



THE CONEJOS COUNTY MESSENGER

Published Quarterly on April 1, July 1, Oct. 1, and Jan. 1

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Welcome to our second Conejos County Newsletter! As elected officials and county department directors, our goal is to inform our citizens of news stories, information and data through the periodic publication of a newsletter.

Due to the expense of printing the newsletter, we will publish the newsletter on the county website conejoscounty.org. We are asking local businesses to allow us to post the code on their bulletin boards, in the front entry areas and other areas of the business.

Scan QR code with your smartphone



DID YOU KNOW

- ◆ Conejos County will publish a July 20th special edition newsletter that will highlight the importance of a retail sales tax? We will be highlighting areas such as: county services, current and projected revenues and expenditures, and will also have opinions from our retail sales tax committee members. Our retail sale tax committee "Citizens for a Better Conejos County" meets weekly every Tuesday in the Board of County Commissioner @ 6:30 pm. Please feel free to join us and join the Committee!. Please take time and comment on the newly created Facebook Page, Citizens for a Better Conejos County.
- ◆ For every \$1.00 of property tax paid, 25 cents is all that funds the County General Fund. The remaining \$.75 is divided per mill to school districts, fire protection districts, cemetery districts and other special taxing districts. School districts receive approximately \$.50 of every tax dollar collected.
- ◆ Veterans: The work hours for the county's veteran's service officer were increased to 30 hours per week in calendar year 2020 in order to allow for more valuable time in servicing veteran's needs. Robert Lockwood, Veteran's Service Officer office hours are Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, 8:30 am - 4:30 pm. Mr. Lockwood requests veterans contact him by phone, (719) 376-6725, or by email, rlockwood@co.conejos.co.us in order to schedule an appointment. Any changes such as time off for personal appointments, training, and outreach visits will be posted on the outer door to the building and on my voicemail message.
- ◆ 4-H Participants: Colorado State Extension Service has announced the hiring of Morgan Young, 4-H agent for the San Luis Valley. If you are interested in participating in 4-H activities, please contact Ms. Young at morgan.young@colostate.edu or 970-589-5708.

Treasurer's Office

For our second 2021 newsletter the Treasurer's Office has just completed the 2nd half payment collection date which was June 15, 2021. Thank you to all those who have paid their taxes in full. Upcoming delinquent notices are scheduled to be mailed July 2, 2021. Real estate taxes need to be paid by September 30, 2021 to avoid advertising charges. For mobile homes and personal property taxes, please pay by August 31, 2021 to avoid advertising charges. Our annual tax lien sale is currently scheduled online for Wednesday, November 17, 2021.

A reminder you can still make online payments as well at our county website at: conejoscounty.org If you have any questions regarding your taxes, please call our office at (719) 376-5919. Thank you and have a great summer 2021!



CONEJOS COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Greetings,

The Conejos County Department of Social Services wishes all a happy and safe summer.

Congratulations to our scholarship recipients:

Tiana Mortensen (Sanford)

Madison Reed (Sanford)

Allison Westberg (Sanford)

We wish you the best in your future endeavors!

The CCDSS scholarship is announced annually at each of our school districts. Upcoming seniors, we encourage you to apply next school year!

Do you need to apply for public assistance? Using our online system "Colorado Peak" can save you a trip to the office. Creating an account is easy and you can report changes, check your benefits, and determine your potential eligibility.

<https://coloradopeak.source.force.com>

Information on all programs provided by the Department of Social Services can also be found on our County Website.

Be on the lookout for our annual back-to-school backpack/school supply giveaway which will occur in August. This year we will be having a drawing for 40 laptops to our returning Conejos students.

**They can't.
You can.**
Be their voice Make the call.
1-844-CO-4-KIDS
1-844-264-6437





Conejos County Sheriff's Office
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Po Box 37
Conejos Co. 81129
PH# 719-376-2196

The Sheriff's Office has been extremely busy as usual, handling numerous calls for assistance from the citizens of Conejos County. The Search and Rescue Team has added to the heavy workload of the Deputies and volunteer personnel. With the warmer weather and

Covid restrictions of public venues more and more people have taken to the outdoors hiking, camping and enjoying being outside.

One of the popular activities of late is trekking the Continental Divide Trail from start to finish. The trip starts in Mexico and ends in Canada with just over three thousand miles walked by the participants. The journey takes between five and seven months to complete through some of the most rugged back country our nation has to offer. The Continental Divide runs through the back country of Conejos County which in turn causes numerous calls for our Search and Rescue Team every year. In the first half of the month of June, we have responded into the high country on four different occasions to assist or rescue people attempting the trek. Two of the four trips included a Flight for Life helicopter with whom we have teamed up with for assistance.

June 9th was one of those calls for us, as the Alamosa Dispatch Center received a SPOT Distress signal from a hiker in trouble. A husband and wife team was hiking the trail and had to descend a very steep and treacherous incline. In doing so a rock came rolling down the mountain and struck the female in the lower left leg breaking her tibia. Disabled they pushed their emergency beacon which alerted the SPOT Company of the situation, who in turn notified the authorities. Sheriff Personnel quickly made a plan and got in touch with the victim via text message confirming their situation. Flight for Life was notified and lifted off from Durango as deputies responded from the Sheriff's Office.

Flight for Life dropped a team of nurses in the area, which had to climb up a snow filled avalanche chute to the victim. The helicopter then flew down to Platoro where the Sheriff and Undersheriff were airlifted to the scene to assist. While in flight we learned that a second hiker unassociated with the husband and wife team had fallen several hundred feet down the same avalanche chute. The Flight Nurses immediately made their way to the unidentified man and rendered aid. As soon as the helicopter touched down in the area Sheriff's Deputies climbed up to the injured parties and assisted. A second Flight for Life helicopter from Pueblo was sent to assist with the injured. Both hikers were carried off the mountain to the awaiting helicopters. The injured were transported to the hospital in Pagosa Springs for medical attention. Both hikers sustained severe injuries, broken bones and deep lacerations, which led them unable to walk and stranded in the wilderness.

Sheriff's Office (continued)

Sheriff Crowther wishes to thank all the First responders, Sheriff's Deputies and Staff for their profession, rapid and unselfish response to these emergency situations. We would like to thank the Flight for Life Crew who helped us and continue to help us on these dangerous and possibly life threatening calls. We can never thank them enough.

Our Search and Rescue Team is a busy and important tool at the Conejos County Sheriff's Office. We continue to train and improve our skills and equipment as time goes on. We are currently working on a project, in which we are accepting donations toward the goal of purchasing a snow cat for wintertime rescues. We are making great progress and thank those who have so graciously donated to the cause. The purchase of a snow cat will no doubt save a life in the future with all of the winter time activities that take place in our county during the winter months.

The Sheriff and Undersheriff believe we are blessed to have the men and women that work at the Sheriff's Office, who so graciously and unselfishly work day in and day out to save lives and make Conejos County a better place to live.

Land Use Office

Short-term overnight rental property is defined for the purpose of the Conejos County Land Use Code, as a residential dwelling unit, or any room therein, available for lease or exchange for a term of less than thirty (30) consecutive days. A short-term vacation rental property as regulated by this section is differentiated from a bed and breakfast and hotel/motel establishment.

A County Land Use permit is required to rent your property on a short-term basis. If you are renting your property for short-term overnight lodging and do NOT have a permit, you are in violation of the Conejos County Land Use Code and must immediately cease all rentals.

An Emergency Moratorium is in the process of being approved on July 1 by the Board of County Commissioners to allow for the development of Land Use Standards for Short-term Overnight Lodging.

Contact the Linda DeHerrera, Land Use Administrator at the Land Use Office 719-376-2014 for more information or to provide input in the development of these standards.

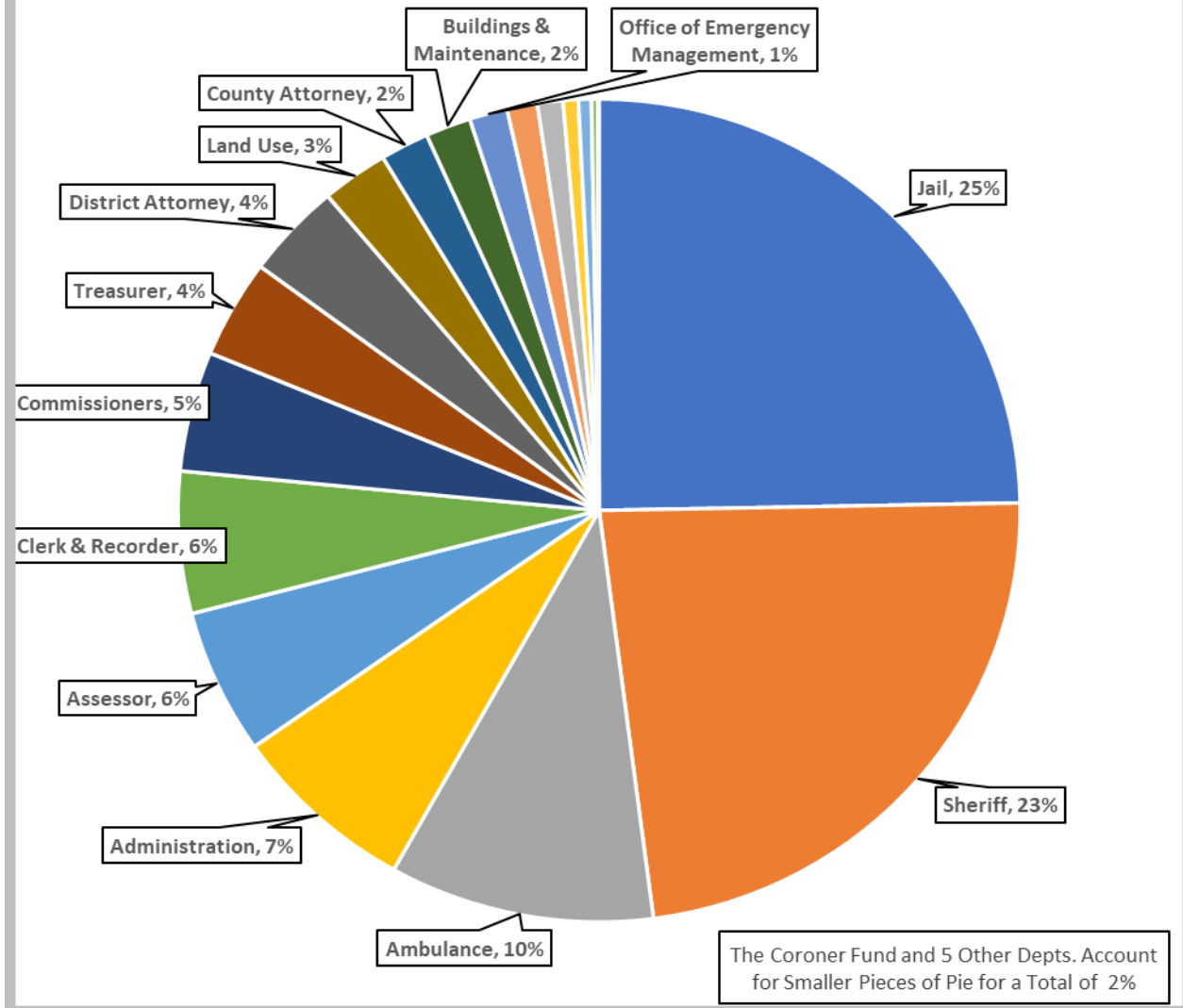
Commissioners

The Board of County Commissioners passed a resolution opposing “Ballot Initiative 16” due to the adverse effects it would have on our local ranchers. We are very pleased to announce the Colorado State Supreme Court rejected the ballot measure on Monday, June 21, stating “Initiative 16 fails to satisfy the single-subject requirement...”. We are relieved that this decision was made, but are keenly aware that these types of issues will continue to be brought forward by groups who do not understand the livestock industry.

Due to the increase in permit applications for “short-term rentals” and the controversial nature of these business ventures in subdivisions and communities in our county, we held a special meeting on June 18 and conducted the first reading of the ordinance for a moratorium. The second reading and the hearing for the ordinance is scheduled for July 1, at 10:00 a.m. If passed, the moratorium will allow for a 6 month period in order to work on standards of approval. Public comment is welcomed and citizens are urged to attend planning commission meetings and Board meetings.

We are continuing to pursue a sales tax question on the November ballot and have produced a survey that many of you have taken the time to fill out. Thank you! We have had a good response and have found feedback informative and helpful. Our committee, “Citizens for a Better Conejos County” meets each Tuesday evening at 6:30 p.m., at the courthouse to discuss how to get good information out to all our citizens which will allow them to make an informed decision in November. These meetings are open to all and we invite any who have questions, want more information, or who are willing to help, to attend.

2021 General Fund Budget Expenditures Pie Chart



Road & Bridge Dept.

Preparations for summer/seasonal projects began in the month of April and with the work planned will continue into late fall. Below are pictures of the first paving project this summer. These pictures show the crew laying 1 1/4 inch of asphalt, the first layer of asphalt known as the leveling course. Next week the crew will finish the project with the second layer, 2 inches of asphalt as the final course. The department then lets the asphalt settle and in three weeks follows with leveling road base on both sides of the road.





The latest and most updated news stories can be found on the county website: <https://conejoscounty.org> All offices and departments have a link to their individual web page with very useful information and Facebook page, if they have one.

WANT TO CONTRIBUTE

Would you like to contribute a picture or article for our next newsletter? Please send your pictures or article ideas to Commissioner Carlos Garcia @ cgarcia@co.conejos.co.us



Town of Platoro, Picture submitted by Chris DeHerrera