

Pueblo County Coroner Resigns Amid Somber Mortuary Scandal

by Sentinel Staff

The Pueblo County Coroner, who is trusted to handle loved ones with dignity, has resigned amid shocking revelations. On August 20th inspectors from the Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA) arrived at Davis Mortuary in Pueblo to conduct their first routine inspection under new oversight laws. What the inspectors encountered was a strong odor and then a horrifying discovery: 24 bodies in various states of decay, containers of bones, and possible human tissue behind a hidden door concealed with a cardboard display.

When confronted, Pueblo County Coroner Brian Cotter, who co-owns the mortuary with his brother Chris and was on site for the inspection, admitted that some bodies had been awaiting cremation for as long as 15 years. He went further saying some grieving families may have received fake ashes.

The swift response from multiple



state agencies and neighboring counties reflects how seriously our community and Colorado regard this breach of trust. The Colorado Coroners Association (CCA) called an emergency meeting to

address this crisis. Custer County Coroner Brad Baltzly, who serves as Treasurer for the association and is one of the four members of the executive board, substantiated that Cotter should be removed from

the CCA board and called on to resign. Custer County Deputy Coroner Nikita Phillips also serves as one of the twelve CCA board members making Custer County the only county in the state with two current CCA board members. The group voted unanimously to remove Cotter as Secretary of the CCA “due to unethical practices and harm to the community in which he was sworn to uphold”. The CCA also noted in its August 23 press release that Cotter’s actions violated the highest ethical standards he swore to uphold.

Baltzly and Phillips were called to the Pueblo scene as part of the State Coroner Assist Teams. CCA has a database of all the coroners and deputies in the state who are available to assist in a disaster to include the equipment they have available. These are the folks that make up “assist teams”. Custer, El Paso, Fremont and Douglas counties all responded to the call

CORONER
see page 23

BOCC: IT Outsourced, Unfunded Mandates

BOCC Meeting Report

– August 27, 2025

by Michael Foster

The most recent, regularly scheduled Board of County Commissioners’ (BOCC) Meeting was held at All Aboard Westcliffe on Wednesday, August 27th at 9 a.m. Chaired by Commissioner Bill Canda, all three commissioners were present, as well as Sheriff Rich Smith, a handful of citizens, and other staff members from various county departments. The agenda presented held a variety of issues to be addressed, with several votes taking place during the meeting.

In opening comments, Commissioner Canda started the substantive portion of the meeting by highlighting the Sheriff’s Office execution of a search warrant at the Veteran’s Service Office as was reported in last week’s edition of The *Sentinel*. Commissioner Lucas Epp stressed the needs and challenges being faced by the Workforce Housing Committee and the Custer County Kid’s Council and how those two groups are working together to help create solutions to shared problems. Commissioner Paul Vogelsong provided comments, which were

echoed by Commissioner Canda, on the poor condition of roads in the county especially given recent heavy rainfalls.

IT Director Vernon Roth kicked off the only topic in the Unfinished Business category, by providing an update on the issue of the county selecting a future IT Service provider. Vernon provided a detailed overview of the two companies previously selected as finalists in the process and what he viewed as pros and cons of the respective proposals they submitted. After some commentary and questions from the commissioners and public comment, a vote was taken. The commissioners voted unanimously to award PDS IT Services a contract to provide IT services and support to the county starting in 2026. The base cost of the contract was around \$134,000. This decision means that starting with the new year, the county will have only one full-time employee, John Mapes, working in the IT department.

John will continue to be the on-site IT tech for things like hardware replacement, email setups and budget.

AUG 27th BOCC
see page 17

The Trouble with the Curve



Semi-truck highway rollover in Custer County earlier this year.

Custer County Sheriff’s Office FaceBook page

by Sentinel Staff

We’re not talking about the 2012 Clint Eastwood baseball movie. We’re talking about something much closer to home—the curves on Custer County highways.

The curve itself isn’t the real problem. The problem is the speed at which too many drivers try to take it. In baseball, speed helps you master the curve. On our mountain roads, speed works against you every time.

This summer has been a busy one for rollovers. Just last week, a semi loaded with fresh Olathe sweet corn

tipped over making it the county’s fourth commercial vehicle rollover of the year. Earlier this summer, it was a semi-truck hauling Bar-S hot dogs, sausage, and bologna. When food trucks crash, the Wet Mountain Fire Protection District salvages what it can and shares with the community. A truckload of corn or hot dogs may make for a memorable potluck, but not every wreck leaves behind a consumable bounty. In July, a rollover involved potentially hazardous materials.

THE CURVE
see page 3

High Altitude Car Show Photo Feature
pages 12-13

Remembering George page 4

School Board Election Canceled
page 5

Bobcat Homecoming Activities
page 10

Westcliffe Town Mtg.
page 17

3 Takes On Colorado Special Session
page 15

Protecting Senior Assets
page 18

CO Sheriffs Get Heartburn
page 20

PATRIOT ALERT!

CALI Carry Judge Decision
page 21



For we walk by faith, not by sight.

2 Corinthians 5:7

SANGRE DE CRISTO
SENTINEL

Copyright©2025
Accurate
Timely
Relevant



We believe that freedom is a gift from God and not granted to us by politicians or governments. Freedom demands responsible behavior of all citizens and must be consistent with the truths expressed in the great moral and governing guides as The Ten Commandments, The Declaration of Independence, The U.S. Constitution and The Bill of Rights.

These were the principles that guided our founding fathers and which we believe are still relevant. These are the principles that will guide our reporting and be the basis of all our views.

We will be led by truth, facts, logic and common sense.

The Sangre de Cristo Sentinel (USPS 11280) is an independent newspaper, published weekly by The Mountain Publishing Company, Inc. P.O. Box 179, Westcliffe, CO 81252.
POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to The Mountain Publishing Company, Inc. P.O. Box 179, Westcliffe, CO 81252

Key Personnel

Michael Foster - President & Managing Editor
editors.sentinel@gmail.com
Fred Hernandez - Vice President
FredHer8@proton.me
L. Vass - Secretary and Asst Editor / Graphics Layout
sdc.sentinel@gmail.com
Katherine Brencley - Advertising Coordinator
SentinelAds1791@gmail.com

Office Support

Accounting Services
Bookkeeper.sdc@gmail.com
Yvonne Phillips
sdc.sentinel@gmail.com

Mailing & Delivery

Galen Studebaker

Founding Editor

George Gramlich
2013-2025

Sentinel Founders

Mike Hess
George Gramlich
Mary Seifert
Rob Canterbury
Katherine Brencley

Sentinel Honor Roll

Dan Bubis
Jackie Bubis
Carol Clemenson
Scott Clemenson
Barbara Napolitan

Contributors

Audrey Slater
Mtn. Photo in Logo
by Peggi Collins

Business Hours:

Tues: 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Wedn: 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Fri: 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.
Closed Mon, Thurs & Weekends

Subscription Rates:

\$49 yearly for 81252 zip code
\$59 yearly elsewhere
\$29 yearly for Digital Edition

How to contact us:

719-783-3360
P.O. Box 179
601 Main Street
Westcliffe, CO 81252
www.SDCSentinel.com

Please send your letters to sdc.sentinel@gmail.com

www.facebook.com/
SangreDeCristoSentinel



"We the People" Speak Letters to the Editor



Please send your submissions to us at sdc.sentinel@gmail.com, mail them or bring them in to the office at 601 Main St., Westcliffe CO 81252. Rules: We will print, at our discretion, the thoughts and ideas of our fellow citizen-patriots. Please limit your offerings to 500 words or less. No profanity or vulgarity, no personal attacks, and please sign your name and give us the general location of your residence. Also please provide your phone number or email - for confirmation only. The opinions expressed here are solely those of the author; they do not necessarily reflect the opinions held or endorsed by the Sentinel.

WMVO and the Real Custer County

On behalf of Custer County's second largest constituency and its second largest bloc of voters, this correspondence offers some commentary and rebuttal regarding what was communicated and has been published in (other) local media regarding the Wet Mountain Valley Outdoors (WMVO) premier gathering at Lange Hall on August 6, 2025.

The Custer County Conservation District (CCCD) was formed in May 1939. The CCCD is a local governmental subdivision of the State of Colorado and includes all of Custer County, excluding the incorporated communities of Westcliffe and Silver Cliff. Our purpose is to provide information, education and service regarding natural resource issues and concerns to landowners within the District boundaries. An elected board of five Supervisors, along with an appointed District Manager, direct the goals and activities through the use of a Long-Range Plan and an Annual Plan of Work. Names such as Vickerman, Coleman, Adams, Rusher, Geroux, Berry, Proctor,

Rusk, and Miller populate our eighty-six year history.

The CCCD was not blindsided by the birthing of WMVO, we were not blindsided by their survey, nor were we blindsided by their community meeting. What caught us off-guard were the misinformation and disinformation, and the not-so-subtle targeting of Custer County's life-blood – the agricultural industry – the farmers, the ranchers, the growers, and the producers. Evidently, "we" are the problem – our historical cattle and sheep trails, your toxic algae blooms in your DeWeese Reservoir, and our fertilizer use . . .

Some facts and realities that have been ignored by this group and by the group preparing the survey:

1. Water quality in Grape Creek has been deemed "compromised or out of compliance" by the Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment (CDPHE) because water samples indicate "nutrient" levels exceed maximum limits.

2. The CDPHE has been taking water samples in Grape Creek for nearly 20 years, but the sampling and collection protocols have been random in nature rather than following strict scientific data guidelines; and therefore, results are inconsistent, with many unsupported and irreconcilable data points.

3. The Colorado Cattlemen's Coalition Ag Water NetWORK recently concluded a study of four separate mountain meadow sites (very similar to any of the hay meadows in the Grape Creek drainage) around the Intermountain Colorado region. The results of this study demonstrated that waters diverted from the stream, for the purpose of irrigation, were returned with substantially fewer visible solids. Additionally, the study demonstrated an insignificant change in nutrient levels between diversion and return flow. In other words, hay fields return water to the stream in a condition very similar to how it is received, and thus does not significantly contribute to nutrient or other pollutant loading.

4. Several of the water samples taken over the years by the CDPHE just before Grape Creek enters private land contained levels of nutrients as high or higher than samples taken at the entrance to DeWeese Reservoir, which would lead one to question the data.

5. It is also important to note that DeWeese Reservoir was originally constructed for the sole purpose of providing irrigation storage for the vegetable and fruit crops in the Lincoln Park area south of Cañon City. It could be said that recreation has hijacked the reservoir and is creating unrealistic expectations for a body of water that was designed to be withdrawn to extinction annually.

The District strongly urges the WMVO to convey complete, relevant, and truthful data and information.

Signed,

Board of Supervisors
Custer County Conservation District

SUNFLOWER
Natural
FOODS



Open Mon - Thurs
10 am - 7 pm
Fri 9 am - 7 pm
Sat 9 am - 6 pm
Sun 10 am - 5 pm
405 Main St.,
Westcliffe
719-783-9266

Your local option
for healthy food!

We carry:

- Local Produce
- Local Meats
- Local Dairy & Cheeses
- Supplements
- Personal Care items

We also do special
order requests for
hard-to-find items!

Come see us today!

MAGA
PROUD!



H & L
TRUCKING
&
SKID STEER
WORK



719-371-1570

SPECIAL
WEEKEND
OFFER!



TONY'S STEAK
AND TAVERN

Two pork tenderloins, scalloped potatoes, seasonal vegetables, and roll.

\$21

REGULAR FEATURES

Business Directory	page	6-7
Classifieds	page	9
Churches	page	8
Crossword Puzzle	page	17
Events	page	8-9

Business Directory QR
(Scan to download)



website <https://SangreDeCristoSentinel.com>



Hershberger
CONSTRUCTION



719-216-9545

OVER 20 YEARS OF QUALITY AMISH WORKMANSHIP

- Metal Roofing
- Siding
- Windows
- Decks
- Buildings

THE CURVE
from page 1

The pattern is apparent: Highway 69, especially along mile post numbers in the 40s and 60s, and the curves combined with drivers often pushing speeds higher than the highway number itself. So far, we’ve seen eight rollover crashes in Custer County this year. Once winter ice and snow arrives, that number is likely to climb.

Crash investigations fall mostly to the Colorado State Patrol, though Custer County Sheriff’s deputies often handle the calls due to an ongoing shortage of troopers. Either way, the data is reported to the Colorado Department of Transportation. Regardless of who is doing the paperwork, the manpower strain is real. The corn truck crash alone kept emergency crews tied up for 17 hours. The State Patrol arrived around 2:30 a.m. to investigate the accident and then departed, leaving Custer County Sheriff resources and the Wet Mountain Fire Department stretched thin.

These wrecks aren’t just about inconvenience, and wearing out our first responders, they’re about safety. Back in 2022, Custer County had one of the



Top and Right: Semi-truck wreck. (CCSO photos.)
Bottom: Folks picking up corn from the Wet Mountain Fire District.



Photo by Leah Grundy



highest fatal crash rates in Colorado, with 12 crashes per 10,000 residents. That number has come down thanks to targeted traffic enforcement, especially in high-crash areas and spots where citizens report reckless driving.

Still, the temptation to speed remains. Many drivers believe a few extra miles per hour will save them time. But the numbers don’t back that up. A study by AAA Colorado found that traveling 80 mph instead of 75 mph saves just five minutes over 100 miles. For the average driver, speeding amounts to a daily savings of only 26 seconds.

The cost of that “time saved” can be deadly. In the past five years, more than 1,200 people have died in speeding related crashes across Colorado. According to CDOT’s 2025 Driver Behavior Report, 71 percent of Colorado drivers admit to speeding on highways at least some of the time.

So, if you are among the 71 percent, the next time you’re cruising above 65 mph on Highway 69, remember: speed might help a pitcher throw a perfect curveball, but on our highways, speed is what causes trouble with the curve.

NOW STOCKING

DRYWALL

1/2" 4x8

\$12.99

jeremy@cbslmb.com • 719-783-2385
705 Ohio St, Silver Cliff, CO 81252

Barb Beckner

Financial Advisor

Barb@peaks-integrity.com

Ron Beckner

Financial Advisor

Ron@peaks-integrity.com

RAYMOND JAMES

Peaks Integrity Wealth Management, LLC

595 Hermit Rd Westcliffe, CO 81252

719-581-(PEAK) 7325

www.peaks-integrity.com

Your Full-Service Investment Office in Custer County and Surrounding Areas

Securities offered through Raymond James Financial Services, Inc., Member FINRA/SIPC. Investment advisory services are offered through Raymond James Financial Services Advisors, Inc. Peaks Integrity Wealth Management LLC is not a registered broker/dealer and is independent of Raymond James Financial Services.

Jeff Ray

Owner-Master Plumber
Your Local Plumbing & Heating Service Company

719-783-0379

pinonplumbing@gmail.com

Residential & Commercial
Service and Installs,
Furnaces, Boilers, Propane
Heaters, Tanked & Tankless
Water Heaters, Main Water &
Sewer Line Replacements,
Water & Gas Lines,
Remodels & New Construction

Providing 34 years of
Experience, Knowledge,
Reliability & Honesty

LICENSED & INSURED
P.C #2578 / M.P. #189724

Open Tues-Sat from 10am-5pm

206 Main St., Westcliffe

719-659-8743

Mention this ad
for 20% off
one item!
(Excluding Guns)

Come in to check out our great selection of firearms,
we will special order firearms and ammo not in stock!

FFL transfers - \$40 | Discount for police, military and first responders



“We the People” Speak

Letters to the Editor Cont’d

George Gramlich A Few Words on George Gramlich

Friend - Patriot

At times, words seem inadequate to describe feelings about relationships and phenomenon that not only impact one personally but that have wide ranging and lasting effects in the community at large. George represents a larger-than-life example of a person that puts service to others over self. Joy can be represented by Jesus - Others - Yourself.

Many of his good deeds were purposely hidden from the public eye demonstrating his humble nature. He was always capable of sharing his love for common sense with those with whom he came in contact. This was especially true with his keen ability to cut right to the chase when observing senseless behavior that was detrimental to good order and discipline.

His satirical and colorful way with words were straight and to the point. There was no ambiguity in his writings or speech. One always knew on which side of an issue that he stood, and he was never shy about taking a stand on issues. The word of God tells us in I Corinthians 16:13-14, “Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong. Let all that you do be done with love.” That was the George who knew and loved.

Yvonne, my prayers are with you as you adjust to life without your soul mate. May God be with all of the *Sentinel* stalwarts as the work that George helped start continues on into the future. May our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ be with you all. With respect and love - semper fidelis, Bob Hollingsworth

Greetings Everyone,

I wanted to share a few words about my good friend George Gramlich (from “A Sheepdog Barks” point of view). I started the Southern Colorado Patriots Club (SCPC) right after Barack Obama was elected. Many local Patriots attended. Several meetings had over 300 people attending, especially when the Colorado Democrats started attacking our 2nd Amendment rights. I mention that because that is where I met George & Yvonne. What a pair. They were a delight. Great conservatives with a New York attitude. They were a terrific addition to the valley, quite an inspirational team, and I was happy they had showed up. After Obama was reelected, I became very depressed. It was inconceivable to me that that could happen in America. That was, in my opinion, a result of two very weak Republican candidates. Sorry, I digress.

The first SCPC meeting



after the reelection only resulted in about 10 people showing up. Guess I wasn’t the only one depressed. Two of those were George and Yvonne. At that meeting I hinted that I might step down. George blasted me. His harsh New-York-style comments rang true and restored my hope and optimism. He and Yvonne, along with a few other hard-core conservatives, helped save the Club. Shortly afterwards, George and I discussed the need

for another newspaper, one that would better reflect the conservative nature of Custer County. Years earlier I had tried to start one but was never able to raise the necessary start-up money. Great support for that idea but no money. Then America experienced Obama. AND this time it was successful. George Gramlich, Mary Seifert, Rob Canterbury, Kat Branchley and I joined together and we raised a little over \$40k. That

was enough and on July 4th, 2013, the *Sangre de Cristo Sentinel* was born. It has been, and still is, a lot of hard work, but also a labor of love. And George and Yvonne became the heart and soul of this paper. I thank them both. I will miss George for many reasons. I will miss his honest reporting, his sense of humor and his New York attitude and wit. Mostly I will miss his friendship. George brought gritty truth to the valley. TRUTH and conservative commentary. I eagerly waited for it every week.

I love George and look forward to the day we are reunited. He made a real difference, and we are all better for it. Enjoy Heaven my friend, we will all be along soon. Thanks for all you did for the citizens of “Happy Valley.” RIP. gg, I offer you my highest Sheepdog salute – WOOF, WOOF, WOOF!

J. Michael Hess
Former Rosita &
CC resident, 1995-2017

Special!
Reese's Peanut Butter Sundae

STAGE STOP

EST 2019

3rd & Main

Vanilla Soft Serve, Peanut Butter Sauce, Reese's Pieces

LOCAL, TRUSTWORTHY, DEPENDABLE.

INSURED, WITH 20+ YEARS EXPERIENCE

GRAVEL

LANDSCAPE ROCK

TOPSOIL

SAND

ROAD BASE

MATERIAL HAULING

EXCAVATION

SEPTIC INSTALLATION

EROSION CONTROL

DRIVEWAY INSTALLATION

FOUNDATIONS

SITE PREP

STUMP GRINDING

MULCHING

Shawn Gaide

719-429-1676 coforearth@gmail.com

YODER'S
HOME FURNISHINGS

We create heirloom furniture so you can create lasting memories.

New lines of Patio Furniture and A-Frame Swings!
Beautiful furniture of all kinds, Live Edge Slabs, Amish Handcrafted Beds & Mattresses, Metal Art, Quality Footwear and SO MUCH MORE!
Come check us out!

At Yoder's, we only source the highest quality materials. Our furniture is built by the best Amish craftsmen in the country and will last for generations to enjoy.

Open Mon - Sat | 9am-5pm
57965 Hwy 69, Westcliffe | 719-783-0988 | <https://shopyoders.com>

White Bros Custom
Plumbing & Heating, Inc.
We put the master's hands to work for you

LOCAL FULL SERVICE PLUMBING & HEATING

719-458-8305

WESTCLIFFE, CO

PC# 1016 MP# 189358

www.whitebrosplumbing.com

Custer County School Board Election Cancelled

by Laura Vass

The Custer County School District’s first meeting of the month took place Tuesday, September 2, 2025. Four of the five members were in attendance. Jennifer Kreigh was absent due to work.

The most interesting action item for the community was the cancellation of the School Board Election. Colorado statute allows the election to be cancelled when the number of candidates, to include write-ins, does not exceed the total of open seats.

The Board voted unanimously to adopt a resolution cancelling the School Board Election and declaring the directors to fill the open positions; John Tillotson 2-year term, Cameron Fore 4-year term, and Linda Brown 4-year term. All will be sworn in once the election is certified by the County Clerk in November.

We requested the Resolution and are providing it for our readers. See below.

Look for the full school board meeting report in next week’s edition.

Resolution 25-14

CUSTER COUNTY CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT C-1

Cancellation of School Board Election

WHEREAS, the only matter before the electors at the regular biennial school election on November 4, 2025 is the election of three (3) persons to fill three (3) offices of school director; and

WHEREAS, three (3) individuals have nomination petitions with sufficient signatures to qualify as candidates; and

WHEREAS, the deadline for filing an affidavit of intent to be a write-in candidate has passed with Zero (0) individuals filing such an affidavit; and

WHEREAS, state law at Colo. Rev. Stat. § 1-5-208(1.5) authorizes the Board of Education by resolution to cancel the election and declare the candidates elected if at the close of business on September 2, 2025 there are not more candidates than offices to be filled at the election, including candidates filing affidavits of intent to be write-in candidates.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education of Custer County School District C-1 has determined that the prerequisites for canceling the election have been met so the 2025 regular school biennial election is canceled.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Donna Newell, the designated election official

for the regular school biennial election, is authorized to take all necessary and appropriate steps to cancel the election, including providing notice of the cancellation by publication and by posting notice in the office of the designated election official and in the office of the county clerk and recorder; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the designated election official shall officially notify the county clerk and recorder of this action so that election expenses to date can be pro-rated accordingly; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the following individuals are hereby declared elected by acclamation: John Tillotson, 2-year Term; Cameron Fore, 4-year Term; and Dr. Linda Brown, 4-year Term, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the designated election official shall notify these candidates of the cancellation of the election and of their resulting election by acclamation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that between Election Day and the next regular meeting of the Board of Education or the Board’s organizational meeting, whichever comes first, the designated election official shall provide these candidates with certificates of election after which they shall each take the oath of office within 10 days and will thereafter be qualified to participate in meetings of the Board of Education.

Respected Funeral Home

Editor Note: We reached out to our trusted advertiser, Holt Family Funeral Home, for a statement concerning industry standards and recent events at an unaffiliated funeral home. We appreciate their prompt and comforting response;

We, at Holt Family Funeral Home, are profoundly disturbed by the reports of funeral homes in Colorado that betrayed the trust of grieving families. It is a travesty for a family to face mistrust of an industry that is supposed to help them through grief and the loss of someone they love.

Even with needed oversight from the Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies, families should always feel comfortable asking a funeral home about its facilities, procedures of care and compliance with state regulations.

Families should inquire if the funeral home has its own crematory, and if it’s available for inspection. If the funeral home does not

have an on-site crematory, families have the right to inquire about chain of custody.

At Holt Family Funeral Home in Cañon City, over 100 years and five generations of the Holt family serving southern Colorado—we hold ourselves to the highest standards of integrity, transparency, and care. We have the only crematory in Fremont County, and our operations adhere strictly to regulatory, ethical, and professional guidelines.

We believe transparency and trust is non-negotiable, and we welcome anyone with questions about our practices. We also welcome inspection of our facilities and our crematory—and provide witness cremation—something other funeral homes in Fremont County cannot offer.

As we have done for 103 years, we will continue to serve with honesty and transparency, integrity and compassion.

Beth Holt Madone,
Owner, Holt Family
Funeral Home



Norup Gas Inc.
28 Rangeview Loop
(Rangeview Industrial Park)

Located
one mile north of Westcliffe
on Highway 69.

Office hours:
Monday through Friday
8 a.m. until 5 p.m.
719-783-9338

**564-ACRE RANCH
WITH LOADS OF CHARACTER**





Brenda Bosse
Realtor®
*26 years listing and
selling in the valley!*



This beautiful property has big rolling hills, lots of trees, rock outcrops, old homestead buildings, and ample good grass for grazing. The 896 sf house is itching for a face lift and some TLC. National Forest access is across the road. Three wells, septic, propane, electric are all in place. \$2,200,000

(719) 371-3270
9 Bassick Place, Westcliffe
brenda@brendabosse.com
www.brendabosse.com

WILDFIRE MITIGATION
HOME & PROPERTY PROTECTION
SKID STEER WORK / HOME IMPROVEMENT & REPAIRS



SWOTA ENTERPRISES
SERVING CUSTER COUNTY & SURROUNDING AREAS

719-783-4477
RAY SWOTA **RSWOTA@GMAIL.COM**

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

Automotive Services

The Cliffes Auto Service
Automotive Repair and Service
215 E Main St, Silver Cliff • 719-783-3281
CliffesAutoSvc@gmail.com

Wrasse & Son Diesel Repair, LLC
719-429-9275 | wrasseandson@gmail
Please call for an appointment
Diesel Repair & Maintenance, Full Service Tire

Banks & Financial Services

**Collector & Investor Coins -
Buying Selling & Trading**
719- 269-7507 • 123 S 5th St, Canon City, CO
www.canoncitycoins.com

Kirkpatrick Bank
8 Bassick Place, Westcliffe, CO
719.783.2030
www.kirkpatrickbank.com

Peaks Integrity Wealth Management, LLC
Raymond James
Investments, Financial and Insurance Services
719-581-PEAK (7325) / www.peaks-integrity.com

Building SUPPLY

Central Building Supply
Hardware, Lumber & OSB
705 Ohio Street, Silver Cliff
719-783-2385

Builders/ Construction

Construction Solutions of Colorado, LLC
Steel Buildings -- Licensed & Insured
Casey N. 719-371-7454 - Corey N.- 719-371-6143
Nordyke Family • constsolutions@icloud.com

Eagle Edge Construction, LLC
Ronnie Miller
719-239-0300
Honesty is Everything

Eagle Peak View
All phases of Construction & Plumbing
Mike Mitzner
719-494-4026 | mike@eaglepeakview.com

Hershberger Construction
719-216-9545
Matt@HershbergerConstruction.net

Kauffman's Construction
Porches & Decks - Roofing & Siding
Custom Pole Barns & Garages • Free Estimates
Owen 719-371-7863

Old Country Construction
719-458-4184
New Homes, Additions, Polebarns, Garages
Certified Passive House Tradesperson

**CUSTOM Home Builders
Westcliffe Construction, LLC**
From the Ground Up!
719-371-5231 Please Call or Send Text

Daryl CUSTOM Home Builders
WKM Construction, LLC
New Homes, Renovations
719-371-5231 www.WKMconstruction.com

Cabs & Transport

RANDY CAB
Randy Schiro Owner /Driver
719-210-5908
randolf.schiro@icloud.com

Computer/Cell Phone Repair

Electron Wizard
sleuth1@sleuth1.com 719-431-9442
615 Main St, Westcliffe
Computer Repairs, Sales, Cell Phones, and More!

Clothing & Footwear

Custer County Supply Co
206 Main St. Westcliffe | 719-659-8743
Open Tues-Sat: 10am-5pm
Guns, dog supplies, clothing, & much more!

Salty Pine Floral & Boutique
411 Main St, Westcliffe
719-783-9393
www.westcliffeflowershop.com

Yoder's Home Furnishings
57965 Hwy 69, Westcliffe
Home & Patio Furniture, Footwear, Outdoor Wear
Mon - Sat 9am-5pm

Construction Services

Beach Redi-Mix & Concrete Pumping
Precast septic tanks &
decorative blocks
719-783-3558 | info@SBCompanies.com

Colorado Forestry & Earthworks, LLC
Gravel: Landscape Rock, Topsoil & More
Excavation: Septic Installs, Driveways, Foundations
719-429-1676 | coforearth.com

**Harald Frank Skid Steer Services
and H & L Trucking**
HaraldFrank7@gmail.com 719-371-1570
Driveways Build/Repair - Gravel & Road Base Hauling

KLM Seamless Gutters
Marlin Miller
Quality and Experience
719-371-7021

Sapiah Woodworks, LLC.
Lisa Kidwell, Owner/Contractor
Custom & Fine Carpentry, Restoration, Consulting
720.309.4262 sapiahwoodworks@gmail.com

Seifert Enterprises
Excavation, Septic Systems, Culverts,
Driveways, Rock Sales & Delivery
719-783-2757 info@SBCompanies.com

Solar Solutions Ltd
Off Grid and Grid Tie
10 Hermit Lane. Silver Cliff 719-783-9666
email: pbailey@solarsolutions.com

Valley View Windows & Doors
Call Marty Byler at 719-220-4151
or Email Will@valleyviewwindows.net
Free Estimates, Replacements, New construction

Countertops

SOL Granite & Natural Stone
4804 Dillon Dr. Pueblo - 719-544-3085
solgranite.com
Inventory, Custom Design, Fabrication & Installation

Dentist

Jared Smith, DMD
618 Main St, Cañon City
719-275-0661
www.jaredsmithdmd.com

Electricians

Boneyard Electric LLC
Steven Hardin
719-371-1221 - boneyardelectric@gmail.com
Industrial - Residential - Commercial

J.R.B. Electric, LLC
Residential & Commercial
Serving Fremont, Custer, Chaffee & Pueblo Counties
719-320-0913 · JRBElectricLLC.com

Firewood

Westcliffe Firewood
Ryan Stover
719-371-6074
westcliffefirewood@gmail.com

Flooring

Choice Floors
Jeff Holmberg 719-429-3008
Free Estimates
Local Rep / Nationwide Company

Florist

Salty Pine Floral & Boutique
411 Main St, Westcliffe
719-783-9393
www.westcliffeflowershop.com

Funeral Homes

Holt Family Funeral Home
806 Macon Ave, Cañon City
719-275-4113
www.holtfamilyfuneralhomes.com

Furniture & Home Goods

Yoder's Home Furnishings
57965 Hwy 69, Westcliffe
Home & Patio Furniture, Footwear, Outdoor Wear
Mon - Sat 9am-5pm

Grocery & Health Foods

DUTCH PANTRY & DELI
404 E. Main St., Silver Cliff
719-298-6689 Call for store hours
DELI HOURS: Mon-Friday 11 - 4 , Sat: 11- 2:30

Lowe's Market
50 Main St, Westcliffe
719-783-0550
www.lowesmarket.com

Sunflower Natural Foods
405 Main St., Westcliffe
719-783-9266
Mon-Fri 10am-7 pm, Sat 9am-4pm

Shopping Local Helps Local Economy & Creates Local Jobs

Guns , Ammo, Knives

Custer County Supply Co
206 Main St. Westcliffe | 719-659-8743
Open Tues-Sat: 10am-5pm
Guns, dog supplies, clothing, & much more!

Don’t see Your Business?
Call us for Great Rates! 719-783-3360

Guns , Ammo, Knives Cont’d

Salida Cutlery & Smoke Shop
132 W Hwy 50 Salida
719-539-2884 Monday-Friday 9-6
Where you’ll find sharp gifts & smokin’ deals!

Salida Gunshop
7345 W Hwy 50, Salida
salidagunshop.com | 719-207-4285
please see ad on page 20 -21 for hours

Gun Clubs

Royal Gorge Gun Club & Lincoln Park Pawn
1345 Elm Ave, Cañon City 719-276-3030
Lincolnparkpawn@hotmail.com
1 foot to over 1 mile, 75 different powders

Sangre Shooting Sports Club
P.O. Box 1554, Westcliffe
http://sangreshooting.com

Heating & Spas

Salida Stove & Spa
11130 W Hwy 50, Poncha Springs
719-539-2125
salidastove.com

Heating & Air Conditioning

Greenstreet Plumbing
Licensed, Bonded and Insured Master Plumber
Infloor Heat Systems - Plumbing
719-783-2800 - greenstreetplumbing@gmail.com

Piñon Plumbing, LLC
All Service Heating · Residential & Commercial
Boilers, Furnaces & Propane Heaters
Licensed & Insured · Jeff Ray 719-783-0379

White Bros Custom Plumbing & Heating, Inc.
www.whitebrosplumbing.com
P.O. Box 957, Westcliffe ~ 719-217-7202
Locally Owned & Family Operated

Insurance

State Farm Dennis Podzemny
1004 S 9th St, Cañon City
719-275-1548
https://www.canoncityinsurance.com

Landscaping

Yardcrafters
Full Landscapes, Xeriscaping, Retaining Walls
719-275-5091
yardcrafterscolo@outlook.com

Lodging

Darksbies Vacations
Enter WMV-LOCAL for 10% off vacation home rentals.
Visit Darksbies.vacations or call
719-783-0648

Mitigation/ Pest Control

Premier Pest Control LLC
719-371-7404 ~ ppc16@privategarden.org
inspections, estimates, professional pest management
residential, commercial, licensed and insured

Mitigation/ Tree Removal

Swota Enterprises
Wildfire Mitigation and Excavation
719-783-4477
rswota@gmail.com

Wise Tree Service
719-429-2866 Local, Insured, Experienced
Complete tree service-difficult removals, trimming/
shaping, stump grinding and fire mitigation

Pharmacy

Palace Drug - Silver Cliff
Get your prescriptions filled while you wait!
94 E Main St., Silver Cliff
Palacedrugco.com | 719-371-9402

Plumbing and Heating

Greenstreet Plumbing
Licensed, Bonded and Insured Master Plumber
Infloor Heat Systems - Plumbing
719-783-2800 - greenstreetplumbing@gmail.com

Piñon Plumbing, LLC
All Service Heating · Residential & Commercial
Boilers, Furnaces & Propane Heaters
Licensed & Insured · Jeff Ray 719-783-0379

River Valley Plumbing and Heating
250 Moore Dr, Florence
719-784-3876
www.rivervalleyplumbingandheat.com

White Bros Custom Plumbing & Heating, Inc.
www.whitebrosplumbing.com
P.O. Box 957, Westcliffe ~ 719-217-7202
Locally Owned & Family Operated

Propane

Norup Gas
28 Range View Loop, Westcliffe
719-783-9338

Real Estate Services

Brenda Bosse HomeSmart Preferred Real Estate
9 Bassick Place, Westcliffe, CO 81252
719-371-3270, brenda@brendabosse.com
Selling locally for 24 years.

Custer County Realty
902 Main St, Westcliffe
719-783-9221
www.custerrealty.com

Lori Kastendieck
Independent Broker
719-269-0653
WestcliffeBroker.com

Restaurants & Dining

DUTCH PANTRY & DELI
404 E. Main St., Silver Cliff
719-298-6689 Call for store hours
DELI HOURS: Mon-Friday 11 - 4 , Sat: 11- 2:30

Restaurants & Dining Cont’d

**Stage Stop Gourmet Sundaes
& Espresso**
3rd and Main Street, Westcliffe
Follow Us: Facebook.com/inthesangres

Tony’s Mountain Pizza
719-783-9300 • tonysmountainpizza.com
Tues, Wed, Thursday &Sun 11-8.
Fri-Sat 11-9 closed Mon
630 Main Street, Silver Cliff

Tony’s Steak & Tavern
719-783-9300 • tonyssteakandtavern.com
Wedn-Thurs 11-8, Friday-Sat 11-9
Sunday 10 -8, closed Mon-Tues

Septic Installation

Colorado Forestry & Earthworks, LLC
Gravel: Landscape Rock, Topsoil & More
Excavation: Septic Installs, Driveways, Foundations
719-429-1676 | coforearth.com

Finney Drilling
Cañon City
719-275-9525
larryfinneydrilling@gmail.com

Seifert Enterprises
Excavation, Septic Systems, Culverts,
Driveways, Rock Sales & Delivery
719-783-2757 info@SBCompanies.com

Solar / Renewable Energy

Solar Solutions Ltd
Off Grid and Grid Tie
10 Hermit Lane. Silver Cliff 719-783-9666
email: pbailey@solarsolutions.com

Storage

Outta Space Storage LLC
86o Airport Rd | SilverWest Airport
outtaspacestoragecolorado.com
303-906-1900

Wet Mountain Storage
300 Main St, Westcliffe (office)
719-783-9321
www.westcliffecoloradoselfstorage.com

Tractor/Trailer Sales

True Value Hardware and Trailers
635 Shoop Dr, Penrose
719-784-0123
https://www.truevaluetrailers.com

Vacation / Accommodations

Darksbies Vacations
Enter WMV-LOCAL for 10% off vacation home rentals
Visit Darksbies.vacations or call
719-783-0648

Veterinary

High Peaks Animal Hospital
1200 Broadway St, Silver Cliff
719-783-3770
www.highpeaksanimal.com

Well Drilling and Pump Services

Finney Drilling
Cañon City
719-275-9525
larryfinneydrilling@gmail.com

Recurring Events

Mondays
10 a.m. Pickle Ball Silver Cliff Mem.Park (SCMP)
More info: lizbrannen@gmail.com
6 p.m. Alcoholics Anonymous (CLSD) 12 Step study, at St. Luke’s, 3rd & Rosita, Westcliffe. Martha at 719-371-1853.
1st Monday of the Month
10 - 11 a.m. Women’s Veteran Coffee Social
West Custer County Library Library Community Rm., 209 Main St. Westcliffe
5 p.m. Post 170 Auxiliary mo. mtg (year-round) Cliffe Lanes
2nd and 4th Monday
6 – 7 p.m. Narcotics Anonymous
Community United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall.
Children Welcome. colobamanana@yahoo.com

Tuesdays
12 noon – 1 p.m. Alcoholics Anonymous (CLDS)
“As Bill Sees It” St. Luke’s, 3rd & Rosita in W/C.
Call Martha at 719-371-1853.
1st Tuesday of the Month
9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Old Schoolhouse Quilters Comfort Quilters @Valley Bible
6:00 p.m. American Legion Post 170 monthly meeting at Cliff Lanes meeting room.
4-6 p.m. Christian Music on KLZR 91.7 FM
2nd Tuesday of the Month
9 a.m. Old Schoolhouse Quilters Guild Mtg @Valley Bible

3rd Tuesday of the Month
Liberty Rocks TUESDAY Meet/greet &order 5:30 p.m. Presentation 6 p.m. Location Tony’s Pizza All welcome.
Wednesdays
8 -9 a.m. Veterans Coffee Social, Veterans and Caregivers welcome. West Custer County Library Community Rm., 209 Main St. Westcliffe
9:30 – 11 a.m. Line Dancers meet at United Methodist Church, 204 S 6th St. Call Debbie Underwood at (432) 553-7483.
9:45-11:45 a.m. The Posse Ladies Bible Study SUMMER August 20 @305 County Road 159, Holly 703-338-4100 or Rene at 719-371-7076

10 a.m. Pickle Ball (SCMP) info: lizbrannen@gmail.com
6 p.m. Alcoholics Anonymous (CLSD) Big Book Study at St. Luke’s, 3rd & Rosita, Westcliffe. Martha at 719-371-1853.
6 p.m. Prayer Group Meeting. First Baptist Church of Westcliffe. Call 719-783-2498.

First Thursday of the Month
9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Comfort Quilters, FBC (log bldg next to the church) 417 S. 6th St. Contact Delores at 719-371-1451.

2nd Thursday of the Month
6 p.m. Custer County Republican Central Committee meeting. Ranchers Roost. The public is welcome See www.CusterGOP.com or Facebook page at https://m.facebook.com/custergop

3rd Thursday of the Month
2 p.m. Round Mt Water District Meeting.

Fridays
10 a.m. Pickle Ball Silver Cliff Memorial Park
More info: lizbrannen@gmail.com
1 - 4 p.m.- Mah Jongg at the Senior Center
6 p.m. Alcoholics Anonymous Open Discussion. St. Luke’s, 3rd & Rosita. Call Martha 719-371- 1853

2nd Friday of the Month
8 a.m. Mens’ Prayer Breakfast at First Baptist Church
Saturdays
10 a.m. Wet Mountain Al-Anon Family Group meets at St. Luke’s Episcopal Church. Call Dee (719) 404-1851 or Jean (719) 371-1229.

3rd Saturday of Month
8 a.m. Valley Bible Fellowship Men’s Breakfast Open to all Men of the Community, 116 Hermit Lane, Silver Cliff Questions, Mike @ 719-650-0362
1 p.m. VFW meeting at Cliff Lanes Conference Room, Post Commander Burt Daniels 719-783-3050



Wellness and Health Fair Saturday

Press Release
Custer County Wellness Council (CCWC)
The newly created 501 (c) 3 Custer County Wellness Council (CCWC), an umbrella organization of wellness oriented professionals, businesses and organizations with the vision to grow the community into a “ Wellness Center of the Rockies “, to allow and promote relaxation and restoration of body, mind and soul for residents and visitors alike, has organized an annual Wellness- and Health Fair to be held on Saturday, September 6th from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. at All Aboard Westcliffe event center. The fair will be in part a medical event with basic blood draws and physical exams, vision and hearing tests, taking vital signs and calculating BMIs. Additionally offered are classroom education with different speakers on different topics ,

such as 9 a.m. Emotional Intelligence by Jaclyn and Tom Manzione, 10 a.m. Foundation of nutrition by Mountain View Nutrition, 11 a.m. Move it - or loose it by Dr. Ed Hunt. Additional speakers will be present as well as equine assisted therapy demonstrations by Veterans Rescue Ranch.
For more information contact CCWC at custercountywellnesscouncil @gmail.com



Custer County SO Weekly Summary

Between August 23rd and August 31st the Custer County Sheriff’s deputies and posse had a decidedly diverse week navigating 27 different types of engagements.

Beginning with the faint echoes of rural life, as deputies investigated two separate instances where shots were heard, though no sources were located. This was followed by a more definitive report of shots fired.

In a feat of modern telephony, 911 was misdialed or there was an open line nearly a dozen times. Feisty and wandering animals prompted seven animal control calls. Deputies also completed seven special details and provided four assists to motorists and other agencies.

Continuing the effort to keep our roads safe, our deputies rolled motorists to a total of 36 traffic stops. The SO would like to remind our community and visitors that while admiring the beauty of the open road, the speed limit still applies. The SO responded to two traffic accidents (one of which provided the entire valley with corn for supper), along with four abandoned or suspicious vehicle reports.

This blotter time period was rounded out with CCIC and civil calls along with four burglar alarms, 11 information calls, two suspicious activity calls, and two threats. The week’s excitement was capped with the execution of one search warrant, which, by its nature, remains classified.

As always, thanks to our deputies and posse members for responding to and assisting our community with their emergency needs and concerns.

Custer Senior Center Menu

Monday, September 4 # 81 Sloppy Joe on a Bun Scalloped Potatoes Broccoli & Carrots Apple	Tuesday, September 5 #31 White Bean Chicken Chili Spinach Salad w/Lite Italian Apple Cornbread w/Butter Orange juice	Thursday September 7 #104 Tuna Salad Tomato Slice Pasta Salad Orange Raisin Nut Cup
--	---	--

Served Mondays, Tuesdays & Thursdays at noon. 612 Main St. , Silver Cliff Townhall (lower level)
The following major food allergens are used as ingredients: Milk, Egg, Fish, Tree Nuts, Peanuts, Wheat, Soy and Sesame.

Please call (719) 783-9508 before 9:30 a.m. for reservations
A \$4 suggested donation per meal is appreciated, but not required. All menus subject to change.

Come and Worship

Christian Science 9:30 a.m. Worship 8 Bassick Place, Westcliffe Church of Christ 9:30 a.m. Bible Study 10:30 a.m. Worship 818 Ohio Street, Silver Cliff 719/783-4601 Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints 240 Ridgeline Dr, Westcliffe Pres: 719/214-4589 Cody Park Community Church 9:30 a.m. Sunday School ? 10:30 a.m. Worship Tues. 8:30 a.m., Prayer Mtg. Wedn. 7 p.m. Bible Study 0157 County Rd. 27A Cotopaxi 719/942-3526 (719) 942-3462 Community United Methodist Church 10 a.m. Worship 202 S. 6th Street, Westcliffe 719/783-2511 Cotopaxi Community Church 9:30 a.m. Sunday School 11 a.m. Worship 6 p.m. Wedn. Bible Study PastorSteveHolcomb@gmail.com 20326 Hwy. 50, Cotopaxi	First Baptist Church of Westcliffe 9:30 a.m. Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Fellowship 10:45 a.m. Worship 410 S. 6th Street, Westcliffe Pastor Josh Olsteen 719/783-2498 High Country Mennonite Church 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:45 a.m. Sunday School 103 N. Adams St, Westcliffe 719/783-9045 Call Pastor Err @ 719.429.0556 or Pastor Davie @ 719.371.3861 Huerfano Community Bible Church 10:30 a.m. Sunday Worship 7 p.m.: Thursday Bible Study 603 Leon Street, Walsenburg (719) 251-9053 Hope Lutheran Church 2 p.m. Worship 3:15 p.m. Bible Study 3rd & Powell Streets, Westcliffe Pastor Dan Kletke 719/783-2323 Lange Hall 719/783-2561 Living Stone Calvary Chapel Saturday evenings: 5:30 p.m. Sunday Mornings: 9 30 a.m. Outdoors Bring a lawn chair! 830 Bridge St., Canon City, CO Pastor Sean Meagher 719/276-0863	Our Lady of the Assumption Roman Catholic Church Diocese of Pueblo 11 a.m. Sunday Mass 10 a.m. (2nd Tuesday of month) Mass 10 a.m. Wednesday Mass 5:30 p.m. Thursday Mass 109 S. 5th Street, Westcliffe 719/783-3507 Our Lady of Mt. Zion Catholic Church 11 a.m. Mass, 2nd & 3rd Sunday of month 210 S. 2nd St, Westcliffe 719/783-2491 Praise Community Church Sunday School 9:30 a.m. Praise & Worship 10:45 a.m. 215 N Pikes Peak Ave., Florence 719/784-1184 St. Luke’s Episcopal Church 10:30 a.m. Worship & Eucharist 11:30 a.m. Fellowship 8:30 a.m. Prayer Service, Thursdays 3rd & Rosita Streets, Westcliffe 719/783-2477 St. Patrick’s Anglican Church 11 a.m. Worship 403 S. 2nd S., Westcliffe 925/339-0175 or 719/783-2500 Sacred Heart Catholic Church Diocese of Pueblo Saturday Mass 4 p.m. Highway 69, Gardner Bldg. Mickey. 719/746-2037	Sangre de Cristo Cowboy Church Pastor: Mike Shields 10 a.m. Sunday School 11 a.m. Worship Last Sunday of Month: Potluck at Noon sangredecrislocowboychurch.com also on Facebook 60260 Hwy 69, Westcliffe 719/232-5372 Sangre de Cristo Fellowship 9 a.m. Meet & Greet 9:30 a.m. Service 120 Jerry Drive, Westcliffe 719/783-0903 Sangre de Cristo Seminary Chapel 10 a.m. Worship 6160 County Rd. 130, Westcliffe 719/ 371-1822 Valley Bible Fellowship 10 a.m. Worship 116 Hermit Lane, Silver Cliff 719/581-7572 Wetmore Baptist Church 9:45 a.m. Sunday School 10:45 a.m. Worship 1 p.m. Worship Junction of Hwy 96 & 67, Wetmore 719/371-1230 Wetmore Community Church 9 a.m. Sunday School 10 a.m. Worship 699 County Rd. 395, Wetmore 719/784-0596
--	--	--	---

Send Church updates to sdc.sentinel@gmail.com
(719) 783-3360

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing,
in everything give thanks;
for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.
1Thessalonians 5:16-18

The Cliffes Auto Services

215 E. Main St
Silver Cliff, CO 81252

(719) 285-3181
(719) 783-3281

cliffesautosvcs@gmail.com

Eagle Peak View

Commercial Construction
Quality and Experience
at Residential Pricing

All Phases of Construction & Plumbing

Mike Mitzner
719-494-4026
eaglepeakview.com

Colorado Regional Partnership Initiative

WET MOUNTAIN VALLEY

★ OUTDOORS ★

COMMUNITY MEETING #2

SEPTEMBER 08, 2025 • 5:30 - 7:30 PM

5:15 PM FOR LIGHT REFRESHMENTS

ALL ABOARD WESTCLIFFE

110 ROSITA AVE • WESTCLIFFE

Wet Mountain Valley Outdoors' mission is to help plan and implement Colorado's Outdoor Strategy and Framework through a place-based, Custer County lens.

Bringing your state tax dollars and lottery money back to support our local community.

PLEASE RSVP FOR
ACCURATE HEADCOUNT

tinyurl.com/wmvocm2

LEARN MORE: WMVO.ORG

CUSTER - FREMONT - CHAFFEE

CALL / TEXT
719-429-3008

JEFF HOLMBERG
AREA SALES REP.

Choice FLOORS

ChoiceFloors.Com

Nationwide Buying Power,
Translates to Better Prices.

Call or Text
Free Quote!

Events

Thursday, September 4 @ 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Runs through September 11
Sangre Art Guild Show: Thru a Child’s Eyes See website for more detail @ SangreArtGuild.org

Saturday, September 6 @ 8 a.m.–12 p.m.
Health and Wellness Fair @ All Aboard Westcliffe.
CCSO Clinician Tom Manzione will present on Emotional Intelligence.

Monday, September 8 @ 5:15 refreshments; 5:30-7:30 p.m. meeting. Wet Mountain Valley Outdoors hosted by the Colorado Partnership Initiative

Tuesday, September 9, 2025, 12 – 1 p.m. FREE
JOB! JOB! JOBS! Colorado Workforce Center @ West Custer County Library Community Rm.

Thursday September 11 @ 5:15 p.m.
9/11 Remembrance Event CCSO with Wet Mountain Fire Department &Custer EMS @ The Bluff Park, Westcliffe.

Classifieds

Announcement

FREE BOOKS

At the Sentinel’s Lending Library: History, biography, war, crime, etc. Good quality.

For Sale

Firewood Pine Saw Logs and Slabs, will load, located 7 miles S. of Westcliffe. \$80 / Cord. Call 303-250-5055 Merlin

Get Noticed with Color

For Sale:
2001 VW Jetta Diesel
Rare opportunity. 2001 VW Jetta Diesel. Black. ONLY 86k original miles. Stored outside for 9 years and not run. Put a new battery in it and it fired up immediately. Motor purrs. Super nice 5 speed tranny. Well cared for. Needs a glow plug and possibly a turbo mass air valve. NO Blue juice for this baby, just straight diesel. Was getting 50+ MPG highway. Insane cruising range. Call The Sentinel for details. 719 783 3360. Price \$5k.

**

Help Wanted

Sangre de Cristo Sentinel

We are looking for local writers to Report on LOCAL News Town Meetings, Events, Projects, Youth & Sports

Stop in Tues -Wed. 9-3, Fri. 9-12 601 Main St., Westcliffe or email us at editors. sentinel@gmail.com

Custer County School District is now hiring. Apply online at https://www.applitrack.com/ccbobcats/onlineapp

Real Estate

Lori Kastendieck
Independent Broker
Real Estate
WestcliffeBroker.com
719-269-0653
Serving buyers & sellers Since 1982

Services

WILDFIRE MITIGATION

Home and Property Protection
Skid Steer Work/Home Improvement and Repair
Serving Custer County and Surrounding Areas
Swota Enterprises
719-783-4477

Community Services

Altitude Community Fitness
(719) 783-0750

American Legion Post #170
PO Box 424, Westcliffe, CO 81252
talpost170westcliffe@gmail.com
(719) 783-2462 westcliffepost170.org

Custer County Community Sharing Food Pantry
120 N. 3rd St. Fri. (719) 783-2994
OPEN First 3 Fridays of the month 11 – 2 p.m.
Everyday Eats boxes are available during any regular distribution from 11-2
An Equal Opportunity Provider

Family Crisis Services
Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Center for Fremont and Custer Counties
(719) 275-2429 FamilyCrisisOnline.org

Front Range Clinic
Medications for Addiction Treatment (MAT)
1-866-MAT-STAT
www.frontrangemd.com/mobile-unit

Lighthouse Pregnancy Resources
Monday and Thursday 11a.m. to 4 p.m.
Friday 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
(719) 783-4357

VETERANS SERVICE Office (VSO)
Dominic Edginton new VSO
(719) 618-8266 vso@custercounty.co.gov
Courthouse Bldg. (Rosita Rd. Entrance)

West Custer County Library
209 Main Street Westcliffe, CO 81252
(719) 783-9138
Tue. – Fri.: 10 a.m. – 5:30 p.m..
Saturday: 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Wet Mountain Rotary Van Service
Limited Dispatch 719-783-2343

To Place an ad, please call 719-783-3360 or email sdc.sentinel@gmail.com.
The deadline for getting your information into the Classifieds is Monday at 4 p.m. for that week’s edition.

FREE SINK with purchase

Countertop purchase of 45 square feet minimum required. Valid only on Stainless Steel sinks. \$195 value. Coupon must be presented at time of sale. New proposals only. Only one coupon per customer. Not to be combined with any other offers.

SOL GRANITE

STONE & TILE CENTER

Pueblo’s Only Granite & Quartz Countertop Fabricators!

719-544-3085

4804 Dillon Drive, Pueblo (Behind Texas Roadhouse)

Local Mountain News & Notices

Liberty Rocks - 2025
Tuesday, September 16th

Tony's Steak & Tavern
Tony's Mountain Pizza's Full Menu will be offered
- All are welcome -
Meet & Greet and Dinner begins at 5:30 pm
Presentation begins at 6pm
Come eat, discuss, engage, and learn
★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Guest Speakers:
John DiGirolamo, Author
Sarah Fisher, Family Crisis, Inc.
(A crisis clinic dealing with sexual assault and domestic violence for
Fremont and Custer County Sheriff's Offices):
"Unlocking the Arsenal of Tools - From Access to Impact"

★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Proudly sponsored by: Custer Citizens for the Constitution
Contact: Ann Barthrop (303) 547-4723, abarthrop@msn.com
Facebook: Liberty Rocks in Custer County

BOBCAT PRIDE
HOMECOMING WEEKEND ACTIVITIES

Friday, Sept. 12:
@ 4:30 pm: Homecoming Parade on Main St
@ 8:30 pm: Bonfire (Custer County HS Students Only)

Saturday, Sept. 13:
@ 9 am: Mini Bobcats Cheer Camp
@ 1 pm: HS Volleyball
@ 1 pm: MS Football
@ 3:30 pm: MS Volleyball
@ 4 pm: HS Football
@ 9:30 pm: Homecoming Dance
(Custer County HS Students Only)



BOBCAT SCOREBOARD

Friday, August 29:
HS Varsity Volleyball @ Cripple Creek: 3-1, Win!
(Game 1: 25-9, Game 2: 25-5, Game 3: 25-11)
HS Football @ Sedgwick County in Calhan: canceled
Saturday, August 30:
Cross Country: Lake County Invitational:
All three high school boys team members finished in the top ten
(Mason Stover - 3rd, Jacob Weeks - 10th, Robert Bachman - 7th),
Abigail Handy got 11th (this is only her second meet as a HS cross
country athlete), & the middle school boys earned 4th place as a team.

BOBCAT CORNER

Friday, September 5:
10 am: MS Volleyball @ HOME vs Cripple Creek
4:30 pm: HS Varsity Volleyball @ Del Norte (away)
Saturday, September 6:
9:40 am: Cross Country: Joe Vigil Invitational in Alamosa
1 pm: HS Football @ Plateau Valley (away)
1 pm: MS Volleyball @ HOME vs ECA
2 pm: HS JV Volleyball @ HOME vs ECA
3 pm: HS Varisty Volleyball @ HOME vs ECA
Friday, September 12:
10 am: MS Volleyball vs Cotopaxi
Saturday, September 13: HOMECOMING!
10 am: Cross Country: Trojan Invite @ Fountain-Ft. Carson
1 pm: MS Football @ HOME vs South Park
1 pm: HS JV Volleyball @ HOME vs South Park
2 pm: HS Varsity Volleyball @ HOME vs South Park
4 pm: HS Football @ HOME vs Holly
TBD: MS Volleyball Tournament @ Sierra Grande (away)
Friday, September 19:
4 pm: HS JV Volleyball @ Primero (away)
5 pm: HS Varsity Volleyball @ Primero (away)
7 pm: HS Football @ HOME vs Sargent
Saturday, September 20:
9 am: Cross Country: Coronado Cougar Classic in Co. Springs
Tuesday, September 23:
4:30 pm: MS Football vs Edison @ Hanover (away)

COME OUT AND SUPPORT YOUR
CUSTER COUNTY BOBCATS!

All games and dates are subject to change without notice.

Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA)



Faith + Athletics = FCA
All students in grades 9-12 are Welcome
Every Wednesday evening at 6:30
Custer County High School Commons

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good
courage; do not be afraid nor be dismayed,
for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."
Joshua 1:9

KIDS Friday, September 5, 2025

Hummingbirds

Hummingbirds are some of the smallest birds in existence and they get their name from the noise that their wings make while flapping. I know there are a lot of them here in Colorado, and they inhabit the Americas from south central Alaska to the Tierra del Fuego and the Caribbean. They are found where there are large amounts of plants, flowers and insects, or as some of us Coloradans know there are a lot of hummingbird feeders full of sugar water.



They have characteristic long, narrow beaks (bills) which may be straight (of varying lengths) or highly curved. Their anatomical structure enables helicopter-like flight in any direction, including the ability to hover. Particularly while hovering is when the wing beats produce the humming sounds, which function to alert other birds. One species of hummingbird – the little woodstar – has a wing-beat frequency of 99 per second during hovering. Hummingbirds feed on a wide range of insects and they drink nectar from flowers to meet their energy demands. If there is a scarcity of food they go into torpor, this is a state of low physical activity to conserve energy. They also have the ability to sing songs, consisting of squeaks, whistles, chirps and buzzes.

The females are the nest builders. The nests resemble a small cup about 1.5 inches in diameter, commonly attached to a tree branch using spider webs, lichens, moss and loose strings of plant fibers. Typically, two pea-sized white eggs – the smallest of any bird – are incubated over 2-3 weeks in breeding season and are fed by regurgitation only from the mother, the chicks fledge about 3 weeks after hatching.

The average lifespan of a ruby-throated hummingbird is estimated to be 3-5 years, with most deaths occurring in yearlings, although one banded ruby-throated hummingbird lived for 9 years and 2 months. Bee hummingbirds live 7-10 years.

Their predators include praying mantises, but also included are domestic cats, dragonflies, frogs, orb-weaver spiders and some birds, such as the roadrunner.

As of 2025, 21 hummingbird species are listed as endangered or critically endangered, with about 191 species declining in population.

by Audrey Slater. Sources: <https://www.animalspot.net/hummingbird>, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hummingbird#Description>.
Pic Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hummingbird_Aerodynamics_of_flight.jpg. By Dan Pancamo - originally posted to Flickr as Hummingbird aerodynamics, CC BY-SA 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=12188017>.

Sangre de Cristo Sentinel • Westcliffe, Colorado

Corner

Cross Country Bobcats Place in Leadville

by Sentinel Staff

The Custer County Cross Country team journeyed to Leadville Saturday, August 30th to compete in the highest elevation cross country meet in the nation. It was the first race of the year for the team's middle schoolers. The runners led again this year by Head Coach Heather Ramer who also teaches middle school

English. Hal Walter rejoins the crosscountry coaching staff this year to serve as assistant coach.

The meet altitude was not an issue for our high school boys who all placed in the top 10! Mason Stover was 3rd, Robert Bachman 7th, and Jacob Weeks finished 10th. Stover and Weeks both bettered their times from the same course last season,



High School Juniors Robert Bachman, Mason Stover and Jacob Weeks with top 10 finishes.

Photo courtesy of Heather Ramer



High School Boys and Girls compete in Leadville. Back Row: Jacob Weeks, Mason Stover, Robert Bachman. Front Row: Abigail Handy, Emma Stover, and Shiloh Holmes and Pierce Rowans.

Photo courtesy of Heather Ramer

setting momentum for the meets ahead. Seventh place was a great showing for Bachman in what was only his second meet as a cross country competitor. Incoming freshman, Pierce Rowans, has just joined the cross country team and is looking forward to his first race as a Bobcat.

The high school girls team is made up entirely of

freshmen; Abigail Handy, Emma Stover and Shiloh Holmes. This young team is showing promise already as Handy ran for an impressive 11th place finish. Lizzie Hamilton was our sole Bobcat in the middle school girls contest. Hamilton was full speed ahead in her first cross country event ever as she passed 20 girls over her first two miles. Adding

depth to our middle school girls team are Zoe Hogg, Sage Everhart and Ahni Benson.

looking forward to their first competition are Michael Weber, Matthew Agnew and Mason Anderson.

Custer County's middle school boys brought their own heat to the field. Jackson Erlenbusch, Salem Holmes, Caleb Stover and Logan Weeks ran to a 4th place team finish. While Caleb Stover earned 20th Overall. New middle school team members still

When you are in and around town and see these Bobcat athletes on training runs consider offering a "honk" or shout of encouragement. The schedule for the crosscountry team is posted on the Custer County School District website: custercountyschools.org.



Middle school boys team place 4th, L to R: Logan Weeks, Caleb Stover, Jackson Erlenbusch and Salem Holmes.

Photo courtesy of Heather Ramer

Market

Your Neighborhood Grocery Store

- Full Service Grocery Store
- Ice
- Blue Rhino Propane
- Firewood
- Hunting / Fishing License

Open 7:00 a.m. • 8:00 p.m.
7 Days a Week

Visit us online at LOWESMARKET.COM
or on Facebook at [FACEBOOK.com/LowesSupermarkets](https://www.facebook.com/LowesSupermarkets)

50 Main Street
719/783-0550

After an accident have your insured vehicle towed to Zimmermans Body Shop now thru October to receive a \$50.00 gift card to the Holy Cross Abbey Winery! (The holidays are coming!)

CALL US TO BOOK YOUR APPOINTMENT TODAY!

719-275-4300

John@zimmermansbodyshop.com

Monday - Thursday 7:30am-5:30pm
Friday: 7:30am-11:30am

713 S. 8th St., Cañon City, CO 81212

Accepting most insurance, including Tricare!

Offering the same great service in Custer County that has won us "Best Pharmacy in Fremont County" for the past 20 years!

Your local source for
Prescriptions and
Over-The-Counter
Medications & Supplies

OPEN MONDAY-FRIDAY
9AM-5:30PM
CLOSED SAT & SUN

palacedrugco.com

719-371-9402

94 E. Main St., Silver Cliff

~ 601 Main St., Cañon City

TIMBERLINE METALCRAFT AND FAB

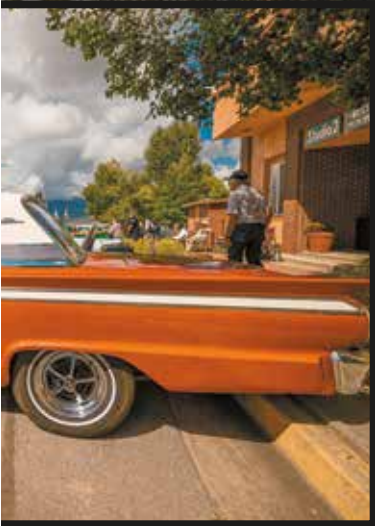
Custom Farm and Ranch Signs, Balcony Panels, Metal Art, & Gates

719-371-6434

High Altitude Horsepower Car Show



High Altitude Horsepower Car Show



Sentinel photos by Mike Twombly; Layout by Katherine Brenchley

Local Mountain News & Notices

August 19 Town of Westcliffe Meeting: Alta Beer Cave Ok'd, Tourism Market Plan for Winter, Starlink Plans, Lighting Ordinance Enforcement Postponed

Town of Westcliffe Meeting Report
by Laura Vass

The August 19, 2025 Town of Westcliffe Trustees meeting was held at the Westcliffe Town Hall and was called to order at 5:30 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. All Board members were present.

Recognized visitors included Dan Findley, new lawyer, representing the Board, Deb Adams and John Van Doren – representing CC Tourism, Sean Austin and Bianca Trencker, lodging owners, Bob Walsh, Erick Messick -Dark Skies local chapter and on Zoom, Trey Peters, Chris Medina with Alta Convenience, Debi Van Doren and Anita Gragg, with CF Altitude and Alta.

Under Old Business, Alta Convenience’s modification of premise was finally approved.

Lawyer Dan Findley was asked about issues brought up at the last meeting. In response he said that he has not seen anything that would enable the Westcliffe

board to interfere with Alta’s rights to operate. Since the existing business had a liquor license and it remains current, harm to competition and change to neighborhood arguments do not apply.

The issue at hand is approving the already constructed Beer Cave, so that it can operate. Alta has all required certifications approved by the State and holds a liquor license and the Board voted proceeded to approve the modification of premises at the Alta Convenience Store.

Under New Business, John Van Doren gave an update on Tourism. This also developed into a discussion. He said Tourism’s Marketing Plan included plans to work toward having an appealing, safe and inviting downtown in the winter months. He explained that the marketing plan is divided into three areas 1) Market to full time Custer County Residents 2) Reaching out to part-time residents and 3) Marketing weekend getaways.

The focus presented was how to increase activity downtown in the winter months by making the area

safe (work on ice build-up issues), and to make the town look less “closed for the winter” by light decorating and activities that would draw people to town.

Mayor Wenke interjected that when there were lights downtown the (now five years defunct) Chamber planned it and locals, including himself, did the work and helped finance it.

During the discussion, a request for the Town to work on solutions to the downtown ice problems, for cooperation for decorating, event collaborations and some financing from the Town of Westcliffe were requested. Mayor Wenke did stress that while the Town is not adverse to helping with this, the business owners need to be willing to contribute as volunteers to get the work done and as financial contributors.

Deb Adams reminded the TOW Board that their own master plan includes specific efforts and cooperation to improve winter tourism. (Deb said tourism is also asking for TOW financial contribution to the plan.)

Mayor Wenke suggested they bring a proposal to the Board.

Trustee Christy Patterson noted that it gets really frustrating from the town government standpoint when downtown businesses want something to happen but want other people to pay for it or someone else to do things and there’s no one offering to volunteer for the work. “A little reciprocity will be helpful.” She ended saying, “I don’t think this Board is against it, at all, but it’s a give and take.”

Deb Adams feels that the current business owners are very willing to collaborate.

Mayor Wenke suggests that they work on a plan over a period of years on this, so that Town contribution can be fit into the budget starting with holiday lighting.

Someone asked if the money in the Façade grant could be used. That discussion did not end with a definitive yes.

Another trustee said that grassroots fundraisers like the one supporting 4th July Fireworks might be the way to go.

In summary, there were several stances

taken on the shared desire to improve downtown appearance and events in the winter, starting with Christmas.

A workshop will be planned for further discussion.

The old “Light up the Valley” efforts included lots of volunteers. Black Hills Energy provided electricity for the downtown lights, which included the top edge of buildings for free.

Maintenance said half of the poles have electricity for connected decoration. Some of the trees still have lights on them.

Resolution 2-2025 to amend the Town Policy Handbook with an addition of a distracted driver clause was approved.

Consideration of a request to change the Town Office internet service to Starlink, was approved. Hilltop is used currently, but with frequent outages. Starlink will be less per month but will cost \$2K business equipment.

Through Resolution 3-2025, the Board voted to change the authorizer for phone service to Erin Christie. This passed.

Consideration of a request for the Town to enforce its municipal lighting code §10-4-3 was on the agenda again.

Under Discussion, began with research being done by Christy Patterson which would inform the Board about what other communities are doing and help the Board make changes to the code.

Patterson is doing research on all the dark skies communities with ordinances and creating a data table which she will be able to present in September. This will show what codes, lighting descriptions and definitions, etc. are used elsewhere to make code compliance and enforcement clearer.

The request to enforce the Lighting Ordinance was related to the WMV Saddle Club. This issue is ongoing. In summary, part of the Board wants the Lighting Ordinance violations enforced. Others on the Board want the ordinance to be examined and possibly altered, arguing that the code is difficult to comply with and relies on an outside organization to advise on complying in each situation.

This month’s request to have the issue on the agenda was from Chuck Jagow

who is both on the TOW Board and a member of Dark Skies Westcliffe. Chuck Jagow and Robert Wolf want the Board to enforce the existing code and point to several violations by the Saddle Club that include not having a special permit for light non-conformity for Thursday night events this year and not applying for a special permit for Stampede activities.

There are problems with clarity and the ability to comply with the lighting codes and Mayor Wenke and Trustee Christy Patterson, along with the town lawyer, were in consensus that it might not be in the best interest of the Town to enforce a code that has issues. WMV Saddle Club did get advisement on the lighting they chose, but Dark Skies says it’s not compliant and also causes light trespass. Several Dark Skies affiliated people in attendance voiced similar opinions. The Board voted to table the enforcement request until a workshop is completed.

Compliments were given to Parks and Recreation on parks and sidewalks.

Mr. Wenke said the town has three engineer proposals on the Infrastructure Project (Water/Sewer to Town lots.) He plans to meet with Round Mountain on this so the project can be done before winter frost hits. And he’d like to get the property appraised after that, so that it’s available should a private developer for housing development approach the town.

Under public comment, an attendee spoke about the lodging tax, saying that the State is looking to raise the tax statewide and reminded the Board that the county meeting (now past) was going to vote on raising the Lodging tax percent and its allocation of funds.

Reporter/Editors Note: As presented in public comment, it sounded like the Lodging Tax was one state-wide increase with the County Board voting on the taxes. The County Board only vote(d) to approve getting ballot language approved in order to place the proposed increased tax on the fall 2025 ballot. The proposed tax amount and the allocation of the tax is determined in each county using State guidelines. The citizens of Custer County will decide by vote whether or not to increase the lodging tax in Custer County.

Contractor License
#CNON153778



**Old Country
CONSTRUCTION
LLC**

Westcliffe, Colorado

**New Homes
Additions
Polebarns
Garages**

719.458.4184



**River Valley
PLUMBING & HEATING**

- Sewer Line Cleaning
- Video Camera Inspection
- Tankless Water Heaters
- Replacement of Main Water and Sewer Lines
- Repair & Replacement of Water Heaters, Furnaces & Boilers
- Geo Thermal Heating & Cooling
- Air Duct Cleaning

**Certified Backflow
Installation and Testing**

Service and New Construction
Licensed and Insured
Locally Owned & Operated



www.rivervalleyplumbingandheating.com
250 Moore Dr, Florence

719-784-3876



**Construction Solutions
of Colorado, LLC**

**Custom Homes . Remodeling
. Concrete
. Steel Building Sales and Erection**





**Construction Solutions
of CO, LLC**

**Casey Nordyke:
719-371-7454**

**Corey Nordyke:
719-371-6143**

CONSTSOLUTIONS@ICLOUD.COM

**Authorized Dealer
Sentinel Steel Buildings**



Colorado State News



THREE TAKES ON THE COLORADO LEGISLATURE SPECIAL SESSION

Colorado Addresses Budget Shortfall In Special Session

by Elyse Apel
The Center Square

Facing a \$1.2 billion budget shortfall, the Colorado legislature returned to the capitol to take action.

Gov. Jared Polis signed two bills as a part of the six-day special session, which was adjourned on Tuesday. The bills protect funding for food assistance programs and Medicaid for entities such as Planned Parenthood.

The legislation came in response to cuts in the federal One Big Beautiful Bill Act, which state officials are blaming for the shortfall.

“Colorado legislators stepped up and helped protect children’s food access and minimized the devastating cost increases to health insurance premiums across the state, to the best of our ability,” said Polis, a Democrat. “During this special session, Colorado law-makers did what the federal government refuses to do: closed special interest corporate tax loopholes and balanced our state budget while protecting funding for schools, roads, and health care.”

A previous report from state economists predicted a \$600 million tax revenue loss. Revised to \$1.2 billion in the wake of federal cuts, that represented less than 3% of Colorado’s total \$44 billion budget for fiscal year 2025-26, which was passed in April and

started on July 1. With the predicted shortfall, the deficit was expected to be \$955 million.

One of the steps the legislature took to address the deficit was to change the tax law for Colorado businesses and business owners, which will bring in \$150 million for the state.

Democrats applauded the special session’s actions.

“Colorado Democrats have responsibly picked up the pieces from Trump and Washington Republicans’ big ugly budget, which any one of the GOP members of our Congressional delegation could have stopped,” said House Speaker Julie McCluskie, D-Dillon. “We took a balanced approach that closed corporate tax loopholes, established a process to cut some spending, and used some of our rainy-day savings to protect funding for health care, roads and education.”

While protecting funding for some programs, \$300 million will still need to be cut at Polis’ discretion.

The One Big Beautiful Bill Act shifted some of the spending burden for programs like Medicaid and SNAP back to states. *The Center Square* previously reported on the impact the bill would have on these programs in Colorado.

In short, the state is expecting to bring in less tax

money, while costs are also expected to increase. This is what led Polis to call the special session.

Republicans said the session passed no real solutions, instead “gaslighting” Coloradans.

“CO Dems had no long-term solutions, they chose to kick the can down the road,” said the Colorado Republican Party in a statement on social media.

Special interest groups are also pushing for more long-term solutions to the increased costs for the state.

“We are grateful to the governor and our legislators for coming together to find immediate solutions to begin to protect children from its impact,” said Heather Tritten, president and CEO of the Colorado Children’s Campaign. “We look forward to working with policy-makers to find long-term approaches to support kids’ health and well-being.”

Elyse Apel is a reporter for The Center Square covering Colorado and Michigan. A graduate of Hillsdale College, Elyse’s writing has been published in a wide variety of national publications from the Washington Examiner to The American Spectator and The Daily Wire.

Please see: https://www.thecentersquare.com/colorado/article_9db7abcc-bae0-42ce-896b-2a22a589230b.html

Colorado Taxpayers Squeezed In Special Session; More Promised

by Mark Hillman,
CompleteColorado.com

I miss John Hickenlooper – and I really miss Roy Romer.

While I often disagreed with their policies, at least we lived on the same planet because both former Colorado governors understood that Colorado businesses must prosper to sustain the functions of government.

The recent “extraordinary” session of the Colorado legislature starkly illustrated how the Democratic Party has changed since Gov. Hickenlooper’s term ended in 2019 and even more so since Gov. Romer’s tenure (1987-1999).

Before becoming Denver mayor, Hickenlooper was a restaurateur and worked

as a geologist for an oil company in his early years. Romer, still active today at age 95, coupled his work as a legislator and state treasurer with his family’s John Deere dealerships before being elected governor.

Democrats with meaningful business background are an endangered species at today’s state Capitol. The current legislative majority seems to view the relationship between government and business like that of a parasite and a host. Ruling “progressives” rarely hesitate to add more burdens – regulation, litigation or taxation – to the litany of hazards confronting anyone doing business here.

Business, it seems, is a necessary evil tolerated only to fund government.

A handful of business-friendly Democrats remain, but they either must largely toe the progressive mark or risk a primary challenge from their own party – much like Republicans insufficiently onboard with Trumpism.

Bleeding business dry

Gov. Jared Polis called lawmakers back to Denver to solve a state budget shortfall that Democrats blamed on the federal One Big Beautiful Bill Act, but he wouldn’t allow them to consider spending cuts.

How did legislators balance their budget? Well, they didn’t.

HILLMAN on CO
see page 16

Special Session Leaves Polis With a \$783m Deficit — Here’s How He Can Fix It Without New Taxes

by Russ Minary,
Guest Commentary,
Rocky Mountain Voice

Governor Polis recently called—and lawmakers have now concluded—a special session aimed at addressing the estimated State budget deficit of \$1.2 to 1.6 BILLION. That means that every man, woman and child in CO has to pay \$208 more this year. That’s in addition to all of the other current local, county, state, sales and special district taxes they are already paying. But kids don’t pay taxes; adults do. I think CO taxpayers and citizens already pay enough in taxes.

While lawmakers passed roughly \$300 million in tax changes during the session, the ball is now in Gov. Polis’ court. He has been given authority to sign the bills and make deep spending cuts, up to \$300 million, to close the remaining \$783 million gap.

Rather than addressing the real underlying causes and finding ways to cut taxes or reduce costs, State officials blame TABOR or the Trump administration for withholding Federal funding.

Irresponsible and out of control spending has put CO in this hole. I and many

other CO taxpayers are tired of being treated like an ATM when the State needs more money. Enough is enough.

This massive (and entirely avoidable) deficit was created by Democrats who have controlled the CO State government with one-party rule since 2018.

FACT: the CO legislature House and Senate majority, the Governor, Lt. Governor, Secretary of State, Attorney General and Treasurer are all Democrats.

CO BUDGET:
HOW TO FIX IT
see page 22



Beach REDI-MIX

CONCRETE SUPPLIER & CONCRETE PUMP TRUCK

“THE FOUNDATION OF CUSTER COUNTY”

PRE-CAST SEPTIC TANKS AVAILABLE
1000 GALLON, 1250 GALLON, AND 1500 GALLON

PRE-CAST BARRIER BLOCKS
DECORATIVE & PLAIN

198 Range View Loop, Westcliffe, CO 81252

719.783.3558

BeachRediMix-CO.com


LIKE US ON facebook

HILLMAN on CO from page 15

Everyday Coloradans would spend less if their income was reduced. Instead, progressive Democrats increased state spending. Instead, they bled taxpayers even more:

First, they eliminated the rebate business owners receive for the trouble of collecting and remitting sales taxes to the state, shifting about \$56 million a year away from businesses and into government coffers.

Next, they took away a tax deduction for insurance companies that keep at

least 2% of their employees in Colorado. Insurers will pay an extra \$90 million a year which will necessarily be passed along to everyone who buys home, auto or health insurance.

This is stepping over dollars to save dimes.

If insurers employ about 2% of their workforce in Colorado, they obviously have many more employees in other states, most of which value employers more than Colorado does. Taking away this incentive gives insurers every reason to move employees elsewhere.

They increased taxes by

\$97 million a year on so-called “wealthy business owners” by refusing to conform to federal law allowing individuals to deduct 20 percent of the business income they receive from partnerships, sole proprietorships and certain corporations.

Bill sponsor Rep. Emily Sirota (D-Denver) said allowing this deduction “is not good tax policy.”

To believe that, she must think business owners hide profits in their piggybank because to do most anything else – hire an employee, buy new equipment, or even buy a new car or build an addition to your house

– puts more money into the economy. That money turns over repeatedly to generate more income and sales taxes to be paid to – you guessed it – the State of Colorado.

The economic short sightedness of these policies is just astonishing.

More to come

But what’s worse is legislators vow, “This is really just the start,” according to House Speaker Julie McCluskey (D-Dillon), a moderate on today’s Democrat spectrum.

Rep. Lorena Garcia, a self-proclaimed Democratic Socialist, laments the

existence of “frivolous tax credits.” It’s a safe bet she doesn’t consider Colorado’s biggest tax credits frivolous. In the last two years, lawmakers created roughly \$1 billion in “refundable tax credits” whereby state government literally writes checks to people, including illegal immigrants, who pay little or nothing in taxes.

Instead, progressives gripe about tax credits for people who do pay taxes because they do earn wages or profits in Colorado’s increasingly hostile business climate. To those Coloradans, progressives say, “No tax credits for you!”

Our ruling majority puts

Colorado firmly on the path to follow Oregon and Washington toward Californication– naturally beautiful states where everything costs too much because legislators don’t know what they don’t know.

Only voter intervention – by sensible Democrats, Republicans and independents – can change that.

Mark Hillman represented the Eastern Plains in the Colorado Senate from 1999 to 2005.

Please see: <https://completecolorado.com/2025/08/29/colorado-taxpayers-squeezed-in-special-legislative-session/>



Off Grid



Grid-Tie



Solar Solutions Ltd.
"Renewable Energy Systems"
QUALITY - SERVICE - DEPENDABILITY
Custom Design and Installation
Photovoltaics, Wind, Hybrid & Grid-Tie systems
Maintenance Program Available
Serving Custer County For 30 Years
www.solarsolutions.com



Pat Bailey - Owner
10 Hermit Lane,
PO Box 554
Silver Cliff, CO 81252
Ph: 719/783-9666
Fax: 719/783-2167
email: pbailey@solarsolutions.com

Coffee and Friday Morning's Paper
Plus Back Issues





SANGRE DE CRISTO SENTINEL
The Voice of Conservative Colorado!



E-Edition
\$29 a year. That's it.
SangreDeCristoSentinel.com

Cañon City Coins
Collector & Investor Coins - Buying, Selling & Trading



(719) 269-7507



Jason
123 S. 5th St., Cañon City, CO 81212
www.canoncitycoins.com



FINNEY DRILLING & EXCAVATING INC.

"We take the time to do the job right"
Larry & Cathy Finney, Owners • Fourth Generation Driller
Water Wells • Septic Systems • Foundation Excavating
Well & Septic Permit Applications • Free On-Site Planning & Estimates
Friendly Service • Licensed #1358 • Bonded • Insured • Competitive Pricing
719-275-9525 • larryfinneydrilling@gmail.com • Cañon City

Porches & Decks - Roofing & Siding
Custom Pole Barns & Garages



Kauffman's Construction

Call Owen 719-371-7863
Free Estimates - No Job to Big or Small



SAPIAH WOODWORKS

Lisa Kidwell
Owner/Contractor

- ♦ Deck Restoration ♦ New Deck Construction
- ♦ Log Home Restoration ♦ Custom & Fine Carpentry
- ♦ Interior/Exterior Painting ♦ Hardwood Floor Installation
- ♦ Hardwood Floor Restoration ♦ Custom Barn Doors
- ♦ Project Management ♦ Consulting

Fully Insured ♦ Complimentary On-Site Consultation
720.309.4262 sapiahwoodworks@gmail.com

JARED M. SMITH, DMD
Advanced Dental Technology

- Same Day Porcelain Crowns Bridges, Inlays, Onlays, Veneers
- Dentures, Partial
- Root Canals
- In-Chair Bleaching Available
- Laser Soft Tissue Treatment
- Digital X-Rays & 3D X-Rays



Creating Beautiful Smiles in Colorado

618 Main Street, Cañon City, CO
719-275-0661 jaredsmithdmd.com

Local Mountain News & Notices

Wet Mountain Valley Outdoors WHO? WHAT? WHEN? WHY?

We have received many inquiries about the WMVO. What is Wet Mountain Valley Outdoors (WMVO)? How will the WMVO impact Custer County and its residents? Who is involved in the decision making? Let us learn together.

Attend WMVO meeting #2 and hear for yourself on Monday, September 8th at 5:30 p.m. Arrive at 5:15 p.m. if you want refreshments and time to be social.

Future *Sentinel* issues will answer your questions and some of our own.

Local reporters will work for you to define RPI, SPLT, Rewilding and much more. Please write to us with your questions or share your knowledge of the WMVO.

—*Sentinel Staff*

AUG 27th BOCC from page 1

He will also be responsible for the duties of the Geographical Information Systems (GIS).

According to Vernon, the contracted IT services will cover things like new computer setup, backups and restores, the complete Cyber-Security operations and monitoring suites, as well as data migration for projects. They will also do yearly PIN tests to evaluate the safety and vulnerabilities in our network. Vernon will still coordinate certain financial aspects of IT to include billing.

New Business items commenced with a review of accounts payable (current total was \$108,041.98) by Commissioner Epp and a review of the County Treasurer’s Report for June. Those items were approved and accepted unanimously by the commissioners. The commissioners then received several briefings and updates from various groups on issues ranging from the leasing and outfitting of county vehicles, funding for the rotary van, to the operations of air medical evacuations in the county.

Sheriff Smith provided a presentation of a proposal for Custer County to enter into an intergovernmental agree-

ment with the town of Silver Cliff for the adoption and implementation of an automated parking citation system. Sheriff Smith said the adoption of this system would decrease the time and cost currently associated with enforcing parking violations and the initial focus would be on handicap designated parking spaces. He also stated that it was probable that Westcliffe would pursue a similar action with the county. The proposal was passed by the commissioners without dissent.

The last and arguably most important topic of the day was discussion surrounding Custer County’s position on unfunded state mandates. Commissioner Canda noted the uptick in mandates from the Colorado Legislature that come without supporting funding. He highlighted that Colorado Revised Statute 29-1-304.5 was unambiguous in its guidance that the state must provide funding for any mandate that establishes a new service or increases the level of a service beyond the existing level required by law.

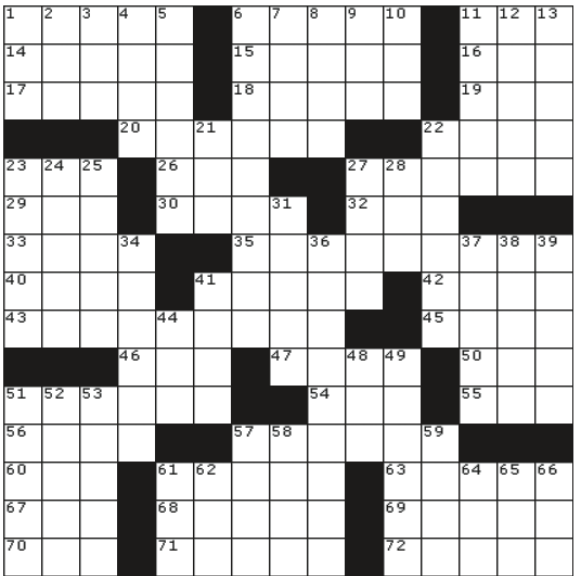
Commissioner Epp emphasized that, “from what I have heard, this has never been tested in Colorado Supreme Court”, even though this statute has been in place since 1991. Commissioner Epp went on to state

that it was his belief that a majority of counties in Colorado were in the same boat as Custer County and supported taking action against the State. County Attorney Dan Slater commented that the “issue has also been a point of discussion for quite a while on the county attorney’s email list”, but agreed that he also believes that violation of the mandate hasn’t been challenged in state court. Slater also went on to summarize one of the major points of the issue being the question of can a legislature in 1991 dictate what Colorado’s legislature in 2025 can and cannot do.

Talk amongst the commissioners centered around the county’s inability to fiscally keep up with the rising costs associated with unfunded state mandates, regardless of whether or not they thought the mandate was “good” or “bad” for the county. In a vote of 3-0, the commissioners agreed to the drafting of a letter to Governor Polis outlining the county’s position to Colorado’s violation of CRS 29-1-304.5 with the specifics of the letter to be decided in a future workshop.

This issue, and how it is resolved at the state and local level is one to keep an eye on. Another thing to keep an eye on in upcoming BOCC meetings is all things around the county’s 2026 budget.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



ACROSS

- 1 Summary
- 6 Recesses
- 11 Ball
- 14 Speak in public
- 15 Rhymers
- 16 Neither’s partner
- 17 A witch lived here
- 18 ___ be with you
- 19 Day of the wk.
- 20 Book near Proverbs
- 22 Meditation

- 23 Abdominal muscles (abbr.)
- 26 Caesar’s three
- 27 Married secretly
- 29 Rent
- 30 Father of Abel
- 32 Type of Buddhism
- 33 Rascal
- 35 Fighting Irish school (2 wds.)
- 40 Exhort
- 41 Sporty car brand
- 42 Demonic
- 43 Mary ___

DOWN

- 1 Seafood
- 2 Sea eagle
- 3 Blackguard
- 4 On top
- 5 Ancient empire
- 6 Gadget
- 7 Verse
- 8 Salty water masses
- 9 And so forth
- 10 South southeast
- 11 Upon (2 wds.)
- 12 Cheek make up

- 45 Hurry
- 46 Large computer co.
- 47 Biblical weed
- 50 Nettle
- 51 Comes about
- 54 Transgression
- 55 Scriptural your
- 56 Salve
- 57 Cuddly
- 60 Flightless bird
- 61 Speak
- 63 Tiny amounts
- 67 Part of a min.
- 68 Loon-like seabird
- 69 Slide across the ice
- 70 Antlered animal
- 71 Religious songs
- 72 Lodge

- 13 Man shall not live by ___ alone
 - 21 Assist
 - 22 Over there (KJV)
 - 23 Collection
 - 24 Baseball player Yogi
 - 25 Canned chili brand
 - 27 OT book of history
 - 28 Downwind
 - 31 Sermon on the ___
 - 34 Boredom
 - 36 Prizes
 - 37 ___ -garde
 - 38 OT book of prophecy
 - 39 Lament
 - 41 Charity
 - 44 Reduced (abbr.)
 - 48 Set up
 - 49 Recruit
 - 51 Very fat
 - 52 Hard to pass through a needle?
 - 53 Hen sound
 - 57 Tuber
 - 58 Northeast by north
 - 59 Link
 - 61 Good grief!
 - 62 Strive
 - 64 Listen in
 - 65 Dined
 - 66 Visit
- Key on page 7



**High Peaks
Animal Hospital**

Dr. Kayla Ingram

**Call for an appointment:
719-783-3770**

1200 Broadway in Silver Cliff

WET MOUNTAIN STORAGE
115 C.R. #241, WESTCLIFFE, CO
FOR ALL YOUR STORAGE NEEDS

Fully Fenced, Automatic Gate & Video Surveillance

**5x10 10x10 10x15 10x20
8x20 Conex 10x30 8x40 Conex
RV Storage**

**Office at 300 Main Street• Westcliffe
custompropertyservices@yahoo.com
719-783-9321**



**EST. 2018
WESTCLIFFE
FIREWOOD™
719-371-6074**

Ryan Stover
719-371-6074

westcliffefirewood@gmail.com



**PREMIER
PEST CONTROL LLC
WESTCLIFFE, CO**

719-371-7404
PPC16@PRIVATEGARDEN.ORG

*Call to schedule: inspections, estimates, professional
pest management, residential, commercial,
licensed and insured*

**Need a ride? Call
Randy CAB**

Owner/Driver
Randy Schiro
719-210-5908
randolf.schiro@icloud.com

Licensed & Insured



The American Legion Monthly Meeting is the 1st Tuesday of every month at 6:00 p.m. at the bowling alley.

The American Legion Auxiliary Monthly Meeting is the 1st Monday of each month at 5:00 p.m. at the Cliff Lanes meeting room.

**American Legion and VFW
Monthly Meetings**

The Veterans of Foreign Wars Monthly Meeting is the 3rd Saturday of every month at 1 p.m. at the bowling alley.



The Liberty Tree

Religion, The Constitution & Culture

State, National, & World

The Daily Jot

Daily reporting and analysis of current events from a biblical and prophetic perspective.

NOTE: When writing about God and Jesus, The Daily Jot means YHVH as God and Yeshua Ha Mashiach as Jesus--the actual original names and the true nature and character of them.

Choose Life with a Joyful Heart

In Deuteronomy 11:26–16:17, Moses sets before Israel the choice of blessing or curse. God gives this same charge later in Deuteronomy 30 and again commands—“Choose life!” The Hebrew word Re’eh is in the imperative form, meaning “you see!” The call is personal. Each person is responsible to see clearly and to make faithful choices that align with God’s will. Obedience isn’t just about grand acts of faith. It is often lived out in daily decisions, the little choices that shape our direction. Choosing life is both a responsibility and a blessing, for in following God’s way, we find provision, protection, and purpose. The Lord makes the options plain. The decision, however, rests with us. In all matters of life, our choices matter.

God then moves quickly into instruction: destroy the Canaanite religious centers, avoid idolatry and offer sacrifices only in the place the Lord chooses. That place, He says, is where He will put His name. Ultimately, this was revealed to be Jerusalem and the Temple, the center of worship for Israel. God warns not to add or subtract from His word, and to be wary of false prophets who seek to lure people away from His truth. He also revisits dietary laws and introduces tithing, the Sabbatical year and the pilgrimage festivals. These commands were designed not only to ensure worship, but also to sustain community life. In God’s economy, spiritual devotion and practical provision are always connected. Obedience secures both.

The tithing commands in Deuteronomy point to something deeper than obligation. There were actually two tithings of a tenth, one for the Levites and a tenth of produce and livestock for the tither to enjoy themselves in God’s presence during the festivals. Tithing ensured that those who ministered before God had provision, while also reminding Israel to rejoice in the Lord’s goodness. Though the original tithe was specific to the land of Israel, the practice of giving a tenth became a model for generosity. Abraham and Jacob tithed even before the Torah was given. Later, Jesus affirmed the principle of supporting teachers of the Word in Matthew 10:10, and Paul taught that elders who labor in the Word deserve support (1 Timothy 5:17-18). Giving, in God’s plan, was never just a duty—it was an act of worship.

Today, we’re not bound by the same agricultural laws of ancient Israel, but the heart of giving remains. We are called to give to our congregations, to the poor, and to those teaching the Word. A tithe is a good starting place, but true discipleship asks, “How much more can I give, and with joy?” The sages taught that giving with a joyful heart reflects trust in God’s provision. Generosity ensures the needs of all are met, strengthens community, and keeps our hearts aligned with God’s purposes. The call of Re’eh is clear: see what the Lord has set before you, choose life, and rejoice in giving. When we give joyfully, we walk in blessing, and our hearts are shaped by the goodness of God. As is written in Deuteronomy 16:17, “Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which He has given you.”

Bill Wilson
Dailyjot.com Printed with permission.

Protecting Senior Citizens from Asset Theft by Collusion of Doctors and Judges

Part One

By Pam Long
KimMonsonShow.com

Recently, a senior friend told me her Colorado doctor not only asked her if she had a will but asked for a copy of it. This friend was already skeptical of how doctors share immunization records with state government databases (CIIS) and state health information exchanges (CORHIO) for paid subscribers. She wisely did not provide a copy of her will. (The “P” in HIPAA stands for Portability, not Privacy). I informed her about the most profitable criminal scheme aimed at our elders that starts with doctors as screeners of valuable estates and then declaring the patient mentally incompetent and unable to manage his/her own estate. A doctor asking for a copy of a will is a red flag for exploitation of seniors.

Guardianship Fraud

This elder asset theft is best portrayed in the movie “I Care A Lot.” Although the movie is not a true story, it was based on actual criminal activity reported in the news. The scheme involves a network of organized crime posing as helpful, caring people. First, a doctor screens patients for considerable estates and usually targets seniors without a spouse or adult children and declares the wealthy patient mentally incompetent. Next, the doctor refers the patient’s file to a professional guardian, without the patient’s consent or knowledge. The guardian convinces a colluding judge to appoint him or her as the legal guardian, then relocates the patient to a long-term care facility, and swiftly sells off the possessions of the patient to pay for the facility fees and the guardian’s “services.” Lastly, an administrator at the long-term care facility works in collusion to drug the uncooperative patient and limit the patient’s communications and visitors. The patient is robbed of both wealth and autonomy, without access to money and without choices in medical care. The guardian makes all decisions for the ward, without any disclosures to the family, while racketeering with the others in the network.

One estimate reports that over \$273 billion in assets are controlled by guardians in the United States.

The Victims and the Guardians

Esquire reported on one real-life guardianship victim and how it is worse than prison:

In a report on legal guardianship by The New York Times, Phyllis Funke, a 77-year-old retired journalist with a master’s degree, a pilot’s license and several hundred



thousand dollars in investments, spoke about how desolate her life became after being declared an “incapacitated person” by the state of New York.

“I’ve been bullied, blackmailed and stripped of the things I need to live, including my money,” Funke said. “Everything has been taken away from me. I have no access to my bank accounts. I don’t have the money to pay for the medications that I’m prescribed. I don’t get mail. I can’t choose my own doctors.”

Funke went on to compare her situation to incarceration, though she then walked that statement back, saying, “It’s worse than incarceration. At least in prison you have rights.”

Professional guardians are only required to attend a one-day certification, which does not include a background check. These guardians will liquidate the assets of the patient as quickly as possible in over-priced care and while billing hourly service fees for hundreds of dollars, and later relocate the patient to low quality nursing homes with government funds when the patient’s assets are drained. The guardians also bill the patient for the legal fees.

In 2018, April Parks of Nevada was charged and later convicted of elder exploitation as a guardian for 400 wards. A county guardian commissioner awarded Parks a ward on average once a week for years, and a judge consistently disqualified family members as guardians with unsubstantiated accusations of being unsuitable, neglectful, drug addicts, gamblers and exploiters.

The laws in Nevada allowed any professionally licensed guardian to file an Ex Parte motion for temporary guardianship, meaning they did not even have to serve their motion on the adult they wished to be guardian over, nor their family. All that was needed was verification from a physician that the proposed ward was mentally or physically incapable of handling their affairs.

What Ms. Parks had going was a

Physicians Assistant who would sign off on reports saying the elderly person was incompetent and not well enough to even appear at the hearing. Then, the motion would claim the elderly person’s family was either out of state or incompetent to serve due to drug/alcohol problems.

So, she would get appointed as a temporary guardian. Then she [would] move the person to an assisted living facility, where they’d be heavily medicated.

After this, Ms. Parks would apply for full guardianship, knowing the court had a distrust of family members serving as guardians and taking their parents’ money. Then, ironically, she’d drain their bank accounts to pay her crazy invoices, often billing for 25 hours of services in 1 day. She’d sell their property and generally ruin them.

If you are over 60, read the full-length article “How the Elderly Lose their Rights” with details from the victims and their families on how April Parks, a judge, and medical professionals ran this guardian fraud operation.

(See <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/10/09/how-the-elderly-lose-their-rights>)

To add insult to injury, family members who were justifiably outraged were accused of being unstable, and removed from court rooms, and sometimes arrested for trespassing at senior care facilities where their parents were held against their will.

Ways to Prevent Guardianship Fraud

Don’t disclose. Medical personnel and social workers at hospitals and rehabilitation centers were the main source of leads to screen seniors for having a large estate and if the senior had in-state relatives who would intervene. Be guarded about

PROTECTING
SENIOR ASSETS
see page 19

Minneapolis School Shooter Deliberately Chose a “Gun-Free Zone”

by Ammoland Editors & Staff,
Ammoland.com

—Minneapolis, MN

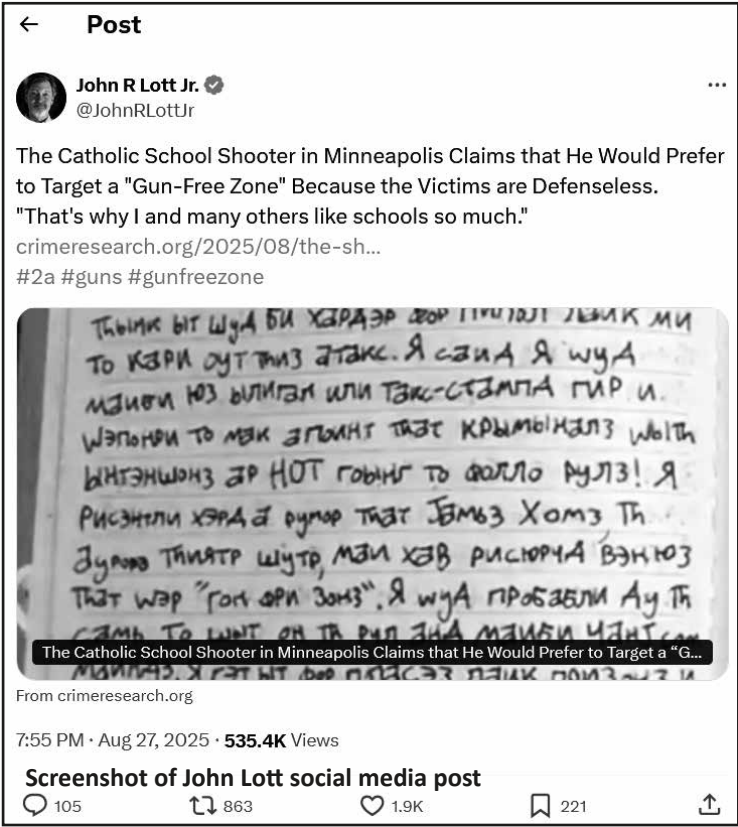
The manifesto of the Catholic school shooter in Minneapolis has confirmed what gun-rights advocates have been saying for decades: “gun-free zones” are not safe spaces — they are killing zones.

In chilling words, the Minneapolis Trans Shooter explained his choice of target:

“I recently heard a rumor that James Holmes, the Aurora theater shooter, may have chosen venues that were ‘gun-free zones.’ I would probably aim the same way . . . Holmes wanted to make sure his victims would be unarmed. That’s why I and many others like schools so much. At least for me, I am focused on them. Adam Lanza is my reason.”

The shooter’s words were written partly in Russian (Cyrillic), and, the clear message matches what researchers and survivors have long understood: mass killers pick locations where they know nobody can fight back.

**Ammoland News has not been able to confirm every aspect of the translation independently.*



Gun-Free Zones: A Magnet for Attackers

This is not the first time evidence has pointed to killers deliberately targeting so-called “gun-free” areas. From the Aurora movie theater in Colorado, to Sandy Hook, to the more recent Lewiston bowling alley massacre, nearly every modern mass shooting has

taken place in a location where law-abiding citizens were banned from carrying firearms.

Alan Gottlieb of the Second Amendment Foundation has put it bluntly: “You’re a sitting duck in a gun-free zone.” Research from the Crime Prevention Research Center backs this up — showing that over 98 percent

of mass public shootings since 1950 happened in places where ordinary citizens were prohibited from carrying firearms.

The Minneapolis shooter himself echoed the same logic that killers before him have used: criminals don’t follow rules. Gun bans don’t stop attacks — they advertise a free field of defenseless victims.

A Failed Experiment in “Safety”

Gun-free zones were sold to the public as a way to keep people safe. Instead, they’ve created spaces where innocent lives are sacrificed to politics. Author Dan Wos, writing about repeated tragedies, called them “the biggest culprit of unnecessary and preventable death.”

The failed logic is now tragically clear in Minneapolis: posting a sign or passing a law doesn’t stop evil. It doesn’t protect children. It doesn’t save families. Instead, it creates the illusion of safety while making sure law-abiding citizens are disarmed and helpless when the worst happens.

The Real Answer: Armed Self-Defense

The only proven way to stop mass shootings quickly is through armed resistance. We’ve seen it in

Indiana’s Greenwood Park Mall, where a young man carrying legally stopped a shooter before more people died. We’ve seen it in Texas churches, where armed volunteers took down killers in seconds.

History shows the same pattern: when killers meet resistance, the killing ends. When they don’t, the body count rises.

Time to End Gun Free Killing Zones

The Minneapolis shooter’s words are horrific, but they also serve as a grim reminder: gun-free zones do not protect anyone. They attract killers who want easy prey.

Gun-rights advocates have been warning about this for years — and tragically, once again, they’ve been proven right.

If policymakers truly cared about saving lives, they wouldn’t keep doubling down on “gun-free zones.” They would empower ordinary Americans to defend themselves and others. Because when seconds matter, the only real defense against evil is the ability to fight back.

Please see: <https://www.ammoland.com/2025/08/minneapolis-school-shooter-chose-a-gun-free-zone/>

PROTECTING SENIOR ASSETS from page 18

“small talk” about your assets and relatives with seemingly caring people at routine medical appointments. It is best to convey that you have nothing of value but your large extended and involved family!

Don’t go alone. The guardians use bully tactics to convince seniors to leave their homes quickly without

even a phone call to a friend or relative. The guardian presents a court order, alleges that refusal to cooperate will result in the police coming to arrest them, and gives the false assurance that any misunderstanding will be quickly resolved. In reality, many of the victims were in facilities for 18 months or more. Many victims in facilities died of despair and being over medicated. Do not leave your home out of compliance. Call a relative, friend, attorney, or trusted doctor who can validate

your competence. This might be enough deterrent for the perpetrator to move on to find an easier target with less resistance.

Don’t let the court decide who represents you. It often takes days for relatives to realize that their parents have been medically kidnapped. When relatives try to become guardians in court, a corrupt judge will dismiss them with false allegations. Family members who live out of state are often disqualified from serving as guardians. The best defense is to

appoint a trusted family member as a guardian or medical power of attorney in the event you are incapacitated BEFORE an opportunist guardian requests a court ordered appointment.

Americans Against Abusive Probate Guardianship have identified “hot spots” or cities where guardianship abuse is prevalent with a high number of retirees: Palm Beach, Sarasota, Naples, Albuquerque, and San Antonio. But right here in Colorado, we also have doctors

requesting copies of wills. Every senior group should be discussing this fraud and how to implement safeguards.

Pam Long is a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, a U.S. Army Veteran, and a former Medical Intelligence Officer.

Please see https://kimmonson.com/featured_articles/protecting-senior-citizens-from-asset-theft-by-collusion-of-doctors-and-judges/

FYI...

for your information...

The Sangre de Cristo Sentinel is published every Friday.

Office Hours are Tuesday & Wednesday 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Fridays 9 a.m. - noon.

Deadline for classified ad copy is Monday by 4 p.m.

Deadline for display ad copy is noon on Friday the week before the ad is to appear in the paper.

Deadline for all other submissions is noon on Monday, and can be emailed to sdcsentinel@gmail.com

Please send us information on clubs and organizations, news stories and pictures, and upcoming events.

Please limit Letters to the Editor to 500 words or less. Please include your name, address and phone number.

Garage/Yard sales are printed free. However, verbiage is limited to date, time and address.

Birth, Engagement, Wedding Announcements and Obituaries are also printed FREE OF CHARGE with a 350 word maximum and one photo included.

Sangre de Cristo Sentinel · 601 Main Street · Westcliffe Colorado 81252 · 719/783-3360



Thank You for Your Support!



Subscribe to the Sangre de Cristo Sentinel

“The Voice of Conservative Colorado”

Help us Spread the word! Subscribe today!

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City & State _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone Number: _____

Payment: \$ _____ Type: (circle one): Cash Check _____ Credit Card

\$49 Yearly for 81252 zip code · \$59 Yearly for out of 81252 zip code.

Please Mail or bring your payment to:
Sangre de Cristo Sentinel
601 Main Street, Westcliffe, Colorado 81252
719/783/3360

Get the Digital Edition for only \$29 a year!
Online @ <http://SangreDeCristoSentinel.com/register/>

Gun Buyer Licensing Law Giving Some Colorado Sheriffs Heartburn

by Sherrie Peif
CompleteColorado.com

DENVER – A major gun licensing law enacted by the Colorado legislature during the 2025 session is leaving some Colorado sheriffs with a bit of heartburn.

Although Senate Bill 25-003 won't take effect until Aug. 1, 2026, the sweeping changes to how Colorado residents can purchase certain firearms puts the onus on local sheriffs to enforce, but no help with funding of the new state mandates.

Weld County Sheriff Steve Reams said all this bill has done is put him in a situation where his constituents think he is helping Democrats enforce a violation of their Second Amendment rights.

"They ask me all the time why I just don't refuse to enforce it," said Reams, who has previously refused to enforce gun laws enacted during his time as sheriff of what is the most conservative-leaning county of over 100,000 in population in the state.

It's not that easy

Not enforcing it, he said, makes it harder on his constituents, not easier.

"If I ignore this and don't issue these permits, I'm creating a bigger barrier for them to exercise their constitutional right to buy a gun," Reams said. "I'm just trying to get out of the way. It is unconstitutional. But until someone sues, I can at least not be a roadblock. Sheriffs are squarely

in the middle of a gun conflict that we didn't ask to be in."

Reams was referring to the steps added to purchase semi-automatic guns that accept detachable magazines, which amounts to a huge number of commonly owned handguns and rifles.

Hopeful buyers must first get fingerprinted to prove eligibility to own a gun, then taking that proof to the local sheriff, who then gives them a card that approves them to take a special class by a certified instructor (the details of which are not yet in place). Once the applicant passes that test, they will be put into a statewide database for five years, which gun dealers will then need to access to confirm the person is legally able to purchase the firearm.

However, the added workload and costs to sheriff's offices across the state are what are of concern for many – but not all – sheriffs. Reams said at this point he's planning to request two more full-time employees to manage the increase. But those numbers are not guaranteed. He said it could be more.

"Weld County has 27,000 concealed-carry permit holders," Reams said. "That keeps my front office staff busy enough as it is. My guess is there will be four to five times as many people who will want to exercise their right to take that class to go buy a gun."

He added he will also have to move things around the office and do some capital construction for new space to accommodate the new employees.

"There is going to be a cost increase to do business," Reams said, while making it clear Weld County will not charge its residents for the new services other than the fees the state may require. "I don't want to be a barrier for someone to go buy a gun."

“Summit County Sheriff Jaime FitzSimons said SB 3 imposes “unfunded mandates that require significant time, personnel and financial resources to implement.”

Sheriffs on the Western Slope who spoke to *Sky-Hi News* agreed with Reams.

Summit County Sheriff Jaime FitzSimons said SB 3 imposes “unfunded mandates that require significant time, personnel and financial resources to implement.”

Moffat County Sheriff Chip McIntyre described his office as one with “a lean staff and a budget focused on core public safety services, including patrol, detention and emergency response.”

Gatekeeping gun rights

Although a majority of sheriffs have come out against the new law, Reams said he has no doubt there are some who welcome the new state mandates, and the authority over gun owners that comes along with them.

"I see certain sheriffs enjoying being the gatekeeper on this," he said.

Jefferson County Sheriff Reggie Marinelli, for example, was seemingly indifferent on the law, responding to *Complete Colorado* through her public relations staff.

"We have seen some increases in the workload, but not substantial," said Mark Techmeyer, director of public affairs for the Jefferson

County Sheriff's Office. "We are monitoring it, and if it becomes necessary to add personnel to meet the demand, we will act accordingly."

restrictions since Democrats became the majority under the gold dome.

Stuck in the middle

"We feel confident in our ability to meet the new responsibilities associated with the law," Techmeyer said.

Reams said although sheriffs did not ask to be part of this, the state threw them in the middle of it anyway, most notably the fingerprinting portion is of great concern for him.

The way the bill was written, he said, residents can obtain their background check through any private facility. It does not have to be performed by the sheriff's office, and there is no time restriction on how recent the background check must be.

That presents a problem because Reams has no way of knowing what the person has done since the background check was run.

"Someone could get a clearance on one day, and six days later have a restraining order filed against them, and we wouldn't know that," Reams said. "We have to just look at the report, say, 'you're clear,' and then hand them their card to take the class. We are simply a rubber stamp. It's a disingenuous process. If you have a background check, all we can do is say, 'here's your card, see you later.'"

Please see: <https://completecolorado.com/2025/08/28/gun-licensing-scheme-colorado-sheriffs-heartburn/>

Trump Asked to Remember Pledge About Military Base Victim Disarmament Policies

by David Codrea,
Commentary
Ammoland.com

There's an easy way the Commander in Chief can show his appreciation and demonstrate how much he values the lives of troops under his command.

"Fort Stewart Shootings Recall Forgotten Trump Commitment," this correspondent wrote last week in *Firearms News*. "President Trump promised to allow weapons carry (and later CCW) by military personnel on bases way back in 2015."

The column noted those shootings were but the most recent, recounting prior incidents and summarizing current nonstandard policies regarding personal weapons "on DOD property by DOD personnel," established in 2016 by Department of Defense Directive 5210.56,



from The White House/Facebook

"Arming and the Use of Force." It then recalled two separate pledges made by Donald Trump to "mandate that soldiers remain armed and on alert at our military bases."

In 2015, candidate Trump promised that to AmmoLand Editor Fredy Riehl. He reiterated that commitment as a first-term president in 2018, as reported by Military.com in its "Trump Pushes to Allow Troops to

Carry Personal Weapons on Bases" report. Yet for whatever reason, the only comment he's made after the Fort Stewart shootings as a second-term president has been to promise that the shooter will be "prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law."

Meanwhile, the situation and the risks for those we thank for their service, all of whom have been subject to more scrutiny

than civilian background checks, remain. To remind him of his earlier pledge, the president was notified via both X.com and his own Truth Social platform. Still, one lone voice is easy to miss or ignore, so major "gun rights" groups were nudged to "call on their members to urge the president to act."

If such efforts have been made, they evidently haven't been publicized. But there's no reason that should stop individual gun owners who don't need to be led from contacting the president on their own initiative. That's what *WarOnGuns* Correspondent "CDT" has done in his "Open Letter to President Trump on Military Base Victim Disarmament."

"There have been seven other spree shootings with this same profile since 2009, all made possible by President Clinton's ban on soldiers carrying arms inside military bases," CDT reminded the president. "There is no place in the USA for victim disarmament policies, but *especially* not on military bases."

"As Commander in Chief, this is a pen-and-a-phone moment for you," CDT asserted. "No rogue federal judge has the power to stop

you. Do it this week, and take one more easy Win."

"Fort Stewart army base shooting raises questions about military gun policies, *Associated Press* reports.

Yeah? Who's doing the asking? Any "gun groups"?

I once more encourage them – and readers who believe keeping his earlier promises is something President Trump ought to and can do, to remind him of that.

You can reach him several ways, via comments to username on X.com or Truth Social, or, if you don't use "social media" (which I urge you to reconsider), you can send him a message via The White House contact page, and, of course, if you don't mind a bit of Secret Service scrutiny to make sure the envelope is safe, via good old-fashioned snail mail, or by calling to leave a message.

Please see: <https://www.ammoland.com/2025/08/trump-asked-to-remember-pledge-about-military-base-victim-disarmament-policies/>

California’s Carry Restrictions Crumble— Judge Sides with Gun Rights

by Dean Weingarten,
Ammoland.com

On July 1, 2025, United States District Court Judge Cathy Ann Bencivengo granted summary judgment to Firearms Policy Coalition members to obtain California Concealed Carry Permits. Judge Bencivengo ordered the Plaintiffs and Defendant to submit proposed orders within 30 days. From the order:

For the above reasons, the Court grants Plaintiffs’ motion for summary judgment as to their facial challenge pursuant to the Second/Fourteenth Amendment and denies the request for relief pursuant to the Privileges and Immunities Clause. The parties are ORDERED to meet and confer and submit a proposed order for an injunction consistent with this order within 30 days.

It is SO ORDERED.

The California Attorney General submitted a proposal requiring applicants to attest, under oath, that they intend to spend time in a California jurisdiction within the next 12 months. The proposal includes four pages of explicit instructions about how non-residents can apply and what laws they must observe.

The plaintiffs submitted an order that says California licensing authorities are permanently enjoined from enforcing Penal Code sections 26150(a)(3) and 26155(a)(3). Judge Bencivengo chose the Firearms Policy Coalition’s order. Here it is:

Defendant Attorney General Rob Bonta; Defendant’s officers, agents, servants, employees, and attorneys; and any other persons who are in active concert or participation with Defendant, are hereby permanently enjoined from enforcing California Penal Code sections 26150(a)(3) and 26155(a)(3) as to CCW applications submitted by Plaintiff Firearms Policy Coalition’s members who are not residents of California, including the named Individual Plaintiffs.

The order took effect on August 21, 2025.

California vests the issuing of concealed carry permits with sheriffs and police chiefs. The issuance of permits varies enormously between jurisdictions. Thirty years ago, sheriffs and police chiefs could issue permits to anyone they chose. This became a way for people who desired a permit to escape the horribly



More than 30 percent of American gun owners say they have used a gun in self-defense.

Photo courtesy of Ammonland.com

restrictive policies of sheriffs or police chiefs in large cities. Some counties were issuing thousands of permits to people who did not reside in their jurisdiction. The California legislature passed a statute forbidding the issuance of permits to people who did not live in the jurisdiction of the issuing authority.

The permanent injunction applies only to non-residents of California who are members of the Firearms Policy Coalition. This effectively makes it easier for non-residents of California to obtain California concealed carry permits than for residents of some restrictive areas in

California. For example, only 100 to 200 permits were expected to be issued for San Francisco in 2024.

The order does not limit what jurisdiction an applicant may apply in. Placer County California already lists a process for obtaining a non-resident concealed carry permit. It is not clear how non-resident applicants may qualify with their personal handguns.

In the next few months, many applications will be submitted for non-resident concealed carry permits in California. The process may vary significantly by county.

Those counties that cater to non-residents are likely to reap the rewards of their efforts. California concealed carry permits are currently valid for two years. The Crime Prevention Research Center estimates the cost of obtaining a California permit was over \$1000 for the initial permit, and over \$600 for renewal, in 2023. Some jurisdictions, such as Placer County, appear to charge a couple of hundred dollars less.

Dean Weingarten has been a peace officer, a military officer, was on the University of Wisconsin Pistol Team for four years and was first certified to teach firearms safety in 1973. He taught the Arizona concealed carry course for fifteen years until the goal of Constitutional Carry was attained. He has degrees in meteorology and mining engineering, and retired from the Department of Defense after a 30-year career in Army Research, Development, Testing, and Evaluation

Please see: <https://www.ammoland.com/2025/08/californias-carry-restrictions-crumble-judge-sides-with-gun-rights/>

Peak American: the Winchester 1897 Trench Gun in WWI



The Winchester model 1897 pump-action shotgun was most often used by American sentries or as a means of last resort in the event that a soldier’s position was going to be overrun.

NRA’s American Rifleman

by Ian McCollum,
ForgottenWeapons.com

The United States was the only country to use shotguns in World War One in a substantial way. It was not the first time the U.S. had used such guns either; shotguns were used in the Philippines against the Moros and on the Mexican Punitive Expedition. For use in the Great War, however, it was deemed necessary to fit bayonets to them. At the request of the War Department, the Winchester company designed a bayonet mounting adapter for their Model 1897 pump-action shotgun, to use the M1917 bayonet that Winchester was also making at the

time for the war effort.

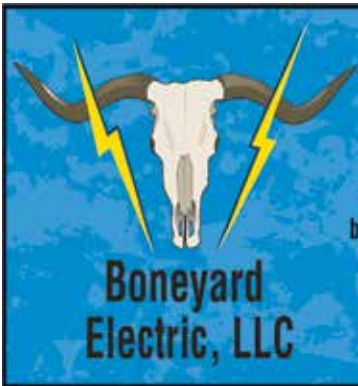
Guns were first deployed to France in June 1918, for field testing, used with 9-pellet 00 buckshot in paper hulled cartridges. The reactions from troops in the field varied widely. Those who tended to be in relatively dry conditions with close-range combat tended to like them. Those in particularly wet areas had problems with the paper shells swelling, and those engaged in more open combat at range had little use for them. They were primarily used for military police roles like guarding POWs, but some did see combat.

The U.S. military actually used Winchester 1897s in three different

configurations. Guns with bayonet mounts and heat shields, “riot” types with short (20”) plain barrels, and long-barreled models used for training aircraft and anti-aircraft gunners. Numbers are conflicting and sources are complex, but the best assessment appears to be that approximately 12,000 trench models and about 18,000 riot models were sent to the Army.

(Ian’s accompanying video has more information and examples.) Please See <https://www.forgottenweapons.com/peak-american-the-winchester-1897-trench-gun-in-ww1/>

Printed with permissions.



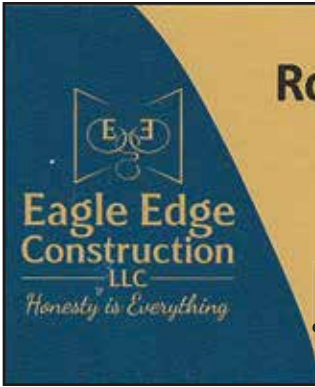
Steven Hardin
Owner
719-371-1221
boneyardelectric@gmail.com
License No. ME.3001843
Industrial • Residential
Commercial

William A Good
Manager

Outta Space Storage LLC

860 Airport Road
Silver West Airport
Westcliffe, CO 81252

Learn more and reserve at our website:
www.outtaspacestoragecolorado.com
or call 303-906-1900



Ronnie Miller
Custom Homes
General Construction
Framing, Siding
Metal Roofing & Decks
719-239-0300
eagleedgeconstruction@yodermail.net



**SANGRE DE CRISTO
SENTINEL**
(719) 783-3360 • 601 Main St. Westcliffe
The Voice of Conservative Colorado!

Don’t miss out! SUBSCRIBE Today

Annual Cost
\$49 for 81252 zip code
\$59 outside 81252 zip code
\$29 for E-Edition
sdcsentinel.com

24 PAGES EVERY WEEK
LOCAL EVENTS AND NEWS • LOCAL YOUTH HAPPENINGS
STATE NEWS • PHOTO FEATURE EVERY WEEK
BONUS GUN AND CONSTITUTIONAL SECTIONS
Real News for Informed Citizens

207 Butler St
Silver Cliff, CO

Offered at \$29,500

.28 +/- Acre
Nice Corner Lot
Across from Dog Park
Close to Silver Cliff Park
Views of Wet Mtns &
Sangre de Cristos

Offered by: Bob Senderhauf



MLS

Custer County Realty, Inc.
902 Main St. - Westcliffe, CO
(719) 783-9221



725 Riggs Road N
Westcliffe, CO

Offered at \$195,000

Bull Domingo Ranch
35.2 +/- Acres
Nicely treed with Mountain Views
Cul-de-sac Property

Offered by: Bob Senderhauf



MLS

Custer County Realty, Inc.
902 Main St. - Westcliffe, CO
(719) 783-9221



CO BUDGET: HOW TO
FIX IT
from page 15

It is important to note that the largest group of ~4 million registered voters in CO are neither Democrats (1,017,086 or 25.29%) nor Republicans (916,004 or 22.77%). The majority of registered voters in CO are Unaffiliated (1,993,837 or 49.57%). This huge bloc of disaffected unaffiliated voters is growing every year.

This is caused by the lack of vision, oversight and good governance by both parties who would rather fight each other than help CO citizens. Sadly, uninformed CO voters continue to elect them.

NOTE: rather than just pointing out problems, this article suggests some practical ways that CO can deal with this self-imposed crisis via fiscal discipline, business savvy, common sense and conservative principles. Some of these ideas will require hard choices; some can be easily implemented. But when there's no more money, we all have to tighten our belts, cut and change a few things and share the burden. The State of Colorado does not have the ability or authority to print money. They can only get it from you, the taxpayer.

Here is a list of ideas in no specific order of priority:

1. Cut all state expenditures on costly and unsustainable green energy projects (solar and wind), related departments, personnel and programs.

Privatize the industry and let the free market work. Most of CO, especially in rural or mountain areas, relies upon vehicles like heavy and small trucks, cars, buses, trains, heavy equipment, road construction and agriculture equipment that run on fossil fuels. Green energy is not practical in those areas. Most 'green' wind and solar generation facilities are backed up by diesel generators somewhere in the process.

2. Restart and unleash the CO fossil fuel industry (gas, diesel, oil, coal and natural gas) which are abundant and easily accessible in our State. Fossil fuels are an enormous contributor to the CO economy. The infrastructure already exists to extract, deliver and use fossil

fuels. Consider: In 2022 oil and gas production activity directly contributed \$1.9 billion dollars in state and local tax revenue, or an average of \$321 per Colorado resident. That lost tax revenue will more than cover the current deficit now and into the foreseeable future. But don't take my word for it. A recent report from the non-partisan Common Sense Institute (CSI) suggests that this problem can be fixed. You can read the full fact-filled report here: <https://www.common senseinstitute.us.org/colorado/research/energy-and-our-environment/impact-of-sb24-159-on-the-economy-revenue-and-emissions>

Yet, the Polis administration released its first Greenhouse Gas Pollution Reduction Roadmap ("GHG Roadmap") in January 2021 to eliminate the use of all or most fossil fuels in CO by 2030 and replace them with green energy. Several laws have been passed to impose this agenda on all CO residents. It is the opposite of an 'all of the above' energy policy that would allow CO consumers to choose and use the type/s of energy that is most appropriate for them in their individual locales.

Here's a breakdown of how those new energy policies will impact YOU if they are fully implemented (from the CSI Report):

- **\$1.2 billion in property tax revenue from oil and gas production** – This is the largest single source of revenue to the State.
- **\$432 million went to schools.**
- **\$768 million goes to fire, police, cities, counties and other local services.**
- **This was 6% of all property tax revenue and 7% of all school district property tax revenue.**
- **\$31 billion to \$48 billion loss over decade** – The dynamic fiscal impacts on state and local tax revenue would total between \$31 billion and \$48 billion over the first decade.
- **181,800 jobs lost** – The loss of oil and gas upstream activity would result in employment losses growing from 34,700 in year 1, to a reduction of 181,800 jobs by year 10.
- **70% of jobs lost from within Metro Denver** – While 64% of oil and gas extraction

employment is within Metro Denver, approximately 69% of all employment losses would be in Metro Denver.

- **\$321 billion in lost GDP over 10 years** – State GDP impacts would decrease from a loss of \$6 billion (-.9%) to a loss of \$48.5 billion (-5.4%) by year 10.

3. Reduce the pay of all State officials, bureaucrats and employees across the board who make over \$175K by 10%, beginning in fiscal 2026. To set the example for all of us, Gov. Polis (who has an estimated personal net worth of \$400 Million) should refuse any salary or other benefits for his position. NOTE: the CO Constitution defines compensation ranges for many positions but no person is required to take this compensation. BTW, never ask a person who works for or gets income from the government if government should be eliminated or defunded.

4. Cut all taxpayer funding of arts by 50%. Arts should be funded solely by private sector donors, patrons and those who enjoy them. We use our own money to buy tickets to movies, concerts, plays, entertainment and other public events. So all other artistic endeavors can use the same model. If people want it, they'll pay for it.

5. Implement a Colorado Dept of Government Efficiency (DOGE) to identify all redundant or unnecessary programs, positions, personnel and funding throughout CO state government. Then, publish ALL findings and implement these recommendations immediately. Those who hold redundant or unnecessary positions can find a similar job in the private sector, or train for a different career. That's how people who've lost jobs in the private sector do it. Remember when many small businesses were shut down and their jobs were lost during COVID?

6. Promote private education or homeschooling as an alternative choice via major tax breaks (not subsidies or vouchers). Then reduce or eliminate funding of non- or under-performing or redundant public school programs, personnel and buildings. CO kids and their parents deserve and already pay for the best education available. Your kids do not belong to the government; they belong to you.

7. Restart the Colorado logging industry. Logging operations in our forests put green products and natural resources to a good use rather than watching our forests go up in smoke via wildfires. Modern forestry practices (which no longer use clear-cutting) actually make forests healthier. Logging operations create jobs, many of which are in small communities. Here are some facts to consider. Between 2020–2024, Colorado wildfire activity burned approximately 733,851 acres, or about 1150 square miles. Those forests went up in smoke causing massive air and water pollution, and the deaths of countless wildlife. When logging operations were stopped, no more logging roads were built. Those roads gave firefighters access to wild-fire areas. But now, firefighting must often be done from the air, which is very expensive. Healthy forests are a renewable and sustainable green resource. Trees and other plant life absorb CO2 and turn it into oxygen.

8. Halt all funding and programs related to wolves and issue hunting permits to farmers and ranchers. Their livestock have been killed, hurt or destroyed because they are an easy food source for these predators. Reintroducing wolves has been a big, costly mistake. They pose a potential danger to humans, too. Wolves don't stay put; they multiply and move to new territory. People will encounter wolves in urban or recreational areas of CO very soon.

9. Crack down on illegal immigration and cooperate with all existing Federal immigration agencies in all sanctuary jurisdictions in the state. This is the biggest and costliest unaddressed budget-buster for CO. Gov. Polis and Denver Mayor Johnston insist that CO is not a sanctuary jurisdiction. The US Dept of Justice defines this as cities, states, or counties that publicly declare themselves a sanctuary jurisdiction or equivalent, with the intent to undermine federal immigration enforcement; have laws, ordinances, regulations, resolutions, policies, or other formalized practices that obstruct or limit local law enforcement cooperation with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE); and limit whether and how local agencies share information about immigration status of detainees with

federal authorities. Illegal immigration is a major direct/indirect cause of massive spending on law enforcement, crime, drugs, human trafficking, homelessness, healthcare and education spending and insurance. Defunding all related immigration funding and programs will result in many voluntary deportations. One reason for the loss or withholding of Federal funding is that CO has refused to enforce existing Federal immigration laws.

Many people will be angry or offended by these suggestions, for a variety of reasons. After all, change is good, *as long as it happens to those other people.*

Some ideas (like point #2) can happen with little or no negative impact on most people in our State. Increasing taxes on overburdened parents, small businesses, workers, property owners and every other CO taxpayer is not necessary to solve this problem. Bad policies create bad problems.

Here's one last point for every legal, hard-working, law-abiding CO citizen and taxpayer to consider. You are not a piggy bank or ATM for the government to tap when their policies fail or their budget is busted. You can use your own money far more effectively for your own purposes than any government official or agency.

With the special session wrapped up, it is now Polis who must decide whether the burden will fall on taxpayers yet again or whether he will finally confront the spending problem head-on.

Russ Minary is a retired sales executive, marketing consultant, small business owner and veteran. He helped businesses with hiring, talent consulting and organizational effectiveness before retiring.

Editor's note: Opinions expressed in commentary pieces are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the management of the Rocky Mountain Voice or the Sangre de Cristo Sentinel, but even so we support the constitutional right of the author to express those opinions.

Please see: <https://rockymountainvoice.com/2025/08/28/the-special-session-leaves-polis-with-a-783m-deficit-heres-how-he-can-fix-it-without-new-taxes/>



Colorado State News



CORONER from page 1

for assistance in Pueblo. All four of those county coroners were present with their deputies to help with the processing and cleanup. Because there was suspicion of wrongdoing by the Pueblo County Coroner, all members of the assist teams were deputized in Pueblo County. The deputization permitted them to help with the still incoming calls that require a Coroner response.

When Baltzly and Phillips arrived at the scene on Friday, they were deputized and then began to work out the logistics of setting up a secure processing area with tents. The secure area became necessary because drones equipped with microphones belonging to the media and others were flying over the area. To protect the scene, the investigation, and impacted families, the assist teams were forced to set up a tunnel of tents from the garage door of the mortuary to the morgue trailer. Friday's hours were spent just creating a secure area so the agencies could safely and confidentially process the scene. The actual processing would not begin until Saturday morning.

Custer County's assist team was first in the door on Saturday. The Colorado Bureau of Investigation (CBI) flew a drone in the first room and took pictures of everything from all angles. Baltzly and Phillips then began numbering the bodies starting with those closest to the door. In order to limit the transfer of biohazards the teams set up four stations in the tented and secure area. Baltzly and Phillips worked at the first station. They removed the bodies from the room in the facility and placed them on the station one cot. The body was then moved to station



Members of the Colorado Coroners Regional Incident Response Team.

Photos courtesy of the Custer County Coroner's Office



Custer County Coroner Brad Baltzly and Custer County Deputy Coroner Nikita Phillips suited up and on the scene.

two cot where it was placed in a new body bag. At station three the bodies were inspected and checked for identifying information and then logged. The fourth and final station assist team carried the remains to the morgue trailer for transport. Each team stayed in their

station to prevent cross contaminating the scene or any evidence. The Custer County assist team was relieved for a break after the first 16 bodies were processed. A total of 20 bodies were processed on Saturday and an additional four on Sunday. All remains were

then transferred to the El Paso County Coroner's Office for autopsy and identification, which is expected to take months.

Pueblo County Sheriff David Lucero pressed for accountability in this violation of public trust. Other Pueblo County officials highlighted their proud commitment to integrity and service, and the fallout for Cotter was swift. The Colorado Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is leading a full-scale criminal investigation. The 10th Judicial District Attorney's Office is also involved. As part of the investigation, search warrants were executed at the Cotters' homes, and the mortuary's business license was revoked. The Cotter's have also been served a business eviction notice.

Cotter was hospitalized for a cardiac event in the ensuing days. On August 29th, Cotter's legal counsel announced he would resign effective September 2, 2025. His resignation was accepted on September 2nd by the Pueblo County

Commissioners. Coroners from El Paso and Fremont counties stepped in to ensure coroner operations continue uninterrupted.

This isn't just about one man or one facility. Colorado has long been known for minimal oversight in its funeral industry. Routine inspections and professional licensing were only recently implemented after prior abuses, including a recent case where nearly 200 bodies were found in poor condition at Return to Nature in neighboring Penrose. Baltzly was also immediately on scene for the Penrose crisis and spent a full week in 2023 assisting Fremont County agencies with the cleanup. He also worked with the FBI to notify those impacted families. Baltzly said, "Even though we have mutual aid agreements with surrounding counties our service time in Penrose was about neighbors helping neighbors to clean up a crisis and help families in grief."

This story hits close for Custer County. Qualified

professionals are sometimes hard to come by in small towns like ours and those we do have often wear multiple hats. Those of us in rural communities rely heavily on our public servants and trust them to serve honorably.

Many have expressed concerns about not knowing what to do or ask when faced with making final resting plans and arrangements. When it comes to choosing the facility that will care for your loved one, there are some important questions to ask.

- Will my loved one be cared for on-site or transported elsewhere?
- What measures do you take to ensure proper handling and dignity?
- Can we tour the facilities before making a decision?
- How long has your funeral home been in operation?
- Are you family-owned, corporate, or part of a larger chain?
- Can you provide references or testimonials?
- Are you licensed?
- Do you handle permits, death certificates, and Social Security/Veterans Affairs paperwork?
- Can you provide a complete, itemized price list (as required by law)?
- What is included in your basic service fee?
- What additional or hidden fees should I be aware of (transportation, death certificates, embalming, etc.)?

As the criminal investigation into Davis Mortuary progresses, we will hold the grieving families in our thoughts and prayers and continue to report new developments.

"Heaven Awaits"



Expert From "Swift, Rocky, and Oz: What Stories Teach Us About Being Human."

Drake Hunter, Pastor of Elevating Life Church
Fort Morgan, CO

"Some people may be curious about what the Annunciation is. Our Christian friends ...especially those of the Catholic faith, likely have a good understanding of it. Our hearts go out to everyone affected as we think about the tragic shooting at Annunciation Catholic Church.

The Annunciation is the biblical moment (Luke 1:26-38) when the angel Gabriel told Mary she would bear Jesus, the Son of God. Catholics celebrate it on March 25 each year as the Feast of the Annunciation. Churches with this name honor Mary's "yes" to God's plan—symbolizing hope and new life.

That's why violence at a place called Annunciation is so jarring. The very name points to God entering human history with grace, not tragedy."

Drake Hunter is a contributing voice for Rocky Mountain Voice and pastor of Elevating Life Church in Fort Morgan, Colorado. He writes about faith, culture, and leadership, inviting readers to rediscover what it means to be fully human in today's world through his own faith, over two decades of service in the active military, and the lessons learned from life's challenges and common sense.

<https://rockymountainvoice.com/2025/08/29/swift-rocky-and-oz-what-stories-teach-us-about-being-human/>



GET THE TO-DO'S TO-DONE

CK SERIES

- 20, 35 AND 40 HP ENGINES
- 8 TRANSMISSION CHOICES
- HOPS OR CUB MODELS
- EASY TO DO!

True Value

Store Hours:
Monday - Friday 8 am - 6 pm | Saturday 8 am - 2 pm
635 Shoop Dr., Penrose, CO 81242
719-784-0123
www.truevaluetrailer.com



HOLT FAMILY
FUNERAL HOME

serving the community for five generations

**WE ARE FREMONT COUNTY'S ONLY
ONSITE CREMATORY. YOUR LOVED
ONES NEVER LEAVE OUR CARE.**



BROOKE PETERSON
5th generation to serve Fremont County

719.275.4113

OLDE SCHOOLHOUSE QUILTERS QUILT SHOW 2025 WINNERS!



**Best of Show &
1st Place Large Quilt**
Made by Paulette Shapland
& Quilted by Kathleen Cocher



2nd Place Large Quilt
Made & Quilted by Carol Rice



3rd Place Large Quilt
Made & Quilted by Carol Rice



1st Place Handquilted
Quilted by Karen Yoder



1st Place Small Quilt
Made by Kim Bolton
Quilted by Tammy Maher



2nd Place Small Quilt
Made by Mindy Kenyon
Quilted by Mindy Kenyon
& Kathy Bell



3rd Place Small Quilt
Made & Quilted by Ruth Lackey



**Sentinel's Choice
1st Quilt** Made by Shelby Flick!
Quilted by Karen Yoder

More beautiful quilts will be featured next week!
Sentinel photos by Katherine Brenchley