Proximo, COVID-19, and the future of Black Hawk
"The times they are a-changin" were the lyrics of a song written by Bob Dylan, and although the song was about the 1960s, the words seem fitting today. The song wasn’t intended to apply to a pandemic, but it indeed describes this life-changing event our country is facing.

When I look back on the last newsletter article I wrote, the issues facing our community were clearly less important in comparison to our current situation. People are falling ill to the virus, businesses and schools are closed, and our hospitals are swamped with patients. Even our ability to go for a simple hike in the beautiful Colorado mountains is impacted by this event.

Today, casinos are closed, and employees are wondering when they will return to work. We are practicing social distancing, washing our hands, cleaning workspaces, and watching everything available on Netflix as we sit at home.

We know we will get through this, but right now, we yearn for the simple things we enjoyed just a few months ago.

I can assure everyone that our City Council and staff are here to help our community survive this pandemic and thrive long after the virus is gone.

The City Council has waived device fees for the casinos for March and April and deferred water payments to help them make it through the shutdown. City services are available to our citizens, and we continue to work on city projects, albeit sometimes remotely. In the meantime, we hope each of us will continue to do our part to stay healthy and protect those around us.

We know we will get through this, but right now, we yearn for the simple things we enjoyed just a few months ago.
New Conveyance Regulations Effective January 1, 2020

The new conveyance regulations became effective on January 1, 2020. For building managers and owners, there are three components that include major changes; (1) the testing and inspection timing requirements; (2) the requirement to test the phone; and (3) clarification of who may have access to the elevator hoistway, pit, and top of car.

1. Section 2-3-2: In 2020, the annual safety test required for all elevators is to be completed no sooner than 120 days prior to the annual inspection. The annual safety test is performed by a licensed elevator mechanic. The annual or periodic inspection is performed by a licensed 3rd party inspector. In 2021, the inspection may no longer be performed in the month prior to the certificate expiration date.

The intention is to align the inspection month, annual safety test month, and witnessed safety test month to the same month.

2. Section 2-3-3: The elevator owner is responsible to do a basic functionality test on the elevator emergency phone on a quarterly basis in addition to the annual test conducted by the inspector. OPS will provide an updated form to log the quarterly phone checks along with the current monthly requirement to test fire service operations.

3. Section 4-1: See the clarification in this section, particularly Section 4-1 (4), with the understanding that elevator owner personnel are “authorized personnel” as defined in regulations.

The new conveyance regulations can be accessed at: https://ops.colorado.gov/sites/ops/files/ConveyanceRegulations010120.pdf

FINANCE

With Governor Polis’ executive order to close casinos and other social spaces, the City of Black Hawk is facing unprecedented times. Most of the City’s major revenue sources, including gaming tax and sales tax, will be negatively impacted by the closure of the casinos.

However, the Black Hawk City Council has announced it will waive nearly $1.4 Million in casino device fees to help alleviate a portion of the economic loss to the City’s primary revenue producers. Additionally, City officials will monitor and modify, as needed, expenditures to offset a portion of the lost revenue. The City has imposed a hiring freeze, eliminated or reduced overtime, prioritized and/or delayed capital projects, and is evaluating discretionary spending.


Colfax Marathon postponed, no date yet.
Development Services Coordinator  ASHLEY WILSON

I worked for the City of Loveland for a total of 8 years, 4 of those years I worked for the Building Division. I started as a Permit Technician, moved to Permit Technician Supervisor, then Residential Building Inspector, and lastly, was asked to fill a new coordinator position. In the coordinator position, I supervised the Permit Technicians, facilitated communication between homeowners, business owners, contractors, and consultants, and worked with the Development Review Team to provide the best service possible to our community. I was ready to learn more about the entire Development process and was also ready for a change.

The Development Services Coordinator position was exactly what I was looking for, and I hope to use my experience for the benefit of the City of Black Hawk.

I have been welcomed with open arms and have loved meeting the great employees of the City of Black Hawk. This is a unique municipality, and I am excited to be here.

I live in Johnstown with my husband, Cliff, and we are expecting our first child in July. I am a Colorado Native. I grew up in Pagosa Springs, and then moved to Northern Colorado when I graduated high school. The drive to Black Hawk has been stress-free so far, and I love driving up the canyon.

I love camping and hiking with our two dogs - spending time outdoors is good for the soul!

Firefighter  DAVID YOUNG

David spent the first 12 years of his life in Nebraska before moving to Colorado with his family and graduating from Dakota Ridge High School.

David now lives just down the hill from Black Hawk in the Morrison area. He has a background in concrete construction and started a career in the fire service as a volunteer with Fairmount Fire Protection District in 2013. Since that time, he has enjoyed deploying on wildfire incidents around the country.

David spends his spare time playing with his son, who also enjoys his sport of choice, ice hockey. David participates in an ice hockey league with his team of other firefighters from the metro area. He also likes to go camping and fishing with his wife and son, his favorite location near Kenosha Pass.

David says he is having a wonderful experience working at the Fire Department. Everyone has been extremely nice and welcoming, and he is looking forward to creating new bonds with the people here and working hard for the City of Black Hawk.

Employee Spotlight  TRENT INGLE

I have been working for the City of Black Hawk since August 1997. I like working in the mountains and enjoy the peaceful environment, along with the challenges we face in our small town with an active business community and transient population.

The City has been a great place to work. They have always done a good job of taking care of their ambassadors with a decent compensation plan and great benefits package. The best part of my job is the people that I work with every day. My first position with the City was in the Public Works Department as a Street Maintenance worker. A lot has changed in the City since then! There are more projects completed in-house by knowledgeable and experienced staff than ever before, which is a huge benefit to our City.

After a short time in Public Works, I transferred to the Fire Department. When I started at the Fire Department in February 1998, the City had just ended the residency program requiring that we live within close proximity of town so that we could respond from standby. Prior to my transfer, the Fire Department was also operating with only a few full-time members and shift rotations were one 24-hour shift followed by one on standby, and then four days off. We’re now staffing three 48/96 shifts. We were operating with an engine, aerial, and rescue truck, much like today.

Over time, staffing has increased to accommodate the larger visitor population and expansion of gaming. We started with three members per shift and grew to seven in the early 2000s.

I am currently serving the department as Lieutenant on A-Shift. I handle a lot of administrative tasks for our shift, such as coordinating trainings and scheduling. I am most often the responding officer on Engine 41.

I was born in Laramie, Wyoming. We moved to Colorado when I was still pretty young and, with the exception of a year and a half in Oregon, have been in Colorado ever since. I have been married for almost 12 years. We have a son, Calvin, who is almost four years old. We like to travel and would like to spend some time exploring Italy. We enjoy golfing and pretty much anything outdoors. I like to work on my house—we recently completed a remodel of our kitchen. I like older country music and my quiet, easy-going life.
The regular online meeting of the Black Hawk City Council highlighted the annexation of Lake Gulch Whiskey Resort Properties, an Emergency Declaration for the City of Black Hawk, and an agreement for the July 4th fireworks.

Mayor Spellman called the Council to order followed by Roll Call and an online Pledge of Allegiance. Roll call revealed Council members that were present online included Linda Armbright, Paul Bennett, Jim Johnson, Greg Moates, Hal Midcap, and Benito Torres. Also present online were City Attorney Corey Hoffmann, City Manager Stephen Cole, City Clerk/Administrative Services Director Melissa Greiner (and webinar host), and Deputy City Clerk, Michele Martin.

City Attorney Hoffmann asked Council to declare any Conflicts of Interest on any issue appearing on the agenda other than those already disclosed and filed with the City Clerk and Secretary of State. There were no objections from the City Council or from anyone online.

Approval of Minutes
Black Hawk City Council approved the meeting minutes from the March 11, 2020 regular meeting, and the March 18, 2020 special meeting with no corrections.

Public Hearings
Mayor Spellman opened the Public Hearing for Agenda items 7. A. through I. All items were pertaining to the proposed annexation and zoning for the property known as the Lake Gulch Whiskey Resort. In his opening remarks Mayor Spellman stated, “The documents which comprise the Public Hearing are comprehensive, deliberative, and cogent. A tremendous amount of time and energy has gone into accomplishing this. What you will see here today is a bit of blue sky and even a few rays of sunshine in an otherwise bleak and gloomy time. This is a project all of Gilpin County can rally behind, be excited about, and look forward to when we emerge from this unsettling and dark time. It is the first significant development to diversify Black Hawk and Gilpin County from being a single-industry community and relying solely on the gaming industry for revenue and employment. I would say this pandemic is our clarion call to embrace a project such as this one, which has so much to offer, as you will all now see.”

Representatives from the City’s consultant, Baseline Engineering, introduced the project to the City Council and those viewing remotely through the Zoom online meeting app.

Next up was the applicant and a dazzling presentation of Proximo Spirits distillery brand experience director, Rodrigo Braun, consisting of a number of videos. Braun stated Proximo Spirits, Inc. is the seventh largest distiller in the United States and Tincup Whiskey, which is what will be distilled in Black Hawk, is only one of the many brands the company produces. The impressive lineup includes Stranahan’s and Pendleton Western whiskeys, Jose Cuervo Tequila, Hanger 1 and Three Olives vodkas, as well as Bushmills and Sexton Irish whiskies. The company has distilleries in the United States, the U.K., and Mexico. “This will be the largest distillery in the whole State of Colorado,” Braun proudly proclaimed. The Black Hawk distillery will use 100,000 gallons of water per day, bring 45 full-time and 45 part-time jobs to Gilpin County, and attract 60,000 annual visitors to the distillery resort.

In addition to the distillery and bottling works, the resort will include a restaurant, event center, an outdoor amphitheater, lodging and camping, outdoor activities such as hiking, mountain biking, ziplines, and an ax-throwing area. Braun emphasized the company’s commitment to historical provenance and that Proximo would celebrate the mining history of Black Hawk, in part by designing the structures to resemble Black Hawk’s mining and milling history. He concluded by announcing “the name Black Hawk will be prominently displayed on the Tincup whiskey bottles as they go throughout the United States and around the world.”

This concluded the staff and applicant presentations. Mayor Spellman then asked for public comment at which time Gilpin County Commissioner Ron Engels, who is a Central City resident and former Mayor, spoke in support of the project. Commissioner Engels stated for the record, “The Gilpin County Board of County Commissioners unanimously and enthusiastically support Proximo relocating their Tincup Distillery to Gilpin County. During one of our many special meetings this last week, and as you saw earlier in this presentation, we signed our consent for the annexation. Also, we have had very positive

Lake Gulch Whiskey Resort

by Randy Beaudette (Complete article originally printed in the Weekly Register-Call on April 2, 2020)
Lake Gulch Whiskey Resort

negotiations with the City addressing the minimal concerns we had over the impact such a large project might have to the county. Those of you who know me, understand that I have been beating the drum of economic diversity for years. For as much as we appreciate the casinos that have made Black Hawk and Central City home, having them alone as our economic engine left us in the same unsustainable situation we were in during the gold rush days in the County.

We first and foremost mourn the loss of life and livelihood the world-wide pandemic we are in the midst of has caused. But we also must see it as stark, sad evidence of how fragile our dependence on a single economic driver is. Gilpin County, Black Hawk, and Central City will be dealing with the financial fallout of this pandemic for years to come. As we welcome Proximo and Tincup to the County, we are happy, we are excited to have a new partner in not only regaining our economic stability, but in moving it forward. The Gilpin County Board of County Commissioners welcomes you all to the little kingdom of Gilpin and at least I personally am looking forward to the day when we can lift a welcoming glass of Tincup together face to face. And for such an auspicious event, I might even be convinced to crack open the bottle of Bushmills 1608 I’ve been jealously guarding the last 12 years.”

Commissioner Engels was the only public speaker for or against the project. City Attorney Hoffmann then informed City Council that just prior to the Council meeting and Public Hearing, Central City had filed a lawsuit against the City of Black Hawk, Proximo Distillers, LLC, and RSM Partners LLC seeking to stop the project.

Attorney Hoffmann stated he had not had time to review the Complaint, but would inform Council as to its merit once he had reviewed it. City Council then proceeded to vote on Agenda Items 7. A. through I., all passing unanimously.

Proximo Distillers, LLC is under contract to purchase the properties from RSM. Proximo plans to purchase the property with the purpose of developing a distillery for the Tincup Whiskey brand. The development is proposed to include a distillery, barrelhouses, a visitor’s center, residential uses, guesthouse and cabins, a restaurant, event space, retail, parking and outdoor activities.

Mayor Spellman made the following statement related to Central City’s opposition and lawsuit. “It is important that everyone attending this online meeting today, understand that three out of four major governmental entities in Gilpin County support this history making project. It is amazing what we can accomplish when we are all pulling in the same direction. This is called good governance.” He continued, “Central City’s opposition to a project that will benefit all of Gilpin County demonstrates a decisive lack of leadership and failure to look out for their residents and businesses of their City by squandering precious revenue at a time like this on a frivolous lawsuit. Instead of waiving their casino’s device fees at a time like this to offer them relief, they would rather line the pockets of their city attorney as well as outside legal counsel. These actions are shameful - the Council’s action amounts to intellectual bankruptcy and confirms they are devoid of how to better their City without resorting to extortion by filing a senseless lawsuit. Central City, you cannot extort your way to success, and you cannot extort your way to prosperity. It will only bring further ruin to your city, which you cannot afford. It appears your actions are rooted in jealousy, envy, and spitefulness which will bring doom and gloom to the city you claim to love and represent. This is beyond shameful - this is pathetic and irresponsible in the governance of your city.”

Before closing the Public Hearing, Mayor Spellman went on to thank the Black Hawk City staff and Baseline Engineering for their diligent work on this development. He thanked the Gilpin County Commissioners for their collaboration and support adding, more work lies in front of us, but I have no doubt that together we will accomplish it.” Not forgetting the Gilpin County Board of Education, the Mayor thanked the board for its Resolution. He concluded by acknowledging Proximo for their hard work and commitment to this project.

“With what we are experiencing today in our country, a lesser company than Proximo would have at a minimum delayed this Public Hearing, if not pulled the plug all together.

Proximo is to be commended for their fortitude, steadfastness, and commitment to this development. There have been tough negotiations between us, but also camaraderie, which at our last meeting ended with shots of Tincup.

To say we are excited about your project would be an understatement to the extreme. We, in Black Hawk and Gilpin County, look forward to a long relationship.

Tincup Whiskey has found a new home in Black Hawk, County of Gilpin, in the state of Colorado.” With that Mayor Spellman closed the Public Hearing.
COVID-19 AND GAMING

Economic Impact of COVID-19 on U.S. Casino Gaming Industry

The coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak is deeply impacting the U.S. casino industry. The American Gaming Association (AGA) is paying close attention to the COVID-19 outbreak, which has created uncertainty for the gaming industry and economy broadly.

Our industry’s commitment to responsibility has always focused on employees, customers, and communities. Through this time, we continue to prioritize their health and safety. The industry is in constant contact with local health authorities, closely following guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), local authorities, and acting on the most up-to-date information on the evolving situation.

Employees from every sector of the casino gaming industry have felt the repercussions of government-mandated property closures across the United States. Nationwide casino closures affect nearly 650,000 casino gaming and resort employees, or 99% of the total U.S. casino workforce. These closures risk more than $74 billion in total wages annually for workers and their families.

As the United States grapples with the COVID-19 outbreak, the gaming industry is stepping up to provide immediate, urgently needed support to communities, families, and workers. Casinos from Las Vegas to Black Hawk to Atlantic City and everywhere in-between have donated tons of excess food, medical supplies, and personal protective equipment to local charities, food banks, first responders, and medical facilities.

U.S. casino gaming companies are also doing their part to assist American workers during these unprecedented times. Despite mandatory shut downs and a near economic standstill, gaming companies are working to pay employees and provide health insurance coverage for as long as possible.

The impact on our employees, their families, and communities is staggering, and the implications extend far beyond the casino floor. Leading technology companies that supply the industry, and the nearly 350,000 small business employees that rely on gaming for their livelihood, are also feeling the devastating blow of this unprecedented public health crisis," American Gaming Association President and CEO Bill Miller.

“Gaming is an economic engine, employing millions of local residents, generating community investment through vital tax revenue, and supporting small businesses in communities all across the country.”

The gaming industry is an economic engine in communities across the country. Entertainment hubs where Americans come to work, see a show, enjoy a great meal, or try their luck on the casino floor. Hosts and conveners for conferences, tradeshows and conventions. Small business advocates, supporting more than 350,000 small business employees nationwide who supply and work with our industry. Investors in critical infrastructure, inserting billions of dollars in tax revenue and tribal revenue share into communities across 43 states. The gaming industry will continue to serve these important roles throughout this public health crisis and in our communities’ recovery in the weeks and months ahead.

The AGA commends Congress and the administration for acting swiftly to provide needed relief through the CARES Act. The gaming industry united to achieve a major first step that will help sustain us during the required shutdown, and ensure America’s employees can return to their jobs as soon as it’s safe.
FIRE DEPARTMENT

Safety in the City – Protecting our First Responders and Community from COVID-19

The City of Black Hawk Fire Department is working closely with regional partners as we continually monitor the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. To prevent the spread of COVID-19 and protect both the people we serve and our first responders, business practices and emergency operations are adjusted as necessary to maintain the highest possible level of service and safety. Through these changes, Black Hawk Fire wants to assure our community that the level of service has not changed, and we are ready to respond in the event of an emergency.

Protecting First Responders

As the number of presumptive cases of COVID-19 rises in Colorado, Black Hawk’s first responders are taking extra precautions to prevent illness from spreading.

• The Fire Department has implemented infection prevention measures, to include cleaning and disinfecting shared equipment and surfaces regularly. Cleaning and disinfecting stations are located in numerous areas of the fire station and offices.
• Public access to City of Black Hawk facilities is restricted. Making phone calls instead of personal contact is promoted on signage at each public building. Contact information can also be found online at cityofblackhawk.org.
• First responders have been provided essential personal protective equipment and are completing daily screenings.

Protecting Yourself and Others

During this unprecedented public health crisis, everyone’s daily preventive actions are important in reducing the spread of disease, including the following safety measures:

• Stay home. If you are healthy and must go out, practice social distancing, personal cleanliness, and wear a protective face mask covering.
• Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your inner elbow shirt sleeve.
• Wash your hands with soap and water or, at minimum, alcohol-based hand rub.
• Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
• Avoid close contact with other people.
• Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
• Practice other good health habits. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.
• To prevent the spread of illness, it is important to call ahead before going to see a doctor or emergency room.

If you have questions about COVID-19, including symptoms, testing, or more, please contact your primary care physician or call Colorado’s COVID-19 hotline at 303-389-1687 or email COHELP@RMPDC.org.

Thank you Black Hawk Public Works, we appreciate all you do!

PUBLIC WORKS

The City of Black Hawk Public Works department was formed in 1968 when the Office of Street Commissioner was created and lead by Roy Addyman. In 1991 the name was changed to Public Works Director and has evolved over the years to a staff of 30 hard-working individuals that maintain the streets, city vehicles, drinking water, building maintenance, and project management in the City of Black Hawk.

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The City of Black Hawk

City Council meetings are virtual until further notice.

No physical meetings at this time.

We are using ZOOM to hold our meetings and would like you to join us!

go to: www.cityofblackhawk.org for the current link details and instructions.

Join the meeting using ZOOM from a PC, Mac, iPad, iPhone, or Android device:
Please click this URL to join:

Or join by phone: 888-475-4499 (Toll-Free)
Webinar ID: XXX-XXX-XXX
International numbers available:

Cloud Camera System

The prevalence of thieves who steal packages left at front doors, also known as “porch pirates,” has been lambasted into every corner of the web. The main reason behind all the footage is because cameras are accessible to even the most technically inept. Cue the doorbell camera, which is at the cornerstone of this topic. These cameras replace an existing doorbell and give you the option of answering your door from anywhere via mobile app. These cameras also capture video and stream it to the internet where the footage is stored on a provider’s server, which makes it a Cloud DVR Camera. The primary benefit of a Cloud-based recording system is access to the footage cannot be destroyed simply by physically breaking or stealing the camera.

Home Energy Monitor

A home energy monitor can track and monitor power use inside your home. You can see the details of each device using power inside your home. The monitor uses sensing clamps on the power rails in your electrical panel. From there, it builds a profile on each device inside your home by analyzing the power usage. Because your TV, Microwave, Dishwasher, etc. generally use the same amount of power each time they operate, the monitor can build a profile to account for almost everything using power inside your home.

This one is not as simple to install as some of the other upgrades but is generally very easy to use. The insight that you can gain will give you options to reduce your energy consumption, which can ultimately lower your energy bill.
Citizens Save a Life

On March 2, 2020, the City of Black Hawk and the police department were proud to extend our thanks to four citizens whose quick actions helped save a life. Oscar Kahler was in the Monarch Casino last December when his heart stopped. One of the casino’s patrons immediately went to his aid and provided CPR. Three of the Monarch Casino employees rushed to aid Mr. Kahler. They continued CPR, attached an AED, and obtained a first aid kit. They continued life-saving efforts until the police arrived and followed by ambulance and fire personnel.

Mr. Kahler, along with the Police Department, wanted to thank everyone for the great job they did. Mr. Kahler also wanted to thank everyone involved in saving his life. Mr. Kahler and Chief Lloyd presented Citizen Life Saving Awards to Terry Swearingen, Molly Councilman, Craig Armbright and Dennis Quirk.

We presented the following employees with awards as their continued efforts assisted in the result of Mr. Kahler’s full recovery; Officer Heidi Hansen, Sgt. Becky Bushéy, Paramedic Dave Nixon, EMT Matthew Kaye, Fire Lieutenant Trent Ingle, Fire Engineer Bruce Hollenbeck, Engineer Kip Karr, Firefighter Marc Norman and Firefighter Tony Roybal.

The efforts of all of these people resulted in the saving of Mr. Kahler’s life. We are grateful to everyone who was part of this situation and to Mr. Kahler for his desire to thank those involved.

This was a team effort that saved Mr. Kahler’s life.