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Stratton Flats funding funky

By Randy Wyrick
Mountaineer Staff Writer

Commissioners spend \$4.5M before approving it

The Eagle County commissioners spent millions on a struggling housing project more than three months before they publically approved the funding, county records show.

The commissioners invested \$4.5 million in the Stratton Flats housing project in early January. The money came from one of the county's general facilities funds, which had just over \$6 million in

it at the time.

During their March 11 meeting, the commissioners officially approved that funding.

The \$4.5 million investment pumped new life into the project, which is being developed by the Aspen-based Meritage Group. It's now a partnership between the county, Gypsum and Meritage.

County to the rescue

Sources close to the deal say that before the county got involved, Stratton Flats' funding had collapsed, as with several other development projects in the slumping real estate industry. A few private developers were considering picking it up, sources say.

The county's part of the Stratton Flats project was assigned to the new Eagle County Housing Authority. However, the commissioners did not hear a resolution to create a housing authority until April 22, county records show.

Not illegal, just unorthodox

While spending the money months before it was appropriated might be unorthodox, the Colorado State Legislature's legal counsel found it's probably not illegal.

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THE UPDATE

Karadzic refuses to plea

Former Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic refused Friday to enter pleas to



KARADZIC

11 charges filed against him, including genocide and crimes against humanity. Judge Iain Bonomy, presiding over the hearing by the U.N. Yugoslav tribunal, entered not guilty pleas on Karadzic's behalf.

"I will not plead, in line with my standpoint as regards to this court," Karadzic said when Bonomy asked for his plea to a count of genocide. "This court is representing itself falsely as a court of the international community, whereas it is in fact a court of NATO whose aim is to liquidate me."

Bonomy set Sept. 17 as the next date for a hearing, when Karadzic said he would challenge the court's jurisdiction. No trial date has been fixed.

\$1K reward

"Lock your vehicle" is the message the Eagle County Sheriff's Office wants citizens to hear after a spree of vehicle break-in's that occurred this week in Edwards. All vehicles were parked in residential areas on Homestead Drive and were left unlocked.

Deputies have recovered a bag of miscellaneous items ranging from sunglasses to prescription medications and believe that other vehicles were broken into during that time and not reported.

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Off the front



Eagle's Anita Ortiz, right, and Katie Mazzi — seen here wearing the pink jersey as race leaders — make their way through Camp Hale earlier this week as part of the Gore-Tex Transrockies Run. The six-day, 112-mile trail-running race through the backcountry started Monday in Buena Vista and ends Saturday at Beaver Creek's Park Hyatt. Photo courtesy www.transrockies.com.

McCain taps Alaskan for VP

Little-known newcomer rocks the political world

Republican John McCain introduced first-term Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin as his vice presidential running mate Friday, a stunning selection of a little-known conservative newcomer who relishes fighting the establishment.

"She's exactly who I need. She's exactly who this country needs to help me fight the same old Washington politics of 'Me first and country second,'" McCain declared as the pair stood together for the first time at a boisterous rally in Ohio just days before the opening of the party's national convention.

Palin, the first Republican woman on a presidential ticket,

promised: "I'm going to take our campaign to every part of our country and our message of reform to every voter of every background in every political party, or no party at all."

"... Politics isn't just a game of competing interests and clashing parties," added Palin, 44, who has built her career in large measure by challenging fellow Republicans.



PALIN

'A heartbeat away'

The Obama campaign immediately questioned whether Palin would be prepared to step in and be president if necessary. "Today, John McCain put the former mayor of a town of

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Labor Day Sale!


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kids' cottage
toys ♥ books ♥ clothing

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40-50% off
select merchandise



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Running through the Rocky Mountains

Eagle's Ortiz-Mazzia cruising to victory in backcountry running race

By Randy Wyrick
Mountaineer Staff Writer

If you're in the mountains, all roads lead to Vail and Beaver Creek — even if you're not running on roads.

Anita Ortiz and Katie Mazzia, both long-time fixtures in the Vail Valley's running community, are basking in the warm early afternoon sun, sitting still. Better look quick because they don't sit still for long.

They're long-time runners, friends, training partners and, this week, teammates in the Gore-Tex Transrockies Run, a six-day endurance running race. They started in Buena Vista on Monday and finish in Beaver Creek today. The courses run through the backcountry from stage to stage, through all kinds of terrain and up and down all kinds of mountains — mostly up.

Pretty in pink

Through Friday, Ortiz and Mazzia had won every stage and led the women's open division by two hours heading into Saturday's final stage. They've been wearing the race's pink leader's jersey, of sorts, since the first day.

"It's amazing the people who you meet."

This year's field boasts 300 runners, split into two-person teams. They come from all over the U.S., Sweden, Germany, Poland, Argentina, Ireland. One team

of women is from Manhattan, the one in the heart of the Big Apple. They learned about the event while surfing the Web. They decided they'd do it because they thought they'd see lots of pretty scenery (they were right) and because the menu looked great (Cowboy Catering is doing the food).

One team doesn't speak English, but it doesn't require much English to figure out that you're going to have to run a long way every day, and most of it is up.

"What could be better than running through the mountains every day with a group of great people who want to run through the mountains every day?" asked Ortiz.

Blisterless buddies

No blisters. They train about 100 miles per week, so this isn't that much different, except that it's more intense and dozens of people are chasing them.

She and Mazzia have been running and training partners for years. They're about as close as two people can get without swapping jewelry.

"We're opposites but we get along really well. She's laid back and I'm high strung. She calms me down and I rev her up."



Katie Mazzia, left, and teammate Anita Ortiz, both of Eagle, celebrate arriving in Vail Friday with a lead of two hours in the women's open division at the Gore-Tex TransRockies Run. Photo by Randy Wyrick.

'I do'

One team, Ryan Flock and Amy Baker, are swapping jewelry. They're running together through this week's event and are getting married just a few minutes after they cross the finish line Saturday in Beaver Creek. The thinking is that if they can thrive through the Transrockies Run, they can make it through anything.

"Yes, we are getting married, we have thrown away the ugly wedding dress, took away all the glitz and glamour and decided to sweat like smelly beasts in the wild as we run 125 miles in 6 days throughout the Colorado Rockies!" Ryan and Amy say on their Web site, ryanandamyrun.com. "Once we cross the finish

line we will be giving each other high fives and saying 'I do.'"

\$20K in prizes

Since the event rolls out over a full week and athletes camp together in tent cities, the 150 teams have time to share their experiences of running the Colorado Rockies.

While most participants may not have their eye on a win, some certainly will. A combined prize purse of \$20,000 will go to top teams in four categories: Men, Women, Mixed and Men 80+, which is for teams of men whose combined age is 80 or higher.