



2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Park County Coroners Office

David E Kintz Jr, BS, NRP, F-ABMDI

Coroner

MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of the Park County Coroners Office is to provide thorough death investigations of all of those who die within Park County or suffer a fatal event within the county that results in their death outside the county. The Coroners Office is on call and responds 24 hours a day, every day of the year. The Coroners Office conducts an independent investigation to determine the cause and manner of death. We embrace our role as an advocate for the deceased, who can no longer speak for themselves, solemnly and respectfully. Families, we consider an equal priority to the death investigation. We strive to notify families quickly and keep them informed throughout the process. Our staff is available 24 hours a day, to answer any questions or concerns family may have.

Forensic sciences are ever evolving and education is an absolute necessity. The Park County Coroners Office seeks out educational opportunities each year to enhance our team with the latest information in the forensic community. In addition to education, a standard of the Park County Coroners Office is to have each staff member certified by the American Board of Medicolegal Death Investigation as soon as they are eligible under the experience requirements. To further our pursuit of the truth in each investigation, we became Fully Accredited by the International Association of Coroners & Medical Examiners in 2015 and reaccredited in 2020. The Park County Coroners Office works with law enforcement, Human Services, and Public Health to ensure that each death gets a thorough and respectful investigation.

CORONER STAFF

DAVID E KINTZ JR, BS, NRP, F-ABMDI
CORONER

DON COMSTOCK, D-ABMDI
CHIEF DEPUTY CORONER

BONNIE GUZMAN, RN, D-ABMDI
DEPUTY CORONER

BILL LANDON, D-ABMDI
DEPUTY CORONER

LEA HAMNER D-ABMDI
DEPUTY CORONER

14 CARE TEAM VOLUNTEERS

DUTIES OF THE CORONER

The Coroner is charged with determining the cause and manner of death. The Coroners office is a statutory office under title 30-10-601 through 30-10-622 of the Colorado Revised Statutes. The coroner must investigate the following types of deaths under statute:

- I.** Deaths from external violence, unexplained cause, or other unexplained suspicious circumstances
- II.** Deaths where no physician is in attendance or physician is unable to certify cause of death
- III.** Deaths from Thermal, chemical, or radiation injury
- IV.** Death from criminal abortion, including self induced
- V.** Deaths from hazardous or contagious conditions that may pose a threat to the general public
- VI.** Deaths while in custody of law enforcement or incarcerated
- VII.** Death was sudden and happened to a person in good health
- VIII.** Death from industrial accident

In Park County we do not have a hospital or inpatient hospice which means that all deaths fall under the jurisdiction of the coroner.

The Park County Coroners Office covers Park County, Colorado with a population of 17,390 in 2020 per the US census bureau. We cover the incorporated towns of Fairplay and Alma. The county is home to two state parks, many wildlife areas and hundreds of thousands of acres of state land and national forest. Park County is tourist destination for camping, hiking, fishing, hunting, sight seeing, and much more. Vacation rentals have dramatically increased the amount of visitors to our county.

Coroner Accomplishments 2024

In February, Coroner Kintz attended the American Academy of Forensic Science and held numerous meetings regarding our continued work with Colorado Mesa University at our High Altitude Human Decomposition Research Facility. In addition, this meeting expanded relationships with federal agencies as well as national and international groups to bring the latest in forensic science back here to Park County.

In March, the county began the process updating our facilities to meet case load and latest forensic needs. We contracted with MWL and had a pre-program plan drawn for several options. This will guide us in the process up updating and expanding our facility to serve current and future needs.

In April, Coroner Kintz and Chief Deputy Comstock traveled to Ohio to the Ferno-Washington to be trained on how to maintain our cots in house. We are now able to do preventive maintenance and make repairs including replacing parts in house.

In May, Coroner Kintz spoke at the National Violent Death Reporting Systems national meeting to give a perspective of rural death investigation to the data being collected.

In August, one of our CARE Team Members was accepted to attend the NTSB Family assistance training. This was the first time one of our members had been selected. She attended the training and brought back a wealth of knowledge that we are sharing with the rest of the team to serve families.

2024 Continued

In August, we once again partnered with CMU to put on the Death at Altitude training course for Coroner and Medical Examiner investigators from around the state. This was a successful training which brought education of how to handle cases of skeletal remains and outdoor circumstances.

In July, Members of our staff and CARE Team once again attended the International Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners annual symposium. This training keeps all members up to date on the latest in forensic science as well as continues to building relationships and bring resources that benefit Park County. One of those was a new vendor this year that was able to help us reduce cost of investigation supplies.

In September, Coroner Kintz was asked to testify to the National Academy of Sciences on the field of rural coroners and best death investigation practices. This testimony will hopefully lead to legislation in the future to continue and expand on the best forensic science practices in all rural communities like Park County.

We hosted another table top exercise surrounding a possible weather related mass fatality. This included all of our partners that would respond to such an event around Eleven Mile Reservoir.

The two new staff from last year both achieved ABMDI Diplomate certification.

2025 Goals

Our biggest goal this year is to achieve reaccreditation. Our audit will be conducted in late spring. This is an every five year examination of how our office functions and serves the community. The standards are getting harder and we are excited to keep meeting them in our service to Park County.

This year we will be working closely with the County Commissioners to move forward on getting us a new facility to serve the future. As mentioned last year we saw a 98% increase in cases from 2011 to 2022. That trend has not changed. We will take all we have learned from getting the pre-program plan together and apply it to the next steps and finding funding sources.

Once again we will be attending trainings and seminars through the year to keep the latest information coming back to serve our county. This will begin in February at the American Academy of Forensic Science meetings that will be in Baltimore this year.

We will be working with Colorado Mesa University to once again host a seminar for agencies around the region and state at the Forensic Research Facility. This years focus will be on buried remains and excavation.

2024 CASES

- TOTAL CASES: 101
- ALCOHOL ASSOCIATED: 20
- WITH COVID: 1
- SCENE RESPONSES: 78
- HOSPICE: 24
- AUTOPSIED CASES: 32
- TOXICOLOGY CASES: 41
- DECEASED TRANSPORTS: 78
- MORGUE USED: 78
- EXTERNAL EXAMS: 78
- MARIJUANA USE 9
- DONOR REFERRALS: 2
- ORGAN DONORS: 1
- TISSUE DONORS: 2
- WHOLE BODY DONORS: 3
- EXHUMATIONS: 0
- UNIDENTIFIED: 1
- UNCLAIMED: 0
- DEATH NOTIFICATION: 9

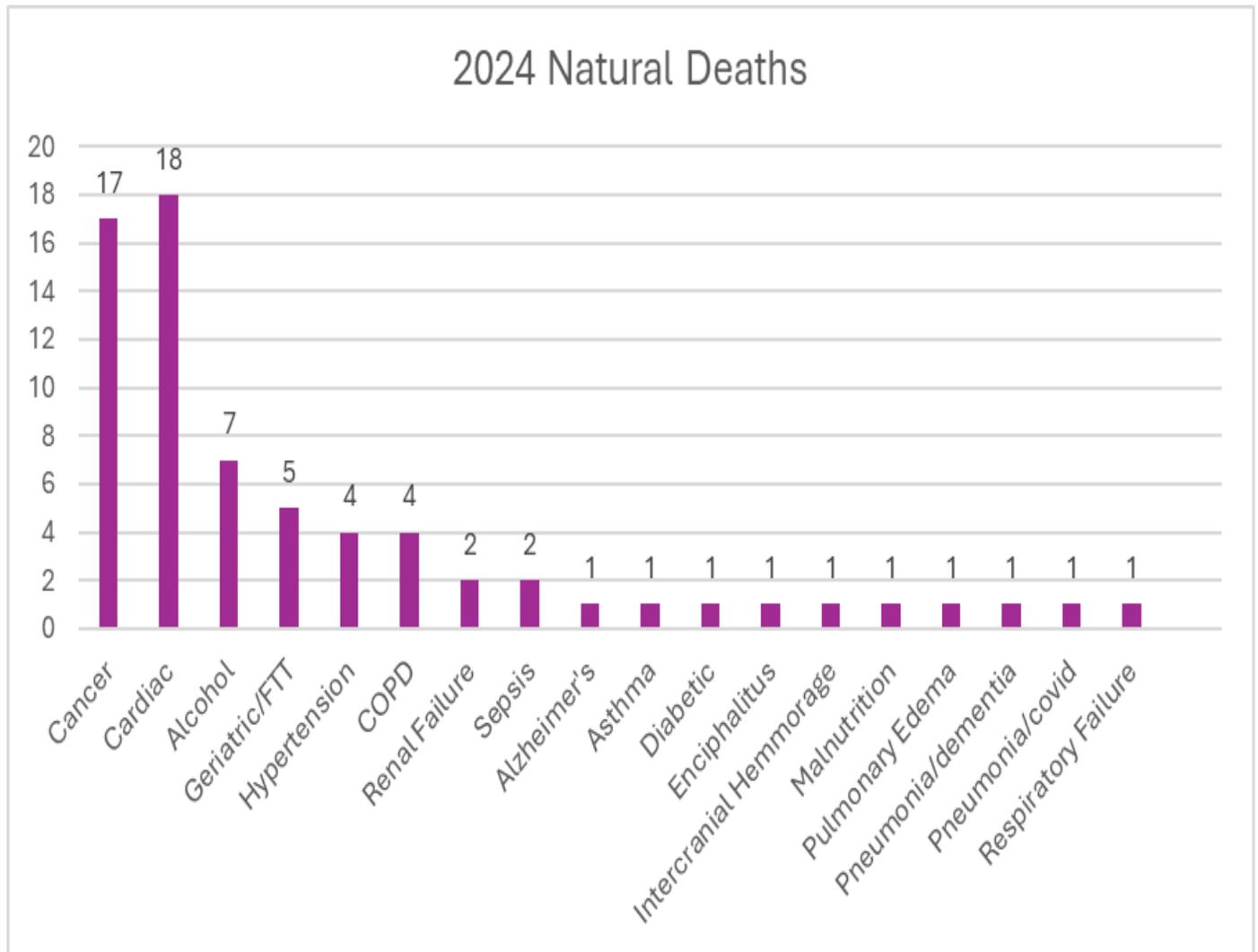
101 CASES MAKES 2024 THE THIRD BUSIEST YEAR FOR PARK COUNTY.

- MANNERS OF DEATH:
- NATURAL: 69
- ACCIDENTAL: 15
- HOMICIDE: 2
- SUICIDE: 13
- UNDETERMINED: 2
- IN CUSTODY/LE 0
- MINORS (0-17) 1

UNDETERMINED MANNER

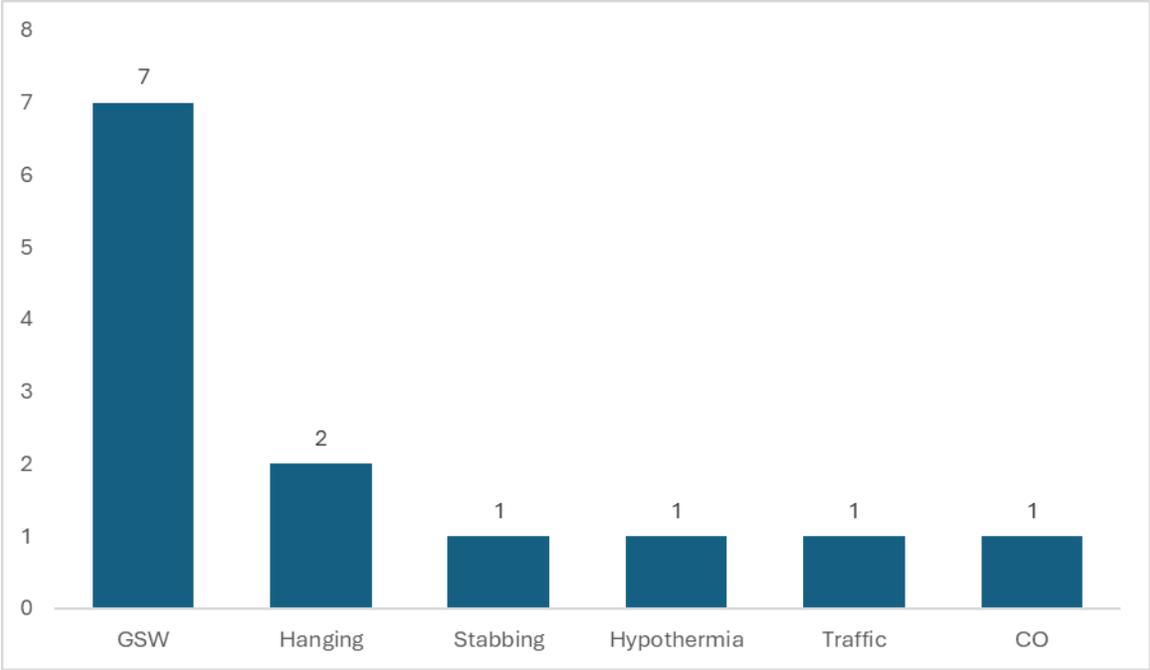
CAUSE OF DEATH BY MANNER NATURAL

TOTAL : 69



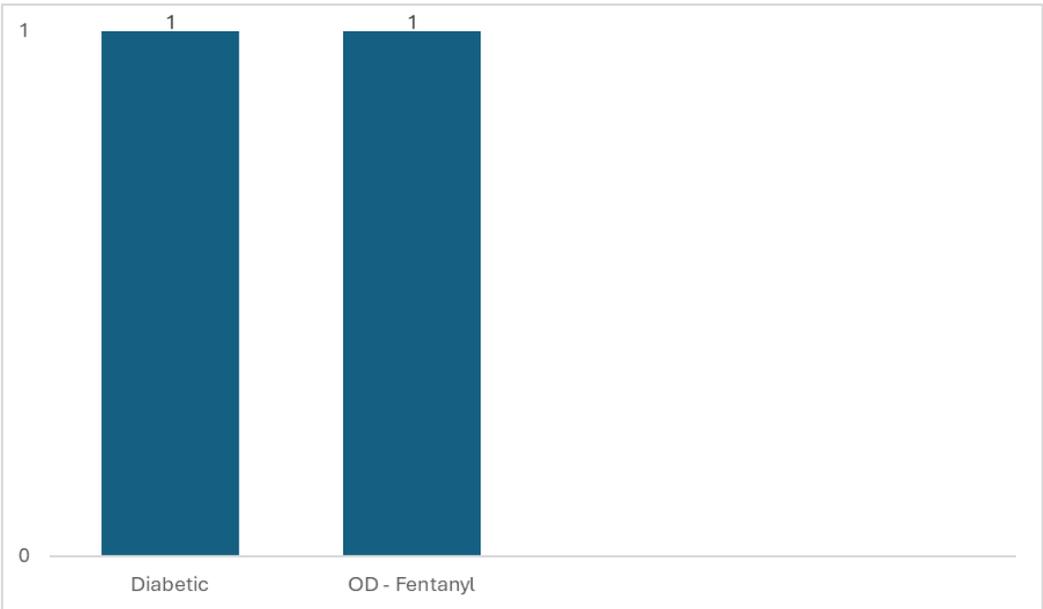
SUICIDE

TOTAL: 13



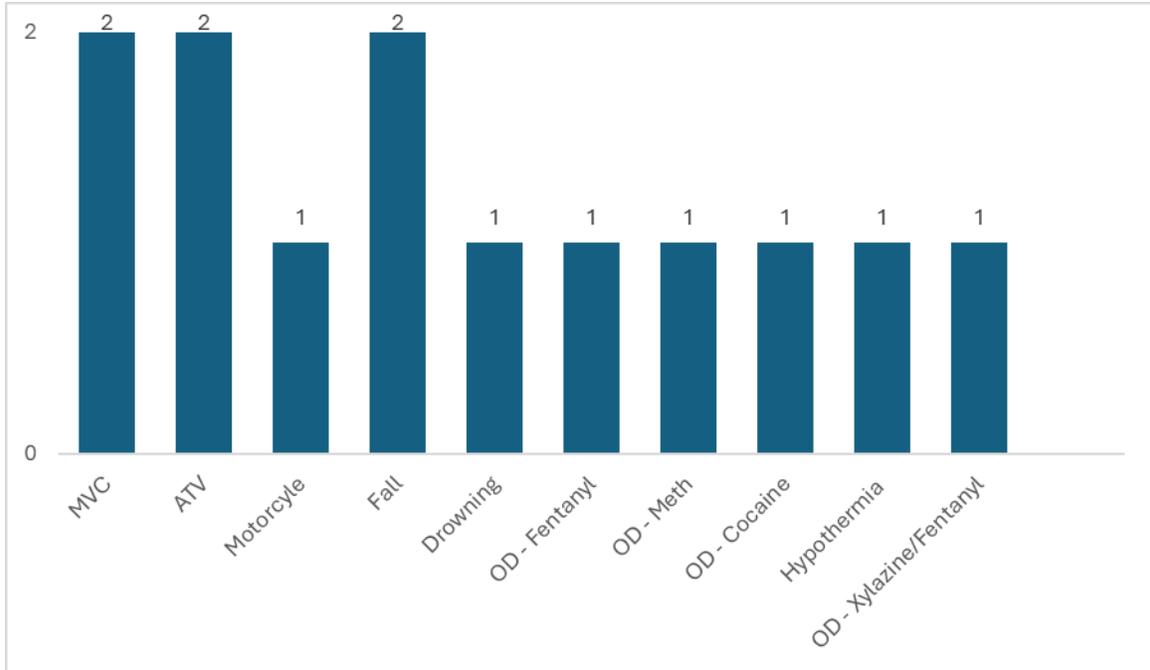
UN-DETERMINED

TOTAL: 2



ACCIDENTAL

TOTAL: 15



HOMICIDE

TOTAL: 2

