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Blurbs

STAFF REPORTS

Tourism zone meeting

MONTROSE — Leaders of tourism-based organizations and public agencies are invited to a Monday presentation concerning potential capital projects that could be eligible for funding under a proposed regional tourism authority for Montrose, Ouray, Delta, Hinsdale, San Miguel and Gunnison counties.

The meeting begins at 10 a.m. Monday in the Montrose County Commissioners' board room (161 S. Townsend Ave.), and will end no later than noon.

Montrose County and Montrose Citizens for Funding Our Future (MC4FF) are hosting the meeting.

The MC4FF is working with all six counties to apply for designation as a regional tourism zone, to be called GREAT Colorado. Only two tourism zones can be designated each year, and the designation would make the area eligible for state money to fund tourism-related infrastructure projects, including maintenance and management of related facilities.

Montrose County Commissioner David White in an e-mail urged attendees to bring a "wish list" of projects that would fall within the guidelines of promoting tourism within the proposed regional tourism zone — projects as varied as trails, bike paths, restroom facilities, signage, visitor centers, sports or recreation-related facilities, museums, events centers, rest stops, and infrastructure improvements (streets, sidewalks, sewers, water lines and more).

Attendees will need to provide a project description, estimated cost, an estimate of anticipated incremental revenue, and contact information for a representative.

This information will be compiled on a regional tourism plan project submission form, which will be submitted with MC4FF's application for the regional tourism zone designation.

Go & Do

Ouray Mine Tours

OURAY — The Ouray County Winter Mine Tour will be Saturday, Feb. 26. Those interested will meet at the Ouray Visitor Center at 10 a.m. Participants will carpool to the lower end of CR 31 where it connects to Hwy. 550. There is a minimum donation of \$25 which includes a catered lunch and refreshments. It is asked that attendees bring cash or check payable to the Ouray County Historical Society Saturday.

The mines which will be visited include: Guston, Robinson, Genesee-Vanderbilt, Yankee Girl, and discussion of the Mount King, Barstow, and the Idarado. The tour will be by skis or snowshoes on the lower end of CR 31.

The guides will be
 • Don Paulson, curator of the Ouray County Historical Society (OCHS). He will address the cultural and historical aspects of each site.
 • Rachel Boothby of the Uncompahgre Watershed Project (UWP). She will speak about reclamation needs and options.

Info/questions: Don Paulson, 325-0931. This is a fundraiser for the Uncompahgre Watershed Partnership (UWP) and the Ouray County Historical Society (OCHS) to draw attention to the need for both historical preservation and remediation of mine sites. Proceeds are divided evenly between the two groups.

With a little help from AARP



JOEL BLOCKER / DAILY PRESS

AARP tax-aid volunteers, wearing blue shirts, help area taxpayers with their preparation and e-filing of their federal and Colorado income tax returns at the Montrose Pavilion Senior Center meeting room Thursday afternoon. Free income tax advice, preparation and e-filing of federal and Colorado income tax returns is available to all low-to-middle income taxpayers, with special attention to those age 60 and over, through the AARP Tax-Aide program. The tax-aid service is available Tuesdays from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. and on Thursdays from 12:30 p.m. to 3 p.m., walk-ins are welcome. The service is available until April 14.

Cops: Girl assaulted by known sex offender

BY KATHARHYNN HEIDELBERG
 DAILY PRESS SENIOR WRITER

DELTA — A Delta-area teen whose caregivers knowingly left her with two registered sex offenders was sexually assaulted by one of the men, Joe Andrew Aragon, an arrest affidavit alleges.

Aragon, 52, was arrested Feb. 2, months after the alleged assault occurred in Peach Valley, Delta County. He is charged with sexual assault on a child by one in

a position of trust; sexual assault/10-year age difference, and unlawful sexual contact-victim incapable/use of force or threats.

Aragon also faces possible revocation of his probation in a false-reporting case from 2010.

He waived advisement Wednesday. Aragon returns to court at 3 p.m. March 9 to have a preliminary hearing set in the sexual assault case, and

for entry of plea in the revocation case.

Aragon was previously convicted of a sex offense, the affidavit says. He was arrested in 2003 on suspicion of unlawful sexual contact, according to background records from the Colorado Bureau of Investigation.

The records show a guilty plea to that charge, a misdemeanor, 2004, and

SEE ASSAULTED, PAGE A3

MMHI board candidates interviewed

BY KATI O'HARE
 DAILY PRESS WRITER

MONTROSE — Directors of Montrose Memorial Hospital Inc. are expected to fill their open board positions Saturday.

Four of the six applicants — Robb Ruyle, Don Gladwell, Theresa Leben and Dr. Mary Vader — were interviewed Thursday by a subcommittee of the nonprofit, MMHI.

The committee, consisting of MMHI directors, Patricia Dickinson, Debra Harmon, Bill Bennett and Dr. Louis Winkler, was created to interview and narrow the list of candidates the full board would consider, Bennett said. With there being only four applicants, all will be considered by the board during a 2:30 p.m. Saturday meeting at Brooks & Brooks law firm, 516 E. Main St.

Thursday, the subcommittee conducted 30-minute, open interviews of each applicant. Similar questions were asked of each candidate, in-

SEE MMHI, PAGE A2

Woman found dead in hotel Thursday

BY KATHARHYNN HEIDELBERG
 DAILY PRESS SENIOR WRITER

MONTROSE — The death of a 40-year-old woman whose body was found Thursday in her hotel room should galvanize the community into action, the hotel's proprietor said.

"This is a horrible thing that could be a lesson that we need to reach out," said Jody Holland of Affordable Inn.

Holland uses her hotels to provide temporary shelter to homeless people. Thursday, she made a horrific discovery: the body of a woman who had been staying at the inn for about a week.

A housekeeper first noticed something was amiss when she could not rouse the woman, whose identity has not yet been formally released.

The Daily Press confirmed her identity, and the existence of a criminal record, through other sources, but will wait for the coroner to release her name, because next of kin may not yet have been notified.

Holland said her housekeeper first thought the woman was sleeping, so she closed the room door. But when she entered the woman's room Thursday, she found her in the same position, and rushed to notify Holland, who immediately checked the room, and called 911.

Police are investigating the death, but said they do not think it is suspicious.

"We're treating it as an unattended

SEE HOTEL, PAGE A2

Music to my ears



JOEL BLOCKER / DAILY PRESS

Marge McCarty, sitting at the piano, plays a song for Montrose Senior Center Volunteers, from left, Veronica Miller and Louise Simonson during the center's lunch hour Thursday. The center offers nutritional lunches for seniors in the community for \$4, Monday through Friday. The entertainment is free, and anyone is welcome to participate.

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Local:

Police release sketch
 of man found dead
 in Delta
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TODAY'S WEATHER

Cloudy. A chance of snow in the morning. Then a chance of rain and snow in the afternoon.
 High 45, Low 30
 See details, Page A11



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