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THE OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF RIDGWAY, OURAY AND OURAY COUNTY, COLORADO

NO. 21 OCT. 20 - 26, 2011

CITY OF OURAY

Council approves upgrades Hot Springs bathhouse will be renovated

By SANDY BARNES
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To make the Hot Springs Pool Bathhouse more appealing and comfortable to those who use it, City Council has approved a \$50,000 expenditure for renovations.

"The bathhouse is the first place people see," said pool Manager Tom Kavanaugh while presenting details of the project to Council members at the Monday night meeting. Rotted areas and the pitted, deteriorating floor make the changing areas "look unclean," he said.

"It's pretty clear that we all want to see changes down there," Kavanaugh said.

Improvements to the bathhouse include tile removal and replacement in the showers, the addition of privacy dividers in the men's locker room and upgrading flooring and the de-humidification system. The

entrance also will be improved.

The initial amount approved for 2011 will cover costs for renovating the men's area of the bathhouse, where there is a lack of privacy, Kavanaugh said. Another \$50,000 will be requested from the 2012 budget for continued improvements.

While discussing the need for the bathhouse project, Kavanaugh said that he had read critical comments about it on the TripAdvisor website. People reported being displeased with recent price increases at the hot springs pool when there were no improvements, he said. "We produce a lot of revenue from this, and we need to reflect it."

Kavanaugh said that the type of flooring material to be used at the bathhouse would be discussed with the general contractor selected to do the project. "We haven't gotten bids yet," he said.

OCC A3

RIDGWAY SCHOOLS

Bus stop could move on mesa

By JESSI MARLATT
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Ridgway School students living on Log Hill may be getting picked up by the school bus at a new location.

Currently students are dropped off and picked up in the parking lot at the old Fairway Pines Clubhouse, located at 117 Ponderosa Dr., but that may be coming to an end on Monday, Oct. 24, said Cheryl Gomez, Superintendent of the Ridgway School District at the Ridgway School Board (RSB) regular meeting on Oct. 12.

Gomez has been in contact with Paul Dicus, President of the Fairway Pines Estate Owners Association (FPEOA), for over two months regarding the bus stop that the school has been using since the building was constructed in 1980.

According to Dicus, the FPEOA received the deed to the clubhouse property this

spring after five years of litigation with the previous owner. The FPEOA received the property with a "Quit Claim Deed."

In a phone interview with Dicus on Tuesday, Oct. 18, he told the Plaindealer, "We cannot speak for the previous owners and their agreements with the district, but we have to protect ourselves as the new property owners."

Dicus sent a letter by certified mail to Gomez on Oct. 12, stating: "The Board of Directors has authorized the installation of a cable to block entrance of the parking lot on our property. This cable will be installed Monday morning, Oct. 24. The parking lot will not be accessible and the District will need to find an alternative bus stop beginning Monday, Oct. 24. To be clear, without an acceptable agreement, the District will not be allowed to use our property as a

BUS STOP A2



Heavy equipment is parked in the lot where the Ridgway School Bus has been picking up students living on Log Hill Mesa for 30 years. Plaindealer photo by Beecher Threatt

TOWN OF RIDGWAY

Public Art in Ridgway Colorado under a Montrose non-profit umbrella

By JESSI MARLATT
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Public Art in Ridgway Colorado can now accept tax-deductible donations.

As of Monday Oct. 10, Public Art in Ridgway Colorado is under the non-profit umbrella of the Montrose Community Foundation (MCF). Public Art in Ridgway Colorado was accepted on an interim basis as a component fund by MCF, and Public Art in Ridgway Colorado is currently working to achieve its own official non-profit status.

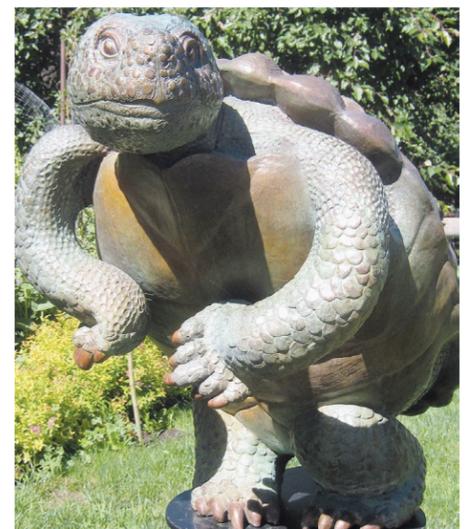
Six bronze statues have been placed in the Town of Ridgway's public spaces by Public Art in Ridgway Colorado. The newest is an otter located on the River Trail, sculpted by Scott Shaffer of Grand Junction. All statues placed by Public Art in Ridgway Colorado are on Ridgway Parks properties and are covered by the Town's insurance.

According to a statement released by PARC, the organization has "also applied to the Region 10 Enterprise Zone to become an Enterprise Zone contribution project, which would allow donors to claim a state tax credit as well." The status of this application is pending.

Public Art in Ridgway Colorado's mission is to place quality works of sculpture in the town's public spaces. The organization began in January 2011 and has eight active members.

"We are taking the winter months to regroup, make plans and set the staging for financial tax shelter and to hopefully get our own 501 (c) 3 status," said Public Art in Ridgway Colorado Co-Chair Lucy Boody. Boody leads the organization with Caroline Lescroart.

Public Art in Ridgway Colorado meets the second Wednesday of each month. To get involved with Public Art in Ridgway Colorado, contact Lucy Boody at the old Firehouse in Ridgway.



This turtle was placed by Public Art in Ridgway Colorado in the Ridgway Town Park. Plaindealer courtesy photo

TIRES

Army investigates Unc tires

By JESSI MARLATT
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An investigation into the improper disposal of tires and other waste matter on the property of Laurence (Butch) Gunn is being conducted by the Department of the Army (DA), Colorado West Regulatory Branch of the Army Corps of Engineers.

A flash flood on July 26 of this year dislodged over one thousand tires from the Gunn property. Subsequently, the tires flowed from an unnamed drainage into Burro Creek, which feeds into Cow Creek and eventually into the Uncompahgre River. The Ouray Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) received reports of tires on the banks of the waterways 17 miles downstream of the Gunn property. Gunn stated in August that the materials were being used for erosion control.

The DA began investigating when the

Colorado Department of Public Health and the Environment (CDPHE) concluded their investigation in late September.

In a certified letter sent to Gunn on Oct. 12, the DA stated that the unnamed drainage filled by Gunn is a waterway of the United States and any alterations require a permit from the DA.

According to the letter from the DA: "Section 404 of the Clean Water Act requires a DA permit to be obtained prior to the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States, including wetlands. Since a DA permit has not been issued authorizing this discharge, the work appears to be in violation of the Clean Water Act."

Potential enforcement actions include fines, penalties and imprisonment as well as restoring the land to natural conditions. The DA stated, "Prompt voluntary restoration of

TIRES A3

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Planes, busses, Jeeps unexpected BOCC topics

BY BEECHER THREATT
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In a significant departure from business as usual, the Board of County Commissioners had a full house for its Call to the Public.

Sheelagh Williams expressed concern about a "disconnect" between what the Air Force representatives said at last week's public meeting on training flights and what was actually in the draft environmental assessment.

Commission Chair Heidi Albritton set an agenda item on the Oct. 25 docket to discuss the EA and decide what stance the county should take. See editorial on page A6.

Ridgway Schools Superintendent Cheryl Gomez asked for any assistance

the board can provide to assist the school district in a dispute with Fairway Pines Estate Owners Association regarding use of a parking lot as a school bus stop. See page A1 for a full story.

Ken Emory, with Western Slope 4 Wheelers Club, asked the commissioners for a letter of support regarding a grant to construct a bypass road around the "wall area" on Poughkeepsie Gulch Road in San Juan County. The board set the matter on its growing Oct. 25 agenda.

West Region Wildfire Council representatives addressed the board on the issue of contributing \$4,000 to its coordinator position. Commissioners said the requested contribution was

not possible in next year's budget, but they would be able to provide a portion.

Commissioners suggested that the local fire districts contribute a small amount each to make up the difference or that the county contribute in-kind services.

On the issue of 'smart meters', David Masters of The Masters Law Firm, acting as interim county attorney, advised the board that the county commissioners have no authority to impose a moratorium or regulate implementation of a 'smart meter' plan by San Miguel Power Association.

The board will hold a meeting with SMPA and interested citizens on Nov. 22.

OCC Last regular meeting before election

FROM A1

The installation of glass partitions, which would add a clean look to the facility, is also under consideration — along with correction of a mismatched color scheme. "We need a theme at the pool," Kavanaugh remarked.

"We want to put this out to bid and to get it done as soon as possible," said City Resource Director Rick Noll.

City Council voted unanimously for a 50 percent increase in the monthly benefit for retired firefighters at the Monday night meeting. The Fire Pension Board recommended the payment increase from the present \$60 to \$90 per month for firefighters 50 years and older who have served more than 20 years. "For people who have given 20 years of service, I think that's reasonable," said Councilman Gary Hansen.

"They haven't had a raise since the year 2000," said Councilman John Ferguson while speaking in support of the increase.

Benefits for spouses of deceased retirees of the Ouray Volunteer Fire Department also have increased from \$30 to \$45 per month.

The last raise in retired fire-fighters' benefits was in May 2000 when the monthly amount increased from \$30 to \$60.

Council members questioned comparisons of Ouray's energy consumption to San Miguel County during a presentation of a greenhouse gases study by Kim Wheels, Community Energy Coordinator for The New Community Coalition based in Telluride.

According to the inventory done by the University of Colorado-Denver Center for Sustainable Infrastructure

Systems, the average residential electricity usage for Ouray and San Miguel counties is 1,380 kWh hours per month, approximately twice as much as the Colorado state average of 674. Average natural gas usage in the two counties is also double that of the state.

The study also showed that greenhouse gas emissions are significantly higher in Ouray and San Miguel counties, averaging 29.3 metric tons of carbon dioxide per resident annually — as compared with 24.5 metric tons per resident statewide.

Councilman Gary Hansen said that relating energy usage in Mountain Village with that in Ouray was comparing "apples to grapefruit."

"How skewed is this to Ouray?" asked Councilman John Ferguson.

"We're double-checking the data," Wheels replied. "We're trying to understand which benchmarks are valid."

Along with data on energy consumption, Wheels also presented possible actions that could be taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Ouray and San Miguel counties.

Commercial electricity customers who participated in Tri-State Generation and Transmission's demand side management program could reduce carbon dioxide levels over the next nine years, she said. Increasing the use of commercial green power by 10 percent of the total purchased could also result in reductions, Wheels stated.

Residents who voluntarily participate in SourceGas's demand side management program and install home energy meters also could help reduce carbon dioxide emissions, according to the study.

Promoting pay-as-you-throw trash services, which charge users directly on the amount discarded, and encouraging residents to compost waste are other voluntary actions that could be beneficial.

Small hydro electricity generation such as the Ridgway Dam project and pico-hydro electricity production at individual households are other suggested greenhouse gas reduction measures.

Wheels also said that promoting local food production and consumption could reduce emissions by as much as 10 percent in the area through saved transportation costs.

"A lot of people want one silver bullet," said Wheels. "Instead, what happens is that there are opportunities for everybody."

Wheels said that it isn't feasible to make energy reduction measures mandatory.

"I think it's an educational issue; not a mandatory issue," said Hansen.

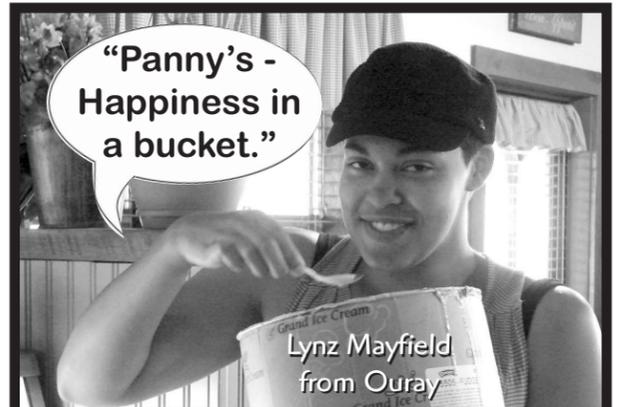
"We have as one of our goals to reduce our energy use as much as possible," said Mayor Bob Risch.

In other business, Mayor Risch presented a brief update on the 2012 Budget Work session progress.

"We're not doing terribly badly," Risch said. "Patrick and Kathy have budgeted fairly conservatively, he added, referring to Town Administrator Patrick Rondinelli and Clerk/Treasurer Kathy Elmont. "If we are prudent, we should get through 2012 pretty well."

Council also recognized outgoing member Joe Kersen and presented him a plaque.

"All of us are counting on you coming back at some point," said Risch.



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TIRES DA investigates

FROM A1

the site in accordance with a Corps-approved plan may preclude some or all of these actions." This means Gunn must un-do over 15 years of environmental degradation.

Gunn gave a verbal commitment at the site visit conducted by the CDPHE in early August that he would cooperate to resolve the violations.

The DA has requested that Gunn provide any additional information he might want considered in the investigation to Steve Moore at the Colorado West Regulatory Branch in Grand Junction by Nov. 14. Moore can be reached at (970)243-1199 ext.13 or stephen.a.moore@usace.army.mil.

On Oct. 4, the BOCC passed a motion pursuant to Ordinance 95-1 which requires property owners to remove rubbish from their property. Gunn was given 20 days to comply, and those 20 days have almost expired.

The BOCC has scheduled a "Show Cause" public hearing for Oct. 25 in the 4-H Center at 1:30 p.m., at which the affected property owners are invited to speak. The BOCC hopes to learn the extent and cost of the damages resulting from the flash flood of tires.

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