

LOG HILL



(Top and left) Log Hill Fire Department was called out at 2:08 p.m. on July 20 to a report of a lightning strike between Snowbush and McLaran lanes. (Top, right) The fire burned about two acres of sage and grass. Twelve firefighters were on scene for about three hours.

Courtesy photos Charles Carson



Courtesy photo Tom Emanuel

THE United Church OF THE San Juans

Sunday Service & Sunday School
10:00 a.m.

On the corner of Lena & Charles St.
Rev. Harry Strong, Pastor 970-626-5803

Sunday, July 27
Guest Speaker:
Rev. Timothy Mooney
Humble Like a Child - Really?
4:00 p.m. Tim Mooney
Concert (Church)

*Affiliated with Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,
United Methodist Church, Presbyterian Church (USA),
United Church of Christ*

www.UCSJridgway.org

CITY OF OURAY

Sludge removal complete

BY SHERIDAN BLOCK
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Citizens and visitors have more than likely caught a whiff of the foul stench at the north end of town near the city's waste water treatment plant. Some residents, like Laszlo Kubinyi, have complained of the odors that have lingered with the dredging project at the facility over the last six weeks.

"We're living with hell," Kubinyi told city council on Monday night, adding that there have been several instances when he had to wake up in the middle of the night to close the windows because of the smell.

Along with his neighbors, Kubinyi wanted to know what's going on with the project and when the odors would end.

Fortunately, Public Works Director Dennis Erickson was pleased to announce that the sludge removal project at the facility ended last weekend. Even though the project lasted longer than expected (a total of eight weeks due to some equipment failure), Liquid Waste Management was able to remove an estimated 300 dried tons of sludge from the lagoons. However, citizens should note that smells may remain for up to six weeks as the deposits stabilize, Erickson said.

In the meantime, he added, the public works crew will be injecting new microorganisms for two weeks to bring the system back to normal and will also install more aerators as part of the plan to get the facility running properly and efficiently.

"I'm sorry it's been a problem," said Mayor Pam Larson. "This is something we should be doing every three to five

years, but it hasn't been done for over 25 years."

In other business Monday, council:

- approved adoption of the city's strategic plan, which identifies the vision and goals of city council for the upcoming years. The plan was initially developed by council earlier this year and has undergone revisions over the last few months. The goals include: developing and maintaining the city's amenities and natural resources for economic and community development; demonstrating government performance through efficient, effective and innovative city operations; fostering civic engagement; and, promoting fiscal stability and sustainability.

- denied a request from Bob and Karen Risch to purchase 580 square feet of city property behind their 9th Avenue home. Council member Glenn Boyd reiterated his position that the city is "land poor" and could potentially use the small piece of property in the future. Larson was also uncomfortable with the idea of selling city land. Council member Richard Kersen added that with the plans to revitalize the pool and Fellin Park area, the property could be used for additional parking. Risch told council he had no interest in a permanent encroachment arrangement, as he saw no benefit to it. "That doesn't work in this situation," he said. He noted that he was disappointed with the council's decision.

- discussed approaches to filling the Community Development Coordinator position as current staffer Ann Morgenthaler leaves her role with the city this week. Council met on Wednesday afternoon to discuss a temporary contract with Mark Garcia until the position is filled. See story on page 18.

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NEWS

Lightning Strike Sparks Wildfire on Log Hill Mesa

BY SAMANTHA WRIGHT

OURAY COUNTY – A dry lightning strike sparked a small wildfire on Log Hill Mesa on Sunday afternoon, July 20, burning through roughly two acres of grass and sage before it was contained.

A crew of 12 volunteer firefighters with the Log Hill Volunteer Fire Department responded to the call at 2:08 p.m., bringing four firefighting vehicles to the scene, about five or six miles north of The Divide Ranch & Club near Snowbush Lane.

Assistant Fire Chief Tom Austin reported that within 10 minutes, the fire was completely contained and put out, well before it could spread to any trees. The crew then spent the next two-and-a-half hours stirring and dumping water on the ashes to prevent the fire from reigniting.

“The sage and grass burned fast, but we put it out fast, too,” Austin said.

This was the second wildfire of the season on Log Hill. The first wildfire flared up Sunday, July 13, and was caused by chainsaw sparks.

The storm that sparked this latest wildfire was capricious, dumping considerable amounts of water in nearby Log Hill Village, but delivering nothing but thunder and lightning to the area to the north where the fire started.

“This is the time of year when it starts,” Austin said of wildfire season, “when we sometimes get the lightning without the rain.

“Let’s hope the monsoons show up with water pretty soon.”

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