

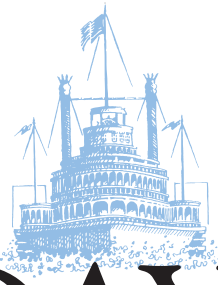
OLD WORLD LUXURY

Graystone Court on the market

REAL ESTATE 1B



STEAMBOAT
PILOT & TODAY



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YEAR OF ASTRONOMY

There are plenty of reasons to look to the skies in 2009

ROUTT COUNTY 1D



2008 shook the city

The past year tore down, built up and dramatically changed Steamboat



MATT STENSLAND/STAFF

SUNDAY FOCUS

STORY BY MIKE LAWRENCE

Imagine you picked 2008 to leave Steamboat Springs for a year, with no communication or news — not even a ski report.

How surprised you would be upon returning.

You would find Ski Time Square demolished, seemingly washed away by a record-setting, season-long storm that dumped 489 inches of snow on Steamboat Ski Area. After gawking up at One Steamboat Place looming over Gondola Square, you would head to Old Town and find a new Soda Creek Elementary School and vastly expanded Bud Werner Memorial Library, along with high-profile developments — Alpen Glow, Howelsen Place, The Victoria — changing the face of Lincoln Avenue through a downtown no longer distinguished by a daily noon whistle.

You would find all three Routt County school districts with a new superintendent — along with new principals at Steamboat and Soroco

high schools — Steamboat without a city manager, pine trees ravaged by bark beetles, slick waterslides at a renovated Old Town Hot Springs and a new Steamboat Springs Community Center.

As Routt County rolls into 2009, there is no doubt that 2008 brought sweeping changes not only to the entire nation but also to our own corner of Colorado.

Schools sprouting

The year of 2008 was a big one for local education. The widespread administrative turnover also included a new chief executive officer at Colorado Mountain College's Alpine Campus. The Steamboat Springs community, spurred by two parents, rallied to build two new, universal playgrounds at the city's elementary schools.

The South Routt School District completed the South Routt Early Learning Center and replaced coal-burning heat systems with

biomass heating in South Routt schools.

"This is really important to the state," Gov. Bill Ritter said at Soroco High School in May. "In Colorado, we really believe your future will involve a different way for you to both produce energy as a society and to consume energy. If we don't act ... we really believe the climate is in peril."

The Hayden School District added a state-of-the-art regional vocational center, and in North Routt, plans and fundraising continued for a new charter school facility — an idea now under way in McCoy and being considered in Stagecoach.

But perhaps the biggest educational impact of 2008 came at the polls, where voters resoundingly approved not only a renewal of Steamboat's half-cent sales tax for education but also the ability to share those revenues with Hayden and South Routt schools. That approval will play out in 2009, as Education Fund Board members and school officials from across the county iron out the details of the groundbreaking policy change.

See **Year in review**, page 8A

Girl run over by snow machine

5-year-old receives only 4 stitches after accident on Lynx Pass

Melinda Dudley
PILOT & TODAY STAFF

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS

Shortly after getting four stitches removed from under her nose Friday, 5-year-old Claire Fisher still was unfazed at being run over in a snow machine accident a week prior. The most upsetting part of the ordeal, to her, was that the ambulance crew had to cut off her snowsuit.

When asked about the accident, Claire immediately talked about her new red and black replacement snowsuit Friday afternoon, and the two teddy bears she was given in the emergency room.

"Grandpa bought me a new snowsuit," the feisty little redhead said, animatedly bounding around her mother's office at Resort Group. "Look at these new boots."

"She told Grandma in the emergency room, 'They cut my clothes off, and that's a waste of money,'" mom Dina Fisher said.

Dina called Claire's lack of injuries after the Dec. 26 accident on Lynx Pass her family's "Christmas miracle."

"This was an 800-pound machine, and it's just a miracle that she didn't even have a broken bone," Dina said. "She's 34 pounds but tough as nails."

"The first thing she tells everyone now is 'I got ran over,' but she can't remember what the snowcat is called," Dina continued.

Claire's grandparents, visiting during the holiday from Evergreen, have a remote cabin on Lynx Pass and use an old-style Bombardier "snowcat," a tracked vehicle, to access it. With both parents back at work the day after Christmas, Grandma and Grandpa planned to take Claire and her 9-year-old brother Charlie up to the cabin for an overnight trip.

Grandpa was driving the kids up to meet Grandma, who was busy cooking lunch up at the cabin, when the throttle got stuck as they drove around a corner, causing the snowcat to lurch violently, Dina said.

"It jerked out of gear, and Claire fell



MATT STENSLAND/STAFF

Claire Fisher, 5, sits with her brother Charlie, 9, on Friday. Charlie helped calm his sister after she was run over by a snowcat Dec. 6.

out," Charlie said.

Charlie immediately jumped out the snowcat, too, saw Claire underneath the tracks and flagged Grandpa down to stop the machine.

"All you could see was an inch of my helmet, and my arms," Claire said.

Grandpa "threw it in drive, and lifted the tracks off of her, while the driverless snowcat rolled forward," Dina said.

The scariest part, according to Claire, was when Grandpa then immediately took off running to chase down the snowcat as it lumbered away.

"I was trying to say 'Grandpa,' but all I could say was 'enhhhh,'" Claire groaned dramatically, giving a re-enactment of being run over on the office carpet.

Charlie stayed with Claire to keep her

calm and still for the next 15 minutes, while Grandpa ran ahead to the cabin to call for help.

Because of poor cell phone reception on Lynx Pass, Dina and her husband, Tim, did not get word about the accident until a crew from the Oak Creek Fire Protection District had loaded Claire into an ambulance and was en route to Yampa Valley Medical Center.

"All (Grandma) told Tim was 'Claire's had an accident; we're in the ambulance on the way to the hospital,'" Dina said. "Then the phone

cut out."

The next few minutes were immeasurably nerve-racking for Claire's parents, as

See **Accident**, back page



MATT STENSLAND/STAFF

Partners in Routt County mentor Nicole Williams, right, takes her partner, Lluvia, 14, bowling Wednesday. Lluvia scored two strikes in the first four frames.

Group works toward creating partnerships

Organization celebrates Mentoring Month

Zach Fridell
PILOT & TODAY STAFF

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS

When Nicole Williams began working with Partners in Routt County, she was paired with Lluvia, a 14-year-old girl who recently had arrived in Steamboat Springs and spoke little English. Lluvia was shy and quiet, Williams said, but after nearly a year of activities and time together, Lluvia has become confident, well-spoken and more outgoing.

Williams and Lluvia are one of about 40 pairs created through Partners, a program designed to work with children who need extra assistance and guidance through positive role models and activities.

Libby Foster, executive direc-

For more

To volunteer to be a mentor with Partners in Routt County, or for more information about how to become a younger partner, call 879-6141.

tor of Partners, said the National Mentoring Month of January is also a time for the group to focus on the adult partners who donate a few hours a week to work with youths across Routt County.

The first of those activities is a mixer Jan. 13, to allow the elder mentors to meet other local volunteers. A time and location for the event are not finalized.

Community outreach assistant Allison Holt said the event will be helpful for older partners

See **Partners**, back page

PAGE DESIGNED BY CHRISTOPHER WOYTKO



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OUTSIDE

Sunny most of the day. High of 19. Page 2A



VIEWPOINTS

LAST WEEK: Should the city pass an ordinance that makes compliance with historic preservation policies mandatory? Results/5A

THIS WEEK: Should Denver Broncos owner Pat Bowlen have fired coach Mike Shanahan?

DELIVERY PROBLEM?

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