

DENVER & THE WEST

HOLIDAY WEEKEND SKI TRAFFIC DOWN

Despite abundant new snowfall, traffic to the high country over the Presidents Day weekend was down significantly as compared to that holiday weekend in 2020.

For the four-day weekend that began ran last Friday and concluded Monday night, 152,999 vehicles passed through the Eisenhower-Johnson tunnels, a decrease of 16% compared to the same four-day period in 2020. Presidents Day weekend is typically the busiest of the ski season.

While ski areas are limiting capacity by requiring reservations because of COVID-19, the Presidents Day drop was surprising because it was much bigger than the decrease seen only four weeks earlier on the four-day Martin Luther King Day weekend. That weekend saw 169,031 vehicles pass through the tunnels, a drop of 3.2% as compared to 2020.

A series of storms this month has created much-improved ski conditions at most Colorado resorts after a dismal start to the season, but frigid temperatures in metro Denver and the mountains may have contributed to reduced skier traffic last weekend.

"It was a good holiday weekend, but not quite as busy as we expected it to be," said John Sellers, marketing and communications director for the Loveland ski area. — John Meyer, *The Denver Post*

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U.S. ATTORNEY TO STEP DOWN

Colorado's U.S. attorney, Jason Dunn, plans to resign as the Biden administration prepares to appoint new top federal prosecutors.

Dunn, an appointee of President Donald Trump, told Colorado Public Radio his resignation will be effective Feb. 28. He joined the U.S. attorney's office in 2018, and he declined to speak of his future plans.

Dunn is one of more than 50 top federal prosecutors who were asked to resign — a normal occurrence in changes of U.S. presidential administrations.

Dunn's successor will need to be confirmed by the U.S. Senate.

Colorado's Democratic senators, Michael Bennet and John Hickenlooper, have recommended possible replacements, including Denver City Attorney Kristin Bronson, Assistant U.S. Attorney Hetal Doshi and Cole Finnegan, a former Denver city attorney who served as chief of staff to then-Denver Mayor Hickenlooper. — *The Associated Press*

Dem wants punishment for GOP House colleague

Republican Rep. Hanks said he stands by going to Jan. 6 rally in D.C.

By Saja Hindi
The Denver Post

A Colorado House Democrat called on Tuesday for the state legislature to consider stripping Republican Rep. Ron Hanks of his committees or even expelling him for attending the Jan. 6 rally in Washington, D.C.

The move by La Jara Rep. Donald Valdez on the day the legisla-

tive session restarted shows the ripples of last month's insurrection across the country. It also came as a surprise to fellow Democrats as well as the House speaker, who admonished Valdez for using his moment of personal privilege to condemn anyone's motives outside the Colorado Capitol.

Valdez said Hanks' conduct on Jan. 6 raises serious questions

that need to be addressed and he asked that a panel be formed to take testimony under oath to consider possible punishment.

Although Hanks, a newly elected representative from Fremont County, was at President Donald Trump's rally in Washington, D.C., and told a radio station that he marched with supporters to the U.S. Capitol, nothing has placed him inside the Capitol

during the insurrection that led to five deaths and several injuries.

"Let us be clear — the fight is between those who believe in democracy and fair elections and those who do not," Valdez said in a written statement. "Those who attended the rally wanted to set aside a free and fair election and install into office someone who lost. That is called a coup d'etat."

House Democratic leadership, however, does not plan to take

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"It's changed everything"



Russell Strong, posing for a portrait Tuesday in Aurora, was hit in the face by a police-fired projectile last May during protests of police brutality in downtown Denver. He lost his eye, and on Tuesday filed a lawsuit against the city. Daniel Brenner, Special to *The Denver Post*

Man sues Denver after losing an eye from being hit by projectile fired by police at May protest

By Elise Schmelzer
The Denver Post

A Denver man whose eye had to be removed after police shot him in the face with a projectile during protests downtown last summer is suing the city government for his injuries and in an attempt to change police policies.

Russell Strong has undergone three surgeries since Denver police injured him during a protest against police brutality on May 30 at Civic Center. The projectile that slammed into his face ruptured his eye, broke the bones in his eye socket and fractured his face. He will need more surgeries and care as he manages the loss of his eye for the rest of his life, he said.

"It's been devastating, quite honestly," Strong said. "It's hard to put into words. It's changed everything. Not only when it comes to physical tasks like driving or tasks at work, but the mental strain of being in large crowds and feeling self-conscious about my eye."

The lawsuit filed late Tuesday is at least the fifth claim in federal court against the Denver government for injuries inflicted on protesters by police officers responding to the massive demonstrations of police brutality in late May and early June in the wake of the killing of George Floyd by Minneapolis police.

The lawsuits represent more than 20 people injured by police, though hundreds more were hurt by projectiles and tear gas.

Denver police Chief Paul Pazen promised change in how the department reacts to large protests after a scathing report by the city's Office of the Independent Monitor about how the department handled the demonstrations found a lack of communication, multiple instances of excessive force and a lack of recordkeeping. He has also promised to thoroughly

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