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New twist to old colors ... Dolores County Sheriff Jerry Martin was proud of the new sheriff vehicle logo. The logo is done in Bulldog Blue and Gold, to honor the home team. Martin said he had been

working on the design and colors for several months, and he hopes the community will be proud of the design

Biologists To Discuss Sunflower Crop Concerns

Colorado Parks and Wildlife staff will discuss ongoing research related to damage by wildlife to sunflower fields at a meeting in Dove Creek on February 23.

The agency started work during the summer of 2011 to try to determine how to keep deer and elk from eating sunflowers in this area of southwestern Colorado. Wildlife managers put up three types of temporary fencing to study their effectiveness. Also, some deer and elk were trapped and fitted with radio collars so that their movements could be tracked throughout the year.

At the meeting, agency biologists will discuss the research design, field activities expected to occur during the next year, share preliminary information from the study and answer any questions.

Parks and Wildlife is also looking for sunflower growers who are interested in participating in the research project this summer.

The meeting will be 6:30 p.m., February 23, at the Dolores County Courthouse, 409 Main St., Dove Creek.

For more information call Matt Hammond at 970-749-8804.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife works with private landowners throughout the state to minimize wildlife conflicts. Agricultural producers concerned with damage by big game can contact any local agency office. District wildlife managers will provide advice on how to prevent damage from wildlife and explain programs available to agricultural producers.

For more information on Parks and Wildlife private lands programs, see: <http://wildlife.state.co.us/LandWater/PrivateLandProgram/Pages/PrivateLandPrograms.aspx>.

Forest moneys help the Dolores County School District budget

For the first time in months the story on school funding wasn't all bad at the February 9 School Board meeting. The Forest Service distributed checks to rural counties and stipulated that 25 percent of the money goes to local school districts and 25 percent to the County Road and Bridge. Another rule is that three people from the school and three County Commissioners have to agree on how to distribute the remainder of the money. Early in the week those six people all agreed to split the remainder of the money with half going to the school and half to the County. So February 9, the School Board enjoyed the addition of \$159,000 to its budget.

County Commissioners said the funding from the Forest Service is on a year-to-year basis.

The lack of an official attendance policy troubled School Board members, but there were no suggestions. Superintendent Bruce Hankins said that it is up to parents to see that children attend school. "If we get pushy with them, they take their kids out of school and home-school them and that doesn't solve anything," he said. Board President Travis Randolph said that the school has made several runs at enforcing an attendance policy but nothing worked very well. Hankins suggested that each case be treated individually. One program is working to improve attendance with freshman in high school, but Hankins said that by then the battle is usually lost. He would like to see more attention paid to younger students.

Hankins said the District will continue to work with Rico parents to try to find ways to keep the school there open. He said the

plight of the school has generated several newspaper articles and television programs, but hasn't seemed to change many Rico parent's minds about where they will send their children to school. There wasn't much participation at a recent open house.

Hankins said that a Rico parent had requested that the School Board film and broadcast Board meetings. He said that available bandwidth may not be enough, but he would investigate.

Hankins said that it appears that EagleNet is going to install fiberoptic cable to Dove Creek. The Colorado legislature approved a \$100 million grant to install cable to all of the schools in the state. Hankins said that officials are projecting a July 1 launch and a September completion.

Principal Ty Gray asked if the District needs some new people on the state-required accountability committee. A meeting was scheduled, but only John Davis, Hankins, and Gray showed up. Hankins said that the school needs a five-year plan and that would be a good place for the Accountability Committee to start. People who agreed to be on the committee will be contacted to see if they wish to continue.

The Board agreed to pay employee health, vision, and dental insurance another year. Bookkeeper Steve Cole said that this is the first year it hasn't gone up by 15%.

It was the first meeting that School Board members had lap top computers. Principal Ty Gray told members that he would be e-mailing financial information each month. This month he revealed that several outdated bank accounts

have been discovered, some of which have bank accounts and some have debt. An Aviation Club has \$61. There is also a Letterman's Club and several others. The one most in debt is a Wood Resale account, which is in the hole \$2,300. The motion to close out the accounts by the end of the year excluded the wood resale account that will require more research.

Hankins said that the School has already contracted for the printing of two yearbooks at \$6,000 each. "We're on the hook for that," he said. Last year the yearbook fell through the cracks with the sudden departure of Henry Anselmo. Local

parents have been working on finishing last year's and this year a new teacher is working on another yearbook. Gray said that the school will seek a less expensive option next year.

The Board approved new credit cards school employees can use to pay travel expense. The previous cards had to have an individual's name but the new ones only a school department. Employees will still have to check out credit cards before a trip.

The Board accepted resignations from middle school basketball coach Rick Ernst and elementary

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COGC attends Planning Commission by phone

Dolores County Planners spent over an hour on the telephone with Steve Labowskie, southwest Field Inspector for the Colorado Oil and Gas Commission at a meeting February 13. This reporter missed the meeting and had to rely on Commission Secretary Margret Daves who kept the minutes.

Labowskie said that the Kinder Morgan Doe Canyon plant is under the regulation of the COGC and if his organization hears complaints, it will investigate. Labowskie, who has been the southwest inspector for about six months, said he knew of no complaints on this particular plant. COGC regulates odor, noise, light and other nuisances. Labowskie said that odor problems are sometimes harder to verify because of things like wind.

After the phone call ended Kinder Morgan's Bob Clayton complained to Planners that Labowskie had told them exactly

what he had been telling them.

Clayton brought better drawings of proposed changes at the compressor station and told Planners that Kinder Morgan has hired Engineering Dynamics Incorporated (EDI) to come from Texas and run vibration tests on the existing plant and its foundation in an attempt to design a better foundation for the addition.

Clayton expressed concern about delays and warned Planners that Kinder Morgan has deadlines. Planning Chairman Steve Garchar assured Clayton that the Planning Commission is being careful to do

things right and has no incentive to hold up the project other than nuisances it may create.

Planners approved a motion to accept the application as complete.

The meeting lasted past 10:00.

Planners are scheduled to meet with County Commissioners February 27 for a workshop at 6:00. If there is nothing on the agenda a regular meeting will not be held.

A public hearing was scheduled for the Kinder Morgan plant expansion March 5 at 7:00 in the courtroom. A representative from EDI will be invited.

Honoring Veterans

DCBS will honor all Veterans Friday, February 17 at half time of the Girls Varsity Basketball game. The game will begin at 5:30 p.m. and there will be a section roped off for all Veterans and their families. Veterans will get into the game for free. We would like to encourage the community to come and support the Lady Bulldogs and honor those who have served our country.