

Kiowa County *Press*

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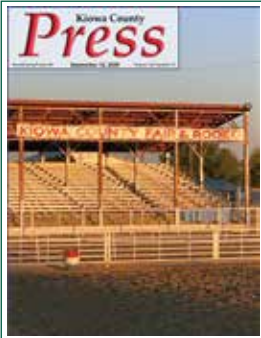
September 12, 2025

Volume 138, Number 37



PERIODICAL

About the Front Page



Another year has passed - far too rapidly - and fair week has returned in Kiowa County, Colorado.

Photo: Chris Sorensen

KiowaCountyPress.net

Kiowa County Press

138 years and counting!

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KiowaCountyPress.net

Joe Bush Earns Kansas Real Estate License & Part 107 Remote Pilot Certificate



Cruikshank Realty, Inc., is proud to announce that veteran agent Joe Bush has recently passed the State of Kansas real estate licensing exam, officially earning his license through the Kansas Real Estate Commission. This accomplishment further strengthens Joe's credentials and expands his capability to assist clients across state lines.

In addition, Joe has earned his Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Part 107 Remote Pilot Certificate, commonly known as a drone pilot license. This certification equips him with advanced aerial imaging capabilities, enhancing property marketing through high-quality drone photography and videography.

A proud alumnus of Texas A&M University, Joe earned a B.S. in Agronomy with a minor in Animal Science in 1977. He began his career in production agriculture in Southern Texas before transitioning to real estate. Now a cornerstone of the SE Colorado team, Joe specializes in residential, farm and ranch properties across Lamar, Cheraw, Rocky Ford, Towner, and surrounding communities.

"Passing the Kansas exam is an exciting milestone,"

says Joe. "Combined with my Part 107 certification, I'm committed to offering clients elevated service—whether it's cross-border real estate expertise or stunning aerial property presentations."

Since joining Cruikshank Realty, Inc., Joe has closed numerous transactions, ranging from starter homes in Lamar to 160-acre farms and luxury properties above \$1 million. His deep-rooted understanding of agricultural land and modern farming and ranching practices, honed through years in crop production, adds valuable insight for farm and ranch clients.

Thanks to his new credentials, Joe can now:

- Represent clients in both Colorado and Kansas markets
- Capture drone footage for

heightened visual marketing

- Offer seamless, professional services from property analysis to final sale

About Cruikshank Realty, Inc.

Located in Lamar, CO, Cruikshank Realty, Inc., is a full-service brokerage serving Colorado, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and adjacent Kansas areas. Their team specializes in, agricultural, as well as residential and commercial properties, delivering expert local knowledge and personalized client care.

For more information or to contact Joe Bush, please reach out to Cruikshank Realty, Inc., at 719-336-7802 or visit www.2cr2.com

Photo: Cruikshank Realty Inc

Pages from the Past

15 Years Ago
September 10, 2010

One day Clinic for
women & girls interested in the sports of fishing, archery & shotgun shooting will be held at the Kiowa Creek Natural Area located just south of Eads.

25 Years Ago
September 15, 2000
Failed robbery attempt
at the Colorado East Bank & Trust in La Junta. The potential thieves broke into the home of the bank president & him to accompany them to the

bank while holding his wife hostage at their home. When the attempt to open the safe failed the robbers fled.

40 Years Ago
September 13, 1985
Colorado state will
have a onetime Tax Amnesty. Last chance for those who owe back taxes before penalties increase.

50 Years Ago
September 12, 1975
The Kiowa County
Hospital board voted to cut hospital employees salaries 10% from Sept.

through Dec. as one of several recommended from the auditor because of the current hospital financial situation.

75 Years Ago
August, 1950
Primary election in
Kiowa County was a very quiet affair with no local contest voters seemed uninterested.

100 Years Ago
1925
Activities at the Kiowa
County Fair included auto races, singing contest, shirt race, balloon ascension & horseshoe games.

Hometown Gas & Grill
719-438-2206
Eads CO-OP
719-438-2201

GNBank
The Best Place to Bank and Borrow
719-438-5331

137 Years and Counting!
Kiowa County Press
719-438-5800

SHARE YOUR Story

The Kiowa County Press invites you to share what's happening in your world with our readers.

Send your stories and photos from southeast Colorado life to
editor@KiowaCountyPress.net

ABOUT TOWN

Doris Lessenden



"Encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing." 1 Thessalonians 5:11 (NIV)

Hello, Reader, I do hope you are practicing and using those words and lifestyle to encourage your family members, fellow workers, and citizens as this Bible verse suggests. Then we will have a happier world.

After living in and around Eads for most of my 80-some years, I so appreciate that our county has good people who are generally positive, thoughtful, and kind to have lived around and with. I do admit that times in the world have changed immensely since I was a youth. People were more caring in the earlier years of our lives, and we spent more times in each other's homes or at the lakes having fun hours of visiting, sharing meals, and helping others around their homes and ranches - not reading our cell phone screens or watching television. Maybe that was before those communication devices were invented.

August 29, our Brenda Leon arranged for Terry Stillwell, formerly of Scott City, Kansas, to sing for an audience at Prairie Pines Assisted Living Community. He sang so wonderfully so many songs familiar to us from the 1940s, 50s, and 60s, through the 90s and 2000s, to a few present-day country artists. We loved to hear these beautiful love songs, ballads, and sad songs too, that reminded us of our younger years. Sometimes his melodious voice and style reminded me of some trips to California night clubs. Those are such pleasant memories with Jenness and Ann Klieboeker and Suzanne Proctor in Nevada. The Weisbrod residents who rode over to Prairie Pines enjoyed the evening with such an accomplished singing artist, his attractive wife, the hospitality of the Pines, and hostess-activity director, Charlotte Gunning, our director, Brenda Leon, and assistant, Linda Hopkins.

Last week we were pleased to watch the photo shoot by Raina Lucero of our dietary employee, J. B. Brown, who was given an impressive gold medal by Josh Vanderpool of Sheridan Lake, who was at Weisbrod to thank the young man for saving a resident's life by doing the Heimlich maneuver.

All this rain this summer has been a real blessing, except last weekend the rodeo arena southeast of Kit Carson was just too wet to have the traditional rodeo for youth and older participants. However, there was their wonderful barbeque and parade, followed by the popular duck race, and the Melodrama was

fine. Our own Morena Lowe was in the Melodrama. She is the Theatre Director at the Crow-Luther Cultural Event Center in Eads, and works at Crow's Stop and Shop. Their sports games went well, and the Trinity Lutheran Church group sold out their bake sale. By 7:00 p.m. there was another huge rain, but they were able to move their outdoor dance to the community building. Those people like to dance up there!

By the time you may be reading this, the last county fair of the season will be in full swing in Eads. Plans are made to host a great fair in our little but great town, and the junior high and high school volleyball and football teams will be hosting Wiley. The junior high volleyball game starts at 3:00 p.m., and the night ends with the high school football game at 7:00 p.m.

It is a delight to visit with tall, blonde Reese Barnett, a freshman at Eads High School. This season, she has already played in tournaments that are usually about five hours long at CSU in Fort Collins, UNC in Greeley, and this week in Thornton/Denver.

I was sad to read of the death of Richard Ritchie, a graduate of Eads High School. I remember him as friendly, outstanding leader, and such

a good athlete. Although he lived most of his adult life in Illinois as a successful businessman, we remember how he liked to return to Eads, especially at Kiowa County Fair time, to have a great time camping and visiting with his siblings, most of whom all returned for a reunion during the fair.

Jack Johnson's family returned to Kit Carson last weekend to have a burial for their father and relative. We surely do miss him sitting in his usual pew at Trinity Lutheran, and his weekly column he had in the Kiowa County Press.

Ron Mannering of Lamar's Family Grace Church Center was our guest Pastor at Weisbrod Home in Eads last Sunday. His message is always a blessing.

We often see hospice service nurses in our town who come to facilities and homes to give medical service and comfort to so many people and families. They come from the Lamar area.

Since school began, we like getting to know Kara Wilson of Sheridan Lake, who is a senior at Eads High School. She comes at least once a week to observe and assist around Weisbrod because she would like to have a career in the medical field. What a good

Pastor's Pearls

Pastor Rich Z

JUDAH or USA

This is what the Lord said about the punishment of Judah. "Because they have despised the law of the Lord, and have not kept His commandments. Their lies led them astray..." Amos 2:4

way to help youth make final decisions about their future studies and educational training.

The Chamber of Commerce leaders have given plaques to the worthy persons who have been chosen to be our parade marshals. They are Chad and Beth Bell, the "Citizens of the Year," and Ken Flory, the "Volunteer of the Year." Beth is the CEO of Weisbrod Health, the long-term care unit, and clinic, and teams with the new addition of the Prairie Pines Assisted Living Community on the south side of Eads. She is also a volleyball coach for the Eads junior high team, and a mother of two young boys. Her husband, Chad, owns the Muscle Farm Gym on Maine Street, plus he buys, remodels, and rents homes, and has electrical skills.



Invenergy

Learn More →

Prairie Pines Assisted Living

Our Residents Love to Host!

Join us for Coffee Hour Every Tuesday @ 2:00 pm Treats & Drinks Provided

101 E. Lowell St Eads, CO 719-438-2141 prairepines@esrta.com

KIOWA COUNTY WEATHER

Sept 2, 2025 - Sept 08, 2025
8:00 a.m. reading for the previous 24 hours

Date	High	Low	Precip	Snow
02	86	53	0.02	0.00
03	88	57	0.00	0.00
04	91	56	0.00	0.00
05	92	51	0.00	0.00
06	55	48	0.33	0.00
07	90	55	0.00	0.00
08	79	54	0.00	0.00

Last Year High/Low: 93/51
Sept Precip. ('24/'25)..... .04/.33
Year-to-Date ('24/'25)..... 7.19/21.47

Snow ('24/'25)
Month:..... 0.00/0.00
Year: 5.2/6.13

4 DAY FORECAST for KIOWA COUNTY

FRI	SAT	SUN	MON
Precipitation 0%-20%	Precipitation 10%-20%	Precipitation 0%-0%	Precipitation 0%-0%
90	86	82	86
58	52	54	57

Brought to you by
KiowaCountyPress.net

USDA UPDATE

Kiowa/Cheyenne County
USDA Service Center Staff

TEMPORARY FSA POSITIONS AVAILABLE

FSA is looking for temporary office assistance to help deliver 'The American Relief Act of 2025,' which was signed into law on Dec. 21, 2024 and provided USDA with more than \$30 billion to deliver disaster recovery assistance for farmers and livestock producers. This position will help support the implementation of the Emergency Livestock Relief Program and the Supplemental Disaster Relief Program which will provide assistance to producers for necessary expenses due to losses due to weather related events in 2023 and 2024.

Applicants who are interested can submit a resume or an FSA-675, employment application which are available at any Service Center or online.

The following counties are looking to hire temporary employees:

Cheyenne County USDA Service Center: Resume or FSA-675 application can be submitted to 215 N 1st W, PO Box 850, Cheyenne Wells, CO 80810 or emailed to Dawna Weirich, Acting CED @ dawna.weirich@usda.gov

Kit Carson County USDA Service Center: Resume or FSA-675 application can be submitted to 138 S 14th St, Burlington, CO 80807 or emailed to Mindy Neve, CED @ mindy.neve@usda.gov

Prowers County USDA Service Center: Resume or FSA-675 application can be submitted to 1501 S Main Ste. A, Lamar, CO 81052 or emailed to Hallie Barlow, CED @ hal-lie.barlow@usda.gov

Register for CCA's Mid-Winter Conference

Registration is now open for the Colorado Cattlemen's Association's (CCA) Mid-Winter Conference, which will be held on November 10th and 11th at the Denver Marriott West Hotel in Golden, CO. We have adjusted our conference from January to November so make sure to add this new date to your calendar.

The Mid-Winter Conference will kick off on November 10th with CCA's Board of Directors meeting, as well as a meeting for Colorado Cattle-Women. Following the meetings, CCA will start the first of three rounds of steering committee meetings. The evening will conclude with the CCA President's Reception, where all conference attendees and vendors are welcome to network and mingle.

Tuesday, November 11th, will be a full day, starting with CCA's remaining rounds of steering committee meetings in the morning - facilitating important discussions about topics and issues affecting every aspect of Colorado's beef industry. During Tuesday's lunch, CCA will host its business meeting and recognize several award winners. On Tuesday afternoon, CCA will host a legislative panel where members have the opportunity to engage directly with elected officials to discuss relevant industry priorities. Then attendees are invited to stay for the 1867 reception and banquet that evening where we will celebrate award winners and enjoy connecting with our industry friends and colleagues.

To register, please visit the CCA website or call the CCA office at 303-431-6422. CCA also has a discounted room block at the Denver Marriott West Hotel for our conference attendees. For more information on the conference, visit www.coloradocattle.org/mid-winter-conference.

Thanks to the sponsors who have already signed on to support CCA and its members! Sponsorship opportunities are available as well as opportunities to connect with beef producers and industry leaders. Don't hesitate to get in touch with the CCA office at info@coloradocattle.org, for more information about the best ways to showcase your business while supporting CCA.

KANSAS CROP PROGRESS AND CONDITION

For the week ending September 7, 2025, there were 4.6 days suitable for fieldwork, according to the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service. Topsoil moisture supplies rated 3% very short, 16% short, 68% adequate, and 13% surplus. Subsoil moisture supplies rated 6% very short, 20% short, 65% adequate,

and 9% surplus.

Field Crops Report: Winter wheat planted was 1%, near 4% last year and 2% for the five-year average.

Corn condition rated 3% very poor, 9% poor, 25% fair, 45% good, and 18% excellent. Corn denting was 85%, near 86% last year and 83% average. Mature was 44%, behind

52% last year, but near 42% average. Harvested was 2%, behind 13% last year and 11% average.

Soybean condition rated 1% very poor, 5% poor, 25% fair, 56% good, and 13% excellent. Soybeans setting pods was 92%, equal to last year, and near 91% average. Drooping leaves was 14%, behind 21% both last year and average.

Sorghum condition rated 3% very poor, 7% poor, 25% fair, 47% good, and 18% excellent. Sorghum headed was 96%, equal to last year, and near 95% average. Coloring was 63%, near 65% last year, and equal to average. Mature was 23%, near 21% last year, and ahead of 13% average. Harvested was 2%, equal to last year, and near 1% average.

Cotton condition rated 0% very poor, 7% poor, 24% fair, 47% good, and 22% excellent. Cotton bolls opening was 17%, well behind 43% last year, and behind 35% average.

Pasture and Range Report: Pasture and range conditions rated 4% very poor, 10% poor, 27% fair, 50% good, and 9% excellent.

Data for this news release were provided at the county level by USDA Farm Service Agency, KSU Extension Service, and other reporters across the State.

Golden Plains Insurance

Auto, Home, Life, Health, Crop,
Farm/Ranch Business, Flood - and MORE!

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GoldenPlainsInsurance.com

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809 Wansted St
719-438-2206
<https://www.facebook.com/Hometown-Gas-Grill-1827749380800315/>

Hot Dogs - Sandwiches - Pizza Oven - Ice Cream
Pop - Chips & Snacks - Candy - Dining Area

Eads Consumers Supply

We have: Propane - Batteries (Marine/Car) - Oil -
Tires & Tubes - Feed - Bulk Fuel - We can: Fix truck tires
Service jobs - Brakes - On-the-road tire repair

Eads, CO
719-438-2201 500 15th St

JUST LISTED
CHEYENNE COUNTY, COLORADO
680+ AC CROPLAND

LEGAL DESCRIPTION:
SECTION 28-12-42

CROPS: Buyer will receive landlord's 1/3rd share of 2026 wheat crop.
MINERAL RIGHTS: All of Seller's interest in mineral goes to the Buyer.

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KIOWA COUNTY AG OLYMPICS

SEPTEMBER 11th - 13th, 2025

11:00 AM - 5:00 PM

KIOWA COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS | EADS, COLORADO

September 11th: Registration & Practice Runs Age Groups:
September 12th: Round 1 Competitions 1st - 3rd
September 13th: Final Competitions & Prizes 4th - 6th
7th - 9th

FREE TO ENTER



KIOWA COUNTY PUNCHY PLAYGROUND

SEPTEMBER 11th - 13th, 2025

11:00 AM - 5:00 PM

KIOWA COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS | EADS, COLORADO

AGES 6 & UNDER

WITH PARENT OR RESPONSIBLE ADULT (OVER 18)

FREE ADMISSION



Great Fun for Everyone!!

A Parent or Responsible Adult (over 18) must be present when children 6 & under are in the Playground

KIOWA COUNTY FAIR & RODEO CONCERT FEATURING:

CHAD BROCK & HUGH PHILLIPS

SEPTEMBER 12th, 2025

FOLLOWING THE RANCH RODEO

KIOWA COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS | EADS, COLORADO

CHAD BROCK

2000 Academy of Country Music Awards Nominee for Top New Male Vocalist and Vocal Event of the Year for 'A Country Boy Can Survive' with George Jones & Hank Williams Jr.

'Ordinary Life' peaked at number #3 on Billboard's Hot Country Songs.

'Lightning Does the Work' hit number #19 on Billboard's Hot Country Songs.

'Yes' the title track to Brock's second album release went to #1 on Billboard's Hot Country Songs.



HUGH PHILLIPS

Colorado Playlist 2021 Listener Poll Nominee for Best New Artist/Band, Best New Male Vocalist, & Best New Americana/Country Song [Hi-Ways].

'It's Been a Long Time' hit #1 in Colorado & #2 on the Top 50 Global Country Charts during its release cycle.

'Boys That's a Cowgirl' landed at #3 on Country Radio after only 12 weeks!



FREE ADMISSION

KIOWA COUNTY HORSE RACES

EADS, COLORADO

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 13th, 2025

ENTRIES

7 HORSE GATE

RACE ENTRIES OPEN AUGUST 27, 2025, 10:00am & CLOSE AUGUST 30, 2025, 4:00pm.
ENTRY FEES MUST BE RECEIVED BY SEPTEMBER 3, 2025, 3:00pm VIA BANK WIRE TRANSFER.

BANK DETAILS & WIRE TRANSFER INSTRUCTIONS WILL BE PROVIDED UPON ENTRY.

SADDLE & PONY RACES ENTER DAY OF RACE ON SITE. CASH ONLY.

STOCK SADDLES ONLY

TO ENTER CALL OR TEXT: 719-688-3099

ADDED MONEY FOR ALL RACES

RACES START PROMPTLY @ 1:00 p.m.

GATE	ENTRY	ADDED MONEY
220 YD OPEN	\$500	\$1,000
220 YD OPEN	\$1,500	\$1,000
220 YD OPEN (WINNER TAKE ALL)	\$3,000	\$1,000
100 YD DASH	\$1,000	\$1,000
220 YD SADDLE OPEN	\$200	\$500
(Lap & Tap)		
220 YD JUNIOR SADDLE	\$100	\$500
(Lap & Tap)		
100 YD PONY	\$100	\$500

LARRY & SUSAN LUSHER MEMORIAL	ENTRY	ADDED MONEY
3/8 MILE OPEN (WINNER TAKE ALL)	\$500	\$1,000
ROB KELLEY MEMORIAL	ENTRY	ADDED MONEY
1/2 MI + 70YD OPEN (WINNER TAKE ALL)	\$500	\$1,000

RACES LIMITED TO HORSE OWNERS AND TRAINERS ONLY
BUCKLES TO HIGH POINT JOCKEY & TRAINER

More Colorado voters opting to register unaffiliated in 2025

LINDSEY TOOMER

(Colorado Newsline)

The number of active voters in Colorado has grown by just under 50,000 between January and July of this year, but more voters are opting to be unaffiliated than register as a Republican or Democrat.

A recent analysis from the [New York Times](#) found that Democratic voter registration declined in every state between 2020 and 2024, while in many of those states Republican registrations grew. In Colorado — where a voter does not need to be registered with a party to vote in primary elections — both parties have seen further reductions since the start of 2025.

Both parties saw reductions of total membership in the state of less than 1 percent, but the number of Democratic party voters declined slightly more than Republican voters. Unaffiliated voter registration across Colorado grew by 3.1 percent, while Democratic registration dropped by 0.9 percent and Republican registration dropped by 0.77 percent.

The vast majority of voters who are registering for the first time or updating their registration do so through automatic voter registration



at the Division of Motor Vehicles, according to Aly Belknap, executive director of Common Cause Colorado, a pro-democracy organization with branches in about two dozen states. People who register through the DMV are automatically registered unaffiliated, but Belknap said voters are able to update that to join a party.

Belknap said voters opting to be unaffiliated aligns with “a trend we’ve seen steadily over the last decade” after Colorado opened up its primaries. Over the last three presidential election cycles, the national approval ratings of the Democratic and Republican parties have reached “historic lows,” she said.

“I think that’s really a driving force for many Col-

oradans, as well as many Americans because this is a trend that we’re now seeing nationally, even in states with closed primaries,” Belknap said. “This is I think a driving reason why folks are moving away and deciding to register unaffiliated and forge a path on leading with the issues that matter mostly to them and choosing the candidates accordingly.”

Voters’ trust in government is also at a historic low, Belknap said, which affects people’s willingness to engage with democracy and elections.

Unaffiliated voter registrations have been steadily on the rise since November and peaked at 2,029,337 in July, growing by more than 60,000 voters since the start of the

year.

Immediately after the November election, Republicans saw a slight uptick in registrations in Colorado between the end of November and December, but the number of voters affiliated with the party have slowly declined each month since. The number of voters registered as Republican hit a high of 943,564 in December and have dropped to 936,002 by the end of July.

The Colorado Republican Party did not respond to a Newsline request for comment.

Consistent across congressional districts

The Democratic Party’s high since the November election was at the end of November, when 1,050,789 Colorado voters were registered with the party. Democratic registrations dropped to 1,036,115 in July after gradually declining each month since.

Voters across the country “are feeling disillusioned and apathetic,” according to Andrew Nicla, Colorado Democratic Party communications director, and “the toxic national discourse has left many questioning whether either party is truly fighting for them.”

“These voter registration numbers are a snapshot, not

a sealed fate. Colorado Democrats didn’t blow a \$1.2 billion hole in our state budget or cut health care and food assistance for working families,” Nicla said, referencing the federal tax and spending bill’s [effect on Colorado’s budget](#). “There is a clear contrast between our vision, and the damage done by Colorado Republicans in Congress and in our state.”

Party affiliations are consistent across Colorado’s eight congressional districts, too.

In Colorado’s battleground 8th Congressional District, where Republican U.S. Representative Gabe Evans defeated former Democratic U.S. Representative Yadira Caraveo by less than a full percentage point, the number of Democratic-affiliated voters has decreased more than the number of Republican-affiliated voters has: Between January and July, the district has seen a 0.06 percent reduction in registered Republican voters compared to a 0.33 percent reduction in registered Democratic voters.

A priority over the next 10-15 years will be to implement automatic voter registration through Medicaid, Belknap said, meaning people seeking Medicaid in Colorado would “have the same benefit as folks who are getting a driver’s license.” The Colorado Legislature approved a [bill](#) that would have implemented that process in 2019, but the federal government has not made the changes needed to allow it.

While political parties and candidates may not be engaging with voters as much during an off year, Belknap said nonpartisan voter registration organizations are still out within the community registering voters, but not pushing for any particular party. She would “love to see the voter registration numbers continue to increase” going into 2026 when there are more local and national elections on the ballot, both in the spring and fall, she said.

Colorado voters to decide on funding for school meal program

ERIC GALATAS

(Colorado News Connection)

This November, Colorado voters will decide whether people earning more than \$300,000 a year should pay more to ensure that the state’s Healthy School Meals for All program is fully funded.

The program serves 6,000 meals each day, significantly more than what was expected when it was passed by voters in 2022.

Ana Bustamante, Colorado state manager with the Save the Children Action Network, said it’s hard for anyone to be productive on an empty stomach, and school meals are the most nutritious food

many kids get all day.

“We know that that leads to kids learning better,” said Bustamante, “having better participation at school, less behavioral issues, improved grades, stronger graduation rates.”

If voters approve [Proposition LL](#) on the November ballot, the state will be able to keep tax revenue already collected for the program. [Proposition MM](#), which would increase taxes for about 6 percent of Colorado’s top earners, was recently amended in a special legislative session.

It will also allow the state to use any overflow tax revenue to soften the blow of cuts to the Supplemental

Nutrition Assistance Program food assistance under the Trump administration’s One Big Beautiful Bill Act. People earning over \$300,000 per year received permanent federal tax cuts in the same bill.

Roy Chrobocinski, managing director of federal domestic policy with Save the Children’s national office, said 14 million children living in households with incomes below the poverty line don’t know where their next meal will come from.

He said programs like Healthy School Meals for All can be a lifeline for families.

“We’ve seen food insecurity rise for three straight years,” said Chrobocinski. “Right now, across the U.S.,

about 47 million people — including one in five children — don’t have access to adequate food.”

Eight in ten Coloradans across party lines [support Healthy School Meals for All](#). Bustamante said the program also helps strengthen the state’s food system by dedicating funds for schools to buy fresh, healthy food directly from local producers.

“Not only are we supporting the schools,” said Bustamante, “we are also strengthening our local economy by getting food directly from Colorado farmers and ranchers.”

Liberal groups pitch graduated income tax for Colorado's 2026 ballot

SARA WILSON

(Colorado Newsline)

A coalition of liberal groups in Colorado want to ask voters in 2026 whether higher earners in the state should pay more in income taxes to raise billions more in revenue.

The group, dubbed Protect Colorado's Future, submitted ballot measure language Wednesday for a constitutional amendment that would raise the income tax rate for Coloradans making at least \$500,000.

"A graduated income tax is just common sense: 98 percent of us get a tax cut, and the folks doing really well chip in a fair share to keep our schools strong, our healthcare system solid, and our communities thriving. That's how we build a Colorado where everyone gets ahead, not just the lucky few," Kathy White, executive director of the Colorado Fiscal Institute, said in a statement.

Colorado's income tax is currently at 4.4 percent. The measure would bump that rate to 4.6 percent for people making at least \$600,000 and increase it as people earn more, to a 9.2 percent rate for people making at least \$10 million per year. People earning less than \$250,000 per year would see a slight income tax reduction.

The proposal is what's known as a graduated income tax rate, in which people pay a higher percentage as their income increases. Twenty-seven states and Washington D.C. use a similar system. Colorado is one of 14 states with a flat income tax.

Colorado is also subject to the Taxpayer's Bill of Rights, which caps annual state spending according to inflation and population growth. Colorado can retain and spend tax revenue only up to that limit, even if it collects more and even if costs for government services balloon.

The cruel cuts to healthcare and the absurd corporate tax giveaways in the federal budget bill have pushed Colorado over the edge, and only the voters of Colorado have the power to make the



wealthy pay their fair share and restore funding to critical state priorities.

"For more than three decades, an upside-down tax code has hurt Colorado's schools, health care, child-care and the environment," said Chris deGruy Kennedy, head of the left-leaning Bell

Policy Center. "The cruel cuts to healthcare and the absurd corporate tax giveaways in the federal budget bill have pushed Colorado over the edge, and only the voters of Colorado have the power to make the wealthy pay their fair share and restore funding to critical state priorities."

The [recent federal spending cut and tax break bill](#) slashed Colorado's expected tax revenue for the current fiscal year by about \$1.2 billion and will increase the state's financial obligation for Medicaid and nutrition assistance programs in future years.

The groups behind the proposal include the Bell Policy Center, the Colorado Fiscal Institute, the Colorado Children's Campaign, the Colorado Center on Law and Policy, New Era Colorado, Great Education Colorado, the Colorado Statewide Parents Coalition, the Colorado Consumer Health Initiative, the Blueprint to End Hunger, Colorado Counties and Commissioners Acting Together, the Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition, and the Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights.

To place the constitutional amendment on the ballot, the coalition would need to get at least 125,000 petition signatures, including from at least 2 percent of the voters in each of the state's 35 state Senate districts.

Conservative activists are pursuing other ballot measures that would cut the income tax rate across the board. Voters approved rate cuts in 2020 and 2022.

Colorado orders pharmacies, insurers to maintain broad access to COVID-19 vaccines

CHASE WOODRUFF

(Colorado Newsline)

A public health order issued by state officials Wednesday aims to ensure updated COVID-19 vaccines remain widely available for Coloradans amid efforts by President Donald Trump's administration to limit access to certain groups.

The [order](#), signed by Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment director Jill Hunsaker Ryan, criticizes the "confusion and uncertainty" caused by the Food and Drug Administration's August 27 move to restrict access to the latest COVID-19 vaccines to those aged 65 or older or at higher risk of severe disease. The CDPHE order directs multiple state agencies to take steps to maintain broad access to vaccination, including by requiring insurers to cover the vaccines and instructing pharmacists to provide them without a doctor's prescrip-

tion.

"I'm taking action to ensure that Coloradans who want to can easily and conveniently get the safe and effective updated COVID vaccine, along with the flu vaccine, this fall without having to go to a doctor first," Governor Jared Polis said in a statement. "Starting this Friday, the COVID-19 vaccine should be available to those who choose at many local pharmacies."

More than 4,500 Coloradans have been hospitalized due to COVID-19 over the last 11 months, CDPHE officials said.

Pursuant to the CDPHE directive, Colorado's chief medical officer, Dr. Ned Calonge, issued a [standing order](#) that will "serve as a prescription for eligible Coloradans to receive the COVID-19 vaccine." Those eligible include anyone between the ages of 5 and 64 who "desire their protection from COVID-19" and young children "whose parent or guardian desires their protec-

tion from COVID-19," even if they do not belong to a high-risk group.

That significantly expands the eligibility limits set by the FDA's Aug. 27 approval of four new vaccine formulations, which were directed by top Trump administration officials over the objections of agency scientists, The New York Times [reported](#). The move comes amid a broad assault on the federal public health establishment led by Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., who has spent decades spreading misinformation and conspiracy theories about vaccines and other health issues.

Amid the unprecedented [upheaval at federal health agencies](#) — including the recent resignations of four senior officials at Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the firing of the agency's director — the states of California, Oregon and Washington announced this

week that they [will form a "health alliance"](#) to make recommendations on vaccines. A group of northeastern states are [considering](#) a similar move.

Polis has faced criticism for his own [history of opposition](#) to vaccine mandates, and for voicing his [support](#) last year for Kennedy's appointment to lead HHS. But he called the administration's new vaccine limits "ridiculous."

"These effective vaccines are available at many local pharmacies and supermarkets, and I encourage my fellow Coloradans to join me in getting protected," Polis said. "Colorado is committed to empowering individuals to make choices to protect their own health and safety."

The State Board of Pharmacy will convene an emergency meeting Friday to consider [draft rules](#) formalizing the requirements in CDPHE's order.

AREA SCHOOL CALENDARS

Eads School Calendar

Sept 11-Sept 22

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

- NO SCHOOL FOR FAIR
- 4:00 p.m. HS Softball @ Alamosa V, JV lv 10:30 am

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

- 4:00 p.m. JH Volleyball vs Wiley
- 4:00 p.m. JH Football vs Wiley
- 5:00 p.m. HS Volleyball vs Wiley
- 7:00 p.m. HS Football vs Wiley

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

- 11:00 a.m. HS Softball vs Forge Christian

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 16

- 4:00 pm HS Softball @ Rocky Ford lv 1:00 pm

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 18

- Fall Pictures
- 4:30 pm HS Softball vs Lamar @ Wiley
- Friday September 19
- 8:30 am HS Knowledge Bowl @ Flagler
- 10:00 am HS Golf @ Akron lv 6:45 am
- 3:00 pm JH Volleyball @ Granada
- 4:00 pm JH Football @ Granada
- 5:00 pm HS Volleyball @ Granada
- 7:00 pm HS Football @ Granada

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 20

- 4:00 pm JH Volleyball vs South Baca
- 5:30 pm HS Volleyball vs South Baca

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 22

- 8:00 am HS Golf @ Pueblo West lv 5:00 am
- 4:30 HS Volleyball vs Holly

Cheyenne Wells School Calendar

Sept 11-Sept 20

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 11

- 3:00 pm Josten Sophomores rings & Seniors Caps & Cowns

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 12

- 3:00 pm JH Volleyball @ Walsh lv 12:30 pm
- 4:00 pm JH Football @ Walsh lv 12:30 pm
- 5:15 pm HS Volleyball @ Walsh lv 1:30 pm
- 7:00 pm HS Football @ Walsh lv 1:30 pm

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 15

- 9:00 am HS Boys Golf V @ Wray
- 10:00 am HS Boys Golf JV

KIT CARSON SCHOOL CALENDAR

SEPT 11-SEPT 22

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 11

- 4:00 pm JH/HS Volleyball vs Springfield

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 12

- 3:00 pm JH/HS Volleyball @ Hugo lv 1:30 pm
- 4:00 pm JH Football @ Hugo lv 1:30 pm
- 7:00 pm CW Football @ Walsh

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 15

- Homecoming Week

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 16

- Homecoming Week
- 4:00 pm JH/HS Volleyball vs McClave

Plainview School Calendar

Sept 16-Sept 26

- @ Yuma
- 4:30 pm HS Football JV @ Idalia

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 16

- 4:00 pm HS Volleyball @ Holyoke lv 12:45 pm
- 4:00 pm JV Football vs Stratton

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 19

- 8:00 am Teacher Professional Workday
- 3:00 pm JH Volleyball vs Cheraw
- 4:00 pm JH Football vs Cheraw
- 5:00 pm HS Volleyball with Cheraw
- 7:00 pm HS Football vs Cheraw

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 20

- 1:00 pm HS Volleyball @ Otis lv 9:30 am

WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 17

- Homecoming Week

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 18

- Homecoming Week
- 4:00 pm JH Football vs Walsh
- 4:00 pm JH/HS Volleyball vs Walsh

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 19

- 8:00 am School in Session
- 7:00 pm CW Football vs Cheraw

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 20

- 2:00 pm HS Volleyball vs Merino

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 22

- 4:30 pm VW JV Football vs Deer Trail

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 16

- 2:30 pm JH Volleyball @ Alta Vista

WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 19

- Secondary Field Trip - Titanic

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 25

- 1:30 pm K-1 Field Trip @ Kiowa County Library
- 5:00 pm JH Volleyball vs Moms

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 26

- 8:30 am HS Knowledge Bowl @ Genoa-Hugo

Wiley School Calendar

Sept 11-Sept 19

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 11

- 4:00 pm HS Softball @ Alamosa

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

- 4:00 pm JH VB @ Eads
- 4:00 pm JH Football @ Eads
- 4:00 pm JH Volleyball @ Eads
- 5:00 pm HS Volleyball @ Eads
- 7:00 pm HS Football @ Eads

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 15

- 2:30 pm JH Volleyball vs Alta Vista

- 7:00 pm Wiley School Board Meeting

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 16

- 3:00 pm JH Volleyball @ South Baca
- 4:00 pm HS Softball @ Rocky Ford
- 4:00 pm HS Volleyball @ South Baca

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 18

- 2:00 pm JH Volleyball vs McClave
- 4:30 pm HS Softball vs Lamar

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 19

- 8:30 pm HS Knowledge Bowl @ Flagler
- 3:00 pm HS Volleyball vs Caliche
- 3:00 pm JH Football vs Caliche

McClave School Calendar

Sept 11-Sept 18

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 11

- 3:00 pm JH Volleyball @ South Baca
- HS Volleyball @ South Baca -following JH

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 12

- 6:00 pm FFA Back to School Picnic

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 13

- 11:00 am JH Volleyball @ Simla
- HS Volleyball @ Simla -following JH

- 2:00 pm JH Football vs. Simla
- 6:00 pm HS FB @ Simla

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 15

- 4:30 pm JV Football @ Las Animas

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 16

- JH Volleyball @ Kit Carson
- HS Volleyball @ Kit Carson -following JH

WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 17

- Health Screenings

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 18

- 2:00 pm JH Volleyball @ Wiley

GRANADA SCHOOL CALENDAR

SEPT 11-SEPT 26

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 11

- 4:00 pm HS Volleyball @ Las Animas

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 12

- Staff Work Day
- 3:00 pm JH Volleyball @ Cheraw
- 4:00 pm HS Volleyball @ Cheraw
- 4:00 pm JH Football @ Cheraw
- 7:00 pm HS Football @ Cheraw

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 15

- 3:00 pm JH Volleyball @

Holly

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 16

- 4:00 pm HS Volleyball vs Crowley County

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 18

- 4:00 pm HS Volleyball @ Swink

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 19

- 3:00 pm JH Volleyball vs Eads
- 4:00 pm HS Volleyball vs Eads
- 4:00 pm JH Football vs Eads
- 7:00 pm HS Football vs Eads

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 26

- 3:00 pm JH Volleyball vs Wiley



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Southeast Colorado high school football schedule – September 18-20, 2025

6-MAN

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

- Stratton 2-0 @ Arickaree 2-1

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

- Branson/Kim 1-0 @ Deer Trail 0-2 Non-Conference
- Walsh 2-0 @ Idalia 2-0 Non-Conference
- Miami-Yoder 0-2 @ Flagler 2-0 Non-Conference
- Otis 2-0 @ Genoa-Hugo 1-1
- Eads 3-0 @ Granada-0
- Hanover 0-2 @ Manzanola 0-2
- Cheraw 0-3 @ Cheyenne Wells 1-1
- Bethune 1-1 @ Kiowa 1-1

8-MAN

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

- Caliche 1-1 @ Wiley 1-1 Non-Conference
- Akron 2-0 @ Holly 0-2 Non-Conference
- Calhan 0-2 @ Swink 0-2 Non-Conference
- Walsenburg 1-1 @ Rocky Ford 10-1 Non-Conference
- Haxtun 1-2 @ Crowley County 0-1 Non-Conference
- Sanford 2-0 @ Fowler 1-1 Non-Conference
- Elkhart KS 0-1 @ Springfield 1-1

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 20

- Dayspring Christian Academy 2-0 @ Las Animas 2-0 Non-Conference

CLASS 1A

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

- (2A) #15 Lamar 2-0 @ #11 Burlington 2-0

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 20

- (2A) Bennett 0-2 @ #1 Limon 2-0

CLASS 2A

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

- #17 La Junta 2-0 @ #1 The Classical Academy 2-0 Non-Conference

Lamar High School boys soccer schedule – September 12-27, 2025

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 6

(2A) Bennett 2-1 @ (3A) Lamar 1-0

- Lamar 3
- Bennett 1

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

Lamar @ Prospect Ridge Academy 03 Non-Conference

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

- 11:00 am Lamar 1vs DSST College View 0-1 Tournament
- 4:00 pm Prospect Ridge Academy 0-3 vs Lamar

Tournament

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 20

- 2:00 pm Lamar vs Mitchell Non-Conference

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

- 4:30 pm (2A) Colorado Spring Christian vs Lamar

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

- 6:30 pm Liberal KS vs Lamar

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

- 1:00 pm Pueblo Central vs Lamar

Southeast Colorado high school volleyball schedule - September 15-20, 2025

CLASS 1A

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16

- Wiley 3-2 @ South Baca 2-1
- (2A) Trinidad 1-3 @ Kim/Branson 1-4
- (2A) Wray 0-2 @ Hi-Plains 4-0
- Cheyenne Wells 2-1 @ (2A) Holyoke 4-2
- (2A) Crowley County 0-2 @ Granada 3-1
- (2A) Las Animas 1-4 @ Cheraw 0-2
- #2 McClave 6-0 @ #18 Kit

Carson 1-5

- (2A) Peyton 1-4 @ Genoa-Hugo/Karval 2-1
- Otis 3-2 @ #12 Bethune 3-2

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

- Granada 3-1 @ (2A) Swink 3-1
- Walsh 1-4 @ #18 Kit Carson 1-5
- South Baca 2-1 @ Holly 2-1
- Genoa-Hugo/Karval 2-1 @ (2A) Burlington 1-1

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

- Kim/Branson 1-4 @ Deer

Trail 0-4

- Hi-Plains 4-0 @ Idalia 1-3
- Caliche 3-0 @ Wiley 3-2
- Eads 3-1 @ Granada 3-1
- Cheraw 0-2 @ Cheyenne Wells 2-1
- Hanover 4-3 @ #22 Manzanola 1-7
- #12 Bethune 3-2 @ Kiowa 1-1
- Otis 3-2 @ Genoa-Hugo/Karval

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 20

- Briggsdale 0-4 @ Hi-Plains 4-0
- Merino 5-0 @ #18 Kit Carson 1-5
- Cheraw 0-2 @ Springfield 1-2
- Cheyenne Wells 2-1 @ Otis 3-2
- Stratton 1-0 @ #8 Akron 4-2
- Lone Star 1-3 @ Flagler 4-0
- Holly 2-1 @ Kim/Branson 1-4
- South Baca 2-1 @ Eads 3-1

Southeast Colorado high school softball schedule - September 16-20, 2025

CLASS 3A

- #16 Lamar 3-4 @ Southeast Colorado 1-0

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16

- Limon 1-7 @ #16 Lamar 3-4 Non-Conference
- Southeast Colorado 1-0 @ #19 Rocky Ford

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

- #19 Rocky Ford 2-6 @ Florence 2-1 Non-Conference

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

- (4A) Discovery Canyon 3-5 @ #10 La Junta 5-2
- #21 Burlington 2-4 @ Limon 1-7 Double Header

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 20

- #8 Alamosa 5-2 @ #16 Lamar 3-4

CLASS 2A

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16

- Swallows Charter Academy 3-0 @ Fowler 1-2
- Swink 3-1 @ Walsenburg 0-1
- (3A) Mitchell 0-4 @ Rocky Ford 1-3

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

- #12 Hoehne 5-2 @ Fowler 1-2
- (1A) Deer Trail 0-4 @ Limon 0-2

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

- Burlington 1-1 @ Byers 0-2
- #17 Haxtun 2-4 @ Crowley County 0-2

CLASS 3A

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

- (4A) Pueblo County 0-2 @ La Junta 1-3

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16

- Florence 1-1 @ Lamar 1-1
- Woodland Park 1-4 @ La Junta 1-3

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

- The Vanguard School 2-0 @ Lamar 1-1

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

- La Junta 1-3 @ #4 Salida 5-2



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SOUTHEAST COLORADO HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS SCORES

Southeast Colorado High School Football Scores September 4-6

6-MAN

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 4

Stratton 1-0 @ Genoa-Hugo 1-0

- Stratton 52
- Genoa-Hugo 6

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 5

Mountain Valley 0-0 @ Walsh 1-0 Non-Conference

- Mountain Valley 7
- Walsh 44

Eads 2-0 @ Miami-Yoder 0-1 Non-Conference

- Eads 78
- Miami-Yoder 6

Primero 0-1 @ Manzanola 0-1 Non-Conference

- Primero 35
- Manzanola 25

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 6

Bethune 0-1 @ Cotopaxi 0-1 Non-Conference

- Bethune 40
- Cotopaxi 26

Wiley 1-0 @ Cheyenne Wells 0-1

- Wiley 0
- Cheyenne Wells 52

Cheraw 0-2 @ Flagler 1-0 Non-Conference

- Cheraw 8
- Flagler 24

8-MAN

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 5

Front Range Christian 0-0 @ Rocky Ford 0-1 Non-Conference

- Front Range Christian 14
- Rocky Ford 22

Las Animas 1-0 @ Walsenburg 1-0 Non-Conference

- Las Animas 51
- Walsenburg 0

Merino 1-0 @ McClave 2-0 Non-Conference

- Merino 6
- McClave 42

Swink 0-1 @ Sanford 1-0 Non-Conference

- Swink 7
- Sanford 56

Simla 1-0 @ Fowler 1-0 Non-Conference

- Simla 12
- Fowler 8

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 6

Elbert 1-1 @ Springfield 1-0 Non-Conference

- Elbert 20
- Springfield 16

Dayspring Christian Academy 1-0 @ Holly 0-1 Non-Conference

- Dayspring Christian Academy 44
- Holly 0

CLASS 1-A

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 5

#1 Limon 1-0 @ #17 Flatirons Academy 1-0 Non-Conference

- Limon 41
- Flatirons Academy 13

Lakin KS 0-0 @ #11 Burlington 1-0

- Lakin 6
- Burlington 42

CLASS 2-A

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 5

Sterling 1-0 @ #15 Lamar 1-0 Non-Conference

- Sterling 13
- Lamar 21

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 6

#17 La Junta 1-0 @ Mitchell 0-1 Non-Conference

- La Junta 40
- Mitchell 0

Southeast Colorado high school volleyball scores - September 1-6, 2025

CLASS 1A

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2

Walsh @ #23 Wiley

- Walsh 1
- Wiley 3

South Baca @ Kim/Branson

- South Baca 3
- Kim/Branson 0

#14 Granada @ Kit Carson

- Granada 3
- Kit Carson 0

(2A) Burlington @ #12 Hi-Plains

- Burlington 1
- Hi-Plains 3

Deer Trail @ Stratton

- Deer Trail 0
- Stratton 3

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 4

#10 Cheyenne Wells 2-1 @

- #20 Idalia 1-3
- Cheyenne Wells 2
- Idalia 1

#14 Granada 3-1 @ South Baca 2-1

- Granada 3
- South Baca 0

(2A) Crowley County 0-2 @ Holly 2-1

- Crowley County 3
- Holly 1

(2A) Las Animas 1-4 @ Manzanola 1-7

- Las Animas 3
- Manzanola 0

St Francis KS 1-2 @ #10

- Cheyenne Wells 2-1
- St. Francis 0
- Cheyenne Wells 2

#12 Hi-Plains 4-0 @ #7 Eads 3-1

- Hi-Plains 0
- Eads 3

Stratton 1-0 @ Genoa-Hugo/ Karval 2-1

- Stratton 3
- Genoa-Hugo/Karval 0

Kit Carson 1-5 @ (2A) Limon 0-2

- Kit Carson
- Limon

La Veta 1-3 @ Cheraw 0-2

- La Veta 0
- Cheraw 3

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 5

Springfield 1-2 @ Holly 2-1

- Springfield 3
- Holly 2

Kim/Branson 1-4 @ #14

- Granada 3-1
- Kim/Branson 0
- Granada 3

#7 Eads 3-1 @ Miami-Yoder 1-3

- Eads 3
- Miami-Yoder 0

13 Primero 5-0 @ Manzanola 1-7

- Primero 3
- Manzanola 0

#16 Lone Star @ Bethune

- Lone Star 3
- Bethune 0

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 6

#23 Wiley 3-2 @ #10

- Cheyenne Wells 2-1
- Wiley 2
- Cheyenne Wells 3

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Southeast Colorado high school softball scores - September 2-6, 2025

CLASS 3A

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2

(4A) #4 Widefield @ #19 Rocky Ford
 • Widefield 13
 • Rocky Ford 1

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2025

#23 Platte Valley 4-3 vs Limon 1-7 Tournament
 • Platte Valley 14
 • Limon 7

#20 Rocky Ford 2-6 vs #3 Wellington 4-1 tournament
 • Rocky Ford 3
 • Wellington 6

Limon 1-7 vs #5 Brush 5-1 Tournament
 • Limon 2
 • Brush 12

#13 Lamar 3-4 vs (4A) Falcon 2-3 Tournament
 • Lamar 8
 • Falcon 4

#1 Eaton 7-1 @ #11 Southeast Colorado 1-0 Non-Conference
 • Eaton 7
 • Southeast Colorado 1

#13 Lamar 3-4 vs (4A) #24 Pueblo East 4-2 Tournament
 • Lamar 6
 • Pueblo East 5

(4A) #8 Cheyenne Mountain 3-1 vs #10 La Junta 5-2 Tournament
 • Cheyenne Mountain 4
 • La Junta 1

#20 Rocky Ford 2-6 vs #5 Brush 5-1 Tournament
 • Rocky Ford 1
 • Brush 16

Burlington 2-4 vs #22 Florence 2-1 Tournament
 • Burlington 0
 • Florence 11

#15 La Junta 5-2 vs Sand Creek 1-2 Tournament
 • La Junta 11
 • Sand Creek 4

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 6

#23 Platte Valley 4-3 @ #20 Rocky Ford 2-6
 • Platte Valley 4
 • Rocky Ford 14

(4A) Pomona 1-3 vs #11 Southeast Colorado 1-0 Tournament
 • Pomona 8
 • Southeast Colorado 18

#11 Southeast Colorado 1-0 vs #8 Strasburg 6-2 Tournament
 • Southeast Colorado 22
 • Strasburg 12

Limon 1-7 vs #21 Burlington 2-4 Tournament
 • Limon 8
 • Burlington 9

Bayard NE 0-3 vs Limon 1-7 Tournament
 • Bayard 8
 • Limon 4

Holyoke 1-6 vs Burlington 2-4 Tournament
 • Holyoke 9
 • Burlington 17

#13 Lamar vs (4A) #12 Pueblo County Tournament
 • Lamar 1
 • Pueblo County 4

(4A) Mesa Ridge vs #15 La Junta Tournament
 • Mesa Ridge 4
 • La Junta 2

#13 Lamar vs #12 Alamosa Tournament
 • Lamar 8
 • Alamosa 1

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VOLLEYBALL SCORES Continued from A10

#9 Otis 3-2 @ #12 Hi-Plains 4-0

• Otis 3
 • Hi-Plains 2

#20 Idalia 1-3 @ #3 McClave 6-0

• Idalia 0
 • McClave 3

Rocky Ford 1-3 @ Fowler 1-2
 • Rocky Ford 0
 • Fowler 3

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 5

#5 Swink 3-1 @ Sanford 3-0
 • Swink 0
 • Sanford 3

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 6

Crowley County 0-2 @ #17 Charter Academy 3-0
 • Crowley County 0
 • Swallows Charter Academy 3

CLASS 2A

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2

#5 Swink @ Crowley County
 • Swink 3
 • Crowley County 0

(3A) Strasburg @ Limon
 • Strasburg 3
 • Limon 1

#2 Rye @ #23 Las Animas
 • Rye 3
 • Las Animas 0

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 4

#17 Swallows Charter Academy 3-0 @ #5 Swink 3-1
 • Swallows Charter Academy 0
 • Swink 3

CLASS 3A

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2

(2A) #19 Hoehne @ (3A) La Juntas
 • Hoehne 3
 • La Junta 1

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 6

Lamar 1-1 @ (2A) Rye 4-0
 • Lamar 1
 • Rye 3



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In Memory
**Austin
Lucio
Gonzales**
*January 18, 1982
August 14, 2025*

Austin Lucio Gonzales was born January 18, 1982, in Springfield to Shellie Spell Engelhardt and Jeffery Gonzales. Austin passed away August 14, 2025, at the age of 43.

He will always be remembered for his contagious laugh, one-of-a-kind nicknames, signature sayings and pranks. Austin was a tough man, yet underneath that toughness was a soft teddy bear side that he showed

for his family and friends. He lived for his family. It was a life of authenticity, purpose, joy, and teaching those around him the values of hard work, honesty, and living fully. Austin was larger than life: fun, intense, unforgettable, and most of all, loyal to those he loved.

Austin came into this world making a statement by being the largest baby born in Springfield. He graduated

from Springfield High School in 2000. His time in high school was one of sports and friends where he participated in football, basketball, and racing.

In 2000, he went off to college to pursue auto mechanics in Sterling at Northeastern Junior College. This was a passion handed down to him from his Dad and Grandpa Turkeybutt.

After college, he moved to Denver. Here he met the love of his life, Melanie Kaye Kleber. After dating for two years, they married September 29, 2007. To this loving union they welcomed their sons, Easton Cole July 16, 2013, and Brody Cash October 2, 2024. His family was his pride and joy. To know Austin was to know his devotion to his wife and

his boys. There was never any doubt that he would move mountains if demanded so by them.

Marriage and fatherhood were highlighted by many joys. Their time was spent on the baseball field where he helped coach his son, and then they spent late nights in their garage working on his red truck and their dirt bikes. Austin was more than happy to pass on his love for all things gasoline and diesel, and most importantly his red truck, to his boys or anyone who would listen. If you did not find Austin in his garage, he might have been teaching Easton the ropes on the towing job site, hunting for Bigfoot, watching something Superman, or enjoying fishing and shooting with the whole family.

Austin is survived by his beautiful loving wife, Melanie; sons; Easton and Brody; mother, Shellie and David Engelhardt; father, Jeffery and Laurie Gonzales; brother, Rhian and Shayla Gonzales; nieces, Julianna, Quinn, and Tilly; brother, Keagan and Kayla Gonzales; nephew, Kanyon; Melanie's family, who he always considered his own parents, Phil and Dixie Kleber; sister, Dawn and Marcus Macias; nephew, Colin and Millie Miller and family; nephew, Kyle and Tabby Miller and family; brother, David Kleber and Jered; several aunts and uncles; extended family; and many friends.

A Go Fund Me page for Austin's family has been setup at <http://gofundme.com/f/support-for-austin-gonzales-family-whv77>

NCMEC Releases New Age-Progressed Image of Christopher Abeyta at CrimeCon 2025

The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) is in Denver this weekend for CrimeCon 2025, bringing national attention to cases of missing children. Today, alongside the Colorado Springs Police Department, NCMEC is unveiling a newly created age-progressed image of Christopher Abeyta,

who was abducted from his crib in his family's home on July 15, 1986.

This new age progression image reveals a glimpse of what Christopher may look like today at 39 years old, nearly four decades after he was stolen from his family at seven months old. Age

progression is a critical tool created by forensic artists at NCMEC to help generate leads for investigators in long-term missing child cases

The family tells NCMEC, "For nearly four decades, our family has worked tirelessly to keep Christopher's story in the public eye. We hope this new image will reach someone who can help us find the truth about what happened to him, and, if he is alive, that someone will recognize him. We pray every day that one piece of information will come in that can finally give our family the answers we have been searching for all these years."

"We are committed to searching for answers in the case of Christopher Abeyta," says the Colorado Springs Police Department. "The case remains open, and detectives with the CSPD Cold Case Unit continue to pursue leads and conduct investigative follow-up."



Christopher's Case

- Date Missing: July 15, 1986
- Location: Colorado Springs, Colorado
- Age at Disappearance: 7 months old
- Current Age: 39 years old
- Distinguishing Features at Time of Disappearance: Blue eyes, light brown hair

CrimeCon is being held at the Gaylord Rockies Resort in

Denver, Colorado, and draws thousands of attendees from around the world. The immersive, three-day experience features the latest investigative techniques, case updates, and content creators who bring these stories to life. CrimeCon's mission is to foster education, advocacy, and awareness for survivors and families impacted by crime.

If you have any information about Christopher Abeyta's disappearance or current whereabouts, please contact the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children at 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678) or the Colorado Springs Police Department at 719-444-7000.

Christopher Abeyta's missing poster: <https://www.missingkids.org/poster/NCMC/600552/1>

Photo Christopher Abeyta age progressed to 39 years old. Courtesy of NCMEC

WHEN SHOULD SOMEONE REACH OUT TO 988?
When you or a loved one are feeling...

Sad or depressed

Stressed, anxious, or overwhelmed

Hopeless or alone

988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

TIMES PAST

Limon Leader

September 2, 2025, the Limon Leader notified the Kiowa County Press that the Leader would be closing its doors by the end of the year.

This is sad news and especially for those of us on the plains of Colorado. We know there are a number of people who relied on printed paper

for their news and entertainment.

Several printed weekly newspapers on the eastern plains have stopped printing in recent years. For most it's not because they want to, but economics has forced them to quit. The cost of printing has gone up along with wages. Technology has played a part also. You can go online and

get most information free.

In several cases, large corporations have bought the smaller papers then closed them because they didn't draw the revenue the city newspaper do.

A little of the history about Lincoln County newspaper from the Limon Leader site <https://www.thelimonleader.com/>

Records found in Lincoln County show many papers previously published in Hugo from 1887, including the Stayer, Hugo Star, Hugo Advocate, Lincoln County Ledger, which continued later as the

Range Ledger, Hugo Independent, the Hugo Times and the Lincoln County Democrat, which continued as your Eastern Colorado Plainsman in 1929.

Papers published in Arriba starting in 1889 included the Mirror, the Arriba Record (started by William Hoffman who is the great-great-grandfather of the current owners of the Leader, Michael Hoffman and Shalynn Richardson), and the Arriba Advocate.

Genoa had the Genoa Sentinel started in 1912, also by William Hoffman, and the Genoa Guide which only lasted one year in 1938.

The Limon Independent began in 1898 and was followed by the Limon Herald, the Limon Express, and the Eastern Colorado Leader, which combined with the Genoa Sentinel in 1939 and then became your Limon Leader in 1947.

We are locally owned. Family owned. We live here. We have a long history with the newspapers in this area.

We combined the Eastern Colorado Plainsman and the Limon Leader in July of 2023 to become The Leader, serving all of Lincoln County.

THE WAY IT WAS

The Life & Times of Ernest W. Hammer

Second Time Around

by Ernest Hammer

A Story about one old flat-bed Ford

My Dad wanted a flat bed truck to haul livestock, grain, or various items around the ranch to town. I remember going with my Dad and Mother to pueblo to look for this truck. I was four or five years old

He found a 1939 green, on tone, flat bed Ford truck on a used car lot and he bought it. It had dual tires on it. He rigged up a second axle with single wheels that he attached behind the main axle so it could haul more weight. He hauled grain, hay, and cattle with this truck.

I had a real gentle horse that I called Shorty.

Uncle Gerhart was running sheep up in the mountains near Terryall. He had a herder, and he needed a horse for him. Guess who had a horse. No one asked me if Uncle Gerhart could use Shorty. They loaded him on the flat bed. They, Dad and Uncle Gearhart, tied Shorty in the middle of a board that went from side to side behind the cab. There were no side boards, so they ran a heavy rope from the top of the board down to the end of the flat bed. Uncle Gerhart hauled Shorty up to Terryall for his sheepherder to use.

Bonny Cordova was Uncle Gerhart herder. Bonny was a great guy and he stayed at our house many times over my growing up years.

Annual Tri-State

9-11 Tribute Foundation
welcomes

WILLIAM JIMENO
World Trade Center Survivor & Hero

on

Friday, September 12th at 7:00 pm
at the Lamar Community Building, 610 W. Sixth Street

Port Authority Law Enforcement Officer William Jimeno will share his story with the public. Seating is limited to the first 1,500 attendees.

Saturday, September 13th at 10:00 am
at the 9-11 Tribute Memorial

The Tri-State 9-11 Foundation will unveil a bronze sculpture of Officer Jimeno. This will join the sculpture inspired by the story of firefighter Stephen Siller. The two statues are presented in a *Field of Dreams* pose on the Tri-State 9-11 Memorial center wall. Eventually, the combined display will be entitled, "Running Towards Danger."

The Tri-State 9-11 Memorial is located at 7515 US Highway 50, adjacent to the Big Timbers Museum, one mile north of Lamar.

Nashville recording artist
CLARE DUNN
performing the National Anthem
at both events

For inquiries, contact Doug Harbour at 719-691-0959

988 SUICIDE & CRISIS
LIFELINE

KIOWA COUNTY

RODEAR WORKING DOG & HORSE COMPETITION

1:00PM

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2025

KIOWA COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS

EADS COLORADO

HANDLER HORSEBACK

DOG WORKS CATTLE THROUGH OBSTACLES

TIMED EVENT WITH POINTS AWARDED

CALCUTTA

\$25 PER DOG ENTRY FEE

100% PAYOUT PLUS ADDED MONEY

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

GARY WOLLERT (719) 688-1107

KIOWA COUNTY



JACKPOT

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2025

KIOWA COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS, EADS COLORADO

ENTER AT 6PM ROPE AT 7PM

#13 SLIDE

Money Paid

Enter 6x each way. \$40 a man.
1 1/2 seconds up and 1 1/2 down.
No more than 6 seconds up and
no more than 6 sec off

#10 STRAIGHT

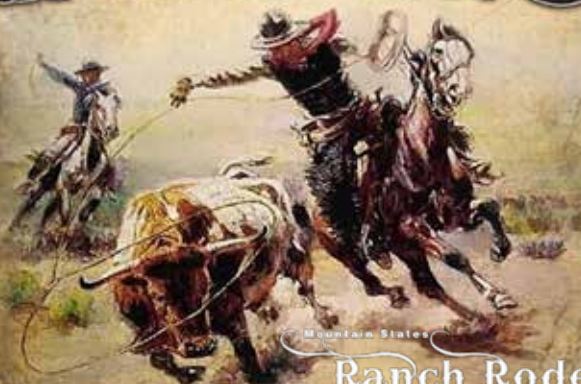
Money Paid

Enter 6x each way.
\$40 a man.

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KIOWA COUNTY

RANCH RODEO



Ranch Rodeo

KIOWA COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS | EADS, CO

FRIDAY, SEPT 12TH, 2025

6 O'CLOCK CHECK-IN | RODEO EVENTS START AT 7PM

FIVE MAN TEAMS (LIMIT 12 TEAMS) | ENTRY FEE \$500/TEAM (CASH ONLY)

A MOUNTAIN STATES RANCH RODEO QUALIFIER

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT (719) 469-1133

KIOWA COUNTY

RANCH BRONC RIDING

SEPTEMBER 13TH, 2025

KIOWA COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS | EADS, COLORADO

\$1,000 ~ Added Money

CALCUTTA 6:00 PM (CASH ONLY)
RIDE STARTS IMMEDIATELY AFTER

FOR ENTRIES CONTACT: SALT RIVER RODEO (520) 875 - 6788

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as is the ER
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Saturday: 9:00am -
1:00pm, Sunday: Closed
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townofeads10@gmail.com
Town of Eads- P0 Box 8-Eads,
CO 81036

KIOWA COUNTY ASSESSOR

1305 Goff St Eads CO
719-438-5521
kiowacoassr295@gmail.com

KIOWA COUNTY CLERK & RECORDER

1305 Goff St Eads CO
719-438-5421

KIOWA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

1305 Goff St Eads CO
719-438-5810
kiowaco100@gmail.com

KIOWA COUNTY TREASURER

1305 Goff St Eads CO
719-438-5831
[kiowacotreas247@gmail.
com](mailto:kiowacotreas247@gmail.com)

Kiowa County Emergency Management

719-438-2288 [sengelhardt-
toem@gmail.com](mailto:sengelhardt@gmail.com)

Kiowa County Sheriff

- 719-438-5411- You may call our number anytime.
- If not in the office call will route to the Bent County Dispatch. If you have an emergency call 911

KIOWA COUNTY FAIR, RODEO



YARD / MOVING SALE

Friday September 12
7:00 am – 2:00 pm

Saturday September 13
7:00 am – 2:00 pm

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Mayor of Lamar, Colorado is at Safeway.

UPDATED - 1:34pm - After more than a half-century of service, the Lamar Safeway Store No. 1721, located at 906 E. Olive Street, will be closing its doors to the public on November 7, 2025. I received official notice from the Director of Communications with Safeway's Mountain West Division, confirming this difficult decision.

This closure affects 53 dedicated associates in Lamar, and while Safeway has plans to place some into positions at other locations, we recognize the deep impact this will have on these employees, their families, and our community as a whole.

Safeway has been more than just a grocery store—it's been a part of Lamar's daily

life, a place of connection, and a symbol of stability for generations. Its absence will be felt deeply.

While this is a significant loss, Lamar is a resilient and strong community. We will continue working closely with our economic development partners to recruit new businesses—especially one that can provide similar goods and services to meet the needs of our residents.

Our thoughts are with the employees during this time of transition. We understand the uncertainty this brings and remain committed to supporting them however we can.

As with every challenge we've faced, we will move for-

ward together. Let's continue to look for opportunities to strengthen Lamar's future and support one another through this change.

UPDATE - We have been notified that Walsenburg and Burlington will not be affected. The full list of stores closing can be found below:

- - 201 E Jefferson, Englewood, Colorado 80113
- - 500 E. 120th Ave, Northglenn, Colorado 80233
- - 1653 S. Colorado Blvd., Denver, Colorado 80222
- - 12200 E. Mississippi, Aurora, Colorado 80012
- - 3657 S. College Ave, Fort Collins, Colorado 80525
- - 860 Cleveland Ave., Loveland, Colorado 80537
- - 5060 North Academy Blvd., Colorado Springs, Colorado 80918

- - 1425 S Murray Blvd., Colorado Springs, Colorado 80916
- - 315 West 2nd St., La Junta, Colorado 81050
- - 906 E. Olive St., Lamar, Colorado 81052
- - 230 Morehead Street, Chadron, Nebraska 69337
- - 730 W. Main St., Farmington, New Mexico 87401

UPDATE - We were advised by staff members that it MAY affect Walsenburg and Burlington, but we have not received any corporate verification of that. We have only received verification of the Lamar and La Junta closures. We will provide updates as they are received.

**TAKEN FROM THE MAYOR OF
LAMAR FACEBOOK PAGE**

Kiowa County BOCC Meeting Minutes August 28, 2025

The Regular meeting of the Kiowa County Commissioners was called to order on, August 28, 2025; at 9:00 a.m. by Commissioner Butch Robertson. Robertson opened the meeting with prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance.

- Donald Oswald, Chairman
- Howard "Butch" Robertson, Commissioner Mike Lening, Commissioner
- Adrienne Yates, Deputy Clerk
- Tina Adamson, County Administrator

Members of the Audience: None

Minutes: Lening moved, Robertson seconded to approved the minutes from the August 14th, 2025 meeting. Motion carried.

Vouchers: Robertson moved, Lening seconded to approve vouchers as presented. Motion carried.

Agenda: Oswald moved, Robertson seconded to ap-

prove the agenda with 2 additions. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

Grant Updates: Fairgrounds doors are installed, maintenance will paint the trim, and they will be done. The east side walk will need to be scheduled to hopefully get finished after fair. Adamson is still waiting to hear back from COOT to order the building. Energy audit from Iconergy is complete, will schedule a work session to determine how to proceed with improvements. Outlets are installed at fairgrounds.

Oswald moved to go into **Executive Session** for Attorney Consultation per CRS 24-6-402 (4)(b) 1041 Matters at 9:37 a.m. Motion carried.

Oswald moved, Lening seconded to exit executive session and resume normal session at 9:58 a.m. Motion carried.

Public Hearing for 1041 Regulation Revisions: Oswald moved, Lening seconded to convene public hearing at

10:13 a.m. **Tori Jarvis** opened the meeting advising it was to discuss 1041 Regulation Revisions only not any specific projects. Moratorium expired on it's face 8/27/2025. Jarvis advised acting as staff they would recommend approving Revisions as presented on website last week. The floor was opened for public comment, **Leslie Waterson with RES (Renewable Energy Systems)** spoke regarding her concerns with the proposed revisions.

Lening moved, Robertson seconded to recess for 10 minutes at 10:28 a.m. Meeting will resume at 10:38 a.m. Motion carried.

Meeting resumed from recess at 10:41 a.m.

Mave Gasaway, Attorney; Davis, Graham & Stubbs: Representing the Towner entities. Advised they would like more time to review the revisions before the board approves as given.

Natacha Kiler, Invenenergy spoke asking the board for more time before adopting

the regulations in order to review and obtain public comment.

Randy Williams, County Resident: Would like to know what other counties have adopted but also urges the board to adopt quicker than slower in order to get things progressing for the county.

Jarvis advised neighboring counties were consulted, especially those that use the 1041 Regulations.

Tina Adamson, County Administrator: In 2017 other counties were consulted who had projects already in place or development to obtain any and all information regarding their regulations. The BOCC at that time decided to adopt the 1041 Regulations because the types of projects were unfamiliar to the county staff at that time. 1041 Permits offer the best protection for county residents and the county itself. It allows for consistency amongst counties regarding processes.

Continued on page A17

Kiowa County BOCC Continued from A16

Oswald moved, Robertson seconded to close the public comment section of hearing at 11:00 a.m. Motion carried.

Oswald moved, Lening seconded to re-open public comment at 11:04 a.m. Motion carried.

Lening asked those that commented to advised how much time they would like to review the proposed revisions.

Gasaway spoke asking for 30 days from time revisions were made public.

Waterson spoke, stating they believe 30 days would be appropriate. She also mentioned the fees were left ambiguous and the annual review process were 2 of the things they noticed right away. She can get a more detailed list.

Randy Williams spoke he feels that 1 week or 10 days to review should be sufficient in order to get things moving forward for the residents and county.

Oswald moved, Robertson seconded to end public comment section at 11:09 a.m. Motion carried.

Lening moved, Robertson seconded to continue the **public hearing regarding the 1041 Regulation Revisions until September 9th, 2025, at 10:00 a.m.** Motion carried. Roll Call- Robertson - Yes, Lening-Yes, Oswald -Yes

Oswald moved, Lening seconded to close public hearing at 11:14 a.m. Motion carried.

MEMBERS OF AUDIENCE (IN PERSON):

- Tina Adamson, Kiowa County
- Torie Jarvis, SGSJ
- Liam Gilden, SRP
- Stephen Land, SRP
- Donna Adame, Kiowa County
- Lane Roy Stum, Thunderbird & Faithwalk
- Chad Rouse, Resident
- Raina Lucero, Kiowa Ctny

- Independent
- Justin Causey, Invenergy
- Natacha Kiler, Invenergy
- Mark & Diane Sanders, Resident
- Savah Ibrahim,
- Lesley Waterson, RES
- Mave Gasaway, DGS

MEMBERS OF AUDIENCE (VIRUTAL):

- Brandee Caswell
- Dawna Peck
- Mave Gasaway
- Bryce Barbier
- Rachel Thomison
- Norman Arends
- Randy Williams, Resident
- Betsy Barnett, Kiowa Ctny Independent
- Tearle Lessenden, CSU Extension
- Emiliano Pelcon, RES
- Craig Williams
- Carol Ho
- Madison Wrobley
- Alaina Merrill
- Clint Hinebaugh

Landfill/Recycling Update: A load of tires has been shipped off, metal and cardboard recycling is continuing. Landfill has been busy especially with the house that was demolished by the hospital.

Housing Update: Cactus Corner is progressing; units 1 & 2 should be open for move in by September.

Planning and Zoning: Adamson handed out the revised fee structure draft. There was discussion regarding possible changes for future projects.

Oswald moved, Robertson seconded to recess for lunch. Regular session will resume at 1:00 p.m.

Oswald opened regular session at 1:09 p.m.

Oswald moved, Lening seconded to move into public hearing for Invenergy 1041 Permit Amendments.

Darla Scranton-Specht, attorney for Kiowa County opened with purpose of Hearing.

Oswald opened the floor for public comment:

Justin Causey, Invenergy; Spoke in favor of approving

the amended permits to allow moving forward with their projects.

Linley Stum, Thunderbird; Would like the projects to move forward as quickly as possible.

Robertson moved, Lening seconded to close joint hearing at 1:17 p.m. Motion carried.

Lening moved to go into regular session at 1:21 p.m. Robertson seconded, motion carried.

Resolution 2025-12 to Approve Towner East 1041 Permit Amendment; Oswald moved to sign permit amendment, Lening seconded. Roll Call- Robertson -Yes, Lening - Yes, Oswald - Yes. Motion carried.

Resolution 2025-13 to Approve Towner West 1041 Permit Amendment; Robertson moved, Lening seconded to sign permit amendment. Roll call: Robertson -yes, Lening -yes, Oswald - Yes. Motion carried.

Lening moved to go into regular session at 1:21 p.m. Robertson seconded, motion carried.

Redistricting Update; Redistricting board would like to present the board with some ideas if possible, at a work session. Adamson will try to schedule a work session for September 10th in the evening.

Sales/Use Tax - Ballot Language: Adamson has turned in letter of intent to clerk for a ballot question. Adamson has the language for ballot question ready for review by the BOCC, once approved a resolution will be presented for approval at the next meeting. Oswald motioned to change the language to sunset in 15 years, Lening seconded. Motion carried

NEW BUSINESS

Time Off Requests: None

New Hire Progress Report: Landfill new employee is doing well. One of the seasonal Road & Bridge employees has been moved to regular em-

ployee effective September 2025.

leave Donation Request: One at this time.

Heat & A/C Estimates: Adamson advised the mini-split in the Deputies office has quit Adamson has received two estimates from Plains Heating and Air Conditioning, Inc., one is a Lennox brand that will cost \$4,610 to replace with same model. A different brand, Pioneer, is \$3658 for the same BTU. Lening moved, Robertson seconded to purchase the Pioneer model. Motion carried.

RESOLUTIONS:

- **Resolution 2025-10 to Appoint County Clerk-** Oswald motioned to appoint Adrienne Yates, Lening seconded. Motion carried.
- **Resolution 2025-11 to Adopt Revised 1041 Regulations-** Continued until September 9th, 2025, meeting
- **Resolution 2025-12 to Approve Towner East 1041 Permit Amendment** Approved
- **Resolution 2025-13 to Approve Towner West 1041 Permit Amendment-** Approved
- **Resolution 2025-14 Ambulance Authorization to Operate-** Lening moved to approve, Oswald seconded. Roll Call - Robertson - yes, Lening -yes, Oswald -yes. Motion carried.
- **Resolution 2025-15 Excessive Force -**Robertson moved, Lening seconded. Motion carried.

Cobblestone Lodging Tax Waiver: The \$1,075 for 1 quarter, \$1428.00 for 2nd quarter for \$2503.00 total, Cobblestone was assessed a penalty and interest from the state. The state advised Adamson they can waive the penalty but not the interest. Robertson moved to not reimburse Cobblestone for taxes paid to the state. Lening seconded. Roll call - Robertson -yes, Lening -yes, Oswald - yes. Motion carried to not reimburse the taxes paid to the state.

SECED Letter of Support

for Enterprise Zones: Oswald moved, Lening seconded, motion carried.

Audrey Johnson, DSS Director entered the meeting at 3:03 p.m.

DSS Report: New employee has completed new worker training and is working on paperwork to become certified. The department received a certificate and letter from the state for 2025 SNAP timeliness. The department is looking at some of the federally mandated changes that begins in October such as work requirements for able bodied adult only homes.

Johnson handed out a bid that was received for painting and updating at their office. They have only received one bid so far. Lening motioned, Robertson seconded to approve bid. Motion carried.

Johnson exited the meeting at 3:15 p.m.

Jeff Scranton, Landfill Foreman entered the meeting at 3:25 p.m.

Scranton wanted to update on Regulation 31: The latest submission at the recent hearing would give a 3 year moratorium for smaller counties and landfills. Kiowa County's landfill meets the requirement for a waiver except for waste in place reporting due to being under the 8 million tons intake every year. No further decision will be made until the next hearing on December 19th, 2025.

Scranton exited the meeting at 4:10 p.m.

With no further business, Oswald moved to adjourn, Robertson seconded. Motion carried.

The next regular meeting of the Kiowa County Board of Commissioners is scheduled for Thursday September 9th, 2025, at 9:00 a.m.

/s/Donald Oswald
Donald Oswald Chairman

/s/Adrienne Yates
Adrienne Yates County Clerk

DEPUTY CLERK

Seeking energetic self-starter, with good work ethics to apply at the Kiowa County Clerk & Recorder's Office.

Must be detail-oriented, professional, responsible, flexible and customer-service oriented.

This job performs a variety of duties including Motor Vehicle, Driver's Licenses, Bookkeeping, Recording and Election functions.

Full job description and application can be found at: www.kiowa-county.colorado.gov

If this sounds like you please return a completed application with resume to Adrienne Yates at the Kiowa County Clerk & Recorder's Office, 8:00 am- 4:45 pm, Monday - Thursday, or mail to Kiowa County Clerk, P.O. Box 37 Eads, Colorado 81036.

Applications are also available at the Kiowa County Clerk's Office, 1305 Goff St, Eads, CO 81036 or call 719-438-5421 to request an application for employment.

Starting at \$18.36/hr., up to \$19.36 after 6 months.

Application deadline is September 25, 2025.

NOTICE

TO ALL PERSONS INTERESTED:

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Adjustment and Appeals Board of the City of Lamar has scheduled a Public Hearing, AA-2025-05, regarding a variance for the consideration of attaching a carport to garage/shop, less than 15 feet from the street. North side Blk 2; E ½ of Lot 8 & E ½ of Lot 9, City of Lamar, County of Prowers, State of Colorado; also known as 309 North 8th Street.

That on September 24, 2025 at the hour of 6:00 p.m. or as soon thereafter, as the matter may come to a hearing in the Cultural Events Center, at 102 East Parmenter Street, Lamar, CO 81052; the Adjustment and Appeals Board will hold a Public Hearing for the consideration of attaching a carport to garage/shop, less than 15 feet from the street. A copy of the application is available for public inspection at the Building Department's Office, 102 E Parmenter St., Lamar, CO 81052. Petitions or remonstrances may be filed until 5:00 P.M. on September 23, 2025 at the City of Lamar Building Department Office, 102 E. Parmenter St., Lamar, CO 81052.

Dated this 2nd day of September 2025

First Published September 05, 2025
Last Published September 19, 2025
In the Kiowa County Press

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LAMAR MET IN REGULAR SESSION ON AUG 11 & 25, 2025. COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT APPROVED THAT THE BILLS BE ALLOWED AND PAYMENT BE MADE ON THE SAME.

GENERAL, SANITATION & WATER FUNDS

NAME	AMOUNT
PROSPERITY LANE COMMUNITY	766.00
HOME STORE LLC	10,000.00
FRONTIER BANK	65.00
LEGALSHIELD CORPORATE OFFICE	186.50
DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY	2,614.44
COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE	779.00
JR AUDIO INC	29,955.00
SHANNON VENTURI	230.00
ANNE-MARIE CRAMPTON	414.00
CITY OF LAMAR-WATER INVEST FEE	103,777.28
FRONTIER BANK	21.00
UNITED STATES POST OFFICE	2,044.72
JASON YANT	864.00
COUNTY HEALTH POOL	161,354.54
LINCOLN NAT'L LIFE INSURANCE	8,367.32
COMMUNITY STATE BANK	655.00
PEOPLES CREDIT UNION	124.60
CITY OF LAMAR	96,251.38
CITY OF LAMAR-PAYROLL	1,239.15
FIRE & POLICE PENSION ASSN	2,813.04
PROFESSIONAL FINANCE CO	50.00
SOUTHEAST COLO FOP LODGE #30	179.50
FAMILY SUPPORT REGISTRY	321.23
GEORGE R SCHAEFER JR	43.91
A-1 RENTAL AND SALES INC	539.62
LAMAR BMS	1,469.53
CITY OF LAMAR-UTILITIES	99,203.28
DELOACHS WATER COND INC	120.50
AIRGAS USA LLC	122.32
LAMAR AUTO PARTS	3,942.28
PUEBLO DEPT OF PUBLIC HEALTH & RANCHERS SUPPLY OF LAMAR LLC	210.00
ROBINSON PRINTING INC	459.90
SOUTH EAST MACHINERY CO INC	125.00
WAGNER EQUIPMENT CO	1,570.98
JILL BELLOMY	2,278.75
FASTANEL COMPANY	40.00
BIG TIMBERS VETERINARY CLINIC	202.43
SCHWARTZ MARKETING INC	639.47
NKC TIRE	405.00
BSN SPORTS LLC	4,800.76
AFLAC PREMIUM HOLDING	350.81
FARMERS COUNTRY MARKET	2,338.75
FARIS MACHINERY COMPANY	673.59
TRI COUNTY FORD INC	1,885.17
DOUBLE K CAR WASH LLC	934.20
OTIS ELEVATOR COMPANY	374.90
GALLS LLC	6,200.28
PROSPERITY LANE COMMUNITY	68.59
WALLACE GAS & OIL INC	390.00
JABB INC	1,448.24
GREAT PLAINS SECURITY LLC	1,575.00
ACE TIRE SERVICE LLC	385.00
THE LL JOHNSON DISTRIBUTING CO	855.95
UNCC	2,491.35
STEVE SANGER	96.51
TAYLOR SEPTIC & PLUMBING	50.00
LAS BRISAS	313.32
O'REILLY AUTOMOTIVE STORES INC	88.00
VAN DIEST SUPPLY COMPANY	277.09
MY WHOLESALE PRODUCTS	5,434.00
INGRAM BOOK COMPANY	704.90
DELL MARKETING LP	1,207.13
21ST CENTURY EQUIPMENT LLC	2,901.06
LAMAR PARTNERSHIP INC	73.02
ADAMS & SONS INC	1,662.81
LAMAR OUTDOOR SPORTS LLC	2,164.61
DIGITCOM ELECTRONICS INC	1,680.54
VOIANCE LANGUAGE SERVICES LLC	198.01
HENRY SCHEIN INC	2.07
HOME STORE LLC	1,320.57
TOTAL HEALTH CARE WEED NP	3,237.22
PRECISION AUTO GLASS LLC	525.00
IMELDA RIOS	352.65
CHRISTINA MAYHEW	750.00
JOSE A CANALES ROJAS	500.00
RESERVE ACCOUNT	518.00
A-1 TOWING INC	2,000.00
KIMBALL MIDWEST	75.00
ATMOS ENERGY	907.46
CHOICE SCREENING	2,413.25
REVIVAL ANIMAL HEALTH	17.50
PROCUM	24.78
BIG R PROPERTIES LLC	495.00
HD SUPPLY	870.83
ROCKY MOUNTAIN FIRE & SECURITY	832.43
JVA INC	150.00
CANON FINANCIAL SERVICES INC	40,062.06
STRATEGIC GOVERNMENT RESOURCES	1,881.72
CHARTER COMMUNICATIONS	8,075.70
VERIZON WIRELESS LLC	35.26
STATE INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS CORP	40.05
AT&T MOBILITY LLC	1,422.64
NEWMAN SIGNS INC	4,343.03
	296.00

COLORADO ANALYTICAL LAB INC	808.00
INTERSTATE BILLING SERVICE INC	27.10
BOOKLIST	184.95
CORPORATE BILLING LLC	3,277.05
CITYSERVICEVALCON LLC	32,145.68
IRE ENTERPRISES LLC	795.49
AIRCRAFT SPRUCE & SPECIALTY CO	3,704.15
LEXIPOL LLC	9,031.40
CENTURYLINK	6,977.15
AMAZON CAPITAL SERVICES INC	1,705.38
GEOCYCLE LLC	1,076.00
SHRED AMERICA COLORADO	29.32
AJ PEST CONTROL & FUMIGATION	1,735.00
PVS DX INC	430.59
ACLARA TECHNOLOGIES LLC	1,423.11
THE EMBLEM AUTHORITY	516.00
TYLER TECHNOLOGIES INC	6,465.70
UNITED COMPANIES	1,539.75
ZOHO CORPORATION	4,648.00
CINTAS CORP LOC #562	5,380.67
DICKINSON WRIGHT PLLC	774.00
G & S SOLUTIONS	16,834.43
MY RURAL PLANNER, LLC	2,687.50
SECOM	1,233.83
NATIONAL FIRE SAFETY COUNCIL	250.00
WALMART #2672	568.00
KIESHA BRENNER	100.00
NEVEAH GOMEZ	25.00
CRISTINA HOLBEIN	175.00
JULIA KHEN	50.00
ABIGAIL STILSON	75.00
WEX BANK	10,458.54
CHARTER COMMUNICATIONS	102.87
CITYBYAPPINC	17,500.00
MY WHOLESALE PRODUCTS	34.67
S E COLO POWER ASSOC	2,818.30
STRATEGIC GOVERNMENT RESOURCES	8,245.70
TYLER TECHNOLOGIES INC	6,820.00
CITY OF LAMAR	97,343.37
CITY OF LAMAR-PAYROLL	1,239.14
COMMUNITY STATE BANK	855.00
FAMILY SUPPORT REGISTRY	321.23
FIRE & POLICE PENSION ASSN	2,448.66
PEOPLES CREDIT UNION	124.60
PROFESSIONAL FINANCE CO	50.00
SOUTHEAST COLO FOP LODGE #30	179.50
21ST CENTURY EQUIPMENT LLC	160.65
A-1 RENTAL AND SALES INC	118.83
AIRGAS USA LLC	278.84
AMAZON CAPITAL SERVICES INC	3,840.02
AMERICAN ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTING LLC	315.00
ANNE-MARIE CRAMPTON	332.80
ARKANSAS VALLEY DIESEL SER INC	6.52
ATMOS ENERGY	125.00
AYRES ASSOCIATES INC	9,385.89
BIG R PROPERTIES LLC	640.75
BRAXEN SHELTON	172.50
CANON FINANCIAL SERVICES INC	963.73
CAPITAL ONE	1,931.66
CINTAS CORP LOC #562	3,389.31
CINTAS CORP LOC #562	194.13
CIRSA	4,515.00
COLO DEPT OF PUBLIC HEALTH	768.00
COLORADO ANALYTICAL LAB INC	136.00
COLORADO DIVISION OF FIRE	30.00
CORE & MAIN LP	164.45
CORPORATE BILLING LLC	6,390.11
CURTIS LANE PORTER	1,625.00
D & D QUALITY CLEANERS LLC	22.00
DELOACHS WATER COND INC	19.50
DIRECTV LLC	112.99
EATON SALES & SERVICES LLC	746.47
EBSCO INDUSTRIES	1,907.03
ENVIRONMENTAL PROD& ACCESS LLC	409.37
FARMERS COUNTRY MARKET	149.63
FNBO	16,318.71
GALLS LLC	1,522.19
GRAINGER INC	122.60
HELTON & WILLIAMS PN PC INC	4,790.25
HENRY SCHEIN INC	3,153.88
HOME STORE LLC	34.00
INGRAM LIBRARY SERVICES INC	26.08
INSIGHT PUBLIC SECTOR INC	936.42
JACINTO S SILVA JR	60.00
JASON SCOTT DITTBURNER	900.00
JOEL DAVIS	120.00
JVA INC	53,582.80
KACTUS INC	950.00
LAMAR AUTO PARTS	149.12
LAMAR BMS	297.54
LAMAR HIGH SCHOOL	711.00
LITTLE CAESARS PIZZA	51.59
LUCAS ANDRADE	60.00
MAE SHELTON	165.00
MAKYDR LLC	83.26
MIGUEL ANGEL ALVAREZ	1,320.00
MY WHOLESALE PRODUCTS	121.00
NKC TIRE	260.04
O'REILLY AUTOMOTIVE STORES INC	64.99
PITNEY BOWES INC	1,716.42

Continued on page A19

HELP WANTED FULL-TIME

Kiowa County Commissioners office has a full-time job opening for the Administrative Assistant position.

Applicants must have good public relations, clerical, bookkeeping and computer skills. Starting wage is \$18.36 per hour with a \$1.00 increase within 6 months.

Four-day workweek, Monday – Thursday, paid holidays and paid leave time.

Great benefits including health & life insurance and retirement.

Applications and job description can be picked up at the Kiowa County Commissioner's office, Eads Courthouse, 1305 Goff Street, PO Box 100, Eads, Colorado 81036, (719) 438-5810 or downloaded from our website <https://kiowacounty.colorado.gov> under the jobs tab.

Applications must be returned no later than 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, August 27, 2025. We reserve the right to reject any and all applications. EOE.

HELP WANTED CUSTODIAN

Kiowa County has a full-time job opening for a Custodian. Applicant should have a valid driver's license.

Duties include janitorial, lawn care, snow removal and basic repairs. Position could be part time or seasonal if preferred. Full-time starts at \$17.50.

Great Benefits including; paid holidays, health & life insurance and retirement!

Application and job description can be picked up at the Kiowa County Commissioner's Office or can be printed from our website www.kiowacounty/colorado.gov under the jobs tab.

Return applications to the Kiowa County Commissioner's Office
Eads Courthouse
1305 Goff Street
PO Box 100
Eads, Colorado 81036

(719) 438-5810
or emailed to kiowaco100@gmail.com

Position will be available until filled.

We reserve the right to reject any & all applications. EOE.

HELP WANTED MAINTENANCE WORKER

Kiowa County has a full-time job opening for a Maintenance Worker. Applicant should have a valid driver's license.

Duties include janitorial, lawn care, snow removal and basic repairs. Position could be part time or seasonal if preferred. Full-time starts at \$18.50.

Great Benefits including: paid holidays, health & life insurance and retirement!

Application and job description can be picked up at the Kiowa County Commissioner's Office or can be printed from our website www.kiowacounty/colorado.gov under the jobs tab.

Return applications to the Kiowa County Commissioner's Office
Eads Courthouse,
1305 Goff Street,
PO Box 100,
Eads, Colorado 81036,

(719) 438-5810
or emailed to kiowaco100@gmail.com

Position will be available until filled.

We reserve the right to reject any & all applications. EOE.

ABOUT CLASSIFIEDS

The Press can be responsible for only one incorrect insertion. Rates: \$12.50 per week, flat fee, any number of words online. Also published online at KiowaCountyPress.net at no extra charge. Add a picture \$5.00. Classifieds can be submitted to kiowacountypress@gmail.com

MISCELLANEOUS

Your ad could reach more than 31,000 readers each week for as little as \$13.50

THE UTILITIES BOARD OF THE CITY OF LAMAR MET IN REGULAR SESSION ON AUGUST 12 & 26, 2025. ALL MEMBERS PRESENT APPROVED THAT THE BILLS BE ALLOWED AND PAYMENT BE MADE ON THE SAME.

UTILITY FUND

NAME	AMOUNT
MARIA D MIRANDA HERNANDEZ	209.04
3B PROPERTIES LLC	86.10
KIRK POWERS	297.03
EDWARD D THILL	27.27
CITY OF LAMAR L&P RESERVE	30,000.00
CITY OF LAMAR-GENERAL FUND	12,468.75
COUNTY HEALTH POOL	46,645.78
LINCOLN NAT'L LIFE INSURANCE	530.32
PERA OF COLORADO	18,370.62
401K VOLUNTARY INVESTMENT PLAN	1,617.56
COMMUNITY STATE BANK	75.00
CITY OF LAMAR	11,144.14
CITY OF LAMAR-PAYROLL	100.00
CITY OF LAMAR-UTILITIES	663.15
EBBIES PLUMBING SERVICE	264.50
LAMAR AUTO PARTS	646.88
AMERICAN ELECTRIC COMPANY	1,416.00
DOUBLE K CAR WASH LLC	81.59
UNCC	143.95
OFFICE DEPOT	190.68
ALLEN'S AUTOMOTIVE	200.00
JACO ANALYTICAL LABORATORY INC	180.00
PROCOM	303.00
JOHN DEERE FINANCIAL	5.94
VERIZON WIRELESS LLC	338.29
AMAZON CAPITAL SERVICES INC	663.29
H & N WIND	942.16
ALTEC INDUSTRIES INC	324.85
SECOM	576.40
VISA	5,681.17
CENTURYLINK	1,080.95
LAMPTON WELDING SUPPLY INC	66.16
WESTERN UNITED ELECTRIC SUPPLY	163.57
AP SAFETY TRAINING INC	510.00
NATIONAL INDUSTRIAL & SAFETY S	1,258.20
ZORO TOOLS INC	262.96
IBS OF WEST KANSAS	29.79
STREAMLINE SOFTWARE INC	839.00
D & D QUALITY CLEANERS LLC	36.90
LAWSON PRODUCTS INC	272.53
WINDCARE SOLUTIONS LLC	3,500.00
BOSTON UNIVERSITY	700.00
WEX BANK	1,946.25
GEORGE R SCHAEFER JR	37.74
COLORADO GRAVEL LLC	4,311.18
AFLAC PREMIUM HOLDING	330.94
CITY OF LAMAR-MISC	749.00
401K VOLUNTARY INVESTMENT PLAN	1,560.08
CITY OF LAMAR	10,973.59
CITY OF LAMAR-PAYROLL	100.00
COMMUNITY STATE BANK	75.00
PERA OF COLORADO	18,387.50
CITY OF LAMAR-L&P SALES TAX	23,749.00
ATMOS ENERGY	175.95
JOHN DEERE FINANCIAL	77.97
UPS	213.78
TOTAL	205,601.50

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Lamar August Bills Continued from A18

PLCS LLC	161.52
PRINTED IMAGINATION LLC	301.75
RANCHERS SUPPLY OF LAMAR LLC	3,531.13
REXEL USA INC	129.71
RFARMER LLC	47,000.00
ROBINSON PRINTING INC	120.00
S E COLO WATER ACTIVITY ENT	13,163.72
SCHWARTZ MARKETING INC	393.75
SHANE AGUILERA	2,280.00
SHANNON VENTURI	480.00
SHAWN AUSTIN	60.00
SIRCHIE ACQUISITION CO LLC	47.39
SOUTH EAST MACHINERY CO INC	44.60
OLDCASTLE SW GROUP	2,912.01
HD SUPPLY INC	577.26
VAN DIEST SUPPLY COMPANY	2,269.20
WAGNER EQUIPMENT CO	310,090.29
WALLACE GAS & OIL INC	20,486.83
WEAR PARTS & EQUIP CO INC	870.70
WEIS FIRE & SAFETY EQUIP LLC	709.25
ERIK AVILES	296.00
TOTAL	1,432,725.49

Published September 12, 2025
In the Kiowa County Press

Build the Local Economy.
Supporting Local Businesses
Builds Our Community's Future!

EADS LANDFILL

Wednesday - Friday - Saturday

8:00 am to 3:30 pm

RATE CHANGE

Effective 05/01/2022

Accepting Residential
organic yard waste
(grass clippings, weeds,
tree trimmings)
for **FREE** as long as the
load is

YARD WASTE ONLY!

Disposal fees

General Waste **\$0.05 / pound**

E-Waste **\$0.40 / pound**

Tires **\$3 to \$25 ea** depending on size

Effective 06/25/2022

Residential General Waste
will be discounted on the
last Saturday of each
month at
\$0.03 per pound.
(No discount on commercial loads)

Payment Methods

Credit Card or Punch Card*

*purchased at the Commissioners Office

For Billing Info 719-438-5810

To receive text message when there are
holiday or weather related closures can
text **landfill closures** and **your name**
from your cell phone to **719-691-5426**

For More Information

kiowaco100@gmail.com

We Now Rent Roll-Off Dumpsters!

Call 719-438-5810 for information

32,000+
articles
online at

KiowaCountyPress.net



High-Speed Internet in Eads and Haswell



CONNECT FASTER LIVE BETTER



PLACE YOUR EVENT LISTING

To place your non-commercial listing, email Editor@KiowaCountyPress.net.

Listings are limited to dates, times, locations, and a brief description. All pricing information will be excluded,

LOST

Lost tackle box between Eads and Kit Carson on 287. My son would really like to get it back.

Reward offered
Rynea Kissel
719.429.4966

SEPTEMBER 10-13

- Kiowa County Fair & Rodeo

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

- 6:00 p.m. Prairie Pines Auxiliary Meeting
- 6:00 p.m. Republican River Water Conservation District informational Meeting @ Chyenenne County Community Building
- 7:00 p.m. Lamar Elks Bingo

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

- 7:00 p.m. Tri-State 9-11 Tribute Foundation Welcomes William Jimeno Lamar Community Building

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

- 10:00 a.m. Tri-State 9-11 Foundation unveil Bronze Statue of William Jimeno
- 2:00 p.m. Talent Show @ Lamar Public Library
- 4:00 p.m. Summer Blast Shrimp Boil @ Lamar Elks Lodge
- 6:00 p.m. Lamar Area Hospice Backyard Bash Fundraiser-Fraternal Order of Eagles #3898

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 14

- 2:00 p.m. "Hoedown" Tea Party @ Las Animas

Rawling Museum Grand Hall- Close out the summer exhibits

- 5:30 p.m. Haswell Community Cards

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

- 12:00 p.m. PEP Board Meeting Lamar
- 6:30 p.m. Lamar Chamber of Commerce Board Meeting

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16

- 4:00 p.m. Lamar Lodging Panel Meeting
- 6:00 p.m. Eads Senior Citizens Cards
- 7:00 p.m. Kiowa County Fire Protection District Meeting
- 7:00 p.m. Lamar Eagles Bingo

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

- 7:00 p.m. Lamar Elks Bingo

SEPTEMBER 19-20

- 9:00 Art Guild Craft Show Las Animas Rawlings Museum Grand Hall - Purchase Holiday, Gifts

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

- 9:00 a.m. Cheyenne Co Commissioners/ Board of Public Health/ Board of Human Services Meeting

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 22

- 6:00 p.m. Lamar City Council Meeting

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

- 1:00 p.m. Prowers County Commissioners Meeting
- 6:30 p.m. Weisbrod Health Board Meeting

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

- 10:00 a.m. La Junta Tarantula Fest

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 28

- 5:30 p.m. Haswell Community Cards

Adrienne Yates sworn in as Kiowa County Clerk and Recorder



Thursday, September 4, Adrienne Yates was sworn into office as the Kiowa County Clerk and Recorder by Tarryn L. Johnson, District Court Chief Judge for the 15th Judicial District.

Yates was appointed by Kiowa County Commission-

ers at their regular meeting held August 28 replace former clerk [Delisa L. Weeks](#), who passed away August 15. She will serve until the next general election, which will be held November 3, 2026.

Weeks was serving her in her third term as Clerk and

Recorder at the time of her death.

Photos: Judge Tarryn L. Johnson & Adrienne Yates- Tina Adamson

Judge Johnson & Adrienne Yates being sworn in - Roland Sorensen

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30

- 9:00 a.m. Cheyenne County Board of Commissioners Meeting
- 7:00 p.m. Lamar Eagles Bingo

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 4

- 10:00 a.m. Boggsville Days Boggsville Historic Site -Free Admission

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18

- 6:30 p.m. Night at the Museum Las Animas Rawlings Museum Grande Hall - Our version of "Clue"

KIOWA COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

719-438-2288 sengelhardt@toem@gmail.com

KIOWA COUNTY SHERIFF

719-438-5411. You may call our number anytime. If not in the office call will route to the Bent County Dispatch. If you have an emergency call 911

TOWN OF EADS

8am-4pm Mon-Fri. Can use drop box or pay with debit

card by phone 719-438-5590. Fax: 719-438-5652. townofeads10@gmail.com Town

BIRTHDAYS

September 15

- Dustin Owen
- Case Nelson

September 16

- Jimmy Brown
- Brad Howe
- Reid Jackson Kleisen
- Mia Crow
- Lindsey Banion
- Blaine Howe
- Cheyenne Brown
- Haniah Penner
- Kenan Gooden

September 17

- Christopher Owens

September 18

- C.H. Williams
- Brandon Lening
- Silas Webster
- Mark Imel
- Ryan Shoemaker
- Alexavier Zemarripa
- Teri Castle

September 19

- Bo Chandler Kent
- Robert Kern
- Cory Crow
- Jess Buller

- Scarlett Webster
- Charlotte Phillips* In Memory

September 20

- Keith Crow
- Bart Michael* In Memory
- Ella Banion
- Jacob Weirich

September 21

ANNIVERSARIES

September 16

- Jonathan & Molly Rosler
- Mr. & Mrs. Mike Lening
- Mr. & Mrs. John Barton

September 17

- Mr. & Mrs. Tyler Shaw

September 18

- Lois & Danny Weisdorfer
- TJ & Danae Cleveland
- James & Jessy Bradley

September 19

- Marie & Kyle Lyon
- Mr. & Mrs. Clint Robertson
- Janie & Jeff Bayer

Kiowa County *Press*

KiowaCountyPress.net

September 12, 2025

Volume 138, Number 37

The background of the newspaper cover is a photograph of the Kiowa County Fair & Rodeo arena. The arena has wooden bleachers and a sign that reads "KIOWA COUNTY FAIR & RODEO". In the foreground, there is a dirt arena floor with a white and red barrel. A semi-transparent white box with a light blue border is overlaid on the center of the image, containing the text "Subscriber EXTRA!".

**Subscriber
EXTRA!**

Exclusive section for our electronic edition subscribers.

Shooting association sues Colorado over new gun control law

DEREK DRAPLIN

(The Center Square)

A new lawsuit seeks to block one of Colorado's newest gun control laws before it takes effect next year.

The suit, brought by the Colorado State Shooting Association and litigated by Lakewood, Colorado-based Mountain States Legal Foundation, questions the constitutionality of Senate Bill 25-003. The suit argues the new law puts in place an onerous permit-to-purchase scheme.

SB 25-003 was passed by the Democratic majority in the last regular legislative session and signed into law by Governor Jared Polis, a defendant in the lawsuit, in April. But it doesn't go into effect until August 2026.

The law will ban the purchases of semiautomatic rifles and shotguns that have detachable magazines, unless individuals get a "firearms safety course eligibility card" from their local sheriff department and then complete a firearm education course.

The bill, when it was initially introduced, was an outright ban on so-called



"assault weapons," but was later amended to include the permit-to-purchase requirements.

"The Act's permit-to-purchase requirements for specified semiautomatic firearms arbitrarily delay and burden the right of law-abiding citizens to obtain and possess arms even if they have previously been determined to be law-abiding, and even if they desire to obtain and possess arms for the purpose of self-defense in the home,

where Second Amendment protections are at their zenith," said the lawsuit, filed Tuesday in the U.S. District Court for the District of Colorado.

The Colorado State Shooting Association, which is the National Rifle Association's state affiliate, said in its announcement of the lawsuit that the law will place "unlawful burdens on the rights of law-abiding Coloradans."

"This law won't stop crime — it will only stop Colora-

dans from exercising their constitutional rights," CSSA President Ray Elliott said. "Colorado already has background checks. We already have waiting periods. SB25-003 piles on yet another hoop for responsible citizens while criminals ignore the rules."

"Enough is enough," Elliott said.

Mountain States Legal Foundation said the new law is "a direct affront to the Constitutional rights recognized" in the U.S. Supreme Court de-

cisions *District of Columbia v. Heller* and *New York State Rifle & Pistol Association v. Bruen*.

"If the State of Colorado were to try these backhanded tactics to limit any other fundamental right — whether that be religion, speech, or the right to counsel — those statutes would be quickly struck down as unconstitutional by even the most partisan of jurists," Michael McCoy, the MSFL director of the Center to Keep and Bear Arms, said in a statement. "But when it comes to the Second Amendment, these tactics to limit our God-given right to keep and bear arms for self-defense have borne fruit for far too many states ... and for far too long. No more!"

McCoy added he's confident the law won't stand up in court.

"With the recent and clear precedent out of the United States Supreme Court and the Tenth Circuit upholding the Second Amendment protected rights of law-abiding citizens, SB3 will not be able to survive review and will be struck down," he said. "I am confident of that."

One of the lawsuit's plaintiffs, Israel Del Toro, an Air Force veteran who survived an IED blast in Afghanistan that left him with burns on over 80 percent of his body, said the law would ban certain firearms and accessories that help him shoot despite physical limitations from his injuries, according to MSFL. One of those accessories, force-reset triggers, will be banned under the new law.

"Similarly, due to the difficulty that [Del Toro] experiences trying to hold a more traditional-style handgun with only one partially intact hand, Mr. Del Toro has come to rely on the more versatile AR platform semiautomatic pistol with stabilizing brace," the lawsuit stated. "However, under the provisions of the Act, AR-platform pistols will become illegal to manufacture, sell or purchase ..."

Colorado raises \$41 million from Keep Colorado Wild passes

ELYSE APEL

(The Center Square)

Colorado raised \$41 million from its Keep Colorado Wild Pass in its second year of being on sale.

That was \$5 million more than the \$36 million annual goal set by Colorado Parks and Wildlife.

"We're excited to report on the Keep Colorado Wild Pass's success during its second year of operations," said Justin Rutter, CPW chief financial officer. "This is a meaningful increase in revenue for our agency compared to previous years, which is an important source for our state parks, wildlife, search and rescue volunteers, and avalanche forecasters."

The funds raised by the Keep Colorado Wild Pass are used to support Colorado state parks, local search and

rescue volunteers, and the Colorado Avalanche Information Center.

In fiscal year 2023-2024, the first year it was offered, the pass raised \$39.7 million. This past year's \$41 million in revenue means it saw a 3 percent increase in just one year.

"With these passes, Coloradans are investing back into the lands they love while exploring all our great state has to offer," said Colorado Governor Jared Polis.

The pass is offered automatically during all passenger vehicle, light truck, motorcycle, or recreational vehicle registrations at the Colorado Division of Motor Vehicles. Residents must opt out of the program to not purchase the Keep Colorado Wild Pass.

According to the state, at just \$29, the pass is 60 percent cheaper than the traditional \$80 annual state park

pass.

More than 1.5 million Colorado residents opted to buy the pass. With the state's population of six million, that represents a significant portion of its citizens participating in the program. The state only expects it to continue growing.

"We're proud to see so many Coloradans saving money by taking advantage of the low-cost Keep Colorado Wild pass, and we expect these numbers to continue growing as the popularity of our iconic state parks only increases," Polis said.

The spending is allotted four different ways:

\$32.5 million for state park maintenance and development.

\$2.5 million for search and rescue teams.

\$1 million to the Colorado Avalanche Information Cen-

ter.

Any revenue beyond that goes to "wildlife projects and outdoor educational programs."

That means the last category received \$5 million in fiscal year 2024-2025. Colorado Parks and Wildlife applauded the assistance this will provide to those additional projects and programs.

"Whether you use the pass to visit state parks or to show support for our outdoor first responders and avalanche forecasters, your contribution plays an integral role in giving back to the outdoor spaces and recreational programs our local communities treasure," said CPW Director Jeff Davis. "The pass also helps our staff implement non-game species work to keep our wildlife ecosystems diverse and thriving."

SPACECOM will leave Colorado for Alabama's Rocket City

ALAN WOOTEN

(The Center Square)

U.S. Space Command Headquarters will move to Alabama from Colorado.

Calling Huntsville by its beloved "Rocket City" nickname, second-term Republican President Donald Trump reversed yet another Biden era action and credited the city for fighting harder "than anybody else." Known colloquially as SPACECOM, the agency "plans, executes and integrates military space power into multi-domain global operations in order to deter aggression, defend national interests, and when necessary, defeat threats," says its military website.

Huntsville is home to the Redstone Army Airfield and NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center. The Space and Missile Defense Command of the Army is also in Huntsville and is source of the community moniker.

General Stephen Whiting leads headquarters at Peterson Space Force Base in Colorado. The installation sought to retain its position. As Trump's first term wound down, the Air Force on Nov. 19, 2020, named Peterson and Redstone among six finalists. The others were Kirtland Air Force Base in New Mexico; Port San Antonio in Texas; Offutt Air Force Base in Nebraska; and Patrick Air Force Base in Florida.

Two dozen locations were in the self-nominated category of wanting to be host. That included then-Senator J.D. Vance – now Vice President Vance – helping lead an Ohio charge for NASA John H. Glenn Research Center's Neil Armstrong Test Facility in Sandusky. California also made a pitch in its role as home to two Air Force bases (Edwards, Travis), two Marine Corps installations (Pendleton, Twentynine Palms), multiple Navy bases and the Army's sprawling Fort Irwin training center.

In 2023, then-President Joe Biden said temporary headquarters in Colorado Springs would become permanent. That bucked Trump's first-term plan, a move he said



"wrongly obstructed."

In a release, Republican Alabama Governor Kay Ivey said, "The Redstone Arsenal region was ready to welcome Space Command Headquarters when I made the official pitch to the Defense secretary in June 2019, and it remains ready today to not only welcome headquarters, but to welcome all of the military personnel and their families."

"I commend Redstone and city of Huntsville leaders for their diligence in maintaining a mission-ready stance. I also applaud our entire congressional delegation – Repub-

licans and Democrats – especially Congressman Mike Rogers as chairman of the House Armed Service Committee."

Ivey has been governor since 2017, when former Governor Robert Bentley resigned. She won election in 2018 and 2022 with 59.5 percent and 66.9 percent of the votes, respectively.

U.S. Representative Mike Rogers, R-Ala., said, "Alabama was chosen in 2021 because it was the absolute best location for the Space Command headquarters. Today, in 2025, it remains the best location

for our national security and for the taxpayer. This basing decision has been affirmed and reaffirmed by multiple agencies and multiple officials throughout both the Trump and Biden administrations. Biden was content to have Space Command located in the fourth best location because it served him politically. The differences between him and President Trump have never been clearer.

"On this historic day, I am extremely proud to be an American, proud to be an Alabamian, and proud to support the administration who made

this possible."

Huntsville Mayor Tommy Battle estimated 1,400 jobs will come over the next five years.

"Uprooting Space Command will weaken national security and readiness, waste taxpayer dollars, and inconvenience military families," said second-term Democratic Governor Jared Polis of Colorado. "Coloradans and Americans should all be provided full transparency and the full details of this poor decision."

Colorado officials decry Trump plan to relocate Space Command headquarters out of state

LINDSEY TOOMER

(Colorado Newsline)

President Donald Trump will announce his intention to move U.S. Space Command headquarters out of Colorado to Alabama on Tuesday, officials told national news outlets including [The Associated Press](#).

Space Command has been at full operational capacity at Peterson Space Force Base in Colorado Springs since December 2023, after former President Joe Biden

announced in [July that year](#) it would stay in Colorado.

Colorado officials previously expressed concern that Trump's decision during his first presidential term to move Space Command to Huntsville, Alabama, was [politically motivated](#), as he waited until after the 2020 election to announce the move. Alabama went for Trump, a Republican, in that election, and Colorado went for Biden, a Democrat.

Colorado officials from both parties have advocated

Space Command staying in Colorado. Peterson housed a previous version of Space Command from 1985 to 2002. The Air Force subsequently oversaw military space operations from the site.

Colorado Attorney General Phil Weiser, a Democrat who is running for governor in 2026, said in a statement Tuesday his office has been preparing for legal action over a Space Command relocation if Trump "made such an unlawful decision." Weiser said military families in El Paso County

have relied on the decision to keep Space Command headquarters in Colorado.

"The Trump administration should not play political games with our nation's military readiness and military families," Weiser said in a statement. "Moving Space Command Headquarters to Alabama is not only wrong for our national defense, but it's harmful to hundreds of Space Command personnel and their families."

Colorado's estimated tariff rate rises sevenfold due to Trump policy, state report says

SARA WILSON

(Colorado Newsline)

Colorado's effective tariff rate is seven times what it was last year following sweeping tariffs imposed by the Trump administration, according to a [new report](#) released by Governor Jared Polis' office.

"One thing that's clear is that everyone loses a trade war," Polis told reporters at the Governor's Residence in Denver during a press conference Thursday. "It's a race to the bottom."

A tariff is a tax on imported goods. President Donald Trump has imposed a patchwork of tariff rates on different countries, many of them stemming from a 10 percent baseline tariff on all imports imposed in April. Tariffs currently in effect include 50 percent tariffs on Brazilian goods, 39 percent on Swiss goods and 15 percent on goods from the European Union. Trump has also imposed high tariff rates on Canadian, Mexican and Chinese goods — which account for roughly half of Colorado's imports — but those are in flux as the countries negotiate, and they exclude Canadian and Mexican products included in the United States-Mexico-Canada trade pact. There are also individual tariffs on imported cars, steel, aluminum and copper.

Companies that bring for-



eign goods into the country are responsible for those tariff costs.

"When businesses face high tariffs and the associated uncertainty and confusion, they have difficult choices," said Jeff Kraft, the deputy director of the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade. "Companies are forced to either pass costs onto consumers, which raises prices and can reduce revenue and obviously hurts the consumer, or they have to shift funds to cover the cost of the tariffs internally."

Polis requested the tariff impact analysis through an executive order in July. The analysis says the estimated

effective tariff rate in Colorado last year was 3 percent but now it has increased to 21 percent.

Companies are forced to either pass costs onto consumers, which raises prices and can reduce revenue and obviously hurts the consumer, or they have to shift funds to cover the cost of the tariffs internally.

The hardest hit industries in Colorado will likely be agriculture, energy, construction and aerospace. The state's beef exports, for example, fell by nearly \$40 million in the first half of this year compared to last year, and the report's authors estimate a combined direct and indirect

impact of that loss of beef exports to be a reduction of 265 jobs and \$80 million of economic output in Colorado.

The Swiss tariffs could have a big impact on Colorado's aerospace industry, which imports about 73 percent of its materials from the country. Product-specific tariffs on steel, aluminum and copper could also affect aerospace defense manufacturing. The report considered a potential 5 percent reduction in foreign demand for Colorado aerospace products and concluded an estimated 195 lost jobs and \$61.6 million in gross domestic product loss.

Additionally, tariffs related to imported construction ma-

terials and the countries that supply them could increase construction costs for new homes by 4 percent to 6 percent, according to the report.

"There's no doubt that any costs associated with tariffs are directly incorporated into construction costs and into housing costs," Polis said. "Of course, we're doing everything we can to reduce the cost of construction as a state, and this works counter to that goal."

There is potential that the tariffs will impact state revenue as well, because they are expected to weaken consumer spending and slow economic growth. The state could lose about \$240 million in general fund revenue during the current fiscal year and about \$450 million next fiscal year if the current tariff rates hold. That is a potential estimate and not part of an official economic forecast, which will come later this month.

The Colorado Legislature recently [wrapped up](#) a special session to raise revenue to soften the adverse impacts of the recent federal spending and tax cut bill.

Colorado was part of a coalition of states that sued the Trump administration over the tariffs imposed using emergency authority. An appeals court [found that most of those tariffs](#) were an illegal use of the emergency powers law, but the decision left the tariffs in place for now and Trump is asking the U.S. Supreme Court to take up the case.

Polis is hoping the courts will negate the tariffs, and he called on Congress to do more. The state does not have any power regarding this international trade policy.

"We really hope that Congress shows a spine and pushes back against costly increases through tariffs and try to change the mind of the president in the White House," he said. "Congress absolutely can limit the authority of a president. They can do that in the spending bills that they're considering right now. They can restrict the ability of any president to unilaterally impose tariffs."

Coloradans hold breath as judge considers new gas pipeline standards

ERIC GALATAS

(Colorado News Connection)

After an explosion in Firestone killed two people in 2017, Colorado lawmakers ordered the state agency regulating oil and gas pipelines to create new safety standards.

In June, the Public Utilities Commission issued a [proposed rule](#) on advanced leak detection and repair for natural-gas pipelines.

Barbara Vasquez, board member of the Western Colorado Alliance for Community Action, said if the new rule is approved, future tragedies like the one in Firestone can be prevented.

"The expectation is, with this advanced leak detection and repair embedded in the rules, that the whole state will be safer," Vasquez explained.

Administrative Law Judge Robert Garvey is charged with bringing final recommendations on the new rule to the commission. Vasquez hopes Garvey will incorporate public health and climate concerns in his decision.

Pipeline leaks send harmful pollutants, including carcinogens like benzene, into the air near homes and businesses. Methane, the primary component of natural gas, is also more than 80 times more

potent at trapping heat in the atmosphere than CO₂.

Each year, gas pipelines in Colorado leak as much as [76,000 metric tons](#) of methane, according to recent analysis. Oil and gas producers have largely supported regulations, many pioneered in Colorado, requiring operators to find and fix leaks.

Vasquez noted the new rule will help industry bring more of their product to market.

"It seems a no-brainer to me that they would be on board with whatever is the most effective leak detection and rapid repair, to conserve their profit margin."

Lynne Sullivan works on a

ranch in Larimer County. She said over the past two decades, oil and gas production has had a profound effect on air quality, especially for anyone who works outside on hot summer days sparking ground-level ozone pollution. Sullivan believes the new rule is critical for cleaner air, and meeting Colorado's climate goals.

"This is an incredibly exciting opportunity for the Colorado PUC to do the right thing, demonstrating how to protect people and our places from hazardous pollutants and worsening climate disasters," Sullivan contended. "These are expensive things."



Polis calls for return of Victims of Crime Act grant funding

ELYSE APEL

(The Center Square)

Colorado Governor Jared Polis is calling for the Trump administration to end restrictions it has put on Victims of Crime Act grants.

The funding in jeopardy, which has already been appropriated by Congress, totals more than a billion dollars.

"Coloradans know that politicizing support for crime victims is wrong," Polis said. "The Trump administration's decision to withhold these funds is cruel and makes our communities less safe."

The U.S. Justice Department has declared that states will not be able to access Victims of Crime Act funding unless they agree to support the administration's immigration enforcement.

Colorado is one of 20 states that have joined together in [suing](#) over these restrictions on the funding, calling it in their lawsuit "unprecedented conditions."

The [Victims of Crime Act](#) was first enacted in 1984. Administered by the U.S. Department of Justice, the grants help fund a wide variety of programs including victim and witness advocacy services, emergency shelter, crime scene cleanup, sexual assault forensic exams, and

medical, funeral and burial expenses.

In 2024, Colorado's Office for Victims Programs received over \$21 million in funding from Victims of Crime Acts grants. Funding is distributed to states based on fixed statutory formulas.

Polis said Colorado will continue to fight for the restoration of the funding.

"This federal funding should go toward helping survivors heal and get a fresh start," Polis said. "Colorado

will stand up for survivors and fight to ensure that every victim has access to the resources needed to recover."

Colorado House Majority Leader Monica Duran, D-Wheat Ridge, joined Polis in pushing back.

"As a domestic violence survivor, I know how life-saving these services are," Duran said. "For Colorado families in crisis, VOCA funds mean having a safe place to sleep, access to counseling, or support navigating the justice system.

It is unconscionable to use survivors as pawns in a political fight over immigration."

She added that the Colorado legislature will work to protect services from being impacted by this federal funding pause.

Under the Trump administration's conditions, to continue receiving the funding, Colorado must comply with immigration efforts by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Currently Colorado and its

capital city Denver have been under scrutiny for their so-called sanctuary city policies, which limits their cooperation with federal immigration authorities.

The U.S. Department of Justice recently released a [list](#) of "states, cities, and counties identified as having policies, laws, or regulations that impede enforcement of federal immigration laws."

Colorado and Denver were both on that list.

Pay gap widens between Colorado workers and CEOs

ERIC GALATAS

(Colorado News Connection)

As Coloradans celebrate Labor Day, a [new report](#) showed just how far workers have fallen behind bosses when it comes to their share of company earnings.

CEOs at the largest 100 low-wage corporations listed in the S&P 500 – businesses such as Home Depot, Starbucks, Walmart and others – earn 632 times more than their lowest-paid workers on average.

Sarah Anderson, Global Economy Project director at the Institute for Policy Studies and the report's lead author, said CEO pay has soared since 2019, while worker pay

has lagged behind U.S. inflation.

"At a time when many American workers are struggling with high costs for things like groceries and housing, what we found is that the nation's 100 largest low-wage employers are focused on making their overpaid CEOs even richer," Anderson asserted.

Average CEO compensation at low-wage companies was more than \$17 million in 2024. The average median pay for workers was less than \$36,000. Corporate leaders have long dismissed concerns about pay disparities, arguing it is the free market at work. They said companies have to compete for executive tal-

ent with other firms offering handsome compensation packages.

Anderson disagrees with the so-called "great man theory," a perspective suggesting the person in the corner office is almost single-handedly responsible for the value of a company. She said the justification for skyrocketing executive pay was turned on its head during the COVID public health emergency.

"It was low-wage, front line workers who really kept our economy going," Anderson pointed out. "Everyone contributes to the value of a company. It is not healthy to have one person making hundreds if not thousands of times more than ordinary em-

ployees make."

One of the report's recommendations is to raise taxes on firms paying CEOs 50 to 100 times more than the average worker. Anderson noted companies with reasonable executive salaries would not pay an extra dime in taxes. She added some cities and states are already doing it to encourage companies to narrow pay gaps.

"By either bringing down CEO pay or lifting up worker pay, or both," Anderson advised. "If they refuse to do that, then they'll pay a bit extra and we can use that money to help reduce inequality."



Talk of possible ICE raid mars Nebraska county fair's push to feature Mexican band

NATALIA ALAMDARI

(Nebraska Examiner)

In a dusty show barn, kids march out their prize-winning swine as an auctioneer sings out competing bids.

Outside, shrieks pierce this hot August night as families spin in loops on lit-up carnival rides. Vendors sell giant chocolate ice creams and funnel cakes, corn dogs and lemonades.

Every year, the Chase County Fair & Expo draws 10,000 people to this county of 3,764. They come for the classic small-town rite of summer. And they come for the fair's annual concerts.

This year, the county fair did something new. For the first time, fair organizers hired a Mexican band to perform, figuring that made practical sense in a community whose Latino population has grown sixfold since 2000. The announcement brought buzz and excitement on social media.

But in the hours leading up to the Thursday night concert, only 300 tickets had sold, low

for the grandstand that can hold 3,500. Many local Latino residents had decided to stay home, afraid of what could happen.

"The rumor was that this was bait," Imperial resident Cynthia Almanza said while waiting for the concert to start. "That ICE was going to show up."

The local rumor mill also alleged that the county sheriff had been the one to make that call.

Versions of this story burned through Imperial and surrounding towns this summer, Almanza and other residents told the Flatwater Free Press.

The Chase County sheriff was upset the fair had booked a Mexican band, residents said. He had called the feds, they said. They even said the fair had planned the concert as a trap. The suspicion grew so strong that one Imperial police officer went so far as to ask Immigration and Customs Enforcement: Did the sheriff contact you?

Chase County Sheriff Kevin Mueller said in an emailed

statement it was a "false and harmful rumor" that he "made a racist comment" during a fair board meeting discussing security needs for the concert.

But it was true that he called ICE, he said in an email Thursday evening.

"I did place a call to ICE," Mueller wrote. "About a week later, someone returned my call ... by that time, I had already determined that we had sufficient security in place through the Fair Board and the State Patrol."

The idea that ICE agents could show up at the fair took root in people's minds. Almanza had friends who skipped the show. "It terrified lots of people," she said.

"It made me question if I should even be here," said Judith Beltran, another concert-goer, who heard the story of the potential ICE raid shortly after arriving for the concert from Denver. "Just because of the chaos ... I don't want to be in the middle of it."

In the eight months of immigration crackdowns under the Trump administration,

fear of ICE raids has penetrated many aspects of immigrant life in Nebraska. Rumors of raids and government vehicle sightings flood Facebook groups and WhatsApp chats.

Some families are retreating from public life, including some who have legal status, advocates say. It's keeping kids from attending school, they say, and parents from going to work.

In Imperial, it left some wondering: Is the county fair safe?

A LATINO BAND

The Chase County Fair Board approached Rodolfo Aragon in April with a question: Would he join the committee to help book a Latino band? The board was trying to make the annual event more inclusive, Aragon said, and wanted "to thank people for being a part of the community."

Aragon moved to the area 21 years ago to work for the feedlot Imperial Beef. He encouraged his brother to join him. They're one of the many families from Chihuahua,

Mexico, that found a home here, drawn by feedlot jobs or farm work at the potato grower Frenchman Valley Produce.

In 2000, only 5% of Imperial's residents were Latino, according to census data. Now, nearly a third of the city's residents are.

"The whole community has really shifted in the last two to three decades," said Tyler Pribbeno, an Imperial native and the city administrator. "Imperial has sustained its population ... we would have been much smaller, probably the size of Grant, if we didn't have all these people coming in and choosing to live and work and play here."

The fair board first suggested a smaller act to draw this ever-growing Latino crowd, maybe a show that didn't play at the main grandstand, maybe a local band.

But the newly recruited Aragon and the concert committee wanted to go bigger. After all, Johnny Cash played the Chase County Fair. So did Alice Cooper.

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Nebraska Fair Continued from B6

"We didn't want the Hispanic pick to be any different," Aragon said. "Let's pick someone from Chihuahua, everyone's going to be drawn to that."

In May, they hit what they thought was the Mexican music jackpot, hiring La Fiera de Ojinaga, an accordion-driven norteño band from northern Mexico with more than 2 million monthly listeners on Spotify and hundreds of millions of streams.

Then, Aragon started hearing a rumor. White residents were telling their Latino friends: You might not want to be at that concert. People in the country legally worried about attending, scared that they could get detained because of the color of their skin, Aragon said.

The most out-there version of the rumor he heard: That the fair board had planned the concert as a trap.

"We can't control fear. We can only control what we can control," said Ryan Stromberger, president of the fair board. "It's unfortunate that they felt that way, I don't know how we can control that, though ... Obviously we had no ill intentions, otherwise we wouldn't have booked it."

RUMORS ROLL

Much of this fear appeared to stem from the May fair board meeting, when the board convened weeks before fair leaders planned to announce the last-minute concert addition.

City police and the Sheriff's Office attended to discuss concert security. They appeared to single out the Mexican concert as a specific worry.

The law enforcement officers "voiced concerns about disturbances during Thursday's night concert," meeting minutes read. "They want to know about security precautions for concert nights."

The discussion lasted about 20 minutes, according to meeting minutes. There is no audio recording of that meeting. Fair board members deferred questions to Strom-

berger, who said discussion focused mostly on whether law enforcement agencies had the budget and manpower to accommodate an extra concert night.

But that discussion continued among law enforcement officers outside the meeting room, said Chris Bustillos, the Imperial police sergeant. After that meeting, the rumors started to spiral, several Imperial residents said in interviews.

Mueller, the county sheriff, said in an email that any rumors that he "made a racist comment during a fair board meeting" were false.

"We had concerns that an extra night would place additional strain on our resources," he wrote. "Apparently, one member took offense

partment of Homeland Security agent replied that the office had "received a call regarding the concerts."

Bustillos said he and the DHS agent then spoke by phone. The agent told him that yes, the Sheriff's Office had contacted the ICE office, Bustillos said in an interview. No, the ICE agents weren't planning to come to the fair.

Mueller didn't return a phone call Thursday seeking additional comment. Instead, he had a Sheriff's Office employee send the Flatwater Free Press his emailed statement. He had previously not returned two other phone calls and an email seeking comment, instead communicating via another emailed statement.

Calling ICE had "nothing to

an Imperial United Methodist Church sanctuary. The day's lecture: Knowing your rights if stopped by ICE.

After hearing the fair rumors, Jo Leyland felt moved to act. The retired city administrator started calling nonprofits, hoping to get a pamphlet she could hand out to people about immigration rights. Instead, staff members from Nebraska Appleseed, a nonprofit that advocates for immigrant rights, offered to make the nearly four-hour drive from Lincoln to Imperial.

"I wanted to educate people, both with brown and white faces, about what could be done if the worst thing happened and ICE did show up," Leyland said.

After the presentation at the church, Leyland took Know Your Rights cards from an Appleseed rep to pass out at the fair. The city took pamphlets to keep at the library and city offices. By the end of the session, all the paper handouts had been taken.

Appleseed has held worker's rights safety trainings for years, said Ruby Méndez López, a community organizer with the nonprofit. But since January, the nonprofit has held about 20 Know Your Rights meetings across the state, educating immigrants and Americans on what they can and can't do during a crackdown.

People are desperate for this information, Méndez López said, and grateful to get it. But getting people to attend Know Your Rights sessions can be a challenge.

"If we publicly post Know Your Rights information, people get really nervous about showing up," Méndez López said. "People start to think it's a trap put on by whoever is planning it."

At the Imperial meeting, most of the attendees were white. Méndez López tried to set up a smaller Know Your Rights session with migrant workers in town. People were too scared to come, she said. The fear of going out in public has come and gone in waves through 2025, Méndez López said.

It was strong at the start of the year, when President Donald Trump took office. It

peaked again after the immigration raid at Glenn Valley in Omaha, when ICE detained about 75 people. In the aftermath, rumors of potential ICE raids in towns like Lexington and Grand Island flooded social media. No other large raid has yet happened.

"People were just not showing up to work," Méndez López said. "When there's rumors that are unverified, it disrupts people's lives entirely ... it's hard to know what to believe."

HOW IT WENT

Thursday night at the fair, excitement over the concert mixed with unease and uncertainty. At a large booth on the midway, young members of the Lions Club shouted out bingo numbers — in English and Spanish.

Further down the midway, a cutout of Donald and Melania Trump advertised a booth selling MAGA hats and T-shirts, thermoses proclaiming "Don't Tread on Me" and "I voted for the felon."

No immigration authorities showed up that night. And fewer concertgoers than usual showed up, too — roughly 500 people ended up buying tickets to see La Fiera de Ojinaga, Stromberger said, far fewer than the combined 6,000 attendees at the Friday and Saturday country acts.

But the hundreds of mostly Latino fans who did attend came dressed in their best cowboy hats, jeans and boots. Some, like Almanza, never thought they would see a day when one of their favorite Mexican bands played their small-town American fair.

As the band played, couples paired off and whirled their way around the empty back half of the venue, stepping in time with the band's bouncy drumbeat in the glowing light of the stage. The notes of an accordion and saxophone rang out into the crowd. And when the band shouted out their home state of Chihuahua, whoops and cheers erupted from the crowd.

Behind the crowd, a lit-up Ferris wheel looped kids into the sky. Vendors handed out cotton candy and fried Oreos. For a moment, it felt like another night at the fair.



to my comments and began spreading a false and harmful rumor about me ... this allegation is baseless, damaging, and driven by personal agendas — not facts."

Bustillos said he decided to fact-check the rumors himself.

"I believe our sheriff for Chase County contacted someone either in your office or on the hotline about a Hispanic concert we will be having for our Chase County Expo Fair," he wrote to the North Platte ICE office in an email obtained by the Flatwater Free Press through a records request. "I was just hoping to find out if that is something you or anyone in the ICE office will be attending? Again, I was just informed our sheriff contacted you. I have no idea if he really did or if that's something you do."

Replying via email, a De-

do with the false allegation that I made racist comments," Mueller wrote. "My focus throughout has been solely on ensuring the safety and security of the fair, nothing more."

An ICE spokesperson declined to discuss any interaction with the sheriff.

"Pushing something out about ICE speaking to a sheriff or other law enforcement officers, with whom we partner with on a daily basis, will do nothing but fear monger," spokesperson Tanya Roman wrote in an email. "There is no reason why anyone not breaking the law should have any concerns about one law enforcement agency speaking to another."

KNOWING YOUR RIGHTS

On a Sunday afternoon two weeks before the fair, about 20 people gathered in



Utah redistricting lawsuit parties agree on new timeline to redraw congressional map

KATIE MCKELLAR

(Utah News Dispatch)

Attorneys for the Utah Legislature and plaintiffs in the redistricting lawsuit against the state have agreed on a timeline to redraw Utah's congressional boundaries.

Third District Judge Dianna Gibson tossed out Utah's 2021 congressional map in a ruling she issued last week that determined the Utah Legislature unconstitutionally repealed and replaced Better Bound-

aries' 2018 voter-approved ballot initiative that sought to create an independent redistricting commission.

Attorneys for both the Legislature and the anti-gerrymandering lawsuit's plaintiffs agreed on the following deadlines, according to a court filing submitted Thursday:

September 25: The Utah Legislature will publish its new proposed map.

September 26 to October 5: Lawmakers will hold a public

comment period to take input on the map.

October 6: The Legislature will take a final vote on the map and submit it to the court for consideration. Plaintiffs will also have the same deadline to submit any proposed maps to the judge.

October 17: The deadline for both parties to file briefs, expert reports, and other materials in support or opposition to map submissions, if necessary.

October 23 to October 24:

The court will hold an evidentiary hearing, if necessary.

October 28: The deadline for parties to file proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law with the court, if necessary.

November 10: The latest possible date for the court to select a final map, according to the lieutenant governor's office.

Previously, Lt. Governor Deidre Henderson's office had told the judge the latest a new map could be adopted

would be November 1, in order to give county clerks enough time to finalize precincts before candidates can begin filing in January.

However, earlier this week during a status conference, Gibson asked if there would be any flexibility — even if it's a matter of days — to push back her previously proposed schedule to give lawmakers more time to submit their maps. In her initial order last week, the judge proposed that deadline to be September 24.

The lieutenant governor's attorneys said in another court filing earlier this week that they could push the November 1 deadline to November 10.

Additionally, Gibson had included in her initial order the opportunity for "third parties" — in addition to the Legislature and the lawsuit's plaintiffs — to submit proposed maps. However, in their joint court filing, attorneys for both parties said they "agree that map submissions to the Court should be limited to the existing parties in this case."

"Third parties have the opportunity to submit proposed maps and comments during the legislative process," they wrote in Thursday's filing.

West Nile virus-related death reported in Utah as illness spreads across counties

ALIXEL CABRERA

(Utah News Dispatch)

Human West Nile virus cases are increasing along the Wasatch Front, two health agencies reported this week. The spread resulted in one death in Davis County.

As of Wednesday there were three cases of the virus in Davis County, said Trevor Warner, communications manager at the Davis County Health Department. Two of them were neuroinvasive, a severe form of the infection that affects the central nervous system, leading the patients to be hospitalized.

An individual over 60 years old died at the hospital last week, Warner said. It's the

first death related to the virus in the state since 2023.

"(The neuroinvasive form of the virus) can result in some long-term complications or even death," Warner added. "So, the more severe infections, those will include a high fever, neck stiffness, the person will be disoriented, and in some cases, have tremors or muscle weakness."

The neuroinvasive virus may also lead to other serious conditions, including meningitis, encephalitis or paralysis, the Utah County Health Department said in a news release Wednesday. However, most people infected with the virus don't develop symptoms.

The Utah County Health

Department reported five probable human cases of the West Nile virus. Four of them are neuroinvasive.

The virus has been confirmed in mosquito pools and human cases across different counties in the state, so local agencies are urging residents to avoid mosquito bites.

Health officials advised wearing insect repellent when outdoors, especially at dawn or dusk, as well as wearing long sleeves, pants and socks at those times, which is when mosquitoes are the most active.

Utahns are also advised to eliminate standing water around homes, even small containers, ensure that doors and windows are screened,

and take extra precaution if they are older or immunocompromised to avoid severe illness.

In Davis County, Warner said, residents can call the mosquito abatement district to request an inspection to identify potential issues with standing water or any other sources of mosquitoes. When needed, the district can spray those areas to avoid mosquitoes.

"It's not uncommon to have West Nile positive pools and have human cases of West Nile. But what is a little uncommon is the amount of neuroinvasive cases, and then the fact that we did have a death," Warner said.

Yellowstone wolves observed moving pups to follow elk – upending assumptions

KATIE KLINGSPORN

(Daily Montana)

Scientific research has long assumed gray wolves are non-migratory during springtime, staying anchored to tend to litters of nearly helpless pups. For the first weeks of life, after all, pups are blind, deaf and extremely vulnerable.

A game camera image captured in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, however, upends that assumption. In the picture, an adult female wolf hauls a squirmy-looking pup by its hindquarters. The collared female, GPS data shows, was transporting the youngster from a den site to a new pack “rendezvous” site — effectively relocating her young family.

The photograph is part of a study, [“Wolves use diverse tactics to track partially migratory prey,”](#) that sheds new light on the evolving dynamics between ungulates and the carnivores that prey on them.

The study, published August 1 in the journal *Current Biology*, finds that canids with very young pups relocate homesites if their source of prey — in this case, elk — migrate.

The research helps illuminate the ways shifting ungulate migrations can impact predator behaviors and ecosystem dynamics, said senior author Arthur Middleton, a University of California, Berkeley, professor who has spent years researching ungulate [migration](#) and [conservation](#) in Wyoming.

“It’s sort of become pretty obvious to me that (ungulate migrations are) really important to the functioning of the ecosystem,” Middleton said. “But, we’ve had work to do to show how and why, and so I think this helps add another piece of that puzzle.”

This puzzle piece relates to the ways ungulate movements can directly influence the behavior of large carnivores. “That has broader implications, I think, for how we think about the migrations and why we’re trying to conserve them and things like



that,” Middleton said.

TRACKING MOVEMENTS

The research team set out in 2019 to learn about wolf predation in more granular detail, said co-author Avery Shawler, who completed her doctorate at the University of California – Berkeley in 2024. To do that, researchers partnered with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department to put collars on both prey — nearly 100 members of the large Cody elk herd — as well as their predators — 19 wolves belonging to seven packs.

“So we were investigating wolf kill sites to see what they were killing and eating,” said Shawler, who completed her doctorate at the University of California – Berkeley in 2024.

This study area is east of Yellowstone National Park in the Absaroka Mountains, a rugged landscape home to high-alpine meadows, Douglas fir forests, aspen glades and sagebrush steppe.

During summer and winter seasons through 2021, scientists collected a great deal of data on the movement patterns of the animals, Shawler said.

That allowed researchers “to do movement analyses and compare GPS collar information,” she said. Through that, they realized “that different wolf packs have different strategies for tracking the Cody elk herd, which has individuals that migrate and individuals that don’t migrate.”

Wyoming Game and Fish game camera images helped bolster the collar observations.

Ultimate findings demonstrated that gray wolves use diverse movement tactics to track partially migratory elk. Some Yellowstone Ecosystem

elk only migrate short distances in the spring, and the wolf packs that tracked them generally stayed in the territory where they first established their dens. Other elk travel longer springtime distances, and the wolf packs that tracked them went to greater lengths to keep close. That includes packs with pups shifting homesites to follow migratory elk to summer range. Sometimes they carried small pups as far as 20 kilometers from their original dens.

Because the highest source of wolf mortality can be attributed to members of other packs killing puppies, moving them is risky, Shawler said.

The relocation of small pups was not a surprise to Game and Fish biologists and other large carnivore specialists, Shawler and Middleton said. Experts have observed

that behavior on the ground for years. The finer-scaled detail provided by GPS collars confirmed their observations.

But, Middleton said, these findings counter years of assumptions by the larger body of animal researchers that migratory ungulates can escape predation in spring because wolves are anchored to dens and their largely immobile pups. The study is the first time researchers outside of the Arctic have observed gray wolves shifting their territorial range to be closer to prey during pup-rearing season.

The game camera photo captured it perfectly, Shawler noted. “Once they got that camera trap photo, literally of an adult wolf carrying a pup that was really, really young ... It was like, ‘Oh, they actually are moving the pups, and that’s over some really rugged terrain, over a pretty long distance.’”

IMPLICATIONS

Previous work by Middleton illustrated that [elk are highly variable and have the means to adapt](#) to changing climate cues.

This study takes that a step further, Shawler said.

“There’s less research on how predators respond to that flexibility, and it would

make sense that predators are also able to adapt,” she said. “So it’s just kind of adding to that literature.”

Understanding how wolves adapt to the prey’s behavior can help land managers better conserve both species, Middleton said. The study area, outside of Yellowstone National Park boundaries, encompasses human development like ranches and wilderness. That makes it a candidate for human-wildlife conflict.

Researchers generated a significant body of data, and Shawler is working to publish further work from it.

Additional study co-authors include Kenneth J. Mills and Tony W. Mong of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department; Kristin J. Barker of UC Berkeley and Beyond Yellowstone Living Lab; and Wenjing Xu of the Senckenberg Biodiversity and Climate Research Centre in Germany.

The National Geographic Society, Knobloch Family Foundation, George B. Storer Foundation, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, UC Berkeley and USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture supported the study, which was conducted from a base at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West in Cody.

Wyoming to host congressional hearing on public lands maintenance

SUZANNE POTTER

(Wyoming News Service)

Grand Teton National Park will host a congressional hearing today on renewed funding for a law providing for maintenance on public lands.

The [Great American Outdoors Act](#), which passed with bipartisan support during the first Trump administration, is up for reauthorization.

Emily Douce, deputy vice president of government affairs for the National Parks Conservation Association, said it has funneled more than \$6.5 billion to national parks to fix a range of issues.

“A lot of these facilities, whether it’s a visitor center, or waste or drinking water

systems, or trails, or campgrounds, they were built about 60 years ago, and they need an upgrade,” Douce contended.

Over the past few years, crews at Grand Teton have repaved roads, reconstructed a bridge, improved the wastewater system and upgraded parking areas. Nationwide, the projects employ around 17,000 people.

National parks attract more than [330 million tourists](#), contribute more than [\\$55 billion](#) in economic output and support 415,000 private sector jobs each year.

Douce stressed the Trump administration’s extensive cuts to the Park Service workforce this year are making it difficult to manage maintenance projects.

“Twenty-four percent of permanent employees have been let go since January,” Douce pointed out. “It is important for this work to continue. This progress will likely be compromised if the staff don’t get replaced and the reductions in force go forward.”

Wyoming is the third-largest recipient of funding from the National Parks and Public Legacy Restoration Fund, established as part of the Great American Outdoors Act. The fund handles deferred maintenance at the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service, The Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management and the Bureau of Indian Education.

North Dakota tribes become a model for promoting Native tourism

JEFF BEACH

(North Dakota Monitor)

North Dakota tribes say their first-in-the-nation effort to band together to promote tourism is paying off.

"We want to tell our stories with our voices," said Stacey LaCompte, director of the [North Dakota Native Tourism Alliance](#).

She said the group has had success catering to tour groups from Europe. She said the European groups are often in North Dakota for about three weeks and are interested in visiting all five tribal nations that share geography with North Dakota. They often want to take in South Dakota sites, too, she said.

"They're paying for the tour. They're paying for the hotels, the gas, the food," LaCompte said. "They're buying souvenirs. They're buying from our artisans."

Stacey LaCompte, director of the North Dakota Native Tourism Alliance, right, and Tamara St. John, a board member for the group, speak to a legislative committee on Aug. 19, 2025, near Hankinson, North Dakota. (Photo by Jeff Beach/North Dakota Monitor)

LaCompte and others from the tourism group briefed North Dakota lawmakers on their efforts recently.

The presentation was to the North Dakota Legisla-



ture's Tribal and State Relations Committee that met at the Dakota Magic Casino near Hankinson on the Lake Traverse Indian Reservation. The reservation lies mostly in South Dakota with a small portion in southeast North Dakota.

The reservation is the home of the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate tribe. Tamara St. John is a historian for the tribe who called North Dakota Native Tourism Alliance "precedent setting," with similar groups forming in other states after hearing of the success in North Dakota.

The North Dakota Native Tourism Alliance was formed in 2016. The group began offering cultural tours in 2021.

St. John, a board member

for the group, said international travelers are often interested in an "authentic" travel experience to learn about Native American culture.

"And who better to share that than us," St. John said.

Some tour groups from countries such as Norway and Germany are interested in learning about immigrant families that settled in Dakota Territory.

"They want to understand the cultural differences and relationships" with Native Americans, St. John said.

Fred Walker is global marketing manager for the North Dakota Department of Commerce's tourism and marketing team. He said in an interview that Europeans do

have strong interest in Native American culture and when they visit, will take their time to visit multiple attractions.

"They spend more time, they spend more money, and they really try to engage into wherever they're at," Walker said. "They immerse themselves."

He said the groups are usually families of four to eight people instead of large tour groups.

European tourists may visit the reservations but tours often include visits to other sites, such as Theodore Roosevelt National Park, the National Buffalo Museum at Jamestown and other museums.

LaCompte said the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential

Library, which is scheduled to open in Medora next year, has already reached out to the Native Tourism Alliance so the group can be a resource for library visitors.

Walker said other states, including South Dakota and Montana, have followed North Dakota's example in forming Native tourism groups.

North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Wyoming and Idaho also have formed a tourism partnership called the Great American West. Each year, it hosts an event called the International Roundup that helps tour promoters learn about attractions and events, including with Native Americans, in the five-state region.

The 2026 International Roundup will be in Medora from April 28 to May 1.

In addition to international tours, Les Thomas, president of the Native Tourism Alliance, said tribes have been building themselves up as tourist destinations beyond casinos. The Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa, where he is a citizen, has added a water park and trampoline park.

Thomas emphasized the economic impact of tourism for the tribes and North Dakota.

He said the United Tribes Technical College annual powwow in Bismarck has a \$10 million economic impact. The [powwow](#) is Friday to Sunday.

Tourism is on the agenda for Wednesday's Annual Tribal Leaders Summit that leads up to the powwow.

He said the tribes also have been participating in more non-tribal events, such as being a sponsor of the Norsk Hostfest in Minot and having dancers perform at Country Fest near New Salem.

St. John invited North Dakotans to stop at a new visitor center for the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate.

"There's so much to be gained by building bridges and building relationships and that's really what North Dakota tribal tourism is all about," St. John said.

Boom or bust? North Dakota sees new data center debates

MIKE MOEN

(Prairie News Service)

A data center company hopes to break ground soon on a new project in North Dakota, with promises of economic gains but in addition to community-level pushback, the proposal faces questions about sustainability.

The firm behind the project, Applied Digital, wants to build a [\\$3 billion data center](#) just outside Fargo. Officials said it is needed to meet the surge in demand for storing digital data and it would add at least 200 jobs to the area.

Michael Graalum, clean energy field organizer for

the Dakota Resource Council, questioned whether it is worth it to use land protected by the flood mitigation effort known as the Red River Diversion.

"Especially in Fargo, it's just such a waste of land that we've worked so hard to make viable," Graalum contended. "We're just gonna throw it away for a data center, and it's thoroughly frustrating."

Data centers are under scrutiny over the immense water use required to keep internal servers cool. Developers have eyed cold-weather states to avoid such conflicts. Graalum is more worried about the data cen-

ter boom being used to keep fossil fuel plants alive. The Harwood City Council this week advanced the project near Fargo, with residents citing concerns about noise and other issues.

Another vote on the local development is expected in October. Graalum argued if a town or city is taking a strong look at a data center plan, they should limit interest to those proposed by large, established companies like Microsoft or Amazon. He thinks too many players have come on the scene, predicting resources will be wasted once demand subsides.

"I think what we're gonna

see here over the next few years is gonna be a data center bust," Graalum asserted. "A lot of these facilities going to end up being abandoned."

According to the group Data Center Watch, [\\$64 billion in projects](#) have been blocked or delayed amid local opposition around the country. However, some analysts downplay claims of an "overbuild" of the centers as community debates play out. Meanwhile, Applied Digital said North Dakota has abundant power resources, including renewables, to build sustainable digital infrastructure.

Firefighters question leaders' role in Washington immigration raid

ALEX BROWN

(Stateline)

Wildland firefighters were stunned when federal immigration authorities last week [raided an active wildfire response in Washington state](#), arresting two firefighters and sidelining crews for hours.

Wildfire veterans say the operation was nearly unprecedented, a breach in longstanding protocol that federal agents don't disrupt emergency responders to check immigration status.

Many wildfire veterans believe the management team overseeing the fire crews played a key role in handing over the firefighters to immigration authorities.

Stateline spoke to nearly a dozen firefighters, agency staffers and contractors familiar with the incident, who shared their belief that the top officials assigned to the fire deployed the crews to a remote location under false pretenses so federal agents could check their immigration status. Most of them spoke privately for fear of retaliation.

The raid has reverberated among fire crews, agency leaders and contractors. Wildfire veterans say the arrests have stoked fear and distrust among firefighters on the ground. They worry that crews may be scared to deploy if they may become a target for immigration raids.

"There's really no way [the wildfire management team] could not have been involved," said Riva Duncan, a former wildland fire chief.

TEAM WAS ASSIGNED TO RESPOND TO BEAR GULCH FIRE NEAR OLYMPIC NATIONAL PARK

Since the incident became public, the wildfire world has been abuzz with anger at that team — California Interagency Incident Management Team 7. Made up of federal, state and local fire professionals, the team was assigned to oversee the response to the Bear Gulch fire, which has burned 9,000 acres in and around Olympic National Park in

Washington state.

One firefighter who was present at the raid said he is convinced that Team 7 leaders sent their crews into a trap.

"I felt beyond betrayed," said the firefighter, who requested anonymity to protect his career. "What they did was messed up. They'd been talking in their briefings about building relationships and trust. For them to say that and then go do this is mind-boggling. It boiled my blood."

Team 7 Incident Commander Tom Clemo, in an email, declined to comment, citing an active investigation. Tom Stokesberry, the team's public information officer, did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

According to daily Incident Action Plans filed by Team 7 and posted online, the crews had previously been digging holding lines, working to protect structures and conducting mop-up work. The two crews targeted by federal agents had not been assigned to work together in the days leading up to the raid.

Then, August 27, both crews — workers from private companies contracted to help fight the fire — were told to deploy to a staging area where they would cut firewood for the local community. The firefighter who was present at the raid told Stateline that a division supervisor told the crews he would meet them at the site, but never showed up.

After arriving at the site, the firefighter said, the crews found piles of logs, seemingly from a timber operation. Not wanting to damage a logging company's property, they waited for a management team leader to show up with further instructions.

After an hour, unmarked law enforcement vehicles pulled up to the site and federal officials began questioning the firefighters. Duncan, the former Forest Service firefighter, said immigration agents would not have been able to access the site without help from Team 7 leaders.

"Fire areas are officially closed, very secure and there

are roadblocks," she said. "Somebody would have had to tell these agents how to get there."

TIME CARD DISCREPANCIES FOR FIREFIGHTING CREWS LEAD TO IMMIGRATION STATUS CHECKS

In a news release, U.S. Customs and Border Protection said its agents assisted with an investigation led by the federal Bureau of Land Management. While the agency's release did not mention the nature of the investigation, multiple wildfire sources said the feds claimed they had uncovered fraud on time cards submitted by the crews.

Table Rock Forestry Inc., an Oregon-based company whose crew was one of the two at the scene, was allegedly subjected to the raid due to a half-hour discrepancy on a time sheet, said Scott Polhamus, secretary of the Organization of Fire Contractors and Affiliates. Table Rock Forestry is a member of the fire contractors' group.

Multiple wildfire veterans said that time card discrepancies are not uncommon at wildfires, where crews work long days and it's not always clear if lunch breaks or errands in town count toward working hours. Such mix-ups are typically sorted out between organizational leaders. Calling law enforcement in such a scenario is almost unheard of.

After about five minutes discussing the time card issue, according to the firefighter who was present at the raid, federal agents spent the next three hours checking each firefighter's immigration status.

The Customs and Border Protection news release announcing the immigration arrests made no mention of time sheets or any evidence that the investigation had turned up fraud. It did state that the two companies whose crews were raided had their contracts terminated by the government.

Polhamus, with the fire contractors' group, said that claim is false. While the crews were demobilized and sent

home, the feds have not actually ended the companies' contracts or ability to accept future deployments.

A Customs and Border Protection public affairs specialist did not immediately respond to questions about the investigation, the alleged fraud or federal agents' coordination with Team 7.

Federal officials did not warn state agency about its investigation.

The Washington State Department of Natural Resources, the state's lead wildfire response agency, said federal officials did not notify their state counterparts about the investigation.

"DNR was not informed of the incident until well after the fact," said Ryan Rodruck, wildfire on-call public information officer with the agency.

Rodruck noted that the fire response was under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Forest Service.

Multiple wildfire sources said the crews would not have been sent to the staging area where they were ambushed without the knowledge of top leaders on the fire's management team.

The two crews that were raided have a diverse mix of firefighters, many of them Hispanic. One of the crews has many foreign workers who are legally in the country on H-2B visas. Duncan, the former Forest Service firefighter, said it was likely not a coincidence that two crews with many brown-skinned members were targeted in the raid.

Two of the firefighters were arrested, federal officials said, for being in the country illegally.

One of the firefighters who was arrested is represented by Innovation Law Lab, an Oregon-based legal group that defends refugees and immigrants. Isa Peña, the group's director of strategy, said the Department of Homeland Security has not revealed the whereabouts of their client.

The firefighter, who Peña declined to name, has been in the U.S. since he was four years old and served as a

firefighter for the past three years. Immigration advocates are alarmed that the raid was potentially arranged by California Interagency Incident Management Team 7, the leaders charged with overseeing the wildfire response.

Several wildland fire veterans also noted that the raid took place on Team 7's final day in charge of the fire response, hours before a Washington team rotated in to take command. The California team headed home and left the new team to face the media scrutiny and angry firefighters in camp.

"If you've got ICE teams pulling your contractors out, you'd want to cut and run as soon as you can," Polhamus said.

On a forum for wildland fire professionals on the social media platform Reddit, many expressed anger at Team 7. Firefighters also took issue with the assertion, shared by federal immigration officials, that the raid did not disrupt firefighting operations.

"It's total bulls***," said Duncan, the former Forest Service firefighter. "Whoever made that statement doesn't understand the work. To take two crews off of a fire that's only 13% contained, that seems ridiculous at that point in a fire. That does seem very unusual."

Many wildfire veterans said that conducting a raid at the site of an active wildfire was reckless and irresponsible.

Duncan said she's spoken with firefighters still assigned to the Bear Gulch fire who are disgusted with the situation and want to leave.

"The three principal wildland fire values are duty, respect, integrity," she said. "Utmost in that is taking care of your people. If you can't trust the people you're working with when things get hairy, that's a concern."

In Washington and Oregon, elected leaders have decried the raids and are pushing for more information on the status of the firefighters who were arrested. Federal immigration officials have said little since the news release announcing the arrests.

Conservationists want Arizona lawmakers to fight environmental rollbacks

MARK RICHARDSON

(Arizona News Connection)

Budget cuts and [regulatory rollbacks](#) are roiling Arizona conservation groups to demand their representatives in Washington D.C. stop “rubber-stamping” cuts to environmental regulations and agency funding.

Groups such as [Chispa Arizona](#), the community organizing program for the [League of Conservation Voters](#), said rising energy costs are hurting working people and providing corporate interests with unwarranted record profits.

Vianey Olivarría, executive director of Chispa, fears decades of work toward renewable energy goals will be erased.

“The utilities just rolled back their promises to transition to clean energy by 2030,” Olivarría pointed out. “They just said, ‘We’re not going to do that anymore.’ It’s really alarming because renewable



energy, clean renewable energy, is the only way that we can move forward in Arizona.”

Olivarría argued in Arizona, utility regulators are standing

aside while power companies are abandoning promises to develop renewable energy sources while they raise rates. She added the people feeling it the most are low-income families, working families, people of color and unsheltered people.

She stressed Arizona’s climate is among the most extreme in the world, and for more than a decade, summer brings [record-breaking heat](#) and record numbers

of heat-related deaths. She cautioned the policy changes could have long-term effects.

“These cuts will devastate American innovation for the next generation for clean-energy technologies,” Olivarría contended. “We’re facing what I think is a climate crisis that is existential to our generation.”

Olivarría argued the officials elected to the Arizona Corporation Commission, charged with regulating [utili-](#)

[ty rates](#), have turned a blind eye to cost gouging by power companies. She believes their first job is to protect Arizonans.

“They are not doing that right now,” Olivarría underscored. “We are facing a rate hike in October by APS of 10 percent. That would mean for people who are barely surviving on their minimum wage jobs, the rent, groceries and then on top of it, a rate hike on their electricity bill.”

New Mexico health department issues COVID-19 health order to ‘remove barriers’ to access

SOURCE NM STAFF

(Source New Mexico)

Saturday, the New Mexico Department of Health [issued a new health order](#) regarding access to COVID-19 vaccines.

According to a news release, the order follows “[some pharmacies announcing they cannot administer the vaccine in New Mexico](#) unless recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), an advisory group to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which has yet to convene and act on the matter.”

The order directs the state health department to work with New Mexico’s Board of Pharmacy “to remove potential barriers and ensure access to COVID-19 vaccines at pharmacies across the state.”

Last week, the [U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved the updated COVID-19 vaccine formula-](#)

[tions](#), but with [new restrictions](#). As noted in the new health order, people over the age of 65 are eligible, under the new FDA rules, for the vaccine, with younger people requiring an underlying medical issue for eligibility. According to the news release, the state anticipates the updated COVID-19 vaccine to begin arriving in New Mexico in the next few weeks.

“It’s important for New Mexicans to know the New Mexico Department of Health is committed to keeping residents safe as we enter the 2025 – 2026 respiratory virus season,” Health Secretary Gina DeBlasse said in a statement. “This order will remove obstacles to vaccination access.”

The news release noted that pharmacies won’t have any issues administering the influenza vaccine because the ACIP recommended that vaccine for persons aged six months and older.

California lawmakers to vote on bill to make car buying more transparent

SUZANNE POTTER

(California News Service)

You know how some car dealerships tell people one price to get them in the door, then jack it up with a bunch of add-ons? It would become illegal under a bill being considered in California.

The [Combating Auto Retail Scams Act](#), is expected to get a vote in the State Assembly this week.

Rosemary Shahan, president of the nonprofit Consumers for Auto Reliability and Safety, said the change would save California car buyers millions.

“It will require car dealers to disclose the total price up

front,” Shahan explained. “It addresses the problem of bait and switch. It’s a flat-out prohibition against charging more than what they advertise as the total price.”

Initial opposition came from car dealers, auto lenders, the Chamber of Commerce and the Civil Justice Association but they negotiated amendments and dropped their objections.

Under President Biden, the Federal Trade Commission issued a [similar rule](#) nationwide but it was [struck down](#) in court and the Trump administration has not indicated plans to revive it. The California version would also prohibit car dealers from

selling add-ons which do not benefit the consumer, for instance, lifetime oil changes for an electric vehicle.

Shahan noted California would also become the first state in the country to require a cooling-off period for used car sales.

“If you buy a car that costs \$50,000 or less, you would be able to bring it back and get a refund,” Shahan stressed. “You could bring it back for any reason at all.”

Dealers would be allowed to charge a restocking fee of between \$200 and \$600, depending on the sales price of the car.

As Florida plans to end all vaccine mandates, Western states form vaccine alliance

NADA HASSANEIN

(Stateline)

The Democratic governors of California, Oregon and Washington said Wednesday they are forming an alliance to coordinate vaccine recommendations for their states.

Meanwhile, Florida announced plans to become the first state to phase out all vaccine mandates, including ending requirements that kids be vaccinated against dangerous diseases before enrolling in schools.

Public health experts have relied on vaccines, including school mandates, for decades to limit the spread of communicable diseases and keep kids and adults safe.

The contrasting moves come amid turmoil at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, where several top leaders resigned last week to protest efforts by Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., a vaccine skeptic, to dismiss CDC Director Susan Monarez for pushing back against Kennedy's vaccine policies.

Accompanied by Florida Republican Governor Ron DeSantis, state Surgeon General Dr. Joseph A. Ladapo said at a news conference Wednesday that vaccine mandates are "wrong" and "immoral," [the Florida Phoenix reported](#).

"Your body is a gift from God. What you put into your body is because of your relationship with your body and your God," Ladapo said.

"They do not have the right to tell you what you put in your body. They don't have the right to tell you what your kids have to put in [their] body. They do not have the right. Do not give it to them. Take it away from them. And we're going to be starting that here in Florida."

The Florida Department of Health can eliminate some vaccine mandates on its own, Ladapo said, but the Florida legislature would have to scrap other ones. He did not mention specific vaccines, but repeated that his goal was to end "all of them. Every last one of them."



"Every last one of them is wrong and drips with disdain and slavery," Ladapo said.

The goal of the new West Coast Health Alliance, governors said, is to disseminate evidence-based recommendations about who should get immunized, as well as to provide vaccine education throughout the three states. In the coming weeks, the states will coordinate and finalize immunization guidelines that are in line with leading medical organizations.

In their announcements, [California](#) Governor Gavin Newsom, [Oregon](#) Governor Tina Kotek and [Washington](#) Governor Bob Ferguson criticized recent Trump administration actions, including the

firing of scientists and the upheaval at the CDC.

"When federal agencies abandon evidence-based recommendations in favor of ideology, we cannot continue down that same path," Washington Secretary of Health Dennis Worsham said in a statement.

Worsham added that "public health at its core is about prevention — preventing illness, preventing the spread of disease, and preventing early, avoidable deaths."

Last week, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration restricted access to updated COVID-19 shots. In June, Kennedy ousted all 17 members of the vaccine advisory committee at the CDC, replacing them with some members who are

vaccine skeptics. Many states rely on the committee to form vaccination guidelines.

And in May, Kennedy rescinded recommendations for children and pregnant women to get vaccinated against COVID-19 — sidestepping the usual process for issuing official recommendations.

The three Western states [said](#) the "dismantling" of the CDC has created "a vacuum of clear, evidence-based vaccine guidance," hampering health care providers, disrupting manufacturers' production plans and creating uncertainty for families.

In 2020, at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the three states, along with Nevada, created a similar [workgroup](#) that emphasized the scien-

tific rigor behind the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine in an effort to boost confidence in the shot.

"President Donald Trump's mass firing of CDC doctors and scientists — and his blatant politicization of the agency — is a direct assault on the health and safety of the American people," the joint statement from the three governors' offices said.

"The CDC has become a political tool that increasingly peddles ideology instead of science, ideology that will lead to severe health consequences. California, Oregon, and Washington will not allow the people of our states to be put at risk."

Lawsuits filed to stop Texas' new congressional map

FREDA ROSS

(Texas News Service)

Two lawsuits have been filed against the newly drawn [redistricting map](#) in Texas.

Opponents of the gerrymandered map, which creates more Republican districts, said it is racially discriminatory, and redrawing maps mid-decade is unconstitutional.

Stephanie Gomez, political director for the advocacy group [Move Texas](#), said under the current system, Texas' maps will always favor the

majority party.

"Ultimately the issue that we need to be talking about as a state and a country, what does it look like to have an independent — actually community-led — redistricting process?" Gomez emphasized. "We know that this type of stuff exists in other states but in Texas they have made it so we can't have that."

The map was [redrawn](#) at the urging of President Donald Trump, to increase the number of Republican seats in Congress. Lawsuits have been filed by the League of

United Latin American Citizens, the NAACP, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund and the Mexican American Legislative Caucus. A hearing on the map is scheduled for October.

In hearings leading up to the final passage of the legislation, hundreds of Texans testified against redrawing the lines. Gomez stressed voters want lawmakers to address other issues.

"Rising rent, disaster preparedness, student loans, jobs and wages," Gomez outlined. "That's when, at the

state and federal levels, we have leaders who don't want to be bold. And so, I think for us, it's what are our options to do something about it? Sometimes that's voting, sometimes that's protesting, sometimes that's running for office."

The new map moves more Democratic voters in Dallas and Houston into districts the minority party already controls and puts Democratic voters in largely Republican districts.

Cities respond to Trump's sanctuary threats as judge extends protection from cuts

TIM HENDERSON

(Stateline)

More cities and states have responded to U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi's [threat to prosecute](#) them over so-called sanctuary policies limiting law enforcement cooperation with federal immigration enforcement — some by thumbing their noses, at least one by acquiescing.

Written responses defending sanctuary policies have been sent to Bondi from cities including [Albuquerque](#), New Mexico; [Boston](#); [Hoboken](#), New Jersey; [Portland](#), Oregon; and [Seattle](#), along with the states of [California](#), [Connecticut](#), [Minnesota](#), [Oregon](#) and [Washington](#). Many noted that courts so far have upheld their right to limit cooperation with deportations.

"Pam Bondi seeks to have Washington state bend the knee to a Trump administration that, day by day, drags us closer to authoritarianism. That's not going to happen," Washington Governor Bob Ferguson, a Democrat, said in an August 19 news conference.

Louisville, Kentucky, is one city that [agreed](#) to more cooperation after a confrontation over the issue — before Bondi threatened prosecution in August, but after the attorney general said she



had issued a "strong written warning" to the city.

The city had stopped complying in 2017 with so-called detainer requests to hold jailed residents for immigration authorities, but leaders resumed cooperation to avoid being targeted for more raids.

"Cities on the sanctuary city list right now are experiencing a terrifying increase in raids by ICE, including mass raids," Louisville Mayor Craig Greenberg, a Democrat, said in a [July 22 statement](#). "I've talked with leaders within our

immigrant community before I made this decision. I heard their fears loud and clear about current federal policies and ICE actions. I also heard that they want Louisville off the federal sanctuary city list."

Bondi issued a [revised list](#) of sanctuary cities, counties and states in August.

Cities on the sanctuary city list right now are experiencing a terrifying increase in raids by ICE, including mass raids.

Rochester, New York, meanwhile, in August amended its

municipal code to [strengthen its policies against cooperation](#) by adding disciplinary measures for personnel who violate the policy. State Attorney General Letitia James, a Democrat, had earlier supported the city's existing policies in court, saying in a statement that they "keep communities safe and allow local law enforcement to use resources to address local public safety priorities."

In Boston, Democratic Mayor Michelle Wu's response letter accused the Trump administration of "false and

continuous attacks" as part of a campaign to "divide, isolate, and intimidate our cities, and make Americans fearful of one another."

U.S. District Court Judge William Orrick issued a new order August 22 extending a preliminary injunction to more cities, counties and states that had asked for protection against President Donald Trump's executive orders and agency directives. Trump sought to withhold unrelated federal funding based on similar sanctuary policies.

Orrick's ruling found the orders and directives are likely to be unconstitutional violations of local rights to set limits on immigration enforcement cooperation.

The injunction covers [50 areas in 14 states](#): California, Connecticut, Colorado, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Washington and Wisconsin.

Trump administration lawyers asked August 26 to dismiss the case, arguing that the administration's actions so far "merely instruct agencies to assess federal grant programs to determine where they can lawfully add immigration related conditions."

A hearing is scheduled October 22.

Appeals court upholds ruling rejecting sweeping Trump tariffs

JACOB FISCHLER

(Colorado Newswire)

The economy-wide tariffs President Donald Trump placed on nearly every U.S. trading partner are illegal, a federal appeals court said Friday.

The International Economic Emergency Powers Act does not give the president the power to impose tariffs, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit ruled in a [7-4 decision](#) upholding a [May decision](#) from the U.S. Court of International Trade and dealing a blow to Trump's signature trade policy.

The unsigned majority opinion said the tariffs "ex-

ceeded the authority delegated to the President by IEEPA's text."

However, the judges delayed their ruling from going into effect until October, providing the Trump administration an opportunity to appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court. The ruling also does not affect other tariffs Trump issued under different authorities, including industry- or material-specific tariffs on automobiles, steel and aluminum.

In a post to social media, Trump said he would appeal to the Supreme Court, where he predicted victory, and repeated his claim that tariffs were an essential economic

tool.

"If these Tariffs ever went away, it would be a total disaster for the Country," he wrote shortly after the decision was published. "It would make us financially weak, and we have to be strong.... If allowed to stand, this Decision would literally destroy the United States of America. At the start of this Labor Day weekend, we should all remember that TARIFFS are the best tool to help our Workers, and support Companies that produce great MADE IN AMERICA products."

Several Democratic states challenged the IEEPA tariffs. Oregon Solicitor General Benjamin Gutman argued on

their behalf [July 31](#). The 11 judges on the appeals court [expressed skepticism of both sides](#) during those arguments.

In a statement Friday, Oregon Attorney General Dan Rayfield called the ruling "a huge win for Americans."

"Every court that has reviewed these tariffs has agreed that they are unconstitutional," he said. "This ruling couldn't come at a better time as people are walking into their local stores and seeing price increases for school supplies, clothes, and groceries."

Despite shutdown deadline, little movement in Congress on spending deal

JENNIFER SHUTT, SHAUNEEN MIRANDA

(Stateline)

Members of Congress began searching for compromise on a short-term government funding bill Wednesday, with just a few weeks left to broker a deal before a possible shutdown.

Fresh off their August recess, congressional leaders and members of the Appropriations Committee appealed for bipartisanship from the other side while admitting they are far from a final agreement.

Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., declined to say during a press conference whether he will negotiate a stopgap spending bill with Democrats, or use the go-at-it-alone approach that succeeded in March.

"Republicans are committed to keeping the government open, and unfortunately, it seems like not all Democrats agree with that, and they're beginning to apply the government shutdown pressure," Johnson said. "But I want you to remember one thing: All but one House Democrat voted to shut down the government in March, and we expect, sadly, that that may happen again."

Johnson said he was open to negotiations with Democratic leaders as long as they "are willing to work with us and think responsibly about how we can spend less than we did last year."

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer said during an afternoon press conference that Democrats want GOP leaders to negotiate the stopgap spending bill across party lines.

"The bottom line is very simple: We Democrats want a bipartisan bill and we are pushing the Republicans very hard to do it," Schumer said. "We're on our front foot. We're unified."

Schumer, who took considerable flak for helping Republicans limit debate on a partisan stopgap bill in March, said "it's much different than last time."

Pressed by several report-

ers about what Democrats would help move through the Senate this time around, Schumer said: "We are willing to sit down and negotiate a bipartisan proposal with significant Democratic input. So far, they are not."

SPENDING RUNNING ON AUTOPILOT

The House and Senate are supposed to complete work on the dozen annual government funding bills by the start of the fiscal year on Oct. 1 but that hasn't happened for decades, so lawmakers rely on a stopgap spending bill to keep federal departments and agencies running on autopilot for a couple months.

That measure, sometimes called a continuing resolution, is intended to give lawmakers a bit more time to complete bipartisan House-Senate negotiations on the full-year appropriations bills, though Congress used three CRs to fund the government this fiscal year instead of getting its work done.

Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., said he expects lawmakers will need to approve a stopgap spending bill "for some time into the foreseeable future," but that discussions are ongoing about how long it will last and what else might be added.

"My hope would be that whatever that CR looks like, that it is clean and that it enables us to buy some time to get a regular appropriations process done," Thune said. "I still think the best way to fund the government is through the appropriations process."

President Donald Trump said from the Oval Office earlier in the day that he expects Republicans will vote for a stopgap spending bill but he didn't address how it would get through the Senate's 60-vote legislative filibuster, which requires bipartisanship.

"I think the Republicans will vote for an extension," Trump said. "We won't have any Democrat votes."

THREE SPENDING BILLS SEEN AS POSSIBLE

House Appropriations Chairman Tom Cole, R-Okla., told reporters he hopes to negotiate final versions of three full-year bills with the Senate before the end of the month.

Lawmakers would then use a stopgap spending bill to keep the departments and agencies covered in the other nine bills flat funded for a couple of months until the two chambers can reach final agreement on the spending levels and policy within those measures.

"We're talking about relatively modest bills and bills where there is either broad agreement, like MilCon-VA, or LegBranch and Ag," Cole said. "We're not talking about major bills. You can't really do that until you have a topline and we don't have a topline."

The Agriculture-FDA, Legislative Branch and Military Construction-VA spending bills are generally easier to negotiate than some of the other full-year measures, like Defense, Homeland Security and Labor-Health and Human Services-Education.

Cole said when House and Senate leaders begin negotiating a total spending level for all of the bills, or topline, is "above my paygrade."

"I'm ready to do it at any time if they want to empower us, otherwise the leadership on both sides and the president have to" figure that out, Cole said.

The House and Senate are supposed to start off the annual government funding process in the spring by reaching bipartisan agreement on how much in total spending to spread throughout the dozen appropriations bills.

Those talks haven't even started for fiscal 2026, which is slated to begin Oct. 1.

Instead, the House and Senate Appropriations committees have separately decided how much to spend and written vastly different versions of the bills.

HOUSE AND SENATE AT ODDS

The 12 bills that have been

released by the GOP-led House committee are partisan, while the eight bills released by the Senate panel have received broad bipartisan support in committee.

Senate Appropriations Chairwoman Susan Collins, R-Maine, said she's spoken with Cole a couple of times about the three-bills-plus-stopgap strategy and supports the concept.

"I have and I agree with that approach," Collins said.

Washington state Democratic Senator Patty Murray, ranking member on the Appropriations Committee, said any stopgap bill "needs to be a real bipartisan compromise."

"For the last few months we have shown a bipartisan way forward on the Appropriations Committee," Murray said. "Democrats have shown that we are willing to work in good faith to write bipartisan funding bills that protect investments in education, life-saving research and a lot more."

"We've already passed eight out of the committee and three on the floor: MilCon-VA, Ag and LegBranch. As part of a bipartisan short-term CR, I support conferring those three bills and passing them with the short-term CR for the remaining nine bills."

House Appropriations ranking member Rosa DeLauro said "the best case scenario for us is to move forward."

"No gimmicks, no riders, let's clear the decks," the Connecticut Democrat said. "Talk about how we get Republican priorities, Democratic priorities."

NEGOTIATIONS 'FOR WEEKS NOW'

House Majority Leader Steve Scalise said "there's a chance" to wrap up negotiations between the two chambers on final versions of some of the full-year government spending bills before the end of the month.

"It might not be all 12, but a few of them for sure," Scalise said. "So let's give the appropriators that opportunity to keep negotiating. They've

already been having negotiations for weeks now — Tom Cole and a lot of his counterparts. I have faith they can hopefully get a lot of things done."

Scalise, R-La., said he plans to reserve floor time later this month to ensure whatever spending bill gets written is "the top priority."

Representative Robert Aderholt, chairman of the Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Subcommittee, said he thinks most people agree there's going to be some sort of stopgap given all 12 of the annual bills aren't close to becoming law.

The Alabama Republican said this feat is "almost impossible" given the short number of legislative days left before the shutdown deadline.

"The solution, of course, obviously, or the only alternative, would be to have a CR, but I think the shorter the CR, the better," he said, noting that the measure would have to be "long enough that you can have negotiations, but short enough that it doesn't drag out until Christmas and that ... we're up here at Christmas doing an omnibus or something like that."

Congress has often bundled the final, conferenced versions of the dozen bills together into a sweeping omnibus package at the end of the year to ensure quick floor votes, though GOP leaders have tried to get away from that practice in recent years.

Representative Chuck Edwards, a North Carolina Republican who sits on the House Appropriations Committee, said that while he hopes a stopgap spending bill is "not necessary," the panel is "certainly prepared to put together a short-term CR if that's what's required to avoid a shutdown."

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Q&A: Building support and breaking mental health stigmas

MADELINE DE FIGUEIREDO

(The Daily Yonder)

Based in Sauk County, Wisconsin, the [Farmer Angel Network](#) is the founding organization behind a growing rural mental health initiative serving South Central Wisconsin and reaching audiences across the state and country. Its mission is to ensure that all farmers can lead resilient, healthy, and productive lives. With a vision rooted in farmer-to-farmer peer support, the network works to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health and strengthen rural communities through connection and support.

Two of the network's founders, Brenda Statz and Dorothy Harms, bring deep personal experience to their advocacy. Brenda, a lifelong farmer, co-owns Statz Circle S Farms LLC and Dorothy and her husband, Don, formerly ran a grass-fed beef operation and now host guests at

their farm stay. After Brenda lost her husband to suicide and Dorothy lost two farmer friends while navigating her own transition out of dairy farming, both became strong advocates for mental health in agriculture.

In this conversation Brenda and Dorothy share their insights on mental health in agriculture, the power of peer support, and what the Farmer Angel Network is doing to make a difference.

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

The Daily Yonder: What is the Farmer Angel Network and what inspired its creation?

Dorothy Harms: The farmer Angel Network is a collaboration of a lot of different groups, but grounded in supporting farmers and providing educational resources in the mental health field for rural communities.

We got started about six

years ago when Brenda's husband, Leon, died by suicide. He was a good friend and the community really came together to say that we have to do something. At the time, we weren't quite sure what that was going to look like. But here we are, six years later and very established in the work we are doing. But I think at its core, Farmer Angel Network is the grassroots efforts by farmers themselves to make space for mental health support.

DY: What gap in services and support is the Farmer Angel Network filling?

Brenda Statz: The network we have created is committed to bringing visibility. I know when I went through things with my husband at the time, I really didn't know what resources were out there, and so one of my goals when we started this was just to bring more awareness and visibility to what is available. I figured the more that we can shine a

light on the help and resources available, the better.

Now we are able to link people when they do reach out to us either online or just by word of mouth in the rural communities. We have made space for people to say, "Hey, can you check in on my neighbor? They've been having a really challenging time." A lot of what is needed is just listening, because people need to be heard.

DY: How does the farmer-to-farmer support model fight stigma around mental health in agricultural communities?

DH: I think when people hear another farmer's story and realize they're going through a lot too, it helps them reflect and think, "I'm not the only one."

One of our ongoing messages is that it's okay to not be okay. Farmers are traditionally very strong, independent, and stoic. They're used to pulling themselves up by

their bootstraps and fixing things on their own. And that mindset can be a barrier we often work to break down. When those of us who are farmers are willing to tell our own stories, it helps open the door for others to recognize and talk more openly about their own struggles.

BS: I've seen that stigma come to life again and again, especially when we table at events. There's such a stigma, even just to accept a resource off the table. People are afraid someone will see them take it. So I say, "This could be for a neighbor, or maybe a family member." That way, it gives them a reason to take it without feeling exposed.

And I always say, "When you have a phone number or something tangible to hold onto, even in your most challenging times, it's a reminder that you're not alone."

DY: Have you observed

Continued on page B17



Stigma in agricultural communities

Rural Energy
Continued from B16

notable changes in the stigma around mental health in agricultural communities over time? How have these shifts affected attitudes and practices both within the community itself and among healthcare providers?

BS: I think some of it's generational. Older generations were always told to 'man up.' My husband, the first time he went to the doctor for depression, was really struggling. It started after I quit working full-time to stay home. We had a three-year-old, a four-month-old, and we had just taken over the farm. Leon felt so much pressure. He told me, 'If I fail, we all fail.'

Eventually, Leon started medication, but it wasn't until he was hospitalized that his dad finally opened up and admitted he'd gone to counseling once, though he never

said what for. That gave Leon a little validation. The older generation often sees asking for help as weakness.

Younger folks still feel pressure to handle things alone, thinking they'll be judged. But once they see someone get help and improve, the mindset starts to shift. The first doctor Leon saw, our family doctor, just told him to 'chin up' and said he'd laugh about it in a year. But it didn't go that way. He was hospitalized for a week just to get on the right medications. That doctor was later reprimanded, had to take additional training, and eventually apologized to me. Leon's been gone seven years this year. So that mindset – even in rural healthcare – goes back almost 40 years.

DH: And just to add to what Brenda said, some of our efforts have focused on working with healthcare professionals to help them understand the culture of agriculture. We've

done SafeTALK trainings, for example, to give them tools to be better active listeners. When a farmer takes time to see a doctor, it usually means things are pretty bad; it's hard for them to leave the farm. And even then, they might talk about the weather, their dog, or a cow before getting to the real issue.

Providers have to learn how to ask the right questions to get past that. Helping them understand what farmers value, and how their mindset differs from someone with a typical 8-to-5 job, can make a big difference. The more healthcare providers understand that culture, the better they can support our farmers.

DY: What are your hopes for the future of the Farmer Angel Network?

BS: This area relies heavily on dairy farming, and the industry is struggling. Farmers are facing serious financial pressure, so there often isn't

extra money for outings or family activities. That's why we try to offer free or low-cost opportunities that give them a break and a sense of connection.

I think we need more fun, proactive events to bring farmers together and help them get off the farm. I'd like to see more group activities. It could be something simple, like an adult night or a small social gathering. It doesn't have to cost much. The goal is to build community and give people something to look forward to.

I always talk about what I call "tailgate talk." Farmers used to stop by a neighbor's place, drop the tailgate, visit for ten or fifteen minutes, then move on. These days, people are so busy they don't take that time anymore. But we need to slow down, check in on each other, and be willing to ask questions or just listen.

Sometimes all it takes is

showing someone you care. Many farmers carry a heavy burden and are afraid to talk about it. But once they open up, it can make a huge difference. They realize they are not alone, and they can get through it.

DH: We've built a community model through a collaboration of public and private agencies working together. We now have one sister chapter in the northwest, and we'd like to see more communities like ours develop across the country. That way, farmers would have a trusted place to go for help and feel secure. Having farmers involved in the planning and providing farmer-to-farmer mentoring and counseling is a strong part of the model, one we believe could work well nationwide.

FEMA would be a Cabinet-level agency under bipartisan bill approved by US House panel

JENNIFER SHUTT

(Utah News Dispatch)

A broadly bipartisan bill to overhaul and elevate the Federal Emergency Management Agency is heading toward the U.S. House floor after a key committee approved the legislation.

The Transportation and Infrastructure panel voted 57-3 Sept. 3 to advance the measure, which would make dozens of changes to how the federal government prepares for and responds to natural disasters.

"FEMA is where Americans look for help after what is the worst day in their lives, so it is critical that the agency be postured to respond at all times," said Arizona Democratic Rep. Greg Stanton, one of the co-sponsors. "This bill gives FEMA independence and tools it needs to respond to disaster."

Republican Reps. Tim Burgett of Tennessee, Eric Burlison of Missouri and Scott Perry of Pennsylvania voted against reporting the bill to the House floor. Their offices didn't respond to requests for comment asking why they opposed the legislation.

The [207-page measure](#), formally called the Fixing Emergency Management for Americans (FEMA) Act of 2025, would remove FEMA from the Department of Homeland Security and make it a Cabinet-level agency.

The legislation would create one application for federal natural disaster assistance from FEMA, the Department of Agriculture, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Small Business Administration.

It would also give local and state governments more flexibility in deciding which types of emergency housing best meet the needs of their residents following different natural disasters.

Republicans and Democrats on the committee praised the various changes the measure would make during a two-hour markup that offered an increasingly



rare example of bipartisan support on Capitol Hill.

DONATIONS FROM CHARITIES AND FEMA

North Carolina Republican Rep. David Rouzer and California Democratic Rep. Laura Friedman both spoke in support of a provision reversing a policy that they said penalized people who received assistance from charities following a natural disaster.

"Too many families who accept a donation from a charity or take an SBA loan to keep the lights on find out later that accepting those essential resources prevents them from receiving other assistance later for which they otherwise would be eligible," Rouzer said. "This bill makes clear that SBA loans and private charitable donations are not considered duplicative for FEMA individual assistance."

Friedman said she was shocked to learn that FEMA counted charitable donations against disaster survivors following the Los Angeles wildfires.

That led her to introduce the Don't Penalize Victims Act with Mississippi Republican Rep. Mike Ezell, which was rolled into the FEMA overhaul bill.

"I want to thank all the members of this committee, and particularly Chair (Sam) Graves and ranking member (Rick) Larsen, for their under-

standing of the importance of this measure to victims, who were seeing the charity that their churches, that their friends are raising for them be counted as income and deducted from the amount they were getting from FEMA," Friedman said.

Oregon Democratic Rep. Val Hoyle spoke in support of making FEMA a Cabinet-level department, saying that it's been bogged down in the Department of Homeland Security since just after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

"After being folded into the Department of Homeland Security, it became buried in layers of bureaucracy," Hoyle said. "DHS's sprawling mission — cybersecurity, counterterrorism, immigration enforcement, transportation security and more — has left FEMA less able to act with the speed and agility disaster-stricken communities need."

Hoyle said the legislation restoring FEMA's "independence will help insulate disaster relief from" the types of "political pressures" that exist throughout the Homeland Security Department.

PERMITTING REFORM

Despite the broadly bipartisan support for the legislation within the committee, it will likely undergo some changes in the weeks and months ahead.

House Natural Resources

Chairman Bruce Westerman, R-Ark., and ranking member Jared Huffman, D-Calif., who both sit on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, raised concerns with elements in the FEMA overhaul bill during the markup.

Westerman said he voted for the bill but expected the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's leadership to work with him to address concerns over "permitting reform issues" that fall under his panel's jurisdiction.

"There is one provision on the Endangered Species Act that we have concerns with actually being executable the way it's written," Westerman said. "Again, that's something that's fixable, and we look forward to working with you as we move forward on the bill."

Huffman said he had concerns about how the FEMA overhaul bill addresses "environmental review statutes," which fall under the Natural Resources Committee's purview.

"I, of course, share the goal of cutting red tape. We want disaster-stricken families to be able to rebuild faster. There are ways to do that that also ensure that recovery is durable, resilient and sustainable. That we rebuild once. These are things that (the National Environmental Policy Act) helps to ensure. So I look forward to continuing

to work with the committee on this as the bill advances. This is a problem that can be fixed, and I hope it will," Huffman said.

POTOMAC RIVER WATER

Transportation and Infrastructure Committee members offered just two amendments to the bill — one adopted by voice vote and one withdrawn.

Indiana Democratic Rep. André Carson received broad support for his amendment to require FEMA to inform members of Congress about grants within their districts, a practice he said has changed during the Trump administration.

"We should not need to mandate transparency and accountability, but if FEMA fails to provide this information, my amendment codifies the traditional notifications to Congress," Carson said.

Democratic Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton, who represents the District of Columbia, offered and then withdrew an amendment that would have required FEMA "to submit to Congress a plan to supply emergency drinking water to the nation's capital region during any period the Potomac River becomes unusable."

Offering and then withdrawing an amendment is a common way for members to highlight issues without forcing a vote.

Norton said the Army Corps of Engineers, which is responsible for the city's water supply, only has sufficient reserves for one day should something happen.

"If the Potomac River becomes unusable, which could happen at any moment whether through manmade or natural events, it would pose a significant risk to the residents of the nation's capital, the operations of the federal government, national security and the region's economy," Norton said.

Congress has partially funded a study to identify a backup drinking water supply and additional water storage facilities. But, Norton said, "any solution is years away."

AGs disclose FEMA failed to make grants for months to critical disaster program

JENNIFER SHUTT

(Colorado Newline)

Democratic attorneys general have updated their complaint against the Trump administration in a lawsuit over whether the Federal Emergency Management Agency can refuse to spend pre-disaster mitigation grants approved by Congress.

The attorneys general wrote in the new filing that FEMA hadn't made a single award to the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities program between April 2 and August 25.

"The BRIC program is critically important nationwide. Over the past four years, FEMA has selected nearly 2,000 projects from every corner of the country to receive roughly \$4.5 billion in funding," they wrote. "Due to the unique threats they face, coastal communities have received the largest allocations over the past four years, with California, Louisiana, Texas, New York, New Jersey, Florida, North Carolina, and Washington leading the way."

"But interior communities rely on BRIC too: Pennsylvania and Utah have received the next largest allocations, and Ohio is not far behind."

FEMA [announced in April](#) that it was "ending" the program and "canceling all BRIC applications from Fiscal Years 2020-2023."

Members of Congress from both political parties brought up their disagreement with that decision in May during a [hearing](#) on FEMA's budget request and by sending a [letter](#) signed by more than 80 lawmakers.

But that didn't appear to sway the Trump administration to reverse course and allocate the funding that had been approved by Congress.

'Devastating' delays in FEMA funding

Democratic attorneys general, Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear and Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro filed their lawsuit in July and later called on the judge to block the Trump administration from moving money out of the pre-disaster mitigation



account.

U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts Judge Richard G. Stearns, who was nominated by President Bill Clinton, [issued a preliminary ruling](#) in early August preventing FEMA "from spending the funds allocated to BRIC for non-BRIC purposes until the court is able to render a final judgment on

the merits."

The updated [83-page complaint](#) filed Friday argues the two people President Donald Trump has installed as acting FEMA administrator did so unlawfully because they were never formally nominated to run the agency, didn't receive Senate confirmation and didn't meet the qualifications laid out in federal law.

It also alleges that unilaterally canceling funding approved by Congress, which holds the power of the purse, violated the separation of powers laid out in the Constitution.

"The impact of the shutdown has been devastating. Communities across the country are being forced to delay, scale back, or cancel

hundreds of mitigation projects depending on this funding," they wrote. "Projects that have been in development for years, and in which communities have invested millions of dollars for planning, permitting, and environmental review are now threatened. And in the meantime, Americans across the country face a higher risk of harm from natural disasters."

Each BRIC grant, the updated complaint notes, "can cover up to 75% of a project's costs, and the federal share can rise to 90% for small rural communities."

Attorneys general from Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington and Wisconsin filed the suit, along with the Pennsylvania and Kentucky governors.

States break with FDA restrictions on COVID vaccines, ensuring broader access

SHALINA CHATLANI

(Stateline)

Several states, including [Colorado](#), Massachusetts, New Mexico, New York and Pennsylvania, announced this week that they would be breaking with restrictive eligibility policies unveiled last week by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration on the newly approved COVID-19 vaccines for the fall season.

In New York, Democratic Governor Kathy Hochul signed an executive order Friday morning to authorize pharmacists to provide the shot to anyone who desires it for the next 30 days, which can be renewed.

"When they said that they are not going to be requiring COVID shots and other vaccinations for our families, I said, 'No, here in New York we will make parents have the option.' If you want your child to have a COVID shot, it should be available to you and it should be covered by insurance," Hochul [said](#)

during a news conference Friday morning, where she signed the order.

"So what I'm doing now is signing an executive order, because extreme times call for extreme measures. And this is the power I have to use in the interim until we are able to have the legislature get back in January and pass legislation that mandates this."

Previous FDA policy recommended that COVID-19 vaccine booster shots be made available to anyone 6 months or older regardless of their health status. But in August, the federal agency announced restrictions for the new shot.

The FDA limited access to the vaccines to people who are 65 and older and to younger people with at least one underlying health condition, such as asthma or obesity, that would put them at risk of developing a severe illness without a booster shot. Children are eligible only if a medical provider is consult-

ed. Additionally, the Pfizer vaccine, one of the three that were approved, will no longer be available for any child under 5.

"The American people demanded science, safety, and common sense. This framework delivers all three," U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. wrote on social media platform X on August 27.

Other states are also taking measures to ensure more people can get access to the vaccines.

Thursday, Massachusetts Democratic Governor Maura Healey [ordered](#) health insurers in the state to continue covering the vaccine. The state also issued an order to allow pharmacies to continue providing shots to residents above the age of 5.

Massachusetts is "leading efforts to create a public health collaboration with states in New England and across the Northeast committed to safeguarding public health as the federal govern-

ment backs away from its responsibilities," the governor's office said in a [release](#).

This week, the State Board of Pharmacy in Pennsylvania held a [special meeting](#) to vote to bypass federal vaccine recommendations and allow pharmacists to continue administering COVID-19 vaccines.

"Health care decisions should be up to individuals — not the federal government and certainly not RFK Jr. My Administration will continue to protect health care access for all Pennsylvanians," Pennsylvania Democratic Governor Josh Shapiro [said](#).

[Colorado](#) and [New Mexico](#) took similar steps this week, with state officials signing public health orders asking state agencies to take steps necessary to require insurers to cover the vaccines and instructing pharmacists to provide the shots without a doctor's note.

New law will limit payments to hospitals that treat low-income patients

SHALINA CHATLANI

(Stateline)

President Donald Trump's new tax and spending law will likely force more than half the states to reduce payments to doctors and hospitals that treat Medicaid patients, a change critics warn will be particularly harmful to rural hospitals struggling to stay afloat.

Medicaid, the joint state-federal health insurance program for low-income people, reimburses doctors, hospitals and nursing facilities for treating enrollees. But in many cases, the program doesn't fully cover the cost of care, straining providers that serve a large share of Medicaid patients.

To help providers cover losses and continue to serve poorer populations, the federal government allows the 41 states, plus the District of Columbia, that have contracted with Medicaid managed care organizations (MCOs) to run their Medicaid programs to direct them to pay providers more — in some cases, as much as commercial plans.

Ultimately, taxpayers cover the costs of these so-called state directed payments — and those costs are growing. As of August 2024, the higher payments were projected to add [\\$110.2 billion](#) per year to Medicaid spending, nearly 60 percent more than the previous year's projection.

That higher spending attracted the attention of conservatives on Capitol Hill.

Beginning in 2028, the One Big Beautiful Bill Act will cap the payments, forcing state Medicaid programs to reduce reimbursement rates by 10 percentage points each year until they reach either 100 percent or 110 percent of what Medicare pays. States that expanded Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act would be capped at the lower rate.

The new law will reduce Medicaid spending by [\\$149 billion over the next decade](#), according to the Congressional Budget Office, and reduce Medicaid provider payments in [as many as 31](#)



states, according to KFF, a health policy research group. A separate analysis by The Commonwealth Fund, another research group, found that Medicaid payments to hospitals would drop by [at least 20 percent](#) in 19 of the 25 states that had publicly available data.

Critics say the change could be disastrous for hospitals, many of them in rural areas, that see a large share of Medicaid patients.

"This is all on top of an already pretty strained financial situation for rural hospitals," Alexa McKinley Abel, director of government affairs and policy at the National Rural Health Association, a group representing rural health care providers, said in an interview. "We are worried about seeing service line closures at hospitals in an environment where OB-GYN and chemotherapy service lines are already being cut."

COVERING THE COST OF CARE

Supporters of the change say the extra payments inflate federal spending on the Medicaid program, giving hospitals "windfall profits."

"Not only do these programs sidestep the truly needy on Medicaid and favor special interests instead, but all this is financed by growing the federal debt, leading to inflation and higher interest rates for all Americans," the Paragon Health Institute, a

conservative think tank that helped draft the bill, stated in a policy brief.

Hospital leaders dispute that. Earlier this year, the American Hospital Association asserted that without the extra payments, Medicaid managed care organizations in 2023 [only covered about two-thirds](#) of the actual cost of care.

Cindy Samuelson, senior vice president of the Kansas Hospital Association, said the additional payments are especially critical in a rural state such as Kansas, where some researchers have found that 87 percent of rural hospitals are in the red. Kansas is one of 10 states that did not expand Medicaid, and like other nonexpansion states, it will have to begin reducing direct payments to 110 percent of what Medicare pays starting in 2028.

"Over time, commercial payers are paying less and less," Samuelson said. "Many hospitals in our state are at risk of closure."

Samuelson said that in rural areas, health care providers see fewer patients, which makes it hard to spread out the cost of care and make up for losses that come from serving underinsured, Medicaid and Medicare patients. One result is that rural hospitals are trimming services. A [report](#) published this year by Chartis, a health care consulting firm, found that be-

tween 2011 and 2023, nearly 300 rural hospitals across the country stopped offering obstetrics care, and 424 rural hospitals ceased chemotherapy services.

In Hutchinson, Kansas, Benjamin Anderson, CEO of the rural and community-owned Hutchinson Regional Health System, said his hospital barely broke even this year, and lower Medicaid payments will take a toll. The 190-bed hospital serves more than 65,000 people in the central Kansas region, and sees a lot of patients who are struggling with mental health issues and substance use disorders.

"We are closely managing our workforce expenses. We're going to be relying more heavily on philanthropy," Anderson said, adding that the hospital wouldn't lay off staff but would reduce the number of workers by not filling open positions.

He said his hospital has some cash reserves that should enable it to keep going, but that many other rural hospitals lack such a cushion.

"When we think about the cuts to Medicaid, it isn't simply about cutting services to the poor. It's threatening services to everyone, because in a rural community, we all get care in the same place," he said. "If we cut out the safety net that's sustaining these hospitals, everyone's health care is threatened."

SEARCHING FOR ANSWERS

Three hours northeast of Hutchinson is the rural town of Holton, where about 3,400 people live. Holton Community Hospital is a 14-bed critical access hospital, meaning that it provides emergency care around the clock for a rural community. For the past two years, it has been struggling, according to Carrie Lutz, the hospital's CEO.

Lutz said the hospital is not part of a broader health care group, and it relies on philanthropy and local taxes. Due to financial strains, it's in the process of selling off its home and hospice services to another health care facility. The cap on extra payments

will be an additional barrier, she said.

Samuelson said Kansas is applying for money under the five-year, \$50 billion Rural Health Transformation Program, which Congress added to the One Big Beautiful Bill Act amid concerns about its impact on rural hospitals. She expects Kansas to get at least \$500 million between 2026 and 2030.

Rural hospitals in Mississippi also hope to tap into those funds. The Mississippi Hospital Association, which is advising state leaders on their application, said it expects Mississippi to get at least \$500 million over the next five years.

Like Kansas, Mississippi did not expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care, a decision that deprived it of additional Medicaid patients and thus extra revenue.

"A few years ago, we had several rural hospitals that were facing some imminent closure challenges, and so our enhanced supplemental payment based on the average commercial rate has been a lifeline," said Richard Roberson, president and CEO of the Mississippi Hospital Association.

"What we're concerned about is that when those payments start to decrease, then we're going to be right back to where we were in 2022, with concerns about rural hospitals again."

Roberson said Medicaid, with the additional payments, had become "one of the best payers, if not the best payer, for our hospitals over the last two years," and helped a lot of hospitals stay out of the red.

He said the new rural health care fund is promising, but noted that Mississippi will decide where to spend any money it gets, and some rural hospitals might miss out.

"We want to make sure we're working with the state to provide sustainable solutions, not one-time fixes," Roberson said. "The big wild card is the Rural Health Transformation fund and what the state chooses to do with that money."



EarthTalk

EarthTalk

RODDY SCHEER & DOUG MOSS

Dear EarthTalk:
I heard that VW and Toyota were fined for cheating on emissions tests for new vehicles. Why did they do this and are all of the car companies likely cheating?
B.C., Boston, MA

Emissions testing plays an essential role in controlling vehicle pollution and conserving the environment. These evaluations confirm that vehicles comply with legal regulations for the release of harmful gases such as carbon dioxide and nitrogen oxides. Nonetheless, certain car producers have been discovered to be cheating in these evaluations.

The main motive for is monetary. Achieving emissions standards frequently necessitates costly technologies such as sophisticated

catalytic converters or more environmentally friendly engine designs. For car manufacturers, these enhancements may reduce profits or increase vehicle prices for buyers, possibly leading to lower sales. By engaging in deceit, companies can evade these expenses while still seeming to adhere to regulations. Moreover, tougher emissions regulations in areas such as the European Union and the U.S. exert notable pressure on manufacturers to innovate quickly. When deadlines appear unattainable, certain automakers resort to shortcuts by altering test outcomes.

Cheating also helps preserve a company's reputation. For example, VW heavily marketed its "Clean Diesel" vehicles as Eco-friendly alternatives, but later investigations revealed the use of

defeat devices—software designed to manipulate results during tests. These devices made cars appear cleaner while emitting up to 40 times the legal limit of pollutants in real-world driving. Toyota was recently fined for cheating, showing that even trusted industry leaders sometimes prioritize profits over compliance.

Other manufacturers have also faced accusations. Nissan falsified emissions data in Japan due to poorly managed testing systems. Opel was also found using defeat devices in Europe in 2015. And BMW was involved in an "emissions cartel" that sought to limit progress in AdBlue, a technology designed to decrease nitrogen oxide (NOx) emissions. Even Mercedes-Benz faced allegations of using defeat devices, though the company refutes the claims. John Stoll explains, "The emissions information says what the test needs it to say so that it pass-

es regulatory tests. And then in real-world conditions, it emits far more of the harmful emissions such as NOx into the air than is legally allowed."

While it's unlikely that every car company cheats, the problem appears widespread enough to warrant concern. Weak enforcement and the potential for profit make cheating an attractive option for unethical companies. Nonetheless, many manufacturers do focus on compliance and put resources into cleaner technologies, demonstrating that innovation can occur without resorting to fraud.

To tackle emissions fraud, authorities need to enhance enforcement and apply stricter penalties. Third-party organizations should handle emissions tests to ensure impartiality, and carmakers should be incentivized to develop sustainable technologies. As consumers, we

can help by choosing vehicles that have confirmed eco-friendly certifications, and insisting on increased transparency from carmakers.

CONTACTS

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Movie Review - Caught Stealing

BOB GARVER

"Caught Stealing" is one of those twisty crime thrillers where it seems like the filmmakers cast as many interesting names as they could and then wrote the movie around using them all. For example, at no point did I feel it was necessary for the film to feature Matt Smith as a character with a 60's U.K. punk rock aesthetic in this film set in New York in 1998 (itself an inexplicable choice). All the film needed was a neighbor character who's mixed up with some bad people. But the movie got Smith for the role, and somebody, possibly Smith himself, wanted to see the character played with the crazy getup. The result is a character that is a scene-stealer to be sure, but is the story really helped by all his quirkiness? I don't think so. If anything, he's a distraction from the main character, whose journey is supposed to be the focus. Though maybe it's for the best, because I wasn't digging the main character and was welcoming all distractions.

Austin Butler stars as Hank

Thompson, a disgraced former baseball prodigy barely scraping by as a bartender, and an alcoholic one at that. The one good thing in his life is his way-out-of-his-league girlfriend Yvonne (Zoë Kravitz). She's almost ready to start taking the relationship more seriously, which he wants, but first she needs him to start taking himself more seriously, which he isn't ready to do. Subconsciously, he'd rather just spend all his time moping around and thinking about how his life would have been better if he hadn't crashed his car while drunk, thus ending his baseball career.

Hank's neighbor Russ (the aforementioned Smith character) hurriedly puts him in charge of his cat Buddy while he leaves town for a few days. Hank's proximity to the shady Russ gets him into trouble with some Russian gangsters (Yuri Kolokolnikov and Nikita Kukulshkin), which also leads to trouble with a Puerto Rican gangster (Benito Martinez Ocasio aka rapper Bad Bunny), and eventually a pair of really



dangerous Hasidic gangsters (Liev Schreiber and Vincent D'Onofrio). Hank tries with increasing desperation to stay out of trouble with all five gangsters, and at least he can

expect some help from hard-boiled detective Elise Roman (Regina King). But running from his problems hasn't worked out for Hank in the past, is it a good idea here,

even though for once his predicament isn't his fault?

There's a good idea for a character arc here with Hank needing to learn to take responsibility for mistakes he's made in both the recent and distant past. But it was just too hard for me to respect the character after his incredibly stupid decision to go on an alcohol bender the night after losing a kidney, thanks to the Russians. I can understand straying from doctors' orders to a degree, I'm not exactly an angel myself in that department, and I know every movie hero isn't going to be strictly by-the-book. But for the character to make a decision that stupid that quickly, sorry, I was done rooting for him. Which was a shame, because the movie is without the delightful Kravitz for a long stretch, leaving the film without a likeable protagonist.

I'm giving "Caught Stealing" the mildest of recommendations, because the jokes are just funny enough, the action and suspense just exciting enough, and the overachieving cast just interesting enough for me to praise among an near-equal list of complaints. It's hard to believe a movie this middling came from usually-ambitious director Darren Aronofsky. Since this movie likes its baseball metaphors, I'll say that I associate Aronofsky with spectacular hits ("Requiem for a Dream," "The Wrestler," "Black Swan") and the occasional spectacular strike-out ("Noah"), but "Caught Stealing" is an unimpressive single - avoiding an "out," but just barely.

GRADE: B-

"Caught Stealing" is rated R for strong violent content, pervasive language, some sexuality/nudity and brief drug use. Its running time is 107 minutes.

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Home Country - The Ballad of Hoser

SLIM RANGLES



my tree seeds and see if any miracles had occurred. Not on the growing of trees department, but as I stood next to the garden cart with tools and rolls of new hose on it, a bumblebee flashed past my face and then vanished into his or her duty of collecting and distributing pollen. But where had he come from?

I have a serious respect for bumblebees, because they can temporarily cripple you with a single sting, I knew from experience.

So when it cooled off that evening, here came the bumblebee back and as I watched, he landed on the tool cart and solemnly walked into the faucet end of the new garden hose. And as he entered, some of his day's pollen fell off. I'd never known anything to live in a hose, but we wished him well. His name, of course, was Hoser.

Then one day we found his body lying next to his home entrance, so we wished he'd lasted longer so we could brag on him, but that's how life goes.

Then a couple of days ago,

I was out there again and a bumblebee flew past my face and later returned to the hose.

Meet Hoser II.

Haven't used the hose yet for its intended purpose, but there's always time for that later on. Like winter. Or maybe next Spring.

Go Hoser III!

If pollinating plants and supporting our pollinators appeals to you, but you'd feel cramped living in a hose, you might try <https://xerces.org/>.

I have to tell the Ballad of Hoser, to remain true to my readers. It began at the beginning of summer, when I went out the back door to check on