

## Stolen Guns Have Been Found

First the bad news—as many of you know, the Museum of the West suffered a theft on November 2nd of last year. An individual or individuals hid in the museum till the staff had left before emerging from hiding, broke the glass on two of the gun exhibit cases, stole three pistols, and quickly escaped before the police arrived. Specifically, they took two Model 23C Glocks that had belonged to two of Mesa County’s recent sheriffs—Riecke Claussen and Stan Hilkey. While these guns are not uncommon, they are irreplaceable considering who previously owned them.



The third firearm is a very unique artifact. The gold-plated 38 caliber Colt Revolver had belonged to actor Leo Carrillo. Remembered by many as Pancho in the 1950s television series “The Cisco Kid,” Carrillo was one of America’s first well-known Hispanic actors. Like the Glocks, because of who had owned the Colt, this gun is also irreplaceable.

The good news at the time was that no one was hurt, that the damage was minimal, and that the theft resulted in the MWC reviewing its security procedures (a review that has brought about a few changes). Also, we are now planning a new gun exhibition. After the incident, all the guns on exhibit were moved into locked storage until new measures can be implemented to insure their safety and discourage another theft. In the meantime, this gives David Bailey, Curator of History, time to conceive of and install a revised and improved firearm exhibit.

And for some more good news—just three days after the robbery, the police caught two men who are alleged to have been involved in the theft. Evidently, these two men had been quite busy. In the ensuing investigation, it has been determined that they might be involved in 40 to 50 burglaries throughout Grand Junction, many of which were in the Redlands, in addition to the one at the Museum of the West. However, at the time, the police had not located the firearms.

And now for the best news—the police have found all three firearms. They have not been returned yet to the MWC since they are being held for evidence and pending prosecution. But, we can now rest assured that Carrillo’s gun, which is a wonderful piece of history, will soon be returning home to the MWC along with the two sheriff guns.

The MWC wants to thank the Grand Junction Police Department and all those who cooperated with them for their hard work and dedication.

Peter Booth  
Executive Director

## Museums of Western Colorado 2016 Events and Exhibits

Feb. 25	<b>Museum Gallery Tour • Museum of the West</b>
Mar. 1	<b>Heritage Awards and Annual Meeting</b>
Mar. 3	<b>Western Slope Heritage Rendezvous Museum of the West Exhibit Opening</b>
Mar. 31	<b>Behind the Scenes Operations Tour • Museum of the West</b>
Apr. 9-10	<b>Burnham Indian Arts Auction</b>
Apr. 21	<b>Architectural &amp; Historic Grand Junction Walking Tour</b>
May 7	<b>Spring Day on the Farm • Cross Orchards</b>
May 12	<b><i>Western Colorado Weaponry: Tools of Survival and Conflict</i> Museum of the West Exhibit Opening</b>
May 19	<b><i>T. rex and the End of the "Age of Dinosaurs"</i> Dinosaur Journey Exhibit Opening</b>
May 26	<b>Museum Gallery Tour • Museum of the West</b>
June 11	<b>Dinosaur Day • Dinosaur Journey</b>
June 23	<b>Behind the Scenes Operations Tour • Museum of the West</b>
Aug. 27	<b>Feast of Skulls • Dinosaur Journey</b>
Sept. 8	<b>Architectural &amp; Historic Grand Junction Walking Tour</b>
Sept. 16-17	<b>Two Rivers Chautauqua • Cross Orchards</b>
Oct. 12	<b>National Fossil Day • Dinosaur Journey</b>
Oct. 13	<b>Architectural &amp; Historic Grand Junction Walking Tour</b>
Oct. 22	<b>Fall Day on the Farm • Cross Orchards</b>
Oct. 31	<b>KOOL 107.9 Monster Mash • Dinosaur Journey</b>
Nov. 4-5	<b>Grand Junction Cowboy Poetry Gathering Whitman Educational Center</b>
Nov. 5	<b>Authors' Party • Museum of the West</b>
Nov. 10	<b>Museum of the West Winter Exhibit Opening</b>
Nov. 17	<b>Museum Gallery Tour • Museum of the West</b>
Dec. 3	<b>Breakfast with Santa • Dinosaur Journey</b>
Dec. 15	<b>Behind the Scenes Operations Tour • Museum of the West</b>

*Please note:* Dates are subject to change. Please call to confirm and check our website and Facebook page for updates.

Through strong stewardship and relevant programming, the Museums of Western Colorado strives to inspire the community to preserve its heritage and tell its story.



Dinosaur Journey collects, preserves, interprets and displays evidence of the history of life and environments of western Colorado and geologically related surrounding areas.



The Loyd Files Research Library provides learning and research opportunities for exploring and interpreting western Colorado's past, present and future.

The Museum of the West is dedicated to the collection, preservation, exhibition and interpretation of artifacts that represent the rich heritage and history of western Colorado and the contiguous areas of the American West.

Cross Orchards Historic Site utilizes living history to preserve, interpret and educate the public on agriculture, transportation and the social history of the region.

Museums of Western Colorado  
P.O. Box 20000  
Grand Junction, CO 81502-5020  
(970) 242-0971

[www.museumofwesternco.org](http://www.museumofwesternco.org)  
Subscribe to e-news and more at  
[newsletter@westcomuseum.org](mailto:newsletter@westcomuseum.org)  
or on our website.

*Museum Times* is the monthly newsletter of the Museums of Western Colorado informing members and supporters of news, programs and events.

**Please note:** Dates and times of events, meetings and programs are subject to change; please call to confirm.

Museum membership entitles you to free admission to all of our sites, as well as discounts for various programs. Check our website for updated membership fees.





**\$1/Kids under 12 • \$4/Adult • \$7/Family**

### **Oral History Program**

**Thursday, January 21 • Noon**

**Whitman Educational Center • 248 S. Fourth St.**

Bob Weiss, former owner of Sundrop Grocery, will talk about his involvement with the natural grocer and vegetarian movement in the Grand Valley.

Oral History programs are held at the Whitman Educational Center, 248 S. Fourth St. They are jointly sponsored by the Museums of Western Colorado and the Mesa County Historical Society and are free to the public. The programs are held on the third Thursday of the month at noon.

# Passport to Adventure

## Sandhill Crane Migration

March 14 - 17

Register by February 12

Led by Jen McCollough

Follow the Platte River to Central Nebraska to view Sandhill Cranes on their yearly migration. We will stop by the original Cabela's in Sidney, in case you need any last minute gear! Then we will travel on to Kearney, NE and view the cranes from blinds along the river in the Sandhills they were named for. We will also take some time to appreciate the history of the area known as the Gateway to the West.

**\$695/Museums member; \$740/Non-member** - includes transportation, lodging, and admissions

**\$140** - reservation deposit ; **\$125** - single supplement



Photo courtesy of Josh Fiedler

## Curator's Tour of Denver's Great Museums

April 11 - 13

Register by March 11

Led by Erin Schmitz

Travel with Curator of Collections and Archives, Erin Schmitz, and explore the museums of the Front Range. Erin has worked at several of these museums and can deliver that special experience only a curator can. Our journey will include Lakewood Heritage Center and its historic buildings in Belmar Park, the little known Geology Museum at the School of Mines in Golden, and the Denver Museum of Nature and Science with its special exhibit, "Chocolate: The Exhibition." Our visit there will be capped off with a behind the scenes tour with Rene O'Connell, Image Archivist, of the new state of the art Avenir Collections Center.

**\$440/Museums member; \$470/Non-member** - includes transportation, lodging, and admission

**\$90** - reservation deposit; **\$75** - single supplement



## Rafting the Yampa River: Dinosaur National Monument

May 12 - 15

Register by March 12

Led by Zebulon Miracle

Ride the crest of one of Colorado's last free rivers—the Yampa! These famous waters are compressed between towering canyon walls and flows past high-altitude landscape. Float through rock layers that are rich with Jurassic fossils; explore ancient Native American rock art; and follow the historic 1869 route of John Wesley Powell.

**\$980/Museums member; \$1,030/Non-member** - includes transportation, all meals while on the river

*Does not include camping gear, misc. expenses while on the road (snacks, drinks, etc.), and tips for the boatman.*

*Camping gear available to rent.*

**\$200** - reservation deposit

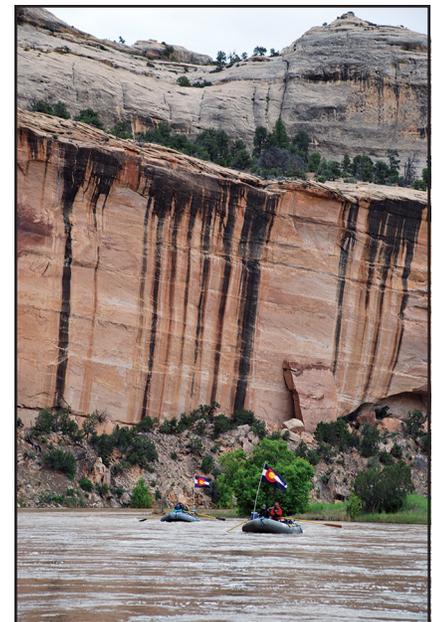


Photo courtesy of Adventure Bound

### The Museums of Western Colorado Honors Ronna Lee Sharpe as She Moves On to New Adventures



On December 18th, Ronna Lee Sharpe left the Museums of Western Colorado, and started a new and exciting chapter in her life at Colorado Mesa University. According to Executive Director Peter Booth, “We were all very sad to see Ronna Lee move on. I personally had come to value her contributions to the Museum, especially at Cross Orchards. She will be sorely missed by the entire MWC family. But of course, we are happy for Ronna Lee as she enters her new adventure.”

Ronna Lee started her career with MWC in 1989 as the State Folklorist for Western Colorado. For much of her tenure with the Museum, the regional traditional arts program of the Colorado Council on the Arts (now known as Colorado Creative Industries) was based at the Museum and coordinated by Ronna Lee.

In the past three years, she served as the Museum's Membership Coordinator. In this capacity, the MWC's membership grew approximately 36%. Throughout Ronna Lee's time at the MWC, she has been the heart and soul of the ongoing

and popular Grand Junction Cowboy Poetry Gathering which is held annually at the Whitman Educational Center. This tradition is a beautiful mix of Western heritage and performance art. Through Ronna Lee's efforts, the MWC is proud to keep this tradition alive.

Ronna Lee enjoyed her time with the Museum and took great pride in the work. She loves the members, the volunteers, and especially Cross Orchards.

The Museum thanks Ronna Lee for all her hard work and dedication. We also wish Ronna Lee all the best as she explores her new career.

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### A Toast to the MWC's Staff and Volunteers

2015 has been a wonderful year in so many ways. Thanks to volunteers and staff, there has been a steady increase in visitors throughout the year which has been wonderful to see. The volunteers and staff have worked hard and installed some exciting exhibitions, worked together on some terrific community events, and have done a tremendous job making sure our visitors have a great experience at all three of our sites.

I am honored to be associated with a museum as great as the Museums of Western Colorado. The community is wonderful, the region is tremendous, the heritage is rich and the opportunities abound. But most importantly, I am honored to work with such a wonderful group of individuals who love heritage as much as I do.

Thank you staff and volunteers for all that you do!

Peter Booth  
Executive Director

## Seeking Nominations for the Museums of Western Colorado's Heritage Awards

Nominations due February 1, 2016

Honors to be presented at the MWC's Heritage Awards Ceremony, March 1, 2016

The Museums of Western Colorado's (MWC) mission is to help the community preserve its heritage and tell its story. This is a significant undertaking. For this reason, our Museum relies on others in the community, either in cooperation with the MWC or individually, to help fulfill this very important mission. It is an honor and privilege for the MWC to be able to recognize leaders and organizations who have contributed so significantly to the community's heritage.

We are turning to our members and the community in seeking nominations for the MWC's 2016 Heritage Awards. The chosen recipients will be honored at the MWC's Heritage Awards Ceremony on March 1, 2016. We will be honoring people and organizations in six areas:

- **Historian Award** - This award recognizes distinguished and long-term contributions by an individual, group, or organization to the public understanding and appreciation of Mesa County and Western Slope history.
- **George Callison Paleontological Award** - This award recognizes distinguished and long-term contributions by an individual, group, or organization to the public understanding and appreciation of Mesa County and Western Slope paleontological heritage.
- **Heritage Enterprise Award** - This award recognizes a business enterprise that has made distinguished and significant long-term contributions to the preservation of Mesa County's heritage.
- **Museum Service Award** - This award recognizes meritorious efforts by an individual, group, or organization in support of the MWC's mission and vision.
- **Preservation Award** - This award recognizes distinguished and long-term efforts of an individual, group, or organization to the preservation of Mesa County's architectural treasures.
- **Archaeological Award** - New last year, this award recognizes the distinguished and long-term contributions by an individual, group, or organization to the public understanding and appreciation of Mesa County and Western Slope archaeological heritage.

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To nominate someone, please submit a letter including:

- the award category
- your proposed nomination
- a one-page description of why the person, persons, or organization should be honored
- contact information for you and your nominee (specifically mailing address, daytime phone number, and email)

*Museum staff and Board Members are not eligible to be recipients of the awards.*

Nominations must be received by February 1, 2016 to be considered. We hope all of our members will join us at the Heritage Awards Ceremony on March 1.

Mail nominations to:

Museums of Western Colorado

ATTN: Heritage Awards

P.O. Box 20,000

Grand Junction, Colorado 81502-5020

Nominations can also be made via our website - <https://www.museumofwesternco.com/event/heritage-awards/>.

## End of the Year Appeal - Thank you!

### Thanks for the Year-End Gifts

The Museums of Western Colorado (MWC) wishes to thank everyone who donated via Colorado Gives Day and the Annual Fund Drive.

For the sixth consecutive year, Community First Foundation presented Colorado Gives Day, an annual statewide movement to celebrate and increase philanthropy in Colorado through online giving. This year, on December 8th, over \$28,800 worth of donation gifts came to the MWC. Colorado Gives also had an incentive fund that is distributed to the non-profits. Each got a percentage of that fund depending on the amount that was donated to them. The MWC received over \$1,300 from that fund bringing our total raised to over \$30,000. I wish to also thank staff and volunteers who helped spread the word via social media that day. It was wonderful to see all the emails, posts, and tweets promoting support for Colorado's non-profits.

In addition, gifts from the annual fund mail campaign are still coming in. Once again, the Museums' friends are showing their continued support. We don't have a total yet (that will be printed in the next newsletter), but we are very thrilled that you, our friends, have given your donations – they were truly wonderful Christmas gifts.

Thank you!!  
Peter Booth

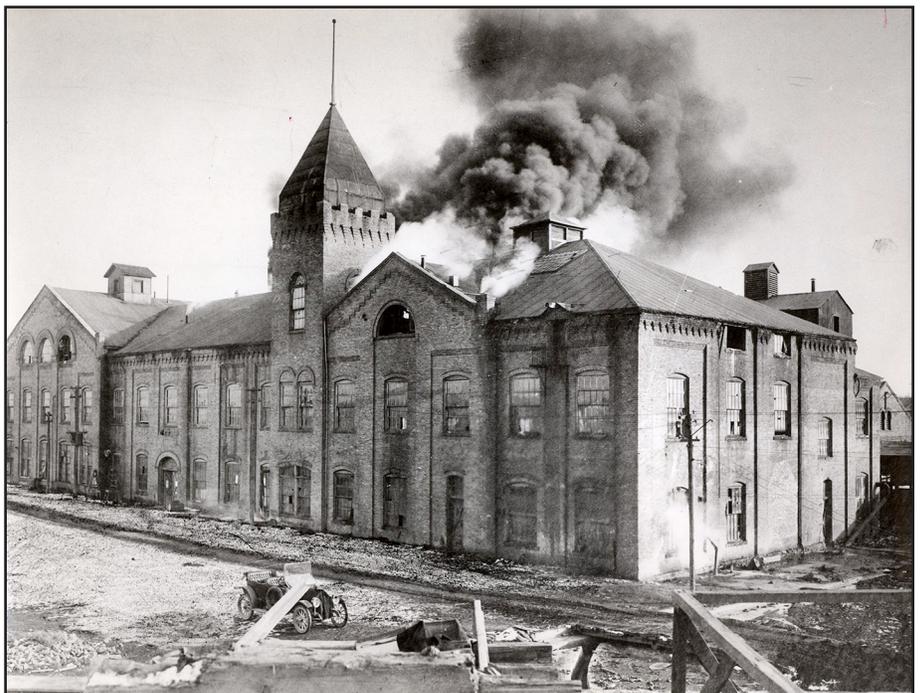


A program of Community First Foundation

## From the Collections

The Climax Uranium mill was built on 114 acres of property that was once the Grand Junction sugar beet mill. It was incorporated in May 1950 and processed vanadium and uranium until it was decommissioned in 1970 under the US Department of Energy's Uranium Mill Tailings Remedial Action act. Most of the machinery and all of the buildings were buried on site. The only building left standing was the original sugar beet processing area.

The Loyd Files Research Library and Archives houses several collections that tell the story of the Climax Uranium mill including a newly processed collection that includes equipment schematics and company documents.





Museums of Western Colorado  
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 Organization  
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**Cross Orchards Historic Site**

3073 F Road • (970) 434-9814  
 Closed for the season.

**Dinosaur Journey Museum**

550 Jurassic Court, Fruita • (970) 858-7282  
 October 1 - April 30  
 Monday - Saturday • 10 am - 4 pm  
 Sunday • Noon - 4 pm

**Museum of the West**

462 Ute (5th & Ute) • (970) 242-0971  
 October 1 - April 30  
 Monday - Saturday • 10 am - 4 pm  
 Closed Sunday

**Loyd Files Research Library**

Monday • 10 am - 1 pm  
 Tuesday - Thursday • 10 am - 4 pm  
 Friday • 10 am - 1 pm  
 Closed Saturday and Sunday

**Calendar**

<b>JANUARY</b>	<b>1</b>		Happy New Year! All sites will be closed.	
	<b>2 &amp; 3</b>	10 am - 4 pm	Grand Valley Model Railroad Club's Christmas Train Show	Cross Orchards Historic Site
	<b>15</b>	9:30 am	Volunteer Craft Meeting	Cross Orchards Historic Site
	<b>20</b>	10:00 am	Cross Orchards Volunteer Meeting	Cross Orchards Historic Site
	<b>21</b>	Noon	Oral History Program	Whitman Educational Center
	<b>29</b>	9:30 am	Volunteer Craft Meeting	Cross Orchards Historic Site