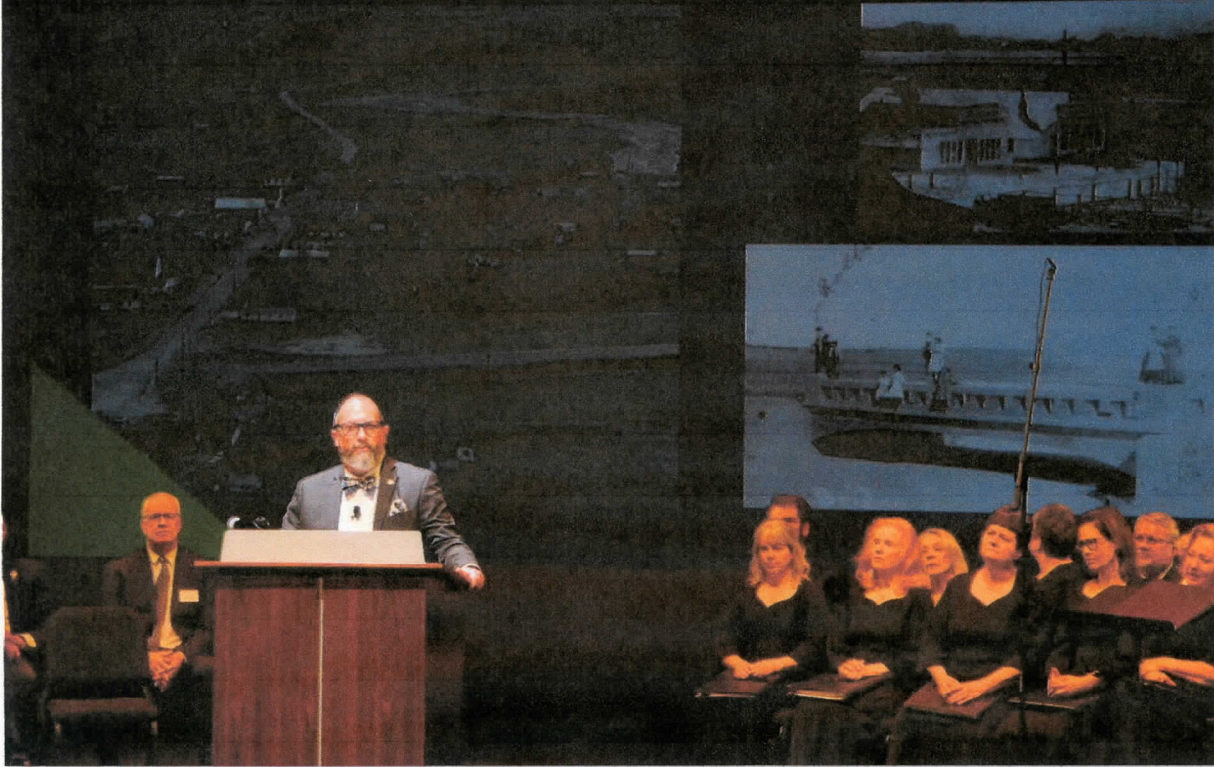


# PARKER CHRONICLE

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## PARKER'S ROOTS



At the annual Parker State of the Town, Mayor Joshua Rivero speaks about where Parker came from, how it has evolved over 44 years and how town staff is planning for the future.

PHOTO BY HELENA LENA

## Parker's State of the Town looks at past, present, future

### Legend High School principal recognized with Impact Award at event featuring new Mayor Josh Rivero

BY HELENA LENA  
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For 16 years, the Rotary Club of Parker has hosted a State of the Town event to celebrate the previous year and to look forward to what's ahead. And this year, the event focused on making lasting changes for the betterment of the community.

For "over 44 years, this town's elected officials have guided Parker's progress and made sure that while we have grown, we have also preserved that hometown feel that makes Parker unique," said Mayor Joshua Rivero.

Speaking at the State of the Town for the first time as mayor, Rivero took a look back at Parker's roots.

When the town was incorporated in 1981, Rivero said the town started with 285 people. By the year 2000, the population had grown to 23,000 and it now has more than 68,000 residents. But Rivero said the hometown feel is not judged by the size of the population.

"It's judged by how we treat each other," Rivero said.

Including the re-implementation of the Parker Police Department's traffic unit, modernized updates to the town's land development ordinance and online permitting process, 2024 worked on changes for the future safety and success of Parker.

In terms of economic development, a majority of the town's revenue goes to public works, parks and recreation and public

safety.

Rivero said there was an increase in expenditures for the parks and recreation department in 2024 due to the Salisbury Park expansion, which will expand the park by 91 acres.

Having received \$8.7 million in share back fund distributions from Douglas County, the park will include multiple baseball fields, two multipurpose sports fields, pickleball, tennis and basketball courts, a BMX track and a playground.

The park is to be constructed in four phases, with the first phase anticipated to begin later this year.

Construction will also continue on Parker's roadways as the engineering and public works departments work on the trans-

portation system, including updates to the traffic system with new equipment.

With some roadway projects already completed and more to be done, Rivero said the projects are a nearly \$90 million investment to the town.

"I know that myself and (Councilmember) John Diak, we like to see orange cones because that means progress," said Rivero. "It means a betterment in the future."

But roadways aren't the only areas undergoing construction — progress on the Town Hall expansion was also made in 2024. The final product will allow more town staff to work under one roof and it will provide

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### Lawmakers offer more mental health help for youth

### Bills tackle insurance coverage and cell phone use in schools

BY MONTE WHALEY  
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Legislation aimed at improving the mental health of Colorado's children and teens gained bipartisan support among lawmakers, say bill advocates.

"I think everyone agrees that there is a mental health crisis among our youth," said Zach Zaslow, VP of Community Health and Access at Children's Hospital Colorado. "I think (lawmakers) are stepping up to be helping with this crisis."

Zaslow, Dr. Laurence, clinical director for Colorado Springs division of Pediatric Mental Health Institute at Children's Hospital Colorado and about 100 other primary care physicians at the State Capitol, supported the passage of two key bills: HB 2510 and HB 2511.

Both measures passed in the State House and now await passage by the Senate after they are voted on by the legislature.

Zaslow said neither measure will increase costs for taxpayers but will save lives in the long run. HB 2510 tries to cut ties between standard health and mental health benefits. The measure ensures private health insurance carriers are not required to provide coverage for mental health services.

SEE MENTAL HEALTH



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# TOWN TALK

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space for additional services not currently offered by the town, such as issuing passports for example.

Town staff are in the process of updating the 2025 Comprehensive Plan, which acts as a road map that guides the town council and staff on how to grow and develop. With the town council to potentially adopt the plan in 2026, Rivero said resident input is essential. There will be multiple open houses in the future for residents to voice their opinions.

"To the citizens, please get involved in this," said Rivero. "Those plans are put together by you."

## Jason Jacob receives Impact Award

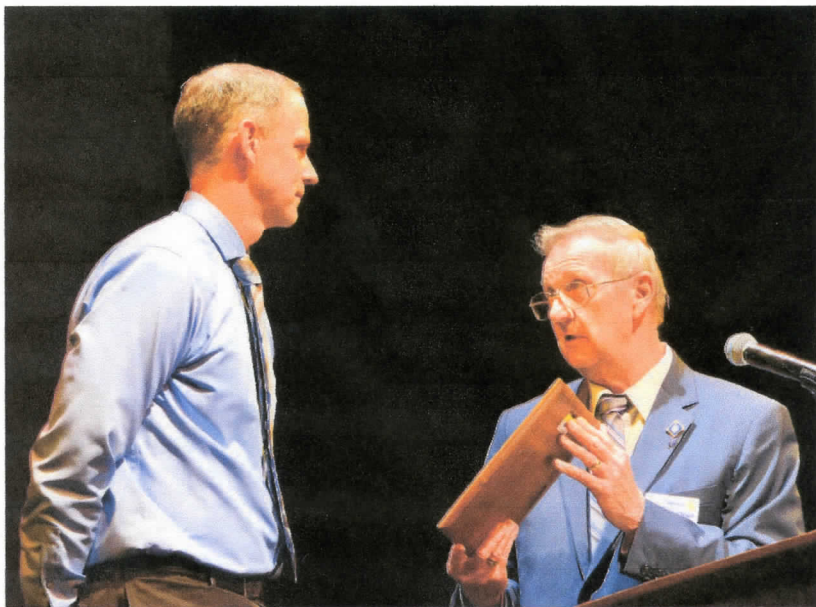
Making a lasting change is what's at the core of the Rotary Club of Parker. And every year, the club honors a community member or local group that dedicates their work to making positive change in the town.

After serving in the Douglas County School District for 27 years, Legend High School Principal Jason Jacob was the recipient of this year's Impact Award.

"No matter what Mr. Jacob has emphasized, he's done it with selfless leadership, ensuring that every student under his care had the best opportunity to strive academically and personally," said Harold McCloud, Rotary member and chairperson for the Impact Awards.

Jacob started out as a science teacher at Chapparral High School in 1998, with no intentions of taking on a leadership role. But over the course of a decade — and the encouragement of his mentors — Jacob served as a basketball coach and eventually transitioned into administration, becoming the dean and assistant principal.

In 2008, Jacob was an integral part in es-



Rotary Club of Parker member Harold McCloud, right, presents Legend High School Principal Jason Jacob with the Rotary Impact Award for his dedicated service to the Parker community.

PHOTO BY HALEY LENA

tablishing Legend High School. Helping to cultivate a positive, prideful and vibrant community, Jacob has served the school for 17 years as assistant principal, athletic director and principal.

"It's definitely the most rewarding thing that I've done in my life," Jacob said.

Whether it's offering words of encouragement during challenging times, celebrating the victories of students or energizing the student community during assemblies and special events, McCloud said that Jacob has embodied the Rotary club's motto: service

above self.

"His influence extends far beyond the walls of Legend High School, as his legacy of leadership has inspired countless students and educators to embody excellence, integrity and their pursuit," McCloud said.

Understanding that sometimes when people take on a leadership role, it becomes easy to take yourself too seriously when all you need to do is keep it simple, Jacob said.

"If we just love and we just care and if we take care of people, I think things just kind of fall into place," Jacob said.