

Forecast

Partly cloudy,
20-percent
chance of rain.

H 82 L 50

**City planners to consider
special use permit**

See page 3

**GARNA sponsors
greenhouse tour**

See page 9



THE MOUNTAIN MAIL

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The Voice of Salida and the Upper Arkansas Valley

50 cents

Torrent of mud and muck

98 Alpine residents evacuated Saturday following 3-4 inch rain storm

by Paul J. Goetz
Mail News Editor

ALPINE – The cabin community of Alpine was evacuated about 9 p.m. Saturday as heavy rain and multiple mud slides made the area dangerous.

Evacuation was prompted by a National Weather Service prediction of another inch of rain before midnight, Chaffee County Fire Protection District Chief Jim Wingert said.

Fire district personnel evacuated 98 residents going door to door and using reverse 911.

About 30 responders with flashlights knocked on doors and attempted to determine



continued to drizzle.

Electric power in Alpine was knocked out, but was restored about 2:30 p.m. Sunday.

Residents estimated 3-4 inches of rain and hail fell between 7:15 and 8 p.m. when they reported hearing a loud roar.

"It came, it saw, it kicked butt," Wingert said during a press conference Sunday afternoon. "Some residents said they couldn't see 3 feet outside their windows when the rain came down."

Within 7 miles of the Alpine area along CR 292, 15-20 mud slides occurred, damaging outbuildings, houses, roads and



A heavy mud slide pushed a late model Chevy Suburban about 20 feet sideways from where it was parked at the owner's home in Alpine. The slide knocked outbuildings off foundations and carried away propane tanks.

automobiles.

"It rained about 45 minutes. We could hear a roaring and tumbling, and we watched as (3-4 feet of) mud went around our house," resident Jack Spencer, said.

"I walked back to the cabin and heard a rumble. I went around to the front side where I was safe and the mud slide

Photo by Paul J. Goetz

Leadville boy killed riding bike

by **Christopher Kolomiz**
Mail Managing Editor

A 12-year old Leadville boy riding a bicycle 3 miles south of Leadville on U.S. 24 was struck and killed by a motor vehicle at 1:35 p.m. Friday.

Ricardo Hernandez was westbound down an embankment toward U.S. 24 near CR 300 when the westbound vehicle driven by Ken Swinarski, 46, of Woodland Park hit him, Colorado State Troopers reported.

Hernandez did not stop after coming down the embankment and proceeded

onto the highway on his bicycle. Swinarski was unable to stop and the vehicle he was driving struck Hernandez.

Hernandez was thrown from the bicycle, received fatal injuries and was pronounced dead at the scene.

Swinarski drove to a controlled stop on the shoulder. Swinarski and his passenger were uninjured.

Neither alcohol nor drugs is suspected in the crash, troopers said. The incident is under investigation by the Colorado State Patrol Accident Reconstruction Team.

Nathrop family moves into new Habitat for Humanity home

by **Jennifer Dempsey**
Special to The Mail

More than 50 people congregated in Nathrop Saturday morning for dedication of the fourth home built by Chaffee County Habitat for Humanity.

Sixty local business and more than 200 volunteers participated in construction of the 4-bedroom, 2-bathroom house on County Road 198. The house, which took a year to build, will be home Rodney and Renee Wilson and their four children.

"The biggest misconception about Habitat for Humanity is this is a handout," Ken Harrison, Habitat board member, told the crowd. "This is definitely not a handout - all you have to do is ask Rodney how many hours he's put in."

Habitat families are chosen on the basis of need, ability to Please see **BUILDING**, page 3

day, stuck in mud which earlier roared down the hill following courses of least resistance.

Like toy cars immersed in playground puddles, sport utility vehicles and station wagons littered the area Sun-

Please see **DRAINAGES**, back page



Photo by Jennifer Dempsey

Rodney Wilson holds three of his children - Brianna, 4, Skylar, 2, and Sadie, 1, in front of their new home built by Habitat for Humanity on County Road 198 in Nathrop. Wilson's father, Roger Wilson, stands behind him with grandparents Emma and Walter Wilson. Rodney's wife Renee was unable to attend the dedication. She was at Children's Hospital in Denver with their oldest daughter Britney, 6, who has medical problems.

Drainages clogged with debris, rocks

Continued from FRONT page

Propane tanks were pushed and floated by force of the slides in the same fashion as the vehicles — away from where they were. Wingert said there is some concern about automobiles and propane tanks.

"Fluid leaking from (vehicle fuel) tanks could contaminate the aquifer," he said.

With more rain predicted Sunday night, emergency personnel were immediately concerned about drainage.

"We have to open the natural drainages," Wingert said. "Right now they are filled with debris and rocks."

Natural drainages in the area include Coal Camp Canyon and Weldon Creek.

"Basically you had this torrent of water come down the two drainages and spread out," Ann Ewing, U.S. Forest Service public information officer said Sunday.

More rain could cause more mud to slide and result in more damage to property, Wingert said.

Evacuees Saturday were housed at Buena Vista High School. Red Cross volunteers received evacuees.

"There was only one minor injury," Wingert said. "It was



Photos by Paul J. Goetz
An unidentified garage had its doors pushed in and was moved several inches on its foundation. The torrential mud and debris slide cut a new drainage channel about 30 feet wide and 4 feet deep in the foreground.

arrived Saturday night and returned Sunday with Sam Schroder, timber forester, to assess damage to CR 292 which extends beside Chalk Creek from Iron City to from Alpine.

Forest service personnel said CR 292 will remain closed until further notice. Officials will assess damage

and what kind of equipment



Community 'steps up in a big way'

Almost 80 people evacuated from Alpine because of mud slides Saturday spent the night at a temporary Red Cross Shelter at Buena Vista High School.

Jennifer Mariano, emergency services director for Pikes Peak chapter of the American Red Cross, said Sunday 15 volunteers helped at the school and the Buena Vista community "stepped up in a big way," Sunday

Mariano said Red Cross volunteers expected fewer evacuees to spend the night Sunday at the school. Depending on need Mariano said the shelter may be closed today.

"A lot of those folks who were displaced are going to stay with friends or family," Mariano said.

City Market donated food for breakfast Sunday. Subway and Pizza Hut donated food for lunch and a church youth group made dinner. A local pharmacy opened Sunday to replace prescriptions left behind, Mariano said.

Today Red Cross officials

That individual was taken to the hospital and released."

By early Sunday night the amount of property damage remained undetermined.

"It's unknown how much damage was caused because of possible mud indoors," Winger said. "The extent to personal property doesn't look bad, but the damage to real estate is another question."

Bill Schuckert, U.S. Forest Service district ranger,

from Chaffee County Fire Protection District, South

Arkansas Fire Protection District, Chaffee County Search and Rescue, Chaffee

County Emergency Medical Services. U.S. Forest Service and Chaffee County Sheriff's Office responded.

Chaffee County Commissioners are looking into the possibility of applying for state and federal aid for the community.

Chaffee County Fair

MOST TALENTED YOUTH CONTEST

Saturday, Aug 4th
10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Age Categories:
6-10, 11-14 & 15-18

Three winners chosen from each age group
First Prize \$50.00
each age group

Auditions: Wednesday, August 1st
at 7:00 pm
Finals: Saturday, August 4th
at 10:00 am
Entry Fee: \$5.00 per act

COME SHOW OFF YOUR STUFF!

Pre-register at the fairgrounds on July 24, 25, or 26 from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. See Harriet. No professional acts accepted. See fair book for complete rules.



Jack Spencer built his Alpine home 24 years ago. He said the deluge of rain was one of those "100 year floods." He cited a 125-year-old cemetery hit by mud slides for the first time.

ber damaged and to what extent, Mariano said. An early estimate put the number between 30-40. The level of damage will determine what types of assistance the Red Cross provides, she said.

- C. Kolowitz

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Drainages clogged with debris, rocks

Continued from FRONT page

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Evacuees Saturday were housed at Buena Vista High School. Red Cross volunteers received evacuees.

"There was only one minor injury," Wingert said. "It was (an over exertion) related injury to one of the residents. That individual was taken to the hospital and released."

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Today Red Cross officials will start disaster assessment on homes in Alpine to better understand the number damaged and to what extent, Mariano said.

An early estimate put the number between 30-40. The level of damage will