

10a-7p Monday-Thursday | 8a-7p Friday-Sunday

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FREEDOM ROAD
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TUESDAY
MAY 24, 2016

THE CHRONICLE-NEWS

The Chronicle-News
TRINIDAD'S HOMETOWN
NEWSPAPER FOR MORE THAN
139 YEARS
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TRINIDAD
COLORADO

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THE FINE PRINT

TUESDAY—MAY 24

LAS ANIMAS COUNTY
TUESDAY (9 a.m.) Board of County Commissioners work session will be held in the Las Animas Courthouse, 200 E. First St., Room 201. Information: 719-845-2568. **COUNTY COMMISSIONERS:** Gary Hill (719-845-2595), Mack Loudon (719-845-2592), and Anthony Abeyta (719-846-9300).

VISION LOSS SUPPORT
TUESDAY (1:30-3:30 p.m.) Group meets monthly at the Trinidad Work Force Center, 140 N. Commercial. Refreshments will be served — family and friends are encouraged to attend. Info: 719-546-1271.

HOLY TRINITY ACADEMY
TUESDAY (5:30 p.m.) School board meeting at the school, 613 Prospect St. Info: Jasper Butero, 719-846-4522.

CITY COUNCIL
TUESDAY (6 p.m.) A special session for consideration of Water Supply Agreements between the City and Pioneer Natural Resources and XTO Energy will be held in Council Chambers, City Hall, 135 N. Animas St. Information: Audra Garrett, 719-846-9843. **CITY COUNCIL:** Mayor: Phil Rico and Council Members: Joe Bonato, Pat Fletcher, Carlos Lopez, Anthony Mattie, Michelle Miles, and Liz Torres.

Today's Quote

"Sleep is that golden chain that ties health and our bodies together."

~Thomas Dekker

WEDNESDAY—MAY 25

TJSC HIGHLIGHTS
WEDS. (5:30 p.m.) The community is invited to hear Trinidad State President Dr. Carmen Simone present the "Year in Review" in the Pioneer Room of the Sullivan Center, 600 Prospect St. Info: Greg Boyce, 719-846-5530.

PUBLIC MEETING
WEDS. (6 p.m.) Las Animas County Board of Commissioners will hold a public meeting to hear comments on the proposed transfer of property known as Fort Wootton Memorial Square to the LA County Veterans Council. Info: 719-845-2568.

WILDFIRE RISK WORKSHOPS
WEDS. (1-5 p.m.) Wildland Fire Risk Reduction Mitigation Site Tour Sponsored by the Stonewall Fire Protection District at the Station, 7375 Hwy 12. Free admission, refreshments served and reservations required. Info: 719-868-2249.

PUBLIC SERVICE

FREE QUIT TOBACCO CLASS
FRI. (3 p.m.) Las Animas-Huerfano Counties Public Health Dept. will offer this free class at 412 Benedicta, Trinidad. Register: 719-846-2213.

THS BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT
FRI. & SAT. (8 a.m. registration- 9 a.m. game time) Sign up now for the Lady Miners 2016 Basketball 3 on 3 Tournament at the THS Donnelly Gym. Info: George Dasko, 719-846-0367 or Jenny Garrison, 719-680-1574.

CEMETERY SERVICES
MAY 30 (8 a.m.) Memorial Day services will be held at the Trinidad Catholic Cemetery on East Main St. Info: Leesa Gigvigliano, 719-846-4934.

DRIVER'S SAFETY CARFIT
JUNE 1 (1-3 p.m.) For safety sake attend the free AARP event that will be held at the Las Animas Co. Health Dept. parking lot, 142 Benedicta. Schedule your 20-minute appointment: 719-846-2213. Info: www.car-fit.org.

STONEWALL FISHING TOURNAMENT
JUNE 4 (7 a.m.) Get ready for the 20th Annual Event at Monument Lake Resort on Hwy 12, 37 miles west of Trinidad. The day's event will have food, fun and lots of prizes. Info: Barb Holik, 719-868-2024 or stonewallfireauxiliary.com.

YEAR OF THE STAGECOACH
JUNE 4 (9:30 a.m.) Free kick-off opening, parade, lunch and live entertainment for the new Heritage Center at 151 Main St. in Aguilar. Info: Pat Romero, 719-680-1393.

LUDLOW MEMORIAL
JUNE 5 (10 a.m.) 102ND Annual Memorial Service will be held at the memorial site, located just west of Exit 27 off of I-25, 12 miles north of Trinidad. Info: 719-846-2403 or E-Mail region4@umwa.org.

SANTA FE TRAIL DAYS
JUNE 10 (5-11 p.m.) & JUNE 11 (10 a.m.-11 p.m.) Calling all vendors for Community's fun summer event. Info: Chamber of Commerce, 719-846-9285.

RIVER CALL

Purgatoire River Call as of: **05/23/2016. Baca Joint Ditch: Priority #95 --- Appropriation date: 11/04/1883.**

Trinidad Reservoir Accounting:
Release 313.83 AF
Inflow 329.50 AF - 166.12 CFS
Evaporation 24.67 AF
Content 34,475 AF
Elevation 6,201.20
Precipitation 0

Down stream call: Highland Canal: 04/01/1884.



ECONOMY

State quarterly report shows job openings double in Las Animas County, unemployment ticks upward

Staff Report
The Chronicle-News

The quarterly report from the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE) revealed statewide that unemployment ticked upward for the first time since 2011.

In Las Animas County, the unemployment percentage also increased, after steady declines in the past two years, while the number of available jobs has more than doubled from last quarter.

Since January 2011, Colorado's seasonally adjusted unemploy-

ment rate either moved lower than, or stayed flat with, the previous month, falling from 8.8 percent to a low of 2.9 percent in March.

The April report broke that 63-month run, with an uptick in the state unemployment rate to 3.1 percent, according to the CDLE.

State experts say that, across the state, the unemployment rate couldn't have gone much lower than what it reached in March

without creating larger problems for the labor market.

employed people. To be considered unemployed in the official counts, a worker must have actively sought a job the past month.

According to the Denver Post, even with the increase, Colorado's unemployment rate remains at its lowest levels since the early 2000s and the

labor market remains tight, which contributed to a boost in average

Continued on Page 2 ...

"In December there were 106 available jobs in the county, according to the CDLE. The April report had that number more than doubling, at 222."

PASS THE TORCH

Class of 2016: Area high schools bring year to a close, celebrate many graduation achievements



Photo by Mike Tranter Photography



Photo by Eric John Monson / The Chronicle-News

Staff Report
The Chronicle-News

Over the weekend, Hoehne High School, above, and Trinidad High School, left, were among area schools that celebrated the end of another year and graduated their 2016 classes full of optimistic and hopeful students.

Many area students have specific plans for their immediate futures, while some will take a little time to explore how they will venture into the exciting world of careers and the work force.

Graduation is a time to celebrate achievements and plan a course of action that many times leads to new places and new faces. Graduation is a benchmark in a student's life, well worth the time and effort it took to achieve this level in life.

Congratulations go out to all the area graduates on a job well done. Keep up the good work and reach for your highest dreams.

More photos from THS on page 2.

SPOTLIGHT ON BUSINESS

From coal to diamonds: Joe Spicola makes Anthony's Jewelers shine

Tim Keller
Correspondent
The Chronicle-News

RATON — Joe Spicola went straight into the coalmine as soon as he graduated from Raton High School in 1968. For eight years he worked in the Kaiser mine in York Canyon west of Raton. In 1976, his world twisted. His dad started treatment for cancer, closing the store he owned downtown, and Joe was laid off from the mine.

"Give me the keys, Dad. I'll go open the store," Joe remembers saying. The store was Anthony's Jewelers, founded by Joe's parents in 1948. "I just started working at the store. After a few months they

called me back to the mine, but I decided to stay where I was. Dad came back and taught me watch repair. That was his specialty; he was a watchmaker."

The senior Joe Spicola was born in 1906 in Starkville and married Margaret Corich Spicola, born in 1912 at her family's home on Baca Street in Trinidad. While his brother began a lifelong career as a typesetter at The Chronicle-News, Joe entered the jewelry business when he started work in the 1930s for Lou Martin at Martin's Jewelers in Trinidad.

Following Joe's World War II service in the Army Air Corps,

Continued on Page 3 ...



Photo by Tim Keller / The Chronicle-News

Customers often encounter owner Joe Spicola at work on jewelry, small batteries or tiny watch movements. Multiple eyepieces and a smile are standard.

WEATHER WATCH

Tuesday: Sunny, with a high near 79. South southwest wind 5 to 15 mph. **Night:** Mostly clear, with a low around 45.

Southwest wind 10 to 15 mph. **Wednesday:** Sunny, with a high near 78. West southwest wind 10 to 15 mph. **Night:** Mostly clear, with a low around 45. West southwest wind 10 to 15 mph. **Thursday:** A 10 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms after noon. Mostly sunny, with a high near 72. West wind 10 to 15 mph. **Night:** A 10 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms.

Partly cloudy, with a low around 42. West wind 10 to 15 mph. **Friday:** Mostly sunny, with a high near 68. West wind around 10 mph. **Night:** A 10 percent chance of showers. Partly cloudy, with a low around 43. West southwest wind 5 to 10 mph. **Saturday:** Mostly sunny, with a high near 75. South wind 5 to 10 mph. **Night:** Partly cloudy, with a low around 46.

Weather Sponsored by:

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719-845-0102

SPOTLIGHT ON BUSINESS

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the Spicolas decided to strike out on their own. In 1948, they purchased Divini's Jewelers in the small storefront attached to the south side of the El Raton Movie Theatre, and they moved to Raton. They changed the store's name to Anthony's Jewelers. Two years later, their son Joe was born. He's not a Junior: Father and son had different middle names.

"I don't know why I never thought to ask my dad why he changed the store's name to Anthony's Jewelers," Joe says. "His father's name was Antonio—he was from Sicily—and I have a feeling that Dad named the store for his dad."

Joe lost his dad to cancer in 1978. "I bought the store from Mom in 1979," he says, "and the next year I bought out a jeweler, Ed Kaufman, who had been in business here and in Trinidad for 49 years, Kaufman's Jewelers. His Raton store was in the lobby of the El Portal Hotel around the corner, and much bigger, so I moved into there. We had a big fire-place right in the store."

Joe's never gotten far from his beginnings: He was born in the other corner of the El Portal when the privately owned Donovan's Hospital was there, at Third and Clark, and all three locations of Anthony's Jewelers have been within the same block.

"In 1990, I moved the store to its current location." For 26 years, Anthony's Jewelers has been located at 100 North Second Street, downtown at Park Avenue.

"When I started," Joe says, "there were three jewelry stores in Raton and two in Trinidad. That's when all the mines were working and the economy was good. Now, we're the only jewelry store between Pueblo and Santa Fe."

In a small business in a small town, success is part business acumen and part personality. Customers like Joe Spicola and apparently his three employees do, too—they've been with him since the last millennium, starting in the 1990s.

"Gerry Davis has been with me so long, we can't even remember how long," Joe says. "Joyce Frew works on Fridays and she's been here for years."

"Jeannie Kamm's mom worked for me until she retired in the early 1990s, then Jeannie came and took her place. Jeannie's been with me almost as long as Gerry. Jeannie manages Arthur Insurance all week but works here at lunch, five days a week. She calls Anthony Jewelers her fun job. She pays our bills and does all the reports."

Open Monday through Friday from 10 to 5 and Saturday from 10 to 2, Joe's slowed down enough to take most Thursdays and Fridays off, leaving the store to the gals. That gives him more time for golf, plus he grows a vegetable garden every summer to help support his role as his household's premier cook. His wife Charlene Spicola is a nurse and clinic director of Raton's VA clinic.

Joe's passion for home-grown tomatoes pales beside his passion for fantasy football. "I've been playing fan-



Joe Spicola adjusts a retired railroader's pocket watch, making tiny adjustments and checking daily to see how much time the watch has gained or lost. He'll keep the watch until it's accurate.



Photos by Tim Keller / The Chronicle-News

tasy football with the same guys since the 1970s. Some people made a documentary on fantasy football and they came all the way here to interview us. Nowadays everybody else tabulates all the weekly data with computers but we still do it the old way. We gather the numbers and do the tabulations by hand. It's eight guys. One drives down from Wyoming now but the rest are all still here in Raton. We have a waiting list for replacements."

As the jewelry business has evolved, Joe's begun sending out watch repairs and engraving to specialists that use computers and digital technologies. He still enjoys doing the handwork himself.

"Until battery-powered watches came in," he says, "the Santa Fe Railroad required all of its workers here to have their approved pocket watches inspected and certified annually, to keep the trains all running on the same time. I used to do those certifications."

Right now, he's tending a retired railroader's 21-jewel pocket watch. "I'm regulating it now, to keep good time." Each day he checks to see how the watch has done overnight, then he opens it up and makes another tiny adjustment. When it's keeping accurate time, he'll call the railroader to come pick it up.

Perhaps befitting a former coal miner, much of his sales are in diamonds—rings, bracelets, necklaces, earrings, pendants, and of course wedding sets.

"We get all ages, young and old, and everyone from A to Z. I recently sold a wedding set to a pair of senior citizens. We probably get more guys coming in to look



Joe Spicola traded coal for diamonds when he left the mines 40 years ago and took over his father's Raton jewelry store. The only jewelry store between Pueblo and Santa Fe, Anthony's Jewelers sits in the heart of Raton's downtown district, at the corner of North Second Street and Park Avenue, directly below Goat Hill and the iconic Raton sign. Anthony's Jewelers' loyal employees count their tenure at the store not in months or years, but in decades. From left are Joyce Frew, Gerry Davis, owner Joe Spicola, and Jeannie Kamm. Spicola uses specialized tools and eyewear to adjust a retired railroader's pocket watch to accuracy. He'll check and adjust the watch daily until it's keeping accurate time.

at wedding sets, but then they usually bring their fiancé back.

"We sell a mizpah, a heart-shaped pendant that has a zigzag cut in the middle, one half for the guy, one half for the lady. When placed together, it spells out a phrase, something like 'We are together even when we are apart.' We sold a lot of those up until about ten years ago, but kids don't do that anymore."

"We used to sell a lot of

promise rings, what technically was called a pre-proposal ring," he says. "That's another that's gone by the wayside. I don't know what kids do today."

Kids, and perhaps most adults, now use their smartphones for an alarm clock, but Anthony's Jewelers still sells a diverse assortment of watches and even a smart little chrome-cased travel alarm clock.

"We sell gold and pearls, diamonds and colored-stone jewelry," Joe says. "We sell some silver now that gold has gotten so high. We sell chains, rings, pendants, earrings, and bracelets." They

sell engraved plaques and St. Christopher medals; in fact, a close look around the store reveals surprise after surprise.

With a work lamp and multiple magnifying eyepieces, Joe is often tinkering inside tiny spaces. When a customer brings a digital clock or watch with a dead battery, he replaces the battery and resets the watch while the customer waits, all for about the price of the battery alone at a local discount store. That brings some people into the store every year as the batteries runs out.

Anthony's Jewelers has

anchored the same block of downtown Raton for 68 years. Since Joe Spicola took over for his father 40 years ago, the other four jewelry stores in Raton and Trinidad have folded. In a span of almost 300 miles along I-25 from Pueblo to Santa Fe, Anthony's is the only jewelry store, which partly explains its success.

The rest of the explanation is in loyal employees who just never quit, and their boss who went from coal to diamonds, building one of the region's most longstanding and successful small businesses along the way.



Diamond wedding sets are among the biggest sellers at Anthony's Jewelers. Pearls in all sizes and colors are also popular with shoppers and Anthony's still sells pocket watches. Anthony's Jewelers stocks dozens of watches, offering seemingly endless options. Joe Spicola will even replace a watch battery for about the same cost as discount stores charge for the battery alone.