



Hard to see progress after USMNT makes same old exit

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ASPEN ACRES FIRE

WILDFIRE BURNS 96K ACRES



Smoke blows over a ridge approaching Wetmore in Custer County due to the Aspen Acres Fire on July 1. ZACHARY ALLEN/THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

At least 266 homes lost in the blaze

Zach Hillstrom and Justin Reutter
Pueblo Chieftain
USA TODAY NETWORK

Growth of the Aspen Acres Fire was limited to just over 2,100 acres overnight, and the fire was 15% contained as of noon on July 8.

The fire that began June 29 has now burned 96,031 acres in Pueblo and Custer counties, and 1,677 personnel are responding to the blaze.

The seventh-largest fire in Colorado history has seen limited spread in recent days compared to the explosive growth it saw for much of last week, as it's grown just over 4,500 acres over the past two days.

At least 266 homes — 185 in Pueblo County and 81 in Custer County — and four businesses have burned, making the fire the fifth-most destructive in state history.

No civilian injuries or deaths have been reported.

The cause and origin of the fire are unknown, but fire officials have said it was human-caused, which just rules out natural causes such as lightning.

What happened Tuesday, what was expected Wednesday

Greenwood and Wetmore were defended the afternoon of July 7 as the Aspen Acres Fire made a "surge" to the northwest, leading to a firefight that lasted several hours, according to a morning update from Alaska's Complex Incident Management Team 1 (CIMT 1), which is commanding the Aspen Acres Fire response.

Winds out of the southeast pushed the fire downhill toward dozer lines that had been completed just the day before.

"Firefighters were poised and ready to spring into action," CIMT 1 officials said. "With the support of engines, dozers, and aerial resources, they added checkline (a temporary fireline constructed at right angles) along the flank of the oncoming fire, to keep it from moving laterally around the dozer line. Several spot fires ignited nearby, and firefighters pushed handline and dozer line around those spots."

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What to know about flash flooding risks in wildfire burn scar areas

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As the Aspen Acres Fire continues to burn, the National Weather Service is sounding the alarm about the next natural disaster that could impact areas ravaged by the fire — burn scar flash flooding.

Colorado has seen major flooding and damage in the past when rain hits wildfire burn scar areas.

Even moderate rainfall can cause significant flooding in the first few years after a forest fire, so those living in or near burn scars need to plan ahead and be aware of the weather.

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Labor council holds fundraiser for union members affected by fire

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The Southern Colorado Labor Council is holding a solidarity fundraiser July 10 for union members affected by the Aspen Acres Fire. The event will

take place from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Steelworkers Hall, 1414 Evans Ave.

SCLC is partnering with Working Families Friend to reimburse up to \$1500 in emergency expenses for union families.

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Pueblo bank robbery suspects indicted by federal grand jury

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Two Pueblo men accused of robbing a bank in March and carjacking multiple vehicles during their attempted escape — an incident that sparked a scathing rebuke of the criminal justice system

from Pueblo's chief of police due to the suspects being repeat offenders — have been charged by a federal grand jury with several crimes.

Mario Lucero, 49, and Esai Maestas-Torres, 24, were each charged with one count of bank robbery, three counts of using and brandishing a firearm during a crime of violence, three counts of car-

jacking, and one count each of possession of ammunition by a prohibited person, according to a news release from the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Colorado.

Pueblo police said in a news release the day of the bank robbery that two suspects entered the U.S. Bank on Bonforte Boulevard around 4:55 p.m. on

March 27. One man was allegedly armed with a rifle while the other carried a shotgun, demanding cash from employees.

The bank staff handed over an undisclosed sum of money, according to the release.

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