

## BOCC

# Commissioner Albritton's letter of resignation

It has been an honor to serve as your District 3 County Commissioner these past 7+ years, and I regret that I must leave before the end of my term is completed. I have been offered a position that will allow me to grow in my own career, as well as enable my family to once again live and work together in the same city, though that city is unfortunately not Ouray. As a term-limited official, I knew that my time in office was coming to a close, and that in order to provide for my family once my term ended, I would have to start over in my career somewhere. I am excited to begin a new chapter in my life together with my family, and thank you for the incredible opportunity that I was given here in Ouray County.

While I began my work in elected office as a Republican candidate, I have become increasingly frustrated with the party's hostile rhetoric and inflammatory partisanship. I do not identify with it, and it does not represent the type of public servant I have sought to be. The climate of finger pointing and 'us vs. them' politics is disruptive, and is ultimately a disservice to the public, as it precludes real work from getting done. The focus should be on solving problems, on getting past our differences, and on working together to face our common challenges. I am an independent individual, and have done my job as such. I have done my best to

listen and to learn, and to make my decisions based on facts and not ideology. I leave my office as an Independent, as it has become clear that the Republican Party is at a crossroads, and at this time there is just not room in the GOP tent for voters like me. I have struggled to balance party expectations, and 'doing the right thing' for Ouray County. Becoming an Independent was the only real option for me on a very personal level. I have confidence that Governor Hickenlooper will appoint an excellent candidate to serve the remaining months of my term. The new District 3 Commissioner will be elected in November, with two very capable candidates already vying for your vote.

Much like the work that goes into a marriage, or a friendship, the work of governance is challenging, and requires listening, understanding, negotiation, and yes, it requires compromise. Making thoughtful decisions requires being able to adapt, learn and change, and I have been humbled on many occasions at my own resistance to change. It is irresponsible to ignore facts and reality, simply because they interfere with your opinions. I have been challenged to listen to the diversity of opinions in our community, and to act for the betterment of Ouray County as a whole. Just as spouses and friends do not always agree and yet manage to work out their differences, those in gov-

ernment must also find ways to do their work, despite the divergent opinions of the constituents they serve.

Ouray County has been, and always will be my home. I was born here, as were both of my children, and Ouray County will always hold a very special place in my heart. I have truly enjoyed my job, and want to thank you for allowing me the chance to represent you for two very dynamic and challenging terms. I thank those of you who pushed me, gave me reasons to pause before I acted, and supported me. I thank those of you who challenged and questioned me every step of the way. You have made me a stronger, better person.

Ouray County has become more accountable and transparent, and I know that it will continue to evolve and improve moving into the future. I am proud of our County departments that have grown and progressed in professionalism. Many wonderful, capable people work for the County organization, and they invest their heart and soul into their work. While there is always room for improvement, I tend to be a 'glass half full' kind of person, preferring to focus on what is achievable, rather than what is 'wrong'. My proudest times as a Commissioner have been in those moments when our community came together and just got the job done; regardless of political affiliation. From wit-

nessing our 4H Event Center become a much-utilized community gem, to creating a magnificent 'Mudfest,' tackling broadband infrastructure issues, working to save historic opera houses, protecting our agricultural and mining heritage, providing first class arts education for our children, or establishing our own Creative District; when we come together in the true spirit of community, there is no stopping us.

Whether you were born here, or moved here from somewhere else, we are all in this together. We need diversity of opinion, it is a healthy and important component of a democratic system, and it provides for the vigorous debate and accountability that our government so desperately needs. I am proud of Ouray County and I want nothing more than a bright and prosperous future for all of you and for our community as a whole. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to contribute what I could towards that goal, and for giving me the chance to actively work for a place and a community that I hold so dear. This is one of the most amazing places on the planet, and I was honored to serve you.

A grateful servant of Ouray County,  
Heidi Albritton  
District 3 Commissioner

## ALBRITTON tenders resignation despite ongoing tire issue

## FROM P1

the time was right to "begin a new chapter" in her life. She accepted a position as legal advisor for the city of Seattle and has family and friends in that area.

Albritton said she had planned to resign a few weeks ago, but the turmoil surrounding the buried tires on the Butch Gunn property and the involvement of state representatives caused her to delay a final decision. Her effective date of resignation, Aug. 14, is also the date set for the Board of County Commissioners' public hearing on the county's enforcement of its rubbish ordinance and its new administrative action against Gunn to enforce the state waste tire statute.

State representatives Don Coram (R-Montrose) and Jerry Sonnenberg (R-Sterling), commissioners learned recently, have been meeting with a state agency and Gunn representatives since early this year. Sonnenberg, chair of the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, asked the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment to drop its investigation of the buried tires. (See July 19 and July 26 editions of Ouray County Plaindealer.)

"This is terrible timing," Albritton said on Tuesday. "I was ready to resign when we got the Sonnenberg letter (by email). The tire thing needed to be front and center."

Albritton said she hopes that on Aug. 14 she and commissioners Lynn Padgett and Mike Fedel can reach a consensus on an outcome for the buried tires. "I agree with Lynn that we need to see some serious effort to resolve it."

In her resignation letter, Albritton explained her switch from the Republican Party to Unaffiliated voting status. She said she has "become increasingly frustrated with the party's hostile rhetoric and inflammatory partisanship." Albritton

said it is clear the Republican Party does not have a place for "voters like me." She commented that in governing, compromise is required and she has listened to diverse voices in the county.

Albritton lauded county departments and employees and noted the county has become more "accountable and transparent." Her proudest moments, she said, are those when the county came together regardless of affiliation. She cited growth of the 4-H Center, Mud Fest, broadband issues, renovation of historic opera houses, protecting agriculture and mining heritage, arts education for children and the Ridgway Prospective Creative District.

Fellow Commissioner Lynn Padgett said it has been a pleasure to serve with Albritton and the board's deliberations were more thorough, decisions were more informed and the county organization is stronger and more dependable because of her.

Padgett also commented that she and Albritton championed transparency, accountability, responsiveness and efficiency in local government, qualities "that appear to be unappreciated by some of our more partisan county citizens."

Commissioner Mike Fedel was not prepared to comment on Albritton's resignation on Tuesday.

In 2004, Albritton defeated incumbent

Bill Ferguson to become the first female and the youngest county commissioner in

Ouray County history. She was voted chair of the board for 2012.

## GRIFFIN HOUSE

His mix of sentimental melodies, ambient guitars, and sparse arrangements attracted attention from *Netwerk*, a Vancouver-based record label, and House soon issued *Lost & Found* in 2004. Several self-released albums followed, and House signed with *RCA* before issuing *Flying Upside Down*, a folk-rock album recorded with members of Tom Petty's Heartbreakers.  
-Andrew Leahey (*All Music Guide*)



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# OURAY COUNTY Opinion

"It was as flawless as one could hope."

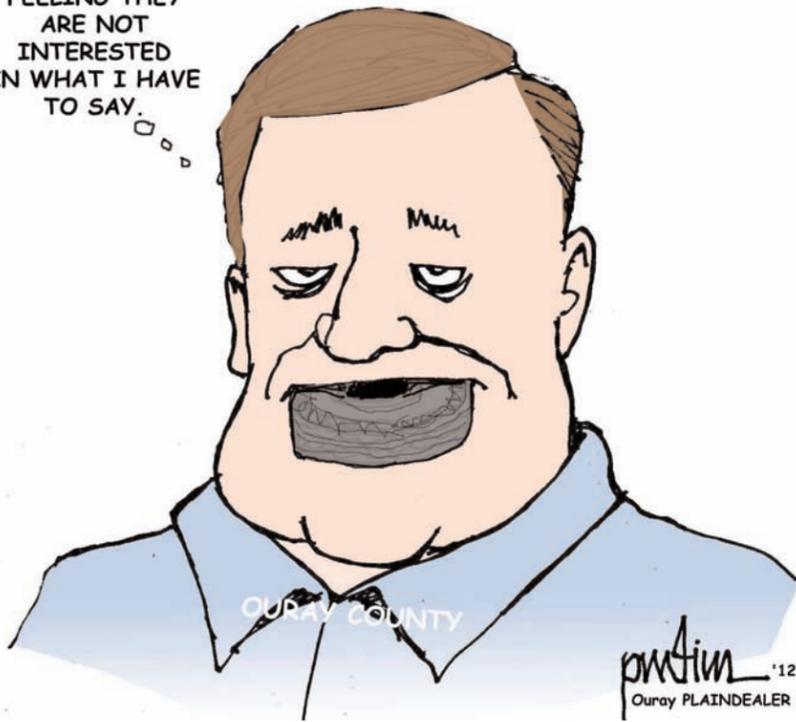
Patrick Rondinelli, Ouray City Administrator  
Page 1

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OURAY COUNTY PLAINDEALER • PAGE 10

AUGUST 2 - AUGUST 8, 2012

I HAVE THE FEELING THEY ARE NOT INTERESTED IN WHAT I HAVE TO SAY.



## LETTER TO THE PLAINDEALER

### Sign interpretation paints race

Dear Editor,

As a long time reader of the Plaindealer, and recognizing the fact that it is the official newspaper of the county, I would expect the paper to be neutral and report only the facts relative to the upcoming commissioner election. By your interpreting the message of the sign on Hwy. 550 as, "Lynn Padgett is an outsider from California and therefore is not qualified to serve as county commissioner as a native,"

as well as "Padgett's deficiency" according to the signs "stems from the fact that she moved to Colorado from California when she was in her late teens," you have painted both commissioner Padgett and candidate Flowers in a negative light and you owe both an apology.

Bud Zanett  
Ouray

## LETTER TO THE PLAINDEALER

### The meaning of the message

Dear Editor,

In your editorial in last week's Plaindealer, Mr. Todd, you presumed to know what was meant by a sign on Hwy 550 which states "This is Colorado, not California." Mr. Todd, your presumptions have mistakenly personalized this message as a reflection on a county commissioner candidate.

This county is comprised of many wonderful people from California. We are from California and have many friends who are as well. Thankfully, this is not California with its cities and towns filing for bankruptcy, a state deficit of \$389

billion(U.S.Debt Clock.org) and state wide unemployment hovering around 10.2% (Bureau of Labor Statistics). California is a state that has fallen victim to unreasonable regulation, elected officials ignoring their responsibilities and bowing to special interests, and....too much spending. The people and businesses of the beautiful state of California are forced into leaving.

Could it be that this is the message of the sign...a path we do not want to take locally, as a state or a country?

Dick and Gail Jossi  
Ouray County

## LETTER TO THE PLAINDEALER

### State rep weighs in on tires

Dear Editor,

After reading your news story and the editorial from the publisher, I wanted to share with your readers the facts about the Ouray County case involving waste tires.

Let me first say the reason I became involved is at the request of other rural legislators. I don't just represent my district; I am a state legislator which is charged with making decisions that are in the best interests of the state. The rural legislators tend to work together so that the urban representatives don't ignore the less populated portions of the state such as Ouray County and the counties I am elected in. Ouray County is the first county in my tenure that hasn't appreciated other elected officials visiting their communities, even if there may be some disagreement. I consistently make a number of trips each year to counties on the western edge of Colorado so as Chairman of the Ag Committee, I can better understand the issues that your own Representatives have and need help with.

When Ouray County government enlisted a state agency, the Colorado Dept of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), to help in their enforcement action, it is unreasonable for them to not expect other state agencies or representatives to weigh in. The lack of Ouray County governments' solicitation for input from the Colorado Dept of Agriculture and from their state elected officials apparently was intentional. Was it because they knew the only agency that would be helpful to their position on this issue was CDPHE?

A threat was mentioned by your paper which is absolutely untrue. The comment that was made referred to "Rep. Coram

and myself would be happy to propose legislation" was intended to clear up any confusion that may be in statute on the historic use of tires for erosion purposes and agriculture uses.

You see, agriculture has been using tires for these purposes for decades and until Ouray County decided to pursue an enforcement action, there had never been a complaint filed or an action taken regarding these type of uses for tires. It is indeed unfortunate that Mother Nature would send a hundred year rain that washed the tires down the creek and into the river. Unfortunately, it also washed down debris from trees and litter from neighboring communities as well. The Gunn's began picking up the mess caused by the heavy rains just as most of the members of the community worked at picking up the damage near them.

What is important now is how to move forward. If the county doesn't want these ranchers to utilize tires for erosion control, then they have the tools to make sure that doesn't happen. For Ouray County to demand the removal of tires that have been buried for decades and that have successfully eliminated the erosion where they have been placed, even after the hundred year rain event, doesn't make sense. I find it very hard to believe that removing these tires that have been successfully utilized and opening the land back up so that the side of a mountain can go back to washing down to the river is good for the environment. Sincerely,

Representative Jerry Sonnenberg  
Chairman, House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee

## LETTER TO THE PLAINDEALER

### Traveling to Ouray through our pages

Dear Editor,

We have been enjoying reading the Plaindealer since 1960. Because of old age (80s) and sickness, we are unable to travel to Ouray any more, but thanks to the Plaindealer and the pictures in it, we can

still enjoy.

Keep it coming.

Victor and Yvonne Duvall  
Houston, Tex.



COLORADO SUMMER OLYMPIC GAMES...

...THE GET OUT OF HAIL FAST DASH



FENCING



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TRAFFIC HURDLES



TRACK AND FIELD



Colorado Views by Ken Keegan

# OURAY COUNTY Plaindealer

Since 1877

Official newspaper of the Town of Ridgway, the City of Ouray and the County of Ouray. The Ouray County Plaindealer (USPS 415-260) is published every Friday at 280 fifth Avenue, Ouray, Colorado. Second class postage paid at Ouray, Colorado.

Postmaster, Send address changes to:

Ouray County Plaindealer, Box 607, Ouray CO 81427

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(970) 626-5100  
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E-mail: plaindealer@ouraynews.com  
Fax: (970) 316-7062

One Year Subscription: \$36; Two Year Subscription: \$65



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