

County still seeking hospital board members

Thursday's regular meeting of the Gila Regional Medical Center Governing Board — which consists of all five Grant County commissioners — focused on plans to seat an independent board of trustees and hire permanent executive staff.

Board Chair Alicia Edwards reminded the public that the application process for the new board of trustees is still open, and the board anticipates discussing the applications April 13.

"Probably the most important thing happening in our communi-

ty right now is the new board of trustees for Gila Regional. We had a great group of people come and speak with us on Tuesday," she said. "I anticipate a lot more great folks applying for the trustees."

Interim Chief Nursing Officer Cynthia Lewis introduced herself to the board Thursday.

"I'm grateful for the opportunity to be here and be part of the community," she said. "I've worked with HealthTech previously, and grew up in a small community. I

look forward to being part of progressive changes and helping to influence positive outcomes."

The board also recognized Dr. Norman Ratliff, who has been providing cardiology services with Gila Regional for 10 years, including the introduction of the "CT coronary angiogram with fractional flow reserve," also known as heart flow.

"It's a very, very advanced diagnostic tool, and we were the first hospital in New Mexico to have

it," Edwards said.

Commissioners presented Ratliff with a certificate and stood for photos.

The board also approved a routine update of delineated privileges, which determine which services each physician can perform. Board member Harry Browne asked interim CEO Margie Mollitor to make sure this privilege list stays updated.

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SILVER CITY DAILY PRESS

AND INDEPENDENT



(Press Staff Photo by Jo Lutz)

A volunteer trail crew led by Melissa Green, at right in an orange helmet, improves Bear Canyon Trail 104 over the weekend. Green is the trail project coordinator for the Back Country Horsemen, which partners with other organizations to provide horse-supported trail maintenance.

Trail crew volunteers begin busy season

By JO LUTZ
Daily Press Staff

As the Gila National Forest thaws, a variety of volunteer organizations and nonprofits have been getting out in the woods to repair and maintain trails.

This past weekend, 10 volunteers joined a joint project by Back Country Horsemen and New Mexico Volunteers for the Outdoors to maintain a portion of Bear Canyon Trail 104, which connects the end of Fierro Road to Allie Canyon.

"Our motto is 'Keeping Trails Open for All,'" said Back Country Horsemen Trail Project Coordinator Melissa Green. "We don't just work on trails for horse people. We have so many hikers, we want to thank them and do the trails they're excited about."

Green worked on wilderness trail crews with the Forest Service for more than a decade in the Aldo Leopold and Gila Wilderness. She joined Back Country Horsemen in 2018, expanding their trail maintenance program.

According to Green, the Horsemen had been doing small projects such as log removal for 19 years. Green now leads teams of trail enthusiasts in more comprehensive maintenance such as treading, brushing, blazing and marking.

A big project for 2023 will be working on the Jerky Mountains,

completing Lilley Mountain Trail 164 that goes from Gila Center all the way to Willow Creek.

"We've already started," Green said. "We're hoping to get it mostly done this year, weather permitting."

So far this year, Back Country Horsemen has facilitated work on the Johnson Cabin Trail, but had to cancel work on Little White-water near Glenwood due to cold and high water. She said the organization tries to do a project close by each community each year, keeping trails maintained near Silver City, Mimbres, Glenwood and Reserve.

"We talk to the Forest Service about their priorities, but also check in with the public," Green said.

Back Country Horsemen gets input from hiking and biking groups, outfitters, hunters, via Facebook and through the website

they maintain, gilatrailinfo.net. They have partnered with New Mexico Volunteers for the Outdoors, Southern New Mexico Trail Alliance, Silver City Bike Group, N.M. Wild and the Continental Divide Trail Coalition, and are looking to partner with backcountry hunters and anglers.

Projects fall into two categories: regular maintenance, when trails have been maintained one to four years prior, or deferred maintenance, when trails haven't been maintained in five years or more.

"It just becomes exponentially more difficult to reopen a trail the longer you wait to open it," Green said.

Another complication is the effects of wildfire — not only recent burns, but lasting impacts of previous ones.

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Bayard brings back animal control officer

In a special meeting Friday morning, the Bayard City Council voted unanimously to return Animal Control Officer Frank Gomez to work while continuing an investigation.

The decision came after

councilors spent more than an hour in closed session.

Mayor Chon Fierro said because it was a personnel issue, he could not discuss the nature of the investigation.

—JUNO OGLE