

NEWS IN BRIEF

RIDGWAY

OFFICIALS DELAY ACTION ON RIVER DISTRICT ORDINANCE

Ridgway's Uncompahgre River Overlay District ordinance, which would enact new development restrictions to preserve, improve and protect the river corridor as a town amenity, did not go to second reading and adoption at the Jan. 10 meeting of the Ridgway Town Council as expected.

Instead, the controversial ordinance, opposed by many riverside property owners but supported by many town residents, was scheduled for a future workshop. The workshop date was decided after The Watch's press time and was unavailable.

Town Manager Jen Coates said the staff did not complete revisions to the ordinance in time to bring it to second reading this week. Due to the delay, the ordinance must be re-introduced for another first reading in order to move forward.

Coates added that it's possible a first reading will happen at the workshop or the council's regular meeting in February.

TELLURIDE

TCHN, UNIVERSITY OFFER ADVANCED-CARE WORKSHOPS

When someone no longer can speak for themselves, the person's loved ones often must take on the burden of making difficult decisions. Creating an advanced care plan can help your family honor your wishes when you cannot voice your preferences.

Tri-County Health Network is collaborating with the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus to offer free advanced care planning workshops in Telluride and the West End on Thursday, Jan. 18.

Three workshops are planned for that day:

- 10:30 a.m.: Nucla Senior Center in downtown Nucla (386 Main St.)

- 5 p.m.: Wilkinson Public Library Program Room in Telluride (workshop in Spanish)

- 6:30 p.m.: Wilkinson Public Library Program Room in Telluride (workshop in English)

During the workshops, participants will learn how to select a person to make health-care decisions on their behalf and will receive coaching about different choices for end-of-life care. At the end of the workshop, participants will have a document that they can give to their doctors, families and friends that details their care preferences. Workshops are open to all adults aged 18 and older.

Through advanced care planning, a person can establish the kind of medical care they would like to receive under different circumstances in case the ability to communicate is lost. Your wishes can be fulfilled, but also your family members will not have to endure the stress, uncertainty and potential conflict that may come with making medical decisions on your behalf.

To learn more or reserve a spot, call TCH Network at 970-708-7096.

IN THE NEWS

TELLURIDE

Telski CEO addresses community chatter

No truth to rumors of an early closure, Jensen says

By JESSICA KUTZ
Staff Reporter

During a Q&A session with Telluride Ski Resort CEO Bill Jensen on Wednesday morning, one message came through loud and clear: Any rumors about the resort planning to shut down early due to the low-snow accumulation are just that.

Jensen said the falsities have been a bit of a plague this year, with the buzz around town being that the resort is going to close early, snowmakers are running out of water, Telski's water rights expire this month and the Forest Service will be shutting down the resort.

Are such rumors true? According to Jensen, not one bit.

Unfortunately, Jensen said, these messages were "shared with a lot of our guests" around the holidays — something that has been a bit of a challenge for the resort to overcome — which is why he set about to squelch any further discussion on the topic.

As he stated during Wednesday's session at the New Sheridan Chop House: "I am here to tell you guys that unless it is 120 degrees in March, we will be open until April 8."

"We have never even had a conversation about (the resort closing)," he added.

As for the state of the resort's water supply, Jensen assured at-



Telluride Ski Resort CEO Bill Jensen talks to a small group of residents and media members during a Q&A session on Wednesday morning at the New Sheridan Chop House. Jensen addressed rumors that have circulated throughout the community over the last few weeks, saying Telski plans to stay open for the entire season. (Photo by Jessica Kutz/The Watch)

tendees that the reservoirs are full and that Telski has the ability to use water for snowmaking until Feb. 23, well into the ski season, which is scheduled to end on April 8.

In addition to addressing some falsehoods, Jensen provided a look

into the business practices of the resort this year.

In terms of employee numbers, Jensen said the resort has nine more employees than last year (with four of those working for an acquired ski locker business). Over the holidays, Jensen said the re-

sort's peak payroll was running up a tab of \$160,000 a day. The average Telski payroll during a normal year is \$120,000 (not during peak times).

To attract visitors, lift tickets were sold at a reduced price dur-

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MONTROSE

Hospital settles age-discrimination suit

\$400K to be divvied up among 29 former workers

By JUSTIN CRIADO
Associate Editor

Montrose will pay 29 former employees — ages 40 and older — a total of \$400,000 in settlement of an age discrimination lawsuit, according to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

The settlement, which was announced Jan. 4, is the result of a multi-year investigation sparked by former longtime employees — some with over 20 years experience — who alleged they were fired or forced to resign due to their age, according to Laurie Jaekel, trial attorney at the EEOC's Denver office.

"During both the investigation and the litigation, we uncovered evidence of hostile and ageist comments toward older employees from hospital managers and supervisors," she said.

The Age Discrimination in Employment Act protects individuals 40 years of age or older from employment discrimination based on age, she explained.

Former nurse Katherine Casias filed an age discrimination charge in March 2013, which prompted the EEOC investigation.

As a result, another former nurse, Sharon Eshelman, filed a similar charge in April 2016. Jaekel



Montrose Memorial Hospital will pay \$400,000 to 29 former employees as a result of an age discrimination lawsuit settlement. (Courtesy photo)

el said 113 former hospital employees were contacted during the age-discrimination investigation. Over two dozen additional former employees joined the lawsuit, which the EEOC filed in September 2016.

"We determined that other workers age 40 and older were ag-

grieved by the hospital's discriminatory practices," Jaekel said.

A former nurse, who worked at the hospital for over 35 years, testified that several comments made by then-chief nursing operator Joan Napolilli were an example of the hospital staff's discriminatory

behavior.

"She overheard Napolilli say, 'We've got to get all of these old monkeys out of here and get cheery young things in,'" according to Jaekel. Napolilli retired in February 2017.

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