

### Early Deadlines

The Chronicle-News will be closed on Thursday, Nov. 26 and Friday, Nov. 27 in observance of the Thanksgiving holiday. We will also have early holiday deadlines: All classified and display ads will be due by 10 a.m. on Monday, Nov. 23 for the Wednesday, Nov. 25 edition and by Noon Tuesday, Nov. 24 for the Friday, Nov. 27 and the Monday, Nov. 30 editions.

## THE FINE PRINT

Please see page 5 for all SCHOOL EVENTS

### FRIDAY - Nov 13

#### Al-Anon Family

Family Group meets at 6 p.m. Fridays, Presbyterian Church, 801 San Pedro, in the basement. Info call: Sharone 719-846-9999. No charge.

#### Eagles #179

Eagles Regular Meeting is Fri. at 8 p.m. in Eagles Hall.

#### Raton Service

3rd Annual Healing Our Hearts Candlelight Ceremony - Fri. 6 p.m. at Long Term Care Facility in Raton. Sponsored by Miners' Colfax Medical Center.

### SATURDAY - Nov 14

#### Gideons

Fisher's Peak Gideons - 7 a.m. Saturday Prayer Meeting. Call 719-680-0290 for location. Please note phone number has changed.

#### Rummage Sale

First United Methodist Church - Sat. 8-Noon @ the church, corner of State and Broom.

#### NDSAR

Santa Fe Trail Chapter's monthly meeting - Sat. 10 a.m. - Davis Building at TSJC Campus. Guest Speaker & program to be presented by Louise Clapp.

#### Flu-Shot Clinic

H1N1 Flu-Shot Clinic @ Walsenburg Health Department - Sat. 9 a.m.-1 p.m. - Target Populations: Pregnant Women, Household contacts of children under 6 months, emergency medical services, children 6 months to 24 years and non-elderly adults with underlying risk conditions.

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## RIVER CALL

Purgatoire River Call-as of 11/12/09 Johns Priority #13 1/1/1864 Trinidad Lake accounting: Release-0.02 acre ft.; Inflow-71.62 acre ft.; Evaporation-3.60 acre ft.; Content-15,344 acre ft.; Elevation-6,172.67; Precipitation-0

Downstream River Call-John Martin Reservoir "JMR" 12/31/1948 (Provided by Division of Water Resources)



TSJC Photo by Mike Salbato

Trinidad St. Jr. College student Kaddo Bates played the bagpipes on campus Wednesday to honor veterans in his family and other American servicemen and servicewomen being recognized on Veterans' Day. Bates has been playing the bagpipes since he was 13 years old.

## National nursing home chain takes long look at Trinidad facility

By MIKE GARRETT  
The Chronicle-News

Now that ballot measure 5A failed to pass voters approval to increase their property taxes to fund the county's Health Services District in the Nov. 3 election, where does Trinidad State Nursing Home go from here? Well, the state is now likely to start entertaining offers from outside for-profit nursing home chains to possibly come in and purchase the home. Or the state may continue to play the waiting game.

The Trinidad nursing home has actually made money during the past three months and October could also finish in the black, according to nursing home administrator Lee Burkholder. He said Thursday afternoon that a for-profit nursing home chain had just looked at the property, although no specific numbers or offers were exchanged. He said they were a chain of 70 nursing homes, including four others in Colorado.

"They toured the facility and said they were impressed with the building," Burkholder stated. "From what they had read and heard from the state it was going to be wreck. But that's not what they saw at all. They spent about 3 and a half hours here and might be interested. They said the numbers have to work and that's what we're going to hear from any for-profit," said Burkholder. "They don't buy places just to be good to the community."

Burkholder said he is sending them the home's financial performances and budgets to check out. "If the numbers are right for them, they'll come back."

While the home's assessed valuation has been placed at \$4 million, Burkholder said the nursing home group doesn't think it's worth that. "But they think it's worth more than \$1 million."

The Health Service District's initial offer to take over its ownership was for around \$450,000 although at the last community forum meeting board members were going to try and sweeten that offer as much as they could. But with voters turning down any funding mechanism for the district, any local offer is probably out the window for the foreseeable future.

Burkholder said he thinks the state is still going to try and get as much as it can for the facility to get a return on its recent maintenance and upgrade investments into the building.

While divestiture deadlines like June 30, 2010 have been tossed around in exchanges between local interests and the state Department of Human Services and state office of Veterans Nursing Homes, Burkholder pointed out the state is no longer losing money on the facility.

"We've made a net income of \$66,000 over the past three months (July through September)," he said, "and October looks good," adding that doesn't mean the state will likely back off from its earlier commitment to divest itself from the property after years of money-losing propositions. "But there are no financial incentives for rushing into it (sale) right now."

The margin between profit and loss is still mostly

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## Economic downturn continues to wreak havoc with city budgets

By MIKE GARRETT  
The Chronicle-News

The severe economic downturn continues to have a ripple affect on city of Trinidad utilities departments.

Power and Light Superintendent Dave Brunelli laid it on the line for city council to address a 2010 and beyond electric utility rate hike at Tuesday's work session while Utilities (water, gas and sewer) Superintendent Jim Fernandez is having to rob Peter to pay Paul by taking funds out of his Water Department budget to offset revenue shortfalls in his Sewer Department budget.

Brunelli explained his dilemma very simply: His department revenues haven't kept pace with expenditures as the cost of purchasing electric power for the city keeps rising while revenues remain stagnant under a no-growth or declining local economy. He is asking the city for a consumer electric rate increase that would average around 4.8 percent over the next three years.

Brunelli said in projecting a \$7 million department budget for 2010, including \$5 million to purchase electric power for the city, and comparing that with projected revenues and cutting back on proposed capital improvement project expenses, he's still looking at a minimum \$200,000 budget deficit next year. He said the only way to reduce that deficit is lay off employees and line crewmen "and I can't operate that way."

Ever since 2004 when power and light was purchasing its electricity from Tri-State Generation at 4 cents a kilowatt hour, the purchase cost has risen every year to where it has doubled to 8 cents an hour under other power suppliers, Brunelli said. It's also costing the department more just to light neighborhoods and back yards, now a \$120,000 a year expense. Meanwhile, Brunelli said sales growth from attracting new electric utility customers has grown only around 1.5 percent a year, largely because new planned housing subdivisions like Cougar Canyon and commercial development.

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## WEATHER WATCH

**Today:** A 10 percent chance of showers. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 58. Breezy, with a west southwest wind between 10 and 20 mph, with gusts as high as 30 mph.

**Tonight:** A slight chance of rain showers before 8pm, then a slight chance of snow showers. Cloudy, with a low around 28. West wind around 5 mph becoming calm. Chance of precipitation is 20 percent.

**Saturday:** A slight chance of snow showers before 10am, then a chance of rain showers. Cloudy, with a high near 49. East northeast wind between 5 and 10 mph. Chance of precipitation is 30 percent.

**Saturday Night:** A 50 percent chance of snow. Cloudy, with a low around 25. Southwest wind around 5 mph becoming calm. New snow accumulation of less than one inch possible.

**Sunday:** A 50 percent chance of snow. Cloudy, with a high near 36. South southwest wind 5 to 15 mph becoming north northeast. New snow accumulation of less than one inch possible.

**Sunday Night:** A 30 percent chance of snow. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 22. North northwest wind between 10 and 15 mph.

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