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ASSOCIATION



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MURA CONSIDERS PROJECT #TWO FOR DOWNTOWN



During the Montrose Urban Renewal Authority (MURA) Dec. 10 meeting, the City of Montrose presented their proposed plans for URA Project #2. (L to R) City Business Development Anthony Russo and City Manager/MURA Executive Director Bill Bell. Photo by Gail Marvel.

By Gail Marvel

MONTROSE-The Dec. 10 meeting of the Montrose Urban Renewal Authority (MURA) was called to order by Board President David Reed. The order of business included the Pledge of Allegiance, roll call, no changes to the agenda, no public comment, and approval of the amended Nov. 18 minutes. Board members Tom West, Ed Ulibarri, and Doug Glaspell were absent, all others were present in person. Attendance for this meeting (approximately 20 people) included business owners, city staff, and those who were interested in the agenda topic, "Establishment of Project Area # 2".

Discussion Related to Establishment of Project Area # 2

- Executive Director/City Manager William Bell.

Bell gave an overview of both Project #1 (Mayfly Outdoors Development), and

Continued pg 48

"TRANSPARENCY IS THE NAME OF THE GAME"

By Gail Marvel

REGIONAL-The Dec. 11 meeting of the Project 7 Water Authority Board, which was held at 3pm, was called to order by Vice Chair Vicki Ripp. Board members Jake Foreman and Kevin Carlson, as well as their alternates, were absent.

The revised minutes of the Oct. 23, 2025 meeting were approved; items added to the agenda were Christmas bonuses for employees, the insurance settlement, and a letter from the City of Montrose.

Public Comment: Participants are given three minutes to speak. Citizen Patti Hill's comment received a chuckle when she said, "Could you speak up a little for the next five hours?"

MANAGER'S REPORT – Adam Turner
Consumption Report – November 2025
Turner said, "October was down a little, but year over year we are 80 million beyond last year."

Continued pg 44



The Project 7 Water Authority held their monthly meeting on Dec. 11. (L to R) City of Montrose Representative David Bries and Chipeta Water District Representative Matt Miles contemplated who is on Santa's naughty list. Photo by Gail Marvel.

[In the End It's Up To The Owls:
Prairie Dogs in Peril At Top of the Pines!](#)

[Montrose Red Hawks
Girls Basketball!](#)

[Montrose Red Hawks
Boys Basketball!](#)

[Babe Fausonne's 102nd
Birthday: By CB Williams!](#)

UPDATED GUIDELINES FOR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Dear Readers:

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

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

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

RULE 3. Please limit repetitive mud-slinging to avoid bumping up against Rule 1. Also, in the case of those writing to intentionally discredit a public official or candidate for public office, please provide a link to the source of your allegation if possible. Unsourced, unproven allegations are not credible, and could in fact be untruths. Finally, opinions expressed in letters and commentary are those of the authors themselves, and do not reflect the views of the *Montrose Mirror* or editorial staff.

*Thank you,
 Caitlin Switzer,*

the
Montrose Mirror



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We welcome community contributions and commentary! Please note, submitted content does not necessarily reflect the views of the *Montrose Mirror* or its editorial team.

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Coffee & Conversation

**December 16,
10-11:30 AM
Library Meeting
Room**

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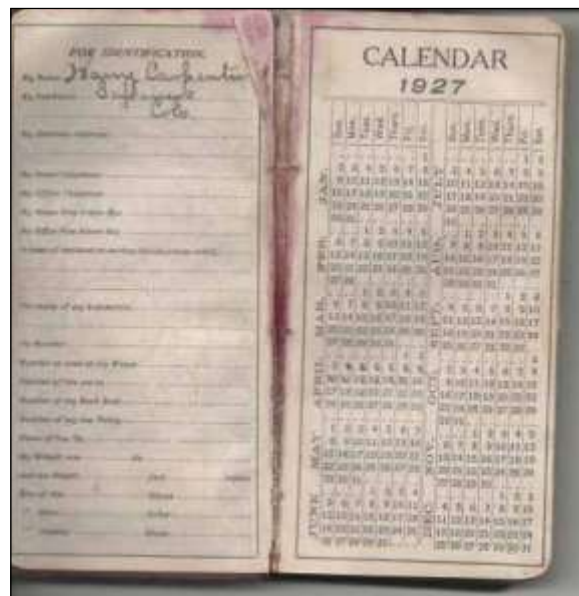
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DOES THIS DIARY BELONG TO YOUR FAMILY?

My dad (Joseph Thomas Hollingshead) passed away a year ago and it was in his belongings. None of us kids knew what to do with it and I felt that it shouldn't be thrown away so I kept it until my mom remembered last week how my dad got the diary. She said, my dad was tasked with tearing down a cabin at Sapinero before the water to Blue Mesa absorbed the town. And when he tore down the cabin he saved the diary and one lightbulb (for some odd reason).-Kelly Ray



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OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

MY FAVORITE MONTROSE CHRISTMAS MEMORY

Dear Editor,

I'd love to share my favorite Montrose Christmas memory.

In the early 1990's, I had 2 preschoolers, a busy hubby and a MORE than full-time teaching position at Northside Elementary, teaching college classes and playing piano at church. But somehow, we made it through each week. THEN came CHRISTMAS!! Christmas cookies, presents, programs and many other commitments really ramped things up. It amazes me now, to watch young families keep that similar pace. Hurrying into the Montrose historic

Post Office, I was confronted with a line from the teller windows out through the open glass doors, past the entrance into the cavern of post boxes. These were the days before many shipping choices and internet alerts counting down days for "mail to arrive for Christmas." The mood was tense. Children fidgeted and whined, acquaintances visited about the horrible line. Everyone had lots of packages to mail, the poor workers were overwhelmed and doing their best to move things along. It was getting tenser. Then, from way in the back, by the far

corners of the post office boxes someone began humming softly and then quietly singing the carol "What Child is This?" Steadily, the volume grew as more and more people joined in singing. Next, "Joy to the World" and finally "Silent Night" echoed through those tall ceilings. Most had tears in their eyes and smiles on their faces. No one was tense anymore. In this season, let us remember what draws us together and do more of it. Grateful to live in a small, AG-based community. Merry Christmas, Montrose!
Zoe Werden, Montrose



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Exciting News... Starting on January 1st – we are reimbursing counseling or therapy sessions at \$125!!

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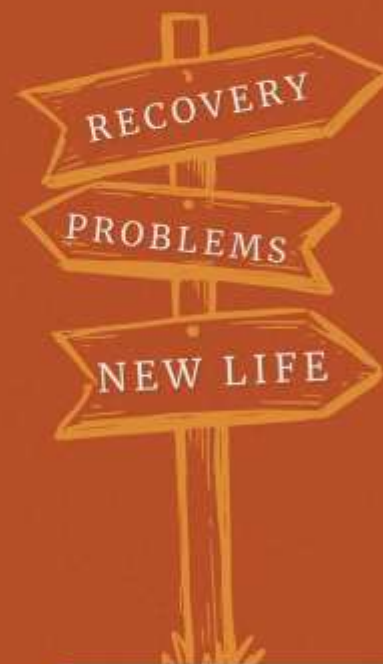
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OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

OUR COMMUNITY DESERVES TO KNOW WHERE THIS NEW BOARD IS HEADED

To the Editor:

I was curious to see how our new school board president would begin advancing what she has described as her top priorities: parents' rights, student achievement, and school safety. I am 100% in support of those goals; and I guess I thought we already had parents' rights, a focus on student achievement and school safety.....but ok---what's Mrs. Balleck, and the new board, going to bring to those worthy goals?

The first thing Mrs. Balleck did, right after opening the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance, was ask fellow board members, and everyone in the audience, to have a moment of silence to reflect on the importance of their actions and decisions. I respect Mrs. Balleck's right to pray, reflect, take a moment of silence, whatever as she enters into her decision making. If she would like to do that BEFORE she calls the meeting to order, silently and to herself, fine. I think it is highly inappropriate to lead fellow board members or the audience to do so. That smacks of crossing the line between church and state.

Then, the first major initiative of this board was a proposal to shift Vista Charter School out of local oversight and place it under the Colorado Charter School Institute (CSI), an appointed body in Denver. Vista and MCSD have worked together since 1984—over 40 years of local partnership. It is difficult to understand how transferring authority 300 miles away strengthens parents' rights, student achievement or school safety. It does, however, guarantee that taxpayer dollars and major decisions would fall under the authority of people we did not elect.

Despite Mrs. Balleck's strong push to relinquish Vista to CSI, it was extremely reassuring to hear the Board vote 5-2 to postpone that vote. Kudos to the five board members (Daly, Hovde, Scarbough,

Valerio and West) who showed independent thinking and voted to postpone. They rightfully need more information. This is a time for the community to write to the Board and let them know what they think about sending authorizing authority over to Denver. I can't help but wonder when Vista hired their current law firm, Miller Farmer Law, of which Brad Miller is a partner. Is that when issues began to pop up between Vista and MCSD? We now have time to look into that connection, if any.

The board is also moving ahead with the approval process for Montrose Classical Academy.

If MCA becomes part of our district, families deserve firm assurances that it will serve the full spectrum of MCSD students—including those with disabilities, English-language learners, and students who struggle academically. Any new school should reflect the demographics of the community it serves.

Then Mrs. Balleck put another rather bizarre item before the board. She introduced a 14-minute 'infomercial' from consultant Aaron Salts, who was there to sell his private board-training program, ChalkForge.

This created immediate confusion for many of us. MCSD already pays dues to the Colorado Association of School Boards (CASB), they provide training and networking opportunities for board members. Ironically, our board left on Wednesday for Colorado Springs to attend a CASB training. So why does Ms. Balleck want the district spend additional taxpayer money on a consultant offering services we already receive? Is that fiscal responsibility? See CASB's comprehensive agenda here: <https://www.casb.org/casb-convention-agenda>

Adding to the concern, ChalkForge appears to have ties to Brad Miller's (Miller Farmer Law Firm) wife, the same firm that

currently represents Vista Charter School, and was involved in the MCA application, according to MCA board member Kay Alexander. When the board president is in favor of pushing to move Vista out of local control and elevating a consultant connected to Vista's attorney, the community has every right to ask questions.

Such as:

-Why bring in ChalkForge when the district already pays for CASB training?

-What is the relationship between ChalkForge, Aaron Salts, and the Miller Farmer Law Firm, Vista, and MCA?

-Why is a consultant linked to Vista's legal representation being promoted during a meeting where the board president is advocating major changes to Vista's authorization?

-And how do these outside connections advance parents' rights, student achievement and school safety?

When taken together, these actions—proposing to remove local authority over Vista, highlighting outside consultants, and elevating groups tied to Vista's attorney—point toward a direction that shifts power *away* from local voters and *toward* outside organizations and private interests. I don't think the voters in Montrose and Olathe want a repeat of the disaster that happened in Woodland Park under Brad Miller's legal guidance. Read this Colorado Sun article: <https://coloradosun.com/2023/10/01/woodland-park-schools-opinion-carman/>

Our community deserves to know where this new board is headed.

I encourage residents of Montrose and Olathe to stay informed, ask questions, and participate. Our schools belong to all of us, and decisions that affect local control should remain in the hands of the people who live here.

Sincerely,

Linda Gann, Montrose

REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

MONTROSE REGIONAL HEALTH TO OPEN NEW PLASTICS AND RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERY CENTER FEATURING HUNTER OLIVER-ALLEN, M.D.

New clinic expands access to plastic and reconstructive procedures on the Western Slope

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE – Montrose Regional Health (MRH) will open its new Plastics and Reconstructive Surgery Center on Jan. 8, 2026, at the Ambulatory Care Center, 3330 S. Rio Grande Ave., Suite 220, in Montrose. The clinic will be led by board-certified plastic surgeon Hunter Oliver-Allen, M.D.

"I am honored to bring comprehensive plastic and reconstructive surgery services to the Western Slope," Oliver-Allen said. "This community deserves high-quality care close to home, and I look forward to helping patients recover, restore confidence, and feel whole again. I am also excited to build lasting relationships with patients and become a trusted part of their healthcare journey."

Oliver-Allen earned his medical degree from the Indiana University School of Medicine in Indianapolis and graduated as a member of the Alpha Omega Alpha Medical Honor Society. He completed a plastic surgery residency at the University of California, San Francisco, followed by a microvascular reconstruction fellowship at the University of Pennsylvania with a fo-

cus on advanced breast and cancer reconstruction.

The new clinic will offer a wide range of surgical and nonsurgical services, including:

- breast reconstruction
- aesthetic surgery of the breast and body
- cancer reconstruction and head and neck reconstruction
- trauma and limb salvage surgery

-scar revision and wound care

-injectables and nonsurgical aesthetic treatments

In his free time, Oliver-Allen enjoys cycling, weightlifting, and fly fishing.

The Plastics and Reconstructive Surgery Center will be open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., beginning Jan. 8. For more information or to schedule an appointment, call 970-497-5535.

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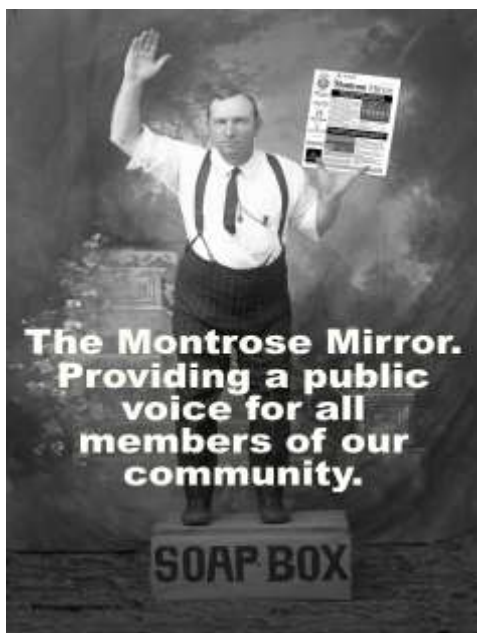
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The advertisement features a background image of a female doctor in a white coat with a blue stethoscope, smiling and examining a young girl's chest with a stethoscope. The girl is holding a small brown stuffed animal. In the top left corner, there is a logo for Delta Health Pediatrics, which consists of a stylized mountain peak above the text "DELTA HEALTH PEDIATRICS". Below the text are icons for Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, and TikTok. A circular inset photo shows a woman, Amanda Lovette, MD, smiling. Below her photo is her name and title: "Amanda Lovette, MD PEDIATRICS DELTA HEALTH". At the bottom of the advertisement, the text "NEW EXPANDED HOURS" is written in large, bold, multi-colored letters (green, blue, and purple).

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COLORADO NEWS BRIEFS

SLOW DOWN FOR RUDOLF AND HIS FRIENDS

Special to the Mirror

COLORADO – Was that Rudolf? Seeing the reflection of two eyes from an animal on the road in front of you can send a wave of adrenaline and fear through even the most experienced drivers, so the Colorado State Patrol would like to assist by providing some general recommendations to lower the chance of a wildlife collision.

“Last December troopers investigated 431 wildlife crashes around the state,” warned Col. Matthew C. Packard, chief of the Colorado State Patrol. “The most common time for crashes this time of year is between 3 – 7 p.m. or 5 – 9 a.m.”

Two of the most essential things a motorist can do are to drive the speed limit and use their high beams when not around other motorists in rural areas or neighborhoods adjacent to open space areas. Increase your chances of seeing wildlife crossing up ahead or on the side of the road by staying alert. You can give yourself the time to adjust your speed or stop if no one is behind you.

“The worst choice you can make is to swerve outside your lane or slam on your brakes with vehicles behind you,” explained Col. Packard. “People can end up in serious crashes when they let their emotions take over to save Rudolf or his friends.”

Be prepared to make a tough decision when encountering animals. If you have time and space, you can flash your lights and slow down in a straight line, coming to a stop. If you have very little time and distance and no one is behind you, you can brake hard in a straight line. However, if you don’t have time and there is traffic behind you, the right choice is to drive through, keeping in the lane, but with a slight angle towards the butt of the animal ONLY if by the white side lane line. Never swerve or jerk the wheel.



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Haven House

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Every little bit helps

Donate this season to local charities



REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

US 550 OVERNIGHT CLOSURE SCHEDULED DEC. 16 SOUTH OF OURAY

Special to the Mirror

SOUTHWEST COLORADO — The Colorado Department of Transportation will require a full closure beginning Tuesday, December 16 at midnight on US Highway 550 between Ouray and Silverton (Mile Points 71 to 92). The highway is expected to reopen to motorists at approximately 8 a.m., Tuesday morning. The overnight closure is necessary to provide ample room for heavy equipment while crews push snow from the highway shoulder and clean ditches.

Beginning Dec. 12, additional daytime snow removal and ditch clearing operations will occur on US 550 between Purgatory Ski Area and Silverton and CO 145 between Telluride and Rico. Motorists can expect up to 15 minute delays and alternating traffic guided by flagging personnel to continue through Dec. 19.

US 550 Red Mountain Pass Nighttime Closure (Dec. 16)

On Dec. 16 between midnight and 8 a.m., motorists will encounter full stops in both directions between Silverton and Ouray. Traffic impacts will include:

- Northbound travelers will encounter a closure just north of Silverton (MP 71)
- Southbound travelers will encounter a closure just south of Ouray (MP 92)
- Do not attempt to bypass the closure gates

US 550 & CO 145 Daytime Delays (Dec. 12 to 19)

Dec. 12 to 19, motorists will encounter maintenance operations on US 550 south of Silverton and CO 145 south of Telluride. Traffic impacts will include:

- Working hours will be from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday
- Motorists can expect full stops and alternating traffic. Traffic delays up to 15 minutes should be expected

Traffic fines will be doubled in the work zone. Motorists should slow down as they approach the work zones, drive with caution, allow extra space between vehicles, and give themselves extra travel time

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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

RED HAWK SPORTS INC. DONATES \$100,000 TO SUPPORT MONTROSE HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETICS AND EXPANDS COMMUNITY INITIATIVES FOR 2026

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE - Red Hawk Sports Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to elevating Montrose High School Athletics, is proud to announce a \$100,000 contribution benefiting student-athletes across all Red Hawk sports programs.

The contribution includes:

- \$50,000 donated directly to Montrose High School to cover travel expenses for all 22 CHSAA-sanctioned sports.
- \$50,000 distributed to individual Red Hawk teams, supporting essential needs such as equipment, training resources, uniforms and facility improvements.

In 2025, Red Hawk Sports Inc. provided targeted support to multiple programs, ensuring every dollar met real and immediate needs for athletes. This included:

- Volleyball: Upgraded practice equipment, summer training resources and travel support.
- Baseball: Field renovation and maintenance improvements.
- Athletic Training Program: New training room supplies and medical equipment.
- Tennis: Team apparel and gear needs.
- Cross Country: New competition tent.
- Football: New white team uniforms.
- Cheer: Signage, uniforms, camp expenses and performance materials.
- Climbing Team: Travel to state and national tournaments.
- Track and Field: Athlete development and summer training.
- Senior Safe Party: Graduation celebration.

This funding supports the organization's mission to provide a safe and successful environment for competition by ensuring student-athletes have the resources they need to excel. "Everything we do comes back to the athletes," said founding member Amy Legg. "Our goal is to remove barriers, enhance opportunities and strengthen the connection between Montrose High School and the community that rallies behind it."

A Year of Growth: 2025 Highlights

In addition to direct team support, Red Hawk Sports Inc.:

- Launched the Red Hawk Fan Club, giving families, grandparents, alumni and supporters a meaningful way to engage with MHS Athletics. Members receive exclusive Red Hawk merchandise and free admission to all home games.
- Delivered \$100,000 in total athletic support, reducing costs for families and improving resources across every sport.
- Strengthened partnerships with local businesses, making it easier to support all teams through centralized, tax-deductible contributions.

Looking Ahead to 2026

Red Hawk Sports Inc. is preparing for another impactful year that will include:

- Expanded Red Hawk merchandise, giving fans more opportunities to show school pride.
- The first Red Hawk Fan Club Spring Banquet, bringing the community together to celebrate achievements and raise funds.
- Continued investment in equipment, training needs and travel support for athletes competing across Colorado.

"We are just getting started," said Amy. "The community's support has been incredible and together we can continue providing outstanding opportunities for every Red Hawk athlete."

Join the Movement

Red Hawk Sports Inc. encourages all Montrose High School athletic teams to reach out with their program wish lists. The organization remains committed to improving every CHSAA sanctioned sport by meeting real needs and working directly with coaches to build well supported and competitive programs.

The community is invited to stay engaged and be part of the growth ahead. Follow Red Hawk Sports Inc. on Facebook and Instagram for updates, events and opportunities to support Montrose High School Athletics.

LET'S GO RED HAWKS!

REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS: LOCAL BUSINESS

WARM UP YOUR WINTER WITH THE FIRE WITHIN



This winter marks the birth of Fire Within Sauna, a nomadic enterprise that is now open for communal sits, private rentals, and bespoke sauna designs/construction. Courtesy photo.

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE-Inspired by their travels to Ireland where mobile saunas dot the coastline, a carpenter-nurse duo decided to bring their love of wellness, nature, and community to the Western Slope. This winter marks the birth of Fire Within Sauna, a nomadic enterprise that is now open for communal sits, private rentals, and bespoke sauna designs/construction. A builder by trade, Brendan Delaney of Paonia selected aspen for the sauna's benches and walls, as well as a Finnish

wood-fired stove. The ventilated space generally is heated to 175-200F degrees and, when combined with the hot-rocks steam, can support health by:

- Relaxing the body
- Fighting inflammation
- Strengthening respiratory system
- Alleviating pain
- Boosting immunity
- Hydrating skin

"We have received warm welcome so far; it's been-energizing to see others get excited about our creation,"-says co-founder

Delaney. A private sauna rental for the holidays could be an "experience" gift, as an alternative to-tangible items, or a jump-start to New Year's intentions related to health and wellness. Punch cards are available.

Interested sauna sitters can find the business on Instagram or Facebook @firewithinsauna; online bookings and more info are located at www.firewithinsauna.com. Welcome! 970-531-7702. firewithinsauna@gmail.com

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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

CITY OF MONTROSE ANNOUNCES 2026 MUNICIPAL ELECTION

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE-The City of Montrose will hold a municipal election for three city council seats on Tuesday, April 7, 2026. Council seats in District I, District II, and the At-Large position will be on the ballot.

Candidates elected to the District I and II seats will serve four-year terms, while the At-Large representative will serve a two-year term. To view a map of Montrose's council districts, candidates can visit CityofMontrose.org/Elections

The city encourages all residents who are passionate about public service, collaboration, and strengthening our community to consider stepping forward. Your voice, your experience, and your leadership on the City Council can help shape Montrose for years to come and make a lasting impact.

Those interested in running can access the candidate packet and other resources on the City of Montrose website beginning Monday, December 8, 2025, or pick up a paper version from the City Clerk's Office between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m., Monday through Thursday.

To qualify as a candidate, individuals must be registered electors, eighteen years of age or older, and have resided within the city and district they wish to represent for at least 12 consecutive months immediately preceding Election Day.

While candidates for the At-Large seat can reside anywhere within city limits, they must meet the minimum residency requirement.

Candidates may circulate nomination petitions beginning on Tuesday, January 6, 2026, and submit them to the City Clerk's Office no later than Monday, January 26, 2026. A minimum of 25 valid signatures is required for a candidate to be included on the ballot.

For more information, please visit CityofMontrose.org/Elections or contact the City Clerk's Office at 970-240-1430 or cityclerk@cityofmontrose.org.

For information about the City of Montrose visit CityofMontrose.org.

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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

DELTA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ADOPT 2026 BUDGET WITH DECREASED EXPENDITURES AND CONTINUED INVESTMENT IN COUNTY PRIORITIES

Special to the Mirror

DELTA— The Delta County Board of Commissioners unanimously adopted the County's 2026 Budget during Tuesday's Board of County Commissioners monthly meeting, marking the conclusion of a months-long, collaborative budgeting process involving all elected officials, department heads, and the County's interdepartmental budget team.

The 2026 adopted budget totals \$53,670,105, representing a \$2,022,512 decrease from the 2025 adopted budget. The reduction is largely due to the completion of multi-year construction projects, including the final remodel of the Delta County Jail.

Finance Director Leone Anderson and County Administrator Robbie LeValley were recognized for their leadership, attention to detail, and successful implementation of ClearGov, which again provided full transparency to the public. All budget changes, requests, and departmental submissions were accessible online throughout the process.

The Finance Director is available to meet with anyone who has questions about the budget or needs assistance locating specific information.

Leone Anderson

landerson@deltacountyco.gov

Phone: [970-874-2103](tel:970-874-2103)



Delta County Finance Director Leone Anderson. Courtesy photo.

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OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

WHY THE MONTROSE GOP LOST CREDIBILITY WITH REPUBLICAN VOTERS

Editor:

MJB's latest article in the Mirror blaming the Montrose Republican women for the division in the Montrose GOP is as off base as is most of his articles. I can say unequivocally that Karri Catlin and the Montrose republican women did not endorse the recall.

And FYI the Montrose republican women is not a club. Their charter and articles of incorporation have been on file with the secretary of state since 1936. The reality is the Montrose central committee created this division by pushing good republicans out of the party because they lost sight of what their goal was. They somehow got the idea that their job was to tell its members who they could vote for and what the members could say publicly. In other words, violate their members' constitutional rights to freedom of speech and freedom to vote for the candidate of their choice. And their favorite name to call republicans that they disagree with is **RINO** (republican in name only).

Poor leadership will always blame someone else for their lack of **LEADERSHIP**. Keeping in mind they removed the Republican Women, me, and others from the central committee. But the Montrose republican women were invited to serve

food at the central committee banquet. They politely refused that offer. So, the central committee is reaping what they sewed.

The results of this are we now have a BOCC made up of two unaffiliated members and one weak republican who flip flops between the Republican Party and unaffiliated (Sean Pond). So, in one year we went from having a BOCC of three republicans to only one. How did this happen? It started in 2020 when some misguided members of the central committee ignored my input and decided to get the party involved in the primary. Up until then the central committee did not endorse candidates in the primary, they remained neutral. And they accomplished this by not getting involved at all. They let the registered republicans sort out the primary candidates and the central committee got behind the primary winners. That is the only way the party can truly be neutral. For the party to be involved in the primary will always lead to division. Because some members will support one candidate while others will support a different candidate and that will lead to violations of the neutrality clause of the by-laws. The election of 2024 is proof of this as we had the state party chair and

the Montrose County chair running for office in contested primaries. And that was a violation of the by-laws and every voting member who allowed this is as guilty of violating the by-laws as Scott Riba and Dave Williams.

The central committee's support for Mi-jares is the reason Sue Hansen changed her affiliation. She had no support from the central committee. So, there was no reason for her to continue to be a part of a party that was supporting a political opportunist and closet democrat at her expense.

And whose bullying tactics were causing her and the county employees' unnecessary uncertainty about how the county was doing business.

The central committee removed me twice for violating the by-laws, which is true. But neither time had I violated the by-laws. I have a video of the meeting where I was removed which shows Carol Antolovich pointing out to Scott Riba that I had not violated the by-laws. Scott's reply was we will change the by-laws. The constitution calls that ex-post facto law (Article I section 9 of the constitution). This is from the organization that claims strict adherence to the constitution.

Ray Langston, Montrose

SHOULD SUPPORT PUBLIC FUNDING FOR CULTIVATED-MEAT RESEARCH

To the editor,

Politicians who care about animal welfare should support public funding for cultivated-meat research at the state and federal level. For those who don't know, cultivated meat is grown from livestock cells, without slaughter. Even low adoption rates of the protein would save countless animals from brief, hellish lives on factory farms.

While the private sector has made admirable progress advancing the field of cellular agriculture, important technological hurdles remain for the mass production of cheap cultivated meat. These can be overcome with further study, backed by the government. Compassionate leaders should help accelerate development of the field.

Jon Hochschartner, Granby, CT

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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

ROAD CLOSURE SCHEDULED FOR UNCOMPAHGRE ROAD BEGINNING DEC. 15



Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE— Road and Bridge will be replacing a culvert on Uncompahgre Road beginning on December 15, 2025, with work expected to last through December 18, 2025. This culvert replacement will require a road closure at McDonald Ditch.

Drivers are encouraged to plan alternate routes and follow posted signage during this period. For more information, please contact Rusty Catlin 970-964-2447, Curtis Milton 970-964-2444 or Richard Rivera 970-252-7009.

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One of the original homes in Montrose, has been lovingly cared for, carefully updated and maintained. The main floor business was a styling salon for many years that evolved into a cottage retail store with room for classes and workshops. The original use of the home is noticeable in the front parlor, living, dining, bedroom, bath and kitchen.

COLORADO NEWS BRIEFS

SAFETY ANNOUNCEMENT: WINTER LOGGING ROAD CLOSURES

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Special to the Mirror

GRAND JUNCTION — The Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison (GMUG) National Forests' Grand Valley Ranger District are temporarily closing several roads in Mesa County to ensure public safety while timber is being harvested in the area. The following roads will be closed to visitors Monday through Friday from Dec. 10 at 8 a.m. to Dec. 23 at 8 a.m. and Jan. 4 at 8 a.m. to April 1 at 8 a.m. unless rescinded. The road closures include:

-National Forest System Road (NFSR) 121 (Trickel Park Road) is closed from the northern forest boundary approximately 5 miles south to the intersection with NFSR 114.

-NFSR 260 is closed from the intersection with NFSR 121 for approximately 5.2 miles east to the edge of the Englehart DxP Timber Sale.

-NFSR 114 is closed from the intersection with NFSR 121 for approximately 4.8 miles east to the eastern terminus of the road.

Temporary closures of snow- and ice-covered mountain roads are necessary to protect public safety and prevent collisions with logging trucks. Roads will reopen to the public on weekends and when log hauling operations are paused.

For more information on this closure order, to include a detailed map, please visit our website or contact the Grand Valley Ranger District at 970-242-8211.

About the Forest Service: The USDA Forest Service has for more than 100 years brought people and communities together to answer the call of conservation. Grounded in world-class science and technology— and rooted in communities—the Forest Service connects people to nature and to each other. The Forest Service cares for shared natural resources in ways that promote lasting economic, ecological, and social vitality. The agency manages 193 million acres of public land, provides assistance to state and private landowners, maintains the largest wildland fire and forestry research organizations in the world. The Forest Service also has either a direct or indirect role in stewardship of about 900 million forested acres within the U.S., of which over 130 million acres are urban forests where most Americans live.

MONTROSE COUNTY ADOPTS 2026 BUDGET, APPROVES SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET FOR 2025

By Caitlin Switzer

MONTROSE-The Montrose Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) convened for a special meeting on Wednesday, Dec. 10. All commissioners were present.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

Interim County manager David White had no changes to the meeting agenda.

GENERAL BUSINESS & ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

Commissioners opened a public hearing for consideration and possible adoption of Resolution Number 56-2025, regarding the Adoption of the proposed 2026 Budget and Annual Appropriation.

Interim County Manager David White opened the Budget presentation; Finance Director Cindy Dunlap and Budget Manager Lanny Paulson were present for the Special Meeting.

Dunlap delivered Summary Comments concerning the budget process. BOCC Chair Sue Hansen said, "Normally we have a bit of a presentation...I just want everyone to appreciate—it is a heavy lift. David

was instrumental in working through it."

Dunlap said that five FTE's and three vehicles were removed from the Sheriff's Office budget, as was \$125K in funding for the rural medical clinic. Spending on heavy fleet and public works was reduced. Capital expenditures and debt service were increased.

Interim County Manager David White said that the revenue side drives next year's expenditures.

"Trust me, we've been through this a lot," BOCC Chair Sue Hansen said.

Commissioners voted unanimously to adopt Resolution 56-2025, regarding the 2026 Budget Adoption and Annual Appropriation. The Supplemental Budget was also approved; commissioners voted to adopt Resolution 57-2025, regarding a 2nd supplemental appropriation to the Budget for the Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 2025. Budget Manager Lanny Paulson discussed the Mill Levy, which will increase by 3.2 percent.

The BOCC voted to approve Resolution 58

-2025, regarding the establishment of Mill Levies for levying taxes for the levy year 2025/budget year 2026.

The Board left Regular Session to enter Executive Session for two items:

1. Executive Session with the County Attorney, Interim County Manager, and Planning and Development Director, pursuant to C.R.S. 24-6-402(4)(b) and (e) for legal advice and direction for negotiations pertaining to construction of workforce housing on the West End to support the Four Seasons Resort project.

2. Executive Session with the County Attorney and Human Resources Director, pursuant to C.R.S. 24-6-402(4)(b) and (f), for legal advice and discussion of personnel matters relative to the contract for the interim county manager and the organizational structure of the administrative office.

Upon return to regular Session, the Special Meeting was adjourned.

View the entire proposed 2026 Budget here.

OPINION/EDITORIAL: MIRROR COMMENTARY

WHITE OUT AS COUNTY MANAGER; BOCC BACK TO SQUARE ONE

By Caitlin Switzer

MONTROSE-Having watched nearly every meeting of the Montrose County BOCC for more than a decade, the events of the past year have sometimes felt like watching a train slowly roll off the tracks.

Starting with the resignation of Ken Norris, who served from 2017 to 2021, Montrose County has seen no less than six County Managers come and go. Interim County Manager David White, a local business owner and past two-term commissioner who accepted the interim job with misgivings, was removed last Friday at the behest of the BOCC.

As someone who spent years in the private sector before launching my own business, I know that there are some jobs that resemble "hot seats," for all kinds of reasons. A carefully chosen candidate is hired, only to leave several months later—and the process repeats itself over and over until the "heat source," whatever it may be, is found and cooled.

Montrose has, in the past, had managers who serve longer than six months. Why has Montrose County's top job become a hot seat?

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- At the beginning of 2022 we averaged 40-50 students participating weekly. In 2025 we are averaging **120-150 students weekly!**
- Over 300 bibles have been distributed in our schools to date!
- **Over 320 life commitments** have been made to Jesus from 2022 to 2025!



We've grown from 0 staff to two from 2022 and we have another staff member coming on in 2026 for Western Colorado University!

Would you consider partnering with us to see transformation on our school campuses for Jesus!!! For End of Year Giving 2025, our need is \$31,000.00!

IN THE END, IT'S UP TO THE OWLS

Only the presence of burrowing owls could prevent another round of poison for Top of the Pines Prairie Dogs

By Caitlin Switzer

RIDGWAY—After a group of locals worked diligently to raise funds to acquire the 175-acre parcel known as Top of the Pines (TOP) from the U.S. Bureau of Land Management and the Grand Junction Chipeta chapter of the U.S. Girl Scouts in 2002, the locals then gifted the land to Ouray County to serve as a resource for the public to enjoy.

Initially the facilities were in disrepair, but over the past two decades many improvements have been made and Top of the Pines is now a popular destination for weddings, recreation, and environmental education. TOP is managed by a volunteer non-profit on behalf of Ouray County.

Still, Top of the Pines has drawn backlash recently, as those who see the prolific Gunnison's Prairie Dog—which are essential to the ecosystem's food chain—as important, and those who see the prairie dogs as a nuisance and potential danger, to be managed with the placement of poison in their burrows.

On Sept. 23, the Ouray County BOCC regular meeting agenda included an item to discuss [prairie dog mitigation](#) at Top of the Pines, in which contractors would use a carbon monoxide (CO) or carbon dioxide (CO₂) fumigant in the Management Area where prairie dog activity is occurring. Prior to engaging in mitigation efforts, a visual survey must be done to ensure that no burrowing owls—which make their nests in empty prairie dog dens—are present. The proposed mitigation plan states, "If nesting burrowing owls are confirmed, no prairie dog control will occur until at least three nesting seasons have passed without recurrent nesting."

Wildlife advocates have expressed opposition to the use of poison.

"Prairie dogs are a keystone species providing food for raptors, ravens, and even magpies," said Roubideau Rim Wildlife Rescue Executive Director Brenda Miller. "...Wildlife should be left alone. If they are worrying about sickness in wildlife - zoonoses--diseases that can be transmitted to humans, then they should kill the fox, coyotes, (rabies, distemper, fleas,

lice, ticks) deer and elk (CWD, ticks, lice) most of the birds (avian flu, fleas, lice), chipmunks, ground squirrels, and mice. (fleas, lice, ticks, hanta virus).

"I felt the biologist made it clear that the venues are causing damage to the habitat, the prairie dogs are self-limiting due to the vegetation. There are always hazards to humans when out in nature," Miller said.

A memo from Ouray County Commissioner Jake Niece, who serves as Top of the Pines Liaison, said that if the mitigation occurs, follow-up efforts would include, among other steps to be taken, teaching students about prairie dog eradication efforts: "...Community partnership with Ouray High School AP environmental science class to study the ecology and social science of prairie dog management decisions."

Mitigation efforts were previously conducted in 2023, according to the annual report to the BOCC from the Top of the Pines board, signed by Board Chair Brad Wallis:

"...Early last spring when I came up to arrange for the water system startup, I found that it had also been a bumper year for prairie dogs with literally hundreds of new pups scampering around the east end of the meadow. We were concerned that this prairie dog population explosion might be a health risk to TOP users and create safety hazards with the many new mounds and holes they were creating.

"We contacted the BOCC to get your opinion regarding possible population reduction methods. You recommended that we contact the CPW for their recommendation which we did and we followed their recommendation exactly and placed a specific short lived poison direct into their mounds. This effort was successful with at least a 90% reduction in prairie dog numbers. This mitigation is likely to be needed at least once a year to keep their numbers in check."

A wildlife biologist has prepared guidelines for the mitigation effort. A [2024 report was prepared by Steve Boyle](#), entitled, "Top of the Pines Gunnison's Prairie



Prairie Dogs have a variety of calls that they use to communicate with one another. Above, a Gunnison's Prairie Dog gives the "All Clear" call to let other prairie dogs know that danger has passed. I Stock Photo.

Dog Management Plan."

Not all local residents are in favor of the mitigation efforts, however. A number of citizens and wildlife professionals have spoken out to express their opposition to the proposal, in letters to the editor and at meetings. A letter that appeared in the *Ouray Plaindealer* on Oct. 26 specifically outlines the reasons for opposing the use of poison in prairie dog burrows and offers alternatives:

"Until Death Do Us Part

Though the public has spoken consistently and with a unified voice against the killing of prairie dogs at Top Of the Pines (TOP,) two of our three commissioners voted last month to proceed with gassing/poisoning the prairie dog colony. The justification? Injury or disease transmission to wedding guests. Weddings bring revenue to the non-profit managing this county-owned public land. I wonder if spouses-to-be would rent this scenic venue if they knew a keystone species - essential to the health of an ecosystem - would be heartlessly killed on their behalf.

"Prairie dog burrows aerate the soil, improve water absorption and create shelter for other species including the burrowing

IN THE END, IT'S UP TO THE OWLS *From previous pg*

owl. A colony is a model of communal living, cooperation, communication and family bonds which magnifies the irony of killing them in celebration of love and unity.

"You are far more likely to die by a lightning strike than to contract the plague. On average 7 cases of plague in humans are recorded each year in the US and fatalities are rare due to available treatment.

"Natural settings pose hazards (think tripping, slipping, poking, stinging) and people assume those risks daily.

"Prairie dog holes are far from the greatest risk at an outdoor wedding. Do Ouray County and TOP want to prioritize profit over wildlife?

"There are alternatives to killing prairie dogs. Barrier fencing, used by Boulder County, is an effective method. The argument for not trying some form of physical barrier (hay bales were suggested to keep the rustic appearance) was that barriers would detract from the scenic vistas. A minor visual impact seems like a small price to pay for preservation of a keystone species and a healthy ecosystem.

"So if you know anyone planning to marry at TOP, please ask them if they want animals to be killed and the ground poisoned for their celebration of love and commitment. Then raise your voice, because though prairie dogs are extraordinary communicators, they can't provide public comment at the BOCC meetings.

For more information visit:

<https://www.cdc.gov/plaque/maps-statistics/index.html>

<https://www.prairiedogcoalition.org> and [https://](https://www.prairieprotectioncolorado.org/)

www.prairieprotectioncolorado.org/ Robyn Cascade, Ridgway"

Of the three County Commissioners, however, only Lynn Padgett has voted against the use of poison to kill the native species at Top of the Pines.

And according to the Courthouse News Service, a Federal Judge earlier this year dismissed an environmentalist group's (Prairie Protection Colorado of Sedalia) third lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Agriculture seeking to block Colorado prairie dog kills.

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VOLUNTEERS MAKE WREATHS FOR VETERANS' GRAVES



Volunteers gather each year to create wreaths for placement on veterans' graves. Sheree Wanner, owner of Camelot Gardens is third from the right in the front row . All photos are by Les Williams, member of Montrose Veterans Memorial Coalition.



Volunteers gather each year to create wreaths for placement on veterans' graves. Wreaths Across Montrose is a combined effort of local chapters of the America Legion, American Legion Riders, DAV, VFW, Montrose Veterans Memorial Coalition and the public. Sheree Wanner, owner of Camelot Gardens is a great supporter of veterans and she and her staff host the event each year.



Deb and Greg Jackson, representing Delta American Legion and Auxiliary, place a wreath at Grand View Cemetery.



AJ from Welcome Home Alliance for Veterans helps load and count wreaths as they are readied for distribution at area cemeteries.

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RE-1J BOARD APPROVES MCA CONTRACT, POSTPONES VISTA CHARTER SCHOOL DECISION



Attendees and the Board of Education say the Pledge of Allegiance on Dec. 9. Meeting Screenshot.

By Caitlin Switzer

MONTROSE-The Dec. 9 regular business meeting of the Montrose County School District RE-1J Board of Education began at the usual time-but by meeting's end the planned [Enrollment Report](#) was not given, as Finance Director Emily Imus had been allowed to go home due to the late hour.

All directors were present, including Board President Neisha Balleck; Vice President Ted Valerio (who attended virtually); District C Director Scott Scarborough; District D Director Tom West; District E Director Tiffany Vincent; District F Director Jody Hovde; and District G Director Shane Daly.

During the meeting, the Board voted to approve the Montrose Classical Academy contract, and to postpone a decision on whether to release Vista Charter School to the [Colorado Charter School Institute](#).

At the start of the meeting, Board Chair Neisha Balleck asked for a moment of silence, so that the board and the community could "consider the weight of the decisions and actions undertaken by the board."

The Board voted unanimously to approve the meeting agenda.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

District Public Information Officer Mikayla Unruh introduced two members of the City of Montrose Youth Council, Sydney Bell and Jordyn Simo, to "share an overview of the program, highlight recent projects, and discuss how their involvement is

helping shape civic engagement opportunities for students across our community."

"We are pleased to welcome these outstanding young leaders and to recognize their commitment to public service," Unruh said.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND CELEBRATIONS

Unruh presented the December winners of the Altrusa Apple Awards, including 27-year Teacher Kathy Holcomb of Pomona Elementary School and Cassidy Gray of Olathe Elementary School.

Next, Unruh presented recent donations, including:

- Pediatrics Associates donated \$2,000 for 2025-2026 sponsorship of the home basketball tournament event in December;
- MHS Mock Trial Club has received a \$2,000 donation from the Seventh Judicial District Bar Association. The sponsor/ advisor over the Mock Trial Club is Michael Birtles and has about 12 students actively participating in this club;
- A donation was received from the Townsend Family in the amount of \$66,560.50 designated for a new Montrose High School building;
- A donation from Suzi and Michael King was received for the Girls and Boys Swimming team in the amount of \$2,000.

Unruh also presented a grant:

- Montrose High School's PLTW Biomedical Science program was awarded the \$10,000 Foundations for the Future Grant

from Elevate Internet. The grant will be used to purchase new laptops supporting hands-on, technology-focused biomedical and healthcare learning.

BOARD REPORT

The Board briefly discussed Board Advisory Committee updates. Balleck reminded directors that a representative is still needed for the Montrose Urban Renewal Authority (MURA).

With a new Agenda item, "School Event Updates," the board acknowledged Veterans Day Celebrations. Balleck said that there is a group called Homegrown Pathways that helps students learn how to be entrepreneurs.

Also new to the agenda is the spot for Board Comments/Updates. Balleck spoke about a program called [School Board Boot Camp – ChalkForge](#), and introduced Director Aaron Salt, who spoke about the project via Zoom.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Finance Director Emily Imus discussed the 2025 October Count, which took place on the 1st of October. The Final October Count is embargoed, Imus said, but takeaways include [5,611.5 FTE's](#), which will be plugged into a four-year average. MCSD's preliminary funded October pupil count of 5,611.5 FTE's came in 24.5 FTE's higher than budgeted after four-year averaging; Vista Charter School's pass-through funded pupil count came in 9 FTE's higher than budgeted-the net impact to MCSD from the October count is 15.5 FTE's higher than budgeted, Imus said. The per pupil funding amount also changed, Imus said.

"...Bottom line is that MCSD will receive about \$186,000 more in revenue from the state ..."

Free and reduced meal eligibility is also up, she said.

Overall, student enrollment is 115 students lower than last year's October Count; over half of the decrease is from Pre-K enrollment, with 63 less students and about 36 less students in elementary levels, Imus said.

COMMUNITY INPUT

First to speak was Pomona Elementary School Principal Chris Lehman, who recognized the work of the District's Safety

RE-1J BOARD APPROVES MCA CONTRACT, POSTPONES VISTA DECISION *From previous pg*

team. "We had a pretty tough situation that we dealt with at Pomona, and our Safety Team in our district stepped up and supported in a big way. I wanted to give them a shout out and honor the great work that they do," he said. "...they are a huge asset to our school in a big way...they also help out in a responsive way...they step in when there's a crisis...I love how they collaborate with our teams, they help me as a principal create a calm, safe learning environment...I really appreciate the district's focus on supporting school in this way...on supporting the well-being of students, and families and staff..."

Next, LeAnna Spadafora spoke. "I'm speaking to you guys, but I was also going to speak to Vista...I don't have much hope that this new board or the current administration at Vista see the value in maintaining local control or oversight..."

As a Vista employee of more than 30 years, Spadafora also spoke about her own history as a Vista Staffer and the history of the school. "...If Vista is unable or unwilling to meet requirements of local authorizers just down the street and a personal visit away, what do they hope will change with the authority in Denver? The rules and requirements are the same, no matter who is overseeing their compliance."

"To the Vista administration and the board at Vista, I say, 'How dare you.' How dare you take this school built over the course of 40+ years and decide to give it away...how dare you cloud the extraordinary vision of the founders, who provided a building students can be proud to call their school. How dare you let your responsibilities slide to the point where our district no longer cares to fight for you...my fear is that this is the beginning of the end...my heart is broken, my hands are tied..."

Linda Gann spoke next. "I trust that everyone on this board shares my same goal, and that is to do what's best for our students. That's why I was surprised to see the very first major action before this board is a proposal to move Vista Charter School away from local authorization and place it under Colorado Charter School in

Denver. Vista and MCSd have worked together since 1984, over 40 years of local partnership. Do you really want to be the board that gives up local control...if Vista transitions to CSI, there will be no elected oversight...later in tonight's agenda you will also consider the approval of Montrose Classical Academy...any new school operating in this district must reflect and serve the full spectrum of our student population and not just a select portion...our schools must remain independent, accountable, and centered on students."

"So tonight, I want to clearly be on public record. I urge this board to keep Vista Charter School and Montrose Classical Academy under local oversight, honor decades of partnership, insure demographic equality, and protect the authority entrusted in you by the voters."

Gail Rust spoke. "I'm a retired teacher from Vista Charter School...I also am asking the board to please reconsider...to retain the local chartering authority of Vista Charter School...every time I run into an ex student in town who's working in our community and doing well, it reminds me of the important role that Vista has played in their lives...Vista literally changed their lives; they tell me that all the time...I understand...that in recent years a rift has been forming between the Vista administration and the Montrose School District. But I would ask the board to look into what has transpired and to work to mend those damages rather than turning that task over to an outside chartering authority that doesn't understand the long history of Vista and its impact on our students and our communities..."

Next to speak was Phoebe Benziger. She reminded Directors of her own eight years on the Board of Education. "...I was elected just like you were from the public, to represent the public school board...you've heard...you know that the public is going to hold you accountable for what they want with your MCA Charter that you're going to talk about in Executive Session...and you will be held accountable, please, you don't have to look far to know...what happens when you are held accountable and you don't think that any-

body's watching, it's not pretty...people will watch and people will be aware of that...you're elected by a public to represent public schools in Montrose County, so enjoy it and get out like Jody does, I know Tom does, meet the teachers, know what they're talking about, smell the crayons, meet the people...so don't think that it's just a matter of coming and sitting at the board and reading the agenda...looking at this agenda tonight, it actually could use a lot of work, a lot of tweakin' down. A lot of it that happened tonight was stuff the public didn't need to hear. So yeah, I do applaud that, so yeah, enjoy it, congratulations, don't take it lightly, and know that people will be watching. And to your attorneys, thank you for being here."

"Yep, we appreciate it."

OLD BUSINESS-CONSENT AGENDA

Consent Agenda items including [Personnel Report](#) were approved as presented.

NEW BUSINESS

The first item of business was the Recommendation to approve and certify the [Mill Levy](#) for the Property Tax Year 2025 and [Resolution 10-2025](#) Certify Property Tax Mills Authorized By Colorado Statutes for 2025-2026.

RE-1J Finance Director Emily Imus discussed the Mill Levy in detail; the Board voted unanimously to approve and certify the [Mill Levy](#) for the Property Tax Year 2025.

The Board heard the [Auditor's Report](#) and voted to accept the [Audited Financial Statements](#) for 2024-2025.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Board of Education entered Executive Session "in accordance with C.R.S. 24-6-402 (4)(a), Purchase, acquisition, lease or sale of any real, personal or other property for discussion of the Fieldhouse property located at 25 Colorado Avenue and to include all board members present this evening, Dr. Stephenson, Mr. Pavlich, Mr. Matt Smith, Ms. Imus, Mr. Quon, Mr. Culver & Mr. Wesley (for technical support), and Mrs. Laird;" and "in accordance with C.R.S. 24-6-402 (4)(b), Conference with Attorney for the purpose of receiving legal advice, to discuss the Montrose Classical Academy Charter contract and the Vista

RE-1J BOARD APPROVES MCA CONTRACT, POSTPONES VISTA DECISION *From previous pg*

Charter School Resolution Requesting Release to CSI and to include the following individuals: all Board members present this evening, Dr. Stephenson, Attorney Jon Fero (by Teams), Dr. Kalb, Mr. Pavlich, Mr. Quon, Mr. Culver and Mr. Wesley (for technology support) and Mrs. Laird and

then return to regular session.”

NEW BUSINESS CONTINUED

The Board of Education returned to Regular Session.

The Board voted unanimously to approve the Montrose Classical Academy Charter Contract with revisions. [Attachments are](#)

[included](#) in the meeting packet.

With Balleck and Vincent voting No, the Board voted to postpone [Resolution 11-2025](#)-Release of Vista Charter School to Charter School Institute.

With no further business, the Board of Education voted to adjourn.

OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

TRUMP'S PARDON OF TINA PETERS: FULLY ENFORCEABLE UNDER ARTICLE II

Editor:

On December 11, 2025, President Trump issued a full pardon to Tina Peters, the former Mesa County Clerk serving nine years in Colorado state prison.

Peters' actions, preserving 2020 election records to expose potential vulnerabilities in voting machines tabulating federal ballots, directly implicated the integrity of presidential, Senate, and House elections under Article I, § 4 and Article II, § 1. **This constitutes an "Offence against the United States,"** placing her case squarely within presidential clemency authority.

Article II, Section 2, Clause 1 grants the President power to pardon "Offences against the United States." Alexander Hamilton in Federalist No. 74 emphasized its breadth to mitigate excessive severity. The Supreme Court has affirmed this as **"unlimited"** except for impeachment (Ex parte Garland, 71 U.S. 333 (1866)), *extending to every offense and restoring innocence "as if he had never committed the offence."*

Ex parte Grossman (267 U.S. 87 (1925)) held pardons reach offenses attacking

federal dignity, even in non-federal forums. Ex parte Wells (59 U.S. 307 (1856)) upheld commutation absent federal statutory crime.

Historical practice confirms nationwide effect:

-Washington pardoned Whiskey Rebellion leaders for [Pennsylvania violations](#).

-Lincoln and Johnson amnestied Confederate [crimes prosecutable by states](#); none defied.

-Grant pardoned New York election officials and Susan B. Anthony for [state voting offenses tied to federal elections](#).

-Ford's Nixon pardon barred [state prosecution](#) for Watergate conduct.

Courts cannot "fetter or embarrass" this power (Schick v. Reed, 419 U.S. 256 (1974); Burdick v. United States, 236 U.S. 79 (1915)).

In November 2025, Trump re-pardoned J6 defendant Dan Wilson, erasing a federal firearms sentence discovered via J6 investigation, treating it as "fruit of the poison tree." Peters' convictions stem solely from [securing federal election evidence](#).

Colorado SOS Jena Griswold stated: "Tina

Peters was convicted... for state crimes in a state Court. Trump has no constitutional authority to pardon her. His assault is not just on our democracy, but on states' rights and the American constitution." CO AG Weiser claimed: "One of the most basic principles... is that states have independent sovereignty... The idea that a president could pardon someone tried and convicted in state court has no precedent... and will not hold up."

Griswold and Weiser ignore Grossman, Wells, and unbroken history where pardons bound states for dual offenses. Peters endures solitary confinement since early December 2025 after filing a grievance, strip searches and forced evaluations.

Michael J Badagliacco, "MJB"

Michael is a father of five, grandfather of three, United States Air Force veteran, international recording artist, and Editor-in-Chief of the [Colorado DOGE Report](#). He is passionate about the United States of America and the founders' genius in crafting the Constitution.



LESLIE GORE WITH CENTURY 21 ELEVATED PROUDLY PRESENTS

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LESLIE GORE



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OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

IT WAS THE SEAT ALL ALONG

Communist/Maoist tactics that have no place in a Constitutional Republic

Editor:

A Pattern Emerging in Montrose County

In Montrose, a group of radical activists has increasingly turned to recalls to challenge elected officials. Following the successful recall of County Commissioner Scott Mijares on November 4, 2025, speculation has arisen about potential efforts targeting the Montrose County School District (MCSD) board. The Mijares recall centered on concerns over transparency, fiscal management, and leadership decisions, though supporters of Mijares viewed it as an attempt to override voter choices.

Targeting the Newly Elected School Board

Recent elections installed new members on the MCSD board, aligning with the preferences of Montrose County voters. Some activists now appear poised to challenge them. Phoebe Benziger, a former board member and key figure in the commissioner recall, addressed the board at its December 9 meeting, stating, "I am

watching you." Many interpret this as a warning of possible recall if the board pursues policies diverging from certain viewpoints. From another perspective, the comment might seem like a routine caution, but given Benziger's role in prior recall efforts, it carries added weight.

The Danger of Overriding Elections

Recalls are intended for serious misconduct, not political disagreements. Employing them to remove officials over differing views undermines democratic principles. Voters selected these representatives, and repeated challenges can foster instability. Critics of conservative policies as "threats to democracy" may need to reflect on tactics that disrupt election results. These are classic Communist/Maoist tactics that have no place in a Constitutional Republic. These ties have been definitively established and links provided in my [previously published articles](#) archived at [codogereport.com](#).

Outside Influences and Power Dynamics

Out-of-state dark money funding, including links to organizations associated with George Soros, while refuted by some in the press, have been verified as established definitive ties and not simply citizen driven actions. There is a much larger agenda at stake that includes disruption of traditional values. The pattern indicates a focused group aiming to influence seats through ongoing pressure rather than accepting electoral outcomes. Montrose County deserves stable leadership that respects the voters' voice. Persistent recalls divert attention from community priorities and diminish trust in the democratic process.

Michael J Badagliacco, "MJB"

Michael is a father of five, grandfather of three, United States Air Force veteran, international recording artist, and Editor-in-Chief of the Colorado DOGE Report. He is passionate about the United States of America and the founders' genius in crafting the Constitution.



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“TRANSPARENCY IS THE NAME OF THE GAME” From pg 1

Cash Flow Report – November 2025

Turner said, “Cash from water sales is \$50,000 above 2024. One and a half million above sales over 2024. Interest income is down slightly. Expenses are looking really well. We’ll be coming in at budget, or under budget.”

Process Control – November 2025

Turner said, “Raw water was down a little, PH up a little, water quality tracking well.”

Legal Update – Attorney James Silvestro (Zoom).

Silvestro said, “It’s very light on legal, typical at the end of the year. Items are Update on the Garver Contract Risk Assessment, and DA Davidson Contract to Project 7.”

Continued 2026 Budget Hearing

Chair Ripp re-opened the Public Hearing. There was no public comment.

Turner said, “Greg [Swartz] helped work through this. We need to show you \$3.2 million in loans. Line items E and F, \$6 million in capital construction. Rather than anything going to resiliency, that would be in line F.”

Matt Miles said, “That six million line item, valve replacement from the last meeting [discussion]? It was two or three million at the last meeting, now it’s six million.”

Turner responded noting the CIP Plan, a combination of existing plan and the resiliency plan, and the Fairview study that pushed some repair work from 2027 to 2026.

Matt Miles said, “We earmark something now, for something in the future? The six million — I don’t understand why we throw that number out there. The capital improvement of three million construction is more appropriate.”

Swartz (on Zoom) did not want to limit the board’s authority and suggested approving three million now and three million subject to board approval. There was agreement to modify the attachment. Budget Resolution 2025-5, as amended, was approved. Appropriation of Funds, Resolution 2025-6, was approved.

Resiliency Program - Program Manager Engineer Rick Huggins.

Background:

The Resiliency Project, which was first presented in 2023, is to build a second water treatment plant south of Montrose that would have direct access to Ridgway Reservoir. The Project 7 Board turned the project over to a contracted management team — Program Manager Engineer Rick Huggins, D.A. Davidson Representative Greg Swartz (financial); Deputy Project Manager Miles Graham, and Jessica Johnson, a Garver employee.

Huggins said, “With two members missing there is no workshop. We’re just having discussion and will do the workshop in January. This [handout] is the current outline on the Risk Study.”

Matt Miles said, “The handout we get when we come in. Can we get it before we come into a meeting?”

Huggins said, “My goal was to introduce this for you to take home, and we’ll use it in the workshop. It’s the basis for what we will do in January.”

Matt Miles said, “The Risk Assessment was for \$30 million for the plant and \$30 million for the pipe. When did it turn into a \$185 million project?”

David Bries said, “I don’t want to be constrained by prior things in the previous [2013] Risk Assessment.”

Huggins gave a quick summary of the 2013 Risk Assessment, which identified 20 critical asset groups and estimated a risk score. However, Huggins was not confident with the data used in some scores. Referencing the five highest risk scores, Huggins said, “Option one and five have the most value. Option five kept everyone happy and at a lower cost. I’ve added changes. Over the last 13 years things have changed.”

Bries said, “Risk is not water quality issues.”

Matt Miles said, “When you use the term ‘resiliency,’ are you using that interchangeably with ‘emergency’? I think we need to decide if this is an emergency, or [is this] to augment the current plant. I think that needs to be clarified. Why can’t we draw out of the river? Sucking it out of the river solves so many problems.”

Huggins provided information on previous scenarios. He said, “The board di-

rected us to move forward [with second plant option].”

Matt Miles said, “Once again, supply the plant with water. We need to exhaust pulling water out of the river.”

Speaking to Matt Miles, who joined the board on Sept. 25, Ripp said, “Do you want me to explain our thought process?”

Huggins said, “It started as a Tri-County initiative. To take pressure off their pump stations. We wanted to take the load off pumping in the valley.”

Matt Miles said, “We should not exclude anyone from discussions. We’re now looking at \$185 million, plus differed maintenance at Project 7 [current facility]. It doesn’t add that Delta doesn’t have a way to get water.”

Huggins said, “From an engineering perspective, we can get water to Delta.”

Huggins said that he had some long-term solutions, to which Matt Miles said, “Get the documents to us before the meeting.”

Matt Miles recounted a situation in a previous Executive Session where board members were given a financial document, and according to former Chipeta Representative John McCollum, they were not allowed to leave the meeting with the document. Matt Miles said, “Transparency is the name of the game. You can’t trust your board members? You can’t leave the room with information?”

Huggins explained that he was in contract negotiations and if the information got out it would hurt the negotiations.

Attorney Silvestro was asked to weigh in on the rules pertaining to Executive Sessions. He said, “It makes sense to me with contract negotiations.”

Bries said, “I think there are some other options. What’s our cost for a true emergency [not for resiliency]? The bare minimum.” Without going into detail, Bries threw out some options that he thinks should be considered.

Randy Meaker said, “What is the potential for [population] growth? The city promotes growth. How long will the plant continue to provide enough?”

Huggins said, “There is a good amount of buffer.”

Bries said, “It will be 20 years before we

“TRANSPARENCY IS THE NAME OF THE GAME”

From previous pg

need it. We are not seeing grass lawns, but little patches of green and xeriscape. There are a lot of things going on. City water demands are going down. We are a little up in 2025, but down since 2020.”

Ripp said, “The question we need to ponder, are we talking about some emergency problem, or are we planning for the future of the valley? I did not think we were just talking about emergencies.”

Bries said, “But we weren’t looking at \$185 million. Invest in something that takes care of emergencies.”

Water Consultant Amy Housh joined the meeting on Zoom. She said, “I’ll attend the meeting in January for the two to three hour workshop.” The workshop, which will be held at 3pm on January 22, will include a brief business meeting. Attendees will be board members and their alternates, one staff member from each entity, and members of the public. The public will not participate in the discussion.

Old Business:

- The CFO position has been put out with an RFP for early 2026.
- Per request of Matt Miles, the board was emailed costs associated with the contracted management team.

New Agenda Items:

- Christmas bonuses** for employees. Approved unanimously.
- Insurance settlement** from wind damage on 9/10/2025. Approved a contribution to a neighbor for his out-of-pocket expenses not covered by insurance.
- Letter from the City of Montrose.** The letter was not released for public information.

Adjourned

Project 7 Background:

Established on September 29, 1977, the Project 7 Water Authority is a cooperative among seven water entities that provide domestic water to the municipalities and rural areas of the Uncompahgre River Val-



The Project 7 Water Authority held their last board meeting of 2025 on Dec. 11. In the absence of Chair Jake Foreman, Vice Chair Vicki Ripp served as Chair. (L to R) Water Authority Manager Adam Turner and Tri-County Board Representative Vicki Ripp. Photo by Gail Marvel.

ley.

The seven entities that represent the Project 7 Water Authority are:

The City of Montrose

The City of Delta

The Town of Olathe

The Tri-County Water Conservancy District

The Chipeta Water District

The Menoken Water District

The Uncompahgre Valley Water Users Association (non-voting member).

Project 7 Board meetings, which are held on the fourth Thursday of every month, begin at 4:30 p.m. Meetings are open to the public and are available on Zoom.

Board packet materials, which are unavailable to the public, are circulated to board members prior to the meeting.

Project 7 Contact Information:

The seven entities that represent the Project 7 Water Authority are:

The City of Montrose David Bries 970-240-1484 dbries@cityofmontrose.org

The City of Delta Mayor Kevin Carlson 970 874-7566 kevin@cityofdeltanet

The Town of Olathe Mayor Jake Foreman 970 323- 5601 ja-

cob.foreman@geocities.com

The Tri-County Water Conservancy District Vicki Ripp 970 874-5127 info@tricountywater.org

The Chipeta Water District Matt Miles

The Menoken Water District Randy Meaker 970 249-5118

The Uncompahgre Valley Water Users Association (non-voting member).

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MURA CONSIDERS PROJECT #TWO FOR DOWNTOWN From pg 1

the proposed Project # 2, slated for the Downtown corridor and extended to the West Main Trailhead.

Bell said, "The thing we are discussing will have an impact on the Downtown area. We are looking at Downtown for revitalization; looking at options that could be put in place as a financial incentive. The entirety of Montrose is the URA, but money is recaptured in specific areas. Colorado Springs has dozens of these. It's a good investment for people to reinvest in our core."

Bell continued, "City Council would make the final decision. The decision does not come from the MURA [board], but we want everyone included in the discussion. We will be going through the same process with all [taxing] entities going to their boards."

City Business Development Anthony Russo said, "There are two things. There is NO increase in taxes currently being paid. Another difference, in the original project there was a lot of empty land. In downtown we have buildings in place. Some things we will look at a little differently. There is not much need for horizontal [streets, sidewalks] improvements. Things that happen to buildings is to keep them from falling apart."

Proposed Boundary

The proposed boundary includes Main Street, plus one block north and south off Main Street, west on West Main to the old Arcadia Park property, and south to include Recla Metals and the old Bullock Power Plant. The proposed plan excludes the West Main Trailer Court.

Bell said, "The Arcadia piece currently in not in the city. We do believe there could be possible annex into the city. Possible incentives to clean it up. Everything around it is in the city. The intention is to have a good solid conversation with them. The Arcadia piece is more complicated when buildings are on the ground. It is blighted and estimated \$1 to \$1 ½ million just to clean it up."

The Arcadia property has been identified as potential for residential housing. Using a hypothetical, Bell said, "Arcadia owners could say they want to annex because



The old Bullock Power Plant is now owned by the City of Montrose. The plant, located south of West Main, is an example of blighted property that has potential for redevelopment. Mirror file photo.

they would like to redevelop. In the URA we really don't like houses because they don't generate revenue. [Look at] a mixed use commercial project. The [redevelopment] plan, what do you want to do? The city would discuss zoning, water, and sewer before coming to MURA. We would fine-tune before coming to the URA."

Russo said, "The formula for Project # 2 may be different from Project #1.

Dave Frank said, "Horizontal infrastructure was in Project #1. Rethink our modeling [for Project # 2]." Examples of items that developers could avail themselves of in Project # 2 include plumbing, electrical, fire suppression, updated facades, and historical preservation.

Speaking to funding, Bell said, "We will go with the most conservative risk for public reasons. The city has no more money to loan. We could go out to bond."

Frank said, "Before we had a pool of money to start."

An audience member pointed out that waiting on sales tax revenue was not

much of an incentive to developers. The funding mechanism used at River Landing, where funding was provided upfront by Developer Matt Miles, was discussed. Montrose County Assessor Brad Hughes reminded the board that the former Downtown Development Authority (DDA), 2010-2019, failed to generate funds.

Hughes said of the new proposal, "It's going to take some big projects."

Bell said, "The DDA sales tax side was coming back, but the DDA property tax didn't come around."

Hughes said, "I think it's smart that we are not funding up-front. I'd like to see some big projects because they are easier [from the assessor's point of view] to evaluate."

Developer Scott Stryker asked if the incentives could be presented in a spreadsheet format.

Parcels of land in Project #2 area include city properties, such as parking lots, which could be redeveloped. Laughter erupted when Russo emphatically said, "No announcements are being made today!"

MURA CONSIDERS PROJECT #TWO FOR DOWNTOWN From previous pg

Reed said, "The decision is up to the City Council, but we want feedback from MURA."

Otto said, "I suppose as long as we were not talking about bonding up-front."

Jim Haugsness said, "The West Main Trailer Court is really blighted."

It was explained that the city does not want to attract a developer who would buy the trailer court and then force residents to move. Russo said, "We can go back later. We want to protect the residents of that area. The city does not want to displace low income people. We would bring it in only if it made sense."

Reed asked for a consensus to move forward. Hughes cautioned that the School District and the County Commissioners need to be consulted. Hughes said, "They

contributed [property tax revenue] to the last project, but you need to see if they are willing to pledge their property tax."

Bell said he had talked to Montrose County Commissioner Sue Hansen, and they are setting up a joint meeting. He will be contacting the School District.

Russo said, "This is the first dialogue to get a head-nod [with MURA]."

Bell said, "This will only impact businesses if they want it to impact them [ability to apply for MURA incentives]."

Adjournment

Background: The Montrose Urban Renewal Authority (MURA) was formed in late 2016 by a resolution of the Montrose City Council. Generally speaking, the MURA Board oversees the Colorado Outdoors Urban Renewal Area and administers the

Tax Increment Financing (TIF), the funding mechanism to finance public infrastructure in the MURA. The property, which covers 158 acres along the river corridor between the Justice Center on the north and West Main on the south, is being developed by the Dragoo's Mayfly Outdoors. The Dragoo Developers are son David Dragoo and father Doug Dragoo.

The 10-member MURA board is made up of Montrose City Council (five members), City Manager Bill Bell (Executive Director), Brad Hughes (Montrose County), Jim Haugsness (At-Large Representative), Tom West (Montrose School District) and Ken Otto (Special Districts Representative). The six-member city constituency holds the controlling interest and actions of the MURA Board.



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OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

THANKFULLY, DEMOCRATS NO LONGER CONTROL THE NARRATIVE

Editor:

It is actually kind of sad --- the Democrats keep trying out new narratives every couple of days. Last week it was about blowing up narcoterrorist drug boats. The Trump administration is doing what previous presidents have failed to do; namely, use lethal force to eliminate one of the most urgent and deadly threats to the American people --- a threat that kills about 100,000 Americans every year. Democrats are so consumed with Trump hatred that they are now siding with cartel killers over their own citizens. That action is even more fraudulent given what we witnessed under the last two Democrat presidents.

The same people who now want to put our military people on trial for rightfully killing foreign terrorists were silent when Biden hastily launched a drone strike that murdered ten innocent civilians --- including a U.S. aid worker and seven children -- after overseeing the most shameful military withdrawal in our history and leaving \$7 billion of military equipment in the hands of the Taliban. Even worse was Obama launching over 600 drone strikes killing hundreds of innocent civilians, including children. Many of those attacks were "double taps," where a first missile was fired at a wedding or funeral gathering, followed by a second missile 20 minutes later to kill the first responders.

Put a narrative out there, double down, and accuse Trump and Hegseth of anything that comes to mind.

The Democrats' hair was on fire over the Epstein files they suddenly demanded be released after languishing under Biden. Then, all of a sudden, no one cared because it became obvious there was nothing they could remotely use against Trump, and the documents largely bagged Democrats. Never mind, on to the next narrative. Democrats and their media flunkies have only one plan and that is to resist Trump. No policy. No coherent sales pitches. Just tantrums and more narratives. Democrats are not offering any policy ideas to attract American citizens, but are working overtime to come up with ideas to make the lives of illegal alien mur-

derers and terrorist drug traffickers better. In the Dem echo chamber, those people are the only ones deserving of their sympathy. In their arrogance, Democrats have the conviction that they are always right, even when they are hopelessly going against the will and best interests of the American people. That arrogance comes from the fact that they have always controlled the media, and therefore the narrative. While it is true they still control most of the "mainstream" media, no one pays any attention to the New York Times or the Washington Post anymore (or the Montrose Press or GJ Sentinel). Thankfully, Democrats no longer control the narrative. Americans understand perfectly well that Trump is right to do everything possible to return America to the country it was before the Biden invasion of 20 million unvetted illegal migrants.

Once Democrats no longer controlled the narrative, the American people were shocked to learn what is really going on in this country. We were once proud in thinking that we sent billions of our taxpayer dollars in the form of foreign aid to the poor and oppressed around the world. Then the young volunteers of DOGE exposed the rats that have played the American taxpayers for fools for decades. We learned that very little of that foreign aid actually went to the poor and needy. Most went to NGOs that were little more than left-wing slush funds benefiting their wealthy owners and the Democrat party. DOGE also revealed shocking theft of taxpayer money to pay for government employee luxuries. We learned that ripping off taxpayers is big business in Washington, and everyone in the swamp gets their cut. We also learned that Democrat bureaucrats defined the "poor and needy" to include such things as pottery classes in Morocco, atheism in Nepal, trans comic books in Peru, and biological weapons labs in Wuhan, China.

It also became blatantly clear that there is a two-tiered justice system in American --- one for Democrats and one for the rest of us. It is now no secret that Obama lied about Obamacare, used the IRS and Jus-

tice Department to target political opponents, and illegally spied on thousands of Americans. He shipped billions in unmarked money to Iran's leaders, and dictatorially stopped an investigation into a terrorist drug-running trade to appease Iran. He also bragged about all the people he killed with drones. The Clintons physically and emotionally abused a number of women, lined the pockets of their foundation with massive kickbacks, and paid \$10 million for a fake document to destroy Trump. Don't even get me started on the Biden crime family.

Last week we learned about the massive scandal in Minnesota's welfare system on governor Walz's watch. It turns out that the darling of today's Democrats, Ilhan Omar actually introduced some of the legislation that enabled the fraud. The very congresswoman whose district was ground zero for the billion-dollar fraud introduced the policy that made the fraud possible and cashed in politically and financially. She was responsible to ensure guardrails were put in place to prevent fraud, but then had the audacity to complain about the lack of those guardrails. I am sure Democrats will come up with a narrative that will explain how Omar's net worth exploded 46,254% from \$65,000 to \$30,000,000 since her election to Congress in 2019. They might also want to explain that she didn't really commit immigration fraud by marrying her own brother to get him into the country.

Every week we see more examples of Democrats partaking in and supporting crime, fraud, and disdain for America. In Democrats' Depraved New World, crime is excused and those exposing the fraud are despised and mocked.

Last week the former DEA CFO under Obama was arrested for laundering a Mexican cartel's money. The director of Black Lives Matter Oklahoma City was indicted for funneling donations meant for charities into her own account. Now that Democrats can't control the narrative, it is very apparent that Democrat fraud and corruption is now the norm rather than the exception.

Ed Henrie, Montrose

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OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

SECRETARY GRISWOLD'S RECKLESS ASSAULT ON ELECTION INTEGRITY

Editor:

Colorado Secretary of State Jena Griswold's recent statement rejecting the U.S. Department of Justice's request for voter registration data is not just misguided; it is a blatant act of partisan obstruction that undermines the very foundation of the American Republic. By declaring that the DOJ "can take a hike" and lacks any "legal right" to this information, Griswold has elevated political theater over her sworn duty to uphold federal law. Her rhetoric, laced with unfounded accusations of election subversion, dismisses a straightforward federal effort to verify citizenship and ensure only eligible Americans vote. This is not about "sensitive" data or federal overreach. It is about enforcing the law to protect the integrity of our elections, and Griswold's refusal endangers that trust.

The Mischaracterization of "Sensitive" Data

Griswold labels the requested information, full names, dates of birth, residential addresses, and partial Social Security or driver's license numbers, as "sensitive voting information." This framing is deliberately alarmist and ignores reality. The federal government already maintains vast databases through agencies like the Social Security Administration and Department of Homeland Security that include similar details for millions of citizens. The DOJ's request is not an invasion of privacy but a targeted validation exercise. Federal law mandates that only U.S. citizens vote in federal elections, yet noncitizen voting erodes public confidence when it occurs.

This data is precisely what enables cross-checks against federal citizenship records via tools like the Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) program. Expanded under recent executive actions, SAVE allows bulk verification to "scrub aliens from voter rolls," as DHS has stated. Far from exposing voters to harm, sharing this information safeguards the process by confirming eligibility. Griswold's portrayal of it as a tool for "undermining elections" is fearmongering that prioritizes partisan narratives over factual compliance. Colorado voters deserve better than a leader who treats routine verification as a con-

spiracy.

Solid Legal Ground for the DOJ's Authority

Griswold's claim that the DOJ has no legal right to this data is flatly wrong. Federal statutes explicitly empower the department to demand and inspect voter registration records to enforce election integrity. The Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2002 requires states to maintain accurate statewide voter registration lists and cooperate in verification efforts, including data matching with federal databases to confirm eligibility. HAVA's Title III mandates that states develop centralized, interactive databases and enter agreements for verifying voter data, precisely to prevent fraud and ensure compliance. Complementing HAVA is the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA), which charges the Attorney General with overseeing state voter roll maintenance and authorizes demands for records to assess adherence. The Civil Rights Act of 1960 further bolsters this authority, allowing the DOJ to request "records relating to any application, registration... or other act requisite to voting" upon providing a basis and purpose, which it has done here: validating citizenship per federal mandates. These laws preempt state privacy concerns when federal election standards are at stake, as courts have affirmed in similar disputes.

Griswold's office previously complied with a May 2025 DOJ request by sharing public data, yet now balks at unredacted details essential for deeper verification. This selective cooperation exposes her stance as politically motivated, not legally defensible. By ignoring these statutes, she risks court intervention, as seen in the DOJ's successful suits against other non-compliant states.

A Pattern of Lawsuits and National Accountability

The DOJ has not hesitated to act against obstruction. Since May 2025, it has sued at least 14 states, including California, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Pennsylvania, New Hampshire, Maine, Oregon, Delaware, Maryland, New Mexico, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington, for refusing to provide voter rolls. These cases cite the same HAVA, NVRA, and Civil

Rights Act violations, demanding unredacted lists to enable citizenship checks. Colorado's defiance places it squarely in this lineup, inviting litigation that could force compliance and waste taxpayer dollars on avoidable battles.

This wave of suits underscores a national crisis: too many states, often led by Democrats, resist federal oversight under the guise of privacy. Yet the Constitution balances state administration with congressional authority over federal elections. As Attorney General Pam Bondi has warned, "States that continue to defy federal voting laws interfere with our mission of ensuring that Americans have accurate voter lists." Griswold's November 18 letter, co-signed by nine other secretaries, demanding DOJ transparency was a stalling tactic; the agencies' non-response does not erase the legal imperative.

Partisan Obstruction at the Expense of Democracy

Griswold's vitriolic dismissal, accusing the "Trump Department of Justice" of plotting to "hurt the American people," reveals the true driver: blind partisanship. This is not about protecting Coloradans; it is about shielding a narrative that federal integrity efforts are inherently suspect. By framing compliance as complicity in subversion, she sows division and erodes trust in elections, the very harm she claims to prevent.

Colorado's voters, like all Americans, rely on leaders who prioritize law over ideology. Griswold's stance invites chaos, potentially allowing ineligible votes to slip through while tying up resources in court. It is time for her to reverse course, honor federal mandates, and affirm that clean rolls benefit everyone. Anything less is a betrayal of her office and the citizens she serves. **For someone vying for the job of Attorney General of Colorado, her blatant disregard for the law is stunning!**
Michael J Badagliaccio, "MJB"

Michael is a father of five, grandfather of three, United States Air Force veteran, international recording artist, and Editor-in-Chief of the [Colorado DOGE Report](#). He is passionate about the United States of America and the founders' genius in crafting the Constitution.

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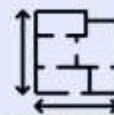
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RED HAWK GIRLS REMAIN UNDEFEATED

Montrose Red Hawks 69, Basalt Longhorns 8



teams scored 13 points in period number 2. The Red Hawks then cranked up their offense and outscored the Fury 39 to 16 down the stretch.

Senior Mayce Oberg led all scorers with 15 points while the total team effort saw 10 Red Hawks dent the scorebook. The rebounding looked very similar to the scoring as 10 Red Hawks captured rebounds. The team handed out 14 assists and came up with a dozen steals while turning the basketball over only 9 times.

MONTROSE RED HAWKS 54, GLENWOOD SPRINGS DEMONS 17

The Montrose Red Hawks continued their domination of the Glenwood Springs tournament by outdistancing the homestanding Demons by the score of 54 to 17, to run their overall record to 6 wins and 0 losses after two weeks of combat.

The Red Hawks jumped out to a commanding lead in the first period of play as they outscored the Demons by 15 points, 21-6.

The second period saw the Red Hawks virtually double up the Demons 11 to 6 for a 32 to 12 half-time advantage. The Red Hawks then outscored the Demons 22 to 5 throughout the second half of action, making the final score the Red Hawks 54, the Glenwood Springs Demons 17.

NEXT UP FOR THE RED HAWKS:

The Montrose Red Hawks will play host to several teams at the Timberline/Black Canyon Tournament to be played at the Montrose Field house next weekend. The Red Hawks open up their third tournament in a row by hosting Pagosa Springs. The Pueblo Central Wildcats and the Glenwood Springs Demons round out the field with games on Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

Ladies in action. Photo by Cliff Dodge.

By Cliff Dodge

MONTROSE—The undefeated Montrose Red Hawks (3 wins, 0 losses) continued their winning ways as they plowed through all competitors at the Glenwood Springs Tournament last weekend. The Red Hawks were basically unchallenged as their offense never slowed down throughout the three games and their defense slammed the door to any attempt at even a small rally.

The first victim of the Red Hawks' onslaught was the Basalt Longhorns, who managed a game low of 8 points while the Red Hawks put up 69 points. The Longhorns managed 6 points in the initial period while hanging 28, and then going into the halftime leading by 36 to 6. The second half saw the Red Hawks out score the Longhorns 33 to 2. The second half was shortened by a running clock due to the

huge scoring imbalance.

Senior Maggie Legg led all scorers with 17 points, while Mayce Oberg chipped in with 13 points. This was a total team effort as nine Red Hawks hit the scoring column. The rebounding department was also a team event as the Red Hawks had ten players among the 31 caroms credited to the Red Hawks. The Red Hawks passed out 14 assists, had 15 steals and only turned the basketball over 3 times.

MONTROSE RED HAWKS 62, FORGE CHRISTIAN FURY 33

The Montrose Red Hawks took on the Forge Christian Fury in the second of three games in Glenwood Springs. The game was much closer than the 61-point rampage over the Basalt Longhorns. The Red Hawks jumped out to a 10-4 lead after the initial period and then maintained the 6-point advantage as both

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RED HAWKS BOYS WIN 1, LOSE 2 AT GLENWOOD SPRINGS TOURNAMENT

Montrose Red Hawks 45, Wheat Ridge Farmers 31



Red Hawks Look to score. Photo by Cliff Dodge.

By Cliff Dodge

GLENWOOD SPRINGS-The tournament started well for the Montrose Red Hawks as they manhandled the Wheat Ridge Farmers by the score of 45-31 on Thursday evening in Glenwood Springs. The Hawks ran out to a 7-0 lead at the end of the first period of action. Montrose led 20-15 at the close of the first half. The Red Hawks turned loose the offense down the stretch and outscored the Farmers 25 to 16 for the 45-21 victory.

The Red Hawks were led in scoring by Senior CJ Rocco with 15 points while Junior Ryan Pankey chipped in a dozen. Sophomore Bodhi Schafer and Senior Lane Pressler added 8 and 7 points respectively. Junior Ryan Pankey led all rebounders with 15 boards. Ridge Smith chipped in with 7 boards while Rocco and Pressler each added 4 to the Red Hawks total. The Red Hawks passed out 8 assists while capturing 16 steals. The Red Hawks turned the basketball over 24 times.

PEAK TO PEAK PUMAS 63, MONTROSE RED HAWKS 33

The going got very difficult on Friday evening as the Red Hawks ran into a buzz saw as the Peak to Peak Pumas outplayed Red Hawks 63 to 33, a 30-point loss. The Pumas raced out to a 21-13 lead after one period of play. Things went downhill from there as the Pumas outscored the Red Hawks in every quarter to end up with a 30-point loss.

Cache Oberg, a freshman, led all Red Hawk scorers with 10 points. Sophomore Bodhi Schafer chipped in with 8 points while Junior Ridge Smith added 6. Senior CJ Rocco led all rebounders with 6 rebounds while Junior Ryan Pankey added 5 caroms. In all, 9 Red Hawks contributed to the rebounding total of 28 boards. The Red Hawks passed out only 5 assists, grabbed only 4 steals while turning the basketball over 20 times.

FORGE CHRISTIAN FURY 61, MONTROSE RED HAWKS 41

The third and final game of the Glenwood Springs Tournament featured the Red Hawks and the Forge Christian Fury which the Fury won by 20 points, 61 to 41. The

Fury hit the gas pedal and never let up as they outscored the Red Hawks 21 to 8 in the initial period. The Red Hawks found themselves looking up at a 27 to 13 score at the halfway point of the game. The Red Hawks actually outscored the Fury in the second half, 28 to 24, to make the final score 61 to 41.

Freshman Cache Oberg led all Red Hawk scorers with 13 points while senior Lane Pressler added 10 points to the score book. Seniro C. J. Rocco added 8 to the red Hawks total. Oberg and Pankey led all rebounders with 8 and 6 caroms. The Red Hawks passed out 12 assists, had 4 steals and 6 blocked shots.

NEXT UP FOR THE RED HAWKS:

The Red Hawks will host their third set of three basketball games this coming week-end. The Timberline/Black Canyon tournament will be held at the Montrose fieldhouse on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. The Red Hawks will play host to the Pagosa Springs Pirates on Thursday and then play Pueblo Central and Glenwood Springs on Friday and Saturday.

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OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

COLORADO DEMOCRATS CHOSE TO GO AFTER A PERSON WHO PUSHED FOR ELECTION SECURITY

Editor:

Hallelujah! Finally, justice for Tina Peters! On Dec 11, 2025 President Trump announced on Truth Social he has granted a full pardon to Tina Peters, the former Mesa County clerk who has served 14 months of a nine year prison sentence just for trying to do her job by preserving evidence as required that showed why Colorado's voting systems can't be trusted. Violent criminals, some illegals, who are attacking innocent Americans should be locked up instead, but are released over and over by Left Wing judges. Wouldn't it be appropriate if some of them would be sentenced to nine years in prison? But instead Colorado Democrats chose to go after a person who pushed for election security. They chose instead to prosecute anyone they could find who wanted safe and secure elections. President Trump called Peters a patriot who simply wanted to make sure elections were fair and honest. But "fair and honest" words are not in the Democrat Party's vocabulary. So, Tina Peters sat in a Colo. prison for the simple crime of demanding honest elections. Democrats were relentless in their targeting of Tina just for that. And the judge, Matthew Barrett, who was picked for that kangaroo court was nominated by none other than the head of the Denver/Democrat swamp, Governor Polis! Now it all fits!.

The only actions Tina was guilty of were protected under 52 U.S.C.20701 which requires election records to be retained for 22 months following a federal election. Peters acted to preserve that election data that was at risk of being erased during a "software update" ordered by Polis's Colorado Secretary of State Jena Griswold in April 2021. That sounds highly suspicious. Peters arraigned for an expert to oversee the software process and created video and photographic documenta-

tion to comply with federal record keeping requirements. No statute or regulation prohibited Ms. Peters from making the video or taking pictures with her cellphone. And she was within her legal rights to authorize an expert to observe the software upgrade citing Colorado Election Rule 20.5.3(b). But she was arrested anyway on fictitious charges by the Polis Democrat machine just for doing her job. Her 14 months in prison was legally contentious at best. A federal judge admitted Tina raised important constitutional questions about whether a state court punished her for her free speech. Then just hours later Colorado's DOC moved Peters into Isolation Detention Observation forcing her detention in a concrete cell twenty-two hours a day, which was freezing, dirty, devoid of meaningful human contact, lights on around the clock, no yard time and she was told---"this is for your safety!" On top of all that, Tina's health had been seriously deteriorating and was unable to receive proper medical care. That same afternoon, the United States Department of Justice opened a civil rights investigation into Colorado's prisons while a seventy-year-old woman raising serious constitutional claims was put into solitary confinement inside a system under federal investigation. And her only crime was to preserve evidence that showed why Colorado voting systems can't be trusted. The latest Rasmussen poll shows 63% of American voters are concerned that electronic voting systems may allow votes to be changed. Former Venezuelan general Hugo Carvajal Barrios confessed publicly that Smartmatic software was exported to the US to rig elections here the same way they are rigged in Venezuela. That's why state officials, with Polis at the top, were desperate to keep Tina Peters from revealing that information by keeping her locked up in a

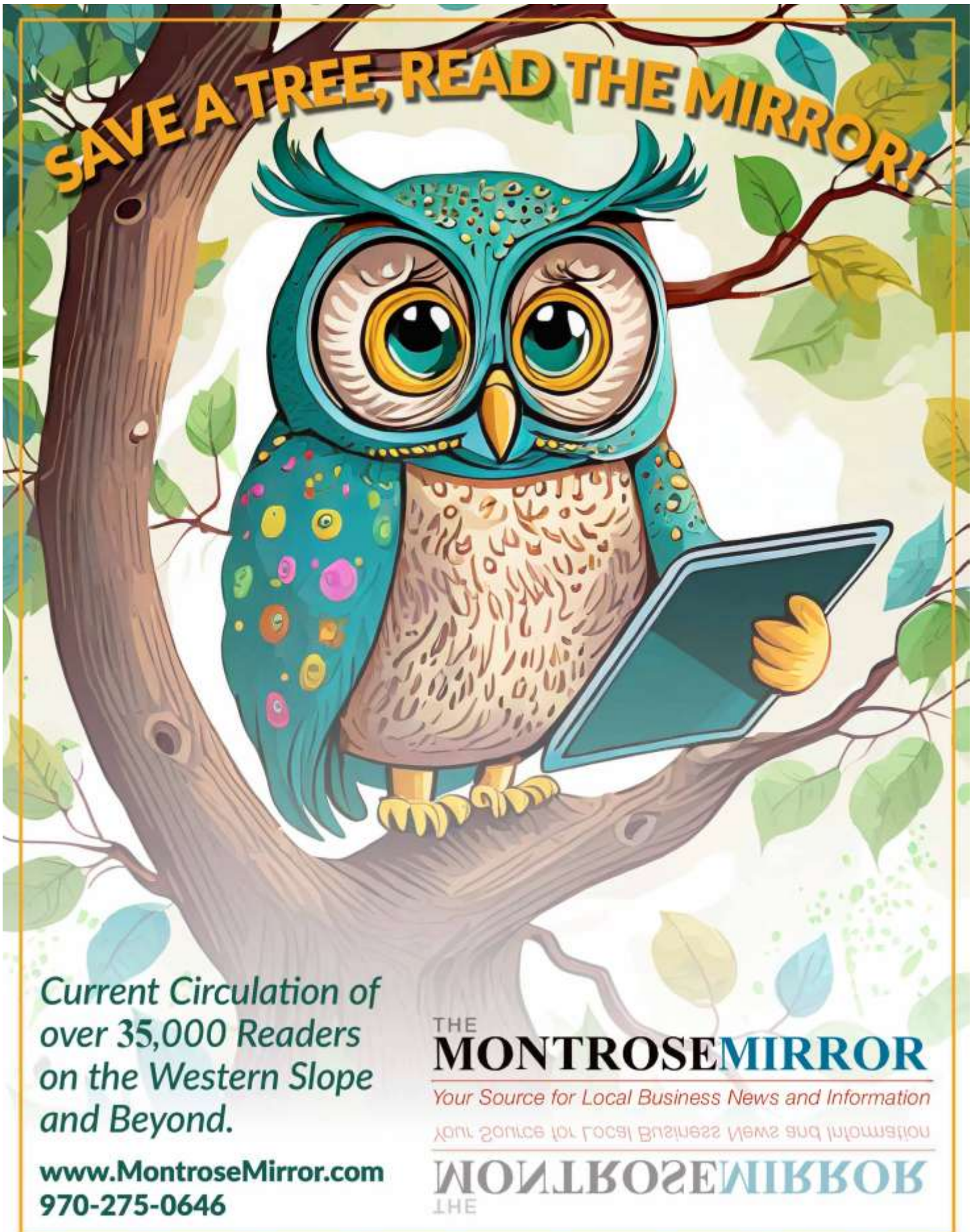
state prison. Speaking out is why state officials attacked Tina Peters in the media and why they were desperate to keep her quiet in state prison.

Voters need to constantly keep in mind what Biden bragged about just days ahead of the 2020 election-----"We have put together, I think, the most extensive and inclusive voter fraud organization in the history of American politics." Mike Lindell had the proof of voter fraud nationwide and attempted to enter that proof in courts, but every time he tried the courts refused to let him present his proof. That's why Leftists can say voter fraud is unproven.

For months Peter's attorneys had argued that the trial judge punished her more harshly because of her speech about election vulnerabilities. The sentencing record contains the judge's own ugly words: Peters was a "charlatan," someone who "undermined trust," whose "damage is as bad if not worse than the physical violence this court sees." (what a stretch of his imagination!). Those remarks were the stated basis for incarceration and denial of bond during appeal. (kinda sounds like the illegal imprisonment of the Jan. 6 protesters). A federal judge wrote that Peters raised important constitutional questions concerning whether the trial court improperly punished her more severely because of her protected First Amendment speech.

Now, thankfully for the love President Trump shows for America, he has righted another despicable dirty trick promulgated by the Colorado Democrat swamp in Denver. Let's hope Tina can recover her health, but sadly she will forever be plagued with nightmares from the Democrat/Marxist iron-fisted false prosecution and imprisonment of a brave and honest patriot.

Jerry Bartholome, Montrose



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COMMUNITY OBITUARIES

TRISTEN GEORGE DIAZ *April 1, 2003 – December 5, 2025*



TRISTEN GEORGE DIAZ, age 22, of Montrose, Colorado, was born on April 1, 2003,

and passed away on Friday, December 5, 2025. Tristen was a beloved son, brother, and friend whose life, though far too short, was filled with love, laughter, and deep connection to those around him.

Tristen was born and raised in Montrose, Colorado, to his loving parents, Elizabeth Diaz (Bridges) and Juan Diaz Jr.

He is survived by his parents and his siblings: Aurora Diaz, Juan Diaz III, Nyssa Diaz, Illeana Diaz, Ysadora Diaz, Athena Diaz, and Nymeria Diaz. He was deeply devoted to his family, especially his siblings, whom he loved fiercely and always protected. Tristen graduated from Montrose High School and later attended Colorado Mesa University.

He was known for his warm and comforting presence, his loyalty, and his ability to make others feel safe and valued. To his family and friends, Tristen was fun-

loving, adventurous, and fiercely loyal — someone who lived life to the fullest and embraced every moment.

He loved traveling and spending time outdoors, always seeking new experiences and hidden trails. Tristen lived a balanced life rooted in family, friendship, and joy, leaving behind countless memories that will forever be cherished.

Though the Lord called him home at a young age, the light and spark Tristen brought into the lives of those he encountered will live on forever.

To his friends: when you travel, explore new places, or find hidden trails, know that Tristen is with you — guiding you, laughing with you, and walking beside you always.

Tristen will be deeply missed and lovingly remembered, forever held in the hearts of those who knew and loved him.

News, if unreported, has no impact.
It might as well have not happened at all.
Thank you for reading The Montrose Mirror.

COMMUNITY OBITUARIES

DEBRA (DEB) DIAN HYATT *February 24, 1953-December 10, 2025*



DEBRA (DEB) DIAN HYATT, 72, passed away peacefully surrounded by family and friends on December 10, 2025, at the Hope West Care Center in Grand Junction Colorado. Deb was born on February 24, 1953, to Helen J Murphy (Harvey) and Boyd Murphy Jr. in Sun Hill West Virginia where she spent most of her childhood before moving to Virginia. In 6th grade, Deb's family moved to [Montrose, Colorado](#). The Murphy family moved back to Virginia for a year and returned to Montrose where Deb graduated from Montrose High School in 1971.

After graduating, Deb joined the workforce at Gibson Discount Center in Montrose.

In 1974, Deb married Harold Bruce Hyatt III (Bruce) where she was a devoted and loving wife for 52 years. Deb worked various jobs including convenient store clerk, maintenance worker at the Black Canyon, school bus driver, and trash truck driver for the City of Montrose, where she retired after 20+ years.

Throughout her years of work, she was right beside her husband supporting the family fruit ranch and outfitting business by either picking, selling, packing fruit, or cooking and cleaning at hunting camp. Deb has the most love and passion for her family friends, and most of all her children.

Deb had many hobbies; church, bingo, playing slot machines, hosting family gatherings, especially at the cabin, yard selling, hunting, fishing, crafting or painting knick-knack items for the friends and family, metal detecting with the Uncompahgre Treasure Hunting Club, riding the side by side, riding horses in the gymkhana in her early years, yard selling, and trying to create new sweet treats.

In all of these adventures, Deb did not meet a stranger and always had friends

around her. Deb had become immersed in church and the Bible. Her bingo family extended from the Elk's Lodge in Montrose to the Legion Hall in Olathe, Deb also loved to host family gatherings at her home in Montrose or her Cabin on the Uncompahgre Plateau. Every Year the Murphy Family gathered in July to have a weekend of fun at the cabin.

Deb is survived by her husband, Harold Bruce Hyatt III; daughters, Trisha Ann (Hyatt) Santonastaso (Mike, husband) and Kristy Lynn (Hyatt) Pittman (Travis, fiancé); son, Kevin Eugene Hyatt (Jodi, wife); son-in-law, Shannon Pittman; grandchildren, Tayllor Lynn Pittman, Dyllan James Pittman, Charles Bruce Hyatt, and Jackson Dale Hyatt; brothers Harold Murphy, Darrel Murphy, and Larry Muphy. She was preceded in death by her grandchild Alexander Boyd Santonastaso, by her parents, Helen and Boyd Murphy and others.

The Celebration of Life will be held in January, with more details to come. Instead of flowers, the family would like to have donations made to either Hope West: 3090 North 12th St, Unit B, Grand Junction CO 81506 or the Uncompahgre Treasure Hunting Club: UTC C/O Don Roderate, 2795 Stoney Creek Lane, Montrose, CO 81401 on behalf of Debra Dian Hyatt.

Now more than ever...

Thank you for reading

THE MONTROSE MIRROR

COMMUNITY OBITUARIES

DAVID KIRK ALEXANDER SR. ***August 1, 1927 — November 30, 2025***



DAVID KIRK ALEXANDER SR. passed away on Sunday November 30th 2025, at the age of 98. Kirk was the son of Robert T. Alexander and Oda Alexander. Born in Telluride in 1927 he was raised in Nor-

wood. At a young age he started running sheep with his father on Wilson Mesa, it was nothing for him to saddle his horse and ride from Norwood to Telluride on a regular basis by himself, spending most of his time in sheep camp as a child.

Kirk graduated from Norwood High in 1945, and joined the Army in 1946. He was honorably discharged in 1947 with a WWII Victory, and an Army of Occupation Medal. Marrying the love of his life Kathleen "Kay" Ray in July of 1949, they settled down in Norwood to raise their three children, David, Karen, Kerry. Taking over his father's ranch in 1960, he would go on to run sheep and/or cattle for the rest of his life. Still spending every summer on Wilson Mesa or in the mountains and basins around Telluride. There wasn't a basin or a trail that he didn't know and have a story about. Ranching was what he loved, his favorite days were those spent in the saddle.

He was asked once what his favorite memory was; "How do you go back over a favorite one when everything you done, you enjoyed it"

Kirk is preceded in death by his father and mother Bob and Oda Alexander, four sisters, Irene Kinion, Helen Heald, Mary Sue Watley and Betsy Davis, along with two brothers, Robert Alexander Jr. and Joseph "Guy" Alexander.

He is survived by his wife Kathleen "Kay" Alexander, with his legacy continuing on through his three children, Dave (Katie) Alexander, Karen Alexander, and Kerry (Cindy) Alexander, 7 grandchildren, and 10 great-grandchildren. All whom brought him great pride and joy.

His stories and laughter will be greatly missed by all who knew and loved him. May we all live as Kirk did, enjoying every moment of everyday and never picking a favorite memory as all of them are our favorite.

SHEILA MARILYNN OBERT (SPICER) ***November 5, 1931 – December 10, 2025***

SHEILA MARILYNN OBERT of Montrose, Colorado passed away on December 10, 2025.

She is survived by her son Allan (Laura) Obert of Greeley, Colorado, her daughter Lauren (Jeff) Riddle of Montrose, Colorado and son Joe (Sandy) Obert of Mohave Valley, Arizona. She has four grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. She is preceded in death by her infant son, Bruce Obert, her husband Gene Obert, her parents Robert and Merle Farnsley Spicer and her brother, Robert Spicer Jr.

Sheila was a volunteer manager at Bonell Good Samaritan Center, Greeley Colorado, for twenty years, retiring in 1996. She enjoyed her family, reading, genealogy, gardening, knitting, volunteering and hiking.

Arrangements and cremation are in care of Crippin Funeral Home in Montrose, CO.

A private family gathering will be held at a later date. In lieu of flowers, the family requests a donation to be made in her honor to the Montrose Botanical Society (Botanical Gardens) or The Shepard's Hand, of Montrose, CO.



ISSUE 552 Dec. 15, 2025

ART & SOL

CELEBRATING BABE FAUSSONE'S 102ND BIRTHDAY!



Babe Faussone celebrates with Tina Lemus and Paul Marcinek at the WHAFV Warrior Center last Thursday.
Photos by CB Williams

By CB Williams

MONTROSE—Last Thursday local veterans showed up at the Montrose Welcome Home Alliance for Veterans Warrior Center to help celebrate Louis “Babe” Faussone’s 102nd birthday.

Babe, the youngest child of Louis and Teresa Faussone, was born in Montrose in 1923, and served in World War II, as did his brother Roy.

“Roy went in about 1940,” Babe said, “I



signed up in 1945, just before I was to be drafted.” He said he spent most of his time in occupied Japan where he “saw things I hoped to never see again.”

He said he and Roy returned to Montrose after the war and in 1946 took over the family farm. They raised sugar beets, grains, and had a commercial dairy, he said.

After decades of being part of the Montrose community, Babe and his late brother Roy created a scholarship for high school graduates through the Montrose Community Foundation <https://montrosecf.org/apply-for-a-scholarship/>. Babe has had a lifetime of reading and learning and also has been a big supporter of the Montrose Regional Library.

Babe said he did not want a big deal

made of his 102nd birthday, but his friends supported him Thursday and joined in cutting into a huge cake thanks to fellow veterans like Paul Marcinek, Mike Davis, Pete Wright and Tina Lemus. Babe said it’s all about the veterans and it was clear Thursday morning that veterans of all ages appreciate and love Babe.

Amy Eifling, WHAFV volunteer coordinator, said Babe “holds court” at a special table each Thursday from 8-10 a.m.

“And his friends take him to lunch often,” she said with a big laugh, “not necessarily because they like him, but because he’s a chick magnet.”

The veterans showing up Thursday each had their own stories, and several had connections to Babe. Mike Davis said he has been helping Babe with things like yardwork, and it appeared he helps in transporting Babe here and there.

Robert Ziegler, combat engineer in Operation Iraqi Freedom 2003, is Babe’s postal carrier.

At a table with Army, Air Force and Navy veterans, one joked, “We come here and can sit together because we aren’t in uniform.” There is a camaraderie here at the Warrior Center that goes beyond a birthday party and service years.

Each veteran there had their own story, like Screaming Eagle Todd Larson who served as a medic. Or Tina Lemus the marine. Mark Lavertew was in the Navy during Desert Storm, Stan Hoover in the Army.

Continued next pg

CELEBRATING BABE FAUSSONE'S 102ND BIRTHDAY! From previous pg



Above and bottom right, Betty Hayes, Montrose's 101-year-old Rosie the Riveter, dances at the recent Blue Jean Ball. Photo by C.B. Williams.

The veterans gather here to celebrate people like Babe, and people like 101-year-old Betty Hayes, who served as a Rosie the Riveter during WWII. Betty, who volunteers each Monday morning at the



Robert Ziegler, veteran and USPS postal carrier. Photo by C.B. Williams.

Warrior Center, was out dancing Nov. 7 at the WHAFV Blue Jean Ball fundraiser.

Betty and Babe are Warrior Center treasures, according to Eifling. And she is pleased to help honor them.

The WHAFV has joined in the effort with the Montrose Veterans Memorial Coalition, the City of Montrose and Montrose County to build a memorial for these veterans, she said.

As secretary of the Coalition and retired (but always) a US marine and WHAFV vol-



Veterans from different services join in conversation each Thursday morning at the Warrior Center. Photo by C.B. Williams.

unteer coordinator, she sees the need in the community for a place for veterans, their families, and the public to go to remember and learn about the service and sacrifice of so many.

She said she encourages all to donate to both the Memorial at <https://www.montrosevmc.us> and WHAFV <https://www.whafv.org/> to support these veterans who mean so much to Montrose and the surrounding area.



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COMMUNITY NEWS BRIEFS

HOPEWEST ANNOUNCES THE RETIREMENT OF GEORGIA ROCK, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

Special to the Mirror

REGIONAL-Georgia Rock, Chief Operating Officer at HopeWest, is retiring after an impressive 44-year career in healthcare. Rock has been an integral part of the HopeWest team for the past eight years, bringing exceptional leadership, compassion, and dedication to our dementia support, PACE (Program of All-Inclusive Care of the Elderly), palliative care, hospice, and bereavement programs.

In her role, Rock led HopeWest teams to provide care that goes beyond basic standards, making an impact on both patients' lives and her teammates' careers.

She notes that one of the most rewarding parts of her role was shaping a generation of new leaders, who she is confident will carry forward the mission of HopeWest with heart and dedication.

Looking back on her career, Rock says the most important thing is to work for organizations that share your values. And during the tough conversations she says, "always be humble, kind, and speak the truth in love."

Rock earned her undergraduate degree in Communication Disorders from Colorado State University before starting her career in healthcare administration and later obtaining her MBA. She joined Aegis Home Health Services in 1982, then worked with the Visiting Nurses Association from 1988 to 1996. She then spent 22 years at Pathways Home Health and Hospice, a community-based nonprofit in northern California, before joining HopeWest.

Returning to Colorado, Rock concluded her career at HopeWest, where she says she has had the honor of supporting numerous families and connecting with countless friends, donors, and neighbors. She also met her husband, Kerry Fordyce, as a result of her move to Grand Junction.

"Through Georgia's tireless work, she has guided our teams in delivering exceptional care to our patients and families, strengthening our mission at every step,"

said Deneen Silva, President and CEO of HopeWest. "I share my deepest gratitude with Georgia for her unwavering service and incredible impact on this organization and the communities we serve."

Rock, who has ensured a seamless transition, will conclude her role at the end of the year. She looks forward to retirement, enjoying more time with her family and her beloved dogs.



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COMMUNITY NEWS BRIEFS

MORNINGSTAR THERAPY DOGS DONATES TO ANIMAL SHELTER



Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE-At their annual Christmas party, members of Morningstar Therapy Dogs collected donations for animals currently waiting for their forever homes in the Montrose Animal Shelter. For more information about Morningstar, check out the website at morningstartherapydogs.org

NEW HORIZONS BAND OF MONTROSE TO PLAY DEC. 17 @ THE LIBRARY

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE-The New Horizons Band of Montrose will present an informal performance at the Montrose Regional Library entry area, Wednesday, Dec 17, 2025 from 10:30 — 11 am, 320 South 2nd Street, 81401

This FREE performance allows the concert band to share holiday music with the community, and also promote the next session, which begins on Jan 21, 2026. Complete information is in the current Montrose Recreation Activity Winter/Spring Guide, 50+ activities.

This concert band program is organized in partnership with the New Horizons International Music Association, founded in 1991 to encourage music making for those 50+. According to NHIMA founder Roy Ernst, "Playing music in groups supports good mental and physical health, besides being an unending source of joy."

Contact:

Kim Lundgren

New Horizons Band of Montrose

nhbandmontrose@gmail.com

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MIRROR CHURCH DIRECTORY

ALL SAINTS ANGLICAN CHURCH

Address: 2057 S. Townsend, Montrose, CO 81401.

Office Hours: By appointment.

Contact Information: (970) 249-2451
<https://www.allsaintsmontrose.org/> Rec-
 tor: The Rev Preston Gordon, [pgor-](mailto:pgor-don@allsaintsmontrose.org)
don@allsaintsmontrose.org

Worship Service Times: Sundays 9AM,

Sunday Worship. Wednesdays 11AM, Mid-week prayer and communion, Wednesday, Noon, Multi-denominational Community Prayer Hour.

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

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

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

BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH

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

Olathe, Co 81425

Tuesday-Friday Phone: 970-808-1021
www.biblebaptistchurcholathe.com
 Pastor Gabe Skillo

Sunday School 9:15 a.m.

Sunday 10:30 a.m.

Sunday 6 p.m.

Wednesday Bible Study/Prayer 7 p.m.

CEDAR CREEK CHURCH

affiliation: Evangelical Free

Address: 222 South Townsend Montrose, CO 81401

Office Hours: 10am-2pm Tuesday- Friday

Contact: 970-252-1163

ccc@cccmontrose.org

Pastor: Curt Mudgett

Sunday worship:

worship Service: September-May at 10:15am **Discipleship Hour** at 9am

Worship Service: June-August at 9:30am
 Nursery available for 0-4 during worship service

Wednesday Prayer: 5:30-6:15pm

Cedar Creek Church is a welcoming and friendly group of people that takes God seriously, but not ourselves.

We enjoy gathering for encouragement, meals, prayer and having fun!

Our mission is to exalt Jesus Christ by being a Word-centered community of believers who are equipped for a life of worship, prayer and service, and to reach our neighbors for Christ.

Please make plans to come check us out soon!

CELEBRATION CHURCH

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

Address: 2900 Sunnyside Road, Montrose, CO 81401

Office Hours: By appointment

Phone: (970) 497-4925

Email: celebrationmontrose@gmail.com

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

celebrationmontrose.org/

Worship Service Times: 9am and 10:45am

Senior Pastor:

Pastor Brandon Mathis

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

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

Demographics: Multi-generational

Celebration Kids: (age birth to 5th grade) programs offered both services.

Student (middle & high school) at 9am.

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

CHRIST'S CHURCH OF THE VALLEY

Name of Church: Christ's Church of the Valley

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

Address: 10 Hillcrest Plaza Way. Montrose, CO 81401

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

Contact information:

Phone: 970-249-0530

Email: CCVMontroseCO10@gmail.com

Website: ccvmontrose.org

Name of current Senior Pastor: Ken Lawrence

Worship service times: 10:30 a.m.

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

in our Lord Jesus Christ to the glory of God.

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

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

CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH

Denomination: Christ Lutheran Montrose

Affiliation: Lutheran Church Missouri Synod

Address: 1980 N. Townsend Ave., Montrose, CO 81401

Contact: 970-633-0226

Website: www.montroselutheran.org

Email: montroselutheran@gmail.com

Pastor: Tim Onnen

Worship: Sundays at 9 AM

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

find friendly people gathered in a welcoming environment being comforted and encouraged by the forgiveness and love of Jesus, and sharing that with one another.

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

MIRROR CHURCH DIRECTORY From previous pg

COMMUNITY SPIRIT CHURCH

United Church of Christ (UCC)

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

Office hours: Call or text for appointment

Phone: 970-765-7070

Email: spirit@communityspiritucc.org

Website: communityspiritucc.org

Current Pastor: Rev. Wendy Kidd

Worship service: Sundays at 11am

Mission: Our commitment to a more inclusive and accepting world is steadfast, and we will continue to work towards a future

where everyone can live freely and authentically.

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

COVENANT HEBRAIC FELLOWSHIP

Denomination affiliation. No affiliation

Address Office hours N/A

Contact: 720-951-9941,

office@ccfmontrose.net,

www.ccfmontrose.net

Name of current Senior Pastor. Led by elders

Worship service times. Noon on Saturdays. Children's Church will be offered as needed.

Covenant is a Hebraic roots community

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

FIRST CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

Denomination: Church of the Nazarene

Address: 705 South 12th Street

Office Hours: Tuesday - Thursday 9 am - Noon and by Appointment

Contact Information: Office Phone 970 249 -9213, mncfirst@gmail.com, www.montrosenazarenechurch.org

Pastor: Interim Pastor Ian Hyde

Services Sunday: Worship 10:30

AM, Discipleship Hour: 9:30

AM. Discipleship Hour has classes across all age groups. Nursery for children UNDER 3 is available during Worship.

Mission Statement: Montrose First Church of the Nazarene exists to make

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

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH MONTROSE

Affiliation: Presbyterian

Address: 1840 E Niagara Rd. Montrose

CO. 81401 **Office Hours:** M-Thu 9AM - 12PM

Contact: 970-249-4732, info@fpcmontrose.com,

www.fpcmontrose.com

Pastor: Rev. Dr. Jesse G. Mabanglo

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

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

HILLCREST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Denomination affiliation: United Church of Christ

Address: 611 South Hillcrest Drive, Montrose, CO 81401

Office hours: By appointment

Contact information:

Phone number: (970) 249-9047

Email address: office@montroseucc.org

Website: montroseucc.org

Current Pastor: Rev. Wendy Kidd

Worship service times: Sunday, 10 a.m.

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

on life's journey.

Church demographics: HCUCC welcomes all ages to worship with

us. (predominately family, youth, seniors, singles)

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

MONTROSE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Denomination Affiliation: United Methodist

Address: 19 S. Park Avenue Montrose CO. 81401

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

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

montroseumc.org

Current Senior Pastor: Rev. Kevin Young

Worship service times:

9:15 AM to 10:15 AM: Children's, Youth, and Adult Sunday School; Christian Education & Fellowship.

10:30 AM: Sanctuary & Virtual Worship
Montrose UMC is a leader in being fully

inclusive, loving, and just servants of Christ. Our church family welcomes people from various cultural and faith backgrounds: single, married, remarried, with or without children, from diapers to dentures. Wherever you are on your spiritual journey we invite you to come discover hope, joy, peace, purpose.

ROSEMONT BAPTIST CHURCH

Affiliation: Southern Baptist

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

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

Contact information:

Phone: 970.249.4887

website: www.RosemontBaptist.org

email: office@rosemontbaptist.org

Senior Pastor: Rolland Kenneson

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

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

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

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

matter what stage of life they are in.

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

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

MIRROR CHURCH DIRECTORY From previous pg

SPIRITUAL AWARENESS CENTER

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

Macdonald, Senior minister; Rev. Ruby Salaz, Assistant Minister. Spiritual Counseling available.
Worship service times: From November 9-December 14, the regular Sunday gatherings will meet from 9:30-11 am for a six-week SAC/Meditation program with Sang-drol Blanchard of Meditation Spaces. Meditation time and guest speakers are planned. Virtual services are temporarily cancelled. Chai Chats will continue to

meet on Wednesday mornings at 10:30 am at Pun Hill Himalayan Restaurant, 710 N. Townsend, Montrose.
 The Spiritual Awareness Center is an interfaith spiritual community welcoming spiritual seekers and people of all faiths, providing a safe place to explore and nurture the individual's unique connection to the Divine through Unity services, classes, meditation, and family and community projects.
 People of all ages are welcome.

ST. STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

Denomination: Anglican-Reformed Episcopal Church (REC)
Address: 2405 Sunnyside Road, Montrose 970-249-4868
Contact: [ststephensmont-](mailto:ststephensmontrose@yahoo.com)

rose@yahoo.com
www.ststephensmontrose.com
Rev. Dec. Garrett Agajanian
 St. Stephen's is a community of caring Christians rooted in the godly traditions of the past, focused on the challenges of the

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

VICTORY BAPTIST CHURCH OF MONTROSE

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

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

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

Church Directory

Mirror Editorial Staff

MONTROSE-As a way of serving the faith community in Montrose, the Montrose Mirror is in the process of establishing a Church Directory. If your congregation or fellowship would like to be included in the directory, please supply the following information to the Montrose

Mirror:

Name of church
 Denomination affiliation
 Address Office hours
 Contact information (phone number, email address, website)
 Name of current Senior Pastor
 Worship service times

Please give a one sentence description of your church and its mission in the Montrose community.
 Brief description of your current church demographics (predominately family, youth, seniors, singles).
 Do your church services include Sunday School and childcare?





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The Satisfied Self

26 For 26: Week 5: Integrity, Boundaries & Self-Trust

By Week 5, the work begins to feel quieter—and deeper. You've established rhythm in your days, order in your environment, and refinement in how you show up.

Now the focus turns inward again, toward something less visible but infinitely more powerful: integrity.

This week is not about doing more. It's about closing loops, honoring your word, and protecting your energy. These three shifts—the evening shutdown, promises to yourself, and boundary scripts—form the backbone of self-trust. When these are in place, life feels steadier. Decisions feel cleaner. You stop negotiating with yourself.

Integrity, after all is not about perfection. It's about congruence.

The PM Shutdown.

(Pillar: Time & Focus)

How you end your day determines how you begin the next. Without a closing ritual, work, worry, and mental noise bleed into the evening—and eventually, into sleep.

The PM shutdown is a deliberate transition from output to rest. Each evening, take five to ten minutes to:

- Write tomorrow's top three priorities
 - Close any open loops you realistically can
 - Note what is intentionally unfinished
- Then dim the lights.

Physically signal to your nervous system that the day is complete. The effect: you go to bed clearer, calmer, and less mentally burdened or stimulated. Sleep deepens when the mind knows it doesn't have to keep working.

Promises to Yourself

(Pillar: Identity & Mindset)

Self-trust isn't built through grand gestures. It's built through keeping small promises—especially when no one is watching,

This week, choose one micro promise per day. It should be specific, doable, and meaningful:

- Five minutes of meditation
- No phone calls during meals
- Journaling one page

Track your streak visibly—on a calendar, a note on your mirror, or a habit app. The visibility matters. Each checkmark is a vote for your identity.

The rule: never miss twice. Consistency, not intensity, is what rebuilds trust with yourself.

The Boundary Script:

(Pillar Time, Focus & Relationships)

Boundaries often fail, not because we lack conviction, but because we lack language. In moments of pressure, we default to over-explaining, apologizing, or saying yes when we mean no.

This week, you'll practice one simple boundary script—and say it out loud until it feels natural.

"I'm not available for that this week."

"I'm prioritizing something else right now."

"That doesn't work for me, but thank you for thinking of me."

No justification. No negotiation. No apologies. Calm. Neutral. Respectful.

Boundaries aren't about pushing people away. They're about staying connected to yourself.

This week is all about self-respect in action. These shifts are subtle, but they change everything. A closed day, a kept promise, a clean no-together they form a

life that feels trustworthy and stable from the inside out.

When you honor your time, your word, and your limits, confidence becomes non-negotiable and unshakeable. You stop managing chaos and start moving with intention.

Next week we turn toward practical power: money, work, and systems that support long-term stability. This is where clarity meets capability.

For now, let this week be about integrity, the kind that feels calm, grounded, and deeply self-supportive.



By Gia Pirelli.
Courtesy photo.

Gia Pirelli—Former salon owner, group fitness instructor, competitive cyclist and triathlete. These days she's trading blow-outs for balance, and endurance for infinity as a certified Yoga and Mat Pilates instructor, Sound Healing Practitioner, Breathwork & Meditation Guide, and inner & outer beauty consultant. She blends physical, mental, and spiritual wellness with creative pursuits like jewelry design and painting. When she's not guiding clients toward balance and beauty, she's exploring the world, chasing waves, riding motorcycles, and saying "yes" to life—and Tank, her Pitbull PIC, is almost always along for the ride.

Follow her on socials: https://www.instagram.com/gia_pirelli/, <https://www.youtube.com/@GiaPirelli>, <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61582789143474>

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SAVE THE DATE! LOCAL EVENTS CALENDAR

ONGOING-

ALTRUSA INT'L believes in "Leading to a Better Community" and is always looking for new members. We meet in Montrose on the first three Tuesdays a month at the Field House: 25 Colorado Ave, 12-Noon. Pick a day that works for you & please join us! Through our local Altrusa Club, members unite their varied talents in service to others, achieving as a group what individuals cannot do alone." <https://www.altrusamontrose.org/> P: 970-765-7666 E: Altrusa.Montrose@gmail.com

BLACK CANYON AUDUBON SOCIETY provides a monthly program on the 2nd Thursday of the month at 7 pm at the Montrose Field House, 25 Colorado Avenue, Montrose. blackcanyonaudubon.org

Tuesday - 1st and 3rd Tuesdays-Black Canyon Audubon Society hosts monthly birdwatching field trips in the Montrose area on 1st Tuesdays of the month and in the Delta area on the 3rd Tuesdays of the month. Check out the website for field trip details at blackcanyonaudubon.org.

COLUMBINE QUILTERS meet at Welcome Home Alliance Warrior Resource Center, 4 Hillcrest Plaza Way Montrose. 1st Saturday except for July at 9 am.

FRIENDSHIP QUILTERS meets at the Montrose County Events Center, 4th Thursday Jan - Oct, 3rd Thursday Nov - Dec, 9am.

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

MONTROSE FARMERS MARKET (970) 249 0705 Centennial Plaza, 433 S. 1st St. Montrose, CO 81401 www.valleyfoodpartnership.org. Year-Round Farmers Market, Saturdays 9am-1pm (Summer), every other Saturday 10am-1pm (Winter). Accepts SNAP and Double Up Food Bucks.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MONTHLY

Dec 21-3 pm "Christmas on Mainstreet" free concert @ Montrose Pavilion. Take an afternoon break and allow the Montrose Community Band to be a part of your holiday traditions.

NO SHELTER FROM THE COLD



On a brutally cold December Sunday, a man named Steve takes refuge near the former Bullock Power Plant facility owned by the City of Montrose. Mirror staff photo.

