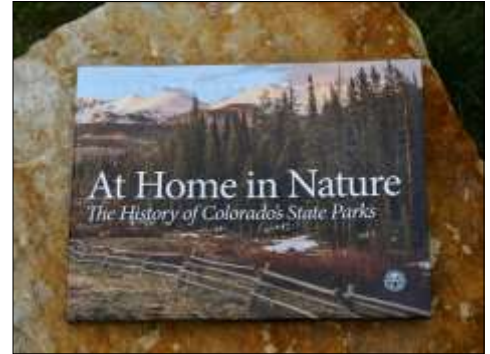
## COLORADO PARKS AND WILDLIFE'S NEW BOOK 'AT HOME IN NATURE, THE HISTORY OF COLORADO'S STATE PARKS' AVAILABLE

DENVER — CPW's first book chronicling the history of the Colorado state parks system is on sale for 30% off now through January 5 at state park visitor centers and online at [cpwshop.com](http://cpwshop.com).

"At Home in Nature, The History of Colorado's State Parks" explores the rich history of Colorado's state parks, from their inception to the present day, and is a must-read for anyone interested in the state's natural and cultural heritage. The story of the book and its creation was recently featured on [CPW's Colorado Outdoors podcast](#).

"The first book sold out quickly and now that we're re-stocked, we thought it would be a great idea to offer the book at a discount for Coloradans looking for the perfect holiday gift for their family and friends," said CPW Capital Development Program Manager Margaret Taylor.

Plan your next outdoor adventure at a Colorado state park using [CPW's State Park Finder](#) to discover a world of outdoor activities. Join us in keeping Colorado, Colorado. Get a \$29 Keep Colorado Wild Pass with your next vehicle registration and support Colorado state parks, search and rescue teams, avalanche safety, wildlife conservation, and outdoor education. Start your journey at [cpw.info/keepcoloradowild](http://cpw.info/keepcoloradowild).



Start your journey at [cpw.info/keepcoloradowild](http://cpw.info/keepcoloradowild). Courtesy photo.

## FISHING IS FUN GRANTS AVAILABLE FOR PROJECTS THAT IMPROVE ANGLING OPPORTUNITIES IN COLORADO

**Welcome**

Delta Health is excited to welcome **JESS SHELTON**, Executive Director to the Delta Health Foundation team.

**DELTA HEALTH FOUNDATION**

**INNOVATING SERVICES FOR YOUR HEALTH**

1501 E 3RD ST • DELTA, CO • 970.399.2610 • DELTAHEALTHCO.ORG

*Special to the Mirror*

DENVER — Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) is excited to announce the 2025 round of funding opportunities for the [Fishing is Fun Grant Program](#). The goal of this program is to provide funding to projects that expand fishing access across the state and provide more angling opportunities. CPW awards around \$700,000 in Fishing is Fun grants annually.

The Fishing is Fun program supports projects such as stream and river habitat improvements, access improvements, perpetual easements for public access, pond and lake habitat improvements, fish retention structures, development of new fishing ponds and amenity improvements such as shade shelters, benches and restrooms.

This program provides matching grant funds annually to local and county governments, park and recreation departments, water districts, angling organizations and others for projects to improve angling opportunities in Colorado.

A fillable application form and additional program information can be found at: [cpw.state.co.us/fishing-fun-grants](http://cpw.state.co.us/fishing-fun-grants). The completed application form must be submitted by Jan. 31, 2025.

**PLEASE, may I attend a  
classical, charter school in  
Montrose or Olathe?**



**The Montrose Classical Academy application  
was rejected by MCSD. What happens to  
the children who would truly benefit greatly  
from this educational opportunity??**

**JOIN OUR "APPEAL MOVEMENT" TO  
STILL MAKE MCA A REALITY!!**

**For details: [www.montroseclassical.org](http://www.montroseclassical.org)**

# Dear Santa,



Sharing Ministries Food Bank has been very busy this year! Our volunteers have filled boxes, served clients, pushed carts, mopped floors, stocked shelves, delivered food, pulled weeds, fixed trucks, repaired freezers, stuffed envelopes, laughed and cried as we shared with our communities.

We have shared our bounty with soup kitchens, food pantries, schools, churches, veterans, children, grandpa's & grandma's, the homeless and disabled, single moms, your neighbors and mine.

We know you are making your lists and checking them twice. We hope you know we have not been *naughty but we have been very nice.*

So during this holiday season while you are busy with all the hustle & bustle we ask that you assist and put us on your list!

## PLEASE HELP US FEED A FAMILY THIS SEASON

We serve Montrose, Delta, San Miguel, and Ouray Counties

Your tax-deductible gift will provide many holiday meals for local families.

*Please partner with us as we serve our community this holiday season!*



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**THANK YOU & HAPPY HOLIDAYS  
FROM OUR FAMILY TO YOURS!**

# REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

## MONTROSE COUNTY, COLORADO MESA UNIVERSITY AND COLORADO MESA UNIVERSITY FOUNDATION PARTNER TO FUND HEALTHCARE EDUCATION

*Special to the Mirror*

MONTROSE – Montrose County, Colorado Mesa University (CMU) and Colorado Mesa University Foundation are excited to announce the creation of the Montrose County Healthcare Education Account. This innovative partnership will provide a permanent source of funding to support medical education programs at the CMU Montrose Campus.

The fund will be used specifically to acquire essential supplies, instructional materials and technology needed to enhance the learning experience for students pursuing healthcare careers. By alleviating the financial burden associated with these costs, the fund aims to empower students to focus on their studies and achieve their academic goals.

“By investing in this fund, we are ensuring that our community has access to high-quality healthcare for years to come,” said Commissioner Keith Caddy. “This fund will provide critical support to our students, enabling them to gain the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in the healthcare field.”

The initial funding for the Montrose County Healthcare Education Account is \$200,000, with contributions from Montrose County (\$100,000), CMU (\$50,000), and the CMU Foundation (\$50,000).

This partnership between Montrose County, CMU and CMU Foundation represents a significant step forward in strengthening healthcare education and workforce development in the region. By investing in the future of healthcare, the community is ensuring a brighter future for all.



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# REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS



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## STAY SAFE ON WINTER ROADS

*Special to the Mirror*  
COLORADO – If the winter wonderland of the Rocky Mountains is calling your name – for vacation or some outdoor recreation - it’s important to remember the dangers of navigating the region’s snow-packed and slippery roadways.



Looking at 2023-2024 winter crash data from December 1, 2023, through the end of March 2024 for just the western mountain regions of the state, 280 injury and fatal crashes were investigated by Colorado State Troopers in that area. The top identified causal factors for these crashes in descending order were:

- Excessive Speed (posted limit or for the conditions)
- Animal involved
- Lane Violations (drivers traveling outside their lane by switching lanes in a dangerous manner or driving while crossing over the center or side lanes)
- Distracted Driving
- Following too closely

“Drivers should prepare themselves for the key characteristics of mountain driving, including narrow and winding roadways, sharp curves, and animal encounters,” stated Major Brett Williams, District Five Commander for the Colorado State Patrol. “Now factor in unfavorable weather conditions or towing a vehicle. Taking things slow and maintaining a centered lane position is the safest and smartest way to explore the region.” Coloradoans also know that the I-70 corridor experiences frequent congestion with traffic for recreation. Motorists are asked to pack their patience along with their gear. Aggressive driving comes in all forms, including excessive speed and following too closely.

As a resource for visitors in the area, the Colorado State Patrol has updated its [Super Cruising in Colorado web resource](#) to help prepare visitors for scenic byways and mountain roadways throughout the area during winter conditions.



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## **BOCC CONTINUES HEARING ON AMENDMENT TO ZONING REGS From pg 1**

"...beautiful morning out there...clear sky, beautiful mountains. And there's one sign that I know of where it says, cars must maintain a three-foot distance from bicycles on the side of the road. And it's on Chipeta Road. So my first comment is, could you put more of those signs up? It would be nice if there were a few of 'em...just keeping bikers safe and keeping drivers safe."

Switzer also spoke about air quality in the valley. "I do ride my bike regularly, and I couldn't help but notice, for about a month there was compromised air quality due to significant burning that was going on.

"I understand agricultural burning," he said, "I'm from Iowa originally...I spent a lot of time on my great grandpa Earl's farm, which then went to my great Uncle Bud...so I'm familiar with agriculture, grew up with it, and familiar with the burning that was done in Iowa at least, on Iowa's farms...I rode through the smoke that was in our valley for a month, I saw it every day...it would be great if we had a little more consciousness of what is appropriate for burning in our valley, in our relatively small, beautiful valley...thank you."

### **COUNTY MANAGER**

County Manager Frank Rodriguez had no changes to the meeting agenda.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

Commissioners voted to approve Consent Agenda items, with Resolution No. 56-2024 assigned to Item 7.

### **GENERAL BUSINESS AND ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS**

Commissioner Keith Caddy presented for consideration and possible approval a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Colorado Mesa University and the Colorado Mesa University Foundation to establish the Montrose County Healthcare Education Account Agreement.

Caddy said, "Montrose County is committed to nurturing the next generation of health care professionals, and to support local students in their pursuit of nursing and medical education. The County is proudly contributing to an education account... a partnership with Colorado Mesa University and the Montrose Campus along with the Colorado Mesa University

Foundation. We're very pleased to do this. "There's four groups of people that I look at in this world as the front line for everything we do...One's firefighters, one's law enforcement, one's our teachers, and one's our health care providers," Caddy said. "Without those groups of people being on the front line every day, supporting us and keeping us alive and safe, things wouldn't get done. We'd be living in a whole different world."

"That's why I'm proud to have Roger sign this if he will... after we vote on a donation of \$100,000 from Montrose County with a matching from Colorado Mesa University of \$50,000 and Colorado Mesa University Foundation for \$50,000 for basically the nursing and health care provider programs here at the University. It'll pay for a lot of the materials for their labs—it's all about books, materials, and equipment to do the labs here. That way we can train up the next generation of nursing and public health people that's going to help us survive when we get old, like I'm getting... we're trying to stack the deck here..."

Commissioners voted unanimously to approve the MOU with CMU and the Colorado Mesa University Foundation to establish the Montrose County Healthcare Education Account.

The BOCC then voted to approve the County Attorney's signature on a disclaimer of interest in litigation brought by Randy Sutherland pertaining to a sliver of land in Naturita.

Commissioners held public hearings prior to approving Resolution Number 57-2024, regarding the 2025 Budget Adoption and Annual Appropriation; and Resolution 58-2024, regarding a second supplemental appropriation to the Budget for the Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 2024; and Resolution Number 29-2024, regarding the establishment of Mill Levies for levying taxes for the levy year 2024/budget year 2025.

Also approved unanimously was the Inmate Health Care Services 2025 Amendment for jail health and food services, not to exceed \$1,012,578.224.

### **PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT GENERAL BUSINESS**

Commissioners voted unanimously to approve the first item, a proposal to extend the time period to file an approved plat for recording at 399106200013 16318 6900 RD.

For the second Planning and Development General Business item, Commissioners opened a public hearing to consider a Proposal to Amend Zoning Regulations to include use standards for Power Generation Facilities based on findings of fact listed in the staff report.

Commissioners opened the floor to comments.

Ryan Sedgley spoke, and said that he was perplexed that the BOCC would seemingly single out and target this type of land development purpose while ignoring other issues; he suggested going back to the drawing board and rethinking it. "...Solar offers our county a unique opportunity to take advantage of significant amounts of investment money into these kinds of plants...they can also be built to support and enhance agriculture through agri-voltaics...there are a lot of places where this could be appropriate and wouldn't necessarily need this kind of regulatory burden to develop there. We could do that while still maintaining our viewsheds...it is also a model that can help bring business to our community...siting is really important...maybe not put the solar development right in the middle of an elk migration path..."

Creating a uniform siting rule that applies to all industrial land uses would better help achieve goals, he said. "Having more regulations that seem unnecessary...isn't going to keep energy costs low..."

Speaker Tony Hoag said that Montrose County has prime farm ground, that farmers are facing hard times, and that agri-voltaics represent an opportunity to earn an income stream for a family while they continue to farm. Hoag said that if the county has a proposed project on prime farm ground, that the rules could require agri-voltaics. He cited improved production through water savings and shade benefits and micro-climate control. He asked commissioners to increase the production standard of one megawatt for a utility scale project to five megawatts, and adopt

## BOCC CONTINUES HEARING ON AMENDMENT TO ZONING REGS From previous pg

adopt a different time frame for approval of a project.

Next to speak was Isaac Ketcham, who said that some members of his family have sold agricultural land and that subdivisions have gone in. "Subdivisions are very permanent disturbances to land, where you're putting in sewers and natural gas lines and buried electric cables. Solar has much less of an environmental impact and disturbance to the land than a subdivision...if they're allowed to do that, than they should also be allowed to do whatever else they want with their land...and considering that solar has actually less land disturbance and actually provides a commodity still, maybe we should...back down some of these regulations and rules, it is unfairly boxing in an industry and unfairly boxing in a property owner..."

Don Coram spoke. He said that he represents Ute Peak Solar and Standard Solar, which is looking at a solar project in the West End. When a property is already zoned for industrial use, "We probably don't need a lot more regulations...I think we need to do this very carefully...I don't want elected officials and bureaucrats deciding what investors and private business should be doing...your protection is bonding...I think we have an opportunity here to create a new industry, as they call wind and solar in the Midwest the new cash crop. I am working on a project right now that's about 435 acres, it's got a 25-year \$1,000 an acre, \$400,000 a year lease...you're never going to make that farming, I can tell you that folks."

Ken Dolezal spoke. He said that he is retired after 30 years of practicing law in Iowa, and has concerns that the County is discriminating against renewable energy facilities. Solar energy generation should be a use by right in the general industrial district, he said. "...You're taking that

away from these farmers, and ultimately...we're going to be involved in litigation as a result...Mesa and San Miguel counties do not require this special permitting...you're burdening landowners...you are punishing taxpayers...the income from these projects is punishing every taxpayer in this community. Consequently, I think you need to take a long and hard look at what you're proposing here to burden the county."

Commissioner Keith Caddy said he is a big believer in what's been said about agriculture and farmers using their land as their 401K. "I'm a big proponent of ag and personal property rights."

He asked that the proposed amendment be continued time date certain to allow reevaluation.

"None of us believe in over regulation," Commissioner Sue Hansen said, noting that continuing the decision would allow time for reconsideration. "The last thing we want to do is harm anyone in this county...we haven't taken a deep dive in geothermal, we haven't taken a deep dive in nuclear, we haven't taken a deep dive in solar...I am not even opposed to extending the moratorium a little so we can get this right...we want to be sure it's right out of the gate."

BOCC Chair Roger Rash said, "This whole thing is about profit, it's about money. It started back in the Obama era when he said 'you can have your power plants, you just won't be able to afford to run 'em,' and they started killing our power generation plants.....we forced our costs up through government, we put our farmers in a bad spot...this was all done by government, that created this mess, and now our government which is \$35 trillion in debt is subsidizing a whole industry that probably would not carry itself if it was not for the government carrying it...not only do the farmers have rights, but their

neighbors have rights too...I don't appreciate that when I'm driving into Monticello and I used to see a mountain range and now I see a bunch of wind wheels...not only am I concerned about the farmer and the rancher...what about the guy that's living next to 'em..."

Montrose County already gets San Miguel County's garbage, he said. "...These things are an eyesore to me. I think that we have to balance everybody's rights, and sometimes that takes regulation...our government has regulated an industry, shut down power plants... what about those people and their jobs? These aren't going to create jobs...I want to get this right as well...but I think the next board can address it if we approve it now...that's what good county government does..."

Special use permits would be required for all power generation facilities, not just renewables, Planning and Development Director Tallmadge Richmond said.

Isaac Ketcham spoke again, saying that Montrose County should be careful not to over-regulate local energy suppliers.

"...What we don't want to do is box in our economics. If we box in supply and demand...what will inadvertently happen is you will have a demand shift, price goes up... limiting ourselves to what we can do as a county further cuts off our ability to meet the challenges of a downward pushing regulation body...we just want to be very, very careful. If we box in our ability to supply, we could damage our community with higher prices inadvertently."

Commissioners voted two to one to deny the proposed amendment to the Montrose County Zoning regulations, to allow for a future work session to further consider the regulations. Rash voted against the denial and in support of the proposed amendment.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.



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# REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

## DELTA HEALTH FOUNDATION WELCOMES NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

*By Emily Gomez, Marketing Specialist*

DELTA—The Delta Health Foundation is excited to welcome Jess Shelton as its new Executive Director.

The Delta Health Foundation is a non-profit organization whose mission is to inspire generosity and support, as well as remarkable care in our community, through Delta Health. Donations to the Foundation help support the short and long-term goals of the hospital through education and innovation, modern equipment and the most up-to-date knowledge. “Jess brings a strong connection to the communities here in Delta County. Her leadership skills will help the Foundation to grow and expand to further serve our patients and community,” said Jonathan Cohee, MHA, OT, Delta Health Chief Executive Officer.

In her previous role, Shelton served as the Town Clerk, Economic Development Coordinator and Court Clerk for the Town of Cedaredge. She was able to organize events such as Applefest, parades and Business After hours. She has a background in criminal justice and worked as the Finance Clerk for the Community Corrections Center in Montrose and as a Court Clerk for the 7th Judicial District. “I absolutely love helping people,” said Shelton. “The Foundation offers opportunities to do just that while also strength-

ening the hospital and providing necessary services to our community. I am looking forward to many things – one of them is being able to work for a wonderful organization that holds people’s care in such high regard.”

Shelton moved to Cedaredge from Northern Colorado 11 years ago and grew up coming to Delta County to visit her family’s ranch. When she and her husband had children they decided they wanted to move here.

“When I am not working I am spending time with my husband and our two boys,” said Shelton. “We are heavily involved in youth sports. We love the outdoors and spend as much time on the Mesa as possible fishing and exploring. When time allows, I also enjoy reading, cooking and volunteering.”

Shelton looks forward to growing the Foundation to garner continued support and to provide more opportunities for the hospital and employees to grow and expand.

“From the amazing employees to the selfless donors, and dedicated Board, it is just a winning team that I am honored to be a part of,” said Shelton.

Up next for the Foundation is the Annual Delta Health Foundation Gala happening on Saturday, February 1, 2025, at the Longhorns and Lace event center in Delta.



*Jess Shelton. Courtesy photo.*

The theme is Kentucky Derby and will be a semi-formal Gala that includes dinner, a cash bar, silent and live auctions, entertainment and more. Tickets can be purchased online at [foundationdeltahealth.org/foundation-gala](https://www.foundationdeltahealth.org/foundation-gala).

For more information about the Foundation, visit <https://www.foundationdeltahealth.org/> or contact Jess Shelton at [jshelton@deltahospital.org](mailto:jshelton@deltahospital.org) or 970.399.2610.



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# OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

## DEMOCRAT POLICIES AND GOALS HAVE BEEN TO MAKE MORE PEOPLE DEPENDENT ON AN EVER-EXPANDING BIG GOVERNMENT

*Editor:*

Jack Hellner concluded a great article on Trump's policies by saying "Thank goodness for capitalism and thank goodness we elected Trump where we have a chance to reverse the cascading disaster caused by big government." For as long as I can remember, Democrat policies and goals have been to make more people dependent on an ever-expanding big government, instead of lifting people up through capitalism. Their policies accelerated the breakup of the family and vastly increased single parenthood, resulting in an epidemic of generational poverty. In capitalism people move up or down the economic ladder based on their hard work, sacrifice, and commitment – in other words, merit. In socialism / communism everyone but the elite are equal – equally poor and without any hope of improving their status. The powerful get richer while the masses suffer.

Of course, the Democrat propaganda machine is aghast at the people Trump is including in his new administration, many of whom are billionaires. How dare Trump find wealthy, highly successful people (most of whom worked their way up the economic ladder) who are willing to set aside their businesses to concentrate on cleaning up the massively bloated, inefficient, and non-functioning federal government. Rather than choose the most forward-looking, competent, non-government leaders to help him govern, Trump should surround himself with pseudo-intellectual bureaucrats and politicians who have no clue about anything outside their little beltway bubbles – and who very likely will soon stab him in the back. And don't forget to include a fair number of individuals based totally on their race and/or sexual orientation. And add in a few academics. That worked out so well for Obama and Biden.

My views on capitalism and big government are formed by my life experiences. While growing up, very few of my high school classmates could remotely be la-

beled "rich". Many were rather poor. If I am honest, I was at the bottom of the "economically challenged" list. I don't want to bore anyone, but I worked hard in various jobs starting before junior high school, saved my money, and applied myself throughout my school years. I was the first in my family to graduate from high school, much less college. After college, I continued to apply myself in a successful career in business. My wife and I are now happily retired, live a simple life, and are by no means "wealthy", but we are able to give generously each month to worthwhile charities, and be helpful to our grandkids when there is a need. Thank goodness for capitalism! Some of our children are now very well off financially – all are successful. We have our share of Masters Degrees and MBA's as well as successful entrepreneurs and tradesmen with no degrees. So you see, I am a staunch advocate of "equal opportunity," and find the Democrat push for "equal outcome" rather repulsive and un-American. I am OK with billionaires like Musk, Bezos, Buffett, Gates, and Zuckerberg being extremely rich because they didn't start out rich. They took risks, worked hard, and have been greatly rewarded. (Compare that to how the Biden Crime Family acquired their wealth.)

I know what it is like to have a real job where you are actually responsible for doing something --- to manufacture a product at a profit in an environmentally safe manner while keeping your employees safe, healthy, and happy. It is not surprising that I view the bloated federal bureaucracy with considerable mistrust and some disdain. I look forward to Musk and Ramaswamy evaluating those bureaucracies and eliminating those positions (and departments) that do nothing more than collect their bloated paychecks and excessive retirements while making life more difficult for working Americans. It doesn't bother me that only 6% of federal workers show up in person on a full time basis. Productivity is more important

than where the job is done. If it is determined that little or no work is being performed in a particular position, that position should be eliminated, whether home-based or in a mostly empty federal building.

I have to comment on Sue Schmidt's latest (MM 12/9) challenge to my opinions (MM 12/2.) As mentioned previously, I trust readers will draw their own conclusions regarding our polar opposite views. They can decide, for example, whether my concerns about the administrative bureaucracies eclipsing our constitutional form of government are valid, or they can agree with Schmidt that Trump is trying for an "autocracy" because his cabinet nominees are not career politicians/ bureaucrats and believe in Trump's goals – and because billionaire (and genius) Elon Musk will play a role. They can also decide whether they agree with Schmidt's making excuses for Biden pardoning his son and lying about it – and her belief that father and son didn't really accept million-dollar bribes.

To me, Schmidt's three-page letter tends to support the main point of my previous letter: Dems focus on (and lie about) Trump and totally ignore serious destructive actions actually taken by their own party. It's a lot easier for Schmidt to criticize my opinions than it is for her to write a letter extolling any of Biden/Harris' non-existent accomplishments (or Biden's lucidity), and to ignore Trump's very successful first term. Her repeated very lengthy attempts to refute my opinions lead me to conclude she might be suffering from HDS (Henrie Derangement Syndrome) in addition to TDS (Trump Derangement Syndrome). I will try to not respond to her in the future and let our letters stand on their own merits.

Here is this week's chuckle: Don't forget to take advantage of Hunter Biden's close-out sale on his paintings, which are now marked down 99.9%, plus buy one get one free. Can't wait.

*Ed Henrie, Montrose*



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# REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

## JULIE MILLER HONORED WITH COMMISSIONERS' AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE



*Courtesy Photo-Julie Miller and Fellow Nominees. From Left to Right: Commissioner Sue Hansen, Commissioner Roger Rash, Dean Baumgardner, Sarah Manore, Julie Andress, Laura Lenihan, Julie Miller, CJ Black, Brandon Watson, Lanny Paulson, Keegan Harmon, Cassie Coca, Commissioner Keith Caddy, County Manager Frank A. Rodriguez.*

### Special to the Mirror

**MONTROSE COUNTY**—Montrose County is proud to announce the inaugural recipient of the Commissioners' Award for Excellence. This prestigious award recognizes outstanding contributions and dedication to public service.

Julie Miller, Program Manager for the Montrose County Case Management Agency, has been honored with this inaugural award. Miller played a pivotal role in establishing the Case Management Agency, which serves Montrose, San Miguel,

and Ouray counties. The agency assists children and adults in maintaining safe, independent lives, providing essential services such as in-home care, home modifications and medical equipment.

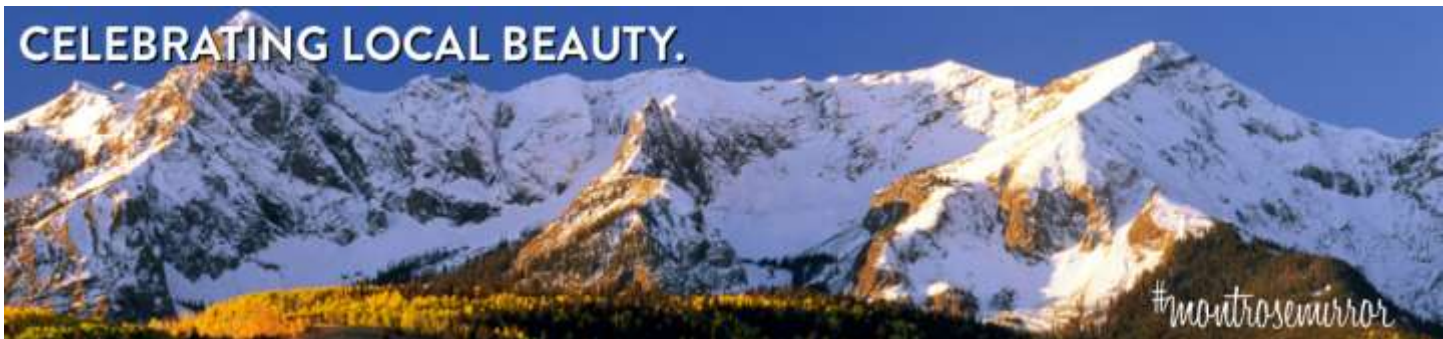
"Julie's tireless efforts and innovative approach have been instrumental in the success of the Case Management Agency," said Jennifer Sherwood, Human Services Director.

"Her dedication to helping others is truly inspiring, and she has set a high standard for excellence in public service."

Commissioner Sue Hansen added, "Julie's visionary leadership has transformed the lives of countless individuals in our community. Her commitment to providing compassionate and effective care is a testament to her dedication to public service."

The award was presented to Miller at the County Christmas Party on Dec. 6 in a room full of staff and their families.

To learn more about the Montrose County Case Management Agency, please visit [www.montrosecounty.net/cma](http://www.montrosecounty.net/cma).





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# COMMUNITY NEWS BRIEFS

## VOLUNTEERS MAKE WREATHS FOR VETERANS' GRAVES



*Lorraine Shide and John Boughton share a hug after making wreaths for veterans' graves. Courtesy photos.*



*Volunteers join in annual wreath-making at Camelot Gardens in Montrose.*

*Special to the Mirror*

MONTROSE-Dozens of volunteers gathered at Camelot Gardens Saturday morning to tie bows on wreaths that would later be placed on veterans' graves.

Local veterans from the America Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans and the Montrose Veterans Memorial Coalition joined in the annual event honoring those who served and have passed away. The tradition began many years ago when Camelot owner Sheree Wanner opened the doors and provided the pine boughs to make the wreaths.

On Saturday volunteers tied more than 500 wreaths, according to American Legion Riders commander John Boughton who helped organize the event.

"Lorraine Shide made the bows attached to the wreaths," Boughton said, "She was a teacher and is in charge of the ASTRA Club and was a major supporter of the Navy Junior ROTC back in the day."

Following the preparation, the volunteers drove to Valley Lawn, Grand View, and Cedar Creek cemeteries to pay respects and place the wreaths on the graves.

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# MONTROSE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT RE-1J CAREER PATHWAYS PROGRAM RECOGNIZED BY COLORADO ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BOARDS



Courtesy photo.

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE— Montrose County School District (MCSD) has been honored with the 2024 Student Achievement High School Award for its innovative Career Pathways Program at the 84th Annual Colorado Association of School Boards (CASB) Convention, held Dec. 5-7 at The Broadmoor. This prestigious recognition highlights the district’s commitment to providing students with real-world learning experiences that prepare them for success in college, careers, and life.

The MCSD Career Pathways Program offers students opportunities to explore diverse industries such as manufacturing, health care, public safety, and more. Through partnerships with local businesses, hands-on learning opportunities, and engaging course offerings, the program equips students with the skills and confidence needed to pursue their chosen careers. Career Pathways students were present at the convention to be recognized and receive the award. Montrose High School student Brylee Baines, Olathe High School student Brock Fassett, and Peak Virtual Academy student Spencer



Montrose County School District (MCSD) has been honored with the 2024 Student Achievement High School Award for its innovative Career Pathways Program at the 84th Annual Colorado Association of School Boards (CASB) Convention, held Dec. 5-7 at The Broadmoor. Courtesy photo.

Leggett proudly showcased their work and presented to an audience of close to 1,500 CASB members.

“This award is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our staff, students, and community partners,” said Dr. Carrie Stephenson, Superintendent of Montrose County School District. “Our Career Pathways Program not only prepares students for their future but also strengthens our local economy by developing the next generation of skilled professionals. We are honored to receive this recognition and remain committed to providing every stu-

dent with opportunities to thrive.”

The Career Pathways Program represents a cornerstone of MCSD’s mission to ensure all students are prepared for life after high school. From classroom-based projects to on-the-job training, the program fosters innovation and hands-on experiences that inspire students to reach their full potential. This award underscores the district’s commitment to excellence and innovation in education. For more information about Montrose County School District’s Career Pathways Program, visit [www.mcsc.org](http://www.mcsc.org).

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## RE-1J BOARD VOTES 5 TO 2 TO DENY MCA CHARTER APPLICATION *From pg 1*

All directors were present for the meeting, including Board President Sarah Fishing (District E); Vice President Steve Bush (District G); District A Director Neisha Balleck; District B Director Ted Valerio; District C Director Alice Murphy; District D Director Tom West, and District F Director Jody Hovde.

There were also constituents in attendance. President Fishing opened the meeting and led in saying the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Board voted to approve the meeting agenda.

### STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Re-1J Public Information Officer Matthew Jenkins presented the Student Spotlight as well as recent awards, recognition, and donations.

The School Resource Officer Student of the Month Award was presented by SRO Trevis Booth. A seasoned veteran of the job, Booth nevertheless struggled to hold back tears as he presented the award to Montrose High School Student Braxton Sidanyez. Sidanyez was present to graciously accept the award before leaving to join his church choir.

PIO Matthew Jenkins also recognized Olathe High School students Marlee Fenske and Rebecca Taylor, and Montrose High School Student Joelle Potts for making it into the Colorado All-State Choir and congratulated the Montrose High School football team on their Second Place 4A State Finish.

Finally, Jenkins praised the Montrose Career Pathways students who earned the Student Achievement High School Award at the 2024 Colorado Association of School Boards (CASB) Convention earlier this month at the Broadmoor. "Montrose High School Student Brylee Baines, Olathe High School Student Brock Fassett, and Peak Virtual Academy Student Spencer Leggett proudly showcased their work and presented to an audience of close to 1,500 CASB members," Jenkins said.

Altrusa Apple Awards for December were awarded to Pomona Elementary Special Education Teacher Tina Rudy and to Olathe Elementary Fourth Grade teacher Melissa Cary.

No board advisory committee updates were presented. The District Accountability Committee (DAC) met, but their actions would be discussed in a later portion of the meeting.

### OCTOBER COUNT AND ENROLLMENT REPORT

Finance Director Emily Imus presented information on current enrollment and on per pupil funding based on the 2024-2025 October Count. This year's official count day for 2024-2025 was Oct. 1, Imus said. The Funded Pupil Count is 5,671. The number of Full-Time-Equivalent (FTEs) is down by 83.5. When compared to the budget (5,748.5 FTEs), and after five-year averaging, the District's funded Pupil Count is down 36.5, resulting in \$420,000 in lessened revenue, to be offset by additional one-time funding.

Overall student enrollment is 47 students lower than last year's October Count, Imus said, and the funded pupil count is 19 students lower than last year.

### COMMUNITY INPUT

The board heard comments from constituents. A number of speakers expressed support for the Montrose Classical Academy, which would be presented for approval later in the meeting. Those in support included Forrest Faulkoner and child, as well as Katherine Sharman. John Brown also spoke in favor of MCA, after noting that microphones would be very appropriate for use at school board meetings, as it was difficult to hear what was being said.

Sarah Field spoke in support of the Montrose Classical Academy, as did Rita Rivas, who said that choices are crucial to educational success, "...If we want to be the best country we can be, those kids should have options to grow to their full potential."

### CONSENT AGENDA

Directors voted unanimously to accept Consent Agenda items including Personnel Report as presented.

### NEW BUSINESS

The first item under New Business was a Recommendation to approve and certify the Mill Levy for the Property Tax Year 2024 and Resolution 19-2024 Certify Property Tax Mills Authorized By Colorado

Statutes for 2024-2025.

Imus presented certification information to the Board. Total program funding is \$65.5M, 65 percent of which comes from State funding, Imus said.

**Background**-As stated in the meeting agenda, "*The Certification of Mill Levies for the Property Tax Year 2024 for taxes to be collected in 2025 are presented for Board approval. The General Fund Mill Levy is 26.046, located on Line 7 and the Bond Fund Mill Levy is 2.292, located on Line 8 for a total mill of 28.338 located on Line 13. As a reference point, last year's mill was 24.989 for the General Fund and 2.416 for the Bond Fund for a total mill of 27.405. The Net Assessed Valuation was \$810,935,640 in the prior year and is \$838,644,650 this year, which is a 3.4% increase in value. The mill levy would have been 68.953 without state funding. House Bill 21-1164 was signed into law June 2021, which mandates the District to increase our mill levy set in 2020 of 21.967 to 27.000 gradually over the next 6 years. Tax credits of 5.033 were put in place in December 2020 for the District to backfill the difference between the 21.967 and 27.000. Beginning in the 2021 tax year for taxes to be collected in 2022, taxpayers in our District will see a one mill per year increase in their annual property taxes through the 2025 tax year with an increase of .033 in year 6 to reach the 27.000 mills.*"

The Board of Education voted unanimously to approve and certify the Mill Levy for the Property Tax Year 2024 and to approve Resolution 19-2024 Certify Property Tax Mills Authorized By Colorado Statutes for 2024-2025.

As Imus introduced the 2023-2024 Audited financial statements for consideration, she thanked Margie Whitcomb of the Finance Department for her invaluable contribution to the audit process. "I just want to thank her for all of her involvement."

This year, Auditor Paul Backes of McMahan & Associates appeared virtually to present the Audit Report, which was approved unanimously by the Board of Education. Backes said that the RE-1J schools have a "very high performing"



## **RE-1J BOARD VOTES 5 TO 2 TO DENY MCA CHARTER APPLICATION *From previous pg***

finance team. “You’re kind of in the sweet spot,” he said more than once.

The Board of Education considered a Recommendation to approve the authorization for the Superintendent or her designee to proceed with the purchase of the 3.5-acre Producers Coop property at the price of \$400,000.

RE-1J Director of Operations James Pavlich said that the potential purchase “Gives us flexibility for the future.”

The Board voted unanimously to allow RE-1J Superintendent Carrie Stephenson to move forward with the potential acquisition of the Producers Co-op property at 644 and 500 South Rio Grande Avenue, “to support future district operations and strategic growth.” The proposed purchase price for the property is \$400,000. The meeting agenda states, “The district intends to leverage funds obtained from the recent sale of the Brown Ranch property to complete this acquisition, ensuring minimal impact on other operational budgets.”

The final New Business item on the agenda was “Recommendation to (Approve/Deny/Approve with Conditions) the Montrose Classical Academy Charter School,” in which the Board was given three op-

tions—to approve the charter application, to deny the charter application, or to approve the charter application with conditions. They could also propose an alternative motion.

Board of Education directors shared their reasoning one by one prior to the vote as Hovde proposed a motion to deny the charter school application, which was approved in a four to three vote with Balleck, Valerio, and Fishing voting to deny the proposed motion.

The board then entered Executive Session, “to discuss charter school resolution in accordance with C.R.S. 24-6-402 (4)(b) and then return to regular session.”

Upon returning to regular session, Directors voted on Resolution 2024, to deny charter school application by Montrose Classical Academy. Directors Balleck and Valerio voted to deny Resolution 20-2024; all other directors voted to approve.

Board President Sarah Fishing said that a great deal of work went into the application and that there are a lot of details in the resolution. “I hope that the MCA Board takes this as constructive criticism and constructive feedback, and that they consider all the information that is in the resolution which is very detailed, and po-

tentially work on a new application that takes those things into consideration...”

Hovde said she is not opposed to a charter. “...But a charter that’s complete, that I think has sustainability over the long term, as we’re going into uncharted times.”

### **EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER**


The ECC dashboard is included in the board packet for the meeting. ECC enrollment is down since last year; Preschool enrollment at the Outer Range Campus is down as well.

### **ENROLLMENT REPORT**

Finance Director Emily Imus presented the Enrollment Report. District enrollment as of Dec. 5 is 5,978 students, which is two fewer than last month, and 76 students fewer than this time last year. Imus said that the State demographer has said that the birth rates in Montrose County are very low, “...and I’ve seen the impacts in preschool and in Kindergarten; with our declining enrollment that’s where it’s hit the most.” District D Director Tom West said that the ninth grade class at Montrose High School is a big class.

Fishing said that the board meeting schedule for 2025 is ready.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.



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*Thank you for reading The Montrose Mirror.***



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# 2024 ELEVATE GIRLS BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

By Cliff Dodge

**MONTROSE**-The basketball season has arrived in Montrose. This year the Red Hawks have created their own pre-season basketball tournament and invited several area teams and even a team from the Front Range to compete in this new tournament. The invitees are: Eagle Valley B/G; Coal Ridge G; Steamboat Springs B/G; Weld Central B/G and Montrose B/G.

## **MONTROSE GIRLS 55, WELD CENTRAL GIRLS 25**

The Red Hawks stormed out of the gate on Thursday evening as they ran past the Rebels of Weld Central High school by the score of 55-25. The Red Hawks offense fired on all cylinders leading 21-12 at the mid-point in the game. The defense forced many turnovers and the defense kept the Rebels off balance throughout the contest. Junior Maggie Legg led all scorers with 19 points which included three 3-point baskets from long range. Junior London Schafer chipped in with 10 points and Lilly Nelson and Sadie Wareham added 5 points each. Nine Red Hawk players contributed points to the final total of 55 points.

Other statistics included 33 rebounds of which 17 were on the offensive glass. The Red Hawks passed out 11 assists, had 10 steals and turned the ball over 22 times. The Red Hawks shot 49 percent from the floor.

## **MONTROSE GIRLS 31, COAL RIDGE GIRLS 10**

The Montrose Red Hawks second game saw the home team take on the Coal Valley Titans, losers of their first game to Eagle Valley by the score of 46-27. The two teams engaged in a very low scoring contest that saw the Red Hawks lead 10-2 at the half-way point.

The Red Hawks found their shoot touch in the second half as they outscored the Titans 21 to 8 making the final score 31-10 in favor of the Red Hawks. Junior Point Guard Maggie Legg led all scorers with 13 points, while Junior Lilly Nelson chipped in with 9 points. Nelson and Senior Brooke Williams each had 5 rebounds to lead the

Red Hawks in that department. The Red Hawks passed out 9 assists, had six steals and turned the ball over 20 times. The Red Hawks shot 40 percent from the field for the contest.

## **MONTROSE GIRLS 32, EAGLE VALLEY DEVILS 25**

The Montrose Red Hawks remained undefeated on Saturday as they polished off the Eagle Valley Devils 32-25. The contest was close all the way and the Red Hawks prevailed down the stretch and came away with a 7-point victory. Junior Maggie Legg led all scorers with 11 points. She was followed by Senior Brooke Williams with 8 points and junior Lilly Nelson with 6 points. Williams and Junior Maliah Leiba led the Red Hawks in rebounding with 6 caroms each. The Red Hawks passed out 9 assists, had five steals and turned the ball over 14 times.

Next action for the Red Hawks will be an appearance at the Basalt Invitational next weekend in Glenwood Springs.

## **RED HAWKS PUMMEL LONGHORNS RED HAWKS 60, BASALT LONGHORNS 19**

The Montrose Red Hawks jump-started their offense by scoring 24 points in the first quarter of action while holding the Longhorns to 3 points. This set the tone for the contest as the Red Hawks scored in double digits in the final three quarters of the game making the final score 60-19. The Red Hawks defense was stout and denied the Longhorns any opportunity for second shots throughout the contest. Junior Maggie Legg led all scorers with 20 points. Lillian Vender, a junior, cashed in 10 points. Nine Red Hawks dented the scoring column in a game that was not close. Nine Red Hawks also had rebounds to snuff out any chance of a Longhorn comeback. The Red Hawks passed out 11 assists, had 19 steals and turned the basketball over only eight times. The Red



*Basketball season has arrived in Montrose. Photo by Cliff Dodge.*

Hawks shot 50 percent from the field and 61 percent from the free throw stripe.

## **RED HAWKS 55, MOFFAT COUNTY BULLDOGS 26**

The Red Hawks wasted little time in establishing dominance versus the Bulldogs. After an even first quarter the Red Hawks clamped on a smothering defense and won going away. The Red Hawks scored in double figures in all four quarters giving the opposition no chance for a rally.

Once again Junior Maggie Legg led all scorers with 20 points. Once again nine Red Hawks hit the scoring column and 10 Red Hawks cashed in rebounds as well. Junior Lilly Nelson led the Red Hawks with 8 caroms including 4 on the offensive glass. The Red Hawks 10 assists and 10 steals.

## **PEAK TO PEAK PUMAS 43, RED HAWKS 23**

The Red Hawks win streak ended at 5 games as the Peak to Peak Pumas put up a suffocating defense and held the Red Hawks to 23 points as they suffered their first defeat of the season 43-23. The Red Hawks shot only 29 percent from the field, had only three steals and turned the basketball over 21 times.

The Red Hawks take their 5-1 record to Pagosa Springs for their third tournament in three weeks. They will take on Pagosa Springs, Pueblo Central, and Glenwood Springs. The team will then take the Christmas holidays off and return to action on Jan. 7 when they welcome the Basalt Longhorns to the fieldhouse.

# RED HAWKS BASKETBALL WIN 2, LOSE 1

By Cliff Dodge

## PEAK TO PEAK PUMAS 40, RED HAWKS 35

The Montrose Red Hawks basketball team headed for Glenwood Springs last week-end and came away with two wins and one loss to improve their overall record to 5 wins and 1 loss.

The Red Hawks led 8-5 after the initial period and were virtually even at the half-way point. The Pumas then add 2 additional points to their lead in the third quarter and tacked on 2 more in the fourth quarter to make the final score 40-35.

Caleb Ferguson led all Red Hawk scorers with 15 points while Senior Brekin Hutto and Junior C. J. Rocco each chipped in with 8 points. Junior Lane Pressler led the Red Hawks with 7 rebounds. The Red Hawks passed out 10 assists, had eight steals and shot 39 percent from the floor.

## MONTROSE RED HAWKS 64, WHEAT RIDGE FARMERS 40

The Montrose Red Hawks, after suffering a 5-point loss to the Pumas, rebounded in major fashion and took out their frustrations on the Wheat Ridge Farmers 64 to 40. The Red Hawks outscored the Farmers 17-7 in the opening stanza and then proceeded to open up their offense and win going away.

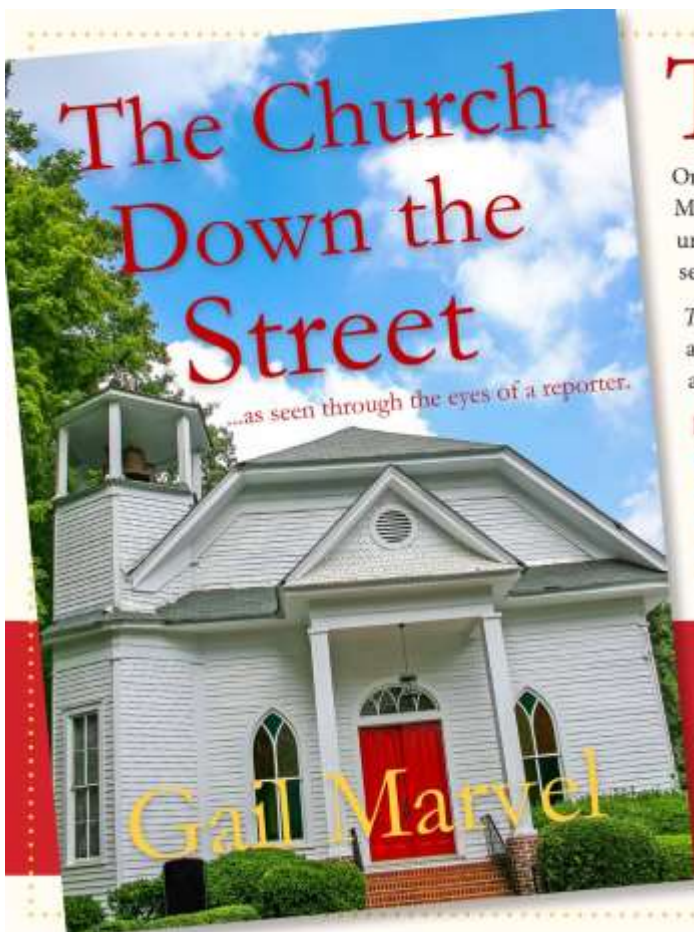
Seven Red Hawks hit the scoring column with Senior Caleb Ferguson leading all scorers with 23 points. Senior Brekin Hutto was not far behind as he added 18 points to the Red Hawks total. Junior Lane Pressler led the Red Hawks with 6 rebounds. The Red Hawks passed out 20 assists, had 10 steals and only turned the basketball over 10 times. The Hawks shot 75 percent from the 2-point area.

## MONTROSE RED HAWKS 50, FORGE CHRISTIAN FURY 49

The best game of the tournament was played on Saturday afternoon as the Red Hawks fought valiantly and turned a 2-

point deficit into a 1 point victory in the fourth quarter. The Red Hawks were down 4 points at the end of the first quarter and fought to stay close through the next two quarters. It was their offensive spurt that secured victory for the Red Hawks as they outscored the Fury 13-6 down the stretch. Seven Red Hawks scored in the ball game with Senior Kaleb Ferguson led the way with 21 points. Senior Brady Cooling scored 8 while Hutto and Rocco each added 7 points. Ferguson and Hutto also had 6 and 5 rebounds to lead the Red Hawks in that department. The Red Hawks had 7 assists, six steals and turned the ball over 14 times.

Next up for the Red Hawks will be a third straight tournament, this one in Pagosa Springs. The team will take on Pagosa Springs, Pueblo Central, and Glenwood Springs before taking the Christmas holidays off. Next action will be Jan. 7 when the Basalt Longhorns come to visit.



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# OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

## MCA DECISION HAS ONLY IGNITED A STRONGER RESOLVE, THE "APPEAL MOVEMENT"

Dear Mrs. Fishing and MCSD Board,  
I am writing to address some comments you made during the school board meeting on Tuesday, December 10th, particularly during the discussion on the MCA resolution. While I understand there will always be differing opinions, some of your remarks stood out as problematic and warrant accountability.

First, as president of the board, it is not your role to talk down to fellow board members or misconstrue their statements. Specifically, I am referring to your comments about Neisha Balleck. Neisha pointed out how MCA would differ from public schools by offering unique elements like cursive and Latin instruction. Instead of addressing this fairly, you appeared to belittle her remarks. Can you confirm that all Montrose/Olathe schools currently implement a full classical core curriculum or teach cursive universally? If not, questioning Neisha's point seemed less about facts and more about discrediting her perspective, which was uncalled for.

Your dismissal of Latin as unimportant based on your own experience was equally troubling. If you had pursued a medical or law degree or spoke languages like Spanish or Italian, you might have a greater appreciation for its value. If you spoke

Spanish and still saw no benefit in it, I'd be shocked. While it may not have benefited you personally, using that anecdote to undermine another board member's perspective came across as dismissive and narrow-minded. Frankly, an apology to Neisha would not be misplaced. Her restraint in not responding publicly deserves acknowledgment.

Next, you needed a way to diminish the overwhelming parent support. Your argument was that all the parents who did not fill out an EOI are essentially saying no to this school, as if they do not want it to happen. That's like saying when Bon Iver comes to town, and I don't buy a ticket, it means I don't like Bon Iver. I love Bon Iver! Just because people didn't actively participate doesn't mean they're expressing opposition—it's just as likely they didn't have enough information, didn't care, or didn't feel it was relevant to them. Silence doesn't inherently mean "no."

Lastly, your comments about the resolution itself gave the impression that the decision to deny was already made. Criticizing the curriculum, speaking down to Neisha, and then choosing to "Approve with Conditions" felt performative and insincere, particularly when it seemed destined for denial all along. Recognizing the overwhelming community support for

MCA while ultimately ignoring it sends a clear message: acknowledgment without meaningful action is equivalent to dismissal. Those who denied the resolution disregarded the will of the very people who elected you.

If the intent behind a wordy eight-page denial resolution of an application (one that your board itself deemed complete) was to justify your votes and deter opposition, I believe that approach is misguided and will do the opposite. Your acknowledgment of the hard work put in by MCA feels ironic when weighed against the decision to deny the application based on conditions that were deemed too burdensome to address.

Suggesting that MCA simply reapply is a standard response often given when boards deny an application. However, it gives the impression that the hope is for MCA to feel discouraged and unwilling to persist. Let me assure you, this decision has only ignited a stronger resolve, the "Appeal Movement". This movement will continue—whether through an appeal, a reapplication, new district board members, or whatever steps are necessary.

"Liberty is not the power of doing what we like, but the right to do what we ought."--Lord Acton

- Forrest Faulconer, Montrose





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# OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5M Enterprises, LLC/USC Labor Solutions</li> <li>Alexander Orthodontics</li> <li>All Points Transit</li> <li>Alpine Bank</li> <li>Alzheimer's Association Colorado</li> <li>Atha Team</li> <li>Atlasta Solar Center</li> <li>Bank of Colorado</li> <li>Basecamp Apartments</li> <li>Black Canyon Boys &amp; Girls Club</li> <li>Budget Blinds</li> <li>Builders First Source/Probuild</li> <li>Buzzing Byte Marketing</li> <li>Carnelot Gardens</li> <li>Cedar Creek Lodging &amp; RV</li> <li>Centennial RV Park</li> <li>Climmaron Creek/Hidden Lake Community</li> <li>Citizens State Bank</li> <li>Cobble Creek</li> <li>Colleen Aller Real Estate</li> <li>Colorado Workforce Center</li> <li>Montrose WFC</li> <li>Community Banks of Colorado</li> <li>Culver's</li> <li>DART/City of Montrose</li> <li>DWC CPAs and Advisors</li> <li>Dyslexia Foundation</li> <li>ElderAdo Financial</li> <li>Elevate Internet</li> <li>Elite Dog Walking</li> <li>Elk Ridge Rehab</li> <li>Etwood Staffing Services</li> <li>Experience on Demand</li> <li>Fairfield Inn &amp; Suites By Marriott</li> <li>Farm Bureau Insurance</li> <li>Fairmont Furniture</li> <li>Flower Motor Company</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Forest Insurance</li> <li>Glass Doctor</li> <li>High Desert Haulers</li> <li>HorseFly</li> <li>Hot Water Productions</li> <li>HR Block</li> <li>Inject Wellness</li> <li>Innovative Visions</li> <li>Jaz Print &amp; Promo</li> <li>Jetton Legal</li> <li>KKCO 11 News</li> <li>KREX TV</li> <li>Lifespan Psychiatry of Colorado</li> <li>Local Focus</li> <li>MarillacHealth</li> <li>MEDC</li> <li>Miss Suzy's Educational Services</li> <li>Montrose Business Times</li> <li>Montrose Community Foundation</li> <li>Montrose County Board of County Commissioners</li> <li>Montrose Longevity Clinic</li> <li>Montrose Mirror</li> <li>Montrose Professional Network</li> <li>Montrose Recreation District</li> <li>Montrose Regional Library District</li> <li>Moore Connections</li> <li>Mountain Group of Kellier Williams</li> <li>Realty Southwest Associates</li> <li>Mountain West Insurance &amp; Financial Services</li> <li>Museum of the Mountain West</li> <li>Northwestern Mutual</li> <li>NuVista Federal Credit Union</li> <li>Olathe Sweet Corn Festival</li> <li>Our Town Matters</li> <li>Partners of Delta, Montrose &amp; Ouray</li> <li>Phoenix Fitness</li> <li>ProSpace Interiors</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Red Cross Region 10</li> <li>Rocky Mountain High Dispensaries</li> <li>Rose Bowl</li> <li>San Juan Coffeehouse</li> <li>Sandoval Construction</li> <li>Secret Creek</li> <li>Sharing Ministries</li> <li>Shelter Insurance</li> <li>Silver Basin Brewing</li> <li>Skytan Services</li> <li>SOM Footwear</li> <li>Southern Star Self Storage</li> <li>Star Light Home Health</li> <li>Stout Rentals</li> <li>Sure Stay Plus by Best Western</li> <li>TEI Rock Drills</li> <li>Teri Farley Photography</li> <li>The Real Estate Store</li> <li>The Rehab Vets</li> <li>The Screen Medic</li> <li>The Stone House</li> <li>The Temple Events</li> <li>Timberline Bank</li> <li>T-Mobile</li> <li>Townsquare Media</li> <li>Trailhead Clinics</li> <li>True Grit Café</li> <li>United Country Real Estate</li> <li>Unrivaled Plumbing</li> <li>US Bank</li> <li>Visiting Angels</li> <li>Volunteers of America</li> <li>Vybe Med Spa</li> <li>Weshawken</li> <li>Western Paper Distributors</li> <li>Western Slope Appliance</li> </ul> |
|--|---|--|

### CULTIVATED MEAT IS GROWN FROM LIVESTOCK CELLS, WITHOUT SLAUGHTER

To the editor,

As the impacts of climate change become more widely felt and acknowledged, our political leaders should support increased public funding for cultivated-meat research. For those who don't know, cultivated meat is grown from livestock cells, without slaughter. The new protein is expected to require a fraction of the greenhouse-gas emissions that traditional meat does.

Many people aren't aware that animal agriculture is one of the most significant causes of global warming. While cultivated meat has earned regulatory approval in the United States, it's currently too expensive to mass produce. This can be rectified with the help of environmentally-conscious politicians backing more government money for cellular-agriculture development.

Jon Hochschartner, Granby, CT

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# OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

## RESTRICTIONS ON LAND USE ARE DIRECT RESTRICTIONS ON PERSONAL FREEDOM

### *Editor:*

**Land and Liberty: The Roots of American Freedom and the Fight for Open Lands**

In the tapestry of American history, two threads are inextricably woven together: land and liberty. Far more than mere physical territory, land has been the sacred ground upon which the American ideal of freedom has been cultivated, challenged, and redefined.

### *The Philosophical Landscape*

The connection between land and liberty predates the United States itself. Indigenous cultures understood this relationship intimately - land was not a commodity to be owned, but a living entity with which humans shared a profound, reciprocal relationship.

### *The Modern Battleground: Preserving Public Access*

Today, this fundamental relationship is under siege. The proposed Dolores Monument and National Conservation Area (NCA) represent a direct threat to the core American principle of land accessibility and personal liberty. These designations are not conservation efforts - they are instruments of restriction, transforming public lands into controlled territories that limit human interaction and economic opportunity.

### *The Threat of Monuments and NCAs*

Monuments and National Conservation Areas sound benign, even noble. But in practice, they are sophisticated mechanisms of land control that:

- Restrict traditional land uses
- Limit economic activities like grazing, mining, and recreation
- Reduce local community decision-making power
- Create bureaucratic barriers to land access
- Diminish individual and community autonomy

### *The Dolores Controversy*

The proposed Dolores Monument and NCA represent a critical flashpoint in the ongoing battle for land rights. These designations threaten to:

- Limit local residents' traditional land use
- Reduce economic opportunities in rural communities
- Create additional federal bureaucratic control
- Infringe on generations of local land management practices

### *Liberty Requires Open Lands*

True liberty is not about preservation

through restriction, but about maintaining open, accessible territories where individuals and communities can thrive. The cry "No more monuments, no more NCAs" is a direct defense of fundamental American freedoms.

### *The Cost of Restriction*

Each new monument, each new conservation area:

- Reduces local economic autonomy
- Limits traditional land uses
- Increases federal control
- Diminishes community self-determination

### *A Call to Action*

The fight against the Dolores Monument and NCA is more than a local issue - it's a national stand for liberty. It represents a

crucial moment in defending the principle that lands should remain open, accessible, and managed by those who know them best.

### *Conclusion*

Land and liberty are not just connected - they are two expressions of the same fundamental human desire for autonomy, dignity, and self-determination. Restrictions on land use are direct restrictions on personal freedom.

The battle cry is clear: Halt the Dolores Monument.

Halt the Dolores NCA. No more monuments. No more NCAs. Preserve our lands, protect our liberties.

*Sean M Pond, West End*



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# OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

## INTERNATIONALLY THE US ECONOMY IS BOOMING WHILE AMERICANS STRUGGLE—THE RESULT OF MULTIPLE FACTORS, NOT PARTY AFFILIATION

*Editor:*

First, although party affiliation should not be anyone's business but my own, that information is easily available online. But, to address Henrie's presumption of my political affiliation, my vote is directed toward those candidates with values I find most important to me, as shown below, not what party they are affiliated with: The constitution and rule of law over chaos and insurrection.

Policy over party.

Truth over lies.

### Trump's Promises to Americans

Trump won. Now it's time for Henrie to focus on the promises Trump made to the Americans who supported him, whether he met those commitments, and the consequences of his actions:

On day one, carry out the largest mass deportation in U.S. history.

End inflation and make American affordable again.

Cut federal funding to schools that teach "critical theory" and "transgender" matters.

Terminate the Green New Scam and end electric vehicle incentives and mandates. End taxes on tips and Social Security income.

Replace Obamacare.

Expand child tax credit to \$5,000 a year per child.

End the Ukraine/Russian war before Inauguration Day.

Above are excerpts from *Here are the campaign promises Trump and Harris have made to voters*, November 7, 2024, CBS, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/trump-harris-campaign-promises-2024-election/>

Drill baby drill to reduce our energy costs.

Impose a 10 to 20 percent across-the-board tariff on all \$3 trillion worth of U.S. goods imported, a 60 percent tariff on all Chinese goods, and a 25 percent tariff on Canada and Mexico goods.

Not cut one penny from Social Security or Medicare and not raise the retirement age.

Get rid of military that are woke.

Secure elections by calling for same-day voting, paper ballots, proof of citizenship and voter identification.

Above are excerpts from *24 things Donald Trump is promising to do*, August 7, 2024, PBS Politics, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/24-things-donald-trump-is-promising-to-do>

Okay in case Henrie forgot, here are some of Trump's promises. Maybe he could focus on these?

### HERE IS MY LAUGHABLE – Talk About Trump's Lies and Deception – Tariffs Won't Cost Consumers BEFORE ELECTION BECOMES "Can't Guarantee Anything" WHEN ELECTED

When asked by *Meet the Press'* Kristen Welker whether Trump could guarantee that his tariff plans would not mean American families end up paying more, Trump replied: "I can't guarantee anything. I can't guarantee tomorrow."

### RALLY TALK – PRESIDENTIAL ABOUT TURN

Trump repeatedly said during rallies this year that WE would not pay the tariffs but instead the foreign country or the retailer would pay for them irrespective of the fact that economist and Harris said this was a sales tax on Americans.

"We're going to be a tariff nation. **It's not going to be a cost to you**, it's going to be a cost to another country." *Trumps Rally in Mosinee, Wisconsin*, September 7, 2024

<https://x.com/acyn/status/1832508262316699871?s=46>:

**She is a liar.** She makes up crap. I am going to **put tariffs on other countries** coming into our country, and that **has nothing to do with taxes to us.** That is a tax on another country. *Trump rally in Arizona August 23, 2024* – <https://x.com/acyn/status/1827139464906600538?s=46>  
In September, he repeated the claim during an interview with Fox News: "It's not a tax on the middle class. It's a tax on another country."

### These Factors Measure the Strength of Our Economy – Use Them to Compare Trump versus Biden Success Not Unsubstantiated Rhetoric

Economically, Trump was more successful than Biden in some areas and Biden was more successful than Trump in others. Ultimately, COVID which began in January 2020 in the US and was declared ended on January 30, 2023 (three years later), had a major influence on inflation, pricing, employment, and housing costs. While many suffered from these issues, the pandemic was a trigger that could not have been controlled no matter who served as president.

**Economic Growth** – Real GDP Change (GDP) is a foundational measure of economic performance. Trump campaigned on his ability to boost GDP growth. That didn't happen.

*Real GDP (% change)* – A measure of a country's economic activity, size, and health over a period of time. It measures value of all goods and services produced minus the value of the goods and services used to produce them.

Trump term January 20, 2017 – January 20, 2021 - Biden term January 20, 2021 – January 20, 2025

### Trump

First Quarter 2017, 2.0%  
First Quarter 2018, 3.3%  
First Quarter 2019, 2.2%  
First Quarter 2020, -5.3%  
Second Quarter 2020, -28%  
Third Quarter 2020, 34.8%  
Fourth Quarter 2020, 4.2%

### Biden

First Quarter 2021, 5.2%  
First Quarter 2022, -2.0%  
First Quarter 2023, 2.2%  
First Quarter 2024, 1.6%  
Second Quarter 2024, 3.0%

**Stock Market** – Stocks rose 48.1% under Trump and 49.6% under Biden.

**Inflation** – Inflation is the rate at which prices rise over time. The reasons for inflation are varied but ultimately it comes down to the basics of supply and demand. When Trump took office, inflation was at 2%. When he left, inflation was at 1%. When Biden took office, inflation was 1%. Currently, inflation is at 3%. But wait, inflation reached 9% in 2022,

## ***ECONOMY RESULT OF MULTIPLE FACTORS, NOT PARTY AFFILIATION From previous pg***

one year after Biden took office. WHY?

Covid emerged in the US in January 2020. By March, businesses closed, non-essential workers stayed home, and the economy ground to a halt. People stopped buying things as paying the mortgage or rent was sometimes a struggle. With these shutdowns, supplies were low and, due to lack of work, purchases were low as well. As a result, prices stayed relatively flat. Remember when you couldn't buy toilet paper and waited months for an appliance? Well, when we emerged from Covid in 2023, people were making money and demand for goods outpaced the backed-up supply chain. Prices increased. Other factors such as energy supply and access to labor also influenced the supply and price of goods.

***While the President has limited impact on inflation other factors have a far greater influence on inflation.***

***The Federal Reserve:*** The Federal Reserve, as the central bank of the US, influences the money supply and credit conditions. It can influence inflation. Since the Federal Reserve was intended to act independently from the president, any presidential influence currently is informal.

***Budget:*** Deficit spending creates artificial demand and is inflationary so Congress influences inflation as they are responsible for budget adjustments and approval.

***Free Trade:*** Free trade decreases inflation while tariffs are inflationary as they make imports more expensive.

So, logically, a President/Congress that balances the budget and encourages free trade could have an impact on lowering inflation.

***Stimulus and Relief Funds Authorized by the President:*** In March 2020, Trump signed the CARES ACT authorizing a \$2.3 trillion package providing relief to American families and workers during the coronavirus outbreak and Biden authorized a \$1.9 trillion stimulus bill providing Covid relief.

***Labor and Energy:*** Outside of politics, some inflation is due to labor shortages and energy prices.

**Employment** – Trump added 6.8 million jobs during his first three terms and lost 9.8 million jobs in 2020 (COVID time).

However, even annualizing the first three years over the full four, it would lag behind Biden's results.

**Wages** – Wages were lower during Trump but so was inflation so average hourly earnings adjusted for inflation rose 6.4% during Trump's term. That meant wages bought more goods.

A tight labor market during Biden's term delivered significantly higher wage gains for most Americans, particularly in lower-income households. But high inflation restricted their purchasing power resulting in real wage gains of only 1.4% from January 2021 through September 2024. That meant wages during that period bought less goods.

**Unemployment** – Both presidents had strong records of high employment and low unemployment.

**Interest Rates** – During the first half of Trump's presidency, the Federal Reserve raised its benchmark federal-funds rate to a maximum range of 2.25% to 2.5% in December 2018 – I did not include the March 2020 rate as it was in response to COVID. Under Biden, the Federal Reserve hiked interest rates 11 times during a two-year period to try to get inflation under control. Recently, the Federal Reserve lowered the fed-funds rate to 4.75%-5.00%.

**Housing Prices** – The average price of a home in January 2017 was \$300,000. The pandemic fueled a homebuying spree. Prices reached a 15-year high in 2021 to \$493,948, reflecting a heated demand and constrained supply of houses and some of the steepest increases in the past 30 years. So, a pandemic fueled homebuying spree during Biden's term resulted in much higher prices that were driven by high demand and low inventory.

***The Trump vs. Biden-Harris Economy, in 10 Charts***, Megan Leonhardt, October 21, 2024, Barrons, <https://www.barrons.com/articles/trump-harris-economy-inflation-jobs-c1d411b1>.

**Final Remarks**

I feel like Henrie's editorials are like a Merry Go Round. His editorials keep circling over and over again, and I see the same horses. Never new content. Well, I've provided a list of Trump promises.

Time to breath and enjoy the holidays. Maybe he'll start talking about Trump's accomplishments after January 20, 2025 rather than rehashing unsubstantiated claims of Democratic failures

A laughable moment for me is Trump's continuing lie during rallies that we would not experience higher prices with tariffs even though Harris and multiple economists said we would bear those cost. He won. Now he has changed his tune. What other rhetoric will prove to be lies?

Biden's economy is not a disaster. In fact, our economy is the envy of the world.

When looking at the G7 nations (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, The United Kingdom and the United States), our economy is enviable. GDP grew at a seasonally adjusted annualized rate of 2.8% last quarter on par with economic expansion during the Trump administration. A historically high percentage of people have jobs (unemployment stands at 4.1%, a healthy level.) The number of job listings is larger than the number of job seekers. Paychecks are growing at a 3.9% adjusted rate – a faster rate than the current rate of inflation. Inflation-adjusted disposable income per capita rose for the 27<sup>th</sup> straight month, the longest streak on record.

***America won the war on inflation. You still think the economy stinks***, David Goldman, CNN, October 31, 2024, <https://www.cnn.com/2024/10/31/economy/inflation-economy-perceptions/index.html>.

The pinch comes from  
-Rising housing costs (owned or rented) from relatively low inventory. Homeowners who locked in super-low mortgage rates in 2020 and 2021 don't want to buy at higher interest rates. Local land-use regulations and zoning restrictions have hindered construction of affordable housing for the low-income group who has the greatest difficulty in finding affordable housing.

-Prices have not dropped. Is that a result of corporate greed or presidential policy? Even though inflation is back to normal, prices have not dropped. They are roughly 20% higher now than they were when Biden took office. Gas prices, however,

# ECONOMY RESULT OF MULTIPLE FACTORS, NOT PARTY AFFILIATION From previous pg

have fallen dramatically.

See also *The Top 10 Largest Economies in the World in 2025*, November 20, 2024, FocusEconomics, <https://www.focus-economics.com/blog/the-largest-economies-in-the-world/#:~:text=2025%20GDP%3A%20USD%2030.4%20trillion,economy's%20structure%20is%20highly%20diversified>.

Could one of our issues also be that we have the highest income inequality in the G7 nations. In 2022, the top 10% of American families owned almost 70% of the country's wealth – higher than in almost any other developed nation. That gap between wealthy and middle/lower class Americans continues to grow.

The bottom line is the economy is complex and is impacted by multiple factors. It is naive to believe that the issues we experience can be influenced or corrected by the acts or omissions of one individual.

Sue Schmidt, Montrose



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# REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

## DELTA COUNTY COMMISSIONER WENDELL KOONTZ ELECTED TO COLORADO COUNTIES INC. (CCI) BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Commissioner Wendell Koontz, Courtesy photo.

*Special to the Mirror*

DELTA—Delta County proudly announces that Commissioner Wendell Koontz has been elected to the Colorado Counties Inc. (CCI) Board of Directors. The election took place during the annual CCI Winter Conference held last week in Westminster, Colorado.

The CCI Board of Directors, composed of county commissioners from across Colorado, plays a critical role in guiding the organization’s mission to empower counties through advocacy, education, and networking. Commissioner Koontz’s election highlights his dedication to championing the needs of rural communities and ensuring their unique perspectives are represented at the state level.

“I am honored to be elected to the CCI Board of Directors,” said Commissioner Koontz.

“This opportunity allows me to advocate for the needs of Delta County while collaborating with commissioners statewide to address shared challenges.”

Commissioner Koontz has served Delta County for four years and was recently re-

elected in November, reaffirming the community’s trust in his leadership.

During his tenure, he has been a driving force behind initiatives focused on economic development, wildfire mitigation, and infrastructure improvements. His commitment to collaboration and innovative problem-solving has earned him widespread respect among peers and residents alike.

As Commissioner Don Suppes concludes his term as both county commissioner and CCI president at year’s end, Koontz expressed enthusiasm for stepping into this new role to ensure Delta County’s interests remain well-represented.

In his role on the CCI Board, Commissioner Koontz will work alongside leaders statewide to shape policies and advocate for legislation benefiting Colorado counties. Key areas of focus include transportation, housing, public safety, and natural resource management.

His contributions will amplify the collective voice of Colorado’s counties while bringing valuable insights back to Delta County.

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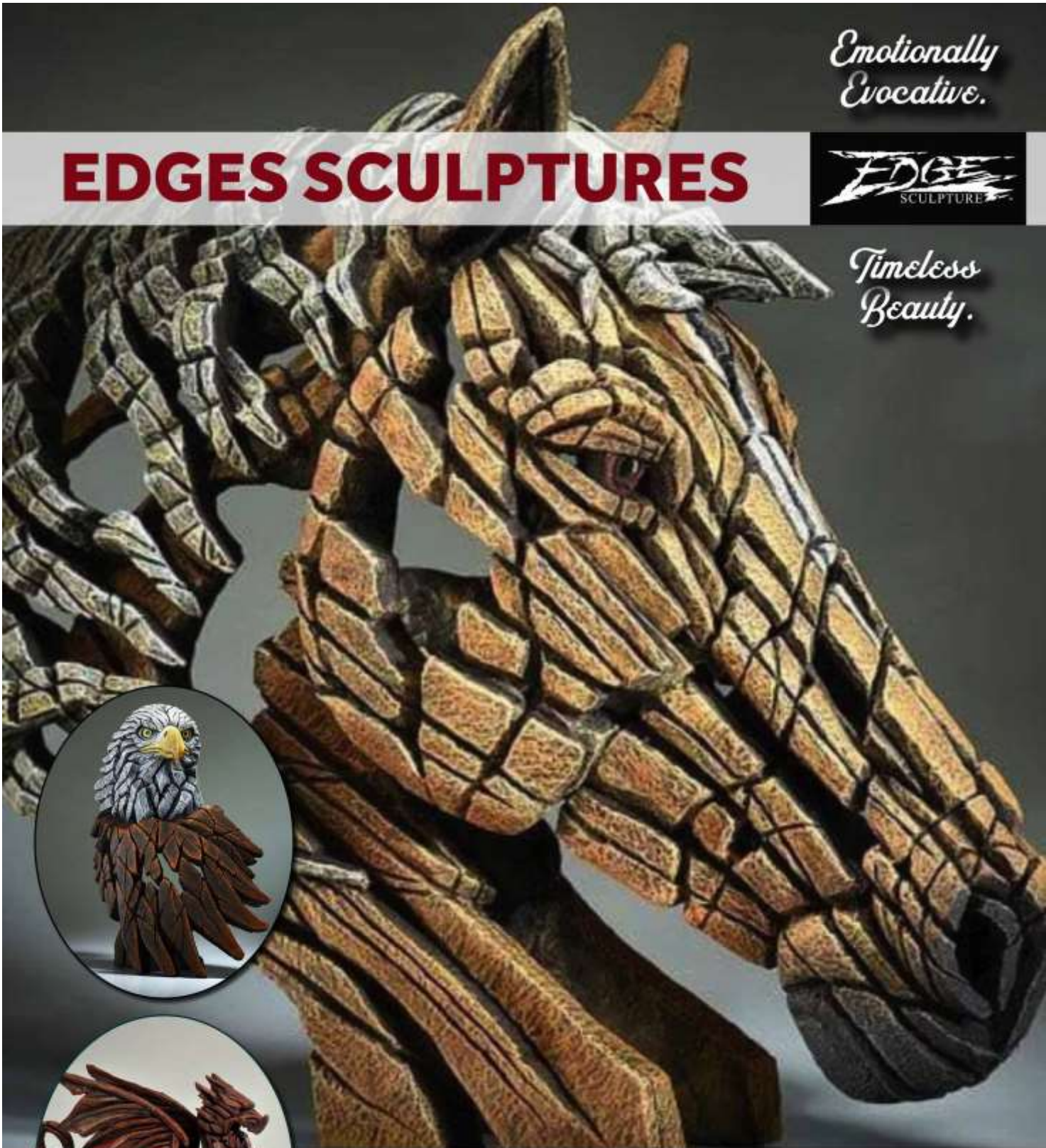


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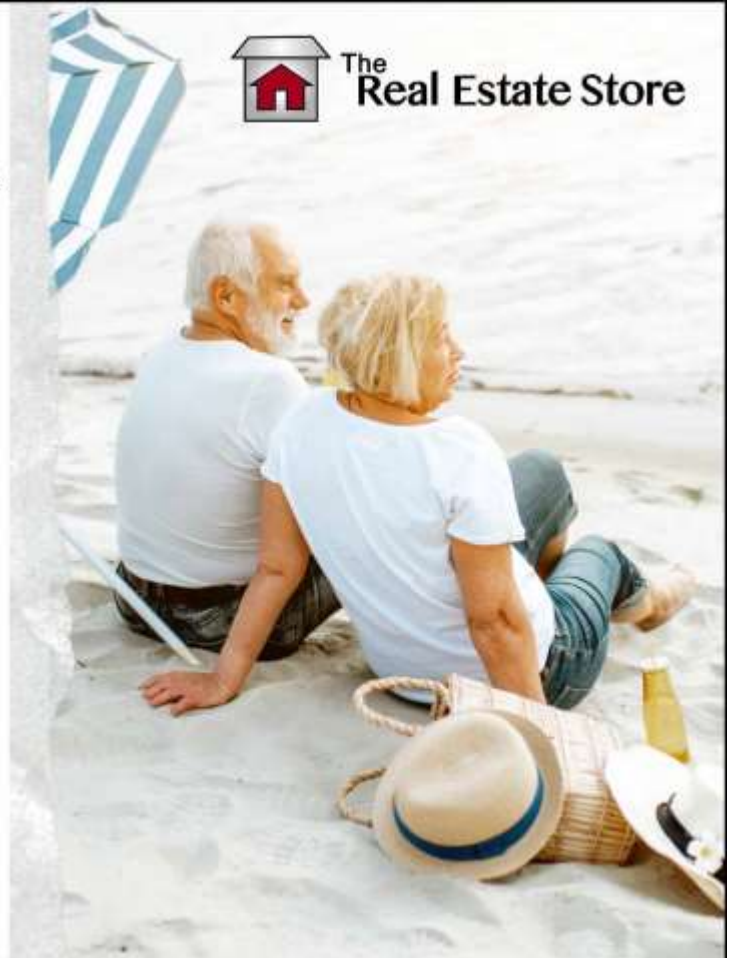
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# OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

## DOES SOMETHING TRAGIC HAVE TO HAPPEN BEFORE THE CITY OF MONTROSE STARTS ENFORCING ANIMAL CONTROL LAWS?

By Michael A. Cox

Have you heard this one?

“My dog doesn’t bite.”

The puncture wound required six stitches. Maybe this, “I have him on voice command, it’s okay,” as the loose animal attacks, kills smaller dog.

Here’s a new one I heard the other evening at the River Bottom, “It’s your offensive posture that is making him growl and snap,” he said, as my wife stood terrified, five feet from the charging dog, and I controlled my elderly dog who was less than a month from undergoing surgery for cancer.

The late middle-aged fellow had a German shepherd type dog running loose and it had charged toward us to within a few feet barking and snapping, looking for an opening.

I politely suggested he put the dog on a rope. I call all leashes “ropes.”

The perp did nothing.

Then, (I’m sorry I used bad words I can’t repeat here) as I once again told the clown with the aggressive and loose animal to put it on rope. His dog was still advancing. A line of large, pointed teeth punctuated his growls and barking.

The Missus had her mace cartridge at the ready when the dog owner then threatened her saying that if she maced his dog he would, “Hit her upside the head with this,” waving the leash reel (not connected to a dog). I am not sure he fully understood who exactly was going to be

sprayed should he try to enforce his threat.

I told (yelled at) him for a third time to control his animal and get out of the park—more inappropriate words. He never complied but finally headed back up the path to the soccer fields mumbling about lord knows what. His dog was still on the loose.

It is an all too frequent scenario in the parks of Montrose. On multiple occasions we have seen as many as a half dozen dogs off lease in the River Bottom. That’s bad enough, but when we are threatened with physical harm when trying to protect our own dog, things have gone too far.

The Montrose animal law is quite simple and straight forward. Here is **Sec. 6-2-4. - Running at-large prohibited:**

(A) *It shall be unlawful for the owner or custodian of any animal to fail to confine it or cause it to be confined to the premises of the said owner or custodian, unless the animal is under effective, immediate, and physical control of the owner or custodian by a leash, cord, chain or other restraining device, that is no longer than six feet in length. This Section shall not be construed to permit an owner or custodian to control any animal off his premises utilizing verbal command or electronic collar.*

Further, the regulations sign at River Bottom says quite plainly, “Dogs must be on a leash.”

So, we have rules, that’s nice. The prob-

lem is no one enforces them. On the evening of the occurrence related here there were three other offenders, which we managed to avoid.

In five years of walking my dogs at Baldrige (River Bottom) I have never seen an Animal Control Officer or a police officer presence of any kind, none, zero, zip, nada.

I know, because I have heard it before, the PD doesn’t have the resources to put people on the ground to cover the matter. I get it. Let me make a couple of suggestions.

In the traffic enforcement division, they use a tactic to police roadways where people are in the habit of speeding. It happened on Oak Grove Road last summer. Every once in a while, a radar cop shows up at Hillcrest and Oak Grove. He writes a few tickets. Folks get the idea that there is a consequence and things slow down, for a while—so, we rinse and repeat.

Let’s do two things:

1. Put an animal control officer in the River Bottom once in a while and have them actually write some citations and impound some dogs.
2. Other park visitors need to alert the PD of loose animal offenders, the non-emergency dispatch number is 970-249-9110.

Don’t expect a Code 3 response when you call, but if the calls become frequent there might be some action.

It couldn’t hurt.

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*see something, say something*

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# OPINION/EDITORIAL: COMMENTARY

## MONTROSE AWASH IN LIQUOR?

### *Between Retail Liquor Sales & Bars and Taverns – When is Enough, Enough?*

By David White

Let's cut to the chase Montrose City Council. Deny the request by City Market, DBA Kroger Companies, for a licensed drug store license to sell spirits in their soon to be expanded south Montrose store.

You define the City limits as the "neighborhood" for determining the need for each and every liquor license. Our neighborhood can't handle a behemoth like Kroger Companies and the volume of booze that they'll pump into our community, perhaps at loss leader prices (they'll sell the liquor cheap and mark everything else a few pennies to cover the reduction in revenue from the liquor sales like most retailers do on everything else they sell on "sale"). The "neighborhood" needs are being met just fine with the retailers in place and licensed.

Furthermore, City Market has all of a sudden started "carding" everyone including senior citizens and has left many standing at cash registers trying to find I.D. when a verbal answer to "what is your date of

birth" always sufficed until this new application came to the forefront. I know this from two recent personal experiences! They're playing games on you Council. They haven't played by the rules and now, to put on a show, are doing so to an extreme degree in order to get your approval for their ambitious plans.

You all need to remember the bars and taverns too. These are typically small business operations. Some operate within the State guidelines that you are to enforce, and some don't. As the local liquor licensing authority, it is incumbent upon the City to keep them in check. For years, most have been playing by the rules with those that don't (the old Sam's Tavern and its successor owners, under different trade names – Red, White & Brews, Twisted Ginger and Corner Taps seem to regularly get in hot water for over serving patrons or serving underage individuals, but are rarely called on the carpet for what they've done) while others have "training periods" that find new hires shorted on

their pay and tips in violation of labor laws or being asked to collect unreasonable credit card "fees" for food and liquor purchases. It's more than past time to keep these establishments in check. Whether the City Clerk, in conjunction with the Montrose P.D. and City Finance Department does it or Councilmembers do, someone needs to get in there and see what's going on.

Regardless, the honest small businessperson needs a break from these corporate types. I'm all for the free market controlling supply and demand, but with alcohol, which is as bad or worse than other kinds of drugs when not used in a responsible fashion, a legitimate case can be made to throttle back on these applications.

*Mr. White is an active citizen & community leader as well as a business owner, entrepreneur, former Colorado Springs City Councilor and Montrose City Councilor as well as Montrose Mayor. He was a two-term Montrose County Commissioner and has served on many boards and commissions during his career. He & his wife are the parents of six children and have 10 grandchildren & a great grandchild.*

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# OPINION/EDITORIAL: COMMENTARY

## HISTORIC LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONSTRUCTION SPENDING COMING FOR 2025: WHETHER NEEDED OR NOT, PUBLIC DISCUSSION HAS BEEN SORELY LACKING IN CITY AND COUNTY PLANS FOR NEW GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS



County Building. Courtesy photo.

By David White

On the agenda for this Wednesday's Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) meeting is the request of County Staff to approve spending \$24,039,967.20 with Stryker Construction Company, Inc. (against a bid price of \$25,363,111.76) to build what is being called the "Montrose County North Campus" adjacent to the Montrose County Justice Center and the Montrose County Sheriff's Office on N. Grand Avenue and N. Townsend Avenue. (See Item E5 here: Agenda)

Of course, this price is only a part of the total cost of the project as it doesn't include land (which the County already owns but needs to be included in the cost) as well as costs for the architects, engineers, etc. (already at \$1.27M), phone systems, furnishings, moving expenses and many more. Count on plenty of change orders too. The planned 48,791 square foot "North Campus" building (with a cost of roughly \$500.00+/- per square foot) is designed to replace the "South Campus" (located next to the Dunkin Donuts on S. Townsend) which has been extensively remodeled over the years and has now been determined to have structural and other problems that have been deemed by the County to be not worth repairing yet will have to be in the short term given the 21 month construction schedule being called for to reach "substantial completion" of the new building. After completion of the new building, the "South Campus" build-

ing complex will either be sold, demolished, or otherwise emptied until a decision is made on what to do with it. Perhaps the "North Campus" should be called the "Main Campus" since there will not be a "South Campus" after this is over. Seen as the second of the "legacy projects" of outgoing Commissioners Rash and Caddy, combined with the roughly \$20,000,000 cost to renovate the Historic Downtown Montrose County Courthouse (to include sunk costs associated with renovating other office space for the County Clerk & Recorder's Office, Treasurer's Office, the Assessor's Office and the GIS (Graphic Information Systems) Department who had to move out of the building as well as the architectural and engineering fees and many other costs), these two commissioners along with Commissioner Hansen will be on track to drop close to \$50,000,000 of tax dollars on these two projects alone with principal & interest payments on the loans to finance them totaling millions of more dollars.

While in true President Joe Biden style (i.e. blaming Trump for all of his issues), Commissioner Roger Rash has been very vocal in chastising his predecessors for approving (8 years ago) the construction of the Montrose County Road & Bridge Department complex on Lasalle Road & N. Townsend (paid for with funds generated from the County's dedicated .75% road and bridge sales tax fund) and the Montrose County Event Center (which, through events held throughout the year, gener-

ates millions of dollars in revenue for the community – hotels, restaurants, retailers, the County airport, etc., etc. as well as revenue for the County through booking fees) pays for its keep.

Both complexes were built for less than \$20M with minimal financing at low interest rates. That fact is conveniently overlooked by this BOCC who is on track to make those expenditures look like small change.

On the flip side, these legacy projects will house the County's various offices and the almost 400 members of the bureaucracy that runs the County. While it will be nice to have spanking new offices and facilities for the employees and I guess the public, there doesn't seem to have been much thought given to the ultimate costs that the taxpayers will be on the hook for once the dust settles and all of the change orders, which are inevitable, come their way.

While there is apparently a facilities problem in the County, glaringly absent from any discussion is why the BOCC let things get this far down the road on their watch and why this North Campus is being shot gunned through for approval at the last minute as the door is about to hit them in their rear ends as they leave office in less than a month. What are the alternatives, if any, that were presented to them vs. building an almost 50,000 square foot building? And how is it going to be paid for? Approving a contract with a contractor is one thing, but without telling the public how you are paying for it is wrong.

One such option, staring anyone within walking distance of the proposed site for the new "North Campus" building in the face, is the now abandoned Colorado Outdoors Medical Center building. Listed for sale for \$11,500,000 and no doubt can be bought for much less, this 55,624 square foot building sits on 3.5 acres and has room to park hundreds of cars as well as, given that it is at least 30% or more complete with permit fees paid, etc., is a blank slate for a new owner to design their own



## HISTORIC LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONSTRUCTION SPENDING COMING FOR 2025

*From previous pg*



*Colorado Outdoors Medical Center. Courtesy photo.*

interior tenant finish in the way of offices and common areas. Buying this building would lift local contractors who have been in limbo since the original owners didn't pay contractors for getting the building to where it is today. There are many positive possibilities with this option to include a lower finished cost as well as taking blighted property and making it a community asset. More square footage for less money. If we need a new building, this might just be it. For details, see the listing here: [121 Tributary St, Montrose, CO 81401 - Colorado Outdoors Medical Center | LoopNet](#)

Over at the City we see their plans for a new Public Works complex and an extension of S. Rio Grande Avenue from West Oak Grove south to the new Cedar Point Health/Montrose Regional Health building coming together on the south end of the City on almost 40 acres of land that they've acquired between 2016 and 2024 for almost \$1.7 million dollars.

The new Public Works facility is, quite frankly, long overdue and I'm glad to see it coming together. As with most of my writings on the City, I take umbrage with the way that they spend our tax dollars, and this isn't going to be an exception (not that it's going to change anything!). Back in June of 2006, while I was on the

cent to the Wastewater Treatment Plant and the Animal Shelter on the north side of the City to construct a Public Works complex on. That was 18 ½ years ago. According to the City's Public Works Director, Jim Scheid, there were too many access related issues off of Highway 50 in the area that they deemed too difficult to work through with the Colorado Department of Transportation. That may be, but back in the day, those were ones that could be overcome, and the reality is that the speed limit in that area today should be reduced and with a traffic signal or some other type of a "go slow" warning, the site could have been developed as intended.

So today, we see the City moving forward with a complex that will now include a maintenance and equipment building for the Montrose Rec District (one might assume that the City will be reimbursed for this structure, however, I haven't seen any documentation to that effect yet) as well as multiple buildings for the City's needs (repair and maintenance buildings, storage, offices, etc.). Costs have escalated and could reach well over \$50,000,000 not including design, engineering, land costs, street construction, utilities (some of which were constructed last year and this year down Anderson Rd.), etc. On the



*City of Montrose Public Works Facility. Courtesy photo.*

City Council, we purchased 35 acres of land adja-

agenda for this week's Council meeting is a request to spend an additional \$2.3 million on a design contract for the project which will raise the total to over \$3 million dollars and they are close to breaking ground yet.

Of course, the financing of this project will entail public debt through the issuance of Certificates of Participation (COPS) which utilize City assets as collateral for the loan given.

This will occur in the Summer of 2025 according to City documents. COPS are an end run around the Taxpayer Bill of Rights (TABOR) and do not require voter approval to be issued and sold.

While it is generally agreed that the City and County are growing (much of it with stimulus money from the City) and with that comes the need for an increase in public services, long term planning needs to be improved so as to not unfairly burden the taxpayers with these large hits to the debt that we're all ultimately obligated to pay.

***Mr. White is an active citizen & community leader as well as a business owner, entrepreneur, former Colorado Springs City Councilor and Montrose City Councilor as well as Montrose Mayor. He was a two-term Montrose County Commissioner and has served on many boards and commissions during his career. He & his wife are the parents of six children and have 10 grandchildren & a great grandchild.***

# CARTOON BY TIM JONES

WEEKLY CARTOON

## SOUR GRAPES

by Tim Jones



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## COMMUNITY OBITUARIES

### **TOM (JOSEPH T.) HOLLINGSHEAD** ***August 1, 1936 - December 1, 2024***



Tom passed away peacefully on December 1, 2024, with family by his side. He was born August 1, 1936, in Gunnison, CO to Joe E. and Mary A. Hollingshead. He was one of three boys. The family moved to Montrose to live on Bostwick Park, because his dad wanted to live in the country and be farmers. Tom and his brothers all worked on the farm, growing potatoes and raising cows. Tom attended Montrose

High School and participated in several sports. Tom excelled in wrestling. He graduated in 1955. With four of his friends, he joined the Navy after graduation. He was trained as an electrician to serve on submarines. After study in New London, Connecticut, he was sent to Hawaii and stationed at Pearl Harbor. He primarily served on the submarine USS Tiru, then the USS Pickeral during the Cold War. He served in the Pacific, making a stop in Japan. Tom was very proud of his service to his country.

After four years in the Navy, Tom returned to Montrose. He worked on the construction of Blue Mesa and Morrow Point Dams and also on the Red Rock Dam in Iowa. He then attended Western State College on a wrestling scholarship and was an assistant coach for the 1963 National Championship team.

Tom graduated from WSC and later had one year of postgraduate school. Tom returned to Montrose to teach Biology and was a wrestling coach at the high school. He always enjoyed visiting with former students and wrestlers. He retired in 1991 after 24 years.

Tom and Jan (his wife of 44 1/2 years) opened Black Bear Antiques in Montrose and ran the business for 35 years. They enjoyed traveling the country looking for

antiques and seeing new places, even before he retired from teaching. After Jan retired from her high school counseling job, they became snowbirds, spending their winter months in Laughlin, NV.

Tom enjoyed hunting, fishing, socializing and gambling. He loved spending time with his family, especially his kids and grandkids, and many friends. He was a proud member of the Montrose Elks Lodge and the American Legion of Laughlin, NV.

Tom was preceded in death by his parents; his son, Zane; and his brother, Paul. He is survived by his wife, Jan (Malsed) Hollingshead; his son, Jerry (Judy) of Montrose; son, Kent (Dede) of Aledo, TX; daughter, Kelly (Aaron) of Montrose; Marlene K. Hobbs (mother of his children); brother, Robert (Judy) Hollingshead of Fruita; sister-in-law, Susan Hollingshead of Cortez; his brother-in-law, Steve (Joann) Malsed of Iowa; 10 grandchildren, Jessica, James, Josh, Kristina, Cody, Derek, Branden, Casey, Kyle, Matthew; as well as 12 great-grandchildren and many nieces and nephews.

No services are planned at this time. A celebration of life will be held at a later date. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Montrose Elks Lodge #1053, 801 S Hillcrest Drive, Montrose, CO 81401.



# COMMUNITY OBITUARIES

## VIRGINIA JANE AST

**July 21, 1942 — December 5, 2024**



VIRGINIA JANE AST, a beloved mother, grandmother, and friend, passed away peacefully on December 5, 2024, at the age of 82. A Kansas na-

tive, she spent much of her working career in Wichita, Kansas, before visiting Ouray, Colorado, in the late 90s. Virginia was known for her warmth, generosity, and deep love for her community. She brought joy to everyone she met and will be remembered for her caring nature, adventurous spirit, and devotion to her family. She spent many hours advising tourists at the Ouray County Resort Association and volunteered at the Ouray County Historical Society.

Prior to coming to Ouray, Virginia had a fulfilling career in Human Resources at NCR Corp., AT&T, Symbios Logic, and LSI Logic, where she specialized in employee

training, compensation and benefits, and new employee orientation, also serving as the editor of the company newspaper.

With a background in administration and computer utilization, she was known for her professionalism and kind, welcoming demeanor. She was dedicated to making her workplace a better, more supportive environment for all.

Outside of her professional life, Virginia led a rich and fulfilling personal life. She had a love for the natural world, especially the beautiful mountains that surround Ouray. Whether hiking, jeep exploring, snowshoeing, or even trying her hand at skiing in Telluride, Virginia was always up for an adventure. Her love for the outdoors was matched only by her affection for young children. She often spent hours at the local park, watching with delight as children played, enjoying their energy and innocence.

Virginia also dabbled on the piano and with the accordion, expressing her strong musical interest and spirited nature. She was an accomplished landscape photographer and enjoyed writing poetry. She was an active member of the Black Canyon

Astronomical Society, where she enjoyed stargazing and exploring the wonders of the universe. Her curiosity about the stars and her deep appreciation for the night sky were genuine passions.

Virginia was also a dedicated member of St. Daniel's Catholic Church in Ouray, where she participated in the Women's Prayer Group. Her faith was an important part of her life, and she cherished her time spent with her church family. She was also a proud member of the Ouray Elks Lodge #492, where she formed many friendships and was an active member of the lodge community.

Virginia is survived by her husband, John Ast, and her three sons, Marvin, Timothy, and Michael Ogden, and her stepdaughter, Karen, along with many dear friends and colleagues who will miss her gentle spirit and unwavering support.

Virginia's legacy of kindness, adventure, and love for her community will continue to inspire those who had the privilege of knowing her.

Her caring heart, joyful spirit, and dedication to family and friends will never be forgotten

## STERLING LEETH HODGES

**February 10, 1984 - December 8, 2024**

STERLING LEETH HODGES, of Montrose, Colorado passed away on December 8, 2024, at the age of 40. A devoted husband, father, son, and friend. Sterling's life was defined by his love for his family, his passion for music, his creativity, and his thirst for knowledge. He had a vibrant personality and a deep commitment to the people he cared about. His absence will be deeply felt, but this unique individual will continue to be felt by those he impacted.

Born on February 10, 1984 in Houston, Texas, Sterling graduated from Friendswood High School in 2001 and received his Audio Engineering degree from the Conservatory of Recording Arts & Scienc-

es in 2006. He began his music recording career at Ocean Way Recording in Los Angeles, California. During his six year tenure at Ocean Way, Sterling worked on recordings for Christina Aguilera, Herbie Hancock, Dr. Dre, and many other famous artists that he had listened to growing up. While attending CRAS in Tempe, AZ, he met Heather Parish, and his life was changed forever more. In December 2012 Sterling and Heather moved to Montrose, CO., where they began their careers at Parish Oil Company. On May 8, 2013 Sterling and Heather were married and began to build their future.

Sterling is survived by his wife of 11 years, Heather; their son Shannon (10) and

daughter, Scarlet (7). He is also survived by his parents, Shannon and Kerrye Hodges of Cranfills Gap, TX, Greg and Lisa Parish of Montrose, CO., sister, Sloane Hodges, Brandon Parish (Alisa), Amber Claeys (Nate), grandmothers, Iris Hodges, Earlene Pridy, several aunts and uncles, numerous nieces, nephews and cousins. Though Sterling may no longer be with us, he will forever remain in our hearts and



ISSUE 499 Dec. 16, 2024

# ART & SOL

## YOUR BRAIN ON NATURE – OBESITY



By Dr. Lauren Hall Ruddell, Ph.D

*Greetings Mirrorites!*

OLATHE-This may seem like a repulsive topic at this time of the year when we are all gathering to feast. The good news is that nothing I reveal here should impact your feasting pleasure, and may even alleviate some guilt.

I have a fat goat. His twin brother is a normal weight with a normal appetite. I have a fat cat. Her twin sister is a normal weight and even a little on the thin side. My father was tall and thin enough to play basketball in high school, while his brother was always the jolly fat kid. We are born with genetic templates that help to inform our bodies about our relationship with food as well as our metabolisms. Some of this is nature (human genetic heritage) and some is nurture.



*Delicious food and stress appear to be a holiday double hammy-whammy.*

Anyone who keeps up with the latest news knows of a prominent politician who is opposed to ultra-processed foods. Whether you like this guy or not, there is abundant scientific evidence from researchers around the world that UPFs are not only bad for your health in general, but they are also highly addictive. Once, physicians chided patients for lack of willpower in resisting junk or comfort foods, but that practice is decreasing. Yes, diffi-

culty resisting that bag of chips, or glazed donut, is all in your head, but not in the way we used to think of it.

Our modern food environment has changed dramatically with the influx of hyper-palatable foods that are engineered in ways that appear to surpass the rewarding properties of traditional foods (e.g., vegetables, fruits, nuts) by increasing fat, sugar, salt, flavors, and food additives to unnaturally high levels). These

**Continued next pg**

## YOUR BRAIN ON NATURE – OBESITY From previous pg

yummy, altered foods then begin to share multiple features with addictive drugs. Over-consumption of these foods is particularly damaging to the hypothalamus, with implications for cognitive function and premature aging. This happens also to be a brain area that strongly influences appetite. The more we consume addictive foods, and the more we damage this structure, the less that signals of satiation are sent to the rest of the brain. A vicious cycle. We remain hungry long after our caloric needs have been met. This goes hand in hand with the way we evolved to survive in a calorie-challenged world.

Then, it was adaptive, now, not so much. And it's not just us humans. Animals given intermittent access to excess sugar exhibit behavioral and neurobiological indicators of withdrawal and tolerance. Rats consuming diets high in sugar and fat demonstrate reward dysfunction associated with drug addiction, and compulsive eating including continued consumption despite receipt of electrical shocks. Yikes! That's some serious drive to keep gorging!

Further, and this can be more true at the holidays than many other times of the year, stress plays a part. A team from the Australia based Garvan [Institute of Medical Research](#) found that stress overrode the brain's natural response to satiety, leading to non-stop reward signals that promote eating highly palatable, even if non-nutritious or toxic, food. This occurred in a part of the brain called the lateral habenula, which is also instrumental in dampening reward seeking signals. "Our findings reveal stress can override a

natural brain response that *diminishes the pleasure* gained from eating – meaning the brain is continuously rewarded to eat," says Professor Herbert Herzog, senior author of the study.

As you may have guessed by now, exposure to green spaces can help. Older investigations found that an imagery-based task helped reduce craving, where the imagery involved a natural setting (e.g. *beach*, Versland and Rosenberg, 2007; *woodland*, Hamilton et al., 2013). More recent work ([2019](#)) discovered that viewing landscapes that contained over 25 percent greenery helped quell a certain amount of food cravings. Actual physical access to a garden or other green landscape significantly reduced both the intensity and the frequency of food cravings in an inverse correlation. In other words, the more green the environment, the less the binging response.

You, dear readers, may think this is a silly topic for the middle of Colorado winter gatherings and dining options, but be aware that just viewing green nature scenes on your computer until spring arrives may help with a bit more willpower against over-indulgence. A pretty good New Year's resolution might be to become more aware of potential obesogens in your diet and what to do about it.

Obesogens...I love that word. It has a nice mouthfeel to it. But seriously, it's not just fat, salt, and sugar that puts on the pounds. When deciding on new snack foods that are not organically grown apples and carrots that you will consume while sitting on a park bench in the sun,

consider this...there are hundreds of chemicals that may compound weight problems as well.

### Types of Obesogens

**Phytoestrogens.** Phytoestrogens are found in food products, including soybeans, lentils, and chickpeas. (I avoid soybeans whenever possible).

**Bisphenol A (BPA).** BPA and similar chemicals are used in plastics. They are found in food and beverage containers.

### Polybrominated diphenyl ethers

**(PBDEs).** PBDEs are flame retardants. They are used to treat materials such as fabrics or furniture to make them less likely to catch fire.

**Parabens.** [Parabens are preservatives](#) found in food, paper products, and medicines.

**Pesticides.** Pesticides used in agricultural industries may have obesogenic effects. This is a very abbreviated list intended only to raise awareness. It appears as though we are afloat in a sea of natural and manmade compounds determined to make us overweight. Many of them affect the brain.

So yeah, weight gain is all in your head, but that doesn't mean that it's all your fault. Now that is a cheery bit of news for the holidays!

And more good news. For folks who want to work off a few pounds while strolling in nature with pack goats, I will be assembling a walking group in Olathe for April 2025.

Interested parties should inquire for more information at [planet-goatpress@gmail.com](mailto:planet-goatpress@gmail.com). Merry Christmas!

SEE SOMETHING - SAY SOMETHING



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ANONYMOUS CALL

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CRIME STOPPERS

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<https://www.allsaintsmontrose.org/> Rec-  
 tor: The Rev Preston Gordon, [pgor-  
 don@allsaintsmontrose.org](mailto:pgor-<br/>
  don@allsaintsmontrose.org)

**Worship Service Times:** Sundays 9AM,

Sunday Worship. Wednesdays 11AM, Mid-  
 week prayer and communion, Wednes-  
 day, Noon, Multi-denominational Commu-  
 nity Prayer Hour.

All Saints Anglican Church is an Evangelical  
 Anglican Church committed to the minis-  
 try of Word, Sacrament, and Spirit. Our  
 music is a combination of traditional  
 hymns, contemporary, and modern songs.

We invite kids preschool and up to join  
 our kids worship time during the 9am Sun-  
 day service. We would love to welcome  
 you here. Following the service, join us for  
 snacks and conversation. On the third Sun-  
 day of the month we celebrate a potluck  
 meal together.

**Vision:** We see Jesus Christ restoring  
 hope: in us and in our world.

## BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH

Independent Baptist  
 112Main St.  
 P.O. Box 262

Olathe, Co 81425

Tuesday-Friday Phone: 970-808-1021  
[www.biblebaptistchurcholathe.com](http://www.biblebaptistchurcholathe.com)

Pastor Gabe Skillo

Sunday School 9:15 a.m.

Sunday 10:30 a.m.

Sunday 6 p.m.

Wednesday Bible Study/Prayer 7 p.m.

## CELEBRATION CHURCH

**Denomination:** Southern Baptist Church  
 (SBC – Southern Baptist Convention)

**Address:** 2900 Sunnyside Road, Mont-  
 rose, CO 81401

**Office Hours:** By appointment

**Phone:** (970) 497-4925

**Email:** [celebrationmontrose@gmail.com](mailto:celebrationmontrose@gmail.com)

**Website:** [https://  
 celebrationmontrose.org/](https://celebrationmontrose.org/)

**Worship Service Times:** 9am and 10:45am  
**Senior Pastor:**

Pastor Brandon Mathis

**Church Description/Mission:** Celebration  
 Church makes disciples that make disci-  
 ples. Our core values include the Scrip-

ture, discipleship, community, service,  
 prayer, love, and unity.

**Demographics:** Multi-generational

**Celebration Kids:** (age birth to 5<sup>th</sup> grade)  
 programs offered both services.

**Student** (middle & high school) at 9am.

**Adult** -Discipleship classes 8am and  
 10:45am.

## CHRIST'S CHURCH OF THE VALLEY

**Name of Church:** Christ's Church of the  
 Valley

**Denomination Affiliation:** Non-  
 denominational Christian Church/Church  
 of Christ

**Address:** 10 Hillcrest Plaza Way. Mont-  
 rose, CO 81401

**Office hours:** Tuesday & Wednesday 9am-  
 noon and by appointment.

**Contact information:**

Phone: 970-249-0530

Email: [CCVMontroseCO10@gmail.com](mailto:CCVMontroseCO10@gmail.com)

Website: [ccvmontrose.org](http://ccvmontrose.org)

**Name of current Senior Pastor:** Ken Law-  
 rence

**Worship service times:** 10:30 a.m.

**Mission:** Christ's Church of the Valley is a  
 loving and welcoming church whose pur-  
 pose is to help people to know and grow

in our Lord Jesus Christ to the glory of  
 God.

**Description:** CCV is a multi-generational  
 church family. While we are currently pre-  
 dominately seniors, we are becoming  
 more multi-generational.

**Sunday School & Childcare:** CCV has  
 adult Sunday School at 9 a.m. and Youth  
 Church during the 10:30 a.m. worship  
 service.

## CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH

**Denomination:** Christ Lutheran Montrose  
**Affiliation:** Lutheran Church Missouri Syn-  
 od

**Address:** 1980 N. Townsend Ave., Mont-  
 rose, CO 81401

**Contact:** 970-633-0226

**Website:** [www.montroselutheran.org](http://www.montroselutheran.org)

**Email:** [montroselutheran@gmail.com](mailto:montroselutheran@gmail.com)

**Pastor:** Tim Onnen

**Worship:** Sundays at 9 AM

Sunday School and Adult Bible Class at  
 10:15 AM; Women's Bible Study Fridays at  
 9 AM. At Christ Lutheran Montrose you will

find friendly people gathered in a welcom-  
 ing environment being comforted and en-  
 couraged by the forgiveness and love of  
 Jesus, and sharing that with one another.

We are a small congregation of seniors  
 and middle-aged, sprinkled with young  
 children and teenagers.

## COMMUNITY SPIRIT CHURCH

**United Church of Christ (UCC)**

**Address:** 504 N. 1st Street (HAP Building)

**Office hours:** Call or text for appointment

**Phone:** 970-765-7070

**Email:** [spirit@communityspiritucc.org](mailto:spirit@communityspiritucc.org)

**Website:** [communityspiritucc.org](http://communityspiritucc.org)

**Current Pastor:** Rev. Wendy Kidd

**Worship service:** Sundays at 11am

**Mission:** Our commitment to a more inclu-  
 sive and accepting world is steadfast, and  
 we will continue to work towards a future

where everyone can live freely and au-  
 thentically.

**Demographics:** We are a small congrega-  
 tion of mostly adults and seniors, however,  
 we are always ready to welcome families  
 and children.

## COVENANT HEBRAIC FELLOWSHIP

**Denomination affiliation.** No affiliation

**Address Office hours** N/A

**Contact:** 720-951-9941,

[office@ccfmontrose.net](mailto:office@ccfmontrose.net),

[www.ccfmontrose.net](http://www.ccfmontrose.net)

**Name of current Senior Pastor.** Led by  
 elders

**Worship service times.** Noon on Satur-  
 days. Children's Church will be offered as  
 needed.

Covenant is a Hebraic roots community

that studies the Torah as well as the rest of  
 Scripture. We learn about the Hebrew  
 roots of the language and believe that the  
 Lord's feasts are for today. We are pre-  
 dominantly made up of older folks, but  
 have some young blood, too.



# MIRROR CHURCH DIRECTORY *From previous pg*

## FIRST CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

**Denomination:** Church of the Nazarene

**Address:** 705 South 12th Street

**Office Hours:** Monday - Thursday 9 am- Noon and by Appointment

**Contact Information:** Office Phone 970 249 -9213, [mncfirst@gmail.com](mailto:mncfirst@gmail.com), [www.montrosenazarenechurch.org](http://www.montrosenazarenechurch.org)

**Pastor:** Buddy Cook

**Services** Sunday: Worship 10 AM, Adult Bible Study 11:30 AM Worship includes age-appropriate children's ministry during adult worship.

Wednesday: Prayer Boot Camp - 7 PM  
Mission Statement: *Montrose First Church of the Nazarene exists to make Christlike*

*disciples in Montrose Colorado and around the world.*

**Demographics:** Our church consists of older and younger people. We have younger families with children and young teens and older adults as well. We also support the work of Calvary Ranch Colorado and its addiction recovery ministry.

## FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH MONTROSE

**Affiliation:** Presbyterian

**Address:** 1840 E Niagara Rd. Montrose CO. 81401 **Office Hours:** M-Thu 9AM - 12PM

**Contact:** 970-249-4732, [info@fpcmontrose.com](mailto:info@fpcmontrose.com), [www.fpcmontrose.com](http://www.fpcmontrose.com)

**Pastor:** Rev. Dr. Jesse G. Mabanglo

**Worship Service times:** 9:30AM, *We strive to encourage, challenge and*

*support one another through spiritual growth, worship, and service in our community, country, and world. We also encourage children and youth to grow their relationship with Christ through our children and student ministries.*

## HILLCREST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

**Denomination affiliation:** United Church of Christ

**Address:** 611 South Hillcrest Drive, Montrose, CO 81401

**Office hours:** By appointment

**Contact information:**

Phone number: (970) 249-9047

Email address: [office@montroseucc.org](mailto:office@montroseucc.org)

Website: [montroseucc.org](http://montroseucc.org)

**Current Pastor:** Rev. Wendy Kidd

**Worship service times:** Sunday, 10 a.m.

Hillcrest Congregational UCC is a welcoming, open and affirming church, open to all no matter who you are or where you are

on life's journey.

Church demographics: HCUCC welcomes all ages to worship with us. (predominately family, youth, seniors, singles)

We offer inter-generational worship with a children's "prayer-ground" and activity packets. A cry room is also available.

## MONTROSE MISSION OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH

**Affiliation:** Orthodox

**Meets:** 2057 S. Townsend, Montrose, CO

81401 and Cimarron Creek Clubhouse.

**Worship Services:** The Montrose Mission of the Orthodox Church meets every Saturday night at 7 PM at All Saints Anglican

Church for Vespers, and we currently meet only on the third Sunday of each month for Divine Liturgy in Montrose at 9:30 AM at the Cimarron Creek clubhouse.

## MONTROSE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

**Denomination Affiliation:** United Methodist

**Address:** 19 S. Park Avenue Montrose CO. 81401

**Office Hours:** M-Thu, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

**Contact Information:** 970-249-3716, [office@montroseumc.org](mailto:office@montroseumc.org), [mont-](http://montroseumc.org)

[roseumc.org](http://roseumc.org)

**Current Senior Pastor:** Rev. Kevin Young

**Worship service times:**

8:30 a.m. Sanctuary & Virtual

9:45 a.m. Christian Education & Fellowship

11 a.m. Sanctuary

*Montrose UMC is a leader in being fully inclusive, loving, and just servants of*

*Christ. Our church family welcomes people from various cultural and faith backgrounds: single, married, remarried, with or without children, from diapers to dentures.*

*Wherever you are on your spiritual journey we invite you to come discover hope, joy, peace, purpose.*

## ROSEMONT BAPTIST CHURCH

**Affiliation:** Southern Baptist

**Address:** 1598 E. Niagara Road, Montrose, CO 81401

**Office Hours:** Tues-Thurs, 9am-4pm

**Contact information:**

Phone: 970.249.4887

website: [www.RosemontBaptist.org](http://www.RosemontBaptist.org)

email: [office@rosemontbaptist.org](mailto:office@rosemontbaptist.org)

**Senior Pastor:** Rolland Kenneson

**Worship Service Times:** Our engaging and relevant Sunday Worship Service is at

10:45 AM. We also have Bible Study for All Ages Sunday mornings at 9:15 AM. We provide a professionally-staffed nursery throughout both.

*Rosemont Baptist's desire is to passionately bring people face-to-face with the life-changing power of Jesus Christ.*

*We are a multigenerational church from different walks of life who love Jesus, love each other, and love our community. Everyone comes dressed in whatever is comfortable. We love meeting new people no*

*matter what stage of life they are in.*

**Children's services:** *We have a fun Sunday School for children from four years old through youth. We provide Children's Church during the Sunday Worship Services where children four years old through 9 years can learn to be worshippers of Jesus.*

*We provide a nursery for children under four years old with paid staff providing excellent care during Sunday Morning Bible Study and Worship Service.*

# MIRROR CHURCH DIRECTORY *From previous pg*

## SPIRITUAL AWARENESS CENTER

**Denomination affiliation:** Independent Spiritual and Interfaith Community  
**Address:** Services at Lions Park Community Building, 602 N. Nevada, Montrose  
**Office hours:** Tues-Fri, 9 am to 4 pm, Home Office – 970-252-0908  
**Contact information:** Rev. Dr. Arlyn Macdonald, 970-252-0908, [arlyn@spiritaware.org](mailto:arlyn@spiritaware.org), [www.spiritaware.org](http://www.spiritaware.org)  
**Name of current pastor:** Rev. Dr. Arlyn

Macdonald, Senior minister; Rev. Ruby Salaz, Assistant Minister. Spiritual Counseling available.  
**Worship service times:** In-person Sunday Unity Service at 11 a.m., (Social Time begins at 10 a.m.); Quiet Meditation at 10:30 a.m. Virtual Afternoon Service on Zoom at 2:00 p.m., 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of each month; Chai Chats, a Wednesday morning midweek informal spiritual gathering at 10:30 a.m. at Pun Hill Himalayan Restaurant, Mont-

rose; Everyone is welcome. The Spiritual Awareness Center is an interfaith spiritual community welcoming spiritual seekers and people of all faiths, providing a safe place to explore and nurture the individual's unique connection to the Divine through Unity services, classes, family and community projects. People of all ages are welcome.  
 There are currently no Sunday School or nursery services provided but craft supplies are available for youth.

## ST. STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

**Denomination:** Anglican-Reformed Episcopal Church (REC)  
**Address:** 2405 Sunnyside Road, Montrose 970-249-4868  
**Contact:** [ststephensmontrose.com](http://ststephensmontrose.com)

[rose@yahoo.com](mailto:rose@yahoo.com)  
[www.ststephensmontrose.com](http://www.ststephensmontrose.com)  
**Rev. Dec.** Garrett Agajanian  
 St. Stephen's is a community of caring Christians rooted in the godly traditions of the past, focused on the challenges of the

present, hopeful for the future, continuing in the Faith once delivered to the saints, using the 1928 Book of Common Prayer.  
**Sunday:** Holy Communion 10 am. Fellowship following service.  
 Children's nursery available (unstaffed).

## SUMMIT CHURCH OF MONTROSE:

Denomination affiliation: Southern Baptist  
 Address: 10977 60.75 Rd. Montrose, CO 81403  
 Office hours: Varies  
 Contact information:  
[email:summitchurchmontrose@gmail.com](mailto:summitchurchmontrose@gmail.com)  
 website:  
[www.summitchurchmontrose.org](http://www.summitchurchmontrose.org)  
 Senior Pastor: Interim Pastor

Worship service times: Sunday Worship is at 9 a.m. followed by a time of fellowship and snacks.  
 Beginning Sept. 8 we will have a family Bible study, "Who's in Charge?" following fellowship from 10:45-11:30 a.m. All family members are welcome.  
 During the Sunday sermon we offer teaching for children ages birth to kindergarten, in a kid-friendly room called Base

Camp.  
 We have communion on the first Sunday of each month and meet later in the day for a potluck dinner at 5:30 p.m., followed by a prayer session at 6:30 p.m.  
 Please visit <https://www.summitchurchmontrose.org/events> for more information.  
 Summit Church welcomes people of all ages!

## VICTORY BAPTIST CHURCH OF MONTROSE

**Denomination Affiliation:** Independent Baptist  
**Address:** 2890 N Townsend Ave., Montrose, CO 81401  
**Office Hours:** Monday-Friday 8am-12pm  
**Contact Information:** Phone (970) 249-

6874; email at [info@vbcmontrose.org](mailto:info@vbcmontrose.org); website: [vbcmontrose.org](http://vbcmontrose.org)  
**Current Pastor:** Roland Kassales  
**Worship Service Times:** Sunday School at 9:30am, Sunday AM Service at 10:30am, Sunday PM Service at 6pm, Wednesday Night Service at 6:30pm (all services include childcare)

*Victory Baptist Church exists to exalt God, edify saints, and evangelize the lost.*  
*Demographics: Victory Baptist serves everyone with age-appropriate classes, groups, and activities. Families with children make up the majority of VBC with young adults, singles, middle-aged couples, and seniors comprising the rest.*

<p>Church Directory  <i>Mirror Editorial Staff</i>                  MONTROSE-As a way of serving the faith community in Montrose, the Montrose Mirror is in the process of establishing a Church Directory. If your congregation or fellowship would like to be included in the directory, please supply the following</p>	<p>information to the Montrose Mirror:                  Name of church                  Denomination affiliation                  Address Office hours                  Contact information (phone number, email address, website)                  Name of current Senior Pastor                  Worship service times</p>	<p>Please give a one sentence description of your church and its mission in the Montrose community.                  Brief description of your current church demographics (predominately family, youth, seniors, singles).                  Do your church services include Sunday School and childcare?</p>
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# The Perfect Holiday Gift

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**Thr., Jan. 30, 5:30-7:30 pm**  
**At Mosaic, 21 N Cascade Ave, Montrose**

# Alcohol Ink Creative Color

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 with Kate Burke  
 \$45/pp. \$40/pp Welcome Back.  
 Sign up in store or online  
<https://kathrynrburke.com/product/013025M>




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**Thr., Jan. 16th**  
**5:30-7:30 pm**

Send us a picture of your pet.  
 We will create a transfer for you to  
 paint your pet on a canvas.  
 Everything provided plus snack and  
 adult beverage or soft drink.  
 \$45. Welcome Back, \$40.  
 Group rate available.  
 21 N. Cascade Ave.  
 Downtown, Montrose

With Kate Burke  
 Sign up in store or online.




<https://kathrynrburke.com/product/111625m>

## COMMUNITY NEWS BRIEFS

### COWBOY POET JOHN NELSON OF GUNNISON TO PERFORM IN NORWOOD DEC. 18 AT 6 PM

#### *Special to Art & Sol*

NORWOOD- A hit from our first year, *Stories & Poems Norwood* will host outfitter, backcountry guide and cowboy poet John Nelson of Gunnison on Wednesday Dec. 18 at 6 pm at the Lone Cone Library.

"In 1998 John and I appeared together in groundbreaking Western Colorado anthology, *The Geography of Hope* (Conundrum Press, Crested Butte) edited by David J. Rothman," said Art Goodtimes, director of the Telluride Institute's Talking Gourds Poetry Program. "I was impressed with his poetry back then and have been ever since."

Retired after forty years of leading horseback pack trips and trail rides into spectacular Rocky Mountain wilderness country as the owner and operator of The Gunnison Country Guide Service, John Nelson remains a sought-after cowboy performer.

mance poet.

In his early years as an outfitter, Nelson began reciting cowboy poetry from his favorite authors to entertain guests and wranglers around the evening campfires. When one guest inquired, "Hey John! You're pretty good at reciting other people's poetry, but have you ever written any of your own?" That query spurred him into action. Since then he has authored a pack load of his personal writings. Nelson has performed and entertained at numerous gatherings, banquets, guest ranches, hunting camps and clubs, outdoor sports shows, school classrooms, celebrations of all kinds, as well as on tv and radio. His work has been published in a couple of anthologies, and in many outdoor sports magazines, and newspapers.

As Jack Brown of Western Outdoors Magazine commented, "His poems are

born in the peaks and canyons of the Rocky Mountains..."

The Stories & Poems free series happens on the third Wednesday of each month. Our featured guests will give a 15-20 minute presentation each, followed by a short question and answer period after the presentation. Then there's a passing of the gourd, where community members are encouraged to share stories or poems.

For those who like prompts for stories or poems, this month's prompt is: "Living in the Rocky Mountains."

A collaboration of the Lone Cone Library and the Telluride Institute's Talking Gourds poetry program, *Stories & Poems Norwood* is free and open to all ages, thanks to the generosity of the library, a Town of Telluride CCAASE grant, private donors, and Talking Gourds' Fischer and Cantor poetry contests.

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- 12" I-Beam
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- 2 X 3 Interior Walls
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- Metal Roller Drawer Guides
- Lined Overhead Cabinets
- Lined Base Shelf
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- Pfister Brushed Nickel Faucets
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# SAVE THE DATE! LOCAL EVENTS CALENDAR

### ONGOING-

**HEALING COLLECTIVE OF WESTERN COLORADO**-Every 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month from 12-1pm the Healing Collective of Western Colorado meets at 220 N Stough Ave. It is open to all wellness providers in the area who would like to collaborate with and learn from other local practitioners.

**MONTROSE FARMERS MARKET** (970) 249 0705 Centennial Plaza, 433 S. 1st St. Montrose, CO 81401

[www.valleyfoodpartnership.org](http://www.valleyfoodpartnership.org). Year-Round Farmers Market, Saturdays 9am-1pm (Summer), every other Saturday 10am-1pm (Winter). Accepts SNAP and Double Up Food Bucks.

**MONTROSE CENTER FOR ARTS FIRST FRIDAY**-New Art Exhibit opening with featured artists.4:30 - 7 pm First Friday of every month. 11 S Park Ave., Montrose. Free Admission. For more information: 970-787-9428 or [info@mc4arts.com](mailto:info@mc4arts.com)

**MONTROSE ALTRUSA**-1st Tuesday of the month Program meeting; 2nd Tuesday of the month committee meeting; 3rd Tuesday of the month Business meeting. Meetings are held at the Field House on the corner of Colorado Avenue and Rio Grande Avenue at Noon.

**FREE THINKERS** meet 1st Sunday of the month for information call 970 417-4183

**BOSOM BUDDIES BREAST CANCER SUPPORT GROUP**, Wednesdays noon-12:45, 645 S. 5th Street

**MONTROSE HISTORICAL SOCIETY** meets 1st Wednesday of the month @ Montrose Events Center, 1036 No 7th Street 7 pm (970) 249-2085 [www.montrosehistory.org](http://www.montrosehistory.org)

**MONTROSE AREA WOODTURNERS** Montrose Area Woodturners meet second Saturdays 9 am. Chapter of the American Association of Woodturners. For location and information contact: Al Head 970-209-0981 or [aheadaviation@outlook.com](mailto:aheadaviation@outlook.com)

**NURSE FAMILY PARTNERSHIP**-Breastfeeding Support Group on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of every month. An infant scale will also be available to check your baby's weight. Breastfeeding Support Group (Bring your questions and your family!) Montrose County Event Center (1036 North 7th Street Room 3) 10am - 12pm. Questions? Please call 970-252-5015.

**BINGO EVERY FRIDAY, SATURDAY, SUNDAY** at 7pm at the American Legion Post 24 Olathe doors open at 5:30. Sunday Bingo will start at 1:30pm. More info call Tom 970 260 8298.

**THE MONTROSE GENEALOGY CENTER** at 700 E. Main St. is now open Wednesday and Thursday afternoons, 1-4 p.m. or call for an appointment: 970-240-1755. Free help and resources for your family history research." (The center is sponsored by the non-profit organization, Fore-Kin Trails Genealogical Society.)

### MONTHLY

**Dec. 18**-*Stories & Poems Norwood* will host outfitter, backcountry guide and cowboy poet John Nelson on Wednesday Dec. 18 at 6 pm at the Lone Cone Library.

**Dec 22-3 pm ~ Free Holiday Concert: Winter Wonderland.** Join the Montrose Community Band at the Montrose Pavilion. Christmas is time for joy and memories. Let us entertain you with fond memories, musical pictures, and old favorites.



# MONTROSE HIGH SCHOOL DIVISION AWARD WINNERS



Division Award Winners for December are (L-R) Madison Collin, Adrian Rubalcaba, Yoselin Serrano, Alexis Hernandez, Kaston Kail, Jayce England, Joshua Maddox, Esther Greear, Mikayla Peterson, and Caden Kelley. Not pictured: Erika Zeferino, Yarezi Barron and Wakeena Standefer. Courtesy photo.



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