



Town of New Castle Newsletter

A Monthly Update for Residents

FEBRUARY 2022

February is New Castle History Month



In 2015 the Town Council proclaimed February to be New Castle History month and ordered an annual celebration of our history each February. The 2022 event is scheduled for February 5 and will feature the history (and the future) of the New Castle School building on Main Street.

Throughout 2021 residents watched the clean-up of the school site, and Founders Day gives them the opportunity to tour the building and see the result. Residents who went to the New Castle School will share reminiscences, and historic photos from Steve Rippy's collection to be on display in the Community Center during the potluck following the tour.

Lodging Tax Question on April Ballot

During the February 1 Town Council meeting, Councilors will consider a resolution to add an issue to the ballot. Pending Council approval, the April election ballot could contain a voter question to increase the town's lodging tax from 2.5% to 5%. The lodging tax is paid by visitors to the town who stay at any motel, VRBO, Airbnb or bed and breakfast as a percentage of their bill. Currently the 2.5% lodging tax nets approximately \$30,000 annually.

Lodging tax funds remitted to the town are currently dedicated to economic development, community enhancements, or marketing of the town. The town has historically used these funds to enhance Main Street, host community events, market businesses etc. The Town Council favors using any new voter-approved lodging tax funds to further support economic development programs.

Lessons From the Marshall Fire

The Marshall Fire in Boulder County was a wake-up call for the entire state. Out-of-control fires are no longer limited to wilderness areas. The state's perpetual state of drought, when combined with winds and flammable building materials, can lead to fires in densely populated areas. And these fires can occur at any time of year.

The Climate and Environment Commission will continue to share fire preparedness materials in 2022. Among their suggestions:

- 1) Sign up for the Garfield County Emergency Notification System at <https://garco911.com>.
- 2) Prepare a Go-Bag with items that you will need to take in case of a hasty evacuation. Include items like a cell phone charger, a change of clothes, face masks, blankets, copies of essential documents, whatever you may need if forced from home.
- 3) Have a plan for your animals Make sure they are wearing their New Castle license tags in case they are separated from you.
- 4) Update your homeowner's insurance policies to cover the replacement value of your home and possessions.
- 5) Make sure you're familiar with all the routes which lead out of town.



Ice Rink Opens in Breslin Park

Throughout the month of January, the New Castle Parks Department worked to construct an ice rink in Frank Breslin Park. The combination of snow, melting ice and animal incursions forced delays as the rink had to be re-flooded several times. Finally on January 23, the rink opened to skaters. New Castle residents Hunter, Avery and Emerson brought their dad to be the very first family on the ice.

Skaters report that the first weekend was a huge success, and the announcement of the opening garnered the largest ever response on the Visit New Castle Facebook page.

Keeping the ice smooth is still a challenge, and the town will close the rink between the hours of 12 noon and 3:00 pm each day. The ice tends to soften during those warmer hours and is vulnerable to overuse. Town staff will monitor the area and make improvements as the needs arise.

Frank Breslin Park is south of the Colorado River and west of the bridge, across from VR Cabinet Makers (the former Mr. T's site). The park also holds the town's disc golf course and boat ramp.

CDOT Reports Spike in Highway Deaths

Last year, 672 people were killed on Colorado roadways, and that number is expected to increase as the Colorado Department of Transportation continues to receive additional crash reports. This marks a 50% increase from the 447 fatalities recorded a decade ago in 2011.

Recently CDOT, the Colorado State Patrol and the Colorado Springs Police Department urged Coloradans to drive like lives depend on it. They attributed the increase in fatalities to risky driving behavior. According to John Lorme, Director of Maintenance & Operations for CDOT, "Drivers making poor decisions — whether it's speeding, being on their phones, or not buckling up — cause more than 90% of the fatal crashes on our roadways."

CDOT, Colorado State Patrol and Colorado Springs Police Department, among other statewide traffic safety advocates, call on drivers statewide to:

- Never drive after consuming alcohol, marijuana, or other drugs
- Avoid speeding
- Always buckle up, no matter the distance
- Never text and drive
- Use extra caution around pedestrians and bicyclists

New Castle Police Chief Tony Pagni confirms the statewide findings, noting that there has been an increasing number of traffic accidents in town.

Readers report delays in receiving the newsletter through the mail. We post the newsletter on the town web by the first of each month. Go to newcastlecolorado.org and click on News.



The "artists" who showed up for Bad Art Night in the Community Center in January.

April Election Candidates

Election Day is Tuesday, April 5, 2022. So far only Caitlin Carey and incumbents Brandy Copeland and Bruce Leland filed petitions for a seat on the Town Council by the January 24 deadline. Art Riddile is the single candidate for the Mayoral position. Biographies of all the candidates will appear in the March newsletter.

The election will be by mail ballot. Ballots will be mailed between March 14 and March 21 to registered voters within town limits. Ballots may be returned by US mail or by dropping them off at the ballot box in front of Town Hall. In order to be counted, ballots must be received by 7:00 pm on April 5. Please call Town Clerk Melody Harrison at 984-2311 if you have any questions.

Candidate biographies will appear in the March newsletter.

Holiday Lights Winners Announced

The New Castle Garden Club has announced the Christmas Lighting Contest winners for 2021:

Lakota Canyon Ranch:

1st Place:
136 Blackhawk

2nd Place:
107 Spur

3rd Place:
Lakota Ridge Senior Housing, Building D

Castle Valley Ranch:

Best Overall:
521 Honeysuckle

Best Tree:
449 Palmetto

Best Entryway:
639 Wildhorse

Most Nostalgic:
112 Carson

Old Town/Apple Tree:

1st Place:
Apple Tree Park #62

2nd Place:
River Park 3 story tree

3rd Place:
365 Rio Grande

Did You Know That

- The utilities bill included with this newsletter reflects the 3% annual rate adjustment which was effective with the new year.
- The town has its own tourism booklet located at the Lodge and various other vacation rentals. If VRBO owners would like to display the booklets, they can contact Rochelle at 984-2311 ext. 114.
- The I-70 ramps and the bridge are maintained by CDOT. It was a CDOT crew that made the temporary repairs to the potholes in January.
- All business and contractor licenses were renewable in January and dog licenses also need to be renewed.
- Funded by FMLD (Federal Mineral Lease District) work is underway for the next round of Community Center kitchen upgrades. New counters and commercial-sized sinks are among the improvements.
- The Climate and Environment Commission continues to solicit volunteers to help with a variety of projects. Write to CEC@newcastlecolorado.org to let Commissioners know of your interest.

Re-2 School District Mill Levy

On January 18, Re-2 School District Superintendent Jeff Blanford and Communications Director Theresa Hamilton met with the Town Council. The visit was part of their effort to share information about the Mill Levy Correction which has been in the news lately. The Council agreed to help share this important information.

Taxpayers in the Re-2 district and 127 other districts throughout the state will face annual mill levy increases for the next 10 years. The hike was necessitated by the State Legislature when they passed HB20-1418 and HB21-1164, intended to correct a decade-old error in interpreting the Taxpayers Bill of Rights (TABOR).

In 1998 voters approved “de-TABORing” for Re-2, which allowed the district to keep more of the tax funds they collected than would have been allowed by TABOR. Subsequently the Department of Education (and others) ruled that districts which had de-TABORed should reduce the amount they collected in property taxes. State funds would be used to make up any shortfall.

Now the Legislature has determined that the previous ruling was in error, and school districts must repay the state by increasing their mill levy by 1% per year for ten years.

New Castle Chamber of Commerce "Growing Businesses, Building Community"

Council Highlights

- Appointed Dick Fletcher to a seat on Historic Preservation Commission
- Approved a Special Events Liquor License for "Bad Art Night"
- Approved a Modification Application from Tapatios for their Hotel & Restaurant Liquor License
- Approved a Retail Liquor Store Renewal Application for Spirits of New Castle
- Approved Resolution TC 2022-1 – Designating Public Notice Posting Places
- Approved Resolution TC 2022-2 – Waiving the Requirement for Bonds for Certain Town Officers
- Approved Resolution TC 2022-3 – Authorizing a Mail Ballot Election
- Approved Resolution TC 2022-4 – Approving an MOU with Garfield County Senior Programs
- Approved Resolution TC 2022-5 – Amending the Town Directory of Fees and Charges Regarding the Recreation Development Fee
- Approved the Talbott Trail Agreement
- Read a Proclamation Honoring Steve Rippey
- Approved Ordinance TC 2022-1 – Amending the Municipal Code Regarding Family Child Care Homes
- Approved Ordinance E 2022-1 – Amending the Municipal Code Regarding Wastewater Discharge and Cross Connections

From the Chamber

Bingo is a big success! Mark your calendars now for the second Thursday of each month for this fun, family-friendly event. The doors at the Community Center open at 6:00 pm and games begin at 6:30 pm. Game cards are \$10 each and daubers are available for \$1. This month's bingo will be on February 10th.

The Chamber is also sponsoring monthly *Business After Hours* gatherings on the fourth Wednesday of each month. These offer an opportunity to network and meet neighbors. Mark February 23rd for this month's event; the location will be announced on the New Castle Chamber of Commerce Facebook page.

Next, we'd like to introduce New Castle Coffee and owner Kevin Hansen. Originally from Salt Lake City, Hansen moved to Colorado in 1997, living in Greeley before settling in the Valley in 2016. He had loved coffee since high school, and a trip to Italy brought his passion for coffee to a head. Once home he became a recreational barista making coffee and specialty drinks for his friends. Always in the back of his mind was the idea of opening his own small business.

Those dreams came to fruition in August 2021 when NCC opened its doors in the New Castle Plaza. Kevin's sense of community is displayed in the shop where the works of local artists hang on the walls. He also has locally-made pastries and donuts for sale and some days local musicians perform live at the shop. One of the special ways Kevin gives back to the community is by supporting art for youth. In January he sponsored a pottery painting class through the New Castle Recreation Department. Fifteen youngsters got to participate at no cost.

New Castle Coffee is open seven days a week at 6:00 am during the week and at 7:00 on Saturdays and Sundays. They're open until at least 2:00 pm, later depending on business.

From the Recreation Department

January 2022 has been filled with youth basketball.

- The 4-week-session of Little Hoopers Basketball K-2nd graders wound up. Thank you to our volunteer coaches: Mike and Casey Cox.
- New Castle Recreation's SLAM Basketball League hosted over 50 basketball games in the month of January. Teams came from all over the Western Slope to New Castle to play competitive basketball. Thank you to Aimee Gerber for administrating this program and to all our referees who made it happen.
- New Castle Recreation's 3rd-6th grade basketball program is in full swing with five teams, and nearly fifty participants. Thank you to our volunteer coaches: Derek McGuire, Erik Slade, Ryan Harlow, Mike Picore, and Rob Peters.

Keep checking out www.newcastlerec.com for sports programming and more this spring.