

the WATCH

Serving Telluride, Mountain Village, Ridgway, Ouray,
Montrose, Norwood and the Western San Juans



FARMERS
AUTO • HOME • LIFE • BUSINESS
WORKERS COMPENSATION

HOWARD DAVIDSON
Insurance Agent
970-249-6823
1551 Ogden Road, Montrose
hdavidson@farmersagent.com

VOL. 17, NO. 31 | THURSDAY, AUGUST 1 - WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7, 2013 | WATCHNEWSPAPERS.COM



MARSHMALLOW MOMENT – Jack Franck roasted marshmallows near Silver Jack Reservoir in the Cimarron Range on Saturday evening. The U.S. Forest Service has reopened the area following the East Fork Fire that burned last month. All Forest Service trail closures have been rescinded in the area including the Alpine Trail, East Fork Trailhead, High Mesa Trail, and the East Fork Road. Recent monsoonal weather has eased fire restrictions in most areas as well. (Photo by Brett Schreckengost)

Revenue-Virginus Mine Advances Despite Turbulent Markets

BY SAMANTHA WRIGHT

OURAY COUNTY – The recent volatility of the gold and silver market has spooked investors and wreaked havoc with the plans of many companies in the mining sector, but the pace of work at the Revenue-Virginus mine near Yankee Boy Basin, 6.9 miles south of Ouray, continues full speed ahead, as Star Mining Operations charges toward its goal of mining and milling ore at the historic silver mine by fall.

see **GOLD** on page 28

FAA Revokes Montrose Plane Engine Business Certification

FAA Alleges Improper Maintenance by Western Skyways

BY GUS JARVIS

MONTROSE – While Western Skyways, Inc. appeals a June 3 Federal Aviation Administration

decision to revoke its repair station certificate, the company's owners say it is business as usual at the well-established aircraft engine rebuilding center located off the Montrose Regional Airport's runways.

According to an FAA spokesman, Western Skyways' repair station certificate was revoked for a number of alleged violations including improper maintenance

that caused an in-flight engine failure, improper record keeping, failure to make records available to the FAA, making false maintenance record entries, and records falsifications.

Western Skyways employs approximately 50 people at its two engine remanufacturing fa-

see **SKYWAYS** on page 32

SMARTS Park Suspends Service Due to Lack of Funding

Owner Eyes Waste-to-Energy Facility

BY SAMUEL ADAMS

TELLURIDE – Jonathan Greenspan stood outside the closed gates of the San Miguel Area Resource Transfer Station Park, known as SMARTS Park,

in the Ilium Valley, gazing at torrents of recyclable materials from Telluride, Mountain Village and nearby towns. Dumped and sorted at the transfer station, the materials will be shipped elsewhere for resale.

The piles of recyclables are higher and there are significantly fewer workers than usual, Greenspan says, because SMARTS Park,

facing severe funding shortages due to evaporating profit and a lack of government subsidies and investment, is temporarily suspending operation.

"What the community is losing is a facility that handles not just traditional recyclables like glass, cardboard and plastic, but also

see **SMARTS** on page 34



IN THE BIN – Ouray native Doug Gregory, employed with the surface crew at the Revenue-Virginus Mine, pondered his next move in the "fire ore bin" earlier this summer before concrete was poured. Mining and milling at the historic mine should commence shortly. (Courtesy photo)

SKYWAYS from page 1

cilities (one piston, one turbine) in Montrose, which together occupy over 130,000 square feet of space. Western Skyways co-owner David Leis said Western Skyways is the largest aircraft engine rebuilding facility in the U.S. and is the only shop in the U.S. that has both a piston rebuild shop and a turbine turbo prop shop.

"We are the only ones that do both," Leis said. "Most people don't know that."

Leis said the FAA's decision to revoke his repair station certificate came as a shock last June and both he and his partner and co-owner Al Head quickly appealed.

"We both said, 'What the heck is this?' It was totally out of the blue," Leis said. "It was something that happened five years ago. I still can't believe it. We have filed an appeal, which

will be in November. Right now it's business as normal. We are selling engines left and right."

In April 2009, after overhauling a Continental engine for Detroit Lakes Aviation, Western Skyways allegedly failed to produce an overhaul work order when an FAA inspector requested it in November 2009. Western Skyways produced the work order 15 months later, in February 2011, but the order was allegedly missing required information.

Detroit Lakes Aviation returned the Western Skyways overhauled engine for exchange under warranty in June 2009. That same month, Western Skyways allegedly approved the engine for return to service and issued a form stating more work was done in accordance with the engine overhaul manual. That engine, according to the FAA, experienced a loss of power on Oct. 8, 2009, after being operated for

approximately 198 hours following the overhaul.

The FAA asked to see all documents related to the work that was done on that engine. The FAA now alleges that Western Skyways altered some of the documents to make it appear they were prepared for a June 11 work order while they were allegedly, in fact, prepared for other work orders. Furthermore the FAA alleges that the company did not overhaul the engine using required methods, techniques and practices and that it altered documents to make it appear the engine was overhauled a second time when it was not overhauled a second time.

In a separate allegation, the FAA believes Western Skyways failed to use required methods on a torqued bolt in July 2010 on a Teledyne Continental engine. On Aug. 20, 2010, that engine failed after being operated on for less

than five hours after its overhaul. An FAA analysis showed the engine failed due to an improperly torqued bolt.

After the FAA decision to revoke the repair station certificate, Leis said Western Skyways representatives took the time to call each and every engine owner it had worked with to notify them of the situation and ask them if they have had a problem with their work.

"Nobody has had a problem with it and we are going to continue on just as we have," he said. "We are in the appeal process and hopefully we will get [the certification] back. It was a paperwork snafu is what it was. The chief inspector put the wrong numbers on the wrong pages. The attorneys have all the paperwork and we will see what comes out of it."

Regardless of the outcome of the appeal, Leis said Western Skyways will continue on with business as usual. While it's

preferable for Western Skyways to have a FAA repair station certificate, he said it's not necessary to run the business.

"It's just a recognition," Leis said. "It may or may not hurt some sales here and there."

Leis went on to say that Western Skyways employs licensed mechanics and that both Leis and Head will have the ability to sign off on all the work the individual mechanics do without each individual having to carry their own liability insurance.

"We can sign off on everything we do," he said. "Everything is going along just as normal. It hasn't affected us and it won't affect us. We are not asking employees to sign off on them. Al and myself will sign them off. This isn't as big of a deal that many people might think."

gjarvis@watchnewspapers.com
Twitter: @Gus_Jarvis

IMPACT from page 5

a house, she said, could be considered a fire hazard that would cause insurance rates to go up.

It's these kinds of cascading unintended consequences that she says would ultimately be borne by realtors and homeowners.

"I think it should be completely dropped and they should

start all over again," she said. "You are taking away people's property rights; how does it make your house more valuable?"

UP TO THE CITIZENS, NOW

Ken Lipton, meanwhile, was enjoying the quiet before the storm on the back porch of his ranch home on County Road 12 on a recent af-

ternoon as the date of the public hearing loomed.

As the chair of the planning commission, Lipton has witnessed firsthand the almost rabid bitterness that the proposed revisions have evoked in the community. Through it all, he said, the planning commission has carried on, "holding workshops three times a month for all those years."

He emphasized that the process has incorporated a lot of public feedback. "The public comment did have an effect, and we went back and changed some things," he said. For example, mining structures and most agricultural structures are now exempt from VIR regs, and a proposed increase to the existing setback for structures built on an escarpment has been scrapped.

As for the blending issue, he reflected, "A lot of people think the county will dictate what color their house can be, but if you read the definition of blending, it's much clearer than in the existing visual impact regulations. Any reasonable person will find they can blend their house."

Concerns that the new regulations would negatively affect property values are unfounded, he maintained, stressing that he speaks solely for himself, rather than representing the viewpoint of the planning commission as a whole. "We reviewed the county assessor's data and determined that the most valuable, highly assessed properties in the county are actually within existing visual impact areas," he said.

"While many new roads have been added, many of the revisions have less restrictions compared to the current plan, and many things have been made more clear. We

have taken as much subjectivity out as we possibly could."

Now, Lipton said, it's up to the citizens of the county to let the county commissioners know what they want. "They need to make decisions based on strategic thinking, relative to potential buildout in the county and the impact that future development could have on the values that many people prize in this county — specifically, incomparable views, magnificent valleys and the overall rural appearance of county," he said, gazing out over lush green pastures stretching to the Cimarron Range that represent one of the county's iconic view corridors the new regulations seek to further protect.

"I'm passionate about it, and I feel badly that some in the county have been very hostile to this effort. Some people see this as unwarranted regulation. Many have an ideology opposed to government regulations or what they feel is unnecessary government regulation," he reflected.

"I don't think we can win those arguments. But the majority of people in this county have a concern for the common interest. The land use code is designed to protect that common interest."

swright@watchnewspapers.com
Tweet @iamsamwright



REACH YOUR PEAK AT TELLURIDE MOUNTAIN SCHOOL

Telluride's Independent School and Ski Academy

Small Class Sizes, Challenging Academics,
Nurturing School Culture, Comprehensive Arts & Language Programs,
Innovative Music Program, Experiential & Service Learning



Visitors Warmly Welcomed

www.telluridemtnschool.org

Financial aid available

LABORATE DURE...LUDITE DURE WORK HARD... PLAY HARD



Massage • Facials
Manicure • Pedicure • Waxing

970.497.0019 or 970.728.9772

breatheintelluride@gmail.com