

The Carbon Valley Herald

FREE

Covering the Carbon Valley area, including Frederick, Firestone, Dacono, Platteville and Mead

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Photo by Carl Johnson

Randy “Wild Bill” Hedberg makes his way from the midway to the Dacono Centennial Celebration parade route Aug. 9 with a handful of balloons. Hedberg, who sells balloons around the country, used to sell his balloons to children for 50 cents each, but due to the cost of inflation, his prices ballooned to \$3 each or two of \$5.

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Weathering the storm

By Jen Reeder
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PLATTEVILLE — Vicenta Valazco was working as a cashier at Everyday, a gas station minimart in Platteville, when one of her regulars came in to the store. Since he was a young boy, she was concerned for his safety.
“I said, ‘There’s a tornado warning – get home right now!’” Val-

lazco said.
It was Aug. 6, and the National Weather Service had issued a tornado warning for much of Weld County. As it turned out, Valazco was right to send the child home.
“It started raining about 6:10 p.m., and a guy on a bike came in (to avoid the weather),” she said. Soon, a nurse from Greeley came in for shelter from the storm as well

as a few residents of Platteville.
Suddenly, accumulated rainwater flooded into the store. About 6:30 p.m., a telephone pole fell near the gas pumps, missing them by only 3 feet, Valazco said. She called 911, and the power soon went out.
“We couldn’t see for about five minutes because the water was falling against the win-

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English-only ballots for Weldco

County likely exceeds bilingual status; 2010 census to determine
By Linda Tharp
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WELD COUNTY – Voters in Weld County will either need to read English or be prepared to have someone interpret the November General Election Ballot for them.
Weld County Clerk and Recorder Steve Marino said Aug. 12, the day of the primary election, that it’s almost certain the county already meets the federal standards needed to be designated a bilingual county. Such a distinction would mean the county could offer ballots in Spanish.
According to the U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division Voting Section, federal law would allow local counties to provide multiple language versions of ballots once a single language is the primary language of: more than 10,000 voters; more than 5 percent of all voting-age residents; or the

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Photo by Jen Reeder

A sign for Everyday, a Platteville gas station, displays damage it sustained when a telephone pole crashed into it during a storm in Platteville Aug. 6.

To: Postal Patron

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Platteville officials, residents pull together after severe weather



Photo by Jen Reeder

Platteville resident Steve Medina surveys an uprooted tree at Mizpah Cemetery Aug. 7. He called the storm that hit Platteville the evening of Aug. 6 “pretty horrific.”

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dows so hard,” she said.
She was told that local residents should go home if they could, and the others should seek shelter in the bathroom because of the tornado warning. The local residents paid cash for their items and left.
Soon after, officials from the fire department evacuated the store because gas was rising to the surface from underground tanks. Coupled with fears that the telephone pole might give off electric sparks and start a fire, the evacuation was important, she said.
The frontage road was closed, as well as Highway 66. The man with the motorcycle decided to continue on to Denver, but the nurse had a false start before heading home.
“We told her which road to take, and she drove away but she came back and said, ‘No, I’m scared.’”
After the customers left, Valazco went home to a flooded basement. Though rumors that a tornado hit Platteville abound in town, it was not confirmed.
“We had a significant

wind event around 7:30 p.m.,” Platteville Town Manager Nick Meier said. “We’re really fortunate that no one was hurt.”
Meier said that roughly half the town was without power until about 2 a.m., at which time service was restored to part of the area. Service was fully restored to all residents by 9 a.m.
In addition to the downed telephone poles at Everyday, there was significant street flooding, collection issues with the wastewater lift stations, and many trees were uprooted, particularly at Mizpah Cemetery.
Meier credited Platteville’s police, fire and public works departments, as well as officials from Xcel Energy, with helping restore services to residents as quickly as possible.
“All of the groups worked seamlessly together to facilitate the clean-up and restore the services that we’re responsible for delivering,” Meier said the morning after the storm. “We’re very pleased to have all services restored, and we’re working on clean-up efforts.”

Government officials in other towns in the area were on high alert the night of the storm as well, though they were ultimately spared.
Frederick Police Chief Gary Barbour said Frederick did not sustain any damage, though the town ran the tornado sirens as a precaution because the tornado warning from the National Weather Service initially included parts of southwest Weld County, including Frederick and Dacono.
“I think some heavy rain was about it,” Barbour said.
Dacono City Administrator Karen Cumbo said city officials debated using the town’s notification system, which allows the administration to send a text message to the cell phones of Dacono residents. They realized the storms were hitting farther north and decided not to utilize the system.
“We were monitoring it,” Cumbo said. “We try to find a balance between making sure people have information and not creating a panic.”
Platteville was not as fortunate. Twelve-year-old Dorian Richard, a Platteville resident, said the storm was “kind of scary.”
“Those clouds were

moving so fast, I thought it was forming a tail,” he said.
He said his home has no basement, and he was awake throughout the storm. His house lost power, but regained it around 1:30 a.m.
“I was waiting for my microwave to come on so I could make a Hot Pocket,” he joked.
He was serious about being relieved that no one was injured in the storm.
“I’m glad my mom didn’t get hurt,” he said.
His friend Justin Miller, another 12-year-old resident of Platteville, was awake during the storm, which caused his home to lose power, too. In fact, most people they know stayed up during the night because of the threatening weather.
“Everybody was grabbing candles,” Miller said.
The day after the storm, adults in the community were hard at work to repair their properties and to remove fallen trees

from Mizpah Cemetery. Platteville resident Burt Schoneman said that after clearing five fallen trees from his son’s farm, he got a call from a friend, Mike Evans, asking him if he had a chainsaw. So the two friends headed over to the cemetery to get rid of the uprooted trees.
“We just thought we’d come in and clean up the place before a branch falls down and hurts someone,” Schoneman said.
While Schoneman worked with his chainsaw, a woman, who wished to remain anonymous, cleared the area of smaller branches and debris. She was lending a hand in the spirit of community service.
“It’s our cemetery. It needs our care,” she said.

To contact Carbon Valley Herald Reporter Jen Reeder, call 303-833-2730.



Photo by Jen Reeder

Platteville resident Burt Schoneman uses a chainsaw to help clear fallen trees from Mizpah Cemetery Aug. 7.