

# Boulder Park offers new places to climb

by Kevin Hoffman  
Mail Staff Writer

After several months of effort by private and public forces Buena Vista recently established Boulder Park.

Consisting of three artificial climbing boulders in the Buena Vista River Park, the improvements are part of the second phase of construction paid for with Great Outdoors Colorado grant money matched by local contributors including the Town of Buena Vista, Chaffee County, South Main and the Trailhead.

"The boulders will make Buena Vista more of a climbing destination," South Main marketing director Dustin Urban said.

He described construction of the boulders, the tallest nearing 11-feet, as foam core technology anchored to an excavated concrete pad.

The structure is coated with three layers of different kinds of fibrous concrete, first sprayed and later hand stamped and textured. Construction leaves placements for additional climbing holds. Two feet of soft fill wood chips cushion falls by providing a safe landing zone around the boulders Urban said.

South Main Development contributors donated \$20,000 toward the boulders and the grant proposal was co-written by Urban and his wife, Katie Selby-Urban.

Buena Vista treasurer Christine DeChristopher oversees how money is distributed and after the Urbans submitted the initial proposal, she made revisions to provide additional parking and landscaping.

Of the \$293,700 awarded



Photo courtesy of Dustin Urban

Andre Spino-Smith tops a climb on the newly installed Buena Vista Boulder Garden, a new feature in Buena Vista River Park. The artificial boulders were paid for with a Great Outdoors Colorado Grant matched by money raised by local business owners and the Town of Buena Vista.

through the grant, \$165,000 went to Buena Vista parkland southeast of the Buena Vista Community Center and the park at the South Main Square while the rest of the money will pay for improvements to whitewater features next year she said.

DeChristopher said the boulders are managed like playground equipment. The town would be responsible for maintenance including cleaning once a year and where moveable holds are positioned.

"Other than maintenance they should last for a really long time," she said.

The Trailhead store contributed the holds, estimated at \$2,500, and co-owner Keith Baker invested time researching other artificial climbing walls in Crested Butte and Gunnison before construction began.

Baker said he has interest in the project as a local retailer and as a town trustee because the boulders give climbers one more option cou-

pled with outdoor rock climbing east of Buena Vista.

"(The boulders) help promote the town as a climbing destination and an outdoor recreation Mecca," Baker said.

Baker and Urban said they hope to host competitions to showcase the boulders, however nothing will be scheduled until official completion of the park areas.

DeChristopher said the boulders are open to the public with a "climb at your own

risk" disclaimer. Official completion is set for mid to late September when signs, landscaping and parking are complete.

Phase 2 will be improvements to the whitewater aspect of the park.

The original budget shows two new features will be added and improvements made to existing features beginning this winter and continuing through March.