

METRO & STATE
Pride is running high in the Springs

Political victories during the past year give the local gay community much to celebrate as PrideFest approaches. **Metro 1**

Peterson crews back from fires

Pilots from an Air National Guard team from Wyoming will replace them in California. **Metro 1**

Useful info for outbound soldiers

A Fort Carson deployment fair continues today. **Metro 1**

HEALTH
Senate votes to triple AIDS funding

A U.S. program has treated and protected millions in Africa and elsewhere. **A4**

Study: Mutation raises HIV risk

A genetic defect that once protected Africans from malaria might partly explain a disproportionate spread among blacks. **A4**

WORLD
Israel, Hezbollah make a trade

The Middle East's bitter divisions were put on display as bodies and prisoners crossed the border. **A4**

NATION
Women convicted in homeless killings

The two are said to have gotten millions in insurance payouts before their scheme was discovered. **A5**

Gay marriage ban bound for ballot

Because the California Supreme Court declined to hear a challenge to a ballot initiative, voters will decide on a constitutional amendment that would again limit marriage in the state. **A10**

CAMPAIGN 2008
Obama criticizes Bush on security

He said he'll take aggressive measures to lessen the U.S. threat from WMDs. **A12**

McCain received politely by NAACP

His appearance, seen as symbolic, might help sway undecided voters. **A12**

Ties to Fannie, Freddie run deep

Workers on both campaigns are closely connected to the embattled mortgage giants. **A12**

IRAQ
U.S. hands over 10th province

Iraq hopes to control all security by 2009. **A13**

BUSINESS
Local housing will stay slow, firm says

At least into 2009, according to a report. **Metro 4**

LOCAL WEATHER
High 85 • Low 58

Today is a good day to arm yourself with an umbrella.

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FULL REPORT METRO 8



IN OUT THERE

RARE BEAUTY

Some wildflowers that bloom above the tree line on Pikes Peak grow nowhere else in the world. See them before fall strikes – which is early at altitude.

The Gazette

50 cents | Informing the Pikes Peak region since 1872 | gazette.com

BATTLE OF THE DIETS

STUDY: TRIM CARBS OVER FATS

AVERAGE WEIGHT LOSS

Over two years:
Atkins: 12 pounds
Mediterranean: 10 pounds
Low fat: 7.3 pounds.

INSIDE

A study of internal tobacco-industry documents shows companies altered menthol levels to attract young smokers and retain older ones. **A9**

Atkins plan took off the most pounds in a 3-diet comparison

BY DENISE GELLENE
LOS ANGELES TIMES

A long-running comparison of three diet plans found that the low-carbohydrate Atkins regimen and a Mediterranean diet rich in fish and nuts produced slightly greater weight loss than a low-fat program modeled on American Heart Association dietary guidelines.

The low-carb dieters — who consumed generous amounts of saturated fat but avoided such staples as bread and pasta — saw steeper increases in their HDL, or good, cholesterol, than people on either the Mediterranean or low-fat diets, according to a report in Wednesday's New England Journal of Medicine.

The study, funded in part by the Dr. Robert C. and Veronica Atkins Research Foundation, was the lat-

est to demonstrate the benefits of diets high in fat, protein and cholesterol, which have long been demonized as unhealthy.

"It is time to reconsider the low-fat diet as the first choice for weight loss and for cardiovascular health," said study author Dr. Meir Stampfer of Harvard Medical School. "It is not the best."

But Dr. Robert Eckel, a past presi-

SEE DIETS • PAGE 2

Attention all daredevils: Start your engines



KIRK SPEER, THE GAZETTE

Drivers in the Protruck, Vintage and Exhibition divisions of the Pikes Peak International Hill Climb made their way back to the beginning of the top section during the first practice day Wednesday.

INSIDE

In a race where a slight mistake could spell disaster and in a sport where fuel is \$8 a gallon, registration fees may be the cheapest part. **Full report, Sports 1**

UTILITIES

RESIDENTS MAY SEE EVEN MORE RATE HIKES

Would increase typical bill about 18 percent

BY PAM ZUBECK
THE GAZETTE

Not only do Colorado Springs' residents face an 18.6 percent bump in water rates in September, but Colorado Springs Utilities also proposes to increase the typical residential utility bill by another 18 percent on April 1.

Increases are proposed for all four services: electric, gas, water and wastewater, according to a preliminary budget forecast outlined Wednesday for the City Council, acting as the Utilities Board.

The increases would raise a typical \$159 monthly residential bill to \$187.

In a five-year forecast Utilities CEO Jerry Forte termed "very preliminary," officials also predicted the typical residential bill would go up about 27 percent between 2009 and 2013, a commercial bill, 24 percent and an industrial bill, 28 percent.

Vice Mayor Larry Small cautioned about being too optimistic, a problem that led to the latest water increase proposal after Utilities failed to foresee the extent of the troubled market for new homes.

For this year's budget, Utilities predicted the city would collect development charges for 2,100 new housing starts, but construction has fallen considerably behind that estimate.

That, coupled with a decline in water usage, led to a \$44.6 million deficit that will be offset by spending cuts and the September water rate hike.

"I'm concerned we're going to be optimistic again," Small said after seeing the 2009 forecast. "The curve is actually going to be much lower than that."

He was referring to Utilities' prediction for 1,750 new housing starts this year and a like number in 2009. Small said the Pikes Peak Regional Building board, on which he

SEE UTILITIES • PAGE 2

FIRST IN LINE

SPRINGS' PREMIER MOVIE MAN MOVING ON

'Dark Knight' camp out may be last before move to L.A.

BY ANDREW WINEKE
THE GAZETTE

When "The Dark Knight" opens in Colorado Springs at midnight, it might be the last hurrah for Alex Billington's home away from home outside the Cinemark Carefree Circle off Powers Boulevard.

Beginning with tents and sleeping bags when they were still in high school, Billington and his friends have built ever-more-elaborate sets on the sidewalk outside the theater, where they camp out to snag the best seats for the summer's biggest movies. For "Dark Knight," the production resembled a bachelor pad more than a campsite, with couches, coffee tables and carpet.

SEE MOVIE GUY • PAGE 7



KEVIN KRECK, THE GAZETTE

Alex Billington, founder of First Showing, plans to move to Los Angeles in August, a move key to helping his Web site grow, he said.

ONLINE > In depth

Read more about "The Dark Knight" in Friday's Go! section, and learn more about camping out at the theater beforehand in a video at gazette.com



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