

**PLANS EMERGING**

Space remains at Wildhorse center for new development

REAL ESTATE 1C



STEAMBOAT  
**PILOT & TODAY**

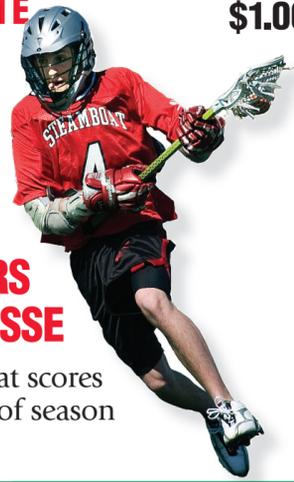
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**SAILORS LACROSSE**

Steamboat scores first win of season

SPORTS 1D



**Study eyes local economy**

Steamboat begins to tackle tough questions about the future

Blythe Terrell  
PILOT & TODAY STAFF

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS

Steamboat Springs is growing — that's no secret. What city officials are trying to nail down is how much, how fast and in what direction.

City Council members learned more about that at their meeting Tuesday night, when Economic and Planning Systems representatives presented the economic development study they have been

working on for months.

"This is not intended to be the be all, end all of the conversation," City Manager Alan Lanning said. "This is the beginning of the conversation."

A key part of Tuesday's conversation was the future in Steamboat of large-format retail, often referred to as "big box" chain stores. Part of the development study included a survey of the public, which weighed in on the issue.

Residents were split: 45 percent of respondents said they should be allowed in the city, and 54 percent said they should not. One percent was neutral.

"I would have to say that's not a mandate either way," Dan Guimond of Economic and Planning Systems said in an interview Friday. "That just says it's an issue that I think the community is going to have to continue to address

See **Economy**, page 14A



FILE PHOTO  
**Craig Mayor Don Jones** speaks at Wal-Mart's grand opening in Craig in November 2007. On Tuesday, the Steamboat Springs City Council discussed the future of big box retail in Steamboat Springs. A newly released economic development study showed Steamboat residents are divided in support for big box stores.

**Facing a hard bargain**

City prepares for tough annexation negotiations

Brandon Gee  
PILOT & TODAY STAFF

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS

Granby Mayor Ted Wang said his Grand County town was languishing in the early 1990s.

"We began to realize Granby had a choice to make," Wang told the Steamboat Springs City Council at a special meeting Monday. "It was either grow or die. We aggressively went after annexing properties."

When it was all said and done, Granby ended up annexing 8,000 acres, including a 5,200-acre parcel. Wang was part of a three-member panel Monday aimed at educating Steamboat's City Council as it prepares for an annexation of its own. The other two members were lawyers Jerry Dahl and Munsey Ayers, who have experience representing municipalities and developers, respectively, in land-use matters including annexation.

Steamboat's situation is much different than Granby's. The city is in little danger of going belly-up, and the amount of land it is currently considering for annexation is just 700 acres. But officials still hope to learn from the experiences of a town like Granby. Steamboat has not had an annexation of any significance in two decades.

"We understand that we don't have any experience," Planning Services Manager John Eastman said Friday. "We're going to try and learn from other people's mistakes. We don't have any other option."

Wang said Granby made some mistakes in its first annexations and got better at negotiating them as it went along. That's a luxury Steamboat may not have. Many have cited the Steamboat 700 development west of city limits as the city's last hope to solve its affordable housing problem. The primarily residential development proposes about 2,000 homes as well as commercial properties, parks and other features.

See **Annexation**, page 12A

**Pipelines unlocking bounty of Rockies' gas stock**

Paul Foy  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SALT LAKE CITY

In the Rocky Mountains, the energy crisis mostly has been a crisis for natural gas producers and a boon for consumers.

Last fall, gas suppliers competing to stuff excess production into constrained pipeline systems drove spot prices to a laughably low 5 cents for 1,000 cubic feet of gas. That's the equivalent of a nickel to heat a typical house for two winter days.

"A lot of producers didn't think it was funny," said Porter Bennett, president and chief executive for energy analysts Bentek Energy LLC. "They were actually paying somebody to take it." Storing gas or turning off wells isn't always practical.

Yet, for consumers across much of the West, where natural gas historically has been cheap and plentiful, the party is almost over, and it may have ended with that final discount splurge. The first of a handful of major new pipelines originating in the Rocky Mountains is starting to siphon away the bounty, promising lower prices for other regions.

"If you don't care about the rest of the country, it's not such a good thing," Bennett said in Golden. "We kind of get screwed in the deal."

Gas suppliers say this equation works both ways — if they can't maximize profits, fewer companies would bother drilling for natural gas in the West, which could lead to shortages and higher prices. They say gas production will continue to soar, keeping prices around here under control.

The new pipelines will take the Rockies' landlocked supply to major markets in California, the Phoenix area and flood the Midwest, where it can free

See **Pipelines**, page 13A

ADDRESSING LITERACY ISSUES IN STEAMBOAT SPRINGS



BRIAN RAY/STAFF  
**First-graders Gabe Aigner, left, and Zoe Crockett, right, practice reading with their teacher Janel Florquist during class at Soda Creek Elementary School in Steamboat Springs on Thursday morning.**

**Between the lines**

Assessing reading skills in young students a challenging, constant process

**SUNDAY FOCUS**

STORY BY MIKE LAWRENCE

Eric Casey, 7, spent part of Thursday morning diving into colorful books such as "The Messy Monster," "Arthur's Underwear" and "The Penguin Finds a Hot Dog."

A first-grader in Janel Florquist's class at Soda Creek Elementary School, Eric listened to a story on headphones while other young students played vocabulary games on computers, read at tables or listened to Florquist read out loud.

"We switch," explained classmate Miri Frasier, also 7. "Seat work, computers, listening, Ms. Florquist."

The multi-faceted lesson is indicative of how Steamboat Springs teachers and school officials assess the literacy

of young children. The development of skills including fluency, vocabulary, comprehension and phonemic awareness, or the ability to hear and use specific sounds in spoken words, is a delicate process that can be different for each child. Tracking literacy growth in young children has often involved different methods at different schools or times.

See **Literacy**, page 10A

**Hagenbuch to run for House**

Commissioner Stahoviak could be unopposed for re-election

Melinda Dudley  
PILOT & TODAY STAFF

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS

Todd Hagenbuch, a fourth-generation Routt County rancher and executive director of Historic Routt County, is running as a Democrat for state House District 57, the seat to

be vacated by Rep. Al White, R-Hayden, who will seek a District 8 state Senate seat.

Hagenbuch has the support of the Routt County Democratic Party, whose members gathered Saturday at its county convention and assembly to appoint delegates for the party's state

convention, discuss issues of political interest and hear from local and regional candidates for the 2008 election.

Hagenbuch, a Phippsburg resident, will challenge Republicans Randy Baumgardner of Hot Sulphur Springs and Dan

See **Democrats**, page 12A



BRIAN RAY/STAFF  
**Routt County Democrat Catherine Carson** leads a discussion at the organization's convention in Olympian Hall at the Howelsen Hill Lodge on Saturday afternoon.

PAGE DESIGNED BY CHRISTOPHER WOYTKO



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**OUTSIDE**

Cloudy with a shower; snow tonight. High of 40.  
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**VIEWPOINTS**

LAST WEEK: Are you more excited than sad about the demolition and rebuilding of Ski Time Square? Results/5A

THIS WEEK: Would attracting big box retail stores be good for Steamboat Springs residents?

**DELIVERY PROBLEM?**

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