

Sara Shields

Colorado CattleWoman of the Year

WESTCLIFFE, CO

Custer County CattleWomen are proud to announce that Sara Shields has been honored as the 2025 Colorado CattleWoman of the Year, recognizing her lifelong dedication to the beef industry, agricultural education, and land conservation.

A third-generation rancher, Sara carries forward the legacy of her family’s San Isabel Ranch, homesteaded in 1872 by her great-grandfather here in Westcliffe, Colorado. From a young age, she was horseback and active in every aspect of ranch life—from animal health and irrigation to haying and range management.

Sara is a graduate of Colorado State University, where she earned a Bachelor’s degree in Equine



Sara Shields at Custer County Fair.

Courtesy photo

Science and a Master’s in Beef Industry Leadership. Her professional journey began with the Nebraska Cattlemen’s Association, where she lobbied on behalf of agricultural and rural communities at both state and federal levels.

For decades, Sara has played an active role in promoting beef and supporting youth engagement in agriculture. She has worked tirelessly at the Colorado State Fair and National Western Stock Show since 1989, and continues to serve as a mentor and educator to young cattle producers. A former 4-H club leader, she remains involved in youth development through showmanship clinics and leadership training.

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But my God shall
supply all your need
according to his riches
in glory by Christ
Jesus.
Philippians 4:19 KJV

Columbus Day



October 12, 1492 ◦ October 13, 2025

Second Monday of October

by Fred Hernandez

The first Columbus Day celebration took place on October 12, 1792, when the Columbian Order, the precursor of Tammany Hall, a political and social entity, held an event to commemorate the 300th Anniversary of the historic landing of Columbus on the American continent at Guanahani, an island in the Bahamas. The year was 1492.

Celebrated in many countries of the world, Columbus Day is a federal holiday in the United States. Observed on the second Monday of the month of October it is a paid holiday in some countries and unpaid in others. In fact this is one of the more fascinating holidays in the world not only because of the many different ways it is celebrated but also due to the rich history of the seafaring man himself.

Christophorus Columbus was the Latin name of the man born in Genoa, Italy. The name was eventually anglicized to Christopher. A bright young man he educated himself and became quite knowledgeable in geography, astronomy and history. He also spoke several languages including Portuguese, Latin and Castillian. During that epoch of the

COLUMBUS DAY See page 2

Government Shutdown:
White House Report on Colorado

Economic Impacts of the
Government Shutdown in Colorado
via Whitehouse.gov

A government shutdown occurs when Congress fails to pass appropriations bills or continuing resolutions to fund federal government operations. CEA analysis indicates that a shutdown may have wide-ranging economic effects that reduce the prospects of Colorado constituents through lower growth, higher unemployment and disruptions to Social Security and nutritional support to women with infant children.

Government Shutdown Would Reduce Growth and Increase Unemployment

CEA estimates Colorado’s Gross State Product will decline by approximately \$289 million each week the shutdown extends, the equivalent of \$1.3 billion per month while the government is shut down.

As a result of estimated GDP declines during the shutdown period, CEA analysis finds that there may be an increase in unemployment of about 900 workers in Colorado under a one-month shutdown.

In a government shutdown, most federal workers will be furloughed or be required to work without pay. In Colorado, there are around 55,000 federal workers, or about 1.9 percent of the state workforce.

Government Shutdown Would Stop Some Federal Benefits

Under a government shutdown, SNAP benefits continue for approximately 30 days before facing disruption. In Colorado there are around 615,000 total enrollees in SNAP, and an estimated 239,000 whom are children.

Benefits are likely delayed for those that

receive their Social Security benefits by check instead of direct-deposit. In Colorado, there are approximately 6,000 seniors that receive their benefits by check.

Due to the government shutdown, federal funding for the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program stops immediately and becomes reliant on very limited local contingency funding. If the government shutdown is prolonged, those reserves are likely to run out by the end of the first week. In Colorado, there are approximately 93,000 WIC recipients who rely on the program for nutritional support for themselves and their children.

Government Shutdown Would Hurt Small Business

Small Business Administration loan distributions are also frozen during a government shutdown. Assuming equal, average distributions each month, small businesses would face delays of around \$92 million in Colorado under a month-long shutdown of the federal government.

Federal contracts will similarly be affected by a federal government shutdown. CEA assumes all non-cost contracts (flat rate paid by the government) will continue, but funding will stop for all cost contracts (government pays for actual costs incurred, requiring oversight, invoicing, etc.). In this case, a one-month shutdown would cut federal contract spending by around \$422 million in Colorado.

Combining this with federal employees going unpaid, consumer spending from lost wages will fall by an estimated \$717 million in Colorado each month the government shut down extends.

*See page 24 for Information on What remains funded during a Gov’t shutdown.

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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.

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fifteenth century one of the most sought after commodities were the different spices that were available in the East Indies. There was keen competition going on to acquire control of these products and Columbus was interested in finding a western sea passage to the East Indies spice trade. He made multiple attempts to seek a sponsor for his venture from the royalty of various countries. He was rejected often until he was able to establish contact with Spanish royalty. He had several audiences with the Spanish rulers Isabella I of Castille and Ferdinand II of Aragon. It took a while but eventually Spain sponsored the voyages of Columbus, and he left Castille in 1492 with three ships named Santa Maria, Pinta and Nina.

Today many countries celebrate Columbus Day. Some countries honor Columbus and at the same time indigenous people. In the USA seventeen states and the District of Columbia have holidays honoring native Americans on the second Monday in October. In the state of Colorado recognition of its immigrant heritage has turned its focus from Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples Day. Also celebrated in Colorado by some is what is known as Cabrini Day, honoring Italian immigrant Frances Xavier Cabrini, a Catholic nun who worked tirelessly among the poor immigrants. She is the first American citizen canonized a Saint. Instead of the second Monday, Cabrini Day is celebrated on the first Monday in October. Many Italians honor Columbus Day in memory of their compatriot who found the route to the East Indies spice trade and brought honor and riches to his sponsors in Spain. Happy Columbus Day to one and all.

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Business Directory QR
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website <http://SangreDeCristoSentinel.com>

Alisha Shy Nominated
for CO CattleWomen
Rookie of the Year



Teri Munson, Sudzy Benesch, Sheron Berry, Alisha Shy and Christe Coleman-Holt.

Photo courtesy of Teri Munson

by Reggie Foster

Local Alisha Shy was recently nominated by Colorado CattleWomen for Rookie of the Year. How can someone with Alisha's lifetime of experience in Ag to include ranching and owning a feed store be considered a rookie? Well, because this was Alisha's first year as a member of the Custer County CattleWomen. She jumped in with both feet, attending every meeting and volunteering at every CattleWoman

event, noticed by her fellow CattleWomen. Alisha also gives her time as Treasurer of the Custer County Fair Board and is the Club Leader for the Custer County Trailblazers. When asked why she gives so much of her time to so many community programs she said, "I do all of these things because I feel like volunteering is a good way to serve and give back to my community." Custer County is proud to recognize Alisha Shy as our local CattleWomen Rookie of the Year.



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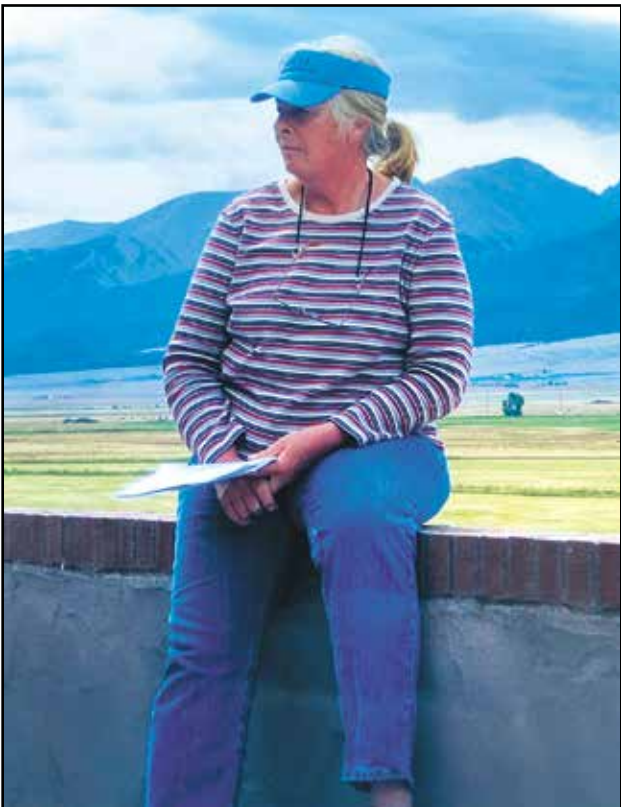
Local Mountain News & Notices

Claricy Rusk Recognized by Colorado CattleWomen

by Reggie Foster

Claricy Rusk, a dedicated rancher and community advocate, has been recognized as the Colorado CattleWomen Southeast Member of the Quarter. This honor highlights her unwavering commitment to agriculture, conservation, and the future of ranching in Colorado.

When asked about ranching as a way of life Claricy said, “It’s just what we do and it is not for everyone. It’s not all work, it’s a way of life. It is what we do”. Claricy and her husband Randy operated the Rusk Hereford Ranch and their ranching legacy continues with their son, Tate, and daughter-in-law, Wendy, spanning the legacy five



Fourth and fifth generation Rusks, Randy, Tate, Wendy and Claricy taking a break. Courtesy photo

generations. The Rusks are celebrated for their innovative conservation efforts, earning them the 2017 Southern Colorado Conservation Award. Claricy is an advocate for preserving our land. She said, “The thing we really are most proud of is the work we’ve done to preserve the land with conservation easements and protecting it from development. They are not making any more dirt.”

Beyond ranching, Claricy is an active member of the Custer County CattleWomen. She has contributed to various community initiatives, including reading to K-5 students while teaching them about the importance of agriculture in our community and on their plates. Claricy emphasized, “Many people don’t understand where

their food comes from. The CattleWomen are trying to stress where food comes from and find a better way to present beef and ag and the work we do every day.” Another way Claricy educates our youth is in her support of county livestock clinics for 4-H and FFA members.

Her leadership within both Custer County CattleWomen and Colorado CattleWomen reflects her dedication to promoting service to community and the values of both local and statewide agriculture. When asked about the good and bad of the ranching life she said, “In ranching I like that no two days are the same. I hate working in the wind. You can find something every day that irritates you but if you look you will find 900 things that make you smile.” The worst thing

according to Rusk, “the entities that are trying to take Ag down. The biggest irritant is fighting new rules and regulations when you are just trying to feed people. What is going to happen when all the water goes to municipalities and when the wolves are eating our calves.”

Claricy shares a love of both hunting and fishing with her husband Randy. She says, “Just take me outdoors.” If she’s not in the woods or on the water she may be on the bleachers, cheering on her grandson Grant Rusk in Bobcat football, basketball and track. Or she may be under the CattleWomen tent selling Sloppy Joe’s, burgers or beef burritos to benefit local causes. Claricy has donated countless pounds of beef from her ranch for both local fundraisers and to create awareness of the beef industry. If you have ever enjoyed one of the CattleWomen’s burritos on an early County Fair morning, then you have tasted the importance of the Rusk’s life work in the beef industry.

The Colorado CattleWomen Southeast Quarter Member Spotlight is awarded to the women in Colorado who demonstrate exceptional leadership and advocacy in the cattle industry. Claricy’s selection is a small nod to her decades of hard work and passion for preserving Custer County’s ranching heritage. Claricy’s contributions continue to inspire, educate and preserve our community.

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Sources & other information at: www.KCCA.info

Local Mountain News & Notices

FFA CREED CONTEST: I Believe in ...

by Sierra Foster,
Custer County FFA Chapter Reporter

High School's FFA students recently took the stage in the school's west gym to participate in the FFA Creed Contest. The contest showcases their confidence, knowledge of principles of agricultural leadership, and dedication to the Chapter.

The FFA Creed, written in 1930 by E.M. Tiffany has guided generations of agriculturists. Tiffany, a longtime educator and agricultural advocate, composed the Creed to articulate the values of the organization. Hard work, service, leadership, and the promise of the American agricultural way of life are central to the Creed. The Creed has been revised twice to its current version. Saturday, October 4th the chapter held their annual CreedSpeaking Competition. A century long tradition, and necessary completion to be a part of FFA. Freshman, or first year members spend the beginning of the school year memorizing the FFA Creed, by E.M. Tiffany. They then recite the Creed, and the judges follow up with three questions relating to the creed, FFA, or agriculture.

Local judges Brittany Van Duesen, Sara Shields, and Kobe Lewsader had a difficult time narrowing the field to the top three. This year, seven hardworking freshmen completed the Creed, one will continue to the regional competition. The winners for this year's Creed Contest are 1st place, Killian Petek; 2nd place Allie Tomassoni; and 3rd place Keera Petek. First place winner, Killian Petek will represent the Custer County chapter at the Colorado Regional FFA Creed Speaking Contest in November.

Judges, parents and peers praised the participants for their dedication and effort. "Memorizing the creed is more than a requirement," said Eddie Crispe, FFA Advisor. "It's about understanding what it means to be a leader in agriculture and in life. I'm really proud of these kids."

The Creed Contest is just one of many

opportunities for students to grow as leaders, public speakers, and advocates for agriculture. The skills they are building in FFA will serve them well in school, career, and community life.

The Custer County FFA Chapter is working hard as their annual events are around the corner. They are excited to see what this new year will bring and all the ways they will grow the chapter. The new officer team for the year is composed of 3 third-year officers, 3 second-year officers, and 2 first-year officers. All with experience behind their belts, they have confidence in their ability to improve the chapter and in the fact that 7 of the 8 senior officers will leave the chapter in good hands. The new officers were appointed to their positions, May 4th, 2025, at their annual parent member banquet. They are, Brylee Shy- President; Alexis Grossardt- Vice President; Marin Foster-Secretary; Docerty McCoy- Treasurer; Sierra Foster- Reporter; Stephanie Lewis-Sentinel; Hayden Hampton- Historian; and Grant Rusk- Parliamentarian.

In other FFA news; Locals looking forward to the Chapter's annual Fruit Sale will be glad to know that the time to order is almost here. FFA members will have their fruit sheets by the end of October so look for the opportunity to purchase your holiday fruit soon. Fruit will be delivered in mid December.

The next big event for the FFA Chapter is a community favorite: The Custer County FFA Annual Oyster Fry. Rocky Mountain Oysters that is (chicken tenders are available for the faint of heart). The dinner is open to all. Mark your calendars for supper on November 15th at 5 p.m. Tickets can be purchased at the door. The meal will include Rocky Mountain Oysters or chicken fingers, fries, dessert, and tea or lemonade.

For more information please contact the Custer County FFA Chapter Reporter, Sierra Foster through Advisor Eddie Crispe eddie.crispe@ccbobcats.net.



The Custer County FFA Chapter Creed Contest winners L to R: Killian Petek, Allie Tomassoni and Keera Petek.

Photo courtesy of FFA



Custer County FFA Officer team for 2025-26. L to R: Stephanie Lewis, Hayden Hampton, Marin Foster, Sierra Foster, Brylee Shy, Alexis Grossardt. Not pictured Grant Rusk and Doc McCoy.

Photos courtesy of FFA

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Local Mountain News & Notices

The History of Custer County's Tourism Board And Lodging Tax Part II

Collaborated by Laura Vass

Shifts in Focus, State and Local

Last week, we promised to explore if and how Custer County's Tourism Board (CCTB) has gradually drifted from its original and promised mission of "advertising and promoting local tourism". To no surprise to our readers, the Colorado Legislature has plowed the way for mission creep.

State Legislation

Most recent legislative sessions have carried at least one viable bill designed to tap the tourism/hospitality industry for more taxation. Most die due to opposition from stakeholders in the travel and/or real estate industry.

HB-22-1117 passed in 2022. This bill deleted from the tourism district authorization, (Colorado Revised Statutes, 29-25-112) the phrase "for the purpose of advertising and marketing local tourism" and expanded the allowable use of funds to include:

"HOUSING AND CHILDCARE FOR THE TOURISM-RELATED WORKFORCE, INCLUDING SEASONAL WORKERS, AND FOR OTHER WORKERS IN THE COMMUNITY; FACILITATING AND ENHANCING VISITOR EXPERIENCES; CAPITAL EXPENDITURES RELATED TO FACILITATING AND ENHANCING

VISITOR EXPERIENCES." In summary, advertising and marketing became an allowable use, not the exclusive use of lodging tax funds.

Advocates of this bill focused on housing shortages for seasonal workers in Eagle and Summit counties. The bill did retain the requirement to gain voter approval for such expanded uses.

HB-25-1247 became effective July 2025. Its main provision was to change the lodging tax limit from 2% to 6% and to further expand uses of county lodging funds to include –

"PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE MAINTENANCE OR IMPROVEMENTS"; and, "ENHANCING PUBLIC SAFETY MEASURES BY FUNDING LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT, FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES, AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES".

Custer County Considers the Lodging Tax Hike Options

Custer County Board of Commissioners visited the idea of raising the Lodging tax in the June 11 BOCC regular meeting with advocates for TOURISM-RELATED WORKFORCE housing and DAYCARE in mind present in the discussion. **The BOCC passed a resolution in August to place this expanded Lodging Tax on the November 4th ballot.** Ballot Question 1A asks voters to approve an increase of 4% with half to fund childcare and half to fund housing programs.

Tourism Drift: Leveraging Dollars Through State Grants with Prescribed State Agendas

In assessing future use of an expanded lodging tax fund, a look back is warranted.

One of the challenges of drawing

conclusions from a review of the past budget and financial reports is that the Custer County Tourism Board (CCTB) has been effective in obtaining grants from the Colorado Tourism Office (CTO). Those grants are competitive and typically require a local match. Once approved, CCTB spends according to the CTO grant. In short, CTO leverages local funds on projects the state (CTO) likes. A recent (FY 2024) grant funded project included installation of the three bulletin boards and four maps on existing boards, apparently related to a trails experience project.

CCTB gets more money to spend but those expenditures are earmarked for specific projects. To the board's credit, they spend about double the tax receipts through grants. The \$100,000 grant for "agro-tourism" to be headed by John Van Doran, as the CCTB rep and Commissioner Epp, is intended to stand up a farm-to-market store on Main Street. Rent alone consumes a majority of the grant over two years.

From Online Advertising to Glossy Hard Copy

To streamline our analysis, we leaned on Gemini AI to review the budget and accounting reports for the purpose of comparing 2022 paid-advertising budget to subsequent spending. Key findings includes the following:

- **Budget Reallocation Post-2022:** In CCTB's 2023 Budget, after eliminating paid ads on Google AdWords; Facebook and Instagram, the primary Advertising line item (Account 53090) was cut by 50% in dollar terms, dropping from \$35,000 in 2022 to \$17,500 in 2023.
- **Vague Categories:** The funds cut from advertising appear to have been directly reallocated to the vague category of community support. The spending for "Non-Tourism Grants/Support" grew by 142.9% (\$10,000 increase), soaring from \$7,000 in 2022 to \$17,000 in 2023.

A very obvious, (to a human), trend has been a dramatic rise in content creation and printing. Whereas printing was a miniscule expenditure prior to 2023, it has grown dramatically in recent years. A prominent 2023 project was printing 15,000 copies of a 28 page "Past & Present Booklet" at a cost of \$25,000. CCTB's printing budget in 2024 was \$17,000. It was boosted to \$27,000 this year and includes the "Main Street Banners" you see on light poles. That was a tradition started by CART.

Another growth category is the Welcome Center which cost \$4,000 in 2023. Rent and utilities currently run about \$5,000 per year.

The brief analysis above compares 2023 to previous years. Changes in priorities are aligned with–

HB-22-1117, adding "visitor experience" as an authorized purpose for the Lodging Tax Fund.

Nearly two-thirds of CCTB budget is now for "Third-party Advertising" (40%) and "Contract Labor" (22%) according to recent CCTB statements. The Sentinel has requested a breakdown of these expense categories. When successful, we will publish the findings.

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www.westcliffeflowershop.com

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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 4:30 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.



Recurring Events

- Mondays**
10 a.m. Pickle Ball Silver Cliff Mem.Park (SCMP)
More info: lizbrannen@gmail.com
6 p.m. Men’s Bible Study, FBC 6th St.
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**
4:30 PM. 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**
9 a.m. Women’s Bible Studay, FBC 6th St
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
Sept 24-May 13 @ Sangre de Cristo Fellowship, 120 Jerry Dr, Westcliffe. Free childcare 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.
- Thursdays**
5:45 p.m. Women’s Bible Studay, FBC 6th St
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



Custer County Sheriff’s Office
October 5, 2025 — Silver Cliff, CO.

On the afternoon of October 5th, Custer County Deputies observed a sport motorcycle traveling at a dangerously high rate of speed—estimated at 120 miles per hour—on Highway 96 near Bear Basin.

As the motorcycle approached the town of Silver Cliff, radar recorded the vehicle’s speed at 98 miles per hour.

Awaiting Deputies safely contacted the rider, identified as 20-year-old Ezra Trujillo of Pueblo, Colorado, as he entered Silver Cliff. During the stop, it was determined that Mr. Trujillo did not possess the required motorcycle endorsement on his driver’s license, nor was the motorcycle registered as required by law.



When questioned, Mr. Trujillo stated, “I was just having fun.”
The Custer County Sheriff’s Office reminds all motorists that excessive speed and failure to comply with

licensing and registration laws put everyone at risk. The safety of our community remains our top priority, and we appreciate the vigilance of our Deputies in protecting our roadways.

School Board Declares Vacancy

by Laura Vass

The Custer County School Board held a Special Meeting Tuesday, October 7, 2025, in the school library to accept the resignation of Board Director Jennifer Kriegh. Kriegh was elected to the seat in November 2023. In Kriegh’s letter to the Board she cited the passing of her mother, as well as personal and medical issues as the reason for her resignation.

While serving as a Director, Kriegh led the policy committee in the nearly two year overhaul of the District’s more than 400 policies. With some policies showing the last approval date as 1999, the Board knew the task

ahead would be monumental. Kriegh worked with Michelle Tillotson to create a system to log and properly format old and new policies.

Kriegh’s resignation letter was read as addressed to the Board, administration, faculty, staff, students, and community. She thanked the parents and staff who actively engaged and encouraged the community to volunteer in the District. She acknowledged her respect for her fellow board members whom she said, “continue to make difficult decisions even when those decisions come at personal cost.”

The current Board has sixty days from the day the vacancy was declared to

fill the seat. Anyone who has been registered to vote in Custer County for at least one year and is interested in serving the Custer County School District as a Board Director may submit a letter of interest, a short biographical statement, and a sworn affidavit attesting to the qualifications for the office until November 19, 2025 at 12 noon. Interviews will be conducted during a Special Meeting of the School Board on December 2, 2025, at 5:30 p.m.

To submit your interest or for more information contact Donna Newell at donna.newell@ccbobcats.net or at the District Administration Office, Monday through Thursday 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Coats for a Cause: Support a Custer County Student in Need

by Sentinel Staff

Recognizing that there are many students in need of a coat for the rapidly approaching winter, Custer County Elementary School Principal Sydney Benesch is leading an effort of warmth. Anyone interested in providing winter coats, hats, socks, and/or gloves can pick up a

“Coat Card” from the school’s main office.

Each Coat Card will have the sizing information for the student in need. Purchase a new or gently used coat and return it to the school office with the Coat Card no later than October 20th. Anyone who is unable to purchase a coat but would like to

support the cause can make a donation to the school’s coat fund. For more information or to donate please contact Sydney Benesch by email at sydney.benesch@ccbobcats.net.

Thank you in advance for supporting Coats for a Cause and bringing a smile and warmth to our Bobcats this winter.

Custer Senior Center Menu

Monday, October 13 CLOSED for Indigenous People’s Day	Tuesday, October 14 #94 Swiss Steak w/Mushroom Sauce Smashed Red Potatoes Seasoned Greens Tossed Vegetable Salad w/Lite Ranch Orange and WW Bread	Thursday, October 16 #21 Chicken and Noodles Seasoned Green Beans Baked Acorn Squash Apricot Pineapple Comote WW Bread w/Butter
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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.

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Events

Sundays 4:30 p.m. Ages 13 and up
Wet Mountain Community Chorale – Rehearsals
Sangre de Cristo Cowboy Church
Contact KMurrayJohnston@gmail for information

October 4, 1 - 4 p.m.
Sangres Art Guild~3rd Street Gallery Art Reception
October Show- “Autumn’s Beauty & Bounty”
Local demo artist, the music of the Beatties, specials, refreshments and free pumpkin painting. 3rd Street Gallery, 59000 N. Hwy 69. See SangreArtGuild.org

Saturday, October 4, 10 a.m. – 7 p.m. \$60
Veteran’s Rescue Ranch Fundraiser -Photo Session
Contact Christy to book session (513) 317-7647 or armychic21t@gmail.com

Saturday, October 18th 5 p.m. \$\$ Adults only event
First Annual Coroner’s Ball, Spaghetti Dinner, Live Music, Auction. Fundraising event to provide trade focused scholarship fund at the WMV Saddle Club. Tickets available atTony’s Mtn. Pizza, Wild Flour Donuts & Co and the Sentinel or from the County Coroner.

Next month:
Friday & Saturday, November 7 & 8, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Beckwith Ranch Holiday Gift Show

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

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

Custer County Community Sharing Food Pantry
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OPEN First 3 Fridays of the month 11 – 2 p.m.
TFAP 12-2 October 10th 12-2 p.m.
Everyday Eats boxes are available during any regular distribution from 11-2
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VETERANS SERVICE Office (VSO)
Dominic Edginton VSO
(719) 618-8266 text 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
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Farmers Markets

TUESDAYS & SUNDAYS 9 a.m to ?
SILVER CLIFF Sammy's Market
Parking lot next to Conoco

Weather Prevailing, Sammy Plans to continue for two more weeks

Classifieds

For Sale

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

For Sale:

2024 Kawasaki Eliminator motorcycle, ABS, 707 miles, purchased April of 2024, one owner, just like new, windshield and radiator cover included, pearl white in color, \$5800, located near Westcliffe, please call (575) 214-0233.



2018 Harley-Davidson Softail Slim motorcycle, 8587 miles, ABS, wicked red in color, multiple modifications including HD push forward seat, HD reach handlebars, HD grips, LED tail light, HD crashbars, windshield, short shift lever, HD 2-up seat, sissy bar with rack, 4-inch swept-back handlebar risers, extended brake cable, located near Westcliffe, \$14,000, please call (575) 214-0233.



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. Huge Muti- Family Garage Sale

Garage Sale

Friday & Saturday
October 10th & 11th
9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Home decor, dishes, bedding and tools. Outdoor tools, antler coat rack. And much more, including an Amish Bake Sale
152 Howe Rd. Westcliffe

Help Wanted

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KIDS

Friday, October 10, 2025

Bigfoot

There are many stories of mythical animals living in forests and lagoons all over the world. This week we will be looking into one of these myths said to inhabit forests in North America, particularly in the Pacific Northwest. It is featured in both American and Canadian folklore since the mid-20th century. Yes, we are talking about Bigfoot.

The origin of the Bigfoot legend consists of stories of a giant, hairy creature that appears half man and half ape and they have existed in various parts of the world for many centuries. In fact, the only continent not to have stories of “wild men” is Antarctica. In the Himalayas, it’s the Yeti. In Canada, it’s the Sasquatch. And in the northwest United States, it’s Bigfoot. Believers of Bigfoot have described him as being between six and eight feet tall, with a large forehead and pronounced brow almost appearing like a hairy caveman. His enormous feet are what gives him his name, Bigfoot. Some estimations of the size of his feet are two feet long and eight inches wide.

Stories of “wild men” existed long before white colonists arrived. Different versions ranged from gentle giants to cannibalistic monsters living on mountain peaks. The Bigfoot legend really started to kick off in 1958. That is when Gerald Crew claimed to have found large footprints at a construction site in California and he had plaster casts made of the prints. However, it turned out that these prints were a hoax. No surprise here. Despite them being found to be fake they still brought the first “Bigfoot Hunters” to the area.

FYI: If you have nothing to do on October 9th – 11th 2026, you can mosey down to Holly-Gray Park in Sutton West Virginia for the Bigfoot Festival. In 2025 they hosted their Fifth anniversary of this festival and even featured a Bigfoot wedding.

For more information on the festival go to <https://wvbigfootmuseum.org/about-the-festival>.

Sounds like fun. I have never been to West Virginia but I have known some folks that have. Maybe we will see each other there.

Until next week, Take Care and give God the Reins.

by Audrey Slater. Sources: Sources: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bigfoot>, <https://www.todayifoundout.com/index.php/2013/05/the-origin-of-the-bigfoot-legend/>, Photo: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:2016ShawneeBigfoot.jpg>.

“Sassy the Sasquatch” roadside attraction statue in the Garden of the Gods Wilderness within the Shawnee National Forest, Illinois



Sangre de Cristo Sentinel • Westcliffe, Colorado

CORNER



BOBCAT

ATHLETE

OF THE WEEK!

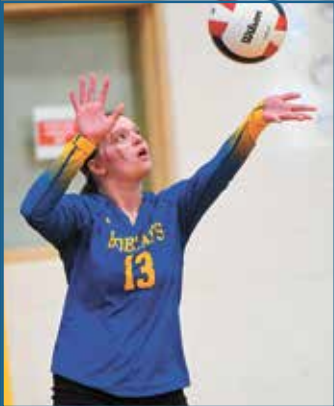
Cross Country

Shiloh Holmes!

This week’s Bobcat of the Week is Shiloh Holmes. Shiloh is a positive team member who loves a challenge and likes to have fun while doing it. At any given practice or race, Shiloh can be found supporting her teammates and cheering them on. She is not only a hard worker, but she appreciates the hard work of others and celebrates their accomplishments. Shiloh is a joy to have on the team, and we are eager to watch her crush her goals in the future!



Shiloh Holmes with Coach Heather Ramer



Trinity Downing

Trinity Downing for Varsity!



Grant Rusk, Coach Nick Effle, and Mason Simmons

Layna Jones for JV!

Volleyball

Football

Offense: Mason Simmons

Defense: Grant Rusk

BOBCAT SCOREBOARD

Thursday, October 2:

MS Volleyball @ South Park: B Team: 0-2 loss: 1st game: 20-25, 2nd game: 21-25; A Team: 2-0, Win!: both games: 25-21

MS Football @ Cotopaxi (6-man): 6-48, loss

HS JV Volleyball @ Crested Butte: Win!

HS Varsity Volleyball @ Crested Butte: 3-1, Win!

Friday, October 3:

HS Football @ Walsenberg: 42-12, Win!

Saturday, October 4:

HS Cross Country @ Salida XC Classic:

Boys: Mason Stover 20:00 (38th), Jacob Weeks 20:14 (23rd)

Girls: Abigail Handy 23:20 (16th), Shiloh Holmes 29:30 (48th), Emma Stover 30:58 (63rd)



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Custer County School District C-1

MENU for the week October 13 thru Oct 16, 2025

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Monday	Cereal Oatmeal Yogurt Fresh Fruit, Fruit	Chicken Patty Sandwich Oven Fries Carrots and Celery Fruit
Tuesday	Breakfast Sandwich Fruit Milk	Carnitas Rice Corn Fruit Milk
Wednesday	Cinnamon Rolls Fruit Milk	Baked Cheese Sandwich Tomato Soup Fruit Milk
Thursday	Biscuits and Gravy Sausage Yogurt Oatmeal Fruit Milk	Tater Tot Casserole Peas and Carrots Fruit Milk

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8-Man Requires A Few Good Men...

by Coach Gerring,
CCSD-1

...and the Custer County Bobcats rolled into Walsenburg last Friday night with more than enough “Good Men” to get the job done. Defeating the Panthers by a score of 42-12.

As of this writing, the game stats are still being compiled so I am going to press with only memorized game highlights. In no particular order, Senior Grant Rusk tallied three touchdowns, one of which was a pick six, with three other scores being called back due to team penalties. In addition, Rusk rushed for 137 yards on 17 attempts. Rusk’s kicking game

reigned superb as did his play on the defensive side of the ball.

Senior Taylor Bradford continued with his hard hitting on defense and yard gaining runs on offense. His offensive blocking was key as was his vocal leadership on the field. Senior Ty Stoltzfus held down the center of the offensive line while making perfect snaps throughout the night. His defensive play was just as impressive as he played both sides of the ball for the second straight week. Senior Doc McCoy turned eighteen on game day and celebrated his birthday while playing flawless on both offense and defense. The mere



Custer vs Walsenburg. The Bobcats are ranked 1st in the SIX COUNTY League.

Photo by Sarah Flynn



Bobcat Seniors Feel the Victory
Grant Risk, Ty Stoltzfus, Doc McCoy and in front Taylor Bradford.

Photo by jhexposures.com

attitude of this young man sets the tone for the offensive line. As far as a birthday cake, none was had but after the game Doc ate everything in sight!

One unsung hero of the offensive line is Stone Everhart. This young man quietly goes about his job without much fanfare. He simply does his job and performs without arrogance. JuniorAgi Thomas had 7 catches for 184 yards and scored three times along the way. Sophomore quarterback

Ely Flynn managed the game well with several great passes totaling 200 yards and only one interception. He threw darts to his receiver’s and had several successful scrambles for positive yardage. Other notable plays by underclassmen include Lucas Bradford, Wade Pierce, Justice Simmons, Brayden Baker and Mason Simmons.

When asked “why the sudden change in Custer County football?” Coach Effle, a man

of few words, simply states “These young men are buying into the system and the process that makes winners, and the fact is we are all just now getting to know one another.”

Friday Night Lights, October 10th at 7 p.m. The 3-1 Bobcats will host the Fowler Grizzlies. There will be a special flag presentation honoring our veterans that you won’t want to miss. So come join in as the Bobcats continue to make us BELIEVE!

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Friday, October 10:

4:30 pm: MS Volleyball @ Calhan (away)

5:30 pm: HS JV Volleyball @ Calhan (away)

6:30 pm: HS Varsity Volleyball @ Calhan (away)

7 pm: HS Football @ HOME vs Fowler

Saturday, October 11:

8 am: HS Varsity Volleyball Tourney @ Swink (away)

10 am: MS Volleyball Tri vs Merit Academy/Cotopaxi @ Paxi

Tuesday, October 14:

4:30 pm: HS JV Volleyball @ La Veta (away)

5:30 pm: HS Varsity Volleyball @ La Veta (away)

Thursday, October 16:

4 pm: MS Football @ Crowley County (away)

Friday, October 17:

9 am: MS & HS Cross Country: Southern Peaks League @ Monte Vista Golf Course

7 pm: HS Football @ Crowley County (away)

TBD: MS Volleyball WCL Tournament @ Cotopaxi

Saturday, October 18:

12 pm: HS JV Volleyball @ Monte Vista (away)

1 pm: HS Varsity Volleyball @ Monte Vista (away)

Friday, October 24:

7 pm: HS Football @ HOME vs Hoehne (Senior Night!)

TBD: HS Volleyball Tournament @ Sargent (away)

Saturday, October 25:

11 am: HS JV Volleyball @ HOME vs Sanford

12 pm: HS Varsity Volleyball @ HOME vs Sanford

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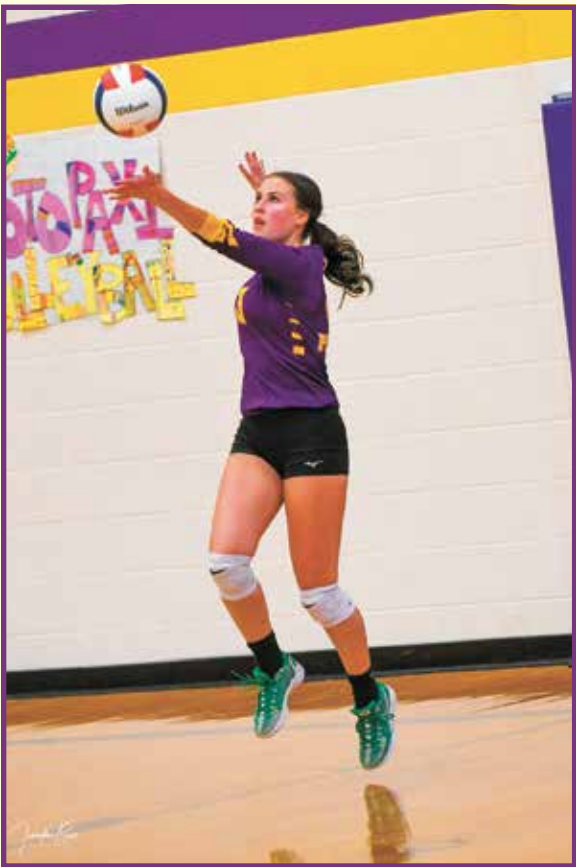
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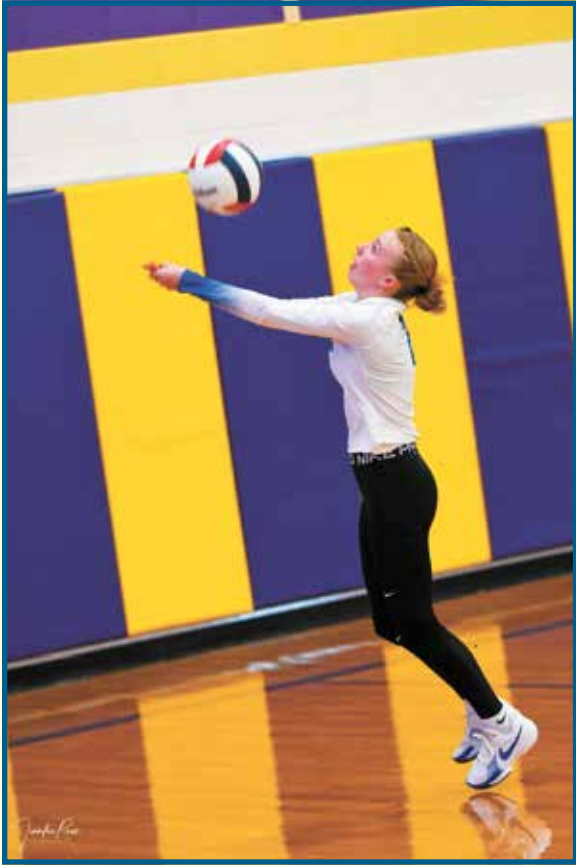
HS LADIES VOLLEYBALL: CUSTE



R BOBCATS

@

COTOPAXI PIRATES



2025 Custer County Ballot Guide and Opinions



Ballots are set to be mailed on October 10th this year. Since this is an odd-numbered year, ballot initiatives are restricted to issues directly related to the Taxpayer’s Bill of Rights (TABOR).

That means unlike last year, Coloradans are not faced with a litany of complicated and often intentionally-misleading ballot questions.

In fact, your ballot will contain only two statewide propositions this year, Proposition LL and Proposition MM.

Both propositions were referred to your ballot by the State Legislature, rather than going through the signature gathering process. (HB25-1274 & SB 25-214)

Here’s what you need to know:

Proposition LL
Vote “NO”

Proposition LL asks voters for permission to keep \$12.4M in excess revenue raised as a result of a previous voter-approved tax hike from 2022. (Proposition FF) TABOR requires the government to ask permission to keep excess funding, any time there is any.

Those excess funds are required to be returned to you as a TABOR refund, if Proposition LL fails to pass.

That previous proposition was a tax hike on Coloradans earning more than \$300,000 annually. But almost immediately, Democrats decided it wasn’t enough.

“Free” school lunches were initially estimated to cost \$100M, but in their very first year already spent \$60M over that budget.

So Proposition LL gives you a choice. Bail out a failing government program? Or get your share of that \$12.4M back as a refund?

Please vote “NO” on Proposition LL.

Proposition MM
Vote “NO”

Proposition MM seeks to raise taxes by cutting allowable deductions for Coloradans earning more than \$300,000 a year. Single filers would see their deductions drop from \$12,000 to \$1,000, and joint filers from \$16,000 to \$2,000.

This is \$95 million tax hike to be funded by just 5% of Coloradans.

Proponents seek to raise taxes again, because their previous tax hike for school lunches wasn’t enough for them, and the program is already overspending drastically as mentioned above.

Voting for Prop MM may sound harmless if you’re in the 95% of Coloradans earning less than \$300,000 annually because it doesn’t hit your wallet today—but it will tomorrow, you can bet on that!

When lawmakers or voters single out “the wealthy,” “the poor,” “the smokers,” or any other group for special tax treatment, they create two Colorados: one paying the bill and another cashing the check. That division gives politicians power to pick winners and losers, weaponizing taxation.

These temporary, “feel-good” policies quickly become permanent costs for the middle class.

Please vote “NO” on Proposition MM.



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2025 Colorado Ballot Certified With Two Statewide Measures

by Sherrie Peif,
Complete Colorado.com

DENVER — Colorado voters will be getting a break from a long list of statewide questions this November, after Secretary of State Jena Griswold announced she had certified the 2025 ballot with only two measures going in front of all voters in the state.

Voters will however still have their fair share of things to vote on closer to home as many city council and school board seats are up for grabs, as well as new local tax asks and extensions of existing taxes around the state.

This year is an odd year election, meaning ballot measures are, for the most part, limited under state law to fiscal issues related to the Taxpayer’s Bill of Rights (TABOR).

The two measures that will appear were both referred by the legislature this Spring out of House Bill 25-1274, and Senate Bill 25-214.

Proposition LL will ask voters to “de-TABOR” excess revenue received

from the previous Proposition FF tax hike on Coloradans with incomes over \$300,000. The 2022 voter-approved measure for the Healthy School Meals For All program pays for public schools to offer fully subsidized breakfast and lunch to students in kindergarten through 12th grade.

However, the program is going broke, with the number of students eating school meals skyrocketing when parents who had been paying learned they no longer had to foot the bill.

It was estimated it would cost no more than \$100 million a year, but in its first year, it was in the red by more than \$60 million.

Proposition LL was referred to help fix the fiscal mess by allowing the state to keep and spend all the excess revenue collected from the first measure, which otherwise would be refunded back to taxpayers.

The second measure on the ballot is **Proposition MM**, which once again hikes taxes on those making more than \$300,000 (roughly 5 percent of

Colorado filers) by lowering their allowable income tax deductions from \$12,000 for single filers and \$16,000 for joint filers down to \$1,000 for single filers and \$2,000 for joint filers, thus increasing their taxable income. It is expected to raise about \$95 million more a year.

An amendment to MM was also created during the recent special session to also help subsidize food stamps in Colorado. Senate Bill 25B-003 allows the state to spend all revenue collected over and above what is needed to fund the “free” school lunch program, on Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, which supplement low-income families’ grocery costs, and which are expected to decrease because of new work requirements put in place by the Trump administration.

Ballots for Colorado’s November 4 election are scheduled to start being mailed out on October 10.

Please see: <https://completeminnesota.com/2025/09/18/2025-colorado-ballot-certified-two-statewide-measures/>

Seven Colorado Counties Asking For Lodging Tax Hikes

—September 25, 2025

by Savana Kascak,
CompleteColorado.com

DENVER—At least seven Colorado counties are asking voters to double, and even triple, lodging taxes at the ballot this November, with proponents claiming the jump in rates is needed to help compensate for declining revenues, and negative impacts of tourism.

Commissioners in Chaffee, Custer, Eagle, Gilpin, Routt, Ouray, and Park counties are all looking to cash in on the higher taxes, which apply to short-term (30-days or less) accommodations such as hotels, motels and short-term rentals, such as AirBnB.

Lodging tax revenue traditionally funds tourism marketing, but also gets poured into things such as roads, police, fire and emergency services. The legislature in 2022 expanded use of lodging tax revenue to include childcare and housing, requiring 10% to be used for tourism promotion.

Lawmakers went a step further earlier this year with House Bill 1247, increasing the maximum lodging tax rate allowed from 2% to 6%, and allowing the money to be used for infrastructure and public safety, thus unleashing the torrent of tax hikes on local ballots.

Don Sheehan, a Centennial city councilmember and mayoral candidate, voted against referring a lodging tax to city voters in 2022, and then went on to help defeat the measure at the ballot.

“The sales pitch is ‘hey it’s not going to hit you, it’s going to hit somebody you don’t know’,” Sheehan told Complete Colorado. “I think that’s

kind of the motivation, it’s an easy way to attempt to raise revenue.”

While lodging taxes might be a convenient way to raise revenue without asking residents to dip into their own pockets, Sheehan notes that such tax hikes could backfire, and urges voters to think through all the potential implications before marking their ballots.

“I wonder if there will be an impact on tourism if it becomes more expensive,” Sheehan said. “You may actually be hurting your overall tourist volume if its more expensive for tourists to come out and stay here.”

Nash Herman, fiscal policy analyst at Independence Institute, a free market think tank (and publisher of Complete Colorado) agrees, noting these taxes may come with good intentions, but poor outcomes,

“These counties are basically trying to account for the adverse effects of over-taxation and over-regulation with even more taxation,” said Herman. “Counties are essentially looking to subsidize services that should already be covered by local property taxes. Voters should first ask that their property taxes be spent more effectively before accepting a new tax.”

The ballot measures

Chaffee County Ballot Issue 1A asks voters to triple the lodging tax from 2% to 6%, raising an estimated \$3.5 million annually for roads and public safety. The tax hike includes the towns of Buena Vista, Poncha Springs and Salida.

Custer County Ballot Issue 1A also asks to raise the tax to 6% for subsidized housing and early childcare. The tax is projected to generate \$170,000 annually.

Gilpin County Ballot Issue 1A triples the county’s lodging tax to 6%. The estimated \$340,000 in new annual revenue would go toward roads and childcare.

Eagle County Ballot Issue 1A asks voters to increase the lodging tax to 4% in unincorporated areas of the county. The tax could generate \$4.5 million a year for tourism marketing, childcare, infrastructure and police/fire services.

Routt County Ballot Issue 1B asks for an increase to 6% for roads and public safety, potentially generating \$821,000 annually. It will not include Steamboat Springs, which already has a lodging tax rate of 12%.

Park County Ballot Issue 1A asks voters to triple the tax to 6%, projected to raise \$1.8 million for roads, police and emergency services and tourism. The tax excludes Fairplay and Alma.

Ouray County Ballot issue 1A asks voters to implement the county’s first ever lodging tax starting at 6%, projected to raise \$182,000 annually. Excluding Ouray and Ridgway, proponents claim the need for the tax is “urgent” due to development pressures and tourism driving up the housing market.

As previously reported by Complete Colorado, at least two Colorado municipalities, Basalt, located in the Roaring Fork Valley, and Rifle, located in Garfield County on the Western Slope, are also asking for lodging tax hikes in November.

Ballots for the November 4 election will start being mailed out to voters on October 10th.

Please see: <https://completecolorado.com/2025/09/25/colorado-counties-lodging-taxes-november-ballot/>

2025 Custer County Ballot Guide and Opinions

Your Vote is Your Voice

by Michael Foster

Here in Custer County, where neighbors know one another and where local and state governance can be felt in our daily lives, there lies a remarkable power in the hands of each citizen: the right to vote. It's vital we remember how precious this right is, how hard it was won, and how important it remains.

Millions around the world still live under regimes where they cannot vote freely. The ability to vote without fear or coercion is rare. The ability to freely cast a personal vote is something that many nations envy and many Americans take for granted.

Voting in America has not always been open to all. The battles for the right to vote were real and often dangerous. Many gave great personal sacrifice so each of us could speak at the ballot box. We should never forget those who fought, marched, and even died to secure this right. For generations, women, Black Americans, Native American citizens and countless others struggled for the chance to cast their ballot. When we make the time to exercise our enviable right and freedom to vote, we honor their courage and continue the work they began by ensuring that every voice counts.

Why would Americans endure such hardship for the right to vote? Because without the ability to vote, you lack meaningful influence over laws, taxes, representation, and community priorities. Because

the individual vote holds leaders accountable. Because democracy works best when each citizen participates.

Custer County voters have repeatedly shown that they value their voices. According to the Colorado Secretary of State website, voter turnout for the 2022 and 2024 General Elections held steady at about 75 percent. We can be proud that three out of every four active voters in major elections cast their vote. About 50 percent exercise their vote in odd year elections. 2025 is an odd year election and there are a few important tax issues on the ballot. Let's encourage one another to vote and increase our voting percentage in this odd year election.

In a small rural county like ours, a single ballot cast can tip a local race. A few years ago a school board seat was determined by fewer than ten votes. In addition to school boards, and county commissioners, infrastructure measures can also be decided by narrow margins. Your vote is your voice and in small communities like ours it carries noticeable weight.

When you cast your ballot this November, you will substantiate the long line of patriots who insisted through suffering, struggle, and sacrifice that every citizen deserves representation. Voting is a right. Voting is a responsibility.

Here is the hope for each eligible voter as we move toward election day on November 4, 2025.

Make a plan for exercising your right to vote. Know the time, date, and place of voting in Custer County. Early voting is available and mailing a ballot may be more convenient for some.

For your convenience, the voting information for the 2025 Election for Custer County Colorado Voters from Custer County Clerk, Kelley Camper is on this page.

You may obtain a replacement ballot, drop off your ballot, update your voter registration, register to vote, or vote using a voting machine at the Custer County Clerk's Office located in the Custer County Courthouse at 205 S. 6th Street, Westcliffe, CO. Ballot boxes with 24 hour access located at the Custer County Courthouse and the Wetmore Community Center make it easy to deliver your vote until November 4th.

Seize the opportunity to vote locally. Encourage your friends, family, neighbors, and fellow citizens to embrace this freedom. Don't let national news distract you from local realities. Local votes decide who runs the schools, fixes the roads, manages law enforcement, and spends local taxes. In our community, a few votes have and can still determine the outcome. This community depends on you, the local decision maker. Consider the issues and embrace your right to weigh in. One vote, your vote, could make all the difference in Custer County.

NOTICE OF COORDINATED ELECTION NOVEMBER 4, 2025 OFFICE OF THE CLERK & RECORDER CUSTER COUNTY, COLORADO

In accordance with §1-5-205(1) C.R.S, notice is hereby given that a Coordinated Election will be held by Mail Ballot Election process, in the County of Custer, State of Colorado, on Tuesday, the 4th day of November 2025.

Mail Ballots – Ballots will be mailed starting October 10, 2025, to all active registered voters in the county. If you have recently moved and not updated your physical and/or mailing address, you can either come into our office to update your address or go online to govotecolorado.gov. Ballots **cannot** be forwarded.

Voter Service and Polling Center (VSPC) – You may obtain a replacement ballot, drop off your ballot, update your voter registration, register to vote, or vote using a voting machine at the Custer County Clerk's Office located at 205 S. 6th Street, Westcliffe, CO. Dates and hours of operation are:

October 27th through November 4th
Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Saturday, November 1st, 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Election Day, Tuesday, November 4th, 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
A voting machine will be available at this location only, starting Monday, October 27th.

Ballot drop-box locations – A 24-hour ballot drop-box is located at the rear entrance of the County Building, 205 S. 6th Street, Westcliffe, CO; and at the Wetmore Community Center, 95 County Road 393, Wetmore, CO.

Sample ballots may be obtained at the Custer County Clerk's Office located at 205 S. 6th St., Westcliffe, CO; or my emailing your request to countyclerk@custercounty-co.gov.

In Testimony Whereof, I have hereunto, set my hand and affixed the seal of the County of Custer this 2nd day of October 2025.

Kelley S. Camper
Custer County Clerk and Recorder



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Every election is determined by the people who show up. —Larry J. Sabato

Colorado's Healthy Meals for All Proves Unhealthy for the State Budget

(Editor's Note/llv: This Economic Analysis was produced and printed in 2024, PRIOR to Legislation that Governor Polis Signed concerning changes to Healthy Meals for All (HMEFA) and provision to create two (2) tax issues to take before the voters in 2025, Prop LL and Prop MM. The author outlines the possibility and likelihood that HMEFA could become an unsustainable money pit. It is important the the reader keep in mind that everything in the article was based on the implemation into Colorado State Statute, the Prop FF on the 2022 Ballot and subsequent 2023 passing of SB23-221 Healthy School Meals For All Program Fund.)

by Dr. Steven Byers,
Chief Economist,
Common Sense Institute (CSI)

After just one year, the program is expected to reach CSI's budget deficit projection 5 years early. In the 2022 study, CSI estimated that the "Healthy School Meals for All" program could grow to a \$50 million deficit by 2030 and a \$72.4 million deficit by 2033 and upwards of \$500 million by 2050[i]. For context, \$50 million is a larger budget line item than the 2024 temporary rental assistance grant (\$30 million). If the deficit continues at the same pace, the cumulative cost of the program is at risk of being over budget to the excess tune of \$1 billion by 2039. While the measure was approved by voters under the assumption the new tax increase would fully fund the new spending, more dollars from the state budget are needed to fill the gap.

The Issue: "Healthy School Meals for all Public School Students"

As lawmakers contend with the state budget, the battle over funding priorities is intensifying. At the top of the list is the "Healthy School Meals for all Public School Students" program. As it stands currently, the program is significantly over budget and will require up to \$50 million to fill the funding gap according to the Colorado Department of Education. In 2022, CSI issued 2022 Colorado State Ballot Proposition FF: "Healthy School Meals for All Public School Students". The study foreshadowed the potential budget shortfall. Voters and lawmakers will now face the choice between raising taxes or funding the program from the general fund at the expense of other priorities such as education, transportation, mental health and housing.

About the "Healthy School Meals for all Public School Students"

In 2022 state lawmakers referred Proposition FF to the ballot and voters passed the proposed measure termed "Healthy School Meals for all Public School Students." The measure proposed to provide free meals to all K–12 students within participating districts.[ii] It also increased wages for school food preparation workers and subsidized the use of Colorado-grown and produced food.

How is "Healthy School Meals for all Public School Students" funded?

To fund the program, the law imposes an income tax increase on Coloradans earning more than \$300,000 a year. The tax was estimated to generate up to \$105.9 million in the first year of the program, \$104.3M in 2024-25, and \$107.5M for 2025-26 under current projections; however, the program is currently underfunded by \$24M in 2023-24 and estimated to be underfunded by \$50M in 2024-25.[iii] Both the Legislative Council Staff and the Office of State Planning and Budgeting are projecting less revenue from the measure than was originally anticipated.[iv] In the 2022 study, CSI estimated the program could be underfunded by -\$1.8 to \$4.2 million in the first year and could grow to a \$50 million deficit by 2030 and a \$72.4 million deficit by 2033 and upwards of \$500 million by 2050 [v]. The program is expected to reach CSI's budget deficit projection 5 years early.

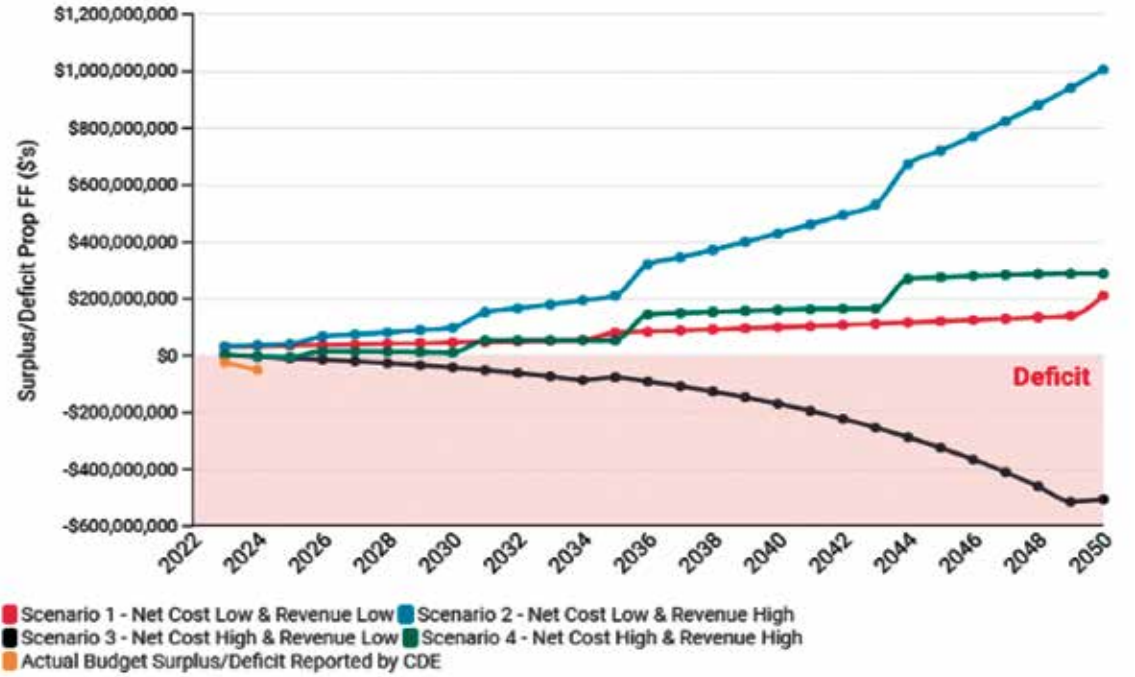
How Much Will the Program Cost? And is it Sustainable?

The fiscal note developed by the State estimated the cost to be between \$71.4 million and \$101.4 million in the first year of full implementation. However, the rate of school participation and the amount of additional federal funding sought under federal programs would impact the overall cost to implement. CSI estimated the range of projected cost and the range of revenue collected for the program. Assumptions for costs and revenue are detailed in the appendix. By 2050, revenues are estimated to be between \$450 million and \$1.24 billion. Costs range between \$239 million and \$956 million. CSI analyzed the budget using the baseline revenue and cost estimates from the proposition in 2023 to calculate net revenue. The four scenarios are based on high and low assumptions of future costs of the program and revenue generated by the new tax using these assumptions:

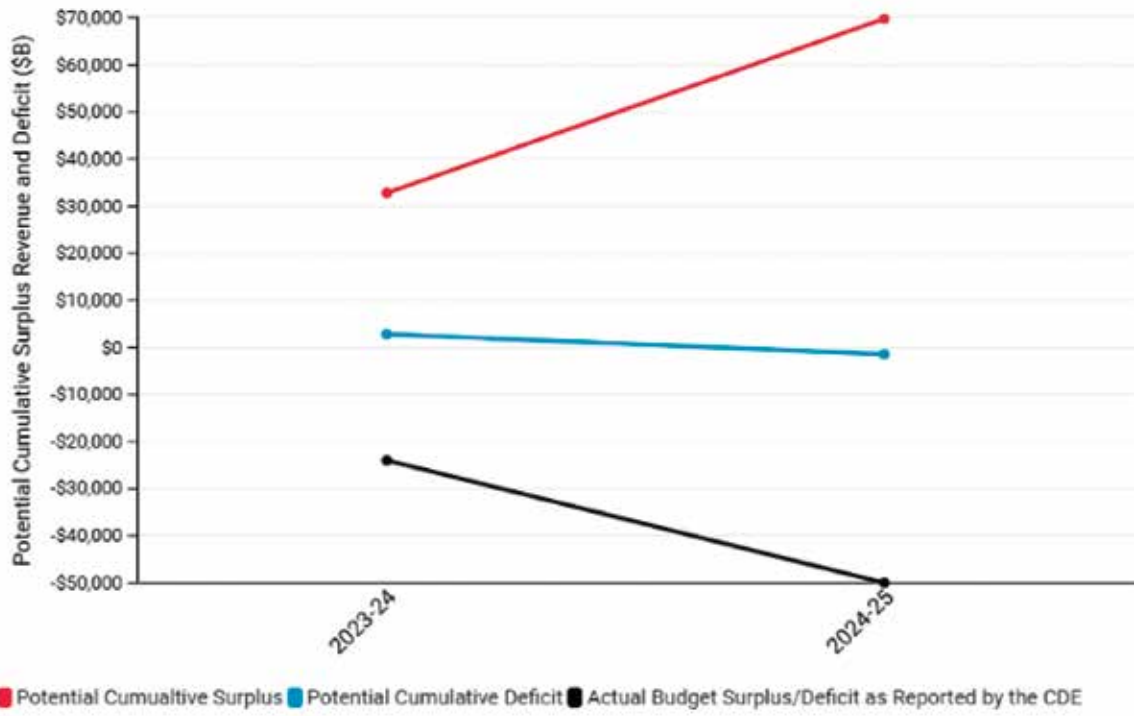
- Scenario 1 – Net Cost Low & Revenue Low
- Scenario 2 – Net Cost Low & Revenue High
- Scenario 3 – Net Cost High & Revenue Low
- Scenario 4 – Net Cost High & Revenue High

Under the assumptions for scenarios 1 and 2, where costs are low, the program is solvent from the first year going forward. However, under scenarios 1 and 2, and scenario 4, where revenues are high, very large surpluses develop, ranging from \$211.3 million to \$1.0 billion. These surpluses can be transferred to the general fund and used for other programs complet[ly] unrelated to the universal free lunch program. In effect, the tax is a combination non-discretionary tax and a discretionary tax.* The program was forecast to be surplus in year one under all scenarios, however, in the second year, 2024, the program is in deficit in scenarios 3 and 4, where the costs are high. Scenario 3 remains in deficit after 2023 over the entire modelling

Budget Projection 2023 -2050 for Colorado's Healthy School Meals for All Program



Healthy Meals for All Program - Actual vs. Potential Cumulative Surplus Revenues and Deficits



period despite increasing revenue, and in 2050 has increased to -\$506 million. Scenario 4 has a deficit in years two and three and then goes into surplus as more taxpayers are in breach [of] the \$300,000 threshold making them subject to the tax.

CSI Offered these Considerations:

- If costs are not carefully managed and revenues fall short of projections, the program could run a deficit as early as 2024 (between -\$1.8 million and -\$4.2 million), grow to \$72.4 million in 2033, and deficit could grow as high as -\$506 million by 2050. CSI fore-saw this outcome in their initial study, prior to allocating more money to the program, a further analysis of it viability going forward needs to be performed.
- According to the USDA's "School Nutrition and Meal Cost Study," the average school meal program operates at a slight deficit. The study also found that the reported cost of offering school meals generally exceeds the federal reimbursements allotted for those meals.[vi]
- The inflation rate on food rose 10.4% earlier this year as compared to 2021. Should inflation rates continue to rise, the cost to

sustain the free lunch program will escalate beyond current projections.

- **Lack of oversight-** Nationally, according to the Office of Management and Budget, the National School Lunch Program lost nearly \$800 million owing to improper payments in fiscal year 2018, while the School Breakfast Program lost \$300 million. The Office of Management and Budget call these programs 'high-priority' programs because of the misspending. The state will need to ensure accountable and transparent reporting is maintained for such a large program.
- **Wasted food-** According to one PMC study, an estimated \$1.2 billion worth of school food is wasted each year. Skeptics of free meals for all school-children fear that waste will only continue to rise if universally free school meals are an option.[vii]
- **High costs-** School-made meals generally cost more to prepare than parent-provided meals. If parents who previously prepared their kids' meals opted into the program, the cost per meal borne by the taxpayer would be greater than the money saved by the parent. Because the law will raise wages for school

lunch workers and incentivize local sourcing of products, regardless of cost implications, the cost of free school meals will be even higher relative to parent-provided meals than in the past.

Despite the benefits for low- and middle-income families, the Healthy Meals for All program encourages inefficiency. On average, due to administrative costs, employee wages, and ingredient costs, school meals are more expensive than home-packed meals. The Program will drive this price disparity wider by requiring food authorities to purchase more expensive ingredients and increasing overhead costs by raising operating expenses, wages and state government employment.

To download this information in a PDF, which includes references, go to <https://www.CommonSenseInstituteUS.org/colorado/research/education/colorados-healthy-meals-for-all-proves-unhealthy-for-the-state-budget>

Editor's Note/llv: * If the 2025 Ballot issues MM and LL pass, **Taxpayer's Bill of Rights (TABOR)** refunds will be further altered. Additionally, Passed Legislation has already redirected funds to pay for deficit issues.



Colorado State News

Colorado Rejects GOP's pick for House Seat, Cites State Law

Colorado Gets 'B+' on Open Enrollment Laws for K-12 Public School System

by Derek Draplin,
The Center Square contributor

A Republican vacancy committee's nomination to fill the seat for Colorado House District 14 has been rejected after the Colorado Secretary of State (SoS) found the committee didn't comply with state law.

The committee's pick came after Republican House Minority Leader Rose Pugliese, who represented Colorado Springs in El Paso County, resigned September 15th.

The vacancy committee, which involved El Paso County Republicans, notified its members the day Pugliese resigned, then met to select a nomination on September 22nd.

According to the Colorado Secretary of State's Office, that timeline violated state law, which requires a vacancy committee to mail out a notice of meeting a minimum of 10 days prior.

"Because this nominating process did not follow timelines established in statute, the paper work has been deemed insufficient," the office said Monday. "The pertinent vacancy committee may resubmit nominating paperwork after following the proper

procedures laid out in Colorado law."

Ken Davis, chairman of the El Paso County Republicans, Wednesday told *The Center Square*, "We intend to adhere to the SOS's decision and will hold a new election on 10/11/25."

The vacancy committee's nominee, Ava Flanell, a Second Amendment advocate and talk radio host, said in a post on social media: "Unfortunately, we celebrated too soon ..."

"This is disappointing, but mistakes happen," she said. "I'm ready to go through the vacancy process again and continue to present my vision of a Republican Party that bands together to fight the left, rather than each other."

"To the vacancy committee members: I would be honored to have your support," she added. "I know there are things you would rather do instead of attend a vacancy committee meeting, let alone for the second time. I will strive to be a representative who makes you proud to have taken the time to participate."

Please see: https://www.thecentersquare.com/colorado/article_e9975608-360a-447f-9b95-bf0c8b94566e.html

by Elyse Apel,
The Center Square

A new report gave Colorado a "B+" rating on open enrollment laws, which allows K-12 students to transfer to a different public school than the one they are assigned to.

The report from Reason Foundation, a libertarian think tank, evaluates open enrollment laws in all 50 states across seven categories.

Colorado got a zero in three of the categories, but still received a score of 87/100 overall. That meant it was ranked eighth nationally.

The Center Square spoke with the report's author, Jude Schwalbach, in an exclusive interview. Schwalbach said the state is in a great position nationally.

"While the state could make its open enrollment policy more transparent at the state- and district-levels, it's an impressive example of a strong program," Schwalbach said. "For example, during the 2023-24 school year, one in four students on average used open enrollment to attend a public school other than their assigned one."

Under open enrollment laws, K-12 students are allowed to transfer to public schools other than their residentially assigned schools, if seats are available.

The report found that, in 2024, only 16 states had "strong" open enrollment laws. That means that about 39.4 million K-12 public school students, or 80%, reside in states with "weak or ineffective" open enrollment laws.

Schwalbach said students benefit from more accessible open enrollment options.

"Open enrollment is a common form of school choice with more than 1.6 million students using it according to data from 19 states," Schwalbach said. "Many students use these programs to access better schools or specialized courses, such as Advanced Placement (AP) classes, shorten their commutes, access smaller class sizes or attend schools that are a better fit."

With a score of 87, that means Colorado received all the points available (60) in the statewide cross-district open enrollment category.

To round out its score, it also received all 15 points available for statewide within-district open enrollment policy.

Between those two policies, that means school choice is available to most students in Colorado. Colorado was one of just a few states to receive such a good score.

"As of 2025, only 13 states received A or B grades per

Reason Foundation's scoresheet," Schwalbach explained. "Reason Foundation's open enrollment best practices offer a roadmap to states so they can improve their policies so more students can attend public schools that are the right fit."

Colorado also received full credit for not charging transfer tuition, meaning transferring is free to students. It received only partial credit, two out of four points, for transparency.

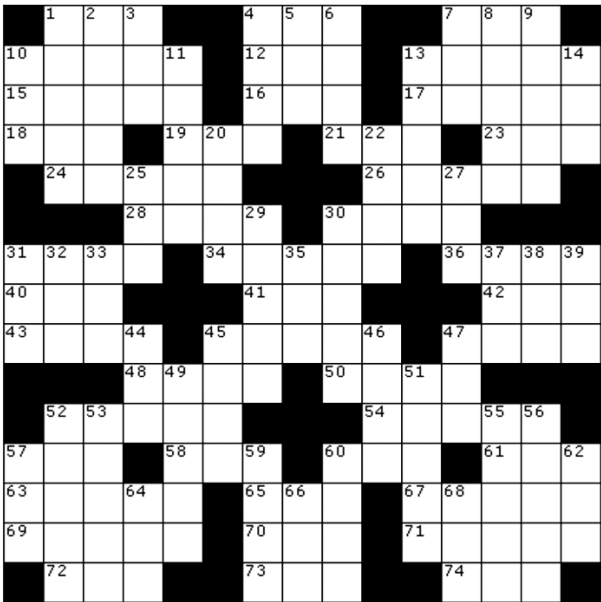
In the three other categories — which include aspects of open enrollment like discrimination based on disabilities and allowing an appeals process— Colorado scored zeros.

Throughout the nation, the report found that more than 1.6 million students are utilizing open enrollment. In Colorado, those students made up 20% of all publicly-funded K-12 students.

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_74534991-f339-4526-a022-d3fd122394b6.html

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



- ACROSS
- 1 Parody

4 Every

7 Tree

10 Straightforward

12 Toilet

13 Life and ____

15 Musical "slow"

16 I want my ____

17 Swell

18 Spanish "one"

19 American Cancer Society (abbr.)

21 Self-esteem

23 Judge

24 ____ Saxon
- 26 Beginning

28 A Gospel

30 Blessed are the ____

31 You are the ____ of the earth

34 Fisherman disciple

36 Object of false worship

40 Miner's goal

41 Rodent

42 Baboon

43 Alter

45 Heavenly being

47 Do ____ others

48 Transgressions

50 Crack

- 52 Divine water

54 Statement of beliefs

57 Dress edge

58 Veneration

60 Executive director

61 ____ Lanka

63 One-celled animal

65 Expression of surprise

67 Access (2 wds.)

69 Reasoning

70 Transgression

71 Soups

72 Bother

73 Government agency

74 Sign language

- DOWN
- 1 Stadium

2 Authoritative list of scripture

3 Trinitrotoluene

4 Charity

5 Large number

6 ____ your neighbor

7 Cause of sickness

8 Struck (KJV)

9 Biblical seat of emotions

10 Winter malady

11 Kangaroo bear

13 Cut of beef

14 Pigpen

20 Corporation (abbr.)
- 22 Movie ____

25 Greenwich Time

27 Slide on snow

29 Soft drink brand

30 Measure

31 Distress call

32 Noah's ____

33 Downwind

35 Children's game

37 Tribe of Israel

38 Choose

39 Sign of the zodiac

44 Compass point

45 Afresh

46 Plague of Egypt

47 North American Indian

49 Son of Abraham

51 Plague of Egypt

52 Evil angel

53 Last letter of Greek alphabet

55 Painter Richard

56 Texan accent

57 Movie 2001's talking computer

59 Relive

60 Jesus turned water into wine here

62 ____ A Small World...

64 Macro

66 Leg ending

68 Airport abbr.

Key on page 20

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“All That Is Necessary for the Triumph of Evil Is That Good Men Do Nothing”— Edmund Burke

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.

When God Seems to be Absent

Deuteronomy 31:1-30, *Vayeilekh* (“He Went”), is the shortest portion in the Torah—just 30 verses—yet it’s packed with meaning. Moses, now 120 years old, tells Israel that his journey is ending. He will not cross the Jordan River, but God Himself will go before them. His message is simple but powerful: “Be strong and courageous. The Lord will not fail you or abandon you.” Before the nation, Moses commissions Joshua to lead them into the Promised Land, a foreshadowing of Messiah guiding us into God’s promises. He then entrusts the Torah to the priests to read publicly every seven years during Sukkot, ensuring future generations remember the covenant and walk in God’s ways.

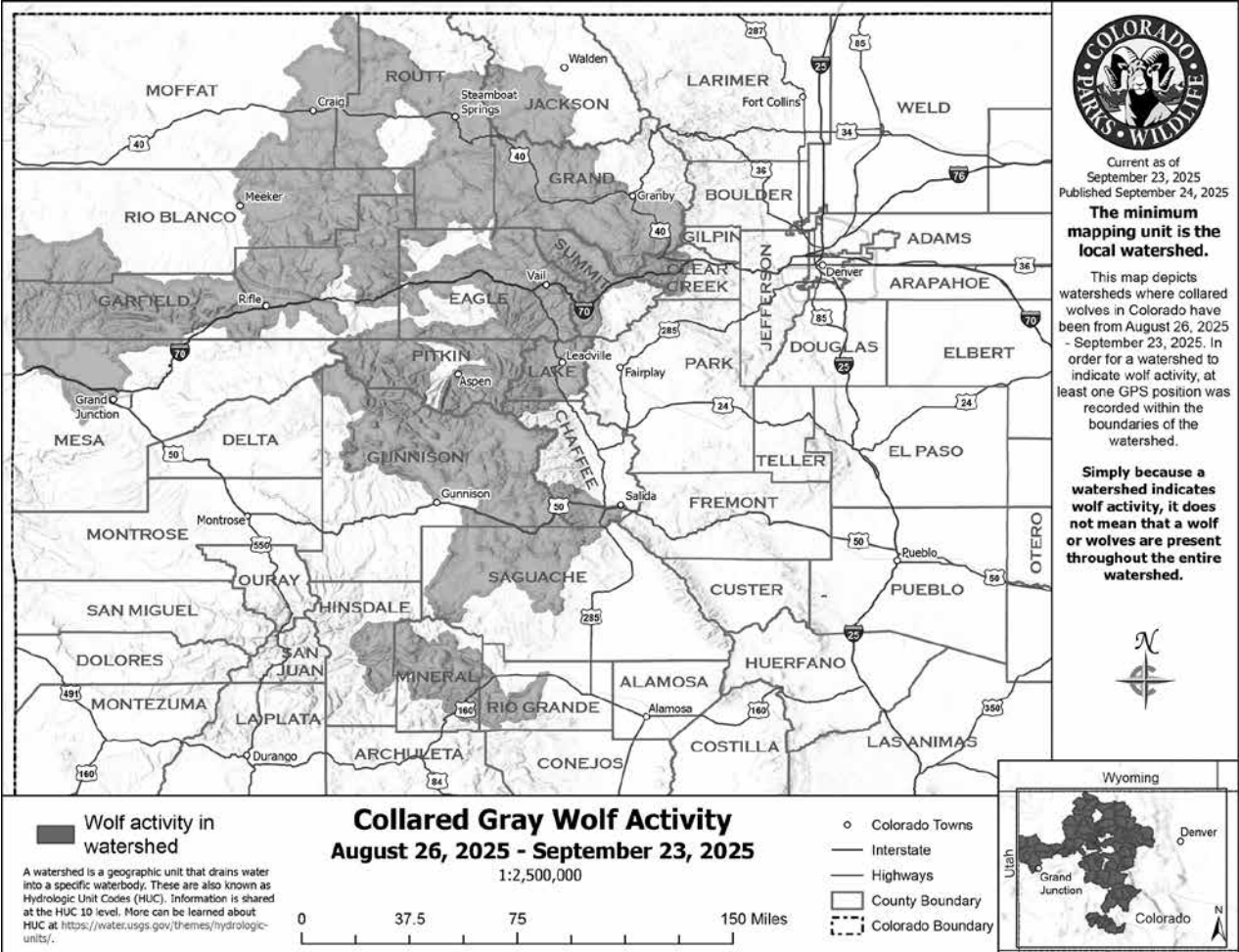
God then gives Moses a sobering prophecy: after his death, the people will turn to foreign gods and break their covenant, triggering divine judgment. “I will abandon them and hide My face,” God says, warning that calamities will follow their rebellion (Deuteronomy 31:17). This “hiding face,” or *hester panim*, describes a time when God’s presence seems absent, not because He is gone, but because sin blinds people to His hand. The Book of Esther shows this beautifully: God’s name is never mentioned, yet His providence orchestrates Israel’s deliverance. Idolatry leads to exile and silence, but confession (*vidui*) and repentance (*teshuvah*) restore fellowship. Esther and Mordechai’s three-day fast illustrates how earnest seeking breaks through divine silence.

The sages teach that when God hides, it’s not rejection, it’s an invitation. His absence stirs the soul to search for Him. David understood this when he wrote, “When You said, ‘Seek My face,’ my heart said, ‘Your face, Lord, I will seek’” (Psalm 27:8). That’s why *Vayeilekh* is read before Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. These High Holy Days are about returning—about turning from idols, distractions, and self-reliance back to the God who never left us. Divine hiddenness is not divine indifference. It’s a Father calling His children home. Even when heaven feels silent, He is closer than we realize, waiting for repentance to reopen the door to blessing and guidance.

And when we do return, God’s heart is overflowing with mercy. Yeshua’s (Jesus) parable of the prodigal son captures it perfectly: the father doesn’t scold or punish but runs to embrace his wayward child. “Let’s feast and celebrate! For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found” (Luke 15:23). God’s “hidden face” is never the end of the story. It’s a call to seek, to turn, and to be restored. May we refuse to drift into spiritual complacency. Whatever challenges or failures weigh us down, may we respond by seeking His face daily—because when we do, we discover that He has been watching, waiting, and welcoming us all along. As in Jeremiah 29:13, “You will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.”

Bill Wilson
Dailyjot.com Printed with permissions

Colorado Wolf Reintroduction Effort: An Update



by Laura Vass

Wolf Tracking and Wolf Count

Near the end of September, Colorado Parks and Wildlife reported that twenty-one collared wolves currently roam Colorado, and at least 10 pups were born this summer to the state’s four wolf packs. The map shows wolves as far north as the Wyoming border, north of Craig, west near the Utah border, and south to Wolf Creek Pass, near South Fork.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife is still making plans to release up to 15 more wolves this winter to continue the state’s voter-mandated wolf reintroduction program, which began releasing animals captured outside the state in late 2023.

How the effort will be paid for and where the wolves will be obtained has not been announced. During an August special session convened to deal with a billion-plus dollar revenue shortfall, the Colorado Legislature rejected a proposal to pause the state’s wolf reintroduction program. At the same time, the legislature agreed to redirect \$264,268 from the state’s general fund, which was initially earmarked for the wolf reintroduction program, to pay for subsidizing the state’s health coverage costs.

Death or Removal

According to Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has confirmed that the investigation into the cause of death of male gray wolf #2507 has been completed. The investigation has determined that wolf #2507 died from blunt force



One of three pups born to 2025’s released pack.
Courtesy Photo Colorado Parks and Wildlife

trauma sustained during a suspected vehicle collision.

A few days earlier, CPW published its final report on lethal removal efforts in Rio Blanco County. The report mentioned delays due to the Elk Fire near the search area and did not report elimination of a wolf. The report includes information regarding DNA analysis that was conducted on samples gathered from the uncollared gray wolf in Rio Blanco County, which confirmed the uncollared wolf was the fifth yearling from the Copper Creek pack. It announced only a conclusion of the active removal period to address chronic depredation in Rio Blanco County, stating that there have not been any depredation reports since then.

In a July CPW report, five wolf mortalities were noted. (That would include the June highway death.) Two of these mortalities took place in Wyoming. During the same time period, 10 pups had been confirmed born to the introduced wolves.

Depredation

Depredation reports for CPW’s Wolf Biological Year April 2025 - March 2026 so far include 7 calves, 4 yearling calves, 2 cows, 1 ewe and 5 lambs. Claims on those can be submitted up to December 31st. Counties where the reports originate are Grand, Gunnison, Jackson, Pitkin, Rio Blanco and Routt. It’s noteworthy that last year, the payouts far exceeded the dollars allotted for depredation compensation.

*by Megan Brock,
The Daily Caller News Foundation*

THE DAILY CALLER
NEWS FOUNDATION

A May 2022 email obtained through the lawsuit accused Rosenthal and his gender

Rosenthal explained to Deutsch in a November 2022 email that giving adolescents over age 14 puberty blockers as a monother-

The PICO process is a framework used in healthcare to formulate evidence-based research questions.

Please see: <https://dailycallernewsfoundation.org/2025/10/03/exclusive-docs-knew-gender-science-was-shoddy-but-pushed-chemical-sex-changes-on-kids-anyway/>

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before the ad is to appear in the paper.
Deadline for all other submissions is noon on Monday,
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1776

The Second Amendment Corner

Liberty's Line in the Sand

2025



"Blessed be the LORD my Rock, Who trains my hands for war, And my fingers for battle—"A Psalm of David, Psalm 144:1

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9am-1pm: Steel Challenge
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Saturday, Oct. 18, 7:45-4pm: Ladies CCW
Friday, Oct. 24, 10am-12pm: Firearm Identifying & Clearing Class for Professionals
Saturday, Oct 25, 11am-12pm: Vehicle Preparedness
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Judge Knocks Down ATF's "Engaged in the Business" Rule

by John Crump,
AmmoLand.com

In a significant victory for gun rights advocates, a federal judge in Alabama has ruled that portions of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives' (ATF) 2024 Final Rule on firearm dealing exceed the agency's statutory authority. The decision, handed down [a week ago], could reshape how hobbyists and collectors navigate federal regulations on buying and selling guns, potentially easing fears of unlicensed prosecution for casual transactions.

The case, *Butler v. Bondi*, was decided by U.S. District Judge Corey L. Maze in the Northern District of Alabama's Eastern Division on September 30, 2025. Plaintiffs—including individual gun enthusiasts Don Butler and David Glidewell, along with the National Rifle Association (NRA)—challenged the rule's broad interpretation of what it means to be "engaged in the business" of dealing firearms under the Gun Control Act (GCA).

The ATF's Final Rule, effective April 19, 2024, aimed to clarify and expand the definition of unlicensed firearm dealing. According to then-President Joe Biden, the change was over rising concerns over gun trafficking, although many saw those reasons as just an excuse. The ATF stated that their reasoning was rooted in the GCA and amendments such as the Firearms Owners' Protection Act (FOPA) of 1986 and John Cornyn's Bipartisan Safer Communities Act of 2022 (BSCA). The rule sought to require federal licenses for anyone "engaged in the business" of selling guns, even if not for primary profit.

Critics, including the plaintiffs, argued the rule criminalized innocent activities. Butler and Glidewell, for instance, described themselves as hobbyists who occasionally buy, sell, or trade firearms to build personal collections. The men feared a single sale could land them in legal jeopardy for selling a gun without a license. The NRA joined to defend its members' rights. Defendants included Florida Attorney General Pamela Bondi and ATF Director Daniel Driscoll.

The suit, filed in July 2024, raised multiple claims: statutory overreach

(Count 1), arbitrary and capricious rule-making (Count 2), vagueness in violation of the Fifth Amendment (Count 3), Second Amendment violations (Count 4), and separation of powers issues (Count 5). Cross-motions for summary judgment followed, unfolding against the backdrop of the 2024 presidential election. Following Donald Trump's inauguration, a review of the rule began, but it remained in force.

Judge Maze granted summary judgment to the plaintiffs on Count 1, declaring several provisions of the Final Rule unlawful under the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) for exceeding the ATF's authority. He denied the defendants' motion on that count and deferred the remaining claims without prejudice, invoking the constitutional avoidance doctrine to sidestep thornier Second and Fifth Amendment questions for now.

Central to the decision was the rule's elimination of a minimum transaction threshold for licensing. Maze emphasized that Congress intended "engaged in the business" to mean a "regular course of trade or business" involving "repetitive purchase and resale," not isolated sales. "Regular means repeated or often. So regular business requires more than one firearm transaction involving a single firearm," the judge wrote, drawing on statutory text analysis from *Garland v. Cargill*.

The court also struck down the rule's redefinition of "predominantly earn a profit," which dispensed with the need to prove actual profit motives for non-criminal dealers. Maze applied the negative implication canon, noting that Congress's carveout for criminal or terrorism-related dealings implied that proof of profit is essential otherwise. "By not requiring proof of profit for those who deal firearms for criminal purposes or terrorism, Congress implied that proof of profit is required for everyone else," he reasoned.

Further, the judge invalidated the exclusion of "personal protection" firearms from the safe harbor for personal collections, arguing it contradicted congressional intent to shield hobbyists. "If Congress meant not to burden the collection of guns for personal protection, then ATF's

interpretation...makes little sense," Maze stated, referencing *NRA v. Brady*.

Rebuttable presumptions, such as those triggering licensing for a single sale if paired with resale intent or informal promotion, likewise fell, as they amplified the rule's overreach. On standing, Maze confirmed the plaintiffs' credible threat of enforcement, given the rule's breadth, and extended associational standing to the NRA.

While celebrating the statutory win, the court declined to address the constitutional counts. Citing precedents like *Ashwander v. TVA*, and *Spector Motor Serv., Inc. v. McLaughlin*, Maze applied constitutional avoidance: "The Court will not pass upon a constitutional question although properly presented by the record, if there is also present some other ground upon which the case may be disposed of." He noted that the existing statutory injunction already provides meaningful relief, though plaintiffs seek broader declaratory judgments.

A separate order will permanently enjoin enforcement of the invalidated provisions against the plaintiffs. Maze scheduled a status conference for October 14, 2025, to chart the path forward on the deferred counts.

This ruling arrives at a pivotal moment, with the incoming Trump administration signaling a regulatory rollback. Parallel litigation in other districts could lead to circuit splits, potentially hastening Supreme Court review. For everyday gun owners, the decision offers immediate reassurance. Casual sales within personal collections appear safe from federal licensing mandates, at least in this jurisdiction.

Mr. Crump is an NRA instructor and a constitutional activist. John has written about firearms, interviewed people from all walks of life, and on the Constitution. John lives in Northern Virginia with his wife and sons, follow him on X at @crumpyss, or at www.crumpy.com.

Please see: <https://www.ammoland.com/2025/10/judge-knocks-down-atfs-engaged-in-the-business-rule/>

"If you have ten thousand regulations, you destroy all respect for the law." —Winston Churchill

5th Circuit Rules Post Office Gun Ban Unconstitutional

by Dean Weingarten,
Ammoland.com

Judge Reed O'Connor, a Chief United States District Judge in the Fifth Circuit, has determined the ban on possession and carry of arms in common use in Post Offices and on property owned by the postal service is an infringement on the rights protected by the Second Amendment.

From the decision:

The Court determines that both 18 U.S.C. § 930(a) and 39 C.F.R. § 232.1(1) are inconsistent with the principles that underpin this Nation's regulatory tradition. Thus, they are unconstitutional as-applied to carrying firearms inside an ordinary post office or on post office property.

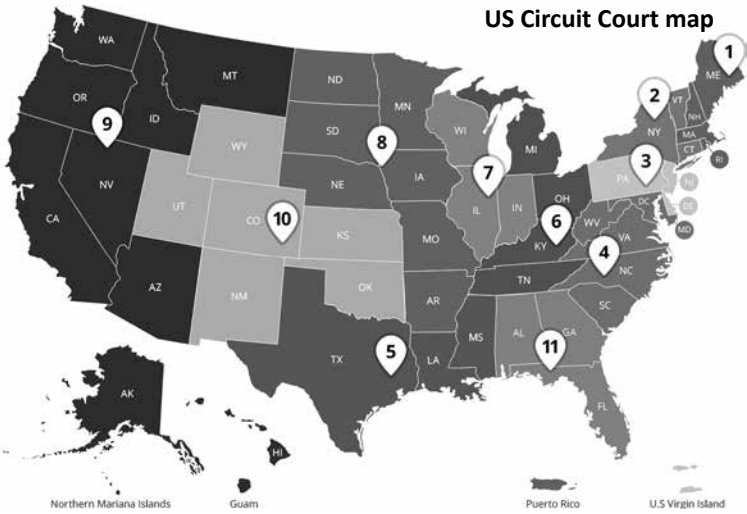
The decision was published on September 30, 2025, in the United States District Court for the Northern District of Texas, Fort Worth Division. The case is *Firearms Policy Coalition Inc, et al., v. Pamela Bondi*. The Second Amendment Foundation and two Texas citizens, Gavin Pate and George Mandry, were also

parties to the lawsuit against the Federal government as represented by Pamela Bondi, United States Attorney General (AG). The original lawsuit was brought against Merrick Garland when he was AG on June 18, 2024.

Both the regulatory ban on firearms or other weapons in Post Offices and the Statutory ban on weapons in federal government buildings are relatively recent. The first prohibition on firearms in government buildings occurred in 1964. The regulatory ban on weapons in Post Offices was put in place in 1972.

Judge O'Connor handed down a summary judgment, which is appropriate when the facts of the case are not disputed. The only dispute in this case is about the law. Because the plaintiffs did not specify whether the case was a facial challenge or an "as applied" challenge, Judge O'Connor decided to treat it as an "as applied" challenge. The remedy only applies to the plaintiffs carrying ordinary firearms in an ordinary post office.

The judgment is limited to



Plaintiffs carrying firearms inside of an ordinary post office or the surrounding post office property, with the exception of post offices inside of restricted areas. Examples of such restricted areas include military bases or post offices located in federal buildings, which otherwise prohibit the carry of firearms. It appears that the Plaintiffs will be able to carry firearms in most post offices in the USA. Plaintiffs include all members of the Second Amendment Foundation and the Firearms Coalition, as well as the two individual Plaintiffs.

The judgement applies to both 39 C.F.R. § 232.1(1) and 18 U.S.C. § 930(a). (39 C.F.R. is a post office regulation. 18 U.S.C. § 930(a) is a United States statute.)

This case only applies in the Fifth Circuit of the United States. The Fifth Circuit includes Texas, Louisiana and Mississippi. It is unknown if the USA will appeal the Fifth Circuit decision on the carry and possession of firearms in Post Offices.

In recent developments, the U.S. Department of Justice has

refused to appeal a criminal case in Florida, challenging the ban on carrying firearms in Post Offices. Florida is in the Eleventh Circuit.

The Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit upheld the ban on firearms in Post Offices in 2015 in *Bonidy v. USPS*. The *Bonidy* case was decided 2-1 in 2015. The *Bonidy* decision happened before the Supreme Court admonished the inferior courts on how they treated Second Amendment jurisprudence, with the *Bruen* decision in 2022.

It is likely the Supreme Court will strike down the ban on firearms in Post Offices when it hears a case on the subject. There is no historical tradition of such a ban when the Bill of Rights was ratified in 1791 or during the period when the 14th Amendment was ratified on July 9, 1868. The Supreme Court has limited resources. A challenge to the ban on firearms in Post Offices may not reach the Supreme Court for several years.

Please see: <https://www.ammoland.com/2025/10/federal-judge-rules-post-office-gun-ban-unconstitutional/>



Gun History with Ian McCollum

A Modern Integrally Suppressed Pistol for Everyone: The SilencerCo Maxim 9

by Ian McCollum,
forgottenweapons.com

SilencerCo announced the Maxim-9 pistol in late 2015. Having gone through some huge growth of the past few years, the company wanted to expand its capabilities and thought that the time was right for a modern integrally suppressed pistol. It was a unique new design of modern semiautomatic pistol build from the ground up to be integrally suppressed.

The action is a proprietary delayed blowback system with all of the moving parts in the back half of the slide. This leaves the front of the gun dedicated entirely to suppressor volume.

The guns were released at SHOT Show 2017, and were relatively slow sellers, because of the high price and the required NFA registration. The expected passage of the Hearing Protection Act around that time would have been a huge boon for sales but did not ultimately happen. Still, production continued

until tapering off in early 2021 as SilencerCo shifted priority to regular suppressor manufacture in the face of a boom in demand.

The project may not have been a massive success for SilencerCo, but it was still a worthy endeavor that they do not regret. It helped mature the company, forcing them to embrace new proficiency in things like GD&T and advanced quality control machinery. And the pistol is, in fact, very cool.



To watch the video with more info, see: <https://www.forgottenweapons.com/a-modern-zintegrally-suppressed-pistol-for-everyone-the-silencerco-maxim-9/>
SilencerCo Maxim 9
Photo via Manufacturer

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Obituary

Patricia Ann “Pat” Zweygardt

Patricia Ann “Pat” Zweygardt (née Reiling), age 69, passed away on August 9, 2025, in Cañon City, Colorado. Her passing marks the loss of a vibrant and generous spirit whose warmth and adventurous nature touched many lives.

Born on April 12, 1956, in Lead, South Dakota, Pat was the daughter of Lester and Millicent Reiling. She grew up surrounded by a large and loving family that helped shape her into the big-hearted and spirited woman she became.

Throughout her life, Pat embraced every opportunity to live fully. She earned her Bachelor’s degree from Regis University while raising her three children and worked in sales and information technology. She had a passion for cooking, sewing, and gardening. Her adventurous side shone brightly as well; she especially loved riding motorcycles, an activity that brought her freedom and exhilaration.

Pat’s generous heart earned her many friends over the years. She was known for making people feel welcome and valued wherever she went. Her home was often filled with laughter and conversation.

She is lovingly remembered by her husband, Johnnie Zweygardt; her children Jason Carr, Peter Carr, Leslie (Keith) Proctor; and her siblings Bill Reiling, June



Reiling, Judy (Clark) Fleege, Mary (Mike) McKettrick, and Bob Reiling. Pat also leaves behind numerous grandchildren, nieces, nephews, other family members and friends who brought immense joy to her life.

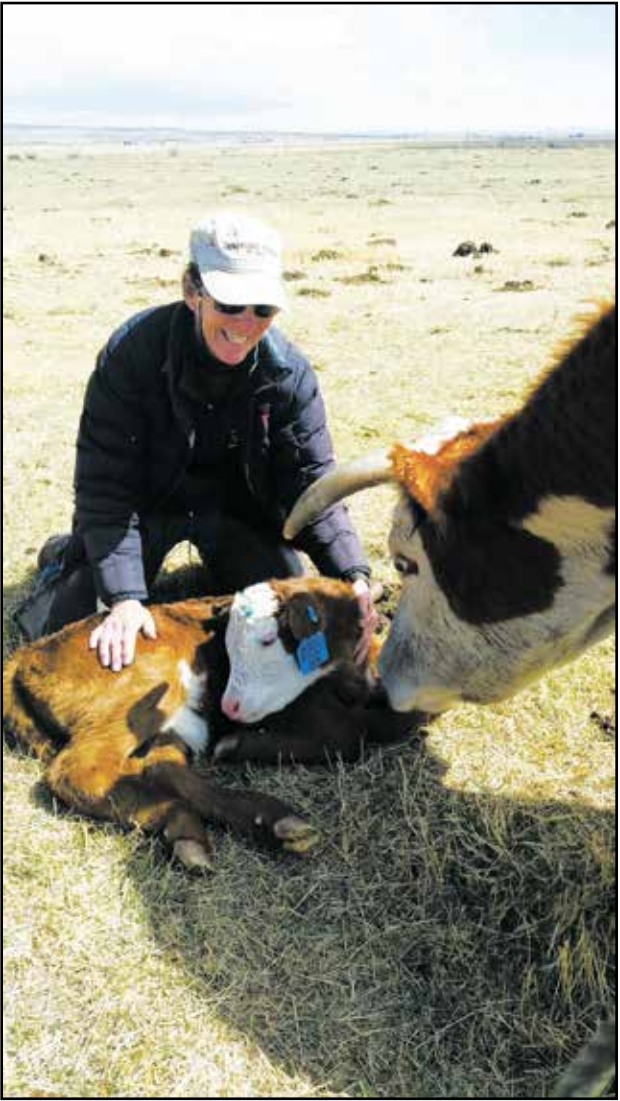
She was preceded in death by her parents and her sister Debbie.

May Patricia’s memory bring comfort to all who knew and loved her. A Memorial Gathering will be held on October 18, 2025, at 3 p.m. at Pat and Johnnie’s home at 1051 Indiana Avenue, Cañon City. All are welcome.

CW of the YEAR from page 1

Most recently, Sara helped launch the Colorado CattleWomen’s Beef Ambassadors Program, which teaches youth vital communication and advocacy skills to promote the beef industry. She and fellow advocate Sudzy Benesch led the program’s inaugural workshop at the Colorado CattleWomen and Colorado Cattlemen’s Association joint convention in Steamboat Springs.

Beyond her work in the beef industry, Sara also serves her community as a pastor’s wife and continues her family’s conservation legacy. In 2003, the Shields family placed the San Isabel Ranch in a conservation easement, ensuring the preservation of Colorado’s natural resources and working landscapes for generations to come. Sara continues this stewardship today as a board member of the Colorado Cattlemen’s Agricultural Land Trust. The Custer County CattleWomen extend heart-felt congratulations to Sara Shields for her exceptional leadership, advocacy, and life-long commitment to Colorado agriculture. We are beyond proud to have her in our “herd”.



Sara Shields

Photos courtesy of Custer County CattleWomen

Sara has spent her life caring for this valley, its people and animals. She also served as the interim Custer County Extension Agent in 2017. Sara is loved by both young and old. Sara Shields sets the finest example in both agriculture and in loving kindness toward others. The *Sentinel* staff congratulates Sara on this recognition.

The LORD will command the blessing on you in your barns and in all that you undertake.
And he will bless you in the land that the LORD your God is giving you. Deuteronomy 28-8 ESV

St. Patrick’s Anglican Church, Westcliffe

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St. Patrick’s in Westcliffe is an Anglican Church. This just means the Church as it was planted, bloomed and grew on the British Isles and spread all over the world where English has been spoken.

Out of the mist-covered, mysterious islands on the far reaches of the Roman Empire’s periphery, a beautiful, true and good expression of the Christian faith grew up so early in the history of the church, the disciple John had not yet written his vision in the Book of Revelation. In the shadow of druidic Stonehenge, the first Christian church in Great Britain was established in Glastonbury.

Britain’s rich language and spiritual understanding of everything from the stars to the stones, was chosen before the world began to express the love of God, to spark the Holy Spirit within the souls of the pagan peoples, and to proclaim the Kingdom of Heaven Jesus Christ ushered into the world by his teachings and his sacrifice of himself.

For more than two millennia the complex island produced great Christians: Arthur of misty myth and history, united the tribes against superstition and evil. Alfred the Great brought learning and law as he freed the island from the Viking invasions. Julian of Norwich, a woman who separated herself from the world, wrote beautifully about the sanctity and holiness of faith in Jesus Christ. C. S. Lewis, pipe smoking academic scarred by World War, wrote the Chronicles of Narnia to renew faith to a generation shaken by evil. Queen Elizabeth II kept her people from falling completely apart as atheism and Islam rocked her realm.

The century that the Bible was translated into English and published by William Tyndale, the English Christians put their best heads together and gave the world the Book of Common Prayer. Distilled from monastic Book of Hours, this book made it possible for regular Christian families to worship God in their churches and in their homes, while living in the world, getting married, having children, working. This made such a difference, that Thomas Sowell, in his 1998 book Conquest and Cultures noted how different geographic expansion was between English and all the other European colonizers. The English colonies left civilization in their wake, the others, exploitation, Sowell explained.

As America expanded across our continent, from 1789 through the early 20th century, what kept the brave families from losing their minds and their faith?

The Bible with the organizational help of the Book of Common Prayer guided them through all the good times and bad times.

From the teaching and the words of the Holy Bible, the Book of Common prayer had the words for marriage and for burial. It organized reading the Bible annually by the Church Year. When the people “back home” were

celebrating Christmas, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost, All Saints Eve, so were the families on the frontier. The Circuit Riding preachers came through as often as they could to bless marriages and baptize everyone. Civilization came across America this way.

Satan never gives up. Marx’s scientific materialism, Charles Dawin’s belief that we evolved from primeval slime instead of a divine spark, Freud’s belief that we are so messed up because we have put guardrails on sexuality, Nietzsche’s assertion that God is dead, and Margaret Sanger’s quiet assertion that some babies are too brown, too poor or just a waste of earth’s resources, all shook Christianity, changing language subtly to affect how we view our parents, our families, our roles in the world. The serpent is a wise and subtle demon. The godless philosophies of these thinkers kept trying to infiltrate the church. They erased important distinctions between men and women established by the Holy Bible. They made up differences that arbitrarily divided us, like the color of our skin or where our families originated. In some ways, especially radical feminism, Satan succeeded in changing our churches.

But God did not fall from his throne. Christ’s sacrifice on the cross still saves us. Where the new thinking of false science took hold, sin shook things up, but the prophets told us this would happen, did they not?

It takes those unchanging voices to keep the truth before Christians to this day. Sometimes, the way to move forward spiritually is to dive into the depths and rise to heights of past, rich, unworldly worship.

In a little brown converted garage, a little House of Prayer that God set up here in a series of “accidents” and opportunities became St. Patrick’s Anglican Church in Westcliffe.

St. Patrick’s name reminds us that one enslaved shepherd boy 300 some years after Christ’s victory over death, could change the world just by loving Christ and loving the people who enslaved him. Son of a Roman Brit who was kidnapped as a young teenager by Irish pirates, who was kept starved and frozen for more than six years, all Patrick had for comfort was the sliver of faith given him by his Christian family. In starvation and deprivation, he prayed and fasted. God delivered him. Saved him. Filled his heart with love instead of bitterness for his captors.

Patrick loved Christ and the people who enslaved him enough to convert an entire island to Christ. We admire that kind of thing.

We who live in the shadow of mountains named for the Blood of Christ are bound together in a real way. CHRIST AND HIS MIRACLES ARE REAL! Christ’s promises still change the world! Have faith! Join us to praise and worship Him in timelessness with great joy!

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Jesus said,

“Anyone who wants to be My disciple must follow Me, because My servants must be where I am. And the Father will honor anyone who serves Me.”

John 12:26 NLT

Come and Worship

Christian Science 9:30 a.m. Worship 8 Bassick Place, Westcliffe	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	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. (1st Friday of Month) Mass 109 S. 5th Street, Westcliffe 719/783-3507	Sangre de Cristo Cowboy Church Pastor: Mike Shields 10 a.m. Sunday School 11 a.m. Worship Last Sunday of Month: Potluck at Noon sangredecristocowboychurch.com also on Facebook 60260 Hwy 69, Westcliffe 719/232-5372
Church of Christ 9:30 a.m. Bible Study 10:30 a.m. Worship 818 Ohio Street, Silver Cliff 719/783-4601	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	Our Lady of Mt. Zion Catholic Church 11 a.m. Mass, 2nd & 3rd Sunday of month 210 S. 2nd St, Westcliffe 719/783-2491	Sangre de Cristo Fellowship 9 a.m. Meet & Greet 9:30 a.m. Service 120 Jerry Drive, Westcliffe 719/783-0903
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints 240 Ridgeline Dr, Westcliffe Pres: 719/214-4589	Huerfano Community Bible Church 10:30 a.m. Sunday Worship 7 p.m.: Thursday Bible Study 603 Leon Street, Walsenburg (719) 251-9053	Praise Community Church Sunday School 9:30 a.m. Praise & Worship 10:45 a.m. 215 N Pikes Peak Ave. , Florence 719/784-1184	Sangre de Cristo Seminary Chapel 10 a.m. Worship 6160 County Rd. 130, Westcliffe 719/ 371-1822
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	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	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	Valley Bible Fellowship 10 a.m. Worship 116 Hermit Lane, Silver Cliff 719/581-7572
Community United Methodist Church 10 a.m. Worship 202 S. 6th Street, Westcliffe 719/783-2511	Living Stone Calvary Chapel Saturday evenings: 5:30 p.m. Sunday Mornings: 9 a.m. & 11 a.m. 830 Bridge St., Canon City, CO Pastor Sean Meagher 719/276-0863	St. Patrick’s Anglican Church 11 a.m. Worship 403 S. 2nd S., Westcliffe 925/339-0175 or 719/783-2500	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
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		Sacred Heart Catholic Church Diocese of Pueblo Saturday Mass 4 p.m. Highway 69, Gardner Bldg. Mickey, 719/746-2037	Wetmore Community Church 9 a.m. Sunday School 10 a.m. Worship 699 County Rd. 395, Wetmore 719/784-0596
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Q&A on the Government Shutdown

from <https://usafacts.org>

What is a furlough?

A furlough is a mandatory temporary unpaid leave of absence for employees, typically due to a lack of funding. Non-essential federal employees are furloughed during government shutdowns until Congress approves funding to resume operations. Furloughed federal employees generally receive back pay when the shutdown ends.

Furlough vs. Reduction in Force (RIF)

A furlough is different from federal layoffs, officially called a “Reduction in Force” (RIF). The Office of Personnel Management sets the rules for how agencies must carry out force reduction. In this process, agencies determine which employees can remain in their current positions and whether others have rights to different positions. Agencies must follow four retention factors when making these decisions:

- An employee’s tenure (type of appointment)
- Veterans’ preference
- Length of service
- Performance ratings

What services are impacted by a government shutdown?

The specific agencies and services affected by a government shutdown depend on the details of the funding legislation in effect at the time of the shutdown.

Past shutdowns have affected numerous services and agencies, including:

- National parks and monuments
- Federal museums
- Federal research projects
- Processing of certain government benefits
- IRS taxpayer services

What services are not affected?

Many essential government services continue to operate during a shutdown, either because they are excepted from furloughs to ensure public safety and welfare or are funded outside of annual appropriations (such as mandatory spending programs or self-funded programs). These include:

- Social Security and Medicare benefits
- The military and federal law enforcement
- US Postal Service
- Air traffic control
- US Passport Agency

How does the government decide which departments and employees are essential?

Essential activities and personnel can continue certain functions if they are

1. Authorized by law (like Social Security payments)
2. Necessary to protect life or property (like law enforcement, medical care, air traffic control, SNAP benefits)

3. Necessary to facilitate an orderly shutdown of the government (like issuing furlough notices).

Frequently asked questions about government shutdowns

Are national parks & museums open during a shutdown?

Depending on available funding and staffing, national parks and museums may close or continue to operate but with limited services. National parks that remain open may have reduced or no visitor services. For updated information on specific park closures or limitations, visit the National Park Service (NPS) website.

Do VA payments continue during a government shutdown?

Government shutdowns don’t affect Veteran Affairs benefits such as compensation, pension, education, and housing. However, other VA services may be reduced, and offices may be closed. For more information, visit the VA’s shutdown contingency plan.

Are passports or travel affected by a shutdown?

Passport services are not expected to be affected by a government shutdown, although it depends on the length of the shutdown and the location of the passport office. Transportation Security Administration, Customs and Border Protection, and air traffic control workers are considered essential and would work without pay.

For updates on passport services, visit the Department of State’s US Passports News . For travel updates, visit the TSA website.

Are Social Security benefits paid during a shutdown?

Social Security benefits will continue to be paid during a government shutdown. In the Social Security Administration’s contingency plan, essential services, including processing benefit payments, continue. However, some administrative operations not critical to direct service may be delayed.

Does Medicare & Medicaid coverage continue during a shutdown?

Medicare and Medicaid coverage continues and reimbursements will still be processed. The Department of Health and Human Services says it will continue operations for mandatory healthcare program payments with a limited staff. For more information, visit the HHS contingency plan.

What happens to SNAP benefits during a shutdown?

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is considered essential, and benefits continue during a government shutdown. The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) may be impacted, depending on the duration of the

shutdown. *(Editor/llv: The \$8 billion program has \$150 Million contingency plan budget.)*

Because WIC does not have permanent funding authority, the USDA and Food Nutrition Service will provide funding as long as possible, and rely on states for additional funding.

Do you have to pay taxes while the government is shut down?

Yes, paying taxes is still required during a government shutdown. The IRS typically continues to process tax returns and payments. However, certain services, such as issuing tax refunds or conducting audits, may be delayed. For information on operations during a shutdown, visit the IRS’s contingency plan.

Does the president get paid?

Yes —Article II, Section 1 of the Constitution states that the president’s salary may not be reduced while in office, meaning that their pay cannot be withheld. It’s considered mandatory spending.

Do Congresspeople and Senators get paid?

Yes — Congressional salaries are required by the U.S. Constitution and part of mandatory spending, not the annual appropriations bills that can lapse during a shutdown. Their pay is not directly affected by the funding gap.