



MONTROSE DAILY PRESS

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The Gunnison River flows through the Black Canyon at the East Portal. Like other rivers in the Upper Basin, it is stretched thin due to prolonged drought. Experts are fighting to protect the rivers, which water agriculture and feed the economy. (Monica Garcia/Montrose Daily Press)

Sheriffs in the sunset

Ron Bruce, Hinsdale County

By KATHARHYN HEIDELBERG
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Ron Bruce first retired in 2002, coming to Lake City after a lengthy career with the Arizona Department of Public Safety — but he couldn't stay out of law enforcement.

This time, though, he means it: Bruce, who was elected Hinsdale County sheriff in 2006, is wrapping up his third and final term in office this year. He is among five sheriffs in the six-county judicial district who are stepping down.

"It's time to let go. I've done this for 40 years. It's time to pack it in," said Bruce, who is turning 70.

"Were it not for my age, I would have done another term. I've got a pretty well-oiled machine here, but for me, my age is a deal-breaker. But I'm proud of what I've done."

It all started in 1974, when his neighbor, an Arizona state patrolman, told the then-surveyor he ought to do a ride-along. At last, Bruce relented.

"I rode a shift with him. It was like a narcotic. I was hooked. I said, 'They pay you to do this?'" Bruce recounted.

After completing academy training, Bruce was assigned to a post in Casa Grande. Later — as he put it, divorced

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A river at risk

Stakeholders push to save the Colorado

- **Drought, overuse tax water resources**
- **River district: Others must share the pain**
- **Climate-change is extending growing season**

By KATHARHYN HEIDELBERG
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Cary Denison stopped his car in disbelief as he passed by a stretch of the Big Cimarron this past July.

Denison, the Gunnison Basin project manager for Trout Unlimited, knew Colorado was in a tough water year, but the woeful trickle of the stream drove home the point.

"This year hurt," Denison said Oct. 25, as he and others explained how far-reaching drought affects fish, birds, wildlife, farms — and, by extension, anyone who likes to eat.

Strong management of water resources is imperative, said the experts assembled for "The Value of Water & Time for Collaboration."

Audubon Rockies, Black Canyon Audubon Society, Trout Unlimited, the Business for Water Stewardship, Mayfly Outdoors and the Colorado River District presented the

seminar, with remarks by State Rep. Marc Catlin.

According to the district, the river is caught between climate change-driven drought and overuse by the Lower Basin states to which a certain amount of water must be delivered each year, under the 1922 Colorado River Compact.

The compact divides Colorado River water between seven Upper Basin states, including Colorado, and three Lower Basin states, as well as provides a portion to Mexico.

The Upper Basin water is stored in Lake Powell and also feeds a major hydroelectric project. Too little water puts the Upper Basin states in jeopardy of violating the compact by failing to deliver the correct amount to the Lower Basin — where the population is steadily increasing.

A shortage also jeopardizes the power project, as well as the revenue from that electricity.

Additionally, the Western Slope sends about 450,000 acre-feet of water each year to the eastern side of the state through transmountain diversions.

"We're kind of in the middle of a thin rubber band that gets stretched both ways," Colorado River District Manager Andy Mueller said.

This year, 4.5 million acre-feet of Colorado River water went into Lake Powell, the "savings account" for the Upper Basin. More than 9 million acre-feet were delivered,

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Freddy's coming to town

- **Montrose location to be by Taco Bell**
- **Restaurant broke ground Oct. 15**
- **Owner of Montrose's site also operates Grand Junction locations**

By ANDREW KISER
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The lot just north of Taco Bell on Townsend Avenue has been dormant for years, but soon the empty spot will be the location to order a burger, fries and even a shake.

Freddy's Frozen Custard & Steakburger will set up shop under the ownership of David Giesen, of Denver, who also operates nearby locations in Grand Junction.

"As we looked at other opportunities, Montrose kind of

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The Stone House switches owners

- **Deal completed Oct. 22**
- **Will continue quality**
- **Everyone welcome**

By MONICA GARCIA
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Change can be hard, but when it comes to the ownership change at The Stone House restaurant between former owner Jack Ludwig and new owner Donald Vincent, it is more. It is passing on a legacy to a friend.

"We have more of a father-son relationship, he has his kids but within the business he's mentored me quite a bit over the last 10 years, and I really appreciate it and try to absorb a lot of what he has to offer," Vincent said. "I think it's kind of a neat experience to be able to pass on your legacy to a certain degree to someone you've mentored."

Twenty years ago, Ludwig moved to Montrose from Grand Junction seeking a slower pace of life. Soon after he moved Montrose changed, he said, adding that many people thought he was smart for coming in before the growth — but he had no idea what was on the horizon for Montrose.

Ludwig has a history in restaurant

management. In Montrose, he first opened Silverjack Mining Company, followed by The Stone House on Dec. 4, 2008.

Right before this opening, Vincent was working as a bartender at Applebee's. Ludwig would frequent the restaurant during the building stages of The Stone House and the men forged a friendship.

Soon it was decided that Vincent would go work for Ludwig as the opening bar manager with the hopes of doing something more. For a bit, there were even plans of Vincent opening up another location, but with the economic crash in 2009, those plans were put on hold.

Looking to go out on the top, Ludwig recently decided to "retire." When Ludwig decided to sell The Stone House, Vincent said it was a good opportunity for him to fulfill his goals, and they came to the idea of Vincent buying Ludwig's out.

"I think it's a unique experience and I think that it's a perfect way — it's kind of a win, win, win, perfect situation," Ludwig said of handing the reins to his friend. "This has been a pleasure compared to doing business with somebody you don't know."

Ludwig will not be retiring in the



Donald Vincent, left, stands with Jack Ludwig at the Stone House. (Monica Garcia/Montrose Daily Press)

traditional sense. The better phrase, according to Vincent, is "move on to something different."

Ludwig has no set plans, but he will be doing something, they both joked.

"It's nice for me to be able to continue on Jack's legacy in this respect," Vincent said.

The restaurant will benefit from the youth

that Vincent brings to the establishment, Ludwig said. A fresh look and new things in the future will be healthy for the operations and a positive for Montrose, he added.

The Stone House aims to maintain its established standards and to improve on certain things, Vincent said. There won't be any

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STONE HOUSE

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going back, he said.

Vincent will utilize social media and the internet a bit more. There, customers will be able to find the restaurant's specials and other happenings.

"I want to continue to do different things within the community and give back to the community and help out with the people who have really made it successful to begin with and I think that's important," Vincent said.

Some activities with which the restaurant is involved include wine benefit dinners and the Angel Tree fundraiser on Nov. 28. The latter is a collaboration between The Stone House and residents in Cobble Creek. Vincent said he is open to other ways the restaurant can help out in the community.

The Stone House has a solid menu, Vincent said, but there might be some new additions coming at the beginning of the year. He added people need not worry, there won't be major changes, but they will strive to improve.

If customers aren't happy with something or are

looking for something else, Vincent said he invites people in to meet and talk to him. Comments can be made through Facebook and the restaurant website, as well.

"This is my new home," Vincent said. "I'm excited to meet more people. I've been behind the bar but sometimes that restricts me from meeting everybody who comes through ... this allows me to meet more people throughout the restaurant as they are coming and going."

Ludwig said receiving — and being open to — feedback is something that makes a restaurant successful. You find what people want and give them what they want, he added.

If Vincent were looking to change things — such as making it a burger place — he would have just opened a new place instead, he explained.

"There's a reason why I'm buying The Stone House and not starting another one. We've already established the quality that we have and it's something the community needs," Vincent said.

"So to change those things would be to be taking something away from

the community that's there, and it's obviously been a very successful restaurant so the demand is there and I think that is important to continue on."

The challenge for Vincent will be his new job description. He has been the go-to fixer, and delegating may pose a bit of a transition. Everything else will be the same: chef, office manager, front of the house and back of the house staff.

This is a culmination of what Vincent has been working toward for the past 20 years. He will now get to see if he knows anything, he joked.

"The opportunity to do things my way," Vincent said of what he is most looking forward to. "I'm very customer service-oriented, I'm a people person and I want to be able to do that and I have the opportunity more to meet more people, to help more people and that's kind of fun."

Vincent emphasized The Stone House is for everyone and something that he will be working on, as he's found many in the community

are intimidated by the exterior.

But he said the menu is reasonably priced, quality food. He added that families are welcome in the restaurant, and you may even see his children helping out around the establishment. He is looking forward to his kids growing up, being able to see how small businesses operate.

"It's a nice place for everybody in the community," Vincent said. "I think our goal, here at The Stone House, has always been to give a really nice, comfortable environment to everyone. We don't want to be elitist. If you're coming in after a hard day's work or if you're coming off of vacation or if you're stopping by after camping, 4-wheeling or fishing we just want you to have a nice place to relax and enjoy."

"It's not something you have to dress up for, it's not something you have to be somebody you're not. We just want to have everybody welcome and enjoy a nice environment and I think we've accomplished that."

Monica Garcia is the news editor at the Montrose Daily Press.

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FREDDY'S

FROM PAGE A1

stuck out because the state (highway) that goes through the town is very heavily traveled," said Giesen, who's doing the project under his business, CO Steakburger LLC.

"We thought the competition mix there, in Montrose, would be something that we would complement. There's nobody that does quite as we do."

Construction began with groundbreaking Oct. 15 at 2018 S. Townsend Ave. The restaurant should be ready to open its doors in February. Freddy's was the creation of brothers Bill and Randy Simon, and their friend and business partner, Scott Redler. The three opened the first location back in 2002 in Wichita, Kansas, naming the restaurant after the Simons' father, Freddy, according to the restaurant's website.

The Montrose location was the spot of community radio station KUBC from the 70s to the late 90s, said John Renfrow of Renfrow Realty. He added the City of Montrose staff was a key reason why Freddy's will be at its new location, citing Chelsea Rosty, the city's director

of business innovation as a big help.

"It (Freddy's) should really help bring more activity to the area. It's a great franchise to have," de said.

Renfrow had been working on the deal for with developer Kyle Miller of MG Retail Partners out of Dallas since last February. The location of a trailer home and longer entitlement process held up the deal longer than usual, Renfrow explained.

Giesen is well-versed in operating franchise restaurants. Giesen said he and his wife first opened up an Arby's in the earlier 1990s in his significant other's home state of Ohio.

He's worked with other Arby's restaurants, as well as other chains and smaller, independent businesses.

Three years ago, Giesen signed up to build five Freddy's restaurants on the Western Slope. He has chosen Montrose as his third. Giesen said he's aware Montrose residents have frequented the two Grand Junction sites, so he thought bringing it here was the next logical step.

"All the pieces came together where we found a site that we liked and we thought it was a good opportunity there," he said.

Giesen said he doesn't see Freddy's as a fast-food



The construction of Freddy's Frozen Custard & Steakburgers is underway on Wednesday. (Andrew Kiser/Montrose Daily Press)

restaurant, but rather "fast casual."

"We make all of our sandwiches to order," he said. "... With us, until you drive up or you come up to the counter and place that order, we don't put that beef down onto the grill until we've received that order. Our goal is to have that sandwich literally having steam coming out of it when you take your first bite."

The steakburger patties themselves aren't like typical hamburger meat, Giesen said. He explained the patties are a "smash burger" with caramelized edges, which gives it a crisp taste on the first bite.

Steakburgers and fries aren't the only items available at Freddy's, which also serves "authentic Chicago" hot dogs,

chicken tenders and custard.

"We're looking forward to serving the market," Giesen said.

Andrew Kiser is the Montrose Daily Press' sports/business writer. Follow him on Twitter @andrew_kpress.

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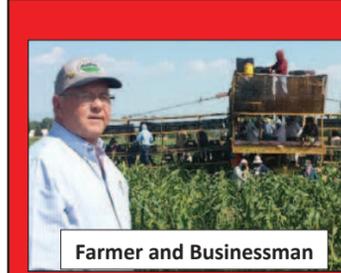
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