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Colorado Attorney General Cynthia Coffman listens as José Esquibel, director of community engagement with the Colorado Department of Law, discusses the Safe2Tell hotline and other issues Thursday. Coffman stopped in Montrose to hear from local law enforcement and school officials. (Katharhynn Heidelberg/Montrose Daily Press)

TOPS

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Booth said, estimating that in two years, he’s received six tips through Safe2Tell.

Delta schools, he said, receive far more, possibly because there are not school resource officers there, Booth said.

“I think it just depends on the demographic of your community. I think it’s a great program,” he added.

“Kids are very good here about talking to SROs. That’s a great thing. We always encourage kids to go to an adult they trust,” Coffman said.

Formerly, Booth heard mainly about drugs but, like Coffman reported, he has seen a shift toward suicide as the leading concern.

“I’ve seen a change in those calls. Typically now, they’re going to be about a suicidal subject,” he said. “We want to know that information so we can try to stop something from happening.”

Worries about suicide also lead direct reports to SROs.

“Suicide is probably the biggest thing we’re getting reported in any type of thing,” Booth said.

Mental health professionals were part of Thursday’s meeting, Coffman said. One reported having spoken to a suicidal 11-year-old, she said.

“Kids don’t always grasp the finality of their actions. We’re seeing much younger kids commit suicide,” Coffman said.

The Safe2Tell line connects kids with resources and professional help. Many times, though, the caller isn’t suicidal, but is concerned about a friend.

“That’s what we want kids to do, to let us know,” the attorney general said.

A need is seen for more mental health services across the state, for all ages. Coffman consistently hears about how mental illness plays into homelessness. The mentally ill also wind up in jails.

“We have a real need. So often, we end up incarcerating people because there is nowhere to put them,” Coffman said.

“It’s really a lack of resources,” said José Esquibel, director of the Office of Community Engagement in the Colorado Department of Law.

“So much of what we’re seeing in law enforcement is mental health,”

Coffman wants to carry that message back to the Legislature. Although mental health has good advocacy among lawmakers, funding doesn’t really follow.

“I feel it’s hard to get attention for mental health, and yet, we would resolve other social issues if we would just address mental health,” Coffman said.

Coffman and meeting attendees

Thursday also discussed drugs, particularly opioid use and overdose. Montrose County has reported three overdose deaths this year; one victim was only 15, Coffman said.

“It’s tragic when it comes to that,” she said.

Coffman earlier this week announced the Colorado Naloxone for Life Initiative, which provides opioid-overdose reversal medication kits to law enforcement agencies. Esquibel spearheads that program.

Among youth, marijuana appears to be the drug of choice, because kids perceive it as safe and it’s easier to access than other drugs, Coffman said.

“It’s something we’re seeing across the state,” Esquibel said. “It’s not surprising (to see it here). At least it confirms we’re seeing the same pattern.”

As is the case in several communities, the big need on the Western Slope is for more preventative funding, he said.

Local drug prevention initiatives have seen their funding dry up, creating a challenging environment, according to Esquibel.

Funding preventative efforts adequately makes more sense than throwing just a little in that direction, only to wind up pouring more resources in when the problem becomes acute, he said.

PLANNING

FROM PAGE A1

• and 15,000 sq. ft. for a duplex

The packet notes that the “Comprehensive Plan and River Master Plan identifies the property as potential acquisition for river corridor preservation. Resources don’t currently allow for full acquisition of the property to fulfill the Comprehensive Plan guidelines ... The challenge is to pursue these river corridor preservation goals while allowing reasonable development of private property.”

The subject property is located within Growth Area 1, the area where infrastructure is largely in place to support urban levels of development, according to the packet. The Addition is within the West Montrose Sanitation District and the Tri-County Water Service Area.

“Our understanding is that the developer plans



This property, across from the Montrose County Service Center on North Grand Ave. on the east side of the Uncompaghre River where Colorado Outdoors has proposed an addition. The City of Montrose Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on Wednesday, Sept. 28. (Paul Hurschmann/Montrose Daily Press)

to access the property across the river via a bridge. This will eliminate traffic impacts to Marine Road and the west side of the river,” states the packet.

Further, the packet states that the proposed Addition is within the Comprehensive Plan Urban Growth Area.

“It is fully compliant with city annexation priorities and policies,”

states the packet.

The staff recommendation to the Planning Commission is “the proposed residential zoning is compatible with future plans for the river corridor ... will not adversely affect the public health, safety and welfare, and is consistent with Municipal Code requirements and adopted land use plans for the area.”

Staff recommendations

are for approval of the R-3A zoning for the Colorado Outdoors Addition No. 1.

Matthews objects to the rezoning and annexation not only due to the impact on animal habitat, but also because of concerns he has for furnishing of service and utilities to the area. He questions how the city can deliver sewer and utilities for a reasonable cost.

Montrose Senior City Planner Garry Baker, in an email response to Matthew’s inquiry about the proposal, notes that “annexation and zoning is not a concrete development proposal. Zoning merely specifies allowed uses, if a development proposal is actually created.”

Anyone with questions about the proposed zoning may contact the city planning department staff prior to the hearing with questions or concerns about the proposed zoning. You may contact Baker at (970) 240-1475 or attend the public hearing.

In brief

Bids taken for Montrose City Hall Lobby project

The City of Montrose is accepting contracting bids to provide and install approximately 700 square feet of Conwed New Dimensions acoustical ceiling panels in the Montrose City Hall Lobby as per specifications.

All work must be performed after hours or on weekends (Friday through Sunday) with all clean-up completed by normal business hours.

Deliver or mail hard copy bids to Montrose City Hall by 2 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 13.

Info: www.cityofmontrose.org.

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