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‘More accountability measures are necessary’



Sen. Nick Hinrichsen says he is drafting legislation that removes financial conflicts of interest from county coroner’s offices and streamlines the process by which a coroner may be removed from office. ZACHARY ALLEN/THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

Davis Mortuary incident could inspire new state laws

James Bartolo
Pueblo Chieftain
USA TODAY NETWORK

Legislation increasing accountability for county coroners throughout Colorado could be ready for introduction by January 2026.

Sen. Nick Hinrichsen of Pueblo told the *Chieftain* on Sept. 5 that he is in the “early stages” of drafting legislation that removes financial conflicts of interest

from county coroner’s offices and streamlines the process by which a coroner may be removed from office.

Consideration of such legislation follows state investigators’ discovery of 24 bodies, and multiple containers of bones and probably human tissue improperly stored at Davis Mortuary, 128 Broadway Ave., in August. The mortuary, now under criminal investigation, was owned by then Pueblo County Coroner Brian Cotter and his brother Chris.

“This is in the draft phases, but there is a realization that more accountability measures are necessary and the ability to have oversight in an emergency is also necessary,” Hinrichsen said.

This realization is “near universal” and bipartisan among members of the Colorado General Assembly, Hinrichsen said. However, the specifics of how

See MORTUARY, Page 2A

D70 BOARD OF EDUCATION



Mark Emery stands in front of Pueblo County High School. PHOTO PROVIDED BY MARK EMERY

Emery running to return to board

James Bartolo
Pueblo Chieftain
USA TODAY NETWORK

Mark Emery enters the 2025 Pueblo County School District 70 Board of Education election with eight years of school board experience.

Emery was elected to serve on the board in 2013 and spent his eighth year as board president. Prior to serving on the board, Emery taught instrumental music at Pueblo County High School for 30 years and at Pueblo Centennial High School for one year. He currently teaches in Fountain-Fort Carson School District 8 and continues to spend summers directing the award-winning Sun City band of middle school students.

The longtime music educator and band director is running to represent parts of the St. Charles Mesa and Pueblo West in the District 4 seat. His 2025 opponents include Dr. Andrea Wade and incumbent Chris DeLuca, according to Colorado Transparency in Contri-

See EMERY, Page 3A

Police say suspect shot and killed girlfriend’s mother

Justin Reutter
Pueblo Chieftain
USA TODAY NETWORK

A Pueblo man was arrested last week after police allege he shot and killed his girlfriend’s mother, according to a Pueblo Police Department arrest affidavit.

Alejandro Chacon, 20, was charged with first-degree murder in connection with the death of 47-year-old Andrea Martinez. He was arrested on Sept. 3

with the assistance of the U.S. Marshals’ Colorado Violent Offender Task Force.

Pueblo police responded to an apartment in the 1600 block of Spruce Street on Aug. 14 and were met by the victim’s husband, who told police “he shot my wife” and “she’s dead.”

Officers located Martinez with an apparent gunshot wound to the head, and she was determined to be deceased.

The man told police that his daughter resides at the apartment with her boy-

friend, Chacon, and their two children. He said he and his wife often stay at the residence to help with the kids, as they had on the evening of the shooting, while their daughter was at work. He alleged Chacon was the one who shot his wife, according to the affidavit.

Police contacted Chacon’s girlfriend, who said that earlier in the evening, around 6:30 p.m., she had spoken with Chacon while she was at work. She said that Chacon told her he was irritated

that her parents and sister were at the house drinking and said he was going to leave the house.

When the girlfriend arrived home later that night, between 1:30 a.m. and 2 a.m., she said she saw Chacon outside holding their child, appearing to be highly intoxicated, according to the affidavit.

The couple began to argue, and the

See SUSPECT, Page 2A

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