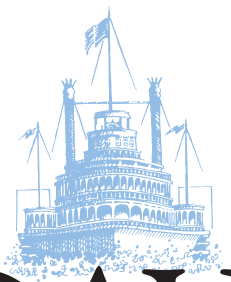


**A TASTE OF MEXICO**

South of the border flair in Hayden  
**BUSINESS 1B**

STEAMBOAT  
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**THEY'VE ARRIVED**

Boys lacrosse impressive in games

SPORTS 1D



**Iraq plan under review**

Candidates to weigh in on war

Liz Sidoti  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON

When Army Gen. David Petraeus delivers his assessment of the Iraq war next week, the next commander in chief will weigh in as well.

Republican Sen. John McCain will get a chance to argue that last year's U.S. troop buildup has been a success and withdrawal would be a mistake. Democratic Sens. Hillary Rodham Clinton and Barack Obama will have an opportunity to ask why the United States still is fighting more than five years after the invasion.

All three presidential contenders serve on Senate panels that will hear and question the top U.S. military commander in Iraq when he testifies Tuesday. McCain and Clinton serve on the Armed Services Committee; Obama is a member of the Foreign Relations Committee.

The backdrop to the Petraeus hearings includes the stark difference on the war between Republicans and Democrats, an increase in fighting in Iraq's southern region and a deeply disapproving public. Petraeus' status report not only will shape the administration's policy for the next several months, but also how the war will figure in the general election campaign.

With the presidential election just seven months off, President Bush's successor is certain to inherit the war that has cost more than 4,000 U.S. military lives and nearly \$500 billion throughout five years.

"Overall, it's a remarkable success — overall with significant challenges ahead," McCain said recently as he predicted what Petraeus will say about the troop-increase strategy and what he says he believes himself — even though the year of the buildup was the bloodiest for U.S. troops.

Clinton and Obama offer a sharp contrast to the Republican nominee-in-waiting.

See **Iraq**, page 11A



**A B&K Distributing employee** finishes filling the diesel gas tank on a commercial vehicle at the Petro West gas station in Steamboat Springs on Friday afternoon.

**Diesel prices slam businesses**

Record-high fuel costs pain truckers, other industries

Blythe Terrell  
PILOT & TODAY STAFF

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS

Diesel fuel prices are higher than ever, and businesses are feeling the burn.

Across Steamboat Springs and Routt County, diesel fuel costs more than \$4 a gallon. A year ago, the state average was about \$2.98, according to AAA.

"It's crazy. It's totally crazy,"

said Don Hayes, who owns Hayes Trucking in Hayden.

He said the soaring prices are cutting into his bottom line.

The state average for diesel was \$3.975 a gallon Friday, which was the highest price on record, according to AAA. The national average was \$4.02 a gallon.

"Even on local trucking, if you're staying within a 220-mile radius, the jobs that we were doing a month ago for \$243 in

fuel are now costing us \$279 to \$285," Hayes said.

The costs are going to hit consumers eventually if they aren't already, trucking industry experts said. Some independent truckers went on strike or decreased their speeds last week in protest, but local truckers said they were not involved.

The strike was limited, said Larry Daniel, president

See **Diesel**, page 11A

**New rules, same game**

**Shortened Cardboard Classic still entertains**

Cardboard Classic participants are limited to only a few construction materials — cardboard, duct tape, masking tape, string and water-based paint, but

**SUNDAY FOCUS**

STORY BY  
MELINDA DUDLEY

the camp chairs — we'll see how long that lasts," Cutter said.

In addition to two entries from the Boy Scouts of Troop 194, troop leaders such as Cutter also had their fun, sending a whimsical campsite entry sliding down Headwall during the 28th annual SmartWool Cardboard Classic at the Steamboat Ski Area on Saturday. Their campsite entry was complete with a fake campfire, marshmallow roasting sticks, pup tents and a camper-eating bear.

"We just took one of our pictures from our past camping trips and replicated it,"



**Cardboard Classic event** participants attempt to navigate their giant bulldozer made of cardboard down the slope at the Steamboat Ski Area on Saturday afternoon. A large crowd was on hand for the closing weekend festivities.

Cutter said. "We thought this was going to be a Spruce Goose, but every time we step on it, it takes off."

A total of 50 crafts entered the annual competition, rendering the event smaller

and shorter than years past when the number of entrants was unlimited. This year, Cardboard Classic entries cost \$10, and Steamboat Ski and Resort Corp. and Steamboat Springs police cracked down

on alcohol consumption and unruly behavior.

Nonetheless, onlookers lined both sides of Headwall, cheering for speedy crafts, spinouts and the trail of debris left by a cardboard space

shuttle entry.

Steamboat Ski and Resort Corp. has not yet determined whether this year's new restrictions will become permanent,

See **Classic**, page 13A

**State speaker addresses county Dems**

Andrew Romanoff says education, health care Colorado's challenges

Melinda Dudley  
PILOT & TODAY STAFF

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS

Colorado Speaker of the House Andrew Romanoff, D-Denver, identified education and health care as two of the biggest problems facing the state in his keynote address to the Routt County Democrats during Saturday night's Jefferson/Jackson Dinner.

Colorado has fallen to 37th in the nation in public support for primary and secondary education, and either 49th or dead last in support for higher

education, Romanoff said. In addition to not serving Colorado's youths, failing to support higher education is a horrible economic strategy, he said.

Next year's budget increases education funding by \$53 million, which is a step in the right direction, Romanoff said.

"The bad news is, at the current rate, it'll be 2025 before we're at the national average of public support for education," Romanoff said. "And average isn't what we're aiming for."

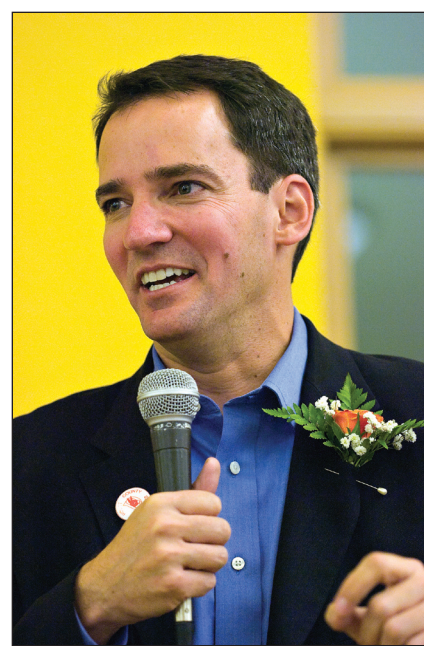
In addition to overhauling Colorado's financial support of public education, Romanoff also spoke of

"fixing" health care — letting politics fall away and letting the math speak for itself.

"We're going bankrupt," Romanoff said. "The system is broken. America's health care system is in need of a total overhaul, not just tinkering around the edges."

"What we need to do at the state legislature is hold down costs, cover more kids and adults and create more personal responsibility."

The Jefferson/Jackson Dinner is the premier annual event for the



**Colorado Speaker of the House** Andrew Romanoff addresses a sizable crowd during the Routt County Democrats Jefferson/Jackson Dinner and Fundraiser at the new Steamboat Springs Community Center on Saturday evening.

See **Democrats**, page 11A

PAGE DESIGNED BY MICHELLE FINKLER



**INSIDE**

- Classifieds ..... 3B
- Crossword ..... 5E
- Education ..... 6A
- Happenings ..... 2A
- Horoscope ..... 5E
- Milestones ..... 3E
- Obituaries ..... 3A
- South Routt ..... 7A
- Television ..... 5E
- Viewpoints ..... 4A

**OUTSIDE**

A couple of afternoon showers. High of 45.  
Page 2A



**VIEWPOINTS**

**LAST WEEK:** Should some of the city's revenues from the half-cent sales tax for education be shared with Hayden and South Routt school districts? Results/5A

**THIS WEEK:** Will the \$30 increase in the cost of a season pass to the Steamboat Ski Area make you reconsider whether to purchase one?

**DELIVERY PROBLEM?**

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