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Hi Quality property changes hands

BY PAT SUNDERLAND

Managing Editor

Delta County Economic Development has announced a new business is moving to Delta County.

Waste Farmers, a sustainable agricultural company manufacturing bagged soil products, recently closed on the Hi Quality food processing building at 215 Silver Street in Delta. They will be moving their manufacturing operations to Delta from the Front Range.

According to a press release from DCED, five to seven current employees will be moving to Delta County.

John Paul Maxfield, Waste Farmer CEO, is quoted as saying, "We will be looking to hire an additional three or four employees as we get up and running in late July."

In addition to their operations they plan to keep the produce market open (currently the Laughing Goat Farmers Market).

Waste Farmer's mission is to empower the farmers of the 21st century with sustainable solutions to grow consciously.

"Waste Farmers is an ideal company to attract to Delta County with their focus on sustainable agriculture," said Trish Thibido, executive director of DCED. "This continues to strengthen our agriculture sector. It is wonderful to attract a young and vibrant company to Delta County, a company which has grown 100 percent every year for the past two years."

In moving his company, Maxfield cited Delta's rich history in agriculture and being in the middle of paradise. "It just felt right and felt like home."

Waste Farmers plans to continue to diversify operations and become a vertically integrated food and agriculture company that cultivates solutions empowering the world to eat and grow sustainably. Waste Farmers employees and families are looking forward to engaging and working with the local community, particularly related to agriculture. **John Paul Maxfield states an appreciation for DCED, City of Delta, Renfrow Realty and Cushman**

& Wakefield helping with the transition to Delta.

DCED reports the 63,681-square-foot facility sold for \$1,075,000 on June 10.

Former owner Joe Davis retained the coolers, according to John Renfrow of Renfrow Commercial Realty.

Waste Farmers worked with the city to subdivide the

property. "Glen Black and the City of Delta did an awesome job of helping split those properties so Waste Farmers could buy the remaining Hi Quality office and warehouse," Renfrow said.

A 90-day transition period will allow Davis to consolidate his operation in the coolers.

Renfrow said commercial

property in the Delta area has been moving — the Hirschberger facility on F Road, Skyland and other smaller warehouse facilities have been leased out.

"The plus side is that some of the space is getting eaten up; the downside is that I see another wave of vacancies coming."

GOP launches Facebook probe

BY PAT SUNDERLAND

Managing Editor

The previously established accountability committee of the Delta County Republican Central Committee has been tasked with conducting a "complete, thorough" investigation into the fallout from a Facebook meme characterized as racist. The meme appeared on central committee chairman Linda Sorenson's Facebook page, spurring cries of outrage as the story spread across the country through social media, newspaper accounts and TV broadcasts.

"You cannot believe what I've been accused of," Sorenson said at the monthly GOP central committee meeting held last Tuesday. She described the comments as "threatening, vile and violent."

The furor prompted a closed-door meeting with local party officials and state GOP chairman Steve House last week. After that meeting, Sorenson prepared a statement which she distributed to news outlets and party leaders. Copies were made available at the Tuesday night meeting.

In her statement, Sorenson confessed to "liking" the internet meme, a picture of Ronald Reagan bottle feeding a chimpanzee from the movie "Bedtime for Bonzo." The photo contained the caption, "I'll be damned ... Reagan used to babysit Obama!" When contacted by a blogger who spotted the meme on Sorenson's Facebook page, she said, "I don't care if you're offended."

"However, I do care very

much if anyone else was offended," she said in her statement. "Please forgive me for being insensitive and not thinking of others in the heat of the moment."

In a followup story in the Grand Junction Daily Sentinel, members of the local

GOP PROBE TO A3



Photo by Pat Sunderland

Cruising Main

Lisa Rover pulls her 17-month-old twins, Koye and Kellen, down Delta's Main Street last Thursday. Closed to traffic for Downtown DeltaFest, the street was lined with vendors offering food, merchandise and information. The 500 block featured Moto Mayhem, a dirt biking competition sponsored by Grand Mesa Motorsports. Additional Downtown DeltaFest's are planned in August and September.

River study generates enthusiasm

BY PAT SUNDERLAND

Managing Editor

A conceptual plan for development of the Gunnison River corridor east from Confluence Park generated a great deal of excitement when it was unveiled last week. When — and if — fully implemented, the plan would clearly run into the millions and would require the purchase or acquisition of right-of-way along both sides of the river. But as a "vision" with no price tags attached, the concept appeared to have the support of most of those gathered to hear a presentation from the engineering firm contracted to complete the study.

City manager David Torgler set the stage for the June 9 presentation, saying RiverRestoration has roughed in about 30 percent of the conceptual plan. The purpose of the meeting was to seek feedback before the design process moves to 60 percent completion. That's as far as RiverRestoration will take the concept at this point.

Engineer Jason Carey made the presentation for Riv-

erRestoration, breaking the river into six segments beginning with the boat ramp in Confluence Park and moving upstream to the city-owned Cottonwood property. In between is isolated, privately-owned land that offers a great deal of potential. Carey said a "significant floodplain issue" is likely one reason that property is undeveloped, but it's not an insurmountable obstacle.

Beginning at Confluence Park, Carey cited a desire to build on the existing trail system by extending the trail east via an underpass beneath the Highway 50 bridge. When asked to prioritize projects later in the meeting, Carey said the underpass would be a great place to start. He also mentioned riverbank improvements and controlling invasives, which would require an ongoing effort.

Carey commented on Delta's OHV-friendly policies, saying the trails could be designed to connect the city to BLM land and on up to Grand Mesa. A multi-use bridge from 1675 Road would accommodate off-highway vehicles as

well as pedestrians and bicyclists. Kids could use the trail system to cross the river and get to the Cottonwood soccer fields. The cost of the 600-foot bridge alone could run \$2 million, Carey acknowledged.

New recreational opportunities include a camping area for rafters, which is currently a missing element on the 100-mile stretch of river from the Gunnison Gorge to White-water. In other areas of the river, boulders would be used to create terraces that would invite wading and tubing. There are five lakes along the river where concessionaires could offer paddleboarding or a cable park.

Those who have visited Salida, Buena Vista, Durango and Montrose have seen how the rivers have been transformed in the hope of tapping into the growing outdoor recreation industry. But when she visited the river park in Montrose, Jo-An Barnett said she was told only locals are taking advantage of that amenity. With her comment, discussion turned to the need for marketing. Torgler said

that discussion is not confined to Delta, but has expanded to surrounding communities that would also like to get the word out about the opportunities for outdoor recreation.

Carey pointed out river improvements have not only produced "massive" economic returns in other communities, they're also a lifestyle enhancement that will hopefully reverse the outward migration of Delta County's younger generations. The broadband effort is another component of that vision, which is designed to position Delta County toward growth and expansion by creating a more diverse economic base.

Carey, who called the turnout for the meeting "impressive," said community support will be of tremendous importance if the city pursues funding from such sources as Great Outdoors Colorado.

The river corridor study can be viewed on the city's website at www.cityofdeltanet.net. The study, which was funded by a \$100,000 DOLA grant, is expected to be completed by the end of the month.

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BLM invites public comment

The Bureau of Land Management's Uncompahgre Field Office has released a draft plan for managing BLM-administered surface land and mineral estate in southwestern Colorado. Public comment is sought to help refine the draft into a final plan to guide the management of these resources for the next two decades.

During the 90-day public comment period, the Uncompahgre Field Office is hosting a series of open houses, including one Wednesday June 22, at Hotchkiss High School. The other

Delta County meeting will take place Tuesday, June 28, at the Delta Center for Performing Arts. Both meetings run from 6 to 8 p.m.

Written comments may be submitted by email to uformp@blm.gov or by mail to the BLM, Uncompahgre Field Office, 2465 S. Townsend Ave., Montrose, CO 81401.

The plan and associated environmental documents are available at http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/ufo/uncompahgre_rmp.html (or www.uformp.com).

Interim chamber director named

Holly Piatek is no longer with the Delta Area Chamber of Commerce. In her absence, Darnell Place-Wise has been named interim executive director. Chamber board president Heather Redden says Place-Wise has helped pull off Deltarado Days as both a former board member and as a volunteer. "We wanted someone with that level of experience to get us through this busy time," Redden said. "She'll keep us moving on the right track."

Redden continued, "We've got a good team of volunteers in place for Deltarado Days, but still need a few more." Anyone interested in helping out with the community celebration July 14-17 is urged to call the chamber at 874-8616.