



TUESDAY  
FEBRUARY 3, 2009

Vol. 133, No. 23

# THE CHRONICLE-NEWS

50 CENTS  
TRINIDAD, COLORADO

Proudly Serving Southeastern Colorado and Northeastern New Mexico

## THE FINE PRINT

### Continuum of Care

The Las Animas/Huerfano Continuum of Care meeting will be from 8-9 a.m. today the Soup Kitchen, 308 Church St. All newcomers with ideas for the less fortunate are welcome to attend.

### LA County BOC

The Las Animas County Board of County Commissioners will meet at 9 a.m. today at the Commissioners' Chambers, Las Animas County Courthouse Rm. 201.

### Pastor's Text Study

Pastor's Text Study will meet at 9 a.m. at Zion's Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall today. All pastors welcome to come and study the texts for Sunday and for support of each other.

### Kiwanis luncheon

The next Kiwanis luncheon will begin at 12 p.m. today at the Leone Room at TSJC.

### City Council

Trinidad City Council will meet at 7 p.m. tonight at the City Hall Council Chambers, third floor, City Hall.

### LAC Health Services Dist.

The Las Animas County Health Services District will host a regular monthly meeting from 5-7 p.m. tomorrow in the Berg Little Theatre, TSJC campus. The public is invited.

Continued on page 12

## Man shot during quarrel Sunday

Courtesy of the Trinidad Police Department  
Special to the Chronicle

On Feb. 1, 2009 at approximately 3:10 a.m., Trinidad Police Department Officers were dispatched to Mt. San Rafael Hospital on a report of a male, Jesse Angelo Kiefer, 26, who had been transported by personal vehicle with a gunshot wound to the head. Kiefer was treated and admitted to the hospital.

According to Kiefer, he was called to his sister's, Ricky Lynn Baca, home located at 113 E. North Ave. to assist with a disturbance that was currently going on between his other sister, Heather Baca, her boyfriend, Freddie Lucero, and a third party identified as David Tillman. According to Kiefer the argument stemmed from a lover's quarrel between the three. Kiefer went on to say that he arrived at the residence with Aerial Valdez and their three-year-old daughter. Kiefer went into the residence and attempted to resolve the conflict.

The argument escalated and spilled out into the front yard of the residence directly in front of a vehicle where Valdez and the child were sitting. It was alleged that at this time, Tillman pulled a handgun from his waistband



David Tillman  
(Photo courtesy of TPD)

and pointed it in the direction of Kiefer and his family. A struggle then ensued over the weapon, which discharged, hitting Kiefer on the left temple area of his head. The bullet path continued and lodged into the right rear passenger door jamb less than two feet from where the child and Valdez were sitting. Tillman then fled the scene on foot and Valdez drove Kiefer to the hospital.

Tillman later turned himself in to the Trinidad Police Department where he was charged with first degree assault, a class three felony; three counts of felony menacing, a class five felony; illegal discharge of a firearm into an occupied vehicle, a class five felony; child abuse - no injury, a class two misdemeanor; and three counts of reckless endangerment, a class three misdemeanor. Tillman is being held on a \$45,000 bond.

## Federal, state funding of regional job placement centers still up in air

By MIKE GARRETT  
The Chronicle-News

Is it going to be business as usual or is a big shakeup in store to distribute state and federal funding for disadvantaged regional job seekers who have traditionally gone through Rocky Mountain SER offices and Colorado Workforce Centers for job placement services?

For the past 25 years, Rocky Mountain SER/JP Inc., has been providing workforce development services as the sole grantee for distributing federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funds to eight South Central Colorado counties that house those offices, usually in the same building as the South Central Colorado Workforce Centers.

But as a result of the state's intentions to take on a greater role in determining who gets what federal funding and a Las Animas County vote last week against making Conejos County the one-stop regional operator to distribute WIA funds to replace the

state's past administrative role, the whole shooting match is apparently up for grabs. The state will soon launch a request for proposal bidding process to determine which entity gets to distribute the federal WIA funds.

Leon Ortega, director of Rocky Mountain SER/JP Inc., and Jerry Gallegos, RM/SER's San Luis Valley field representative, have indicated they were baffled over recent complex consolidation attempts by the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment to possibly take over direct operation of Rocky Mountain SER offices through its affiliations with the Colorado Rural Consortium and South Central Workforce Centers.

Such a hotly debated state cost-cutting consolidation could mean the elimination of numerous Rocky Mountain SER staff positions to be replaced by fewer state staff employees.

"We do not believe that a state-operated WIA model in this region will

Continued on page 3



In this Dec. 11, 2008 file photo, President-elect Barack Obama, right, stands with Health and Human Services Secretary-designate, former Senate Majority Leader Thomas Daschle, during a news conference in Chicago. Daschle, President Barack Obama's choice to head the Health and Human Services Department, apologized Monday, Feb. 2, 2009 to the Senate panel that will decide his fate, saying he was "deeply embarrassed and disappointed" about failing to pay more than \$120,000 in taxes. (AP Photo/Charles Dharapak, File)

## Daschle pleads his case to keep nomination alive

By KEVIN FREKING  
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) - Fighting to salvage his Cabinet nomination, Tom Daschle apologized Monday for failing to pay more than \$120,000 in taxes and appealed to former Senate colleagues to approve him all the same. President Barack Obama said he was "absolutely" sticking with his nominee for health secretary, and a key senator added an important endorsement.

The White House both underscored the magnitude of the problem and tried to downplay it in the space of seven words. "Nobody's perfect," said press secretary Robert Gibbs. "It was a serious mistake. ..."

Nobody was predicting defeat for Daschle's nomination as secretary of health and human services, but it was proving an unsavory pill to swallow for senators who only last week confirmed Timothy Geithner as treasury secretary despite his separate tax-payment problems. It's an issue that strikes a nerve among lawmakers' constituents who are struggling with their own serious money problems.

On the bright side for Daschle, he

got warm words of support from the chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, the panel that will have the first say on his fate. Daschle has been "an invaluable and expert partner" in efforts toward health care reform, said Democrat Max Baucus of Montana — an especially important endorsement since the two men have had tussles in the past over Baucus' handling of GOP tax-cut proposals, Medicare changes and other issues.

Daschle was to meet into the evening with the committee in private.

The former Senate Democratic leader, expressed his remorse in a letter to the Finance Committee, saying he was "deeply embarrassed and disappointed" about what he said was an unintentional failure to pay taxes that he owed. He recently filed amended returns for 2005-07 to report \$128,203 in back taxes and \$11,964 in interest.

Obama, asked at the White House whether he was standing by his nomination, answered, "Absolutely." He did not elaborate.

In his letter, released Monday, Daschle sought to explain how he overlooked taxes on income for consulting

Continued on page 3



### Benefit car wash

There will be a car wash to benefit Sheriff James Casias from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 21, weather permitting, at the City Hall parking lot. The cost will be however much you want to donate. The car wash is sponsored by the Trinidad Police Department and the Trinidad Youth Advisory Council. Power washers provided by Grand Rental.

## WEATHER WATCH

Today: Sunny, with a high near 55. West wind around 5 mph becoming calm.

Tonight: Mostly clear, with a low around 22. West-southwest wind between 5 and 10 mph.

Tomorrow: Sunny, with a high near 64. Southwest wind between 5 and 10 mph.

Tomorrow Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 24. Southwest wind between 5 and 15 mph.

## RIVER CALL

Purgatoire River Call as of 2/2/09. Johns Priority No. 9 as of 1/1/1863.

Trinidad Lake Accounting: Release, .01 acre ft.; Inflow 58.14 acre ft.; Evaporation, 1.13 acre ft.; Content, 21,666 acre ft.; Elevation, 6,182.55; Precipitation, 0.

Downstream River Call, Winter Storage as of 3/10/1910.

(Provided by Division of Water Resources)



Damon Brown Barry Hittson Zach Osborn Raymond Rivale Ted Sneed Scott Warner  
(Photos by Tim Keller)

## Des Moines to elect four school board members tonight

By TIM KELLER  
Special to the Chronicle

Des Moines is primed for an election Tuesday to determine four officers for the district school board. Polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. at Des Moines Village Hall. Des Moines School serves a district that includes Capulin, Folsom, Grenville, Des Moines and many outlying ranches — in all, 2,500 square miles lying between Raton and Clayton.

The school board consists of five members; incumbent Alfred Newkirk is not up for re-election this year. Vying for Position 2 are Zach Osborn and Ted Sneed. Scott Warner and Barry Hittson are running for Position 4. Raymond Rivale runs unopposed for Position 1, while Board President Damon Brown is running unopposed for Position 3.

Zach Osborn works for Baca Valley Telephone and serves as a volunteer EMT in the community. Asked why he's running for school board, he responds, "I feel it's important to be part of the community and help the schools and the kids." He identifies the budget and low enrollment as major challenges facing the school. "We need to boost community involvement, try to bring things to the community that will entice families here, especially young families with kids." Osborn is doing his part: he has five children,

all current or future students in the district.

Ted Sneed is the only candidate to have previous experience running for public office: he is President of the community of Capulin. "I want to help our kids, our community, and our school." Asked the major challenges facing the district, he identifies one. "Problems with the pee-wee basketball program. I can step in and help since I am the President of the community of Capulin and I have one little boy that's in school and a little girl that's gonna start pre-K, if they have it. They're trying to get a pre-K here." Sneed's son is in the third grade.

Like Osborn, Scott Warner is a volunteer EMT and employee of Baca Valley Telephone. His three-year-old daughter will attend Des Moines School; his 10-year-old stepson plans to attend for grades 7-12. Warner explains his candidacy, "I feel it will be good to help the community and do what I can for the kids, and to keep the school here. The school is the community: we need to keep it going. The biggest challenge is enrollment. We need to get more kids here. We just need more people in this area. How to do that is the million dollar question. We need more jobs, to bring people in."

Asked what brought him into the race, Barry Hittson

Continued on page 5

## Beware of donation solicitors for sheriff

Courtesy of the Las Animas County Sheriff's Office  
Special to the Chronicle

The Las Animas County Sheriff's Office has received information that unknown individuals have been soliciting donation money in the name of Sheriff James Casias. This unknown person or persons are going to residents door-to-door throughout the community. The Las Animas County Sheriff's Office has not asked anyone officially to solicit donations in this manner. If you would like to make a donation, a fund has been created at International Bank. If anyone has any information regarding the person(s) responsible, or if you have been solicited, please contact the Las Animas County Sheriff's Office at (719) 846-2211 or the Trinidad Police Department at (719) 846-4441.

The car wash set for Feb. 21, 2009 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., sponsored by the Trinidad Police Department and the Trinidad Youth Advisory Council, is an official fundraiser for Sheriff Casias.