

Affluent Douglas County part of proposed district

By Joseph Alan Sanchez
Special to the Chronicle News

Unless the Colorado Supreme Court changes matters, Las Animas County will become part of Colorado's Congressional District 3, a legislative area that would range from Trinidad to Sterling, while picking up affluent Douglas County along the way.

Colorado law requires the state legislature to examine and re-allocate boundaries for representative voting purposes every 10 years. And every 10

years there is contention regarding where the dividing lines fall. So much so that, this year, the state legislature had to pass along its assignment to the judicial branch.

Denver District Judge Robert Hyatt's ruling was issued late last week and received mixed reaction. Democrats are happy because one of their plans was chosen, and the Republican leadership was dismayed because their final map proposal was not accepted.

A suggested alternative

map presented by the only non-partisan member of the committee charged with presenting congressional boundaries was briefly considered, but fell by the wayside last week. That proposal would have split Las Animas County in half as far as voting was concerned.

Although an appeals process is in place, Colorado Democratic Chairman Rick Palacio doubts a repeal will occur. Palacio says that given the fact that the map keeps districts contiguous and meets

other primary guidelines, the redistricting proposal is likely to be upheld by the Colorado Supreme Court.

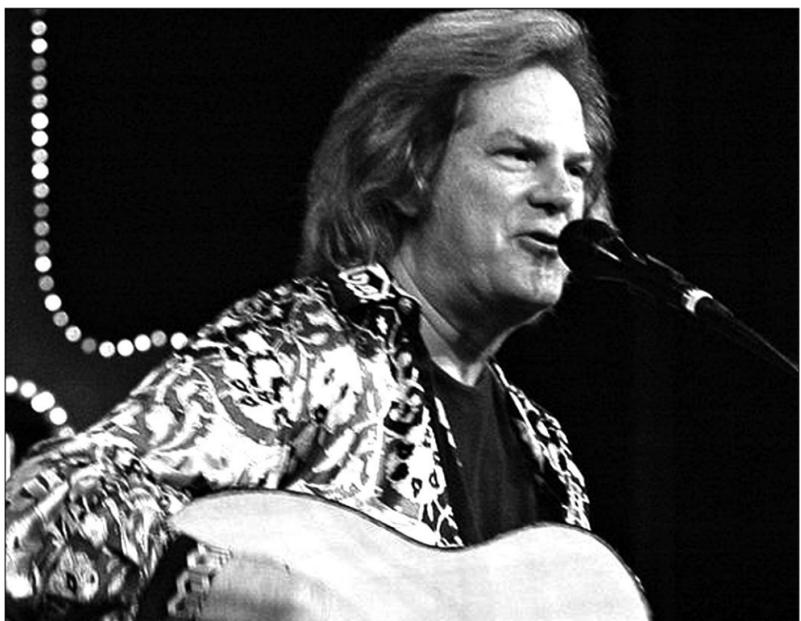
A view of the map shows Las Animas County as part of an eastern side block that includes all eastern Colorado counties in addition to Adams, Arapahoe and Elbert counties and the affluent Douglas County. Several government and private entities have expressed objections to the Hyatt map, including Douglas County, which tends to vote Republican.

Colorado Republican Chairman Ryan Call is on record as saying that the party is also considering filing an appeal of the decision.

Other groups who have been trying to influence or at least follow the re-alignment of voting districts include the Hispanic Bar Association and Clear The Bench Colorado. The Hispanic Bar Association actually proposed a map that focused upon building a Hispanic voting bloc. That proposal along with at least a dozen others were

rejected in the process until Hyatt was able to approve a map that he believes has met the criteria for fair redistricting.

Clear the Bench Colorado, a group originally organized to monitor the Colorado judicial system, has criticized Hyatt's plan for focusing on "competitiveness" as a criteria for setting the dividing lines. "The competitiveness business is a bunch of garbage," according to a spokesperson for ClearTheBenchColorado.org.



Courtesy of johnjorgenson.com

Master of the gypsy jazz guitar, John Jorgenson brings his hot quintet to the Shuler Theater Sunday night.

Guitar virtuoso Jorgenson brings gypsy jazz to Raton

By Tim Keller
The Chronicle-News

RATON — After several years as a founding member of The Desert Rose Band and then The Hellocasters, guitar virtuoso John Jorgenson spent the last six years of the 1990s touring and recording with Elton John.

An A-list session player in Los Angeles, Nashville, and London, he's often played on platinum-selling and Grammy-winning albums in pop, country, and rock music, but his personal love is gypsy jazz.

He's so good at it that he was cast to play the great French gypsy jazz guitarist Django Reinhardt in the 2004 film "Head in the Clouds," starring Penelope Cruz and Charlize Theron.

Sunday Jorgenson brings his crack touring quintet to the Shuler Theater for a two-hour concert. The group has been touring throughout 2011, with the current road trip starting in Illinois November 3. The Raton show will be the band's 11th consecutive one-nighter in a string that takes it through Wisconsin, Minnesota, South Dakota, and Wyoming on its way to New Mexico. It'll follow the Shuler concert with a Monday night show in Cortez, Colo.

Although Jorgenson features his gypsy jazz guitar, he also plays other styles and instruments, including saxophone, clarinet, pedal steel guitar, mandolin, and vocals. He's accompanied

by his longtime band of bassist Simon Planting, drummer Rick Reed, jazz violinist Jason Anick, and guitarist Doug Martin.

Although Jorgenson has worked with such diverse stars as Barbra Streisand, Bonnie Raitt, Billy Joel, Sting, and Luciano Pavarotti, Sunday night's show will be more reminiscent of the hot string jazz of Stephane Grappelli and Django Reinhardt.

Sunday night's concert begins at 7 p.m. All tickets are \$20, available at the door and in advance at the Old Pass Gallery. Additional information is available from the sponsoring Raton Arts & Humanities Council at the Old Pass Gallery, (575) 445-2052.

Commissioners to seek public input on budget plan

By Johnny Hart
The Chronicle-News

The Las Animas County Commissioners will be receiving public input about its proposed 2012 budget today at 10 a.m. immediately following its bi-monthly County Commission meeting.

Between now and the end of the year, interim County Administrator Leslee Fresquez said the commissioners will tweak the budget based on public comments and other factors.

"We will make changes based on some of the public comment we receive, should the board desire to do so," Fresquez said.

This is the only budget hearing for the public to make comment, though the county commissioners will hold some workshops in order to prepare a final budget.

"I think it's very important that they come in and be part of that process just so they can be assure that we are using those tax monies prudently," Fresquez said.

The current proposed budget can be reviewed at

Important Las Animas County budget dates

Today — Public hearing about the proposed 2012 Las Animas County budget.

Dec. 10 — Deadline for the county assessor to submit his assessment of county finances.

Dec. 15 — Deadline for all taxing entities to submit their mill levy certifications.

Dec. 22 — Deadline for the board to certify mill levies and approve the budget.

End of January — Deadline to submit Las Animas County budget to the Department of Local Affairs.

the Las Animas County Courthouse at 200 E. First Street.

"The budget is always available for public review here in the administration office," Fresquez said.

The County Commission meeting is set for 9 a.m.

One hot-button issue on the county commissioners' agenda today will be the County Attorney Dixie Newnam's report concerning the Colorado Supreme Court's hearing regarding the redistricting of Las Animas' Colorado House district.

The county commis-

sioners decided to appeal the Colorado Reapportionment Commission's map just more than two weeks ago, which would essentially split Las Animas County into two for House district races.

"It is really important to keep our county whole, not split up our county into two primary districts," said Las Animas County Commissioner Jim Vigil Tuesday.

Contact Johnny Hart at 719 846-3311, ext. 206 or at jhart@trinidadchronicle-news.com

Fire damages historic Catholic retreat

Associated Press

ALLENSPARK, Colo. — A wind-driven fire heavily damaged a Roman Catholic retreat near Rocky Mountain National Park on Monday, but a church visited by Pope John Paul II was spared, authorities said. There were no injuries.

About 70 firefighters brought the blaze under control several hours after it erupted Monday morning, said Boulder County Sheriff's Cmdr. Rick

Brough. The cause was unknown, but investigators were looking at a fire-place used by workers at the retreat, Brough said.

No guests were at the St. Malo Retreat Center Monday. Electricity had been cut over the weekend by high winds, prompting the retreat to send guests home, said Jeanette De Melo, spokeswoman for the Archdiocese of Denver.

The fire damaged a community residence, kitchen, conference room,

library and lounge, and an atrium roof collapsed, Brough said.

Pope John Paul II, an avid hiker, wore white sneakers with gold laces and a Boy Scout hiking stick that looked like a version of his pastoral cross while visiting Camp St. Malo in 1993.

Camp St. Malo, about 65 miles northwest of Denver, was founded in the 1930s. The church named it after St. Malo, a sixth-century Welsh saint.

Company touts drilling results at Colorado field

Associated Press

DALLAS — Anadarko Petroleum Corp. said Monday that results from early drilling indicate that the company could produce the equivalent of more than 1 billion barrels of oil from

an energy field in Colorado.

Anadarko said that 11 horizontal wells drilled in the Wattenberg field yielded "strong" initial rates of production and high levels of liquids, which have commanded better prices than

natural gas.

The Houston company said its program of horizontal drilling in the Wattenberg field is among its best on U.S. land and should quickly generate "significant" cash flow.

Car to be raffled off for foundation

By Mike Albanese
The Chronicle News

In cooperation with the Trinidad Community Foundation, Phil Long Toyota of Trinidad has donated a car that will be raffled off Feb. 18.

Raffle tickets for the car, a 1999 Saturn valued at \$4,985 with 60,000 miles, can be purchased at the Business Expo Wednesday at the Bell Block Building from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

A raffle ticket is \$10 and three tickets can be purchased for \$25. In addition to the car, an iPad and \$500 worth of gas will be raffled off.

Foundation President Phil Rico said the money raised from the raffle will go to local earthquake victims and to the Grand Cycle, which sends money to non-profit organizations in the community.



Mike Albanese/The Chronicle-News

Phil Rico, president of the Trinidad Community Foundation, left, and Phil Long Toyota general manager Jamie Passarelli showcase the 1999 Saturn to be raffled off in February.

Raffle tickets can be purchased at the TCF office at 134 W. Main St. from noon to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday or from TCF board members.

For more information or for contact information for TCF board members, contact Margaret Apodaca at 719-846-3943.

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