



COME JOIN US AT PURGATOIRE RIVER TRADING FOR LIVE MUSIC FEATURING JIM RICHMOND AND BOB GIORDANO

JIM RICHMOND DEC. 4 & 11, 5-8 PM
BOB GIORDANO DEC. 18, 5-8 PM



WEEKEND EDITION
FRIDAY, SATURDAY
& SUNDAY
DEC. 18-20, 2015

THE CHRONICLE-NEWS

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50 CENTS
TRINIDAD
COLORADO

Vol. 139, No. 252

THE FINE PRINT

■ DECEMBER 18
TRINIDAD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
FRI.: Trinidad School District No. One begins its holiday break with classes resuming Jan. 4.
HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE
FRI. (5-8 p.m.) Annual Holiday Open House with refreshments and live music by Bob Giordano will be held at the Purgatoire River Trading Co., 113 E. Main St. Info: 719-845-0202.
NOAH'S SANTA PAWS AT BIG R
SAT. (11 a.m.-2 p.m.) Annual Christmas Adoption Fair at Big R on Freedom Road helps support the Noah's Ark Animal Shelter. Get your picture taken with Santa Paws.
HOLIDAY TROLLEY TOUR
THRU SAT. (5:30 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.) Annual Trolley Tour of Lights. Passenger pickup will be at Miner's Memorial Park on Main St. Info: Kim Marquez, 719-846-9843.
AGUILAR FESTIVITIES
SUN. (5:30 p.m.) Aguilar American Legion hosts the annual Parade of Lights on Main St. Kids can meet Santa at Roughnecks following the parade. Info: Gennie Tamburelli, 719-859-1590.
WALTON FAMILY CHRISTMAS
SUN. (7 p.m.) Annual Concert to benefit Grace Christian Academy will be held at the First Christian Church, 200 S. Walnut St. Info: 719-846-3843.

Today's Quote

"Christmas! The very word brings joy to our hearts."

~ Joan Winnmill Brown

■ DECEMBER 21
TOWN OF STARKVILLE
MON. (6 p.m.) **PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS MEETING HAS BEEN CANCELLED FOR DEC.** Board of Trustees public meeting in the Fisher's Peak Fire Department boardroom, 8361 County Road 69, Starkville. Info: Crick Carlisle, 719-680-7199.

■ DECEMBER 22
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).
CITY COUNCIL
TUESDAY (1:30 p.m.) Work session will be held in Council Chambers, City Hall, 135 N. Animas St., Third Floor. Info: Audra Garrett, 719-846-9843. CITY COUNCIL: Mayor: Joe Reorda and Council Members: Carol Bolton, Joe Bonato, Pat Fletcher, Anthony Mattie, Michelle Miles, and Liz Torres.
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.

■ PUBLIC SERVICE
TAKE THE SURVEY
JANUARY 7 DEADLINE: EVERYONE HAS A VOICE! Space To Create needs your input, so please take the survey! Let us know what you want. GO TO: www.corzondetrinidad.org

HOLIDAY ART MARKET
THRU DEC 26: Gallery Main's festive annual Art Market at the Gallery, 130 E. Main St. Info: Bree Pappan, 719-846-1441.

SENIOR CENTER FUNDRAISER
For all your holiday needs fresh, new-crop, gourmet shelled pecans and mixed nuts are now available at the Sayre Senior Center, 1222 San Pedro. Info: Anna Ritsley, 719-846-3336.

CALL FOR ARTISTS
JAN. 8 - JAN. 30 SHOW: All area artists are encouraged to enter their work in the Contemporary Western Art of the Southeast Art Show to be held at Gallery Main, 130 E. Main St. Info about submissions: Bree Pappan, 719-846-1441 or trinidadartscouncil@gmail.com

CHRISTMAS EVENTS
DEC 24 & DEC 25: Holy Innocents Catholic Church (Colorado & Nevada): Christmas Eve Midnight Mass 12 a.m. / Christmas Day Mass at 8 a.m.

DEC 24 & DEC 25: Holy Trinity Catholic Church (Church & Convent) Christmas Eve Masses at 3 p.m., 6 p.m. and 9 p.m. / Christmas Day Masses at 9 a.m. (Trinidad) and 9 a.m. (Segundo)

DEC 24: United Methodist Church (216 Broom St.) "A Lesson in Carols" Service at 5 p.m.

DEC 24: United Presbyterian Church (801 San Pedro) Christmas Eve Candle Light Service (5:30 p.m.) Info: Ruth Shell 719-846-3126.

DEC 25: Fisher's Peak Soup Kitchen hosts Christmas Day Dinner at the Sebastiani Gym (11 a.m.-2 p.m.). Info: Terrie Lovato, 719-680-0427.

The Fine Print feature is a courtesy notice used to inform the public of upcoming public meetings and events. Placement is not guaranteed. For contributions please call 719-846-3311 or e-mail cathy@trinidadchroniclenews.com.

RIVER CALL

Purgatoire River Call as of: 12/16/15. Chilili Ditch: Priority # 7 --- Appropriation date: 04/30/1862.

Trinidad Reservoir Accounting:
Release .42 AF
Inflow 35.63 AF -- 17.96 CFS
Evaporation 3.21 AF
Content 24,515 AF
Elevation 6,189.64
Precipitation 0

Down stream call: John Martin Reservoir: 12/31/1948.



2015 BUSINESS EXPO

Chamber's networking event draws big crowd

Businesses, organizations get to rub elbows

By Eric John Monson
News Editor
The Chronicle-News

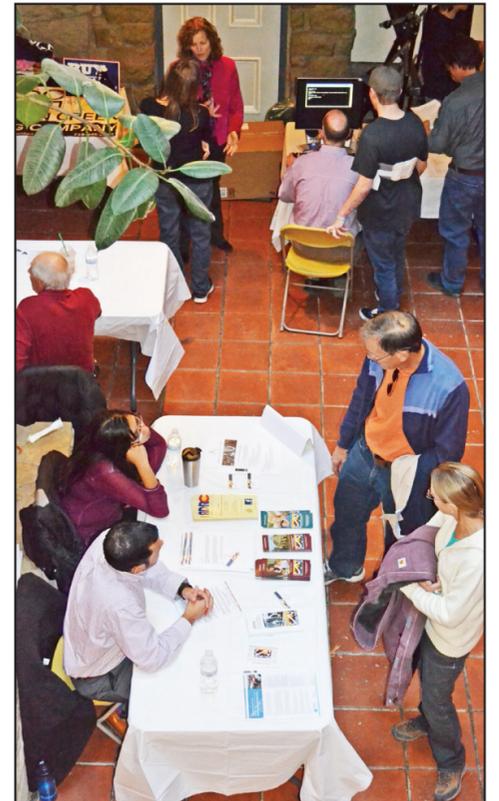
"We're starting to hit a few of these things out of the park," said Trinidad Las Animas County Chamber of Commerce (TLACC) President John Schecter, miming a homerun swing. Spirits were high among the Chamber's Board of Directors and Ambassadors Wednesday evening following

the organizations annual Business Expo, which—as indicated—the group considered a homerun. This year's Expo, which far exceeded last year's lightly attended event, hosted 34 vendors and saw over 200 people register for door prizes. The success of the event could be a harbinger for a brighter future for an organization that has struggled alongside the local economy in recent years.

"It really worked out well," said Schecter. "It was good that we postponed it and were able to get a day without all that winter weather."

That winter weather is prompting the Chamber to schedule next year's Business Expo for the month of October, rather than holding it in late November, as has been the norm.

Continued on Page 7 ...



Eric John Monson / The Chronicle-News

The annual Chamber of Commerce Business Expo held in the Bell Block Building on Main Street on Wednesday drew a large number of visitors anxious to expand their work-related networking resources. Pictured at right, the Southern Colorado Council of Governments had a booth at the event that fielded questions about the work they do.

WESTERN TRADITION

Cowboy Candy Store: Solano's Boot & Western Wear reaches 60th year

By Tim Keller
Correspondent
The Chronicle-News

RATON—Shortly after her store's Monday-morning opening, a couple enters and Sandy Solano-Langan greets them by name. Other customers are already shopping among rows of tall-top boots, a roomful of hats and another room of jeans and Western shirts. The rich scent of leather wafts from beyond the shirts where alternating sounds of mallets and machines draw a visitor toward Sandy's dad, a master leather smith practicing his craft in this building since 1956.

Solano's Boot & Western Wear is an unlikely crossroads of the West. One block from the old Wells Fargo freight office at the town's train depot, Solano's anchors the historic downtown business district of Raton, New Mexico, population 6600. On the one hand, Raton is isolated—the nearest commercial airports are at Denver, Albuquerque, and Amarillo, each 230 miles away. On the other hand, Raton sits beside the well-traveled crossroads of Interstate 25 and U.S. 87 that connects Texas and Colorado at the foot of Raton Pass.

Family ranches around Raton are starting their sixth generation while big outfits like the CS, the UU Bar, the TO and Vermejo Park maintain huge swaths of grazing land. Thousands of visitors annually flock to the nearby Philmont Scout Ranch and the NRA Whittington Center. Sitting right on the historic Santa Fe Trail, family-owned Solano's has grown over 60 years from one room to five and added a website that's brought new



Photos by Tim Keller / The Chronicle-News

Returning home to northern New Mexico after the Korean War, Andy Solano started Solano Shoe Shop downtown Raton in 1956. The business grew into Solano's Boot & Western Wear, but Andy is still back in his workshop making and repairing boots and shoes every day.

customers from around the world, making Solano's a crossroads of happy customers from near and far.

Andy and Fabie Solano couldn't have imagined this when they moved from their tiny village of Ojo de Chapelle in 1956 to open

his new shoe repair shop. After Air Force service during the Korean War, Andy used the GI Bill to apprentice himself to a shoe repairman that wanted to sell his Raton business.

Continued on Page 3 ...



Steve Block / The Chronicle-News

Awards were presented to the winners of the People's Choice Award at the recent High School Statistics Science Fair. From left to right are, Superintendent Scott Mader, High School Math Teacher Eric Kohlbrand and prize winners Jacy Sanchez Maldonado, Alexis Lovato and Lori Abeyta.

EDUCATION

Mathematics key to student progress, achievement

By Steve Block
The Chronicle-News

Secondary school students who are striving toward professional careers need solid backgrounds in mathematics as a key part of reaching their goals. Two math professionals, Charles Lochard and Eric Kohlbrand, presented information about achieving student progress in math at Monday's Trinidad School District No. 1 Board of Education meeting.

Lochard said he was hired by the district last year as a math coach, and is splitting his time

Continued on Page 6 ...

WEATHER WATCH

Friday: Sunny, with a high near 45. West southwest wind around 5 mph. Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 24.

West southwest wind 5 to 10 mph. Saturday: Sunny, with a high near 54. Southwest wind around 5 mph. Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 30. Southwest wind around 10 mph. Sunday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 53. West southwest wind 10 to 15 mph. Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 26. West southwest wind 10 to 15 mph. Monday: Mostly sunny, with a high

near 48. West southwest wind 5 to 10 mph. Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 28. West southwest wind around 10 mph. Tuesday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 47. West wind 5 to 10 mph.

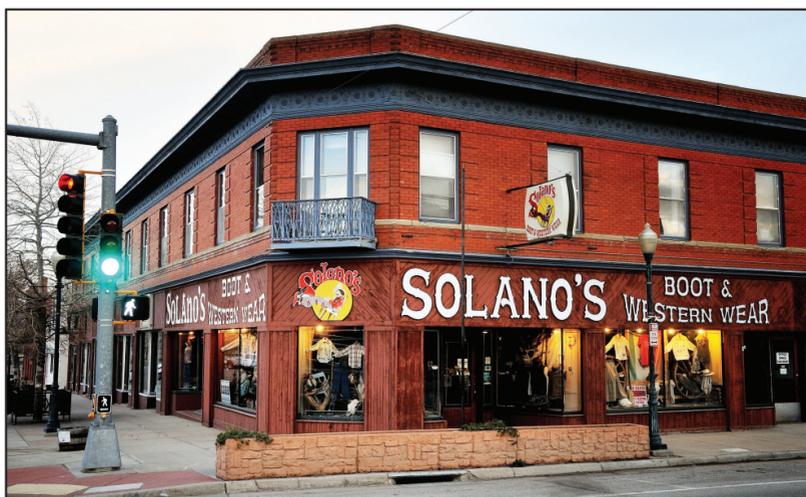
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WESTERN TRADITION

Solano's Boot & Western Wear reaches 60th year

... Continued from Page 1



Photos by Tim Keller / The Chronicle-News

Solano's Boot & Western Wear is a shining star in the downtown Raton business district. Founded in 1956 as Solano Shoe Shop, patriarch Andy Solano still works daily on boots and shoes in his workshop at the back of the store.

Solano Shoe Repair was born, and a few of Andy's customers go back almost that far. One points to Andy in his shop today and says, "They don't make 'em like that anymore."

When the last of their three kids started school in 1968, Fabie got bored at home and opened her own business next door to Andy, selling boots and shoes. To visit Andy, she had to walk outside and go in his door, though they kept just the single sign for both stores.

It took their first-born, Ralph Solano, to transform the two small stores into today's sprawling Solano's Boot & Western Wear. Off to college at UNM in Albuquerque, Ralph immersed himself in the Western-wear trade while working at New Mexico's only Sheplers store. His parents welcomed him home in 1976 to remake their business. Ralph expanded their space through the big corner building, tearing down walls and adding product lines. He mounted a big sign along Main Street with the store's new name.

Andy's leather shop moved to the fifth room where his regulars could reach him directly from the street while others could discover him as they walked through the store, drawn by the smell of leather.

Ralph built Solano's into a bustling regional attraction that's served ranches throughout northeastern New Mexico and into neighboring Colorado, Oklahoma, and Texas. Raton's townspeople and a growing number of tourists shop at Solano's, too. When Ralph's son Dreyson became a software engineer, he convinced his dad that the Web was the future. Drey launched the store's website in 2003 and now maintains it from his home in Blair, Nebraska.

Ralph managed Solano's for 28 years until his tragic death in 2004 prompted his sister Sandy to jettison her Denver corporate career and move home to manage the store. She joined her parents Andy and Fabie in working their six eight-hour days; entirely family-run, Solano's is closed only on Sundays. Sandy's daughter Tiffany is now a sales clerk, joining Drey as the company's third generation. Until they added a part-time sales clerk last year, the only employee not a Solano has been Sandi Simons, and she's been there 27 years. Solano's turnover rate is low.

Raton's 2014 Woman of the Year, Sandy is in her 12th year managing the family business, proud to show off a long line of products that includes wild rags, belt buckles, and clothing from Wrangler and Levi alongside four other brands of jeans. She custom shapes Stetson, Resistol and other hats. "We carry every style of hat," she says, "including modern, traditional, Old West and retro. We even have top hats, fedoras and derbies."

Lining the store's upper walls is a fascinating "hat cemetery" displaying 370 well-used hats complete with dirt, sweat and the names of those that wore them, including Mary Davis of the CS ranch and bull-riding champions Tuff and Roach Hedeman.

More than anything else, though, Solano's sells boots. "We design boots that Honcho makes for us, stamped with our brand on the inside," Sandy says, "along with boots by Justin, Tony Lama, Ariat and Nocona, plus work boots from Wolverine and Red Wing. Our biggest sellers are the tall-top cowboy boots."

The website brings customers from around the world. "One man in Korea saw our boots on the Internet and

custom-ordered a pair. Now he's bought seven," Sandy says. "My dad has people all over, including a man in Maryland, that send their boots or shoes for refurbishing, new soles and heels every year or two."

Andy says, "With a good boot, I can resole it four or five times, and I do same day service."

Sandy adds, "I can't tell you how many cowboys walk around here barefoot while he's refurbishing their boots."

Solano's carries leather goods including moccasins, belts, wallets and ladies' purses. "I make custom gun belts, scabbards and holsters," Andy says. "I put zippers in jackets and boots, and I repair purses, zippers, and shoes."

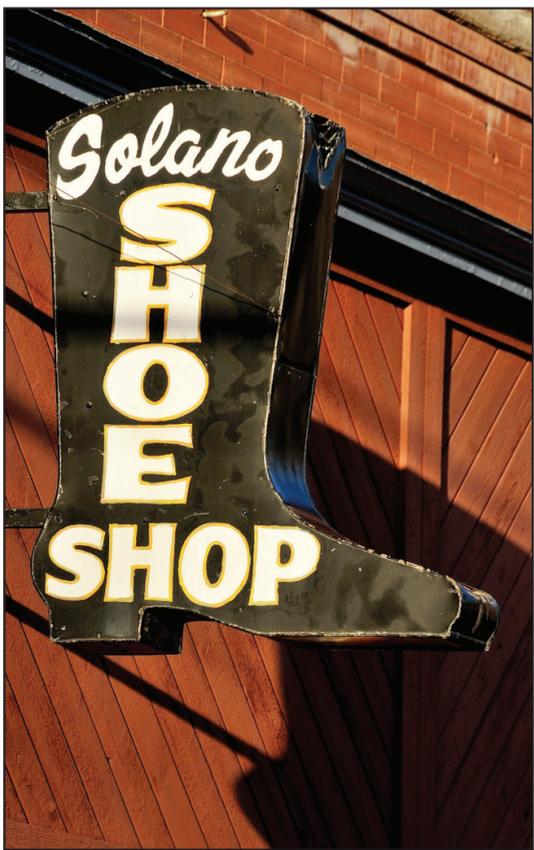
As they prepare to celebrate their store's 60th anniversary, Andy and Fabie have no intention of retiring. "He'd go crazy if he had to stay home," Fabie says, "and I don't want to stay home by myself."

"I'd miss my customers," Andy says. "I like the people. I'm hoping to work ten more years. I'll stay as long as my customers want me and keep coming."

On that basis, he and Fabie will be at Solano's a long time because customers keep coming to downtown Raton's busiest business, the thriving Western crossroads along the old Santa Fe Trail.

Solano's Boot & Western Wear, 101 S. 2nd St., Raton NM 87740, (575) 445-2632 or (888) 898-6813, solanoswesternwear.com, open 9 to 5 Monday through Saturday.

This Tim Keller feature first appeared in Western Horseman, November 2015.



Photos by Tim Keller / The Chronicle-News

Three generations of Solanos work at their Solano's Boot & Western Wear eight hours a day, six days a week. From left in order of (store and chronological) seniority are Andy, Fabie, Sandy, and Tiffany. The store celebrates its 60th anniversary in 2016.

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