Recreational marijuana sales

Recreational marijuana sales in the Gunnison Valley are no longer a pipe dream. The first sales of pot and pot products began Wednesday morning at Acme Dispensary on Belleview Avenue in Crested Butte. Town Council voted unanimously 5-0 Tuesday night to approve Acme’s application for recreational sales. Two council members, Mayor Aaron Hackney and Councilman Jim Schmidt, were not present for the vote, which passed after a public hearing that no one attended, according to Town Clerk Shelley Jansen.

Selling began at Acme at 10 a.m. Wednesday, and employees described business as “steady” all morning. To celebrate, the business hosted an open house with music, food and drinks later in the day. Acme was formerly a medical marijuana outlet, but changed its license to sell recreational marijuana after Town Council voted to allow recreational sales in the town last fall. Council approved up to five permits for either medical, recreational or dual sales of marijuana, but businesses must first obtain a recreational license from the state before a town permit will be issued. The businesses are limited to a section of Fifth and Sixth streets, and a block and a half on the north end of Sixth Street.

Drought assistance available for ag producers

Agricultural producers in Ouray, Gunnison and Montrose counties may be eligible for emergency loans. The loans are being provided as a result of Colorado’s disaster designation for primary and contiguous counties, for damages and losses caused by drought. The low-interest loans are available to operators of family-size farms or ranches who are unable to obtain credit elsewhere. Loans are based on physical and production losses caused by drought that began this past June. Producers must file an application for an emergency loan through the Farm Service Agency by Feb. 12. Each application will be considered on its own merit, taking into account the extent of losses, available security, repayment ability and other eligibility requirements.

For more information, contact Laurie Neilson, at 970-241-3499, ext 2.

County to receive $1 million for courthouse

Gunnison County Commissioners approved a $1 million Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) grant during their regular meeting on Tuesday. The contract has not yet been received by the county, but commissioners moved to allow County Manager Matthew Birnie to sign the agreement on County’s behalf once it’s received. The funds will be put toward the county’s courthouse reconstruction project.

DOLA grants are awarded by the state of Colorado to address public facility and service needs. Gunnison County Council will receive the full amount they requested from the state. “We didn’t expect to get the whole thing,” said Commissioner Phil Chamberland. “Obviously, Paul and Matthew did a good job on their presentation (to DOLA).”

BRIEFS

Visions sought for valley’s future

Leaders come away from workshop seeking unity

Community leaders from across the Gunnison Valley recently returned from Glenwood Springs after an intensive, three-day community prosperity workshop called the Community Builders Leadership Institute, hosted by the Soranor Institute.

The team was made up of representatives from the public and private sectors, and was awarded a scholarship to attend the event. In discussion forums and presentations from experts from around the region and the nation during the conference Jan. 15-17, the team made progress toward the goal of creating a framework for valley-wide partnership and collaboration. They report having come away from the event with a fresh set of ideas and a new sense of unity.

Team members said they believe there is a need to identify a common destination for the valley’s future, even though there may be different paths to that destination. “What our team was able to come away with has the potential to be a valley-wide game changer,” said Gunnison Commissioner and team member Carolyn Riggs. “We have such amazing assets in the Gunnison Valley and we will begin with that foundation for economic and community prosperity that has never been tackled to this degree.

“Our future prosperity is reliant upon local leaders stepping up to unify our community. We also recognize that we need to invite and engage the Gunnison Valley community to successfully create a pathway forward that enhances our economic prosperity. We are in a great position to do that.”

Next, the group will go back to their respective entities to describe the workshop and ideas for subsequent steps. Look for a letter to the editor in local newspapers describing tangible next steps from the workshop.

For more information, contact Cathie Pagano or Russ Forrest at Gunnison County Community Development. 970-641-0360.

Members of the Gunnison Valley team discuss connectivity and linkages across the county. Pictured here (l-r) are Bryan Wickenhauser, Jonathan Houch, Russ Forrest and Glen Michel.