

# Cobre suspends finance director, hires outside firm

By **MARCELA JOHNSON**  
Daily Press Staff

After district Finance Director Frank Ryan was placed on administrative leave last week, the Cobre Board of Education held a special meeting Tuesday to approve a fiscal services contract with Vertex Education.

Under the contract, the district will pay \$29,167 in fees for 15 months, with

the term extending from April 15, 2026, to June 30, 2027. The total agreement amount will be \$437,500.

Interim Superintendent Randall Piper said that district employees would not be replaced by the contractors, and would be rehired next year. Piper said that the contractors would be able to meet with staff and get contact information.

That rehiring will apparently not be

extended to Ryan, according to an email to district staff from Human Resources and Data Coordinator Norma Ramirez, a screenshot of which was provided to the Daily Press on April 10 by an outside source.

“We would like to inform you that Frank Ryan, Director of Finance, is currently on leave for the remainder of the year and will not be returning to the

district next year. We wish him well in his future endeavors,” Ramirez wrote in the email. “In the interim, Mr. Piper will be overseeing Finance operations over the next couple of weeks.”

Piper declined to comment on Ryan’s leave, and in a letter dated Thursday, Piper responded to a Daily Press re-

**COBRE** Page 22

# SILVER CITY DAILY PRESS

AND INDEPENDENT

## Tyrone to replace its water system

The Tyrone Water and Wastewater Association is set to begin its biggest project yet — a nearly \$7 million replacement of the town’s entire water system and rehabilitation of its water tank.

Formed in 2022 to give the community access to state funding, the mutual domestic water and wastewater association has worked since then toward the goal of replacing the system.

Built about 60 years ago, when the townsite was constructed by Phelps Dodge as a company town for its employees at the then-new Tyrone open-pit mine, it used supply pipes made of transite — a combination of cement and asbestos. That aging infrastructure

**TYRONE** Page 21

# GIVE GRANDLY(ER)!



## Longtime giving events join forces

By **JUNO OGLE**  
Daily Press Staff

A regional day of fundraising is expanding far beyond Grant County’s borders this year, and organizers and participants are hopeful that the expansion will provide a greater audience to support needs across the southern part of the state.

The Gila Community Foundation and the Community Foundation of

**GIVING** Page 23

(Daily Press File Photo by Juno Ogle)

Dorothy Wokee, left, and Rebecca Martin pet Jim Bob the miniature donkey during the 2025 Give Grandly! event in Gough Park. Suzy Brown, center, a volunteer with Natural Curiosity, an outdoor education center near Hillsboro, talks about the center’s burros. Give Grandly! returns to Gough Park today as a regional fundraising event.



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April 18, 2026

# Gallery has a flowery feature for next month

History is in full bloom for the month of May at Made In Silver City gallery, 206 W. Broadway.

“Fort Bayard in Bloom,” a photography show by Kendra Milligan, will be on display for the month with a reception scheduled from 5-7 p.m. Friday, May 1.

Milligan’s vision took six years to photograph during her strolls around the historic ghost fort, which is designated a National Historic Landmark District, according to a news release.

“You can’t force a flower to bloom, so I had to scout potential wildflowers and then hope they wouldn’t be mowed down before I could photograph them,” Milligan said.

Founded in 1886 by the U.S. Army, Fort Bayard was later converted into

the Army’s first tuberculosis sanitarium, and later still became a VA hospital, the release stated. The abandoned hospital was demolished in 2015, and the fort now houses the Fort Bayard Historical Museum, the Fort Bayard National Cemetery, and the New Mexico State Forestry office.

Gallery co-owner Chelsea Boone said of the show, “Made In Silver City loves to feature local artists. Kendra’s photographs juxtapose wildflowers against the deteriorating backdrop of Fort Bayard, a Grant County cultural treasure that’s worth revitalizing which I know Santa Clara and the state are working toward.”

For more information, follow the gallery on Instagram or Facebook @madeinsilvercity or email info@madeinsilvercity.com.



“OFFICERS ROW FLEABANE 2019,” BY KENDRA MILLIGAN

## Tyrone...

From Page 1

has brought a host of issues to contend with.

“At each intersection of the streets, there are three or four valves that control the side streets. The existing ones are frozen, so you can’t close them. So if we have a water leak, we have to shut [water to] the whole town down,” said Alan Berg, president of the association. “Then we have five fire hydrants that don’t work, so we’re getting all-new fire hydrants, too.”

On Monday, contractor SmithCo Construction began bringing in equipment, fencing and a storage container near the community’s baseball field, and work is expected to begin by June 1, Berg said at Wednesday’s meeting of the association’s board.

The water project will be paid for with a \$6.8 million grant and loan

from the New Mexico Colonias Infrastructure Fund, which was awarded in 2024. In 2022, the association had received \$382,311 in Colonias funds for the design of the project.

Along with the \$6.8 million, the association received \$848,958 in Colonias funds for the water tank rehabilitation. The Freeport-McMoRan Foundation also contributed two grants totaling \$212,000 for that project.

“The first phase of the project is they’re going to put a vault in at the water tower,” Berg said. “That’s where the valve’s going to be put in place, so that we can take the water tower down out of service to fix that.”

The water tower serves as a buffer for water pressure, according to a history of the town’s infrastructure that Berg provided to the Daily

Press. Without the tower — or the valve that will be in place during the rehabilitation — the town’s water lines would be subject to water pressure of more than 180 pounds per square inch as it comes in from the town of Silver City.

Some service disruptions could occur as the water lines are replaced, but Berg said the contract with SmithCo requires that they replace only as much water line as they can do in one day.

“They can only dig up as much as they can replace and backfill each day. So they can’t just dig up a whole street, and then come back and fix it the next week,” he said. “They have to remove the asphalt, they get the soil down to the subgrade, install the new pipes, compact it and then hook them up to the meter.”

The company will also

repair the asphalt on the roads the same day.

New water lines will be replaced only up to the meter at each of the 322 residences, Berg explained at the meeting. The water line from the meter to the house is considered private property, so public money can’t be used for those.

Updates on the project will be published on the association’s website, tyronewater.org, Berg said. The project is contractually limited to 300 days, with the contractor paying \$2,000 a day for

each day they continue working beyond that.

“So the contractors were motivated to get this thing going, and it started the day they mobilized to the site,” Berg said.

The original water lines will be left in place during the work, since they contain asbestos and would require special handling if removed, Berg said. New meters will be purchased as well.

“We received a \$200,000 capital outlay from the Legislature this last session to replace the meters,” he said.

The association’s hope is that it will eventually take control of reading the meters and billing its members, work which is now performed by the town of Silver City. The town keeps the revenue received, with the exception of a \$10 additional fee that is returned to the association.

The details on future billing arrangements still need to be worked out with the town, however, Berg said.

The association’s objective is to be able to obtain more revenue to help fund future projects.

“Our main revenue is \$75 per month per house. That’s our assessment,”

Berg said. “Then we have this moderate \$1,200 a year [income] for the water tower’s use for the antenna for WNM and TWN. They give internet to town.”

The association also received a \$50,000 grant in 2024 from the New Mexico Environment Department to assess the condition of its wastewater lines, and \$503,000 in Colonias funds in 2025 for the design phase of work to replace them.

—JUNO OGLE

## Single Socks seeks grant applications

Single Socks, a Silver City nonprofit thrift store, announced that it will be accepting grant applications from nonprofit organizations performing anti-hunger work in Grant County.

Grant submission guidelines and the application may be obtained from the organization’s website at singlesocks-sc.com/grants/.

The deadline is May 12.

## Obituaries

From Page 20

at 1:30 p.m., with a Committal Service at Fort Bliss National Cemetery at 3 p.m. Carmen will be escorted into the church by her devoted son, Sam. Honorary pallbearers are beloved brother-in-law Armando Robles, son-in-law Greg Keethler, grandchildren Benjamin Keethler, Nathan Keethler, David Zamora, and Marissa Zamora, and great-grandchildren Collin and Sammy Keethler.

BAUM: Sharon Baum, 79, of Silver City, entered eternal rest Saturday, April 4, 2026, at Fort Bayard Medical Center. Arrangements are pending with **Terrazas Funeral Chapels and Crematory**. Phone 575-537-0777.

MADRID: Michael Madrid, 58, of Arenas Valley, entered eternal rest Wednesday, April 15, 2026, at his residence. Arrangements are pending with **Terrazas**

**Funeral Chapels**. Phone 575-537-0777.

ORTIZ: Mary R. Ortiz, 84, of Silver City, passed away April 16, 2026, in Las Cruces, New Mexico. Funeral service arrangements are pending at **Baca’s Funeral Chapels**.

RAMIREZ: Roberto Jaime Ramirez, 59, of Tyrone, entered eternal rest Monday, April 6, 2026, at his residence. Arrangements are pending with **Terrazas Funeral Chapels**. Phone 575-537-0777.

RIVERA: Arturo Zapata Rivera, 87, a former resident of Silver City now of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, entered eternal rest Friday, April 3, 2026, at H. John Heinz III Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Pittsburgh. Arrangements are pending with **Terrazas Funeral Chapels**. Phone 575-537-0777.