



WEDNESDAY
NOVEMBER 24, 2010

Vol. 134, No. 229

THE CHRONICLE-NEWS

30 CENTS
TRINIDAD
COLORADO

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THE FINE PRINT

CLOSURES

★ The office of the Chronicle-News will be closed Thursday & Friday for the holiday. Normal business hours will resume Monday, Nov 29. Happy Thanksgiving!

★ The City of Trinidad Offices & Landfill will be closed Thursday & Friday for Thanksgiving.

★ SCOOG & Affiliates will be closed Thursday & Friday in observance of Thanksgiving.

WEDNESDAY

Arthritis Exercise

Free Arthritis Exercise Class every Mon & Wed @ 9 a.m. @ Corazon Square & 1 p.m. @ Early Learning Center. Info call: 845-1133 ext. 224.

Tourism Board

Regular Session meets 9 a.m. 4th Wed @ City Hall, Conference Room, 135 N. Animas. For more information call Audra Fatur @ 719-846-9843.

PAL

Playgroup meets 9:30 - 11 a.m. every Weds at Alta Vista, 415 S. Indiana. Moms & caregivers with infants, ages birth to 3. Playroom is also available for same time use Tues & Thurs. Information: Martina at 846-4400.

Senior Exercise

COG sponsored Stretch, Flex, Balance & Music Therapy Classes 10-11 a.m. Mon & Wed @ Primero Community Center, Hwy 12. Call Kim @ 719-557-9642 or COG @ 719-845-1135 x225.

Support Group

Alzheimer's Assn - Caregivers Support meets 10 a.m. to noon last Wed of the month @ the Carnegie Library. For more information, call (719) 868-3789.

LaCasa Lodge

Meeting for all Fiesta members 2 p.m. every Wed @ LaCasa Lodge in Jansen, Hwy 12. Call 719-846-8558 for more information.

Eastern Star

Meets 7 p.m. every 2nd & 4th Wed @ the Masonic Temple on South Commercial Street in Trinidad. For more information call Trinidad Chapter @ 719-846-2861.

THURSDAY

Thanksgiving Dinner

Annual Holiday Dinner - FREE - 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. @ Zion's Lutheran Church, Corner of Pine & Prospect. For more information & for deliveries call Norine Hazen @ 846-2844.

HOLIDAY EVENTS

Tree & Train Lighting

Begins @ 5:15 p.m. Fri (Nov 26) on the lawn @ City Hall on Animas St. with entertainment & hot cider by the Trinidad Rotary Club.

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WEATHER WATCH

Today:

Partly sunny, with a high near 48. Windy, with a west southwest wind between 25 and 35 mph, with gusts as high as 55 mph.

Tonight:

Mostly cloudy, with a low around 10. Blustery, with a north northwest wind 15 to 20 mph decreasing to between 5 and 10 mph. Winds could gust as high as 30 mph.

Thanksgiving Day:

Mostly sunny, with a high near 34. West northwest wind around 5 mph.

Thursday Night:

Mostly clear, with a low around 9. West wind between 5 and 15 mph.

RIVER CALL

Purgatoire river call as of 11/23/10
Chillil ditch priority #7 4/30/1862
Trinidad Reservoir accounting
Release 0.02 acre ft.
Inflow 46.47 acre ft.
Evaporation 3.45 acre ft.
Content 14,711 acre ft.
Elevation 6,171.52
Precipitation 0
Downstream river call
JMR 12/31/1948
Notes
1 cubic (cfs) foot per second equals one cubic foot of water passing a point in one second of time.
1 acre-foot equals a quantity of water required to cover one acre of land to a depth of one foot.
1 cubic foot per second = 1.9835 acre-feet per day (24 hrs)
(Provided by Division of Water Resources)



Giving for Thanksgiving



Photo by Mike Garrett

Trinidad Middle School students have been collecting canned food and 12 turkeys over the past month as part of a community service food drive to help the Open Door Soup Kitchen distribute to Trinidad's low income and elderly families for this Thanksgiving. Soup Kitchen staff assisting with the project, from left, are Dennis, Rudy, Terrie, Ernest and director Sandi Espinoza.

Commissioners continue to seek budget cost-cutting measures

By MIKE GARRETT
The Chronicle-News

If you subtract employees through voluntary early retirement contract buyouts, should you then add another no-pay furlough day during the year, or can you save significant dollars by reducing or shifting some county employees into part-time status?

All of the above and other options were under consideration and discussion at Tuesday's Las Animas County Board of Commissioners work session as they continued to grapple with necessary budget cutbacks to balance the 2011 county budget. The bottom line, according to the three commissioners, is that if 2011 budget reductions aren't considered and acted upon now, county services could be substantially impacted later.

The commissioners are faced with a possible year-end \$750,000 budget shortfall and need to start looking now at securing additional 2011 expenditure shortcuts through county departments and employees. Incoming tax revenues over the last 2-3 months of 2010 are also few and far between. Commissioner Chairman Jim Montoya said \$500,000 will have to come out of the county fund budget and an additional \$250,000 will be taken from the road and bridge department by the end of this year in order to balance the county's 2010 budget.

The county's reserve cash fund balance, which had been around \$5 million at the start of 2010, could end this year at only around \$4 million or even \$3.8 million, according to commissioners Jim Vigil and Gary Hill, who agreed that if budget adjustments aren't made now, drastic county services reductions next year are a very real possibility.

Montoya also stressed that the county's fiscal dilemma will continue to grow much worse next year with plenty of negative implications based on the county's projected 48 percent loss in assessed valuation for 2011. "In order to correctly balance the budget and save for the future, you would have to lose 48 percent of your staff, worse case scenario," he told Sheriff Jim Casias, whose department appears to be bearing the brunt of the budget reductions.

"I can only speak for my office and department," said Casias. "We can't do without employees. We can do the furlough days."

The final 2011 county budget will be released and made public Dec. 22. Montoya emphasized that no departments or employees are being singled out in county cost reductions, that it all comes down to saving dollars to meet the budget.

The commissioners proposed voluntary early retirement-contract buyouts has resulted in 12 county employees (six from the general fund and three from road and bridge) opting to do just that. The problem is six of those retirement elective employees are employed by the county sheriff's department. Casias told the commissioners and county business and finance manager Lee Ann Fabec, who is working out details on the proposed budget reductions, that he has already lost four of his deputies this month, three to the early buyouts, and will lose another three next month under the same buyout provisions.

Casias stressed that in order to efficiently maintain operating his department, and more specifically, the inmate detention center, without a major impact in loss of enforcement services, he said he needs the county to fill at least four of those lost positions by year's end. Montoya had asked Casias what he needed to live with current services and whether adding a second furlough day would be acceptable to his staff. Casias also may consider transferring a road deputy or two into the detention center staff, which is being hardest hit under the contract buyouts.

Casias said he is currently handling furlough days by having employees on 12-hour shifts knock off an hour early to eventually be the equivalent of an eight-hour furlough day. He said he is already

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College for Kids summer workshops at TSJC detailed

By MIKE GARRETT
The Chronicle-News

The College for Kids: Summer Workshop Series is hoping to attract 150-200 7 to 12-year-olds next summer for a series of free workshops to help engage them in a sense of adventure, develop their interest in a variety of topics and plant seeds in them to start thinking about their future

college education.

Debbie Ulibarri, dean of Trinidad State Junior College's College of Arts & Sciences and Debra Krumm, TSJC Director of Upward Bound and adjunct geology instructor, outlined what they hope to accomplish with the program at last week's Kiwanis Club of Trinidad luncheon at A Little Catering Co.

"This is a project that we both

feel very enthusiastic and happy about," said Ulibarri. College for Kids started at TSJC in the summer of 2005 when she became the associate dean of Arts and Sciences. "It has been kid-tested and parent-approved because those kids feel really special when they are on a college campus. They have fun and learn at the same time. Parents like it because

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Photo by Tim Keller

Four teen friends keep the phone lines busy in "Check Please, Take 2" featuring, from left, Mariah Fleming, Ila Medina, Toby Henson, and James Neary.

Teen dating brings laughs to Shuler

By TIM KELLER
The Chronicle-News

Guy and Girl have broken up and re-entered the world of dating, which nowadays means computer matchups; older people remember these as "blind dates." Thing is, if Jonathan Rand's 2006 comedy, "Check Please: Take 2" is any indication, the computer dating world is filled with assorted nut cases and strange birds.

As presented by Raton High School's Mask & Wig Club at the Shuler Theater last weekend, this leads to exasperation for Guy and Girl, ably played by James Neary and Mariah Fleming, but provides hilarious entertainment for the audience.

Rand's play provides rich opportunities for the actors, but the laughs don't fly off the pages by themselves: the whole play could fall flat without skilled direction and acting. Fortunately, young first-time director Cian Hazen and his cast of 10 high-school thespians were up to the task.

The best laughs came from the comic timing and expressions of the actors, laughs that would have been missed in a lesser production. Tegan Thompson's Donna was delightfully oblivious, far more closely connected to her cell phone and friends than to Guy; Thompson drew laughs galore.

Tess Neary's foot-reading, wallet-snatching psychic was another fun, over-the-top character; Neary's confident turn was another crowd-pleaser.

Aleena Richardson and Chante Valdez played Jackie on successive nights: both brought out the laughs in this ridiculous girl prone to speaking in text message: NOYB, IMHO, WTF, LOL, EOD. (The

program thoughtfully provided a glossary for the audience.) Richardson and Valdez each got up-close and physical with her date, Guy, but it was fun to see how differently each actress approached the physicality. They were equally effective, and equally funny.

Toby Henson played three roles but had the most fun as thrill-seeking Dewey. "My greatest passion is doing anything and everything that lets me live on the edge. Life for me is all about intensity, going for broke, taking chances." His date, Fleming's Girl, asks, "What do you do?" Dewey flounders, "I'm an accountant. I know it doesn't sound extreme but..."

And he proceeds to show that he's the weirdest accountant you ever saw. It was way over the top, and way fun.

Ila Medina was just right as Girl's best friend, Kim. James Angeli was suitably strange as suitors Lyle and Alex the Pirate. Haley James was both radiant and hilarious in a tiny part consisting solely of out-of-control laughing. Anchoring the entire play were James Neary and Mariah Fleming, who played the straight parts to the circus of suitors. In the end, they decided to give their relationship another shot.

The successful production was aided by Tessa Fleming as stage manager, Etta Briscoe running lights, Lucas Jansen running sound, Haley James's props, hair by Chante Valdez, and make-up by Aleena Richardson.

Raton High School's drama club continues an upswing begun last year; the addition of Cian Hazen this year as sponsor and director bodes well for more productions as enjoyable as last weekend's "Check Please, Take 2".