

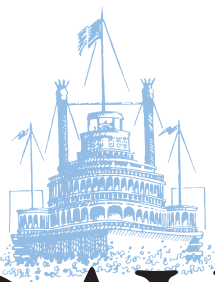
SUPER 8 GOES INDEPENDENT

Lodging property to change to Steamboat Hotel

BUSINESS 3A



STEAMBOAT
PILOT & TODAY



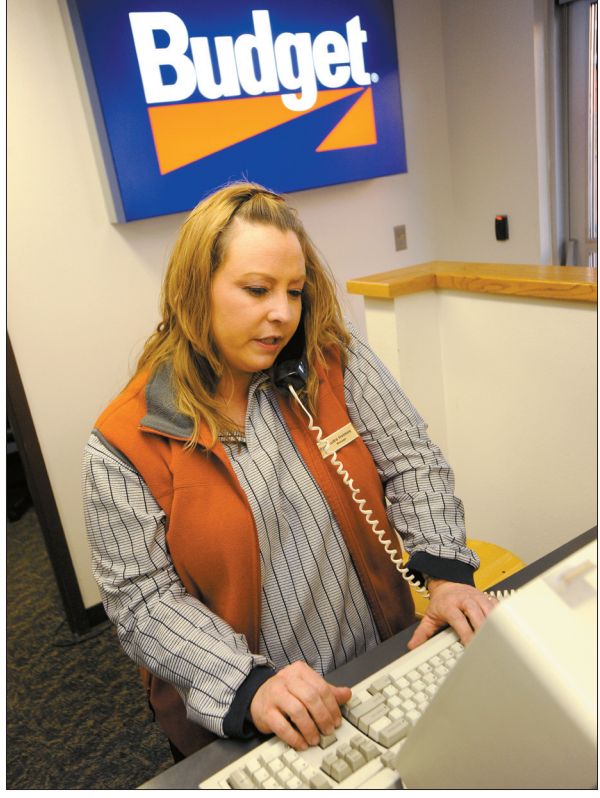
SUNDAY, JANUARY 18, 2009

VOLUME 122, NUMBER 27 • STEAMBOAT SPRINGS, COLORADO • www.steamboatpilot.com

SAILORS SHOOT STRONG

Steamboat boys team sinks shots at 57 percent

SPORTS 1C



MATT STENSLAND/STAFF

Budget Rent A Car manager Audra Holmes talks to a customer on the phone Thursday at Yampa Valley Regional Airport.

Airport's business oscillates

Car rentals slow; restaurant owner reports strong sales

Blythe Terrell
PILOT & TODAY STAFF

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS

Yampa Valley Regional Airport's growing reserves have been a source of pride for Airport Manager Dave Ruppel.

The Hayden airport has been operating in the black the past two years, Ruppel said, meaning it has covered all of its own operating costs. Commercial flight loads have fluctuated this ski season; however, and it's unclear what kind of revenue will come in. Ruppel discussed the money situation last week.

"Parking is one of our larger sources of revenue, but probably our biggest one is our rental car concession" outside of airlines, he said.

That business has slowed, representatives from Avis Rent A Car and Budget Rent A Car said.

See **YVRA**, page 11A

Drug-sniffing dog to roam schools' halls

Zach Fridell
PILOT & TODAY STAFF

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS

A new officer soon will be sniffing around Steamboat Springs schools for the first time.

Steamboat Springs School District administrators plan to bring a drug dog into the hallways of the middle and high schools, likely within the next several months. Superintendent Shalee Cunningham opened a discussion at the Jan. 13 Steamboat Springs School Board meeting about the possibility of bringing a K-9 unit onto school grounds. The dog, from the Front Range, would

See **Drug dog**, page 11A

Oldham sworn in

Former prosecutor leads District Attorney's Office

Melinda Dudley
PILOT & TODAY STAFF

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS

District Attorney Elizabeth Oldham was sworn into office Wednesday with a full staff underneath her — a rare feat in a district that has long struggled with high prosecutor turnover.

After a flurry of hiring, the 14th Judicial District has four new prosecutors and a new victim/witness coordinator in Moffat County.

"We have now filled all our vacancies ... knock on wood," Oldham said.

Just last week, she invited Patrick Welch to fill a prosecutor vacancy in Moffat County. He will begin work in Craig on Tuesday and become full time in February after transitioning from Denver, Oldham said.

Rebecca Voynas is a new deputy district attorney in Routt County and will handle the county court cases. Russ Prindle, who most recently took care of the county court docket, now will be working on felony cases alongside prosecutor Carl Stahl.

In Grand County, Dan Miroflor
See **Oldham**, page 11A



BYRON HETZLER/SKY-HI DAILY NEWS

Michael O'Hara, left, Chief Judge for the 14th Judicial District, swears in new District Attorney Elizabeth Oldham during ceremonies at the Grand County Judicial Center on Wednesday in Hot Sulphur Springs.



MATT STENSLAND/STAFF

Flight student Jim Martin checks the wing of his aircraft before taking off with instructor Joe Birkinbine on Friday morning at the Steamboat Springs Airport.

Dangerous terrain

Mountain flying presents hazardous challenges to aviators

SUNDAYFOCUS

STORY BY BRANDON GEE

It's about 30 degrees, the sun is shining, and there's not a hint of wind Thursday afternoon when flight instructor Joe Birkinbine says, "Take a look outside. What would you say about today?"

"It's a beautiful day," he continues. "Right?"

Not so fast.

"A pilot has to say, 'Let me check the winds aloft at 12,000 feet,'" Birkinbine continues. "If the winds aloft at 12,000 feet are 20 knots (about 23 mph) or higher, it's not a beautiful day for a pilot."

Paying special attention to weather that can be variable and extreme year-round is just one of the things Birkinbine teaches students in specialized courses on mountain flying. Birkinbine has an Airline Transport Pilot License — the highest level of

aircraft pilot certification — and is a certified flight instructor with 20 years of experience in the Yampa Valley.

"The most challenging thing about flying in the Yampa Valley is weather," Birkinbine said. "This includes how difficult the weather is to forecast."

Density altitude, mountain waves and mountain obscuration are other challenges of high-altitude mountain flying, which the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association calls "one of the more dangerous activities (general aviation) aircraft undertake each year. On average, 17 people die annually in GA accidents in the mountains

See **Flying**, back page

Mountain flying tips

■ File a flight plan. Plan your route to avoid topography that would prevent a safe forced landing. The route should be over-populated areas and well-known mountain passes. Sufficient altitude should be maintained to permit gliding to a safe landing in the event of engine failure.

■ Don't fly a light aircraft when the winds aloft, at your proposed altitude, exceed 35 mph. Expect the winds to be of much greater velocity over mountain passes than reported a few miles from them. Approach mountain passes with as much altitude as possible. Downdrafts of 1,500 to 2,000 feet per minute are not uncommon on the leeward side.

■ Don't fly near or above abrupt changes in terrain. Severe turbulence can be expected, especially in high-wind conditions.

■ Understand mountain obscuration (MTOS). In mountainous terrain, clouds

can form at altitudes significantly higher than the weather reporting station and at the same time, nearby mountaintops may be obscured by low visibility. In these areas the ground level also can vary greatly over a small area. MTOS areas are identified daily on The Aviation Weather Center located at www.aviationweather.gov.

■ Some canyons run into a dead end. Don't fly so far up a canyon that you get trapped. Always be able to make a 180-degree turn.

■ When landing at a high-altitude field, the same indicated airspeed should be used as at low-elevation fields. Remember that because of the less dense air at altitude, this same indicated airspeed actually results in higher true airspeed, a faster landing speed and, more important, a longer landing distance.

For more flying tips, see back page

PAGE DESIGNED BY NICOLE MILLER



INSIDE

Business 3A
Classifieds 2B
Comics 5D
Crossword 6D
Happenings 10A

Horoscope 6D
Obituaries 6A
Outdoors 6C
Viewpoints 4A
Weather 2A

SKI TOWN USA SNOW REPORT

Steamboat Ski Area

New snow — Mid-mountain*	0 in.	Total snow†	198 in.
New snow — Summit	0 in.	Trails open	165/165
Base — Mid-mountain	54 in.	Lifts open	16/18
Base — Summit	66 in.	Conditions	Packed powder

*24-hour snowfall as of 12:30 p.m. previous day; †total snow beginning Oct. 21 as measured at mid-mountain FOR UP-TO-DATE ROAD CONDITIONS, INCLUDING RABBIT EARS PASS, call 511 or visit: www.cotrip.org

DELIVERY PROBLEM?

To report home delivery problems, please call 970-871-4250 on Sunday from 7:30 to 9:30 a.m. Missed papers will be delivered by 10:30 a.m.

www.steamboatpilot.com



Every MLS property. Every Realtor®. Updated every day. And all with the click of a mouse.

www.steamboathomefinder.com