



FRUITA COLORADO

Weekly Info Update



To: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
From: MIKE BENNETT, CITY MANAGER
Date: AUGUST 21, 2020
Re: WEEKLY INFORMATION UPDATE

325 E Aspen
Suite 155
Fruita CO 81521

Phone:
970-858-3663

Fax:
970-858-0210

E Mail
fruita@fruita.org

Web Site
fruita.org

City Manager's Office
970-858-3663

City Clerk/Finance
970-858-3663

Community
Development
970-858-0786

Engineering
970-858-8377

Human Resources
970-858-8373

Public Works
970-858-9558

Recreation Dept.
970-858-0360

Tuesday's City Council Workshop

There is only one item on the agenda for the workshop on Tuesday, and that is to continue to our discussion on the Gallagher Amendment. The workshop meeting will be held virtually and the time has been changed to 7:00 p.m.

Update on the Pine Gulch Fire

The Pine Gulch Fire continued to be active this week and has grown to (as of Friday morning) 124,934 acres and is 17% contained. The fire is moving northwest and has led to the closure of Highway 139 along with several other roads in the area, including 21 Road north of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) boundary, 16 Road at V 8/10 Road, and Q 5/10 Road at 18 Road. A map of the road closures can be found [here](#). In addition to these road closures, BLM has closed public lands north of Loma, Fruita, Grand Junction, and Palisade, starting at the Bookcliffs. This includes the North Fruita Desert Recreation Area (18 Road).

Although the fire has grown this week in the southwest region, we are told that **there is not (or has there been) a threat** to the Fruita, Loma, or Grand Junction areas. There are also no evacuation orders for Mesa County residents, however, some Garfield County residents may be evacuated. Information on current evacuations can be found [here](#). For the most up to date information, you can visit the Pine Gulch Fire's page [here](#) or the Mesa County Sheriff's website at this [link](#).

Coronavirus Update

Below are a few updates, but I would strongly encourage all to continue to follow www.fruita.org/covid19 for all updates we are posting. This also links to important Mesa County Public Health sources, as well as many others.

- **Coronavirus Relief Fund Projects.** The downtown outdoor dining spaces to be constructed on Peach and Mulberry project will begin Thursday, Aug. 27 closing both roads from Aspen Ave. to the alley just north. We are designing the outdoor classrooms with each school in Fruita next week. We plan to add a similar style space behind the Recreation Center for programming. Technology upgrades are being ordered. Work with Food Bank of the Rockies to identify Fruita Food Bank additional

Honor the Past – Envision the Future **FRUITA**

needs due to COVID continue. We plan to roll out our Be Well, Be Fruita education campaign next week.

- **Mesa County Survey.** The Mesa County Assessor's Office is conducting a survey regarding the impact of COVID-19 on the local real estate market. The purpose of the survey is to gather information on property values to develop a fair and equitable assessment of commercial properties in the County. To view more information, you can visit this [link](#). The survey can be found [here](#) if you are interested in participating in it.
- **Unemployment Update.** The Mesa County Workforce Center shared that initial filings for unemployment in Mesa County continue to decrease. For the week ending of 8/1/20, filings were decreased from 184 to 146. This is the lowest number for a weekly report since the initial spike of the pandemic in mid-March. This is encouraging news, and the Workforce Center hopes to continue to see gradual decreases through August. The unemployment rate in Mesa County has decreased to 6.9%, but this is due a large decrease in the local labor force.

Mesa County in Stage Two Fire Restrictions (continued)

Also, to limit the impacts of wildfires and because of drought conditions, Mesa County is moving to stage two fire restrictions beginning today (August 14, 2020). Unlike previous restrictions, stage two restrictions prohibit the use of anything that produces an open flame that is not liquid fueled, or gas fueled. Full information on what is and is not allowed can be found below. You can visit the Sheriff's website [here](#) for additional details. Also, this week, Governor Polis announced a state-wide fire ban due to the wildfires. This statewide ban is equivalent to stage two fire restrictions for the entire state.

General Updates

- **Financial Update.** As reported last week and found in our [monthly report](#), June City sales tax revenues were up 16% over the previous year, bringing our year to date total to an increase of 25% overall. Use tax on motor vehicles was also up in June. The City's lodging tax continues to be impacted by the pandemic (down 62.07% in June from the previous year) and use tax on building materials was also down. Of note, is that food-based businesses, which have been down as a whole during the pandemic were 5% over June of last year.
- **CMU Mask Distribution.** Mayor Kincaid joined our Mesa County Economic Development Partners Monday to begin distributing CMU masks to area businesses. GJ, Palisade, Mesa County, Fruita and CMU paid for the masks ordered by CMU, and the Chambers are distributing them.
- **State of the Valley.** Mayor Kincaid and I joined our colleagues to speak at the annual state of the valley event held virtually this year and hosted by the GJ Chamber. The main focus was on status of our long-term planning efforts, response to the pandemic and expenditures of coronavirus relief funds.
- **Fruita Paleo Area.** Next week, contractors for the Bureau of Land Management will be adding some concrete at the Fruita Paleo Area parking lot next week to make the area more wheelchair accessible. The gate will be closed overnight to let the concrete dry.
- **Pine Gulch Fire Monitoring.** We have joined the daily updates being provided to area agencies as well as begun working with the County and the state to prepare for possible watershed damage to address post fire.

- **2021 Budget prep.** We continue to put considerable effort and time into preparing a draft budget to begin bringing to Council in multiple meetings beginning the last Tuesday in September.
- **Meeting with State Representative Matt Soper.** I was able to meet with Rep. Soper this week. He is working with the Railroad to hopefully get the rail cars that have been parked near Highway 6 & 50 in Fruita for a year to be moved.
- **Visit Colorado Instagram Takeover.** Fruita Tourism took over the state's Instagram account this week sharing about our area's incredible landscapes and activities.
- **Monthly Development Report.** In June, Planning and Development issued 54 planning clearances, and three for new residential units. There were 33 code enforcement issues. The full report can be found [here](#).

Administration

- An update on liquor licensing:
 - The Chamber has applied for a **Special Event Liquor Permit** to hold "Supper on Southside" on Sept. 12th in the parking lots of Strayhorn Grill and Rib City with a road closure on Kokopelli Drive. Rib City, Pablo's and Strayhorn will each be provided with expanded outdoor seating in the parking lots. Staff is reviewing the application. The public hearing is scheduled for Sept. 1st and Kayla is hanging the public notice posters in the parking lots today.
 - Mi Ranchito's public hearing on a **new Hotel and Restaurant liquor license** will be held on September 15th. The previous owner let the license expire and it is no longer eligible for reinstatement or Transfer of Ownership.
 - Sean Schafer, the new owner of Aspen Street Coffee, just picked up an application and will be applying for a **new Tavern liquor license** (like Gears Frozen Yogurt had). He will also apply for a Sidewalk Restaurant Permit like others have in downtown.
 - Investor Gretchen Hicks will be submitting an application for a **Transfer of Ownership for Center Town Liquors** on South Mesa. Once the Transfer has been approved and after the building is ready, she will submit a **Change Location Permit** to move Center Town Liquors into the old End Zone building across from PD.
 - Copper Club will be applying for a **Change Location Permit** – they are moving from their current location on Aspen to the Head Start building next to JD's Bar after substantial remodeling and work that needs to be done, so likely to occur next year.
- An update on utility account delinquencies - Delinquent utility accounts in excess of 90 days typically represent about 2% of our total accounts receivable. Since COVID, we have been running about 8% of our total AR in excess of 90 days. We reinstated lock-off letters this month and sent out a total of 194 letters. We had positive responses to the letters with all but 10 accounts making payments (in full or partial) or payments arrangements. The Governor signed an executive order extending the moratorium on late penalties/fees until September. As a result of this moratorium, revenues from penalty/late fee charges are down by 67% year to date (\$8,600).

Engineering

- The response date for the request for qualifications for the Active Circulation Plan was postponed until August 26th.

Parks and Recreation

- Parks worked with the contractor, who is putting in infrastructure at Red Cliffs Subdivision, to clean the drainage ditch that goes through the Fruita Bike Park. After years of silt and debris collection, the ditch was backing up and needed scrubbed out. It helped clean up the park and drainage should flow much better.
- Parks is still looking to hire seasonal workers – there are plenty of projects and work to catch up on in the parks, open space and trails system.
- Last reminder that the indoor pool is closing on Monday for maintenance. The pool replaster contractor will be in on Monday to start demo work on the pool and prepare it for replastering. It is a process and the pool will be closed for up to 5 weeks. The outdoor pool is still open for lap swimming, water aerobics and open swim after 4pm on weekdays.
- Last month, the Fruita Community Center had 4,348 visits, or an average of 140 per day. This is down from the previous year, as July 2019 we had 16,000 visitors.

Planning & Development

To see active reviews of current projects, you may visit: <https://www.fruita.org/cd/page/current-development-projects>

Major/ Minor Subdivisions:

- Dwell PUD Concept Plan (Approved)
- Bradyville Minor Subdivision (Approved)
- Cider Mills Preliminary Plan (Approved)

Site Design Review/ Other Applications:

- Coloramo Site Design Review (333 W Aspen) (Under Construction)
- Monument Powder Coating (1596 Cipolla) (Approved)
- Pediatric Dental Specialist (197 & 101 Jurassic) (Approved)
- Sycamore St ROW Vacation (Approved)
- Lithic Arts Building Site Design Review (Approved)

Public Works

- Completed increased level of right-of-way mowing this the week to try to get caught up on weed control.
- Maintenance crews are trying to manage the accumulation of ash from the Pine Gulch fire, which includes additional cleaning of fallen ash, monitoring & replacing air filters, etc.
- Street striping planned for this week was postponed due the contractor having some equipment breakdowns and unable to get parts due to area road closures. With increased school traffic

during the first week of school and amount of ash on the streets, staff was agreeable with delaying the painting operations and is working to reschedule in the coming weeks.

FRUITA IN THE NEWS (and regional news of impact to Fruita):

- [Road closures north of Fruita due to Pine Gulch Fire.](#)
- [CMU face mask distribution hailed as a show of support.](#)
- [Pine Gulch Fire Burning Near Grand Junction is now 2nd Largest Fire in Colorado.](#)
- [Update: Highway 139 over Douglas Pass closed.](#)
- [How wildfires can spawn lightening and tornadoes.](#)
- [How to properly get rid of ash.](#)
- [No entry allowed north of Bookcliffs, BML cites public, firefighter's safety.](#)
- [Colorado Wildfire Updates for Aug. 20: Maps, Evacuations, Closures, Fire growth, more.](#)
- [CDOT Chief: 1-70 to reopen in days, not weeks.](#)
- [Pine Gulch Fire: New Evacuations Ordered.](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS (*Please let Deb know if you plan to attend so we can make sure to post if multiple council members plan to attend. Deb would also be happy to RSVP for you when needed.*):

- **June 20 – Sept. 19** - Fruita Farmer's Market will be every Saturday from 8:30 am – 12:00 pm at Reed Park during these dates.
- **August 26, 2020** - Women in Business Stand Up Paddle Boarding, hosted by the Fruita Chamber, at Highline State Park from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
- *Due to Public Health Orders in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, most events remain cancelled for the time being.*

CC. Department Directors

Do you have questions about anything in the Weekly Information Update? Please feel free to email us at communications@fruita.org.



Megan Terlecky
Public Information Officer
Mesa County Sheriff's Office
(970) 812-3849 Cell
PIO_Sheriff@mesacounty.us



Eric Coulter
Public Affairs Specialist
Bureau of Land Management
(970) 628-5622 Cell
ECoulter@blm.gov



Grand Junction Fire Dept.
Public Information Coordinator
(970) 697-8587 Cell
GJFirePIO@cityofgj.org



Janet M. Kelleher
Chief Ranger
Colorado National Monument
(970) 858-2811 Office
janet_kelleher@nps.gov

What Stage 2 Fire Restrictions Mean

Stage 2 Fire Restrictions prohibit the use of anything that produces an open flame that is not liquid-fueled or gas-fueled on both public land and private residences. The general rule of thumb is if the fire can be “turned off,” rather than “put out,” it is allowed.

Prohibited:

- Parking or driving a motor vehicle off established roads, motorized trails, or established parking areas unless the parking area has no vegetation within 10 feet of the vehicle.
- Building, maintaining, or using a fire, campfire, charcoal grill, coal, wood-burning stove, sheepherder’s stove, tiki torches, fire pits, and chimineas including in developed picnic, camping areas, and at private residences.
- The use of ANY fireworks.
- Smoking, except within an enclosed vehicle or building.
- Any unpermitted use of fire to burn debris or vegetation.
- Shooting tracer rounds or explosive type targets or the use of explosives including fuses, blasting caps, and rockets.
- Welding or operating acetylene or other torch with open flame EXCEPT in cleared areas of at least 10 ft in diameter and in possession of a chemical pressurized fire extinguisher. **Activity Prohibited on Federal Land.**
- Operating an internal combustion engine such as a chainsaw, generator or ATV, without a spark arresting device installed and working properly. Chainsaws also have to be operated with a chemical pressurized fire extinguisher and a shovel nearby.

Allowed:

- Only devices that are liquid-fueled or gas-fueled are permitted. Gas grills, stoves or lanterns with shut-off valves may be used at least three feet away from flammable materials such as dry vegetation.
- Gas fire pits are allowed under a fire ban as the fire can be “turned off” rather than “put out.”
- Agricultural burns only with a **SHERIFF’S OFFICE ISSUED PERMIT**. [Click here](#) for an application.

View Interactive Fire Restrictions Map at bit.ly/Fire_Restrictions



Mesa County Fire Chiefs Association



**MESA COUNTY
PUBLIC HEALTH**

HOTLINE
(970)683-2300



WHY FRUITA? The City of Fruita focuses on three strategic outcomes built upon a base of providing quality core services.

Quality of Place (QP) The City of Fruita is a community where residents and visitors love where they are. The City strives to be a bike and pedestrian friendly community by providing a system of sidewalks, trails, and bike lanes that connect our parks, schools, neighborhoods, civic facilities, and commercial areas. We value safe neighborhoods, our geographic natural resources and landscapes, top tier education and healthcare, and we collaborate to provide quality essential infrastructure and services. We are an inclusive community of doers who enjoy active and healthy lifestyles.

Economic Health (EH) The City of Fruita strives to be financially sustainable by enabling a stable economy and supporting a diversity of businesses that offer well-paying jobs that attract educated employees. The City works to be fiscally responsible and continuously seeks ways to allocate resources to services and projects that have the highest impact on the City's priorities. We are the innovative leader for economic development in the Grand Valley.

Lifestyle (L) The City of Fruita fosters a fun and funky ambiance by celebrating the local arts, farm and ranching history, unique leisure opportunities, and family-friendly events and activities. As a city, we encourage a diversity of cultural opportunities, businesses, and recreational activities. We continue to improve and enhance recreational offerings from traditional to outdoor adventure sports and youth to adult activities. We are a family-friendly community with diverse cultural opportunities, businesses and recreational amenities where visitors feel like locals and locals play like visitors.



FRUITA COLORADO



City of Fruita staff strive to emulate these core behaviors in everything we do in order to show gratitude for public trust, build trust and maintain trust with the public, our partner agencies and with one another.

We are Fruita. We are...

Fun—This is such a critical behavior that impacts everything we do. If we are not having fun, we must ask why and recalculate and adjust. We must love what we do and where we work, live and play. We are positive and put forth focused effort to have a positive attitude. We are smiling. We are friendly. We enjoy serving the public and working together. We care about the experience those who interact with us internally and externally have.

Respectful—We are empathetic. We take an active interest in each other, residents, businesses and visitors. We listen. We talk one at a time. We compliment and build up others. We are tough on issues and easy on people. We recognize the role of City Council, Board and Commission Members, residents, supervisors, coworkers and customers. We are kind. We treat people with dignity. We embrace diversity and make every effort to think collectively.

United—We are a team. We focus on purpose and work together to achieve our goals. We communicate effectively with each other. We seek consensus, agree to disagree and move forward for the greater good. We support each other. We value partnerships that help us achieve our goals. We remember we are public stewards and serve. We are inclusive. We create synergy by recognizing our strengths and weaknesses and succeeding as a team.

Innovative—Simplicity is our key to innovation. We consider and explore alternatives to the way we've always done it. We are open to new ideas. We welcome calculated risk-taking and learning from our mistakes. We seek continuous improvement and welcome constructive feedback. We ask why and why not. We work to continually improve.

Transparent—We operate as an open book. We create, over communicate and reinforce clarity in our work. We are trustworthy. We assume a positive intent from others. We work with integrity. We seek ways to increase transparency internally and externally.

Authentic—We are unique. We are real. We are different. We are special. We are optimistic. We are exceptional and proud of it. We are comfortable being different. We are open-minded. We are honest. We embrace and value family. We live what we speak. We create clear expectations and work hard to manage those expectations.