COVID kills first victim

Public Health reports 83-year-old man had underlying health conditions

by Brian McCabe
Mail News Editor

A patient who tested positive for COVID-19 in Chaffee County has died, Chaffee County Public Health reported Wednesday.

The patient was an 83-year-old man with underlying health conditions.

He was tested on March 17 and hospitalized at Heart of the Rockies Regional Medical Center March 18 before being transported to a hospital out of county on March 19.

Chaffee County Public Health has been working out to community members he may have come in contact with and investigating the patient’s activities.

“Chaffee County Public Health strives to be as transparent as possible and provide the public with up-to-date, accurate information,” Public Health Director Andrea Carlstrom said. “However, in order to protect patient privacy, we are only releasing gender and age at this time.

The purpose of the public health investigation is to understand the risk of all activities that occurred while the case was potentially infectious.

“We have identified the contacts who have exposure that put them at risk and are contacting them.

“Outdoor and casual activities and contacts like casual contact in a restaurant or passing in a hallway are not a risk for transmission.”

COVID-19

by D.J. DeJong
Mail Staff Writer

The fourth case, reported Wednesday, is an 80-year-old female resident of Columbine Manor Care Center.

The fifth, reported Wednesday afternoon, is an 80-year-old female resident of Columbine Manor.

Four of the five cases are under investigation by Chaffee County Public Health.

Public Health confirmed 2 new cases

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment reported as of 4 p.m. Tuesday the state had:

• 1,086 positive cases of COVID-19
• 147 cases hospitalized
• 36 counties affected
• 8,064 people tested
• 20 deaths
• Nine outbreaks at residential and non-hospital health care facilities.

Polis: ‘stay at home’

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COVID-19: Ten outbreaks in Chaffee County

by Brian McCabe
Mail Staff Writer

The fourth case, reported Wednesday afternoon, is an 80-year-old female resident of Columbine Manor Care Center.

It was the second case reported at Columbine Manor.

Four of the five cases are under investigation by Chaffee County Public Health.

Florida expands testing

Nine outbreaks at residential and non-hospital health care facilities.

Chaffee County Public Health has held a coronavirus case that has been confirmed.

It was the second case reported at Columbine Manor.

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U.S. home to 7M turkeys

A tom turkey puffs up in display Friday in Tom Parkes’ backyard in Mesa Antero.

Turkey populations were once decimated due to poaching and habitat destruction, according to Colorado Parks and Wildlife. In fact, during the Great Depression, only 30,000 of them existed on the continent. However, thanks to successful conservation efforts by a variety of groups, the United States is now home to more than 7 million wild turkeys.

Public Health confirms 2 new cases

by D.J. DeJong
Mail Staff Writer

Chaffee County Public Health confirmed the fourth and fifth cases of COVID-19 in Chaffee County Wednesday.

The fourth case, reported Wednesday, is a 57-year-old man who had traveled out of the country.

The fifth, reported Wednesday afternoon, is an 80-year-old female resident of Columbine Manor Care Center.

It was the second case reported at Columbine Manor.

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Trout Unlimited helps watershed

by Cody Olivas
Mail Staff Writer

Trout Unlimited reports a successful outcome for the Monarch Pass Gravel Mine project that the group finished just before snow started flying.

In an effort to improve the watershed of the upper South Arkansas River, Trout Unlimited joined forces with several organizations and businesses to reduce sediment load in the upper watershed.

The project took place next to Monarch Mountain, accessed via Old Monarch Pass and a Forest Service road.

Jason Willis, Colorado abandoned mine land program manager with Trout Unlimited, said they have other projects in mind but started with this one because it was “low-hanging fruit.”

“The problem the (U.S. Forest Service) identified is in the Monarch ponds; they have to dredge out the sediment,” Willis said. “We’re trying to help reduce the sediment in the upper watershed.”

Willis said sediment can make streams and rivers wider and shallower, in turn increasing their temperature and reducing oxygen.

He also said the existing sedimentation problem in the upper watershed due to decomposing granitic soils has only been exacerbated by the issue of large-scale tree mortality caused by spruce bark beetle epidemics.

The roughly 2-acre project included the Monarch Gravel Mine project in an application submitted to the U.S. Forest Service in Salida.

A “check dam” was built in the gully to slow down the sediment’s flow.

Amendments included compost and fertilizer to help a native seed mix from Coaldale, containing between eight and 12 native grasses and forbs, grow and hold the ground together.

Willis said he first installed some test plots to determine what would grow best in the environment.

“We got everything down and then it snowed a day later, which is perfect,” Willis said. “It’s ideal to get snow on it right after you’re done seeding.”

The snow, he said, not only helps kick-start the growing process, it also protects the seeds from hungry birds.

Check dams, meanwhile, filled in erosional gullies to reduce flowing sediment’s velocity.

“There were a bunch of erosional gullies pumping sediment into water on the site,” Willis said. “We eliminated the pathways.”

The project became a reality, however, TU had to enlist the help of lots of partners.

TU began by discussing possible improvements with the U.S. Forest Service in Salida.

After getting Forest Service approval, TU began working with partners to develop Watershed Collaborative to include the Monarch Gravel Mine project in an application.