

# OURAY COUNTY Plaindealer

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Ouray, Silverton and Durango representatives joined with Colorado Department of Transportation crew members to celebrate the re-opening of Red Mountain Pass with a ribbon cutting ceremony on Friday, June 13. The six week project completely closed the road to traffic twice a day throughout the weeks as crews removed extra rocks from the slopes, while overnight and for one hour during the day one lane alternating traffic was allowed. Earlier in the year, the road was completely closed for weeks. The middle lane fencing barrier "took a beating" from the rockfall, said project engineer Kevin Curry. CDOT removed the fencing last weekend, opening up both lanes, and replaced it with rockfall netting above the slope, which CDOT will continue to monitor every two weeks to determine what further mitigation needs to be completed. While CDOT also re-paved the roadway during this project, crews will return this fall for further repairs to the highway.

Plaindealer photo by Sheridan Block

## CITY OF OURAY

# Council talks pot ballots

BY SHERIDAN BLOCK  
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As decided by city council last year, voters in November will determine whether or not retail and other commercial pot businesses have any place in Ouray. However, council and city staff still have much work to be done before the election, including drafting appropriate ballot language for the issues.

During Monday night's regular meeting, city council reviewed two draft resolutions with a total of three ballot questions regarding commercial marijuana. The first resolution has two questions: should the city allow retail sales of marijuana, and should the city allow manufacturing, growing and testing operations for marijuana.

Council felt that both questions were straightforward and clear enough for voters to make their decision. A minor change of the word "retail" to "commer-

cial" was made in the second question to further distinguish it from the first, to avoid any possible confusion.

The second resolution presented ballot language for a possible sales tax rate, should voters approve retail marijuana sales within the city. According to the staff report, the question is more complicated because of TABOR requirements, due to the question being tax-related.

If citizens vote to allow retail sales, there will be an automatic three percent sales tax requirement, required of all retail businesses in Ouray. The language of the resolution would allow the city to put a higher amount of sales tax on marijuana products. Council will need to approve a proposed sales tax amount, should they decide to include the question on the ballot.

As proposed, the ballot question also allows council to either increase or decrease the sales tax rate for retail marijuana and retail marijuana products

"without further voter approval" as long as the tax rate "does not exceed 10 percent."

Staff also informed council that should the city decide to tack on an additional sales tax to pot products, the city would have to self-collect additional sales tax amounts directly from the retail operations, as the state will not collect beyond the city's standard three percent rate.

Council was also presented with a table of other communities that have imposed an additional sales tax on marijuana on top of regular rates. Many municipalities, including Breckenridge, Carbondale and Manitou Springs have imposed an additional five percent tax rate, while other cities like Denver, Boulder and Littleton added only an additional three percent rate (3.5 percent in Boulder). Ridgway, which is home to the county's only medical and retail marijuana facility, does not charge an addi-

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## OURAY COUNTY

# Fossey dies unexpectedly

BY SHERIDAN BLOCK  
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County and former city employee Dan Fossey died unexpectedly on Monday afternoon, June 16.

"It was very unexpected," said Ouray Mayor Pam Larson. "It wasn't something anyone would have expected that he would have died so quickly."

According to Larson, Fossey was not in the hospital at the time and was working on Monday.

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## TOWN OF RIDGWAY

# Energy investment

BY BILL TIEDJE  
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The Town of Ridgway will buy 10 panels from the San Miguel Power Association's Community Solar Array in Paradox Valley, investing in renewable energy and lowering energy bills over time.

With a net purchase price of \$6,940, the town expects to save \$2,000 in energy bills over the next 20 years, in addition to realizing the environmental benefits provided by the renewable energy source, according to Town Manager Jen Coates.

Owned and operated by the Clean Energy Collective, the one mega-watt Community Solar Array consists of 4,584 panels.

Each panel is linked in a series of 13 panels and is guaranteed to performed at a minimum of 80 percent efficiency for 25 years.

In total, the array produces enough electricity to power roughly 250 homes for a year, said Wiley Freeman, San Miguel Power Association energy services technician.

SMPA purchases the electricity generated by the array from CEC and delivers the power to nearby consumers, such as houses and farms.

The array was constructed in 2012 by Martifer Solar USA, which contracted Mountain Power Co. of Ridgway and Sunsense Solar of Carbondale for the installation of panels.

Freeman explained the panels need sunlight to work but will

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The Community Solar Array, located west of Naturita in Paradox Valley, has a total of 4,854 panels, creating enough electricity to supply roughly 250 homes.

Plaindealer photo by Bill Tiedje

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