

RISTWATCH

RCVFD Quarterly Newsletter P.O. Box 2, Bellvue, CO 80512 Issue No. 98 April 2021

Letter from the President

Community. While this has been a common theme in a number of my previous letters. recent events and experiences are leading me to focus a bit more on this topic today. As you know, in mid-March the RCVFD area was deluged with snow; some areas received over four feet of snow within a period of 48 hours. This was complicated even more by the high winds. During this time, our community was mostly in survival mode, clearing paths and drives throughout the storm and in the following days. Before the last flakes had fallen, I began receiving phone calls and emails which all had a common theme: "concerns" regarding snow removal efforts by Larimer County, or lack thereof.

It seemed that where the County snowplows had operated, despite the efforts of folks having successfully cleared access to their property, snowplows were repeatedly depositing snow and ice from the main road back into these newly cleared access openings. I know of at least one event where an angered resident stopped a snowplow and expressed their concerns and frustration. I completely understood the perspective of the angered resident as, after clearing an access to our

home, I again cleared our access on at least three separate occasions, where a thick "wall" of snow and ice mix again blocked our access.

In an effort to address the concerns of our community, I made phone calls and sent emails until I contacted someone. Alas, my initial efforts were fruitless, as I was not able to speak to anyone immediately; however, my efforts were not in vain. In the days that followed, I received a personal phone call, followed by emails, from management representatives with Larimer County, including Road & Bridge, Emergency Management and from our elected County Commissioner, Kristin Stephens.

The result of these collective efforts and conversations were incredibly enlightening to me and were also genuinely appreciated by Larimer County managers. We had an excellent opportunity to discuss our collective concerns as a community, with my concerns regarding our community residents, and their concerns regarding the provision of services to our residents. One of the concerns I expressed was the repeated need for our residents to clear their accesses, which many, lacking either a tractor or plow, must clear the snow by hand,

Letter from the President, cont'd.

further increasing the risks for our residents who have underlying health conditions.

While acknowledging the difficulties our residents had experienced. Road and Bridge management shared their perspective with me, as well. With a fixed number of plows and personnel, Larimer County was striving to open and clear priority (Level One) roads during and after this unusually heavy snow. In addition to clearing these roads, road crews also had the task of moving all of this snow back even farther, in order to accommodate more snowfall from an impending storm that was forecast to drop another 12" of snow. Simultaneously, as resources were intermittently available, lesser priority roads also needed to be opened and cleared, while some resources were redirected to clear accesses as they were able.

I also asked them to provide me with some additional details, which appear after my article. They also asked that, when residents are clearing access to their properties, that they push the bulk of the snow to the side towards which the snowplows will also be pushing the snow as they clear the road. For example, I live on the north side of Rist Canyon Road. Snowplows will push the snow up the canyon, so I should move my snow to the "up-canyon" side of my access. This way, crews are more likely to push snow away from my access, rather than in to my access.

One more excellent takeaway from our collective discussions was the need for the residents of our community to establish a network of resources, so that we are better able to help one another. In talking with Larimer County Emergency Management staff, they shared a new program which we can implement in our community, called "Larimer Connects". In a sense, it's like the old "phone tree" concept, but more interactive. This program has been implemented by residents and businesses in Red Feather Lakes and Livermore; you can visit their web site at https://n40alliance.org/. If you or someone you know

would like to know more about, or may be interested in getting involved with this program, please let me know. I can arrange to have Shayle Sabo, a Larimer County Emergency Management Coordinator, provide us with an informational meeting at Station One to learn more about the program and discuss how we can implement it in our community.

I'd be remiss if I did not encourage folks to watch for announcements in the Ristwatch (available by mail and online at https://rcvfd.org/community-information/ristwatch), as well as through our Community Alert system for important and timely information for residents. If you are not already registered, please do so through our web site at https://rcvfd.org/community-information/community-alert-signup.

I'd encourage everyone in our community to consider serving as a volunteer with RCVFD. If you are willing and physically able to do so, please contact our Fire Chief (Jeff Elsner) to discuss what opportunities may be available for you. RCVFD has many other less demanding ways to volunteer and become more familiar with others in our community, including but not limited to the "Friends of the Festival" and our "Book Bees". RCVFD is an integral part of our local community, and I encourage you to contact me to see what opportunities to meet others and serve may be available to you!

If you are interested in learning more about RCVFD, our community, or how you can help, please contact me at president@rcvfd.org.

Thank you!

Kindest Regards, Jeff Yarberry RCVFO President



Todd JuergensRoad and Bridge Director

Road and Bridge Department 2643 Midpoint Drive| Suite C Fort Collins, CO 80525 W: (970) 498-5653 |

tjuergens@larimer.org | www.larimer.org/roads

Jeff.

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me regarding snow removal in the Stove Prairie area. As we discussed, we understand that we are blocking driveways along the county road with windrows of snow. We understand that these windrows are wet and heavy and may be difficult for property owners to move. We understand that in many instances this is happening several times as we continue to widen the road. What I am hoping folks understand is that we are not doing this just because we can, or to intentionally make life difficult for residents; in fact just the opposite is true. Our goal is to make the road as safe as possible as quickly as possible and be ready for the next storm event.

We received 3 to 4 foot of heavy wet snow along the CR 52E and CR 27 corridor in this storm. The first pass through we were able to get a path maybe 8' wide and this left a windrow in front of driveways. The next pass through we were able to gain a few more feet of width and again left a windrow and so on.

I was on CR 52E this morning and in many places we have gotten the road widened to the white line but there are still significant lengths of road that do not have enough width for two cars to safely pass so we are continuing to work on widening. In areas where the road surface is exposed white line to white line we will be working to get it moved back a few more feet to create room to store the next storm. The forecast is calling for more snow on Sunday and into next week and we need somewhere to put that snow if in fact it does snow.

We always leave snow along the edge of the road as we clear the travel lanes. The difference in most storms is that there is less depth to deal with and we are able to move it with trucks from the onset of the storm. The trucks are traveling at a higher rate of speed and are able to cast the snow across a wider path, somewhat distributing it in a thin layer rather than a large windrow. With storms like this one where the snow is deep, wet and heavy windrows are inevitable and we cannot take the time to stop and clear each and every driveway.

I hope this helps you to understand why we do what we do and to recognize that we do this work in order to provide a safe roadway.

Thank you, Todd Juergens



Shayle Nelson Sabo

Emergency Management Coordinator COVID-19 Pandemic Recovery Manager - Larimer Recovery Collaborative

Larimer County Office of Emergency Management 200 W Oak St, Fort Collins, CO 80522 | 5th Floor W: (970) 498-7148 | M: (208) 940-2387 sabosn@co.larimer.co.us | www.larimer.org/emergency

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COLLABORATIVE

Resilient communities begin with neighbors helping neighbors. It has been shown through national level research, as well as in recovery efforts locally here in Larimer County, that communities that are well connected recover from adversity much more quickly.

www.larimerrecovers.org

Following the 2012 High Park Fire and the 2013 Larimer County Floods, the Larimer Connects Program was established as a form of technical expertise and support to encourage local communities to build stronger social capital and work together on grassroots resilience.

The Larimer Connects Program works with community members to build what works best for their community, as you know your needs and local dynamics the most. With this in mind, Larimer Connects empowers local residents to take charge of building their own resilience, and serves a facilitation role, providing guidance, technical advice and helping connect citizens with resources to be successful.

Larimer Connects exists because it is becoming widely recognized that communities that are better connected, are armed with knowledge and resources, and have a structure in which neighbors help neighbors are better able to face adversity in whatever form that may be, are more resilient and sustainable long-term, and are more quickly and effectively able to recover from disaster. Larimer Connects was created to provide more outreach and education on resilience, social connectivity, preparedness, and hazard awareness.

More information on the Larimer Connects Program can be found at www.larimer.org/emergency/larimer-connects, or you can reach out to program manager Shayle Sabo at sabosn@co.larimer.co.us

Kindest regards, Shayle Sabo

Chief's Report

March has come in like a lion with a lot of moisture in the form of snow. The amount of snow we had this spring was excessive, and we have had to work hard and have patience, but we came together as a community as we always do and helped our neighbors and those in need. That's why we live in the mountains and love our homes, after all, and in times of adversity, our spirit shines through. Despite the challenges and hardships of last month's snows, we can all agree that fire season is on our minds and having more moisture will help this year.

Last year's fires, primarily Cameron Peak, will have some secondary effects this spring as the snow begins to melt off. Increased erosion and flash flooding are dangers, as well as invasive weeds like thistle and mullein that thrive in disturbed soil. We are always adding more information to our website, <u>rcvfd.org</u> to help folks with whatever is on their minds in terms of safety and community awareness. If you see something missing, let us know and we'll improve it together.

Covid-19 vaccines are rolling out in Colorado, and hopefully soon everyone will have an opportunity to protect themselves and their loved ones from this historic virus. RCVFD has prioritized making vaccines available to our responders, but we continue to follow mask and distancing guidelines as dictated by local, state and federal agencies. Our highest priority is always life-safety, and that means you, our community, as well as our firefighters.

Jeff Elsner Chief, RCVFD

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Letter from the Vice President

The Snow

Yeehaw! As we recover from the wildfires and evacuations, and deal with the masks and any isolation caused by the pandemic, we get four feet of snow shutting down our driveways and roads. At least the snow is white, pretty and prevents wildfires. However, those trying to get back to socially-distanced working to keep their pay coming in were not pleased with four feet of snow that was too deep to be plowed by pickups and needed digging equipment for getting people out.

911 and Snow

Rist Canyon Volunteer Fire Department (RCVFD) firefighters and emergency medical responders continued their work for the community during all this snow. Calls varied from moving a clothes dryer that caught fire to the outside in the snow (and checking that the fire did not spread to the crawl space under the house), to a few emergency medical calls in areas that were snowed in, resulting in the use of snowshoes and emergency backcountry sleds.

As in the past, our RCVFD first responders are there 24/7 to take care of you and your family when 911 is called in our community because of medical emergencies, motor vehicle



accidents, house fires and wildland fires. Please help us by providing financial support so our RCVFD can continue to provide protection for over 100 square miles in Rist Canyon. Please go to our webpage, RCVFD.org, then click on "RCVFD Fundraising," then click on "Donate." Please recall that due to the pandemic many RCVFD residents have had to deal with financial hardships. Please donate generously if you can! Elsewhere in this newsletter we talk about how you can help RCVFD using Amazon Smile, King Soopers and Colorado Gives.

Our Mountain Festival

If the vaccinations into arms keep their fast pace, we hope to have the 2021 RCVFD Mountain Festival! We will decide by June 2021. It is planned for Saturday, September 11, 2021, the Saturday after Labor Day weekend.

In 2019, RCVFD Mountain Festival volunteer neighbors worked together to hold the event that was enjoyed by about 2,000 attendees and raised a profit of \$20,000 for the RCVFD. We need the help of volunteers for 2021, please. You can help anytime, all year long, before, during and after the festival. Two particular positions where we need to replace retirees are the bake sale chair and the corporate donations chair; the current chairpersons will help teach you the job. Please contact HJ Siegel, the Festival Coordinator, to find out more: HJ@computer.org.

H.J. Siegel, VP of RCVFD Board of Directors HJ@computer.org

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Let's Clean Up our Canyon

Hi folks - we are bringing back the "Canyon Clean Up" this year! We need lots of hands to help pick up the items left by the many people who pass through our area. To thank you for your efforts, the Fire Department will have a delicious BBQ lunch for you when we get back to the Fire Station at noon.

- ➤ For Rist Canyon we will meet at Station 1 Date: April 24th at 9 AM - 12 noon Confirm by April 15th
- ➤ For Buckhorn Canyon and Stove Prairie we will meet at Station 3 on Rist Canyon Rd May 8th from 9 AM 12 noon Confirm by April 29th

Be ready to walk in comfortable shoes or boots and clothing. Be sure to bring good gloves to pick up the trash. Please email or call Louise Creager for questions and to confirm you are coming so we know how many vests to have: <u>LouiseCreager@gmail.com</u> - 970/217-6843

Standard Colorado COVID procedures will be observed. Be ready to have a mask if it is required, as well as observing social distancing. If you don't have a mask, we will provide one. We will review the required procedures before we leave.



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Outbuilding and trees lost to the fire. Septic & well already in, this off-the-grid property is perfect for someone looking for an escape or room to roam! Approximately 2.6 miles of 4WD access. Now offered at \$377,500



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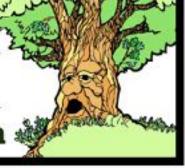


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The process only takes a few minutes. If you don't already have a free King Soopers
 Rewards Card, request one from your cashier or the service desk. Once that's done, jump on your computer and go to www.kingsoopers.com/communityrewards. Click on the link to enroll.
 Set up an account, or sign in if you already have one. Then click on Community Rewards from the list on the left. Use the "Find an Organization" box to enter our NPO number, YP687 and click Search. It will verify that you have selected the RCVFD. Click "Enroll" and you're done!
 Always scan your Rewards Card when shopping. As a Rewards member, you'll save money and earn points towards gas discounts; and the RCVFD will receive 5% of your purchases. If you have any questions about the King Soopers Rewards Program, contact them at 800/576-4377. And thank you for telling your neighbors to sign up, too!

You can donate through Colorado Gives any time of the year! Please Spread the WORD to family and friends!



It's easy—just post this link:

http://coloradogives.org/RistCanyonVolunteerFireDepartment to Facebook and ask them to donate! Your fire department thanks you!



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Why Woodpeckers Don't Get Stuck in Trees

Hammer a nail into a tree, and it will get stuck. So why doesn't the same thing happen to the sharp beaks of woodpeckers? Scientists say they finally have the answer.

In a new study, researchers took high-speed videos of two black woodpeckers (*Dryocopus martius*) pecking away at hardwood trunks in zoos and analyzed them frame by frame to see how the head and beak moved throughout each peck. The bird's secret: an ability to move its upper and lower beaks independently, the team reports this week at the virtual annual meeting of the Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology.

Once the tip of the woodpecker's bill hits the wood, the bird's head rotates to the side ever so slightly, lifting the top part of the beak and twisting it a bit in the other direction, the videos reveal. This pull opens the bill a tiny amount and creates free space between the beak tip and the wood at the bottom of the punctured hole, so the bird can then easily retract its beak.

Until now, scientists have thought woodpecker bills would need to be rigidly attached to the skull to successfully drill into the wood to find insect prey. But actually, the bill's flexibility in these joints ensures that the bird's signature "rat-a-tat-tat" doesn't stop at "rat."

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Community Alerts!

Information about community events, evacuation orders, current active fires and more are delivered directly to your Inbox by signing up for Community Alerts. Just go to RCVFD.org and scroll to the very bottom of the Home Page. There you'll enter your email address and first and last names, then click Subscribe. This is a great way to get the most up-to-date information from the RCVFD.



RCVFD Monthly Meeting Schedule

All meetings begin at 7 PM at Firehouse #1 on Rist Canyon Road

Operations —1st Wednesdays
Fire Training—2nd Wednesdays
Board Meeting—3rd Wednesdays
Medical Training—
4th Wednesdays

The Ristwatch reserves the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any article or ad at any time. We base this decision on our responsibility to our readers. We will not knowingly print any article or ad that is misleading or untruthful. Articles submitted to the Ristwatch are a representation of the author and not necessarily an endorsement by the RCVFD.





We look forward to working with you to help you rebuild your Northern Colorado home.

You've lived through the fires, and again . . . for some of you. You are thankful for what you have, that you're safe, and life is getting back to normal. But many of you have lost your homes. That is a devastating loss in anyone's life. Where do you go from here? Do you rebuild? Do you keep the home in the same spot it was, or do you find that perfect location, with better views, breezes, access, and most of all, good feelings? That perfect spot that you went to for solitude or picnics with family and friends. You're working on insurance claims, and finding out what you can afford. Don't let the cost of the building plans hit you with sticker shock. Crown Jade Design and Engineering can help with a 25% discount off plans if you are rebuilding. We provide all of the architectural and structural plans necessary to obtain a building permit and build your home at a fraction of the cost of a full architect.

Mark and David Benjamin, the founders of CJDE in 2004, went through many fires since David and his brothers built the family home in 1994 as your neighbor. After the High Park Fire of 2012, Mark became involved with the founding, and many of the education sessions, of the Recovery programs at the Bellvue Grange. These were well attended by many of you looking to rebuild and trying to figure out how. Other professionals, such as builders, architects, engineers, county officials, plumbers, electricians and others helped guide us in the steps necessary. As an offshoot of this, CJDE offered a discount on the plans required for rebuilding your homes. Many of you accepted this offer, and CJDE appreciates putting your trust in us. We would like to extend a similar offer now, to help those planning on rebuilding again. The education sessions may or may not happen again, but CJDE has the experience and knowledge to help guide you again. See our ad above for contact information.



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Notes from Your RCVFD Area Representatives

Hi, I'm Erica Michel, your new Upper Buckhorn representative. You will usually see me with a variety of dogs tooling around in our red Jeep. We LOVE the Buckhorn and look forward to working with you all!



Aspen, Lucy & Major

We have started to see work being done on the culverts along 44H. There is one almost done at MM29 which is near Crystal Mountain Road. Despite the intense work the road has remained open with some flaggers stopping cars as needed. New mirrors at tight turns are a nice improvement and will help with big trucks coming up and down the canyon.



There is a cow moose and her yearling (if you look behind her you can see the yearling bedded down in the willows) that seem to have found a perfect patch of willows to call home. I

have found them bedded down several times along the upper Buckhorn when I do my usual patrols. Despite the burned forest around them they seem to be safe and very healthy!



Friday before the big storm came, we found a lot of active birds in the upper Buckhorn. Turkeys were roosting high up in the trees. I bet they can't wait for all the new grass to bring in grasshoppers and bugs to eat this spring. Steller jays were fluffing their feathers to stay warm as the front blew in. Hope they all stayed safe and warm with the blizzard! If any upper Buckhorn residents have questions about the RCVFD, give me a call at 222-1795 or email me at sabout the RCVFD, give me a call at 222-1795 or email me at sabout the RCVFD, give me a call at 222-1795



Erica Michel Upper Buckhorn Area Rep.



Continued on next page

Notes from Your RCVFD Area Representatives, cont'd.

Things have been quiet at this end of Stove Prairie. I'm sure the spring wildflowers will be a bumper crop after that doozy of a snowstorm. If I said it once, I must have said it a thousand times . . . that was a lot of snow. It was by far the largest snowfall I have seen at one time. I think I shoveled more snow than all the shoveling combined in my lifetime. My body also told me that was a workout!

The elk have been coming through periodically and I'm looking forward to seeing some bears. I've heard from some neighbors that the mountain lions have been active on this end of the road, so keep a heads up. I hope the upcoming months bring you as much beauty and joy as these mountains can. Take it easy!

Tim Stratman Stove Prairie Area Rep.

STORM RECAP

What a terrific snow we had this March. We are grateful for all the moisture after a long, dry year. A HUGE THANK YOU to all the hard workers who spent so many hours cleaning roads and our driveways so we could get back to our usual lives. Now we're having such great weather and can plan our spring and summer days with gardening and other chores. Lots of birds now coming through our areas. If you see something different, why not send a picture and share with your neighbors. If any of you have damaged address signs, please let me know and I can get them repaired or replaced. Cheers!

> Louise Creager Stratton Park Area Rep.



Terje S Whitmore LUTCF, MDRT

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Notes from Your RCVFD Area Representatives, cont'd.

Other than having to shovel our way out from the big storm, we all are now dealing with the mud! It's springtime in the Rockies! I know we are all looking forward to spring and the flowers.

The Book Bees are all waiting for most of us to receive our vaccines so we can once again gather to sort books. A lot of us really miss the time we have sorting. Hopefully next month we can dig in!

Carolyn Stanley Davis Ranch Area Rep. and Book Tent Chair

Sandbag Reminder

In a previous Community Alert, we announced that Larimer County will be supplying sandbags to areas most impacted by the Cameron Peak Fire. The purpose of the sandbags is to help mitigate possible flooding from spring run-off or a prolonged rain. Your RCVFD area representatives will be helping find central locations for pallets so residents can pick some up and use at their homes. The sandbags weigh 40 lbs. each. Pallets weigh approximately 2,000 lbs. and will be trucked in via semi trucks with forklifts in late April. Please contact your area representative with any questions. Area reps' names and phone numbers are listed on the back page of the Ristwatch.



6208 South College Avenue
Fort Collins 970.223.5197
Located 1 1/4 miles south of Harmony
on the east side of College Avenue,
just south of Poudre Pet and Feed.

www.coloradospas.com info@coloradospas.com









Notes from Your RCVFD Area Representatives, cont'd.

The last several months have been spent putting our lives and home back together after the chaos of the Cameron Peak fire last year, what with being under voluntary and mandatory evacuation orders off and on for two months. Things finally settled down a bit at the end of 2020, and we were able to enjoy the holidays at home with our family. We are reminded daily of how lucky we are to still have our home and our health.



There have been numerous mountain lion sightings in our area lately, and several of our neighbors have lost chickens to bobcats, foxes and pine martens. Luckily our dogs have kept our chickens safe from predators so far. (Knock on wood!)

As if the influx of predators wasn't enough, our neighbor's chicken coop caught fire and burned to the ground last month because of the heater. Just a reminder to weigh the pros and cons before using a heater in your coop because they aren't always necessary. We decided not to use one when we first started keeping chickens many years ago, and they have always been fine. If you have a solid coop, use extra bedding, and have enough chickens in that coop so that they can huddle together, you probably don't need a heater.

Since we are all hoping to get enough moisture this winter and spring to lessen the chances of another

wildfire, the recent blizzard was a welcome relief. We got about three feet of heavy wet snow at our house.

When the snowstorm hit, our animals were in their element, although they seemed a little surprised at how difficult it was to walk through snow this heavy. All of them prefer to play in the snow rather than hole up in a warm house. (Except the cats, of course—they'd rather curl up by the fireplace or cuddle up together in their cozy barn.)



Zeus and Delilah quickly forged a path through the snow so they could continue to keep an eye on the property and animals, and supervise Terry while he was plowing the driveway. Winter is their favorite season, and they spend a lot of time playing together outside when the weather is cold and snowy.

As we look forward to spring, it's important to plan for possible flooding, especially if you live in a low area or near a creek. There is a lot of helpful information regarding flood protection located at https://www.larimer.org/emergency/flooding2013.

There is nothing like springtime in the Rockies! I hope you all enjoy this time of year as much as we do.

Raina Clingan Lower Buckhorn Area Rep.

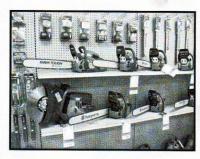


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Advertise in the Ristwatch!

Business Ads Ad Size—Customer Rates Full Page (7 1/2" W x 10" H)—\$100 Half Page (7 1/2" W x 5" H)—\$75 Quarter Page (3 1/2" W x 5" H)—\$50 Business Card (3 1/2" W x 2 1/4" H)—\$25

> Community Classifieds \$1 per line for a 4" wide ad. No businesses, please.

Business ads, classified ads, community news and photos can be submitted to the Editor at ristwatch@rcvfd.org. Please submit business ads and images in pdf format.

> The deadline for the July Ristwatch is June 21st.

2021 Annual Drive Budget \$103,520- Donations YTD \$10,225

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Thanks to everyone! Your support is especially important during this trying time. If we missed you, please call 970/419-0397.



The winner of our logo contest is the multi-talented Gretchen Long. All of the firefighters will be proud to wear her logo. Thank you to all those who participated, and a special thanks to Shawn and Andrea Ziegler for purchasing the sweatshirts from Jax for all of the Rist Canyon firefighters.

Rist Canyon Volunteer Fire Department P. O. Box 2 Bellvue, CO 80512 www.rcvfd.org NON PROFIT ORG PRESORTED U.S. POSTAGE PAID PERMIT NO. 100 ZIP CODE 80538

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