



MONTROSE DAILY PRESS

1.50

montrosepress.com | SUNDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2018



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)

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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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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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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