

## **KVNF Regional Newscast: January 4, 2023**

KVNF

Coloradans can now get thirty percent off the price of electric lawn and garden equipment.

A new state law that took effect this week offers a tax credit to equipment retailers if they offer the discount to consumers at the time of purchase. Participating retailers include Ace Hardware and Home Depot and the discount applies to lawn mowers, leaf blowers, trimmers and snow blowers.

The measure is part of a wider movement to cut down on pollution and noise from gas-powered equipment.

The first benefits will be distributed to Colorado workers next week from the state's new paid leave initiative.

The Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program covers time off for things like serious health conditions, taking care of a family member or having a baby. The program has received over five thousand claims since its online application portal went live in November. More than 3,000 of those have been approved.

The state is holding virtual town halls about the program on January 10 and February 1.

After some months of uncertainty, plans for a bus service linking the Montrose and Ouray communities are back on the table.

The service will be provided by All Points Transit, and, as previously reported by KVNF, officials originally hoped it would begin earlier this year. However, the plan hit a few bumps in the road, and has been in limbo as All Points waited for a necessary signature on a grant application from CDOT to move forward.

With the signature attained and the grant secured, funds would address the issues that have held up the service: workforce shortages and the resulting closures of vital establishments, impacting the communities' abilities to meet visitor needs.

According to the Montrose Daily Press, the project is back on track. All Points Transit is now finalizing operational plans and fares, targeting a mid-January launch.

Megan Sandoval, a Delta County Human Services Child Welfare Caseworker, was recently awarded Colorado's Caseworker of the Year for 2023.

The award recognizes people who exhibit exceptional dedication, professionalism and innovation in the realm of child welfare. Sandoval says the calling "chose" her.

She primarily serves families in need, as well as children, as a frontline intake caseworker.

Her work focuses on creating lasting changes, beyond short-term solutions. Sandoval was among nearly 50 child welfare staff members across the state who were nominated by colleagues for their contributions to their communities.

Nicole Bennett of Delta County Human Services, who nominated Sandoval, described her frontline intake colleague as a "rare individual" whose empathy runs "unparalleled."

During a time when the department faced staffing shortages, Megan Sandoval volunteered to take on additional cases. According to Delta County, she also extended her support to fellow caseworkers.

KVNF's Cassie Knust follows up on a previous report. She spoke recently with Sandoval to hear more about the work that brought her this recognition. Sandoval was recognized by the Delta County Commissioners last month. To learn more about Delta County Child Welfare, visit [deltacountyco.gov](https://deltacountyco.gov)

December 30 was the second anniversary of the Marshall Fire, which burned more than a thousand homes in Boulder County.

Two people died in what was Colorado's most destructive wildfire, and 2 billion dollars in losses were estimated to have occurred. Many victims found out they were underinsured, and many learned about the long and complicated process of collecting on insurance claims.

Valerie Brown, the Deputy Executive Director of United Policyholders, a nonprofit that advocates for consumers around insurance issues, recommends homeowners and renters carefully check their

insurance policies. According to Boulder County, about 25% of those who lost their home in the Marshall fire are back in a new rebuilt house on the burned lot.