



SPECIAL VISIT
Colorado queen helps Haven House
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BOLD VISION

Mayfly Outdoors plans river corridor revamp

By MATT LINDBERG
MONTROSE DAILY PRESS MANAGING EDITOR

Mayfly Outdoors President David Dragoo said his company is ready to grow and forever change Montrose for the better.

Dragoo was calm but excited Thursday at Ross Reels in Montrose as he announced in front of Montrose Daily Press reporters and several city officials his company acquired multiple new properties (about 125 acres) along the Uncompahgre River.

The newly acquired land, which is north of Ninth Street and across from the Montrose County Justice Center, will be home to Colorado Outdoors Recreation/Business Park. The project will be what Dragoo called a “world-renowned business park” aiming to attract outdoor-focused industries to relocate to Montrose and include river restoration and high-end commercial, residential and industrial development.

“One of our goals has always been to own our own property,” said Dragoo about Mayfly, a Colorado-based outdoor industry investment company known for its brand names including Abel Reels and Ross Reels. “The vision was to build our own factory, build it on the river and build it in Montrose, because we have a great relationship with



A sample architectural rendering of the planned Abel and Ross headquarters. (Submitted photo/Mayfly Outdoors)

the city. But we expanded on it — we asked ourselves what we could do to help the local community and bring jobs here?”

Dragoo cited his love for Montrose, noting he doesn't want people to view it as only a stop on their way to Telluride.

“Part of our vision is to

connect Riverbottom Park and expand down the river through Main Street,” he said. “This is an exciting project because it means building a future for Montrose that will attract great businesses and fly-fishing enthusiasts from all over the world while helping sustain one of our greatest

assets: The Uncompahgre River.”

Dragoo noted the project will sustain and protect fish and wildlife areas along the river for approximately 1.5 miles near Grand Avenue.

The project's reveal ends months of speculation. The proposed development plans

had not previously been released to the community, sparking much concern and debate among residents during recent Montrose City Council meetings, as previously reported by the Daily Press. **During those meetings,**

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Hospital ending blood donor program

By KATHARHYN HEIDELBERG
MONTROSE DAILY PRESS SENIOR WRITER

Although Montrose Memorial Hospital is proud of its decades-long in-house blood donor program, changing times are spelling the system's end.

The hospital will cease collecting donated blood on Nov. 17; instead, it is partnering with St. Mary's Hospital in Grand Junction to meet its blood supply needs.

People can continue to donate blood locally through St. Mary's blood mobiles, according to Dr. Michael Benziger, pathologist and MMH laboratory director.

“It will help patients throughout the Western Slope and eastern Utah. People will definitely be able to donate blood locally,” Benziger said.

“The Montrose community should be very proud of its long-term efforts in terms of supplying blood for patients in our hospital and our town. They can continue to be supportive by working with our new system, which will be in collaboration with St. Mary's.”

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Old building gains new purpose

By RICHARD REEDER
MONTROSE DAILY PRESS EDUCATION WRITER

A partnership of health providers and a school district is giving new life to an empty building off Townsend Avenue in Montrose.

The old Harley-Davidson building at the intersection of San Juan and Townsend avenues will soon house facilities for Community Dental Clinic, the Center for Mental Health, Delta County School District and a soon-to-be-announced health provider.

There was a lunch on Thursday at the building for donors and partners to celebrate the building's new beginnings.

“We are about to finish our design work and will start the

remodel soon,” Community Dental Clinic CEO Melanie Hall said. “Today we are giving people a tour and taking pictures.”

Hall said the partnership of the PIC (Partnership In Care) Place will provide all the services anyone might need.

“This will change the health care landscape in Montrose for people in need,” she said. “We are trying to have all the health care services people might need under one roof. We have a good advisory committee that is ensuring we are meeting the needs of the public.”

Kurt Clay of Delta County School District said the new facility will change the outcomes for patients and students.

“Our goal is to integrate the

classroom into the clinic. We want our students working in programs in the health care field,” he said. “If we can get the students the education they need, then they can find jobs with higher wages. Plus, we are providing needed health care services.”

Clay said the program is geared toward secondary students attending Delta-Montrose Technical College.

“This is for students taking different classes through DMTC,” he said. “We do have some programs for high school students to gain college credits.”

Janey Sorenson, marketing director for the Center for Mental Health, said the partnership will provide many benefits to patients.

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Drug problem spurs community meeting

By KATHARHYN HEIDELBERG
MONTROSE DAILY PRESS SENIOR WRITER

Kenneth Vail doesn't just see Montrose's drug problem — he sees it as something the community can tackle together.

The art gallery owner is on Monday hosting a community meeting about drug use in Montrose County. The meeting is from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at the Healthy Rhythm Community Art Gallery, 68 S. Grand

Ave, second floor.

Vail, who has been in recovery from methamphetamine and heroin use for more than 32 years, said he recently began noticing social media posts about Montrose's heroin problem. The drug has so far this year claimed four lives, according to the Montrose County coroner.

After a particularly moving post from a former resident, Vail decided to provide a space for community

members to meet and discuss the issue.

“The more that I thought about it, I thought, maybe there's a reason I'm here and it's not just the art gallery,” Vail said.

“It's something no city or county wants to do. But the longer you look the other way, the worse it gets. I've seen the same scenario — small cities to millions of people. It's always the same: If you keep sweeping it under the rug, the rug gets high

and the stuff starts floating back out.”

Monday's meeting is intended to connect people. Drug use has in some way touched most families, Vail said.

“It's like an initial meeting, so people can meet each other and go, ‘You're not alone. It's not in your head. It's not just your problem. It's a community issue,’” he said.

The meeting is also a starting point for discussing the issues

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Published for the Uncompahgre Valley and Ireta Ross of Montrose



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MAYFLY

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residents questioned realtor John Renfrow, who was representing the property owners, about the project's transparency.

Dragoo said he understands people's concerns, but stressed there were reasons why his company couldn't come out with the plans until now. "We've been wanting to do it for months, but we didn't because it wasn't the right time, and we had contracts that required non-disclosure," he said of the recently acquired land. "But we have nothing to hide. "Call us — especially people in our area. They need to know."

Partnership

The City of Montrose is collaborating with the company to help bring the Colorado Outdoors project to fruition. City Manager Bill Bell said the City Council will hear a proposal in the next few months for an Urban Renewal Authority to oversee a mixed-use commercial area along the Uncompahgre River, noting he envisions it as "very similar" to the Montrose Downtown Development Authority. That nonprofit entity may purchase and redevelop property, enact capital improvements, and administrate other programs for economic development.

Bell said if the City Council establishes a URA, its operations would be directed under state statute. The city manager noted all other taxing entities, such as the county, the recreation, school and fire districts, would be represented on the URA.

"We would create a tax increment financing district within the URA boundaries and the (URA) would use that money to finance the infrastructure," Bell said. "The private companies would finance their own buildings, but public infrastructure — lighting, utilities, streets — that kind of stuff would come through the URA."

Renfrow said the City of Montrose has been instrumental in making the project come to life.

"The city has been absolutely great," he said. "This project wouldn't have happened without the city — there hasn't been a department we haven't (worked with)."

Bell said Mayfly's approach to the project was refreshing.

"It's exciting to have a company who comes forward and wants to be part of a project and not ask taxpayers to pay for everything," he said, noting the city often gets calls about projects in which companies want to put the burden on taxpayers. "It's nice to have a partner that is willing to take a lot of the risk themselves."

Benefits

Dragoo and Renfrow said the company commissioned an independent economist (Mike Anderson of Anderson Analytics) to study the



Rylee Frost, from left, Nikki Rose and Rebecca Montano work in the assembly area at Mayfly Outdoors Thursday. (Paul Hurschmann/Montrose Daily Press)

Go online

See this story on our website, montrosepress.com, to view a tentative master plan for the Colorado Outdoors project.

project, and positive results were brought back.

According to the preliminary study, over a 10-year development period, estimates show an additional 1,266 ongoing jobs would be created within the project. In addition, 593 indirect and induced jobs in the local economy would result, bringing the total ongoing annual economic impact to 1,859 jobs. The total annual payroll impact is estimated at \$81 million and total annual ongoing economic impact (output) is \$297 million, according to Anderson's preliminary study.

What happens next?

Dragoo estimated the entire project will take 10 to 15 years of development, and Renfrow indicated several other outdoor companies he couldn't divulge yet have already expressed interest in coming to Montrose.

In August, Mayfly moved operations for its California-based Abel Reels brand to the Ross Reels facility in town, 11 Ponderosa Court. Dragoo led MDP staffers and city officials on a tour Thursday of the facility, showing the added equipment and process for how the company's products are created.

"We are a precision-manufacturing facility, and our products are distributed worldwide," Dragoo explained. "We're 100 percent made in the USA. We start with the raw materials and they are turned into what you see in your local sporting goods shop."

The bold project will start with Mayfly constructing a new, state-of-the-art 35,000-square-foot building for Abel and Ross on the acquired land.

"Let's do that right and get the project going," Dragoo said, noting he expected to break ground on the new site in 2017. "We plan to move our entire production facility into this new building ... The facility will be eye-catching, but built



David Dragoo, president of Mayfly Outdoors, discusses his company's expansion plans with city officials and media Thursday morning at the company's headquarters on Ponderosa Court in Montrose. (Paul Hurschmann/Montrose Daily Press)

around operational performance. It will help us continue to be a leader in our industry."

The company president said the goal is for that move to begin occurring sometime in 2018.

"Phase two will be expanding," he said.

Phase two will be the strategic expansion of infrastructure within the development, including upgrading roads and expanding fiber optic while recruiting additional outdoor businesses.

Phase three includes a retail development with a riverwalk area featuring restaurants, coffee shops and other local enterprises. "This will take time," Dragoo said.

Montrose Mayor Rex Swanson said he is excited about what the project means for the area. "I think from the city's perspective, it exceeds our master plan for the river corridor," Swanson said after Dragoo finished his presentation.

Bell said he thinks it will be good for Montrose, too. "The city won't pay for all of it," he assured. "This is going to be a partnership. The county's involvement is very important."

Dragoo said he's happy to see government and private businesses working together to make

the project work, citing the City of Montrose, Montrose County, the state of Colorado, and the Montrose Economic Development Corporation.

"All parties are actively collaborating, and it's good to see," he said.

Dragoo reiterated he welcomed phone calls with questions about the project.

"We're excited to tell them," Dragoo said.

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