

KNFO Quarterly Issues Report
4th Quarter of the Calendar Year 2023

Filed on Jan. 1st, 2024

The following are the issues that KNFO, licensed to Basalt, Colorado, has identified as serving the public trust, within our service area. A brief Synopsis of issues and programs addressing them has been filed in the stations next license renewal.

Pitkin County:

- 1.) Homeowners in Snowmass Village who have a security system installed will need to acquire a permit.
- 2.) The housing department in Snowmass Village is clarifying its requirements for affordable housing.
- 3.) A portion of the Tree Farm residential project in El Jebel is now up for sale.
- 4.) Wealthy Americans looking to build large home sin Pitkin Conty will need to scale back their plans a bit.
- 5.) An Aspen Skiing Company employee is claiming to be underpaid as employees don't get paid traveling to on mountain locations each day.
- 6.) A social media threat against Aspen School District was found to be from out of state and a hoax.
- 7.) Autumn roads are beginning to get icy in the morning as temperatures plunge below zero.
- 8.) A three-judge panel of Colorado Court of Appeals listened to debate on real cases in front of high school aged students.
- 9.) Studies grossly exaggerated the demise of the only commercial jet flying into Aspen.
- 10.) New shelters will open for at least 100 migrants in Carbondale.
- 11.) The Mayor of Aspen writes a letter to the editor in the Aspen Daily News claiming he isn't anti semetic.


Eagle County:

- 1.) A federal judge in Denver listened to a latch ditch effort to suspend the release of wolves in Colorado.
- 2.) Winter is coming and Vail Mountain is already making snow for the upcoming season.
- 3.) Vail Resorts' chief marketing officer is resigning effective Friday. This is the third of six executive offers to leave Vail Resorts.
- 4.) If you share your ski pass with a buddy in Vail, be prepared to suffer harsh penalties.
- 5.) Vail Mountain will open Friday with two gondolas and a bunch of terrain.
- 6.) Travis Coggin will be Vail's next town mayor and will serve for the next two years.
- 7.) Vail's Back Bowls are open after the Sun Down Bowl and the Sun Up bowl opened on Thursday.
- 8.) Housing and pay continue to make bringing in new employees to the Eagle County School District.
- 9.) A federal court judge struck down a ban on high volume commercial carriers like UPS and FedEx from driving in the crowded pedestrian areas.
- 10.) Uphillers in Eagle Valley want daytime access to Vail Mountain and Beaver Creek. Currently uphill is only allowed after the ski day at 4:30PM.
- 11.) The 144 year old Tabor opera house in Leadville will finally get repairs to the front façade.
- 12.) Martin Short and Steve Martin will be performing in Vail October 20th.

Garfield County:

- 1.) A proposal to build 144 townhomes and eight single family homes south of Glenwood Springs was denied Monday.
- 2.) Secret tapes from a Glenwood springs City Council meeting in August were finally released to the public.
- 3.) It was a long and strange tenure as the Roaring Fork School District superintendent that had come to an end.
- 4.) The Garfield County Sheriff's office believes the body found Saturday morning at the amusement park was a suicide.
- 5.) The city of Glenwood Springs was awarded \$50 million dollars for the South Bridge project.
- 6.) The Rifle Bears football season came to an end in the 2A state championship game.
- 7.) The Roaring Fork Transit Authority won't be helping out with property tax relief.
- 8.) The Roaring Fork School District has appointed Anna Cole as the interim superintendent.
- 9.) The Colorado Geographic Naming Advisory Board is eyeing a new name for a valley 30 miles north of Glenwood Springs.
- 10.) Colorado Governor Jared Polis spoke at local elementary schools about pre k programs and affordable housing.
- 11.) The Glenwood Springs police department is utilizing drones to enter areas too dangerous for humans to enter.

Homeowners in Snowmass Village who have a security system installed will need to apply for a new permit or face a stiff fine should police get dispatched to their home.... Snowmass Police Chief Brian Olson voiced concerns to town council that police officers were wasting time responding to false burglar alarms around the village... False fines will go up from \$50 to \$100 after three false alarms... Homeowners that didn't register will get nicked for \$250.... Olson warns that many jurisdictions don't respond to alarms anymore because they are most always false alarms.... This is a way to continue to provide prompt police service by hopefully minimizing the false alarms....



PITKIN

In Snowmass Village, the Housing Department is clarifying its requirements for affordable housing.... Renters in 300 employee housing units in Snowmass were given notice about renewing their leases in mid-November through a new electronic system according to the Aspen Times.... . . . Renters are required to provide employee documentation to the town to verify that those renting employee housing in Snowmass are meeting housing requirements.... Renters must provide their latest paystub and their 2022 tax return forms..... To qualify for renting employee housing in Snowmass, applicants must work 1,400 hours yearly in Snowmass and work eight out of 12 months in Snowmass..... If people do not meet the housing requirements, they will be given three to six months to comply with the requirements....

A portion of the tree farm residential project in El Jebel is up for sale after the developer and the former owner head to court.... The Aspen Daily News reports that former owner Ace Lane filed a lawsuit back in June against Arizona developer Walt Brown Jr for allegedly not getting approvals from the Tree Farm's development review board and not obtaining a building permit from Eagle County within 400 days of closing on the land.... Brown has placed his four parcels on the west side of the water ski lake for \$14.87 million dollars.... He says a new developer will be able to work better with Lane and get to work almost immediately.... No trial date has been set.....

Wealthy Americans looking to build a castle in Pitkin County will need to scale back their dreams a bit.... The Pitkin County commissioners approved a new rule that the maximum size of a new home in the county has been reduced from 15,000 to 9,250 square feet.... A citizen board that had been meeting for nearly a year, recommended scaling back home size to deal with damaging effects of greenhouse gas emissions... Commissioners say there is scientific evidence shows that homes larger than 8,500 square feet generate greenhouse gasses and create other “environmental havoc” in an exponential way.... Commissioners plan on scaling back even further next year restricting new home construction to just 8,750 feet in Pitkin County....

A new lawsuit filed by an hourly employee of the Aspen Skiing Co. claims workers are underpaid when they need to ride a chairlift, snowcat, or snowmobile to and from work each day.... The Aspen Daily News reports that the suit claims that workers “face physical hazard and exertion well beyond normal commutes in order to get to and from these on-mountain facilities to get to work,” Workers clock in and out at the on-mountain workplaces so the on-mountain travel time is unpaid.... Similar claims have been made against Vail Resorts when employees are not compensated for getting ready to work on the slopes booting up and for the cost of ski and snowboarding equipment required for many positions at a ski resort... The suit seeks a jury trial, makes three separate claims under the Colorado Wage Claim Act, Colorado Minimum Wage Act and Colorado Consumer Protection Act. The suit also accuses SkiCo of breach of contract and civil theft.

A social media threat against Aspen School District was determined to be from out of state and no immediate danger to the community.... School Resource officers were alerted to the post on an Aspen School District social media group referencing a school shooting... The Pitkin County Sheriff's office was able to determine the source of the threat. ... They found that a student out of state made the threat against the district... Pitkin County Sheriff's Deputies have contacted the student's parents, current school administration and their local law enforcement agency....

It has been 9 days since Aspen voters weighed in on the Aspen School District Board of Education election and after the votes were finally counted, Cassie Harrelson has unofficially defeated Katy Frisch, an incumbent member of the Aspen School District Board of Education, by just 15 votes of nearly 4,000 cast.... After curing outstanding ballots, Harrelson earned 1,936 votes to Frisch's 1,921 votes..... It is likely that a state mandated recount will be scheduled due to the razor thin margin of victory....

It was a grim reminder that the seasons are changing and the roads are getting icy.... An SUV lost control on Highway 82 Saturday morning and slammed into another vehicle turning left.... Five people were injured, including four in one vehicle..... The accident occurred at the intersection of Highway 82 and Emma Road at 9:33 a.m. where traffic is flowing at approximately 55 miles per hour.... A Toyota Highlander was westbound on the highway when it lost control on the snow-covered surface and collided with a Rivian R1S SUV that was waiting to make a turn..... All four occupants from the Toyota had to be extricated by first responders from Roaring Fork Fire Rescue using hydraulic tools..... Wintery weather is making roads icy and slick, officials are reminding motorists to check their tires and expect inconsistent road conditions...

A three-judge panel of Colorado Court of Appeals Tuesday listened to debate on two cases relating to arson and open records law.... They heard arguments, for and against, in front of an auditorium filled with high school aged students from Roaring Fork High School.... Courts in the Community is an educational outreach program that was started by the Colorado Supreme Court on Law Day in 1986. The program gives high school students hands-on experience in how the Colorado judicial system works and illustrates how disputes are resolved in a democratic society. The courts travel to high schools in Colorado each year to hear two oral arguments at each location... After the hearing, students are allowed to ask the three judges questions about what they heard....

In a report in Aspen Journalism dot com, Pitkin County-commissioned studies from a decade ago overestimated the phasing out of the only commercial aircraft into the Pitkin County Airport and the impact it would have on tourist travel.... Commercial airlines decided to phase out the CRJ-700 aircraft in 2011, the last time it was manufactured... Consultants studying the airport for Pitkin County predicted in 2013 that the fleet would be largely phased out by 2023 and all the planes would be retired in 2025... The reality, according to SkyWest, which operates flights for the three commercial carriers serving Aspen, is flying about 16% fewer CRJ-700s today than in 2018.... The doomsday studies were used as the primary justification to expand the runway to facilitate more modern jets like E-175's and possibly larger jets into Aspen...

More than 100 migrants from Venezuela moved to Carbondale and have been living in their cars and residing at a temporary shelter in the town's Third Street Center... Former Roaring Fork Superintendent Rob Stein was charged with finding shelter space for the migrants as temperatures dip to single digits each night... Stein tells the Post Independent that the Third Street Center is feeling the fatigue from housing 60 migrants.... He confirmed that a large meeting room at Carbondale's Town Hall will be used to house 20 migrants and a downstairs meeting hall at Carbondale Community United Methodist Church on Second Street will also house 20.... The Third Street Center needs relief after housing the migrants for the last couple of months however shelter is needed for more than 100 migrants and the new locations only offer help for 40....

The Mayor of Aspen has penned an opinion piece in the Aspen Daily News today defending city council as not antisemitic after voting to not raise the flag of Israel on the former Aspen City Hall building alongside the Ukrainian flag.... Councilman Bill Guth surprised council with a resolution to hang the flag of Israel, but council claimed the two situations are different and voted 3-2 against raising the flag, councilors Ward Hauenstein, John Doyle and the Mayor Torre voting to not raise the flag.... Guth and councilman Sam Rose voted to raise the flag... Council ultimately decided to take down the Ukrainian flag... The mayor in his column today called the debate last Monday inappropriate and damaging and called for a proclamation of only the US flag, Colorado flag, and the Aspen flag... He also called for a valley wide solidarity event on Thursday, Nov. 9 at 4 p.m. to collectively mourn the terrible loss of life in Israel....

A federal judge in Denver today listened to a last ditch effort to suspend the release of wolves in Colorado.... The Gunnison County Stockgrowers' and the Colorado Cattlemen's associations, filed the lawsuit Monday alleges Fish and Wildlife service should have conducted environmental impact statement reviews beyond what has already been completed..... Judge Regina Rodriguez listened to three hours of testimony today and is hoping to issue her ruling on Friday... In 2020, Colorado voters approved Proposition 114, narrowly by a margin of 57,000 votes, to reintroduce wolves in the state before the end of 2023.... Should the judge rule against the lawsuit, wolves could be released on private or state lands somewhere in Eagle, Grand or Summit counties as early as Monday...

EAGLE

Like it or not, winter is on the way and at Vail ski resort, the snow guns are officially on.... Vail started snowmaking Wednesday night Beaver Creek on Thursday.... Mother nature is helping out with a winter storm that rolled through Colorado for the last few days dumping up to a foot of snow up high on area ski resorts..... Keystone also started snowmaking Wednesday night joining ABasin and Copper getting their resorts ready for the upcoming ski season....

Vail Resorts chief marketing officer is out as of Friday... Ryan Bennett's separation is being treated as involuntary, according to the Vail Daily and the company plans to enter into a severance agreement and general release with Bennet... He is the third of Vail Resorts' six executive officers to part ways with the company over the last year.... Bennett was appointed Senior Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer, a position formerly held by current CEO Kirsten Lynch, in November 2021 when Lynch became CEO.

Harsh penalties are in store for those who decide to share their ski pass with a buddy or violate town code.... At last week's town council meeting, Vail Police Chief Ryan Kenney asked for council's support to add a penalty assessment into the town's current penalty code according to the Vail Daily.... This would add first time penalties of \$100 for things like failing to control an animal, obstructing traffic, solicitation and more.... Second time offenders would pay \$500.... Ski pass violations have skyrocketed over the years where just 17 people were charged with sharing passes in 2013 in Vail... Last season there were 147.... This year getting caught with someone else's ski pass could cost you \$500.... Council also voted to add harsher fines for bear-related trash violations, \$1,000 for the use of non-approved bear-resistant/proof garbage and recycling containers.... All these changes were approved on first reading unanimously.... They will require a second vote before they go into effect....

Vail Mountain opens this Friday running two gondolas and a decent amount of terrain..... The runs Swingsville and Ramshorn will open via Gondola One.... Beginners will head for Lionshead taking laps on the Little Eagle Chair..... Shopping and nearby restaurants will also open Friday....

Vail Town Council Tuesday unanimously appointed Travis Coggin to be the town's mayor for the next two years.... Coggin is serving his second four-year term on council after being elected in 2017.... He is a red Sandstone Elementary graduate after his family moved here in 1988.... Barry Davis was named mayor pro tem...

The Back Bowls are open... Vail Mountain opened up the Sun Down Bowl and Sun Up Bowl on Thursday, allowing guests access to exit the back side of the mountain via Sun Up Express (No. 9) and High Noon Express (No. 5).... It's the earliest opening for the Back Bowls since 2019.... Vail Mountain claims to have received more than 7 feet of snow so far this season...

Staffing continues to be an issue in the Eagle County School District.... Housing and pay continue to make bringing in new staff difficult... The Vail Daily reports that at the end of the first semester, the district has 18 certified positions available, down from 41.... and 50 noncertified vacancies down from 53... The district has 18 vacancies in its transportation department and four in its early childhood department.....

A federal court ruled on Friday that the town of Vail cannot enforce its ban on high-volume commercial carriers like UPS, FedEx, and DHL... The Vail Daily reports that Judge Charlotte N. Sweeney, granted a preliminary injunction pending a trial between the town and the Colorado Motor Carriers Association.... The town of Vail is trying to restrict deliveries from commercial companies in pedestrian villages where skiers and snowboarders and shoppers are walking... Thanks to the decision, high-volume commercial carriers will be able to continue to deliver within Vail's pedestrian areas.

Uphillers in the Eagle Valley want daytime access to Vail Mountain and Beaver Creek.... More than 50 people turned out last week at Cripple Creek Backcountry in Avon to grill representatives from Vail and Beaver Creek about uphill access according to the Vail Daily.... Mountain access to uphillers is only available after 4:30PM when the lifts are closed... Representatives reason that Vail and Beaver Creek are less than ideal to mix uphill and downhill traffic... There are pinch points that would bring the traffic together and increase the risk of collision... Nearby resorts like Aspen Mountain don't allow daytime uphill access, but Buttermilk, Aspen Highlands, and Snowmass all have uphill routes on the edge of the resorts....

The Tabor Opera House is 144 years old and will finally get repairs to the front façade in Leadville.... The Colorado Department of Local Affairs awarded the Tabor Opera House preservation foundation \$580,312 on Nov. 8 in a matching grant process to complete the final repairs.... The rehabilitation project began in 2020 after a 2016, Colorado Preservation Inc. report had deemed the Tabor Opera House in danger of demolition by neglect.... After the exterior is done, efforts will turn to the interior of the opera house.... . The preservation foundation plans to lead visioning, fundraising and construction efforts to turn the opera house into a community space....

If you have ever wanted to see Steve Martin live, next June is your chance.... Martin is teaming up with Martin Short for a show titled "The Dukes of Funnytown!" ... The show is described as performance that redefines comedy in unexpected and profound ways, from two of the funniest, most influential and acclaimed talents of the past century.

Presale tickets went on sale at 10 a.m. this morning and the public tickets go on-sale at 10 a.m. Friday, Oct. 20. For more information, visit GRFAVail.com.

A proposal to build 144 townhomes and eight single family homes south of Glenwood Springs was denied Monday..... The Flying M Ranch property development was to be built on 33 acres surrounding the Riverview School.... Developers were offering up housing for Riverview School teachers, units for local workers and a group hospice home.... Still, Garfield County Commissioners denied the application 2-1 according to the Post Independent.... Commissioners were concerned about the traffic impacts in an area already overwhelmed by current infrastructure.... Developers offered to extend the up valley right turn lane by 300 feet to help deal with added congestion.... Commissioner Tom Jankovsky disagreed calling the proposal “one of the best applications he has seen....



GARFIELD

The tapes from the Glenwood Springs City Council executive session in August were released and reveal a conversation about former City manager Beverli Marshall and her management style... Glenwood Springs Mayor Ingrid Wussow summed up the private session that council was considering terminating Marshall for her communication and management style... Wussow and Mayor Pro-Tem Marco Dehm were then instructed to meet Marshall and inform her that she was on paid administrative leave for three weeks and if she didn't voluntarily resign, Glenwood Springs City Council would vote to terminate her position.... Former City Councilman Tony Hershey won a lawsuit to have the tape released to the public because the decision to terminate Marshall was essentially done in a private meeting which violates Colorado Open Meetings law....

It is the end of a strange saga in the Roaring Fork School District after former superintendent Jesus Rodriguez's resignation letter was officially approved last night.... Rodriguez served just over one school year as superintendent for the Roaring Fork School District serving as the first Latino superintendent in a district estimated to be made up of 60% Latino students... Controversies surrounded the hiring started when Rodriguez was offered a higher salary than outgoing superintendent Rob Stein, by more than \$50,000..... The controversy ramped up again when he was offered a \$500,000 housing stipend to live in the district.... Many in the district came out to complain that was too generous when most teachers couldn't afford to live in the district... Rodriguez then proceeded to buy an \$800,000 home near Denver to be closer to his family.... This school year he took family leave for his family as he and his wife were expecting a baby... He hasn't been in the office since the beginning of the school year.... RFSD's board of education unanimously approved the agreement in its meeting, which includes a clause to pay Rodríguez \$144,182.43 the remainder of this year's salary.... The Roaring Fork School District is comprised of schools in Basalt, Carbondale, and Glenwood Springs....

The Garfield County Sheriff's office believes the body found Saturday morning at Glenwood Caverns Adventure Park could have been a suicide.... The body was found around 9AM Saturday forcing the closure of the amusement park.... In a press release from the sheriff's office, the victim is believed to have entered the park illegally.... The release states that "The fact that there was entry into the park by an unauthorized individual after hours makes it important that the investigators not only address and identify the deceased individual but determine his probable cause of death pending a final report from the County Coroner," Authorities are also inspecting all the attractions to make sure there was no sabotage to any equipment....

The city of Glenwood Springs was just awarded \$50 million dollars for the construction of the South Bridge Project.... The city was one of more than 170 applicants for the funding from more than a half billion dollars made available for infrastructure projects.... The South Bridge would provide a crucial second access between the west side of the Roaring Fork River to HWY 82..... This need emphasized in June 2002 when the Coal Seam Fire required the evacuation of residents and businesses in the areas south and west of Glenwood Springs.... It revealed safety limitations for the region; specifically, the risk of having one access point across the Roaring Fork River to SH 82.... There are no current cost estimations on building the South Bridge but officials believe it should come in around \$80 million dollars...

The Rifle Bears football season came to an end Saturday when the Delta Panthers beat them 54-14 in Grand Junction in the 2A State Championship game..... It was the second time Delta beat Rifle this season, the two teams met back in September... The Panthers were dominant all season winning 13 games with no losses....

Don't look for any property tax relief from the Roaring Fork Transit Authority.... The Aspen Daily News reports that RFTA's board of directors anticipates \$18.3 million dollars in property tax revenues next year... That is up from roughly \$12 million dollars in 2023.... RFTA board chair Jeanne McQueeney dismissed the 50% increase saying the \$6 million dollar increase is not a windfall because the cost of buses has gone up considerably as well as the cost of wages to employees... She also dismissed any property tax relief RFTA could offer calling it only a very small amount... She pointed to possible property tax relief coming from Denver instead... RFTA raised its starting wage in September for annual full-time drivers to \$30/hour or \$62,400/year. The top wage for drivers is \$38 per hour.....

The Roaring Fork School District's chief of student and family services, Anna Cole, has been appointed the interim superintendent.... Roaring Fork School District Board President Kathryn Kuhlenberg said of Cole that she has been phenomenal as acting superintendent this year, and making it official feels great..... All five board members had similar praises for Cole... The school board hopes to have a job listing for a new superintendent by mid-January... Cole has not expressed a desire, either way, on becoming the official superintendent....

The Colorado Geographic Naming Advisory Board is eyeing a new name for a valley 30 miles north of Glenwood Springs.... The valley is known as “Dead Mexican Gulch” believed to be named after a man died there working for a sheep herder in the 1920’s.... Jose Velarde was killed by lightning written on a tombstone in the valley.... The state advisory board, established by Gov. Jared Polis is charged with looking for geographic names that may be offensive and changing them.... The board did some research and now believes the man’s name was Belardi and looked to honor him naming the valley Jose Belardi Gulch... More research revealed the man may have been convicted of murdering two shepherders and was sent to prison.... When he was released from prison on good behavior, he was working in the valley when lightning struck him... According to the Aspen Daily News, Garfield County Commissioner Tom Jankovsky called Belardi “a scoundrel and a murderer” in an August meeting and suggested renaming the geographic feature as “Karma Gulch”.... Garfield County Commissioners and Glenwood Springs City Council ultimately recommend the name “Lost Shepherder Gulch” for the valley 30 miles north of Glenwood.....

Colorado Gov. Jared Polis spent part of Tuesday at Glenwood Springs area elementary schools to discuss universal pre k programs before heading to the Hotel Colorado to discuss affordable housing..... Governor Polis says affordable housing represents an existential threat to the community and emphasized his administration's efforts to address the crisis.... He cited House Bill 1255 preventing cities across Colorado from enforcing growth caps..... The law encourages housing development and diversifying the available options, particularly for middle-income families. Governor Polis reasoned that "We have simply got to expedite the approval process for building homes and building barriers for homes... We need homes that are the least likely to be built. Homes in the 200s and 300s, quadplexes, and accessory dwelling units."

It is a twentieth century tool to help police officers in Glenwood Springs..... Glenwood Springs Police Officer Logann Crawford performed a flying drone demonstration in Rifle Saturday.... The Drone, a DJI Matrice 30T features two forward facing cameras with digital zoom up to 200X.... The drone is an invaluable tool to search areas that are too dangerous for humans to enter, or to scan large remote areas in a time saving manner.... The drone can fly up to 400 feet in the air and 9 miles away from the operator.... Glenwood Springs officials say they have used drones to locate lost children and prove to be an incredibly powerful tool for law enforcement use in the future....