

OVER THE PASS



TRINIDAD-RATON CONNECTION

By **Tim Keller**
Correspondent
The Chronicle-News

Question of the Week:

“If you could change one thing about our town, what would it be?”

Photos by **Tim Keller / The Chronicle-News**

“The resistance to change. It’s a good-old-boys club that doesn’t want to join the 21st century. Let the buildings stay old but the people move on.”

– Doreen Schwandt, with husband Dave (Trinidad)



“Find us some industry is what we need, but I don’t know where we’re going to come up with that. Everybody’s having that problem.”

– Rick Poe, retired railroad mechanic (Raton)



“The apathy toward community involvement. There’s not enough people willing to step up to make the difference they want to see. They’ll sit back and complain, but they won’t show up to help fix it.”

– David Wentling, community supporter (Raton)

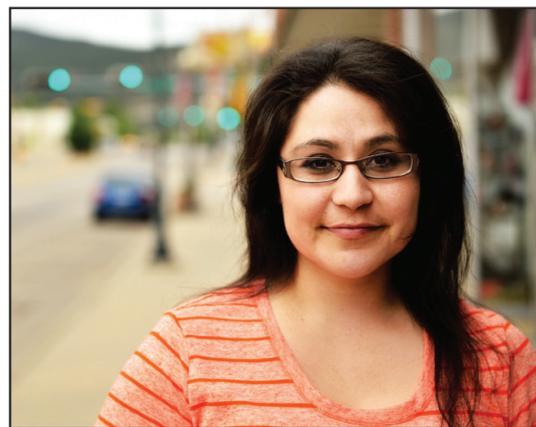
“I would bring in as much business as possible, because there’s a lot of people not working. I’m retired, so I don’t need the jobs, but our town does.”

– Jim Medina, retired telecommunications technician (Trinidad)



“I’d bring in more stores, especially for shopping — things like furniture, shoes and clothes. We have too many dead buildings.”

– Shirley Castillo, owner, Shirley’s Thrift (Trinidad)



“I’d create more to do for the kids. There’s the pool and sports, but with school out kids need more parks and recreation, maybe a summer camp.”

– Connie Coca, pharmacy technician in Fairbanks, Alaska (Raton native, in Raton)

RODEO BUCKING BRONCO

Old horse teaches new tricks at Springs museum

By **CAROL MCGRAW**
AP / The Gazette

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (AP) – Because of age, the old guy had to give up his job in 2011, but like some retirees, he’s now doing a little teaching. Turns out, he doesn’t mind being put out to pasture.

Sheep Tick, a 23-year-old rodeo bucking bronco — and a famous one at that — is spending the summer in Colorado Springs at the ProRodeo Hall of Fame & Museum of the American Cowboy. His job is to teach visitors about rodeo horses.

The horse is getting star treatment, having won every major rodeo in the country from 1995 through 2011, including six Wrangler National Finals Rodeo appearances. His classroom is an upgraded barn and corral. He gets regular exercise, veterinary visits and plenty of scrumptious oats and hay, carrots, apples and access to tasty salt and mineral licks.

The museum hasn’t had livestock on exhibit since the late 1990s. Director Kent Sturman said he has wanted to create the live-animal exhibit for educational purposes since he took over the job a year and a half ago.

Sheep Tick and another horse, Dani Girl, started showing off last month. Their first visitors were dozens of second graders, some of whom had never seen a live horse, Sturman said. A few kids, though, were not fond of the barnyard smells.

Another rodeo star, Dusty Dan, will soon be part of the exhibit. The 23-year-old mare made 10 appearances at the Wrangler National Finals Rodeo in saddle bronc and bareback riding, and she was named best bareback horse at the RAM National Circuit Finals.

The museum officials named the exhibit the Zoetis Barn after the animal-pharmaceutical and health-care company that donated money for the animals’ upkeep and to upgrade the barn area so it is accessible to all visitors. However, tall, sturdy chain-link fencing keeps the horses and visitors safely apart.

The barn exhibit area will include informational signs, and the staff will answer questions about the four-legged athletes and the organization’s animal-welfare program.

The museum hopes to exhibit various horses every summer. Stock contractors will nominate their horses, and a selection committee of museum board member will determine which animals will be on display. The horses on display this summer belong to Harry Vold, an Avondale stockman who is well known in rodeo circles.

The mission of the museum is to educate the public about the history of rodeo and its impact on Western American culture and to honor those involved in the profession.

There will be a celebration of the museum’s 35th anniversary on Aug. 6, with free admission to events and activities that will include pony rides, roping demonstrations,



AP / The Gazette

stagecoach rides, autograph signing by Hall of Fame inductees and music by country-western singers. The celebration also includes a golf tournament on Aug. 7, a Cowboy Ball and auction on Aug. 8 and a Hall of Fame induction ceremony on Aug. 9.

ProRodeo Hall of Fame & Museum of the American Cowboy, 101 Pro Rodeo Drive.

Museum hours: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., daily through August.

Barn and Horse exhibit: open to the public during regular museum hours; handicap accessible.

Information: call 528-4764CQ or visit pro-rodeohalloffame.com.

CANYONS OF THE ANCIENTS

Eagles in Colo. fitted with transmitters

By **JIM MIMIAGA**
AP / Cortez Journal

CORTEZ, Colo. (AP) – This summer, juvenile golden eagles in Canyons of the Ancients National Monument will be fitted with transmitter backpacks for satellite monitoring.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) have identified four nests within the monument for the study.

Professional climbers will either climb up to or rappel down the cliff to the nest. Last year four juveniles were tagged. This year biologists hope to tag two more.

An archaeologist will clear the area before the climb, and if cultural resources are present, climbers will adjust routes.

Once at the nest, biologists will capture a juvenile eagle and it will be raised or lowered to be fitted with a satellite transmitter on its back and returned to the nest.

“Last year the BLM observed the tagging and it went smoothly,” said Nathan West, a wildlife biologist with the BLM’s Tres Rios office. “Trained experts do the tagging and are very professional. The birds don’t just lay down for it, but they’re calmer after a hood is placed over their head.”

A similar program last year tagged golden eagles in the monument and tracked them to Wyoming and Sleeping Ute Mountain. An eagle tagged near Flagstaff, Arizona, left its nest and flew 250 miles to a new home range in the San Juan Mountains.

The tagging project is part of a larger study in the Southwest that monitors juvenile eagle movements and mortality. Golden eagle populations have been declining rangewide, and the cause is not known. The project will provide insight into population dynamics of the iconic bird.

There are an estimated 30,000 golden eagles in the U.S., but juveniles in the southern Rockies have suffered a mysterious decline.

“They are prone to electrocution, and the electric co-ops have been good at designing infrastructure so that does not happen,” West said. “They retrofit old lines as well to accommodate raptors.”

In 2010, Fish and Wildlife in the Southwest region partnered with the Jicarilla



AP / Photo by Dale Staehlecker

A satellite transmitter is fitted on an adult Golden Eagle just trapped in its breeding territory in New Mexico.

Apache Nation, Navajo Nation, Southern Ute Tribe and the BLM to document golden eagle behavior and causes of mortality in the Four Corners.

According to a Fish and Wildlife report in the Sonoran Joint Venture, yearly mortality of golden eagles, excluding adults, averages 40 percent, a relatively high level. Mortality in the months after fledging is high because of starvation caused by drought, which lowers populations of prey animals such as rabbits.

Recent losses included one juvenile eagle that drowned in a steep-sided pool in a sandstone niche. Another was killed by a mountain lion at a deer carcass. Lead poisoning from consuming carcasses with lead bullets also occurs.

The transmitter units weigh 1.5 ounces, provide hourly locations accurate to within 50- to 75 feet and last three years.

Biologists monitor eagle movement via satellite so they can respond quickly if lack of movement suggests death or injury.

“We will reach a project goal of tagging at least 50 young eagles with [transmitters] in the coming months,” wrote biologist Robert Murphy.

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