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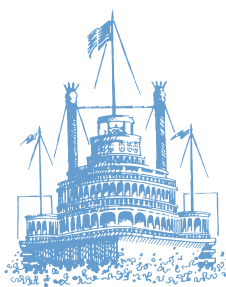
TUESDAY

JANUARY 24, 2017

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS, COLORADO

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STEAMBOAT TODAY

ROUTT COUNTY'S DAILY NEWSPAPER

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INSIDE: Steamboat Springs skier finds thrills, success in big mountain competition • page 11

Worker's comp to cover injured rescuer

Tom Ross
STEAMBOAT TODAY

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS

Routt County commissioners expressed their frustration Monday with two Minnesota men who had to be rescued for a second time from Fish Creek Canyon on Jan. 12 by Search and Rescue volunteers, leading to one rescuer suffering multiple bone fractures after he was swept up in an avalanche in the steep canyon.

"I'm incensed that those guys had to be rescued twice," Commissioner Cari Hermacinski said Monday. "They had no additional outdoor equipment with them, food, water, stove. Do we have a civil complaint against them? I could live with the second call if they had some equipment. I'm damn mad."

Her remarks were made after other county officials confirmed to the commissioners that the county's workers' compensation will cover the medical bills for rescuer Jay Bowman, who was fortunate to ride out of the avalanche without being buried but unfortunate to collide with aspen trees. Those collisions lead to injuries that required 13 screws to stabilize his upper arm, several broken bones in his leg and a laceration to his head.

Adding to the frustration was that the same men — a skier and a snowboarder — had previously called for assistance from Search and Rescue about four years ago in roughly the same location. This time around, they weren't carrying any of the

See **Rescuer**, page 3

Mental fitness in action



JOHN F. RUSSELL/STAFF

Four-year-old Veronika Parker spent Monday afternoon at Bud Werner Memorial Library playing educational games on the computer in the children's center.

New vision for condos Developers of base area project scale down plans

Scott Franz
STEAMBOAT TODAY

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS

The developers who were planning to build a controversial 14-unit condominium project on Burgess Creek Road near the base of Steamboat Ski Area have scaled down their plans.

The new plans call for a five-unit development that isn't as tall or dense as the previous proposal that the city approved in July.

Drawings submitted to the city show more contemporary multi-level units overlooking Ski Time Square and the ski slopes.

The project has also been renamed

from The Viceroy to The Crawford at Burgess Creek.

Architect Eric Smith said Monday the Austin, Texas,-based developers looked at the housing market and came to the conclusion that pulling the trigger on the denser project would have been a mistake.

The project would have required some phasing. And Smith noted the housing market still has not recovered to what it was in 2007.

"It's really not practical to phase it," Smith said, noting the steep building site requires extensive excavation work. "We really need to do this in one phase. It's a difficult site to work on."

Smith also noted pushback on the initial proposal received from neighbors also was a factor in submitting the new plans.

"This (new proposal) should be well received, I would hope," Smith said.

Some residents on Burgess Creek Road feared the larger 14-unit project would add more traffic to an already busy street and cause more ice build up by casting a long shadow on the road.

And several residents in the nearby Stormwatch condos complained that the previous proposal was too

See **Project**, page 2

SKI REPORT

| | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| Midmountain base | 66 inches |
| Summit base | 80 inches |
| Trails open | 165/165 |
| Lifts open | 16/16 |
| Total snow* | 208 inches |

*Midmountain measurement at Steamboat Ski Area since Nov. 2. For up-to-date road conditions, call 511 or visit cotrip.org.

CORRECTION

An article in the Jan. 21 Steamboat Today should have reported that the 2016 Beaver Creek Fire burned 38,380 acres.

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School board OKs plan

Teresa Ristow
STEAMBOAT TODAY

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS

The Steamboat Springs Board of Education on Monday approved a repayment plan for a \$60,000 loan the district provided to North Routt Community Charter School in 2012.

The district had loaned the charter school, which is authorized as part of the district, the money as a way to eliminate a running budget shortfall for the roughly 100-student charter school in Clark.

The debt, which had been whittled down from \$112,000 to \$60,000 by 2012, was attributed to low enrollment numbers at the school in 2004, according to a 2012 report in Steamboat Today.

The loan from the Steamboat Springs School District helped put the charter school in state compliance.

"We've had conversations over the years, but

now, we've firmed up a deadline," said Superintendent Brad Meeks.

Per the repayment schedule, the charter school will pay back the district by June 30, 2022, approximately 10 years after the loan was given.

"They're in a position right now where they can set aside \$10,000 a year to pay us back," Meeks said. "They can certainly pay sooner if they wish to do so."

The board approved the repayment plan as one of two revisions to the district's contract with the school.

Another change to the contract involved no longer moving around per-pupil funds between the charter school and the district's general operating budget if a student transferred schools after the October deadline to determine per-pupil funds.

Budget outlook

District Finance Director Mark Rydberg discussed preliminary budget changes with the

school board, pointing out that district health insurance costs had risen by about \$100,000 more than budgeted this year due to many large claims.

Rydberg said the district's Collaborative Bargaining Team was scheduled to meet at noon Tuesday, and discussions were expected to take place regarding the district's health insurance costs.

Rydberg said the possibility of more cost sharing between the district and employees would be proposed.

Committee update

During an update from the Community Committee for Education, or CC4E, members Robin Schepper and Kevin Sankey reported that the group was on track with its timeline, which aims to put secure type of tax increase to fund school improvements on the November ballot.

See **Board**, page 5

One-third of lost wages covered

Rescuer continued from 1

strongly recommended safety equipment for backcountry skiers — no avalanche beacon, no additional clothing, no avalanche shovel, no means of navigating.

Routt County Attorney Erick Knaus told the commissioners Monday he has reached out to the District Attorney's Office to have a discussion about the matter.

"The easiest criminal action (to pursue) might be restitution, but I don't even know if they're looking at this case for prosecution," Knaus said.

County Manager Tom Sullivan said because Routt County Search and Rescue volunteers carry out rescue missions under the jurisdiction of the Routt County sheriff, they are eligible for workers' compensation through the county, which covers medical expenses

and 66 percent of lost wages.

In Bowman's case, lost wages won't be an issue. He confirmed this week that in addition to all the hours he invests in Search and Rescue, he serves on the boards of directors of four community organizations, but he is not employed.

Sullivan said Routt County arranges for its workers' comp, along with a half dozen counties that are home to large ski areas, through the nonprofit County Technical Services Inc. Typically, any claims elevate the cost of coverage.

Assistant County Attorney Lynaia South reminded the Board of Commissioners that the Colorado Search and Rescue Board, which advises county sheriffs across the state, has a policy of not charging victims for backcountry rescues. However, in the case of rescued

adventurers who possess a hunting, fishing or hiking license, snowmobile/ATV/boat registrations or the Colorado Outdoor Recreation Search and Rescue card, a portion of the associated fees help to defer the cost of searches and rescues.

The first line item in the Search and Rescue board's policy on charging for rescues reads: "At no time, and in no manner, should an individual member of a volunteer search and rescue organization benefit monetarily from rendering emergency service to the subject of a search, rescue or recovery effort."

Routt County Search and Rescue is affiliated with the Mountain Rescue Association, which involves rigorous testing every five years.

To reach Tom Ross, call 970-871-4205, email tross@SteamboatToday.com or follow him on Twitter @ThomasSRoss1

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