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Hoofin' it at the rodeo



Rosie Rogers, 2012-2013 Ouray County Rodeo Association Queen, races on horseback during the Ridgway Heritage Days and Ranch Rodeo at the Ouray County Fairgrounds on June 15.

Courtesy photo by Joan Chismire

CITY OF OURAY

Camp Bird lays off fifteen employees

BY SHERIDAN BLOCK
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Fifteen employees were let go as Camp Bird Mine is currently undergoing a temporary closure.

Due to "unexpected delays underground," the mine is closing its doors for 39 days, according to general mine manager Bumper Williams.

Though Williams couldn't expand on what the "unexpected delays" were, he said that it has impacted the financial end of the operations, which is why the mine had to lay off 15 of its 22 employees.

The delay was just long enough that there was no other choice but to let workers go, Williams said. He added that once the mine is ready to pick up again, these workers will absolutely be considered for rehiring.

Caldera Mineral Resources, the organization heading the Camp Bird Mine initiative, needs to regroup and figure out its next steps, which will include the need for more money to be fed into the mining operation.

Chief executive official for CMR John Bryan was in

CAMP BIRD P12

OURAY COUNTY

Planning commission gets new member

BY BEECHER THREATT
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On Wednesday, June 12, the Board of County Commissioners appointed two regular members of the county planning commission and one alternate. Seven candidates, including the sitting members, applied for the three positions.

For the two terms that expired on Mar. 31, those held by Sheelagh Williams and Tim Currin, the board appointed Colona resident Craig Jackman and re-appointed Currin.

To replace the first alternate, Dudley Case, whose term also expired Mar. 31, commissioners appointed Sheelagh Williams, who told the Plaindealer she was willing to accept the move from voting member to alternate.

After two hours of interviews, Commissioner Lynn Padgett's motion

to re-appoint Williams and Currin and to appoint Jackman as first alternate died for lack of a second. Fedel said those appointments would not get voting diversity back.

Padgett seconded Batchelder's motion to appoint Currin and Jackman, which therefore passed without a yea or nay vote from Fedel. Padgett later said she seconded because she felt that was the best compromise.

In addition to the candidates, most of the current planning commission members as well as about 10 community members were present on Wednesday.

Commissioners' rationales for motions and votes were evident during discussion prior to the vote. The word of the day was "diversity," in both questions and answers, with the assumption being made that the plan-

ning commission needs more diversity.

Batchelder said he was looking for a "voting balance" on the commission, calling out four current commission members' affiliation with Ridgway-Ouray Community Council as a perceived lack of voting balance. One of his interview questions for each candidate was what he or she would do about any perceived "dysfunctionality" on the planning commission.

"With all due respect to ROCC, that is the affiliation I am partially looking at," Batchelder said. "It is partly public perception as well. There may not be a huge factual basis in this, but there is a degree of public perception that if you have too much affiliation in the planning commission, then the public will be disgrunt-

PLANNING COMMISSION P12

OURAY COUNTY

McKenzie Butte fire quickly contained

BY BILL TIEDJE
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A three acre wildfire on BLM lands known as McKenzie Butte, located approximately 7.5 miles northeast of Ridgway, was brought to 100 percent containment in one night through a coordinated effort by three area fire crews.

At 3:48 p.m. on June 17, a Log Hill Volunteer Fire Department crew was the first to respond with 11 firefighters. The Montrose Fire Department, the LHVFD's mutual aide, quickly arrived on the scene as well. Upon arriving, fire crews could see flames leaping from tree crowns across a steep ravine.

Log Hill and Montrose firefighters gained permission to access private lands and were able to reach the fire's perimeter on all-terrain vehicles carrying 50 to 80 gallon water tanks.

WILDFIRE P19

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WILDFIRE sees rapid response time

FROM P1

Tom Austin, Vice Chief of the LHVFD, along with the Montrose field chief, hiked rugged terrain three quarters of a mile on foot to reach the eastern perimeter of the fire.

When BLM crews from Montrose arrived with the help of a crew based in South Dakota, the fire became a federal incident, and coordination was transferred to BLM incident commander Jeff Gehlhausen.

Nine members of the Log Hill volunteer fire department have federal red card certification; therefore, they were able to continue to work on the fire, while non-certified members assisted at the water collection fill point.

Crews dug a hand line around the perimeter of the fire and used a combination of fire and dirt to extinguish this perimeter, as water availability was limited. BLM crews cleared areas with chainsaws and moved large logs to the fire's interior.

Fire crews finally retired at 12:00 midnight to let the fire burn out over night; BLM crews finished containment activities at 7:00 a.m. the morning of June 18. Some smoke was still visible after achieving 100 percent containment as logs pushed to the fire's interior continued to smolder.

Although confirmation of the cause is difficult due to the remote area of the fire, it was likely caused by lightning, as a severe thunderstorm producing lightning strikes passed through the area on Monday afternoon and human access to the area is limited.

On behalf of the LHVFD, Austin expressed his appreciation for the



The fire on McKenzie Butte was visible from US 550 late Monday afternoon.

Plaindealer photo by Beecher Threatt

opportunity to work among the interagency effort. Austin stated it was a great experience for red carded-Log Hill volunteer firefighters.

He also thanked residents who notified authorities immediately, acknowledged area home owners working to mitigate fire danger on their properties and gave a special thanks to the private property owners who allow the fire crews to access their lands to reach the fire.

In response to high fire danger conditions, the following fire bans have been put into effect:

County:

On June 18, Ouray County Sheriff Junior Mattivi instituted stage one fire restrictions pursuant to authority granted him by the Board of County Commissioners. A poster outlining stage one restrictions appears below.

In general, stage one prohibits campfires except in designated campgrounds with fire grates; open burning; fireworks; smoking except indoors or in a cleared three-foot area; chainsaw operation without a spark arrester and without a fire extinguisher within reach; and, welding, except in a barren, 10-foot area cleared of flammable material.

BLM:

Bureau of Land Management has begun its stage one fire restrictions in Archuleta, Delta, Dolores, La Plata, Montezuma, Montrose, Ouray and San Miguel counties.

BLM's restrictions are similar to those used by the county; however, the welding and chainsaw prohibitions are in BLM's stage two, not yet enacted. Stage two prohibits any camp or stove fires, and stage three prohibits all burning.

COLORADO

Grants available to reduce wildfire risks

PLAINDEALER STAFF REPORT
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The Colorado Department of Natural Resources is accepting applications for a new Wildfire Risk Reduction Grant Program. The program will provide \$9.8 million in grants to reduce the risk of wildfire in areas where human development and forested lands overlap, areas often called the wildland-urban interface.

The program focuses on projects that reduce the risk for damage to property, infrastructure and water supplies, and those that limit the likelihood of wildfires spreading into populated areas.

Eligible applicants include community groups, local governments, utilities, state agencies and non-profit groups. Applicants must contribute 100 percent matching funds, which can include in-kind resources, for a 50-50 grant-to-match ratio. Applicants must also identify plans to make use of the woody material resulting from the projects. Those plans can include using the materials for biomass energy and/or traditional forest products.

Examples of projects considered for funding include:

- Creation of defensible space around homes and structures;
- Construction of fuel breaks; and
- Fuels reduction beyond defensible space, designed to protect water supplies and/or reduce fire intensity.

Up to 25 percent of total grant funds are available to pay for the purchase of equipment that will increase current and future capacity for hazardous fuels reduction.

All applicants must coordinate proposed projects with relevant county officials to ensure consistency with county-level wildfire risk reduction planning. The deadline to receive proposals is July 17 and awards are anticipated in mid-August.

A more detailed overview of the grant program and its requirements and limitations, as well as the grant application itself, is available at <http://dnr.state.co.us/Media/Pages/WFRRGrantProgram.aspx>

New Ouray County Fire Restrictions

JUNE 17, 2013 OURAY COUNTY STAGE 1 FIRE RESTRICTIONS

Due to dry conditions in the area, the Board of County Commissioners has authorized Sheriff Mattivi to implement Stage 1 Fire Restrictions, effective June 17, 2013. The Board of County Commissioners and the Sheriff ask residents and visitors to please be diligent and use caution as fuels are dry and, as has been experienced elsewhere in Colorado, wildfire potential is very high. What you need to know:

THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES ARE BANNED:

- Building, maintaining, attending or using a campfire except in designated and signed campgrounds or developed recreation sites with provided fire grates.
- Open burning of any kind including burning of trash or debris, burning of ditches, open charcoal or wood fires.
- Use of all fireworks and use of explosives.
- Smoking, except in an enclosed vehicle, trailer, building or tent, a developed recreation site, or while stopped in a barren or cleared area at least 3 feet in diameter, and disposal of cigarette butts anywhere outdoors.
- Operating a chainsaw, without an approved spark arrester and without a chemical pressurized fire extinguisher and pointed shovel, kept within immediate reach of the operator.
- Welding or use of torch with open flame except in a barren or area cleared of all flammable materials at least 10 feet on all sides from the equipment.

THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES ARE PERMITTED:

- Cooking on manufactured charcoal, liquid fuel or propane gas grills or other manufactured liquid fuel cookstoves
- Campfires with flame length not exceeding two feet in height in pre-fabricated concrete or metal fire enclosures in established campgrounds (USFS, NPS, privately owned)
- Fires in chiminea type manufactured enclosures on private property
- Campers and drivers are asked to limit travel to designated roads and trails as much as possible, to avoid igniting sparks on grass and brush.

These restrictions will remain in place until further notice, and until otherwise revised or rescinded by the Sheriff and the Board of County Commissioners.

Sign up to receive the most up-to-date emergency notifications on the Ouray County website at www.ouraycountyco.gov

WENS (Wireless Emergency Notification System)

is a general warning system of text messages sent when the recipient might be affected by something occurring within Ouray County. It may include an emergency road closure or a warning to avoid a specific area for safety reasons.

TNS (Target Notification System)

is for serious emergencies that may involve evacuation of your home or sheltering in place. It will include voice mail as well as text.

If you have questions, or see a violation of the fire restrictions, please contact the

Ouray County Sheriff's office at 970-325-7272.

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